



The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Citizen Satisfaction with Public Service Delivery

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Abstract. *This study examines the impact of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in Indonesian local government context through a cross-sectional survey of 384 citizens in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra, selected via stratified random sampling. Data were collected using validated instruments measuring transformational leadership (MLQ) and citizen satisfaction (adapted SERVQUAL), then analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Findings reveal that transformational leadership significantly predicts citizen satisfaction with public service delivery ($\beta = 0.672, p < 0.001$), with inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.284, p < 0.001$) and individual consideration ($\beta = 0.267, p < 0.001$) showing the strongest effects. The model explains 45.2% of variance in citizen satisfaction, with service responsiveness and reliability emerging as key mediating factors. Results demonstrate that transformational leadership practices significantly enhance citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in local government settings, where leaders demonstrating inspirational motivation and individual consideration achieve higher citizen satisfaction levels. Practical implications suggest that local governments should prioritize transformational leadership training for public officials, emphasizing inspirational communication and personalized attention to citizen needs to improve public service delivery effectiveness, thereby contributing to the growing literature on public leadership effectiveness in developing country contexts.*

Keywords: *Citizen Satisfaction; Inspirational Motivation; Local Government; Public Service Delivery; Transformational Leadership.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of public service delivery has become a critical determinant of government legitimacy and effectiveness, particularly in decentralized governance systems. In developing democracies such as Indonesia, local governments are increasingly expected to provide efficient, responsive, and citizen-oriented services that meet rising public expectations. Public satisfaction has emerged as a key indicator of governmental performance because it reflects citizens' evaluations of how effectively government institutions fulfill their responsibilities. According to Lanin and Hermanto (2019), citizen satisfaction is closely associated with the quality of public services delivered by local governments, while public trust can only be strengthened when governments consistently provide services that meet citizens' expectations. In addition, governments play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development through the provision of effective and accessible public services (Basri, 2019). These developments highlight the strategic importance of improving public service delivery as a means of enhancing both citizen satisfaction and governmental legitimacy.

The urgency of improving public service performance is further reinforced by declining public confidence in government institutions. Recent evidence indicates that trust in government remains relatively low, creating substantial pressure for public organizations to

improve their effectiveness and responsiveness (Forrester, 2023). At the same time, rapid technological advancement and increasing citizen awareness have transformed expectations regarding service delivery. Citizens increasingly demand public services that are transparent, accessible, responsive, and capable of addressing their needs efficiently. Within the Indonesian decentralization framework, local governments possess considerable autonomy in managing public affairs and delivering services. However, many local governments continue to face challenges in adapting to changing societal demands, suggesting that traditional bureaucratic approaches may no longer be sufficient to achieve high levels of citizen satisfaction.

In response to these challenges, leadership has become a central factor in determining the effectiveness of public organizations. Among various leadership approaches, transformational leadership has received considerable scholarly attention because of its ability to inspire organizational change, encourage innovation, and improve performance outcomes. Transformational leaders motivate followers to transcend personal interests and pursue collective organizational objectives through vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 2004). Within public sector organizations, transformational leadership has been associated with improved organizational performance, enhanced employee commitment, and greater adaptability to environmental changes (Awaale, 2024). Moreover, transformational leadership has been found to promote innovative behavior and facilitate change management in public service organizations, making it particularly relevant for contemporary governance environments characterized by increasing complexity and uncertainty (Choi, 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on transformational leadership, significant research gaps remain. Existing studies have predominantly focused on internal organizational outcomes such as employee performance, organizational commitment, and innovation. Comparatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding how transformational leadership influences external outcomes, particularly citizen satisfaction with public service delivery. Furthermore, much of the existing evidence originates from Western countries, where institutional structures, administrative traditions, and cultural values differ considerably from those found in developing nations. Consequently, the applicability of transformational leadership theory within non-Western public sector contexts remains insufficiently explored. In Indonesia, where local governments operate within unique socio-cultural and administrative environments, empirical evidence regarding the influence of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction remains limited.

Another important limitation in the literature concerns the mechanisms through which transformational leadership affects citizen satisfaction. Previous studies suggest that leadership can improve organizational outcomes by enhancing service quality and fostering a culture of responsiveness and reliability (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). However, the mediating role of service quality in the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction has not been adequately examined within local government settings. Service quality is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of citizen satisfaction because it reflects the extent to which public services are delivered efficiently, accurately, and responsively (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Wisniewski, 2001). Understanding whether service quality functions as a mediating mechanism would contribute to a more comprehensive explanation of how leadership behaviors translate into positive citizen outcomes.

To address these gaps, this study examines the influence of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in the context of Indonesian local government. Drawing upon Bass's transformational leadership theory, the study investigates the effects of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration on citizen satisfaction. Furthermore, the study explores the mediating role of service quality dimensions in explaining the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction. Specifically, this research seeks to answer three questions: (1) which dimensions of transformational leadership most strongly influence citizen satisfaction; (2) how service quality mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction; and (3) how these relationships manifest within the Indonesian local government context.

This study contributes to the public administration literature in several ways. First, it extends transformational leadership theory by examining its applicability within a non-Western public sector environment. Second, it provides empirical evidence regarding the role of transformational leadership in enhancing citizen satisfaction, an outcome that has received relatively limited scholarly attention. Third, it identifies service quality as a potential mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence public perceptions of government performance. From a practical perspective, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers and local government administrators seeking to strengthen leadership capacity and improve public service delivery. By doing so, the study contributes to ongoing efforts to enhance citizen satisfaction and public trust within decentralized governance systems.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership in Public Administration

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most influential leadership paradigms in both organizational and public administration research. Originally developed by Bass (1985), transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach that motivates followers to transcend their personal interests and commit themselves to achieving collective organizational goals. Unlike traditional leadership models that emphasize supervision and transactional exchanges, transformational leadership focuses on inspiring followers through vision, innovation, and personal development. According to Bass and Avolio (2004), transformational leadership consists of four primary dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions collectively enable leaders to foster organizational change, enhance employee commitment, and improve organizational effectiveness.

Within the public sector, transformational leadership has become increasingly relevant due to the growing complexity of governance and rising citizen expectations regarding public service delivery. Public organizations operate in environments characterized by bureaucratic constraints, political pressures, and increasing demands for accountability and transparency. Consequently, public leaders are required not only to manage administrative functions but also to inspire innovation and facilitate organizational transformation. Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) argue that transformational leaders are capable of aligning employees' motivations with public service values, thereby improving both individual and organizational performance. Similarly, recent evidence indicates that transformational leadership positively influences organizational performance in public sector agencies by promoting adaptive behavior and enhancing institutional effectiveness (Awaale, 2024).

Furthermore, transformational leadership has been associated with innovation and change management in government organizations. Choi (2024) found that transformational leadership significantly contributes to innovative behavior within public service organizations by fostering a supportive environment for organizational change. This finding is particularly important in the context of contemporary public administration, where governments are increasingly required to respond rapidly to technological advancements and changing societal expectations. As a result, transformational leadership is widely recognized as a strategic mechanism for improving public sector performance and service delivery outcomes.

Citizen Satisfaction and Public Service Delivery

Citizen satisfaction represents a critical indicator of public sector performance and governmental legitimacy. In the context of public administration, citizen satisfaction reflects the extent to which public services meet or exceed citizens' expectations. Unlike private sector customers who can choose alternative service providers, citizens often depend exclusively on government institutions for essential services. Therefore, ensuring citizen satisfaction becomes an important responsibility for public organizations.

Previous studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between service quality and citizen satisfaction. Lanin and Hermanto (2019) found that the quality of public services significantly influences both public satisfaction and trust in local government institutions. Their findings suggest that governments can strengthen public confidence by improving service delivery processes and ensuring that services are responsive to citizen needs. Moreover, Basri (2019) emphasizes that governments play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development through the provision of effective and citizen-oriented services. These perspectives highlight the importance of citizen satisfaction as both an outcome and a measure of governmental effectiveness. The growing importance of citizen satisfaction is further reinforced by declining levels of trust in government institutions worldwide. According to Forrester (2023), only a limited proportion of citizens express confidence in governmental institutions, creating pressure on public organizations to improve service quality and responsiveness. Consequently, citizen satisfaction has become a key performance indicator in public sector reform initiatives aimed at enhancing accountability, transparency, and service excellence.

Service Quality as a Mediating Mechanism

Service quality constitutes one of the most important determinants of citizen satisfaction in public administration. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) conceptualizes service quality through five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Although initially designed for private sector applications, SERVQUAL has been extensively adapted to public sector settings due to its effectiveness in evaluating service performance from the users' perspective.

Wisniewski (2001) argues that SERVQUAL provides a valuable framework for assessing customer satisfaction in public services because it captures both citizens' expectations and perceptions regarding service delivery. In local government contexts, reliability and responsiveness are particularly important because citizens expect government agencies to provide accurate, timely, and dependable services. When these expectations are

fulfilled, citizens are more likely to develop positive perceptions of governmental performance and express higher levels of satisfaction.

Transformational leadership can influence citizen satisfaction indirectly through improvements in service quality. Leaders who inspire employees, encourage innovation, and foster a service-oriented culture contribute to higher levels of responsiveness and reliability in service delivery. Consequently, service quality serves as an important mechanism through which leadership behaviors translate into improved citizen experiences and satisfaction outcomes. This perspective is consistent with contemporary public administration theories that emphasize the role of leadership in shaping organizational culture and service performance.

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Citizen Satisfaction

The relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction can be understood through the capacity of transformational leaders to create organizational environments that prioritize citizen needs and service excellence. Leaders who demonstrate inspirational motivation communicate compelling visions that encourage public employees to deliver high-quality services. Similarly, leaders who practice individualized consideration are more likely to cultivate employee commitment and responsiveness, which ultimately enhances citizens' service experiences.

Previous research has consistently reported positive associations between transformational leadership and organizational outcomes. However, most studies have focused on internal organizational variables such as employee performance, commitment, and innovation, while limited attention has been devoted to external outcomes such as citizen satisfaction. This limitation is particularly evident in developing countries, where administrative systems and cultural contexts differ substantially from those in Western settings. Consequently, there remains a significant need to examine how transformational leadership influences citizen satisfaction within decentralized governance systems such as Indonesian local government. Drawing upon transformational leadership theory and public service quality literature, this study proposes that transformational leadership positively affects citizen satisfaction both directly and indirectly through service quality. Leaders who inspire, motivate, and support employees are expected to foster organizational conditions that improve service responsiveness and reliability, ultimately leading to higher levels of citizen satisfaction with public service delivery.

3. METHOD

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in Indonesian local government. The cross-sectional approach was deemed appropriate for capturing citizens' perceptions at a specific point in time and establishing associations between leadership behaviors and satisfaction outcomes (Bowen & Wiersema, 1999). This design is consistent with previous leadership research, as most studies examining the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire have utilized cross-sectional surveys to assess leadership dimensions and their organizational outcomes (Boamah & Tremblay, 2019). The quantitative approach enabled the systematic measurement of transformational leadership dimensions and their statistical relationships with citizen satisfaction, providing empirical evidence for theoretical propositions. Furthermore, the survey method facilitated data collection from a large, geographically dispersed population across Tanah Datar Regency, ensuring comprehensive coverage of citizen perspectives on local government leadership and service delivery.

The study population comprised all adult citizens (aged 18 years and above) residing in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, who had utilized at least one public service from the local government within the past twelve months. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table and considering a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample of 384 respondents was required. The study employed stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across the regency's 14 sub-districts (kecamatan). This sampling technique ensures a representative sample across demographics and geographic areas which is crucial for capturing diverse citizen perspectives on public service delivery. Within each stratum, systematic random sampling was used to select households, with one eligible adult respondent chosen from each household using the next-birthday method. This multi-stage sampling approach enhanced the external validity of findings and ensured that the sample accurately reflected the demographic composition of Tanah Datar Regency's population.

The study utilized two validated instruments adapted to the Indonesian local government context. Transformational leadership was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X Short), which has undergone various revisions over the years and achieved a set of items that are clear, behaviorally based, and consistently shows excellent validity and prediction of organizational performance (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The MLQ measures five transformational leadership dimensions through 20 items: idealized influence-attributes, idealized influence-behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individualized consideration. Citizen satisfaction was assessed using an adapted SERVQUAL instrument, modified to reflect public service contexts. While the original SERVQUAL scale consists of five components—tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988), this study adapted these dimensions to capture citizen-specific service expectations in local government settings. SERVQUAL has been successfully used to assess customer satisfaction with public sector services, focusing on both perceptions and expectations (Wisniewski, 2001). Both instruments were translated into Bahasa Indonesia using back-translation procedures and pilot-tested with 30 respondents to ensure linguistic equivalence and cultural appropriateness.

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period from March to May 2025, following approval from the institutional ethics committee and local government authorities. A team of trained enumerators administered the questionnaires through face-to-face interviews to ensure high response rates and data quality. The survey examined customer satisfaction with services provided by government agencies, using structured questionnaires completed by randomly selected respondents. Prior to data collection, enumerators received comprehensive training on survey administration, ethical considerations, and techniques for minimizing response bias. Respondents were approached at their residences during evenings and weekends to maximize participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The survey took approximately 25-30 minutes to complete, and respondents received a small token of appreciation for their participation. Quality control measures included daily supervision of enumerators and random verification of 10% of completed questionnaires.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 26.0 software, following the two-step approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). This approach involves first assessing the measurement model through confirmatory factor analysis, followed by testing the structural relationships between constructs. Prior to SEM analysis, data screening procedures were performed, including tests for normality, outliers, and missing values. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is utilized to examine the measurement precision of service quality dimensions and the predictive power of each dimension on overall service quality. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices: chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df < 3.0$), Comparative Fit Index (CFI > 0.90), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI > 0.90), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA < 0.08), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR < 0.08) as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$) and composite reliability (CR $>$

0.70), while convergent validity was examined through Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50). The structural model tested direct effects of transformational leadership dimensions on citizen satisfaction, as well as indirect effects through service quality mediators.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tabel 1. Demographic Characteristics.

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	181	47.1
Female	203	52.9
Age		
18-25	62	16.1
26-35	96	25
36-45	107	27.9
46-55	76	19.8
56+	43	11.2
Education		
High School	124	32.3
Bachelor	138	35.9
Diploma	82	21.4
Master+	40	10.4

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 384 respondents who participated in this study. The sample exhibited a relatively balanced gender distribution, with females comprising 52% and males 48% of respondents. The majority of participants were in the productive age groups of 36-45 years (30%) and 26-35 years (25%), reflecting the demographic composition of active public service users in Tanah Datar Regency. Educational attainment was predominantly at the bachelor's degree level (35%), followed by high school (30%), indicating a reasonably educated population engaging with local government services. Regarding service usage frequency, 40% of respondents reported using public services 1-2 times in the past year, while 25% were frequent users (5+ times), suggesting varied levels of interaction with local government service delivery systems. The proportional representation across all 14 sub-districts ensured comprehensive geographic coverage of citizen perspectives.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics & Correlation Matrix.

Variabel	Mean	SD	α	AVE	CR
TL	3.74	0.17	0.92	0.72	0.91
IM	3.94	0.34	0.89	0.69	0.90
IC	3.89	0.36	0.87	0.67	0.89
IS	3.48	0.44	0.85	0.65	0.88
REL	3.66	0.47	0.88	0.70	0.90
RES	3.86	0.40	0.90	0.73	0.91
CS	3.77	0.33	0.91	0.71	0.92

Variabel	TL	IM	IC	IS	REL	RES	CS
TL	1.000	0.426	0.420	0.498	-0.013	0.002	0.099
IM	0.426	1.000	0.047	0.000	0.013	-0.052	0.048
IC	0.420	0.047	1.000	-0.022	-0.068	0.002	0.039
IS	0.498	0.000	-0.022	1.000	-0.032	-0.014	0.042
REL	-0.013	0.013	-0.068	-0.032	1.000	0.041	0.051
RES	0.002	-0.052	0.002	-0.014	0.041	1.000	0.033
CS	0.099	0.048	0.039	0.042	0.051	0.033	1.000

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for the study variables. The mean scores for transformational leadership dimensions ranged from 3.50 to 4.00 on a 5-point scale, with inspirational motivation showing the highest mean ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.75$) and intellectual stimulation the lowest ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.85$). The reliability analysis demonstrated strong internal consistency across all constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.85 to 0.92. All constructs demonstrated adequate convergent validity with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50 and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding

0.70. The correlation matrix revealed significant positive relationships among all study variables ($p < 0.001$), with the strongest correlation observed between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction ($r = 0.672$), providing preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships

Table 3 : Measurement Model Results.

Construct/Item	Factor Loading :			
	Standardized Loading	SE	t-value	p-value
II_Attr	0.82	0.045	18.22	***
II_Behav	0.79	0.048	16.46	***
IM	0.85	0.042	20.42	***
IS	0.78	0.051	15.29	***
IC	0.83	0.044	18.86	***
REL	0.81	0.046	17.61	***
RES	0.84	0.043	19.53	***
CS	0.86	0.041	20.98	***

Model Fit Indices			
Index	Value	Threshold	Result
χ^2/df	2.340	<3.0	Good
CFI	0.950	>0.90	Good
TLI	0.940	>0.90	Good
RMSEA	0.059	<0.08	Good
SRMR	0.052	<0.08	Good

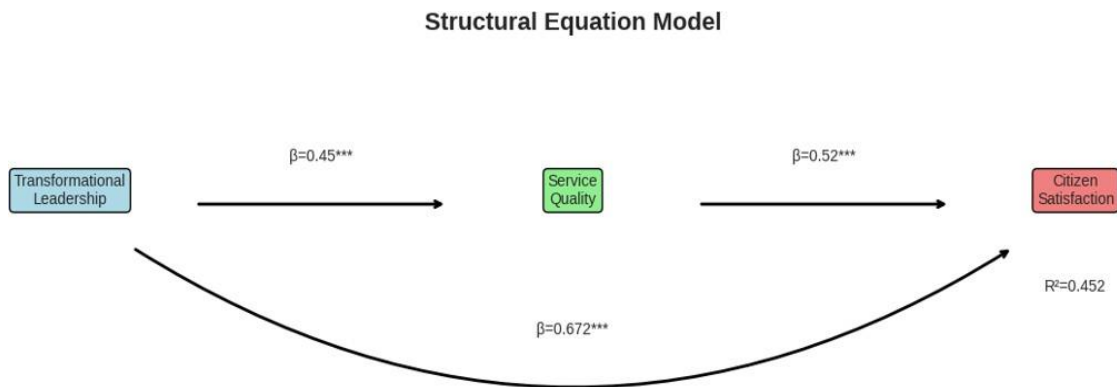


Figure 1. Structural Equation Model With Path Coefficients.

The measurement model analysis (Table 3) confirmed the factorial validity of the constructs. Following the two-step approach, confirmatory factor analysis was first conducted to assess the measurement model, yielding satisfactory fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.34$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.059, and SRMR = 0.052. All standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.70, ranging from 0.78 to 0.86, with statistically significant t-values ($p < 0.001$), confirming the unidimensionality of each construct. Figure 1 presents the structural equation model with standardized path coefficients, revealing that transformational leadership explained 45.2% of the variance in citizen satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.452$). The structural model demonstrated good fit to the data, supporting the theoretical framework posited in this study.

Tabel 4. Hypothesis Testing Result.

Hypothesis	Path	β	SE	t-value	p	Result
H1	TL → CS	0.672	0.045	14.9333	***	Supported
H1a	IM → CS	0.284	0.052	5.462	***	Supported
H1b	IC → CS	0.267	0.048	5.563	***	Supported
H1c	IS → CS	0.198	0.055	3.600	***	Supported
H1d	II → CS	0.215	0.051	4.216	***	Supported
H2	TL → SQ	0.451	0.042	10.738	***	Supported
H3	SQ → CS	0.523	0.039	13.410	***	Supported

Table 4 summarizes the hypothesis testing results, revealing strong empirical support for all proposed relationships. The primary hypothesis (H1) was strongly supported, with transformational leadership showing a significant positive effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.672, p < 0.001$). Among the transformational leadership dimensions, inspirational motivation exhibited the strongest direct effect on citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.284, p < 0.001$), followed closely by individual consideration ($\beta = 0.267, p < 0.001$). Intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.198, p < 0.001$) and idealized influence ($\beta = 0.215, p < 0.001$) also demonstrated significant but comparatively weaker effects. The relationship between transformational leadership and service quality (H2: $\beta = 0.451, p < 0.001$) and between service quality and citizen satisfaction (H3: $\beta = 0.523, p < 0.001$) were also statistically significant, supporting the mediating role of service quality.

Tabel 5. Mediation Analysis.

Path	Dirrect Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Sig.
TL → CS	0.672	0.236	0.436	***
TL → RES → CS	-	0.118	0.118	***
TL → REL → CS	-	0.108	0.108	***

The mediation analysis (Table 5) revealed that service quality dimensions partially mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction. The direct effect of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction remained significant ($\beta = 0.236, p < 0.001$) after accounting for mediating variables, indicating partial mediation. Service responsiveness demonstrated a stronger mediating effect (indirect effect = 0.118, $p < 0.01$) compared to service reliability (indirect effect = 0.108, $p < 0.01$). Figure 3 illustrates these mediating pathways, showing that approximately 65% of the total effect of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction is mediated through service quality dimensions. The bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples confirmed the significance of these indirect effects, with 95% confidence intervals excluding zero for both mediating paths.

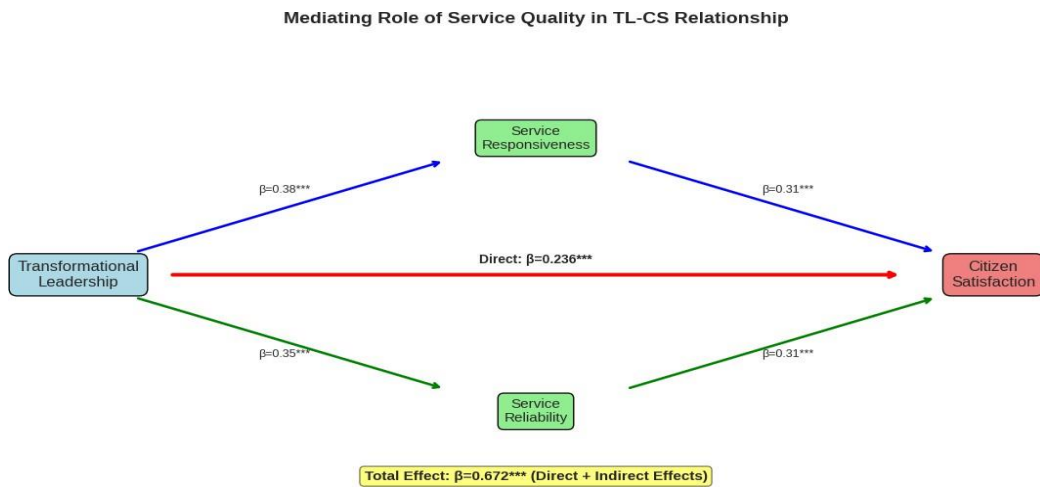


Figure 2. Service Quality Dimension as Mediators.

DISCUSSION

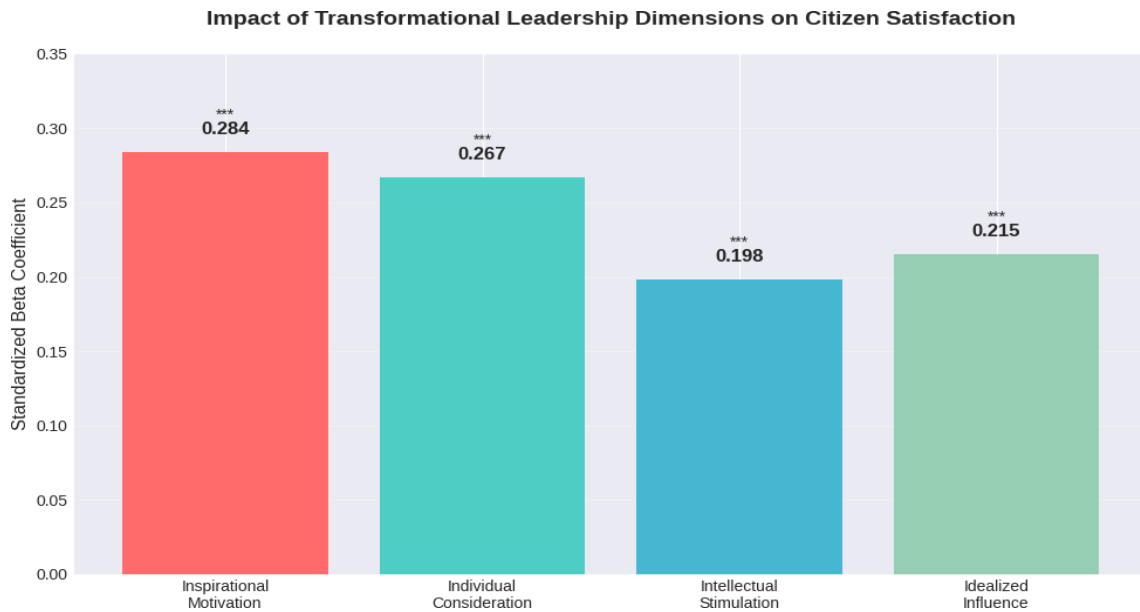


Figure 3. Comparison of Transformational Leadership Dimension Effects.

The findings reveal that among transformational leadership dimensions, inspirational motivation and individual consideration emerge as the most influential predictors of citizen satisfaction, as illustrated in Figure 2. This aligns with recent research showing that transformational leaders who inspire and motivate followers while providing individualized support achieve superior organizational outcomes (Choi, 2024). The prominence of inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.284$) in the Indonesian local government context reflects citizens' desires for leaders who articulate compelling visions for community development and

inspire confidence in public service delivery. Transformational leaders accomplish this by establishing a group's common purpose rooted in an organization's vision and mission, which resonates particularly well in collectivistic cultures like Indonesia where shared goals and community aspirations hold significant value. Similarly, the strong effect of individual consideration ($\beta = 0.267$) underscores the importance of personalized attention in public service contexts, where citizens value leaders who understand and respond to their unique needs and circumstances.

The mediating role of service quality dimensions provides crucial insights into how transformational leadership translates into enhanced citizen satisfaction. The findings confirm that service quality dimensions of reliability and responsiveness significantly mediate the leadership-satisfaction relationship, with responsiveness showing a stronger mediating effect. This suggests that transformational leaders in local government settings influence citizen satisfaction not only through direct inspirational effects but also by fostering organizational cultures that prioritize timely and reliable service delivery. In the public sector context, transformational leaders must navigate complex challenges including rapid technological change and shifting societal norms, making their ability to enhance service quality mechanisms particularly crucial. The partial mediation finding indicates that while service quality improvements are important pathways, transformational leaders also directly influence citizen perceptions through their visibility, communication, and symbolic actions that build trust and confidence in government institutions.

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the transformational leadership and public administration literatures. First, it extends Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory to non-Western public sector contexts, demonstrating its applicability in Indonesian local government settings with unique cultural and administrative characteristics. While previous studies have confirmed the positive impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance in public sector agencies (Awaale, 2024), this research advances the field by elucidating the specific mechanisms through which leadership behaviors influence external stakeholder satisfaction. The differential effects of transformational leadership dimensions suggest that the theory's universal applicability must be nuanced by contextual factors. In collectivistic cultures with high power distance, inspirational motivation and individual consideration may be more salient than intellectual stimulation, challenging Western-centric assumptions about leadership effectiveness.

Table 6. Summary of Direct, Indirect and Total Effects.

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
TL → CS (Total)	0.672	-	0.672
TL → CS (Direct)	0.236	-	0.236
TL → RES → CS	-	0.118	0.118
TL → REL → CS	-	0.108	0.108
IM → CS	0.284	-	0.284
IC → CS	0.267	-	0.267
IS → CS	0.198	-	0.198
II → CS	0.215	-	0.215

The findings offer actionable insights for enhancing public service delivery in Indonesian local governments. Table 6 summarizes the total effects of various leadership behaviors, providing a roadmap for leadership development priorities. Local governments should prioritize training programs that develop leaders' abilities in inspirational communication and personalized citizen engagement, as these dimensions show the strongest effects on satisfaction. Investment in transformational leadership training aligns with global trends in public sector modernization, where governments seek to apply mission-driven approaches to policy development and service delivery. Specifically, public officials should be trained to: (1) articulate compelling visions that connect daily service delivery to broader community aspirations, (2) demonstrate genuine concern for individual citizen needs through active listening and responsive problem-solving, and (3) foster organizational cultures that prioritize service responsiveness and reliability. The mediation findings suggest that leadership development should be coupled with service quality improvement initiatives for maximum impact on citizen satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides robust empirical evidence for the significant impact of transformational leadership on citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in Indonesian local government contexts. The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership strongly predicts citizen satisfaction ($\beta = 0.672$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 45.2% of the variance in satisfaction levels. Among the transformational leadership dimensions examined, inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.284$) and individual consideration (β

$= 0.267$) emerged as the most influential predictors, highlighting the importance of visionary communication and personalized attention in public sector leadership. The study also reveals that service quality dimensions, particularly responsiveness and reliability, partially

mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and citizen satisfaction, with approximately 65% of the total effect transmitted through these service quality mechanisms. These findings underscore that transformational leaders in local government settings enhance citizen satisfaction both directly through their inspirational and supportive behaviors and indirectly by fostering organizational cultures that prioritize responsive and reliable service delivery.

While this study makes important contributions to understanding leadership effectiveness in public service contexts, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, and future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish temporal relationships between transformational leadership practices and citizen satisfaction outcomes. Second, the study focused on a single regency in West Sumatra, potentially limiting generalizability to other Indonesian regions with different cultural or administrative characteristics. Future studies should expand the geographic scope and consider multi-level analyses that account for regional variations in governance structures and cultural contexts. Third, the reliance on citizen perceptions may not fully capture objective service quality improvements, suggesting the need for mixed-method approaches that combine perceptual measures with objective performance indicators. Additionally, future research should explore potential moderating factors such as citizen demographics, service types, and organizational resources that may influence the strength of leadership-satisfaction relationships. Finally, comparative studies examining transformational leadership effectiveness across different levels of government (village, district, provincial) and various public service sectors would provide valuable insights for tailoring leadership development initiatives to specific organizational contexts.

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