

Enhancing Institutional Capacity through Democratic Leadership: A Cross-Sectoral Educational Study in Public and Private Institutions in Karachi Central and East.

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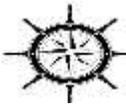
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Abstract

The current quantitative study looks into the role of democratic leadership on institutional capacity, resource management within the context of both the public schools and the private schools as well as the university in the Central district and East district of Karachi. This study has been conducted on six institutions (one school, one college, and one university in each sector). The survey was conducted in a structured way, where 120 respondents were surveyed, with them being principals, administrators and teachers. We employed SPSS to determine the relationship between effective resource management, which is one of the measures of institutional capacity and democratic leadership practices. There is a high positive correlation of the results, particularly in the case of the private institutions. The situation was also better in the public institutions as they became more democratic but had more structural barriers. The paper concludes that participatory leadership is able to improve the operations and performance of learning institutions. Its policy recommends participatory governance and leadership training.

Keywords: Democratic leadership, institutional capacity, resource management, public vs. private education, SPSS analysis, Karachi



Introduction

Background of Study

Nowadays, education institutions depend greatly on leadership. Democratic leadership of participation, collaboration, and shared decision-making has gained attention due to its capacity to enhance the institutional capacity (Bush and Glover 2014). Schools and universities are multifaceted mechanisms that require a resource workforce, people, and culture to be carefully managed. Institutional capacity implies the capacity to utilize human, financial and physical resources in order to promote sustainable growth and improved performance (Fullan 2007).

Schools and universities in Pakistan (particularly, Karachi) are under the pressure to improve their internal procedures and external performance. The resources and autonomy of the private schools tend to be superior, as compared to the public schools which have to deal with bureaucracy, lack of funds and time wastage in the administration. The practices of democratic leadership could have a significant influence on the way in which these institutions plan, allocate and manage resources in order to meet their educational goals.

Problem Statement

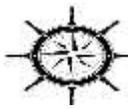
Although the importance of democratic leadership has increased in the global education reforms, little is known about its actual contribution to the institutional capacity, particularly in the management of available resources, in Pakistan when drawn between public and private schools. The biggest urban educational center in the country, Karachi, is a diverse environment where this study is going to be conducted. We have to prove empirically, whether democratic leadership is associated with superior practices in schools, colleges and universities and within the both government and privates set ups.

Purpose of the Study

The paper aims at exploring the relationship between democratic style of leadership and institutional capacity with reference to resource management in Central and East districts of Karachi. It draws upon the comparisons between public and private institutions so as to reconceive the impacts that the leadership practices have on the utilization and advancement of the organizational resources.

Research Questions

- What is the degree of democratic leadership in both the public and the privates in educational institutions?
- How does the democratic leadership affect the management of resources within the institutional capacity?
- Do the differences between public and private institutions in terms of the connection between democratic leadership and management of resources seem to be significant?



Significance of the Study

The research is a contribution to the existing educational leadership literature in Pakistan through the quantification of the effects of democratic leadership on the development of institutions. It quantifies these effects using empirical data at more than one level of the institution. The findings will contribute to policy makers, school leaders and educational planners to develop leadership development schemes and governance systems which promote participative decision making and enhance effectiveness of the institution.

Delimitations of the Study

- The study is limited to educational institutions in Karachi Central and East.
- Only six institutions were selected: one school, one college, and one university from both the public and private sectors.
- The study focuses only on resource management as an indicator of institutional capacity.
- Respondents include only principals, administrators, and teaching staff involved in leadership and management decisions.

Literature Review

Understanding Democratic Leadership in Education

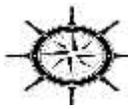
Democratic leadership, also referred to as participative leadership, is characterized by shared decision-making, open communication, and the empowerment of team members (Bass & Bass 2008). In the context of education, it involves the engagement of school leaders, teachers, and even students in institutional governance processes. Educational leaders who practice democratic leadership value input from staff and stakeholders, encourage collaboration, and strive for transparency in institutional management (Bush & Glover 2014).

The democratic leadership model is rooted in early leadership typology. Their work contrasted autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic styles, with democratic leadership promoting inclusivity and organizational cohesion (Lewin et al., 1939). Modern adaptations emphasize that democratic leaders facilitate collective problem-solving, trust-building, and shared accountability principles highly relevant to institutional development in education (Northouse 2021).

Institutional Capacity: A Multi-Dimensional Concept

Institutional capacity in education encompasses a range of competencies and systems that enable institutions to deliver quality services, adapt to change, and sustain improvement. According to Fullan, institutional capacity involves human capital (teacher qualifications, training), social capital (collaborative culture), and physical resources (infrastructure, teaching materials). Defines institutional capacity as the ability of an institution to set objectives, manage resources, and implement effective policies (World Bank 2009).

An institutional capacity that is vital involves resource management. It includes strategic planning, best utilization of human and physical resources, budgetary allocation, and



development of infrastructures. Resource management can enhance teaching and learning, enhance innovation, and enhance equity and sustainability in the teaching (Leithwood 2005).

Leadership and Institutional Development

There is a growing evidence of international research that supports the fact that leadership is a key factor to development in institutions (Day et al. 2011). Leaders influence the culture of the institutions, inspire employees, and determine the strategy in schools. Participatory governance in democratic leadership ensures that institutions are more flexible, responsive and creative. It has also been found that, leadership directly increases the engagement of teachers and indirectly improves student performance based on the improved functioning within institutions (Robinson et al. 2008).

The distributed and shared leadership models are also presented as important to the growth of the institution. The distribution of leadership roles amongst employees makes the institution stronger and more capable of overcoming problems (Harris 2004). Such models are most effective in conjunction with democratic principles, whereby, collaboration is promoted at every level.

Resource Management in Education

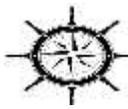
Institutional efficiency manifests itself through resource management. It is the arrangement and mobilization of material, financial and human resources to achieve educational objectives. According to Leithwood et al. (2006), strategic resource management is a good sign of effective leadership since it involves foresight, decisions that are based on data, and the ability to align with the goal of an institution.

The management of resources in environments with limited resources, such as in a developing country in a public school, can have a significant impact. This involves budget transparency, fair distribution, teacher allocation and maintenance of the infrastructure. It is the role of leadership to maximize the resources available in order to maintain the institutional development (Hallinger and Heck 2010).

Democratic Leadership and Resource Management

Democratic leadership is a key factor to the facilitation of accountable and effective management of resources. Making staff part of the budget process, procurement processes and infrastructure planning increases ownership and accountability. In Hong Kong schools, a study established that democratic leadership led to better utilization of resources since teachers and administrators felt to be more invested in making a decision (Ng 2015).

On the same note, schools that had a democratic approach to leadership were better in planning and maintaining resources in Nigeria (Adegbesan 2011). Employee involvement in management conferences resulted in more realistic choices regarding classroom supplies, technology, and employee growth. Such findings indicate that democratic leadership leads to transparency, communication and trust in financial and material management.



In Pakistan, there is not much research. One of the studies conducted on the practices of democratic leadership in the public secondary schools in Punjab revealed that the practice enhanced planning and resource monitoring (Abbas & Asif 2020). The inclusion of teachers in the administrative decisions created a sense of accountability to the institutions and decreased conflicts.

Differences in Public and Private Sector Leadership

The effectiveness of leadership in the institutions of learning is different in public and in the privates. The ability of decision-making is also more flexible in the case of the private schools which tend to be less bureaucratic and more autonomous (Ali & Tahir 2009). Therefore, participatory models are also used by the private leaders to enhance performance and accountability.

Pakistan however, has institutions of the public sector which are run with strict hierarchies. Leaders face a challenge in adopting democratic practices because of bureaucratic red tape, change of policies, and lack of resources (UNESCO 2019). Institutional culture and systemic constraints may hinder adoption even in situations where the leaders are willing.

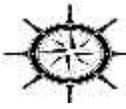
Regardless of these issues, there has been an interest in the introduction of democratic practices in the public sector by means of leadership training, school-based management, and decentralized governance efforts (Shah 2013). The aim of The School Leadership Program initiated by the Ministry of Education in Pakistan is to prepare principals with participatory management skills.

Leadership in Schools, Colleges, and Universities

There is a difference in leadership dynamics as per different levels of education. Principals are in direct control of operations, teams, and classrooms in schools. Hallinger (2003) suggests that successful school leadership integrates instructional leadership and participatory decision-making particularly in planning and staff development.

On the collegiate and university level leadership is more decentralized. There are academic deans, department heads, and administrative officers who have common responsibility. Democratic leadership may include strategic planning committees, the faculty boards and student representation (Bryman 2007). Colleges that incorporate faculty and students into governance are better performers and more innovative as well.

In Pakistan, there are few studies of democratic leadership in tertiary education. A 2021 study conducted at the University of Karachi discovered that the involvement of the faculty in governance resulted in responsive curriculum changes and the improved coordination of resources with academic interests (Ahmed 2021). But the centralization of administration continues to prevent complete involvement of democracy.



Quantitative Approaches in Educational Leadership Research

Quantitative studies offer the means to test the perceptions of leadership, to correlate leadership styles and their results, and to generalize the results. The standardized scales, which researchers typically employ to measure democratic qualities, can be Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) or self-developed surveys, to evaluate such qualities as consultation, delegation, and transparency (Kouzes and Posner 2012).

The quantitative studies reveal that democratic leadership has a positive correlation with institutional effectiveness. As an illustration, a South Africa study established that democratic leadership had a strong positive effect on the staff morale, retention, and development (Oyetunji 2006). Similarly, the regression analysis in Malaysia revealed that the positive school outcomes were significantly predicted by participative leadership (Hassan et al. 2017).

A quantitative study conducted on the use of SPSS in Pakistan indicated that democratic leadership contributed to teachers having a better job satisfaction and trusting the institution significantly. Not many studies directly relate democratic leadership and resource management, and this is the niche that will be covered in the research (Iqbal et al. 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This paper is premised on the Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns and Bass, 1990) which emphasizes that leaders are, inspirational, engaging, and empowering their followers in order to achieve a common objective. Democratic leadership is also compatible with such transformational practices as individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and participative vision building.

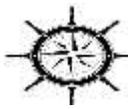
In addition, Systems Theory aids in explicating the institutional capacity as a system that is interrelated whereby leadership influences frameworks, procedures, and results (Senge 2006). Resource management is not regarded as a single behavior, but as the end product of an organizational culture, executive choices and stakeholder actions.

Gaps in Literature

- There are not many quantitative studies that investigate the impact of democratic leadership on the management of institutional resources in both the public and the private sectors in Pakistan.
- These studies lack cross-sectoral compares that include schools, colleges and universities.
- The empirical substantiation of leadership interventions is hardly supported by existing national research as SPSS based statistical analysis is seldom used.

Summary

Democratic leadership has much potential in terms of institutional development in the encourage inclusive decision making, shared responsibility and transparency. Although this connection is proved by the international study, the educational situation in Pakistan is united by the specific group of organizational, cultural, and resource-based obstacles. Focusing on both the state and



the private schools of Karachi, this study is going to bridge a significant gap in research. It will demonstrate quantitatively the effects of democratic leadership practices on institutional capacity, which is reflected on proper management of resources, at various education levels.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Research Objectives

This research is primarily aimed at investigating the relationship between institution capacity and democratic leadership. It pays particular attention to the way that democratic leadership can facilitate effective and strategic resource utilization in state-run and privated schools, colleges, and universities in the Central and East districts of Karachi.

- The specific objectives are as follows:
- Evaluate the level of democratic leadership in sampled learning institutions both public and private.
- Measure quality of resource management as a measure of institutional capacity within these institutions.
- What is the correlation between democratic leadership and management of resources in both the privately and publicly owned institutions?
- Compare the effects of democratic leadership on institutional capacity in both the public and the private education institutions.
- Recommendations to study findings will be given to educational leaders and policymakers.

Research Hypotheses

To guide the quantitative investigation, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Resource management and democratic leadership are positively correlated at the educational institutions.

H2: There is a significantly high level of democratic leadership in the case of the private educational institutions in comparison to the institutionalized education systems.

H3: Privates are more effective in managing resources than the public institutions.

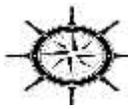
H4: Democratic leadership is an effective predictor of the quality of management of resources in educational institutions.

H5: Statistically, this will demonstrate that democratic leadership has varying effects in the institutional capacity of schools, colleges, and universities.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study was a quantitative and cross-sectional, comparative study that investigated the effects of democratic leadership on institutional capacity in terms of resource management. The



surveys were conducted in both the public and the private educational institutions in Central and East districts in Karachi. The use of structured questionnaires and SPSS statistical analysis assisted in establishing the type and the degree of relationship that exists between leadership style and managerial practices of resource management.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised of academic and administrative staff of both the school, college and university level, both in the public and the privateness category.

Selected Institutions (6 Total):

- Public School (Karachi Central)
- Private School (Karachi East)
- Public College (Karachi Central)
- Private College (Karachi East)
- Public University (Karachi Central)
- Private University (Karachi East)

Sample Size:

A total of 120 participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring inclusion of individuals involved in leadership and resource management decisions. The sample was distributed as follows:

Participants included:

- School principals
- College and university heads of departments
- Senior teachers
- Administrative officers

Research Instrument

We have created a designed questionnaire, relying on the already tested tools, and adjusting it to the Pakistani school environment. The questionnaire will have two distinct parts:

Section A: Democratic Leadership Scale

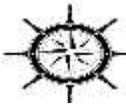
Adapted from the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) by (Kouzes & Posner 2012), measuring five key leadership behaviors:

- Shared decision-making
 - Open communication
 - Delegation
 - Mutual trust
 - Participative problem-solving
- (5-point Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

Section B: Resource Management Scale

Developed from Fullan's and Leithwood's frameworks, measuring:

- Planning and budgeting
- Staff allocation and development



- Physical resource utilization
- Infrastructure and facilities management
- (5-point Likert Scale: 1 = Very Ineffective to 5 = Very Effective)

Reliability

There were 20 participants in the pilot test. It was found to produce a Cronbach alpha of 0.87 (democratic leadership scale) and 0.82 (resource-management scale), which provides a high level of internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was done during the period of four weeks in April 2025. The heads of each institution had been contacted to allow the acquirement of prior permission. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality and requested to fill in the questionnaire on their own. The questionnaire would be provided both in printed and electronic format depending on the preference of the respective institution.

- Ethical considerations included:
 - Anonymity and confidentiality of responses
- Informed consent
- Voluntary participation

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). The following statistical methods were employed:

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution for all items
- Pearson Correlation Coefficient: To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between democratic leadership and resource management
- Independent Samples t-test: To compare public vs. private institutions
- One-Way ANOVA: To examine differences across school, college, and university levels
- Linear Regression Analysis: To test the predictive power of democratic leadership on resource management
- All statistical tests were conducted at a significant level of $p < .05$.

Results

This section presents the statistical findings from the analysis of data collected from 120 participants across six educational institutions in Karachi. The results are organized according to the research objectives and hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were estimated to evaluate the general tendencies in the practices of democratic leadership and resource management in both the public and the private institutions.

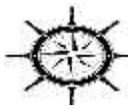


Table 1: Descriptive statistics Democratic Leadership and Resource Management. These findings demonstrate that, on the average, the participants had moderate to high scores on the democratic leadership and moderate resource management effectiveness within the chosen institutions.

Correlation Analysis

In order to test H1 (that the positive relationship between democratic leadership and resource management is significant), Pearson correlation was used. Table 2: Democratic Leadership and Resource Management Correlation. $p < 0.01$. The findings demonstrate that there is a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.691$) between the democratic leadership and resource management that is statistically significant ($p = \text{less than } 0.01$). Thus, H1 is accepted.

Independent Samples t-Test: Public vs. Private Institutions

To test H2 and H3, independent-samples t -tests were performed to compare between the institutions of the public and the private regarding democratic leadership and resource management. Table 3: Comparison Public and Private Institutions. $p < 0.01$. Findings show that the difference between the public and private institutions in democratic leadership ($t = 5.21$, $p = 0.01$) and resource management ($t = 5.79$, $p = 0.01$) is statistically significant. H2 and H3 are accepted, which proves that private institutions rated much more on both variables.

One-Way ANOVA: Institution Type Differences (School, College, University)

To test H5, one-way ANOVA was applied to examine differences in resource management across school, college, and university levels. Table 4: ANOVA for Resource Management by Educational Level * $p < 0.05$

The ANOVA revealed a significant difference ($F = 6.23$, $p < 0.05$) in resource management across different types of institutions. Post hoc analysis (Tukey HSD) showed that universities scored significantly higher than schools, while colleges fell in between. Therefore, H5 is accepted.

Regression Analysis

To test H4 (Democratic leadership significantly predicts resource management), linear regression analysis was conducted.

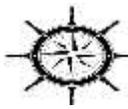
Table 5: Regression Analysis Summary

$R^2 = 0.48$, indicating that democratic leadership explains 48% of the variance in resource management.

These results confirm that democratic leadership is a strong and significant predictor of resource management. Thus, H4 is accepted.

Discussion

In this section, the findings of the study are put into perspective in terms of the existing literature and theoretical points of view. It also brings out the implication of the findings on the field of



educational leadership and establishment of institutions in Karachi both in the world of public and privates.

Democratic Leadership and Resource Management

The paper has found that there is a statistically significant strong positive relation between democratic leadership and resource management ($r=0.691$). This shows that those institutions that engage in participatory leadership will be in a better position to engage the resources in a better and strategic manner. This is supported by international research; when decisions are made by common people and the leadership is clear then the organization planning and use of resources is enhanced (Leithwood et al., 2006). Inclusive leadership in the state schools of Pakistan has also been studied to improve the efficiency of planning and operations (Abbas & Asif., 2020). We generalize these results and apply them to schools in Karachi, colleges and universities both in the public and the private sector.

Public vs. Private Sector Differences

The statistical test established that the use of democratic leadership and management of resources was rated higher in the case of the private institutions than the public ones. These findings validate previous research findings that indicate that private institutions are more independent, flexible and result oriented in their management operations (Ali et al., 2013).

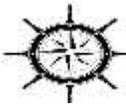
More planning, better management of budget and greater infrastructure investment was reported in the private sector schools and colleges. On the contrary, the public schools had certain practices of participation which were limited because of bureaucratic systems, little financing and a strong hierarchy.

However, there are cases of democratic practices in some of the public colleges meaning that there is a progressive movement toward participatory governance. The recent leadership development programs might be the force behind this trend (UNESCO, 2019). With the backing of system-wide changes, it may enhance the operations of the public sector.

Leadership Practices Across Educational Levels

A one-way ANOVA showed that the effectiveness of resource-management in schools, colleges and universities is significantly different. The most mature and organized resource planning, faculty development and infrastructure management systems could be found in the private-sector universities. Colleges were middle of the pack and the lowest performing were the public schools.

Such disparities are probably caused by the different degrees of institutional complexity, autonomy and leadership training. University leaders are usually better endowed with data, professional growth and decision making forums (Bryman, 2007). The heads of schools, particularly in state-owned schools, might not have the necessary power or education to exercise democratic practices in full (Schah, 2013; Ahmed, 2021).



The results support the importance of context-specific leader training, particularly in the case of public school leaders, in order to develop the capacity to participate in governance and strategic planning.

Predictive Role of Democratic Leadership

The regression analysis demonstrated that the democratic leadership is a significant predictor of resource management quality, and $R^2 = 0.48$. Therefore, leadership practices can be used to explain almost a half of the difference in resource-management effectiveness. The finding is more especially significant to policy-makers and the leaders of institutions, since it measures practical value of leadership style.

The results support the theory of transformational leadership, which assumes that the leaders motivate and involve the followers in common objectives (Bass, 1990). They also follow the systems theory, according to which the leadership is regarded as the main lever to streamline the internal processes and flows of resources (Senge, 2006).

Implications for Policy and Practice

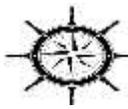
The outcomes of the study can have a number of implications in terms of the educational leadership development and policy formulation in Pakistan:

- Combine democratic principles, Communication, delegation, and shared decision-making Leadership Training Programs should incorporate the democratic principles in order to enhance institutional capacity.
- Public Sector Reforms should cover structural constraints and provided more freedom to school and college heads to participate in the leadership to work.
- Leadership indicators should be encompassed in the institutional Audits and Self-Assessment Tools regarding the inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration.
- The public institutions learning by example of the innovations of the private-sector in terms of resource management and governance can be encouraged in the Cross-sectoral Learning Forums.

Limitations of the Study

Though the research provides important data, it is limited in that:

- The study only included six institutions in the Central and East districts of Karachi, which could have a generalizational impact.
- Only resource management was analyzed as one of the factors of institutional capacity; further studies may include teacher motivation, student achievement, or innovation capacity.
- The research was based on self-report, which can be affected by the social desirability bias.



Directions for Future Research

Geographical Scope: In Future research, more cities and provinces should be incorporated to ensure greater generalization.

Mixed-Methods Design: A qualitative interview may be used to add the depth to the interpretation of the way democratic leadership is experienced and perceived by the stakeholders.

Longitudinal Studies: The observation of institutions with time would be useful in determining the long-term effect of democratic leadership on growth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This paper discussed the democratic leadership and institutional capacity connection in terms of resource management within the arena of public and private educational institutions in Karachi in Central and East district. Based on quantitative data of administrators and teachers in schools, colleges, and universities, the study discovered:

Democratic Leadership There is a positive relationship between democratic leadership and effective resource management. The participative and inclusive leadership behaviors enable institutions to manage resources in a better and more strategic way.

- There is a higher level of democratic leadership and management of resources in the case of the private institutions as compared to the public ones, probably because it is more flexible, has more autonomy and more resources.
- The institutional capacity is different at different levels of education; the universities are the best and then colleges and finally the schools.
- Regression analysis supports the role of democratic leadership as a predictive factor of institutional capacity with nearly half the variance explicable through the leadership style.

Altogether, the democratic leadership plays a crucial role in improving the institutional performance of various sectors. The results explain the frameworks of leadership development that emphasize inclusivity, delegation, and collaborative governance.

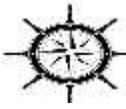
Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for educational leaders, policymakers, and development organizations:

1. Invest in Leadership Development Programs

- Develop and provide systematic training to create democratic leadership skills, particularly to the heads of state schools and colleges.
- Add strategic planning, participatory decision-making and team empowerment modules.

2. Decentralize Authority in Public Institutions



- Shift centralized decision-making that is bureaucratic to independent models that enable leaders to manage resources in an effective way.
- Allows institutional heads the discretionary authority to engage stakeholders in the budget and infrastructural decision making.

3. Encourage Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

- Establish forums where best practices in leadership and management can be exchanged in both the private and public schools.
- Mutexual learning through forums and joint workshops.

4. Integrate Leadership Indicators into Quality Assurance

- Design evaluation mechanisms that encompass leadership quality measures like transparency, inclusiveness and cooperation.
- Associate funding/incentives with proven leadership ability.

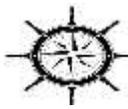
5. Focus on School-Level Reforms

- Since schools, especially in the public sector, showed lower performance, targeted investments should be made in improving leadership and management at this level.
- Pilot projects that embed democratic leadership practices in school improvement plans could yield valuable models.

Final Thoughts

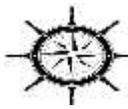
This study contributes to the fact that leadership is one of the foundations of institutional effectiveness. Democratic leadership provides an inexpensive, but high-impact, route to improvement in resource-constrained environments such as most of the public schools in Karachi. By having an open and inclusive conversation with the teachers, the administrators, and the stakeholders, there is a co-creation of more responsive, innovative and resilient systems.

When Pakistan heads toward Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), it will become important to empower the educational leaders with democratic values and managerial ability. Institutions are not just buildings, they are community of practices, and good leadership is what maintains communities of practices.



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