



The Blue Ocean Strategy As An Approach To Innovative Leadership in Educational Institutions in The Sultanate of Oman

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the contribution of the Blue Ocean Strategy to enhancing Innovative Leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. The study adopted a descriptive analytical approach and utilized a questionnaire consisting of 48 items distributed across eight dimensions. The sample comprised 121 teachers and administrative staff from public schools in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicated a high level of implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy ($M = 4.020$) and a high level of Innovative Leadership ($M = 4.061$). The results also revealed a strong positive and statistically significant effect of the Blue Ocean Strategy on Innovative Leadership ($R = .962$, $R^2 = .925$, $p < .001$). The study recommends integrating the Blue Ocean Strategy into school strategic plans, strengthening professional development for educational leaders, fostering an innovation-supportive school environment, and enhancing institutional collaboration to promote sustainable innovative practices.

Keywords: Blue Ocean Strategy; Innovative Leadership; Educational Institutions; School Leadership; Sultanate of Oman.

1. INTRODUCTION

Schools are among the most influential institutions in society, playing a central role in achieving sustainable development by serving as the primary environment for knowledge creation and dissemination, as well as human capital development. Considering rapid global changes, educational institutions are increasingly required to adopt modern strategies and management approaches to sustain their competitiveness and long-term effectiveness. Enhancing competitive advantage has therefore become a strategic priority for schools, particularly in contexts characterized by internal and external challenges such as limited resources and increasing competitive pressures (Asma, 2024).

In response to these challenges, the Blue Ocean Strategy has emerged as a distinctive strategic approach for both school and higher education environments. Rather than competing within saturated and highly contested markets—referred to as the "Red Ocean"—this strategy encourages institutions to create uncontested spaces where competition becomes less relevant. It is founded on the principle of value innovation, which seeks to generate new opportunities through innovative educational services and unconventional strategic practices that respond to contemporary changes, thereby enabling schools to move beyond the constraints imposed by traditional competitive environments (Arnout, 2024).

From an operational perspective, the Blue Ocean Strategy is implemented through four key dimensions: elimination, reduction, raising, and creation. Applications of these dimensions in educational institutions, including Al-Balqa Applied University, have demonstrated positive outcomes in enhancing institutional competitiveness by introducing innovative academic programs that address students' evolving needs, strengthen academic excellence, and foster a culture of innovation beyond conventional educational practices (Qamouh & Al-Adayleh, 2024).

Based on the foregoing, adopting the Blue Ocean Strategy has become a strategic necessity for schools operating in dynamic and increasingly challenging educational environments. Beyond improving internal institutional performance, the strategy enhances schools' capacity to respond proactively to global

developments while offering distinctive educational models that strengthen their institutional standing. As emphasized by Asma (2024) and Arnout (2024), innovation in education through the exploration of untapped opportunities represents a sustainable pathway toward achieving genuine and enduring competitive advantage.

Research Problem

Despite the considerable progress achieved by educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, some educational leaders continue to perform their roles using traditional leadership approaches that lack innovation and proactive thinking. In today's rapidly evolving and highly competitive environment, there is an increasing need to adopt non-traditional strategic approaches, such as the Blue Ocean Strategy, to overcome organizational inertia and achieve institutional excellence. This strategy emphasizes creating new leadership opportunities and delivering added value rather than competing within limited and highly contested spaces. Accordingly, the present study seeks to address the following main research question:

"To what extent can the Blue Ocean Strategy be employed as an approach to enhancing educational leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?"

Research Questions

What is the level of availability of the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy in innovative leadership within educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?

What is the level of innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?

To what extent does the Blue Ocean Strategy contribute to enhancing innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?

Research Objectives

- To identify the level of availability of the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy in innovative leadership within educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.
- To determine the level of innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.
- To examine the contribution of the Blue Ocean Strategy to innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to enriching the Arabic educational literature on the application of contemporary management theories, particularly the Blue Ocean Strategy, within school education settings.

It is among the few studies that examine the relationship between innovative leadership and the Omani educational context, thereby providing a distinctive contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The study offers a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between educational leadership and non-traditional innovation-oriented concepts.

It expands the application of contemporary management

theories within Omani and Arab educational contexts, providing a broader perspective on their relevance and adaptability.

Practical Significance

The findings of the study may support the development of leadership and professional competencies among school leaders and teachers in Oman and the Gulf region.

The study provides educational policymakers and decision-makers with evidence to support the adoption of leadership approaches that emphasize innovation rather than traditional competition.

It helps educational institutions better understand the practical challenges associated with adapting global innovation strategies to local educational contexts.

The study provides a foundation for designing leadership development programs for school education institutions based on the principles of value innovation and the achievement of institutional excellence.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is defined as follows:

Subject Scope: The study is limited to examining the contribution of the Blue Ocean Strategy as an approach to enhancing innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Geographical Scope: The study is conducted among teachers and administrative staff in public schools in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

Time Scope: The study is carried out during the 2025/2026 academic year.

Population Scope: The study is limited to all teachers and administrative staff working in public schools in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman.

Definition of Terms

Blue Ocean Strategy

Al-Thubaiti (2024) defined the Blue Ocean Strategy as "a strategy that seeks to achieve a competitive advantage in graduate programs by exploring alternatives in untapped environments that have not previously been reached by competitors, through the provision of academic programs and services that align with the future demands created by emerging changes" (p. 456).

Operational Definition:

In the present study, the Blue Ocean Strategy refers to the managerial approach adopted by educational institutions in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman, to redefine their educational and competitive position by creating innovative educational spaces that move beyond traditional patterns of competition among school education institutions.

Innovative Leadership

Al-Amriya (2024) defined innovative leadership as "the practices and procedures adopted by principals of Cycle Two schools in Muscat and Al Dakhiliyah Governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. The level of these practices is measured by the total score obtained by respondents on the study instrument developed by the researcher, which comprises the dimensions of originality, sensitivity, flexibility, and problem sensitivity" (p. 1077).

Operational Definition:

In the present study, innovative leadership refers to the leadership practices adopted by school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff in public schools in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman, to foster an educational environment that promotes creativity and continuous improvement through flexible decision-making, active participation of educational staff in program development, and the encouragement of individual and collaborative initiatives that enhance the quality of educational performance.

Theoretical Framework

The Blue Ocean Strategy represents one of the contemporary approaches in strategic management. It is founded on the principle of moving away from traditional competition, commonly described in the literature as the "Red Ocean," toward creating new market spaces known as "Blue Oceans," where direct competition is minimized and opportunities for innovation and growth become more extensive and flexible. This strategy has increasingly been adopted in educational settings to restructure leadership practices and introduce management models capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges (Asma, 2024; Arnout, 2024).

Definition of the Blue Ocean Strategy

The Blue Ocean Strategy is regarded as a transformative framework in strategic thinking that encourages organizations to move beyond saturated markets—referred to as Red Oceans—toward unexplored market spaces that create new demand. Within this perspective, the strategy is defined as a process of value innovation that simultaneously pursues cost reduction and enhanced value for beneficiaries, thereby making competition largely irrelevant. Rather than competing within existing industry boundaries, organizations adopting this approach seek to redefine market boundaries and develop new value curves that address unmet needs (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015).

Within the educational context, the Blue Ocean Strategy is viewed as a transformative framework for reshaping the institutional vision of school education. It enables schools to develop distinctive educational strategies that move beyond conventional competition while strengthening institutional differentiation. The uniqueness of this approach lies in its emphasis not only on academic excellence but also on the creation of innovative educational services and the expansion toward learner groups that were not previously targeted. In this way, the Blue Ocean Strategy extends beyond improving institutional performance to generating educational, social, and economic value that redefines the role of schools in response to the demands of an evolving global environment (Abdulwahab & Abdullah, 2024; Fauziah et al., 2017; Papazov & Mihaylova, 2016).

Dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy

1 .Innovation

The innovation dimension refers to an institution's ability to redefine its activities by adopting creative ideas and non-conventional approaches. In school education, innovation is reflected in curriculum development, the adoption of modern teaching technologies and instructional strategies, and the redesign of leadership practices to enhance responsiveness to environmental changes (Arnout, 2024).

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of introducing innovative educational programs that respond to students' evolving expectations, thereby strengthening the institution's competitive position in a rapidly changing educational environment (Qamouh & Al-Adayleh, 2024). Furthermore, innovation in educational institutions extends beyond academic practices to include school leadership itself, particularly in decision-making processes and the distribution of leadership responsibilities (Asma, 2024).

2 .Raise

The raise dimension focuses on strengthening the factors that create value within the institution, including leadership quality, staff competence, community engagement, and governance. Asma (2024) emphasized the importance of enhancing both internal and external institutional systems in line with international accreditation requirements.

Similarly, Arnout (2024) highlighted the need to improve the effectiveness of professional development programs for teachers and staff, while promoting greater collaboration across academic disciplines to enhance schools' responsiveness to environmental challenges. The study also indicated that increasing financial and technological support directly contributes to empowering school leadership and expanding its institutional impact.

3 .Reduce

The reduce dimension aims to minimize or reconsider practices and policies that consume institutional resources without generating meaningful value. In educational settings, this involves reducing bureaucratic procedures that hinder leadership development and eliminating repetitive administrative processes that limit organizational effectiveness (Qamouh & Al-Adayleh, 2024).

This dimension extends beyond reducing bureaucracy to narrowing the gap between school educational outcomes and the expectations of higher education institutions and the labor market. Such an approach reflects a broader shift toward a more value-oriented philosophy of institutional performance (Asma, 2024).

4 .Eliminate

The elimination dimension emphasizes removing activities, policies, and practices that no longer contribute to institutional goals or that hinder organizational progress. Within the context of educational leadership, this includes eliminating traditional practices that restrict innovation and organizational renewal.

Arnout (2024) stressed the importance of abandoning rigid administrative models, unnecessary meetings, and overlapping responsibilities that consume time and resources. Likewise, Asma (2024) highlighted the need to eliminate routine thinking and reliance on conventional school management practices while fostering a flexible institutional culture that supports continuous improvement (p. 209).

Researcher's Perspective

From the researcher's perspective, the Blue Ocean Strategy represents a valuable opportunity for Omani schools, particularly those operating in environments characterized by administrative rigidity and repetitive leadership practices. The strength of this strategy lies in its ability to balance constructive evaluation of traditional approaches with the development of practical and innovative alternatives. Its successful implementation in Omani schools, however, depends on cultivating an institutional culture that embraces change, encourages calculated risk-taking, and is guided by a clear strategic vision based on systematic analysis of opportunities rather than merely replicating international experiences.

Success Factors of the Blue Ocean Strategy

The successful implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy depends on a set of interrelated factors that enhance an institution's ability to innovate and move beyond the boundaries of traditional competition. Among the most important of these factors is a clear strategic vision, through which the institution develops a deep understanding of the needs of underserved beneficiaries and directs its efforts toward creating new value that differentiates it from competitors. Equally important is leadership commitment, as successful implementation requires strong support from top management to drive organizational change and overcome resistance rooted in conventional structures (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015).

In addition, the success of the Blue Ocean Strategy relies on several fundamental organizational conditions that collectively contribute to building a distinctive competitive advantage. Foremost among these is transformational leadership, which embraces innovative thinking and promotes a culture of change throughout the institution, enabling it to break away from established industry norms. Furthermore, a well-defined strategic vision and proactive thinking in designing future opportunities are essential, as strategic decisions are guided by the principle of value innovation rather than merely improving existing practices (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005; Fauziah et al., 2017; Abdulwahab & Abdullah, 2020).

Challenges to Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy

The implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy, particularly within educational institutions, faces several challenges related to organizational structures and prevailing institutional cultures. One of the most significant barriers is organizational rigidity and a continued reliance on traditional management practices, which limit an institution's willingness to embrace change or adopt innovative strategic approaches. In addition, insufficient innovation-related competencies among staff hinder the effective translation of strategic ideas into practice. Educational institutions also frequently encounter limitations in market and service analysis capabilities, making it difficult to identify uncontested opportunities that constitute the foundation of the Blue Ocean Strategy (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015).

Moreover, the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy is constrained by both structural and behavioral challenges that may reduce its effectiveness. Weak organizational support for innovation, limited strategic alignment, and insufficient leadership commitment to redefining market boundaries can result in fragmented initiatives that fail to achieve meaningful organizational transformation. The literature further suggests that educational institutions may be reluctant to adopt unconventional strategic approaches because of conservative academic traditions and bureaucratic administrative systems, which often discourage experimentation and strategic renewal (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005; Fauziah et al., 2017; Abdulwahab & Abdullah, 2020).

Innovative Leadership

Innovative leadership is regarded as one of the contemporary approaches in management thought that integrates creativity with the ability to influence others. It focuses on motivating individuals to generate new ideas and translate them into practices that enhance institutional performance. This leadership approach promotes positive organizational change by anticipating future challenges and capitalizing on innovative opportunities to achieve institutional excellence. Scholars argue that innovative leadership goes beyond merely responding to existing conditions; instead, it seeks to develop novel solutions that align with the rapidly changing nature of today's work environment (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

At its core, innovative leadership is a dynamic process that transforms creative ideas into practical organizational practices by establishing a work environment that encourages experimentation, initiative, and continuous improvement (Al-Amriya, 2024).

Furthermore, innovative leadership requires leaders to combine managerial competence with intellectual capabilities that enable them to respond effectively to changing situations and make well-informed decisions characterized by flexibility and creativity. This leadership approach has become increasingly essential for addressing organizational challenges and ensuring sustainable institutional performance, particularly within the educational sector (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

Importance of Innovative Leadership

The importance of innovative leadership lies in its ability to enhance institutional effectiveness by directing organizational efforts toward generating and utilizing innovative ideas that support institutional goals. It is widely recognized as a key driver of organizational transformation, fostering positive change through the adoption of creative approaches to addressing emerging challenges. Within educational settings, innovative leadership plays a vital role in improving educational quality and enabling institutions to adapt to the rapidly evolving demands of contemporary education systems (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

Adopting innovative leadership contributes to building flexible organizations capable of responding effectively to continuous change, particularly in educational institutions operating within rapidly evolving knowledge and technological environments. This leadership approach enables educational leaders to develop forward-looking policies and motivates staff to improve their professional practices through innovative and non-traditional methods. The literature further indicates that innovative leadership creates an organizational climate that encourages continuous learning, experimentation, and creativity, thereby enhancing institutional effectiveness and strengthening organizational adaptability (Al-Amriya, 2024).

Moreover, innovative leadership has become a strategic necessity for ensuring the sustainability and continuous development of educational institutions in increasingly complex and dynamic environments. It enables leaders to cultivate an organizational culture grounded in innovation, collaboration, and shared responsibility, thereby strengthening employee engagement and organizational commitment. Previous studies have shown that the absence of innovative leadership often results in organizational stagnation and limited responsiveness to change, whereas its effective implementation supports institutional excellence through the optimal utilization of human potential and the development of innovative solutions to administrative and educational challenges (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

Dimensions of Innovative Leadership

Several dimensions characterize innovative leadership, including the following:

1. Freedom from Traditional Administrative Constraints

Freedom from traditional administrative constraints is considered one of the fundamental pillars of innovative leadership. It requires leaders to move beyond rigid administrative procedures that hinder organizational progress and replace them with more flexible and innovative management practices. This dimension serves as a catalyst for renewing managerial thinking within organizations by enabling leaders to make unconventional decisions that respond effectively to rapidly changing environments. Previous studies have shown that adopting this approach helps reduce bureaucratic barriers while reshaping organizational culture in ways that encourage creativity and innovation (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

This dimension also contributes to establishing an open work environment that promotes both individual and collaborative innovation. Innovative leaders redefine organizational authority through delegation,

empowerment, and teamwork rather than relying on centralized control. By reducing excessive bureaucracy and routine administrative practices, leaders create opportunities for creativity that ultimately enhance overall organizational performance. Research has shown that educational institutions embracing this leadership approach demonstrate higher levels of organizational effectiveness and job satisfaction (Al-Amriya, 2024).

Importantly, freedom from traditional administrative constraints does not imply the absence of structure or discipline. Rather, it represents a shift toward a flexible management model that adapts to organizational realities while empowering employees to express ideas freely and develop innovative solutions to emerging challenges. Such an approach strengthens mutual trust and transforms the relationship between leaders and employees from one based on authority to one built on collaboration and innovation. The literature consistently identifies this dimension as a key driver of effective change leadership, particularly in educational institutions that require continuous renewal of policies and practices (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

2 .Optimizing Resources and Directing Them Toward Innovation

Optimizing organizational resources and directing them toward innovation represents another essential dimension of innovative leadership. Innovative leaders seek to maximize the effective use of available resources while minimizing waste and strategically reallocating them to initiatives that foster institutional innovation. This dimension reflects the leader's ability to balance cost efficiency with value creation through innovative initiatives. Previous research suggests that this approach enhances organizational performance and strengthens institutions' readiness to respond to technological and educational changes (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

Within this dimension, innovative leadership extends beyond financial resource management to encompass the effective management of time, human capabilities, and organizational efforts. Innovative leaders invest in people by channeling institutional capabilities toward activities that generate meaningful innovation and continuous improvement. Studies have demonstrated that such practices enhance institutional success and strengthen educational institutions' capacity for sustainable development (Al-Amriya, 2024).

The effectiveness of this dimension depends largely on leaders' ability to assess institutional realities and identify opportunities where resources can be utilized in innovative ways. Rather than expanding indiscriminately or increasing expenditures without strategic direction, innovative leaders prioritize investments in intelligent solutions and modern educational technologies that improve educational quality. The literature identifies strategic resource allocation as an effective means of reducing waste while enhancing administrative efficiency, particularly in public education settings (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

3 .Promoting an Innovative Culture and Individual Initiatives

An innovative organizational culture forms the foundation of effective innovative leadership. Leaders seek to establish values that encourage creativity, openness, and continuous improvement, thereby increasing employees' willingness to take initiative and embrace innovation. Achieving this objective requires the development of an organizational climate that supports the exchange of ideas, respects diverse perspectives, and encourages calculated risk-taking in pursuit of organizational improvement. Studies indicate that leaders who foster an innovative culture transform their institutions into environments that nurture creativity, experimentation, and continuous development (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

This dimension is also reflected in leaders' support for individual initiatives by providing employees with sufficient autonomy to demonstrate their capabilities and propose innovative solutions beyond routine responsibilities. Successful leaders recognize employees' hidden potential and regard individual initiative as a key mechanism for achieving institutional excellence. The literature suggests that encouraging employees to develop and implement their own ideas is closely associated with stronger organizational commitment and improved overall performance (Al-Amriya, 2024).

Promoting an innovative culture extends beyond institutional rhetoric and requires concrete leadership actions, including establishing incentive systems, adopting evaluation mechanisms that reward innovation, and creating platforms for knowledge sharing. Innovative leaders cultivate a positive psychological environment that encourages critical thinking, experimentation, and confidence in employees' ability to make meaningful contributions. Research demonstrates that educational institutions adopting this leadership approach are better positioned to develop sustainable and innovative solutions to contemporary educational challenges (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

4 .Building Systems that Support Institutional Excellence and Innovation

Building organizational systems that support institutional excellence and innovation is a cornerstone of innovative leadership. The role of an innovative leader extends beyond generating creative ideas to establishing organizational structures that sustain innovation over time. This dimension requires the development of flexible policies and regulations, together with an organizational culture that embraces continuous change as a strategic priority. Previous studies have shown that institutions with flexible and supportive systems provide teams with greater opportunities to achieve high levels of performance and innovation (Al-Sabqiyah, 2023).

Through this dimension, innovative leaders design strategies that integrate institutional objectives with

systematic innovation by providing the technological and financial resources necessary to support organizational development. They also strengthen institutional support mechanisms, such as quality assurance teams and organizational development units. This approach shifts innovation from isolated individual efforts to an institutionalized organizational practice. The literature consistently indicates that systems supporting innovation enhance educational institutions' competitiveness and improve institutional outcomes (Al-Amriya, 2024).

Building an integrated organizational system that supports innovation also requires empowering employees, involving them in decision-making processes, and adopting innovative evaluation methods that emphasize qualitative improvements alongside quantitative outcomes. Innovative leaders redesign organizational processes to increase flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances. Studies have demonstrated that investing in integrated systems of motivation, professional development, and continuous feedback provides the organizational foundation necessary for sustainable institutional excellence, particularly in educational institutions striving for leadership and long-term success (Al-Jaraidah & Al-Jahouri, 2014).

Previous Studies Related to the Blue Ocean Strategy

Carrillo et al. (2018) aimed to apply the Blue Ocean Strategy in the educational sector by designing a digital guidance tool to help teachers integrate digital games into classroom instruction more effectively. The study adopted a case study approach and employed multiple data collection methods, including literature review, competitor analysis, focus groups, and participatory design workshops involving primary school teachers. The findings indicated that the application of the Blue Ocean Strategy led to the development of an innovative educational tool that provided added value for teachers through ready-to-use instructional activities and pedagogical and technical support, thereby facilitating the effective integration of digital games into classroom practice. The study recommended developing more innovative educational tools, expanding support services for teachers, and promoting creative solutions that enhance teaching practices and improve learning quality.

Kejora et al. (2024) investigated the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy at Purwakarta Nature Elementary School and examined how the strategy contributed to establishing the school's competitive advantage through the Four Actions Framework (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Create). The study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach and collected data through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The participants included institutional administrators, supervisors, the school principal, teachers, parents, students, and community leaders with an interest in education. The findings demonstrated that the school successfully implemented the Blue Ocean Strategy by developing innovative educational programs, improving educational service quality, integrating technology, and strengthening human resource development. These practices created a distinctive educational environment that was difficult for competing institutions to replicate. The study recommended that educational institutions adopt the Blue Ocean Strategy as a means of achieving innovation, institutional excellence, and sustainable competitive advantage beyond traditional competition.

Al-Maamari et al. (2024) sought to identify the requirements for developing administrative creativity among principals of Basic Education schools in South Al Batinah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman, considering the Blue Ocean Strategy, and to examine the relationship between the two variables. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach and used a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 85 school principals. The results revealed that the requirements for developing administrative creativity were rated at a very high level, and a strong positive correlation was found between these requirements and the Blue Ocean Strategy. The study recommended designing professional development programs that enhance school principals' understanding of the Blue Ocean Strategy and strengthen their ability to apply its principles within school settings to promote administrative creativity and institutional development.

Al-Shuhi (2024) examined the effect of the Blue Ocean Strategy on developing administrative creativity skills among school principals within the Emirates Schools Establishment. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design using a one-group pretest-posttest approach. Data were collected using an Administrative Creativity Scale consisting of 45 items covering ten creativity-related skills, in addition to a training program based on the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy. The study sample comprised 34 school principals. The findings demonstrated that the training program was effective in improving most administrative creativity skills, while no statistically significant differences were found according to gender, educational qualification, or years of experience. The study recommended expanding training programs based on the Blue Ocean Strategy, developing more comprehensive instruments for assessing administrative creativity, and promoting the wider adoption of the strategy within educational institutions to strengthen the creative capabilities of school leaders.

Previous Studies Related to Innovative Leadership

Al-Jaraidah (2014) investigated the level of innovative leadership practiced by administrative leaders in the General Directorates of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The study adopted a descriptive survey approach

and used a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 151 participants, including directors general and their deputies, department directors and their deputies, and heads of departments. The findings revealed that the participants demonstrated a high level of innovative leadership practices. The study also identified statistically significant differences attributable to gender in favor of female participants, whereas no statistically significant differences were found with respect to educational qualification or years of experience. The study recommended promoting participatory decision-making and expanding the delegation of administrative responsibilities.

Al-Sabqiyah (2023) aimed to determine the level of innovative leadership practiced by principals of post-basic education schools and to examine its relationship with institutional excellence in the Sultanate of Oman. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach and collected data through a questionnaire administered to 82 educational supervisors and senior teachers. The findings indicated that school principals demonstrated a high level of innovative leadership and that institutional excellence was also perceived to be high. In addition, a significant positive relationship was found between innovative leadership and institutional excellence, while no statistically significant differences were identified according to gender or educational governorate. The study recommended strengthening the integration of innovative leadership practices into school management to further enhance institutional excellence.

Al-Amriya (2024) examined the level of innovative leadership practiced by principals of Basic Education schools and its relationship with organizational effectiveness in Muscat and Al Dakhiliyah Governorates, Sultanate of Oman. The study adopted a descriptive correlational approach and used a questionnaire to collect data from 474 teachers. The results showed that both innovative leadership and organizational effectiveness were rated at a high level. Furthermore, statistically significant positive correlations were found between all dimensions of innovative leadership and organizational effectiveness. The study recommended reviewing school principal evaluation systems and providing additional professional development programs to strengthen innovative leadership practices.

Somsueb and Phrakru (2019) investigated the indicators of innovative leadership among secondary school principals and examined their relationship with the development and validation of an organizational relationship model. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach and developed a questionnaire that was administered to 120 principals of private secondary schools in Thailand. The findings indicated that innovative leadership ranged from moderate to high levels in relation to the organizational relationship model. The study also reported statistically significant differences associated with gender and years of experience, with higher levels of innovative leadership observed among female principals and those with ten or more years of professional experience.

Commentary on Previous Studies Related to the Blue Ocean Strategy

In Terms of the Research Objectives

The present study is consistent with the studies conducted by Carrillo et al. (2018), Kejora et al. (2024), Al-Maamari et al. (2024), and Al-Shuhi (2024) in addressing the Blue Ocean Strategy within educational settings and examining its role in enhancing institutional performance, innovation, and excellence. However, it differs from the study by Carrillo et al. (2018), which focused on developing a digital educational tool to support teachers, and from Kejora et al. (2024), which emphasized building a school's competitive advantage. The present study is distinguished by examining the Blue Ocean Strategy as an approach to strengthening innovative leadership within educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

In Terms of the Study Sample

The present study is consistent with Carrillo et al. (2018) in focusing on participants working in educational settings. It also aligns with the studies of Al-Maamari et al. (2024) and Al-Shuhi (2024) by targeting educational leaders within educational institutions. In contrast, Kejora et al. (2024) included a broader range of participants, including teachers, students, parents, and members of the local community. The current study differs by concentrating specifically on teachers and administrative staff in Omani educational institutions, as they represent the population most closely associated with the study variables.

In Terms of the Research Methodology

The present study is consistent with Al-Maamari et al. (2024) in adopting a descriptive approach. However, it differs from Kejora et al. (2024), which employed a qualitative descriptive approach, Carrillo et al. (2018), which adopted a case study approach, and Al-Shuhi (2024), which utilized a quasi-experimental design.

In Terms of the Research Instrument

The present study is consistent with Al-Maamari et al. (2024) in using a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. In contrast, Kejora et al. (2024) employed interviews, observations, and document analysis, whereas Al-Shuhi (2024) used an Administrative Creativity Scale together with a training program to assess the effectiveness of the Blue Ocean Strategy.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive analytical research design, as it was considered the most appropriate approach for achieving the study objectives. This design was employed to determine the level of implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy, assess the level of innovative leadership, and examine the contribution of the Blue Ocean Strategy to innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Study Population

The target population consisted of all teachers and administrative staff working in public schools in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Sultanate of Oman. According to the statistics issued by the Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah for the 2025/2026 academic year, the total population comprised 8,972 participants.

Study Sample

A representative sample was selected using a convenience sampling technique. A total of 121 teachers and administrative staff participated in the study, representing approximately 1.4% of the study population. Data were collected using both paper-based questionnaires and an electronic questionnaire administered through Google Forms.

Research Instrument

Following a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and previous studies related to the Blue Ocean Strategy and innovative leadership, the researcher developed the study questionnaire. The instrument was primarily informed by the works of Qamouh (2024), Asma (2024), Arnout (2024), Al-Qurashi (2024), Al-Sabqiyah (2023), and Al-Amriya.(2024)

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section collected demographic information, including gender, job position, and years of experience. The second section measured the Blue Ocean Strategy through 24 items distributed across four dimensions: Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Innovation. The third section measured innovative leadership using 24 items distributed across four dimensions: Freedom from Traditional Administrative Constraints, Optimizing Resources and Directing Them Toward Innovation, Promoting an Innovative Culture and Individual Initiatives, and Building Systems that Support Institutional Excellence and Innovation.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree.(1)

Validity and Reliability

After developing the questionnaire, its validity and reliability were established through several procedures, including face validity, item validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Face Validity

The questionnaire was reviewed by five experts specializing in educational leadership and management from universities and educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. Their feedback focused on the relevance, clarity, wording, and dimensional alignment of the questionnaire items. Based on their recommendations, the necessary revisions were made, resulting in the final version of the instrument, which comprised 48 items distributed across eight dimensions.

Item Validity

Item validity was examined by calculating Pearson's correlation coefficients to assess the relationship between each questionnaire item and the total score of the dimension to which it belonged. In addition, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between each dimension and the overall questionnaire score to evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument. Tables 1 and 2 present the Pearson correlation coefficients for the questionnaire items and their corresponding dimensions.

Table 1. Pearson's correlation coefficients between each questionnaire item and the total score of its corresponding dimension.

Part 1: Blue Ocean Strategy Scale											
First dimension			The second dimension			The third dimension			The fourth dimension		
Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field
1	0.883	0.**963	7	0.907	0.**972	13	0.909	0.**970	19	0.945	0.**967
2	0.892		8	0.897		14	0.919		20	0.893	
3	0.905		9	0.899		15	0.935		21	0.932	
4	0.926		10	0.928		16	0.937		22	0.918	
5	0.923		11	0.946		17	0.852		23	0.927	
6	0.868		12	0.926		18	0.890		24	0.945	

(**)Significant at the 0.01 level.

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that all Pearson correlation coefficients between the items of the Blue Ocean Strategy scale and the total scores of their corresponding dimensions were high and statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. Furthermore, the four dimensions demonstrated strong correlations with the overall scale score, indicating a high level of internal consistency. These findings provide evidence of the instrument's construct validity and confirm that its items and dimensions are appropriate for measuring the Blue Ocean Strategy, supporting its suitability for use in the field application of the present study.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Questionnaire Items and Their Corresponding

Part Two: Innovative Leadership											
First dimension			The second dimension			The third dimension			The fourth dimension		
Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field	Paragraph	Correlation coefficient	Relationship between dimension and field
25	0.935	0.**979	31	0.940	0.**974	37	0.947	0.**938	43	0.955	0.**967
26	0.948		32	0.946		38	0.950		44	0.921	
27	0.955		33	0.951		39	0.961		45	0.954	
28	0.926		34	0.955		40	0.966		46	0.935	
29	0.935		35	0.909		41	0.941		47	0.943	
30	0.956		36	0.943		42	0.938		48	0.943	

Dimension Scores

(**)Significant at the 0.01 level.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that all Pearson correlation coefficients between the items of the Innovative Leadership scale and the total scores of their corresponding dimensions were high and statistically

significant at the 0.01 significance level, ranging from 0.909 to 0.966. In addition, the four dimensions demonstrated strong correlations with the overall scale score, with coefficients ranging from 0.967 to 0.983. These findings indicate a high level of internal consistency among the items and their respective dimensions, providing strong evidence of the construct validity of the Innovative Leadership scale and confirming its suitability for use in the field application of the present study.

Reliability of the Instrument

To examine the reliability of the study instrument and its dimensions, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each dimension and for the overall instrument. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Blue Ocean Strategy Scale

Axis	Measurement fields	Number of paragraphs	Cronbach's alpha
Blue ocean strategy scale	After disposal	6 – 1	0.952
	Reducing	12 -7	0.962
	Increase	13 – 18	0.957
	Innovation	19 – 24	0.967
the total		1 – 24	0.988

The results presented in Table 3 show that the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Blue Ocean Strategy scale was 0.988, indicating an excellent level of reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four dimensions ranged from 0.952 to 0.967, demonstrating a high degree of internal consistency across all dimensions of the scale. These findings confirm that the instrument possesses excellent reliability and is appropriate for use in the field application of the study, providing dependable measurements for achieving the study objectives.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Innovative Leadership Scale and Its Dimensions

Axis	Measurement fields	Number of paragraphs	Cronbach's alpha
Innovative leadership	Freedom from traditional administrative constraints	25 – 30	0.975
	Rationalizing resources and directing them towards innovation	31 – 36	0.974
	Promoting a culture of innovation and individual initiatives	37 – 42	0.979
	Building systems that support excellence and institutional innovation	43 – 48	0.975
the total		25 - 48	48 – 25

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Innovative Leadership scale was 0.992, indicating an excellent level of reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for its four dimensions ranged from 0.974 to 0.979, reflecting a very high level of internal consistency among the items within each dimension. These findings confirm that the Innovative Leadership scale demonstrates excellent reliability, supporting the trustworthiness of the study instrument and its suitability for administration to the target sample and for achieving the objectives of the present study.

Study Procedures

Following the development of the preliminary version of the study instrument, it was reviewed by a panel of experts. A pilot study was subsequently conducted to establish its validity and reliability. After the instrument had been finalized, it was administered to the study sample. Upon completion of the data collection process, the collected data were statistically analyzed, and the study findings were derived.

Statistical Analysis

After data collection, the responses were entered electronically through Google Forms to facilitate data management. The collected data were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the study instrument, while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the construct validity of the questionnaire items.

Table (5) Criteria for judging the interpretation of the results of the study instrument items

Minimum and maximum limits of the five-point Likert scale

)level(	Arithmetic average
Very high	4.20 - 5
High	3.40 - 4.19
Middle	2.60 - 3.39
a little	1.80 - 2.59
Very little	1 - 1.79

Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question, "What is the level of availability of the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy in innovative leadership within educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?", means, standard deviations, relative weights, and rankings were calculated for the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy scale. The dimensions were then ranked in descending order according to their mean scores, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, Relative Weights, and Rankings of the Dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy

Distance	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Relative weight	Ranking	Degree
Increase	4.077	0.996	81.54	1	High
Innovation	4.047	1.017	80.94	2	High
Reducing	3.988	1.057	79.75	3	High
disposal	3.968	0.965	79.37	4	High
Overall scale	4.020	0.977	80.40	-	High

The results presented in Table 6 indicate that the overall level of implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman was high, with an overall mean score of 4.020 and a relative weight of 80.40%. Among the four dimensions, the Raise dimension ranked first with a mean score of 4.077, followed by Innovation and Reduce, while the Eliminate dimension ranked last. Nevertheless, all four dimensions were rated at a high level, reflecting the considerable attention given by educational institutions to implementing the various dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy.

To answer the second research question, "What is the level of innovative leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?", means, standard deviations, relative weights, and rankings were calculated for the dimensions of the Innovative Leadership scale. The dimensions were then ranked in descending order according to their mean scores, as presented in Table 7.

Table (7) Means, Standard Deviations, Relative Weights, and Rankings of the Dimensions of Innovative Leadership

Distance	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Relative weight	Ranking	Degree
Promoting a culture of innovation and individual initiatives	4.099	1.079	81.98	1	High
Rationalizing resources and directing them towards innovation	4.058	1.058	81.16	2	High
Freedom from traditional administrative constraints	4.052	1.065	81.05	3	High
Building systems that support excellence and institutional innovation	4.036	1.070	80.72	4	High
Overall scale	4.061	1.042	81.22	-	High

The results presented in Table 7 indicate that the overall level of Innovative Leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman was high, with an overall mean score of 4.061, a standard deviation of 1.042, and a relative weight of 81.22%. Among the four dimensions, Promoting an Innovative Culture and Individual Initiatives ranked first, followed by Optimizing Resources and Directing Them Toward Innovation, and Freedom from Traditional Administrative Constraints. The dimension Building Systems that Support Institutional Excellence and Innovation ranked last; however, it also received a high rating. These findings reflect the strong emphasis placed by educational institutions on fostering innovative leadership practices across all its dimensions.

To answer the third research question, "To what extent does the Blue Ocean Strategy contribute to innovative

leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman?", simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the predictive contribution of the Blue Ocean Strategy to Innovative Leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. The results are presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10.

Table 8. Model Summary of the Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Independent variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Blue ocean strategy	0.962	0.925	0.925	0.207

Table (9) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F	Sig
Regression	63.163	1	63.163	1474.768	0.000
Error	5.095	119	0.043		
Total	68.259	120			

Table (10) Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	0.064-	0.111	-	0.583-	0.561
Blue ocean strategy	1.026	0.027	0.962	38.403	0.000

The results of the simple linear regression analysis revealed a strong positive effect of the Blue Ocean Strategy on Innovative Leadership in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. The correlation coefficient was $R = 0.962$, while the coefficient of determination reached $R^2 = 0.925$, indicating that the Blue Ocean Strategy accounted for 92.5% of the variance in the level of Innovative Leadership.

Furthermore, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrated that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 1474.768$, $p < .001$). The regression coefficients also showed that the Blue Ocean Strategy had a positive and statistically significant effect on Innovative Leadership, with a standardized regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.962$ and a t-value of 38.403 ($p < .001$). These findings indicate that strengthening the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy can substantially enhance Innovative Leadership within the educational institutions included in the present study.

Recommendations

- Promote the adoption of the Blue Ocean Strategy within educational institutions by integrating its dimensions into school strategic plans.
- Develop professional development programs that enhance school leaders' competencies in applying the Blue Ocean Strategy.
- Foster a school environment that supports innovation by empowering educational leaders and encouraging innovative initiatives.
- Establish institutional mechanisms to monitor and evaluate innovative practices within educational institutions.
- Strengthen collaboration among educational institutions to exchange innovative experiences and best practices.

Suggested Future Research

- Investigate the impact of the Blue Ocean Strategy on institutional performance in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Examine the mediating role of Innovative Leadership in the relationship between the Blue Ocean Strategy and digital transformation in educational institutions.
- Develop and evaluate a training program based on the dimensions of the Blue Ocean Strategy to enhance innovative leadership among school principals and assistant principals.
- Explore the relationship between the Blue Ocean Strategy and contemporary organizational variables, such as organizational agility, institutional innovation, readiness for change, and institutional sustainability in educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

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