# Approaches to Developing Innovative Leadership among School Administrators within the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

**Walaiparn Yingmeesakul**
*Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand*
 https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3655-000X

**Patumphorn Piatanom**
*Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand*
 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6989-8280

**Abstract**
*Purpose: The objectives of this study were to 1) examine the needs for innovative leadership among school administrators within the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), and 2) identify approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.*
*Methodology: A mixed-methods research approach was used, which was divided into two phases. Phase 1 examined the need for innovative leadership using a quantitative approach. The sample consisted of 370 government teachers within the BMA, selected through multistage random sampling, and the data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the modified Priority Needs Index (PNImodified). Phase 2 identified approaches to developing innovative leadership through semi-structured interviews with seven specialists in educational administration.*
*Results: The research findings revealed that 1) the overall need for innovative leadership among school administrators was high to the highest level. The area with the highest need was Risk Management, followed by Transformational Vision, Information Technology, Innovative Organizational Climate, Innovative Collaboration, and Innovative Creativity, respectively. 2) The approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators were as follows: Transformational Vision included Strategic Foresight; Innovative Creativity included Initiative; Innovative Collaboration included building trust; Risk Management included Knowledge Management; Innovative Organizational Climate included Building Maker Spaces; and Information Technology included Principal's Technological Leadership.*
*Conclusion: The findings highlight the urgent need for developing risk management competency among BMA school administrators. The proposed innovative leadership model provides a concrete basis for operational improvements. Future research should focus on validating the implementation of these guidelines across diverse educational contexts and monitoring and evaluating their long-term sustainability.*
**Keywords: Innovative Leadership, Approaches To Developing, Educational Administration, BMA School Administrators, National Policy, Mixed- Methods Research**

## Introduction

The world is rapidly changing owing to the exponential development of technology and innovation. Therefore, national leaders must prepare the Thai education system to align with innovation-driven economic and social contexts. This is in accordance with the intent of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560 (2017) (Section 69), which promotes research and development in various technologies. In addition, it must align with the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), which emphasises developing ethical, skilled, and high-quality human resources to elevate Thailand towards becoming a technology-owning nation (National Strategy Secretariat Office, 2018).

Furthermore, it must be in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030), particularly Goal 9, which emphasises promoting research and innovation to solve economic and environmental problems (United Nations, 2025).

The National Education Act outlines the direction for educational reform, with a key mechanism being the National Education Standards B.E. 2561 (2018). These specify the desired quality characteristics of Thais 4.0, which all schools aim to achieve in producing and developing learners. The Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE Thailand) consist of three key characteristics: 1) Learner Person, 2) Innovative Co-creator, and 3) Active Citizen (Office of the Education Council, 2019). In particular, the Innovative Co-creator characteristic is considered highly important in global competition. It is a key mechanism for building on knowledge to create new things that can add value to individuals and the nation.

The provision of education in Bangkok is an important mission aimed at improving the quality of life for citizens and youth in the Bangkok area, supporting the development and change of society and the nation. The Department of Education, BMA, plays an important role in driving the policy on basic education provision in Bangkok into concrete implementation by developing the 3rd Bangkok Basic Education Development Plan (2021-2026). This plan serves as a framework for setting the direction and approaches to developing Bangkok's education system to ensure efficiency and enhance learners' potential. This aligns with the national strategic goals of supporting a society driven by innovation-based competition. This emphasises the need for school administrators to possess the competencies to apply innovation and technology to improve work processes, reduce steps, and eliminate redundancy, thereby enhancing management efficiency.

Schools within the BMA serve as a key pillar in cultivating the capital's human capital and are now facing the challenge of ensuring that their quality meets international standards. An important goal is to raise PISA scores in science, mathematics, and reading to match the OECD average. However, the PISA 2022 assessment showed that Thai students, including those in BMA schools, scored below the OECD average in all three areas. In addition, the PISA 2022 assessment included an additional area, creative thinking, and the average score in this area was also low. This result underscores the urgent need for educational development, especially in creative thinking, which is essential for students to generate new knowledge and build on it to create innovative solutions. Moreover, Bangkok has focused on developing students into innovators who can create innovations that contribute to the identity of learners in the metropolis.

Given the background and importance of the aforementioned issues, improving the quality of education and achieving the set goals must begin with school administrators, who serve as a crucial driving force in translating policy into practice in schools (Chamchoi, 2022). They act as modern leaders who support and encourage teachers and educational personnel to recognise that teaching and learning management should align with the current situation while also creating opportunities for students to participate in producing work that drives innovation. In other words, school administrators need to possess innovative leadership, which is a key mechanism for driving genuine systemic change within organisations (Rodlong 2022).

Therefore, this study aims to develop a framework for innovative leadership that serves as a prototype for the professional development of school administrators, aligned with policies for educational reform and sustainable quality assurance. Beyond its practical implications, this study fills a significant gap in the literature by providing empirical insights into a previously unexplored context: innovative leadership development, specifically within the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

**Research Objectives**
1. To examine the need for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.
2. To identify approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.

**Research Questions**
1. What are the needs for developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA?

2. What are the approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators in the BMA?

## Conceptual Framework

The researcher synthesized the characteristics of innovative leadership from the concepts proposed by Imrat (2018), Pongnet (2021), Sarapon (2022), Sonsueb (2022), Deesawat & Phetmalhkul (2024), Srisukanthapuek (2023), Sagkeaw (2023), Thanghirai (2023), Kariji et al (2023), Mayam & Siththada (2024), Wooi (2013), Horth & Buchner (2014), Supriyono & Trisnawati (2015), Nilasari et al. (2023), Motsi et al. (2024). These served as the conceptual framework for this study, as shown in Figure 1.
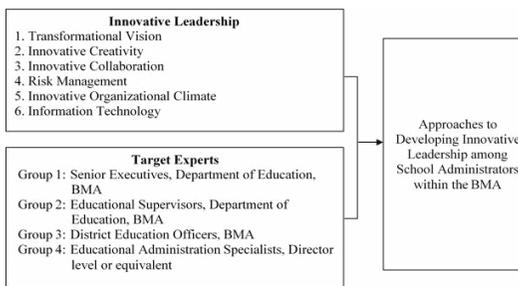


**Figure 1 Conceptual Framework**

## Research Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach. The researcher conducted the study in two phases as follows:

Phase 1: Examining the need for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.

## Population and Sample

For this research, the researcher defined the population and the sample. The population consisted of 14,201 government teachers within the BMA in the 2024 academic year across 437 schools (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Office of Education, 2024). The sample of 370 participants was determined using Cohen et al. (2018) table, at a statistical significance level of .05. Multistage random sampling was then utilised as follows:

Step 1 involved simple random sampling by selecting one district office from each district group,

namely, the Central Bangkok Group, Southern Bangkok Group, Northern Bangkok Group, Eastern Bangkok Group, Northern Thonburi Group, and Southern Thonburi Group, for a total of six district offices.

Step 2 involved stratified random sampling by school size (small, medium, large) within each selected district office; 1 school from each size category was selected, yielding six large schools, six medium schools, and six small schools, for a total of 18 schools.

Step 3 involved randomly selecting teachers from each school using simple random sampling proportional to the sample size. The total sample consisted of 370 participants.

## Research Instruments

The research instrument was a questionnaire that assessed the need to develop innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA. The questionnaire used a 5-point rating scale based on Likert's method (Likert, 1967) and covered six areas: 1) Transformational Vision, 2) Innovative Creativity, 3) Innovative Collaboration, 4) Risk Management, 5) Innovative Organizational Climate, and 6) Information Technology.

## Instrument Quality Check

1. **Content Validity:** The developed questionnaire was reviewed by five experts. The instrument quality was assessed for content validity, content coverage, and language clarity using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) index. Items with an IOC value greater than 0.5 were retained, resulting in a total of 60 items.
2. **Reliability:** The researcher revised the questionnaire according to the experts' recommendations and pilot-tested it with 30 government teachers with characteristics similar to those of the sample group. Reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The analysis showed that the reliability score for the entire questionnaire was 0.983.

## Data Analysis

1. The questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation.

2. The need for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA was analysed by calculating the modified Priority Needs Index (PNI$_{modified}$) ([Wongwanich, 2019](#)) based on the current and desired states, using the following PNI$_{modified}$ formula

PNI$_{modified}$ = I – D/ D

where: I (Importance) = Mean of the desired state

D (Degree of Success) = Mean of the current state

Phase 2: Identifying approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.

**Research Instruments**

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview, developed based on the experiences of seven experts selected through purposive sampling, to identify approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA. The semi-structured interview questions were developed from the PNI$_{modified}$, based on Phase 1 findings.

**Data Collection**

In this study, the researcher followed the procedures and processes for data collection. A request for interviews and data collection was submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies at the Faculty of Education, Ramkhamhaeng University. The request letters were then sent to the target experts, and interviews were scheduled with precise dates, times, and locations, and conducted according to the specified timeframe.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, categorised, and frequency distributions were calculated. The areas with the highest frequencies, as identified by the researcher, were then used to identify approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA

**Research Results**

Phase 1: Results of the needs assessment for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.

The PNI$_{modified}$ analysis of innovative leadership among school administrators yielded an overall value of 0.2022. When considering each area, the highest PNI$_{modified}$ was for risk management, followed by transformational vision, information technology, innovative organizational climate, Innovative Collaboration, and Innovative Creativity. Details are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Current and Desired States of Innovative Leadership among School Administrators within the BMA and the PNI$_{modified}$ values**

| Innovative Leadership | Current state (D) | | | Desired state (I) | | | PNI$_{modified}$ | Needs Ranking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{x}$ | S.D. | Level | $\bar{x}$ | S.D. | Level | | |
| 1. Transformational Vision | 3.96 | 0.36 | High | 4.78 | 0.35 | Highest | 0.2053 | 2 |
| 2. Innovative Creativity | 4.02 | 0.38 | High | 4.81 | 0.38 | Highest | 0.1965 | 6 |
| 3. Innovative Collaboration | 4.03 | 0.41 | High | 4.82 | 0.35 | Highest | 0.1971 | 5 |
| 4. Risk Management | 3.93 | 0.44 | High | 4.79 | 0.38 | Highest | 0.2188 | 1 |
| 5. Innovative Organizational Climate | 4.01 | 0.41 | High | 4.80 | 0.38 | Highest | 0.1980 | 4 |
| 6. Information Technology | 4.00 | 0.38 | High | 4.79 | 0.39 | Highest | 0.1981 | 3 |
| Overview | 3.99 | 0.40 | High | 4.80 | 0.37 | Highest | 0.2022 | |

Phase 2: Results of identifying approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA.

Based on Phase 1 results regarding the current and desired states, the researcher selected the top 3 items from the questionnaire in each area to form interview questions for seven target experts. These experts then proposed approaches to developing innovative leadership for school administrators within the BMA. The details are as follows:

## Transformational Vision

Strategic Foresight refers to school administrators possessing comprehensive knowledge across all aspects, regularly following educational news, and using such information to clearly define the organisation's vision, mission, and goals. It also involves adopting new approaches to school management that are appropriate to the organizational context

## Innovative Creativity

Originality refers to school administrators leading the initiation and creation of new ideas or innovations. They engage in continuous learning, adjust their thinking to broaden their perspectives, think outside the box, and identify opportunities in their surroundings to connect and transform them into something new.

## Innovative Collaboration

Cultivating Trust involves school administrators demonstrating sincerity, showing respect for others and their differing opinions, providing expert guidance to subordinates, and fostering a shared team spirit that promotes commitment and collaboration towards a common goal.

## Risk Management

Knowledge Management refers to school administrators systematically using knowledge and experiences gained through the gathering, transfer, and exchange of information to develop backup plans and serve as a database for the school. This includes decentralising authority to stakeholders to increase development opportunities and reduce potential risks or conflicts.

## Innovative Organizational Climate

Building Maker Spaces refers to school administrators acting as facilitators by appropriately supporting the needs of teachers and personnel, encouraging subordinates to think outside the box, design new things, exchange ideas, and view mistakes not as failures but as opportunities to learn and improve their work.

## Information Technology

Principal's Technological Leadership refers to school administrators who lead in technology, guide the organization through future digital transformation, and promote the professional application of technology in operations.

Approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 Approaches to Developing Innovative Leadership among School Administrators within the BMA**

The results of the study on the approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA showed that Transformational Vision included Strategic Foresight; Innovative Creativity included Initiative; Innovative Collaboration included Building Trust; Risk Management included Knowledge Management; Innovative Organizational Climate included Building Maker Spaces; and Information Technology included Principal's Technological Leadership.

## Discussion

According to the examination of the needs for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA using the $PNI_{modified}$, the overall current state was found to be at a high level. When considering each area, all areas were also at a high level. The overall desired state was at the highest level, and the overall $PNI_{modified}$ value for innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA was 0.2022. When considering each area, the highest $PNI_{modified}$ was Risk Management. This is because most risk management activities, such as risk identification, risk level assessment, and

risk management planning, are conducted during executive-level meetings or planning sessions. The details are often not disclosed to the public or to operational staff. As a result, subordinates have relatively low awareness in this area. They are not fully aware of the administrators' efforts to implement risk management plans to prevent problems within the organisation. Therefore, administrators need communication and decision-making skills to build trust and encourage participation by drawing on individuals' potential and collective knowledge in planning and preparing for potential risks. This aligns with Srisukanthapuek's (2023) study, which examined approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators under the Bangkok Secondary Educational Service Area Office. The results showed that the current and desired states were at a high average level. Eight characteristics of innovative leadership were identified: transformational vision, teamwork and participation, motivation, creative thinking, organizational climate, risk management, networking and relationships, and information and communication technology. This is consistent with Sagkeaw's (2023) study, which investigated the innovative leadership of school administrators under the Phatthalung Primary Educational Service Area Office 1. The study found that the overall level and the levels across each area of innovative leadership among school administrators were high. The study indicated that administrators should possess six key areas: 1) teamwork and participation, 2) information and communication technology, 3) creative thinking and imagination, 4) motivating personnel, 5) risk-taking and decision-making, and 6) transformational vision. This is also consistent with Wooi's (2013) concept, which holds that risk management is inevitable and continuous, as every change carries an equal possibility of success or failure. Therefore, risk management is essential for addressing uncertainty and making informed decisions regarding which risks to accept to move the organisation forward.

Regarding the examination of the approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators within the BMA, it was found that Transformational Vision included Strategic Foresight; Innovative Creativity included

Originality; Innovative Collaboration included Cultivating Trust; Risk Management included Knowledge Management; Innovative Organizational Climate included Building Maker Spaces; and Information Technology included Principal's Technological Leadership. Developing innovative leadership among school administrators is a key factor in driving schools to keep pace with change and improve the quality of learning to meet the needs of the modern world. Administrators are responsible not only for managing existing resources but also for designing visions, missions, and goals that align with the school's context. They also need to encourage personnel to experiment with new ideas, move beyond traditional paradigms, embrace freedom of thought, respect differing opinions, prepare backup plans, and develop a systematic school database. In addition, they need to use communication skills to decentralise decision-making in order to reduce potential risks. Furthermore, they must provide spaces for innovation exchange and creation, stay current with technological advancements, and possess digital literacy to achieve sustainable goals. This is consistent with the study by Sitthirak and Vachungngern (2024), who examined approaches to developing innovative leadership among school administrators under the Prachuap Khiri Khan Primary Educational Service Area Office. Their findings revealed that innovative leadership consists of 1) transformational leadership, 2) visionary leadership, 3) motivation, 4) teamwork, and 5) creative thinking. This aligns with McCaw's (2025) concept, which states that strategic foresight is a key characteristic of leaders, enabling them to guide their organisations towards long-term goals and better cope with changing and complex environments. This is consistent with Torrance's (1964) concept, which defines initiative as the creation of ideas that differ from conventional thinking, ideas that are unusual and can lead to benefits at both the individual and societal levels. Such ideas may come from applying and adapting existing knowledge to create something new. This aligns with Savolainen's (2014) concept, which posits that trust is the heart of leadership and the foundation for sustainable relationships and collaboration. It is an intangible asset, a managerial skill, and a powerful force that

shapes leadership. This is in line with Cristache et al. (2025), who stated that knowledge management is a characteristic that creates sustainable innovation and positive outcomes. This supports organizational success and efficiency in competition, and enables efficient response to and management of challenges or risks that may arise. This is consistent with the concept proposed by Becker et al. (2016), which stated that Makerspaces provide an environment that supports the creation of innovations. They are open spaces that encourage users to create works and serve as learning communities that help develop innovative skills. This is also consistent with the concept proposed by Lukman and Yune (2025), who posited that technology leaders positively influence teachers' teaching innovation and students' positive academic attitudes.

## Conclusion

Findings regarding the perceptions of teachers under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) indicate that school administrators should prioritise the dimensions of innovative leadership in a specific order: Risk Management was identified as the highest priority, followed by Transformational Vision, Information Technology, Innovative Organizational Climate, Innovative Collaboration, and Innovative Creativity, respectively. These six dimensions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing; therefore, a balanced approach is essential for the sustainable development of innovative leadership.

To address this hierarchy of importance, the research proposes an integrated development framework. Specifically, Risk Management should focus on systematic knowledge management, particularly capturing individual expertise and maintaining databases to ensure operational continuity during personnel turnover. Transformational Vision must be driven by strategic foresight to prepare administrators for future transitions. Regarding Information Technology, administrators should demonstrate principal's technological leadership by acting as role models in applying IT to enhance operational efficiency. For Innovative Organizational Climate, the emphasis lies on building makerspaces to encourage experimentation. Innovative Collaboration requires the cultivation of trust to

foster synergy across all parties. Finally, regarding Innovative Creativity, administrators must act as initiators, introducing novel strategies aligned with the current context

## Limitations

This study was conducted specifically within the context of school administrators under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA).

In Phase 1, quantitative data were collected from government teachers to assess school administrators. This approach primarily reflects a subordinate-based perspective (perception-based). Therefore, the study may lack in-depth insights from the administrators' self-assessments or perspectives from other key stakeholders, such as school board members or parents.

This study focused exclusively on the components of innovative leadership as defined by the established conceptual framework. However, there may be other external factors influencing administrative performance that were not examined in this study, such as urgent policies from central authorities or budgetary constraints.

## Recommendations
### Short-Term Strategies

Improving Risk Management: School administrators should prioritise communication and decision-making skills to build trust and encourage participation. This can be achieved by leveraging personnel potential through activities such as meetings, collaborative planning with subordinates, and collecting individual knowledge, in order to be prepared for potential risks that may occur at any time.

### Long-Term Strategies

Innovative Creativity: Innovative Creativity develops from within the individual. School administrators should encourage subordinates to exchange ideas openly and to exercise freedom of thought when proposing and integrating new concepts, thereby creating innovations that efficiently align with the school's mission. This enables school administrators' innovative leadership to guide the school towards becoming a sustainable, innovative organisation.

Developing Innovative Leadership as a Training Program: The Department of Education, BMA, should adopt the approaches to developing innovative leadership and incorporate them into a training course before school administrators are appointed. This will equip leaders to act as innovators who initiate change and encourage teachers and students to think creatively, leading to tangible outcomes and lifelong learning.

## Future Research Directions
### Short-Term Strategies

Put the approaches to developing innovative leadership into practice to assess the instruments' efficiency and further refine them to be more comprehensive.

### Long-Term Strategies

Examine the effects of innovative leadership on both internal and external stakeholders of schools, including the feelings of school personnel, parents' perceptions, and community opinions.

Expand the research to include school administrators from other agencies, such as the BMA, the Department of Local Administration, and the Office of the Private Education Commission, to develop innovative leadership in diverse contexts.

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**Author Details**

**Walaiparn Yingmeesakul**, *Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand,* **Email ID:** *6712470019@rumail.ru.ac.th*

**Patumphorn Piatanom**, *Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand,* **Email ID:** *p.piatanom@gmail.com*