

Innovative Leadership and Educational Management: A Systematic Review of the Relationship and Impact

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Abstract - The increasing complexity and rapid changes in global education systems require educational institutions to adopt adaptive, innovative, and sustainable management practices. Leadership is recognized as a key determinant of effective educational management. This study aims to systematically examine the relationship and impact of innovative leadership on educational management based on research published over the last five years. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach by analyzing 17 relevant national and international scholarly articles. Data were collected through a systematic literature search, screened using inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that innovative leadership has a strong and consistent relationship with educational management effectiveness and plays a significant role in transforming governance structures, strengthening innovation culture, and improving learning quality and educational services. Furthermore, innovation culture emerged as a key mediating mechanism that enhances the impact of innovative leadership on organizational performance in educational settings. This study contributes to the advancement of educational management theory by positioning innovative leadership as a strategic construct and provides practical insights for educational leaders and policymakers in developing innovative and sustainable leadership strategies.

Keywords – Innovative leadership, educational management, educational leadership, innovation culture, systematic literature review

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the global education landscape, driven by technological advancements, 21st-century competency demands, and educational policy dynamics, place educational institutions in increasingly complex and uncertain situations. Schools and educational institutions are compelled not only to maintain organizational stability but also to adapt, innovate, and sustainably enhance service quality. In this context, educational leadership emerges as a key factor determining the success of educational management and transformation [1] [2].

However, field realities indicate that many educational institutions still face various managerial

issues, such as weak innovation culture, low decision-making effectiveness, resistance to change, and limited leader capacity in systematically managing organizational transformation. Several studies show that educational management practices remain predominantly administrative, reactive, and insufficiently innovation-oriented, impacting low teacher performance, learning effectiveness, and education service quality[3] [4]. This condition underscores the urgent need for a leadership model that is not only visionary but also innovative and adaptive to educational environmental changes.

In line with these issues, *innovative leadership* emerges as a leadership approach believed capable of addressing contemporary educational management challenges. Innovative leadership emphasizes leaders' abilities to create innovative visions, foster organizational creativity, facilitate collaboration, and integrate innovation into managerial and learning practices [5][6]. Various studies demonstrate that innovative leaders play a crucial role in driving educational management transformation, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and strengthening innovation culture in schools and higher education institutions [7][8].

Although research on innovative leadership and educational management has grown in recent years, most studies remain partial and fragmented. Some focus on specific leadership styles such as transformational, authentic, humble, or digital leadership without comprehensively examining their relationships and impacts on the overall educational management system [9][10][11]. Additionally, few studies systematically map how innovative leadership contributes to various dimensions of educational management, such as school governance, organizational effectiveness, managerial innovation, and education service quality within a unified analytical framework.

The identified research gap lies in the absence of a systematic synthesis that explicitly examines the relationship and impact of innovative leadership on educational management across contexts and educational levels. Previous studies tend to position innovative leadership as a supporting or derivative variable, rather than a core construct in a holistic educational management framework [2] [12]. Therefore, research is needed to systematically integrate empirical and theoretical findings to produce more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this study lies in developing a systematic literature review that specifically maps patterns of relationships and impacts of innovative leadership on educational management. This research not only compiles prior study findings but also develops a conceptual synthesis linking innovative leadership to educational management transformation, innovation culture, organizational effectiveness, and improved learning quality. Thus, this study offers a new perspective positioning innovative leadership as a strategic element in advancing contemporary educational management theory and practice.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In general, the purpose of this study is to systematically analyze the relationship and impact of innovative leadership on educational management based on research findings from the past five years. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions by strengthening the conceptual framework of innovative leadership in the field of educational management, as well as practical contributions for educational leaders and policymakers in designing innovative, adaptive, and sustainable leadership strategies.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research Type and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design. This approach was selected to obtain a comprehensive and structured understanding of the relationship and impact of innovative leadership on educational management, based on empirical and theoretical evidence from research over the past five years. SLR enables researchers to systematically identify patterns in findings, research gaps, and directions for theoretical and practical development in educational leadership.

Subjects and Data Sources

The subjects in this study are not individuals directly, but rather relevant scientific articles on the research topic. A total of 17 research articles were selected as the primary units of analysis. These articles come from reputable national and international journals, published between 2021–2025, and explicitly address innovative leadership in the context of educational management.

Research Location

This study is not conducted at a specific physical location but is a library study with cross-contextual and regional scope. The analyzed articles originate from various educational settings, such as early childhood education, primary and secondary education, Islamic education, and higher education, both in national and international contexts.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature searches on scientific journal databases and academic publication portals. The search process used primary keywords such as *innovative leadership*, *educational leadership*, and *educational management*. The data collection stages included:

- Identification of articles based on keywords,
- Selection of titles and abstracts,
- Full-text review,
- Final screening based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this study is a data extraction sheet developed by the researcher. This instrument is used to record and organize key information from each article, including: author and publication year, research objectives, educational context, methodological approach, main findings, and implications for innovative leadership and educational management.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved several stages:

- Grouping findings based on main themes,
- Identifying patterns of relationships between innovative leadership and educational management,
- Synthesizing research results across contexts,
- Drawing conclusions on the impacts and implications of innovative leadership in educational management.

This analysis aims to produce a comprehensive conceptual mapping and strengthen theoretical and practical arguments regarding the role of innovative leadership in contemporary educational management development.



Research Flowchart Design

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Analysis Results of Articles on Innovative Leadership and Educational Management

No	Author & Year	Research Focus	Main Findings on Innovative Leadership and Educational Management
1	Nugroho et al. (2025)[5]	Innovative leadership & organizationa l	Innovative leadership acts as the main driver

		performance of organizationa l innovation and improved managerial performance		childhood education	early childhood learning management effectiveness
2	Vergiansyah et al. (2024)[9]	Humble leadership in education	Humble leadership strengthens collaboration and supports school management innovation	Anindhyta et al. (2023) [7] Digital leadership & research culture	Digital leadership strengthens innovation and research management
3	Sugiyanto (2025)[13]	Leadership styles & sustainable education	Innovative leadership supports management sustainability and education quality	Mukhtar et al. (2025) [2] Educational leadership innovation	Innovative leadership improves adaptability and educational management effectiveness
4	Prastianingsih et al. (2025)[10]	Authentic school principal leadership	Authentic leadership fosters trust and school management effectiveness	Trimulyo et al. (2025) [11] Transformational leadership & management innovation	Transformational leadership drives managerial innovation
5	Hojeij (2024) [1]	Educational leadership & innovation	Educational leaders play a strategic role in fostering innovation and educational entrepreneurship	Halimah et al. (2024) [3] Innovative leadership & management transformation	Innovative leadership accelerates educational governance transformation
6	Ali (2022) [14]	Innovative leadership in early	Innovative leadership enhances	Fadhl et al. (2025) [15] Instructional leadership & service quality	Instructional leadership improves educational service quality
				Citrانingsih (2025) [4] School principals as innovative leaders	Innovative leadership supports Merdeka

			Belajar policy implementation			
13	Lahersa et al. (2025) [8]	Leadership & innovation management	Innovative leadership enhances management effectiveness and budget management			
14	Riddel & Zulfikar (2024) [16]	Innovative leadership & learning effectiveness	Innovative leadership impacts student learning effectiveness			
15	Fuad et al. (2025) [12]	Innovative leadership in educational settings	Innovative leadership as a strategic factor in educational management			
16	Karim et al. (2025) [6]	Digital leadership & administrative innovation	Digital leadership improves school management effectiveness			
17	Mutoharoh et al. (2023) [17]	Innovative leadership & teacher performance	Innovative leadership significantly influences teacher performance			
				Core Components of Innovative Leadership		Most studies remain fragmented, focusing on isolated leadership styles like transformational, authentic, humble, or digital leadership without comprehensive analysis of their integrated impact on holistic educational management systems. Research often treats innovative leadership as a supporting rather than core construct, lacking systematic mapping of its relationships across educational levels, governance structures, and management dimensions (Vergiansyah et al., 2024; Prastianingsih et al., 2025). Few studies provide unified analytical frameworks connecting innovative leadership to specific outcomes like teacher performance, service quality, and institutional

Table 2. Key Findings and Research Gaps

Theme	Key Findings from Prior Studies	Identified Gaps

		sustainability.	
Direct Relationships and Mediation Effects	<p>Synthesis reveals direct relationships between innovative leadership and educational management processes, with innovation culture acting as the primary mediating mechanism that amplifies impacts on teacher performance, learning effectiveness, and organizational outcomes.</p> <p>Innovative leaders foster climates supporting experimentation and collaboration, creating indirect effects on education quality (Anindhyta et al., 2023; Hojeij, 2024). This mediation explains transformation from administrative to strategic management practices.</p>	<p>Limited empirical studies examine mediation mechanisms systematically, particularly how innovation culture translates leadership into measurable management outcomes across contexts. Cross-contextual comparisons remain scarce, with most research confined to school settings rather than spanning early childhood, Islamic education, and higher education holistically (Halimah et al., 2024; Lahersa et al., 2025).</p>	<p>produce outcomes including enhanced management effectiveness, teacher professionalism, learning quality, and institutional sustainability. Table 2 demonstrates consistent patterns across methods (SLR, qualitative, quantitative), with strongest evidence from school and PAUD contexts supporting policy implementation like Merdeka Belajar (Citrانingsih, 2025; Mutoharoh et al., 2023).</p>
Contextual Integration and Outcomes	<p>Innovative leadership integrates with other styles (transformational, digital, instructional) to</p>	<p>Studies lack longitudinal analysis of outcome sustainability and fail to address implementation</p>	<p>barriers in resource-constrained settings. Multi-context syntheses are needed to develop flexible, multidimensional models applicable beyond single institutions or national boundaries (Fuad et al., 2025; Karim et al., 2025).</p>

1. Literature Synthesis Results Based on Conceptual Model

Based on the systematic literature review of 17 selected articles, the main findings were mapped into the *Innovative Leadership and Educational Management Impact* conceptual model. This model positions innovative leadership as the core construct influencing various dimensions of educational management through organizational mechanisms and innovation culture.

The analysis results indicate that innovative leadership operates through four main components:

1. Innovative vision and change orientation,
2. Support for creativity and collaboration,
3. Strengthening managerial and digital capacities, and
4. Formation of sustainable innovation culture.

These four components function as driving forces linking leadership to educational management outcomes, as represented in this study's conceptual model.

2. Relationship Between Innovative Leadership and Educational Management

As shown in the initial part of the conceptual model, the synthesis results reveal a direct and consistent relationship between innovative leadership and educational management effectiveness. Innovative leaders act as strategic leaders capable of aligning organizational vision with managerial practices, including strategic planning, data-based decision-making, and educational resource management [5] [2].

In the conceptual model, this relationship is depicted by a direct arrow from *Innovative Leadership* to *Educational Management Processes*. These findings affirm that educational management quality cannot be separated from leadership capacity in driving organizational innovation and adaptation.

3. Impact of Innovative Leadership on Educational Management Transformation

The second component of the conceptual model shows that innovative leadership significantly impacts educational management transformation. Research results indicate that innovative leadership drives institutional governance changes, increased accountability, and management system flexibility in responding to educational environmental changes [3] [8].

This transformation is reflected in the shift of management practices from administrative to strategic and innovative approaches. In the model, this impact is visualized as an *organizational transformation pathway*, linking innovative leadership to improved management effectiveness and educational service quality.

4. Role of Innovation Culture as a Mediating Mechanism

The study results show that innovation culture serves as the primary mediating mechanism in the relationship between innovative leadership and educational management outcomes. Innovative leaders create an organizational climate that supports creativity, professional collaboration, and experimentation in learning and managerial practices [7][1].

In the conceptual model, innovation culture is positioned as a mediating factor that strengthens leadership influence on teacher performance improvement, learning effectiveness, and overall organizational performance. This explains why innovative leadership has significant indirect impacts on education quality.

5. Integration of Innovative Leadership with Other Leadership Approaches

As depicted in the supporting layer of the conceptual model, innovative leadership is often integrated with other leadership styles, such as transformational, authentic, humble, and digital leadership[9][10][6]. This integration enhances leadership effectiveness by combining innovation, ethical values, transformational vision, and technology utilization.

These findings indicate that innovative leadership is multidimensional and contextual, making the conceptual model developed in this study flexible and applicable across various educational levels and contexts.

6. Educational Management Outcomes and Model Implications

The final part of the conceptual model shows that innovative leadership impacts several main outcomes:

1. Improved educational management effectiveness,

2. Enhanced teacher performance and professionalism,
3. Improved learning and educational service quality, and
4. Strengthened institutional sustainability.

These outcomes result from the dynamic interaction between innovative leadership, innovation culture, and adaptive educational management practices. Thus, this study's conceptual model is not only descriptive but also explains the mechanisms of relationships and impacts of innovative leadership in the educational management context.

7. Synthesis of Discussion Based on Conceptual Model

Overall, these results and discussion confirm that innovative leadership is a strategic determinant in educational management development. The developed conceptual model comprehensively explains the structural and functional relationships between innovative leadership and educational management outcomes.

This model provides theoretical contributions by strengthening the position of innovative leadership as a key construct in educational management studies, as well as practical contributions as a reference framework for leaders and policymakers in designing innovative, adaptive, and sustainable leadership strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the systematic literature review of 17 scientific articles published in the last five years, this study concludes that innovative leadership maintains a strong, consistent, and strategic relationship with educational management effectiveness. Innovative leadership proves to be the primary driver in governance transformation, strengthening innovation culture, and enhancing

learning quality and educational services across various educational levels and contexts.

The synthesis results demonstrate that innovative leadership not only directly impacts educational management processes but also operates through innovation culture as a mediating mechanism that fosters collaboration, creativity, and organizational adaptation. Innovative educational leaders strategically integrate change vision, managerial capacity, and technology utilization, resulting in more effective, responsive, and sustainable educational management systems.

This study also concludes that innovative leadership is multidimensional and integrative, frequently intersecting with other leadership approaches such as transformational, authentic, humble, and digital leadership. This integration strengthens leadership effectiveness in addressing contemporary educational challenges while affirming the flexibility of the conceptual model developed in this research.

Theoretically, this study contributes to educational management scholarship by positioning innovative leadership as a key construct explaining leadership relationships and impacts on management effectiveness. Practically, these findings provide a conceptual foundation for educational leaders and policymakers to design innovation-oriented leadership strategies focused on organizational transformation and sustainable education quality improvement.

In conclusion, the conceptual model generated from this research serves as a reference framework for future studies and educational leadership practices, particularly in strengthening adaptive and relevant educational management amid global change demands.

Recommendations

Based on this study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for practice, policy, and future research development in educational leadership and management:

1. Practical Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Educational leaders, particularly school principals and institutional leaders, are advised to systematically develop innovative leadership competencies. This can be achieved through strengthening innovative vision, empowering teachers and educational staff, and creating organizational climates that support creativity and collaboration. Leaders should also integrate innovation into daily managerial processes such as strategic planning, decision-making, and institutional performance evaluation.

2. Recommendations for Educational Policymakers

Policymakers at central and regional levels are advised to incorporate innovative leadership as a core component in educational leadership development policies. Training and professional development programs for educational leaders should extend beyond administrative aspects to include innovative capabilities, adaptation to change, and technology utilization in educational management. Policies supporting innovation culture in schools and educational institutions should also be strengthened.

3. Recommendations for Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are advised to make innovation culture an integral part of educational management systems. This includes providing space for pedagogical experimentation, professional collaboration,

and digital technology utilization to enhance management and learning effectiveness. Implementation of the innovative leadership conceptual model from this research can serve as a guide for sustainable institutional development planning.

4. Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future research is recommended to empirically test the innovative leadership and educational management conceptual model using quantitative or mixed-method approaches across various contexts and educational levels. Additionally, subsequent studies could explore mediating and moderating variables such as organizational culture, digital readiness, and leader characteristics to deepen understanding of innovative leadership influence mechanisms on educational management.

5. Recommendations for Theory Development

In developing educational leadership and management theory, innovative leadership should be positioned as a strategic construct standing alongside other leadership models. Integrating innovative leadership with transformational, authentic, and digital leadership approaches can become a relevant theoretical development direction addressing global education change needs.

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