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Original Research Article

The Impact of Leadership Style and Organizational Culture on Project Success in the Construction Industry in Nepal: The Mediating Role of Team Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to (1) examine the relationships among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project success in the Nepalese construction industry; (2) analyze the mediating role of team collaboration in the relationship between leadership style and project success; and (3) investigate the mediating role of team collaboration in the relationship between organizational culture and project success. A quantitative research design was employed to test the proposed conceptual framework. Data were collected from 364 respondents, including project managers, engineers, and team leaders, using purposive sampling. Prior to the main survey, a pilot study involving 30 construction business owners and managers was conducted to assess the validity of the research instrument. Content validity was established using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) evaluated by three experts. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive statistics and reliability testing, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS was used to examine the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects.

The findings indicate that leadership style and organizational culture have significant positive effects on project success. Furthermore, team collaboration significantly mediates the relationships between leadership style and project success as well as between organizational culture and project success. These results provide empirical evidence highlighting the critical role of effective leadership, a supportive organizational culture, and collaborative teamwork in enhancing project performance. The study contributes to the project management literature by extending the understanding of leadership and organizational dynamics in construction projects and offers practical implications for improving project outcomes in the Nepalese construction industry.

Introduction

The construction industry plays a pivotal role in global economic development by facilitating the establishment, expansion, and modernization of physical infrastructure (Hatema et al., 2022). Beyond the creation of landmark buildings and complex transportation systems, construction projects represent the integration of technological advancement, innovation, human expertise, and managerial capabilities. In recent decades, the industry has experienced substantial growth driven by rapid urbanization, population expansion, and increasing demand for sustainable infrastructure development (Jiang et al., 2022). However, the successful delivery of construction projects is not determined solely by technical capabilities and resource availability. Increasing project complexity, diverse stakeholder involvement, and dynamic operating environments have emphasized the critical influence of non-technical factors, including leadership practices, organizational culture, and team collaboration.

In developing economies such as Nepal, the construction sector operates within a multifaceted environment involving government agencies, private developers, contractors, and international investors (Shrestha et al., 2025). These diverse stakeholders create complex managerial challenges related to coordination, regulatory compliance, resource allocation, and conflict management. Consequently, effective leadership has become essential for navigating these challenges and ensuring project success. Leadership approaches that promote vision, motivation, innovation, and employee empowerment, such as transformational leadership, have gained increasing attention due to their potential to enhance organizational adaptability and performance (Dartey-Baah, 2022). Similarly, an organizational culture characterized by inclusiveness, knowledge sharing, openness, and support for innovation provides a foundation for improving employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, construction projects inherently require collaboration among multidisciplinary teams, as successful project execution depends on the integration of expertise from engineering, architecture, management, procurement, and other functional areas. Effective teamwork facilitates communication, knowledge exchange, collective problem-solving, and coordinated decision-making, which are essential for achieving project objectives. In the Nepalese construction context, where challenges such as skilled labor shortages, limited technological adoption, and fragmented coordination mechanisms remain prevalent, strengthening collaborative team practices may contribute significantly to improving project outcomes. Although previous studies have examined the influence of leadership, organizational culture, and teamwork on organizational and project performance, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how these factors interact within the construction industry of Nepal. Much of the existing literature focuses on developed economies, where organizational structures, technological capabilities, and management practices differ considerably from those of developing countries. Therefore, a contextual investigation of the combined effects of leadership styles, organizational culture, and teamwork is necessary to address this research gap and provide practical insights for improving construction project performance in Nepal.

This study aims to examine the relationship between leadership styles, organizational culture, teamwork, and construction project performance in the Nepalese construction industry. By exploring these interconnected organizational factors, the research contributes to the broader understanding of human and managerial dimensions influencing construction

success and provides recommendations for enhancing project management practices in developing country contexts.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Leadership Style and Team Collaboration

Leadership style has long been recognized as one of the most influential determinants of team collaboration, particularly in project-based industries such as construction. Effective leaders establish a work environment characterized by trust, open communication, and shared responsibility, thereby encouraging employees to collaborate toward common organizational objectives (Cai, 2023). Leadership influences not only employees' motivation but also their willingness to exchange knowledge, coordinate activities, and solve problems collectively. Among various leadership approaches, transformational leadership has consistently demonstrated a positive effect on collaborative behaviors. Transformational leaders inspire employees through a shared vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, creating an atmosphere that promotes innovation and mutual support (Purwadi, 2024). Such leadership enhances interpersonal trust, facilitates knowledge sharing, and strengthens collective problem-solving capabilities, ultimately improving team effectiveness. In contrast, authoritarian or transactional leadership styles may improve compliance and task execution but often provide fewer opportunities for collaborative learning and creativity. Within construction projects, where multidisciplinary teams consisting of architects, engineers, contractors, and project managers must coordinate complex tasks, leadership becomes particularly important in fostering effective collaboration. Consequently, leadership style is expected to influence project success both directly and indirectly through enhanced team collaboration.

Organizational Culture and Team Collaboration

Organizational culture represents the shared values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral expectations that shape employee interactions and organizational practices. A collaborative organizational culture encourages employees to exchange ideas, support one another, and pursue shared organizational objectives, thereby strengthening teamwork and organizational effectiveness (Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023). Different cultural orientations influence collaboration in distinct ways. Clan culture emphasizes trust, employee involvement, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships, creating favorable conditions for knowledge sharing and collective decision-making (Iqbal & Parray, 2024). Adhocracy culture encourages innovation, flexibility, and creativity, enabling project teams to respond effectively to changing project requirements and complex challenges. Meanwhile, market culture emphasizes competitiveness and performance, whereas hierarchy culture prioritizes formal procedures, stability, and compliance with established regulations. In construction organizations, where project success depends on coordination among multiple stakeholders, organizational culture provides the behavioral foundation for collaboration. A supportive culture facilitates communication, reduces interpersonal conflict, and enhances coordination across project teams, ultimately contributing to superior project performance.

Team Collaboration and Project Success

Team collaboration is widely recognized as a critical success factor in construction project management because construction projects involve complex, interdependent tasks requiring extensive coordination among multiple stakeholders (Do et al., 2022). Effective collaboration enables engineers, architects, contractors, consultants, and project managers to exchange information efficiently, coordinate activities, and resolve project-related issues in a timely manner. Strong collaboration improves communication quality, joint decision-making, knowledge sharing, and risk management, thereby reducing project delays, cost overruns, and quality deficiencies (Yahya et al., 2024). Furthermore, collaborative teams demonstrate greater adaptability when responding to unexpected project challenges and changing client requirements. As noted by Abuezhayeh et al. (2022), collaborative work environments improve workflow efficiency and enhance overall project productivity. Therefore, team collaboration represents a key organizational capability that directly contributes to project success in terms of time performance, cost control, quality achievement, stakeholder satisfaction, and overall project effectiveness.

Organizational Culture and Project Success

Organizational culture significantly influences project implementation by shaping employee behaviors, communication patterns, and management practices throughout the project lifecycle (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). Construction organizations with strong collaborative cultures generally demonstrate greater project efficiency, innovation, and stakeholder coordination. Different cultural dimensions contribute to project success through different mechanisms. Clan culture enhances teamwork and conflict resolution, reducing misunderstandings and improving coordination among project participants (Umuteme & Adegbite, 2023). Adhocracy culture supports innovation and technological adoption, enabling organizations to improve construction processes and solve complex project problems. Market culture promotes goal achievement and performance orientation, encouraging project teams to complete projects within budget and schedule. Hierarchy culture contributes through standardized procedures, regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and safety management. Although previous studies have established a positive relationship between organizational culture and project success, increasing evidence suggests that this relationship may operate indirectly through improved collaborative behaviors among project teams.

The Mediating Role of Team Collaboration

Recent research suggests that team collaboration functions as an important mechanism through which leadership style and organizational culture influence project success. Effective leadership creates conditions that encourage communication, trust, and knowledge sharing, which subsequently improve collaborative performance and project outcomes (Oh et al., 2021; Adham, 2023). Similarly, organizational culture shapes employees' willingness to cooperate, share expertise, and collectively solve project problems. While a supportive organizational culture provides the structural and psychological environment for collaboration, successful project implementation ultimately depends on how effectively project teams utilize these cultural values in their daily interactions (Bagga et al., 2023). In construction projects, where

project performance depends heavily on coordination among multidisciplinary teams, team collaboration serves as a critical transmission mechanism linking organizational characteristics to project success. Collaborative teams facilitate efficient communication, collective decision-making, conflict resolution, and knowledge integration, thereby improving project quality, schedule performance, cost efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction (Rekogama, 2022). Consequently, team collaboration is expected to mediate both the relationship between leadership style and project success and the relationship between organizational culture and project success.

Conceptual Framework

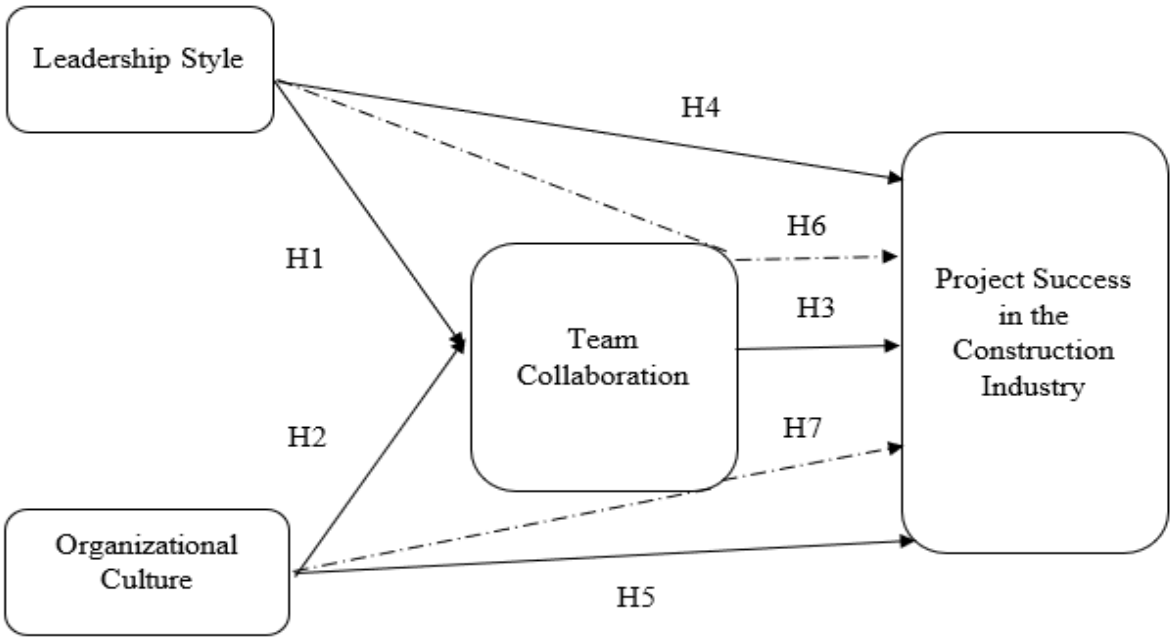

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Objectives

1. To study the relationship among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration and project success in the construction industry.
2. To analyze the mediation role of team collaboration on the relationship between leadership style and project success in the construction industry.
3. To examine the mediation role of team collaboration on the relationship between organizational culture and project success in the construction industry.

Hypotheses

H1: There is positive and significant impact of leadership style and team collaboration.
H2: There is positive and significant impact of organizational culture and team collaboration.

H3: There is positive and significant impact of team collaboration and project success in the construction industry.

H4: There is positive and significant impact of leadership style and project success in the construction industry.

H5: There is positive and significant impact of organizational culture and project success in the construction industry.

H6: Team collaboration mediates the relationship between leadership style and project success in the construction industry.

H7: Team collaboration mediates the relationship between organizational culture and project success in the construction industry.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project success in the construction industry of Nepal. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of numerical data and the application of statistical techniques to examine relationships among variables and test the proposed research hypotheses. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, whereby data were collected from respondents at a single point in time using a structured questionnaire.

The target population comprised 3,973 registered construction establishments in Nepal, as officially identified by the Central Bureau of Statistics (2018). The unit of analysis was the owner or manager of each construction business because these individuals are directly involved in organizational decision-making and possess comprehensive knowledge regarding leadership practices, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project performance. Based on the target population, the required sample size was determined to be 364 respondents. Accordingly, structured questionnaires were distributed to 364 owners or managers of construction businesses across Nepal.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who met the predetermined selection criteria. This non-probability sampling method ensured that participants possessed the necessary knowledge, experience, and organizational responsibilities relevant to the objectives of the study. Owners and managers were specifically selected because of their direct involvement in managing construction projects and organizational operations, enabling them to provide accurate and reliable information regarding the variables under investigation.

The study examined four principal constructs: leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project success. Leadership style was measured through three dimensions, namely transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and democratic leadership. Organizational culture was assessed using the dimensions of innovation and adaptability, supportive environment, and shared values and goals. Team collaboration was measured through communication efficiency, mutual support, and task coordination. Project success was evaluated using three dimensions: timely completion, budget adherence, and quality of work. These constructs were operationalized using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The research instrument was developed based on established theories and previous empirical studies relevant to the research constructs. Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire was evaluated to ensure its validity and reliability. Content validity was assessed using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), and the results indicated an IOC value of 1.00 for all questionnaire items, which exceeded the recommended minimum criterion of 0.50. This result confirmed that the questionnaire adequately represented the research objectives and measured the intended constructs.

A pilot study involving 30 owners or managers of construction businesses in Nepal was subsequently conducted to evaluate the reliability of the research instrument. The pilot study produced an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.950, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the questionnaire was suitable for the main survey. The reliability analysis of the individual constructs also demonstrated satisfactory results. Leadership style achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.887, organizational culture recorded 0.775, team collaboration achieved 0.874, and project success obtained 0.924. Since all Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, the measurement scales were considered reliable for subsequent data collection and statistical analysis.

Following the successful validation and reliability assessment, the main data collection was conducted by distributing 364 structured questionnaires to owners and managers of construction businesses throughout Nepal. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the research, and participation was voluntary. The completed questionnaires were carefully reviewed for completeness and accuracy before being coded and entered into the statistical software for analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 24. SPSS version 26 was employed for data screening, descriptive statistical analysis, and reliability assessment, while AMOS version 24 was utilized to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). These analytical techniques were applied to evaluate the measurement model, assess the validity of the constructs, and examine the hypothesized relationships among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project success. The findings generated through these statistical procedures provided empirical evidence to address the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses.

Results

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 364)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	247	67.86
	Female	117	32.14
Age	25–35 years	67	18.41
	36–45 years	145	39.84
	46–55 years	134	36.81
	56–65 years	15	4.12
	Above 66 years	3	0.82
Position	Business Owner	276	75.82

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	CEO	45	12.36
	Project Manager	24	6.59
	Others	19	5.23
Years of Company Operation	Less than 5 years	76	20.88
	6–10 years	124	34.07
	11–15 years	143	39.28
	16–20 years	15	4.12
	Over 21 years	6	1.65
Number of Employees	1–10	67	18.41
	11–50	197	54.12
	51–100	68	18.68
	Over 100	32	8.79
Primary Type of Construction Project	Infrastructure	125	34.34
	Commercial	110	30.22
	Industrial	56	15.38
	Residential	50	13.74
	Others (Mixed-use)	23	6.32

The demographic profile of the 364 respondents shows that most were male (67.86%) and between 36–55 years old (76.65%). The majority were business owners (75.82%), followed by CEOs (12.36%) and project managers (6.59%). Most companies had been operating for 11–15 years (39.28%) or 6–10 years (34.07%), indicating considerable industry experience. More than half of the businesses employed 11–50 workers (54.12%), while infrastructure (34.34%) and commercial projects (30.22%) were the most common types of construction activities. Overall, the respondents primarily represented experienced business owners managing small to medium-sized construction firms engaged in infrastructure and commercial development.

Correlation Analysis

The values of the correlation coefficient (r) fall between -1 and +1 and indicate strong relationships when they are close to ±1 while values close to 0 show weak correlation. The result of correlation analysis is shown in table 2.

Table 2 Result of correlation analysis

Variables	Leadership Style	Organizational Culture	Team Collaboration	Project Success
Leadership Style	1			
Organizational Culture	.759**	1		
Team Collaboration	.739**	.739**	1	
Project Success	.793**	.772**	.859**	1

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Source:* Data and information from this research

Path Analysis

Path analysis provides researchers with an approach to analyze both direct and mediated and total associations between model variables. The path analysis is shown in figure 2.

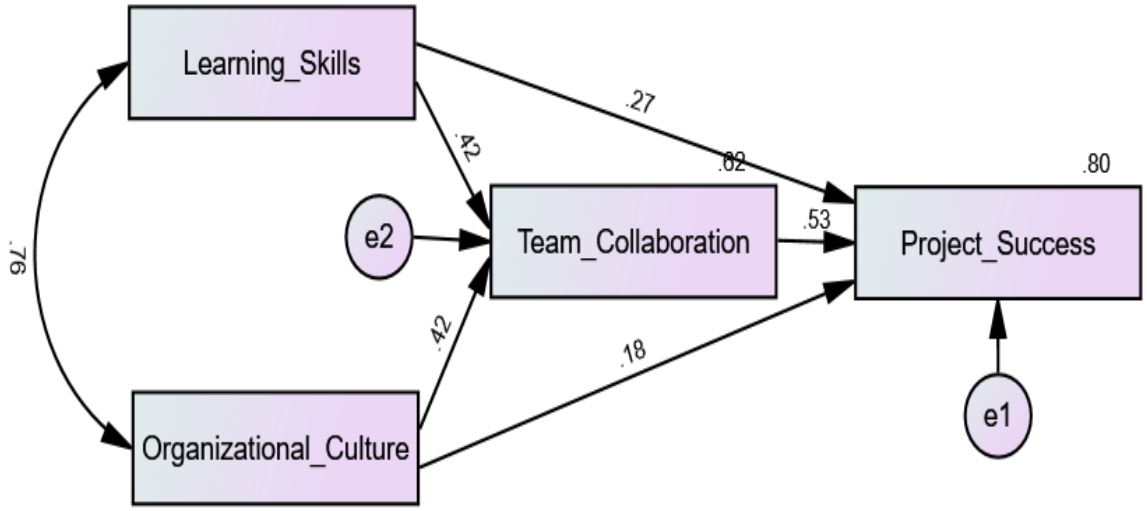

Figure 2 **Path Analysis**

Table 3 Direct Path Analysis

Direct path analysis	Standardized Regression	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value
Leadership Style--> Team Collaboration	0.420	0.054	8.457	***
Organizational Culture--> Team Collaboration	0.420	0.059	8.466	***
Team Collaboration--> Project Success	0.530	0.037	14.136	***
Leadership Style--> Project Success	0.270	0.041	6.834	***
Organizational Culture--> Project Success	0.180	0.045	4.549	***

Note: ***p<0.001 *Source:* Data and information from this research

Table 3 shows that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Leadership Style has a significant positive effect on Team Collaboration (β = 0.420, t = 8.457, p < 0.001), supporting H1. Similarly, Organizational Culture positively influences Team Collaboration (β = 0.420, t = 8.466, p < 0.001), supporting H2. Team Collaboration has the strongest positive effect on Project Success (β = 0.530, t = 14.136, p < 0.001), confirming H3. Leadership Style also has a significant positive effect on Project Success (β = 0.270, t = 6.834, p < 0.001), supporting H4. Organizational Culture shows a smaller but significant positive effect on Project Success (β =

0.180, t = 4.549, p < 0.001), supporting H5. Overall, all relationships are positive and statistically significant.

Mediating Effect

A mediating effect exists when one variable reveals the connection between two other variables. The indirect effect of the study is shown in table 4.

Table 4 Indirect Path Analysis

Indirect Path Analysis	Standardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value
Leadership Style--> Team Collaboration --> Project Success	0.223	0.168	0.32	***
Organizational Culture --> Team Collaboration --> Project Success	0.224	0.177	0.363	***

Note: ***p<0.001 *Source:* Data and information from this research

From table 4 shows that Leadership Style's impact on Project Success goes through Team Collaboration as indicated by the standardized effect value of 0.223. Results based on a confidence interval between 0.168 to 0.32 combined with a P-value below 0.001 prove the reliability of this indirect relationship. From this analysis it shows that hypothesis (H6) team collaboration mediates the relationship between leadership style and project success in the construction industry is accepted. From table 4 shows that organizational culture affects Project Success through Team Collaboration with a strength of 0.224. The findings show the strength of this connection through the CI (0.177 to 0.363) and P-value (p < 0.001). From this analysis it shows that hypothesis (H7) Team collaboration mediates the relationship between organizational culture and project success in the construction industry is accepted.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The value of r square value of $R^2 < 0.19$ is considered weak; $0.19 <= R^2 < 0.33$ is considered as weak; $0.33 <= R^2 < 0.67$ is considered as moderate; $R^2 >= 67$ is considered as substantial. The study shows that the value of R^2 of team collaboration is 0.62 and project success is 0.80. which is considered as moderate and substantial. This indicate that the independent variable has a 62% variance in team collaboration and 80% variance in project success.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, the discussion of this research can be conducted according to the objectives as follows:

Objective 1: To study the relationship among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration and project success in the construction industry. Research results established strong connections between leadership approach and organizational culture and

between both variables and team collaboration and project achievement. Leadership effectiveness serves to drive performance while controlling decision processes and cultural support enables organizational communication along with innovation adoption. Real-world outcomes result from team collaboration which acts as the bridge that links leadership and cultural aspects. Constructing projects achieve maximum success when leadership style collaborates with organizational culture and team collaboration. Organizations which prioritize leader training together with cultural growth and team-based methods achieve better operational results and reduce risks and enable deadlines to be met consistently. The results of this study are relevant to the studies of Bagga et al. (2023) and Channuwong et al. (2022) which found that leadership style such as creative leadership and transformational leadership have a great impact on organizational culture and team collaboration, and provide direction for employees to work in the same direction to achieve organizational goals.

Objective 2: To analyze the mediation role of team collaboration on the relationship between leadership style and project success in the construction industry. Organizations use collaboration between teams to establish a connection between leadership approaches and successful projects. The study demonstrates that successful leadership itself does not result in project goals when collaboration between team members does not exist. Leadership groups that work together create superior communication paths and improved coordination for task completion. Subsequently construction firms need to train their staff both in leadership management and teamworking abilities. The integrated strategy yields enhanced operational procedures along with strengthened team spirit that leads to successful project accomplishments both on time and cost-effectively. The results of this study are relevant a study of Channuwong et al. (2022) which found that team collaboration is a result of clear communication in the group members and leadership style. Both clear communication and inspired leadership combined with shared goal promotion will build well-functioning teams.

Objective 3: To examine the mediation role of team collaboration on the relationship between organizational culture and project success in the construction industry. Team collaboration acts as an important mediator to enhance how organizational culture affects project success. A productive organizational culture establishes accountable workers who show innovative behavior while maintaining unified organizational purpose. The results of this study are relevant to a study of Umuteme & Adegbite (2023) and Wongmajarpinya et al. (2024) which found that effective teamwork enables important company values to become active operational elements. Groups working together create conditions that lead to enhanced mutual comprehension and more effective problem-solving and adjustable systems. A significant contribution of team-building and participatory practices is activating the positive impacts of an organization's cultural elements. Construction projects achieve enhanced communication and speed together with quality improvements which leads to improved long-term project success.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among leadership style, organizational culture, team collaboration, and project success in the construction industry, with a particular focus on the mediating role of team collaboration. The findings achieved the study objectives by providing empirical evidence of the direct and indirect effects among these constructs. The results indicate that leadership style has a positive and statistically significant influence on

team collaboration, suggesting that effective leadership practices enhance communication, coordination, and cooperative behaviors among project teams. Similarly, organizational culture demonstrates a significant positive relationship with team collaboration, confirming that a supportive organizational environment strengthens team functioning and collaborative performance. Furthermore, team collaboration was found to have a strong positive effect on project success, as evidenced by a high standardized regression coefficient and robust statistical significance ($T = 14.136$, $p < 0.001$). This finding underscores the critical role of collaborative teamwork in achieving successful project outcomes within the construction industry. Leadership style also exerts a direct positive and significant influence on project success ($\beta = 0.270$, $T = 6.834$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that effective leadership contributes not only to improved collaboration but also directly enhances project performance. Importantly, the study confirms that team collaboration mediates the relationship between leadership style and project success. This finding suggests that leadership contributes to project success both directly and indirectly by fostering stronger collaboration among team members. The mediating effect highlights team collaboration as a key mechanism through which leadership practices translate into improved project outcomes.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on project management by demonstrating the interconnected roles of leadership style, organizational culture, and team collaboration in driving project success. The findings provide valuable theoretical support for organizational behavior and project management literature while offering practical implications for construction organizations. Specifically, organizations should invest in leadership development, cultivate a collaborative organizational culture, and promote effective teamwork to enhance project performance and increase the likelihood of successful project delivery.

Recommendations

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by developing an integrated understanding of how leadership style and organizational culture influence project success through team collaboration. The findings highlight that team collaboration is a key mechanism that transforms effective leadership and supportive organizational culture into improved project outcomes.

For construction organizations, it is recommended to strengthen leadership development, promote a collaborative organizational culture, and implement practices that encourage communication, trust, and teamwork among project stakeholders. These efforts can improve project performance, efficiency, and delivery success.

For the public and project stakeholders, enhancing leadership and collaboration practices in construction organizations can contribute to higher-quality projects, timely completion, and better value from construction investments.

Future research may examine additional factors influencing project success, such as innovation, digital transformation, risk management, and stakeholder engagement. Further studies across different regions and industries are also recommended to validate and expand the proposed framework.

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