

The Influence of Leadership and Work Discipline on Educational Quality Through Teacher Performance

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Abstract: *This study examines the influence of leadership and work discipline on education quality through teacher performance. Education quality reflects how well learning processes meet established standards and is influenced by leadership and teacher professionalism. This research used a quantitative approach with an associative design. The population consisted of the principal and civil servant teachers at SDN Sungai Raya in 2022, totaling 40 respondents, using a census method. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SEM-PLS with Smart PLS software. The results show that leadership and work discipline have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. However, leadership does not significantly affect education quality, while work discipline and teacher performance do. In addition, leadership has no indirect effect through teacher performance, whereas work discipline shows a significant indirect effect. These findings indicate that work discipline plays a more important role in improving education quality.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental and planned effort to create a learning environment that enables students to actively develop their potential, including spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and essential life skills, as stated in UU No. 20 of 2003. In this process, teachers play a central role as professional educators whose responsibilities include teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students across various levels of formal education. Therefore, the quality of education is closely linked to teacher performance as a key determinant of learning outcomes.

Despite various policy efforts, the quality of education in Indonesia remains relatively low. According to Yulianingsih (2022), Indonesia ranks 54th out of 78 countries based on the World Population Review 2021, still below several Southeast Asian countries. This condition reflects persistent challenges, including limited qualified teachers, unequal distribution of educational resources, rapid curriculum changes, and inadequate infrastructure, particularly in remote areas (Gaol, 2023). These issues indicate that improving educational quality requires a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teaching effectiveness.

Empirical studies have shown inconsistent findings regarding the factors influencing educational quality. Some studies report that leadership and work discipline significantly affect teacher performance and educational quality, while others find no significant relationships. These inconsistencies suggest that the relationships among leadership, work discipline, teacher performance, and educational quality are more complex and require further investigation.

One possible explanation lies in the role of teacher performance as a mediating variable. However, previous studies have largely focused on direct relationships and have rarely examined indirect effects through teacher performance. In addition, integrative studies that combine these variables into a comprehensive model are still limited, particularly in the context of primary education in Indonesia.

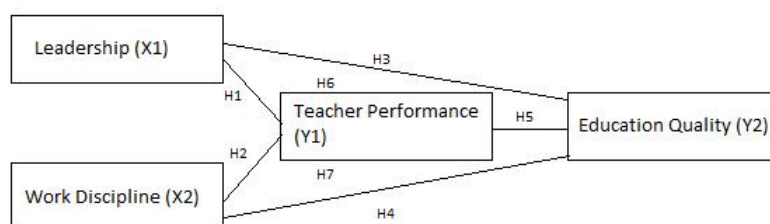
Preliminary observations at SDN Sungai Raya reveal several issues, including low teacher discipline, delays in attendance and classroom activities, and suboptimal implementation of performance evaluation systems. Performance reports at SDN 27 Sungai Raya also indicate that several program targets have not been achieved optimally.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the influence of leadership and work discipline on teacher performance and their impact on educational quality. This study also examines the indirect effects of leadership and work discipline on educational quality through teacher performance using the SEM-PLS approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher performance has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing educational quality, as it reflects teachers' ability to perform their professional duties effectively (Mahgoub et al., 2014; Mayasari et al., 2021). From a theoretical perspective, teacher performance is influenced by organizational and behavioral factors, particularly leadership and work discipline. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence others to achieve organizational goals (Rehman & Iqbal, 2020), while work discipline reflects individuals' adherence to organizational rules and responsibilities (Atun et al., 2023; Mustahyi et al., 2021). Effective leadership enables school principals to guide, supervise, and motivate teachers, whereas strong work discipline ensures consistency and accountability in carrying out educational tasks.

Several studies have reported that leadership significantly improves educational quality (Prasetya, 2020) and teacher performance (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020; Juniarti et al., 2020; Wahyudi, 2021). Similarly, work discipline has been found to positively influence both teacher performance and educational outcomes (Mulyanti et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2025; Panjaitan et al., 2025). However, other studies show contrasting results. Mukaromah et al. (2024) and Lao et al. (2024) found that leadership and teacher performance do not always have a significant effect on educational quality. These inconsistencies indicate the need for further research using a more comprehensive model.



Source: Processed by researchers, 2023

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence, leadership is expected to influence teacher performance by providing direction, supervision, and motivation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Leadership has a significant effect on teacher performance.

Work discipline ensures adherence to rules and responsibilities, which enhances teachers' effectiveness in performing their duties. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Work discipline has a significant effect on teacher performance.

Leadership is also assumed to directly influence educational quality through strategic management and policy implementation at the school level. Therefore:

H3: Leadership has a significant effect on educational quality.

Similarly, work discipline contributes to the consistency and quality of teaching processes, leading to improved educational outcomes. Thus:

H4: Work discipline has a significant effect on educational quality.

Teacher performance plays a central role in determining the effectiveness of the learning process, which directly affects educational quality. Therefore:

H5: Teacher performance has a significant effect on educational quality.

Furthermore, leadership is expected to indirectly influence educational quality through its impact on teacher performance. Thus:

H6: Leadership has a significant effect on educational quality through teacher performance.

Finally, work discipline is also expected to influence educational quality indirectly through improved teacher performance. Therefore:

H7: Work discipline has a significant effect on educational quality through teacher performance.

METHOD

The population in this study consists of all teachers and principals at public elementary schools (SDN) in Sungai Raya District, Kubu Raya Regency, West Kalimantan. The research focuses on Cluster 1, which includes SD Negeri 27 Sungai Raya, SD Negeri 17 Sungai Raya, and SD Negeri 08 Sungai Raya, with a total of 40 respondents. Due to the relatively small population size, a census sampling technique was employed, meaning all population members were included as respondents (Sugiyono, 2016).

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative (correlational) design. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to teachers and principals. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Primary data were obtained directly from respondents, while secondary data were collected from institutional documents and relevant literature (Sugiyono, 2016).

The study includes four main variables: leadership (X1), work discipline (X2), teacher performance (Y1), and educational quality (Y2). Leadership is measured through traits, habits, temperament, character, and personality (Isvandiar & Idris, 2018). Work discipline includes adherence to rules, self-control, responsibility, teamwork, innovation, and professional loyalty (Girsang, 2020). Teacher performance is measured through teaching competence, classroom management, lesson planning, and evaluation ability (Susilowati & Suhari, 2019). Educational quality is assessed based on teacher quality, curriculum, and effective leadership (Susanti, 2021).

Table 1. Operational Definition and Research Indicators

Variable	Definition	Indicator
Leadership	The principal's leadership role is essential to support the creation of professional teacher performance. The principal acts as a leader with a clear vision for the future and can realize and drive the transformation process in the school. (Purwoko, 2018).	1. Traits 2. Habits 3. Temperament 4. Personality 5. Personality (Isvandiyari & Idris, 2018)
Work Discipline	Work discipline is a tool used by managers to communicate with employees so that they are willing to change their behavior and as an effort to increase a person's awareness and willingness to obey all applicable regulations and social norms. (Hadikusumah in Harliani, 2022).	1. Comply with and adhere to mutually agreed-upon provisions. 2. Self-control. 3. Adhere to the teacher's main duties. 4. Create a harmonious atmosphere with colleagues and superiors. 5. Have a creative and innovative attitude. 6. Have loyalty to one's profession. (Girsang, 2020)
Education Quality	Educational quality is often indicated by good conditions, meeting requirements, and meeting all the necessary components of education, including input, process, output, teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, and costs (Muslimin & Kartiko, 2021).	1. Qualified educators 2. Good curriculum 3. Affective leadership (Susanti, 2021)
Teacher Performance	Teacher performance is a synergistic element that must be developed to produce professional educators who are able to produce educational processes that are relevant to the demands of the situation, conditions and needs of the community that uses graduates. (Purwoko, 2018).	1. Mastering teaching materials 2. Developing a syllabus 3. Preparing learning administration 4. Able to manage the class 5. Able to use media and learning resources 6. Able to use learning media 7. Able to approach evaluation methods 8. Able to compile and manage evaluations 9. Able to conduct learning assessments (Susilowati & Suhari, 2019)

Source: Processed by researchers, 2023

Data Analysis Technique

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS)

This study employs Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS software to analyze the relationships among variables. SEM-PLS allows simultaneous evaluation of the measurement model and structural model.

The outer model is used to assess validity and reliability. Convergent validity is evaluated based on outer loading values ($\geq 0.5-0.7$), while discriminant validity is assessed using Average Variance Extracted ($AVE \geq 0.5$). Reliability is measured using composite reliability (≥ 0.6) (Ghozali, 2021).

The inner model is used to examine relationships between variables. The evaluation includes R-square values to assess the explanatory power of the model and path coefficients to determine the strength and direction of relationships.

Hypothesis testing is conducted using a bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is considered significant if the p-value ≤ 0.05 or the t-statistic ≥ 1.96 .

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the research variables, namely leadership, work discipline, teacher performance, and education quality. Based on the processed questionnaire data, all variables show mean values within the "very good" category. The leadership variable obtained a mean score of 4,70, work discipline 4,74, teacher performance 4,80, and education quality 4,76. These results indicate that respondents tend to give highly positive assessments regarding the principal's leadership, the level of discipline, teacher performance, and the overall quality of education in SDN Sungai Raya Cluster 1. Overall, these findings suggest that the internal conditions of the school are well-established and supportive of achieving optimal education quality.

Furthermore, to examine the relationships among variables and test the research hypotheses, the analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the assistance of SmartPLS software version 4.0. PLS model testing involved two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). This evaluation aimed to ensure that the constructs used in the study met the validity and reliability criteria before testing the relationships between variables.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Outer model testing will be carried out to show the results of validity and reliability tests.

Validity Test

Table 1. Result Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	All Indicator		After Deleting Invalid Indicator	
		Outer Loading	p-value	Outer Loading	p-value
Leadership	X1.1	0,58	0,00	0,60	0,00
	X1.2	0,54	0,00	0,61	0,00
	X1.3	0,30	0,18		
	X1.4	0,60	0,00	0,62	0,00
	X1.5	0,73	0,00	0,69	0,00
	X1.6	0,81	0,00	0,78	0,00
Work Discipline	X2.1	0,28	0,28		
	X2.2	0,77	0,00	0,79	0,00
	X2.3	0,86	0,00	0,85	0,00

	X2.4	0,74	0,00	0,77	0,00
	X2.5	0,52	0,01	0,51	0,02
Teacher Performance	Y1.1	0,75	0,00	0,75	0,00
	Y1.2	0,47	0,00	0,47	0,00
	Y1.3	0,81	0,00	0,81	0,00
	Y1.4	0,80	0,00	0,80	0,00
	Y1.5	0,59	0,00	0,58	0,00
	Y1.6	0,87	0,00	0,87	0,00
	Y1.7	0,86	0,00	0,87	0,00
	Y1.8	0,80	0,00	0,80	0,00
Education Quality	Y2.1	0,62	0,00	0,61	0,00
	Y2.2	0,76	0,00	0,75	0,00
	Y2.3	0,63	0,00	0,63	0,00
	Y2.4	0,90	0,00	0,90	0,00
	Y2.5	0,56	0,00	0,56	0,00

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

Validity testing aims to determine whether the constructs meet the required criteria for further analysis. In this study, validity is evaluated using convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is assessed based on the outer loading values and p-values of each indicator. An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading $\geq 0,50$ and a p-value $< 0,05$ (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Based on Table 1, most indicators meet these criteria. However, indicators X1.3 and X2.1 were found to be invalid due to outer loading values below 0.5 and were therefore removed from the model.

Tabel 2. Result *Fornell-Larckel Criterion Test*

Variable	Work Discipline	Leadership	Teacher Performance	Education Quality
Work Discipline	0,74			
Leadership	0,67	0,66		
Teacher Performance	0,85	0,74	0,76	
Education Quality	0,89	0,72	0,93	0,70

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

After re-estimation, all remaining indicators showed p-values below 0,05, indicating that they are valid. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. The results in Table 2, show that the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than or close to 0,70, indicating good discriminant validity. This confirms that each indicator adequately measures its respective construct.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Result Reliability Test

Laten Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
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Leadership	0,68	0,80	0,44
Work Discipline	0,71	0,83	0,55
Teacher Performance	0,89	0,91	0,57
Education Quality	0,73	0,83	0,49

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

Reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A construct is considered reliable if Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0,60, and AVE is above or close to 0,50. Based on Table 3, all constructs have Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0,60, indicating good reliability. Although the AVE value for the leadership variable is slightly below 0,50 the construct is still considered reliable since it meets the other reliability criteria. Therefore, all variables are deemed reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Inner model is the stage in evaluating the coefficient of determination, predictive relevance and hypothesis testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 4. Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	<i>R Square</i>	<i>R Square Adjusted</i>
Teacher	0,78	0,77
Education	0,90	0,90

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

The R^2 value indicates the model's explanatory power. Based on Table 4, the R^2 value for teacher performance is 0,77, meaning that 76,7% of its variance is explained by leadership and work discipline. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for education quality is 0,90, indicating that 88,9% of its variance is explained by leadership, work discipline, and teacher performance. These results suggest that the model has strong explanatory power, as the R^2 values are categorized as high ($> 0,75$).

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Table 5. Results of the Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

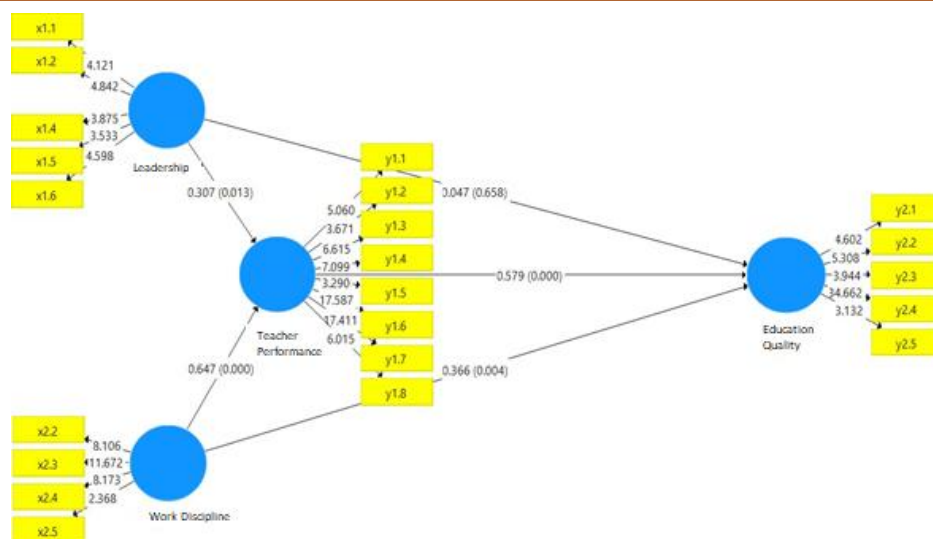
Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Leadership	200,00	200,00	
Work Discipline	160,00	160,00	
Teacher Performance	320,00	190,74	0,40
Education Quality	200,00	123,87	0,38

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

Predictive relevance (Q^2) measures how well the model predicts observed values. A Q^2 value greater than 0 indicates good predictive relevance. Based on Table 5, the Q^2 values for teacher performance (0,40) and education quality (0,38) are both greater than 0, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance and can be applied to similar contexts.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method in SEM-PLS. The significance level used is 5% ($\alpha = 0,05$), with a t-statistic threshold of 1,96.



Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

Figure 2. SEM-PLS Path Diagram

Direct Effects

Table 6. Results of the Direct Effects

Relationship	Coefficient	Statistic-t	p-value
Leadership (X1) - Teacher Performance (Y1)	0,31	2,50	0,01
Work Discipline (X2) - Teacher Performance (Y1)	0,65	5,35	0,00
Leadership (X1) - Education Quality (Y2)	0,05	0,44	0,66
Work Discipline (X2) - Education Quality (Y2)	0,37	2,88	0,00
Teacher Performance (Y1) - Education Quality (Y2)	0,58	3,80	0,00

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

The results of the direct effect analysis (Table 6) show that:

H₁ : Leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0,31$; $p < 0,01$).

H₂ : Work discipline has a significant positive effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0,65$; $p < 0,00$).

H₃ : Leadership does not have a significant effect on education quality ($\beta = 0,05$; $p < 0,66$).

H₄ : Work discipline has a significant positive effect on education quality ($\beta = 0,37$; $p < 0,00$).

H₅ : Teacher performance has a significant positive effect on education quality ($\beta = 0,58$; $p < 0,00$).

These findings indicate that teacher performance plays a key role in improving education quality, while leadership does not directly influence education quality.

Indirect Effects

Table 7. Results of the Indirect Effects

Hubungan	Koefisien	Statistik-t	p-value
Kepemimpinan (X1) - Kinerja Guru (Y1) - Mutu Pendidikan (Y2)	0,18	1,92	0,06
Disiplin kerja (X2) - Kinerja Guru (Y1) - Mutu Pendidikan (Y2)	0,38	3,06	0,00

Source: Questionnaire processed, 2023

The indirect effect analysis (Table 7) shows that:

H_6 : Leadership does not have a significant indirect effect on education quality through teacher performance ($\beta = 0,18$; $p < 0,06$).

H_7 : Work discipline has a significant indirect effect on education quality through teacher performance ($\beta = 0,38$; $p < 0,00$).

This indicates that teacher performance mediates the relationship between work discipline and education quality, but not between leadership and education quality.

Discussion

The Effect of Leadership on Teacher Performance

The results indicate that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. This is evidenced by a p-value of 0,01 ($< 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 2,50 ($> 1,96$). This implies that better leadership leads to improved teacher performance. Theoretically, this finding aligns with leadership theory, which emphasizes the critical role of leaders in directing, motivating, and supervising subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Purwoko, 2018). As leaders, school principals are responsible for creating a supportive work environment that enables teachers to perform optimally.

This finding is consistent with previous studies by Juniarti, et al., (2020), which found that leadership style significantly affects teacher performance. Similarly, Wahyudi (2021) reported that leadership and work discipline simultaneously influence teacher performance. The influence occurs because effective leaders—those who are democratic, open to feedback, and supportive—enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation. This motivation translates into improved performance in lesson planning, classroom management, and student evaluation.

The Effect of Work Discipline on Teacher Performance

The results show that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a p-value of 0,00 ($< 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 5,35 ($> 1,96$). This indicates that work discipline is a dominant factor influencing teacher performance. From a theoretical perspective, work discipline reflects adherence to rules and organizational norms (Harliani, 2022). Teachers with high discipline tend to demonstrate stronger responsibility in fulfilling their duties. This finding supports previous studies by Utari (2019), as well as Bayinah et al., (2024) and Wahyudi (2021), all of which highlight the significant role of discipline in improving teacher performance. The strong effect can be explained by the fact that disciplined teachers are more punctual, compliant with regulations, and consistent in completing tasks. These behaviors directly contribute to higher productivity and effectiveness in teaching.

The Effect of Leadership on Education Quality

The findings reveal that leadership does not have a significant effect on education quality, as indicated by a p-value of 0,66 ($> 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 0,44 ($< 1,96$). This result contradicts

theoretical expectations that leadership plays a strategic role in improving education quality (Purwoko, 2018). However, it is consistent with the findings of Mukaromah et al., (2024), which also reported no significant effect of leadership on education quality. Several factors may explain this result. First, education quality is influenced by multiple variables, including teacher performance, infrastructure, curriculum, and learning environment. Second, leadership practices may not yet be effectively translated into policies or actions that directly impact teaching and learning processes. Additionally, leadership may exert an indirect rather than direct influence, particularly through teacher performance. This is supported by the finding that leadership significantly affects teacher performance, but not education quality directly.

The Effect of Work Discipline on Education Quality

The results indicate that work discipline has a positive and significant effect on education quality, with a p-value of 0,00 ($< 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 2,88 ($> 1,96$). Theoretically, high work discipline ensures that teaching and learning processes are carried out consistently and effectively, which contributes to improved education quality. This finding is consistent with Putri et al., (2025), who found that work discipline significantly influences education quality. The effect occurs because disciplined teachers are more consistent in delivering lessons, assessing students, and maintaining structured learning environments. These factors directly enhance both the process and outcomes of education.

The Effect of Teacher Performance on Education Quality

The results show that teacher performance has a positive and significant effect on education quality, with a p-value of 0,00 ($< 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 3,80 ($> 1,96$). According to theory, teacher performance is a key determinant of educational success (Purwoko, 2018). Teachers with strong pedagogical, professional, and social competencies are better able to deliver effective instruction. This finding is supported by Idris (2018), who reported a significant positive relationship between teacher performance and education quality. The influence occurs because teachers are the primary agents in the educational process. High-performing teachers improve the quality of instruction, student understanding, and overall learning outcomes.

Indirect Effects (Mediating Role of Teacher Performance)

The results indicate that leadership does not have a significant indirect effect on education quality through teacher performance, while work discipline has a significant indirect effect. Empirically, the indirect effect of leadership on education quality through teacher performance shows a p-value of 0,06 ($> 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 1,92 ($< 1,96$), indicating that teacher performance does not mediate the relationship. Furthermore, the direct effect of leadership on education quality is also not significant. This suggests that leadership does not influence education quality either directly or indirectly in this context.

This finding contradicts the study of Prasetya (2020), which states that leadership plays a crucial role in improving education quality. However, it is consistent with Mukaromah et al., (2024), who found that leadership does not significantly affect education quality. Theoretically, this result can be explained by the concept of instructional versus administrative leadership. Leadership that is predominantly administrative tends to focus on managerial tasks rather than directly influencing teaching and learning processes. As a result, its impact on teacher performance and ultimately education quality becomes limited. In this case, teacher performance is not strong enough to act as a mediating variable because the leadership practices have not been effectively translated into actions that directly enhance classroom instruction.

In contrast, work discipline shows a significant indirect effect on education quality through teacher performance, with a p-value of 0,00 ($< 0,05$) and a t-statistic of 3,06 ($> 1,96$).

This indicates that teacher performance successfully mediates the relationship between work discipline and education quality. Additionally, the direct effect of work discipline on education quality is also significant, meaning that discipline influences education quality both directly and indirectly. The indirect effect coefficient of 0.375 suggests that improved discipline leads to better teacher performance, which in turn enhances education quality.

This finding is supported by Putri et al., (2025), who found that work discipline significantly affects education quality. From a theoretical perspective, this result aligns with behavioral theory, which suggests that individual work behavior, such as discipline that directly shapes performance outcomes and organizational effectiveness. Teachers with high discipline are more consistent in carrying out their responsibilities, such as preparing lesson plans, managing classrooms, and evaluating students. These improvements in performance naturally lead to better education quality. Therefore, unlike leadership, work discipline has a more direct and observable influence on teacher behavior, making it a stronger predictor of both teacher performance and education quality.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teacher-related factors, particularly work discipline and teacher performance, play a more dominant role in determining education quality compared to leadership. The findings show that leadership has a significant effect on teacher performance but does not directly or indirectly influence education quality. In contrast, work discipline significantly affects both teacher performance and education quality, either directly or through mediation by teacher performance. Furthermore, teacher performance itself is proven to be a key determinant of education quality. These results indicate that behavioral aspects, especially discipline, have a more immediate and measurable impact on educational outcomes than managerial aspects such as leadership, which tend to operate at a more administrative level.

The implications of this study highlight the need for schools to prioritize strengthening teacher discipline and improving teacher performance as core strategies to enhance education quality. Schools and policymakers should implement stricter supervision systems, clear regulations, and continuous professional development programs to support teachers in performing their duties effectively. In addition, school principals need to shift toward a more instructional leadership approach by actively engaging in academic supervision and supporting classroom practices. Future research is recommended to include additional variables such as motivation, organizational culture, and school facilities to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing education quality.

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