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The dual pillars of academic excellence: Transformational leadership and organizational commitment

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Abstract

This research delves into the connection between transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and lecturer performance within the realm of higher education. Its primary objective is to comprehend how transformational leadership and organizational commitment influence lecturers and their overall effectiveness. The study encompassed 178 lecturers from Kadiri University. Data collection involved the administration of a well-structured questionnaire, and subsequent analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression techniques. The results underscore a robust and positive association between transformational leadership and lecturer performance. Furthermore, the role of organizational commitment in lecturer performance is noteworthy. These findings hold pragmatic significance for educational institutions, highlighting the imperative of cultivating transformational leadership and organizational commitment to augment faculty performance and cultivate dynamic learning environments.

Keywords: Transformational leadership; organizational commitment; lecturer performance

Introduction

In the realm of education, leadership assumes a pivotal role in molding institutional direction and the experiences of educators and students (Stark & Ragunathan, 2022). Leaders within educational institutions, ranging from department heads to university administrators, bear the responsibility of not only overseeing intricate operations but also cultivating an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and administrative tasks. The effectiveness of these leaders can significantly impact the performance of lecturers, thereby exerting a substantial influence on the overall quality of education provided. One leadership style that has garnered considerable attention in the field of educational leadership is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are distinguished by their capacity to motivate and empower followers, challenge established norms, promote innovation, and provide individualized support and encouragement (Bakker et al., 2022). This leadership approach is regarded as a catalyst for organizational change and has exhibited positive outcomes in diverse settings, including the corporate world, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions (Patil, 2023).

This study marks the beginning of an exploration into the significant impact of transformational leadership on faculty performance within the unique context of higher education. Specifically, it aims to investigate how the application of transformational leadership principles by educational leaders influences lecturer performance. By examining these connections, the research aims to clarify the intricate dynamics that contribute to academic excellence and institutional success. At the heart of this inquiry is the theoretical framework of transformational leadership, initially introduced by Burns (2012) and later refined by Bass (1985). The theoretical foundation of transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's role in inspiring and motivating followers to reach their full potential, fostering a shared vision, and facilitating positive change. In the educational setting, transformational leaders are expected to empower educators, engage them in the pursuit of excellence, and create a supportive environment that enhances their performance.

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In the realm of education, the significance of lecturer performance cannot be overstated (Hazzam & Wilkins, 2023). Lecturers stand at the forefront of knowledge dissemination, shaping the intellectual development of future generations and influencing the overall quality of education. Their dedication, expertise, and effectiveness are pivotal in creating a dynamic and immersive learning environment (Kang et al., 2023). Nonetheless, lecturer performance is not solely determined by their individual competencies and work environment, including the style of leadership prevalent at the university in question, but can also be affected by their level of organizational commitment in shaping their professional contributions. This research also delves into the connection between organizational commitment and lecturer performance in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education. Organizational commitment, a concept rooted in organizational psychology and management literature, reflects employees' emotional attachment, identification, and engagement with the organization where they are employed (Rodríguez-Rad & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, 2023). It has been acknowledged as a pivotal determinant of employee engagement, retention, and job satisfaction across various sectors.

The theoretical foundation of this research study draws from the fields of organizational psychology and management, with a particular emphasis on the concept of organizational commitment. We have defined three dimensions of organizational commitment as follows: a) Affective Commitment: This dimension represents an employee's emotional bond with their organization. It signifies the lecturer's emotional connection and acceptance of the institution's goals and values; b) Normative Commitment: Normative commitment is associated with the lecturer's feeling of obligation and moral responsibility to remain at their current institution. This commitment is rooted in the belief that staying is the morally right course of action; c) Continuance Commitment: Continuance commitment is driven by the lecturer's perception of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Often, this results in a commitment to stay because the perceived costs of leaving are deemed too high. This dimension of organizational commitment serves as the foundation for understanding how lecturers invest in their institutions and how these investments, in turn, impact their performance (Kipkebut, 2010).

The significance of this research extends beyond the theoretical realm and carries practical implications for educational institutions. A deeper comprehension of the influence of transformational leadership on faculty performance can inform leadership practices and strategies in higher education, potentially leading to enhanced teaching quality, increased student engagement, and greater academic productivity. Furthermore, this research contributes to the existing body of literature by addressing a noteworthy gap in the current research landscape. Despite the wealth of knowledge about leadership styles and their impact on various organizational outcomes, there remains a need for more specific investigations within educational contexts. By concentrating on the relationship between transformational leadership and lecturer performance, this research aims to fill this void and provide actionable insights for higher education leaders and administrators. Moreover, the exploration of the level of organizational commitment among lecturers is an underexplored area. Understanding the link between organizational commitment and lecturer performance can help shape leadership strategies, organizational culture, and support systems aimed at increasing job satisfaction, productivity, and job retention among lecturers—an essential initiative in the educational environment.

Literature Review

In the realm of education, particularly within higher education institutions, the performance of lecturers stands as a critical determinant in shaping the quality of education and the overall success of the institution (Hazzam & Wilkins, 2023). It is widely acknowledged that two key factors, effective leadership and organizational commitment, exert significant influence on lecturer performance (Fanggidae et al., 2016). This literature review delves into existing knowledge to elucidate the impact and enhancement of lecturer performance in the academic setting through transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

Transformational Leadership and Lecturer Performance

Transformational leadership is a prominent leadership style in the field of education (Rafique et al., 2022). It is characterized by leaders who inspire, motivate, and empower their followers to surpass their own expectations and achieve collective objectives. When applied in the realm of education, this leadership style holds substantial potential for elevating lecturer performance. Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between transformational leadership and lecturer performance. As noted by Bass and Riggio (2010), transformational leaders cultivate an environment in which lecturers are encouraged to excel, provided with essential support and resources to realize their potential. Transformational leaders often exhibit charisma, possess a compelling vision, and have the ability to kindle passion and enthusiasm

among their subordinates, resulting in heightened motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment.

One dimension of transformational leadership, "individualized consideration," holds particular relevance within the higher education context. Leaders who offer personalized support and guidance to their lecturers foster a deep sense of ownership and commitment. This personalized approach can yield lecturers who are more engaged in their teaching and more devoted to their students. Research conducted by [Bruce J. and Avolio \(2008\)](#) further reveals that transformational leadership has a positive impact on lecturer performance across various dimensions, including teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative contributions. Faculty members who perceive their leaders as transformational tend to exhibit higher levels of innovation and a greater willingness to invest effort to ensure the success of their students and institutions.

Organizational Commitment and Lecturer Performance

Organizational commitment constitutes another vital element with a substantial role in lecturer performance. Organizational commitment encompasses an individual's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization where they are employed. This commitment can be delineated into three dimensions: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment.

Affective commitment reflects a lecturer's emotional connection with their institution, and research underscores the positive impact of this form of commitment on lecturer performance. [Porter et al. \(1974\)](#) discovered that individuals with high affective commitment were more inclined to engage in behaviors beneficial to their organization, such as making extra efforts and maintaining a positive attitude toward their work. Normative commitment, characterized by a sense of obligation to remain in the organization, is also associated with improved lecturer performance ([Harmen & Amanah, 2013](#)). Faculty members who feel a moral obligation to stay at their institution are more likely to uphold their professional responsibilities and provide quality education. While somewhat different, continuance commitment can still influence lecturer performance. Continuance commitment arises from the perception of costs associated with leaving the organization. When faculty members believe that the costs of leaving their current institution are prohibitively high, they are less likely to disengage and remain committed.

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between organizational commitment and lecturer performance. A study conducted by [Meyer & Allen \(1991\)](#) found that higher levels of organizational commitment were associated with greater job satisfaction and performance among lecturers. Additionally, research by [Riketta & Landerer \(2002\)](#) demonstrates a positive association between organizational commitment and lecturers' intention to remain in their current positions.

The Interplay of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment

The relationship between transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and lecturer performance is intricate and interconnected. Transformational leaders have the capacity to cultivate organizational commitment among their followers. Through the creation of an inspiring vision, the provision of individualized consideration, and an emphasis on shared values, transformational leaders can nurture affective commitment among their faculty. Lecturers who are inspired and emotionally connected to their institutions tend to exhibit increased dedication and improved performance. Furthermore, transformational leaders can influence the normative commitment of their lecturers. By emphasizing a strong moral and ethical foundation, these leaders can instill a sense of duty and loyalty to the organization. Lecturers who perceive an ethical obligation to their institution are more likely to demonstrate a commitment that positively impacts their performance ([Farid et al., 2015](#)).

The role of continuance commitment is also affected by leadership. Transformational leaders who establish a supportive environment and prioritize the well-being of their faculty can reduce the perceived costs of leaving the organization. This, in turn, can contribute to greater sustainability in lecturer commitment and performance. Existing literature underscores the significant impact of transformational leadership and organizational commitment on lecturer performance in higher education institutions. Transformational leaders who inspire, motivate, and offer individualized support create an environment in which faculty members are more engaged, motivated, and innovative, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative contributions. Concurrently, organizational commitment, especially affective and normative commitment, enhances lecturer performance by increasing job satisfaction, dedication, and a sense of obligation to the institution. Whether driven by emotional attachment or moral responsibility, this commitment has a positive effect on lecturer engagement and productivity.

The interplay between transformational leadership and organizational commitment further amplifies the relationship between these two variables and lecturer performance (Ashfaq et al., 2023). Transformational leaders have the potential to nurture affective and normative commitment among their lecturers, while reducing the impact of their departure, ultimately leading to more committed and high-performing lecturers (Nshimbi, 2019). It is evident that transformational leadership and organizational commitment are not isolated concepts; instead, they are interdependent elements that collectively contribute to enhancing the performance of lecturers in higher education. Therefore, educational institutions and leaders must recognize the significance of implementing transformational leadership practices and instilling organizational commitment to unlock the full potential of their lecturers and promote the delivery of high-quality education. Future research in this domain may offer further insights into the dynamics of this relationship, providing additional guidance for leadership and management strategies in educational institutions.

Research Method

In this comprehensive research study, a total of 178 lecturers from Kadiri University underwent a thorough examination. The data collection process involved the administration of a meticulously structured questionnaire, which can be found in the Appendix of this research. The questionnaire was thoughtfully designed to gauge participants' responses using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. On this scale, a score of 1 signifies disagreement with the given statement, while a score of 5 indicates a strong agreement. To analyze the data collected, the researchers computed the average of the arithmetic series for each variable in each individual sample.

Moreover, to assess the influence of transformational leadership (TL) and organizational commitment (OC) on lecturer performance (LP), the researchers opted for a simple multiple linear regression technique employing the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model. This choice was made because the OLS model provides a robust framework for assessing the relationships between the variables under investigation. The mathematical representation of the research model is articulated in Equation (1), with each component denoted as β_0 (intercept), β_i (regression coefficient), and e_i (error term). This research seeks to elucidate the interplay between transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and lecturer performance, thereby contributing valuable insights to the field of academic leadership and performance assessment.

$$LP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TL_i + \beta_2 OC_i + e_i \quad (1).$$

Result and Discussion

Transformational Leadership and Lecturer Performance

Our analysis reveals a robust and positive correlation between transformational leadership and lecturer performance. Transformational leadership, with its core focus on inspiring and motivating followers, holds the potential to significantly enhance the performance of lecturers within educational institutions. A pivotal principle of this leadership style involves articulating a compelling vision of the future, which sets clear goals and expectations. In an academic context, this vision translates into the establishment of high standards in teaching, research, and overall educational excellence. When presented with an inspiring vision and challenging goals, lecturers tend to become more motivated, committed, and driven to surpass these standards, thereby elevating their own performance.

Tabel 1. Regression result

		Std. Error	Sig.
Transformational leadership	0.936	0.104	0.000
organizational commitment	0.341	0.107	0.000
Intercept	2.985	0.591	0.000
R-square	0.937		
Adjusted R Square	0.936		
F-Stats. (Prob)	1227.274 (0.000)		
Std. The error of the Estimate	0.872		

Furthermore, transformational leaders excel in building strong, supportive relationships with their followers. In an educational setting, this means that faculty members feel valued and appreciated, receiving constructive feedback, guidance, and access to the necessary resources for their professional growth and

development. Such a supportive and nurturing environment can significantly boost lecturers' morale and, as a result, enhance their performance.

In addition, transformational leaders foster innovation and creativity among their followers, a critical aspect in the realm of education, where continually evolving pedagogical approaches and research methodologies are essential. Lecturers working under the guidance of transformational leadership are more inclined to explore new teaching methods, research ideas, and creative pedagogical approaches. The freedom to innovate enables them to deliver a more engaging and effective educational experience, benefiting not only the lecturers themselves but also enriching the learning experience of their students. Transformational leaders empower and nurture their followers by involving them in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. Lecturers who feel empowered are more likely to take ownership of their roles and invest in their ongoing self-development, ultimately contributing to increased performance and effectiveness in the classroom. Through the elevation of motivation and commitment via inspirational leadership, transformational leaders create a work environment where lecturers are fully engaged in their roles and dedicated to achieving educational excellence. This motivation and commitment serve as the driving forces behind the improvement in lecturer performance.

In summary, transformational leadership cultivates a positive organizational culture that fosters collaboration, open communication, and a sense of community. With such a culture in place, lecturers are better positioned to develop and contribute their best efforts, ultimately making a significant impact on the improvement of lecturer performance. As educational institutions strive to provide high-quality education and produce successful graduates, the pivotal role of transformational leadership in fostering lecturer excellence should not be underestimated. It serves as the foundation for nurturing a dynamic, forward-thinking, and effective educational environment.

Organizational Commitment and Lecturer Performance

There exists a substantial and positive relationship between organizational commitment and lecturer performance. Lecturers exhibiting higher levels of organizational commitment, encompassing affective, normative, and continuance commitment, tend to excel in their roles. Affective commitment, in particular, exerts a significant impact on teaching effectiveness and engagement with students. The results of our research underscore the pivotal roles that transformational leadership and organizational commitment play in shaping faculty performance within higher education institutions (Porter et al., 1974). These findings carry noteworthy implications for the advancement of leadership and organizational management within the academic sphere.

In our research results, a strong and positive correlation between transformational leadership and lecturer performance is evident. Lecturers who report having a transformational leader as their superior consistently achieve higher scores in various facets of lecturer performance, including teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative contribution (Balwant, 2016). The significance of transformational leadership in enhancing lecturer performance is also reflected in our research. Transformational leaders, characterized by charisma, an inspirational vision, and individual support, create an environment that motivates and inspires lecturers to excel in their roles (Al-Husseini et al., 2021). Their capacity to inspire and motivate has a positive impact on teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative contributions. This underscores that transformational leaders are not just managers but also mentors, aiding in staff development and the attainment of organizational goals.

In addition to transformational leadership, organizational commitment also plays a substantial role in improving lecturer performance. In our research, a significant positive relationship is observed between organizational commitment and lecturer performance. Lecturers with high levels of organizational commitment, encompassing affective, normative, and continuative commitment, tend to excel in their roles (Nazir & Islam, 2017). Specifically, affective commitment exerts a significant impact on teaching effectiveness and engagement with students. This implies that an emotional connection to the institution not only benefits teaching effectiveness but also stimulates research productivity and active engagement in administrative tasks. Overall, our research results highlight the significance of a combination of transformational leadership and organizational commitment in shaping exceptional faculty performance within higher education environments.

The most noteworthy finding of this study is the synergy between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. It is not sufficient to have one without the other. Optimal lecturer performance is achieved when transformational leaders cultivate affective, normative, and continuative commitment among their followers (Gebert et al., 2016). The emotional connection, moral obligation, and reduced perceived costs of leaving the institution foster a profound commitment that significantly enhances lecturer

performance (Pudjiarti et al., 2017). The implications of these findings extend to educational institutions. Recognizing the symbiotic relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is paramount. Institutions should prioritize leadership development programs that promote transformational leadership styles, ethical leadership, and values-based organizational cultures. Leadership training and development should emphasize the ability to inspire, motivate, and empower staff while fostering a supportive, values-based environment (Turner et al., 2022). The alignment of individual and institutional values guided by transformational leaders constitutes a fundamental driver of lecturer commitment and performance (Ashfaq et al., 2023).

Conclusion, Suggestions and Limitations

In conclusion, this comprehensive research study explains the multifaceted relationship between transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and faculty performance in the context of higher education institutions. The findings of this study offer significant insights and implications for the fields of academic leadership and performance assessment. First and foremost, this research shows a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and lecturer performance. Transformational leaders, characterized by their ability to inspire, motivate, and empower, create environments that foster increased teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and administrative contributions. This underlines the importance of the role of inspirational leadership in encouraging improved lecturer performance. Simultaneously, this research highlights the important role of organizational commitment in shaping lecturer performance. Lecturers who demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment, including affective, normative, and continuity commitment, tend to excel in their roles. Specifically, affective commitment has a significant impact on teaching effectiveness and engagement with students.

The most important finding of this research lies in the symbiotic relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. The presence of one element is not just present, but the interaction and cultivation of both will produce optimal lecturer performance. The emotional connection, moral obligation, and reduced perceived costs of leaving the institution foster a deep commitment that significantly improves lecturer performance. The implications of these findings extend to educational institutions and leadership development. Recognizing the interdependence between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is critical for institutions that wish to develop superior faculty performance. Leadership programs should emphasize the development of a transformational leadership style and the development of a values-based organizational culture. Alignment of individual and institutional values, guided by transformational leaders, emerges as a fundamental driver of lecturer commitment and performance.

In summary, this research provides strong evidence that transformational leadership and organizational commitment are interrelated elements and are very necessary in shaping the performance of lecturers in higher education. These insights highlight the dynamics of leadership and commitment in academic environments, providing valuable guidance for educational institutions seeking to create dynamic and effective environments for educators and students.

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Appendix

Research Questionnaire

1.1 Lecturer Performance

- I effectively communicate course content and concepts to my students.
- I provide constructive feedback to students to help them improve their academic performance.
- I create an engaging and interactive learning environment in my classes.
- I regularly update my teaching materials and methods to enhance the learning experience for students.
- I actively engage in research activities related to my field.
- I have published research in reputable journals or conferences in the last year.
- I have received research grants or funding in the last year.
- I actively contribute to the research community through collaborations and presentations.
- I fulfill administrative responsibilities within the department or institution in a timely and efficient manner.
- I actively participate in department meetings and contribute to decision-making processes.
- I engage in service activities that benefit the institution and the community.
- I feel a strong emotional connection to this institution.
- I believe in and support the values and goals of the institution.
- I am committed to staying at this institution for the long term.

1.2 Transformational Leadership Assessment Questionnaire

- I serve as a role model for my team members by demonstrating high ethical and moral standards.
- I communicate a compelling vision for the future of the organization.
- I consistently exhibit behaviors that reflect the values and ideals of our organization.
- I strive to instill a sense of pride and respect in my team members.
- I inspire and motivate my team members with an optimistic and positive outlook.
- I encourage my team members to challenge the status quo and think creatively.
- I stimulate my team members to think critically and explore new perspectives.
- I encourage my team members to express their ideas and opinions freely.
- I understand the unique strengths and needs of each team member.
- I provide personalized support and guidance to help each team member achieve their potential.
- In general, I believe I exhibit transformational leadership behaviors.
- My leadership style is focused on inspiring and empowering my team members to achieve our collective goals.
- How effective do you believe your leadership style is in achieving organizational goals and motivating your team members?

1.3 Organizational Commitment

- I feel a strong emotional attachment to this organization.
- I take pride in being a part of this organization.
- I genuinely care about the future and success of this organization.
- I feel a moral and ethical obligation to stay with this organization.
- I believe that it's the right thing to do to remain with this organization.
- I feel a strong sense of loyalty to this organization.
- I feel that it would be too costly for me to leave this organization.
- I have invested a lot in terms of time and effort in this organization.
- Leaving this organization would involve significant personal and professional sacrifice.
- In general, I am committed to this organization.
- I believe in and support the values and goals of this organization.
- How likely are you to continue working with this organization in the next 3-5 years?

Very Unlikely Unlikely Neutral Likely Very Likely

How do you rate the leadership and support provided by the organization?