

THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER MOTIVATION, TRUST IN LEADERS, AND ITS IMPACT ON INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of female transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and trust in leaders on innovative behavior among teachers in senior high schools and vocational high schools led by female principals. The background of this study is based on the importance of teachers' innovative behavior in supporting the improvement of educational quality amid the increasingly dynamic development and changes in the educational environment. This study employed a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) for data analysis. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 183 teachers from senior high schools and vocational high schools led by female principals. The results indicate that female transformational leadership has a significant effect on teacher motivation and trust in leaders. In addition, teacher motivation significantly affects trust in leaders and innovative behavior. However, trust in leaders does not have a significant effect on innovative behavior. Female transformational leadership also does not directly influence innovative behavior. The mediation analysis reveals that teacher motivation fully mediates the relationship between female transformational leadership and innovative behavior (full mediation). Meanwhile, trust in leaders is unable to mediate the relationship between female transformational leadership and innovative behavior (no mediation). Furthermore, teacher motivation and trust in leaders in a sequential mediation model are also unable to mediate the relationship between female transformational leadership and innovative behavior. These findings indicate that improving teachers' innovative behavior can be achieved more effectively through enhancing teacher motivation fostered by female transformational leadership.

Keywords: Female Transformational Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Trust in Leaders, Innovative Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Discussing leadership in education is a fascinating and important topic to study because it directly impacts the sustainability of educational institutions. The education sector is one of the areas that significantly determines the progress and success of a nation's development (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). This is because leadership plays a significant role in determining the success or failure of an organization. Numerous studies have shown that the success of an organization's development is inextricably linked to the character of its leader. Therefore, a leadership style is needed that can integrate these two orientations: leadership that emphasizes not only task achievement and work results but also building emotional bonds, trust, and work enthusiasm among organizational members. One leadership style that fulfills these characteristics is transformational *leadership*.

This leadership style is oriented toward positive change and individual empowerment within the organization. Principals who implement transformational leadership are able to create a clear vision, bolster morale, and foster teacher trust and commitment to the school's goals (Komara *et al.*, 2025). Principals who are overly task-focused can indeed create organizational efficiency, but risk reducing teacher morale. Conversely, principals who are overly relationship-oriented can create a comfortable work environment but place less emphasis on achieving results and teacher performance. An interesting phenomenon that is currently occurring is the increasing number of female school principals. in Indonesia. This is inseparable from gender equality policies in education, which open up broader opportunities for women to occupy strategic positions (Utami, 2019).

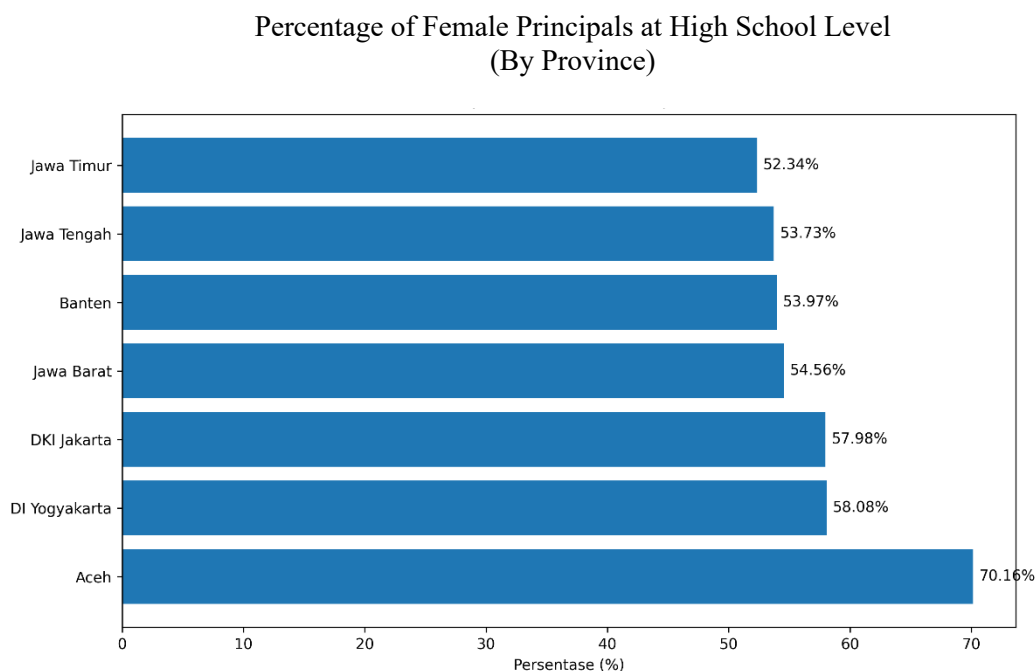


Figure 1.1 1of Female Principals at High School Level

Source: kemendikdasmen.go.id

According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021, the percentage of female principals at the high school level in several provinces has exceeded 50%, indicating increasing female involvement in secondary education leadership positions. Aceh Province ranks highest with a percentage of 70.16%, far above other provinces, which generally range from 52–58%. Meanwhile, provinces on the island of Java, such as East Java, Central Java, Banten, and West Java, show relatively close and moderate percentages, while Jakarta and Yogyakarta have slightly higher percentages.

**Comparison of the Percentage of Female Principals (High School)
Aceh vs National**

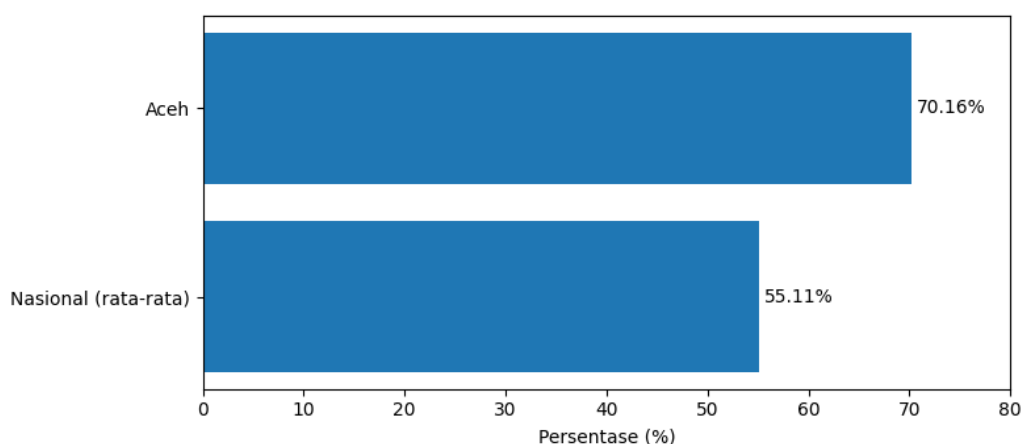


Figure 1.2 2of Female Principals (High School)

Aceh vs National

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2021)

Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2021 also shows a significant difference between the percentage of female high school principals in Aceh Province and the national average. Aceh recorded a percentage of 70.16%, significantly higher than the national average of 55.11%.

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This difference of more than 15 percentage points indicates that female representation in secondary school leadership in Aceh is significantly higher than the national average. This high percentage indicates that Aceh has certain characteristics or policies that are more conducive to women's access to principal positions. This difference emphasizes that the increasing role of women in educational leadership has not occurred uniformly across Indonesia. Therefore, the situation in Aceh is interesting to study further to understand the factors driving the high representation of women and its relevance as a comparison to the dynamics of educational leadership at the national level. Research Othman *et al.* (2023) conducted in Malaysia supports this finding, namely that female academic leaders adopt a transformational leadership style more often than men, especially in terms of providing motivation and individual attention to subordinates. In the context of high schools/vocational schools, the role of female principals is increasingly important because they are not only required to carry out managerial functions, but also to be an inspiration for teachers in facing curriculum changes, technological advances, and the challenges of globalization (Husna Asri *et al.*, 2021). Bilal *et al.* (2025) emphasizes that female transformational leadership has a positive effect on *trust* (subordinate trust) and *innovative behavior* (innovative behavior). This means that the presence of female principals who practice transformational leadership can strengthen teachers' trust in their leaders, which ultimately has an impact on increasing innovation in the teaching and learning process (Amin *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, the success of transformational leadership in encouraging innovative teacher behavior depends not only on the leadership style but also on other factors such as teacher work motivation and trust in the leader (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 1985). Highly motivated teachers are encouraged to try new things in learning, adapt to technology, and develop innovative strategies to improve student learning outcomes. On the other hand, trust in the leader strengthens subordinates' sense of security, so they feel more open to innovating and expressing new ideas (Amin *et al.*, 2018; Mayer *et al.*, 1995). In female leadership, aspects such as empathy, appreciation, personal attention, and motivational encouragement appear more frequently than in male leadership. Several studies have shown that female leaders tend to use "*relationship-oriented leadership*," which encourages a more relational, communicative approach and considers the needs of subordinates. Conversely, in Manzoor dan Abrar (2011) explaining that male leadership is often associated with an "*ego-driven form of direction giving*" that emphasizes instruction, discipline, and results orientation. Thus, female leadership tends to be closer to the characteristics of transformational leadership, especially in aspects of *individualized consideration* and *inspirational motivation*, thus potentially having a greater impact on motivation, trust in leaders, and teacher innovation.

This phenomenon of gender-based leadership differences is not only found in research. Through observation, one high school in Lhokseumawe has also demonstrated innovation from its previous principal. One of these innovative programs is the "*SMANDA FIESTA*" program, implemented in 2024 during the tenure of Mrs. Nur Akla S.Pd., MM. This demonstrates the existence of innovative behavior in female leadership. Furthermore, a similar phenomenon is also evident in senior high schools, as demonstrated by SMAN Modal Bangsa Arun Lhokseumawe, which has established an exclusive partnership with the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMIPA) of Gadjah Mada University. This collaboration reflects the school's innovative leadership strategy in expanding its academic network to improve the quality of learning and enhance students' academic insight. Similar observations were made at SMK Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe, which demonstrated the implementation of a *link and match* between the educational unit and national policies through the *In-House Training* (IHT) for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This activity not only focused on curriculum alignment and teaching material development but also encouraged collective teacher capacity building by involving all elements of school management.

These three phenomena demonstrate the innovation of female leadership in high schools, reflected in the principals' ability to design, implement, and expand strategic school programs. Female leadership is not solely administrative in nature but also emphasizes strengthening collaboration, developing human resource capacity, and openness to changes in education policy. Thus, the innovative behavior of teachers and principals is a crucial factor in improving the quality of learning and the competitiveness of educational institutions. However, phenomena in the school environment indicate that the creation of innovation in learning practices has not developed evenly among teachers. Some teachers still tend to rely on conventional methods and show limitations in proposing new and innovative ideas, whether related to learning strategies, media utilization, or classroom management. Furthermore, teacher participation in providing suggestions for improvement and promoting new ideas within the school environment remains relatively limited.

Teachers often remain passive in conveying innovative ideas due to a lack of confidence or organizational support. This phenomenon results in a low rate of ideas being translated into sustainable innovative programs. Not all teachers demonstrate active involvement in implementing the innovations they have designed, including consistently devoting energy and contributions to ensuring their success. This situation suggests that teachers' innovative behavior is influenced not only by individual abilities but also by leadership support, work motivation,

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and trust in school leaders. Teachers with innovative behavior tend to actively propose new ideas to improve the quality of learning and the effectiveness of school activities. However, teachers' courage in proposing innovative ideas depends heavily on the leadership created by the principal. If the principal is open, supportive, and values teachers' input, teachers will be more encouraged to express their ideas without fear of rejection or negative consequences. Conversely, a rigid leadership style that lacks participation can hinder the emergence of innovative ideas from teachers. When female principals implement transformational leadership, teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of innovative behavior compared to those with purely administrative or instructional leadership. Female principals generally emphasize empathy, interpersonal communication, individualized attention, and emotional support, creating a climate of psychological safety for teachers. This encourages teachers to boldly propose new ideas, experiment with creative learning methods, and develop innovative learning media and strategies.

In the aspect of women's transformational leadership, the goal-setting aspect *still* faces problems where institutional goals have not been fully communicated clearly and participatory to teachers, resulting in an inadequate understanding and commitment to the direction of school change. This condition affects teachers' motivation to align individual performance with the shared goals set by the leadership. Furthermore, in the dimension of human resource development (*developing people*), female leaders' efforts to improve teachers' professional capacity have not always been accompanied by a sustainable mentoring and empowerment system. Limitations in providing feedback, competency development opportunities, and recognition of teacher potential can affect teachers' level of trust in their leaders. This impacts teachers' readiness to actively participate in changes and innovations in school learning.

Another phenomenon is seen in the aspect of school culture reshaping , where the values of collaboration, openness, and innovation have not been fully internalized in teachers' daily practices. An organizational culture that is still administrative and less adaptive can hinder the efforts of female leaders to encourage change oriented towards innovative learning. This phenomenon indicates that the effectiveness of female transformational leadership has important implications for teacher motivation, trust in leaders, and innovative teacher behavior, so it needs to be studied empirically to understand the causal relationships between variables in the educational context.

Furthermore, teacher motivation is a key factor in determining the quality of professional work performance in schools. However, current research indicates that motivation in learning preparation and teaching activities is not yet fully optimal for some teachers. Preparation of learning materials is often carried out routinely and administratively, without efforts to develop innovative learning methods or media. During the teaching process, teacher motivation can fluctuate due to workload, limited resources, and a lack of supportive work environment, impacting the quality of classroom learning interactions. Furthermore, teacher motivation in carrying out supporting tasks also faces significant challenges. Motivation in student evaluation and administrative tasks is often perceived as a time-consuming formal obligation, thus receiving less attention. Low motivation in these areas can limit the overall effectiveness of learning and hinder the emergence of innovative teacher behavior. This phenomenon suggests that teacher motivation is significantly influenced by leadership style, trust in the leader, and a work climate that supports engagement and professional development.

Furthermore, teachers' trust in school leaders is a crucial foundation for building effective and sustainable working relationships. However, phenomena within the school environment indicate that trust in the reliability of leaders and the organization has not yet been fully established. Some teachers still doubt the consistency of policies and the ability of female leaders to manage schools professionally. Furthermore, trust in leaders' integrity, fulfillment of promises and commitments, and fair treatment of subordinates are also important issues in leadership relationships within schools. This phenomenon has resulted in decreased work motivation and teacher engagement, and has the potential to hinder the emergence of innovative behavior. Therefore, trust in leaders is a strategic variable that mediates the influence of transformational leadership on teacher motivation and innovative performance. Furthermore, the increasing representation of women as school principals in Indonesia is an important factor to examine. In the context of the evolving national education system, which demands adaptive change, pedagogical innovation, and the ability to adapt to technology, a leadership style that enhances teacher motivation, trust, and creativity is crucial.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research is an important foundation in compiling research because it provides an overview of the development of scientific studies related to the variables being studied. According to Sugiyono (2022) stated that previous research is used as study material to obtain information on theories, methods, and research results that have been conducted previously, thus serving as a reference in developing more comprehensive research. Creswell (2018) explained that reviewing previous research serves to identify existing findings, identify research gaps , and strengthen

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the conceptual basis for developing hypotheses. Meanwhile, Sekaran and Bougie (2019) states that a review of previous research helps researchers understand the relationship between variables, compare research results, and show the contribution of research conducted to the development of science. In this study, the review of previous research focuses on various studies that discuss the relationship between women's transformational leadership, teacher motivation, trust in leaders, and innovative behavior. These studies are analyzed based on their objectives, variables used, research methods, and results. This analysis aims to identify similarities, differences, and gaps in research that require further study to strengthen the argument for the importance of this research. Duraku and Hoxha (2021) found in their research that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in increasing individual work motivation. Leaders who are able to inspire and empower their subordinates will create a work environment that encourages intrinsic motivation. This finding is also supported by Rochmaniah et al. (2023), who stated that transformational leadership contributes to increasing work motivation through providing direction, support, and developing individual potential.

In their research, Bilal et al. (2021) found that work motivation plays a crucial role in building trust in leaders. Highly motivated individuals tend to be more open to leadership direction and believe that leaders can lead the organization to achieve its stated goals. When teachers are highly motivated, they exhibit a positive attitude toward their work and the organization, including their leaders. Bilal et al.'s (2021) study also found that trust in leaders can increase innovative behavior. This difference in results is possible because innovative behavior is complex and influenced by various factors other than trust in leaders, such as individual motivation, organizational culture, work environment support, opportunities for innovation, and the availability of adequate resources. Furthermore, research by Bilal et al. (2021) also found that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in building subordinate trust in the leader. Leaders who can provide a clear vision, lead by example, and provide support to their subordinates will more easily gain the trust of organizational members. Rochmaniah et al. (2023) in their research showed that leaders who are able to provide inspiration, support, appreciation, and development opportunities to their subordinates will gain a higher level of trust. The results of this study are consistent with those of Bilal et al. (2021), who found that women's transformational leadership positively influences trust in leaders.

Research by Mahmood et al. (2020) found that work motivation positively influences innovative behavior. Highly motivated individuals are more encouraged to explore new ideas and produce innovations that can benefit the organization. Research by Bilal et al. (2021) and Mahmood et al. (2020) shows that the influence of transformational leadership on innovative behavior often does not occur directly, but rather through certain mechanisms such as motivation, work engagement, psychological empowerment, and other internal factors. Furthermore, Duraku and Hoxha (2021) explained that transformational leadership has the ability to increase individual work motivation by providing vision, inspiration, and ongoing support. This finding is also supported by Mahmood et al. (2020), who stated that motivation is a crucial factor driving innovative behavior in organizations. Highly motivated individuals tend to be more confident in proposing new ideas, seeking creative solutions, and making various improvements to their work. Research by Bilal et al. (2021) found that trust in leaders can be a factor driving innovative behavior. This indicates that in the school context, trust in leaders is a key factor determining the emergence of innovative teacher behavior. Duraku & Hoxha (2021) found that teacher motivation is a factor driving innovative behavior. This indicates that in the school context, teacher motivation is a primary factor determining the emergence of innovative behavior.

Conceptual Framework

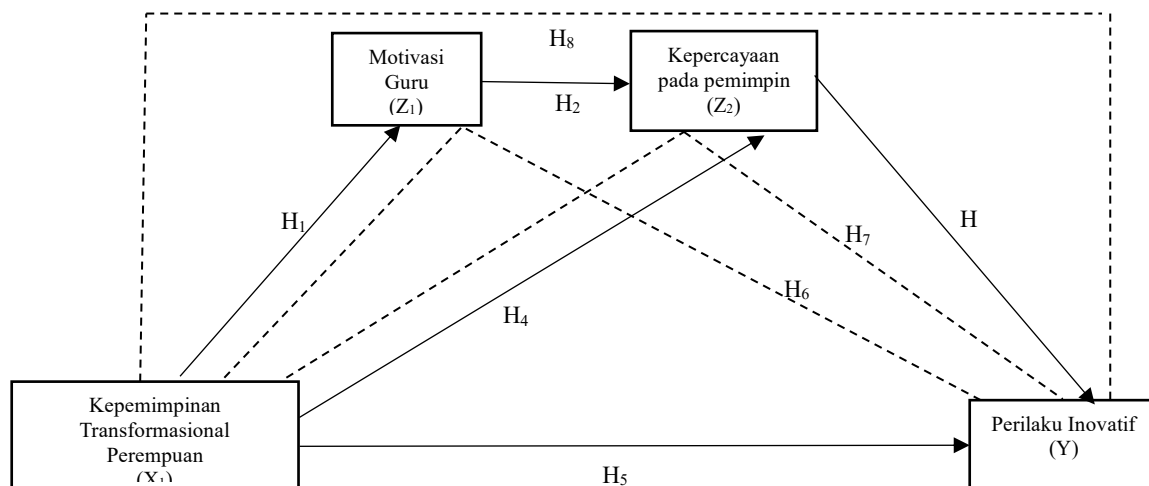


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the figure above, there are one endogenous factor, one exogenous factor, and two mediating factors in this research model. The endogenous variable used in this study is innovative behavior, while the exogenous variable is women's transformational leadership, and the mediating variables are teacher motivation and trust in leaders.

Hypothesis

Based on the background, problem formulation, objectives that have been written, the following hypothesis is created:

- H₁: Women's transformational leadership has a significant influence on teacher motivation.
- H₂: Teacher motivation has a significant influence on trust in leaders.
- H₃: Trust in leaders has a significant influence on innovative behavior.
- H₄: Women's transformational leadership has a significant influence on trust in leaders.
- H₅: Teacher motivation has a significant influence on innovative behavior.
- H₆: Women's transformational leadership has a significant influence on innovative behavior.
- H₇: Teacher motivation mediates the influence between women's transformational leadership on innovative behavior.
- H₈: Trust in leaders mediates the influence between women's transformational leadership on innovative behavior.
- H₉: Teacher motivation and trust in leaders sequentially mediate the influence between women's transformational leadership on innovative behavior.

METHOD

The object in the research plan by the author is Senior High School and Vocational School (SMA/K) which is led by a female principal with each variable, namely female transformational leadership, teacher motivation, trust in leaders, and innovative behavior. Meanwhile, the research location was conducted at a high school/vocational school in Lhokseumawe city. Ghazali (2014) states that the population is the sum of all objects or individual units observed in the study. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2019), the population is defined as the entire group of people, events, or interesting things that researchers want to study. So it can be concluded that the population in this study is all teachers who teach at high schools/vocational schools led by female principals in Lhokseumawe City, consisting of 3 schools, namely, SMAN Modal Bangsa Arun, SMAN 2 Lhokseumawe, and SMKN 2 Lhokseumawe. The population was chosen because it is relevant to the phenomenon being studied and in accordance with the focus of the research variables. The sampling technique used in this study is *non-probability sampling*. According to Sekaran dan Bougie (2019) *Non-probability sampling* is a sampling technique in which the elements of the population do not

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have an equal or known chance of being selected as a sample, and the selection of the sample is based on certain considerations by the researcher. The *nonprobability sampling* technique was used because the research population is specific and relatively limited in number, so all members of the population were used as research samples. This study used a *nonprobability sampling technique*, because sampling was based on certain characteristics that were in accordance with the research objectives. The sampling criteria in this study were teachers who teach at high schools/vocational schools in Lhokseumawe city led by female principals. These criteria serve to confirm population boundaries, not as a respondent filter. The method used was saturated sampling (*total sampling*). Saturated sampling is a sampling technique by using all members of the population as research samples. This technique was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain comprehensive data, thus allowing the researcher to involve all members of the population to obtain more comprehensive and accurate data. Taking into account the existing population and the use of saturated sampling techniques, the sample size in this study was 183 teachers. The data analysis method used in this study is the *Structural Equation Model* (SEM) approach based on *Partial Least Squares* (PLS). SEM is a field of statistical study that can examine a series of relationships that are relatively difficult to measure simultaneously. SEM is an integrated analysis technique combining confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis, and structural modeling. Solimun et al. (2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The latent variable model analyzed in this study is shown in Figure 2.

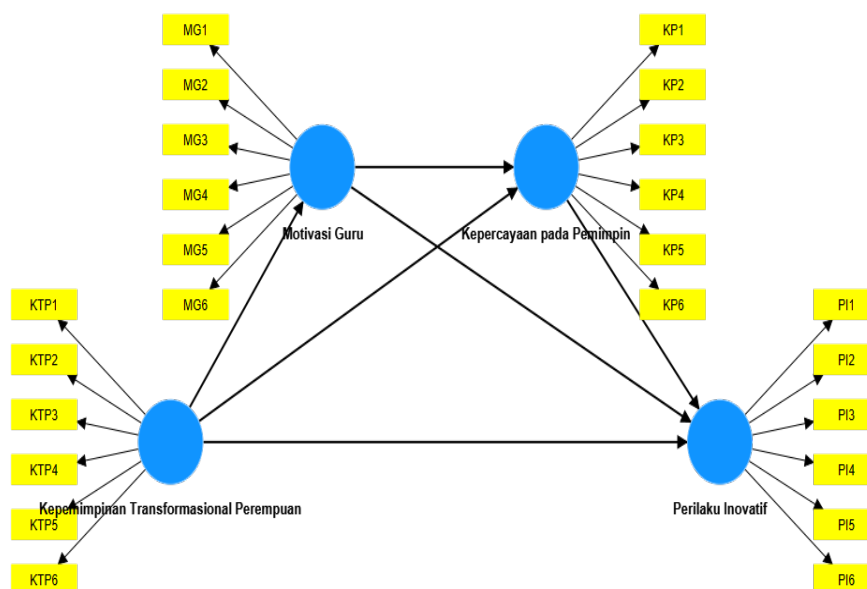


Figure 2 Latent Variable Model of Research

Figure 2 shows the conceptual model of the research analyzed using the *Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM). This model describes the relationship between Women's Transformational Leadership as an exogenous variable with Teacher Motivation, Trust in Leaders, and Innovative Behavior as endogenous variables. Model testing in this study was conducted through two main stages, namely *outer model evaluation* and *inner model evaluation*. *Outer model evaluation* aims to assess the quality of the measurement model by testing the validity and reliability of the indicators used to represent the latent variables. Testing at this stage includes *convergent validity*, *discriminant validity*, and *construct reliability*. Meanwhile, *inner model evaluation* aims to test the structural relationship between latent variables, including the strength and significance of the influence between variables. Analysis at this stage is carried out through testing the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficient, and the significance of the relationship between variables.

Evaluation of Model Fit Test (Model Fit Test)

model fit test was conducted to assess the overall suitability of the research model. In this study, *model fit evaluation* was conducted by examining the *SRMR*, *d_ ULS*, *d_ G*, *Chi-Square*, *NFI*, *GoF*, and *Q² Predictive Relevance values*.

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Table 7
Model Fit Test

Parameter	Fit Criteria	Coefficient	Information
SRMR	< 0.10	0.036	Meet the <i>fit model</i>
d-ULS	> 0.05	0.385	Meet the <i>fit model</i>
dG	> 0.05	0.683	Meet the <i>fit model</i>
Chi Square	χ^2 statistic $\geq \chi^2$ table	667,058 $\geq 35,172$	Meet the <i>fit model</i>
NFI	Approaching the value 1	0.894	<i>Ideally</i>
GoF	0.1 (small GOF), 0.25 (moderate GOF), 0.36 (strong GOF)	0.775	Strong GOF
Q ² Predictive Relevance	Q² > 0: Has <i>predictive relevance</i> Q² < 0: Lacks <i>predictive relevance</i> . 0.02 (Weak) 0.15 (Moderate) 0.35 (Strong)	Q ² Innovative Behavior 0.603 > 0 Q ² Teacher Motivation 0.739 > 0 Q ² Trust in Leaders 0.666 > 0	Q ² strong

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS, 2026

Based on Table 7, the results of *the model fit test* indicate that the research model meets the feasibility criteria. Therefore, the model can be used to analyze the relationships between latent variables due to its good fit with the empirical data and relevant predictive capabilities. The model fit test results are as follows:

- 1) The SRMR value was 0.036, which is lower than the maximum limit of 0.10. These results indicate that the research model has a low residual error rate, thus indicating a good fit.
- 2) The d_ ULS value of 0.385 and d_ G of 0.683 indicate that the model has met the *goodness of fit criteria* because the values obtained are within acceptable limits.
- 3) *Chi-Square* value of 667.058 is greater than the *Chi-Square* table value of 35.172, so the model is considered capable of explaining the relationship between the constructs built in the study.
- 4) *Normed Fit Index (NFI)* value of 0.894 indicates that the model has approached the ideal value, namely 1. The closer to 1, the better the level of suitability of the resulting model.
- 5) *Goodness of Fit (GoF)* value of 0.775 is well above the minimum threshold for a strong GoF of 0.36. This result indicates that the research model has excellent ability to explain the relationship between the latent variables studied.
- 6) All endogenous variables have Q² values greater than zero. The Teacher Motivation variable has a Q² value of 0.739, the Trust in Leaders variable of 0.666, and the Innovative Behavior variable of 0.603. All these values are above the 0.35 criterion, indicating a strong category. Thus, the research model has good predictive ability for the endogenous variables studied.

Coefficient of Determination (R²) Test

Table 8 R-Square (R²) Values

Endogenous Variables	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Trust in Leaders	0.689	0.686
Teacher Motivation	0.735	0.733

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Innovative Behavior	0.733	0.728
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Based on Table 8, it is known that the Teacher Motivation variable has an R^2 value of 0.735. This indicates that 73.5% of the variation in Teacher Motivation can be explained by Female Transformational Leadership, while the remaining 26.5% is explained by other factors outside the research model. The Trust in Leaders variable has an R^2 value of 0.689, which means that 68.9% of the variation in Trust in Leaders can be explained by Female Transformational Leadership and Teacher Motivation. Meanwhile, 31.1% is explained by other variables not included in the research model. Furthermore, the Innovative Behavior variable has an R^2 value of 0.733, which means that 73.3% of the variation in Innovative Behavior can be explained by Female Transformational Leadership, Teacher Motivation, and Trust in Leaders. The remaining 26.7% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Overall, the R^2 values for the three endogenous variables indicate a strong category, so the research model has a good ability to explain the phenomenon being studied.

Effect Size (F^2)

Table 9
Effect Size Values (F^2)

Variables	Trans Women's Rights	Trust	Teacher Motivation	Innovative Behavior
Women's Transformational Leadership		0.261	2,773	0.009
Trust in Leaders				0.025
Teacher Motivation		0.079		0.378
Innovative Behavior				

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS, 2026

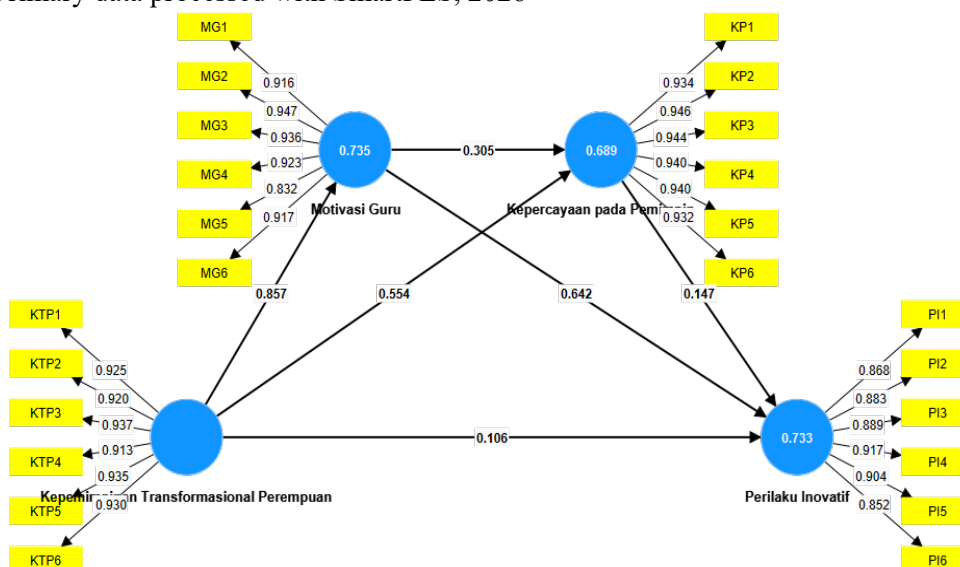


Figure 3 PLS-SEM Algorithm Model Output

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Hypothesis Testing Results

Direct Effect Between Variables

Table 10
Direct Effect Test (Path Coefficient Bootstrapping Direct Effect)

Path Efficiency	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Note
Women's Transf Decree -> Teacher Motivation	0.857	0.853	0.038	22,335	0,000	Accepted
Teacher Motivation -> Trust in Leaders	0.305	0.302	0.100	3,050	0.002	Accepted
Trust in Leaders -> Innovative Behavior	0.147	0.144	0.094	1,558	0.119	Rejected
Women's Transgender Decree -> Trust in Leaders	0.554	0.553	0.100	5,520	0,000	Accepted
Teacher Motivation -> Innovative Behavior	0.642	0.642	0.098	6,615	0,000	Accepted
Women's Transgender Decree -> Innovative Behavior	0.106	0.104	0.101	1,047	0.295	Rejected

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS, 2026

Based on the hypothesis testing results shown in Table 10, the direct effect test *between* variables in the research model was analyzed using the PLS-SEM method through a *bootstrapping procedure*. The interpretation of each hypothesis is as follows:

- H₁: The influence of female transformational leadership (X) on teacher motivation (Z₁) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.857, *t-statistic* 22.35 (>1.96) and *p value* 0.000 (<0.05) shows that female transformational leadership has a significant influence on teacher motivation so that the first hypothesis is accepted.
- H₂: The influence of teacher motivation (Z₁) on trust in leaders (Z₂) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.305, *t-statistic* 3.050 (>1.96) and *p value* 0.002 (<0.05) shows that teacher motivation has a significant influence on trust in leaders so that the second hypothesis is accepted.
- H₃: The influence of trust in leaders (Z₂) on innovative behavior (Y) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.147, *t-statistics* of 1.558 (<1.96) and *p-value* of 0.119 (>0.05) indicates that trust in leaders does not have a significant influence on innovative behavior so that the third hypothesis is rejected.
- H₄: The influence of women's transformational leadership (X) on trust in leaders (Z₂) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.554, *t-statistic* 5.520 (<1.96) and *p-value* 0.000 (>0.05) shows that women's transformational leadership has a significant influence on trust in leaders so that the fourth hypothesis is accepted.
- H₅: The influence of teacher motivation (Z₁) on innovative behavior (Y) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.642, *t-statistic* 6.16 (>1.96) and *p-value* 0.000 (<0.05) shows that teacher motivation has an influence and significant on innovative behavior so that the fifth hypothesis is accepted.
- H₆: The influence of women's transformational leadership (X) on innovative behavior (Y) with a coefficient value (influence) of 0.106, *t-statistic* 1.047 (<1.96) and *p-value* 0.295 (>0.05) shows that women's transformational leadership has no influence. significant on innovative behavior so that the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

Indirect Effect Between Variables

Table 11 Indirect Effect Test
(*Path Coefficient Bootstrapping Indirect Effect*)

Path Efficiency	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Note
Women's Transf Decree -> Teacher Motivation -> Innovative Behavior	0.550	0.548	0.090	6,087	0,000	Accepted
Kep. Female Transf -> Trust in Leaders -> Innovative Behavior	0.081	0.078	0.054	1,518	0.129	Rejected
Women's Transf Decree -> Teacher Motivation -> Trust in Leaders -> Innovative Behavior	0.038	0.038	0.030	1,281	0.200	Rejected

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS, 2026

Discussion

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Teacher Motivation

The first hypothesis in this study stated that female transformational leadership influences teacher motivation. The results showed that female transformational leadership can increase teacher motivation, thus the first hypothesis was accepted. This means that the better the principal's implementation of transformational leadership, the higher the teacher's motivation in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. These findings indicate that female leaders who implement a transformational leadership profile are able to provide inspiration, support, individual attention, and encouragement to teachers to achieve organizational goals. Through these abilities, leaders can build work enthusiasm, increase commitment, and encourage teachers to perform more optimally.

The results of this study align with those of Duraku and Hoxha (2021), who found that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in increasing individual work motivation. Leaders who are able to inspire and empower their subordinates will create a work environment that encourages intrinsic motivation. This finding is also supported by Rochmaniah et al. (2023), who stated that transformational leadership contributes to increasing work motivation through providing direction, support, and developing individual potential.

These findings indicate that teachers will have higher motivation when they feel support, appreciation, and attention from their leaders. Therefore, female transformational leadership is an important factor in encouraging increased teacher motivation in the school environment. Theoretically, these findings align with Bass (1985), who stated that transformational leaders are able to increase follower motivation through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. Furthermore, Eagly et al. (2003) explained that female leaders tend to prioritize open communication, empathy, and subordinate empowerment, thus building positive working relationships and increasing the motivation of organizational members. Thus, the profile of female transformational leadership is one factor capable of creating a work climate conducive to increasing teacher motivation.

The Influence of Teacher Motivation on Trust in Leaders

The second hypothesis in this study states that teacher motivation influences trust in leaders. The results show that teacher motivation can increase trust in leaders, thus accepting the second hypothesis. This means that the higher the motivation a teacher has in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, the higher the level of trust they place in their leaders. These findings indicate that highly motivated teachers tend to display positive attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. Strong motivation encourages teachers to be more involved in school activities, have a greater commitment to achieving organizational goals, and build harmonious working relationships with their leaders. These conditions can ultimately increase teachers' confidence in the abilities, integrity, and decisions made by their leaders.

The results of this study align with those of Bilal et al. (2021), who found that work motivation plays a crucial role in building trust in leaders. Highly motivated individuals tend to be more open to leadership direction and believe

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that leaders are capable of leading the organization to achieve its stated goals. Theoretically, these findings align with Robbins and Judge's (2023) findings, which state that motivation drives individuals to consistently strive toward achieving organizational goals. When teachers are highly motivated, they demonstrate a positive attitude toward their work and the organization, including their leaders. Furthermore, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) explain that trust in leaders is formed when subordinates have confidence in the leader's abilities, integrity, and concern. Motivated teachers are more open to building working relationships with their leaders, thus fostering positive perceptions of their competence and integrity. These findings are also supported by McAllister (1995), who states that working relationships based on commitment and positive interactions strengthen trust between subordinates and leaders.

The Influence of Trust in Leaders on Innovative Behavior

The third hypothesis in this study stated that trust in leaders influences innovative behavior. However, the results showed that trust in leaders had no effect on innovative behavior, thus rejecting the third hypothesis. This finding indicates that teachers' level of trust in leaders is not yet able to directly encourage innovative behavior. Although teachers have confidence in the competence, integrity, and ability of leaders in managing the organization, these conditions do not necessarily encourage teachers to generate new ideas, develop creative learning methods, or implement innovative changes in carrying out their duties. The results of this study are inconsistent with those of Bilal et al. (2021), who found that trust in leaders can increase innovative behavior. This difference in results is possible because innovative behavior is complex and influenced by various factors other than trust in leaders, such as individual motivation, organizational culture, work environment support, opportunities for innovation, and the availability of adequate resources. Theoretically, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) explain that trust in leaders reflects subordinates' beliefs in the leader's ability, integrity, and *benevolence*.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Trust in Leaders

The fourth hypothesis in this study states that women's transformational leadership influences trust in leaders. The results show that women's transformational leadership can increase trust in leaders, thus accepting the fourth hypothesis. These findings indicate that female leaders who apply a transformational leadership style are able to build positive relationships with teachers through effective communication, attention to individual needs, providing support, and the ability to inspire teachers in achieving organizational goals. This profile makes teachers more confident in the leader's abilities and integrity, thus increasing the level of trust given.

The results of this study align with those of Bilal et al. (2021), who stated that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in building subordinate trust in leaders. Leaders who are able to provide a clear vision, set an example, and provide support to their subordinates will more easily gain the trust of organizational members. Theoretically, these findings align with Bass (1985), who stated that transformational leaders are able to influence followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized *consideration*. These four dimensions encourage the creation of positive relationships between leaders and subordinates, thereby increasing levels of trust. This opinion is reinforced by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), who explain that trust in leaders is built based on subordinates' perceptions of the leader's ability, integrity, and *benevolence*. Female leaders who implement transformational leadership tend to demonstrate these three aspects through consistent, fair, and development-oriented behavior.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Trust in Leaders

The fourth hypothesis in this study states that women's transformational leadership influences trust in leaders. Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, the path coefficient value was **0.554**, a value of 0.554. **The t-statistic was 5.520 (>1.96)**, and **the p-value was 0.000 (<0.05)**. These results indicate that female transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on trust in leaders, thus the fourth hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the better the implementation of transformational leadership by female principals, the higher the level of teacher trust in their leaders. Teachers who feel the attention, support, role model, and open communication from leaders will be more confident in the leader's ability, integrity, and commitment in running the school organization.

Trust in a leader is formed when teachers perceive the leader as having the ability to make sound decisions, be fair in treating all members of the organization, and demonstrate consistency between words and actions. This profile is a crucial component of transformational leadership, which can foster positive working relationships between leaders and teachers. When teachers feel valued, their opinions heard, and given opportunities to develop, a sense of security and confidence that the leader is capable of guiding the organization toward shared goals emerges. This trust-based relationship strengthens teachers' cooperation, loyalty, and commitment to the school. Theoretically, the results

of this study are in line with the transformational leadership theory proposed by **Bass (1985)**, which explains that transformational leaders are able to build strong relationships with followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized *consideration*. These four dimensions can increase subordinates' confidence in the leader. This finding is also supported by the trust theory of **Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995)**, which explains that trust in a leader is formed by subordinates' perceptions of *their ability* (ability), *benevolence* (concern), and *integrity* (integrity) of the leader. The higher the teacher's perception of these three aspects, the higher the level of trust placed in the leader.

The Influence of Teacher Motivation on Innovative Behavior

The fifth hypothesis in this study states that teacher motivation influences innovative behavior. The results show that teacher motivation can increase innovative behavior, thus accepting the fifth hypothesis. This means that highly motivated teachers tend to be more active in seeking new solutions, developing creative learning methods, and implementing various improvement efforts to enhance the quality of learning. Motivation is a driving factor that makes teachers more willing to take initiatives and be open to changes that can improve the effectiveness of their work. The results of this study align with those of Mahmood *et al.* (2020), who found that work motivation positively influences innovative behavior. Highly motivated individuals are more likely to explore new ideas and generate innovations that can benefit the organization. Theoretically, these findings align with Herzberg's (1968) explanation that motivating factors, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for development, can drive individuals to achieve better performance, including innovation in the workplace.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Innovative Behavior

The sixth hypothesis in this study stated that women's transformational leadership influences innovative behavior. However, the results showed that women's transformational leadership had no effect on innovative behavior, thus rejecting the sixth hypothesis. This finding suggests that the implementation of transformational leadership by female leaders has not been able to directly encourage innovative behavior in teachers. Although leaders have demonstrated transformational characteristics through providing inspiration, motivation, individual attention, and support to teachers, these conditions are not sufficient to encourage innovation in the implementation of teachers' duties. The results of this study align with those of Bilal *et al.* (2021) and Mahmood *et al.* (2020), which showed that the influence of transformational leadership on innovative behavior often does not occur directly, but rather through certain mechanisms such as motivation, work engagement, psychological empowerment, and other internal factors. Theoretically, these findings suggest that the influence of transformational leadership on innovative behavior can occur through other mechanisms or variables. Bass (1985) explained that transformational leadership plays a greater role in building subordinate motivation, commitment, and trust before ultimately resulting in behavioral change. Meanwhile, Janssen (2000) stated that innovative behavior is a process involving the creation, development, and implementation of new ideas, so it is influenced not only by leadership but also by intrinsic motivation, individual characteristics, and an organizational climate that supports innovation. Therefore, the insignificant direct effect in this study indicates that the relationship between women's transformational leadership and innovative behavior is likely more indirect through psychological and organizational variables.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Innovative Behavior through Teacher Motivation

The seventh hypothesis in this study states that the influence of women's transformational leadership on innovative behavior is mediated by teacher motivation. The results of the study indicate that teacher motivation is proven to mediate the relationship between women's transformational leadership and innovative behavior. Furthermore, the direct effect of women's transformational leadership on innovative behavior was not proven significant, so teacher motivation acts as a full mediator. Thus, the seventh hypothesis is declared accepted. These findings indicate that female transformational leadership does not directly encourage teachers to behave innovatively, but rather first increases teacher motivation, which then encourages innovative behavior. In other words, teacher motivation is a crucial mechanism that bridges the influence of female transformational leadership on innovative behavior. The more a female principal is able to provide inspiration, support, individual attention, and encouragement for development, the higher the motivation teachers feel in carrying out their duties. This motivation, in turn, encourages teachers to be more creative, proactive, and open to various innovations in the learning process.

The results of this study align with the findings of Duraku and Hoxha (2021), who explained that transformational leadership has the ability to increase individual work motivation by providing vision, inspiration, and ongoing support. These findings are also supported by Mahmood *et al.* (2020), who stated that motivation is a

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crucial factor driving innovative behavior in organizations. Highly motivated individuals tend to be more confident in proposing new ideas, seeking creative solutions, and making various improvements to their work.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Innovative Behavior through Trust in Leaders

The eighth hypothesis in this study stated that the influence of female transformational leadership on innovative behavior is mediated by trust in the leader. However, the results showed that trust in the leader was unable to mediate the relationship between female transformational leadership and innovative behavior. Therefore, the eighth hypothesis was rejected. These findings indicate that although female transformational leadership can increase teachers' trust in the leader, this trust has not been able to significantly encourage the emergence of innovative behavior. In other words, teachers who have a high level of trust in female principals do not necessarily show a greater tendency to generate new ideas, develop creative learning methods, or implement various innovations in carrying out their duties. The results of this study differ from those of Bilal *et al.* (2021), who stated that trust in leaders can be a factor driving innovative behavior. This difference indicates that in the school context, trust in leaders is not necessarily the primary determinant of innovative teacher behavior. It is possible that innovative behavior is more influenced by other factors such as work motivation, professional competence, school organizational culture, support for facilities and infrastructure, and opportunities to develop new ideas.

The Influence of Women's Transformational Leadership on Innovative Behavior through Teacher Motivation and Trust in Leaders

The eighth hypothesis in this study stated that the influence of female transformational leadership on innovative behavior is mediated by trust in the leader. However, the results showed that trust in the leader was unable to mediate the relationship between female transformational leadership and innovative behavior. Therefore, the eighth hypothesis was rejected. These findings indicate that although female transformational leadership can increase teachers' trust in the leader, this trust has not been able to significantly encourage the emergence of innovative behavior. In other words, teachers who have a high level of trust in female principals do not necessarily show a greater tendency to generate new ideas, develop creative learning methods, or implement various innovations in carrying out their duties. The results of this study differ from those of Bilal *et al.* (2021), who stated that trust in leaders can be a factor driving innovative behavior. This difference indicates that in the school context, trust in leaders is not necessarily the primary determinant of innovative teacher behavior. It is possible that innovative behavior is more influenced by other factors such as work motivation, professional competence, school organizational culture, support for facilities and infrastructure, and opportunities to develop new ideas.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of female transformational leadership on teachers' innovative behavior, with teacher motivation and trust in leaders as mediating variables in high school teachers. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. Based on the test results and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Female transformational leadership influences teacher motivation, thus the hypothesis is accepted. These findings indicate that the better the implementation of transformational leadership by female principals, the higher the level of teacher work motivation. Female principals who are able to provide inspiration, support, individual attention, and encourage the development of teacher potential have been shown to increase teacher motivation in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.
2. Teacher motivation significantly influences trust in leaders, thus the hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that teachers with high work motivation tend to demonstrate a greater level of trust in the principal as the leader of the educational organization.
3. Trust in the principal did not significantly influence teachers' innovative behavior, thus rejecting the hypothesis. Therefore, teachers' trust in the principal is not directly able to encourage innovative behavior in carrying out learning activities and other professional duties.
4. Women's transformational leadership significantly influences trust in the leader, thus the hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the higher the quality of women's transformational leadership, the higher the level of teacher trust in the principal.
5. Teacher motivation influences innovative behavior, thus the hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the higher the motivation of teachers, the greater the tendency of teachers to generate, develop, and implement new ideas in the learning process and in carrying out their professional duties. Motivation is a driving factor

that can increase teachers' creativity, initiative, and courage in carrying out various innovations to improve the quality of education. Therefore, efforts to increase teacher motivation need to be a primary concern for schools because it can contribute to the growth of innovative behavior that supports the effectiveness and progress of educational organizations.

6. Women's transformational leadership did not have a significant direct effect on teachers' innovative behavior, thus the hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that teachers' innovative behavior cannot be formed solely through direct transformational leadership but rather requires other factors to act as connecting mechanisms.
7. Teacher motivation has been shown to mediate the influence of female transformational leadership on teacher innovative behavior. These findings suggest that increased teacher innovative behavior can be realized through increased teacher motivation fostered by female transformational leadership.
8. Trust in leaders was unable to mediate the effect of women's transformational leadership on teachers' innovative behavior. Thus, trust in leaders is not an effective mechanism in explaining the relationship between women's transformational leadership and teachers' innovative behavior.
9. Teacher motivation and trust in leaders were unable to mediate the influence of female transformational leadership on teachers' innovative behavior. This finding indicates that the serial mediation pathway is not strong enough to explain the increase in teachers' innovative behavior.

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