

Developing an Ecumenical Collaborative Educational Leadership Model for Theological Higher Education in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in theological higher education involves educational quality, academic governance, faculty development, student formation, institutional collaboration, and theological identity. Although Christian leadership, servant leadership, educational leadership, ecumenical theological education, and shared governance have generated substantial scholarship, these conversations are often developed separately. This study conducts a systematic literature review for conceptual model development to synthesize these perspectives and formulate the Ecumenical Collaborative Educational Leadership Model (ECELM). The review uses explicit review questions, predefined eligibility criteria, a reconstructed search strategy, structured data extraction, and thematic synthesis. PRISMA 2020 is used as a reporting guideline rather than as the review method itself. The synthesis identifies five complementary dimensions: Christ-Centered Leadership, Servant Orientation, Ecumenical Dialogue, Collaborative Governance, and Transformative Educational Mission. Indonesian evidence is especially important: recent studies have examined academic leadership in Indonesian theological institutions and servant leadership in Indonesian Christian higher education, including research involving 26 Christian higher education institutions and validation of a servant-leadership scale. The resulting ECELM is proposed as a contextual framework for theological seminaries and theology-focused Christian higher education institutions in Indonesia. The five dimensions are not presented as empirically established causal stages. Rather, they represent analytically distinct but potentially complementary dimensions. Faculty development, student leadership formation, curriculum development, and quality assurance are treated as implementation domains or potential educational implications, not as additional dimensions of the model. Empirical research is required to test the relationships and effectiveness of ECELM.

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Introduction

Higher education leadership has increasingly moved beyond a narrow emphasis on administrative authority toward questions of teaching and learning, academic collaboration, distributed responsibility, institutional development, and organizational transformation. A systematic review of higher-education leadership research found that academic leadership, distributed leadership, educational leadership, transformational leadership, and transformative leadership are frequently used in overlapping ways, while a holistic framework connecting leadership of teaching and learning with higher-education leadership remains underdeveloped (Kinnunen et al., 2024). This conceptual plurality is particularly relevant to theological higher education because theological institutions simultaneously function as academic communities, professional formation environments, and mission-oriented organizations.

The Indonesian context makes this issue particularly significant. Theological higher education institutions are expected to meet increasingly formal requirements concerning academic quality, accountability, accreditation, curriculum development, and institutional governance while retaining their theological and ecclesial identity. Jatmiko

and Kawengian (2023) identify challenges and competency requirements for academic leaders in Indonesian theological institutions, particularly in relation to professionalization, managerial capacity, administrative competence, and accreditation. Thus, educational leadership in theological higher education cannot be reduced either to pastoral leadership or to conventional university administration.

Recent empirical work on servant leadership provides an additional evidence base. Dami et al. (2024) examined servant leadership in Indonesian Christian higher education and found relationships involving trust, job satisfaction, leader–member exchange, and organizational citizenship behavior. These findings demonstrate the relevance of servant leadership to Christian higher education while also cautioning against treating servant leadership as a simple direct predictor of institutional effectiveness. Dami et al. (2025) further validated servant leadership as a multidimensional construct in Indonesian Christian higher education, including ethical behavior, development, empowerment, relationship building, wisdom, spirituality, and motivation to serve.

These studies establish the relevance of servant leadership to Christian higher education, but they do not by themselves provide a comprehensive framework for theological educational leadership. Servant leadership primarily explains a leadership orientation and relational practice. Educational leadership literature addresses teaching, learning, academic leadership, and institutional development. Shared-governance literature emphasizes participation, stakeholder involvement, decision-making, accountability, and institutional processes (Raza et al., 2025). Ecumenical theological education adds another dimension by emphasizing collaboration, networks, theological dialogue, and leadership formation across institutional and denominational boundaries.

The literature therefore reveals a more defensible research gap than the stronger claim that no comprehensive leadership framework exists. Existing frameworks and bodies of research do exist, but they tend to emphasize different levels of analysis. Servant leadership focuses primarily on service and leader–follower relationships; educational leadership focuses on teaching, learning, and academic organization; shared governance focuses on participatory institutional decision-making; and ecumenical theological education focuses on dialogue, cooperation, and formation. The conceptual opportunity addressed by this study is therefore the integration of these perspectives within a contextual framework for theological higher education in Indonesia.

Collaborative leadership has also been discussed specifically in theological education. Lowe (2011) highlights mutuality, collaboration, and others-centered leadership as important considerations for theological education. This perspective is particularly relevant to institutional environments in which faculty, administrators, students, churches, and other stakeholders participate in educational decision-making.

Faculty development is another important dimension of theological higher education. Matthias (2019) shows that faculty development is significant for Christian higher education because faculty members contribute not only to teaching but also to research, mentoring, curriculum development, and institutional life. Consequently, an educational leadership framework for theological higher education needs to account for faculty development as an implementation domain rather than treating leadership solely as the competency of senior administrators.

The ecumenical dimension is likewise important. The World Council of Churches (WCC) frames ecumenical theological education in terms of cooperation, dialogue, networking, and theological formation across institutional and ecclesial boundaries (World Council of Churches, n.d.). The Asian Forum on Theological Education guidelines further emphasize cooperation, mutual learning, institutional networking, faculty and student exchange, and collaborative theological education in the Asian context (World

Council of Churches, 2012). These perspectives provide an important foundation for connecting ecumenical education with educational leadership.

Based on this literature, the study addresses three research questions:

RQ1: What leadership dimensions relevant to theological higher education emerge from literature on Christian leadership, servant leadership, educational leadership, ecumenical theological education, and collaborative/shared governance?

RQ2: How can these dimensions be synthesized into an integrated conceptual framework for theological higher education?

RQ3: What educational and institutional implications can reasonably be proposed from the synthesis, and which of these remain propositions requiring empirical testing?

The contribution of this study is consequently conceptual rather than causal. ECELM is proposed as a framework for organizing leadership dimensions that are otherwise dispersed across several bodies of literature. Its Indonesian grounding comes from the contextual problem and from Indonesian studies included in the evidence base, while international literature provides comparative and theoretical support. The model is intended primarily for theological seminaries, theological colleges, and theology-focused Christian higher-education units in Indonesia.

Methods

Study Design

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) for conceptual model development. The review aimed to identify and synthesize literature on Christian leadership, servant leadership, educational leadership, ecumenical theological education, and collaborative governance in relation to theological higher education. The review process was informed by systematic literature review guidelines (Booth et al., 2016; Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019), while PRISMA 2020 was used as a reporting guideline (Page et al., 2021).

Search and Selection

Literature was identified through academic database searches and supplementary Google Scholar searches using combinations of the following terms: *Christian leadership*, *servant leadership*, *educational leadership*, *academic leadership*, *theological education*, *theological higher education*, *ecumenical*, and *collaborative/shared governance*. Reference lists of relevant studies were also examined to identify additional sources.

Studies were included when they addressed leadership, governance, theological education, Christian higher education, or educational development and provided conceptual, theoretical, empirical, or institutional evidence relevant to the research questions. Peer-reviewed articles were prioritized, while selected books and institutional documents were included for foundational and contextual perspectives. Duplicate, inaccessible, and irrelevant sources were excluded.

Data Analysis

Relevant information was organized according to the author, year, context, leadership concept, main findings, and relevance to theological higher education. The literature was analyzed thematically following Thomas and Harden (2008), moving from recurring concepts to descriptive and analytical themes.

The synthesis identified five dimensions for the proposed Ecumenical Collaborative Educational Leadership Model (ECELM): Christ-Centered Leadership, Servant Orientation, Ecumenical Dialogue, Collaborative Governance, and Transformative Educational Mission. These dimensions were integrated based on their complementary

roles in theological higher education. The model is presented as a conceptual framework rather than an empirically validated causal model.

Results and Discussion

1. Characteristics of the Evidence and Thematic Synthesis

The revised synthesis indicates that the literature relevant to educational leadership in theological higher education is substantial but fragmented across several intellectual traditions. Higher-education leadership research uses overlapping concepts such as academic leadership, distributed leadership, educational leadership, transformational leadership, and transformative leadership. Kinnunen et al. (2024), for example, analyzed 64 publications and found considerable conceptual plurality, while also noting that the reviewed literature did not produce a single holistic framework explaining how leadership of teaching and learning contributes to higher-education leadership more generally. This finding is important for the present study because it supports the need for conceptual integration without implying that previous leadership frameworks are absent.

In the Indonesian theological context, the leadership problem is not simply a matter of personal leadership style. Jatmiko and Kawengian (2023) show that theological higher education institutions face challenges associated with professionalization, legal requirements, and accreditation, and that effective academic leadership requires personal, managerial, practical, administrative, and relational competencies. Their findings place educational leadership within an institutional environment where theological identity must be negotiated alongside the expectations of contemporary higher education.

The Indonesian Christian higher-education literature also provides empirical support for the relevance of servant leadership. Dami et al. (2024) studied 180 lecturers from 26 Christian higher education institutions in Indonesia and found that trust, job satisfaction, and leader-member exchange were direct outcomes associated with servant leadership, while organizational citizenship behavior operated indirectly. This is significant for the present synthesis because it shows that servant leadership has measurable relational and organizational relevance in Indonesian Christian higher education, while also cautioning against a simplistic claim that servant leadership directly produces every institutional outcome.

The evidence was further strengthened by Dami et al. (2025), who validated a servant-leadership scale specifically in Indonesian Christian higher education. Their post-test analysis identified a multidimensional construct involving behaving ethically, development, emotional healing, empowerment, pioneering, relationship building, wisdom, transcendental spirituality, and motivation to serve. The study is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that servant leadership should not be reduced to a generic idea of being kind or helpful; it involves identifiable leadership behaviors and orientations that can be studied in the context of religious higher education.

Taken together, the literature supports five analytical dimensions for ECELM. However, the five dimensions were not copied from one existing model. They were derived by comparing recurring concepts across theological leadership, servant leadership, higher-education leadership, ecumenical theological education, and shared governance. The synthesis therefore treats ECELM as an integrative conceptual framework, rather than as a previously validated theory. This distinction directly addresses the reviewers' concern that the evidence trail from the literature to the

proposed model must be visible. The original manuscript already identified the five dimensions, but the revised synthesis makes clearer why each dimension is retained and what level of analysis it represents.

Dimension	Main literature/conceptual basis	Level of analysis	Role in ECELM
Christ-Centered Leadership	Christian/theological leadership and theological formation	Mission, ethics, institutional identity	Theological and ethical orientation
Servant Orientation	Servant leadership and Indonesian Christian higher education	Leader-faculty-student relationships	Relational leadership practice
Ecumenical Dialogue	Ecumenical theological education and interinstitutional collaboration	Institutional and interdenominational relationships	Cross-boundary collaboration
Collaborative Governance	Shared/inclusive governance in post-secondary education	Institutional decision-making	Participatory governance
Transformative Educational Mission	Educational leadership and Christian higher-education mission	Curriculum, formation, institutional/public engagement	Educational purpose and implementation direction

2. Christ-Centered Leadership as the Theological and Ethical Orientation

The first theme is Christ-Centered Leadership. In the revised model, this dimension is not presented as an empirical variable or as a measurable predictor of institutional performance. It functions as the theological and ethical orientation within which educational leadership is interpreted. This distinction is important because theological higher education is not simply a secular university with religious content added to the curriculum. Its institutional identity includes theological formation, ecclesial responsibility, and preparation for Christian service and public engagement. Consequently, leadership decisions are expected to remain consistent with the institution's theological mission while also meeting academic and regulatory expectations.

The literature reviewed in the original manuscript strongly associated Christ-centered leadership with humility, service, integrity, mission, and formation. However, the revised analysis avoids using general devotional or pastoral literature as direct evidence for institutional outcomes. Instead, Christ-centeredness is positioned as a normative foundation that gives meaning to the other dimensions. In this sense, Christ-Centered Leadership answers the question of what kind of educational community leadership is intended to cultivate, whereas Servant Orientation addresses how leaders relate to others, Collaborative Governance addresses how institutional decisions are organized, and Transformative Educational Mission addresses what educational purposes the institution seeks to accomplish.

This distinction also helps resolve a potential tension between theological identity and professional academic leadership. Jatmiko and Kawengian (2023) demonstrate that academic leaders in Indonesian theological institutions must possess managerial, administrative, practical, relational, and personal competencies in responding to accreditation and institutional requirements. Christ-centered leadership should therefore

not be interpreted as an alternative to professional competence. Rather, theological orientation and academic competence are complementary: theological identity provides mission and ethical direction, while academic leadership competencies provide institutional capacity to enact that mission responsibly.

Within ECELM, the educational implication is that institutional vision, curriculum decisions, faculty development, student formation, and quality assurance should be evaluated for mission coherence as well as administrative efficiency. This does not mean that theological considerations replace evidence-based management. Instead, evidence-based management is exercised within a clearly articulated educational and theological purpose.

Thus, the contribution of Christ-Centered Leadership to ECELM is primarily normative and integrative. It gives the model its theological identity, but the present review does not establish that Christ-centered leadership independently improves educational quality. Such a claim would require empirical investigation.

3. Servant Orientation as a Relational Leadership Practice

The second theme, Servant Orientation, has the strongest direct empirical grounding in the Indonesian evidence base. Dami et al. (2024) provide evidence from 26 Christian higher education institutions that servant leadership is associated with trust, job satisfaction, and leader-member exchange, while organizational citizenship behavior is an indirect outcome. These findings indicate that leadership effectiveness in Christian higher education can be understood partly through the quality of relational exchange between leaders and lecturers. The implication for ECELM is not that servant leadership automatically produces educational excellence, but that relational trust and supportive leadership constitute important conditions for healthy academic communities.

Dami et al. (2025) strengthen this interpretation by showing that servant leadership in Indonesian Christian higher education is multidimensional. The validated construct includes ethical behavior, development, emotional healing, empowerment, pioneering, relationship building, wisdom, transcendental spirituality, and motivation to serve. This multidimensionality is particularly relevant to theological higher education because it connects the relational dimension of leadership with ethical, developmental, spiritual, and organizational practices. The finding also prevents ECELM from treating servant leadership as merely a personal attitude. It can be translated into institutional practices such as mentoring, faculty development, empowerment, academic advising, and participatory leadership.

At the same time, the evidence requires careful boundaries. The Indonesian studies examined servant leadership and its relationships with specific outcomes; they did not test ECELM, nor did they demonstrate that servant leadership causes curriculum innovation, accreditation success, or societal transformation. Therefore, the present study treats these latter outcomes as possible educational implications rather than established effects.

From an educational perspective, Servant Orientation changes the understanding of leadership from control toward enabling. Faculty members are not merely implementers of institutional decisions; they are academic professionals whose expertise contributes to curriculum development, research, teaching, and institutional improvement. Students are likewise not simply recipients of theological instruction but participants in formation and learning. A servant-oriented leader therefore creates conditions in which faculty and students can exercise agency, receive mentoring, contribute ideas, and develop leadership capacity.

Servant Orientation consequently provides the relational bridge between Christ-Centered Leadership and the institutional dimensions of ECELM. Christ-centeredness

establishes the ethical orientation of service, while servant orientation translates that orientation into relationships and practices. This relationship is conceptual rather than causal; it is proposed because the themes converge in the literature, not because a reviewed study has statistically tested the ECELM pathway.

4. Ecumenical Dialogue as Cross-Boundary Educational Collaboration

The third theme is Ecumenical Dialogue. Its importance becomes clearer when theological higher education is considered as a networked educational environment rather than as a collection of isolated institutions. Theological institutions frequently operate within denominational, ecclesial, regional, and international networks. Their educational challenges—faculty development, curriculum renewal, research capacity, digital transformation, student mobility, and preparation for ministry in plural societies—cannot always be addressed adequately by individual institutions acting alone.

In the original manuscript, ecumenical dialogue was sometimes treated primarily as a broad theological value. The revised synthesis gives it a more specific educational meaning: the capacity of theological higher education institutions to engage in structured dialogue, mutual learning, academic partnership, and collaborative activity across denominational, institutional, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries.

This definition keeps the concept connected to educational leadership rather than allowing “ecumenical” to become exclusively ecclesiological. In this framework, ecumenical dialogue can be expressed through joint research, visiting faculty, student exchange, collaborative courses, interdisciplinary seminars, shared academic resources, and interinstitutional quality-improvement initiatives.

Ecumenical dialogue is also different from simple institutional networking. Networking may involve maintaining relationships or exchanging information, whereas dialogue implies reciprocal learning and willingness to encounter difference. For theological higher education, this is significant because institutions may hold different denominational traditions while sharing educational concerns. Collaboration therefore does not require theological uniformity.

The thematic synthesis places Ecumenical Dialogue between relational leadership and institutional governance. Servant Orientation encourages leaders to value and empower others; Ecumenical Dialogue expands that orientation beyond the immediate institution; and Collaborative Governance provides structures through which collaborative commitments can be translated into institutional practice.

This dimension contributes to the distinctiveness of ECELM because generic higher-education leadership frameworks can explain collaboration and distributed responsibility, but the ecumenical dimension adds a contextual concern specific to theological education: institutions must collaborate while maintaining theological identity and navigating genuine denominational and doctrinal differences.

5. Collaborative Governance as the Institutionalization of Leadership

The fourth theme, Collaborative Governance, addresses a different level of analysis. Whereas Servant Orientation primarily concerns relationships and leadership behavior, governance concerns how authority, participation, responsibility, and institutional decisions are organized. This distinction is necessary because an institution may have leaders who personally practice service while still operating within highly centralized governance arrangements.

Recent systematic-review evidence strengthens this distinction. Raza et al. (2025) reviewed scholarship on shared governance in post-secondary contexts and examined inclusive governance principles, stakeholders, decision-making processes, and institutional arrangements. Their review demonstrates that governance in higher

education is fundamentally concerned with how decisions are made and who participates in institutional processes.

For theological higher education in Indonesia, collaborative governance is particularly relevant because institutions manage multiple accountability relationships. These may include institutional leaders, faculty members, students, governing bodies, churches or denominational partners, alumni, regulators, and other external stakeholders. Jatmiko and Kawengian (2023) demonstrate that accreditation and regulatory requirements already place significant demands on academic leadership in Indonesian theological institutions. Collaborative governance can therefore be understood as an institutional mechanism for distributing responsibility while maintaining accountability.

The educational significance of collaborative governance is that governance processes themselves can become part of institutional learning. Strategic planning, curriculum review, quality assurance, faculty evaluation, and program development require information and judgment from people with different forms of expertise. Participatory processes can improve the visibility of institutional problems and create greater ownership of decisions.

Nevertheless, collaboration should not be confused with the absence of leadership. ECELM proposes shared responsibility within clear structures of authority, accountability, and role definition. This is important in theological institutions, where excessive centralization may restrict participation, but an undefined distribution of authority may produce institutional ambiguity.

Thus, the contribution of Collaborative Governance to ECELM is institutionalization. If Servant Orientation represents the way leaders relate to people, Collaborative Governance represents the way an institution organizes participation and accountability. This makes the model more directly relevant to educational management than a framework limited to leadership character or interpersonal behavior.

6. Transformative Educational Mission as the Educational Direction

The fifth theme is Transformative Educational Mission. In the earlier version, this dimension was described too strongly as the final outcome produced by the preceding four dimensions. The revised analysis changes its status. Transformative Educational Mission is not an empirically established downstream outcome of ECELM; rather, it is the educational direction toward which the other dimensions can be organized.

Educational leadership literature supports the need to connect leadership with teaching and learning rather than treating leadership primarily as an administrative activity. Kinnunen et al. (2024) demonstrate that contemporary higher-education leadership research uses several overlapping concepts to describe leadership of teaching and learning, including academic, distributed, educational, transformational, and transformative leadership. Their review suggests that the field contains complementary perspectives but lacks a single holistic framework.

In theological higher education, transformation should therefore be understood in educational terms. It includes the development of theological knowledge, critical thinking, ethical judgment, spiritual maturity, leadership competence, intercultural dialogue, collaborative skills, and the capacity to respond responsibly to social and ecclesial challenges.

These outcomes should be incorporated into curriculum design, assessment, student formation, co-curricular activities, and community engagement rather than being left as implicit aspirations. The model therefore shifts the question from:

“Is the institution maintaining its theological identity?”
toward the broader educational question:

“How does theological identity shape the quality and transformative purpose of education?”

Faculty development is a particularly important implementation domain. Faculty members simultaneously contribute to teaching, curriculum development, research, mentoring, and institutional leadership. A leadership framework that seeks educational transformation therefore requires faculty members to have opportunities for pedagogical development, scholarly collaboration, research capacity building, and reflective practice.

Student leadership formation is another implementation domain. The model implies that students should encounter leadership not only as a subject but as a lived educational practice through collaborative projects, mentoring, service learning, dialogue, research participation, and institutional involvement.

The purpose is not to replace theological formation with generic leadership training, but to integrate leadership formation with theological learning and Christian service. The effectiveness of such integration remains an empirical question for future research.

7. Integration of the Five Dimensions: Deriving the ECELM

The five dimensions become theoretically meaningful when their different levels of analysis are made explicit. Christ-Centered Leadership addresses mission and ethical orientation; Servant Orientation addresses relational practice; Ecumenical Dialogue addresses relationships beyond institutional boundaries; Collaborative Governance addresses institutional structures and decision-making; and Transformative Educational Mission addresses educational purpose.

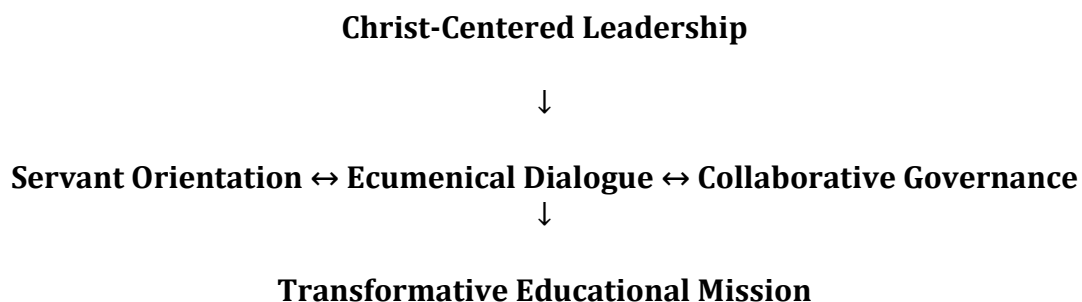
The model is therefore not simply a list of five desirable leadership characteristics. It is an attempt to connect theological identity, relational leadership, interinstitutional collaboration, institutional governance, and educational purpose within one framework.

The evidence trail can be summarized as follows. The higher-education leadership literature demonstrates conceptual plurality around academic and educational leadership (Kinnunen et al., 2024). Indonesian theological education research demonstrates the need for professional, managerial, administrative, practical, and relational leadership competencies (Jatmiko & Kawengian, 2023). Indonesian Christian higher-education research provides direct empirical grounding for servant leadership (Dami et al., 2024, 2025). Shared-governance scholarship provides the institutional governance dimension (Raza et al., 2025). These bodies of evidence provide different pieces of the conceptual puzzle rather than a single ready-made model.

Accordingly, the revised model should not be represented as a rigid five-step sequence. The five dimensions are complementary and can influence one another conceptually. For example, Christ-centered institutional identity may shape how leaders understand service; servant-oriented relationships may create conditions for dialogue; dialogue may generate collaborative arrangements; governance may protect and sustain educational collaboration; and educational mission may continually reshape the institution’s understanding of leadership.

These are propositions about conceptual coherence, not empirically verified causal paths. This correction is important because the earlier manuscript stated that the five dimensions “operate sequentially and interactively.” The reviewer’s criticism was justified: an SLR-based conceptual synthesis cannot establish that Christ-Centered Leadership causes Servant Orientation, which then causes Ecumenical Dialogue and so forth, unless the reviewed evidence explicitly tests those relationships. The revised formulation therefore retains the conceptual relationship while removing the unsupported causal sequence. The original manuscript’s five dimensions and sequential formulation are visible in the submitted version.

The resulting conceptual architecture is:



The arrows should be interpreted as conceptual relationships and complementarity, not statistical causal pathways.

This formulation also clarifies the status of curriculum innovation, faculty development, student formation, research collaboration, quality assurance, and community engagement. These are not additional ECELM dimensions. They are implementation domains in which the five dimensions may become visible and through which the model can eventually be tested.

8. Educational Leadership and Higher-Education Governance Implications

The integrated model has direct implications for the educational and managerial dimensions emphasized by EDUKASI. First, ECELM moves leadership analysis from the individual leader toward the institution as an educational system. This responds directly to the reviewer's concern that the manuscript should contribute to educational leadership, institutional management, student and faculty development, governance, and educational quality rather than remaining primarily ecclesiological.

Second, the model suggests that educational leadership should connect mission, people, structures, and educational processes. Institutional vision without relational leadership can become purely declarative. Servant leadership without governance structures can remain dependent on individual personalities. Ecumenical dialogue without institutional mechanisms can remain informal networking. Governance without educational mission can become bureaucratic. Transformative educational mission without academic leadership capacity can remain an aspiration.

ECELM's contribution is therefore to place these dimensions within one analytical framework rather than treating them as independent leadership agendas.

Third, the model provides a basis for examining faculty development and student formation as institutional processes. Faculty development can be connected to servant-oriented mentoring, collaborative research, curriculum development, and academic leadership preparation. Student formation can be connected to participatory learning, leadership practice, service, dialogue, and ethical decision-making.

Fourth, ECELM has implications for quality assurance, but the claims must be carefully differentiated according to the evidence. Jatmiko and Kawengian (2023) directly support the importance of academic leadership competencies in addressing accreditation and institutional requirements. Raza et al. (2025) provide broader evidence concerning participatory governance in post-secondary education. Dami et al. (2024, 2025) provide Indonesian evidence for servant leadership. These sources support examining institutional vision, leadership relationships, stakeholder participation, faculty development, and educational processes. They do not establish that ECELM itself improves accreditation status, institutional effectiveness, or graduate outcomes.

Table 2. Implications of ECELM for Educational Leadership and Higher-Education Governance

ECELM Dimension	Governance Contribution	Educational Implementation	Evidence Status
Christ-Centered Leadership	Mission alignment and ethical decision-making	Mission-oriented curriculum and institutional culture	Conceptual/theological
Servant Orientation	Empowerment, mentoring, relational accountability	Faculty mentoring, advising, student engagement	Direct Indonesian empirical support
Ecumenical Dialogue	Interinstitutional and interdenominational collaboration	Joint learning, research, exchange, dialogue	Contextual/theoretical
Collaborative Governance	Participation, accountability, strategic decision-making	Curriculum review, QA, stakeholder engagement	Supported by HE governance literature
Transformative Educational Mission	Strategic alignment of institutional activity	Curriculum innovation, formation, public engagement	Conceptual; outcomes require testing

9. Boundary Conditions and Transferability of ECELM

The intended unit of application of ECELM is the theological higher-education institution, particularly theological seminaries, theological colleges, and theology-focused Christian higher-education units in Indonesia. The primary actors are institutional leaders, academic leaders, faculty members, students, and relevant governing or ecclesial stakeholders.

The model is therefore not proposed as a universal framework for all faith-based higher-education institutions. This boundary is important for transferability because ECELM is grounded in the specific intersection of Christian theological identity and higher-education governance.

Its application to other religious higher-education contexts would require adaptation of the theological foundation and mission dimensions. Similarly, its application to secular universities would remove the specific theological rationale that gives Christ-Centered Leadership its meaning.

The Indonesian context also matters because theological higher education operates under national higher-education and accreditation expectations while maintaining ecclesial and theological purposes. Jatmiko and Kawengian's (2023) findings illustrate this dual environment. ECELM should therefore be understood as a contextual framework for institutions negotiating these simultaneous demands, not as a generic organizational model.

The results demonstrate that the literature does not support treating ECELM as an empirically validated causal model. It does, however, support an integrative conceptual synthesis in which five dimensions address different but connected aspects of educational leadership in theological higher education.

Christ-Centered Leadership provides theological orientation; Servant Orientation provides relational practice; Ecumenical Dialogue provides cross-boundary

collaboration; Collaborative Governance provides institutional structure; and Transformative Educational Mission provides educational direction.

The strongest direct Indonesian empirical support concerns servant leadership, while the broader institutional and educational relationships remain conceptual propositions requiring future testing. This positioning strengthens rather than weakens the contribution of ECELM because it makes the model's evidence base, scope, and limitations explicit.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review identified five complementary dimensions relevant to educational leadership in theological higher education: Christ-Centered Leadership, Servant Orientation, Ecumenical Dialogue, Collaborative Governance, and Transformative Educational Mission.

The synthesis shows that these dimensions provide complementary perspectives for understanding leadership in theological higher education. Together, they form the basis of the proposed Ecumenical Collaborative Educational Leadership Model (ECELM), which integrates theological identity, relational leadership, institutional collaboration, participatory governance, and educational mission.

ECELM is proposed as a conceptual framework for theological higher education in Indonesia, rather than as an empirically validated causal model. Further empirical research is needed to examine its applicability and to assess how its dimensions may contribute to leadership, governance, faculty and student development, and educational quality.

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