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## Rethinking Leadership in Extended Education: How Collaborative Leadership Style Drives School Development

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### ABSTRACT

There is growing scholarship that links high quality leadership of the school principal with positive learner outcomes. This study investigates the impact of collaborative leadership on school improvement within public secondary schools in Karachi, Pakistan. Recognizing leadership as both an art and a science, the research underscores how evolving educational paradigms have shifted attention from traditional authoritative leadership to collaborative, participatory approaches. Drawing from global perspectives and contextualizing them within Pakistan's educational landscape, the study explores how school leadership, particularly the principal's leadership style, influences school performance, student achievement, and institutional development. The research employs a quantitative, positivist, and deductive methodology, utilizing validated assessment tools to evaluate both collaborative leadership and school improvement. Data were collected from headmasters, teachers, and community members across Karachi's six districts using a multistage sampling method. Findings revealed a moderate to strong positive correlation between collaborative leadership and school improvement, particularly in areas such as school climate, clarity of mission and vision, and leadership characteristics. The study concludes that collaborative leadership significantly contributes to enhancing school effectiveness, promoting a learning culture, and supporting educational reforms. These findings highlight the need for professional development and systemic support for school leaders to foster sustainable

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improvements in education quality.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Leadership, School Improvement, School Climate, School Mission and Vision and Leadership Characteristics

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## INTRODUCTION

Leadership combines knowledge and skills that lead subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Ashraf, 2019). It is considered an art on one hand because it involves performing different roles; on the other hand, it is a science because it involves practical work (Gill & Prowse, 2012). The nature of leadership in multifunctional or complex networking organizations is not only adapted by individuals from personal experiences but also influenced by path dependency, cultural norms, and power relations, which have a restraining influence on leadership practices (Hallinger, 2013; Lai et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2017). Following the instructional process, research has revealed that school leadership exerts a significant influence, ranking as the second most influential element in student achievement, policy execution, and the attainment of external accountability targets (Leithwood, Harris, et al., 2020; Walker & Hallinger, 2015; Walker & Qian, 2018). Hence, the topic of school administration or leadership has garnered significant global attention due to its influential role in comprehending school efficiency.

It has been universally acknowledged that the school principal's leadership style is key in effectively managing the school and improving overall performance (Zhang et al., 2019). Before the early 1980s, education leadership was centered around the principal's authoritative leadership style (Bush & Glover, 2014). Alongside the increasing prevalence of new educational governance, the principal's collaborative leadership style has received growing attention globally (Pan & Chen, 2021; Zhao et al., 2018). However, research on principals' leadership has shifted from general leadership to investigating different principal leadership styles (Lai et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2018). (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000) discussed instructional, transformational, transactional, and shared or collaborative leadership styles in these leadership styles. Further, (Lai et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2018) explained that these leadership styles are significant in developing schools in light of the worldwide pressures that expose education systems to public scrutiny, as evidenced by widely recognized international assessments and rankings. Equally, with the growing concept of educational reforms worldwide placing student achievement at its core, this movement has enhanced the recognition of school effectiveness and the implementation of standard-based accountability systems in the twenty-first century (Lai et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2017).

The influence of collaborative leadership on school improvement has been supported by research showing that professional collaborative activities may positively affect student achievement (Dumay & Garanina, 2013; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). (Hallinger, 2011) review of empirical research on school leadership inferred that leaders can have indirect or mediated positive effects on student achievement by fostering a collaborative organizational learning culture and helping

to develop the leadership capacities of staff and the community. Moreover, collaboration among school leaders generates a trusting and respectful climate that allows for open discussions about decisions, effective performance, and accountability (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

### **School Development**

School improvement is more than just about developing physical capacities in numbers. However, as a learning organization, it involves adapting and adjusting routinely to new environments and situations as its members individually and collectively, learn their way toward realizing their vision (Janson, 2014). School improvement efforts are generally goal-directed, involving sustained endeavors from the entire school community to bring positive changes to struggling schools (Dixon et al., 2022). Various approaches define improvement more comprehensively, focusing holistically on students' overall development and the school's advancement with emphasis on cultivating student character, morals, social abilities and well-rounded competencies, not just academics and test scores (Chan & Luo, 2023; Xue, 2025). Thus, Chinese school improvement initiatives aim to enrich the learning environment and culture to support multifaceted student growth, while Western efforts rely heavily on performance data and accountability (Hsieh et al., 2024). The school's vision, which emphasizes academic success, has been expressed as one of the components of school climate, which also shows a robust correlation with school leadership (Scherer & Nilsen, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022). Many nations adhere to different practices regarding school growth, some of which involve extensive framework plans intended to gauge and guide the transformation and advancement of educational institutions. These plans cover curriculum, school climate, professional development, leadership, and the teaching and learning environment (Altinay, 2023). Furthermore, some countries follow different practices regarding school development, consisting of comprehensive framework plans created to measure and direct the change and development efforts of schools (Scherer & Nilsen, 2016) but in all these school improvement plans mainly include students' academic performance, with school management effectiveness, school infrastructure and teachers' professional development (Parlar & Cansoy, 2017).

### **Global Practices of School Improvement Planning**

There has long been much scientific debate about improving school performance. Scientific research has provided us with many tools to confront these processes; however, one is the most used and implemented in education systems worldwide: the accountability system (Dussillant & Guzmán, 2014). In some countries, some public policies have been implemented within the accountability framework for schools, which must carry out a School Improvement Plan (SIP). In England (United Kingdom), the Pupil Premium program (Baxter & Clarke, 2013) was launched in 2011. It provides additional funding for publicly funded schools. It is specifically designed to favor the most disadvantaged pupils at all levels of education to close the gaps between them and the most advantaged pupils (Department for Education and Education Skills Funding Agency, 2014). Schools have a certain

autonomy to decide on how to spend the resources provided by the government, as long as these resources are destined to promote strategies that allow disadvantaged students to advance. Ireland has successfully implemented SIPs through an Accountability system through the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools program (Department of Education and Skills, 2011) created in 2005 by the Department of Education and Skills. Portugal also has a system that implements SIPs under the Programa Territorios Educativos de Intervencao Prioritaria (TEIP) (Direcao-Geral da Educacao (DGE), Through this program, Portugal has sought to improve the school success of students through multiple interventions that seek to respond to discipline problems, facilitate the transition to working life, encourage coordination among administrators, and reduce dropout and absenteeism.

Other laws and reforms in numerous countries, both in Latin America and North America, have yet to be as successful as expected because accountability was a very important part of the advances, and schools turned specifically to preparing their students for exams. One of the laws was the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) enacted by the United States in 2002 and was in effect until 2015 to be replaced by a new Every Student Succeeds Act, which maintained certain parts of NCLB and repealed others. This law aimed to provide disadvantaged students with equal educational opportunities (Ma & Lee, 2019).

### **School Improvement Planning in Pakistan**

Undoubtedly, the highest quality of education at all levels is a goal aspired to in all countries. Equally, governments worldwide are introducing a range of strategies to improve the quality and quantity of education services provided by public schools. One such strategy is decentralizing autonomy from the central government to the school level, popularly known as School-Based Management (SBM). The recent local government elections in 2013 in Pakistan exemplify the devolution of political autonomy from the provincial to local governments - districts, tehsils, and village councils. In Pakistan, the devolution of autonomy to schools has been emphasized by National Education Policies since 1959, with a renewed interest in community participation since 1992 (Farooqi, 2005).

The School Development Programme (SDP) was initiated in 1987, two years after the denationalization of the schools. The impetus for the SDP was from the work of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the Aga Khan Educational Services (AKES), which fund and run dozens of schools in Pakistan. Both are part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). School A is nominally included in the Network as it began work in the same parochial community; however, it has a completely separate management structure and does not form a part of the Network regarding its finances and reporting. Alongside the teacher development workshop program, school heads were required by the school management to guide teachers in implementing several changes in the teaching methodology, syllabus planning, conducting examinations, admission policy, and communication strategies with management, colleagues, students, parents, and the community.

Students graduating from matriculation receive the Secondary School Certificate (SSC). Intermediate level graduates receive the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC). Education, in principle, is a provincial subject in Pakistan. However, under the Local Government Devolution Plan 2000, district governments, headed by the Executive District Officer (EDO), are given more administrative authority and control over public institutions at primary, middle, as well as matriculation levels. At the national level, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for the development of the national education policy, national plans and budget, as well as the overall supervision and implementation of these policies and plans. In Pakistan, several types of institutions provide secondary-level education: secondary schools (G 6-10); and higher secondary schools (HSSs) for grades 6 to 12. Schools are often upgraded to include higher graded within limited resources (Lewis et al., 2021).

At the international level, Pakistan has committed to pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, including SDG-4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SESP, 2019). To fulfill this commitment, the federal government supports provincial governments in achieving these targets. It is imperative to strengthen the coordination and alignment of all sector initiatives under Government leadership and enhance capacities in strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation to improve education delivery in the provinces. In this regard, several laws address the provision of education services in Sindh. In particular, the Public Private Partnership Act 2010 and its amendment in 2014/15 provide a framework for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in education to improve schools in the province with the help of the private sector.

### **Collaborative Leadership**

Educational leadership is used to enhance the effectiveness of school performance because school improvement necessitates the cooperation of all stakeholders to meet the defined standards of education (Fidan & Balcı, 2017; Yalaza & Cinoğlu, 2019). Various countries adopt diverse approaches to school development, encompassing full framework plans specifically crafted to assess and guide educational institutions' transformative and developmental endeavors. Among these, instructional leadership refers to the principal's direct engagement with teaching and learning processes (Cunningham et al., 2019). Transformational and transactional leadership emphasize the leader's role in inspiring others to achieve a vision of change and motivating members to develop their capabilities. However, collaborative leadership includes school administrators, teachers, parents, and others working together to improve the organizational attributes (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The leadership must build strong relationships among the heads, subordinates, stakeholders, and community (DuBrin, 2012). Leading a group or organization through active participation in knowledge sharing, experience sharing, and high-order social learning and thinking requires leadership to foster strong relationships and communication among various stakeholders (Ferdman et al., 2010). This way,

the collaborative leadership style has been considered one of the effective leadership styles for principals because it is firmly believed to be linked with education innovation and the reinforcement of students' learning competencies (Dumay & Garanina, 2013; Hallinger et al., 2015; Reiss et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2020). (Hallinger et al., 2015) review of empirical research on collaborative leadership inferred that leaders can have indirect or mediated positive effects on student achievement by fostering a collaborative organizational learning culture and helping to develop the leadership capacities of principals, teachers, and the community. Moreover, collaboration among school leaders generates a trusting and respectful climate that allows for open discussions about decisions, effective performance, and accountability.

### **Collaborative Leadership Style in Schools**

As global educational reform, improved acknowledgment of schools' efficacy, and standards-based accountability frameworks have emerged in the twenty-first century, school leadership has drawn more and more attention (Zhao, 2018). Specifically, school leadership style has been considered one of the important factors that can strengthen the overall quality of school education (Zheng et al., 2020). Therefore, school leadership has been engaged in a speedy school improvement process; schools should use multiple data sources and create their effectiveness criteria based on their internal dynamics (Scherer & Nilsen, 2016). During the post-pandemic revival phase, it was persuaded that the recovery would rely on effective place-led leadership and collaborative action in education (Bileti, 2022). According to (Kalaivani Karnan & Karuppiyah Marimuthu, 2021), collaborative leadership causes leaders to implement organizational leadership more actively. Furthermore, the leadership style empowers the person to engage employees in the organization's decision-making process to enhance performance and develop the system to accept the change and technological evaluation (Hoy et al., 2006). The collaboration enhances adaptability and consistency through strong stakeholder communication (Parent & Deephouse, 2007). (VanVactor, 2012) suggests that when an organization has a collaborative environment, leadership minimizes misunderstanding and complexity in decision-making. He further elaborates that strong cooperation among the leaders increases the ownership of decisions and decreases the resistance to accept the change. This concept of leadership is a familiar leadership style; perhaps people practice this in different ways. It may be directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating types (Mwai, 2011). In this context, the researcher tends to support the subordinates in agreeing on issues in a given organization. What is meant by the organization here is the institution and university.

Collaborative leaders can recognize the impact of their creative behaviour on others and adjust accordingly to the organization's atmosphere (Wepner et al., 2014). Collaborative leadership style is the way the administrators give supportive collaboration by creating room for listening, praising, asking for input, and giving feedback to carry out agreed issues to the certain goal of achievement (Rubin, 2009).

We are now seeing a shift from individual-centered leadership to an others-centered perspective. Chrislip and Larson (1994) defined collaborative leadership as an ability to articulate a vision and inspire subordinates to share in and enact that vision. One of the hallmarks of effective collaborative leadership is to be able to guide and facilitate (Zachary & Fain, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

Moreover, according to this perspective, data for the research is gathered through interaction with individuals in order to understand their perceptions, actions, and experiences, thereby gaining deep insights into their teaching and learning practices (Richards & Hemphill, 2018). However, in the present study, a positivist approach was adopted. This approach allows for making predictions about constructs and interrelationships among variables based on previous research, observations, and viewpoints, without interfering with the model being studied. As (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007) explain, positivists believe that reality is stable and can be observed and described objectively—i.e., without influencing the phenomena under study. They argue that phenomena should be isolated, and observations must be repeatable. Accordingly, this often involves cognition to understand reality by examining variations in independent variables, thus identifying regularities and forming relationships between certain elements of the social world (Richards & Hemphill, 2018).

The focus of the current study is academic performance within the geographical boundaries of Pakistan. Therefore, the target population comprised public secondary schools in the Karachi Directorate, Province of Sindh, Pakistan. Specifically, school leaders (principals or headmasters), teachers, and community representatives closely associated with these schools were considered as the study population.

For data collection, information was gathered from individuals serving as headmasters, secondary-level teachers, and school community members. A multistage, purposive, and systematic random sampling technique was utilized to select the respondents. In the first stage, schools were selected from all six districts of Karachi based on the proportion of the total number of schools.

To assess school improvement, the School Improvement Assessment Scale (SIAS) was employed. This instrument evaluates areas such as school infrastructure development, teachers' professional development, the school learning environment and climate, and the effectiveness of leadership. It has been previously applied in studies by Balc (2016) and Dag (2009), and was originally developed by (Mackey, 2016) and (Thoonen et al., 2012). In contrast, to evaluate the collaborative leadership style, the Collaborative Leadership Assessment Scale, developed by the Prevention Institute (2003), was adopted. This scale has been used across various organizations to measure collaboration among leaders and stakeholders.

In order to ensure content validity, the instruments were reviewed and refined in consultation with three experts in educational leadership from different universities in Karachi, with guidance from the study supervisors. Following

modifications, these experts reviewed and finalized the instruments to ensure the tools were suitable and valid for the Pakistani context.

The results, as shown in Table 8, revealed moderate to high significant relationships between all the factors on the scale. The strongest correlations were observed between leadership characteristics, strength of mission and vision, and school climate with collaborative leadership style ( $r = 1.00, p < 0.01$ ). Conversely, the weakest relationship was found between management and collaborative capacity development and collaborative leadership style ( $r = .80, p < 0.01$ ).

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were also satisfactory, measuring 0.814 for the Collaborative Leadership Assessment Scale and 0.823 for the School Improvement Assessment Scale. Furthermore, the linear regression technique was applied to analyze the impact of collaborative leadership style on school improvement. Additionally, the study examined the impact of specific components of collaborative leadership style—namely, Leadership Characteristics, Clarity of Mission and Vision, Effectiveness of Communication, Collaborative Environment, Collaborative Capacity Development, and Management Skills—on school improvement.

## **Findings**

### **Practices of Collaborative Leadership Style**

To answer the first research question, identify the collaborative leadership style practices of principals, teachers, and the community. These dimensions were leadership characteristics, clarity of mission and vision of the school, the effectiveness of communication, collaborative capacity development and collaborative environment equally, and management skills. This study found how collaborative leadership style practices were exercised in schools of different districts. Results revealed that among these six dimensions and three different stakeholders (head teachers/ principals, teachers, and community of school) defining head teachers' collaboration leadership practices were very high with mean value, i.e.,  $M=4.40$ , teachers exercised collaborative leadership high level with mean value, i.e.,  $M=3.44$ , following the practices exercised by the community were of high level, i.e.,  $M=3.30$ .

Furthermore, to measure district-wide collaborative leadership practices, the study showed that the mean of the respondents in three districts, South, Central, and East Karachi, was very high. Overall, respondents showed the highest rating on all dimensions of practices of collaborative leadership style with mean value, i.e.,  $M=4.59$ ,  $M=4.40$ , and  $M=4.15$ , respectively. At the same time, the levels of collaboration in all dimensions remained high among the principals, teachers, and school community in schools of district Korangi and West, Karachi, with mean values, i.e.,  $M=4.00$  and  $M=3.67$ , respectively. However, the result of practices of collaborative leadership style in the schools of district Malir, Karachi was found low in level with mean value, i.e.,  $M=2.83$ . Meanwhile, the current practices of collaborative leadership style in all public secondary level schools of Karachi have been found to have a high mean value, i.e.,  $M=3.90, SD=0.45$ .

The researcher selected six dimensions to measure the practices of collaborative leadership style by the education leaders at different school levels based on (Turner et al., 2023) and (Somprach et al., 2017) work and adapted the Collaborative Leadership Assessment Scale with few changes. The scale-based results of the study confirmed and extended the findings of the following studies. (Goldring et al., 2009) developed a tool involving effective leadership practices: management, external environment, and personal traits to measure the head teacher's effectiveness. Practices of Collaborative leadership style in this research prove that the thought and action of secondary school administration in effecting broad-based cooperation, forming both person-to-person and network relationships based on mutual trust, shared vision, and commitment in order to mobilize existing skills and values of teachers and community members to achieve the common goals of their schools which stakeholders share the feeling of common ownership the exercise leads better academic performance of schools. (Leithwood & Day, 2007) stated that of all these leadership dimensions, building shared vision and setting school directions is the dimension that accounts for the largest proportion of leadership effects on student outcomes.

Similarly, (Robinson et al., 2007) observed that higher-performing schools had leaders who deliberately focused more on communicating clear academic and learning goals. In the best-performing districts, collective leadership is significant for constructing the educational community and sustaining inclusive collective participation. These goals cut through multiple conflicting demands to define what is important and where to focus staff and student attention and effort. The study found that the collaboration leadership practices practiced by the school leadership refer to the process by which school leaders develop visions and missions for schools, enhance communication effectiveness and collaborative culture in schools, that corroborates, (Bush & Glover, 2014; Sun & Leithwood, 2012; Zhang et al., 2018) collaboration among staff, students, and other stakeholders is essential for better performance. Establishing collaborative consensus for school goals and visions and effectively communicating these goals to relevant stakeholders to give a sense of overall purpose are being detected as collaborative leadership practices in the schools. These findings are similar to the findings of (Mulford et al., 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2004) that effectively build a school vision, school leaders need collaboration to communicate their vision for their school in a way that engages other key stakeholders. Equally, (Leithwood et al., 2017) conclude that community collaboration with their children's education institute is essential because they can substantially influence their academic achievement by supporting their learning process.

### **Collaborative Leadership Style of School Leaders Impacts of School Enhancement**

Collaborative leadership encourages leaders and members of organizations to work together and share knowledge and experience. In addition, collaborative leadership also enhances social learning and communication between members of the organization more effectively. Collaborative leaders must have clear goals and

effective techniques, involve all parties in deciding or solving the problem, have clear responsibilities, and be smart in establishing interpersonal relationships. However, school improvement, which considers the school as a whole, focuses on students' learning outcomes, prioritizing their expectations in cooperation with stakeholders in the school learning ecosystem (Feldhoff & Radisch, 2021; Klein & Schwanenberg, 2022). The study by (Graham & Perin, 2007) suggested that collaboration activities of school leaders significantly improve school effectiveness and students' learning.

In the findings of this study the coefficients of two variables (collaborative leadership style and school improvement) were statistically significant at  $p < 0.005$ . Similarly, the model as a whole ( $F = 4935.728$ ) is significant at  $p = 0.000$ . It is concluded that the collaborative leadership style significantly impacted school improvement at the secondary level. In schools' today, several people, including parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and students, demand an influence in the schooling process. Consequently, when stakeholders in education collaborate, their mutual influence involves shared power and equality among participants. This collaboration of school leadership creates conditions that support effective teaching and learning and builds capacity for professional learning and change (Fullan, 2001; Robinson et al., 2008). The findings of our research on the second question of the study are also according to the findings of (Li et al., 2020; Mora-Ruano et al., 2021; Olson & Walsh, 2019), which show that the practices of collaborative leadership style have a significant impact on school improvement. It can be argued that the practices of collaborative leadership style practiced by the school leadership encourages all the team members to exchange ideas and that part of the leader's role is to display enthusiasm and positive energy, which are then reflected in team morale; ultimately, it is the cause of uphold school improvement. To generalize overall collaborative practices of school leaders' implications were identified in terms of the different dimensions of collaborative leadership style on students' academic achievement, which aligns with the findings of (K Karnan & K Marimuthu, 2021; Yuan, 2021) that these practices of leadership encouraged school members to be active participants who are motivated to work toward a common goal, such as student achievement or overall school performance. (Krüger et al., 2007; Louis, 2015) and (Mulford, 2008) distinct our findings and suggest that sometimes we criticize principals' leadership in creating and maintaining an environment in which students can learn better, teachers could teach professionally, and more than this administration except exceptional outcomes to occur. However, studies by (Joens-Poulton, 2010), (Leithwood, 2021), and (Leithwood, Sun, et al., 2020) also asserted in line that mostly the collaborative culture of a school is an environment where school staff, principal, and community members work together in interdependent teams that pursue common goals but with galactic differences because sometimes it is difficult to develop a consensus by several people with different background. Many of these studies proved that effective educational leadership tends to affect student performance, school effectiveness, and school improvement. However, the types or

forms of leadership in schools that maximally contribute to student achievement and how these relationships differ across countries remain unknown (Bos et al., 2018). Meanwhile, in the education sector, collaborative leadership focused on strategic school-wide actions directed toward school improvement and shared among the principal or administrators, teachers, and community. Collective leadership is based on several elements that can influence the success of leadership, such as understanding the community, building a powerful team, and promoting the team to create change in the school.

### **Impact of Collaborative Leadership Characteristics on School Improvement**

The data analysis results show that leadership characteristics significantly impact school improvement in secondary schools. Education leaders guide the values of their organizations. They motivate students and encourage teachers and staff to do their best. They nurture success through communication, collaboration, and dedication. Our findings support the notion that the different characteristics of the collaborative leadership style of the school headmaster, teachers, and community could be better related to overall school performance. The results of this study are in line with previous studies that investigated the relationship between collaborative practices leaders of the schools and school improvement (Abidin & Alias, 2022; Li & Liu, 2022; Saka et al., 2021), which demonstrated somehow the weakness of leadership characteristics due to the low level of understanding and other social differences disconnect the different stakeholders in the organization. (Cha & Edmondson, 2006) found that examining characteristics of collaborative leadership were trust, commitment, collaborative culture, and the management skills of leaders to ensure the implementation of the school's vision and strategy. Different characteristics of leadership discourse provide many clues for heads, middle leaders, and senior leadership teams. These different school leadership, operating through the hierarchy, can mandate targeted change, such as a stronger focus on particular areas of interest in school, like examinations and test scores (Bush & Glover, 2014). However, this often depends on a single leader and may not lead to sustainable change. Collaborative leadership conceptualization aims to widen commitment to school-wide objectives through the development of shared vision, collaborative environment, and effective communication, but the 'vision' is often that of the head or principal with acquiescence, rather than genuine commitment, from teachers and others staff (Bush & Glover, 2003). Our findings corresponded to those of (Yoda & Batchelor, 2019), who found that visionary leadership of school administrators was rated high, both on the whole and by aspects. He further explained that the main aspects of good leadership are defining the mission, principles, and direction, improving teaching and learning conditions, redesigning the organization, aligning roles and responsibilities, improving teaching and learning, and redesigning and enriching the curriculum. Improving the quality of teachers, building relationships within the school community, building relationships outside the school community, and emphasizing common values.

### **Impact of Strength of Mission and Vision on School Improvement**

(Hoy et al., 2006) showed that employees' clarity about the mission and vision of an organization develops an interest in cooperative decisions, leading to increasing quality of decision acceptance. It was found in secondary schools due to the strength of the mission and vision of school leadership, has been widely recognized as the core factor in school development, and plays a substantial role in school development. That aligns with the findings of (Mulford & Silins, 2009). School improvement is a capacity (infrastructure and enrollment) development and leadership collaboration that employs it as an overall school environment that supports teaching and learning. (Leithwood, 2005) reviewed successful leadership practices of head teachers identified in the seven countries' reports and found that all successful leaders developed a shared vision of the future, built consensus about relevant short-term goals, and demonstrated high expectations for colleagues' work. The strength of the mission and vision creates cooperation among the teachers, and it plays an important role in accepting changes and technological evolution in the schools. This collaboration enables the professional learning of the staff and provides a means for implementing strategic actions according to the mission and vision aimed at continuous school improvement (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). The most highlighted aspect of principal leadership practices is the clarity of school vision and mission statements, making establishing transparent and consistent performance standards and measurements easier. A well-created vision and mission statement can act as a motivating factor for the school and its subordinates. Proper and clear guidelines aligned with the vision and mission inspire them to do their best. A school with a common goal towards vision and mission can work together in teams with a positive team spirit. In the subsequent verification process, it was found that trust and shared vision were the most important components of collaborative leadership for school improvement. The second major aspect of educational leadership practices is to make the mission and vision of the school clear to the shareholders. These findings correspond to those of (Arbsuwan & Keeratichamroen, 2018), who found that shared vision was the highest weighted; the components of trust ranked second, shared decision-making ranked third, and the commitment component was the least weighted. However, all of them were considered crucial for collaborative leadership. Coleman (2011), who studied "The Significance of Vision, of Leadership in School-based Collaborative Leadership," found important components of leadership to improve schools. It is interesting to note that these findings are in line with the previous research studies as (Gurr et al., 2006), (Mulford et al., 2009), and (Mulford & Edmunds, 2009) found that heads of successful schools developed a collective and shared vision. This vision was articulated and reinforced regularly. Furthermore, our findings corresponded with those of (Jameson et al., 2006), who studied "building trust among the different components of organization" as an important component of collaborative leadership.

### **Impact of Effectiveness of Communication of Collaborative Leadership on School Improvement**

The success of educational changes also depends on the degree of leadership involvement. The school's performance could be better in a school where the leadership that enables members to use their educational expertise, affinity, and creativity through strong communication is a key factor for successful educational changes (Buske, 2018). Strong collaboration in the leadership may be crucial in that school leaders can organize, encourage, and facilitate to prompt associates to perceive their ownership of the change process in the schools (Seashore et al., 1960). The findings of this study align with the outcomes of (Samriangjit et al., 2016) and (K Karnan & K Marimuthu, 2021) studies, that the leadership can guide members to be more open in sharing information and experiences, cultivate positive thinking, and establish effective two-way communication to achieve the set mission and vision that has the potential to improve student learning outcomes. (Hayes et al., 2004) found that improved student outcomes occur when pedagogies are a school priority within a culture of care. (Hallinger, 2005) suggests that instructional leadership seeks to influence first-order variables in the change process, conditions that directly impact the quality of instruction delivered to students in classrooms. By strengthening communication practices, schools can create a supportive and nurturing atmosphere that empowers students, engages parents, and ultimately leads to improved academic achievement and student success. Collaborative leaders can guide members to be more open in sharing information and experiences, cultivate positive thinking, and establish effective two-way communication to achieve the set mission and vision (K Karnan & K Marimuthu, 2021). In addition, (Johansson et al., 2014) also stated the importance of communication in the task of coordination, change management, and initiatives to improve the performance of an organization. Effective communication will create a good relationship between principals, teachers, and the community to influence school performance. Their conclusions were similar: good leadership in collaboration is essential for the success of an organization. Looking into the above findings, it can be concluded that most head teachers of successful schools promoted a culture of collaboration, support, and trust with strong communication. Previous researches support this key finding as (D. Gurr et al., 2005), (Mulford et al., 2009) and (Mulford & Edmunds, 2009) identified successful leadership practices and found that the leaders of successful schools promoted a culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust and that this culture is firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values and beliefs. (Bell, 2007) found a positive relationship between increased teachers' collaboration within and across schools and organizational development. (Harris & Muijs, 2004) also found that where teachers work collectively, teachers' expectations, morale and confidence are significantly enhanced, and a higher degree of satisfaction is expressed among members for their work.

### **Impact of the Collaborative Environment on School Improvement**

Within the school community, the stakeholders promote inclusive settings as systems, schools, and classrooms that have shared ownership between and among all staff for the learning of all students equitably. From this culture and climate flows

the professional collaboration that often shapes how students work together. Adults provide in-class support through collaborative teaching and support facilitation. Successful schools with high results have very high levels of collaborative leadership. The finding of the study corroborates with Hargreaves, (Hargreaves et al., 2008) that successful schools in challenging environments usually have leaders who engage closely with and are consequently highly trusted by their key stakeholders and surrounding community. Related to the finding by (Byrom & Lehman, 2009) that in collaborative environment of school leaders spent more time in schools with children and put more focus on improving student welfare and attainment through involvement with partners in their wider community, including sports clubs, businesses, and religious groups. For safe school improvement, the school environment plays a substantial role. The school environment is based on factors such as focus on students' authorization, support, and implementation of school improvement. Collaborative leader encourages a collaborative environment in which leaders and members of organizations work together and share knowledge and experience. The plans encompass various domains, including leadership, professional growth, school atmosphere, curriculum, and the pedagogical setting (Altinay, 2023). In addition, the study of (Kalaivani Karnan & Karuppiah Marimuthu, 2021) emphasizes the importance of a collaborative environment as an essential dimension for collaborative leadership to enhance social learning and communication between members of the organization more effectively. The above findings of the study show that the focus of heads of successful schools was on the collaborative environment, in which they distribute responsibilities among other personnel of the school community. Previous research studies (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Silins & Mulford, 2002) support these findings. (Mulford et al., 2009) and (Mulford, 2011) findings also revealed that successful leaders fostered culture of shared decision-making to motivate and empower others. They also found that the collaborative environment of leadership school empowering others within the school community was central to successful schools.

### **Impact of Collaborative Capacity Development on School Improvement**

Findings of the study also reveal that the majority of the head teachers of successful schools always gave much importance to professional development of themselves as well as teachers. This key finding is also in line with the previous research studies that the leaders adjust to the requirements of their current posts, the process of professional and organizational socialization is often unpleasant. It takes structured planning to establish the knowledge, qualities and skills needed to lead effectively (J.-R. Gurr et al., 2005; Mulford et al., 2009; Mulford & Silins, 2011). (Jones & Fox, 2009) stated that it should be the responsibility of school leader to provide authentic professional development and other resources for teachers and staff, and create new learning opportunities for staff members. Furthermore, the findings of the study also in line with the previous researches as (Harris & Chapman, 2002) identified successful school leadership practices and concluded that improvements in the schools' performance were achieved through the head teachers

working through teams and involving a wide range of stakeholders in decision making. One of the significant aspects of the leadership practices of heads was parental and community involvement in the school improvement process. The concept of community participation regarding educational affairs is most overused but needs to be better understood. For the leadership to involve the community, teachers, and other stakeholders is school collaborative capacity development. The stakeholders impact the decision on resources and development initiatives by participating in the community development process. The study's findings indicate that heads of successful schools frequently involved parents and the community in school activities and gave patient hearing to them. It is also a fact that family, school and community relationships directly affect students' outcomes. Research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support and increase students' achievement and success (Epstein & Salinas, 1992). (Coleman, 1998) stated that partnerships between teachers, students and parents are essential for attaining educational outcomes. (Epstein & Connors, 1995) agreed that when parents get involved in education, children try harder and achieve more at school. (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) also considered community support of the educational process as one of the characteristics common to high-performing schools. One of the significant aspects of the leadership practices of heads was parental and community involvement in school improvement. The study's findings indicate that heads of successful schools frequently involved parents and the community in school activities and gave them a patient hearing. It is also a fact that family, school and community relationships directly affect students' outcomes. Research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support and increase students' achievement and success (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). (Coleman, 1998) stated that partnerships between teachers, students and parents are essential for attaining educational outcomes. (Epstein & Connors, 1995) agreed that when parents get involved in education, children try harder and achieve more at school. Henderson and Mapp (2002) also considered community support of the educational process as one of the characteristics common to high-performing schools.

#### **Impact of Management Skills of Collaborative Leadership on School Improvement**

Another important finding revealed from this study is that the majority of the heads of successful schools provided instructional and mentoring support to their subordinates. It is also highlighted in the previous research studies as (Zepeda, 2013) recommended that school leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to work together based on needs linked to what school leaders observe in classroom observations. Based on observations, school leaders can identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses, which leads to which teachers can serve as mentors and which teachers need mentoring. The results of this study showed that the leadership dimension, management skills of collaborative leadership have a higher impact on school improvement and are statistically significant at  $p < 0.000$ . Managerial leadership focus on formal directing and controlling of their assistants, resources,

structures, and systems. Managers aim to reach short term as well as long term goals, avoid any risks, and establish standardization to improve efficiency (Leithwood et al., 2010). In addition, an effective management needs to have specific qualities like: good communication; organizational; negotiation; and delegation skills (d'Eurydice et al., 2016). School leadership is a critical management skill involving encouraging people toward a common goal. Leadership focuses on the development of followers and their needs. Managers exercising a transformational administrative style focus on developing the value system of employees, their motivational level, and their moralities while developing their skills. There are different administrative styles of a school principal, including initiative, consideration, and participatory management structure. The conditions of effectiveness are managing the school instrumentally, vividly, healthfully and providing spiritual satisfaction for education employees (Başaran, 2020). Students' Performance in examinations is attributed to several factors; these include the provision of physical facilities, classroom size, effective school discipline policies, administrative support, and effective leadership. The findings show that the collaboratively managed schools performed better than the isolated leadership. (Li et al., 2016) study supports the findings that collaborative leadership through power sharing and cooperation between leaders and subordinates is needed to achieve the common goals of schools. School staff of all cadres are also given the authority and responsibility to resolve problems or make certain decisions to ensure the organization's goals are achieved (Di Roberto, 2021). The study of Robinson et al. (2008) noted that improving collaborative leadership improves students' academic achievement.

## CONCLUSION

Educational leadership is used to enhance the effectiveness of school performance because school improvement necessitates the cooperation of all stakeholders to meet the defined standards of education. Various countries adopt diverse approaches to school development, encompassing full framework plans specifically crafted to assess and guide educational institutions' transformative and developmental endeavors. The study confirms that collaborative leadership significantly enhances school improvement by fostering a shared vision, effective communication, and a positive school climate. In the context of Pakistani secondary schools, this leadership style strengthens stakeholder engagement and supports professional development, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of promoting collaborative practices among school leaders to drive sustainable and meaningful educational reform.

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