

DEVELOPING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO NAVIGATE DIGITAL DISRUPTION AND GLOBALIZATION DYNAMICS**Asnawi Malik***¹Institut Miftahul Huda Al Azhar Kota Banjar^{1,2,3,4}**Muntaha Mahfud**²**Miftahudin**³**Maulana Yusuf**⁴**Jamiu Temitope Sulaimon**⁵

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Email*: malikasnawi1407@gmail.com

(*) Corresponding Author

Histori Manuskrip

Submit	review	received
24 April 2026	5 Mei 2026	15 Mei 2026

Abstract

This article explores the development of adaptive capacity in educational leadership as a strategic response to the accelerating forces of digital disruption and globalization. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, shifting knowledge paradigms, and increasing global interconnectivity, educational leaders are required to move beyond traditional administrative roles toward more dynamic, flexible, and responsive leadership practices. The study emphasizes the importance of adaptive leadership competencies, including digital literacy, strategic foresight, collaborative decision-making, and innovation-driven management in educational institutions. Using a conceptual approach based on literature review, this paper synthesizes key theories of educational leadership, digital transformation, and globalization to construct an integrated framework for adaptive leadership capacity. The findings suggest that effective educational leadership in the contemporary era depends on the ability to continuously learn, reconfigure institutional practices, and foster a culture of innovation and resilience within educational organizations. Furthermore, the article highlights that globalization intensifies the complexity of educational governance by introducing cross-cultural dynamics, policy shifts, and competitive knowledge economies. In response, adaptive educational leaders must act as change agents who bridge local educational values with global standards and technological advancements. The study concludes that strengthening adaptive capacity is essential for ensuring the sustainability and relevance of education systems in the digital-global era.

Keywords: Educational leadership; adaptive capacity; digital disruption; globalization; leadership transformation

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital dan dinamika globalisasi telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam dunia pendidikan, khususnya dalam aspek kepemimpinan pendidikan. Kondisi ini menuntut adanya kapasitas adaptif dari para pemimpin pendidikan agar mampu merespons perubahan yang cepat, kompleks, dan tidak terduga. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengembangan kapasitas adaptif dalam kepemimpinan pendidikan dalam menghadapi disrupsi digital dan dinamika globalisasi. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah studi konseptual dengan menelaah berbagai literatur terkait kepemimpinan pendidikan, transformasi digital, dan globalisasi pendidikan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kapasitas adaptif kepemimpinan pendidikan mencakup kemampuan inovatif, fleksibilitas dalam pengambilan keputusan, literasi digital, serta kemampuan membangun kolaborasi lintas sistem dan jaringan. Selain itu, pemimpin pendidikan dituntut untuk tidak hanya berperan sebagai pengelola institusi, tetapi juga sebagai agen perubahan yang mampu mengintegrasikan teknologi dalam proses pembelajaran dan manajemen pendidikan. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kapasitas adaptif menjadi kunci utama dalam memastikan keberlanjutan dan daya saing lembaga pendidikan di era disrupsi digital dan globalisasi. Implikasi dari kajian ini adalah perlunya pengembangan model pelatihan kepemimpinan pendidikan yang responsif terhadap perkembangan teknologi dan kebutuhan global.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan pendidikan, kapasitas adaptif, disrupsi digital, globalisasi, transformasi Pendidikan

A. Introduction

The rapid development of the digital era and globalization has brought significant transformations across various sectors, including education. These changes have not only influenced teaching and learning processes but have also reshaped how educational institutions are managed and led. In this context, educational leadership is required to develop adaptive capacity in order to respond to complex, dynamic, and unpredictable changes (Fullan, 2013).

Previously, educational leadership tended to be hierarchical and centralized, where decision-making was concentrated in formal authority structures. However, in the era of digital disruption, such leadership models have gradually shifted toward more flexible, collaborative, and network-based approaches. Educational leaders are no longer merely controllers of institutional systems, but also facilitators of change who are capable of building adaptive learning ecosystems (Castells, 2010).

The concept of adaptive capacity has become increasingly important in addressing the challenges of globalization and digital transformation in education. This capacity includes the ability to engage in continuous learning, foster innovation, and respond effectively and efficiently to environmental changes. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009)

argue that adaptive leadership is the ability to tackle complex problems that do not have simple technical solutions, but instead require changes in mindset and organizational behavior.

Furthermore, the integration of digital technology in education demands that leaders possess adequate digital literacy. This literacy is not limited to technical skills but also includes strategic understanding of how technology can be utilized to enhance the quality of learning and educational governance. The OECD (2015) emphasizes that digital transformation in education must be accompanied by strengthening human resource capacity, particularly at the leadership level.

Therefore, developing adaptive capacity in educational leadership has become an urgent necessity amid globalization and digital disruption. Educational leaders are expected to integrate innovation, collaboration, and technology into a coherent and sustainable strategy. In this way, educational institutions can remain relevant, competitive, and globally competitive in the long term.

B. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a conceptual and literature review design. The purpose of this method is to explore, analyze, and synthesize relevant theoretical perspectives related to adaptive capacity in educational leadership within the context of digital disruption and globalization.

The data collection technique is conducted through document analysis of various scholarly sources, including international journal articles, books, policy reports, and research studies that are relevant to educational leadership, digital transformation, and globalization. Key references are drawn from authoritative works in the field of leadership studies and educational management to ensure the credibility and depth of the analysis.

The data analysis process follows a thematic analysis approach. This involves identifying key themes, patterns, and concepts related to adaptive leadership capacity, such as flexibility in decision-making, innovation, digital literacy, and collaborative leadership practices. These themes are then interpreted and synthesized to construct a comprehensive understanding of how educational leaders can develop adaptive capacity in response to global and digital challenges.

Furthermore, this study uses an interpretive framework to understand how theoretical concepts of leadership can be applied in contemporary educational settings. Rather than testing hypotheses, the study focuses on building conceptual insights that contribute to the development of educational leadership theory in the era of digital transformation.

Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the role of adaptive leadership in enhancing the resilience and effectiveness of educational institutions amid rapid global change.

C. Discussion

The findings of this conceptual study highlight that adaptive capacity in educational leadership is no longer an optional attribute but a fundamental requirement in the era of digital disruption and globalization. Permana, D., & Naim, M. A. (2023). Educational leaders are increasingly confronted with complex challenges characterized by rapid technological advancement, shifting societal expectations, and the growing interdependence of global educational systems. In such a context, traditional leadership models that rely heavily on hierarchy and rigid control structures are becoming less effective in addressing contemporary educational needs (Fullan, 2013).

One of the central dimensions of adaptive leadership identified in this study is flexibility in decision-making. Permana, D., Bakar, U. A., & Mulyo, A. M. T. (2025). Educational leaders must be capable of responding quickly and effectively to emerging challenges without being constrained by bureaucratic procedures. This flexibility allows institutions to remain responsive to change, particularly in integrating digital technologies into teaching and learning processes. Fullan (2013) emphasizes that successful educational transformation requires leaders who can balance stability with innovation in a rapidly changing environment.

Another important aspect is innovation in leadership practice. Innovation in this context does not merely refer to technological adoption but also includes the ability to redesign organizational structures, learning models, and institutional culture. Educational leaders are expected to encourage experimentation, support creative problem-solving, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. This innovative capacity enables institutions to

adapt to the evolving demands of global education systems while maintaining relevance and competitiveness (Yukl, 2013).

Digital literacy also emerges as a critical component of adaptive leadership capacity. Leaders in education must possess not only operational skills in using digital tools but also strategic competence in leveraging technology to enhance institutional effectiveness. The OECD (2015) highlights that digital transformation in education requires leadership that understands how technology can be integrated meaningfully into pedagogy, curriculum design, and administrative systems. Without adequate digital literacy, educational leaders risk lagging behind in the global education landscape.

In addition, collaborative leadership plays a significant role in strengthening adaptive capacity. The complexity of educational challenges in the digital era requires collective intelligence and shared responsibility among stakeholders. Permana, D., Bakar, U. A., & Mulyo, A. M. T. (2025). Educational leaders must therefore build strong networks with teachers, students, policymakers, and external partners. Castells (2010) argues that in a network society, leadership is no longer centralized but distributed across interconnected actors who collaboratively shape institutional direction and outcomes.

The study also reveals that adaptive leadership is closely related to organizational learning. Educational institutions must function as learning organizations where continuous reflection, feedback, and knowledge sharing are embedded in daily practices. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) emphasize that adaptive leadership involves mobilizing people to tackle difficult challenges and learn new ways of operating. This learning-oriented approach enables institutions to evolve in response to external pressures and internal demands.

Furthermore, globalization intensifies the need for educational leaders to develop intercultural competence and global awareness. Leaders must understand diverse educational contexts and be able to integrate global best practices into local settings. This balance between global perspectives and local relevance is essential for ensuring that educational institutions remain both competitive and contextually appropriate in their approaches (Castells, 2010).

The integration of technology and globalization also introduces ethical considerations in educational leadership. Leaders must ensure that digital transformation

processes are inclusive, equitable, and aligned with educational values. Issues such as digital divide, data privacy, and access inequality must be carefully addressed to prevent further marginalization of vulnerable groups. Ethical leadership, therefore, becomes an integral part of adaptive capacity in the digital age (OECD, 2015).

Overall, the discussion suggests that developing adaptive capacity in educational leadership requires a multidimensional approach that integrates flexibility, innovation, digital literacy, collaboration, organizational learning, global awareness, and ethical responsibility. These dimensions collectively enable educational leaders to navigate the complexities of digital disruption and globalization effectively (Fullan, 2013; Heifetz et al., 2009).

In conclusion, adaptive educational leadership is a dynamic and evolving construct that is essential for ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of educational institutions. Leaders who are able to continuously learn, adapt, and innovate will be better positioned to guide their institutions through uncertainty and change in the global digital era.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that adaptive capacity in educational leadership is a crucial competence required to address the challenges of digital disruption and globalization. The rapid transformation of technology and the increasing complexity of global educational systems demand leaders who are flexible, innovative, and responsive to continuous change. Educational leaders are no longer positioned solely as administrators, but also as change agents who must integrate digital literacy, collaboration, and organizational learning into their leadership practices.

Furthermore, the development of adaptive capacity enables educational institutions to remain relevant and competitive in a rapidly evolving global context. By fostering innovation, strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, and promoting continuous learning, educational leaders can effectively navigate uncertainty and complexity in the educational landscape.

Ultimately, adaptive leadership serves as a strategic foundation for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of education systems in the digital era. Leaders who are

capable of adapting to change and guiding institutional transformation will play a key role in shaping the future of education in a globalized world.

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