

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE SOMALI FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS ROLE IN A FRAGILE STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research article delves into the critical role of collaborative leadership in public administration, focusing on the Somali Federal Government as a specific case study. Effective governance requires innovative strategies in an era of rapid global change and intricate challenges. Through an in-depth case study approach, this research explores how collaborative leadership practices impact the efficacy of public administration in fragile states such as Somalia. Employing qualitative interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussion, this study uncovers the multifaceted effects of collaborative leadership on public administration amid complex socio-political, economic, and security challenges. The findings highlight how fostering interdepartmental cooperation, involving stakeholders, and promoting inclusive decision-making bolsters policy formulation, service delivery, and governance outcomes. Additionally, this study underscores the significance of adaptive leadership strategies for navigating uncertainty. The insights from this study extend beyond the Somali context, with implications for governments and organizations operating in similarly complex environments. By illuminating the advantages and challenges of collaborative leadership, this study contributes to the discourse on innovative public administration approaches, particularly in fragile and uncertain contexts.

Keywords: Collaborative leadership, Public Administration, fragile state, Governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public administration scholars have emphasized the study of public sector leadership behaviors to understand the influence of leadership theories and improve the performance of public organizations (e.g., Fernandez, 2005; Terry, 1995; Tummers & Knies, 2014; Van Wart, 2003; Wright & Pandey, 2010). These scholars have recognized the lack of theoretical leadership studies in the traditional public administration literature compared to other disciplines (e.g., Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Trottier et al., 2008). They emphasized the need to conduct empirical studies to test contemporary leadership theories. Public managers must understand these theories and their related challenges to become influential leaders (Wright & Pandey, 2010; Van Wart, 2003, 2013). (Hsieh & Liou, 2018).

Today's leaders are working in a new landscape that requires collaboration. Collaborative means facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations. Cooperative refers to collaborating to achieve common goals, often across boundaries and in multisector and multi-factor relationships. Collaboration is typically based on the value of reciprocity and includes the public (O'Leary et al., 2009). (O'Leary et al., 2010).

Collaborative leadership works with others to achieve common goals. It is characterized by shared decision-making, trust, and cooperation. Collective leadership is effective in various settings, including in public administration.

In Somalia, the Somali Federal Government (SFG) faces several challenges in terms of public administration. These challenges include a lack of capacity and resources, a culture of mistrust, and fragile and conflict-affected environments. Collaborative leadership can be a valuable tool for the Somali Federal Government to address these challenges.

This article examines the role of collaborative leadership in public administration practices in the context of the Somali Federal Government. This study provides a brief overview of collective leadership and its fundamental characteristics. It then discusses the challenges facing SFG in terms of public administration and how collaborative leadership can be used to address these challenges. The article concludes by presenting a case study of SFG's use of collective leadership to improve public administration.

Background of the study

Collaborative leadership helps organizations reduce conflict, facilitate employee involvement, foster commitment to new initiatives, and accomplish shared purposes (Archer & Cameron, 2009). Public administration scholars are interested in studying the role of leadership in the collaboration process among organizations, networks, systems, and communities (Quick & Feldman, 2014; Van Wart, 2013).

Public administration scholars have recognized its importance and emphasized the need for more empirical research on collaborative leadership and its related factors in different contexts. For example, they suggested testing leadership theories in public sector jurisdictions, administrative levels, and contexts to see if the outcomes vary by area and culture (McGuire & Silvia, 2009; Van Wart, 2003, 2013; Wright & Pandey, 2010). Therefore, this study examined the dimensions of collaborative leadership and its effects on organizational performance in a public service agency in Taipei City, Taiwan. Previous studies have noted an increasing interest in collective governance concepts and strategies in East Asia (Brown et al., 2012; Lee & Liu, 2012; Walker & Hills, 2012). In Taiwan, the Taipei City government has adopted many new collaborative governance concepts, such as client-oriented principles, collaborative practices within and among agencies, and collaborative leadership skills, to improve public service delivery. Among the new governance practices, collaborative leadership skills are essential for coordinating practical operational activities to satisfy organizational goals and improve performance. This study consists of a review of collaborative leadership studies, a presentation of research issues and hypotheses, an explanation of research data and methods, a discussion of research findings and limitations, and suggestions for future research. (Hsieh & Liou, 2018).

The study of collaborative leadership in public administration is particularly significant when applied to complex and challenging environments, such as the Somali Federal Government. Emerging from decades of conflict, political instability, and institutional breakdown, Somalia's journey toward recovery and reconstruction has been characterized by unique complexities that demand innovative approaches to governance and leadership (Mai, 2017).

"Leadership is not about being in charge. It is about taking care of those in your charge." – Simon Sinek

A collaborative leader must build or ensure the success of a heterogeneous organization to accomplish shared purposes. Ansell and Gash (2008) stated that leadership should unite stakeholders and encourage collaboration. Vangen and Huxham (2003) indicate that leadership is essential in embracing, empowering, involving stakeholders, and mobilizing them to move collaboration forward. Rubin (2009) explains that collaborative leadership is implemented through the purposeful exercise of behaviors, communication, and organizational resources that affect collaborative partners' perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the structure and climate of an environment that supports cooperative relationships. Collective leadership is a crucial factor in organizational performance. Collaborative leadership stimulates greater involvement of resources, people, and information in service delivery and enhances organizational performance (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; McGuire & Silvia, 2009). Recent studies of public sector leadership theories provide empirical evidence of the influence of leadership behavior on organizational motivation and outcomes (e.g., Tummers & Knies, 2013; Wright et al., 2012). (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

George Frederickson observed early on (1999, p. 702) that public administration was moving "toward theories of cooperation, networking, governance, and institution building and maintenance" in response to the "declining relationship between jurisdiction and public management" in a "fragmented and disaster-articulated state." Frederickson emphasized institutionalism, public sector network theory, and governance theory as relevant to the future of public administration research. He defined institutionalism as "social constructs of rules, roles, norms, and the expectations that constrain individual and group choice and behavior" (p. 703); public sector network theory as about "structures of interdependence" that have "formal and informal linkages that include exchange or reciprocal relations, common interests, and bonds of shared beliefs and professional perspectives" (pp. 704–705); and governance theory as occurring at institutional, organizational or managerial, and technical or work levels, including formal and informal rules, hierarchies, and procedures, and influenced by administrative law, principal-agent theory, transaction cost analysis, leadership theory, and others (pp. 705–706).

Bryson and Crosby (2008) theorized that collaboration across sectors emerges after the failure of a single sector to address a public policy problem, defining sectors as markets and businesses, nonprofit organizations, the community, the public, the media, and the government. Lester Salamon (2005, p. 16) recently observed:

Unlike traditional public administration and new public management, new governance shifts the emphasis from management skills and the control of large bureaucratic organizations to enablement skills, the skills required to engage partners arrayed horizontally in networks to bring multiple stakeholders together for a common end in a situation of interdependence. (O'Leary & Vij, 2012).

Simon Sinek highlights the essence of leadership as a responsibility toward the welfare and development of the governed rather than a mere exercise of authority. Collaborative leadership, grounded in principles of inclusivity, shared responsibility, and adaptability, resonates strongly with the imperative of caring for those in charge (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2004).

Historically, public administration in Somalia has faced challenges related to security, infrastructure, and social cohesion. The legacy of conflict and the absence of functioning institutions further complicate governance efforts. As Somalia strives to rebuild its state and deliver essential services to its citizens, embracing collaborative leadership offers a promising path for overcoming these obstacles.

Scholars have highlighted the potential of collaborative leadership to foster synergistic partnerships, enhance stakeholder engagement, and promote participatory decision-making. A collaborative leadership approach may bridge divisions and foster cooperation among diverse stakeholders in the Somali context, where clan affiliations, local dynamics, and resource constraints intersect. Moreover, the ability of collaborative leaders to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances aligns with the need for flexible governance strategies in post-conflict environments.

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of leadership dynamics in public administration by examining real-world instances of collaborative leadership. It offers practical insights for policymakers, practitioners, and leaders operating in fragile and complex governance contexts. Ultimately, this research underscores the pivotal role of collaborative leadership in steering the Somali Federal Government's efforts toward sustainable development, resilience, and effective governance.

Statement of problem

The Somali Federal Government's pursuit of post-conflict recovery and effective governance is marked by a complex web of challenges that necessitate innovative leadership approaches within its public administration framework. As the government strives to rebuild institutions, ensure service delivery, and foster socio-political cohesion, how collaborative leadership can contribute to addressing these challenges is paramount.

"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic." – Peter Drucker.

The turbulent history of Somalia, marred by conflict, state fragmentation, and limited state capacity, underscores the urgency to adopt adaptive and forward-thinking leadership paradigms. Peter Drucker emphasizes the perils of adhering to outdated approaches in times of upheaval. Collaborative leadership, emphasizing shared decision-making, partnership building, and responsiveness, presents a departure from conventional modes of public administration that may have limited applicability in the Somali context.

Historically, the absence of effective governance mechanisms has impeded the Somali Federal Government's efforts to provide essential services, promote economic development, and establish the rule of law. The legacy of clan-based affiliations, security concerns, and limited infrastructure further exacerbate these challenges. Therefore, a central issue is to explore whether and how collaborative leadership can catalyze the transformation of public administration practices to address these intricate challenges and propel the nation toward stability and progress (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Scholars have highlighted the potential of collaborative leadership to break down silos, encourage inter-agency cooperation, and foster holistic policy outcomes. In the Somali Federal Government's context, where siloed decision-making and fragmented governance have been persistent obstacles, collaborative leadership promises to promote a more unified and synergistic approach to governance. Additionally, the ability of collaborative leaders to navigate uncertainty and rapidly changing circumstances aligns with the need for nimble governance strategies in post-conflict settings (Mai, 2017).

This study seeks to address the critical gap in knowledge by investigating the role of collaborative leadership in shaping public administration practices within the Somali Federal Government.

By examining the practical implications of collective leadership, this study aims to provide insights into how this approach can contribute to policy innovation, stakeholder engagement, and service delivery, thereby advancing government efforts towards sustainable development and effective governance.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective:

The general objective of this study is to examine and analyze the role of collaborative leadership in shaping public administration practices, particularly within the context of the Somali Federal Government.

Specific Objectives:

1. To explore the theoretical foundations of collaborative leadership and its relevance to public administration.
2. To assess the extent to which collaborative leadership practices have been integrated into the governance framework of the Somali Federal Government.
3. To examine the impact of collaborative leadership on policy formulation, stakeholder engagement, and service delivery in the Somali context.

Research Questions:

1. What are the fundamental theoretical principles and concepts underpinning collaborative leadership, and how do they relate to effective public administration practices?
2. To what degree has collaborative leadership been embraced and operationalized within the Somali Federal Government's public administration framework?
3. How does collaborative leadership influence the process of policy formulation and decision-making within the Somali Federal Government?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative leadership has emerged as a transformative approach in public administration, emphasizing partnerships, inclusivity, and shared decision-making. Within fragile states, such as Somalia, where governance challenges are pronounced, understanding the role of collaborative leadership is crucial for effective public administration and sustainable development.

Collaborative Leadership in Public Administration

Collaborative leadership has gained significant attention in public administration as a practical approach to addressing complex challenges and promoting inclusive decision-making processes. Scholars have highlighted its importance in fostering cooperation, building trust, and achieving improved governance outcomes.

For instance, Ansell and Gash (2008) argue that collaborative leadership involves shared decision-making, mutual respect, and joint problem-solving among diverse stakeholders. They

emphasize that collaborative leaders facilitate inclusive processes and create an environment that encourages participation and collaboration.

Similarly, Emerson et al. (2012) asserted that collaborative leadership requires shifting from traditional hierarchical models to more networked and inclusive approaches. They emphasize the importance of building relationships, establishing trust, and promoting shared goals and values among stakeholders.

Collaborative Leadership in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts.

Collaborative leadership becomes even more crucial for effective public administration in fragile and conflict-affected contexts such as Somalia. Scholars and practitioners have explored their role in rebuilding institutions, fostering social cohesion, and promoting sustainable development. For example, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) argued that collaborative leadership is essential in post-conflict settings to overcome divisions and promote reconciliation. They highlighted the importance of inclusive and participatory processes in building trust, legitimacy, and social capital.

In the case of Somalia, Menkhaus and Mulugeta (2015) emphasized that collaborative leadership plays a critical role in bridging divisions and building trust in a highly fragmented society. They argue it can contribute to effective governance and state-building by fostering coordination, cooperation, and consensus-building among various stakeholders.

Collaborative Leadership in the Somali Federal Government.

The Somali Federal Government, established in 2012, represents a significant step towards political stability and state-building. However, it faces numerous challenges related to its limited institutional capacity, weak infrastructure, and diverse interests. Scholars have examined the role of collaborative leadership in the context of the Somali Federal Government to understand its impact on governance and public administration.

For instance, Olowu and Sako (2016) highlight the importance of collaborative leadership in promoting coordination and cooperation between government entities and stakeholders. They emphasize that collective leadership can enhance transparency, accountability, and trust in public administration.

Similarly, Yusuf and Ahmed (2020) explored the concept of collaborative leadership in post-conflict public administration using Somalia as a case study. They argue that collective leadership is crucial for addressing the challenges of limited institutional capacity and diverse interests. This study highlights the need for inclusive decision-making processes and partnerships with non-governmental organizations and civil society groups.

The literature review demonstrates that collaborative leadership is a recognized and effective approach to public administration. It fosters cooperation, inclusivity, and shared decision-making among diverse stakeholders. In the context of the Somali Federal Government, collaborative leadership is essential because of the complex and fragile nature of the environment.

Scholars have emphasized the role of collaborative leadership in promoting effective governance, transparency, and service delivery. This can contribute to bridging divisions, building trust, and fostering social cohesion. Collaborative leadership practices, such as inclusive decision-making processes and partnerships with non-governmental organizations, can address challenges specific to the Somali Federal Government and similar contexts.

While the literature on collaborative leadership in public administration has grown significantly, a notable research gap exists in understanding the nuanced role of collaborative leadership within fragile states, specifically focusing on the Somali Federal Government. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of collaborative leadership in addressing complex governance challenges, there is a shortage of in-depth empirical studies investigating its practical implementation, challenges, and outcomes in the unique environment of a fragile state undergoing post-conflict recovery.

Most existing studies on collaborative leadership primarily draw on developed or stable contexts, often overlooking the complexities and intricacies inherent in fragile states such as Somalia. As such, the current literature lacks comprehensive insights into how collaborative leadership strategies are adapted and applied in environments characterized by limited state capacity, ongoing security concerns, and deeply rooted societal divisions. Additionally, while some studies touch upon the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative leadership, there is a lack of empirical research that examines its tangible impacts on policy formulation, service delivery, and overall governance outcomes within the Somali Federal Government.

Furthermore, the existing literature tends to focus on individual sectors or aspects of governance, such as health or public service delivery, without providing a holistic view of how collaborative leadership may permeate various government departments and interact with the broader sociopolitical dynamics of a fragile state. As a result, there is a need for a more comprehensive and nuanced investigation that explores how collaborative leadership influences decision-making processes, fosters stakeholder engagement, and contributes to improved governance outcomes at both the micro and macro levels within the Somali Federal Government.

These gaps provide an opportunity for further research on the role of collaborative leadership in public administration in Somalia. By filling these research gaps, we can better understand the potential of collaborative leadership to improve public administration in Somalia.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the Somali public administration system and document analysis.

The participants were 10 adults between the ages of 35 and 65 who came from public institutions using the purposive sampling technique. There were six (6) males and four (4) females; the majority of the respondents were senior public administrators, while only one (2) was junior in public institutions.

The interviews were semi-structured and focused on the following topics:

- The challenges facing the Somali Federal Government in terms of public administration
- The potential of collaborative leadership to address these challenges
- The factors that contribute to successful collaborative leadership in the context of the Somali Federal Government
- How the Somali Federal Government can implement collaborative leadership more effectively

The document analysis focuses on government documents, reports, and other materials related to collaborative leadership in public administration in Somalia.

The data collected through the interviews and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying, coding, and analyzing patterns in data.

The study findings will be used to develop recommendations for the Somali Federal Government to implement collaborative leadership more effectively.

Strengths:

- Using qualitative data collection methods allows for a deeper understanding of Somalia's challenges and opportunities for collaborative leadership.
- Interviews with key stakeholders provide insights into the perspectives of those most familiar with the issue.
- Document analysis provides a historical perspective on collaborative leadership in Somalia.

Limitations:

- The availability of data limits the scope of this study. It may not be easy to obtain interviews with all the key stakeholders involved in collaborative leadership in Somalia.
- The researcher’s biases also limited the study. Researchers should be aware of their biases and take steps to minimize their impact on the study.

Overall, the methodology used in this study was appropriate for the research questions. Using qualitative data collection methods allowed for a deeper understanding of Somalia's challenges and opportunities for collaborative leadership. Interviews with key stakeholders and document analysis provided a comprehensive overview.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Following data analysis, several key themes regarding the critical role of collaborative leadership in public administration, focusing on the Somali Federal Government as a specific case study. The challenges facing the Somali Federal Government in terms of public administration, the potential of collaborative leadership to address these challenges, the factors that contribute to successful collaborative leadership in the context of the Somali Federal Government, and how the Somali Federal Government can implement collaborative leadership more effectively. Every theme is interconnected, and data analysis revealed the critical role of collaborative leadership in public administration.

Informants

Total 10 Adult people between the age 35 and 65 years who come from public institutions were interviewed. There were six (6) males and four (4) females, majority of the respondents were in senior public administrators while only two (2) were fresh in public institutions.

pseudonyms	Age	Level of education	work with
R01	35	University	Legislation
R02	44	University	Parliament(judiciary)
R03	52	Secondary	Administrative

R04	48	University	Administrative
R05	40	Secondary	Security
R06	39	University	Administrative
R07	45	Master	Parliament(judiciary)
R08	58	University	Administrative
R09	62	University	Parliament(judiciary)
R10	38	Secondary	Administrative

The average respondent was 46.1%. This indicates that most of the respondents were senior citizens who have enough experience in the field in which they work. Six respondents have university degrees; one of the respondents has a master's degree, and three have completed secondary school. The targeted respondents of the study worked with public institutions.

The findings of this study suggest that collaborative leadership can effectively address the challenges faced by public administration in Somalia. Collaborative leadership can help pool resources from different stakeholders, build trust between various stakeholders, and overcome the challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected environments.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of other studies of collaborative leadership in public administration. Collaborative leadership effectively addresses various challenges in public administration, such as a lack of capacity and resources, a culture of mistrust, and a fragile and conflict-affected environment.

The findings of this study are also important for the Somali Federal Government. The Somali Federal Government faces several challenges in terms of public administration. Collaborative leadership can effectively address these challenges and improve the Somali Federal Government's public administration in Somalia.

The findings of this study provide many recommendations for the Somali Federal Government on how to implement collaborative leadership more effectively. These recommendations include investing in capacity-building, developing a clear legal framework, and creating incentives for collaboration.

The study also found that the key factors contributing to successful collaborative leadership in Somalia include the following.

- Trust: Trust is essential for successful collaborative leadership. Stakeholders must be willing to trust each other and work together to achieve a common goal.
- Communication: Communication is essential for successful collaborative leadership. Stakeholders must communicate effectively to build trust and achieve their goals.
- Shared vision: A shared vision is essential for collaborative leadership to succeed. Stakeholders must have a common understanding of the problems they are trying to solve and the goals they are trying to achieve.

The study also found that the Somali Federal Government can implement collaborative leadership more effectively.

- Investing in capacity building: The Somali Federal Government can invest in capacity building for government officials and other stakeholders involved in collaborative

leadership. This will help ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to be effective collaborators.

- Developing a clear legal framework: The Somali Federal Government can create a legal framework for collaborative leadership. This will ensure that collaborative initiatives are legitimate and sustainable.
- Creating incentives for collaboration: The Somali Federal Government can create incentives for cooperation. This could include providing financial or technical assistance for collaborative initiatives.

The Somali Federal Government should consider these recommendations as it seeks to improve public administration in Somalia. Collaborative leadership can effectively lead the SFG to address its challenges and improve citizens' lives.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

A study of the role of collaborative leadership in public administration practice in the context of the Somali Federal Government (SFG) has found that collaborative leadership can effectively address the challenges facing public administration in Somalia. Collaborative leadership can help pool resources from different stakeholders, build trust between various stakeholders, and overcome the challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected environments.

The study also found that the key factors contributing to successful collaborative leadership in Somalia include the following.

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The study also found that SFG can implement collaborative leadership more effectively by

- Investing in capacity building: The Somali Federal Government can invest in capacity building for government officials and other stakeholders involved in collaborative leadership. This will help ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to be effective collaborators.
- Developing a clear legal framework: The Somali Federal Government can create a legal framework for collaborative leadership. This will ensure that collaborative initiatives are legitimate and sustainable.
- Creating incentives for collaboration: The Somali Federal Government can create incentives for cooperation. This could include providing financial or technical assistance for collaborative initiatives.
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Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for the Somali Federal Government:

- The Somali Federal Government should invest in capacity building for government officials and other stakeholders involved in collaborative leadership. This will help ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to be effective collaborators.
- The Somali Federal Government should develop a clear legal framework for collaborative leadership. This will ensure that collaborative initiatives are legitimate and sustainable.
- The Somali Federal Government should incentivize collaboration. This could include providing financial or technical assistance for collaborative initiatives.
- The Somali Federal Government should be patient and persistent in its efforts to implement collaborative leadership. It takes time and effort to build trust and cooperation between stakeholders.
- The Somali Federal Government should be willing to share power with other stakeholders. Collaborative leadership requires a willingness to share power and decision-making. The Somali Federal Government should be ready to give up some control to build trust and cooperation with other stakeholders.
- The Somali Federal Government should be transparent and accountable. Collaborative leadership requires transparency and accountability. The Somali Federal Government should be transparent about its decision-making and be responsible for the citizens of Somalia.

The Somali Federal Government should consider these recommendations as it seeks to improve public administration in Somalia. Collaborative leadership can be an effective way for the Somali Federal Government to address its challenges and improve its citizens' lives.

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