

THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL CULTURE, AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE ON EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of principals' transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality in SMPN of Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. This study employed a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto survey design. The population consisted of 96 teachers from four SMPN in Singorojo District during the 2025/2026 academic year. Since the population was relatively small, total sampling was employed, involving all 96 teachers as respondents. The study used primary data obtained through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale, while secondary data were obtained from relevant school and educational documents, including Indonesian Education Report Card data. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the assistance of IBM SPSS. The findings revealed that transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance simultaneously had a positive and significant influence on educational quality, with an R value of 0.884 and an R² of 0.781. Thus, the three independent variables jointly explained 78.1% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 21.9% was explained by other factors not included in the model. The study concludes that improving educational quality requires an integrated strategy involving transformational leadership, a positive school culture, and strengthened teacher performance. The simultaneous development of these three factors can support sustainable educational improvement in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency.

Keywords

Educational Quality, School Culture, Teacher Performance, Transformational Leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

Among the numerous determinants of educational quality, transformational leadership has received considerable attention in educational leadership literature. Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach through which school principals inspire teachers and staff members to exceed organizational expectations by creating a shared vision, encouraging innovation, providing individualized support, and stimulating professional growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Unlike transactional leadership that primarily focuses on supervision and compliance, transformational leadership emphasizes organizational change through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence (Groves, 2014; Mandak & Astuti, 2026). Recent studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership creates a positive organizational climate, enhances teacher motivation, strengthens collaboration, and ultimately contributes to improved school performance and educational quality (Astuti et al., 2025; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Another essential organizational factor influencing educational quality is school culture. School culture represents the system of shared values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and behavioral expectations that guide interactions among school members. A positive school culture promotes trust, collaboration, discipline, innovation, mutual respect, and professional learning communities, thereby creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning (Peterson & Deal, 2002; MacNeil et al., 2009). Schools characterized by strong organizational cultures generally demonstrate higher teacher commitment, stronger organizational citizenship behavior, and better student learning outcomes (Peterson & Deal, 2002). Recent empirical evidence indicates that school culture significantly contributes to teacher performance and organizational effectiveness, particularly when supported by transformational leadership practices (Tarigan & Nurmiati, 2024; Taajamo et al., 2023).

Teacher performance also constitutes one of the most influential determinants of educational quality because teachers directly facilitate student learning (Zaini et al., 2023; Belsito, 2016). Teacher performance refers to teachers' ability to effectively plan instruction, implement student-centered learning, manage classrooms, assess learning outcomes, and continuously improve professional competencies (Irianti & Achmad Kurniady, 2026). High-performing teachers demonstrate pedagogical competence, instructional creativity, classroom management skills, technological proficiency, and reflective professional practice (Jayadi et al., 2025; Singerin, 2021). In the implementation of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are expected to integrate innovative

instructional strategies, digital learning technologies, authentic assessment, and differentiated instruction to improve students' learning experiences.

Ideally, schools should demonstrate continuous improvement in educational quality through enhanced literacy, numeracy, character development, instructional quality, and student learning achievement. School principals are expected to exercise transformational leadership, establish positive school cultures, and support teachers' professional growth in order to achieve sustainable educational improvement. However, the actual conditions found in SMPN in Singorojo District indicate that this ideal situation has not yet been fully realized.

Data obtained from the Indonesian Education Report Card reveal that although literacy and numeracy achievement improved between 2023 and 2024, the character dimension experienced a slight decline. Similarly, instructional quality indicators showed only marginal improvement, while classroom management and psychological support provided by teachers declined in several schools. These findings indicate that educational quality remains inconsistent across performance dimensions despite national educational reforms. Furthermore, preliminary observations and interviews with school supervisors revealed several organizational challenges, including limited instructional supervision, insufficient professional development programs, weak utilization of educational data for decision-making, centralized school leadership, inconsistent stakeholder involvement, inadequate teacher discipline, incomplete instructional administration, and limited instructional innovation. These organizational conditions suggest that transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance require substantial improvement to enhance educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District.

The actual condition of educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency, indicates that quality improvement has been pursued through academic supervision, teacher professional development, school quality improvement programs, and the use of educational data in school planning. However, preliminary observations, interviews with school supervisors and school principals, and documentation reviewed by the researcher indicate that these quality assurance efforts have not yet been implemented consistently and optimally across schools. Several challenges remain, particularly in the follow-up of instructional supervision, teacher participation in professional development, utilization of Education Report Card data for school-level decision-making, teacher discipline, completeness of instructional administration, stakeholder involvement, and innovation in learning. These conditions are also reflected in the Education Report Card, which

shows that improvements in literacy and numeracy have not been accompanied by consistent improvement across other quality dimensions, particularly character development, instructional quality, classroom management, and psychological support. The gap between existing quality assurance policies and their implementation in daily school practices demonstrates the need for empirical investigation into the organizational factors underlying educational quality. Therefore, this study is important to examine how transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance are related to educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, providing empirical evidence that can support more consistent and data-informed school quality improvement.

Previous empirical studies have increasingly highlighted the interconnected roles of transformational leadership, school culture, teacher performance, and educational quality in shaping effective school organizations. Recent studies have further emphasized that the influence of transformational leadership cannot be separated from the cultural environment of the school, as leadership practices can shape shared values, collegial relationships, collaboration, innovation, and collective commitment among teachers (Asriyah, 2024; Ermita & Baysa, 2025). In this context, school culture serves as an important organizational foundation that facilitates the translation of leadership practices into teachers' daily professional behavior and instructional practices (Olivier, 2001; Sirait, 2021). Empirical studies conducted in elementary education contexts have consistently examined transformational leadership and school culture as important factors associated with teacher performance, while recent research has also connected transformational leadership and teachers' professional competence with educational quality (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Surwiti et al., 2025). Other recent studies have expanded this perspective by examining the interaction between transformational leadership, school culture, teacher motivation, and teacher performance, indicating that teacher effectiveness is embedded within broader organizational and cultural conditions rather than being determined solely by individual teacher characteristics. Moreover, contemporary research on educational leadership has increasingly positioned teacher performance as an important mechanism through which leadership and organizational culture contribute to the broader achievement of educational quality, suggesting that improvements in school quality require alignment between visionary leadership, a supportive school culture, and effective professional performance (Yuliyanti et al., 2026; Chisum, 2018).

Nevertheless, previous studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the relationships between transformational leadership, school culture, teacher performance, and

educational quality. In addition, most studies have examined these variables separately or focused on bivariate relationships, while limited research has simultaneously examined transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance as integrated predictors of educational quality. This gap is particularly evident in Indonesian SMPN, where empirical evidence regarding the combined contribution of these organizational factors remains limited.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrated empirical model that simultaneously examines transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance as determinants of educational quality. In addition, this study contextualizes educational quality using recent Indonesian Education Report Card indicators and focuses specifically on SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency, a relatively underexplored educational context. This integrated approach provides a broader perspective on the organizational factors that contribute to school quality improvement. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the individual and simultaneous effects of transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational management literature and provide practical evidence for principals, teachers, and policymakers in formulating effective and sustainable strategies for improving educational quality.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with an ex-post facto survey design to investigate the influence of transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine the causal relationships among measurable variables using statistical procedures. The ex-post facto design was selected because the independent variables had naturally occurred prior to the study and therefore could not be manipulated by the researcher. Instead, the research sought to analyze the existing conditions and determine the extent to which transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance contribute to educational quality.

The research was conducted in four SMPNs in Singorojo District during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of 96 teachers, and total sampling was employed; therefore, all 96 teachers participated as respondents.

Data were collected through a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Educational quality was measured through educational input, process, and output. Transformational leadership was measured through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. School culture was measured through academic culture, socio-cultural values, and democratic culture, while teacher performance was assessed through lesson planning, instructional implementation, and learning evaluation. The instrument was tested for validity using Pearson Product-Moment correlation and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, with $\alpha > 0.70$ indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the research variables, followed by normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Pearson correlation was used to examine relationships among variables, while multiple linear regression was employed to test the partial and simultaneous effects of transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality. Partial effects were tested using the t-test, simultaneous effects using the F-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the proportion of variance in educational quality explained by the three predictors. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

The conceptual framework positions transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance as independent variables and educational quality as the dependent variable. The study examines whether these three factors individually and simultaneously contribute to educational quality in SMPN.

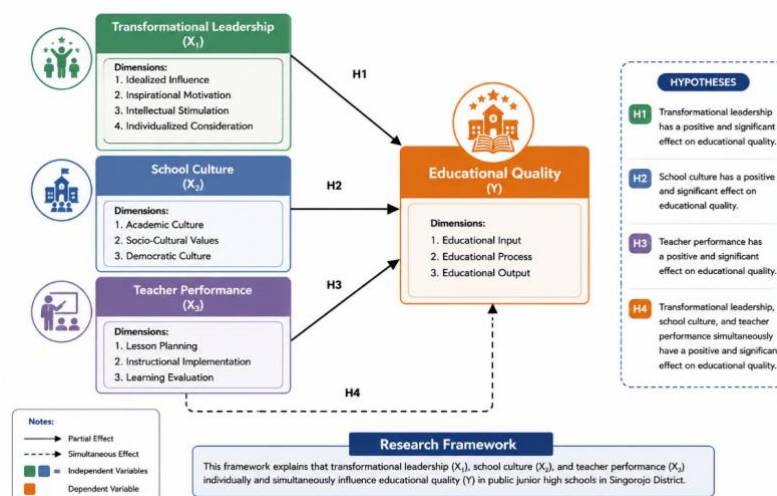


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical findings reported in previous studies, four research hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis proposes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on educational quality. The second hypothesis states that school culture has a positive and significant effect on educational quality. The third hypothesis proposes that teacher performance has a positive and significant effect on educational quality. Finally, the fourth hypothesis proposes that transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aimed to investigate the influence of transformational leadership of principals, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed to 96 teachers from SMPN in the district. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, and multiple linear regression with the assistance of SPSS. Before hypothesis testing, the data were subjected to classical assumption tests, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The results indicated that the data met the required assumptions for regression analysis. The normality test showed significance values of 0.896, 0.930, 0.916, and 0.844 for transformational leadership, school culture, teacher performance, and educational quality, respectively, all exceeding 0.05. Furthermore, the linearity tests indicated linear relationships between each independent variable and educational quality. The multicollinearity test showed tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, while the heteroscedasticity test indicated significance values above 0.05. Thus, the regression models were considered appropriate for hypothesis testing.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership of Principals on Educational Quality

The first analysis examined the influence of transformational leadership of principals on educational quality. The findings revealed a very strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and educational quality, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.808 and a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). The simple linear regression analysis showed a t-value of 13.279, which was greater than the critical t-value of 1.98552. This result indicates that

transformational leadership of principals has a positive and statistically significant influence on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.652, indicating that transformational leadership of principals explained 65.2% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 34.8% was attributable to other factors not examined in this study. The regression equation was $Y = 24.772 + 0.777X_1$, indicating a positive direction of influence. Thus, an improvement in transformational leadership is associated with an increase in educational quality.

Table 1. Influence of Transformational Leadership of Principals on Educational Quality

Model	R	R ²	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership → Educational Quality	0.808	0.652	13.279	0.000	Significant positive influence (65.2%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The Influence of School Culture on Educational Quality

The second analysis examined the influence of school culture on educational quality. The findings demonstrated a strong positive relationship between school culture and educational quality, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.771 and a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). The regression analysis produced a t-value of 11.756, exceeding the critical t-value of 1.98552. Therefore, school culture has a positive and statistically significant influence on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.595, meaning that school culture explained 59.5% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 40.5% was influenced by other factors outside the scope of the study. The regression coefficient was positive, indicating that a stronger and more consistently implemented school culture is associated with better educational quality.

Table 2. Influence of School Culture on Educational Quality

Model	R	R ²	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
School Culture → Educational Quality	0.771	0.595	11.756	0.000	Significant positive influence (59.5%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

These findings indicate that school culture constitutes an important organizational factor in supporting educational quality. A positive school culture, reflected in consistent values, norms, discipline, collaboration, and shared commitment among school members, can create an environment conducive to effective educational processes. When such cultural practices are implemented consistently and embedded in the daily activities of the school community, they can support more innovative and progressive educational practices and contribute to the achievement

of educational goals.

The Influence of Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The third analysis focused on the influence of teacher performance on educational quality. The results showed a strong positive relationship between teacher performance and educational quality, as indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.780 and a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). The simple linear regression analysis yielded a t-value of 12.104, which exceeded the critical t-value of 1.98552. Thus, teacher performance has a positive and statistically significant influence on educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.609, indicating that teacher performance contributed 60.9% to the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 39.1% was explained by other factors not included in the model. The regression equation was $Y = 29.199 + 0.771X_3$, showing a positive relationship between teacher performance and educational quality.

Table 3. Influence of Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

Model	R	R ²	t-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Teacher Performance → Educational Quality	0.780	0.609	12.104	0.000	Significant positive influence (60.9%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The findings suggest that teacher performance is an important determinant of educational quality because teachers are directly involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. Effective teacher performance enables teachers to design appropriate learning strategies, adapt instruction to students' needs, monitor student development, and conduct learning assessments effectively. Consequently, improvements in teacher performance can directly contribute to improvements in the quality of educational processes and outcomes.

The Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The final analysis examined the simultaneous influence of transformational leadership of principals, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) was 0.884, indicating a very strong relationship between the three independent variables jointly and educational quality. The ANOVA results showed an F-value of 109.170, which was greater than the critical F-value of 2.70, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). Therefore, transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance simultaneously have a statistically significant influence on educational quality.

The multiple regression model produced an R^2 value of 0.781, indicating that transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance jointly explained 78.1% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 21.9% was explained by other factors not included in the model. The multiple regression equation was $Y = 6.608 + 0.394X_1 + 0.216X_2 + 0.367X_3$. All three regression coefficients were positive, indicating that improvements in transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance were associated with improvements in educational quality.

Table 4. Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

Model	R	R ²	F-value	Sig.	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership, School Culture & Teacher Performance → Educational Quality	0.884	0.781	109.170	0.000	Simultaneous significant influence (78.1%)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The results of the multiple regression analysis further demonstrate that the three independent variables make positive contributions to educational quality. Transformational leadership had a regression coefficient of 0.394 with a significance value of 0.000, school culture had a coefficient of 0.216 with a significance value of 0.012, and teacher performance had a coefficient of 0.367 with a significance value of 0.000. These results indicate that all three variables independently contribute significantly to the multiple regression model. Among the three predictors, transformational leadership had the largest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.409$), followed by teacher performance ($\beta = 0.371$) and school culture ($\beta = 0.208$).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that educational quality is not determined by a single factor but is shaped by the interaction of leadership, organizational culture, and teacher performance. Transformational leadership provides direction, motivation, and encouragement for innovation; school culture establishes shared values, norms, discipline, and collaborative practices; while teacher performance directly determines the effectiveness of learning implementation. The simultaneous contribution of these three factors suggests that efforts to improve educational quality should adopt a comprehensive approach rather than focusing on only one organizational component.

The findings therefore confirm all four hypotheses proposed in the study: (H1) transformational leadership of principals significantly influences educational quality; (H2) school culture significantly influences educational quality; (H3) teacher performance significantly

influences educational quality; and (H4) transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance simultaneously significantly influence educational quality.

Discussion

The Influence of Transformational Leadership of Principals on Educational Quality

The findings of this study support the first hypothesis, which states that transformational leadership of principals significantly influences educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The analysis demonstrated a very strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and educational quality, with a correlation coefficient of 0.808. The regression analysis further showed a t-value of 13.279 with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), confirming that transformational leadership has a statistically significant positive influence on educational quality. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.652 indicates that transformational leadership explains 65.2% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 34.8% is attributable to other factors outside the scope of this study.

This finding indicates that the quality of education in SMPN is closely associated with the ability of principals to exercise transformational leadership. The positive regression coefficient of 0.777 demonstrates that improvements in transformational leadership are associated with improvements in educational quality. Principals who are able to formulate a clear vision, inspire teachers, encourage participation, stimulate innovative thinking, and provide appropriate support can create organizational conditions that facilitate educational improvement. Thus, transformational leadership is not merely concerned with administrative decision-making but also with mobilizing the commitment and potential of teachers and other school members toward the achievement of shared educational goals.

The finding is theoretically consistent with the concept of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the capacity of leaders to inspire followers, stimulate intellectual development, provide individualized consideration, and establish a shared vision for organizational change. In the school context, transformational principals can encourage teachers to move beyond routine practices and become more actively involved in instructional improvement and school development. Such leadership can foster innovation, collaboration, motivation, and a shared commitment to improving educational quality.

The present finding is also consistent with previous empirical studies cited in the study. (Shofwani et al., 2026) found that effective and efficient transformational leadership contributes to

improved academic quality and the development of a harmonious school environment. Similarly, (Putri et al., 2025; Utami & Al Kadri, 2024) reported a significant influence of transformational principal leadership on educational quality, while (Sugiar & Sanusi, 2024; Khalifah et al., 2026) also demonstrated that transformational leadership contributes to educational quality. These findings reinforce the argument that leadership characterized by vision, motivation, participation, and positive influence can become an important organizational mechanism for improving school quality.

The findings can further be understood from the perspective of the role of principals as agents of school improvement. Transformational principals are expected to provide exemplary behavior, motivate teachers, stimulate new ideas, and pay attention to the professional needs of school staff (Helita et al., 2026). Such practices can encourage teachers to improve their performance and participate in creating a positive school culture. The literature cited in this study also indicates that transformational leadership can create an innovative, creative, and collaborative school environment, which ultimately supports improvements in educational quality.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that strengthening the transformational leadership capacity of principals should become an important component of school quality improvement. Principals should develop a clear and shared school vision, encourage teacher participation in decision-making, facilitate professional development, recognize teachers' contributions, and promote innovation in teaching and learning. In this way, transformational leadership can function as a strategic mechanism for building a school environment that continuously pursues educational improvement.

The Influence of School Culture on Educational Quality

The findings of this study support the second hypothesis, which states that school culture significantly influences educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between school culture and educational quality, with a correlation coefficient of 0.771. The t-test produced a value of 11.756 with a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that school culture has a statistically significant positive influence on educational quality. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.595 indicates that school culture explains 59.5% of the variance in educational quality, while the remaining 40.5% is explained by other factors not examined in this study.

These findings demonstrate that educational quality is strongly connected to the values, norms, habits, behaviors, and patterns of interaction that develop within the school environment. A

positive school culture can provide a shared framework that guides teachers, students, principals, administrative staff, and other stakeholders in carrying out their respective responsibilities. When positive values and behaviors are consistently practiced, they become an integral part of school life and contribute to the creation of a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

The finding is consistent with the organizational culture perspective, which views culture as a system of shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that guides the behavior of organizational members. In educational institutions, school culture can function as an informal mechanism for strengthening discipline, responsibility, collaboration, commitment, and continuous improvement. A strong culture can therefore influence not only how school members perform their duties but also how they collectively respond to challenges and pursue institutional goals.

The results are supported by previous research cited in the study. (Ihsan et al., 2026) found that work culture has a positive and significant influence on school quality, while Anwar et al. (2023) demonstrated that Islamic work culture contributes to educational quality. (Usman et al., 2023) also found a significant influence of organizational culture on educational quality. These studies support the present finding that stronger organizational and school cultures tend to be associated with better educational quality (Pratomo, 2020).

The findings further suggest that school culture should not be understood merely as a set of written regulations. Rather, it should be reflected in repeated behaviors and shared practices among members of the school community. Consistency in implementing school rules, maintaining discipline, encouraging openness, developing collaborative relationships, and supporting continuous learning can gradually establish a positive culture.

The practical implication is that improving educational quality requires schools to intentionally cultivate a positive organizational culture. School principals and teachers need to establish shared values, strengthen professional collaboration, maintain discipline, encourage openness and mutual respect, and develop habits of continuous improvement. A positive school culture should therefore become an integral part of school management rather than an additional program separate from the school's core educational activities.

The Influence of Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The findings of this study support the third hypothesis, which states that teacher performance significantly influences educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency. The results showed a strong positive correlation between teacher performance and

educational quality, with a correlation coefficient of 0.780. The t-value of 12.104 exceeded the critical value of 1.98552, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). These results confirm that teacher performance has a statistically significant positive influence on educational quality. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.609 indicates that teacher performance explains 60.9% of the variance in educational quality, while 39.1% is explained by other factors not included in the model.

The positive relationship indicates that improvements in teacher performance are associated with improvements in educational quality. The regression coefficient of 0.771 demonstrates that teacher performance contributes positively to educational quality. Teachers are central actors in the implementation of educational programs because they are directly responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities. Therefore, the quality of educational services provided by schools is strongly dependent on teachers' ability to perform their professional responsibilities effectively.

The finding is theoretically consistent with the view that teacher performance is closely related to the quality of teaching and learning processes. Teachers with good performance are more capable of preparing effective instructional plans, selecting appropriate learning strategies, implementing meaningful classroom activities, and evaluating student learning outcomes. Consequently, improvements in teacher performance can influence not only classroom practices but also broader indicators of educational quality.

The findings are supported by previous research cited in the study. (Rahman et al., 2020) found that teacher performance influences school quality. Similarly, (Weto et al., 2020) reported a significant influence of teacher performance on school quality, with a contribution of 70.3%. (Sahdat et al., 2025) also found that teacher performance has a positive and significant influence on improving learning quality (Fachmi et al., 2021; Bumay et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the conclusion that teacher performance is a fundamental component in efforts to improve educational quality.

The importance of teacher performance can be explained by the direct role of teachers in the learning process. Teachers who perform effectively are able to plan learning systematically, implement instructional strategies appropriately, evaluate learning outcomes, and adjust their teaching according to students' needs. Improved performance can also encourage teachers to use more innovative learning strategies and monitor student development more carefully. As a consequence, effective teacher performance can contribute to better learning processes and

outcomes, which are important dimensions of educational quality.

From a practical perspective, schools should strengthen teacher performance through continuous professional development, collaborative learning, mentoring, and opportunities for teachers to develop innovative instructional practices. Performance improvement should not be limited to administrative evaluation but should focus on strengthening teachers' actual capacity to plan, implement, assess, and improve learning. Such efforts are particularly important because teacher performance represents one of the most direct pathways through which school management practices are translated into educational quality.

The Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Performance on Educational Quality

The fourth hypothesis examined the simultaneous influence of transformational leadership of principals, school culture, and teacher performance on educational quality. The results showed that the three independent variables jointly have a statistically significant influence on educational quality. The multiple correlation coefficient was 0.884, indicating a very strong relationship between transformational leadership, school culture, teacher performance, and educational quality. The F-value of 109.170 exceeded the critical F-value of 2.70, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

The multiple regression model produced an R^2 of 0.781, indicating that transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance jointly explain 78.1% of the variance in educational quality. The remaining 21.9% is attributable to other factors not included in the present model. The multiple regression equation, $Y = 6.608 + 0.394X_1 + 0.216X_2 + 0.367X_3$, demonstrates that all three predictors have positive regression coefficients. This means that improvements in transformational leadership, school culture, and teacher performance are associated with improvements in educational quality.

An important finding from the multiple regression analysis is that transformational leadership has the largest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.409$), followed by teacher performance ($\beta = 0.371$) and school culture ($\beta = 0.208$). This pattern suggests that, within the simultaneous model, transformational leadership makes the strongest relative contribution to educational quality, although teacher performance and school culture also make significant contributions. The result highlights the strategic position of the principal as a key driver who can influence the organizational conditions under which school culture develops and teachers perform their professional

responsibilities.

The simultaneous finding supports the argument that educational quality is multidimensional and cannot be adequately explained by a single organizational factor. Leadership provides direction and motivation, school culture establishes shared norms and behavioral expectations, while teacher performance translates organizational vision and values into actual teaching practices. These three elements, therefore, operate as interconnected components of school improvement rather than as isolated variables.

The findings are consistent with the theoretical and empirical perspectives discussed in the study. (Setiyanti et al., 2025) explain that educational quality is influenced by several factors, including leadership, professional teachers, and work culture. (Mincu, 2022) also found a positive and significant simultaneous influence of school leadership and teacher performance on school quality. Furthermore, Haq et al. (2020) emphasized that transformational school leadership and optimal teacher performance represent strategic elements in improving educational quality, particularly in contexts with limited resources.

The interaction among the three factors can be understood as a reinforcing process. Transformational leadership can establish a clear vision, motivate teachers, encourage innovation, and create opportunities for collaboration. A positive school culture can then institutionalize these values through consistent norms, discipline, openness, and collective commitment. At the same time, strong teacher performance ensures that these leadership directions and cultural values are translated into effective classroom practices. Consequently, the three factors can mutually reinforce one another in producing sustainable improvements in educational quality.

The findings further indicate that school improvement strategies should be implemented holistically. Strengthening only the leadership capacity of principals without developing teacher performance may limit the translation of leadership vision into classroom practice. Similarly, improving teacher performance without developing a supportive school culture may make professional improvement difficult to sustain. Therefore, transformational leadership, positive school culture, and teacher performance need to be developed simultaneously as complementary components of educational quality improvement. This interpretation is consistent with the findings in the study that the three factors interact and jointly contribute substantially to educational quality.

From a practical perspective, school principals should develop integrated improvement programs that connect leadership development, school culture strengthening, and teacher

professional development. Leadership practices should emphasize shared vision, teacher empowerment, collaboration, and innovation. At the same time, schools need to strengthen positive cultural practices involving discipline, openness, collegiality, continuous learning, and commitment to quality. Teacher development should focus on improving the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively. The integration of these strategies can create a more sustainable pathway toward improving educational quality.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that educational quality in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency, is significantly associated with transformational leadership of principals, school culture, and teacher performance. The very strong simultaneous relationship and substantial explanatory contribution of the three variables emphasize that school quality improvement requires a comprehensive and interconnected approach. Transformational leadership provides strategic direction, school culture creates a supportive organizational environment, and teacher performance ensures the effective implementation of educational processes. Therefore, strengthening these three dimensions simultaneously should be considered a strategic priority for sustainable educational quality improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that transformational leadership of principals, school culture, and teacher performance play significant roles in improving educational quality in SMPN. Effective transformational leadership provides strategic direction, motivation, and support for teachers, while a positive school culture creates an environment that encourages collaboration, discipline, shared commitment, and continuous improvement. At the same time, strong teacher performance ensures that educational programs and learning processes are implemented effectively. The findings suggest that educational quality is influenced not only by individual teacher performance but also by institutional factors that support and strengthen professional practice. Therefore, schools should prioritize strengthening transformational leadership capacity, developing a positive and collaborative school culture, and enhancing teacher performance as integrated strategies to improve educational quality, particularly in SMPN in Singorojo District, Kendal Regency.

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