



# **The Role of Educational Leadership in Institutions: A Literature-Based Conceptual Framework of Concepts, Patterns and Determinants of Effectiveness**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of educational leadership by examining its concepts, patterns, functions, and determinants of effectiveness through a literature-based approach. The research applies a qualitative descriptive design using library research and content analysis of academic sources published in reputable journals and scholarly works. The findings indicate that effective educational leadership is reflected in the integration of democratic and visionary patterns that support participation, collaboration, and strategic adaptability in responding to global challenges. Leadership effectiveness is shaped by interconnected factors, including regulatory frameworks, socio-economic conditions, institutional characteristics, leadership personality, professional qualifications, and organizational support. This study introduces a novel integrative conceptual framework that synthesizes these dimensions into a unified model and positions educational leadership as a multidimensional driver of institutional effectiveness. The framework also emphasizes its role in character formation, organizational performance, and global competitiveness. This research contributes to strengthening the theoretical foundation of educational leadership and provides a conceptual reference for future empirical studies and leadership development practices.

**Keywords:** Leaders, Leadership, Educational, Institutions, Effectiveness.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The dynamics of leadership in educational institutions have become increasingly complex in the contemporary era. Rapid social transformation, globalization, and the advancement of digital technology have significantly reshaped the demands placed on educational leaders (Ihwan, 2025). Educational leadership is no longer confined to administrative responsibilities; it requires the capacity to act as an innovator and change agent capable of addressing emerging educational challenges (Gerasela et al., 2026). These conditions highlight the necessity of adaptive leadership models that enable institutions to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable in a rapidly changing global landscape.



Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping human resources who are not only knowledgeable but also possess strong character and global competitiveness. As social organizations, these institutions require effective leadership to coordinate complex interactions and guide organizational direction (Rodin et al., 2025). Leadership functions as a strategic mechanism that ensures the alignment of institutional goals with societal expectations. Strong leadership contributes to the creation of a conducive academic environment, encourages innovation, and strengthens institutional resilience. In this context, leadership reflects not only managerial capacity but also the broader quality of educational outcomes and societal development.

Despite its importance, a significant gap persists between the expected competencies of educational leadership and actual practices in many institutions. Empirical realities indicate that leadership practices often remain dominated by bureaucratic approaches, limiting participation and innovation (Pattipeilohy et al., 2025). Meanwhile, contemporary educational environments require leadership that is participatory, adaptive, and visionary (Mukti et al., 2026). This mismatch generates various challenges, including low learning quality, weak institutional competitiveness, and reduced responsiveness to societal needs. Such conditions emphasize that leadership is not merely a formal role but a strategic element that determines institutional effectiveness.

Leadership effectiveness is closely related to the personal and professional qualities of leaders. Educational leaders are expected to demonstrate intelligence, technical competence, integrity, and commitment (Karo & Said, 2025). These attributes form the basis of authority and influence within educational settings. Leadership is not solely defined by positional power but by the ability to consistently demonstrate values and competencies in practice (Unnavi et al., 2026). Continuous professional development, experience, and reflective practice are essential for strengthening leadership capacity and ensuring its effectiveness in diverse institutional contexts.

Decision-making represents another critical dimension of educational leadership. Leaders are responsible for determining policies, strategies, and operational directions that influence institutional performance. Effective decision-making contributes to organizational progress, while poor decisions may lead to stagnation and decreased educational quality (I. Rosita, 2024). Leadership effectiveness, therefore, depends on the leader's ability to analyze complex situations,



consider multiple perspectives, and implement strategic actions that align with institutional goals. This capacity strengthens public trust and enhances institutional credibility.

Previous studies have examined educational leadership from various perspectives. Research highlights the importance of innovation and responsiveness to global challenges in determining leadership success (R. Rosita & Iskandar, 2022). Other studies emphasize ethical leadership as a critical factor in shaping organizational culture and sustainability (Rakhma et al., 2022). These perspectives provide valuable insights but tend to focus on specific dimensions of leadership without integrating them into a comprehensive analytical framework.

### **Research Gap.**

A critical limitation in existing literature lies in the absence of an integrative approach that conceptualizes educational leadership as a multidimensional construct. Most studies remain descriptive and fragmented, addressing isolated aspects such as leadership style, ethics, or management practices. There is limited effort to synthesize these dimensions into a unified framework that explains how leadership concepts, patterns, and determinants interact to influence institutional effectiveness.

### **Novelty of the Study.**

This study addresses this gap by developing an integrative conceptual framework that combines three essential dimensions: leadership concepts, leadership patterns, and determinants of effectiveness. The framework positions educational leadership as a dynamic and multidimensional process that connects theoretical constructs with practical implications. This approach offers a more holistic understanding of leadership and enhances its applicability in educational contexts.

### **Research Objective.**

This study aims to analyze and synthesize key dimensions of educational leadership, including its conceptual foundations, patterns of implementation, functional roles, and determinants of effectiveness. The ultimate objective is to construct a comprehensive conceptual



framework that can serve as both a theoretical reference and a practical guide for improving leadership practices in educational institutions.

## **METHOD**

This research was carried out using a library research approach that is qualitative and descriptive (Isra'Ahmad, 2025); (Isra' Ahmad & Supriadi, 2025). The study is directed at the exploration of relevant written sources, such as books, scientific articles, and the results of previous research that discuss educational leadership (Isra'Ahmad et al., 2025). The selection of literature was carried out selectively by considering its credibility and relevance to the research focus. Through this search, the researcher tries to find a comprehensive picture of the concepts, patterns, and effectiveness factors of educational leadership that have been studied by experts before.

The analysis stage is carried out using content analysis (Isra' Ahmad & Supriadi, 2025), which is an in-depth study of the content of the literature to identify the main themes, find patterns of relationships between concepts, and criticize existing findings. Each source is compared and synthesized resulting in a more comprehensive conceptual framework. In this way, the research not only presents a collection of theories, but also presents a construction of new thinking that is more directed and can be used as a foothold in understanding and developing educational leadership today.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Essence of Leaders and Leadership in Educational Institutions**

The essence of leadership in educational institutions cannot be separated from the essence of human beings as social beings who always live in interaction and cooperation. In this shared life, there is always a need for a figure who is able to direct and organize group activities (Syadzili, 2018). This shows that leadership is present in every line of human life, including in educational institutions as social organizations that need leaders to organize and direct all components in it. Thus, leadership is a fundamental need that cannot be ignored.

A leader is someone who is able to influence other people or groups to exert joint efforts to achieve a set goal (Waedoloh et al., 2022a). The essence of leadership lies in the ability to



influence, not just a formal position (Herlina & Sumarni, 2025). In educational institutions, this influence is very important because it concerns the formation of attitudes, behaviors, and performance of all school residents. Therefore, leadership is not only structural, but also cultural and psychological. This confirms that true leadership is born from the ability to build trust and positive influence.

A leader is also understood as a person who has certain skills and advantages, especially in certain fields, so that he is able to move others to carry out joint activities (Duryat, 2021). These advantages are a source of authority that makes others willing to follow the directions given. In the context of educational institutions, this shows that a leader is not enough to only have a position, but also to have relevant competencies (Solikin et al., 2017a). In other words, the personal qualities of leaders are a determining factor for the success of leadership in achieving educational goals.

Based on this understanding, it can be concluded that leaders in educational institutions are individuals who have the ability to take initiative in social situations, organize actions, and build effective cooperation. This ability is very important because educational institutions are complex systems with a variety of different interests and backgrounds. Without these abilities, educational goals will be difficult to achieve optimally. Therefore, leadership is the key to integrating all the potential that exists in educational institutions.

Leadership, in an Islamic perspective, has a broader dimension because it is not only social, but also spiritual (Barus et al., 2025). This is affirmed in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) which states that every individual is a leader and will be held accountable for his leadership (Zaini, 2021). This hadith emphasizes that leadership is a mandate inherent in every human being in accordance with his or her role, both as a leader of the family, community, and institution (Fazillah, 2023). Thus, leadership in education is also a mandate that must be accounted for, both socially and before Allah, so that it requires integrity and sincerity in carrying it out.

The Qur'an provides a theological basis for leadership as stated in Al-Baqarah/2:30:



وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ  
الِدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Translation:

*Remember when your Lord said to the angels: 'Surely I will make a caliph on the earth.' They said: 'Why do you want to make (the caliph) on earth a man who will cause damage to it and shed blood, when we are always praising you and purifying you?' The Lord said: 'Surely I know what you do not know.*

This verse emphasizes that humans are given the mandate as caliphs on earth, namely leaders who are in charge of managing life responsibly (Kholishudin, 2025). In the context of education, this means that a leader must be able to carry out his mandate with wisdom, maintain the sustainability of the institution, and direct all components of education towards meaningful goals (Hanifa & Kusyairi, 2025). Furthermore, QS An-Nisa/4:34 explains:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ  
قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ  
وَاصْرُبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Translation:

*Men are leaders for women, because Allah has put some of them above others, and because they have provided for some of their wealth. Therefore a pious woman is one who is obedient to Allah and takes care of herself when her husband is not around, because Allah has taken care of (them). The women whose nusyuz you are worried about, then advise them, separate them in bed, and beat them. But if they obey you, then do not look for a way to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted and Exalted*

This verse shows the concept of responsibility in leadership. However, in the context of modern educational institutions, leadership is more emphasized on competence, professionalism,



and managerial ability (Suardana et al., 2018). The values contained in the verse can be understood as a moral principle that a leader must have responsibility, justice, and the ability to fulfill his mandate. Thus, educational leadership must be based on spiritual and professional values in order to be able to answer the challenges of the times.

Thus, the essence of leadership in educational institutions is the ability to integrate cultural, religious, and professional values in a complete unit (Shobri, 2025). Effective leadership is not only oriented towards achieving goals, but also on the formation of character and quality of human resources. An education leader must be able to be an inspiration as well as a driving force in creating quality and competitive educational institutions, and remain based on the divine mandate affirmed in the Qur'an and hadith.

### **Leadership Patterns in Educational Institutions**

Bentuk kepemimpinan dalam lembaga pendidikan sangat beragam dan dapat ditemukan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari (Setiawan et al., 2025). Schools as social institutions have a need for leadership types that are in accordance with the situation and challenges of the times (Suryani et al., 2025). Education leaders are required not only to have a formal position, but also to be able to work in an accountable way and build healthy relationships with others (Zaini, 2021). Ideal leaders are those who are able to mobilize members to jointly do something beneficial for the life and goals of Education (Waedoloh et al., 2022b). Therefore, leadership in education must be seen as the main instrument in directing the learning process and human resource development.

#### *Authoritarian Leadership*

Authoritarian leadership is a leadership style characterized by the leader's full control over all existing decisions (Amalia et al., 2025). In a school setting, authoritarian principals usually dictate what teachers and staff should do without providing opportunities for them to take the initiative or express their opinions (Puspitasari et al., 2022). This condition often causes a tense work atmosphere, makes members feel unappreciated, and decreases work motivation. While authoritarian leadership can create strict order and discipline, its weakness is the loss of a sense of joy and togetherness at work. Therefore, this leadership style is considered less appropriate for educational institutions that require creativity, active participation, and freedom of thought. In



other words, authoritarian leadership emphasizes absolute control more than the empowerment of members, thus risking long-term rejection and dissatisfaction.

#### *Laizzes Faire Leadership*

Laizzes faire leadership is a leadership style that gives members full freedom to work according to their own wishes (Amin, 2023). In this model, the role of the leader is almost invisible because all decisions and policies are in the hands of members (Yanto & Sirozi, 2025). In the school environment, for example, teacher meetings can take place without the direction of the principal because each teacher is free to determine the course of the activity. While this freedom can foster confidence and independence, the weakness is the absence of clear work guidelines that make it difficult to achieve educational goals in a targeted manner. Laizzes faire leadership is more appropriately applied to mature and highly responsible groups, but it is less effective if it is fully applied in educational institutions that require clear coordination and direction (Zamroji, 2020). Thus, this leadership style often creates a gap between individual freedom and the achievement of common goals, thus risking weakening the consistency of the work of educational organizations.

#### *Democratic Leadership*

Democratic leadership emphasizes the active participation of all members in decision-making (Karya et al., 2025). Democratic principals respect the opinions of teachers and staff, and share responsibility in the implementation of educational programs. With this style, a healthy working atmosphere, full of joy, and a sense of togetherness is created. Democratic leadership encourages harmonious cooperation between teachers, administration, and school principals, so that educational goals can be achieved more effectively (Mirsa et al., 2024). This model is considered the most suitable for educational institutions because it is able to stimulate member productivity while fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Therefore, democratic leadership is an important foundation for the creation of a conducive and quality-oriented school climate.

Based on the various forms of leadership that have been described, the democratic type is indeed considered the most relevant to be applied in educational institutions. However, in the current context, the leadership needed is not only democratic, but also visionary. This is because the world of education is currently in the midst of a very rapid flow of change, both in terms of technology, social, and culture. A visionary leader is a figure who is able to set a clear vision, read



the direction of the times, and direct educational institutions to be able to produce superior and competitive human resources (E. A. Rachman et al., 2023).

The orientation of visionary leadership in the modern era is directed at the creation of comparative and competitive values of students, so that schools are not only places of learning, but also centers of innovation, improvement, and sustainable development (Wahyudin et al., 2024). In the context of globalization and digitalization, education leaders must be able to integrate participatory democratic values with a strategic vision that is oriented towards the future. In this way, educational institutions can answer global challenges while maintaining local relevance. An additional importance is that visionary leadership must also be able to utilize technology and cross-sector collaboration as a means of strengthening the quality of education in the midst of the dynamics of the times.

Visionary leadership ultimately becomes a bridge between the needs of today and the future demands of education (A. Rachman et al., 2025). In the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and towards society 5.0, education leaders are required to not only manage institutions administratively, but also to be agents of change who are able to foster creativity, innovation, and competitiveness of students. Thus, today's educational leadership must transform into leadership that is adaptive, collaborative, and oriented towards the development of human qualities as the main capital for nation development. Additionally important, visionary leadership must also be able to build synergistic global and local networks so that educational institutions remain relevant and competitive in the midst of changing times.

### **Functions and Roles of Leaders in Educational Institutions**

The world of education is an academic space that demands a scientific culture that is different from the bureaucracy, military, or other organizations. In it, academic freedom is an important element that must be maintained. Therefore, leadership in educational institutions functions not only as an administrative manager, but also as a director, problem solver, and creator of a conducive academic climate (Mukaddamah, 2023). Education leaders are required to have an open, participatory, and oriented attitude towards the development of knowledge and character of students. This is increasingly relevant in the digital era, when leadership is required to be able to integrate technology with academic values.



There are four main functions of leadership in educational institutions. First, leaders play a role in channeling freedom of thought and opinion, both individually and in groups, so that the decisions taken reflect common aspirations and can be accepted by all members (Mansyur & Bunyamin, 2022). Second, leaders must be able to build effective cooperation by rewarding the abilities of subordinates, so that confidence and mutual respect grow (Efendi et al., 2019). Third, leadership functions to encourage meetings with mutual respect, so that members feel involved and responsible for achieving goals (Efendi et al., 2019). Fourth, leaders help solve problems by providing direction and direction, as well as encouraging members to develop independent skills in dealing with problems (Suharti et al., 2024). Fourth, leaders help solve problems by providing direction and direction, as well as encouraging members to develop independent skills in dealing with problems (Romlah et al., 2023). These four functions are now increasingly important as the world of education faces complex challenges that demand collaboration and continuous innovation.

The main functions of leaders in education also include the creation of a healthy social climate (Djibran, 2016), group organization, establishment of efficient work procedures, joint decision-making, and providing opportunities for members to learn from experiences. With these functions, education leaders not only play the role of controllers, but also facilitators who foster the spirit of cooperation and academic freedom. This function is increasingly crucial in the modern era, when educational institutions are required to produce globally competitive graduates.

Today's educational leadership must also focus on building global character and competencies. Leaders are not only tasked with producing graduates who are academically intelligent, but also have integrity, adaptiveness, and have skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (Raprap et al., 2025). In the context of globalization, education leaders must be able to bridge local needs with international demands, so that students can compete at the global level without losing cultural identity. With this role, educational leadership is the key in producing a generation that is not only intellectually superior, but also competitive and has strong character.

Leadership in educational institutions has a wide scope, ranging from academic, social, to moral functions. Education leaders are required to be able to carry out work programs with



integrity, build a harmonious work atmosphere, and direct all components of the institution towards achieving educational goals (Ghofar, 2016). This emphasizes that leadership is not just a formal position, but a mandate that requires skills, wisdom, and commitment to human resource development. Ultimately, modern education leadership must be a driving force capable of bridging local needs with global demands.

### **Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Leadership in Educational Institutions**

A person who occupies a position as a leader in an educational institution certainly cannot carry out his duties freely without the influence of various factors. The leadership pattern that is formed will always be influenced by the internal and external conditions that surround it. These factors determine whether the leadership carried out is effective in directing educational institutions to the expected goals. Therefore, understanding these factors is important so that leadership can run according to the demands of the times and the needs of society. In other words, leadership effectiveness is the result of the interaction between regulations, social conditions, and the leader's own personality.

The first factor is legality and formal regulation. Education leaders in Indonesia cannot be separated from applicable rules, such as Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, presidential decrees, ministerial regulations, and education laws (Harmayanti et al., 2024). This regulation affects leadership patterns, both in terms of teacher certification, professional qualifications, and the selection mechanism for educators. With formal rules, educational leadership has a clear direction, although sometimes these rules also limit the leader's room to innovate. However, compliance with regulations is the main requirement for leadership to remain legitimate and structurally recognized. This shows that educational leadership cannot be separated from the applicable legal framework.

The second factor is the socio-economic conditions and the concept of education. The availability of educational resources and facilities greatly determines the effectiveness of leadership. Community support, both in the form of funds and facilities, will facilitate the course of education. In addition, the leader's understanding of the educational goals also affects his leadership pattern. If the leader has a vision that is in harmony with the needs of the community, then his leadership will be more acceptable (Solikin et al., 2017b). On the other hand, if the vision is not in accordance with social aspirations, then the leadership will face resistance. Thus, socio-



economic factors and the concept of education are important foundations in determining the direction of leadership. This emphasizes that educational leadership must always be oriented towards the welfare of the community and the relevance of educational goals.

The third factor is the fact and characteristics of the school. Each school has different characteristics, both in terms of staff, students, and the type of school itself. The administrative system, curriculum, and learning approach used will influence the principal's leadership style (Octavia & Savira, 2016). For example, religious-based schools certainly have a different leadership pattern than public schools. Therefore, education leaders must be able to adjust their leadership style to the characteristics of the institution they lead in order to create harmony and work effectiveness. This shows that effective leadership is leadership that is contextual, able to read situations and adjust to the conditions of the institution.

The fourth factor is the personality and experience of the leader. Each individual brings energy, loyalty, paradigm, and professional attributes inherent to him. Strong personality, integrity, and commitment will greatly determine leadership qualities (Sudharta et al., 2018). In addition, additional experience and training that leaders have will enrich their ability to manage educational institutions. Leaders who continue to learn and participate in training will be better prepared for challenges compared to leaders who are static. Thus, personality and experience become internal factors that greatly affect the effectiveness of leadership. This confirms that effective leadership is born from a combination of personal character and professional competence.

The fifth factor is the change in educational theory and practice. The world of education is always evolving, both in terms of theory and learning methods. The concept of child growth, curriculum development, and innovation in learning strategies requires leaders to always adapt (Peramesti & Kusmana, 2018). Leaders who do not keep up with the development of educational theory will be left behind and find it difficult to direct institutions towards better quality. Therefore, educational leadership must always be responsive to changes to remain relevant to the needs of the times. This emphasizes that educational leadership must be dynamic, able to adapt to the development of science and technology.

The sixth factor is the training and professional qualifications of school principals. School principals as leaders of educational institutions are required to have adequate professional



qualifications (Ariyani, 2017). Energy, loyalty, and personal and professional attributes determine leadership effectiveness. In Indonesia, the demand for school principals to have special certifications and training is a form of effort to improve the quality of leadership. Professional organizations also play an important role in helping the principal develop knowledge and skills so that he becomes a professional person. Thus, professional training and qualifications are important factors in forming effective and competitive leadership.

The seventh factor is organizational support and the work environment. Leadership effectiveness does not only depend on individual leaders, but also on organizational support and the work environment (Hendriani et al., 2024). Working groups, educational communities, and professional networks can help leaders find solutions and strengthen their leadership capacity. A conducive work environment will increase the motivation of teachers and staff, so that leadership can run more effectively. This shows that educational leadership is the result of collective work, not just the responsibility of individual leaders.

All of these factors show that the effectiveness of leadership in educational institutions is the result of the interaction between regulations, socio-economic conditions, school characteristics, leaders' personalities, changes in educational theory, professional qualifications, and organizational support. Educational leaders who are able to manage all of these factors well will be more effective in carrying out their duties. Thus, modern education leadership is required to be adaptive, visionary, and collaborative in order to be able to respond to global challenges while maintaining local relevance. This emphasizes that educational leadership is a great mandate that requires skills, wisdom, and commitment to human resource development.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of this study shows that educational leadership is a mandate rooted in the definition of a leader as a figure who is able to influence, organize, and build cooperation. The leadership pattern that is relevant to educational institutions is democratic and visionary, because both emphasize participation, togetherness, and the ability to read the direction of the times. The leadership function is not only administrative, but also includes the role of facilitator, director, and creator of a conducive academic climate. Factors that affect leadership effectiveness include



regulations, socio-economic conditions, school characteristics, leader personality, development of educational theory, professional qualifications, and organizational support.

The implication is that modern education leadership must transform into adaptive, collaborative, and visionary in order to be able to respond to the challenges of globalization and digitalization. Education leaders are required to strengthen professional competence, integrity, and effective communication, while building collaborative networks with communities and organizations. Thus, educational leadership is not only oriented towards achieving academic goals, but also on character building, global competitiveness, and sustainability of educational institutions.

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