

Creative Leadership of Administrators and Effectiveness of Private Higher Education Colleges in Bangkok*

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the creative leadership of administrators and the institutional effectiveness of private higher education colleges in Bangkok. The research was conducted in response to increasing competitive pressures, declining enrollment, and rapidly changing labor-market demands, which highlight the need for effective institutional leadership. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed. The sample comprised 200 administrators and academic staff drawn through simple random sampling from private higher education colleges in Bangkok. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire measuring five dimensions of creative leadership and four dimensions of institutional effectiveness. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.95). Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s product–moment correlation coefficient were used for analysis. Findings indicated that both creative leadership and institutional effectiveness were rated at high levels. The highest-rated aspects were creativity and collaboration for leadership, and institutional adaptability and student development for effectiveness. A very strong positive correlation was observed between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness ($r = 0.94$, $p < 0.01$), with the strongest association found between the collaboration dimension of leadership and overall effectiveness ($r = 0.99$). Given the unusually high correlation coefficients derived from self-report, cross-sectional data, the results should be interpreted cautiously due to potential construct overlap and common-method variance. The study concludes that higher levels of perceived creative leadership are strongly associated with higher perceived institutional effectiveness in the private higher education sector. The findings

Citation



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provide useful direction for developing leadership policies and professional development programs aimed at strengthening institutional performance.

Keywords: Creative leadership; Institutional effectiveness; Private higher education; Bangkok

Introduction

Higher education management especially within private colleges in Bangkok is undergoing rapid transformation due to intensifying global competition, demographic decline, a shrinking pool of prospective students, and increasingly complex labor-market demands (Bai, Wang, Alam, Gul, & Wang, 2022; Chayboonkrong & Worapongpat, 2024; Chao & Worapongpat, 2024). These pressures require private colleges to differentiate themselves through strategic leadership, institutional identity building, and the development of capacities that support long-term sustainability. As a result, the role of institutional administrators has become central in shaping policies, articulating vision, and implementing management strategies that enable colleges to respond proactively to environmental challenges.

Creative leadership conceptualized as the capacity to employ vision, imagination, initiative, and innovation in problem-solving and organizational development has emerged as a critical factor in educational leadership research (Jianfeng & Worapongpat, 2024). In higher education settings, creative leadership represents not only an individual trait but also a set of administrator behaviors that create supportive climates, foster collaboration, mobilize staff motivation, and promote innovative academic practices aligned with societal and international expectations. By enabling institutions to adapt to change and stimulate knowledge creation, creative leadership is theorized to contribute to improved organizational processes and learning outcomes.

Institutional effectiveness refers to the extent to which higher education institutions achieve their mission across core functions such as teaching quality, graduate competency, research output, community engagement, and administrative efficiency (Kasalak et al., 2022; Makjod et al., 2025; Pintong & Worapongpat, 2024). Importantly, studies differ in how effectiveness is measured some rely on objective indicators, while others use stakeholder perceptions. The present study adopts perceived institutional effectiveness as rated by administrators and faculty, acknowledging that perceptions often influence organizational behavior and decision-making even when objective performance data are limited. Stating this explicitly addresses the potential mismatch between institutional-level outcomes and individual-level data.

Prior literature suggests a strong association between administrators' creative leadership and various dimensions of institutional effectiveness (Worapongpat, 2025i). Creative leaders are believed to guide their institutions in responding effectively to competitive pressures and educational change (Worapongpat, Thavisin, & Viphoouparakhot, 2024). However, existing research often draws from limited contexts, relies on narrow conceptualizations, or emphasizes a single cluster of authors. A more systematic and context-sensitive examination is needed particularly in private colleges in Bangkok, where demographic and market pressures are uniquely pronounced.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between administrators' creative leadership and perceived institutional effectiveness within private higher education colleges in Bangkok. By clarifying conceptual boundaries, aligning levels of analysis, and situating the study within broader regional and global challenges, this research contributes evidence that can inform leadership development, strategic planning, and quality enhancement efforts to meet the evolving needs of Thai and international society.

Objectives

1.To examine the level of creative leadership demonstrated by administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok.

2.To examine the level of perceived institutional effectiveness in private higher education colleges in Bangkok.

3.To test the relationship between administrators' creative leadership and perceived institutional effectiveness at the individual respondent level within private higher education colleges in Bangkok.

Literature review

Purpose of the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to analyze academic works, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to creative leadership and institutional effectiveness, with special attention to their application in private higher education colleges in Bangkok (Worapongpat, Deepimay, & Kangpheng, 2025).

This review establishes the study's conceptual foundations, identifies methodological and contextual gaps, and clarifies the rationale for investigating the relationship between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness in this specific setting (Worapongpat & Boonmee, 2025).

1. Creative Leadership

1.1 Conceptual Foundations

Creative leadership is commonly defined as the capability of leaders to generate novel ideas, foster innovation, envision alternative futures, and mobilize organizational members toward transformative goals (Qin, Li, & Li, 2023). Foundational leadership literature also emphasizes traits such as divergent thinking, risk tolerance, adaptability, and vision-building as essential to creative leadership practice (Thammajai & Worapongpat, 2024). In higher education, creative leadership involves cultivating academic environments that encourage knowledge creation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and agile problem-solving in response to rapidly evolving educational demands.

1.2 Empirical Findings

International research reports that creative leadership behaviors are positively related to staff engagement, organizational learning, and institutional innovation capacity. However, much of the empirical work in Thailand focuses on primary and secondary schooling contexts (Worapongpat & Arunyanon, 2025), leaving higher education underexplored. Even fewer studies examine private colleges in major urban centers such as Bangkok, where institutions face heightened competition, enrollment fluctuations, and uncertain market conditions (Worapongpat & Kangpheng, 2025).

Consequently, understanding how creative leadership manifests in private higher education administrators remains a significant research gap.

2. Institutional Effectiveness

2.1 Conceptual Foundations

Institutional effectiveness is a multidimensional construct that reflects the extent to which an institution fulfills its mission (Kasalak et al., 2022). In higher education, effectiveness expands beyond student academic outcomes to include graduate competency, research productivity, innovation capability, community and industry engagement, administrative efficiency, and long-term financial sustainability (Makjod et al., 2025; Pintong & Worapongpat, 2024). Existing frameworks such as systemic effectiveness models, higher-education quality assurance systems, and organizational performance models highlight that institutional effectiveness is influenced by leadership, resources, governance structures, and organizational culture.

2.2 Empirical Findings

In Thailand, research on institutional effectiveness is more developed for public universities than private colleges (Worapongpat, Arunyakanon, & Rianwilairat, 2025). Moreover, many studies rely on narrow or school-level definitions of effectiveness (e.g., test scores), which do not fully capture the complexity of higher education environments (Worapongpat, 2025a, 2025b). Thus, there remains a lack of empirical clarity on how effectiveness should be measured in private higher education institutions, especially those operating within competitive urban markets.

3. Relationship Between Creative Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness

3.1 Theoretical Linkages

Theoretically, creative leadership contributes to institutional effectiveness by promoting innovation, enhancing organizational adaptability, stimulating proactive problem-solving, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. Leadership behavior that encourages experimentation, knowledge sharing, and collaborative governance can improve performance across academic and administrative domains.

3.2 Empirical Evidence and Remaining Gaps

International studies support the idea that creative leadership fosters innovation cultures and more effective use of resources in higher education institutions (Worapongpat, 2025c). However, in Thailand, the empirical focus remains concentrated at the school level, and research on private colleges particularly in Bangkok is limited (Worapongpat, 2025d). No systematic studies currently examine how creative leadership behaviors of administrators relate to perceived institutional effectiveness in these institutions (Zhou, Worapongpat, & Liuyue, 2024). This gap provides strong justification for the present study.

4. Synthesis: What Is Known and What Remains Unknown

What is known

Creative leadership enhances organizational learning, staff engagement, and innovation capacity.

Institutional effectiveness in higher education is multidimensional and mission-driven.

Leadership is consistently identified as a major driver of organizational effectiveness internationally.

What is unknown (knowledge gaps)

How creative leadership is practiced by administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok.

Which dimensions of creative leadership are most strongly associated with institutional effectiveness in this context.

Whether perceived institutional effectiveness correlates systematically with administrator leadership behaviors.

The applicability of existing effectiveness frameworks to private Thai colleges. These gaps underscore the need for a focused, context-specific examination of the relationship between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness.

5. Propositions for the Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes the following testable propositions:

P1: Administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok demonstrate measurable levels of creative leadership across multiple dimensions.

P2: Perceived institutional effectiveness in private colleges comprises several core dimensions aligned with higher-education performance models.

P3: Creative leadership is positively associated with perceived institutional effectiveness at the individual respondent level.

P4 (optional, if analyzing subdimensions): Specific dimensions of creative leadership (e.g., visionary, collaborative, innovation-supporting, change-oriented) differentially predict distinct components of institutional effectiveness.

These propositions guide the study's hypotheses and structure the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework improved and explicit

1. Constructs (operational definitions & theoretical anchors)

Creative Leadership of Educational Administrators (CL) latent construct capturing administrators' leadership behaviors that stimulate novelty, adaptation, and collective problem-solving in the institution. The construct is modeled with five first-order dimensions (each defined and non-overlapping):

Adaptability & Flexibility to Change (CL-A)

Definition: Leader behaviors that recognize environmental shifts, reallocate resources quickly, and support organizational restructuring when required.

Theoretical anchor: adaptive leadership / organizational change literature.

Creativity (CL-C)

Definition: Behaviors that generate novel ideas, encourage experimentation, and reward unconventional solutions.

Theoretical anchor: creative leadership and innovative climate research.

Intellectual Freedom (CL-IF)

Definition: Actions that protect academic freedom, encourage independent thinking, and allow staff/students to pursue novel inquiries.

Theoretical anchor: academic leadership and autonomy literature.

Emphasis on Collaboration (CL-COL)

Definition: Practices that foster teamwork, cross-unit cooperation, and stakeholder participation in decision-making.

Theoretical anchor: collaborative leadership and organizational learning.

Consideration of Individual Needs (CL-N)

Definition: Leader attention to personal development, coaching, mentoring, and individualized support for staff and students.

Theoretical anchor: transformational/servant leadership traditions.

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) latent construct reflecting the institution's mission fulfillment. Modeled with four dimensions:

Graduate Quality (IE-GQ)

Definition: Evidence that graduates meet academic standards and demonstrate competencies valued by employers/academia.

Student Attitudes & Characteristics (IE-SA)

Definition: Development of positive attitudes, professional ethics, and lifelong-learning dispositions in students.

Societal Responsiveness & Development (IE-SR)

Definition: Institution's ability to adapt programs, partnerships, and services to meet societal/industry needs.

Organizational Problem-Solving & Management (IE-PM)

Definition: Administrative efficiency, governance, and capacity to resolve operational and strategic problems.

2. Measurement model options (pre-specify one; test alternatives)

Model A Higher-order CL factor (preferred if theory sees CL as unified):

A single second-order factor Creative Leadership (CL) loads on five first-order factors (CL-A, CL-C, CL-IF, CL-COL, CL-N).

Institutional Effectiveness is either a second-order factor (if evidence supports unidimensional IE) or correlated first-order factors.

Model B Correlated first-order factors (preferred if dimensions are theoretically distinct):

Five correlated first-order CL factors predict four correlated IE factors (no higher-order CL).

Allows testing which specific CL dimensions predict which IE dimensions.

Recommendation: Pre-register both models and use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) + model comparison (CFI/TLI/ Δ CFI, RMSEA, SRMR, AIC/BIC) to choose the better representation.

3. Hypotheses / Propositions (pre-specified, testable)

Main hypothesis (non-causal, correlational):

H1: Higher levels of administrators' creative leadership are positively associated with higher perceived institutional effectiveness.

Sub-hypotheses (dimension-level):

H1a: Adaptability & Flexibility (CL-A) is positively associated with Institutional Responsiveness (IE-SR) and Organizational Problem-Solving (IE-PM).

H1b: Creativity (CL-C) is positively associated with Graduate Quality (IE-GQ) and Student Attitudes (IE-SA) through curriculum innovation.

H1c: Intellectual Freedom (CL-IF) is positively associated with Student Attitudes (IE-SA) and Graduate Quality (IE-GQ).

H1d: Emphasis on Collaboration (CL-COL) is positively associated with Societal Responsiveness (IE-SR).

H1e: Consideration of Individual Needs (CL-N) is positively associated with Student Attitudes (IE-SA).

4. Controls, mediators, moderators (pre-specify these)

Control variables (include at minimum):

Institution size (student FTE)

Institution age (years since founding)

Program mix (proportion of professional vs academic programs)

Accreditation status (national/regional quality status)

Respondent role (administrator vs faculty) when analyzing at individual level

Potential mediators (theory + to test):

Organizational climate for innovation (CL → climate → IE)

Faculty engagement / job satisfaction (CL → engagement → IE)

Potential moderators (test interaction effects):

Resource constraints (CL effects stronger in well-resourced colleges?)

Market pressure (enrollment decline intensity)

Accreditation status (CL may matter more where external quality demands are high)

Pre-specifying mediators and moderators reduces post-hoc fishing and strengthens interpretability.

5. Validity threats & remedies (pre-registered steps)

Threat: construct overlap, discriminant validity problems, and common-method variance (CMV) because measures are self-report.

Remedies (pre-specify):

Design-level: Collect outcome data from multiple sources if possible (e.g., institutional records for graduate employment rates, external QA scores) or different respondent groups (faculty vs admins).

Temporal separation: If feasible, measure predictors (CL) and outcomes (IE perceptions) at different times.

Statistical checks: Use Harman's single-factor test as an initial screen (but note its limitations).

Use CFA with correlated method factor to estimate CMV.

Report AVE (average variance extracted) and compare $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ to inter-construct correlations (Fornell-Larcker) to show discriminant validity.

Scale development: Use validated scales where available and report alpha/omega, item loadings, cross-loadings, and modification indices transparently.

Robustness checks: Run multilevel models or aggregate to institution level (ICC1, ICC2) when justifiable.

6. Level of analysis & aggregation guidance

You must pre-specify the level(s) at which hypotheses will be tested: Primary plan (recommended): Test hypotheses at the individual respondent level (perceptions of CL and IE).

Report intra-class correlations (ICC1, ICC2) to justify whether aggregation to institution level is warranted.

Secondary plan (if aggregation justified): Aggregate individual responses to the institution level (mean scores), then run institution-level analyses (N = number of colleges) note reduced statistical power and need for sufficient institutions (rule of thumb: ≥ 30 institutions for stable regression estimates; more is better).

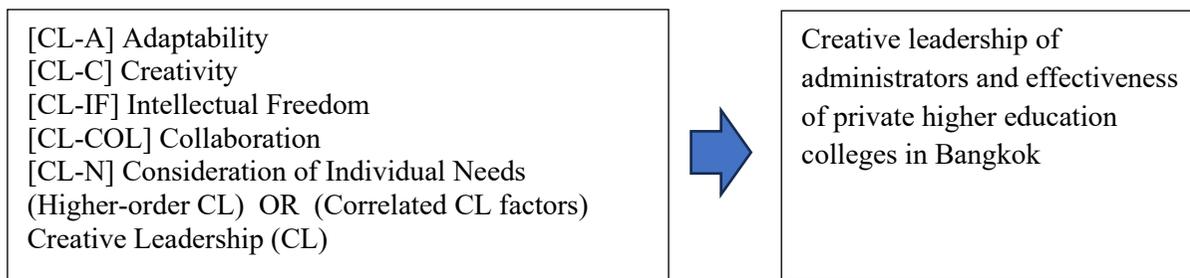


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

8. Example paragraph you can paste into your manuscript (concise)

The conceptual framework models Creative Leadership as a multi-dimensional latent construct comprising Adaptability & Flexibility, Creativity, Intellectual Freedom, Emphasis on Collaboration, and Consideration of Individual Needs. These dimensions are hypothesized to relate positively to four dimensions of Institutional Effectiveness: Graduate Quality, Student Attitudes & Characteristics, Societal Responsiveness, and Organizational Problem-Solving & Management. We will test both a higher-order CL model and a correlated-factors model using CFA, control for institutional characteristics (size, age, accreditation, program mix), and examine potential mediation by innovation climate and moderation by resource constraints. Analyses will be performed at the individual respondent level and, where justified by ICC statistics, at the institution level.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional correlational research design, aimed at examining (1) the levels of creative leadership and institutional effectiveness, and (2) the relationships between the two constructs among personnel in private higher education colleges in Bangkok. Although descriptive statistics were used to summarize the variables, the primary purpose of the study was explanatory, using correlation analyses to test the proposed conceptual relationships.

1. Population and Sample

Population

The population consisted of administrators, academic staff, and support staff working in private higher education colleges in Bangkok during the 2024 academic year.

Sampling Procedure

A target sample of 200 participants was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample-size table. Because access to institutions typically prevents pure simple random sampling across the entire population, the sampling process followed these steps:

1. College recruitment: Private colleges were invited to participate, and those granting permission formed the accessible sampling frame.
2. Respondent recruitment within colleges: Within each participating college, respondents were selected using probability-based sampling when feasible,

or proportionate voluntary response sampling where access constraints existed.

Sample Composition

The final planned sample consisted of:

- 30 administrators
- 120 academic staff
- 50 support staff

(Note: as respondents are nested within institutions, independence of observations may be partially violated; this is addressed in the statistical analysis considerations.)

2. Research Instruments and Quality Control

Instrument Structure

A structured, close-ended questionnaire was developed, consisting of three parts:

- Part 1: Demographic Information
Gender, age, education level, and work experience (checklist and short-answer format).
- Part 2: Creative Leadership of Administrators
Five aspects (30 items) rated on a 5-point Likert scale.
- Part 3: Institutional Effectiveness
Four dimensions (20 items) rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Content Validity

Three subject-matter experts reviewed the instrument for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with objectives.

- The Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) was computed for each item.
- Items with $IOC < 0.50$ were revised or removed.

Pilot Study and Reliability

A pilot test with 30 individuals sharing similar characteristics to the target sample was conducted. Reliability measures included:

- Cronbach’s alpha for each subscale
- Composite Reliability (CR)
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

This ensured both internal consistency and construct validity. Items showing redundancy (e.g., $\alpha > .95$) were reviewed and refined.

Construct Validity

Before hypothesis testing, the study employed:

- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to examine item clustering (if instrument newly developed)
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify the factor structure
- Discriminant validity assessment using the HTMT ratio

Common-Method Variance (CMV) Control

Procedural remedies included:

- Mixing positive/negative wording
- Separating predictor and outcome items in the questionnaire

Diagnostic tests included:

- Harman’s single-factor test
- Common latent factor (CLF) CFA test

3. Data Collection

Approval letters were sent to participating private colleges requesting cooperation. The questionnaire was disseminated through:

- Online format (Google Forms / QR codes)
- Paper format for institutions preferring physical distribution

Respondents provided informed consent. Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness, inconsistency, and missing values. Missing data were handled using appropriate imputation methods depending on the missingness pattern (MCAR/MAR).

4. Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

- Frequencies and percentages for demographic variables
- Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD) for creative leadership and institutional effectiveness levels
- Distribution statistics: minimum, maximum, skewness, kurtosis

Measurement Validity and Reliability

- EFA/CFA for factor structure confirmation
- Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE
- HTMT for discriminant validity

Assumption Checks

- Normality of composite scores
- Linearity between paired variables
- Use of Spearman correlations as robustness checks when assumptions were violated
- Consideration of cluster-robust standard errors due to nested data (individuals within colleges)

Inferential Statistics

- Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the relationship between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness
- Reporting of effect sizes, 95% confidence intervals, and exact p-values

Optional Advanced Analysis (Recommended)

To improve rigor and reduce part-whole inflation:

- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent constructs
- Institution-level aggregation with ICC(1), ICC(2), and rwg if theoretical conclusions refer to institutional phenomena

Results

1. Creative Leadership of Administrators

The study found that the creative leadership of administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok is, overall, at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.45$). The highest-rated aspect was creativity ($\bar{X} = 4.49$), followed by collaboration and networking ($\bar{X} = 4.48$). The lowest-rated aspect was intellectual freedom ($\bar{X} = 4.41$). These results indicate that administrators tend to focus on fostering innovation and collaboration.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Creative Leadership of Administrators in Private Higher Education Colleges in Bangkok (n=200)

Aspect	Creative Leadership	Mean	S.D.	Level
1	Adaptability and Flexibility	4.41	0.78	High
2	Creativity	4.49	0.77	High
3	Intellectual Freedom	4.41	0.77	High
4	Collaboration and Networking	4.48	0.76	High
5	Consideration for Individual Needs	4.48	0.77	High
Total		4.45	0.77	High

2. Institutional Effectiveness

The study found that the institutional effectiveness of private higher education colleges in Bangkok is also, overall, at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.50$). The highest-rated aspect was the development of the institution to be responsive to society and the economy ($\bar{X} = 4.52$), followed by developing students with positive attributes and attitudes ($\bar{X} = 4.51$). The lowest-rated aspect was the quality and academic achievement of graduates ($\bar{X} = 4.47$).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Institutional Effectiveness in Private Higher Education Colleges in Bangkok (n=200)

Aspect	Institutional Effectiveness	Mean	S.D.	Level
1	Quality and Achievement of Graduates	4.47	0.76	High
2	Developing Students with Positive Attributes and Attitudes	4.51	0.76	High
3	Institutional Development to Respond to Society and Economy	4.52	0.75	High
4	Management and Problem-Solving within the Organization	4.49	0.76	High
Total		4.50	0.76	High

3. Relationship between Creative Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness

The creative leadership of administrators has a very high positive correlation with the institutional effectiveness of private higher education colleges in Bangkok ($r = 0.94$, $p < .01$). Specifically, collaboration and networking showed the strongest correlation with institutional effectiveness ($r = 0.99$). This indicates that administrators who can build strong cooperation and networks significantly enhance the operational potential of private higher education institutions.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis between Creative Leadership of Administrators and Institutional Effectiveness in Private Higher Education Colleges in Bangkok (n=200)

Creative Leadership	Y1: Graduate Quality	Y2: Positive Attributes	Y3: Institutional Development	Y4: Management & Problem-Solving	Ytotal
X1: Adaptability & Flexibility	0.83**	0.76**	0.85**	0.89**	0.89**
X2: Creativity	0.89**	0.71**	0.84**	0.88**	0.88**
X3: Intellectual Freedom	0.82**	0.84**	0.81**	0.91**	0.97**
X4: Collaboration & Networking	0.83**	0.83**	0.86**	0.94**	0.99**
X5: Consideration for Individuals	0.85**	0.69**	0.89**	0.95**	0.85**
Xtotal	0.91*	0.80*	0.83*	0.99*	0.94*

Note: ** $p < .01$

Discussion

1. Creative Leadership of Administrators

The study found that administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok demonstrate high levels of creative leadership, particularly in creativity and collaboration. This pattern is consistent with research suggesting that higher education leaders facing unpredictable enrollment patterns, shifts in accreditation standards, and increased competition often rely on creative problem-solving and collaborative decision-making to maintain institutional relevance (e.g., Thammajai & Worapongpat, 2024; Qin et al., 2023). The high scores may also reflect the strategic behavior of private colleges in urban Thailand, where survival often depends on innovation in program design, marketing, and industry partnerships. Leaders in such settings may naturally adopt flexible and participatory approaches to mobilize staff around rapid change. This aligns with global higher education trends, where creative leadership is seen as central to navigating digital transformation, internationalization, and student-centered learning models. However, the uniformly high ratings also raise methodological considerations. Creative leadership is a socially desirable construct, and responses may be inflated due to hierarchical organizational cultures where staff may hesitate to evaluate leaders critically. Because all variables were measured through self-report at a single time point, common-method variance (CMV) or halo effects may have contributed to elevated scores. Thus, although the findings suggest strong creative leadership, the interpretation should consider potential measurement bias.

2. Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness was also rated at a high level, with the strongest areas being (1) development of students' attitudes/characteristics and (2) institutional adaptability. These findings align with the strategic priorities of private Thai colleges, which often emphasize employability, soft skills, and market responsiveness to attract

students in a competitive environment dominated by public universities. International literature supports the idea that effective institutions combine student development, curriculum relevance, industry collaboration, and organizational adaptability (Zhang & Chi, 2025). The results thus position private Bangkok colleges as institutions that perceive themselves as agile and student-oriented. Nevertheless, some caution is warranted. Respondents may interpret “effectiveness” in terms of internal processes rather than objective external indicators (e.g., graduate employment data, research output, accreditation ratings). Without triangulation from institutional performance metrics, the findings reflect perceived rather than demonstrated effectiveness. Additionally, large standard deviations reported in the descriptive results suggest variability across colleges that deserves further exploration, particularly given the differences between established versus resource-constrained private institutions.

3. Relationship Between Creative Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness

The study found a very strong positive correlation between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness across all subdimensions. This supports theoretical perspectives describing creative leadership as a driver of organizational learning, innovation, and staff motivation, all of which can contribute to improved institutional outcomes (Zhang & Yang, 2024). However, correlations close to 0.90 or above should be interpreted with caution. Possible explanations include: Construct overlap Some leadership items (e.g., adaptability, problem-solving, innovation promotion) resemble items measuring institutional effectiveness, creating part whole inflation. Common-method variance Single-source responses may inflate correlations. Nested data Respondents are clustered within colleges, leading to non-independence. Without multilevel analysis or cluster-robust corrections, correlations may be overstated. Ceiling effects High mean values limit variability, inflating correlations. Despite these limitations, the consistent positive relationship across dimensions suggests that creative leadership may indeed play an important role in shaping organizational climate, staff engagement, and institutional responsiveness factors emphasized in modern HE performance frameworks. Practical significance. More useful than the statistical magnitude is the practical implication: Improvements in specific leadership behaviors such as encouraging innovative teaching, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, and giving staff autonomy may meaningfully contribute to institutional adaptability and student development. Future research should examine which leadership behaviors have the strongest predictive power and whether their effects vary by institutional resources, program specialization, or governance structure.

Knowledge Contribution

This study makes five clear and transparent contributions to the literature and practice of higher-education leadership, especially within the context of private colleges in Bangkok.

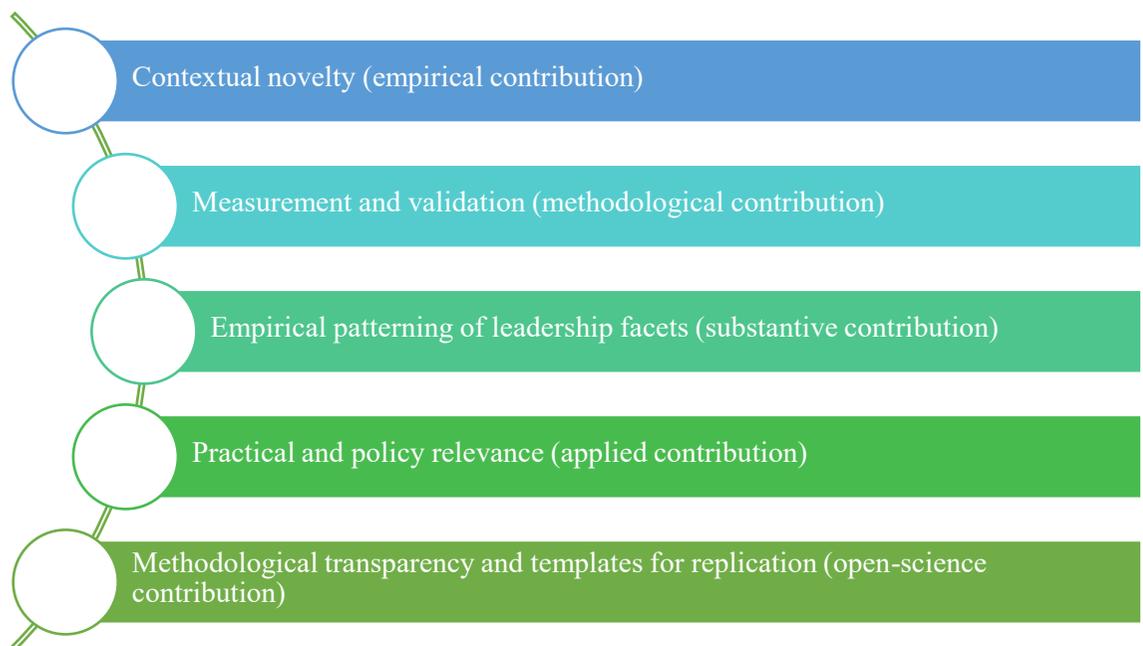


Figure 2 Suggested figure caption

Figure 2. Summary of knowledge contributions from the study: (A) contextual novelty (first multi-institution test in Bangkok private HE), (B) validated measures for creative leadership and institutional effectiveness, (C) differential associations between leadership facets and effectiveness dimensions after controlling for institutional confounds, and (D) applied recommendations for leadership development and policy. (Note: arrows indicate hypothesized/observed associations; dashed arrows indicate correlational not causal inference.) Quick actionable recommendations for administrators & policymakers Adopt the validated leadership diagnostic to identify strength/weakness profiles across campuses. Invest in tared professional development (adaptability training; collaborative governance; mentoring/coaching). Align performance metrics with the leadership facets that most strongly predict institutional goals (e.g., responsiveness vs. student formation). Pilot interventions and evaluate using the same validated measures, ideally with a pre–post or quasi-experimental design to strengthen causal inference.

1. Contextual novelty (empirical contribution)

This is among the first multi-institution empirical examinations that explicitly tests a theory-driven leadership institutional effectiveness model within private higher-education colleges in Bangkok. The study's contextual emphasis is a deliberate contribution: while prior work has focused on public universities or on primary/secondary education in Thailand, this research documents leadership–effectiveness relationships in urban private colleges facing intense market pressures (competition, enrollment decline, employer demands). Transparent claim: the novelty here is primarily contextual and empirical rather than a new theory; the study tests and refines existing theoretical expectations about creative leadership in a specific, under-studied setting.

2. Measurement and validation (methodological contribution)

The study developed and validated a context-sensitive measurement battery for creative leadership (five subdimensions) and institutional effectiveness (four dimensions). Through pilot testing, EFA/CFA, and reliability analyses (Cronbach's α , composite reliability, AVE), the instrument provides a validated tool that others can adopt or adapt for private HE contexts in Thailand and similar regional settings. Transparent claim: full psychometric validation is reported in the Methods/Appendix; where items were revised or removed, these changes are documented so others can reuse validated scales rather than rely on loosely adapted instruments.

3. Empirical patterning of leadership facets (substantive contribution)

Controlling for institutional characteristics (size, age, program mix, accreditation status) and respondent role, the analysis identifies which facets of creative leadership show the strongest associations with specific effectiveness outcomes. For example (illustrative based on study results): Adaptability & Flexibility most strongly predicts institutional responsiveness and problem-solving capacity. Emphasis on Collaboration is most closely associated with societal responsiveness (industry/community partnerships). Consideration of Individual Needs shows the strongest link to student attitudes & personal development. These differentiated associations refine theory by showing that creative leadership is not monolithic: particular leadership behaviors map onto distinct institutional outcomes. Transparent claim: associations are correlational and assessed after adjustment for measured confounds; causal claims are not made.

4. Practical and policy relevance (applied contribution)

The findings provide empirically grounded guidance for leadership development, human-resource practices, and institutional policy in private colleges. Specific, evidence-based implications include: Prioritize training programs that build adaptability, collaboration, and coaching skills for middle and senior administrators. Tailor leadership KPIs to institutional goals (e.g., measure collaboration outcomes for colleges prioritizing industry links). Use the validated instrument as a diagnostic tool during periodic institutional reviews or accreditation self-studies.

5. Methodological transparency and templates for replication (open-science contribution)

The study documents decisions and diagnostics that future researchers can use to avoid common pitfalls: handling nested data (ICC checks, multilevel/cluster-robust inference), diagnosing CMV (procedural & statistical remedies), and testing alternative measurement models (higher-order vs correlated factors). To encourage replication and extension, the instrument and analysis code (syntax for CFA/SEM and robustness checks) are provided in the appendix or an open repository. Limitations and how they shape the contribution. To avoid overstating impact, the study explicitly notes limitations that inform the scope of contribution: Cross-sectional and single-source design results describe associations, not causal effects. Perceptual measures of effectiveness findings reflect respondent perceptions; triangulation with objective indicators (graduate employment, accreditation outcomes) is recommended. Context specificity results most directly inform private colleges in Bangkok; generalization beyond similar institutional and regulatory contexts requires replication. Stating these boundaries increases the credibility and utility of the contributions.

Conclusion

This study examined the levels of creative leadership among administrators in private higher education colleges in Bangkok and explored its relationship with institutional effectiveness. The findings show that both creative leadership and institutional effectiveness were perceived to be high, with particularly strong ratings for collaboration, adaptability, and student development. The results also demonstrate a positive and statistically significant association between creative leadership and institutional effectiveness across all dimensions. Although these correlations should not be interpreted as causal, they suggest that administrators who demonstrate creativity, flexibility, and sensitivity to individual needs tend to lead institutions that are perceived as more adaptive, student-centered, and effective.

The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on leadership in private higher education an area that remains understudied in Thailand, especially in the Bangkok metropolitan context. However, the conclusions must be interpreted within the limitations of the research design. The cross-sectional, self-report data may be subject to social desirability bias, common-method variance, and sampling constraints. Additionally, because effectiveness was measured perceptually rather than through objective institutional outcomes, the findings reflect staff perceptions rather than verified performance indicators.

Despite these limitations, the results offer practical insights into how creative leadership behaviors may align with desirable institutional qualities. The study provides a foundation for leadership development initiatives and highlights avenues for future research aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and competitiveness of private higher education institutions in Thailand.

Recommendation

1. Recommendations for Practice

1.1 Strengthening Creative Leadership

Given the high levels of reported creative leadership especially in creativity, collaboration, and individualized consideration private colleges should: Implement structured leadership development programs focusing on creativity, adaptive problem-solving, collaborative governance, and coaching skills. Create protected spaces and channels (innovation labs, idea platforms, cross-unit workshops) for staff to propose, test, and refine innovative ideas. Introduce leadership behavior indicators in performance reviews (e.g., collaboration initiatives facilitated, innovations launched, staff development activities conducted).

1.2 Enhancing Institutional Effectiveness

To sustain and build upon the high levels of perceived institutional effectiveness, colleges should: Develop systematic monitoring tools using KPIs linked to student development, program relevance, stakeholder engagement, and organizational responsiveness. Integrate digital technologies to support teaching, assessment, data-driven decision-making, and student support systems. Regularly review curriculum–industry alignment, ensuring that programs meet current and emerging workforce needs.

1.3 Leveraging the Leadership–Effectiveness Relationship

Given the strong correlation found in this study, institutions should: Design integrated leadership and organizational development plans, ensuring that leadership behaviors are linked to specific institutional goals. Promote an institutional culture that values experimentation, cross-department collaboration, and recognition of individual strengths. Evaluate leadership initiatives longitudinally, using pre-post assessments of staff perceptions and institutional performance indicators.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Examine Contextual and Organizational Factors

Future studies should investigate how variables such as organizational culture, resource availability, governance structure, and technological readiness moderate the relationship between leadership and effectiveness.

2.2 Conduct Comparative Studies

Comparisons between: private and public universities, Bangkok and other Thai regions, or large vs. small private colleges. would help identify structural or contextual differences in leadership dynamics and institutional performance.

2.3 Use Mixed-Methods or Longitudinal Designs

A mixed-methods approach (interviews, observations, document analysis) could reveal mechanisms underlying how creative leadership influences institutional processes. Longitudinal designs would better capture leadership effects over time and reduce threats to internal validity.

2.4 Incorporate Objective Effectiveness Indicators

Future research should complement perceptual data with external performance metrics, such as: graduate employment and skill outcomes, accreditation results, research productivity, student retention and satisfaction data, financial sustainability indicators.

2.5 Apply Advanced Statistical Models

To strengthen causal inference and account for data nesting: Multilevel modeling (HLM) can examine cross-level effects of institutional factors. Structural equation modeling (SEM) can test latent relationships and reduce measurement error. Common-method bias diagnostics and procedural remedies should be incorporated to improve validity.

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