

# NON-LINEAR PROFESSIONS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLE PERSPECTIVES AND PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES IN LOMBOK

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## INFO ARTIKEL

### Riwayat Artikel:

Diterima: 18-11-2024

Disetujui: 03-03-2025

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### Keywords:

Nonlinear Profession;  
Leadership Style;  
Education Dynamics;  
Professional  
Transformation;  
Modern Era.

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## ABSTRAK

**Abstract:** *The modern technology-based era has led to the emergence of non-linear professions in education, especially principals and teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze in depth about the evolution of non-linear professions that affect the role of leadership in educational institutions, as well as knowing the principal's response to non-linear professions in educational institutions. This research uses qualitative with a library research approach and descriptive qualitative. The data taken at the library research stage is limited to articles published in the last 10 years. Furthermore, we distributed questionnaires to school principals to find out the responses, obstacles, and solutions they apply to non-linear professions in their respective institutions. The results showed that effective leadership to overcome non-linear professions are transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, visionary leadership, and liquid leadership. The response results of 61 principals stated that 80% of principals stated that the existence of non-linear teachers contributed positively to the achievement of educational goals and 77.74% of non-linear teachers needed moral support and more intensive supervision. Furthermore, the limitations of non-linear teachers' professionalism can be overcome by improving hard and soft skills through study group activities, short courses, and regular supervision and evaluation.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

The professional world is currently undergoing rapid and irregular changes driven by various factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and demographic shifts. For instance, digital technological progress has transformed work patterns across various sectors, creating a demand for more dynamic and adaptive skill sets (Ruddin et al., 2022). Globalization has also intensified cross-border interactions, requiring professionals to possess a broader understanding of diverse cultural and economic contexts (Kurdi, 2021). Demographic changes, including an increase in the working-age population and life expectancy, further complicate workforce dynamics (Putro, 2016). These developments demand that the education sector continuously adapt to remain relevant. For educational leaders, these challenges are particularly pressing, as they must maintain operational effectiveness while responding to the demands of a rapidly changing and uncertain work environment.

Educational leaders today face increasingly diverse and complex challenges, including adapting to curriculum changes, evolving educational policies, and the continuously shifting needs of students. Curriculum changes, whether initiated by governments or international educational institutions, require more relevant and flexible teaching and learning strategies that align with contemporary developments (Bahri, 2022). Educational policies undergoing changes at both national and global levels further burden educational leaders to align these policies with local institutional needs (Mesiono et al., 2024). The diverse needs of students, in terms of background, abilities, and interests, make the education profession more dynamic and necessitate continuous adaptation (Vähäsantanen, 2015). In this context, effective leadership is essential to optimize resource management, build solid communication with all stakeholders, and develop innovative strategies to address challenges and achieve desired educational goals.

Adaptability and flexibility are critical elements for educational leaders in responding to rapid changes driven by the evolution of professions that demand innovation and an open mindset. Research by Van Oord (2013) found that leaders who adopt collaborative and flexible leadership styles can reduce stress levels among teaching staff by 25% and improve student academic performance by 15%. Boone (2015) also revealed that 84% of respondents in higher education perceived an improvement in leadership quality through blended learning, and institutions with transformational leadership were better prepared to adapt to educational policies, achieving a 50% increase in adaptability. Furthermore, Smith (2024) demonstrated that 78% of educational leaders implementing adaptive strategies were able to enhance the operational effectiveness of their schools. Additionally, 65% of institutions innovating through digital approaches successfully increased student engagement by 40%, particularly among previously less active students. Finally, Sliwka et al. (2024) also emphasized the importance of adaptation, showing that the implementation of deeper learning models based on transformational leadership improved students' collaboration and problem-solving skills by 35%.

Leadership strategies emphasizing collaboration, long-term vision, and technology integration have become crucial in addressing the challenges of today's educational landscape. Research indicates that collaboration among teaching staff can increase their engagement by 30% and reduce staff turnover by 15%, positively impacting productivity and teaching effectiveness (Hargreaves, 2015). Moreover, leaders with a long-term vision can boost student motivation by 25% and foster innovation among educators, with a 20% increase in innovative practices (Leithwood et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the use of technology and data-driven approaches in education has been proven to enhance student learning outcomes by 35% and improve curriculum design by 20% (Means et al., 2013). The importance of

continuous learning is also evident, as institutions promoting this approach experienced a 40% increase in flexibility and inclusivity within their educational systems, while ensuring their curricula remained relevant to contemporary developments (Timperley et al., 2020).

Although various studies have demonstrated that leadership strategies based on collaboration, technological innovation, and long-term vision are effective in improving educational outcomes, there remains a gap in research that systematically integrates these three elements. Most studies tend to focus on a single aspect, such as collaboration or technology use, without considering how these elements can be holistically adapted to address non-linear professional changes. With the accelerating evolution of professions, particularly in education, the need for more flexible, inclusive, and sustainable leadership strategies is becoming increasingly urgent. Non-linear teachers are educators with backgrounds, skills, or experiences outside formal education pathways, making their roles extend beyond

conventional teaching responsibilities. Therefore, this study aims to analyze in greater depth (1) the leadership styles suitable for addressing non-linear teachers, and (2) school principals' responses to leadership transformation and non-linear teachers in educational institutions. The findings of this research can provide insights for school principals to enhance their responses to leadership challenges in educational institutions and enrich their leadership practices. These findings also have the potential to inform more adaptive and sustainable educational policies.

## B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to analyze more deeply about effective educational leadership models, so as to be able to face the dynamics and complexity of professional evolution more effectively. The method used is qualitative research with a library research and descriptive approach. The research stages can be seen in Figure 1.

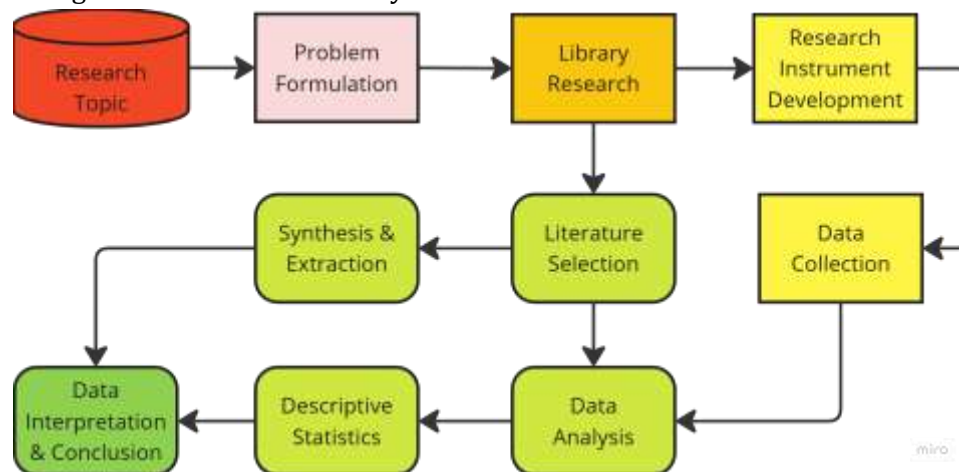


Figure 1: Research procedure

Figure 1 shows that at the initial stage of this research, the researcher determines the research topic as mentioned. Second, the researcher formulates problems that will be studied more deeply and resolved statistically and describes the topics that have been mentioned in depth. Third, conduct library research by selecting data from both books and journal articles. Data sources at this stage are

from journal indexing databases such as DOAJ, Scispace, and Google Scholar published in the last 10 years. The output of this stage found important variables and indicators to answer the problem formulation. These indicators were used to develop a questionnaire for school principals to find out the conditions in schools regarding non-linear professions. Fourth, data collection by distributing online questionnaires

to school principals by convenience sampling in the NTB Province area. Fifth, the researcher analyzed the data with descriptive statistics. Finally, data interpretation and conclusion drawing.

## **C. ESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Relevance of Leadership Theory in Facing the Complexity of Non-Linear Professions**

The non-linear evolution of the profession significantly changes the role of leadership in educational institutions, demanding an adaptive and visionary approach. In the context of the changing educational landscape, leaders must be able to develop innovative practices and create collaborative environments. Visionary leadership is essential to ensure that the leadership vision is aligned with innovative curriculum changes that can address the employment challenges in society (Mutohar, 2023). Transformational leadership models are also essential in encouraging organizational behavior and commitment among staff, so that institutional goals can be achieved properly (Rofiq, 2019). Furthermore, systems-engaged leadership encourages a transition from traditional mindsets to approaches that focus more on fostering organizational culture and individual development (Montgomery, 2020). Effective leaders must be able to diagnose institutional needs and draw constructive conclusions from both successes and failures, as well as promote a culture of self-reflection (Pękala & Kowalska, 2020). In addition, leadership responsibilities should be shared between principals and teachers to create a collaborative environment that improves educational outcomes. The emphasis on pedagogical leadership over merely administrative roles is also key in meeting contemporary educational challenges (Hartati et al., 2023). While the evolution of leadership in education emphasizes adaptability and collaboration, concerns have been raised about the potential blurring of authority and accountability in the decision-making process. Therefore, balancing shared leadership with

clear accountability remains a critical challenge for educational institutions.

As the complexity of the educational environment increases, leaders in educational institutions need to be able to navigate the dynamics to drive innovation and improve educational outcomes. Educational institutions are often characterized by loose systems and ambiguity of purpose, requiring leadership models that balance administrative and adaptive strategies (Schophuizen et al., 2023). In this context, cultural change that supports the implementation of active learning strategies is crucial, demonstrating the importance of flexible leadership that can respond to the changing demands of education (Funk et al., 2022). Transformative leadership that emphasizes long-term vision and continuous improvement plays an important role in increasing organizational productivity and ensuring alignment with the institution's mission (Budiman, 2023). In addition, the development of digital technology also requires leaders to have a strong vision and emotional intelligence in order to effectively guide their institutions through the digital transformation process (Msila, 2022). Educational institutions that lack these skills risk having difficulty in adapting to technological change. While traditional leadership models are still considered relevant in some stable educational contexts, where established practices can provide continuity amidst change, existing evidence suggests that adaptive and transformative leadership is indispensable for dealing with the complexities of modern educational environments.

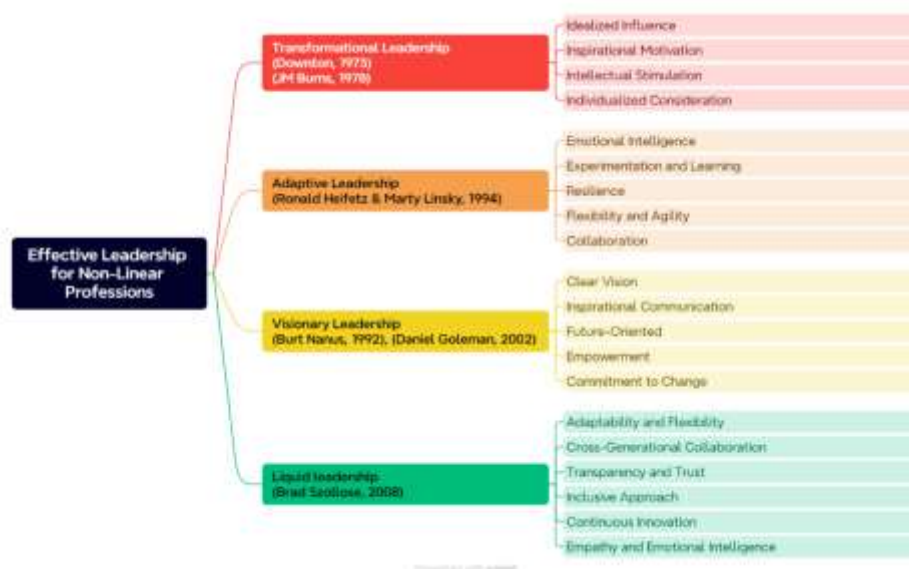
But to deal with increasing complexity, leadership must also be supported by more fluid and adaptive approaches, such as those promoted by liquid leadership and leadership complexity theory. Both approaches emphasize the importance of flexibility, collaboration and the ability to respond quickly to change, which are key in managing teachers with non-linear backgrounds. Leaders are expected to be not only administrators who manage day-to-day operations, but also change agents who are able

to motivate staff to innovate and address evolving global challenges, as seen in curriculum transformation and digitalization.

Although the role of leadership in educational institutions has undergone significant transformation, there are some important challenges that need to be addressed. One of these is the distribution of leadership responsibilities between principals and teachers which, while creating a collaborative environment, can lead to confusion regarding authority and accountability. While transformational and adaptive leadership models have proven successful in various educational contexts, their implementation still requires the right balance between flexibility and structural control. Leadership oriented towards developing a culture of reflection and active learning has also had a significant impact, but not all educational institutions are fully prepared to adopt these changes. These two theories, leadership complexity theory and liquid leadership, complement each other in facing the challenges of non-linear professions. Leadership complexity theory emphasizes the importance of collective processes and adaptation through simple rules, while liquid leadership offers the flexibility and

responsiveness needed to respond to rapid change. In the context of education, the integration of these two approaches enables leaders to create an environment that supports collaboration and innovation, while ensuring accountability in the face of uncertainty. Adaptive leadership is also key in state-owned enterprises facing bureaucratic challenges, where leaders must be proactive and flexible to manage stakeholder pressures and navigate the complexities of the global market (Donkor & Zhou, 2019). Research by Guo et al. (2021) shows that leaders need to use limited rational decision-making strategies to maintain effectiveness amid uncertain situations, as over-reliance on individual leadership can trigger instability.

The results of the above research show that today's leaders function not only as managers, but also as agents of change that require adaptive and collaborative abilities. Thus, it can be concluded that in facing the modern era with non-linear professions, four leadership styles are needed, namely adaptive leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, and liquid leadership. The leadership indicators can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Transformational Leadership Indicators Indicators of transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, visionary leadership, and liquid leadership

Figure 2 shows that transformational leadership is a process in which a person engages with others and creates relationships that increase the level of motivation and morale in both leaders and subordinates. This type of leader pays attention to organizational culture, employee performance, overall organizational effectiveness, and understands the needs of his followers and tries to help followers to reach their full potential (Belhaj, 2024). While adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to overcome difficult challenges and thrive. In general, adaptive leadership is concerned with how people change and adjust to new circumstances (Northouse, 2016).

Visionary leadership, then, is a leadership style that can enhance creativity, reduce work-life conflict, improve organizational effectiveness, foster innovation, and strengthen organizational commitment and performance across multiple contexts (Ghadi, 2024). Liquid leadership represents a shift towards a more adaptive, flexible and integrated form of leadership that is aligned with the dynamic nature of modern organizations. This approach emphasizes creativity, continuous change, and the integration of work into all aspects of life, which presents both opportunities and challenges for leaders and organizations (Clegg & Cunha, 2019).

2. Principals' Response to Non-Linear Leadership and Professional Transformation in Educational Institutions

Principals as leaders in educational institutions have an important role in dealing with non-linear professional issues. This condition is often found in educational institutions, for example, a teacher teaching is not in accordance with his or her educational background. Of the 61 principals surveyed, we found the information in Figure 4.

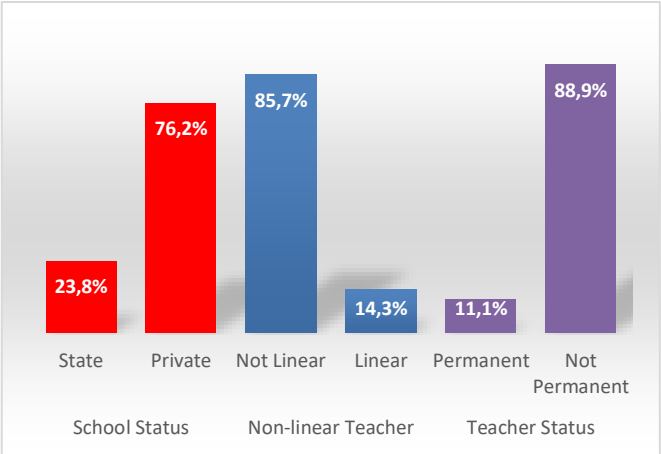


Figure 4. Principal survey results

Figure 4 shows that out of the 76.2% of private schools surveyed, 85.7% of the schools had teachers with non-linear professions. This means that there are teachers teaching in classes that do not match their educational background and they are 88.9% non-permanent teachers. Furthermore, the survey results showed that 60.3% of the reason for this was due to limited teacher resources. This is in line with the results of research by Napier et al. (2020) who found that a common reason behind out-of-class teaching is the lack of qualified teachers in certain subjects, especially in science. This shortage forces schools to assign existing teachers to teach subjects in which they lack expertise. Other reasons include changing curriculum needs, accreditation needs, conditions and demands of the surrounding community, having additional competencies, teaching hours of permanent teachers have been fulfilled, teacher rotations and mutations, and length of service. Furthermore, according to the principal, the process-output of learning in the classroom will certainly not be maximized. This can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Impact of non-linear teachers

No	Indicator	Response
1	Positive contribution to the achievement of educational goal	80,00%
2	Challenges can be overcome	77,10%
3	Does not significantly affect the quality of learning	75,81%
4	Needs more intensive moral support and supervision	77,74%
5	More effective in supporting students' academic development	82,90%

Table 1 shows that in general, non-linear professions do not have a significant adverse impact on school environment activities. Principals said that 80% of non-linear teachers are able to contribute to the achievement of school programs, but the quality and challenges of being a non-linear teacher are certainly tough, because professionalism is required. However, 77.10% of principals said that non-linear teachers can overcome these challenges. Therefore, 77.74% of principals said that non-linear teachers need moral support and more intensive supervision.

While these challenges are significant, adaptive and fluid leadership approaches, such as those promoted by leadership complexity theory and liquid leadership, can help address these issues. For example, through regular classroom observations, MGMP training and team teaching, leaders can create an environment that supports collaborative learning and professional development. This approach is in line with the principles of leadership complexity theory, where solutions emerge from interactions and collaboration between individuals, and liquid leadership, which emphasizes the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in the face of change. This is in line with research Wills & Sandholtz (2009) which found that broader education policies and systemic pressures, such as standardized testing and curriculum mandates, can also influence the assignment of teachers to out-of-field positions. These pressures can limit teachers' autonomy and force them to take on roles outside of their expertise. However, the problems faced can be overcome in several ways, namely (1) conducting regular classroom observations, (2) increasing training and guidance with MGMP, (3) team teaching with linear teachers, (4) conducting regular supervision and evaluation; and (5) providing regular short courses.

#### D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A paradigm shift in educational leadership is essential in the face of the non-linear evolution of the profession. Leaders in educational institutions today are expected to not only carry out management functions, but also act as adaptive, collaborative, transformative, visionary, and liquid change agents. However, common challenges such as curriculum changes and the level of professionalism can be overcome by improving hard and soft skills through learning group activities, short courses, and regular supervision and evaluation. In this context, the

Islamic leadership model is relevant because it emphasizes leadership principles that are oriented towards ethical values, justice, and a balance between knowledge and morals, which can be a solution to the challenges of curriculum change and global professionalism. Based on these results, further research needs to consider the Islamic leadership model in the context of curriculum changes and the demands of global professionalism to identify leadership strategies that are able to face educational transformation in the digital era and multicultural challenges.

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