

Emerging Academic Leadership And School Culture In Fostering A Culture Of Innovation In Higher Education

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Abstract

Academic leadership plays a vital role in fostering innovation and institutional effectiveness in higher education amid evolving global demands. This study examined the relationship between academic leadership practices, school culture, and educational innovation at Laguna State Polytechnic University. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 260 faculty members across four campuses through a validated survey instrument. Statistical analyses included weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation.

Findings revealed that academic leadership practices, particularly transformational, adaptive, servant, inclusive, and digital leadership, were generally manifested, with transformational leadership emerging as the most prominent. School culture components and educational innovation were both perceived as practiced, indicating a supportive and innovation-oriented institutional environment. Correlation results showed strong and significant positive relationships between leadership practices and educational innovation ($r = .673$ to $.809$), as well as very strong correlations between school culture and innovation ($r = .766$ to $.864$). Adaptive and digital leadership, along with student-centered focus and learning environment, demonstrated the strongest associations.

The study concludes that strengthening leadership practices and cultivating a supportive institutional culture are crucial for advancing educational innovation and sustaining quality higher education.

Keywords: academic leadership, school culture, educational innovation, higher education

I. Introduction

Academic leadership in higher education plays a significant role in guiding institutions towards excellence and innovation. As the demands of the 21st century continue to evolve due to globalization, educational institutions are compelled to recalibrate their leadership practices.

According to Mishra (2023), the effectiveness of the higher education system depends largely on vigorous and competent leaders who possess expertise in academics, assessment and evaluation, pedagogy, research culture, and innovation in teaching and learning. The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes that the quality and commitment of faculty members comprise the most critical factor in the success of higher education institutions. It highlights the necessity for faculty to be aware of their performance levels and the areas requiring improvement, as such awareness enables institutions to achieve their goals and

objectives effectively.

Moreover, developing a culture of innovation within academic institutions also requires leaders who can cultivate an environment that values creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Such leadership emphasizes empowerment, shared vision, and the strategic integration of innovative practices across teaching, research, and organizational management. Through recalibrated leadership, institutions can transcend traditional paradigms, enhance institutional agility, and cultivate a culture where innovation becomes a sustained organizational norm rather than an isolated initiative. Consequently, academic leadership recalibration serves as a vital mechanism in nurturing an innovative academic culture that ensures institutional growth, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability.

In the Philippines, however, the state of education continues to face ongoing challenges that hinder its ability to produce globally competitive graduates and foster sustainable national growth. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), in its *Year One Report* entitled “*Miseducation: The Failed System of Philippine Education*” (2024), revealed that the Philippine education system suffers from systemic inefficiencies, fragmented governance, and suboptimal learning outcomes across all levels. The report emphasized that educational reforms must be anchored in strong, visionary leadership and innovative institutional practices capable of addressing these deep-rooted structural issues.

Building on this assessment, the *Year Two Report* of EDCOM II, “*Fixing the Foundations: A Matter of National Survival*” (2025), underscored the urgency of reforming key aspects of the education system, including early childhood care, teacher quality, infrastructure, and higher education governance. The report stated that without decisive leadership recalibration and innovation-driven reforms, the country risks further widening its learning crisis, with long-term implications for economic competitiveness and social equity. These findings reaffirm the critical need to strengthen institutional leadership and cultivate a culture of innovation within schools and universities to drive meaningful educational transformation.

Aligned with the global call for educational reform, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) advocates for “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.” SDG 4 emphasizes not only access but also the quality and relevance of education in developing 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. The integration of SDG 4 within the national education agenda highlights the moral and strategic responsibility of academic institutions to recalibrate their leadership approaches and align them with the principles of equity, excellence, and innovation.

Within this context, academic leadership recalibration becomes an essential mechanism for transforming higher education institutions into a center of innovation and continuous improvement. Effective leadership practices grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and transformational vision can foster a culture that empowers teachers, supports pedagogical innovation, and enhances institutional responsiveness to societal needs. By promoting innovation at the leadership and organizational levels, educational institutions can contribute meaningfully to the realization of SDG 4 and the goals outlined in the EDCOM II reform agenda.

This study, therefore, aimed to examine how leadership practices and institutional culture contribute to educational innovation at Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU). Specifically, it sought to identify the emerging academic leadership practices of administrators and how these, along with perceived school culture correlates with innovative educational practices. The study is grounded in the premise that effective leadership and a supportive institutional environment are critical drivers of innovation in higher education.

1.1. Research Questions

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions.

1. What is the manifested academic leadership practices in the university as perceived by the respondents in terms of transformational leadership, servant leadership, adaptive leadership, inclusive leadership and digital leadership?
2. How do the faculty - respondents perceive the school culture in terms of professional orientation, organizational structure, learning environment, and student-centered focus?
3. How do the faculty perceive educational innovations in terms of curriculum reform, pedagogical approach, technology integration and professional development?
4. Is educational innovation related to the practice of academic leadership?
5. Is educational innovation related to the practice of observed school culture?

1.2. Theoretical Framework and Paradigm

The foundation of this study is based on several emerging leadership theories that collectively highlight flexibility, inclusivity, and innovation as key aspects of effective academic leadership. This was demonstrated in an article by Horton International (2025). The emerging concept of academic leadership was developed from various leadership frameworks in response to organizational and educational changes in the 21st century. In this study, school culture was taken into consideration, which may influence the school's innovation. It involves the following dimensions: professional orientation, organizational structure, learning environment, and student-centered focus (Yli-Pinula, 2022). Educational innovation comprised the following variables: curriculum reform, pedagogical approach, technology integration and professional development (Jassim, 2024)

Figure 1 presents the paradigm of the study. The conceptual model shows the interplay of the emerging leadership practices and observed school culture in relation to educational innovation. By identifying and presenting the different emerging leadership models, this study will enable respondents to determine the predominant academic leadership style practiced within the institution. This identification serves as a basis for analyzing how specific leadership styles, such as transformational, servant, adaptive, inclusive, and digital leadership, relate to the existing school culture and the level of educational innovation. Within the conceptual framework, the prevailing leadership style is viewed as a critical factor that influences organizational culture, which in turn affects the implementation of innovative practices.

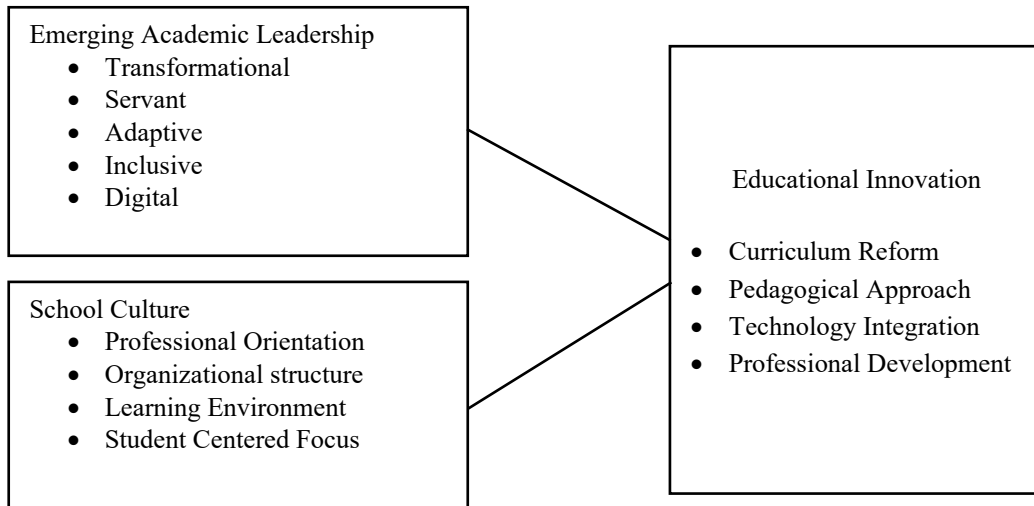


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationships among leadership styles, prevailing school culture and educational innovation. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), this design is appropriate for identifying patterns of association among variables without manipulation, thereby allowing for the analysis of naturally occurring relationships

2.2 . Respondents

A total of 260 faculty members from the four campuses of Laguna State Polytechnic University were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding institutional leadership and innovation initiatives. Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire composed of validated indicators measuring three principal constructs: (1) academic leadership styles (transformational, adaptive, servant, inclusive and digital leadership), (2) perceived school culture (professional orientation, organizational structure, learning environment, and student-centered focus), and (3) educational innovation (curriculum reform, pedagogical approaches, technological innovation and professional development).

2.3. Research Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure

The main instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire, which included a 4-point scale where weights were assigned to every indicator as one (1) being the lowest and four (4) being the highest. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through internal consistency measures, such as Cronbach's alpha, which assesses the extent to which items within a scale are correlated and measure the same construct (Field, 2013). The weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of teachers' leadership practices, school culture, and educational innovation. The Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between academic leadership practices, school culture, and school innovation.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards and institutional guidelines. Permission was obtained from university authorities prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents after explaining the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were kept confidential and reported in aggregate form. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher ensured that no harm was inflicted on participants and maintained honesty, transparency, and objectivity throughout the research process to uphold the integrity and credibility of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

The following table presents the results of the study.

Table 1. Academic Leadership Practices

Academic Leadership Practices	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	3.45	0.53	Manifested
Servant Leadership	3.34	0.60	Manifested
Adaptive Leadership	3.34	0.60	Manifested
Inclusive Leadership	3.30	0.62	Manifested
Digital Leadership	3.29	0.63	Manifested

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Not Manifested); 1.50- 2.49 (Slightly Manifested); 2.50-3.49 (Manifested); 3.5-4.0 (Highly Manifested)

The results revealed that transformational Leadership emerged as the most manifested academic leadership among administrators and faculty, with a mean of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 0.53. This implies that the administrators were observed to have practiced transformational leadership. This suggests that the leader inspires and motivates followers to go beyond their personal interests for the good of the organization. Instead of just managing routine tasks, transformational leaders create a shared vision, encourage innovation, and help individuals grow both professionally and personally.

The role of administrators in crafting a clear and compelling vision and mission is widely recognized as central to shaping instructors' insight, commitment, and professional direction. This is aligned to Senge (1990) who states that a shared vision fosters collective commitment and provides a sense of purpose that motivates members of an organization to pursue continuous improvement and excellence. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2017) emphasize that exemplary leaders "inspire a shared vision," which strengthens engagement and commitment among members of an organization. This supports the idea that a well-articulated college vision can energize instructors and staff toward excellence.

Furthermore, it is also aligned with the theory of Burns (1978) that transformational leaders elevate the motivations and values of followers by articulating a compelling vision that gives meaning and purpose to their work. This idea is further expanded by Bernard M. Bass (1985), who identified inspirational motivation

as a key component of transformational leadership. Through this dimension, leaders communicate a clear and appealing vision that energizes and commits members of the organization. Thus, when administrators develop and communicate a strong institutional vision, they foster deeper engagement and professional commitment among instructors.

The findings support that transformational leaders are skilled at communicating the mission or vision supporting an organization. Their enthusiasm makes employees feel like their work is essential and drives them toward a greater goal, fostering a sense of motivation that unites every team and department. In short, they inspire their followers to challenge themselves and achieve more, which has the benefit of producing a more confident and autonomous workforce. (NU, 2023)

Servant leadership has a mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.60, interpreted as “*Manifested*”. Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy in which the ultimate goal of the institution is to serve others, rather than to gain power, authority, or personal success. It emphasizes the practice of putting the needs of the followers, helping them grow, and enabling them to perform at their best.

According to Thacker et al. (2019), the management challenges leaders to equip themselves with skills that positively influence employees. Servant leaders give emphasis on employees and executive leadership first before their own needs. Hendrikz and Engelbrecht (2019) noted that servant leaders would like employees to become more autonomous and served employees in attempt of leading them.

The study is supported by Nguyen, Hai, and Van’s idea (2021) that the modern concept of servant leadership emphasizes the leader’s motivation, management, and mindset. First, a servant leader’s motivation centers on others rather than self-interest, highlighting the deeply humane-nature of this leadership style. Second, this approach recognizes that followers are unique individuals with their own needs, limitations, and aspirations, and it encourages their growth toward becoming the best versions of themselves. Third, servant leadership is evident when leaders consider the needs of the broader community, extending their concern beyond the boundaries of their organization. From this perspective, servant leaders demonstrate a strong sense of engagement with followers, genuine care for community well-being, and a focus that extends beyond personal interests. Moreover, this leadership style prioritizes the growth and welfare of employees and associates, promotes shared decision-making, and contrasts with traditional leadership, which often centers on authority and personal power. Ultimately, servant leadership fosters collective growth, aligns individual needs with shared values, and cultivates a deep commitment to achieving the organization’s common goals.

Meanwhile, adaptive leadership also has a mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.60, which is interpreted as “*Manifested*”. This implies that adaptive leaders are understood as having the ability to adjust to evolving demands and respond openly and creatively to complex, various situations. It empowers managers to identify and address both the individual and collective needs of their teams, foster collaboration and innovation, and cultivate a strong, adaptable work environment in the face of change.

As narrated by Sott (2025) adaptive leadership is based on the principle that organizations that succeed are those that can most effectively settle into changing conditions. Adaptability refers to the ability to adjust effectively to changes in the environment and is considered vital for the survival and growth of complex systems. Guided by this understanding, researchers and management theorists have examined how the concept of adaptation can inform leadership practices and organizational management.

In broad terms, adaptive leadership is understood as the ability to adapt to evolving demands and respond openly and creatively to complex, various situations. It empowers managers to identify and address

both the individual and collective needs of their teams, foster collaboration and innovation, and cultivate a strong adaptable work environment in the face of change.

Seibel et al. (2023) noted that it is crucial to highlight that adaptive leadership extends beyond simply managing teams during times of change; it represents a philosophy that places flexibility at its core (Naseer et al., 2023). In contrast to traditional leadership approaches, adaptive leadership promotes a culture of continuous learning and swift adjustment. Adaptive leaders do more than react to crises. They anticipate potential challenges and take proactive measures to address them. They nurture an organizational environment that embraces experimentation, innovation, and resilience, motivating team members to face uncertainty with confidence and determination.

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, which is shaped by curriculum reforms, accreditation requirements, technological shifts, public health concerns, and globalization, school administrators respond with flexibility, strategic thinking, and collaborative decision-making. Rather than relying solely on fixed procedures, adaptive leaders assess the emerging situation, interpret its implications for teaching and learning, and mobilize faculty and staff toward responsive action.

Some of these adaptations that guides and governs LSPU include policies from education authorities such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), who governs the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) in the Philippines. CHED recently released updated Policies and Guidelines on Open Distance and e-Learning, which strengthen standards for flexible and online delivery in tertiary education. This policy focuses on learning management systems, faculty readiness, student support services, assessment integrity, and quality assurance mechanisms for distance learning. It is highly relevant for the university in integrating blended and digital instruction due to high cost of diesel and gasoline resulting to transport strike and inclement weather. The university abide with these policies to comply with its mandate.

Similarly, in terms of program accreditation and regulatory compliance, the university ensures that all colleges strictly adhere to the standards set by the CHED by securing the Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC) for every applicable academic program. A COPC serves as CHED's formal recognition that a specific undergraduate or graduate program has fully met the prescribed Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), including curriculum requirements, faculty qualifications, facilities, library holdings, research support, and student services. This demonstrates the institution's strong commitment to quality assurance and continuous academic improvement.

CHED Memorandum Order No. 10, s. 2025 emphasizes stronger criteria for Centers of Excellence and Centers of Development, focusing on research productivity, internationalization, graduate outcomes, innovation, and institutional quality benchmarks. LSPU San Pablo Campus, College of Teacher Education was recognized as Center of Development that maintains to elevate academic quality, research, and international competitiveness.

Additionally, the AACCUP serve as a quality assurance and accreditation body for state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines. Its primary function is to evaluate academic programs and institutional systems to determine whether they meet established standards of excellence in instruction, research, extension, governance, faculty qualifications, student services, library resources, and physical facilities. LSPU submits to voluntary accreditation of its programs to ensure that programs have met the standards of excellence in its four fold functions. The LSPU is currently classified as SUC Level III and is the only institutionally accredited state university in the CALABARZON region, as certified by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP).

Another improvement noticeable to LSPU is the certification from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). It guides SUCs in standardizing key processes such as curriculum review, student services, records management, research procedures, extension services, and internal quality assurance. Through documented procedures, internal audits, corrective actions, and management reviews, the university makes sure that services are delivered consistently, efficiently, and transparently. This supports evidence-based decision-making and strengthens institutional governance, which is vital for public higher education institutions that are accountable to CHED, DBM, and other government oversight bodies.

ISO certification enhances the credibility, competitiveness, and public trust of SUCs. When a state university earns ISO certification, it signals that its systems meet internationally recognized standards for efficiency, learner-centeredness, inclusivity, and service excellence.

The Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) continues to demonstrate its academic and research excellence, maintaining its position among the Top 100 universities in the Philippines in the latest 2026 Edu Rank rankings.

This year, LSPU is ranked 56th out of 229 universities in the country, reflecting its consistent growth and strong performance across multiple disciplines. The above-mentioned achievement of the university shows the significance of adhering to its mandate.

It supports the study of Northouse (2021) which affirms that adaptive leaders engage in deep diagnosis, reframe complex issues, and mobilize collective action to address and adopt challenges effectively. They recognize that many solutions reside within the organization itself, fostering a culture of shared responsibility, collaboration, and mutual learning. This approach enhances organizational resilience, enabling educational institutions to embrace change and thrive amid uncertainty. Moreover, adaptive leaders exemplify resilience, flexibility, and the capacity to lead confidently through ambiguity and transformation.

The study of Sott (2025) also mentioned that adaptive leadership is based on the principle that organizations that succeed are those that can most effectively settle in to changing conditions.

Bender (2025) also confirms that adaptive leadership serves as a highly effective approach for addressing the challenges of an evolving business environment. By emphasizing flexibility, empathy, transparent communication, and innovation, adaptive leaders cultivate high-performing teams and strengthen organizational culture. Their ability to respond to shifting demands and anticipate future challenges positions them as significant drivers of progress and organizational resilience.

Inclusive leadership has a mean score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.62 and is interpreted as “Manifested”. This suggests that leaders actively ensure that all members of an organization feel valued, respected, and meaningfully involved in decision-making and institutional processes. It emphasizes fairness, openness, and respect for diversity, including differences in culture, perspectives, abilities, and experiences.

An inclusive leader listens to diverse voices, creates safe spaces where individuals can express ideas without fear of exclusion or bias, and encourages participation from all stakeholders. They also demonstrate equity in opportunities, ensuring that resources, recognition, and support are distributed fairly across individuals and groups.

Being an inclusive leader, the administrator views success as a strength that contributes to and enhances the diverse needs of the faculty (Bourke and Dillon, 2016). This indicates that the administrator has

the ability to recognize that individual and collective achievements become valuable means for building an inclusive and diverse academic environment (Edmondson, 2019). This emphasizes that success is not seen merely as personal accomplishment, but as something that creates opportunities for different perspectives, talents, backgrounds, and experiences to flourish within the institution. This was evident when the organization rejoiced of the achievements of others. These include achieving post graduate education, local and international recognition such as being victorious in research presentation and competition, best faculty award, research and scholarly publication, innovation in teaching and curriculum development, and leadership in academic programs.

Seeing success as a contributor to diversity also reflects a strengths-based and inclusive mindset. Strengths-based leadership explains that effective leaders identify and amplify the unique strengths of members, enabling them to perform at their best while contributing to a more diverse and collaborative workplace. Breewaart (2025) confirms that when administrators recognize success as an institutional strength, they help ensure that varied talents, identities, and expertise are acknowledged and integrated into school improvement efforts.

Moreover, this perspective supports the development of a culture of inclusion and belonging. Faculty and staff are more likely to feel valued when their successes are recognized as meaningful contributions to the institution's diversity and growth.

Murwanto (2024) in his study explains that inclusive leadership is a concept that combines leadership and inclusion and has the potential to create more equitable and socially just educational environments. Inclusive leadership emphasizes the need to involve all stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, parents, and students, in policy and decision-making processes. It also seeks to address the diverse values, beliefs, and cultures within schools, fostering a climate of understanding and appreciation. By advocating for inclusion, educating all members of the school community, nurturing dialogue, and adopting inclusive decision-making strategies, leaders can pave the way for a more inclusive educational setting. Inclusive education recognizes and embraces diversity and aims to eliminate discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status to ensure equal opportunities for all students. He emphasized that inclusive leadership is critical in promoting equity and social justice in schools, as it fosters culturally responsive practices and ensures that all learners are valued and included in the educational process.

Digital Leadership has an overall mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.63, and it is interpreted as "Manifested." This indicates that a digital leader, actively supports teachers in integrating digital tools and innovative teaching strategies into instruction. This means the administrator does not just require the use of technology but provides clear direction, mentoring, coaching, and practical support so faculty members can confidently use learning management systems, AI tools, virtual simulations, digital assessment platforms, and other technology-enhanced pedagogies. It also suggests that the institution fosters a supportive innovation culture. Faculty are more willing to adopt new technologies when leaders offer access to resources, encourage experimentation, and normalize the learning curve associated with innovation.

With the rise of the use of internet, video conferencing, email, virtual teams and other collaborative alike consider integrating information and communication technologies for leadership purposes way back late 1990's (Figueroa et al. 2025). This transition prompted numerous inquiries among both scholars and practitioners, especially concerning changes in work structures, the implications for leadership roles, and the extent to which these emerging technologies may transform leadership practices and shape future research in the field.

In this perspective, technology increasingly shapes leadership processes, leading to the emergence of digital leadership, e-leadership, and virtual leadership which centered on the integration of technology into leadership practices (Sivulca et al., 2024; Sukmawati et al., 2024). A critical element of these leadership approaches is technological competence, as leaders must effectively employ digital tools to strengthen collaboration, communication, and productivity (Tuschner et al., 2023). E-leadership is commonly associated with the use of internet-based platforms, electronic resources, and virtual environments.

Digital leadership has been “a social influence process mediated by information technology that brings about a change in attitudes, feelings, thinking, behavior, and/or performance in individuals, groups, and organizations”. Another perspective emphasizes the integration of both electronic and traditional communication channels, requiring leaders to possess up-to-date ICT expertise, informed decision-making skills in selecting technological tools, and technical proficiency in their use. Recent literature extends this understanding by linking digital leadership to the Internet of Things (IoT), human–technology communication, digitalization, and digital transformation initiatives (Karakose et al., 2022). Similarly, virtual leadership is characterized by a leader’s ability to effectively guide teams and organizations within digitally mediated environments through the strategic use of technology and digital tools (Bin Hasnor, 2024)

The primary focus of the study of Mukhtar (2025) on digital leadership emphasizes the essential role leaders play in leveraging advanced technologies to enhance educational outcomes. Leaders who strategically implement digital initiatives can better align these innovations with institutional goals, which is crucial for fostering adaptive and resilient learning environments. This points out the need for structured leadership that not only facilitates smooth digital transformation but also prepares institutions to manage technological disruptions effectively.

Table 2. Components of School Culture

Parameters	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Professional Orientation	3.36	0.56	Practiced
Organizational Structure	3.31	0.61	Practiced
Learning Environment	3.30	0.65	Practiced
Student-Centered Focus	3.28	0.61	Practiced
Mean	3.312	0.60	Practiced

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Not Practiced); 1.50- 2.49 (Slightly Practiced); 2.50-3.49 (Practiced); 3.5-4.0 (Highly Practiced)

Table 2 shows that the components of school culture have an overall mean of 3.312 and were perceived as “practiced”, indicating a supportive institutional environment. Specifically, professional orientation has the highest mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 0.56; Organizational Structure has a mean score of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.61; learning environment has a mean score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.65; and student-centered focus has a mean of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 0.60.

Described by Tihuriyanti et al. (2024) school culture is the ethics and social environment in schools composed of administrative and organizational structures and how they work together to enhance the teacher’s professional development. Ismail et al.(2022) described school cultures as consisting of faith and values that comprise a community. Additionally, Schipper et al. (2020) denoted school culture as the perspective through

which the participants are viewed by society. To Mullins and Cronan (2021); Rashid et al., 2021), school culture represents a standard system of values, beliefs and attitudes among the individuals in the organization, shaping their perceptions and judgements which can be transferred from one generation to another.

Professional orientation Yli-Pinula (2022) involves how teachers practically live professionally, which includes their attitudes, beliefs, and practices, their own and other persons' ideas about teaching, studying, and learning in specific circumstances and contexts. The capability of a teacher to bring about teaching–learning situations and his or her role in organizational learning also play a role in shaping school culture (Seashore, 2016). Thus, the conditions that affect the teacher's experiences, and his perception of teaching and other activities in the school is then culture.

Organizational structure determines the employees' roles, functions and activities requisite to achieve the goals of the company. In practice, it establishes the relationships among departments and determines how authority and communication flow through the chain of command (Nyathi, 2019). It is the framework that assists employees in achieving goals most productively. They organize operations, expand decision-making and maintain associations within the educational community. It also creates room for resourcefulness and improves teacher performance as well as student performance.

A learning environment refers to the setting in which learning occurs, with students at its core (Aldridge, 2022). It encompasses the physical surroundings, psychological conditions, and social and cultural impacts that shape students' growth and development. The quality of this environment is shaped by both teachers and students (Schoen, 2020), particularly their interactions, which influence attitudes, behaviors, and the overall promotion of learning.

The student-centered focus, which is the fourth dimension of culture, emphasizes evaluating how effectively the schools' programs, policies, routines, and traditions address the diverse needs of individual learners. It highlights the importance of engagement, collaboration, and student autonomy, aiming to create a learning environment that both supports and challenges students in meeting their needs and achieving their goals. Khoury (2022) contends that this approach enhances student motivation, encourages active participation, and leads to improved learning outcomes, particularly in online and distance learning contexts.

Table 3. Components of Educational Innovation

Parameters	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Curriculum Reform	3.34	0.60	Practiced
Pedagogical Approach	3.30	0.63	Practiced
Technology Integration	3.30	0.63	Practiced
Professional Development	3.30	0.63	Practiced
Mean	3.31	0.62	Practiced

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Not Practiced); 1.50- 2.49 (Slightly Practiced); 2.50-3.49 (Practiced); 3.5-4.0 (Highly Practiced)

Table 3 shows that the components of educational innovation have an overall mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.62, which is interpreted as “Practiced” demonstrates a strong culture of educational innovation and ongoing improvement within the institution. It reflects a high level of responsiveness to change, as the institution continuously updates its curriculum and adopts relevant teaching strategies to meet evolving educational demands. Moreover, it highlights a commitment to instructional innovation through the effective use of technology and modern teaching methods. At the same time, the emphasis on professional development

shows strong institutional support for faculty growth and capacity building. Altogether, these practices signify a dynamic and forward-looking academic environment that prioritizes quality education and enhanced student learning outcomes.

Curriculum reform is defined as the process of implementing changes to the experiences of students with the intention of making teaching and learning more profound and effective. It is a set of principles, practices, and theories that the students should learn and what should be taught through the educational system. According to Stoll (2016), curriculum refers to the materials and documents utilized during the teaching and learning process. In a broader sense, it includes issues that explicitly influence how the curriculum is designed and realized such as methodologies, class size, allocation of hours for learning, assessment and drill practices.

According to Fullan (2015), curriculum implementation refers to the processes used to achieve intended educational goals, emphasizing that a curriculum can only be effective when it is translated into actual classroom practice. The concept of implementation has been extensively examined across fields such as public management, public policy, organizational change and education. Traditionally, curriculum reform has been approached from a “top-down” perspective, where success is measured by the extent to which teachers faithfully follow and adhere to prescribed reforms (Castro, Marshall, & Kelso, 2015). However, this perspective is increasingly challenged by autonomy-centered approaches to curriculum enactment, which recognize teachers as active agents who interpret and mediate policy. In this context, the notion of strict fidelity becomes less relevant, as teachers play a central role in shaping how the curriculum is implemented in practice.

Pedagogy is the technique behind the art of teaching. It contemplates how students learn and uses that knowledge to develop beliefs, methodologies, and procedures for the classroom.

Pedagogical approaches are the techniques educators use in the practice of teaching, from course design to content delivery. The education system encompasses multiple pedagogies, each originating from a different philosophy of learning. A pedagogical approach is a good match when it reflects an educator's philosophies about the practice of teaching and serves the students' needs.

Suyo-Vega (2024) emphasized that innovative pedagogical practices become more effective and sustainable when institutions continuously invest in teacher training, seminars, and reflective professional learning communities. Regular training opportunities create a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the university. Faculty members who participate in workshops and seminars are more likely to integrate new teaching strategies, redesign assessments, and improve classroom management and learner support.

Likewise, Awang et al. (2025) emphasized that innovative pedagogy has become a key pillar of modern education. It is designed to cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among learners. Despite its potential, implementation faces significant barriers, such as inadequate teacher preparation, technological constraints, curriculum misalignment, and socio-cultural resistance. A systematic review of 17 peer-reviewed studies published between 2022 and 2024, sourced from SCOPUS and Web of Science, identified eight categories of challenges: student-related, teacher-related, curricular, technological, infrastructural, school leadership, policy-related, and socio-cultural factors. These interconnected barriers highlight the need for holistic interventions, including targeted professional development, infrastructure investments, culturally responsive approaches, and adaptable policies. He suggested that future research is encouraged to explore longitudinal teacher training, AI-supported adaptive learning, and competency-based policy frameworks. Collaboration among educators, policymakers, and technology developers is essential to achieving equitable and sustainable pedagogical innovation.

Technology integration refers to the utilization of digital tools and platforms to streamline tasks and enhance collaboration among teams. This includes the use of specialized software for tasks management, online file sharing systems, and communication tools such as email and messaging applications. In education, the goal of technological empowerment is to provide learners with the tools and resources they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Technological empowerment can help to bridge the digital divide, providing learners from all backgrounds with equal access to educational opportunities. It can also help to improve the quality of education by facilitating personalized learning, increasing student engagement and motivation, and providing teachers with the tools they need to create more effective and engaging learning environments, as confirmed in the study of Qarkaxhja et al. (2021).

In the digital era, the integration of technology in education has become essential for effective teaching and learning. Across the globe, educational systems continue to evolve to equip learners with 21st-century skills, with technology serving as a key driver of transformation. Studies indicate that technology integration is shaped by various factors, including teachers' access to digital tools, availability of training, and their level of self-efficacy. It confirms the study of Cantutay and Taganas (2024) who found that teachers who engaged in upskilling programs exhibited notably higher technological literacy, particularly in the use of productivity and communication tools. Nonetheless, the adoption of technology remains uneven, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas such as Northern Samar, where both access and training opportunities are limited according to Casilao et al., (2025).

Turbanada (2024) emphasizes that in today's digital age, the integration of technology in education has become a fundamental component of effective teaching and learning. Globally, educational systems are continuously evolving to equip learners with 21st-century skills, and technology plays a central role in this transformation.

Majid (2025) added that technology can facilitate collaboration and communication, enabling students to work together on projects and share ideas and resources. This can help to build a sense of community and engagement in the classroom, as well as develop important 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Technological empowerment in education enhances teaching and learning practices, improves access to education, and promotes student engagement and achievement

Professional development refers to the activities that enhanced the skills, knowledge and expertise as well as the characteristics of a teacher ((OECD, 2009). Choi et al., (2019) affirms that teachers play a central role in realizing educational goals; therefore, the quality of teachers in every field needs to be developed in terms of teachers' competencies and skills.

Additionally, Asiyah (2021) mentioned that the quality of education is largely determined by the quality of the teaching staff (teachers) which further depends upon the continuous professional development opportunities available to teachers. Professional development and teachers' effectiveness have a positive impact on school reforms and increased learning (Gopinathan, 2016). The role of teachers is increasingly being considered strategic in improving quality human resources in the face of the 4.0 industrial revolution and the 5.0 Era Society. It has been emphasized that teacher quality must be optimized in all educational formats, because it is the teacher who produces students of good quality and highly competitive potential.

The role of the administrators, therefore, is to encourage participation of instructors in seminars, workshops, and training related to leadership and innovation. This implies that the administrator takes initiative in fostering continuous professional learning opportunities that strengthen teachers' leadership capacity and

innovative teaching practices. Encouraging attendance in seminars and workshops exposes instructors to emerging pedagogies, leadership models, digital tools, and best practices that can be translated into classroom and institutional improvement. Quinto and Esguerra (2025) affirms that professional development opportunities significantly enhance teachers' instructional competence, leadership engagement, and readiness for innovation.

Table 4. Correlations between Educational Innovation and Emerging Academic Leadership

Educational Innovation	Academic Leadership				
	Transformational leadership	Servant leadership	Adaptive leadership	Inclusive leadership	Digital leadership
Curriculum Reform	.681**	.740**	.809**	.754**	.788**
Pedagogical Approach	.720**	.780**	.788**	.760**	.799**
Technology Integration	.673**	.740**	.768**	.725**	.778**
Professional Development	.673**	.767**	.745**	.747**	.741**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

0.00-0.19 Negligible; 0.20-0.39 Weak; 0.40-0.59 Moderate; 0.60-0.79 Strong; 0.80-1.00 Very Strong

The table reveals that all dimensions of educational innovation practices are significantly and positively correlated with academic leadership, as evidenced by the correlation coefficients ranging from .673 to .809, all marked with double asterisks (**) indicating significance at the 0.01 level. In statistical interpretation, Pearson's r values greater than .50 are generally considered strong positive correlations, which means that improvements in leadership practices are strongly associated with corresponding improvements in curriculum reform, pedagogical approaches, technological innovation, and professional development.

Among the leadership dimensions, adaptive leadership demonstrated the strongest relationship with curriculum reform ($r = .809$), followed closely by its correlations with pedagogical approach ($r = .788$), technology integration ($r = .768$), and professional development ($r = .745$). This suggests that administrators who are flexible, resilient, and responsive to changing educational demands are more likely to drive successful innovation in curriculum design and teaching practices. The strong association particularly with curriculum reforms implies that adaptability is crucial when implementing revised standards, learner-centered models, and emerging educational policies. This supports the idea that institutions thrive when leaders effectively respond to uncertainty and guide stakeholders through change processes. This aligns with adaptive leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of leaders navigating complex and changing contexts to implement sustainable reforms (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Similarly, digital leadership also showed very strong positive relationships across all innovation indicators, particularly with pedagogical approach ($r = .799$) and curriculum reform ($r = .788$). This indicates that leaders who strategically use technology, support digital transformation, and guide faculty in technology

integration strongly contribute to innovative teaching methods and curriculum modernization. The findings imply that digital leadership is an important catalyst for educational innovation, especially in schools transitioning toward technology-enhanced and future-ready learning environments. This finding highlights that school leaders play a critical role in fostering technology-driven transformation in teaching and learning (Dexter, 2018).

The results further show that servant leadership has consistently high correlations, with the strongest link found in pedagogical approach ($r = .780$) and professional development ($r = .767$). This means that leaders who prioritize faculty support, empowerment, and well-being create conditions that are highly conducive to innovation in teaching strategies and teacher growth. The strong association suggests that when teachers feel supported and valued, they become more willing to experiment with creative instructional methods and participate in innovation-focused training programs. This is consistent with servant leadership theory, which underscores the role of leaders in supporting and developing others to achieve institutional goals (Greenleaf, 1977).

In the same way, inclusive leadership demonstrated strong positive correlations ranging from .725 to .760, indicating that fairness, collaboration, and respect for diversity are strongly associated with all dimensions of educational innovation. This means that schools that promote inclusion and shared participation are better able to sustain innovation because multiple perspectives, talents, and experiences are integrated into decision-making and implementation.

Meanwhile, transformational leadership also showed strong positive relationships, particularly with pedagogical approach ($r = .720$). This suggests that visionary, motivational, and inspiring leadership practices are especially influential in improving innovative teaching and learning processes. Transformational leaders create a compelling vision for change, which motivates faculty to align their instructional practices with reform and innovation goals. The findings are in line with transformational leadership theory, which posits that visionary leadership enhances organizational change and innovation (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Overall, the findings suggest that stronger academic leadership practices are associated with higher levels of educational innovation across all domains. Among the five leadership styles, adaptive and digital leadership emerged as the strongest correlates, highlighting the importance of flexibility, responsiveness, and technology-oriented leadership in sustaining innovation in higher education institutions. Since correlation measures association rather than causation, these findings indicate strong relationships but should not be interpreted as direct cause-and-effect links.

The results indicate that educational innovation initiatives significantly influence the success of academic leadership practices, with adaptive and digital leadership showing the strongest associations. This implies that administrators who are flexible, technologically competent, inclusive, and supportive are better positioned to lead curriculum reforms, innovative pedagogies, technological advancements, and faculty development programs

Table 5. Correlations between Educational Innovation and Perceived School Culture

Educational Innovation	Professional Orientation	Organizational Structure	Learning Environment	Student-Centered Approach
Curriculum Reform	.783**	.766**	.783**	.843**
Pedagogical Approaches	.811**	.833**	.848**	.864**
Technological Innovation	.772**	.807**	.833**	.807**
Professional Development	.825**	.827**	.787**	.788**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

0.00-0.19 Negligible; 0.20-0.39 weak; 0.40-0.59 Moderate; 0.60-0.79 Strong; 0.80-1.00 Very Strong

This table presents the correlation between perceived educational innovation dimensions and school culture, and the results show very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships across all variables. Since all coefficients range from .766 to .864 and are marked with double asterisks (**), this means they are significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$). In educational research, Pearson r values above .50 are generally interpreted as strong positive correlations, indicating that as educational innovation also improves, school culture also improves.

Across the variables, the student-centered approach demonstrates the strongest correlations with all aspects of educational innovation, particularly with pedagogical approaches ($r = .864$) and curriculum reform ($r = .843$). This implies that when schools prioritize learners' needs, interests, and active participation, innovation in both teaching strategies and curriculum design is more likely to occur. This finding aligns with Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996), which emphasizes that learning is most effective when students are actively engaged in the process. A student-centered culture naturally encourages experimentation with innovative pedagogies and flexible curricula.

The learning environment also shows very strong correlations, particularly with pedagogical approaches ($r = .848$) and technological innovation ($r = .833$). This indicates that supportive, resource-rich, and collaborative environments foster innovation. According to Cohen et al., (2009), a positive learning environment enhances both teaching effectiveness and openness to change. When teachers and students feel safe, supported, and motivated, they are more willing to adopt innovative practices.

Similarly, organizational structure exhibits strong correlations across all innovation indicators (ranging from .766 to .833). This suggests that clear roles, effective communication systems, and participatory decision-making processes enable innovation to thrive. This is consistent with Eze et al. (2017), which posits that flexible and well-coordinated structures promote adaptability and innovation.

The dimension of professional orientation also shows strong correlations, particularly with professional development ($r = .825$) and pedagogical approaches ($r = .811$). This indicates that when teachers are committed to professional growth, ethical standards, and continuous learning, innovation is more likely to be sustained. This finding is supported by Clark et.al (2023), which highlights that shared values and ongoing professional development enhance instructional innovation.

Overall, the results demonstrate that all aspects of school culture are significantly related to educational innovation, with student-centered approaches and learning environment emerging as the strongest correlates. This suggests that fostering a culture that prioritizes learners, supports teachers, and maintains effective organizational systems is critical for sustaining innovation in education.

The results indicate that all dimensions of perceived school culture are significantly and positively associated with educational innovation, with the strongest relationships found in the student-centered approach and learning environment. This implies that a supportive, well-structured, and learner-focused school culture is essential in advancing curriculum reform, innovative pedagogy, technological integration, and professional development initiatives.

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