

## Education Leaders in Supporting Learning Culture in Higher Education Institutes: Strategies and Issues

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Waseem, <sup>2</sup>Razia Fakir & <sup>3</sup>Tasmina Kiran

<sup>1</sup>Fazaia College of Education for Women, Peshawar, <sup>2</sup>Iqra University, Karachi, <sup>3</sup>IoBM Karachi, Pakistan

\*Corresponding author: [waseem.g23675@iqra.edu.pk](mailto:waseem.g23675@iqra.edu.pk)

*Accepted: 14 February, 2025*

*Published: 30 July, 2025*

### ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a vital role in determining and nurturing collaborative learning cultures in organizations. This research aimed to examine the educational leadership role in creating a collaborative learning culture for faculty in higher education institutes. The research was based on the assumption that leaders provide their staff with a learning culture—an environment that demonstrates and encourages work-place learning and where both gaining and sharing professional knowledge are prioritized and valued. The specific motive for this study was to explore; how higher education leaders perceive their role as instructional leadership to develop learning culture for development of their faculty? What practices do they adopt for developing learning culture within their department?

Data was collected by semi-structured interviews with six Heads/Deans of Department of Education of different private universities located in Karachi. Thematic analysis was used to conceptualize and analyze the qualitative data. The study concludes that fostering a positive learning environment and promoting faculty development in higher education require a comprehensive strategy that can incorporate a variety of leadership philosophies and acknowledge faculty accomplishments.

**Key Words:** Educational Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Learning Culture, Faculty development

### Introduction

Higher education institutions are encountering growing demands to enhance students' learning outcomes in line with emerging market trends and national and international standards. This is essential for fostering innovative minds, intellectual honesty, learning curiosity, and moral values. Central to addressing these demands is the establishment of a supportive learning culture that fosters faculty development. The literature indicates that faculty development includes a wide array of

activities, such as enhancing pedagogical methods and engaging in scholarly pursuits, including research and publication. At the core of faculty development, leadership is crucial in shaping and fostering collaborative learning cultures within institutions (Lambert, 2002 and Shaked 2020). Such a collaborative culture establishes the context and conditions that enable faculty members to work together, enhancing their practices and enriching their students' learning experiences (Lambert, 2002;

Brauckmann and Pashiardis, 2010 and Jamal, 2014).

The efficiency of institutions was dependent of the nature of principal-ship, how they are leading the institution? However, in the contemporary researches this believe is also being faded away that the principal, the lone instructional leader can transform the whole teaching learning process, because improvements with this believe are not sustainable and substantial talents of teachers remain under cover (Lambert, 2002 and Shaked 2020). In the current era of technological advancement only those can survive who are creative, skilled and adaptive for drastically changing conditions. So, it is very vital for higher educational institutions to effectively play their role for the betterment of the societies (George, 2006). Hence, the role of instructional leadership in higher education institutions has been changed (Ersozlu and Saklan, 2016).

Given this theoretical position this research has looked on the other side of mirror and tried to dig out about perceptions of leadership in Higher Education for their leadership role, what tensions surround them and which dilemmas they faced during their journey of leadership (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001). Hence the research objectives were to

- Understand Educational leaders' perspectives about their leadership role in higher educational institutes and practices for faculty development.
- Suggest ways to improve leadership practices and enabling them to become leaders of learning.

On the basis of our objectives following research questions were the focus of the study: -

- How higher education leaders perceive their role as instructional leadership to develop learning culture for development of their faculty?
- What practices do they adopt for developing learning culture within their department?

### **Defining Features of Leadership: Theoretical Perspectives**

The teaching and learning culture are the conveyance of a number of common values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of the institution, programs, people who considerably influence the perception, decision, and action of the organization's teaching and learning processes and find expression in physical manifestations as well as in artifacts a symbol such as new curricular resources, innovative teaching projects, publications on teaching and learning, etc. (Sonntag, et al. 2004). Collie and Taylor (2004), define learning culture as processes to promote learning and a climate of openness, trust, and collaboration to support learning. A learning culture is seen as a part of the organization's culture. An organization culture "ties into bundles a number of common values, norms and attitudes that considerably influence the perception, decision and action of the organization's members and find expression in physical manifestations as well as in artifacts and symbols." (Sonntag et al. 2004).

Leadership is a process of developing harmonization among individual efforts to achieve shared goals (Finley and Michael, 2014). It is a social process of to strive for

intended participation of followers and to influence them to carry out specified tasks (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). Through effective leadership followers can be made familiarize with their potentials. It has positive impact for commitment towards organizational development and individual self-satisfaction. It enables them to have visions with integrity and passion (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014 and Hofmeyer, et. al., 2015). It cannot be conceptualized in a single perspective of personality, trait and skill. However, it can be hypothesized as a combination of influential traits, characteristics and deeds with distinct visions, exemplary roles, moral values and collaborative sense (Finley and Michael, 2014 and Hofmeyer, et. al., 2015).

According to experts, leadership is a dynamic process that requires leaders to consider the expectations, values, and interpersonal skills of those they interact with. They emphasized that effective leaders prioritize the needs of their followers when making decisions, utilizing their own influence to support the advancement of their followers' careers (Landis, Hill and Harvey, 2014). Their leadership style describes their regular pattern of behavior, which can impact effectiveness, gratification and loyalty of employees, which intern can affect organizational commitment and effectiveness (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014).

The term educational leadership has its limitations, concerning its descriptions, conceptualization, practices and measurement (Finley & Michael, 2014 and Yasser, et al, 2015). The foremost reason for these limitations

is the absence of precise definition (Finley & Michael, 2014 and Yasser, et al, 2015). This lack of concise definition leads to misinterpretations, role conflict and low principal evaluation ratings (Finley, 2014). The narrow interpretation defines instructional leadership as an administrator and manager, and in its broader view, instructional leadership refers to all leadership activities that promote staff development and students learning in educational institution (Finley, 2014, Yasser, et. al, 2015 and Kinnunen, et. al, 2022). At the heart of our assertion lies the notion that placing a consistent focus on instructional leadership can effectively facilitate collaborative efforts among teachers to enhance instruction (Li & Liu, 2020). Leadership that promotes excellence through staff engagement and innovation, while fostering collaboration to meet and exceed institutional expectations and continuously improve learning outcomes (Wisniewska & Grudowski, 2024). This, in turn, yields desirable outcomes such as enhanced efficacy, improved attitudes toward teaching, increased job satisfaction, and heightened levels of trust in principals, colleagues, and clients (Goddard, Goddard, Kim and Miller, 2015).

### **Research Methodology**

The research is on the basis of interpretivism paradigm. It is a research approach that views reality as subjectively constructed through individual perceptions and meanings, rather than an objective, external reality (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). A qualitative research design was used to understand the perceptions and practices adopted by educational leaders in Higher Educational Institutions for faculty

development. This study is driven by the objective of gaining insight into the perceptions of educational leaders regarding their role in faculty development within higher educational institutions. While previous studies have utilized various methodological tools, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive and detailed understanding compared to what is typically reported in the literature. To achieve this, multiple case study, as every institute is independent, was employed to gain a more precise understanding of leaders' perceptions and the practices they employ to enhance their performance in higher educational institutions. Since the methodology of this research was qualitative, an inductive approach was employed to extract themes from the interview data collected from all participants. To ensure availability of data and triangulation, the collection process has incorporated semi-structured interviews and document analysis of institutional academic calendar plans, students' academic results and quality assurance policies and initiatives. The guiding questions for semi structure interviews were developed by the researcher. However, these questions were refined and aligned as per the research questions and objectives under the supervision of experts.

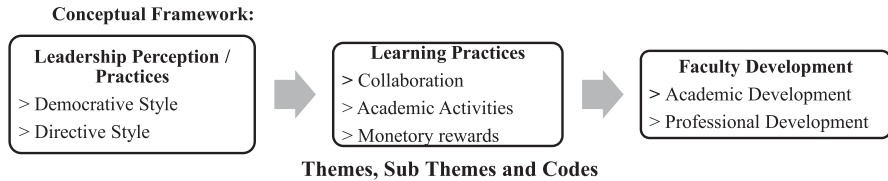
Prior permission was obtained through informed consent from the heads of the educational institutions. The consent process involved email correspondence. The data was securely stored in a designated location, ensuring full protection through physical measures such as locks and keys. For data stored electronically, stringent password protection was implemented to ensure its safety. Interviews

were conducted from Head of Departments of Education and Humanities of Private Universities in Karachi. 03 were male and 03 were female participants to avoid gender biases. As suggested by Cresswell (2008) that studying 5 to 25 cases are enough to infer about a phenomenon. Furthermore, only six heads agreed for the research participation. All participants chosen for this research were interviewed utilizing open-ended questions. Interviews were audio –recorded and later transcribed to ensure accurate capture of the data. Subsequently, the recordings were transcribed verbatim, leaving no room for omission, in order to capture all the points articulated by the respondents as part of their responses. The factors contributing to this variability is completely explored in the discussion chapter. The participants of the study were a group of 03 males and 03 females, with experience of leadership their role in Higher Educational institutions were ranging from 5 to 20 years. The data generated from the interviews of educational leaders, provided information about professional experiences, learning practices and challenges, set within the higher educational institutions and focused on the research questions.

In this study thematic analysis is used to conceptualize the qualitative data. Themes were developed from the language, terms and meaning expressed by leaders and identified through careful analysis of the interview transcripts. The developed themes were rooted in the data and developed through rigorous and cyclical data analysis. The themes were compared across the questionnaires and

interviews in order to ascertain that they were consistently supported. Each transcript was read thoroughly repeatedly adopting inductive attention to the terms and language used by different participants; this way, important

inferences and conclusions with reference to the terms and perspectives of research participants were drawn.



Themes	Sub Themes	Codes
Perceptions of Leadership in Higher Education for their Leadership Role	Democratic	<i>Consent, want, relationship, support, welcome ideas</i>
	Autocratic	<i>Order, instruct, pushed, enforce</i>
Educational Leaderships' Practices for Learning Culture	Professional Development	<i>presenter from outside, seminar, Workshops</i>
	Financial Support	<i>Remuneration, monetary, pays for the cost, increment</i>
	Collaboration	<i>Support, discussion, relationship, workloads,</i>

**Findings and Analysis**

Themes emerged from the data analysis are interconnected and from analyzing the data it has emerged that leadership in higher educational institutions has pivotal role for developing learning culture within their department for their faculty development.

In addition, document analysis (including institutional policy manuals, handbooks and QEC plans) provided confirmatory and contrasting evidence that strengthen triangulation. The document revealed that leadership responsibilities, collaborative learning structure and faculty development procedure and plans were formally defined and operationalized in higher educational institutes.

**Perceptions of Leadership in Higher Education for their Leadership Role**

The findings, overall, demonstrate that the approaches of leaders have an impact on the formation of a learning culture and faculty development in higher education institutions. The participants believe in and practice diverse leadership approaches that demonstrate their support for and/or resistance to faculty development.

Some leaders appear to believe in a democratic work culture where mutual decision-making, self-development, shared responsibilities, and teamwork are the unique features. For example, they recognize their role in empowering and encouraging their teaching staff to continue their professional growth.

*“I never undertake any task without the consent of my faculty. I don't believe in putting pressure on people; I never do that. I will never organize any seminar unless my faculty tells me that we are available and want to attend it. If anyone tells me that they cannot do it or do not want to attend, I won't proceed (Interview-5, Q-7)”.*

The results show that the leaders believe in open conversation and teamwork rather than imposed and prescriptive communication to foster a sense of ownership, which leads to good improvements in their own practices. According to the comments, the leaders were approachable and easily accessible to their staff members in order for them to discuss their issues, seek

direction, and address solutions, as they regarded their role team members rather than controllers or evaluators.

The alignment between interviews and documents strengthens the conclusion that democratic leadership is institutionally valued.

*“I have built a relationship with my faculty, so when there is a relationship building, a trust develops between you and your faculty. In that environment, when you bring any new idea, you also receive support from there (Interview-6, Q-6)”*

It is very important to notice that democratic leadership styles perceive their teachers as leaders and learners, where power is perceived as a responsibility rather than a status (Kasalak et al., 2022). The findings are in alignment of the literature i.e. Bryman and Cassell (2011), highlights the positive impact of democratic leadership on fostering a supportive environment for professional development for faculty.

The data also reveals that, contrary to the democratic leadership style, some leaders see their position assigning duties, distributing

resources, monitoring educational activities, and making choices that faculty members must follow. They were aware that faculty participation in academic activities like as seminars and conferences is critical for future advancement and professional growth; nonetheless, they perceived faculty as lacking enthusiasm to pursue such academic forums. As a result, the leader's judgments and expectations are critical in attending the learning forums available for their professional development, from their viewpoints.

*“When we bring a presenter from outside and wish to have a discussion at the university level, we definitely need to enhance participation. For this purpose, we have to obtain an order from the top management, which requires us to instruct the faculty to attend. Often, the faculty is reluctant, and the motivation is not inherently present. In such cases, we are pushed from above, either at the Vice-Chancellor level or directives are issued from there, mandating the assurance of attendance (Interview-3, Q-7)”.*

*“For this, we have to enforce a little that they come and participate; it's mandatory. We establish policies for attendance, requiring them to attend, and within the minimum session, we strive to force them to maximize faculty attendance (Interview-3, Q-3)”.*

These comments indicate that leaders use various regulatory mechanisms to ensure teachers participation in academic activities. However, on the other hand, it raises questions about teachers own willingness and ownership to regulate their learning.

Similarly, document analysis showed that institutional policy manual clearly outlined

### **Educational Leaders’ Practices for Faculty Development**

The analysis of this theme pursued to examine the diverse strategies and methodologies employed by academic leaders in the realm of faculty development. Understanding the various practices of educational leaders became crucial for institutions looking to foster a culture of

expectation for Heads / Deans, emphasizing responsibilities such as ensuring academic quality promoting faculty and supporting research activities and these have been expressed by leaders in their interviews that they are expected to act as facilitator rather than mere administrator (Suffa University Policy).

continuous improvement and professional development among faculty members. In some institutes, the leaders viewed monetary rewards as a means to reinforce faculty participation in learning endeavors. These rewards are strategically employed to boost both the productivity and quality of faculty contributions, particularly in the realm of research publications.

*“We provide faculty with remuneration on every paper, including even Ph.D. although they have already less workloads (Interview-2, Q-3)”.*

*“Apart from this HoD can give them monetary reward and play an important role in their promotion (Interview-1, Q-13).”*

Leaders viewed monetary rewards not merely as payments to faculty but as strategic investments by institutions (Kiet University Policy). Leaders recognized their faculty as invaluable assets and are committed to investing

in their growth, covering all expenses incurred by faculty for learning and development.

The documents validated that monetary rewards are part of institutionalized faculty development systems (MiTE Policy).

*“Our university pays for the cost of this (any) publication. And faculty is the special asset of a department so it is very important to invest in it so that it can give maximum output (Interview-1, Q-2).”*

In addition to monetary rewards, leaders emphasized the significance of acknowledgment stated in their Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) as a dual-purpose

tool. Leaders employed diverse approaches in the ACR process, with some encouraging self-evaluation by asking faculty to fill out their reports. This not only makes faculty self-

assessors but also acts as a motivational tool, driving increased productivity and accomplishments

*“I usually tell my faculty members, 'Look, I have received your ACR, and these are the five domains within which grading needs to be done. So please, mark yourself in the self-marking section (Interview-5, Q-8).”*

Grading or providing remarks about faculty is recognized by leaders as a challenging task. Negative remarks or low grades have the potential to cause dissatisfaction and discourage

faculty development. It not only reduces leadership responsibility but also promotes self-assessment among faculty.

*“When you grade them and give them low marks, they come to you questioning why you gave them low marks. But when you change the scenario, then most people are giving themselves low marks (Interview-5, Q-8).”*

Some leaders contend that monetary rewards and positive remarks alone may not sufficiently engage faculty in learning activities. They argued against ad-hoc work, advocating

for a structured and evenly distributed plan of activities to maximize faculty time for learning and developmental pursuits

*“Some universities have a practice where faculty is given the opportunity to have a reduced workload, like an HOD (Head of Department), who is pursuing three courses along with all the administration work. In some universities in Pakistan, there are also cases where they have reduced the workload of those three courses to two, and the workload of one course, usually is given for research work (Interview-6, Q-3).”*

Data indicates that reducing workload should not be exclusive to senior faculty members with more experience or higher degrees; less experienced faculty can be

motivated through measures like extra time off or a lighter workload, enabling them to focus on learning and development

*“So for motivation they should be given some monetary reward or they should be given relaxation within the course (Interview-1, Q-6).”*

*“I was not only given the increment but also provided with the opportunity where if the faculty is given off for two days a week, I am given three days off so that I can attend my classes (Interview-6, Q-4).”*

*“See different minds meet, different schools of thought meet, so it's very progressive for the faculty. And then the faculty comes up with a creative idea. So it also creates a process of creativity experiences and experimentation which is very beneficial. So this is how you grow intellectually, academically and professionally (Interview-1, Q-4).”*

The overall findings suggest that leaders employed diverse techniques to communicate and engage faculty, fostering an open culture. Some leaders recognized monetary rewards as a potent incentive for best practices (MiTE Policy) and professional development substantiated by research such as that of Ehrenberg and Zhang (2005). Others hold the opinion that acknowledging commitments and performances can effectively boost faculty engagement in developing a learning culture, echoing the finding of researchers Buckingham and Clifton (2001). However, some leaders expressed concerns that financial rewards might impact the budget for other institutional activities. In such cases, leaders advocated for alternative approaches, such as reducing workloads and assigning fewer credit hours for teaching.

This enables faculty to utilize their extra time effectively, engaging in learning and developmental activities. These measures not only enhance the quality of education and research but also cultivate a learning culture, benefiting both individual faculty members and the department as a whole (Hines et al., 1996). Numerous leaders believed that engaging faculty in workshops is instrumental in learning. This not only enhances collaboration and interaction with faculty from other universities but also facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Numerous research studies have concluded that engagement in activities such as workshops and seminars significantly amplifies faculty learning and development (Meacham & Ludwig, 1997).

This dual impact not only advances faculty members in their professional growth but also plays a pivotal role in institutional development. Such professional development activities not only improve the overall quality but also contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in higher education institutions (Centra, 1978 and Tricio, et al., 2017).

It is also evident from collected data that the internal workings of the department play a pivotal role in faculty growth. The data highlights the necessity of cultivating collaborations, not solely within one's department, but also with faculty from other departments, to facilitate a comprehensive and varied learning experience.

The data further reveals that faculty members are generally reluctant to attend regular departmental meetings or sessions. In response, certain leadership have taken proactive measures to encourage faculty attendance in various activities during these sessions. To facilitate participation, special directives are issued by the Dean of Higher Management or the Vice-Chancellor, ensuring that a maximum number of faculty members are present. The objective is to create an environment where faculty can learn new things, enhance collaboration, alter their thinking approaches, and acquire fresh insights. In adopting this approach, leaderships prioritize active faculty participation, even if it means implementing measures that may appear somewhat autocratic in nature

*“We conduct faculty development sessions arranged by Dean, on a weekly basis in two ways. One is internal policies, procedures, and systems. We provide them with an understanding of our updates so that they are well-informed and stay ahead with such policies (Interview-3, Q-2).”*

To enhance faculty engagement in these sessions, certain leaders recognize the importance of fostering extensive discussions. Employing various methods, they understand that these discussions not only address existing

challenges faced by faculty but also contribute to increased awareness and learning. The exchange of ideas in these discussions provides opportunities for discovering new solutions and acquiring skills.

*“We invite external individuals and engage them in these sessions. In this, our usual practice is to give the presenter 15 minutes to present their topic, followed by a 45-minute discussion with our faculty on topic, which is very important for faculty development (Interview-3, Q-2).”*

Numerous research studies affirmed the value of departmental meetings, scheduled sessions, and discussions in raising awareness about diverse problems and concurrently facilitating the discovery of effective solutions (Hutchens, 1998). The undeniable significance of these activities cannot be overstated, as they emerge

as indispensable contributors to the ongoing faculty development and learning endeavors within academic institutions. The collective impact extends beyond the individual faculty member to influence the academic landscape in a transformative manner.

## **Discussion**

The research has highlighted the significant influence that leadership styles have on developing learning culture and promoting faculty growth in higher education. The participants demonstrated a wide spectrum of leadership styles, indicating support or opposition to efforts related to faculty development. Interestingly, a portion of the leaders showed a dedication to a democratic work environment that prioritizes collaboration, shared accountability, self-improvement, and collaborative decision-making. Their strategy was based on the idea that developing a learning culture required encouraging a sense of teamwork and viewing every faculty member as an important participant in the overall project. These leaders saw themselves as team members

rather than controllers, placing an emphasis on open communication and teamwork over prescriptive directions (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). As a result, they created an atmosphere where faculty members felt comfortable raising concerns, asking for advice, and working together to find answers. The results are consistent with previous research, especially which of Bryman and Cassell (2011), which emphasizes the beneficial impact of democratic leadership in fostering an atmosphere that is conducive to professional growth. Furthermore, faculty members' trusting relationships and teamwork have emerged as the driving drivers behind a positive work culture, with collaborative work emerging as a vital tool for growth and development. This collaborative

leadership approach enhanced student outcomes and created a lively learning environment in addition to having a favorable effect on faculty development. On the other hand, some leaders adopted a more directive approach, believing that their main responsibilities were delegating tasks, allocating resources, and making decisions that faculty members were expected to abide by. The significance of faculty involvement in academic events was recognized, and measures were put in place to guarantee attendance, including policies and mandates. According to the study, while such directive leadership might result in instant compliance, it might not be able to generate true excitement and a dedication to professional development (Finley & Michael, 2014). As a result, this leadership style may have an effect on the cordial and professional interactions between leaders and faculty, which may have an impact on the institute's overall learning culture (Ahmad et. al. 2023). The complex interactions that exist between faculty development, leadership styles, and the overall learning environment in higher education institutions are made clear by this comprehensive analysis. The research has highlighted; higher education leadership understand that using only democratic or autocratic methods is insufficient to create a supportive learning environment and advance faculty growth. One important point made by leaders is that rewards and recognition play a crucial role in encouraging faculty to participate fully in learning activities (Sahl, 2017). In order to encourage faculty participation in a variety of activities, especially research publications, monetary awards have

become an important strategic instrument that boosts output and quality. Leaders viewed these rewards as more than just compensation; they are investments that pay off in terms of improved faculty and institutional growth (Meacham & Ludwig, 1997; Presslee, Vance & Webb, 2013). They actively engaged in the growth of their faculty members, seeing them as priceless assets, paying for all associated learning and development costs (Melguizo, & Strober, 2007). Acknowledgments in Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) serve two purposes as well: they serve for performance improvement and a means of acknowledgment. In the ACR process, leaders use a variety of strategies. Some promote self-evaluation as a means of inspiring faculty members and fostering higher levels of output. The study emphasized the impact of unfavorable comments on satisfaction and discouragement for faculty development. To encourage faculty members to engage in research, some leaders derived for appropriate scheduling, a decrease in workload, and efficient time management techniques (Meacham & Ludwig, 1997). Overall, the results pointed to the benefits of a learning culture for faculty members as well as the institution at large. These benefits include financial incentives, encouraging comments, lighter workloads, and efficient scheduling. In the research results workshops are recognized as essential elements for continuous learning and professional development, and in order to assure the highest level of faculty participation, leaders actively plan and facilitate these activities. A proactive approach is taken by some educational leaders who plan several

workshops over the course of the semester, realizing the value of staying current for faculty support, improved publications, and individual learning. According to the study, these workshops have a customized element that targets faculty members' unique skill gaps or developmental needs (Riechmann & Malec, 1976; Camblin & Steger, 2000). Overall, the results supported a more comprehensive viewpoint that these professional development activities are essential to achieve individual and institutional excellence and as fostering an innovative and continuous improvement culture in higher education institutions (Menges, 1985). Educational leaders highlighted that the faculty learning and development are greatly aided by departmental meetings and collaboration, both within and across departments. The focus went beyond departmental cooperation, emphasizing the need to foster cooperation with academics in other departments in order to offer a thorough and diverse educational experience. To enhance performance and competitiveness, leadership in HEIs must adopt initiatives supported by effective leadership, learning culture and strong academia-industry linkages. Significant investment in these areas is essential for sustainable institutional growth (Shrestha, 2025). In order to advance both personally and professionally, the leaders encouraged faculty

### **Conclusions**

Overall, the analysis suggests that leadership influences faculty members' professional development. In this study, leadership is defined as a process of influence and inspiration because it affects faculty work dedication, learning wants, and professional attitudes towards self-

members to venture outside of their comfort zones and work on consulting projects and collaborative efforts that connect them to the outside world (Centra, 1977; Meacham, & Ludwig, 1997; Webber, 2018). The study emphasized the necessity for academic staff members to avoid working alone and to promote cooperation between departments and disciplines. Overall, the results pointed out the importance of effective collaboration in addition to other factors in faculty members' overall learning and development in higher education institutions.

It is evident from results that leadership programs play a critical role in creating a supportive learning environment that benefits students' academic performance and general well-being. The study offered a concrete proof of how leadership practices support a thriving learning culture by influencing educators' career paths, instructional strategies, and, ultimately, students' academic success (Centra, 1977; Webber, 2018). Essentially, the study emphasized how important it is for leaders to be proactive and supportive in order to foster a dynamic learning environment that helps students and teachers achieve long-term success in educational settings (Centra, 1977; Meacham & Ludwig, 1997)

improvement. Leaders that share goals with their faculty members, are aware of their professional needs, and provide opportunities and feedback for growth were able to lead teachers' participation in their CPDS. Leadership styles play critical role in establishing the learning culture and supporting

faculty development in higher education. Leaders who support democratic work environments place a high value on shared accountability, teamwork, self-improvement, and collaborative decision-making as a means of promoting empowerment and teamwork. On the other hand, leaders who take a more directive stance, place a greater emphasis on resource distribution, task delegation, and required attendance regulations. The study supports earlier research by highlighting the beneficial effects of democratic leadership on professional development. Leaders emphasized the importance of incentives, rewards, and recognition in fostering faculty engagement because they understand that depending only on democratic or autocratic methods is insufficient. The study concluded that fostering a positive learning environment and promoting faculty development in higher education require a comprehensive strategy that can incorporate a variety of leadership philosophies and acknowledge faculty accomplishments. However, to create a strong learning culture for faculty development necessitates a sophisticated comprehension of the various components that make up the educational ecosystem. Although there is no doubt that leadership has a significant role in directing the trajectory of academic developments, teamwork goes beyond positions of leadership. The institutional support and strategic guidance from university administration serve as cornerstones for the continuous learning structure. A department can really succeed in developing its faculty by offering the necessary resources, creating an environment that supports creative teaching

approaches, and expressing a vision for the future.

Furthermore, it is impossible to exaggerate the influence that public policies have on educational establishments. These guidelines serve as the legal foundation for faculty development programs and academic programs. Departmental goals that are in line with the more general educational policies guarantee a coordinated and successful approach to building a learning culture. The dynamic forces that shape the contours of faculty development are the changing demands of society for skilled professionals and the ever-changing nature of market requirements.

Creating a supportive learning environment takes a team effort to be responsive to market and societal demands, maintain policy compliance, exercise leadership and manage the university. A department can truly succeed in its goal of giving faculty members an engaging and flexible learning environment—one that eventually benefits both teachers and students—by adopting this all-encompassing strategy.

### **Limitations of the study**

Although the research has highlighted on the connections among faculty development, learning environments, and leadership styles in higher education, it is important to recognize the limitations that have affected the findings' generalizability and interpretation: -

- (a). The study's conclusions are based solely on the experiences and viewpoints of participants from Karachi, it was context-specific. The findings are not applicable to other types of

educational environments with different challenges, cultures, and institutional arrangements.

(b). A significant portion of the data was gathered through participant self-reporting, which is prone to social desirability bias. It's possible for participants to give answers that match expectations, which could overestimate effective leadership techniques.

(c). The study has overlooked the perspectives of students, who are important stakeholders in the learning environment, by placing too much emphasis on the opinions of leaders and faculty. Incorporating input from students may yield a more thorough comprehension.

### Recommendations

These suggestions, which are based on the study's findings, aim to improve faculty development and the learning environment in higher education institutions: -

(a). Ongoing leadership training programs are to be developed and implemented for educational leaders and Heads of Departments (HODs). These programs should focus on fostering democratic and collaborative leadership

styles, emphasizing the importance of open communication, shared decision-making, and team building.

(b). A comprehensive incentive structure should be established for long term faculty development goals.

(c). A mechanism should be developed for periodic review of institutional policies related to faculty development, workload management and for rewards and recognition.

### Concluding Remarks

However, it is important to recognize that, despite their understanding of the leadership role, leaders face challenges in achieving budgetary targets. In the private sector in Pakistan, salary remains a significant issue; faculty members are not compensated well, leading them to consider alternative sources of income. Additionally, universities often employ visiting or part-time faculty to minimize teaching costs.

Faculty development opportunities, open communication, and other academic support strategies are important; however, teachers' salaries and financial incentives are vital for enhancing their motivation and commitment.

### References:

Camblin Jr. L. D., and Steger, J. A., (2000). Rethinking Faculty Development. *Higher Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jan., 2000), pp. 1-18.

Centra, J. A., (1977). Pluses and Minuses for Faculty Development. *Change*, Vol. 9, No. 12 (Dec., 1977), pp. 47-48, 64

Collie, S. L., & Taylor, A. L. (2004). Improving teaching quality and the learning organization. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10(2), 139-155.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*: Sage publications.

- Faisal, A., (2011). Impact of Educational Leadership on Institutional Performance in Punjab. Faculty of Education Preston University, Kohat.
- Finley, (2014). An Exploration of the Relationship between Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Instructional Leadership and Transformational Leadership Behaviors. Electronic Theses and Dissertations, Georgia Southern University.
- Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Kim, E. S., and Miller, R., (2015). A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of the Roles of Instructional Leadership, Teacher Collaboration, and Collective Efficacy Beliefs in Support of Student Learning. *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 121, No. 4 (August 2015), pp. 501-530.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/681925>.
- Hofmeyer, A., Sheingold, B. H., Klopfer, H. C., & Warland, J. (2015). Leadership in learning and teaching in higher education: Perspectives of academics in non-formal leadership roles. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 8(3), 181–192.
- Hutchens, J., (1998). Research and Professional Development Collaborations among University Faculty and Education Practitioners, *Arts Education Policy Review*, 99:5, 35-40, DOI: 10.1080/10632919809599479
- Khan, I. M., Khalil, U., & Iftikhar, I., (2015). Educational Leadership: Educational Development and Leadership Programs in Selected Countries and Pakistan. *Journal of Higher Education and Science*. DOI: 10.5961/jhes.2015.129
- Kinnunen, P., Torniainen, L. R., Mickwitz, A., and Muhonen, A. H., (2022). Bringing clarity to the leadership of teaching and learning in higher education: a systematic review. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education Emerald Publishing Limited 2050-7003*.  
DOI 10.1108/JARHE-06-2022-0200
- Landis, E. A., Hill, D., and Harvey, M. R., (2014). A Synthesis of Leadership Theories and Styles. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice* vol. 15(2) 2014 p 97.
- Li, L., & Liu, Y., (2020). An integrated model of principal transformational leadership and teacher leadership that is related to teacher self-efficacy and student academic performance, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*.
- Menges, R. J., (1985). Career-Span Faculty Development. *College Teaching*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Fall, 1985), pp. 181-184.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27558139>.
- Meacham, J., and Ludwig, J., (1997). Faculty and students at the center: Faculty Development for General Education Courses. *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (1997), pp. 169-183.
- Melguizo, T., and Strober, M. H., (2007). Faculty salaries and the maximization of prestige. *Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (September 2007), pp. 633-668.
- Nanjundeswaraswamy T. S. and Swamy D. R. (2014). Leadership styles. Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, JSS Academy of Technical Education, Bangalore, India.
- Pervin, N., & Mokhtar, M. (2022). The Interpretivist Research Paradigm: A Subjective Notion of a Social Context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 419–428.
- Presslee, A., Vance, T. W., and Webb, R. A., (2013). The Effects of Reward Type on Employee Goal Setting, Goal Commitment, and Performance. *The Accounting Review*, September 2013, Vol. 88, No. 5 (September 2013), pp. 1805-1831.
- Riechmann, S., & Malec, M. A., (1976). Teacher Development for In-Service Faculty. *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Preparing Sociologists to Teach (Apr., 1976), pp. 289-304
- Sahl, A., (2017). The Importance of Faculty Appreciation and Recognition A Case Study of One Institution. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, Vol. 39, Special Issue 39: Diversity & Social Justice in Higher Education (2017), pp. 246-259.
- Shrestha, P., (2025). Sustainability initiatives in higher education institutions: the stakeholder

perspectives. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* 25 June 2025; 17 (4): 1394–1410. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-03-2024-0141>

Sonntag, K., Stegmaier, R., Schaper, N., & Friebe, J. (2004). Dem Lernen im Unternehmen auf der Spur: Operationalisierung von Lernkultur. *Unterrichtswissenschaft*, 32(2), 104–127.

Steinert, Y., & Mann, K. V., (2006). Faculty Development: Principles and Practices. <https://jvme.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/jvme.33.3.317> - Friday, April 21, 2023 10:42:57 AM - IP Address:39.39.233.131.

Tanveer, M., (2020). Leadership in Pakistani Universities and Management: Exploring the Opportunities of Betterment. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal).

Webber, K. L., (2018). Does the environment matter? Faculty satisfaction at 4-year colleges and universities in the USA. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0345-z>.

Wiśniewska, M. Z., & Grudowski, P., (2024). The culture of excellence and its dimensions in higher education. *The TQM Journal* 5 February 2024; 36 (2): 593–615. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-11-2022-0325>

Yasser, F. Hendawy Al-Mahdy, and Amal, R. Al-kiyumi, (2015). “Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Instructional Leadership in Omani Schools.” *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 3, no. 12 (2015): 1504-1510. doi: 10.12691/education-3-12-4.