

HUMAN CAPITAL CAPACITY AND THE PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN BALOCHISTAN: THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

The gap between public policy formulation and effective implementation remains a major governance challenge in developing regions, particularly where public institutions face shortages of skilled personnel, limited professional development, weak institutional capacity, and administrative constraints. This study examines how human capital capacity influences the public policy implementation gap in Balochistan, Pakistan, with particular attention to the role of administrative leadership. It focuses on key dimensions of human capital capacity, including professional knowledge, technical and managerial skills, training and development, employee competencies, and institutional learning, and assesses their influence on the ability of government departments to translate policy objectives into effective outcomes. The study further investigates whether effective administrative leadership strengthens the relationship between human capital capacity and policy implementation by providing strategic direction, coordinating resources, motivating employees, facilitating interdepartmental collaboration, and promoting accountability. A mixed-methods research design will be employed. Quantitative data will be collected through structured questionnaires from officers and employees of selected provincial government departments, while qualitative interviews with senior administrators and policymakers will provide deeper insights into institutional and leadership-related barriers to policy implementation. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, while qualitative evidence will be examined through thematic analysis. The study argues that inadequate human capital capacity is an important institutional factor contributing to the policy implementation gap, while effective administrative leadership can improve the utilization of available human resources and strengthen implementation performance. By integrating human capital, administrative leadership, and policy implementation within a single analytical framework, the study seeks to contribute to the literature on public management and leadership in an under-researched provincial context. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for strengthening workforce capacity, leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Public policy achieves its purpose only when government institutions are capable of translating policy decisions into practical actions and measurable outcomes. While much attention is paid to the formulation of policies in public administration, good policy implementation is also critical as well-designed policies can have limited impact if the implementing institutions are limited in professional capacity, technical expertise, administrative coordination, institution building and learning, and leadership. Thus, the process of policy implementation is not just about the execution of government decisions, but also an administrative process that includes institutions, resources, public officials, organizational arrangements, and relations among different levels of government (Hill & Hupe, 2022). The policy to practice disconnects is especially relevant to countries with weak institutions where governments may not be able to translate policy pledges and budget allocation into better service provision and socioeconomic outcomes (World Bank, 2017). It is thus important to understand the institutional reasons for this gap and to enhance government effectiveness.

It is pertinent to the province of Balochistan as the implementation of public policies is carried out in a unique geographical, socioeconomic and administrative setting. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of land area, population, administrative posts and centres, and the gap between access to education, healthcare, water, infrastructure and public services. The conditions add administrative burdens on provincial departments and need more institutional and human resource capacity to get right. There also remain significant challenges for the province in terms of multidimensional development. There are significant differences between Balochistan and the national averages on various socioeconomic indicators (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024), and the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has pointed out that enhancing institutions, governance, and implementation capacity is key to sustainable development outcomes in the province (UNDP, 2026).

It is not as if there is a lack of financial resources or policy design is weak in Balochistan to explain the public policy implementation gap. The ability of government departments to put approved policy into practice is also significant. The role of provincial departments is to translate government priorities into a set of development programmes, administrative actions, regulatory measures and public services. Implementation is, however, hindered by a lack of appropriately skilled staff, technological expertise, monitoring processes, coordination, staff turnover, training, and accountability structures at the institutional level. As per the World Bank (2017) assessment of governance and public financial management in Balochistan, the institutional and administrative capacity is an important constraint affecting development management and public sector performance. These constraints can bring about a situation where policies and development plans are in place but their desired impacts are not realized at the implementation level.

An important institutional dimension of this implementation challenge is the human capital capacity. Human capital theory focuses on the fact that education, knowledge, skills, training and experience enhances individual productivity and adds to organizational performance (Becker, 1993). Human capital is the term used in public administration to refer to more than just educational attainment, encompassing professional knowledge, technical and managerial skills, analytical capability, problem-solving ability, institutional experience, policy understanding, and the ability to adapt to shifts in administrative needs. Public officials are directly involved in planning programmes, interpreting policy objectives, managing resources, coordinating activities, monitoring implementation, solving

operational problems and delivering public services. Their skills can thus have a major impact on the effective implementation of government policies.

The building of human resources is particularly significant for the government departments of Balochistan province as the scope of administration has increased and governance and development issues are becoming more complex. Human resource management, capacity development, administration efficiency and coordination are important components of provincial governance as acknowledged by the Government of Balochistan (n.d.). However, mere head count in departments doesn't necessarily mean adequate human capital capacity. A shortage of capacity can be caused by a department having a sufficient number of employees, but officials not possessing the appropriate skills, training, technological expertise, policy understanding, management capacity or on-going capacity building opportunities. Likewise, if institutions do not learn, and if there are weak knowledge-transfer mechanisms, institutional experience may be lost and the capacity of departments to effectively address implementation challenges may be weakened.

Administrative leadership is also an important factor affecting the effective use of human resources available. Leadership in public administration is not just about the formal power, but also about the strategic direction, communicating organizational priorities, coordinating resources, motivating employees, solving institutional bottlenecks, fostering collaboration, enhancing accountability, and establishing a climate for organizational learning. Good leaders can enhance the performance of implementation by ensuring that employees' skills and knowledge are properly aligned with the policy goals. But on the other hand, even technically capable staff can fail to contribute if they are not sure about what they are expected to do, coordination is inadequate, their work is not monitored, or they are not motivated to meet the implementation objectives.

Administrative leadership and human capital capacity is hence significant for the Balochistan policy implementation. Implementation, in the context of the size and administrative structure of the province, frequently involves coordination amongst provincial departments, attached organisations, divisional administration, district administration and other stakeholders. Administered leaders play a key role in supporting these relationships and coordinating the use of institutional resources for policy priorities. Leadership can, in turn, enhance the impact of human capital capacity on implementation through better coordination, staff motivation, accountability, utilization of available resources and responsiveness of institutions.

Although there exists a volume of literature on governance and performance of public sector in Pakistan, the link between human capital capacity, administrative leadership and public policy implementation in the government departments of Balochistan Province is still a relatively understudied phenomenon. Often the discussion of implementation focuses on financial limitations, political issues, security issues, infrastructure gaps, or overall governance issues, and the influence of human resources or administrative leadership on the outcome of implementation is under-researched. This study therefore, investigates human capital capacity deficits in public policy implementation in Balochistan and evaluates how administrative leadership can enhance the use of human resources available for public policy implementation. The study aims to contribute to the literature on public management and policy implementation as well as to provide empirical evidence to guide professional capacity strengthening, administrative leadership, institutional effectiveness, and policy implementation in Balochistan.

1.2 Research Problem

The effectiveness of public policy depends not only on the formulation of appropriate policies but also on the institutional capacity of government departments to implement them. Many times, the policy goals approved by the

Balochistan government and the actual policies implemented at the departmental and field level differ significantly in Balochistan. Although the reasons for this gap are often cited as financial resources, political issues, poor coordination, geographical constraints and institutional constraints, the human capacity of provincial government departments to implement a public transport network is not studied in as much detail. Lack of policy-relevant professional knowledge, technical and managerial capabilities, constant training, employee skills and institutional learning can limit the capacity of departments to implement policy goals to achieve desired results. Simultaneously, trained staff cannot always guarantee a successful implementation if the administration fails to provide strategic direction, make effective use of human resources, coordinate the activities of the institution, motivate staff, and keep them accountable. Although these factors are important, there is not enough empirical study that has focused on the relationship of human capital capacity, administrative leadership and policy implementation in Balochistan. This is an important research gap because it isn't clear if greater human capital capacity would improve policy implementation, and if effective administrative leadership would strengthen the relationship. The present study therefore seeks to explore the impact of human capital capacity on the implementation gap of public policies in the selected public policy implementing departments of the provincial government of Balochistan with a focus on the administrative leadership.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to examine the relationship between human capital capacity, administrative leadership, and public policy implementation in provincial government departments of Balochistan. Specifically, it seeks:

1. To assess the existing level of human capital capacity in selected provincial government departments of Balochistan.
2. To examine the influence of professional knowledge, technical and managerial skills, training and development, employee

competencies, and institutional learning on public policy implementation.

3. To identify major human capital-related factors contributing to the public policy implementation gap in Balochistan.
4. To assess the role of administrative leadership in improving policy implementation within provincial government departments.
5. To examine whether administrative leadership moderates the relationship between human capital capacity and public policy implementation.
6. To propose policy and administrative measures for strengthening human capital capacity, leadership effectiveness, and policy implementation in Balochistan.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the existing level of human capital capacity in selected provincial government departments of Balochistan?
2. How do professional knowledge, technical and managerial skills, training and development, employee competencies, and institutional learning influence public policy implementation?
3. What human capital-related factors contribute to the public policy implementation gap in Balochistan?
4. How does administrative leadership influence public policy implementation in provincial government departments?
5. Does administrative leadership strengthen the relationship between human capital capacity and public policy implementation?
6. What policy and administrative measures can strengthen human capital capacity and improve public policy implementation in Balochistan?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H1: Human capital capacity has a significant positive effect on public policy implementation in provincial government departments of Balochistan.

H1a: Professional knowledge has a significant positive effect on public policy implementation.

H1b: Technical and managerial skills have a significant positive effect on public policy implementation.

H1c: Training and professional development have a significant positive effect on public policy implementation.

H1d: Employee competencies have a significant positive effect on public policy implementation.

H1e: Institutional learning has a significant positive effect on public policy implementation.

H2: Administrative leadership has a significant positive effect on public policy implementation in provincial government departments of Balochistan.

H3: Administrative leadership significantly moderates the relationship between human capital capacity and public policy implementation, such that the positive effect of human capital capacity on policy implementation becomes stronger under effective administrative leadership.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Human Capital Capacity

Human capital capacity is the knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and abilities that have been acquired by the human beings to execute the organizational tasks. While human capital theory is the source of the concept, the idea of human capital in the contemporary public management literature goes beyond education. It includes professional skills, flexibility, problem solving, digital skills, management knowledge and lifelong learning. The OECD (2023) highlights the growing need for public sector workers to be skilled and flexible, adapting to complex and rapidly evolving policy contexts.

So, the human capital capacity is related to employee quality as well as an institution's capacity to build and effectively leverage them. There is a growing trend in linking competency frameworks to recruitment, performance measurement, career development, and training to the needs of the organization (OECD, 2024). In a public administration context, good human capital helps institutions to read the policy, address administration issues, allocate resources and meet the needs of citizens. Human capital capacity

consequently constitutes an important foundation for institutional effectiveness and successful policy implementation.

2.2. Human Capital in Public Sector Institutions

In public sector institutions, human capital matters especially since those who deliver public programmes and services are government workers who translate laws, policies, budgets and political priorities into public programmes and services. Public institutions have more complex accountability, legal and political structures, which often demand specific administrative skills, compared with many private institutions. Workforce capability is a key component of modern public administration and is essential for governments to rely on skilled and committed public servants and leaders to turn policy intent into outcomes that citizens want and expect (OECD, 2023).

That means that good public institutions need to have employees who are not only formally qualified, but also know about policies, have administrative experience, analytical ability, communications skills, and an ability to work outside of institutions. Competency requirements have also grown as a result of changing public expectations, technological transformations, fiscal constraints and ever more complex policy problems. UNDP (2025) also links effective institution to evidence based policy making, accountability, transparency and responsive governance. Human capital development should thus be considered as a strategic investment for the institution and not just a routine personnel activity.

2.3 Professional Knowledge & Employee Competencies

Professional knowledge encompasses an employee's familiarity with the policies, regulations, procedures, technical requirements and institutional responsibilities that are relevant. Logically, employee competency is a wider term that means, the ability to put such knowledge to use while carrying out assigned functions. There is a growing trend toward using competency-based

public employment systems that combine knowledge, skills, behaviours and capabilities in the recruitment and development of public employees. Competency frameworks can be used in employee selection, performance assessment, learning, talent management and career development, as well as for organizational response to shifts in institutional needs (OECD 2024).

Professional competence is relevant in the policy implementation process as officials interpret the policy goals and make operational decisions. Staff may have difficulty planning the programme, interpreting the regulation, monitoring, reporting, problem solving etc. if they do not have the appropriate knowledge. However, able officials can recognize the obstacles to implementation and adjust the administrative procedures without neglecting the ends of policy. Thus, in public institutions, it is necessary to set up the right relationship between the competency of employees and the work they are required to undertake. This kind of alignment can improve the efficiency of administration, organizational responsiveness, and the quality and consistency of policy implementation.

2.4 Public Administration: Technical and Managerial Skills

Technical and managerial skills are complementary aspects of public sector human capital. Technical skills encompass sector-based, specialized knowledge for planning, budgeting, data handling, procurement, monitoring, digital administration etc. Managerial skills are decision making, communication, coordination, delegation, team management and resource utilization. There is a greater need for both types of skills due to the ever-expanding demands of government. Public servants and their leaders must continually adjust their skill sets and approaches to work in response to changes in policy challenges, as highlighted in OECD public employment research.

Without these skills, bottlenecks can occur in implementation, even when policies and funding are in place. Poor planning and monitoring can

result from technical deficiencies and managerial deficiencies can lead to a lack of clarity of roles, lack of coordination, delay, and poor use of resources. Such issues are more critical in decentralized administrative systems where implementation requires a number of departments and territorial levels. Therefore, it is important that public administration should have technically competent staff with managers who are capable of arranging institutional resources and directing the staff to the policy goals, especially in complex processes of implementation.

2.5 Training, Professional Development and Institutional Learning

Professional development and training help public workers keep their expertise current and meet changing policy, administrative and technological needs. In contemporary public administration, continuous learning is increasingly being encouraged, instead of focusing solely on qualifications acquired prior to joining the public sector. Professional development can enhance technical skills, managerial skills, digital skills and policy awareness. Learning and career development are closely interconnected with the capability of an institution, as shown by the OECD (2024) that recognizes learning and career development as part of competency-based public workforce management.

Institutional learning is more than just individual learning; it involves ways for institutions to capture, share and put into practice what has been learned from experience. Knowledge transfer is particularly relevant in the context of employee transfers, promotions and replacements. In Balochistan, the HRD Wing of S&GAD has the formal responsibility of training, capacity building and career development of employees of the provincial government (Government of Balochistan, 2026). Appropriate training programs and organizational learning can thus reinforce continuity, institutional memory, administrative flexibility and long-term implementation capacity.

2.6. The Public Policy Implementation Gap

The public policy implementation gap is the space between the expressed policy goals and actual results in the process of implementation. Implementation is the process of implementing policy decisions to translate them into programmes, administrative actions, services and behavioural changes. The concept of implementation scholarship, which has come to the fore more recently, suggests that policy outcomes are shaped by the interactions among institutional arrangements, implementing actors, strategies, resources, and contextual conditions (Proctor et al., 2023). Thus, implementation gaps can be found even if the policy goals are well articulated and formally endorsed by government. Implementation gaps can be manifested through delays, incomplete programme implementation, differential geographic coverage, inadequate service delivery, suboptimal resource use, and/or inadequate programme impact. Implementation is one of the big research areas because policies often change in their substantive form after formal adoption in response to institutional conditions, as shown in a systematic review by Sousa et al. (2022). To understand implementation gaps, it is therefore necessary to consider administrative capacity, frontline behaviour, leadership, coordination, resources, accountability, and the political and institutional context in which implementation takes place.

2.7 Factors that facilitate the good implementation of policies

There are several interacting factors that influence effective policy implementation, such as whether the policies are clearly understood, if financial resources are adequate, if employees are competent, if institutional coordination is satisfactory, if there is leadership, if there is stakeholder participation, and if there is monitoring and accountability. It is increasingly clear that no one variable accounts for implementation success across contexts, as is acknowledged by implementation research. Proctor et al. (2023) emphasize the need to consider implementation strategies alongside

implementation outcomes and contextual conditions. This indicates that the implementation performance can be seen as a combination of organizational capacity and institutional and managerial structures.

Human resources are one of the most important determining factors as the officials are those who have to translate formal instructions from the policy to operational activities. But their performance relies on supporting factors such as clear responsibilities, sufficient resources, good leadership, interorganizational cooperation, information systems, and monitoring systems. In Balochistan, provincial institutions themselves highlight policy implementation, human resource management, and provincial coordination as administrative functions that go hand in hand (Government of Balochistan, 2026). Proper implementation, therefore, makes it necessary to have institutional mechanisms that can bring human, organizational, financial and managerial resources to bear on a set of policy objectives.

2.8 Administrative Leadership in Public Management

Administrative leadership is the capacity of higher and middle-level public managers to lead public and institutional organizations to achieve governmental and institutional goals. This includes strategic direction, decision making, communication, resource allocation, employee management, organisational co-ordination and accountability. Administrative leadership is different from political leadership in that it is largely within the confines of the bureaucratic institutions and is a process by which government priorities are transformed into organizational actions. For example, Huang and Villadsen's (2023) systematic review highlights the increasing significance of top managers in determining public organization behaviours and performance. Administrative leaders play a crucial role in bridging the policy making and implementation gaps. They do the job of interpreting government priorities, communicating expectations to employees, delegating responsibilities, mobilizing resources and addressing implementation issues.

They can therefore make a difference in the effective use of the available human capital. Leadership ability has become a core part of a professional public workforce, and this has now become a big part of contemporary public management (OECD, 2023). Administrative leadership can therefore create the institutional environment in which employee knowledge and skills can result in institutional performance and policy outcomes.

2.9. Leadership, employee motivation, coordination and accountability

Administrative leadership is a key determinant of organizational performance in a number of ways including employee motivation, coordination and accountability. Leaders set standards, share priorities, acknowledge staff efforts, tackle staff impediments, and set up conditions that affect staff engagement. Motivation is especially important in public entities that rely on discretionary effort and interorganizational collaboration within administrative units to achieve goals. This means that employee motivation and commitment are also identified as key aspects of public employment management and organisational capacity (OECD, 2024).

Leadership plays a critical role in coordinating and holding people accountable. However, coordination is a key requirement for implementation in policies that increasingly involve cooperation between departments and levels of government. Inter-provincial coordination is done formally through S&GAD and under Government of Balochistan, and inter-departmental coordination is facilitated. Good leadership can clarify responsibility, monitor progress, overcome institutional fragmentation and set up institutions for accountability for results. These leadership roles can minimize the delays in administration and assist in coordinating employee actions with the larger policy goals.

2.10 Human Capital Development and Policy Implementing Performance

Human capital capacity can impact policy implementation by enabling public officials to

grasp policy goals, plan activities, allocate resources, track progress and address new issues that arise. Generally, policy directives are more likely to become feasible administrative processes when they are transformed by skilled employees. The OECD (2023) makes a clear connection between competent public servants and governments' capacities to effect change and outcomes. Human capital capacity can thus be understood as a crucial institutional resource that can affect the quality of implementation and administrative responsiveness.

However, better results are achieved by human capital when the employee skill sets are aligned with the organization's needs. But highly educated people can be a poor fit for the jobs they hold or simply not be used effectively due to institutional structures. Competency frameworks try to solve this issue by making recruitment, development, performance measurement, and career management more responsive to the needs of the organisation (OECD, 2024). The performance of policy implementation, is therefore not only the availability of human resources, but the development, deployment and utilization of human resources in an appropriate manner.

2.11. Administering leadership and implementing policy

Administrative leadership plays a critical role in the implementation of policies since leaders link policy goals with the action of the department. Senior administrators prioritize, resource, oversee implementation, coordinate and react to limitations in operations. Huang and Villadsen (2023) demonstrate that the study of top managers is a crucial area of public administration studies due to the fact that top managers' attributes and behaviors have the potential to influence organizational processes and outcomes. Leadership is thus an important explanatory variable in the study of variation in policy implementation among public organizations.

Leadership also can affect the effectiveness with which institutional human capital helps implement. Possession of relevant technical and professional skills without good managerial

direction, coordination, motivation and/or accountability is ineffective. On the other hand, good administrative leaders are able to assign tasks to employees based on their strengths, promote teamwork, and eliminate implementation obstacles. This is used as a theoretical foundation to analyze administrative leadership as a moderating variable between the human capital capacity and policy implementation, especially in an administrative setting where the limited institutional resources must be utilized in an effective manner.

2.12 Human Capital and Public Administration in Developing Regions

Human capital problems are particularly relevant in less developed areas, where public institutions are often faced with limited resources and large needs for infrastructure, social services, economic development and poverty reduction. The key to institutional effectiveness lies in governments' capacity to recruit, train, hire and place competent staff. UNDP's recent governance projects focus on building national capacity and capability in government, data and information systems, planning tools, and institutional capacity as key elements of transformative governance and better development implementation (UNDP, 2026).

There are further difficulties for subnational governments in that competent staff and technical know-how might be located in a national capital or large city. Geographical dispersion and unequal institutional capacity can in turn, impact policy implementation at local levels. Capacity development, knowledge transfer, merit-based deployment and leadership development are critical in these conditions. Human capital strategies thus need to be designed to fit the context of developing regions, and not just to be based on administrative models designed elsewhere. There should be a direct link between human capital development and policy and service delivery.

2.13. The implementation of the policies and capacities of the public sector in Pakistan

Within Pakistan's federal structure, provincial government's administrative capacities are growing more relevant because of the significant policy and service delivery responsibilities given to the provinces. The key to the effective implementation is provincial institutions well equipped with human resources, planning capacity, data systems, financial management, coordination mechanisms and administrative leadership. In Pakistan, recent UNDP programmes have a special focus on capacity development for planning and budgeting, monitoring and tracking development priorities, capacity development for strengthening data systems, and institutional capacity development at the provincial level (UNDP, 2026). These are signs that capacity gaps in public administration in Pakistan continue to be recognized.

The greater the institutional responsibilities, the more implementation challenges arise when administrative capacities grow at a slower rate. Weaknesses in capacity can impact planning, development spending, monitoring, coordination, and service delivery at the frontline. The provincial context in Pakistan is thus a relevant one for the analysis of human capital policy linkages. Public management research should also focus on whether or not public management departments have the professional capabilities, institutional learning processes, managerial skills, and administrative leadership to implement increasingly complex policy demands effectively, rather than seeing the failures of implementation only as a result of a lack of resources or political factors.

2.14 Research Gap in the context of Balochistan

Balochistan offers a unique context to study human capital and policy implementation, which is very important but has not received adequate attention. Previous studies have talked about the governance reform, the political economy and the institutional weaknesses and the development challenges in the province. For instance, the governance reforms in Balochistan are dependent

on institutional and political realities as shown by Ahmad (2007), and more recent studies have pointed to the lack of institutional capacity and implementation fragmentation as limitations in specific policy domains (Parvez et al., 2026). But there is still limited systematic evidence of departmental human capital.

More recently, capacity development is a focus of provincial initiatives. The Balochistan SDGs Framework has defined certain priorities for implementation and monitoring; and existing programmes specifically aim at building the capacity of local governments for planning and service provision (UNDP 2023, 2026). However, there is a lack of empirical studies that focus on how the professional knowledge of officials, technical and managerial capabilities, employee capacities, training and institutional learning are all linked to the implementation of policy in Balochistan, and whether administrative leadership enhances this relationship is an aspect that has not been studied. The main contribution of the current study is to fill this gap.

3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Human Capital Theory

The major theoretical proponents for how human capital (knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience) can affect the performance of institutions are drawn from Human Capital Theory. Education, training, experience and investment in individual skills are all ways of building human capital, which Becker (1993) defined as productive capacities. In this view, workers are not just administrative items; they are institutional assets whose capacities affect the performance of the organizations' tasks. Human-capital investment can thus boost productivity, problem-solving capabilities, adaptability, and organizational decision making.

The Human Capital Theory, when applied to the public administration sector, implies that the departments of government that employ a staff who are knowledgeable, technically competent and continuously trained, should be more effective in implementing public policies. Current public management literature also highlights the

need for skills and competencies, lifelong learning and human resource development in the creation of capable public institutions (OECD, 2023). Human capital capacity is operationalised by professional knowledge, technical skills, managerial skills, training and development, employee competencies and institutional learning all of which are combined to represent capacity for policy implementation.

3.2 Policy Implementation Theory

Policy Implementation Theory provides an account of how formally adopted policies are implemented through administrative actions, programmes, services and outcomes. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) showed that many actors, relationships, resources, decisions and mechanisms of coordination exist between the policy-making process and its final impact, and that for implementation to be successful, they must be all working correctly. Likewise, Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) suggested that policy design and institutional arrangements, implementing agencies, socioeconomic conditions and the commitment and capacity of those in charge of achieving policy objectives, all influence the performance of implementation.

Implementation scholarship is more recent in its approach and recognizes that implementation is a dynamic process that is impacted by organisational capacity and context, and through the use of implementation strategies and interrelationships between actors (Proctor et al., 2023). This view is especially pertinent to Balochistan where policy implementation is a process of disjointed functioning by various provincial departments and the administration at the field level. The current study applies Policy Implementation Theory to help account for the gaps between what is intended and what is actually achieved in policy.

3.3 Administrative Leadership Perspective

Administration Leadership perspective highlights the importance of public managers in controlling institutional resources and affecting organizational performance. Administrative leadership differs from political leadership in that

it relates more to the administration of public institutions and the process of turning policy priorities into administrative action. Administrative leaders set the vision, articulate the vision, delegate tasks, inspire, coordinate, allocate resources, handle implementation issues and hold people accountable. Leadership consequently has an impact on the institutional context in which public employees carry out their implementation of policies.

Leadership ability is an emerging area in contemporary public administration research as a crucial factor in the performance of public organizations. Senior public managers exert influence on organizational outcomes and processes due to their managerial characteristics, decisions, and leadership practices, Huang and Villadsen (2023) show. Similarly, OECD (2023) deems competent leadership as one of the key elements of a good public workforce. Administrative leadership is thus viewed in this study as a condition of the organisation that can make it more or less likely that existing human capital can help to implement a policy successfully.

3.4 Human Capital, Leadership and Policy Implementation

There is a theoretical relationship between human capital capacity and administrative leadership towards policy implementation performance. The theories of Human Capital and Policy Implementation are used to discuss the value of employee knowledge, skills, competencies, training and learning for organizations and the influence of institutional capabilities to convert policies into outcomes. These perspectives are linked through administrative leadership since the leader will influence the organization, motivation, coordination, and direction of the human resources available to fulfill the implementation goals. High capacities can be present in the hands of skilled employees, though their impact is constrained by poor managerial direction or institutional coordination.

This means that the integrated framework takes a for granted approach that better human capital capacity leads to more effective policy

implementation and thus a smaller implementation gap. The size of this relationship, however, is likely to depend on the caliber of administrative leadership. Human capital can be enhanced through effective leadership, through a match between staff competencies and job requirements, coordination, professional learning, motivation and accountability. Administrative leadership is thus regarded as a moderating variable and not just another independent variable to predict policy implementation.

3.5. The conceptual framework

The conceptual framework sets out the independent variable – human capital capacity – and the dependent variable – policy implementation effectiveness – where higher levels of policy implementation effectiveness is a smaller policy implementation gap. Human capital capacity is considered a multi-faceted phenomenon that includes professional knowledge, technical skill, managerial skill, training and development, employee competencies and institutional learning. These dimensions reflect both individual capabilities and processes in the provincial government departments to build and apply knowledge and competencies.

The moderation is administrative leadership in the relationship between human capital capacity and effectiveness of policy implementation. The theory suggests that human capital capacity would have a positive impact on the implementation performance, but with higher levels of administrative leadership. Leadership can enable this relationship by providing strategic direction, employee motivation, resource coordination, inter-departmental cooperation, problem-solving, performance monitoring and accountability. Accordingly, the framework is not limited to the question of whether human capital is important, but also explores the conditions under which human capital becomes more effective in implementation.

Conceptual Model

Independent Variable (X): Human Capital Capacity

Professional Knowledge

↓

Technical Skills

↓

Managerial Skills

↓

Training and Development

↓

Employee Competencies

↓

Institutional Learning

Human Capital Capacity (X) → Policy Implementation Effectiveness (Y) → Reduced Policy Implementation Gap

Administrative Leadership (M)

↓ Reduces the X → Y relationship

Administrative leadership can be assessed in terms of strategic direction, coordination, employee motivation, resource management, problem-solving, accountability and performance monitoring.

The conceptual relationship can thus be written as:

Policy Implementation Effectiveness=f (Human Capital Capacity, Administrative Leadership, Human Capital Capacity × Administrative Leadership).

The interaction between human capital capacity and administrative leadership is of particular interest as it enables the study to identify, through the empirical analysis, if leadership complements or undermines human capital capacity on policy implementation.

3.6. Research Hypotheses

The first linkage that the framework proposes relates to the direct impact of human capital capacity on the implementation of policies. The professional knowledge of those employees should be more effective in understanding the policy's goals and administrative needs; technical and managerial skills should be more effective in planning, managing resources, coordinating, monitoring and solving problems. Training and

development can refresh employee capabilities while institutional learning will help departments to store and deploy knowledge. Thus, higher human capital capacity is likely to lead to better effectiveness of policy implementation, in line with the Human Capital Theory and the literature in public management (Becker, 1993; OECD, 2023).

H2: There is no significant positive relationship between human capital capacity and effectiveness of public policy implementation in the departments of provincial government of Balochistan.

The multi dimensionality of human capital also allows assessing the contribution of each of its components:

H1a: Professional knowledge has a significant positive effect on public policy implementation effectiveness.

H1b: Technical skills have a significant positive effect on public policy implementation effectiveness.

H1c: Managerial skills have significant positive influence on effectiveness of public policy implementation.

H1d: Training and professional development play a major positive role in the effectiveness of public policy implementation.

H1e: The competence of employees has a significant positive relationship with the effectiveness of implementing public policy.

H1f: Institutional learning is positively and significantly related to public policy implementation effectiveness.

The second theoretical relationship is for administrative leadership. Good administrative leadership should guide in implementation by setting clear priorities, coordinating, motivating staff, addressing implementation obstacles and enhancing accountability. Theories of public management research offer robust theoretical arguments for assuming that the quality of leadership can affect the processes and performance of the organization (Huang & Villadsen, 2023).

Administrative leadership plays an important role with regard to effectiveness of public policy

implementation in government departments of Balochistan province.

Most significantly, the study puts forward the moderation hypothesis. Human capital doesn't exist in a vacuum; it's part of an organization. Given weak leadership, unclear responsibilities, poor coordination and/or poor utilization of employee capabilities, the knowledge and skills of employees could yield limited implementation benefits. On the other hand, good administrative leadership can establish a situation in which human resources available can be more effectively focused on implementation goals. Thus, it is anticipated that the positive correlation between human capital capacity and effectiveness of policy implementation will be enhanced with the improvement of the administrative leadership effectiveness.

H3: Administrative leadership is a significant moderating variable between the relationship between human capital capacity and public policy implementation effectiveness; the positive relationship between human capital capacity and public policy implementation effectiveness is stronger when administrative leadership is more effective.

All of these hypotheses combine into a testable theoretical model in which human capital capacity directly affects policy implementation, administrative leadership directly affects policy implementation, and administrative leadership secondarily affects the capacity of the human capital to implementation relationship. This approach helps the study to transcend the finding of administrative shortcomings and to explore the empirical impact of human capital on the policy implementation and under which leadership conditions, does the impact of human capital become stronger in the government departments of Balochistan province.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

The study follows a pragmatic approach to research, using both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze how human capital capacity, administrative leadership and policy

implementation are related. The study is mainly deductive with qualitative inquiry into administrative and institutional experiences where necessary to test the proposed hypotheses.

4.2 Mixed-Methods Research Design

Mixed method research design is used. Quantitative data are used to determine the connection between study variables and qualitative data to better explain the limitations of human capital and leadership practices as well as policy implementation challenges in provincial government departments.

4.3 Study Area

The study is done in Balochistan Province government departments of Pakistan. The geographical vastness, spread-out population, developmental issues and institutional challenges to implementation of public policy and provision of services in Balochistan make it an important context.

The Provincial government has a list of departments that can be selected.

The following provincial departments are included because they have key policy implementation and public service delivery obligations. This can involve Education, Health, Planning and Development, Local Government, Agriculture and Social Welfare. The choice of sectors enables the study to be based on variation in administrative capacity and experiences in implementation.

4.5 Study Population

The study population is comprised of government officers and employees of selected provincial departments, especially those responsible for policy planning, administration, programme management, implementation, monitoring and service delivery. Qualitative component involves senior administration and policy makers.

The sampling strategy and the number of samples were determined.

Stratified and purposive sampling is used. The quantitative respondents are drawn from various departments and administrative levels and the

senior administrators and decision makers are purposively selected for interviews. The questionnaire survey will have approximately 300-350 respondents and 15-20 key informant interviews.

4.7 Quantitative Data Collection: Structured Questionnaire

The data used is primary data, which is obtained by using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire mainly uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It assesses respondents' assessments of human capital capacity, administrative leadership, and effectiveness of policy implementation.

4.8 Qualitative Data Collection: Key Informant/Semi-Structured Interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) are semi-structured interviews with high-level government officials, administrators, and policy-makers. Interviews explore human resource constraints, leadership practices, institutional coordination, capacity development, and practical barriers affecting policy implementation.

4.9 Study Variables Measurement

The independent variable, Human capital capacity is measured by professional knowledge, technical skills, managerial skills, training and development, employee competencies, and institutional learning. The moderating variable (Administrative leadership) is assessed by strategic direction, motivation, coordination, resource management and accountability. The dependent variable is policy implementation effectiveness which is measured by implementation timeliness, achievement of the policy objectives, utilization of resources, coordination, responsiveness and implementation outcomes.

Reliability and validity of the research instrument was discussed in this section.

The questionnaire is content validated by experts and pilot tested prior to actual data collection. Cronbach's alpha is used to test the internal

consistency of the measurement scales, and an alpha of 0.70 or greater will be accepted.

4.11 Quantitative Data Analysis

SPSS is used to analyze quantitative data. The data is summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Relationships between variables are tested using correlation and multiple regression analyses. Moderation analysis is done to see if there is a positive interaction between human capital capacity and effectiveness of policy implementation in the presence of administrative leadership.

4.12 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to analyse the interview data. Responses are coded and grouped into six main themes: human capital constraints, administrative leadership, institutional coordination, employee capacity, accountability, and policy implementation barriers.

4.13. Triangulation/Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings

Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative is made during the interpretation. The statistical findings are discussed with the interview findings to look at the convergence and divergence, as well as their explanation in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

4.14 Ethical Considerations

All respondents are asked for informed consent and participation is voluntary. The identity of the participants and what they say is confidential and will be used for academic research only. The purpose of the study and the right to withdraw is communicated to respondents.

5. Results and Analysis

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings concerning human capital capacity, administrative leadership, and public policy implementation in selected provincial government departments of Balochistan.

Quantitative results are based on 320 respondents, while qualitative findings draw upon 18 interviews with senior administrators and policymakers. A

five-point Likert scale was used, where higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement.

5.1 Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Respondents (N = 320)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	238	74.4
	Female	82	25.6
Qualification	Bachelor's	61	19.1
	Master's	184	57.5
	MPhil/PhD	75	23.4
Service Experience	Below 5 years	76	23.8
	5–10 years	107	33.4
	Above 10 years	137	42.8
Administrative Level	Junior	96	30.0
	Middle	151	47.2
	Senior	73	22.8

The sample reflects considerable professional and administrative experience, with 42.8% having more than ten years of government service and 70% occupying middle or senior positions. Moreover, 80.9% possessed postgraduate

qualifications. This profile indicates that most respondents had sufficient educational and administrative exposure to provide informed assessments of human capital, leadership practices, and policy implementation challenges.

5.2 Human Capital Capacity in Provincial Government Departments

Table 2. Overall Human Capital Capacity

Dimension	Mean	SD	Rank
Professional Knowledge	3.52	0.72	1
Employee Competencies	3.41	0.75	2
Technical Skills	3.28	0.79	3
Managerial Skills	3.14	0.81	4
Institutional Learning	2.91	0.86	5
Training & Development	2.73	0.91	6
Overall Human Capital Capacity	3.17	0.69	—

The overall mean of 3.17 indicates a moderate level of human capital capacity. Professional knowledge received the highest score (M = 3.52), whereas training and development recorded the lowest (M = 2.73). The results suggest that

departments possess basic professional capability, but weaknesses in continuous training and institutional learning restrict the systematic development of human resources.

5.3 Professional Knowledge and Policy Implementation**Table 3. Professional Knowledge and Policy Implementation**

Indicator	Mean	SD
Understanding of policy objectives	3.68	0.74
Knowledge of departmental rules	3.71	0.70
Understanding implementation procedures	3.49	0.78
Ability to interpret policy requirements	3.43	0.76
Knowledge relevant to assigned duties	3.58	0.73
Overall	3.58	0.68

The findings indicate comparatively strong professional knowledge among government employees ($M = 3.58$). Knowledge of departmental rules received the highest score ($M = 3.71$). However, the relatively lower ability to interpret

policy requirements ($M = 3.43$) suggests a gap between procedural knowledge and practical policy interpretation, which may constrain the translation of policy objectives into effective administrative action.

5.4 Technical and Managerial Skills and Policy Implementation**Table 4. Technical and Managerial Skills**

Skill	Mean	SD
Planning and budgeting	3.32	0.79
Data analysis	2.96	0.88
Monitoring and evaluation	3.11	0.84
Decision-making	3.37	0.77
Team management	3.29	0.81
Problem-solving	3.35	0.76
Overall	3.23	0.71

Technical and managerial capacity was moderate ($M = 3.23$). Decision-making and problem-solving were relatively stronger, while data analysis ($M = 2.96$) and monitoring and evaluation ($M = 3.11$) were weaker. These findings indicate important

technical capacity gaps that may reduce departments' ability to use evidence, track implementation progress, and make timely adjustments to policies and programmes.

5.5 Training and Professional Development**Table 5. Training and Professional Development**

Indicator	Mean	SD
Regular training opportunities	2.51	0.96
Training relevant to job requirements	2.79	0.91
Equal access to training	2.63	0.94
Professional development opportunities	2.71	0.90
Application of acquired skills	3.01	0.86

Overall 2.73 0.84

Training and professional development emerged as one of the weakest dimensions of human capital (M = 2.73). Regular training opportunities received particularly low agreement (M = 2.51). Although employees who received training

reported relatively greater application of acquired skills (M = 3.01), limited access and irregular provision suggest that professional development is insufficiently institutionalized across government departments.

5.6 Employee Competencies and Implementation Performance

Table 6. Employee Competencies

Competency	Mean	SD
Problem-solving	3.48	0.74
Communication	3.55	0.71
Teamwork	3.51	0.73
Adaptability	3.33	0.79
Decision-making	3.37	0.76
Task performance	3.49	0.72
Overall	3.46	0.67

Employee competency was comparatively strong (M = 3.46), particularly communication, teamwork, and task performance. Adaptability received the lowest mean (M = 3.33), indicating some difficulty in responding to changing

administrative requirements. Overall, the findings suggest that employees possess useful operational competencies, but institutional conditions may prevent these capabilities from being fully translated into improved policy implementation.

5.7 Institutional Learning and Knowledge Management

Table 7. Institutional Learning and Knowledge Management

Indicator	Mean	SD
Knowledge sharing among employees	3.14	0.82
Documentation of experience	2.72	0.91
Learning from previous policies	2.94	0.87
Knowledge transfer after transfers	2.58	0.95
Preservation of institutional memory	2.69	0.90
Overall	2.81	0.83

Institutional learning represents another significant weakness (M = 2.81). Knowledge transfer following employee transfers recorded the lowest score (M = 2.58), followed by institutional memory (M = 2.69). The findings suggest that

departments remain dependent on individual experience rather than systematic knowledge-management mechanisms, potentially resulting in repeated implementation problems and loss of organizational knowledge.

5.8 Nature and Extent of the Public Policy Implementation Gap

Table 8. Major Dimensions of the Policy Implementation Gap

Implementation Problem	Mean	SD	Rank
Delays in implementation	4.01	0.72	1
Weak interdepartmental coordination	3.89	0.76	2
Human resource capacity limitations	3.82	0.78	3
Weak monitoring and evaluation	3.74	0.80	4
Resource utilization problems	3.62	0.84	5
Failure to achieve intended outcomes	3.57	0.81	6
Overall Implementation Gap	3.78	0.70	—

The overall mean of 3.78 demonstrates a substantial perceived policy implementation gap. Implementation delays emerged as the most serious problem ($M = 4.01$), followed by weak interdepartmental coordination ($M = 3.89$).

Human resource limitations also received strong agreement ($M = 3.82$), supporting the argument that institutional and workforce capacity contribute significantly to implementation difficulties in Balochistan.

5.9 Administrative Leadership Capacity in Government Departments

Table 9. Administrative Leadership Capacity

Leadership Dimension	Mean	SD
Strategic direction	3.39	0.78
Decision-making	3.46	0.75
Employee motivation	3.08	0.84
Coordination	3.16	0.82
Resource management	3.21	0.80
Accountability	3.03	0.87
Overall Leadership Capacity	3.22	0.72

Administrative leadership capacity was moderate ($M = 3.22$). Decision-making and strategic direction were rated comparatively positively, whereas accountability ($M = 3.03$) and employee motivation ($M = 3.08$) received lower scores. The

results indicate that leadership exists at the formal decision-making level but requires improvement in motivating employees, strengthening coordination, and ensuring accountability for implementation performance.

5.10 Leadership, Strategic Direction, and Policy Execution

Table 10. Strategic Leadership and Policy Execution

Indicator	Mean	SD
Clear communication of policy priorities	3.42	0.77
Clear implementation responsibilities	3.31	0.81
Translation of policies into targets	3.18	0.84
Timely managerial decisions	3.39	0.79

Guidance during implementation problems	3.28	0.82
Overall	3.32	0.73

Strategic leadership received an overall mean of 3.32. Communication of policy priorities was relatively strong, but translating policies into specific implementation targets was weaker (M = 3.18). This suggests that administrative leaders

communicate broad priorities but face difficulties converting them into measurable departmental responsibilities, which can weaken the connection between strategic policy direction and operational execution.

5.11 Leadership and Interdepartmental Coordination

Table 11. Leadership and Coordination

Indicator	Mean	SD
Coordination within departments	3.34	0.78
Coordination across departments	2.91	0.89
Information sharing	3.07	0.84
Joint problem-solving	2.98	0.87
Clarification of responsibilities	3.24	0.81
Overall	3.11	0.76

Interdepartmental coordination emerged as a leadership challenge, with an overall mean of 3.11. Coordination across departments recorded only 2.91, while joint problem-solving scored 2.98. The findings indicate that coordination is relatively

stronger within individual departments but becomes weaker across institutional boundaries, creating fragmentation when policy implementation requires cooperation among multiple provincial departments.

5.12 Leadership, Employee Motivation, and Resource Utilization

Table 12. Leadership, Motivation, and Resource Utilization

Indicator	Mean	SD
Recognition of employee performance	2.94	0.88
Employee involvement in decisions	2.89	0.91
Delegation of responsibilities	3.22	0.82
Appropriate staff utilization	3.08	0.85
Efficient resource allocation	3.17	0.81
Overall	3.06	0.78

The overall mean of 3.06 indicates weaknesses in employee motivation and resource utilization. Employee involvement in decision-making was particularly low (M = 2.89), while recognition of employee performance scored 2.94. These

findings suggest that limited participatory management and recognition may reduce employee motivation and prevent departments from fully utilizing the knowledge, experience, and capabilities of available personnel.

5.13 Leadership, Accountability, and Implementation Performance

Table 13. Leadership and Accountability

Indicator	Mean	SD
Clear performance responsibilities	3.24	0.81
Monitoring of implementation	3.09	0.86
Performance evaluation	2.98	0.90
Corrective action against delays	2.91	0.92
Accountability for policy outcomes	2.95	0.89
Overall	3.03	0.82

Accountability emerged as a comparatively weak leadership dimension ($M = 3.03$). Corrective action against implementation delays received the lowest score ($M = 2.91$). The results suggest that responsibilities may be formally assigned but

monitoring and corrective mechanisms remain weaker. This can allow implementation delays and performance deficiencies to continue without sufficient managerial response or institutional accountability.

5.14 Relationship between Human Capital Capacity and Policy Implementation

Table 14. Correlation and Regression Results

Relationship	r	β	t	p-value
Human Capital $\rightarrow$ Policy Implementation Effectiveness	.62	.57	8.94	<.001
Professional Knowledge $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.48	.21	4.18	<.001
Technical Skills $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.53	.24	4.73	<.001
Managerial Skills $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.56	.27	5.19	<.001
Training & Development $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.45	.18	3.62	<.001
Employee Competencies $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.51	.22	4.39	<.001
Institutional Learning $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.49	.20	3.97	<.001

Human capital capacity demonstrated a strong positive relationship with policy implementation effectiveness ($r = .62$, $\beta = .57$, $p < .001$). All six dimensions were statistically significant, with managerial skills producing the strongest

individual effect ($\beta = .27$). The findings therefore demonstrate that stronger workforce knowledge, competencies, skills, training, and institutional learning are associated with more effective policy implementation.

5.15 Moderating Role of Administrative Leadership

Table 15. Moderation Analysis

Predictor	β	SE	t	p-value
Human Capital Capacity	.41	.052	7.88	<.001
Administrative Leadership	.34	.049	6.94	<.001
Human Capital $\times$ Leadership	.19	.045	4.22	<.001
R²	.52			
ΔR^2 from Interaction	.04			<.001

The interaction between human capital capacity and administrative leadership was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), explaining an additional 4% of variance. This confirms the moderating role of leadership.

Human capital therefore produces stronger implementation outcomes when administrative leadership is effective, demonstrating that employee capability and leadership quality operate as complementary institutional resources.

5.16 Testing of Research Hypotheses

Table 16. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	p-value	Decision
H1	Human Capital $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.57	<.001	Supported
H1a	Professional Knowledge $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.21	<.001	Supported
H1b	Technical Skills $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.24	<.001	Supported
H1c	Managerial Skills $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.27	<.001	Supported
H1d	Training & Development $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.18	<.001	Supported
H1e	Employee Competencies $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.22	<.001	Supported
H1f	Institutional Learning $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.20	<.001	Supported
H2	Administrative Leadership $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.34	<.001	Supported
H3	Human Capital $\times$ Leadership $\rightarrow$ Implementation	.19	<.001	Supported

The hypothesis tests support all proposed relationships. Human capital capacity significantly predicted implementation effectiveness, while each individual human capital dimension also produced a positive effect. Administrative leadership independently influenced

implementation and significantly moderated the human capital-implementation relationship. These results provide empirical support for the study's integrated theoretical framework and highlight the combined importance of workforce capacity and administrative leadership.

5.17 Qualitative Findings from Senior Administrators and Policymakers

Table 17. Major Themes Emerging from Interviews (n = 18)

Theme	Participants Mentioning Theme	Percentage
Inadequate professional training	15	83.3
Skill-position mismatch	14	77.8
Frequent transfers affecting continuity	13	72.2
Weak interdepartmental coordination	14	77.8
Limited institutional learning	12	66.7
Leadership and accountability weaknesses	13	72.2
Political/administrative interference	11	61.1

Qualitative findings reinforce the survey results. Most interviewees identified inadequate professional training (83.3%), while 77.8% highlighted skill-position mismatch and weak interdepartmental coordination. Frequent

transfers and leadership weaknesses were also prominent. Senior officials particularly emphasized that Balochistan's implementation problem is not exclusively a shortage of employees but also concerns deployment, professional

development, continuity, coordination, and effective utilization of existing capacity.

5.18 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 18. Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Key Issue	Quantitative Evidence	Qualitative Evidence	Overall Interpretation
Human capital capacity	Moderate (M = 3.17)	Skill gaps widely reported	Convergence
Training	Low (M = 2.73)	83.3% identified inadequate training	Strong convergence
Institutional learning	Low (M = 2.81)	66.7% reported weak learning	Convergence
Coordination	Weak (M = 3.11)	77.8% reported coordination problems	Strong convergence
Leadership	Moderate (M = 3.22)	72.2% identified leadership weaknesses	Convergence
Implementation gap	High (M = 3.78)	Implementation barriers widely reported	Strong convergence

Triangulation reveals substantial convergence between quantitative and qualitative evidence. Both datasets identify training, institutional learning, coordination, and leadership as important institutional weaknesses. The significant statistical relationship between human capital and implementation is reinforced by administrators' experiences. Overall, the findings indicate that reducing Balochistan's policy implementation gap requires simultaneous improvement in workforce capacity and the administrative leadership responsible for utilizing that capacity.

6. Discussion

6.1 Human Capital Deficits and the Policy Implementation Gap

The findings have revealed a distinct correlation between the capacity of human capital and effectiveness of policy implementation in Balochistan. Overall human capital capacity was moderate (M = 3.17) and the implementation gap was comparatively high (M = 3.78). The human capital capacity had a strong positive relationship to implementation effectiveness ($r = .62$; $\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) more importantly. These findings show that gaps in workforce knowledge, skills, training,

competencies and institutional learning have a significant impact on challenges translating policy decisions into effective results.

This finding contributes to the overall notion that policy enacting requires the capacities of public officials who are charged with translating government decisions into working programmes. Skilled, adaptive and professionally able civil servants are at the heart of effective policy implementation, as the OECD (2020, 2023) highlights. The World Bank (2023) also ranks institutional capability as one of the key needs for improving policy implementation in Pakistan. The current results contribute to the above by providing an empirical proof that human capital gaps are a key part of Balochistan's implementation gaps.

6.2 Which Dimensions of Human Capital Matter Most?

The results show significant variations between human capital dimensions. Overall, professional knowledge was most highly rated, with training and development (M = 2.73) and institutional learning (M = 2.81) being especially low. The results of the regression analysis also showed that the managerial skills had the highest individual

path coefficient on implementation effectiveness ($\beta = .27$), followed by technical skills ($\beta = .24$), employee competencies ($\beta = .22$), professional knowledge ($\beta = .21$), institutional learning ($\beta = .20$), and training and development ($\beta = .18$).

These findings indicate that formal qualifications and policy knowledge are not enough for effective implementation. Government departments have a particular need for staff who are able to manage resources, solve problems, coordinate activities, apply evidence, monitor programmes and implement policy in operational decisions. This interpretation aligns with the OECD evidence that highlights the importance of professional skills, adaptable capabilities, and effective public-sector management as building blocks of implementation capacity (OECD, 2023). In this regard, human capital reform in Balochistan should be based on having practical competencies of the employees and not just on increasing the numbers or qualifications.

6.3 Administrative Leadership and its impact on implementation capacity

Another important factor in the policy implementation was administrative leadership. Leadership capacity was rated as moderately ($M = 3.22$), with higher ratings for decision making and strategic direction, and lower ratings for employee motivation, coordination and accountability. There was also a strong positive effect of administrative leadership on the implementation effectiveness ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$). These results suggest that the implementation gap is not solely dependent upon employee knowledge and competencies, but also on how their knowledge and competencies are applied and directed by the administrative leaders.

This discovery aligns with the OECD belief that senior civil-service officials play a key role in supporting implementation of political decisions, to transform them into actionable initiatives and to mobilize human and financial resources for implementation (OECD, 2020). This is also seen in other public institutions in developing countries, where the lack of leadership and managerial development may affect the

effectiveness of institutions and service provision (Hussein, 2024). Thus, administrative leadership should be thought of not as just a hierarchical administrative role but as an implementation capacity.

6.4 Does Effective Leadership Make up for Limited Human Capital?

The most important discovery is that administrative leadership is a moderator. The relationship between human capital capacity and administrative leadership was positive and significant ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), accounting for 4% of the variance in the model. This implies that human capital in its contribution to implementation is more positive when there is effective administrative leadership. Therefore, capable leadership can be used to enhance the mobilization of available employee knowledge, skills and competencies for policy implementation. But leadership should not be taken to mean that poor human resources is not a problem. Good managers can better allocate jobs, motivate staff, coordinate tasks and make use of resources, but they can do little to remedy a lack of technical skills, lack of training or low levels of learning inside the institution. The results thus lend strength to a complementary relationship, where good employees need good leaders and good leaders need capable employees. This confirms OECD research that successful implementation depends on two key factors: capable public servants and capable senior leadership (OECD, 2020, 2023).

6.5 Institutional and Administrative Barriers in Balochistan

Other institutional obstacles are also identified. The highest problem score was for implementation delays ($M = 4.01$), followed by weak interdepartmental coordination ($M = 3.89$) and human resource capacity limitations ($M = 3.82$). These findings are supported by qualitative evidence which found that of the officials interviewed 83.3% considered that a lack of professional training was a problem, 77.8% believed that there was a mismatch between the

skills and positions, 77.8% believed that there were coordination issues, and 72.2% believed that frequent transfers prevented administration continuity.

This is in response to the old governance issues of Balochistan. The governance reform process in the province cannot be divorced from its institutional and political environment, according to Ahmad and Akif (2007). The more recent evidence points to the fact that there are still implementation issues in Balochistan related to coordination, administrative support, monitoring, accountability, resources and geographical conditions. A study by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2024) has also identified policy and institutional gaps that impact on service delivery in the province.

6.6 Comparison of Findings with Previous Studies

The results overall corroborate existing studies and offer a more fine-grained human-capital account of implementation performance. Ahmad and Akif (2007) highlighted the institutional and political barriers to governance reforms in Balochistan and the World Bank's Governance and Policy Project specifically emphasized on strengthening institutional capacity, public financial management, accountability and service delivery. Recent studies on local government in Balochistan also found that there is a mismatch between the policy intent and what is implemented in the field due to political, financial, and governance constraints (Baqi & Mahmood, 2025).

The current study takes this literature one step further by demonstrating quantitatively that human capital capacity alone is a significant predictor of implementation effectiveness ($\beta = .57$). It also shows that this relationship is moderated by administrative leadership. This is an important addition to the existing Balochistan literature that is preoccupied with governance, resources, political economy or sector-specific implementation issues. The findings suggests that the issue of implementation also has to be seen as a human-resource and leadership matter, focusing on competencies, deployment, institutional

learning, coordination and utilization of available human resources.

6.7 Theoretical Implications

The results support the Human Capital Theory as they show that employee knowledge, technical and managerial skills, training, competencies and institutional learning are positively related to implementation effectiveness. But the results also suggest that human capital is not solely dependent on the organizational conditions. The substantial moderating role of administrative leadership reveals that the human capital value of the institution is not only determined by the availability of human resources but also by how they are mobilised, coordinated and marshalled for policy goals.

The study thus makes a contribution to theory through combining Human Capital Theory, Policy Implementation Theory and administrative leadership in a single explanatory framework. The findings indicate that the implementation failure of a policy cannot simply be attributed to a policy design issue or to inadequate resources; rather it is a sequential institutional relationship with human capital providing implementation capability and administration providing activation and direction. This approach is especially helpful in understanding the implementation performance of institutionally constrained subnational governments.

6.8 Public Management and Policy Implications

The findings have important implications for public management in Balochistan. Beyond traditional budget-driven, post creation, or policy change, implementation needs to be enhanced. There is a need for provincial departments to recruit and deploy based on competency, undertake systematic training needs assessment, provide continuous professional development, boost their technical and managerial capacities, establish institutional knowledge management systems and ensure employees' competencies and responsibilities are better matched.

Leadership reform must take place in parallel. Administrative leaders need to have enhanced

ability to strategically manage, coordinate between departments, motivate staff, monitor performance and hold staff accountable. This is especially relevant considering the significant service delivery responsibilities of the provinces in the context of Pakistan's federal system; coordination, incentives, and service delivery performance at all levels of government remain a key focus in recent World Bank analysis (World Bank, 2026). The central policy implication is that, to close the gap in implementation in Balochistan, investments in people, leadership, and institutional systems need to be made in parallel to administrative investments.

7. Policy and Administrative Recommendations

7.1 Improve Human Capital Planning in Government Departments

Human capital should be part of a systematic plan for a provincial department, in line with their policy and services delivery mandate. A shortage in professional knowledge, technical skills, managerial abilities, and specialized competencies should be identified through regular assessment. HRP should be linked with the priorities of the various departments so that they can have the right kind of skills for proper implementation of policies.

7.2 Competency Based Recruitment and Deployment

The recruitment and deployment process should progress towards competency-based options for employment, ensuring employees' qualifications, expertise and experience meet specific job needs. The results of the skill-position mismatch highlights the need for improved placement practices. Whilst the calibre of personnel in policy functions has an impact on the effectiveness of the platform's technical solutions, with appropriate deployment of workforce with merit, workforce utilization can be enhanced.

7.3. Continuous Professional Development and Training

Continuous professional development should be institutionalized within all government

departments, with regular training-needs assessments and jobs specific training programmes. There is a need to prioritize the policy analysis, project management, monitoring and evaluation, digital skills, data analysis, and managerial competencies. Training results are also to be assessed to see if the skills acquired enhance the work performance of employees.

7.4 Administrative Leadership Development

Leadership development programmes that are structured should be implemented for senior and middle level administrators. The focus of training should be strategic planning, decision making, employee motivation, conflict resolution, coordination, resource management and accountability. The results reveal that effective administrative leadership enhances the positive relationship between human capital capacity and policy implementation, especially, which makes leadership development very important.

7.5 Strengthening institutional learning and knowledge management

Mechanisms to document and transfer institutional knowledge should be put in place in the provincial departments in a systematic way. Accessible institutional repositories should be developed and kept to store policy experiences, project evaluations, implementation challenges and lessons learned. Transfers of key officials should be accompanied by formal handover procedures to avoid institutional memory loss and policy continuity breaks.

7.6 Improving Interdepartmental Coordination

The formal coordination mechanisms between the different departments should be enhanced for policies that need the participation of several departments. Fragmentation can be minimized through interdepartmental working groups, focal persons, shared information systems and regular implementation reviews. Responsibilities and timelines should be explicit and coordination failures should not impede policy action or diminish group accountability for results.

7.7. Performance Management & Accountability

Government departments need to further develop performance management by linking individual and departmental accountability with policy implementation targets. Delays and weaknesses in implementation should be detected early in the regular monitoring. The performance assessment process should focus on outcomes, not process and implementation, and there should be clear accountability procedures in place to guarantee that implementation targets are met in a timely fashion.

7.8 Relating Human Resource capacity to the implementation of Policy

HR policies should be directly aligned with the responsibilities of the departments. Departments should examine the capacity for technical, managerial and administrative implementation of policies or programmes prior to the launching of major policies or programmes. Before implementation, any gaps in competencies identified should be resolved via recruitment, deployment, training or technical support prior to the start of work.

7.9 Institutional Framework for Reducing the Implementation Gap

An integrated institutional mechanism should be developed within the Government of Balochistan between human capital planning, leadership development, implementation monitoring and departmental performance. An effective central mechanism to periodically review implementation capability and pinpoint institutional constraints. This would change the nature of administrative reform from a series of interventions to a systematic approach towards better outcomes of policy implementation.

7.10 Balochistan Human Capital Capacity Index

The Government of Balochistan should develop a **Balochistan Human Capital Capacity Index (BHCCI)** to annually assess professional knowledge, technical and managerial competencies, digital capabilities, training

exposure, and institutional learning across departments. The index would identify capacity gaps, enable departmental comparisons, and provide evidence for targeted recruitment, training, deployment, and administrative reforms.

7.11 Policy Implementation Readiness Assessment

A **Policy Implementation Readiness Assessment (PIRA)** should be mandatory before launching major provincial policies and programmes. It should evaluate human resources, required competencies, financing, institutional responsibilities, leadership arrangements, technology, coordination, and monitoring capacity. Policies with significant readiness gaps should receive targeted institutional support before full-scale implementation to reduce avoidable implementation failures.

7.12 Digital Human Capital-Position Matching System

S&GAD should establish a province-wide digital skills inventory containing officers' qualifications, professional experience, specialized training, technical expertise, and previous assignments. A competency-based matching mechanism could support postings and deployment decisions by aligning employee capabilities with departmental requirements, thereby reducing skill-position mismatch and improving utilization of existing human capital.

7.13 Policy Implementation and Delivery Units

Major provincial departments should establish small **Policy Implementation and Delivery Units** responsible for monitoring priority policies against clearly defined milestones. These units should identify implementation bottlenecks, coordinate corrective action, track departmental responsibilities, and regularly report progress to administrative leadership, thereby creating an institutional bridge between policy formulation and actual implementation.

7.14 Administrative Leadership Performance Dashboard

A digital **Administrative Leadership Performance Dashboard** should monitor policy milestones, implementation delays, budget utilization, interdepartmental coordination, staff development, service-delivery indicators, and corrective actions. Linking senior administrative performance with measurable implementation outcomes would help shift the existing administrative culture from procedural compliance toward results-oriented leadership, performance management, and institutional accountability.

7.15 Institutional Knowledge Continuity Protocol

A standardized **Institutional Knowledge Continuity Protocol** should be introduced for transfers of secretaries, directors, project directors, and other key officials. Mandatory digital handover records should document ongoing policies, implementation progress, pending decisions, deadlines, institutional contacts, and lessons learned. This mechanism would reduce institutional-memory loss and policy discontinuity resulting from frequent administrative transfers.

7.16 Balochistan Public Sector Competency Framework

The provincial government should develop a **Balochistan Public Sector Competency Framework** defining the knowledge and skills required at different administrative levels. Competencies should include policy analysis, project management, digital governance, financial management, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, coordination, and leadership. Recruitment, promotion, deployment, and professional development should progressively align with this framework.

7.17 Balochistan Policy Implementation Observatory

A **Balochistan Policy Implementation Observatory** should be established through collaboration between the Planning and

Development Department and S&GAD. It could conduct implementation-capacity audits, maintain performance data, evaluate major policies, document lessons, and publish an annual **Balochistan Policy Implementation Performance Report**, creating an evidence base for continuous administrative and policy improvement.

7.18 District-Based Capacity Differentiation Model

A uniform administrative capacity model is unsuitable for Balochistan's diverse districts. A **District Capacity Differentiation Model** should classify districts according to remoteness, population, vacancies, service-delivery burden, infrastructure, and implementation complexity. Staffing levels, technical assistance, training, financial incentives, and specialist deployment should then be differentiated according to the specific capacity requirements of each district.

8. Conclusion

The study explored correlation among human capital capacity and public policy implementation in the government departments of Balochistan province, focusing on the moderating effect of administrative leadership. The results show that the policy implementation gap is not only due to financial, political or geographical barriers; it is also strongly related to the ability of public institutions and public workers to convert policy aims into actionable policies.

The findings showed a moderate level of human capital capacity in general and professional knowledge and employee competencies were relatively stronger. But key gaps in training and professional development, institutional learning, technical capacity and knowledge management were identified. Relationships between managerial and technical skills and implementation effectiveness were found to be particularly important. Based on these findings, there is a need to focus on the quality, relevance, development and effective use of human resources in the provincial departments to improve the outcomes of policy.

The study also provided evidence as to the significance of administrative leadership in establishing the performance of implementation. There was a rather weak level of employee motivation, interdepartmental coordination, performance monitoring and accountability, but a relatively strong level of strategic direction and decision making. Most importantly, the moderation analysis results showed that strong administrative leadership enhances the positive relationships between human capital capacity and policy implementation. So, good staff will generate good implementation results if it is supported by good administration.

The qualitative findings also indicated problems of low professional training, lack of skills, frequent transfers, limited institutional learning, coordination problems and leadership and accountability constraints. From quantitative and qualitative evidence there is a convergence to show that the reasons of the implementation gap in Balochistan are due to interconnected human resource, leadership and institutional weaknesses. Isolation of individual factors therefore is unlikely to lead to sustainable improvements in public sector performance and service delivery.

The study suggests a need for an integrated administrative reform approach focusing on human capital development, effective leadership, institutional learning, coordination and accountability in order to reduce the public policy implementation gap in Balochistan. Provincial governance reform should focus on competency-based recruitment and deployment, continuous professional development, leadership development, knowledge-management systems, and performance-based administration. Finally, good policies will yield results only if government departments have the human resources and administrative leadership to make them come to fruition.

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