

The contribution of transformational leadership of school principals to improve the quality of education through mediation of organizational behavior in Serang City state elementary schools.

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Abstract

This study investigates the contribution of transformational leadership enacted by school principals to the enhancement of educational quality, with organizational behavior posited as a mediating variable, in state elementary schools in Serang City. Despite ongoing educational reform initiatives in Indonesia, educational quality remains unevenly distributed, and the mechanisms through which school leadership influences institutional outcomes require further empirical clarification. Employing a quantitative explanatory research design, this study surveyed 291 teachers from public elementary schools using probability sampling techniques. Data were collected through a validated and reliable structured questionnaire and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership and organizational behavior collectively exert a significant positive influence on educational quality. Specifically, transformational leadership exerts a statistically significant direct effect on both organizational behavior and educational quality. Furthermore, organizational behavior was found to significantly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and educational quality, thereby functioning as a critical organizational mechanism through which leadership influences institutional performance. These findings underscore the imperative of cultivating transformational leadership competencies and nurturing constructive organizational behaviors as systematic strategies for improving educational quality in public elementary schools. Theoretically, this study extends the scholarly literature by confirming the mediating role of organizational behavior; practically, it provides evidence-based guidance for policymakers and school administrators engaged in the design of sustained leadership development programs.

1. Introduction

Planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently constitutes the fundamental essence of management. In the context of education, school management occupies a strategic role in determining the quality of learning services and ensuring the sustainability of institutional quality improvement. Effective school management is no longer circumscribed to administrative activities; it encompasses human resource development, strategic leadership, and the cultivation of an adaptive and innovative organizational culture (Bush, 2023; OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2024). Recent empirical studies confirm that the effectiveness of school leadership and governance is strongly correlated with academic achievement and overall institutional performance (Day et al., 2023; Hallinger & Wang, 2023).

The quality of education serves as the primary indicator of the success of an educational system, insofar as it reflects the learning outcomes and competencies attained by students. Such quality is realized through the relevance of the curriculum, the effectiveness of the instructional process, the professionalism of teaching staff, and a conducive school climate. In the era of digital transformation and accelerating globalization, schools are compelled to respond adaptively to change in order to remain relevant to evolving societal needs (World Bank, 2023; UNESCO, 2024). Empirical research consistently demonstrates that robust education management contributes significantly to improved learning outcomes by strengthening collaborative cultures and the collective efficacy of teachers (Goddard et al., 2023; Li & Liu, 2024).

Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as an effective approach for generating positive organizational change, including within educational institutions. This theoretical construct emphasizes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration as interrelated drivers of sustainable organizational development. In practice, school principals occupying the role of transformational leaders function not merely as administrative managers, but as agents of change who inspire and empower their teaching staff (Leithwood et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024). Recent research conducted within both Indonesian and international contexts confirms that transformational leadership is positively correlated with teacher performance and overall school quality (Gamaliel & Widodo, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Riyatno et al., 2024; Maris et al., 2025).

Furthermore, transformational leadership has been demonstrated to foster managerial innovation and enhance the professional development of educators (Trimulyo et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). Principals who enact a transformational leadership style are consistently shown to be capable of articulating a shared vision, strengthening organizational commitment, and stimulating teachers' creativity in the design and delivery of instruction (Ariani et al., 2024; Aminah et al., 2025). Complementary research confirms that inspirational leadership practices exert a significant positive impact on teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023; Dewi & Nugroho, 2025).

In addition to leadership style, organizational behavior plays a pivotal mediating role in determining educational quality. A constructive organizational culture—defined by shared values, institutional norms, and interaction patterns that promote collaboration and openness to change—creates a supportive environment conducive to the realization of educational goals. Empirical studies indicate that the organizational climate of a school exerts a direct effect on student achievement and the effectiveness of instruction (Li & Liu, 2024; Santoso & Wijaya, 2024). Transformational leadership contributes to the formation of an innovative work culture, which in turn enhances overall institutional performance (Arifin et al., 2023; Toyib et al., 2025; Widiastuti, 2026).

Initial observations conducted across several public elementary schools in Serang City reveal that the implementation of transformational leadership principles has not been fully optimized. A number of school principals remain oriented toward traditional, transactional managerial approaches that restrict teacher participation in institutional decision-making and limit opportunities for pedagogical innovation. This condition is consistent with findings in the broader literature demonstrating that weakly implemented transformational leadership negatively affects collective teacher efficacy and professional engagement (Nguyen et al., 2024; Day et al., 2023).

Although the Indonesian government has undertaken a range of educational reforms—including curriculum strengthening, teacher competency development, and the digitalization of learning—improvements in educational quality have not been uniformly achieved. Global reports indicate that the success of such reforms is substantially contingent upon the capacity of school leaders to internalize change within the fabric of organizational culture (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2023). In the absence of adaptive organizational behavior, even well-designed reform policies are unlikely to achieve their intended impact (Bush, 2023; Hallinger & Wang, 2023).

Against this backdrop, the present study identifies three interrelated problems: (1) the limited and inconsistent enactment of transformational leadership principles by school principals; (2) organizational behaviors that do not yet reflect a fully innovative and collaborative institutional work culture; and (3) the persistence of uneven educational quality outcomes. Accordingly, this study aims to empirically examine the influence of the transformational leadership of school principals on educational quality, with organizational behavior as a mediating variable, within the context of public elementary schools in Serang City.

This research is anticipated to make a theoretical contribution to the scholarly discourse on educational management and organizational behavior, while simultaneously offering a practical contribution for school principals and policymakers seeking to design sustainable, evidence-based strategies for improving educational quality through transformational leadership development.

2. Review of the Literature

Transformational leadership is a leadership paradigm that centers on the creation of meaningful change through inspirational vision, collective motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized concern for organizational members. Within the context of education, principals enacting transformational leadership play an indispensable role in building institutional commitment, enhancing teacher professionalism, and fostering innovation in instructional practice (Leithwood et al., 2023; Bush, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Contemporary empirical research demonstrates that transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023; Dewi & Nugroho, 2025). Additionally, transformational leadership has been shown to strengthen collective teacher efficacy and the collaborative cultures prevalent in high-performing schools, outcomes that ultimately contribute to improved institutional quality (Goddard et al., 2023; Li & Liu, 2024).

Studies conducted across diverse international contexts further demonstrate that school principals who consistently implement transformational leadership are capable of cultivating innovative and adaptive work environments, particularly in contexts characterized by rapidly evolving educational policy demands (Hallinger & Wang, 2023; Day et al., 2023). Within the Indonesian educational context, analogous findings have been reported by Gamaliel and Widodo (2024), Kurniawan et al. (2024), and Riyatno et al. (2024), all of whom concluded that transformational leadership exerts a positive influence on the quality of primary schools. Maris et al. (2025) and Aminah et al. (2025) further affirm that transformational leadership practices are significantly correlated with improved educational quality standards.

Theoretically, transformational leadership is grounded in motivational theory and organizational change theory, both of which emphasize the centrality of shared vision and collective commitment to the realization of organizational excellence (Leithwood et al., 2023; Bush, 2023). Accordingly, transformational leadership is widely regarded as a key determinant in the continuous improvement of educational quality.

The relationship between transformational leadership and educational quality has been corroborated by a substantial and growing body of empirical research. Lopez et al. (2023) report that principals who consistently implement transformational leadership are capable of improving both teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Riyatno et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership significantly strengthens instructional processes through enhanced teacher collaboration. Complementary research demonstrates that transformational leadership contributes to the attainment of higher educational quality standards through managerial innovation and the development of teacher professionalism (Trimulyo et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). Widiastuti (2026) further established that transformational leadership exerts a direct influence on the effectiveness of school management and the quality of educational services. Recent meta-analytic evidence corroborates that the influence of school leadership on student achievement is

significant and consistent across diverse contextual settings (Nguyen et al., 2024; Day et al., 2023). These converging findings suggest that the more robustly transformational leadership practices are enacted by school principals, the higher the resulting quality of education.

H1. The transformational leadership of school principals has a positive and significant contribution in improving the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

Organizational behavior within the school context encompasses the patterns of collaboration, communication, institutional commitment, and collective responsibility that together determine the overall effectiveness of the institution. A positive and constructive organizational culture generates a conducive work climate and provides the necessary conditions for the achievement of educational goals (Li & Liu, 2024; Santoso & Wijaya, 2024). Goddard et al. (2023) emphasized that teacher collective efficacy—as a core dimension of organizational behavior—is directly related to improvements in student learning outcomes. International research further demonstrates that a supportive school organizational climate enhances teacher engagement and the overall quality of the learning process (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023; Hallinger & Wang, 2023).

Within the national context, Arifin et al. (2023) and Toyib et al. (2025) found that a strong and coherent organizational culture significantly improves the performance of educational institutions. Kasmalinda et al. (2025) similarly concluded that collaborative and adaptive organizational behavior reinforces the quality of educational services. Conceptually, positive organizational behavior creates productive synergies among institutional policies, leadership practices, and instructional delivery, thereby generating a cumulative positive impact on the overall quality of education.

Conceptually, positive organizational behavior creates synergy between policies, leadership practices, and learning implementation, thus impacting the overall quality of education.

H2. Organizational behavior has a positive and significant contribution to improving the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

The relationship between transformational leadership and educational quality is frequently not direct in nature, but is instead mediated by organizational variables such as institutional culture and collective behavioral patterns. Visionary and inspirational leadership shapes collaborative work patterns that subsequently enhance institutional effectiveness (Nguyen et al., 2024; Day et al., 2023).

Zulkipli et al. (2023) demonstrate that organizational behavior functions as a mediating mechanism that amplifies the influence of leadership on academic achievement. Riyatno et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership improves educational quality through the strengthening of an innovative work culture. These findings are further reinforced by Maris et al. (2025) and Widijastuti (2026), who established that organizational culture constitutes a critical transmission mechanism through which the influence of leadership is channeled toward school quality outcomes.

Theoretically, this mediation model is consistent with organizational change theory, which positions collective culture and behavior as pivotal factors in the implementation of a leader's vision (Bush, 2023). Accordingly, organizational behavior functions not merely as an independent predictor of educational quality, but also as an indispensable mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and educational outcomes.

H3. Organizational behavior significantly mediates the relationship between the transformational leadership of the principal and the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

The proposed conceptual model for this study is presented in Figure 1.



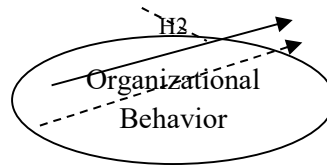


Figure 1 Research Hypothesis.

3. Materials and Methods

This study employs a quantitative explanatory methodology to examine the causal relationships among organizational behavior, transformational leadership, and educational quality. The quantitative research design was selected to enable the objective measurement of inter-variable relationships through rigorous statistical techniques. Specifically, Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was employed for data analysis, given its well-established suitability for latent variable modeling and mediation analysis (Hair et al., 2021; Shmueli et al., 2021; Ringle et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). The SEM-PLS approach is increasingly adopted in educational management research owing to its capacity to accommodate complex structural models with moderate sample sizes and its flexibility in handling both reflective and formative latent constructs (Henseler et al., 2022; Becker et al., 2023). Within the context of education, a growing body of recent studies demonstrates that transformational leadership exerts a significant influence on teacher performance, organizational commitment, and educational quality improvement (Ompusunggu et al., 2025; Bariah & Ramdani, 2025; Suryaningsih & Ediputrai, 2024). The relationships among organizational behavior, organizational culture, and transformational leadership have likewise been shown to mediate improvements in institutional performance and the quality of educational services (Novitasari et al., 2024; Wiyono et al., 2025; Erlina et al., 2025). The application of SEM-PLS in the present study is therefore methodologically warranted and analytically appropriate for the comprehensive investigation of structural relationships and mediation effects among the variables of interest.

3. Results

SEM-PLS was employed to analyze data obtained from 291 respondents with the objective of elucidating the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. The results provide robust empirical evidence regarding the contributions of transformational leadership and organizational behavior to educational quality.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variabel	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Transformational Leadership	291	4,12	0,63	2,00	5,00
Organizational Behavior	291	3,98	0,70	1,80	5,00
Quality of Education	291	3,85	0,68	2,00	5,00

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The mean perception score for the transformational leadership of school principals was classified in the high category ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.63$), indicating that respondents broadly perceived their principals as capable of providing inspiration, motivation, and professional support to teachers. Organizational behavior was similarly rated in the good category ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.70$), reflecting the presence of meaningful cooperation and collective commitment within the school environment. The quality of

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education yielded a mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.68), suggesting that the quality of the instructional process and educational services was perceived as moderately to highly optimal.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

Variabel	Alfa Cronbach	Composite Reliability	AVE
Transformational Leadership	0,89	0,91	0,61
Organizational Behavior	0,87	0,89	0,58
Quality of Education	0,85	0,88	0,60

Source: SEM-PLS Data Processing Results, 2025

As presented in Table 2, all study constructs demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding the threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming satisfactory internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50, confirming the attainment of convergent validity. These results collectively establish that all measurement indicators reliably and consistently operationalize their respective latent constructs, rendering them suitable for subsequent structural model evaluation.

Table 3. Outer Loading Indicator Value

Indicator	Variabel	External Loading
KT1	Transformational Leadership	0,78
KT2	Transformational Leadership	0,82
KT3	Transformational Leadership	0,80
PO1	Organizational Behavior	0,77
PO2	Organizational Behavior	0,81
PO3	Organizational Behavior	0,79
MP1	Quality of Education	0,79
MP2	Quality of Education	0,83
MP3	Quality of Education	0,81

Source: SEM-PLS Data Processing Results, 2025

All indicators presented in Table 3 achieved outer loading values exceeding 0.70, confirming that each indicator accurately reflects its corresponding latent construct. This demonstrates that the measurement instrument is highly valid in capturing the theoretical dimensions of transformational leadership, organizational behavior, and educational quality. The fulfillment of these discriminant validity criteria confirms that the measurement model satisfies the requisite qualification conditions for structural model testing.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

Intervariable Relationships	Coefisien Garis (β)	Statistics-T	p-value	Remarks
Transformational Leadership → Quality Education	0,42	5,21	0,000	Signifikan
Organizational Behavior → Quality of Education	0,35	4,05	0,000	Signifikan
Transformational Leadership → Organizational Behavior	0,47	6,10	0,000	Signifikan

Source: SEM-PLS Data Processing Results, 2025

As presented in Table 4, all hypothesized inter-variable relationships yielded positive and statistically significant path coefficients at the 5% significance level. Transformational leadership exerted a significant direct positive effect on educational quality ($\beta = 0.42$, $T = 5.21$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that more effectively enacted principal leadership is associated with meaningfully improved educational outcomes. Organizational behavior similarly contributed significantly to educational quality ($\beta = 0.35$, $T = 4.05$, $p < 0.001$). The positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational behavior ($\beta = 0.47$, $T = 6.10$, $p < 0.001$) further establishes that the principal's leadership style substantively shapes the collaborative work behaviors of instructional staff.

Table 5. Indirect Effects Test

Mediation Pathway	Indirect Coefficient (β)	Statistics-T	p-value	Remarks
Transformational Leadership → Organizational Behavior → Education Quality	0,21	3,67	0,000	Signifikan

Source: SEM-PLS Data Processing Results, 2025

The indirect effect of transformational leadership on educational quality, operating through the mediating mechanism of organizational behavior, was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.21$, $T = 3.67$, $p < 0.001$). This finding provides empirical support for the proposition that organizational behavior functions as a partial mediator in strengthening the influence of transformational leadership on educational quality. In other words, school principals who enact transformational leadership are able to achieve more optimal improvements in educational quality when such leadership is channeled through and reinforced by positive organizational behaviors—specifically, sustained cooperation, institutional commitment, and effective communication among staff.

Table 6. R² and Q² Values of Endogenous Variables

Variable endogenous	R ²	Q ²
Organizational Behavior	0,35	0,22
Quality of Education	0,48	0,28

Source: SEM-PLS Data Processing Results, 2025

As presented in Table 6, the R² value for the organizational behavior variable was 0.35, indicating that transformational leadership accounts for 35% of the variance in organizational behavior. The R² value for educational quality was 0.48, indicating that transformational leadership and organizational behavior together explain 48% of the variance in educational quality outcomes. The Q² values of 0.22 and 0.28, respectively, both exceed zero, confirming that the structural model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance in accordance with Stone-Geisser criteria.

4. Discussion

4.1 The transformational leadership of school principals has a positive and significant contribution in improving the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

The findings of this study confirm that the transformational leadership of school principals plays a central and significant role in improving the quality of education. Principals who effectively enact transformational leadership demonstrate the capacity to motivate teachers, stimulate pedagogical innovation, and cultivate a conducive and supportive learning environment.

Schools are granted a considerable degree of institutional autonomy in their efforts to improve educational quality. Among the most critical dimensions of this endeavor is the optimization and continuous improvement of learning services. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), school quality is determined by a confluence of factors, including organizational culture, principal leadership style, organizational climate, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, teacher performance, and educational funding. Mutohar (2014) similarly argues that school quality fundamentally reflects the extent to which a school manages and utilizes all available resources to optimize student learning. It is therefore imperative that schools continually attend to and systematically improve their quality in pursuit of institutional excellence.

Quality in education encompasses four interrelated dimensions: input, process, output, and outcome. Educational input is considered high quality when learners are adequately prepared to engage productively in the learning process. The educational process is regarded as high quality when it generates an active, creative, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment. Output is considered high quality when students demonstrate high achievement across both academic and non-academic domains. Outcomes are considered high quality when graduates are rapidly absorbed into the workforce, earn appropriate remuneration, are recognized for their competencies, and are capable of satisfying the expectations of diverse stakeholders (Usman, 2016).

Consistent with the above, Hoy and Miskel (2013) identify a range of determinants of school quality, encompassing organizational culture, the principal's leadership style, the prevailing organizational climate, the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure, teacher performance, and financial resources. These factors interact dynamically to shape the overall quality profile of the institution.

An additional indicator of school quality in the Indonesian context is institutional accreditation status. Accreditation policy is grounded in the constitutional principle that every citizen is entitled to a quality education. To achieve this, every educational institution or program is required to meet or exceed established national standards, which are assessed through a formal accreditation process to evaluate the suitability of each educational unit or program (Haryati, 2012).

In the domain of education, the formulation of effective leadership styles has become an issue of critical importance, particularly in the context of ongoing reform efforts. Transformational leadership grounded in powerful theoretical constructs such as charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—is understood to generate visionary institutional direction that upholds democratic values and organizational transparency. It is therefore essential that this leadership model be deliberately integrated into the professional role of the school principal. As an institutional leader, the principal plays a crucial role in driving educational quality improvement. A principal who enacts effective transformational leadership is capable of steering the school toward measurable qualitative gains. Supartha (2016) defines transformational leadership as a form of leadership that motivates organizational members to envision the institution's future with a sense of optimism and shared purpose. Susana (2018) characterizes transformational leadership as an integrative leadership approach that synthesizes ideas through charismatic, stylistic, and contingency-based dimensions, with the fundamental essence of distributed power and shared authority. Suwatno (2019) further emphasizes that transformational leadership influences staff so that they feel a sense of confidence, pride, loyalty, and deep respect for their leader, while being simultaneously motivated to achieve performance outcomes that exceed conventional expectations (Yuni Lustiawati, 2024).

Luthans (2006) identifies seven defining characteristics of a principal who successfully enacts transformational leadership: (1) positioning oneself as a proactive agent of institutional change; (2) demonstrating moral courage and decisiveness in taking strategic action; (3) cultivating trust and confidence in organizational members; (4) acting on the basis of established professional values rather than personal interests or external pressures; (5) engaging in continuous professional self-development;

(6) effectively managing complex, uncertain, and ambiguous situations; and (7) possessing clear foresight and a compelling institutional vision.

It may therefore be concluded that a principal's transformational leadership is best understood as the principal's capacity to effectively extend their influence across the entire school community through four interrelated dimensions: charismatic idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions collectively drive the professional development of the school community and underpin the continuous improvement of institutional quality. The empirical results of this study confirm that the effectiveness with which a principal guides teachers toward the realization of shared institutional goals is substantially determined by the quality of their transformational leadership enactment.

4.2 Organizational behavior has a positive and significant contribution to improving the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

Organizational behavior, as a field of scholarly inquiry, encompasses the social interactions that occur within the work environment, including the dynamics of roles, social structures, and interpersonal processes. Within the school context, organizational behavior manifests across the following dimensions: (a) interaction patterns among individuals, including teachers, principals, students, and administrative staff; (b) shared values, institutional norms, and work culture; (c) prevailing leadership styles; (d) the organizational work climate; (e) communication processes and patterns; and (f) collaborative teamwork structures. Edgar H. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions—learned by a group as it addresses external adaptation problems and internal integration challenges—that is subsequently transmitted to new members as the accepted way of perceiving, thinking, and responding to organizational realities.

Robbins and Judge (2019) maintain that organizational behavior is profoundly shaped by leadership style, as leaders determine organizational direction, establish communication norms, and define the parameters of interpersonal relationships within the institution. Hoy and Miskel (2013) similarly assert that organizational climate—understood as the shared perception of the work environment—exerts a substantive influence on the behavior and motivational states of all organizational members.

According to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, and Konopaske (2012), communication processes and work group dynamics constitute central elements of organizational behavior, reflecting the quality of working relationships, the depth of collaboration, and the effectiveness of collective decision-making. The overarching objective is to establish a healthy and productive work environment that sustains the achievement of educational goals across all institutional dimensions.

4.3 Organizational behavior significantly mediates the relationship between the transformational leadership of the principal and the quality of education in public elementary schools in Serang City.

Transformational leadership is widely regarded as a leadership paradigm capable of driving comprehensive and sustainable organizational change. The present study sought to determine the extent to which the transformational leadership of school principals influences organizational change within the elementary school context, with particular attention to the behavioral and cultural dimensions of organizational life.

Principals who enact transformational leadership—through the dimensions of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation—are demonstrably capable of effecting meaningful and lasting change within the school organization, particularly in terms of organizational behavior and institutional culture. This has significant implications for increasing school readiness to navigate change and for enhancing the overall quality of educational services.

It should be acknowledged, however, that transformational leadership does not always translate directly and automatically into educational quality improvements through the mediation pathway. In certain

institutional contexts, transformational leadership may directly inspire teachers and reshape institutional vision without necessarily producing prior or simultaneous changes in organizational behavior. When organizational behavior remains oriented toward administrative functions rather than pedagogical innovation, the mediating pathway may be attenuated.

As Sari and Widodo (2021) observed, teachers and support staff frequently maintain established work patterns even in the presence of newly introduced leadership approaches. Under such conditions, organizational behavior may fail to serve as an effective intermediary in the leadership-quality nexus. Nasution and Darmanto (2019) similarly noted that certain teachers and staff exhibit reluctance to abandon entrenched traditional work habits, thereby limiting the transformative reach of visionary leadership. Azizah and Sukanti (2020) further observed that institutional constraints—including limited facilities, inadequate funding, and insufficient human resources—can render organizational behavior change difficult to achieve, even under capable and visionary leadership.

In the present study, organizational behavior was empirically demonstrated to function as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between the principal's transformational leadership and educational quality. Transformational leadership, operationalized through the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, was found to encourage teachers to engage in creative thinking, embrace openness to change, and develop the professional confidence to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches. The intellectual stimulation dimension, in particular, stimulates the emergence of novel ideas and the professional courage to pursue new methodologies in the learning process. Teachers' innovative behaviors—reflected in their capacity to create, adopt, and implement new ideas in instruction, assessment, and classroom management—contribute directly to enhanced teaching and learning effectiveness. Such innovation positively impacts student engagement, the quality of learning outcomes, and the efficiency of school management, ultimately driving measurable improvements in overall educational quality.

It can therefore be concluded that transformational leadership not only exerts a direct positive influence on educational quality, but also operates indirectly through the mechanism of improved organizational behavior across the school community. This implies that the more robustly transformational leadership is enacted by school principals, the more constructive the organizational behaviors exhibited by teachers, and the more optimal the resulting educational quality outcomes. Organizational behavior thus serves as both a psychological and organizational mechanism that mediates the pathway from leadership practices to institutional quality outcomes.

The significant effects of transformational leadership on organizational behavior confirm that leadership practices exert a substantive influence on teachers' professional attitudes and institutional behaviors. When principals provide individualized inspiration and sustained professional support, teachers are consistently more inclined to exhibit positive organizational behavior, including heightened collaboration, organizational commitment, and proactive engagement in institutional development.

The mediating role of organizational behavior further suggests that the effectiveness of leadership is substantially amplified when it is reinforced by constructive institutional behaviors. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the critical importance of organizational behavior as a pathway through which leadership vision is translated into concrete educational outcomes.

In practical terms, these results carry clear implications for educational policymakers, who should prioritize the design and implementation of leadership development programs that explicitly cultivate transformational leadership competencies among school principals. Concurrently, targeted strategies for strengthening positive organizational behaviors must be systematically integrated into broader school management practices to ensure that leadership capacity translates effectively into improved educational quality.

5. Conclusions

This study concludes that the transformational leadership of school principals exerts a significant positive influence on educational quality, both through a direct pathway and indirectly through the mediating mechanism of organizational behavior. Organizational behavior serves as an important intermediary variable that amplifies and transmits the impact of transformational leadership on educational outcomes. These findings affirm the critical importance of developing transformational leadership capacity among school principals and of fostering positive, collaborative organizational behaviors as dual strategies for improving the quality of education in public elementary schools. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional variables—such as teacher self-efficacy, school organizational climate, and resource adequacy—and to extend the scope of inquiry to broader and more diverse research settings, including comparisons across school levels and regional contexts.

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Ethical considerations

The author stated that he had received consent from the participants who were made respondents and guaranteed the confidentiality of his data.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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