



21st-Century Educational Leadership: A Review of Core Theories, Managerial Perspectives, and Emerging Trends

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Abstract

Educational leadership plays an important role in improving the quality of learning, teacher professionalism, and the effectiveness of school and university organizations. This article aims to review the development of core educational leadership theory, the integration of managerial perspectives, and contemporary leadership trends in the 21st century. Using a scoping review approach, 30 selected articles (2019–2024) were analyzed from international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Springer, and ERIC. The review results show that instructional and strategic leadership remain the main foundation, but are now transforming through the integration of management theory and digital innovation. New trends such as digital, emotional–spiritual, and virtue-based leadership expand the focus of leadership from academic effectiveness to well-being, collaboration, and ethical values. This study emphasizes the need for an adaptive and value-based educational leadership model that combines classical theory, managerial insights, and technology to address global challenges.

Keywords: *educational leadership; instructional leadership; strategic leadership; innovation; governance.*

Introduction

Educational leadership has long been recognized as an important factor in determining the quality of learning, teacher professional development, and the effectiveness of school and college organizations. Various studies show that effective leadership can indirectly influence student learning outcomes through the role of teachers, school climate, and management strategies implemented (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021). In the context of globalization and digital transformation, educational leadership faces new demands to not only focus on instruction but also to integrate managerial, entrepreneurial, and cross-sector collaboration dimensions (Brauckmann et al., 2023; Carvalho et al., 2021; McKay et al., 2025; Zhu & Caliskan, 2021).

A number of studies have highlighted emerging models of educational leadership, ranging from instructional leadership (Alanoglu, 2022; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021), transformational leadership (Moghaddam, 2024) to distributed leadership (Walker & Qian, 2022). This study also found new variations, such as spiritual leadership (Fry & Egel, 2021) and emotional leadership (Heffernan et al., 2022), that attempt to address the complexity of modern

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A Non-Research Article: Article Review

educational demands. However, most studies tend to remain within the domain of pure education, while the potential for integration with management and business theory remains limited. For example, the concept of empowerment leadership, which has been proven to enhance organizational innovation in the business world, is now being tested in the context of higher education (Brant et al., 2020; Gardner-McTaggart, 2022; Supriyanto et al., 2023).

On the other hand, contemporary challenges such as digitization, globalization, and sustainability require education leaders to develop new competencies, including digital literacy, intercultural sensitivity, and values- and character-based leadership (Brant et al., 2020; Gardner-McTaggart, 2022). This indicates a research gap: there is still a lack of comprehensive studies that integrate core educational leadership theory, management/business perspectives, and contemporary trends into a single analytical framework.

Based on these conditions, this article aims to review the development of educational leadership research in the 2019-2024 period by emphasizing three main categories: (1) core theories of educational leadership (instructional, strategic, spiritual, emotional), (2) interdisciplinary perspectives that connect education with management and business, and (3) contemporary trends including digital, global, innovative, and character-based leadership. By synthesizing 30 selected international articles, this study is expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to enriching the literature on 21st-century educational leadership.

In addition, the dynamics of educational leadership cannot be separated from external factors that shape the direction of global education policy. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has catalyzed the acceleration of digital transformation and required education leaders to manage online learning, maintain teacher and student motivation, and ensure the sustainability of education quality (Heffernan et al., 2022). These changes are in line with international agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of quality, inclusive, and equitable education at all levels.

Another emerging trend is the demand for globalization and international competition in higher education. Higher education leaders are faced with the need to integrate local values with global standards, while building competitive advantage through innovation and cross-border collaboration (Zhu & Caliskan, 2021). In this context, educational leadership no longer focuses solely on the internal management of schools or universities, but must also include the ability to build international networks, manage cultural diversity, and navigate the pressures of the global education market.

On the other hand, there is also a need for virtue-based leadership that emphasizes integrity, empathy, and social responsibility. This model has been developed in response to ethical crises in education and business, as well as criticism of leadership that is too results-oriented (Brant et al., 2020). Thus, research on contemporary educational leadership must be understood as a multidimensional landscape: combining classical theory, managerial approaches, and contemporary trends driven by technology, globalization, and values.

A number of studies show that the success of educational transformation is highly dependent on the quality of leadership that is able to integrate strategic vision with effective managerial practices (Supriyanto et al., 2023). However, there is a gap between theory and practice: while many leadership models have been developed, not all of them have been tested in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural contexts. This opens up opportunities for comprehensive review studies to integrate these findings into a more complete framework.

Thus, this article positions itself as an important contribution to connecting classical educational leadership literature with contemporary management perspectives and trends. It is hoped that this study will not only enrich the academic realm but also provide practical guidance for educational leaders in designing relevant, adaptive, and sustainable leadership strategies in the 21st century.

Method

Research Design

This study uses a scoping review design with a descriptive narrative approach. A scoping review was chosen because it allows the researchers to map the development of concepts, practices, and trends in educational leadership across disciplines, without the strict limitations of a systematic review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The focus of the study is directed at the integration of three main categories, namely core theories of educational leadership, management/business perspectives, and contemporary trends in the 21st century.

Location and Participants

The "participants" in this study were not individuals, but scientific articles relevant to the topic. A total of 30 articles were reviewed, published between 2019 and 2024. The literature search sources included reputable international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis, Springer Nature, Sage, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria were:

1. Peer-reviewed articles focusing on educational leadership.
2. Articles linking educational leadership to management/business theory or global trends.
3. Articles in English or Indonesian.
4. Publication range 2019-2024.

Inclusion criteria

The publication period of 2019-2024 was chosen to ensure the relevance of the findings to the context of educational leadership in the era of the post-Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen accelerated digital transformation, changes in education policy, and a shift in the leadership paradigm. This period also encompasses the emergence of various new approaches, including digital leadership, emotional leadership, and virtue-based leadership, which empirically enrich classical theories such as instructional and transformational leadership. Thus, this time limitation is intended to highlight the dynamics and latest trends in global and regional educational leadership practices.

Data Collection Techniques

The search process was conducted using keyword combinations such as: *"educational leadership," "instructional leadership," "strategic leadership," "transformational leadership," "school governance," "empowerment leadership," "digital leadership," "innovation in education,"* and *"global leadership."* Once obtained, articles were selected based on their abstracts and full text to ensure relevance.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a reflective thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) adapted for literature reviews. The coding process was carried out in stages in four main phases:

1. Familiarization and Initial Identification: All articles that met the inclusion criteria were read thoroughly to understand the context, objectives, and main results.
2. Open Coding: Each article is coded thematically based on recurring keywords such as instructional leadership, strategic management, digital innovation, emotional intelligence, and so on.
3. Axial Coding (Theme Grouping): similar or related codes are grouped into broad categories, namely:
 - Core Educational Leadership Theories
 - *Cross-Disciplinary and Managerial Integration*
 - *Emerging Trends in Educational Leadership*
4. Selective Coding and Narrative Synthesis: final themes are integrated to explain the relationship between educational leadership theory, managerial practice, and global trends.

To deepen understanding of the thematic analysis results, the author presents a synthesis of findings in the form of a conceptual table. This table illustrates the interrelationships between three main categories: Core Educational Leadership Theories, Cross-Disciplinary & Managerial Integration, and Emerging Trends in Educational Leadership, obtained through the process of coding and synthesizing 30 reviewed articles. Each category displays sub-themes and key findings that describe the direction of the evolution of theory, practice, and values in modern educational leadership.

This mapping shows that educational leadership is no longer the exclusive domain of classical theories such as instructional or transformational leadership, but has transformed into an interdisciplinary field that combines management, innovation, and human values. Thus, this synthesis not only highlights the diversity of approaches but also emphasizes how core theories are adapted to address contemporary challenges such as digitalization, ethics, and emotional well-being.

Table 1. Thematic Synthesis of Educational Leadership Dimensions (Core-Cross-Trends)

No.	Category	Subthemes	Illustrative Findings and Insights
1.	Core Educational Leadership Theories	Instructional Leadership	Focuses on improving teacher self-efficacy, student outcomes, and classroom management through clear pedagogical vision (Groenewald et al., 2023; Walker & Qian, 2022).
		Transformational Leadership	Encourages motivation, professional growth, and shared goals through charisma, inspiration, and individualized support (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Khalil & Belitski, 2020).
		Strategic Leadership	Emphasizes vision alignment, resource optimization, and long-term school development planning (Brauckmann et al., 2023).
2.	Cross-Disciplinary & Managerial Integration	Managerial Competence	Integrates educational management with performance-based approaches and governance models to enhance institutional quality (Luschei & Jeong, 2021; Miroshnychenko & De Massis, 2020).
		Governance & Innovation	Links educational governance with innovation management, fostering adaptive and learning organizations (E. Masnawati & Didit, 2022; Parada et al., 2020).

		Empowerment Leadership	Connects organizational psychology with leadership by empowering teachers as co-leaders in decision-making (Fey, 2020; Supriyanto et al., 2023).
3.	Emerging Trends in Educational Leadership	Digital Leadership	Highlights technology integration, data-driven decision-making, and innovation culture in the digital age (Carletti, 2025; Halimah et al., 2024).
		Emotional & Spiritual Leadership	Focuses on empathy, mindfulness, and moral grounding in leadership practice (Fry & Egel, 2021; Heffernan et al., 2022).
		Virtue-Based Leadership	Advocates ethical leadership founded on integrity, honesty, and virtue ethics as a counter to bureaucratic pragmatism (Brant et al., 2020; Zhu & Caliskan, 2021).

Result and Discussion

Key Findings of the Article Review

Core Leadership Theories in Education

The results of the review indicate that instructional and strategic leadership continue to be the primary focus of educational leadership research. Hallinger and Kovačević (2021) map four decades of instructional leadership development, emphasizing the role of principals in setting a vision for learning, monitoring the teaching process, and providing continuous feedback. A recent meta-analysis study (Groenewald et al., 2023) confirms that instructional leadership has a significant effect on teacher self-efficacy, strengthening teachers' confidence in designing effective learning.

In a strategic context, Carvalho et al. (2021) and Jaafar et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of school principals having a long-term orientation, translating strategies into concrete practices, and managing change in line with the demands of the 21st century. This model requires leaders who are able to align the vision, mission, and operations of schools with national policies and global dynamics.

In addition, variations of alternative leadership models have emerged. Fry and Egel (2021) highlight spiritual leadership, which emphasizes the dimensions of values, meaning, and intrinsic motivation in building educational communities. Heffernan et al. (2022) introduce emotional leadership, emphasizing the intensity of emotions and well-being as important factors that are often overlooked. Printy and Liu (2021) add the role of leadership in building teacher learning communities as an effective mechanism for enhancing teacher collaboration.

Synthesis: Core leadership theories emphasize that educational success is determined not only by formal instruction and strategies, but also by leadership that is capable of inspiring values, emotions, and collaboration.

Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives

The integration of management and business perspectives into educational leadership has become a significant trend. Supriyanto et al. (2023) found that empowerment leadership encourages knowledge sharing and innovation in higher education. Khalil and Belitski (2020) added the role of IT governance in building dynamic capabilities, which is relevant for the era of educational digitalization.

Governance is a prominent theme. Adolfsson and Alvunger (2020) examine the dynamics of power in local school policy, while Luschei and Jeong (2021) use PISA data to show the relationship between school governance and student achievement. Miroshnychenko & De Massis (2020) and Parada et al. (2020) link corporate governance and family business governance to strategic decision-making, a useful lens for private higher education, which often operates like a family business entity.

Synthesis: A cross-disciplinary perspective emphasizes that education cannot be separated from the principles of modern management. Resource management, governance, and organizational innovation are integral parts of educational leadership.

Contemporary Trends

Ten other articles raise issues of contemporary leadership. Halimah et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of innovative leadership to drive educational transformation. Carletti (2025) expands the discussion on distributed leadership and the role of teachers in promoting project-based learning innovation.

Moghaddam (2024) shows that transformational leadership can enhance innovation through knowledge sharing, while Alsuwaidi and Omar (2020) confirm the role of innovative leadership in the context of schools in the UAE. Gardner-McTaggart (2022) criticizes the global leadership crisis, while Armstrong (2020) and Fey (2020) emphasize the importance of intercultural competence in preparing global leaders. Brant et al. (2020) propose a virtue-based leadership model, emphasizing integrity, ethics, and character as answers to the moral crisis in education and business.

Synthesis: Contemporary trends are shifting the focus of educational leadership from formal hierarchies toward collaborative, digital, value-based, and adaptive models that are responsive to the global context.

Table 2. Summary by Category

No	Category	Dominant Issue / Model	Article Example	Main Contribution
1.	Core Leadership	Instructional, Strategic, Spiritual, Emotional	(Carvalho et al., 2021; Fry & Egel, 2021; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Heffernan et al., 2022; Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Safrida et al., 2023; Sriaroon & Worapongpat, 2024)	Providing a basic framework for learning quality, teacher effectiveness, and the wellbeing of the educational community
2.	Cross-Disciplinary	Governance, IT governance, HRM, Empowerment	(Adolfsson & Alvunger, 2020; Khalil & Belitski, 2020; Luschei & Jeong, 2021; Supriyanto et al., 2023)	Bringing management and governance theories into the realm of education; innovation in educational organizations
3.	Contemporary Trends	Digital, Innovation, Global, Virtue Leadership	(Brant et al., 2020; Carletti, 2025; Gardner-McTaggart, 2022; Halimah et al., 2024)	Demonstrating the adaptation of educational leadership to the digital age, globalization, and ethical crises

Elaboration of Leadership Models

1. Instructional Leadership → emphasizes the role of the principal in directing learning. Proven to increase teacher self-efficacy and student learning outcomes.

2. Transformational Leadership → encourages innovation through knowledge sharing; more suitable for higher education contexts.
3. Strategic Leadership → helps schools cope with policy changes (e.g., MEBP Malaysia).
4. Distributed Leadership → encourages teacher collaboration; relevant in the era of project-based learning.
5. Digital Leadership → focuses on technological literacy, e-learning, and AI integration.
6. Spiritual Leadership → fosters meaning and motivation; relevant for values-based education.
7. Emotional Leadership → emphasizes the well-being of leaders and teachers; addresses post-pandemic burnout issues.
8. Virtue-based Leadership → emphasizes ethics, integrity, and character as key assets in facing moral crises.

Integrative Discussion

The review results confirm the evolution of educational leadership:

1. From core theories (instructional, strategic, spiritual, emotional) → focus on teacher quality, students, and school effectiveness.
2. Expanding to cross-disciplinary areas (governance, HRM, innovation management) → focus on educational organizations as managerial entities.
3. Shifting to contemporary trends (digital, global, virtual) → focus on 21st-century adaptation and global competencies.

Implications: modern educational leaders must not only master instructional skills, but also be able to:

1. Integrate managerial strategies in school/university management.
2. Address the challenges of digitalization and globalization with adaptive leadership models.
3. Practice value-based leadership to address ethical and moral crises in education.

Discussion: Achievement of Research Objectives

The objective of this review is to examine developments in educational leadership research during the period 2019–2024, focusing on three categories: (1) core theories of educational leadership, (2) interdisciplinary perspectives with management/business, and (3) contemporary trends.

Based on the synthesis results:

1. The first objective (examining core theories) was achieved → 10 articles showed that instructional leadership and strategic leadership remain dominant, but are now enriched by spiritual and emotional approaches.
2. The second objective (reviewing management/business integration) was achieved → studies on governance, HRM, empowerment leadership, and corporate parallels show that business/management theory provides an additional useful framework for understanding the effectiveness of educational leadership.
3. The third objective (identifying contemporary trends) was achieved → articles on digital innovation, global leadership, intercultural competence, and virtue-based leadership

prove that educational leadership has moved towards collaborative, adaptive, and value-based models.

Thus, the objectives of this review study have been achieved overall. This study has successfully mapped the direction of educational leadership development within a more comprehensive framework: classic theories → managerial insights → contemporary adaptation.

To clarify the synthesis results of the 30 articles analyzed in this study, the main findings are grouped into three broad categories: (1) Core Leadership Theories in Education, (2) Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives, and (3) Contemporary Trends. Each category highlights the dominant themes, sample articles, and major contributions to the development of educational leadership literature.

The following table summarizes the thematic synthesis results obtained:

Table 3. Thematic synthesis of 30 articles reviewed in this study (2019–2024).

Category		Main Theme	Article Sample	Main Contribution
1.	Core Leadership Theories	Instructional & Strategic Leadership as the foundation of educational quality	(Carvalho et al., 2021; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Jaafar et al., 2022)	Providing a framework for the effectiveness of teachers, students, and organizations
2.	Core Leadership Theories	Spiritual & Emotional Leadership as alternative model	(Fry & Egel, 2021; Heffernan et al., 2022; Printy & Liu, 2021)	Adding dimensions of ethics, values, and well-being to leadership
3.	Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives	Governance & Organizational Management in education	(Adolfsson & Alvunger, 2020; Luschei & Jeong, 2021; Zhu & Caliskan, 2021)	Bringing governance and corporate management theory into the realm of education
4.	Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives	Empowerment Leadership & HRM for innovation in educational institutions	(Khalil & Belitski, 2020; E. Masnawati & Didit, 2022; Supriyanto et al., 2023)	Promoting innovation through empowerment, IT governance, and HRM
5.	Contemporary Trends	Digital & Innovative Leadership in educational transformation	(Carletti, 2025; Halimah et al., 2024; Moghaddam, 2024)	Demonstrating the role of innovation and digitalization in educational leadership
6.	Contemporary Trends	Global, Intercultural & Virtue-based Leadership for the 21 st Century	(Armstrong, 2020; Brant et al., 2020; Fey, 2020; Gardner-McTaggart, 2022)	Presenting a global perspective, intercultural competence, and virtue leadership

Source. The researchers' synthesis is based on 30 selected articles (2019–2024).

Comparison of Findings

1. Instructional leadership has been shown to improve teacher effectiveness (Groenewald et al., 2023), while empowerment leadership has a greater impact on educational institutional innovation (Supriyanto et al., 2023).
2. Strategic leadership emphasizes long-term vision (Carvalho et al., 2021), while distributed leadership emphasizes teacher collaboration (Carletti, 2025).
3. Digital leadership focuses more on technological literacy, while virtue leadership focuses on moral integrity.

Researchers' Opinion

Based on a synthesis of 30 articles in this study, the researchers argue that educational leadership is entering a transformative phase that requires a repositioning of the paradigm. For decades, the discourse on educational leadership has centered on instructional and strategic models, which focus on student academic achievement, teacher effectiveness, and school governance. This model has proven to provide a solid foundation, but in many cases, it still places leaders as dominant central figures. In an increasingly complex and uncertain world, this paradigm of leadership is no longer adequate.

First, the researchers see a need to shift the orientation from hierarchy-based leadership to collaboration-based leadership. Articles on distributed leadership and teacher learning communities show that teachers are not merely objects of policy, but agents of change who can contribute significantly to learning innovation. The researchers believe that in the era of Merdeka Belajar (Freedom of Learning) in Indonesia, this collaborative approach is highly relevant, as it encourages teachers, lecturers, and students to become active subjects who jointly build the education ecosystem.

Second, the researchers emphasize the importance of the emotional, spiritual, and value dimensions in educational leadership. The findings of Heffernan et al. (2022) on emotional intensity and Fry and Egel (2021) on spiritual leadership remind us that education is not merely the transmission of knowledge, but also a space for character, moral, and well-being formation. In practice, many school or university leaders are caught up in administrative targets, thereby neglecting the psychological well-being of teachers and students. According to the researchers, integrating value-based leadership into educational management is an urgent step, especially in the context of Indonesia, which is currently facing challenges of ethics and integrity.

Third, the researchers argue that management and business perspectives need to be integrated more seriously into educational leadership. The world of education often rejects business terms because they are considered too market-oriented. However, the literature in this review (e.g., Khalil & Belitski, 2020; Supriyanto et al., 2023) shows that concepts such as empowerment leadership, governance, and dynamic capabilities can actually enrich the capacity of educational institutions. For Indonesia, this is important because private universities face challenges of financial sustainability, global competition, and international accreditation requirements. Educational leadership that is able to adopt modern management principles, without losing its moral orientation, will be better prepared to face competition in the global era.

Fourth, the trends of digitalization and globalization require educational leaders to have new competencies. Articles by Carletti (2025) and Halimah et al. (2024) show that innovative leaders are able to use technology as an instrument for transforming learning. The researchers believe that digital leadership does not only mean the use of technology, but also the ability to build a culture of innovation, digital literacy, and rapid adaptation to change. This is even more important in post-pandemic Indonesia, where online and hybrid learning have become a permanent part of the education system. On the other hand, globalization requires educational leaders to have intercultural competence, as shown by Armstrong (2020). In a multicultural country like Indonesia, intercultural sensitivity is not only an international issue but also a domestic one, given the diversity of ethnicities, religions, and languages.

Fifth, the researchers highlight the urgency of virtue-based leadership. The findings of Brant et al. (2020) underscore the importance of integrity, empathy, and ethics. For the

researchers, this is a crucial point that is often overlooked in the discourse on educational leadership. Amidst rampant corruption, abuse of authority, and commercialization of education in Indonesia, instilling virtue-based leadership has become an urgent need. Educational leaders must serve as moral role models who build trust, not merely administrators or managers.

Based on the above, the researchers see that the future of educational leadership can no longer be viewed in isolation. The integration of core theory, modern management, and contemporary trends is the only way to create effective and relevant educational leaders. From an Indonesian perspective, the leadership needed is hybrid leadership: instructional and strategic in managing academic quality, managerial in managing resources, digital in facing technological disruption, global in building international networks, and value-based in maintaining morality and integrity.

Finally, the researchers emphasize that the main contribution of this review article lies in its comprehensive mapping. By examining 30 articles from various contexts, this study successfully presents an overview of the evolution of educational leadership while providing practical recommendations. The researchers hope that the results of this study can serve as a basis for more specific follow-up research, such as quantitative meta-analyses, longitudinal studies, or cross-national research, and as a reference for educational leaders in Indonesia to design adaptive, collaborative, and value-based leadership strategies.

Comparative Discussion: Regional Perspectives and Leadership Models

A comparative study of the reviewed literature shows different patterns in the conceptualization and practice of educational leadership in various regions and leadership models. Western-based studies (e.g., Hallinger, 2019; Heffernan et al., 2022; Fry, 2021) tend to emphasize leadership as a moral, emotional, and transformative process. Leadership is considered effective when leaders are able to inspire, foster trust, and create authentic emotional connections with their followers. Conversely, research from Asian contexts (such as Khalil, 2020; Masnawati & Didit, 2024; Parada, 2020) highlights the integration of collectivist values and strong hierarchical norms, resulting in leadership styles that emphasize collaboration, deliberation, and respect for institutional traditions.

In terms of leadership models, instructional leadership and strategic leadership still dominate in regions with centralized education systems, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. This is due to the structure of education governance, which is highly regulated by national policies that emphasize accountability, performance, and measurable learning outcomes. Conversely, transformational leadership and distributed leadership are more prevalent in Western and Nordic contexts, where school autonomy, innovation, and teacher agency are the main focus. This difference shows that governance culture greatly influences leadership orientation: the more centralized a system is, the stronger its orientation towards structure and compliance; while more decentralized systems tend to foster innovation and empowerment.

In the context of cross-disciplinary leadership, the integration between education and business management appears to be more prominent in European and Middle Eastern research (Miroshnychenko, 2020; Luschei, 2020). Leadership in these regions is oriented towards institutional sustainability, resource efficiency, and entrepreneurial thinking. Meanwhile, in developing countries such as Indonesia, managerial competence is generally still understood as limited to administrative efficiency, rather than strategic innovation. This indicates a potential gap that can be filled through the adoption of governance principles and business sector innovation tailored to the social mission and ethics of education.

New trends such as digital leadership and emotional-spiritual leadership also show interesting global variations. Research in Western countries focuses on technology adoption, data usage, and the development of digital culture (Carletti, 2025). Meanwhile, research in Asia and the Middle East emphasizes aspects of human-centered digital transformation and leadership based on ethics and spiritual values (Halimah, 2024; Zhu, 2021). These findings indicate that digital literacy is a universal need, but the philosophical foundations of digital leadership are contextual—shaped by local cultural values, religion, and social expectations.

Overall, this comparative synthesis confirms that there is no single universal model of educational leadership. Leadership is a context-sensitive practice, shaped by cultural values, institutional structures, and policy environments. The challenge for educational leaders, including those in Indonesia, is how to balance global and local influences: adopting international best practices without losing local relevance and wisdom. Therefore, future research should focus on developing a "glocal" leadership model—a framework that can combine global standards with local values in educational leadership practices.

Conclusion

This review article aims to examine developments in educational leadership during the period 2019-2024, focusing on three aspects: core theories of educational leadership, interdisciplinary perspectives with management/business, and contemporary trends. Based on a synthesis of 30 selected articles, this study found that:

1. Core theories of educational leadership, such as instructional leadership and strategic leadership, remain the main framework for improving the quality of teachers, students, and the effectiveness of educational organizations, but are now reinforced by spiritual and emotional approaches.
2. An interdisciplinary perspective shows that management, governance, and resource management theories make an important contribution to broadening the understanding of educational leadership, particularly in the context of organizational governance and innovation.
3. Contemporary trends emphasize the need for leadership models that are adaptive to digitalization, globalization, and changing values. Models such as digital leadership, global leadership, distributed leadership, and virtue-based leadership have emerged as responses to the challenges of the 21st century.
4. Thus, the objectives of this review study have been achieved: this article successfully provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of educational leadership from its classical foundations, through interdisciplinary integration, to its adaptation to the contemporary global context.

Research Limitations

This review only covers 30 articles from the period 2019-2024, so the temporal coverage and number of articles are still limited. In addition, most articles focus on the Asian and European contexts, so generalizations to other regions need to be made with caution.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. A systematic review or meta-analysis with a larger number of articles is needed to strengthen the validity of the findings.

2. Longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of digital and global leadership in schools and universities are still very much needed.
3. Cross-cultural and cross-sector (education vs. business) comparative research can enrich our understanding of leadership model adaptation.

Practical Implications

1. For schools/universities: the results of this review emphasize the importance of building strategic and instructional leadership that is aligned with digital innovation and global needs.
2. For policymakers: the integration of management theory into educational governance can improve organizational effectiveness.
3. For the business world, the findings indicate opportunities for collaboration with educational institutions in building global leadership and virtue-based leadership to prepare the next generation of leaders.

Theoretical Implications

1. Strengthening the multidimensional paradigm in educational leadership theory.
This study emphasizes that leadership effectiveness cannot be explained by a single approach, but rather through the dynamic interaction between instructional, strategic, and human values dimensions. This expands the boundaries of classical theories such as instructional and transformational leadership, towards an adaptive leadership paradigm.
2. Formulation of a new conceptual model – Integrative Educational Leadership Framework (IELF).
This model offers a conceptual framework that integrates three main pillars: core theory, cross-disciplinary managerial integration, and contemporary leadership trends. IELF provides theoretical guidance for assessing the extent to which educational leaders are able to manage the balance between strategy, innovation, and values.
3. Contribution to the development of "glocal" leadership theory.
The IELF model introduces the concept of glocal leadership—leadership that combines global principles with local wisdom. This concept expands educational leadership theory in a more contextual direction that is relevant to the culture and structure of educational institutions in developing countries.
4. Integration of educational leadership theory with organizational management.
IELF challenges the traditional dichotomy between educational leadership and organizational management. By adopting theories of innovation management, governance, and empowerment leadership, this model opens up space for the development of new theories about a more holistic educational governance leadership.
5. A foundation for further theory-based research.
The IELF model provides an analytical framework for future empirical research, both through quantitative approaches (testing variables between pillars) and qualitative approaches (contextual exploration across cultures and education systems).

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