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Teachers' Perceptions of School Heads' Transformational Leadership Practices and Perceived Organizational Performance in Public Elementary Schools: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between school heads' transformational leadership and perceived organizational performance in public elementary schools in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combined surveys of 150 teachers across five schools with semi-structured interviews involving 18 purposively selected participants. Researcher-developed questionnaires assessed seven leadership behaviors and four organizational performance domains. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, linear mixed modeling, and thematic analysis guided data interpretation. Teachers rated transformational leadership ($M = 4.618$) and organizational performance ($M = 4.635$) very highly. A strong positive relationship emerged ($r = .841$, $p < .001$), with leadership remaining significantly associated with perceived performance after adjusting for teacher tenure and school clustering ($B = 0.774$, $p < .001$). Teacher tenure was not statistically significant ($p = .851$). Qualitative findings emphasized shared direction, empowerment, professional trust, coordinated responsibilities, and institutional capacity, while participants identified staffing shortages, workload pressures, and infrastructure constraints as conditions associated with contrasting experiences. The findings demonstrated a significant association between transformational leadership and perceived organizational performance, influenced by organizational conditions. School heads should strengthen participatory leadership, distributed responsibilities, and institutional support systems. The cross-sectional design, self-reported measures, and unequal school sample sizes limited causal interpretation and generalizability. By integrating statistical findings with teachers' experiences, the study provides context-specific evidence for strengthening educational leadership, institutional coordination, and sustainable school improvement.

Keywords: *Distributed Leadership, Kidapawan City, Mixed Methods, Organizational Performance, Public Elementary Schools, Transformational Leadership*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

School leadership influences how teachers collaborate, develop professionally, and respond to institutional priorities. Its contribution to school improvement is often indirect, operating through professional relationships and organizational conditions rather than determining outcomes independently. In a systematic review, Ninković and Knežević Florić (2024) identified teacher collaboration, professional learning, and self-efficacy as recurring pathways connecting leadership and teaching practice. UNESCO (2024) likewise emphasized that leadership effectiveness depends on educational, social, and governance contexts. These perspectives emphasize examining leadership behaviors alongside school functioning. Transformational leadership offers a behavioral lens for understanding how school heads communicate direction, support staff, encourage innovation, and strengthen collective commitment. The Global Transformational Leadership framework developed by Carless et al. (2000) identifies seven behaviors: vision, staff development, support, empowerment, innovative thinking, leading by example, and confidence and commitment. Turan et al. (2024) subsequently examined the adaptation and psychometric properties of this framework in Turkish educational institutions, supporting its relevance for educational research without directly validating the contextualized instrument used in the present study. The Competing Values Framework, developed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), provides a complementary view of organizational effectiveness through human relations, internal processes, open systems, and rational goals. Philippine studies have also connected transformational leadership with school-related organizational concerns. For example, Manglallan and Tagadiad (2024) examined transformational leadership alongside team building, stress management, and teachers' attitudes toward organizational change in the Davao Region. These findings offer context but do not establish district-specific organizational performance. In public elementary schools in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership and these four organizational domains therefore merits focused investigation.

1.2. Research Problem

Previous studies have associated transformational school leadership with various outcomes, although the meaning of each association depends on the measures and setting used. A review by Li and Karanxha (2024) identified mixed findings regarding leadership and student achievement across research models. In the Philippines, Dacpano (2022) investigated transformational leadership and school performance in San Fernando, La Union, while Maligsay and Quines (2023) examined organizational change and teachers' affective commitment in public elementary schools in Davao del Sur. Their outcome measures, however, differ from the multidimensional organizational functioning examined here. The concern in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City, was whether teachers who reported stronger transformational leadership also perceived stronger human relations, more effective internal coordination, greater organizational adaptability, and clearer goal attainment. Interpretation also required accounting for teachers' shared school experiences and differences in tenure under the current school head. Assuming independent responses or focusing only on correlations could obscure these factors. The study therefore addressed a specific need to examine the leadership–performance relationship alongside relevant school-level conditions and teachers' explanatory accounts, rather than assuming a uniform or causal effect.

1.3. Research Gap

The research gap concerns the combination of constructs, setting, and explanatory approach rather than an absence of scholarship on transformational leadership. Berkovich and Bogler (2021) explored pathways linking effective leadership to teachers' organizational commitment,

while Li and Karanxha (2024) reviewed transformational leadership in relation to student achievement. Similarly, Manglallan and Tagadiad (2024) investigated teachers' attitudes toward organizational change in a Philippine setting. These studies addressed important but distinct outcomes and did not directly establish the relationship between the seven transformational leadership behaviors and the four domains of perceived organizational performance in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City. A further gap concerned how the estimated association might change after accounting for teachers' tenure under their current school head and their clustering within schools. Statistical results alone also cannot explain aligned or contradictory perceptions across cases. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach addresses these limitations by relating quantitative patterns to teachers' accounts of organizational mechanisms, enabling conditions, and constraints.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to explain the relationship between teachers' perceptions of school heads' transformational leadership and perceived organizational performance in public elementary schools in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City. It assessed seven leadership behaviors and four organizational performance domains, tested their association, and examined whether the relationship remained after accounting for teachers' tenure under the current school head and nesting within schools. Through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the study also explored how teachers selected from contrasting quantitative cases explained leadership practices, enabling conditions, constraints, and discrepant patterns. Integrating the two strands supported context-sensitive interpretations for leadership development and school improvement (Jackson-Gordon & Plano Clark, 2024).

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

The study contributes to educational leadership scholarship by connecting leadership behaviors with multidimensional school organizational performance. Its findings may inform leadership development, technical assistance, and school-improvement planning within the Schools Division of Kidapawan City. For school heads, the evidence may support reflection on professional support, shared direction, collaborative internal coordination, and responsiveness to changing demands. For teachers, it may clarify leadership-related organizational experiences. The integration of quantitative associations and qualitative explanations also offers future researchers a locally grounded basis for examining the conditions under which leadership and organizational performance appear aligned or divergent, without treating association as proof of causation.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

The study relates directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education through its examination of leadership and school processes that may support effective educational environments. It also relates to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth through teacher development, professional support, and workplace relationships, although employment outcomes were not measured. SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is relevant to organizational coordination, inclusive leadership practices, and institutional responsiveness. These goals are identified by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2025). The alignment is institutional rather than an assessment of SDG indicators: the study contributes district-specific evidence that may inform school leadership and organizational improvement.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study used a pragmatic explanatory sequential mixed-methods design with quantitative priority (QUAN → qual) (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A cross-sectional descriptive-correlational survey assessed teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership and school organizational performance and their adjusted association. Interviews explained contrasting patterns. Survey findings informed the interview probes, while quantitative results and qualitative themes were integrated through narrative comparison to identify convergent, complementary, and contrasting findings (Jackson-Gordon & Plano Clark, 2024; Younas & Durante, 2023). The observational design supported association rather than causal inference.

2.2. Research Locale, Population, and Participants or Respondents

The study covered five public elementary schools in District I, Schools Division of Kidapawan City, Region XII, Philippines. Quantitative respondents were 150 teachers, including Master Teachers, with at least six months under their current school head. School heads, acting school heads, non-teaching personnel, and learners were excluded. School counts were S01 (12), S02 (38), S03 (86), S04 (11), and S05 (3). Tenure ranged from 6 to 120 months (M = 16.39, SD = 17.77, Mdn = 11). Eighteen survey respondents participated in qualitative interviews.

2.3. Sampling Technique and Sample Determination

Eligible teachers were identified from school rosters, with respondents proportionately allocated across schools. For the qualitative phase, 18 consenting survey respondents were purposively selected using maximum-variation and contrasting-case profiles (Haynes-Brown, 2025; James et al., 2024). The profiles included high leadership/high performance (4), low/low (4), high/low (4), low/high (4), and mixed or moderately aligned ratings (2). These profiles reflected relative patterns for explanatory follow-up, rather than the aggregate questionnaire interpretation categories.

2.4. Research Instruments and Reliability Assessment

The questionnaire captured tenure and school codes; 21 researcher-written leadership items covering vision, staff development, support, empowerment, innovative thinking, leading by example, and confidence/commitment (Carless et al., 2000); and 16 researcher-developed perceived-performance items covering human relations, internal process, open systems, and rational goal (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Each leadership area had three items; each performance domain, four. Five-point frequency and agreement scales were used, respectively. Expert review and cognitive refinement preceded administration, consistent with scale-development guidance (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2022; Stefana et al., 2025). Turan et al. (2024) provided educational GTL context, not instrument validation. The first 55 responses yielded α = .985 (leadership) and .977 (performance); unchanged items and responses were retained. Semi-structured interviews used common questions and survey-informed probes.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

After clearance from the Central Mindanao Colleges Research Ethics Committee and written authorization from the Schools Division of Kidapawan City, questionnaires were administered to eligible teachers. Contrasting-profile volunteers then joined private interviews. Audio recording required permission. Condensed interview records were checked and de-identified; contact details were stored separately. School heads had no access to participation lists or individual responses.

2.6. Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

All 150 questionnaires were complete. Means and standard deviations summarized indicators and domains. Mean ranges were 1.00–1.80 (very low), 1.81–2.60 (low), 2.61–3.40 (moderate), 3.41–4.20 (high), and 4.21–5.00 (very high). Pearson's r assessed overall-score association at α = .05. A random-intercept linear mixed model used leadership and tenure as fixed predictors, school membership as the random intercept, restricted maximum likelihood, and Satterthwaite degrees of freedom; five unequal clusters warranted caution (Zhang & Lai, 2024). Condensed interviews underwent repeated reading, meaning formulation, and cross-profile thematic comparison (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Quantitative findings and qualitative themes were compared and integrated through narrative synthesis (Zhou & Wu, 2022).

2.7. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent and voluntary participation were observed. Teachers were assured that refusal would not affect appraisal, promotion, assignment, workload, or professional opportunities. Participants and schools were coded; interview records were de-identified, contact details stored separately, and electronic files password-protected. Procedures aligned with educational research ethics guidance (British Educational Research Association, 2024) and the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, 2012).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Very High Perceived Transformational Leadership Across Seven Indicators

Teachers rated their school heads' transformational leadership as very high across all seven behavioral indicators. The overall mean was M = 4.618 (SD = 0.459), indicating a consistently favorable perception of the leadership practices represented in the instrument. The highest rating concerned vision (M = 4.640, SD = 0.537), followed closely by confidence/commitment (M = 4.638, SD = 0.523) and leading by example (M = 4.636, SD = 0.508). Staff development (M = 4.633, SD = 0.437) and support (M = 4.620, SD = 0.536) also received very high ratings. Empowerment (M = 4.584, SD = 0.548) and innovative thinking (M = 4.576, SD = 0.558) were the two lowest-rated indicators, although both remained in the very-high category. This pattern indicates that teachers most consistently recognized clear direction, confidence in school priorities, and the visible example set by school heads. The slightly lower scores for empowerment and innovative thinking identify relative differences within an otherwise favorable leadership profile, rather than evidence of poor performance. The higher dispersion for innovative thinking and empowerment also suggests somewhat less uniform experiences of discretion and experimentation than of staff development. Accordingly, the leadership profile combined strong vision-setting with a comparatively greater need for shared decision-making opportunities and teacher-led innovation. These findings are consistent with Dacpano (2022), who identified a positive relationship between transformational leadership and school performance in Philippine public elementary schools, and with Santos et al. (2024), who examined links between transformational leadership practices and school climate. Kılınç et al. (2024) further reported that transformational leadership was related to teachers' commitment and innovative practices, with trust in the principal shaping these relationships. Unlike the present descriptive ratings, these studies examined other outcomes and settings; their value here lies in contextualizing why vision, support, and teacher initiative are substantively relevant. The practical implication is to sustain strong direction-setting and role modeling while deliberately expanding teacher voice, autonomy, and opportunities for evidence-informed experimentation.

3.2. Very High Perceived Organizational Performance Across Four Domains

Perceived school organizational performance was rated very high in all four domains of the Competing Values Framework. The overall mean was M = 4.635 (SD = 0.425). Rational goal received the highest rating (M = 4.667, SD = 0.447), followed by open systems (M = 4.652, SD = 0.451), human relations (M = 4.613, SD = 0.443), and internal process (M = 4.610, SD = 0.488). Although the latter two domains had comparatively lower means, all four remained within the same very-high descriptive classification. The relatively high rational-goal and open-systems scores suggest that respondents viewed their schools as effective in clarifying priorities, tracking progress, responding to emerging demands, and mobilizing organizational effort. Human relations and internal process were also regarded favorably, pointing to positive perceptions of collaboration and procedures, though with slightly more room for consistency in communication and coordinated routines. These measures reflect teachers' evaluations of organizational functioning; they should not be equated with independently measured achievement or institutional effectiveness. Liu et al. (2021) identified supportive school culture and teacher collaboration as important explanatory factors in relationships between school leadership and teacher outcomes. Similarly, de Jong et al. (2023) demonstrated how distributed leadership within teacher teams is associated with collaborative practices, while Adams and Adigun (2024) linked transformative principal–teacher conversation with trust and autonomy. These findings provide a useful comparison with the present pattern: strong goal orientation and adaptability may coexist with an ongoing need to support relational and procedural coordination. For the participating schools, sustaining perceived performance calls for balancing clear performance targets and responsiveness with dependable communication, role clarity, and shared responsibility.

3.3. Strong Positive Relationship Between Leadership and Organizational Performance

The Pearson product–moment correlation revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between perceived transformational leadership and perceived school organizational performance, $r = .841$, $p < .001$. Teachers who rated their school heads more favorably in transformational leadership also tended to rate organizational functioning more favorably. The direction and magnitude of the coefficient support the research question concerning the association between the two overall constructs. The correlation should not be interpreted as proof that leadership caused improvements in organizational performance. Both constructs were assessed through the same teachers' reports at one point in time, raising the possibility of common-source influences and shared evaluative tendencies. The result therefore establishes a strong relationship among perceptions within the participating sample, not a causal effect or an independently validated change in school outcomes. This distinction makes the qualitative follow-up particularly relevant for understanding cases that did not conform to the overall positive pattern. The result aligns with Dacpano (2022), who reported a significant positive relationship between school heads' transformational leadership and school performance, and with Maligsay and Quines (2023), who found significant associations among transformational leadership, affective commitment, and organizational change in Philippine public elementary schools. Kılınç et al. (2024) also showed that the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' innovative practice may depend on relational factors such as trust. These comparisons reinforce the relevance of the association while illustrating that the processes connecting leadership and perceived functioning require more specific examination than the overall correlation alone can provide.

3.4. Leadership–Performance Association Adjusted for Tenure and School Nesting

A random-intercept linear mixed model was fitted to account for the hierarchical data structure of 150 teachers nested within five public elementary schools. Restricted maximum likelihood (REML) estimation was used, and fixed effects were assessed with Satterthwaite degrees of freedom. The model included perceived transformational leadership and teacher tenure under the current school head as fixed predictors, together with a school-level random intercept. The intercept estimate was B = 1.140 (SE = 0.191), t(97.14) = 5.984, p < .001. Model outputs also reported a REML deviance of −7.395 and log likelihood of 3.697. Transformational leadership remained positively and significantly associated with perceived organizational performance after the adjustment, B = 0.774, SE = 0.038, t(142.87) = 20.220, p < .001. The corresponding Type III fixed-effect test was F(1, 142.87) = 408.837, p < .001. Holding teacher tenure constant, a one-unit increase in perceived transformational leadership corresponded to an estimated 0.774-unit increase in perceived organizational performance in the fitted model. This coefficient expresses an adjusted statistical association and does not establish that changing leadership by one unit would produce a causal improvement of the same size. Teacher tenure under the current school head did not demonstrate a statistically significant association in the adjusted model, B = −0.000188, SE = 0.001, t(144.13) = −0.188, p = .851; the corresponding Type III test was F(1, 144.13) = 0.035, p = .851. Thus, the estimated leadership–performance relationship remained evident after tenure was included, while the tenure coefficient itself was close to zero in the observed sample. This finding concerns years served under the current school head, not teachers' broader professional expertise, collective experience, or the maturity of school systems. The school-level random-intercept standard deviation was 0.143 (variance = 0.021), whereas the residual standard deviation was 0.215 (variance = 0.046). These estimated variance components yielded a conditional intraclass correlation of approximately .31, suggesting that about 31% of the remaining modeled variation was associated with differences among school intercepts after accounting for the included predictors. Interpretation requires caution: only five schools were represented, and their respondent counts were highly uneven, ranging from 3 to 86 teachers. Consequently, the school-level variance estimate is imprecise and should not be generalized to other schools. The variance components also do not identify which contextual factors produced the remaining differences.

The findings indicate that the strong perceptual association was not explained merely by the length of time teachers had served under a particular school head. Nevertheless, remaining differences among schools are compatible with the possibility that organizational conditions influenced how leadership practices were experienced. Li and Karanxha (2024) documented variation across transformational-leadership models and outcomes, while Karakose et al. (2024) synthesized persistent challenges faced by school leaders, including staffing, resources, and administrative demands. UNESCO (2024) likewise emphasized that leadership operates within broader school and system conditions. The qualitative phase was therefore used to examine organizational circumstances—including staffing, workload, routines, infrastructure, policy pressures, and community participation—that were not estimated as separate predictors in the mixed model.

3.5. Qualitative Pathways Connecting Leadership and Organizational Functioning

The qualitative follow-up addressed how school-head leadership practices were connected in participants' accounts to trust, coordination, adaptability, and goal attainment. Eight interrelated themes were identified across the interview material relevant to this question:

shared direction and empowerment; supportive modeling and psychological safety; the substitution of compliance for initiative when transformational practices receded; distributed organizational capacity and situational calibration; relational trust in human relations; clear roles and dependable internal processes; safe experimentation and external responsiveness; and shared priorities with progress monitoring. These themes explained how participants experienced the relationship between leadership and the four organizational-performance domains; they did not constitute statistical tests of those mechanisms.

First, shared direction and empowerment were associated with collective ownership in the accounts of IDI1–IDI4, IDI9–IDI12, and IDI17. Participants explained that vision became meaningful when teachers understood school priorities, could contribute ideas, and retained discretion over how assigned activities were undertaken. IDI2 described a school head who articulated expectations while permitting teachers to choose an approach suited to their classes. This account adds qualitative meaning to the high vision score and demonstrates why vision alone may not fully describe teachers' experience of leadership.

"Our school head explains clearly what needs to be accomplished, but she also allows us to decide how we will do the activity. We are given the direction, but we still have some freedom to use the approach that works best for our class." (IDI2)

Second, supportive modeling and psychological safety were linked to trust, cooperation, and adaptability, particularly in the accounts of IDI3–IDI4 and IDI9–IDI12. Participants spoke of school heads who explained changes, listened to concerns, provided reassurance, and joined demanding work rather than issuing instructions alone. IDI4 illustrated how such support could make teachers more comfortable seeking help when difficulties arose.

"When we encounter a problem, we are not afraid to approach the school head because she listens first and helps us find a solution. Because of that, we feel more comfortable asking for assistance, especially when there are changes or new requirements." (IDI4)

Third, participants described the converse pattern when consultation, staff development, empowerment, or innovative thinking weakened. In the accounts of IDI5–IDI8 and IDI13–IDI15, work sometimes continued primarily through compliance with announced instructions rather than teacher initiative, experimentation, or sustained application of professional learning. The distinction was not between schools functioning and failing to function, but between routine procedural maintenance and a stronger sense of collective learning and ownership. Fourth, accounts from IDI13–IDI18 indicated that experienced teams, teacher-leaders, committees, and community partners could sustain school operations even when transformational practices by the school head were perceived as less prominent. Participants also emphasized that consultation, delegation, follow-up, and decisive action needed to fit staff capability and the urgency of a particular task. IDI7 expressed concern about consultation that delayed action and monitoring perceived as excessive.

"Consultation is good, but there are times when too much discussion delays the decision, especially when the matter is urgent. There are also situations when frequent follow-up feels like we are being monitored too closely, even when we already know our responsibilities." (IDI7)

Four additional themes described the domains of the Competing Values Framework more directly. Across IDI1–IDI18, relational trust and psychological safety were associated with the human-relations domain because teachers described stronger cooperation when they felt heard and trusted. Clear role assignments, accessible information, delegated coordination, deadlines, and follow-through were linked to internal-process functioning. Safe experimentation, feedback, autonomy, and engagement with outside partners were connected with open-systems adaptability. Finally, explicit priorities, shared accountability, progress monitoring, and timely closure of decisions were connected with rational-goal performance. These domains were differentiated in the interviews even though all received very high quantitative ratings.

This interpretation is consistent with Adams and Adigun (2024), who found positive relationships between transformative principal–teacher conversations and teachers' trust and autonomy, and with Bektaş et al. (2022), who identified teacher trust and motivation as pathways linking distributed leadership and professional learning. De Jong et al. (2023) likewise emphasized the collaborative conditions through which distributed leadership is enacted. Taken together, the findings indicate that leadership was experienced through everyday relationships and organizational routines, with teacher participation, psychological safety, clear coordination, adaptability, and monitored priorities forming a coherent—but noncausal—explanation of the favorable survey pattern.

3.6. Enabling Conditions and Constraints Behind Aligned and Divergent Cases

The next qualitative question examined why leadership and perceived organizational performance were aligned in some cases but diverged in others. Participants described eight interconnected aspects of this issue: consistent and trusted leadership in high–high cases; centralization and compliance in lower–lower cases; structural barriers in high-leadership/lower-performance cases; compensating distributed capacity in lower-leadership/stronger-performance cases; human resources and workload; infrastructure, policy, and community conditions; relational trust and institutional routines; and the situational fit of specific leadership practices. These accounts explained variation around the strong aggregate association without implying that particular cases were statistically representative of a wider population. In the aligned high–high cases (IDI1–IDI4), participants associated favorable assessments of both constructs with routine communication, consultation, practical staff development, teacher autonomy, dependable follow-through, and trust. Rather than identifying isolated positive actions, these participants emphasized the consistency with which leadership practices shaped school operations. By contrast, the lower–lower cases (IDI5–IDI8) described one-way communication, concentrated authority, limited mentoring, reduced autonomy, and cautious compliance. In such accounts, limited participation and opportunities for professional learning were connected with weaker perceived organizational functioning. IDI3 described predictable decisions and follow-through as conditions that helped teachers coordinate their work.

"The school head does not always have the solution, but teachers know that decisions will be explained and that commitments will be followed up. That predictability makes school processes smoother and supports trust even when the task is difficult." (IDI3)

The most consequential qualification came from high-leadership/lower-performance cases (IDI9–IDI12). Participants described school heads as supportive and direction-setting but

reported difficulties caused by insufficient staffing, heavy workloads, unreliable infrastructure, multiple deadlines, changing policies, limited resources, and weak community participation. Additional interview accounts connected these problems to staff turnover, multiple designations, uneven coordinator capacity, inadequate connectivity and equipment, and constraints on family or stakeholder availability. Participant IDI9 explained the consequences of limited personnel, whereas IDI10 emphasized that implementation conditions could hinder school processes despite favorable leadership perceptions.

"The school head was doing many things correctly, but the school did not have enough people to carry the workload. Teachers appreciated the support, yet exhaustion affected coordination and follow-through." (IDI9)

"The pattern is not because leadership is weak. It is because implementation conditions reduce the effect of good leadership. Teachers understand what should be done and receive support, but some processes remain inefficient because the resources are not adequate." (IDI10)

The opposite divergence was also present. Participants in the lower-leadership/stronger-performance and mixed-profile cases (IDI13–IDI18) emphasized experienced teachers, capable coordinators, stable procedures, peer support, committees, and community partnerships that helped schools maintain organizational functioning despite differences in perceived school-head leadership. IDI13 described teacher systems developed over several years, and IDI14 pointed to functional committees and teacher-leaders who supported daily work. These accounts suggest that organizational capacity was distributed across personnel and routines. They also clarify the mixed-model finding about tenure: years under the current school head were not statistically significant, whereas participants described collective expertise, continuity, and established working relationships as distinct resources.

"My lower leadership but higher performance ratings come from strong teacher systems. Coordinators know the processes, teachers help each other, and many routines have been refined over several years. The school head maintains basic oversight, but much of the daily functioning comes from staff experience." (IDI13)

"The higher performance rating reflects distributed leadership below the school-head level. Teachers know whom to approach, and committees are functional. This compensates for the school head's limited involvement in some areas." (IDI14)

Further analysis distinguished human capacity and workload from material and external constraints. Across IDI1, IDI3, IDI5–IDI7, IDI9, IDI13–IDI15, and IDI17–IDI18, staffing levels, school size, workload distribution, turnover, teacher experience, and coordinator competence were described as conditions affecting implementation. IDI2, IDI8, IDI10–IDI12, and IDI16 highlighted connectivity, equipment, funding, changing policies, outside deadlines, and community participation. Meanwhile, relational trust, experienced teacher-leaders, routines, and partnerships (IDI1–IDI4, IDI13–IDI16, IDI18) sometimes amplified positive school-head leadership and sometimes compensated for less intensive involvement. These are contextual explanations reported by participants, not tested moderators in the quantitative model.

Finally, IDI17 and IDI18 challenged the assumption that the maximum possible degree of consultation or follow-up would always be beneficial. Consultation could support teacher ownership during routine planning yet delay decisions when action was urgent; close monitoring could help less-experienced teachers but feel controlling to others. Thus, leadership practice was experienced differently according to urgency, task complexity, teacher experience, and workload. Participant accounts directly illustrated this distinction.

"During routine planning, teacher voice helps, but during an urgent concern the school head sometimes needs to decide quickly and explain the reason afterward. Participatory leadership works well when there is time to discuss alternatives, but during emergencies or very short deadlines the same practice can delay action." (IDI17)

"I agree that support is useful, but it can feel like micromanagement when teachers already know the task. Newer teachers usually welcomed the close guidance, while more experienced teachers sometimes preferred more space to complete the work independently." (IDI18)

The contextual interpretation is supported by Karakose et al. (2024), whose meta-synthesis documented staffing, budgets, changing regulations, and managerial workload as recurrent constraints on school leaders. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that the impact of educational leadership depends partly on conditions beyond an individual principal's control. More recent international evidence from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2026) similarly highlighted administrative pressures and resource constraints affecting principals, although these findings should not be assumed to describe the participating Philippine schools directly. The present results suggest that strong leadership perceptions and effective school functioning often coexist, but adequate human resources, institutional routines, shared expertise, and well-calibrated action also matter in participants' explanations of divergent cases.

3.7. Integrated Mixed-Methods Interpretation of Leadership and Performance

The explanatory qualitative follow-up was integrated with the survey findings to identify where the two evidence strands converged, complemented one another, qualified a general pattern, or appeared to diverge. Participants were also invited to interpret the survey findings in light of their experience. Four overarching integration-oriented themes emerged: transformational leadership should be calibrated rather than maximized; division-level structural support is necessary for implementation; distributed leadership and sustained learning systems extend beyond the school head; and survey scores alone cannot capture timing, trust, capacity, and differences in how leadership behavior is perceived. Participants in IDI1–IDI8 and IDI17–IDI18 endorsed consultation, two-way communication, teacher autonomy, delegation, support, feedback, and safe experimentation, but cautioned against treating these practices as universally beneficial at the same intensity. IDI1–IDI2, IDI4, and IDI9–IDI12 also emphasized the need for division-level support through protected professional-learning time, coordinated deadlines, simpler reporting, more adequate infrastructure, technical assistance, transitional arrangements, and expectations matched to school capacity. Accounts from IDI3, IDI6–IDI7, and IDI13–IDI16 emphasized coaching, post-training mentoring, coordinator development, succession planning, and formal opportunities for teacher-leaders. Across IDI1–IDI18, participants also identified trust, emotional climate, communication histories, training transfer, informal routines,

community responsiveness, and the timing of support as realities not fully differentiated by the survey measures.

The first integrated finding was convergence between the high aggregate scores and the favorable high–high accounts. Transformational leadership had an overall mean of M = 4.618, and perceived organizational performance had an overall mean of M = 4.635. Interviewees who rated both constructs favorably described communication, shared direction, support, empowerment, trust, and follow-through as regular school practices. Their descriptions were consistent with the favorable quantitative assessments, without establishing that all respondents experienced these practices in precisely the same way.

The second finding was complementarity between the strong correlation ($r = .841$, $p < .001$) and accounts of relational and operational pathways. Teachers connected leadership to trust and cooperation in human relations, assigned responsibilities and dependable routines in internal process, autonomy and feedback in open systems, and priorities and monitoring in rational goal. The qualitative data offered plausible explanations of how the two constructs were jointly perceived. The study did not estimate these pathways as mediating effects or demonstrate causation.

The third integrated finding qualified the adjusted leadership coefficient ($B = 0.774$, $p < .001$). High-leadership/lower-performance cases showed that favorable leadership ratings could coexist with staffing shortages, workload pressures, infrastructure limitations, policy demands, and restricted community engagement. Thus, the positive sample-level association did not mean that leadership alone could overcome all implementation barriers. The OECD (2026) report and UNESCO (2024) similarly underscore the importance of providing leaders with practical and organizational conditions that enable their work, although the local constraints here were identified through participants' accounts.

The fourth finding expanded the interpretation of teacher experience. Tenure under the current school head was not significant in the mixed model ($p = .851$), yet interviewees repeatedly described experienced teacher-leaders, cumulative institutional knowledge, and stable working routines as important to organizational functioning. The apparent difference is understandable because years under a specific head and the collective capability of a staff group are not the same construct. The qualitative accounts therefore point to organizational resources that were not directly represented by the tenure coefficient.

The fifth finding concerned organizational context. The school-level random-intercept variance (0.021) and residual variance (0.046) indicated remaining variation in the fitted model, while interviewees described school-specific differences in resources, routines, trust, staffing, infrastructure, and partnerships. These strands complement one another only at the level of interpretation: the model did not estimate separate effects of those contextual factors, and its school-level variance was based on just five unevenly represented schools.

The sixth finding was divergence within an overall positive pattern. Experienced teacher teams, committees, and partnerships could help sustain comparatively strong functioning even when school-head transformational leadership was viewed less favorably. Conversely, consultation could delay urgent decisions and intensive follow-up could be experienced either as support or

micromanagement. IDI18 described differences in teachers' interpretations of the same behavior.

"The survey may not capture how teachers interpret the same leadership behavior differently. One teacher may experience frequent follow-up as support, while another experiences it as micromanagement." (IDI18)

This integrated interpretation is consistent with Berkovich and Bogler (2021), who identified socio-affective and psychological resources as meaningful pathways connecting effective school leadership and teacher commitment, and with de Jong et al. (2023), who showed that collaborative relationships are central to distributed leadership within teacher teams. Adams and Adigun (2024) similarly demonstrated the importance of the structure of principal–teacher conversations for trust and autonomy. Overall, the mixed-methods findings support a context-sensitive interpretation: transformational leadership was strongly associated with favorable organizational-performance perceptions, while distributed capacity, implementation conditions, relational trust, and situationally appropriate leadership practices helped explain how that relationship was experienced in different schools.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that transformational leadership and perceived organizational performance were rated very highly by 150 teachers across five participating public elementary schools in District I. A strong positive relationship between these variables remained significant after accounting for teachers' tenure under the current school head and differences in school membership, while tenure itself was not significant. The qualitative findings further explained this relationship through shared direction, empowerment, professional trust, psychological safety, coordinated responsibilities, adaptive practices, and consistent goal monitoring. The qualitative accounts further identified staffing, workload, infrastructure, policy demands, community participation, and institutional capacity as contextual conditions that participants perceived to affect organizational functioning. These findings suggest that transformational leadership is closely associated with perceived organizational performance when leadership practices are supported by effective coordination, shared responsibilities, and responsive institutional systems. The study contributes to understanding how teachers experience the relationship between school leadership and organizational functioning without establishing causal effects or objectively measured institutional performance.

School heads should strengthen transformational leadership practices by maintaining clear organizational direction, promoting professional trust, encouraging teacher empowerment, and supporting collaborative decision-making. Consultation should be balanced with timely decisions, while delegation should include clearly defined responsibilities, accountability, and appropriate monitoring. Regular staff feedback and reflective evaluation should guide leadership adjustments according to school conditions. The Schools Division of Kidapawan City should complement leadership development initiatives with coordinated program schedules, streamlined reporting requirements, technical assistance, infrastructure improvements, and workload-sensitive implementation strategies. Participating schools should also strengthen distributed leadership by providing Master Teachers, coordinators, grade-level leaders, and experienced teachers with structured mentoring, coaching, and opportunities to assume defined leadership responsibilities. Professional development activities should incorporate systematic follow-through to ensure that acquired competencies are reflected in instructional practices, organizational routines, collaboration, and problem-solving. These recommendations

emphasize strengthening institutional support systems alongside transformational leadership practices to promote coordinated and sustainable school functioning.

The study involved 150 teachers from five public elementary schools in District I, with unequal school sample sizes that limited the precision and broader applicability of school-level findings. Its cross-sectional design and reliance on teachers' perceptions restricted causal interpretation and objective assessment of organizational performance. Potential response biases, restricted score variation, and unmeasured organizational conditions also influenced interpretation. Reliability testing used participants included in the final sample. Additionally, the 18 purposively selected qualitative participants provided contextual explanations, although the use of condensed interview records and relative contrasting-case classifications without specified numerical thresholds limited the methodological detail and reproducibility of the qualitative phase. Future studies may employ broader samples, independent performance indicators, and longitudinal approaches.

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