

# Leadership and Management: A Conceptual and Framework Discourse in Educational Management

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**Abstract:** *The concepts of leadership and management remain central to scholarly debate, particularly in educational management. Although often used interchangeably, these terms denote distinct yet complementary roles vital to organisational success. This paper explores the core concepts of leadership and management, focusing on their definitions, required skills, styles, and similarities and differences. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence, inspire, motivate, and guide individuals or groups towards common goals. In contrast, management is described as the systematic process of planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling resources to achieve organisational objectives. The paper reviews various leadership styles, including autocratic, democratic, transformational, servant, authentic, adaptive, digital, ethical, and inclusive leadership, as well as management styles such as production-oriented, people-oriented, coaching, visionary, affiliative, pacesetter, transactional, transformational, agile, and inclusive management. It emphasises key skills for effective leadership and management, such as communication, decision-making, strategic thinking, delegation, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and technical expertise. The discussion highlights that leadership is primarily focused on vision, influence, motivation, and change, while management emphasises structure, stability, coordination, and operational efficiency. The paper concludes that successful educational leaders need to combine both leadership and management skills to foster institutional growth, employee engagement, innovation, and long-term organisational success.*

**Keywords:** leadership, management, educational management, leadership styles, management styles, organisational effectiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

The conceptualisation of leadership and management has sparked controversy among scholars in management, including educational management. While the ongoing debate continues to confuse the meaning and use of these terms among students, researchers, and authors in management, it is essential that an intellectual discussion be conducted to clarify this ambiguity in educational management. Furthermore, it is necessary to simplify the terms that have been

technicalised, formalised, and semantical regarding leadership and management for both professionals and laypeople.

### **The Concept of Leadership**

Due to the complex nature of leadership, the concept has undergone institutional diagnosis through the cognitive and experiential insights of scholars, organisational specialists, management consultants, and business analysts. To clarify the idea, the word “leadership” can be divided into three components: “lead,” “-er,” and “-ship.” The first part, “lead,” signifies being a pioneer or taking the lead. The second part, “-er,” denotes a person who performs a role or function or undertakes a responsibility. The final part, “-ship,” as in “scholarship,” refers to a skill, ability, or art. Based on this interpretation, leadership can be defined as determining the path a group will follow, guiding it towards a goal, and possessing the requisite skills to mobilise followers with intrinsic motivation (Ozgun and Mustafa, 2020). Leadership involves influencing and guiding individuals towards achieving a shared goal or vision. In a management context, leadership has been consistently recognised as a critical factor in the success or failure of organisations, with some surveys attributing up to 45% of an organisation’s performance to the quality and effectiveness of its leadership team (Guttermann, 2023). In light of this, leadership is also described as the ability to inspire, motivate, and empower individuals and groups to collaborate effectively.

### **Leadership Skills**

Skills are the abilities, competencies, or proficiencies that a person develops through training, practice, or experience to perform tasks effectively. They enable individuals to carry out specific activities with accuracy, efficiency, and competence. Leadership skills refer to a set of essential abilities that enable an individual to influence, guide, and motivate others towards achieving common goals. These skills include effective communication, decision-making, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, adaptability, and the ability to inspire and support team members. Simplilearn (2025) emphasised that key leadership skills should include the capability to provide support, maintain accessibility to team members, be transparent in decision-making, collaborate effectively within teams, and communicate strategies and objectives. Nizarudin (2017) further elaborated that leadership encompasses a wide range of skills, traits, and behaviours such as decision-making, communication, strategic thinking, empathy, and vision-setting—each of which is crucial for effective leadership. Additionally, leadership can be viewed as an art or set of skills that enable an individual to guide a team or organisation through sound decision-making, establish a compelling vision, inspire team members, and achieve collective goals with charisma and integrity.

### **Leadership style**

Leadership style, therefore, refers to how a leader chooses to lead and interact with their followers. It reflects the leader’s behaviours, attitudes, and actions in influencing and directing others. Leadership style has a significant impact on how a leader makes decisions, communicates expectations, motivates followers, and creates a work environment. Leadership styles are the habitual pattern of behaviour adopted by leaders when they attempt to influence others. Recent literature has emphasised the adaptive and situation-specific nature of leadership styles, moving from traditional labels like autocratic or democratic. Northouse (2022) defines

leadership style as "the behaviour pattern of a person who attempts to influence others," underlined by the reality that style is not static but an adaptive phenomenon. Modern scholarship acknowledges that effective leadership should take into account organisational culture, follower preparedness, and environmental dynamics. Leadership styles are therefore now regarded as dynamic and multi-dimensional constructs influenced by situational demands.

### **Types of Leadership Styles**

#### **i. Autocratic Leadership Style**

The autocratic style involves a leader who makes decisions unilaterally without consulting subordinates. It focuses on control, order, and discipline. This style is suitable in emergencies or when prompt decisions are required. However, recent studies, such as Northouse (2022), warn that excessive autocracy can lead to low morale, suppressed creativity, and rebellion among team members due to perceived exclusion.

#### **ii. Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

Laissez-faire leadership is characterised by minimal involvement, where the leader provides little guidance and allows members to make their own choices. This style works well with highly qualified and motivated members who require little supervision. However, Yukl (2022) highlights that laissez-faire leadership can lead to confusion, responsibility issues, and poor coordination if not managed properly within an organisation or in uncontrolled teams.

#### **iii. Democratic Leadership Style**

Democratic or participative leadership involves decision-making by consensus. Leaders adopting this style encourage teamwork, value team input, and tend to base decisions on group agreement. Goleman (2023) supports this approach for its ability to boost motivation, creativity, and team engagement. Nonetheless, it may be time-consuming and less effective during crises or in hierarchical organisations where quick action is necessary.

#### **iv. Pseudo-Democratic Leadership Style**

Pseudo-democratic leadership mimics participative decision-making but retains decision-making authority within the leader. It may seem open but often results in distrust and demoralisation when team members realise their input is disregarded. This style has been criticised as manipulative, and recent studies condemn it for undermining employee commitment and organisational transparency (Bass & Riggio, 2019).

#### **v. Transactional Leadership Style**

Transactional leadership relies on a system of rewards and penalties to motivate followers. Leaders set clear objectives, rewarding achievements and penalising failures. It is effective in formal, bureaucratic environments and for short-term goals but may suppress innovation and hinder creativity or long-term planning (Wang et al., 2022).

#### **vi. Transformational Leadership Style**

Transformational leadership aims to inspire and motivate followers to surpass expectations through vision, communication, and charisma. Bass and Riggio (2019) describe transformational leaders as engaging in intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence. This style is highly valued for its capacity to

drive organisational change, foster innovation, and support followers' career development.

#### vii. Servant Leadership Style

Rooted in the idea that leaders should serve their followers, prioritising their interests and aiding their development, servant leadership emphasises empathy, stewardship, and community-building. Originating from Robert Greenleaf's writings and expanded by Spears (2021), it has become increasingly relevant in workplaces prioritising empathy, especially in education, healthcare, and ministry sectors. It builds trust and long-term loyalty.

#### viii. Charismatic Leadership Style

Closely related to transformational leadership, charismatic leadership emphasises the leader's charm and persuasiveness. Charismatic leaders inspire devotion and emotional commitment from followers. However, Yukl (2022) warns that if not grounded in moral principles, charismatic leadership can foster dependency rather than a focus on the vision or system.

#### ix. Authentic Leadership Style

A relatively recent theory, authentic leadership centres on self-awareness, openness, ethics, and genuine relationships. Avolio and Gardner (2021) state that authentic leaders act according to their core values, foster open communication, and build trust within their teams. This style is best suited for cultivating organisational cultures founded on integrity and responsibility but requires high personal maturity.

#### x. Distributed Leadership Style

Distributed or shared leadership involves spreading leadership responsibilities across organisational members. It views leadership as a team effort rather than a role held by a single individual. Common in schools and projects, Spillane (2021) notes that distributed leadership encourages collaboration, ownership, and community but can suffer from unclear accountability if poorly designed.

#### xi. Adaptive Leadership Style

As defined by Heifetz and Linsky (2020), adaptive leadership focuses on empowering individuals and organisations to adapt to uncertainty and change. Adaptive leaders promote experimentation, flexibility, and learning. It is particularly suited to rapidly changing environments such as crises or technological sectors, aiming to guide people through challenges rather than do the work for them.

#### xii. Digital Leadership Style

With the rise of digital transformation, digital leadership has emerged as a key style for managing virtual teams and tech-focused organisations. Kane et al. (2022) describe digital leaders as those who leverage digital platforms to inspire, coordinate, and engage. Successful digital leadership demands high levels of technological literacy and communication skills to respond swiftly, make evidence-based decisions, and work within distributed teams.

### xiii. Ethical and Inclusive Leadership Styles

Ethical leadership prioritises doing the right thing, promoting justice and honesty. Inclusive leadership emphasises ensuring that all voices are heard, regardless of gender, race, or background. Both styles are increasingly important in diverse, socially responsible workplaces, fostering trust and enhancing employee satisfaction and retention (Brown & Treviño, 2022).

In summary, leadership styles are complex and adaptable, reflecting the shifting dynamics of global, cultural, and technological environments. From traditional autocratic and democratic styles to modern approaches like authentic, adaptive, and digital leadership, contemporary leaders must be responsive and flexible. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; the most effective leaders are those able to assess their environment and adjust their style accordingly to achieve organisational goals and meet the needs of their people.

### **The Concept of Management**

Numerous sources in the literature have emerged regarding the evolution of management, presenting a variety of definitions, principles, and methods aimed at advancing the field. This evolution can be traced back to the classical era, which began during the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. This management approach prioritised efficiency and productivity in organisations and featured prominent thinkers such as F.W. Taylor, Henri Fayol, and Max Weber (Hussain, Haque, and Akhtar, 2019). In this era, Henry Fayol (1916) outlined the key functions of management as planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling, with “commanding” being replaced by “leading” in modern definitions. The progression of management thought continued with the human relations movement, which originated from the Hawthorne studies conducted by Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger from 1924 to 1932. These studies revealed that one of the most significant factors influencing employee performance was the knowledge of being observed by others. This development further evolved into the behavioural science perspective, represented by scholars like Barnard and Gouldner, ultimately leading to the contemporary integrated or contingency approach (Hussain et al., 2019:161).

The perceptions of experts in the field of management regarding the concept of management seem to be revolving as different studies are carried out in the field. Nevertheless, there is a general perception among scholars that management revolves around the human being (Famade, 2003). Nevertheless, there are different definitions in literature penned by scholars to capture the meaning of management. In this scholastic effort, some experts conceived management as a process (Robbins, 2001; Adepoju, 2006; Donnelly et al, 1984) while some scholars denote management as a function (Olagboye, 2004; Adepoju, 2022). Relatedly, the management process is regarded as the vehicle to perform the management function (Adepoju, 2022:6).

Management as a process involves systematic and interrelated activities such as decision-making, problem-solving and action planning performed to achieve desired goals ( Famade, 2006; Adepoju, 2004). Contrary, Cole (1999) argued that management is not an activity but a description of a variety of activities carried out by those members of organisations. Cole’s

definition seems to perceive management as job descriptions or functions of members of organisations. Earlier management scholars such as Gulick and Urwick, according to Adepoju (2023:46), outlined seven activities that constitute management processes including planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. There is enough disagreement among management writers on the classification of managerial functions or processes. Some classify these functions into four types, some into six or seven. The terminology is also not always alike, with different authors offering different names for the same functions of management. For managerial purposes, the following five functions are very essential for managers. They are planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling (Marzano, Marzano and Pickering, 2003). Hence, management can be defined as the processes of planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling human and physical resources within the organisation such that the organisation's objectives are accomplished (Adepoju, 2023: 46).

### **Management Styles**

The academic literature concerning management styles lacks a universally accepted set of classifications. Furthermore, discussions related to "styles" frequently extend to various other concepts, including "Managerial Behaviour," "Management Systems," "Managerial Philosophies," and "Leadership Style." This complexity underscores the difficulties associated with precisely defining management styles; however, it concurrently provides opportunities for deeper exploration and investigation into these various approaches (Puri, 2020). Consequently, the concept of management styles has been the subject of considerable scholarly inquiry, with various definitions highlighting its multifaceted nature. For instance, Dundon and Rollinson (2011) characterised management styles as not only the preferred approach of a manager in dealing with employee issues and employment relations but also indicative of the manager's use of authority and decision-making. From this definition, it is imperative to know that effective management is essential for any organisation's success, and it requires the use of appropriate management styles tailored to the needs of each employee. Managers utilize different methods to make decisions and interact with subordinates, including assigning responsibilities and motivating contributions.

Yu and Yeh (1977), as cited by Gutterman (2023), articulate management style as “a preferred way of managing people to unify diverse operations and functions, as well as to exert control over employees.” This definition underscores the importance of both cohesion and control in the management process. Similarly, Quang and Vuong (2002) conceptualise management style as the characteristic manner in which an organisation makes decisions and executes its functions, emphasising the uniqueness of each organisation's approach. Furthermore, Khandwalla (1995) offers a complementary perspective by delineating key functions associated with management styles, which encompass goal-setting, strategy formulation and implementation, fundamental management activities, corporate image development, and stakeholder engagement. The alignment of Quang and Vuong's perspective with Khandwalla's functions suggests a convergence in understanding of how management styles manifest in practice. Together, these scholarly contributions illustrate the complexity and significance of management style in organisational effectiveness and leadership dynamics. A similar conception of the term was penned by Barinua and Ezeogu (2022), who opined that

management style is a way of life operating throughout the enterprise and permits an executive to rely on the initiative of the personnel of an entity. In the same academic mindset,

The term "management style" refers to the approach a manager employs in overseeing an organization, which encompasses the methods of control, direction, and motivation utilized to inspire subordinates to adhere to instructions (Norma, 2024). It can also be characterised as the specific practices employed by a manager to steer the organisation's operations. Additionally, management style represents a foundational way of functioning within the enterprise, allowing executives to depend on the initiative of their personnel (Norma, 2024:4). In essence, management style acts as the cohesive force that integrates various operations and functions. It embodies the philosophy or set of principles through which a manager leverages the capabilities of the workforce. Importantly, it should be noted that management style is not merely a procedural guideline but rather a comprehensive framework for achieving organisational objectives (Robbin, 2013).

### **Types of Management Styles**

- i. **Production-Oriented Management Style**  
The production-oriented management style prioritises output, efficiency, and the completion of tasks over the needs of individuals. It is closely aligned with Taylor's scientific management theory, which emphasises workflow optimisation and productivity through control and measurement. While effective in high-demand environments such as manufacturing and logistics, this style often overlooks employee well-being and can lead to burnout or high turnover if not balanced with supportive practices (Northouse, 2022).
- ii. **People-Oriented Management Style**  
In contrast, people-oriented management focuses on building strong interpersonal relationships, fostering collaboration, and prioritising employee satisfaction. Managers who adopt this style actively listen, provide feedback, and create inclusive workspaces. Studies show that people-oriented managers contribute to higher morale, increased innovation, and stronger team loyalty. However, critics argue that excessive focus on people may sometimes lead to lax enforcement of rules or diminished performance accountability (Yukl, 2022).
- iii. **Coaching Management Style**  
Coaching as a management style centres on developing individual potential and aligning personal growth with organisational objectives. According to Namiq (2018), this style helps employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, set career goals, and take ownership of their professional journey. Coaching leaders act as mentors rather than bosses. This style thrives in developmental environments like education, NGOs, and modern corporate settings. However, it requires time, emotional intelligence, and a commitment to long-term results rather than short-term performance.
- iv. **Visionary Management Style**  
The visionary style, as conceptualised by Namiq (2018), is future-focused and strategy-

driven. Visionary managers articulate a compelling organisational vision that inspires and motivates employees toward a shared goal. This style is effective during times of change or uncertainty, where strategic clarity and inspiration are crucial. However, visionary leaders may sometimes neglect immediate operational details, making it necessary to combine this style with more execution-focused approaches.

v. **Affiliative Management Style**

The affiliative style promotes harmony, emotional bonds, and team cohesion. Namiq (2018) posits that this style strengthens internal communication and fosters a supportive work environment. It is particularly valuable in conflict resolution and in environments recovering from stress or change. However, affiliative leaders may avoid addressing poor performance to maintain harmony, which can reduce accountability and discipline if not carefully managed.

vi. **Democratic Management Style**

Democratic or participative management involves shared decision-making, where input from team members is encouraged and valued. Namiq's (2018) conceptualisation links democratic leadership with empowerment and engagement. Research by Goleman (2023) supports the claim that democratic managers enhance innovation and job satisfaction. However, this style can be time-consuming and may lead to indecisiveness in fast-paced or hierarchical industries that require quick, centralised decisions.

vii. **Pacesetting Management Style**

Pacesetting managers lead by example, setting high standards and expecting quick results. According to Namiq (2018), this style can drive high performance in skilled and self-motivated teams. However, it often creates a stressful work environment where employees feel overwhelmed or undervalued. Over time, such pressure may stifle creativity and damage team morale, especially if recognition and support are lacking.

viii. **Autocratic Management Style**

Autocratic management, which relies on centralised decision-making and strict control, is among the oldest and most traditional styles. It can be effective in crises where quick decisions are vital, or in military and industrial settings. However, Namiq (2018) notes that autocratic leaders can generate fear, reduce morale, and suppress initiative. Modern organisations increasingly avoid this style in favour of more inclusive and flexible approaches.

ix. **Laissez-Faire Management Style**

The laissez-faire style provides employees with autonomy to make decisions and manage their work. Namiq (2018) highlights its benefits in teams with highly skilled, self-driven individuals, such as researchers or creative professionals. However, the style may result in confusion, poor coordination, and a lack of direction when applied to teams lacking maturity or discipline. Successful laissez-faire managers must know when to step in to offer guidance.

- x. **Transformational Management Style**  
Transformational managers seek to inspire change by aligning employees with higher organisational values. They use vision, passion, and commitment to drive growth and innovation. Bass and Riggio (2019) describe this style as essential in modern organisations facing constant evolution. It promotes motivation, engagement, and employee development but requires high emotional intelligence and consistent alignment between words and actions.
- xi. **Transactional Management Style**  
Transactional management is based on a system of rewards and penalties. It works best in routine tasks with clearly defined roles and expectations. While efficient for achieving specific outcomes, especially in structured settings, it does not encourage creativity or long-term development. Overreliance on this style can lead to mechanical compliance without emotional investment from employees (Wang et al., 2022).
- xii. **Ethical and Inclusive Management Styles**  
Contemporary workplaces increasingly value ethical and inclusive management. Ethical managers prioritise integrity, fairness, and social responsibility, while inclusive managers embrace diversity and ensure equitable participation. These styles foster trust, improve team dynamics, and enhance organizational reputation. Brown and Treviño (2022) stress that these approaches are not only morally right but also strategically sound in a globalized, socially aware business environment.
- xiii. **Adaptive and Agile Management Styles**  
With the rise of digital transformation and rapid change, adaptive and agile management styles have gained attention. Adaptive managers respond quickly to emerging challenges, while agile leaders encourage experimentation, rapid learning, and flexible team structures. Heifetz and Linsky (2020) argue that these styles are vital for modern, tech-driven industries. However, they require a culture of trust, transparency, and continuous learning to succeed.

Management styles are varied and depend on the context. From production-focused and autocratic models to coaching, visionary, and inclusive styles, each approach offers unique benefits and drawbacks. Namiq's (2018) framework acts as a helpful guide for understanding how to strategically apply these styles in different organisational settings. Effective managers need to build a wide range of styles and use them appropriately to boost employee engagement, productivity, and organisational success.

### **Management Skills**

Management skills constitute a critical set of competencies that empower individuals to proficiently guide teams, formulate strategic decisions, and accomplish organisational objectives. An enumeration of the requisite attributes or capabilities that a manager should embody is essential for the successful execution of specific functions within an organisation. These attributes serve as the foundation for effective leadership and are instrumental in driving performance and fostering a productive work environment.

### **Key Management Skills**

1. **Communication:** Effective communication is crucial for managers to convey information clearly, facilitate collaboration, and resolve conflicts. Good communication ensures that team members understand their roles and responsibilities, which is vital for achieving objectives.
2. **Leadership:** Managers must inspire and motivate their teams. Strong leadership skills help in guiding employees towards common goals, fostering a positive work environment, and encouraging professional development.
3. **Planning:** This involves setting goals and determining the best course of action to achieve them. Good planning helps managers allocate resources efficiently and anticipate potential challenges.
4. **Problem-Solving:** Managers often face unexpected challenges. Strong problem-solving skills enable them to analyse situations, identify solutions, and implement effective strategies to overcome obstacles.
5. **Delegation:** The ability to delegate tasks effectively is essential for managing workloads and empowering team members. Delegation not only helps in time management but also fosters employee growth and engagement.
6. **Technical Skills:** Depending on the industry, managers may need specific technical skills related to their field. These skills help in understanding the work processes and technologies used by their teams.
7. **Conceptual Skills:** These skills involve the ability to understand complex situations and see the big picture. Managers with strong conceptual skills can analyse problems and develop innovative solutions.

### **Convergence and Divergence Between Management Styles and Leadership Styles**

Over several decades, academia has continuously discussed the divergence and convergence between management and leadership concepts. In this discourse, Nizarudin Wajdi (2017) argues that management and leadership are distinct functions. He believes management and leadership share similar duties, including working with people and influencing others to achieve goals. Management skills are used to plan, build, and direct organisational systems to accomplish missions and objectives. In contrast, leadership skills focus on potential change by establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring. Wajdi emphasises that leadership and management are not the same but are necessarily linked and complementary. Any effort to separate the two is likely to cause more problems than it solves.

While Wajdi focuses on the skills engaged by management and leadership, Chinta (2021) distinguishes the two concepts in terms of scope, responsibility, quality, and traits as follows: In terms of scope, Leadership centres on vision and inspiring team members to align with that vision. It involves organising and mobilising teams to achieve tasks while emphasising motivational factors and understanding risks. Management concentrates on processes, stability, and effective functioning. It involves business implementation, decision-making, hiring, budgeting, and supporting operational goals.

In the line of responsibilities, leadership organises teams and mobilises standards, shares a common vision rather than implementing strategies, and inspires and motivating team

members. Management coordinates actions and tactical decisions to achieve outcomes, implements strategies and processes, and focuses on organisational structuring and operations. Concerning position and quality, managers denote a specific position within the organisational hierarchy. They focus on achieving structured outcomes. Leaders are defined by their ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage. Leadership is more about qualities and actions rather than a formal position.

In the disposition of interpersonal skills and traits, both roles require strong interpersonal skills, but apply them differently. Leaders focus on guiding and motivating, while managers emphasise stability, accountability, and planning.

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