



## Psychodynamics in Instructional and Administrative Leadership in a Public School in District Central Karachi with the Lens of Journey from Stagnation to Reforms

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact, quality, and nature of school leadership in a public sector school located in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central, following a leadership transition in 2023-24 academic session. Operating within a highly centralized and resource-constrained system typical of Sindh public schools, the institution previously faced declining enrolment, limited co-curricular activity, and weak stakeholder trust. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the study draws on multiple sources of evidence, including semi-structured interviews with the head teacher and four long-serving teachers, classroom observations, student work samples, document analysis, and feedback from senior students. Findings indicate that leadership intervention played a decisive role in reversing institutional stagnation. A strategic shift from a boys-only model to a co-educational structure up to matriculation level led to a substantial and immediate increase in student enrolment, followed by gradual sustained growth. Additional improvements were observed in instructional practices, co-curricular engagement, school visibility, and parental confidence. The head teacher demonstrated strong instructional and transformational leadership qualities characterized by high personal involvement, strategic decision-making, and continuous academic oversight. However, the analysis also reveals significant challenges related to sustainability. School improvement efforts remain largely leader-dependent, with limited delegation, high teacher workload, insufficient training, and weak distributed leadership structures. While leadership quality proved effective in initiating rapid change, the long-term institutionalization of improvement requires a transition toward shared leadership and capacity building. This study contributes to the understanding of leadership-driven school improvement in Sindh's public education context by highlighting both the potential and the limitations of person-centered leadership within systemic constraints.



## **Introduction**

Educational leadership is increasingly recognized as a central factor influencing school effectiveness, instructional quality, and institutional improvement. Research across diverse educational contexts highlights the role of school leadership in shaping organizational culture, guiding teaching and learning practices, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and sustaining school reform initiatives. Contemporary leadership literature emphasizes instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership as key approaches for fostering meaningful and lasting change in schools.

In Pakistan, particularly within the public sector education system of Sindh, school leadership operates within a centralized administrative framework characterized by limited institutional autonomy, resource constraints, and rigid bureaucratic structures. Head teachers are often positioned as administrative managers rather than instructional leaders, with significant portions of their time devoted to compliance-related tasks. As a result, many public schools experience stagnant enrolment, limited co-curricular engagement, low levels of teacher initiative, and weak parental trust, despite the availability of physical infrastructure and teaching staff.

Leadership transitions in such contexts provide important opportunities to examine how leadership practices influence institutional trajectories. Changes in leadership may introduce new priorities, strategies, and approaches that reshape school functioning, even within systemic constraints. Examining leadership impact in typical public-school settings is therefore essential for understanding not only how improvement is initiated, but also how leadership quality and leadership style interact with organizational conditions to produce change.

The present study is situated within this broader scholarly discourse on educational leadership and school improvement. It focuses on a public sector school in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central that underwent a leadership transition in 2023-24 academic session. Following this transition, the school demonstrated notable changes, including substantial growth in student enrolment, expansion across academic sections, increased co-curricular activities, improvements in classroom environments, and enhanced visibility within the local community. These developments offer a meaningful context for analyzing leadership impact through an evidence-based and comparative lens. At the same time, the school continues to face persistent challenges common to public sector institutions, such as limited support staff, high teacher workload, uneven professional capacity among newly appointed teachers, and centralized decision-making processes. These conditions raise critical questions regarding the quality, nature, and sustainability of leadership-driven reforms. This study contributes to existing literature through an evidence-based analysis of leadership impact, leadership quality, and leadership type in a Karachi-based public school context. By comparing institutional conditions before and after the 2023-24 academic session, the study aims to generate analytically grounded insights into how leadership functions as a driver of change within structurally constrained public education systems.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Public sector schools in Sindh operate within centralized administrative systems that constrain leadership autonomy, limit resource availability, and restrict sustainable instructional improvement. Within such contexts, school leadership has historically been associated with administrative compliance rather than strategic school development, often resulting in institutional stagnation and weak stakeholder engagement. A leadership transition in 2023-24 academic session

in a public school located in North Nazimabad Karachi Central presents an opportunity to explore how leadership practices influence school improvement under these constraints. While visible changes have been observed following this transition, there is limited empirical understanding of nature, quality, and impact of leadership practices that contribute to such change, as well as the extent to which these practices are sustainable beyond individual leadership effort. Existing research on school leadership in Pakistan remains limited in its use of comparative, evidence-based analyses within typical public-school settings. As a result, there is insufficient understanding of how different leadership approaches function in practice, how leadership quality shapes institutional improvement, and how systemic constraints influence the sustainability of educational leadership-led reforms. This study addresses this gap by examining leadership practices in a public sector school in Karachi Central to analyze leadership impact, leadership quality, and leadership type through a comparative, evidence-based lens.

### **Research Question**

How do educational leadership practices influence administrative and instructional framework in a public sector school in Nazimabad Karachi Central despite structural constraints?

### **Research Objectives**

- Explore the administrative and instructional changes introduced after the leadership transition in 2023
- Analyze the nature and quality of leadership practices that contributed to institutional improvement
- Identify ongoing challenges affecting the sustainability of leadership-led reforms

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study examines leadership practices in a public sector school in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central, focusing on administrative and instructional improvements following the 2023-24 leadership transition. It explores the ways in which leadership strategies influenced teacher performance, student engagement, and institutional processes over a two-year period. The study emphasizes both qualitative insights from staff interviews and quantitative evidence from school performance records. This study is delimited to a single public sector school located in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central. The focus is restricted to examining leadership practices and their impact following a leadership transition that occurred in 2023-24 academic session. The study does not aim to generalize findings to all public schools in Sindh, but seeks to provide an in-depth, context-specific understanding of leadership-led school improvement. Similarly, the scope of the study is limited to administrative and instructional leadership practices as observed within the school setting. Data collection is confined primarily to qualitative sources, including a semi-structured interview with the head teacher, four long-serving teachers, classroom observations, document analysis, student work samples, and school activity records, including publicly available social media documentation. Feedback from a small number of senior students is included to provide supplementary perspectives. The study does not incorporate large-scale quantitative measures of academic achievement or standardized test score analysis. Additionally, while parental perspectives and broader stakeholder engagement are acknowledged as important, systematic data collection through parent surveys or focus group discussions was not fully implemented and is therefore beyond the formal scope of this study. The analysis is further delimited by time, focusing on the period before and after the 2023-24 leadership transition.

## **Literature Review**

Educational leadership has long been recognized as a key determinant of school effectiveness and improvement. Research consistently demonstrates that school leaders play a critical role in shaping instructional practices, organizational culture, and institutional direction, particularly in contexts characterized by limited resources and systemic constraints (Hallinger, 2011; Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Contemporary models of school improvement highlight the role of strategic and innovation-oriented leadership in fostering sustainable academic and organizational reform (Archipel Almere, n.d.) Rather than operating solely as administrators, effective school leaders are increasingly expected to influence teaching and learning, mobilize staff capacity, and create conditions conducive to student success. Hallinger (2011) argues that leadership impact on student outcomes is largely indirect, operating through improved instructional practices, teacher motivation, and school climate. This perspective positions leadership not as an isolated action, but as a set of practices embedded within the daily functioning of the school. Such an understanding is particularly relevant for public sector schools where formal authority may be limited, but leadership influence remains significant. On the other hand, instructional leadership emphasizes the leader's role in improving teaching and learning through curriculum supervision, classroom observation, teacher support, and monitoring of student progress (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Studies suggest that instructional leaders maintain a strong presence in classrooms, promote coherent instructional goals, and align school activities with learning priorities (Bush & Middlewood, 2013).

In resource-constrained settings, instructional leadership has been found to compensate for systemic limitations by strengthening teacher practice and student engagement (OECD, 2016). However, excessive reliance on the school head for instructional guidance may lead to leadership dependency if institutional capacity is not simultaneously developed. Consequently, effectiveness and sustainability remain a recurring theme in leadership research.

Transformational leadership focuses on vision building, motivation, and organizational change. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) highlight that transformational leaders influence school improvement by fostering shared purpose, raising expectations, and encouraging commitment among staff and stakeholders. Such leadership is particularly relevant in periods of transition, where schools seek to move from stagnation toward growth. Educational leadership research also indicates that transformational leadership can positively affect teacher morale, stakeholder trust, and institutional identity in schools undergoing reform (Day et al., 2016). However, scholars caution that transformational leadership alone may not ensure long-term improvement unless supported by structural changes and shared leadership practices.

Distributed leadership conceptualizes leadership as a collective practice rather than the responsibility of a single individual (Spillane, 2006). According to Harris (2019), sustainable school improvement depends on the extent to which leadership responsibilities are shared across staff, enabling organizational learning and reducing dependence on individual leaders. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) emphasize that leadership-driven reforms risk collapse if they remain person-centered rather than system-embedded. Distributed leadership is therefore viewed as essential for sustaining improvement, particularly in schools experiencing rapid growth or staff turnover. However, empirical studies note that implementing distributed leadership in public sector schools is often constrained by workload, lack of training, and entrenched hierarchical cultures.

Research on school leadership in Pakistan highlights the unique challenges faced by public sector school leaders. Simkins, Sisum, and Memon (2003) found that head teachers in Pakistani public schools operate within highly centralized systems that prioritize administrative compliance over instructional leadership. As a result, school leaders often struggle to initiate and sustain meaningful academic improvement despite personal commitment. Subsequent studies emphasize that while leadership has the potential to influence school improvement; its effectiveness is shaped by systemic factors such as teacher capacity, resource availability, and bureaucratic control (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011). Within Sindh's public education system, leadership transitions provide important moments to examine how leadership practices interact with institutional constraints to produce change. While the literature affirms the importance of leadership in school improvement, fewer studies adopt a comparative, evidence-based approach that examines leadership practices before and after leadership transitions within the same institution. Comparative analysis allows for deeper understanding of leadership impact, leadership quality, and leadership type by situating observed changes within their historical and organizational context. Existing research suggests that leadership quality is reflected in not only visible outcomes such as enrolment growth or activity expansion, but also in the development of institutional capacity, collaborative culture, and sustainability of reform (Day et al., 2016; Harris, 2019). This highlights the need for context-specific case studies that move beyond success narratives to examine both strengths and limitations of leadership-led change.

Despite a growing body of research on school leadership, there remains limited empirical evidence examining how leadership practices operate within the specific constraints of typical public sector schools in Sindh. Existing literature, including studies such as Simkins, Sisum, and Memon (2003), highlights structural barriers and the administrative emphasis placed on school leaders in Pakistan. These studies, however, often provide broad national perspectives rather than in-depth, comparative analyses of leadership practices before and after a leadership transition within a single school. Furthermore, much of the research on leadership effectiveness focuses on large-scale quantitative outcomes or theories about ideal leadership models without sufficiently engaging with the complex realities of everyday school practice. In the context of smaller, resource-constrained public schools where change is incremental and largely dependent on individual leaders, there is a need for localized case studies that explore how instructional and administrative leadership practices interact with organizational structures, teacher capacity, stakeholder dynamics, and sustainability challenges.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Design and Site***

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine the impact, quality, and type of leadership practices in a public sector school located in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central. A case study approach is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth, context-sensitive analysis of leadership practices within a real-life institutional setting, particularly where the focus is on processes, perceptions, and change over time rather than on large-scale generalization. The research site is a public school in Karachi Central that underwent a leadership transition in 2023-24. The school serves students from early years to Grade 10 and operates within typical structural and administrative constraints of Sindh public sector schools. The site was purposively selected due to its observable institutional changes following the leadership transition.

### ***Sampling and Data Collection***

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich, relevant insights into leadership practices and institutional change. The participants included one head teacher due to direct involvement in leadership decision-making. Four long-serving teachers, to provide comparative perspectives on school conditions before and after the leadership transition. Eight students from Grades 5–10 to provide reflective feedback on changes in learning environment and school practices. The majority of teaching staff at the school are newly appointed; however, only long-serving teachers were included in interviews to enable meaningful comparison. Multiple qualitative data sources were used to ensure triangulation and credibility of findings. Interviews were conducted with the head teacher and four long-serving teachers. Interviews focused on leadership practices, institutional changes, challenges, and sustainability. Similarly, non-participant classroom observations were conducted across different sections. Observations focused on instructional practices, student engagement, and classroom organization. Analysis of teacher-made lesson plans, student work samples, enrolment records, and school activity documentation were parts of the study. Publicly available social media records were included to examine school visibility and stakeholder engagement. Students' informal feedback was collected to capture perceptions of school change over time. It was ensured to conduct field notes too. Reflective notes were maintained to document observations related to leadership involvement, staff interaction, and school climate.

### ***Research Instruments***

This study employed a set of qualitative research instruments aligned with the focused research questions and the small-scale, interpretive case study design. The instruments were selected to capture perceptions, practices, and observable changes related to instructional and administrative leadership following the leadership transition in 2023-24. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore the head teacher's leadership vision, strategies, and perceived challenges. The interview focused on leadership priorities following the 2023 transition, instructional and administrative initiatives introduced, decision-making processes and leadership style and challenges related to staffing, infrastructure, and sustainability. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility while ensuring alignment with the study's central focus on leadership impact.

One semi-structured interview was conducted with a long-serving teacher, supported by informal professional conversations with three experienced teachers who had worked in the school prior to the leadership change. These instruments aimed to document institutional conditions before and after the leadership transition, capture comparative perceptions of change in academic practices and school culture and identify challenges related to staff capacity, workload, and collaboration. Informal conversations were documented through reflective notes immediately after interactions to preserve accuracy. Non-participant classroom observations were conducted using an observation guide focusing on classroom organization and learning environment, teacher instructional practices, student engagement and participation and evidence of planning and lesson structure. Observation notes were descriptive rather than evaluative, supporting alignment with the interpretive research approach. In addition, a document review checklist was used to examine lesson plans, schemes of study and samples of student work. These documents were analyzed to identify consistency between stated instructional goals, classroom practices, and evidence of student learning.

### ***Reliability and Validity of Instruments***

Reliability and validity were addressed through strategies appropriate to interpretive research design rather than through statistical measures. *Credibility (Validity)* was enhanced by using multiple sources of evidence, including classroom observations, interviews, informal teacher conversations, student work samples, lesson plans, and documentary records. The use of different instruments allowed cross-verification of findings related to leadership practices and institutional change. In addition, *dependability (Reliability)* was supported using consistent observation focuses and interview prompts aligned with the research questions. Reflective notes were maintained after observations and informal conversations to ensure accurate documentation of participants' perspectives. To reduce researcher bias, observational data were recorded descriptively rather than evaluative, and interpretations were grounded in direct evidence from the data. Given the small-scale and context-specific nature of the study, findings are not intended to be generalized, but are considered trustworthy within the selected institutional context.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected using qualitative methods consistent with the interpretive case study design. Data collection was conducted within a single public sector school in North Nazimabad, Karachi Central, following the leadership transition in 2023-24. Primary data were gathered through non-participant classroom observations, during which descriptive field notes were recorded to document instructional practices, classroom environment, and student engagement. Samples of student work were collected to provide tangible evidence of instructional planning and learning tasks. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head teacher and one long-serving teacher to gain in-depth insights into leadership practices, institutional changes, and challenges before and after the leadership transition. In addition, informal professional conversations with three experienced teachers were documented through reflective notes to capture comparative perspectives. Supplementary data were collected through document analysis, including lesson plans and schemes of study, to examine alignment between instructional planning and classroom practices. Data collection methods were intentionally limited in scope to reflect the focused nature of the study, the small sample size, and the exploratory purpose of examining leadership impact within a single institutional context.

### **Data Analysis**

This section presents the analysis of data generated through a qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who had direct experience of the school before and after the 2023 leadership transition. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, informal professional conversations, and document analysis. The analysis aims to explore leadership practices and their influence on administrative organization, instructional improvement, and overall school development within a public sector school context.

#### *Head teacher Interview (HT-01)*

#### ***Theme 1: Initial School Context and Structural Challenges***

The head teacher described the school's condition at the time of assuming leadership in 2023 as highly constrained and disorganized. The school had only four classrooms serving students from KG to Matric, with fewer than 100 enrolled students due to limited space and an uncondusive learning environment. Teacher attendance and punctuality were weak, student absenteeism was

common, and parental trust in the school was low, resulting in declining enrolment (HT-01). This initial context highlights severe infrastructural, administrative, and academic challenges, setting a difficult baseline for institutional improvement.

***Theme 2: Leadership Initiative and Infrastructure Development***

HT-01 demonstrated proactive leadership by leveraging her dual role as a district academic coordinator to advocate for school improvement. Despite partial construction of a new building, she persistently pursued approvals and applications to secure additional classrooms. This resulted in the school's relocation to a new building with improved facilities. The expansion of physical infrastructure enabled the hiring of new JST teachers and created opportunities for increased enrolment, reflecting strategic use of administrative channels to support school growth.

***Theme 3: Teacher Management, Resistance, and Capacity Building***

The head teacher reported significant resistance from existing teachers when performance expectations were raised. Several teachers opted for transfers, while others objected to increased accountability. However, HT-01 noted that new teachers were easier to align with school expectations. A major ongoing challenge identified was the predominance of untrained teachers. While this limited independent initiative and leadership distribution, it also created opportunities for structured training and mentoring led directly by the head teacher (HT-01).

***Theme 4: Instructional Leadership and Professional Development***

Instructional improvement emerged as a central leadership priority. HT-01 emphasized her own professional preparation, including STEM training and UK-based leadership courses. She introduced structured frameworks for lesson planning, assessment systems, board examination preparation, and subject-wise scheme building. These initiatives reflect a strong instructional leadership orientation focused on improving classroom practices (HT-01).

***Theme 5: School Development Planning and Systematic Improvement***

The head teacher described formalizing the School Development Plan (SDP) by grounding it in contextual realities. Duties were assigned, teams were formed, and implementation was closely monitored. However, HT-01 acknowledged that most initiatives still required her direct involvement, from planning to execution, due to limited teacher ownership and leadership readiness. This indicates a centralized leadership model driven by necessity rather than preference.

***Theme 6: Strategic Enrollment Growth and Co-Education Policy***

A notable strategic decision was the transition from a boys-only school to a co-educational model up to matric level. This decision significantly increased enrolment, as it reduced dropout among girls after primary grades and encouraged families to enroll siblings in the same school. As a result, student numbers rose from under 100 to nearly 300, demonstrating how contextual leadership decisions directly influenced institutional growth (HT-01).

***Theme 7: Ongoing Challenges and Leadership Sustainability***

Despite progress, HT-01 identified persistent challenges, including shortage of trained teachers, heavy teaching loads, limited support staff, dependence on outsourced services and weak initiative

taking among teachers. While some new teachers showed strong potential, most staff required continuous guidance. Leadership sustainability remains a concern, as institutional functioning is still heavily dependent on the head teacher's personal involvement.

### ***Theme 8: School Climate and Community Response***

HT-01 reported improved student engagement and strong parental response. Students expressed emotional attachment to the school and the head teacher, indicating improved school climate and trust. Co-education was also perceived to have a positive psychological impact on student behavior and participation.

### ***Summary of Head teacher Data Analysis***

Overall, the data reveal leadership characterized by strong personal initiative, instructional focus, strategic decision-making, and persistent advocacy. While significant structural and academic improvements have been achieved since 2023-24, challenges related to teacher capacity, workload, and distributed leadership continue to shape the school's improvement trajectory.

## **Teacher Interview and Professional Conversations**

### ***Theme 1: School Environment Prior to the 2023 Leadership Transition***

Teachers described the pre-transition school environment as weakly structured and poorly monitored. Student enrolment remained at or below 100, and the school operated with only four classrooms, resulting in multigrade teaching practices. Both teacher and student punctuality were inconsistent, and there was no effective system for monitoring attendance. Leadership at the time was perceived as lenient, with minimal enforcement of professional expectations. As a result, routine school practices continued without accountability. Co-curricular activities were rare, parental engagement was minimal, and there was no evidence of institutional visibility or outreach. These conditions contributed to low student attendance and limited community trust.

### ***Theme 2: Changes Following the Leadership Transition***

Following the 2023-24 leadership change, teachers reported visible improvements in school organization, academic outcomes, and overall environment. The introduction of co-education at the secondary level was identified as a key factor in increasing enrolment and stabilizing student retention. Co-curricular activities became a regular feature of school life, positively influencing student engagement and confidence. Academic performance improved substantially, with matriculation results increasing from approximately 60% to over 80 percent. Teachers also observed improved student attendance and stronger parental involvement, reflecting renewed confidence in the school's direction.

### ***Theme 3: Leadership Influence on Teaching Practices and Collaboration***

Teachers noted that instructional expectations became clearer and more structured under the new leadership. Lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement received increased emphasis. While teachers generally cooperated with leadership initiatives, collaboration was often guided by the head teacher rather than emerging organically from within the staff. The leadership approach was perceived as highly directive, particularly in implementation. Although this ensured consistency and momentum, some teachers felt that limited space was available for shared

decision-making. This tension highlights a developing phase in staff collaboration rather than resistance to change.

#### ***Theme 4: Emerging Challenges and Workload Pressures***

Despite overall improvement, teachers identified increased workload as a significant challenge. Expanded enrolment, additional instructional initiatives, and high performance expectations placed pressure on staff capacity. While leadership support was acknowledged, teachers found it demanding to consistently meet the head teacher's standards. These findings suggest that while leadership has strengthened institutional performance, sustained improvement may require gradual development of distributed leadership and shared responsibility among teachers.

### **Reflective Notes (Researcher)**

**Type of Interaction:** Classroom Observation (Multiple Classes & Subjects)

#### ***1. Context of Interaction***

The observation was conducted during regular instructional hours across multiple grade levels (Grades II, III, IV, V, VII, and VIII) and subjects including Mathematics, Urdu, Islamiat, Social Studies, Sindhi, English, and Art. The purpose of the observation was to examine student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom environment following the leadership transition. Informal movement complemented classroom observations across classrooms and brief interactions with teachers and students. The observation also extended to the head teacher's office and common school spaces to understand planning, leadership presence, and institutional organization.

#### ***2. Key Points Highlighted***

High levels of student engagement were observed across all classes. Teachers made extensive use of the board and real-life examples to explain concepts, particularly in Mathematics (profit and loss through buying and selling examples) and Science-related topics (air, gas, and clean air movement). Students were actively encouraged to think, respond, and explain their understanding. In Urdu classes, phonetic learning was evident as students practiced breaking words into sounds and writing accordingly. In Art classes, students confidently explained their artwork, including collage and painting, describing both the process and purpose. Students' notebooks were complete, regularly checked, and well organized. Integrated and cross-curricular activities were evident, such as a weeklong series of subject-based activities related to Quaid-e-Azam Day.

#### ***3. Tone and Engagement***

The overall tone of classrooms was positive, interactive, and purposeful. Students appeared confident, motivated, and actively involved in learning tasks. Teachers demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment, with questioning techniques used consistently to promote understanding rather than rote learning. Transitions between activities and classes were smooth, indicating established routines and effective classroom management.

#### ***4. Alignment with Other Data***

The observed classroom practices aligned closely with evidence from social media documentation, teacher interviews, and school records. The quality and consistency of students' written work reflected previously shared visual evidence. Observations also supported interview data highlighting improved planning, instructional focus, and structured teaching practices after the leadership transition.

#### ***5. Researcher's Observations***

The head teacher was highly visible and actively involved in classroom instruction, often interacting directly with students and shaping lessons during teaching. Leadership appeared centralized, with the head teacher personally initiating and monitoring many instructional initiatives. In the head teacher's room, a working School Development Plan board was displayed, along with schemes of work and planners for all grade levels. These planners included running notes, and planned activities were visibly implemented in classrooms. While teaching quality was generally strong, variation among teachers was noted. Some demonstrated high pedagogical skill, while others appeared to be making sincere but developing efforts. Student enrolment per class was relatively low. The school environment showed evidence of ongoing development: remnants of recent improvement work, preparation for upcoming activities, professional development plans, and workshop materials were visible throughout the school.

#### ***6. Emerging Ideas (Preliminary)***

Preliminary patterns suggest that strong instructional engagement is closely linked to leadership-driven planning and continuous monitoring. The head teacher's active instructional involvement appears to be a key factor in maintaining classroom consistency and student engagement. However, reliance on centralized leadership raises questions about sustainability and the gradual development of teacher autonomy. Overall, the learning environment reflects positive transformation, with structured teaching, active student participation, and alignment between planning and practice.

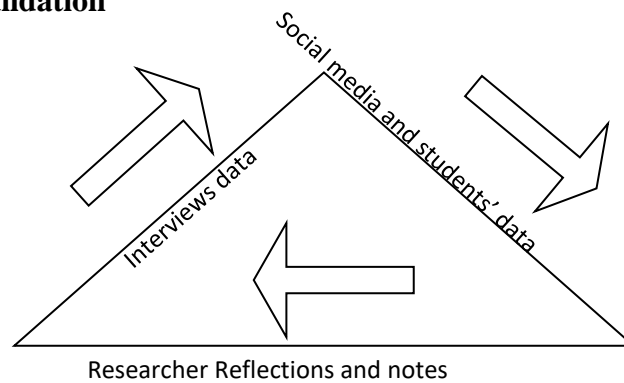
### **Result Analysis: Science Group (2022–2025)**

The result data of the Matric Science Group over three academic years (2022–2023, 2023–2024, and 2024–2025) shows a clear and consistent improvement in overall student performance, pass percentage, and academic outcomes. Student performance increased significantly in 2024–2025, with the pass percentage rising to 89.66%, compared to 63.88% (2023–2024) and 47.37% (2022–2023). The number of failed students decreased, while higher grades (A+, A, and B) showed an upward trend. This improvement indicates stronger instructional practices, better academic monitoring, and effective leadership-led reforms contributing to enhanced student outcomes.

#### ***Interpretation***

The upward trend in results aligns with other qualitative evidence, including improved classroom practices, increased co-curricular engagement, regular assessment, and stronger academic accountability. The data suggests that recent interventions and leadership-driven reforms have translated into measurable academic gains.

### **Triangulation and Validation**



This study employed methodological triangulation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of findings. Data were collected through multiple qualitative sources, including semi-structured interviews with the head teacher and senior teachers, classroom observations, informal professional conversations, document analysis, and documentary evidence. The convergence of evidence across these sources allowed for validation of emerging themes and minimized the risk of single-source bias. Leadership impact identified in head teacher interviews was consistently supported by classroom observation data, which revealed structured instructional practices, active student engagement, and visible implementation of planned activities. Similarly, teachers' accounts of improved academic organization and increased workload aligned with documentary evidence such as lesson planners, schemes of work, School Development Plans, and assessment records. Social media documentation further validated these findings by providing time-stamped visual records of school activities, infrastructure improvements, student projects, and community engagement initiatives. Data triangulation strengthened the study by confirming that improvements in student engagement, academic outcomes, and school climate were not isolated perceptions but observable and documented realities. Minor tensions—particularly regarding directive leadership and workload pressure—also appeared consistently across teacher interviews and reflective notes, enhancing the authenticity of the findings rather than weakening them. Overall, triangulation ensured analytical rigor and reinforced the internal validity of the study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings demonstrate that leadership practices following the 2023 transition played a central role in transforming the school's academic, organizational, and cultural environment. At the time of transition, the school faced severe challenges, including limited infrastructure, low enrolment, weak attendance, minimal accountability, and lack of parental trust. These conditions reflect patterns commonly reported in underperforming public sector schools. Post-transition data indicate a shift toward instructional leadership characterized by structured planning, close monitoring, and active involvement of the head teacher in classroom processes. Classroom observations confirmed consistent use of board work, real-life examples, questioning strategies, and student-centered activities across subjects and grade levels. These practices align with contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasizing engagement, comprehension, and application rather than rote learning. A significant finding relates to strategic decision-making, particularly the introduction of co-education at the secondary level. This policy shift contributed to increased enrolment, improved attendance, and enhanced school climate. The rise in matriculation results—from approximately 60% to nearly 90%—provides quantitative confirmation of academic improvement and supports qualitative evidence of strengthened instructional practices.

Teacher data highlights both positive outcomes and emerging challenges. While teachers acknowledged clear improvement in school functioning, student behavior, and parental involvement, they also reported increased workload and reliance on centralized leadership. This tension suggests that rapid improvement was achieved through strong directive leadership, which, while effective in the short term, raises questions about long-term sustainability and distributed leadership development. Social media analysis played a crucial supporting role by illustrating how leadership initiatives translated into visible, continuous school activity. The breadth of documented events ranging from STEM projects and cultural celebrations to professional development sessions and community outreach-demonstrates holistic school improvement extending beyond academics alone. Using purposive sampling, data were gathered from key stakeholders with direct experience of the school before and after the transition. Multiple qualitative tools ensured depth, context, and triangulation. The study documented substantial improvement in infrastructure use, teaching practices, student engagement, academic results, and community trust. At the same time, it identified ongoing challenges related to teacher capacity, workload, and leadership distribution.

### **Findings of the Study**

Leadership transition served as a catalyst for institutional change and renewed accountability. The other find of the study is that instructional leadership significantly improved classroom practices and student engagement. Strategic decisions, such as co-education, positively influenced enrolment and retention. In addition, academic outcomes improved markedly, particularly at the matriculation level. Strong centralized leadership enabled rapid improvement, but increased teacher workload. Teacher autonomy and distributed leadership remain underdeveloped.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that effective school leadership can drive meaningful improvement even within constrained public sector contexts. Leadership practices that combine instructional focus, strategic planning and persistent monitoring can transform school culture, academic outcomes, and community perception. However, sustained improvement requires a gradual shift from leader-dependent systems to shared responsibility and teacher empowerment. The study concludes that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by formal authority, but by consistent action, vision alignment and contextual responsiveness.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that capacity building with emphasis on regular, structured professional development should focus on developing teacher autonomy and leadership skills. Distributed leadership responsibility for initiatives should be gradually delegated to trained teachers to reduce leadership dependency. Teacher workload management context is an essential aspect to ponder over. Teaching loads should be reviewed to allow teachers time for planning and additional responsibilities. Sustainability planning for the school improvement strategies should include succession and continuity plans. Authorities should recognize and support context-responsive leadership models in public schools.

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