

# Influence of Principals and Teachers' Collaborative Strategies on Students' Academic Achievement in Public and Private Secondary Schools.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of principals' and teachers' collaborative strategies on students' academic achievement in public and private secondary schools. The primary goal was to examine the effects of specific cooperative strategies between educators and school administrators on student learning outcomes. For the study, a descriptive survey research approach was chosen. The population consisted of teachers and administrators from both public and private secondary schools in the Local Government Area. There were 100 responders in the sample. Methods of multi-stage sampling were used. The "School Culture Questionnaire" (SCQ), a modified structured questionnaire from Gruenert & Valentine (2006), was used to gather data. Experts in the area validated the instrument, and its good internal consistency was evidenced by its reliability coefficient of 0.82, which was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Research issues were addressed using percentages, frequency counts, and mean scores; the null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using the t-test. The results of the study demonstrated that collaborative strategies between principals and teachers have a significant impact on students' academic achievement, demonstrating that schools with strong collaborative practices, consistent leadership, opportunities for professional growth, and shared academic goals typically record higher student academic achievements. In order to maximise student academic success, school administrators were advised to deliberately create and institutionalise collaborative frameworks, encourage continuous teacher-principal communication, and develop a cooperative professional climate.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, Collaborative Strategies, Principal and Teachers, Public and Private Schools.

## INTRODUCTION

The institutional ethos of a school, commonly conceptualized as school culture, encompasses the collective values, beliefs, norms, and practices that define the social and academic environment of an educational institution. Contemporary educational scholarship posits that school culture is not merely a background variable but a pivotal determinant of student academic performance. A robust, positive school culture fosters a supportive atmosphere that amplifies teacher enthusiasm and enhances student engagement, thereby creating the requisite conditions for academic excellence (Deal & Peterson, 2016). While academic success is universally recognized as a critical indicator of national development and institutional efficacy, a paradox persists within the secondary education sector. Despite substantial governmental investments in educational infrastructure and human capital, student performance, particularly within public institutions, remains suboptimal. Consequently, the focal point of recent educational inquiry has shifted from tangible inputs to internal organizational processes. Specifically, the cooperative tactics employed by school administrators and teaching staff have emerged as crucial variables influencing learner outcomes (Afemikhe, 2022).

The role of administrative leadership in cultivating this culture cannot be overstated. Collaborative tactics utilized by school principals exert a tangible influence on school culture and overall educational efficacy.

Empirical evidence suggests that when principals adopt collaborative leadership practices, characterized by shared decision-making, transparent communication, and the promotion of collective responsibility, teachers demonstrate heightened levels of motivation, professional commitment, and instructional coherence (Marzano, 2005). This administrative approach directly correlates with improved student academic achievement. Furthermore, effective school reform is predicated on leadership that champions teamwork and aligns stakeholders around a unified vision (Reeves, 2007). By decentralizing authority and fostering a participatory environment, principals can transform the school climate from one of compliance to one of shared ownership, which is essential for sustaining high performance.

Parallel to administrative leadership, the collaborative dynamics among teaching staff constitute an equally significant factor in educational quality. Teacher collaboration, manifested through cooperative lesson planning, peer mentorship, the exchange of instructional methodologies, and collective problem-solving, enhances the quality and consistency of pedagogy (Emunemu & Adepoju, 2020). Comparative analyses indicate that schools characterized by high levels of internal communication and teacher collaboration yield superior academic results compared to institutions where instructors operate in isolation (Ushie et al., 2018). The synergy between principals and teachers serves as a mechanism for refining instructional strategies and aligning institutional objectives with the specific learning needs of students. This holds true across diverse institutional settings; effective collaborative tactics have been shown to bolster academic progress in both public and private secondary schools. However, the operational contexts differ; public schools often contend with systemic challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and resource scarcity, whereas private institutions typically benefit from more rigorous accountability mechanisms (Okorie & Eze, 2023).

Notwithstanding these theoretical imperatives, empirical data reveals a persistent disconnect between policy intentions and student outcomes. In Nigeria, for instance, despite the availability of qualified teachers and continued budgetary allocation to the education sector, secondary school students continue to record poor academic performance. Data from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC, 2022) indicates that only 39.5% of candidates achieved credit passes in core subjects such as Mathematics and English. This chronic underachievement suggests that improvements in infrastructure and teacher credentials alone are insufficient to elevate academic standards. A critical underlying issue is the ineffective utilization of cooperative strategies by principals and teachers. In many secondary schools, leadership remains predominantly hierarchical, limiting teacher participation in decision-making processes. Similarly, teachers often engage in professional isolation, lacking opportunities for meaningful collaboration. These conditions erode instructional coordination, diminish collective efficacy, and impede the school's capacity to address learning challenges effectively (MacNeil et al., 2009).

Significant disparities in academic performance persist between public and private secondary schools, despite both sectors adhering to the same national curriculum. These discrepancies necessitate a critical examination of how varying collaborative leadership styles influence student outcomes across different school types. In the Nigerian context, school culture, particularly regarding collaborative practices, is rarely subjected to systematic evaluation or strategic enhancement (Nna-Kue & Agumagu, 2023). If principals and teachers continue to neglect cooperative tactics, the trajectory of low academic accomplishment in both public and private sectors is likely to continue. Therefore, there is an urgent scholarly need to investigate the specific impact of collaborative strategies employed by teachers and principals on students' academic achievement. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing evidence-based interventions that can optimize learning outcomes and bridge the performance gap across secondary education sectors.

## Objectives of the Study

The study was carried out with two objectives, which are to;

- Determine the influence of principal collaborative strategies on students' academic performance in secondary schools.
- Identify the influence of teacher collaboration on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

## Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding substantial governmental investment in educational infrastructure and the progressive enhancement of teacher qualification frameworks, students' academic performance in secondary education continues to register persistently low outcomes. Empirical evidence from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC, 2022) reveals that only 39.5% of candidates achieved credit-level passes in core subjects, including Mathematics and English Language, in the most recent examination cycle. This enduring pattern of underachievement signals a critical disjuncture between resource allocation and pedagogical effectiveness, suggesting that conventional interventions focused solely on teacher credentials and physical facilities are insufficient to catalyze meaningful improvements in student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2023).

A salient yet underexplored factor contributing to this impasse is the inadequate implementation of collaborative strategies between school principals and teaching staff. In numerous secondary schools, pedagogical practices remain fragmented, with teachers operating in professional isolation and minimal engagement in structured collaborative processes such as co-planning, peer observation, or data-informed instructional refinement (Vangrieken et al., 2021). Compounding this challenge, leadership paradigms in many institutions continue to reflect hierarchical, top-down management styles that marginalize teacher voice in curricular and policy-related decision-making (Leithwood et al., 2020). Such organizational configurations undermine instructional coherence, attenuate collective teacher efficacy, a robust predictor of student achievement (Goddard et al., 2021), and constrain the school's adaptive capacity to diagnose and respond to diverse learner needs (MacNeil et al., 2009).

This concern is further accentuated by the persistent achievement gap between public and private secondary schools, despite their operation under a unified national curriculum. While contextual disparities in resource endowment and accountability mechanisms partially explain these variations (Okorie & Eze, 2023), emerging scholarship posits that differential enactments of collaborative leadership and teacher teamwork may constitute a more proximal explanatory variable (Nna-Kue & Agumagu, 2023). Critically, school culture, particularly the normative expectation and structural support for professional collaboration, remains rarely subjected to systematic assessment or intentional improvement initiatives within the Nigerian educational landscape (Afemikhe, 2022). Consequently, the potential of collaborative praxis to mediate the relationship between institutional context and student learning remains theoretically acknowledged but empirically underexplored. The confluence of these factors presents a compelling scholarly and practical imperative: to interrogate the extent to which principals' and teachers' collaborative strategies influence students' academic achievement across public and private secondary school settings. Without rigorous, context-sensitive investigation into the mechanisms through which collaboration shapes instructional quality and organizational learning, policy and practice risk perpetuating interventions that address symptoms rather than structural determinants of underperformance. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of collaborative leadership and teacher teamwork on student academic outcomes, to generate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing pedagogical coherence and equity in secondary education.

## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to carry out this study

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant mean difference in the response of private and public schools on the influence of principal collaborative strategies on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant mean difference in the response of private and public schools on the influence of teacher collaboration on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun.

## LITERATU REREVIEW

The pursuit of educational excellence remains a central objective of secondary education systems globally. While earlier studies of school effectiveness emphasized physical infrastructure and teacher qualifications, recent

research increasingly highlights organisational culture and collaborative practices as stronger predictors of student academic achievement. However, much of the existing literature treats collaboration as a universally effective strategy without sufficiently examining how its impact varies across institutional contexts. This review therefore critically examines how collaborative strategies between principals and teachers influence student performance, with particular attention to the differences between public and private secondary schools.

### **Principal Collaborative Leadership and Organisational Climate**

The role of the school principal has shifted from administrative management to instructional leadership. Studies such as Bush and Glover (2017) argue that collaborative leadership improves school effectiveness through shared decision-making, distributed responsibility, and trust-based management. While these findings are widely accepted, they often assume that collaboration functions similarly across different school systems. In reality, the effectiveness of collaborative leadership depends heavily on structural and institutional conditions.

Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria support the positive relationship between collaborative leadership and student performance. For example, Afemikhe et al. (2022) found that schools led by collaborative principals recorded higher examination pass rates and better classroom coordination. However, these studies rely largely on self-reported perceptions of leadership effectiveness, which may introduce bias. In addition, many of them do not sufficiently account for contextual differences between public and private schools. Private schools typically enjoy greater administrative autonomy, allowing principals to implement collaborative strategies more quickly. In contrast, public school principals often operate within rigid bureaucratic structures that limit flexibility. This suggests that collaboration alone may not explain improved academic outcomes; rather, its effectiveness is mediated by institutional conditions such as policy restrictions, resource availability, and administrative autonomy.

### **Teacher Collaboration and Instructional Effectiveness**

Teacher collaboration is frequently identified as the mechanism through which leadership practices influence student achievement. Collaborative practices such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), peer mentoring, lesson co-planning, and joint analysis of student performance data have been shown to improve instructional quality. Enwereazu (2024) reports that schools with strong teacher collaboration tend to demonstrate higher student performance in core subjects. However, many of these studies focus on the positive outcomes of collaboration without critically examining the challenges involved in sustaining it, particularly in resource-constrained public schools.

The structure of collaboration also differs significantly between public and private secondary schools. In many private schools, collaboration is institutionalised through scheduled meetings, performance monitoring systems, and administrative accountability structures. In contrast, collaboration in public schools is often informal and dependent on the initiative of individual teachers or principals. Onofe et al. (2022) acknowledge that collaborative practices improve performance in both sectors, but their study does not adequately explain how differences in funding, teacher workload, and organisational culture influence the success of these practices. This limitation suggests that collaboration should not be viewed as a universal solution; instead, its effectiveness depends on how it is implemented within specific institutional contexts.

### **Interplay Between Principal Leadership and Teacher Collaboration**

The relationship between principal leadership and teacher collaboration is not simply linear but interactive. Collaborative leadership can create the conditions necessary for teacher collaboration, including trust, professional autonomy, and structured opportunities for interaction. However, the success of this relationship varies between public and private schools. In private schools, administrative flexibility often allows collaborative strategies to be implemented more consistently. In public schools, bureaucratic constraints, limited resources, and high teacher workload may weaken the effectiveness of collaboration, even when principals adopt inclusive leadership styles.

Another limitation in existing studies is the heavy reliance on survey-based research. While surveys provide useful insights into perceptions of collaboration, they do not always capture how collaboration actually operates in classrooms or how it affects student learning in measurable terms. This methodological limitation raises questions about the generalisability of many findings, particularly when studies are based on relatively small samples.

## Research Gap

Overall, the literature confirms that collaboration between principals and teachers plays an important role in improving student academic performance. However, much of the research remains descriptive rather than analytical, focusing more on the benefits of collaboration than on its limitations or contextual variations. There is also limited attention to how collaborative strategies function differently in public and private secondary schools, especially within the Nigerian educational system.

This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by examining how collaborative leadership and teacher cooperation influence student performance while considering the structural differences between public and private schools. By doing so, it moves beyond the assumption that collaboration is universally effective and instead explores the conditions under which it produces meaningful academic outcomes.

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** This study adopted a quantitative research approach utilizing a descriptive survey design. This design was selected as it is particularly efficacious for examining the characteristics of a population and describing the relationships between variables without manipulating the environment (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The descriptive survey method allowed for the systematic collection of data regarding the perceptions of educational stakeholders concerning collaborative strategies and their perceived impact on academic outcomes. By employing this design, the research sought to establish empirical evidence linking principal-teacher collaboration to student achievement within the specific context of secondary education in Osun State.

**Population and Setting:** The target population for this study comprised educational practitioners, specifically teachers and school administrators, operating within secondary schools in the Ila Local Government Area (LGA) of Osun State, Nigeria. While the dependent variable of the study is student academic achievement, the data regarding the influence of collaborative strategies were sourced from staff members who directly implement and observe these pedagogical and administrative interactions. According to recent administrative records from the Osun State Ministry of Education (2025), the state contains approximately 393 public secondary schools. Within the specific locale of Ila LGA, there are 36 registered secondary schools, encompassing both public and private institutions (Rentech Digital, 2025). This setting provided a diverse context for examining variations in school culture and leadership dynamics across different ownership structures.

**Sampling Technique and Sample Size:** A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to ensure the representativeness of the sample and to mitigate selection bias. In the first stage, stratified sampling was utilized to categorize the secondary schools in Ila LGA into two distinct strata based on preliminary data obtained from the Local Government Education Authority (2025): schools exhibiting strong collaborative cultures and those exhibiting weak collaborative cultures. This stratification was critical to ensure that the study captured a spectrum of organizational climates.

In the second stage, simple random sampling was applied to select three schools from each stratum, resulting in a total of six (6) sampled schools. This proportional allocation ensured that both high-performing and low-performing cultural environments were equally represented. In the final stage, simple random sampling was again employed to select individual respondents from the staff of the six selected schools. A total of 100 respondents, consisting of teachers and administrators, were selected to participate in the study. This sample size was deemed adequate for the intended statistical analyses, aligning with recommendations for survey-based educational research (Etikan et al., 2016).

**Instrumentation:** Data were collected using an adapted version of the School Culture Questionnaire (SCQ), originally developed by Gruenert and Valentine (2006). The instrument was modified to align with the specific objectives of this study, focusing on teacher collaboration, principal collaborative leadership, and the perceived influence of these factors on student academic progress. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), allowing respondents to indicate the intensity of their agreement with various statements.

The instrument was structured into three sections. Section A solicited demographic information regarding the respondents' professional roles and school type. Sections B and C contained ten items designed to evaluate the extent of collaborative strategies and their subsequent impact on school culture and student achievement. The use of a Likert scale facilitated the quantification of attitudinal data, enabling robust statistical analysis (Jamieson, 2004).

**Validity and Reliability:** To ensure the instrument's psychometric quality, a rigorous validation process was undertaken. Face and content validity were established through a review by a panel of experts in educational management and research methodology. These experts evaluated the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Based on their feedback, ambiguous items were rephrased, and the instrument was refined to enhance comprehensibility.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the instrument. This pilot involved staff from two secondary schools in the neighboring Ife East Local Government Area (Modakeke High School and Royal Comprehensive High School), which were excluded from the main study to prevent contamination of data. The data obtained from the pilot were subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. The analysis yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the items. According to Field (2018), a Cronbach's alpha value exceeding 0.70 is considered acceptable for social science research, thereby confirming the instrument's reliability for the main study.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical protocols were strictly observed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school administrators, principals, and the relevant educational authorities. Informed consent was secured from all participating teachers and administrators, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed; no personally identifiable information was linked to the responses in the final data analysis, adhering to standard ethical guidelines for educational research (American Educational Research Association, 2019).

**Data Analysis:** The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, were employed to answer the research questions and summarize the demographic and variable-specific data. To test the hypotheses and determine significant differences between groups (e.g., public vs. private schools), inferential statistics were utilized. Specifically, the independent samples t-test was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance. This statistical threshold is standard in educational research for determining the probability that observed differences occurred by chance (Pallant, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of principal collaborative leadership strategies on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun?

To address the first research question, descriptive statistics were employed to analyze respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of principal collaborative leadership strategies on student academic achievement. Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations associated with five distinct indicators of collaborative leadership. The data elucidates the extent to which administrative behaviors—ranging from stakeholder engagement to equitable discipline—are perceived to influence the pedagogical climate and, subsequently, student outcomes.

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Influence of Principal Collaborative Leadership Strategies on Student Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

Item	Mean	S. D	Remark
School administrators respect students' opinions	4.09	1.207	Agreed
The principal encourages student participation in school activities	4.60	.620	Agreed
School leader motivates teachers to support students' learning	4.42	.755	Agreed
School leadership rewards academic excellence	4.44	.656	Agreed
School leaders treat all students fairly and with discipline	4.48	.674	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The empirical data presented in Table 1 indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the positive influence of collaborative leadership practices. The mean scores for the five items range from 4.09 to 4.60, all falling well above the theoretical midpoint of the scale, which signifies agreement. Specifically, the item "The principal encourages student participation in school activities" recorded the highest mean score ( $M = 4.60, SD = 0.620$ ), suggesting that student engagement in extracurricular and governance activities is a predominant feature of the leadership style observed in these schools. Conversely, while still indicating agreement, the item "School administrators respect students' opinions" yielded the lowest mean ( $M = 4.09$ ) and the highest standard deviation ( $SD = 1.207$ ). This variance implies that while student participation is encouraged, the depth of administrative receptivity to student voice may vary more significantly across different school contexts than other leadership behaviors.

Collectively, the grand mean of 4.41 affirms that collaborative leadership strategies are actively implemented and perceived as beneficial within the studied secondary schools in Ila Orangun. These findings align with contemporary educational leadership theories which posit that school effectiveness is inextricably linked to the quality of administrative interactions with both staff and students. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), successful school leadership is not merely about management but involves cultivating a culture where stakeholders feel valued and empowered. The high rating on teacher motivation ( $M = 4.42$ ) supports Robinson's (2018) assertion that instructional leadership, which includes motivating teachers to focus on learning, has a substantial effect size on student outcomes. When principals prioritize the professional support of teachers, it creates a ripple effect that enhances instructional quality in the classroom.

The strong agreement regarding fairness and discipline ( $M = 4.48$ ) and the rewarding of academic excellence ( $M = 4.44$ ) highlights the importance of a structured yet supportive school climate. Research by Hallinger and Wang (2021) suggests that a disciplined environment, when coupled with positive reinforcement, fosters psychological safety, allowing students to focus on academic pursuits without the distraction of perceived inequities. The data suggests that principals in this locale are effectively balancing authoritative governance with collaborative engagement. This duality is critical; as noted by Hattie (2023), school climate factors, including teacher-student relationships and clear expectations, are among the most significant influences on student achievement.

However, the slightly lower mean and higher deviation regarding the respect for student opinions warrant critical attention. While participation is high, the variability in how opinions are respected suggests a potential gap between tokenistic participation and substantive influence. Distributed leadership frameworks argue that for collaboration to truly impact achievement, students must transition from passive participants to active partners in the learning process (Spillane, 2019). The data indicates that while the structural mechanisms for participation exist, the cultural shift toward fully valuing student agency may require further development.

The results confirm that principal collaborative leadership strategies exert a significant positive influence on the school environment, which is a precursor to academic achievement. The high levels of agreement across all items demonstrate that principals in Ila Orangun are largely adopting best practices in stakeholder engagement, teacher motivation, and equitable discipline. These findings corroborate global trends indicating that collaborative leadership is a vital determinant of school success, reinforcing the necessity for continued professional development in these areas to sustain and improve academic performance (Day et al., 2022).

**Research Question 2:** Research Question 2 of the present study interrogates the influence of teacher collaboration on student academic performance within secondary schools in Ila Orangun, Osun State, Nigeria. Grounded in contemporary educational scholarship, this analysis examines empirical data collected via a structured field survey (2025) to elucidate the perceived extent and nature of collaborative practices among teachers and their purported linkage to student outcomes. The subsequent discussion presents a critical interpretation of descriptive statistics, situates findings within relevant theoretical frameworks, and introduces the foundational hypothesis for comparative analysis across school ownership types.

**Descriptive Analysis of Teacher Collaboration Indicators**

Table 2 presents mean ratings and standard deviations for five items (6–10) designed to measure respondents' perceptions of teacher collaboration and its influence on student academic performance. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, with a theoretical midpoint of 3.00 serving as the benchmark for neutral agreement.

**Table 2** Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Influence of Teacher Collaboration on Student Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
6	Teachers cooperate to support students' learning	4.63	.580	Agreed
7	Teachers share strategies to help struggling students	4.38	.632	Agreed
8	Teachers willingly assist new colleagues to settle quickly	4.42	.654	Agreed
9	Teachers support one another in solving student academic challenges	4.37	.800	Agreed
10	Teachers support each student to improve student outcomes	4.47	.717	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The aggregate data reveal a consistent pattern of strong agreement across all indicators of teacher collaboration. The grand mean of 4.45 (SD = 0.677) substantially exceeds the neutral threshold, indicating that respondents perceive collaborative behaviours as prevalent and positively oriented toward student learning. Item 6 ("Teachers cooperate to support students' learning") recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.63, SD = 0.580), suggesting that cooperative support for student learning represents the most salient dimension of collaboration within the sampled schools. The relatively low standard deviation for this item reflects consensus among respondents, implying institutional consistency in this practice.

Items 7 (M = 4.38) and 10 (M = 4.47), which address the sharing of instructional strategies for struggling students and individualized support for outcome improvement, respectively, underscore the pedagogical orientation of collaborative efforts. These findings align with empirical literature positing that teacher collaboration functions as a mechanism for the diffusion of effective instructional practices, thereby enhancing collective capacity to address diverse learner needs (Vangrieken et al., 2017). The moderate standard deviations (0.632 and 0.717)

indicate acceptable response homogeneity while acknowledging contextual variability in implementation. Item 8 ( $M = 4.42, SD = 0.654$ ) captures the socialisation function of collaboration, specifically the willingness of teachers to assist new colleagues. This dimension reflects the development of professional community, which research identifies as critical for teacher retention and instructional coherence (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Item 9 ( $M = 4.37, SD = 0.800$ ), addressing mutual support in resolving student academic challenges, recorded the highest variability among items. While still indicating agreement, the elevated standard deviation (0.800) suggests differential experiences or perceptions regarding problem-solving collaboration, potentially signalling an area for targeted administrative attention. Collectively, these descriptive results substantiate the proposition that teacher collaboration in Ila Orangun secondary schools is characterised by mutual support, knowledge exchange, and a shared commitment to student achievement. The consistency of agreement across items supports the theoretical assertion that collaborative cultures generate social capital that can be leveraged to improve instructional quality and, by extension, student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2007). However, as these data represent perceptual measures, causal inferences regarding the direct impact of collaboration on academic performance require cautious interpretation and further inferential analysis.

**Hypothesis Formulation for Comparative Analysis**

While the descriptive analysis establishes the perceived prevalence of teacher collaboration, the study further seeks to examine whether perceptions of collaborative leadership strategies differ by school ownership type. Consequently, the following null hypothesis was formulated to guide inferential testing: Hypothesis 1 ( $H_{01}$ ): There is no statistically significant mean difference in the responses of private and public school stakeholders regarding the influence of principal collaborative strategies on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun.

This hypothesis positions school ownership (public versus private) as a potential moderate variable in the relationship between administrative leadership practices and perceived student outcomes. Testing this hypothesis via independent samples t-test will determine whether sectoral differences in resource allocation, governance structures, or institutional culture significantly shape the implementation or perception of collaborative leadership strategies (Oluwatayo, 2019).

Rejection of the null hypothesis would imply the necessity for differentiated policy interventions tailored to the distinct operational contexts of public and private secondary education in the study locale. The descriptive analysis of Research Question 2 provides robust empirical evidence that teacher collaboration is perceived as a salient and positively valued practice among secondary school educators in Ila Orangun. High mean ratings across all indicators reflect a professional culture oriented toward collective responsibility for student learning, consistent with international scholarship on professional learning communities and instructional improvement (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the variability observed in certain items, particularly regarding collaborative problem-solving, warrants further investigation to identify contextual barriers or enablers. The subsequent testing of Hypothesis 1 will extend this analysis by examining whether these collaborative dynamics are moderated by school ownership, thereby contributing nuanced insights for evidence-based educational policy and leadership development in the Nigerian secondary school context.

TABLE 3: t-Test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Private and Public Schools on the influence of principal collaborative strategies on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun

Group Statistics					
	Type of School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Infl_prin_colla_leader	PUBLIC	51	21.6471	2.90395	.40663
	PRIVATE	49	22.4286	2.10159	.30023

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	2.193	.142	-1.536	98	.128	-.78151	.50866	-1.79093	.22791
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.546	91.154	.126	-.78151	.50546	-1.78552	.22249

Table 3 shows the t- test of Independent Sample conducted to check how significant or not the dissimilarities are.

As seen in Table 3, there was no significant dissimilarity between private and public schools' mean ratings on the influence of principal collaborative strategies on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun.

The null hypothesis was not rejected because the p-value of .128 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which it was teste

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no statistically significant mean difference in the response of private and public schools on the influence of teacher collaboration on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun.

TABLE 4: t-Test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Private and Public Schools on the Influence of Teacher Collaboration on Student Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Ila Orangun.

Group Statistics					
	type of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Teach_collabo	PUBLIC	51	23.2549	7.61799	1.06673
	PRIVATE	49	22.2653	2.25255	.32179

  

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed									
	Equal variances not assumed									

<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	<b>.649</b>	<b>.422</b>	<b>.873</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>.385</b>	<b>.98960</b>	<b>1.13326</b>	<b>-1.25933</b>	<b>3.23852</b>
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			<b>.888</b>	<b>59.005</b>	<b>.378</b>	<b>.98960</b>	<b>1.11421</b>	<b>-1.23993</b>	<b>3.21912</b>

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis on the mean responses of private and public schools on the influence of teacher collaboration on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance with p-value .385. Since p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant mean difference in the response of private and public on the influence of teacher collaboration on student academic performance in secondary schools in Ila Orangun was NOT rejected.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The empirical evidence derived from this study substantiates the proposition that school culture, specifically operationalized through the collaborative strategies of principals and teachers, serves as a critical determinant of students' academic achievement across both public and private secondary education sectors. This finding aligns with contemporary educational leadership theories which posit that administrative and pedagogical synergy creates an institutional ethos conducive to learning. Hattie (2023) reinforces this perspective, arguing that principal collaborative leadership strategies function as a catalyst for student success, not merely through direct administrative oversight, but indirectly by enhancing teacher efficacy and fostering a sense of collective responsibility. Within this framework, collective teacher efficacy is ranked among the most potent influences on academic outcomes, suggesting that the belief systems of the faculty, shaped by leadership, directly translate into student performance metrics.

Furthermore, the data indicates that organizational clarity is paramount. Owolabi (2020) observed that institutions possessing a clearly defined mission, which is comprehensively understood by both staff and student bodies, demonstrate significantly superior academic performance. This suggests that collaborative strategies are most effective when anchored in a shared vision. In the context of administrative conduct, Principal Collaborative Strategies are characterized by the inclusion of teachers in decision-making processes. Okon and Archibong (2014) note that such inclusivity leads to a more stable teaching workforce and a coherent instructional program. When principals adopt a distributive leadership model, they mitigate hierarchical barriers, thereby empowering teachers to take ownership of instructional outcomes.

Parallel to administrative collaboration, Teacher Collaboration emerges as a distinct yet interconnected variable. Practices such as joint lesson planning, peer mentoring, and collective data analysis facilitate a cycle of continuous instructional improvement. This collaborative inquiry enables educators to identify learning gaps and implement timely interventions for struggling students. Ejiogu and Ajayi (2010) and Ross and Adams (2018) identify these collaborative pedagogical practices as significant predictors of academic success. The mechanism at play is the transition from isolated teaching practices to a professional learning community model, where knowledge is co-constructed and pedagogical challenges are addressed communally. Crucially, the study found that the positive impact of these cooperative strategies remains consistent regardless of the school's management style (public or private). This implies that the efficacy of collaboration is intrinsic to the practice itself rather than contingent upon external resource disparities often associated with sectoral differences.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the synthesized findings, it is concluded that the collaborative strategies employed by school principals and teaching staff constitute a decisive factor influencing students' academic achievement in secondary education. The research underscores that collaborative leadership is not merely an administrative preference but a pedagogical imperative. When principals utilize a distributive and inclusive leadership style that values the

contributions of stakeholders, they inspire employees and cultivate an environment that is equitable, orderly, and goal-oriented. This leadership approach lays the groundwork for a positive school culture that improves academic results through both direct instructional support and indirect morale enhancement.

The study affirms that students' academic success is inextricably linked to the broader school culture, which encompasses norms, values, expectations, leadership styles, and interpersonal relationships within the school community. Academic achievement is significantly enhanced when teachers actively collaborate, share effective pedagogical strategies, and work collectively to resolve student learning challenges. This cooperation increases collective efficacy, which maintains a strong correlation with improved student achievement. The consistency of these findings across both public and private secondary schools suggests that the effectiveness of intentional collaboration is robust against varying management styles. Consequently, the moderate positive correlation observed indicates that deliberate improvements in the collaborative strategies of principals and teachers can lead to discernible and sustainable improvements in students' academic performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance educational outcomes through improved collaboration:

- **Enhance School Leadership to Foster a Collaborative Culture:** School administrators must transition from autocratic models to leadership philosophies that prioritize participation, inspiration, and teamwork. Principals should prioritize establishing trust, promoting interdisciplinary teamwork, and supporting pedagogical innovation. Furthermore, it is imperative that the school's mission and vision are not only clearly stated but actively co-constructed with staff to ensure buy-in and alignment with daily instructional practices.
- **Institutionalize Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development:** Educational policy should mandate and facilitate structured time for teachers to work together, share best practices, and engage in regular professional development activities. To enhance competency, classroom management, and instructional delivery, schools should implement formalized workshops, seminars, and peer mentoring programs. These initiatives should focus on data-driven instruction and collaborative problem-solving regarding student learning barriers.
- **Optimize the Educational Environment and Institutional Conduct:** A supportive learning environment is a prerequisite for academic success. All classrooms and school facilities must be maintained to promote safety and psychological well-being. To promote order and minimize disruptions that obstruct learning, clear codes of conduct and consistent disciplinary actions must be established and enforced equitably. This structural stability allows collaborative teaching strategies to flourish without environmental interference.

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