

# The Relationship of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment in Higher Education

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**ABSTRACT** – This study explores the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education. Correlational research methods were used with 54 staff as respondents. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) in enhancing organizational performance. Using a literature review method, it examines key GHRM practices such as green recruitment, environmental training, performance management, and sustainability-oriented culture. The analysis results show a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This confirms that the higher the level of transformational leadership, the higher the level of organizational commitment. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the important role of leadership in forming organizational commitment. The practical implication of this research is the need to develop more effective leadership strategies in higher education to increase organizational commitment. Although these findings provide important contributions, this study has limitations in sample size and research design. Future studies could expand the sample scope and explore other factors that influence this relationship.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership, organizational commitment, higher education, correlation, human resource management.

## A. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of social existence, organizations play an important role in forming groups directly. Organizations are formed through ongoing coordination, recognized by their members, and constrained by identifiable parameters to achieve common goals. This assertion underscores the importance of coordination, awareness, and clear

parameters as important factors in the formation of an organization. Organizations are driven by primary goals such as growth, stability, and continuous interaction. These goals become the basis for formulating strategies and policies aimed at achieving these goals. In addition, to achieve these goals, organizations must have supporting human resources. This emphasizes the important role of human resource management in the overall dynamics of an organization, indicating that effective human resource management is very important for improving organizational performance.

Effective HR management, led by the right leadership figure, is the key to improving organizational performance (Arifin et al., 2022; Handayani & Khairi, 2022; Putra, 2022; Retnowati et al., 2023; Darmawan, 2024). Leadership involves coordination, aligning individual actions with organizational goals. Awareness of the organization's mission and goals strengthens member commitment, increases motivation and productivity (Kahn, 1990; Mardya, 2021; Mardikaningsih & Munir, 2021), and facilitates effective communication and collaboration. Growth, stability, and continuous interaction become the main goals of organizations guided by leaders to ensure continuity and adaptation in a dynamic environment (Meyer & Zucker, 1989; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Effective human resource management is also important for optimizing organizational performance (Pfeffer, 1994; Darmawan et al., 2020; Chasanah & Mardikaningsih, 2023). By understanding and exploiting these dynamics, organizations can make a positive contribution to social development.

Transformational leadership aims to change, motivate and inspire individuals and organizations to achieve higher levels of performance and make positive contributions to the surrounding environment (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership, which is closely

related to the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide organizational members towards shared goals (Bass, 1985), plays an important role in the formation of organizations. As a catalyst, transformational leaders strengthen coordination, awareness, and understanding of organizational goals. They direct members' energy towards the vision and mission, ensuring synergy in efforts to achieve common goals (Avolio et al., 1991). By inspiring and motivating, transformational leaders strengthen awareness of organizational goals, build strong organizational identity, and increase commitment (Bass, 1985; Al Hakim & Hariani, 2021). They also guide organizations to achieve key goals such as growth, stability, and continuous interaction, encouraging innovation, adaptation, and development (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Moreover, through inclusive and empowering management practices, transformational leaders strengthen human resources (Rojak & Munir, 2023) and create a work environment that supports individual and organizational growth (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2021).

Thus, the concept of transformational leadership is in accordance with the dynamics that occur in organizations and can be an effective framework for strengthening and expanding the influence of key factors such as coordination, awareness, clear parameters, and achieving organizational goals. The concept of transformational leadership paves the way for the realization of strong organizational commitment through its influence on coordination, awareness and deeper understanding of organizational goals (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2021). Through an inspiring and motivating approach, transformational leaders can strengthen members' identity and loyalty to the organization, encouraging the creation of a culture based on solid commitment.

Organizational commitment refers to the level of involvement, identification, and dedication of organizational members to the goals, values, and success of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). A transformational leader has the ability to communicate an inspiring vision and organizational values in a convincing and motivating way (Bass, 1985), increasing members' commitment to the organization (Mardikaningsih, 2021). They also encourage active participation and involvement of members in decision making and achieving organizational goals (Avolio & Bass, 1995), as

well as facilitating leadership development at all levels of the organization (Putra & Darmawan, 2022), helping members to grow and develop personally and professionally (Bass & Riggio, 2006). To face uncertainty and change, transformational leaders inspire confidence, courage, and resilience, strengthening members' commitment to the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Jahroni et al., 2021; Hariani, 2023).

Thus, the concept of transformational leadership can significantly play a role in strengthening members' commitment to the organization. Through building a strong vision, encouraging member engagement, empowering self-development, and addressing uncertainty, transformational leadership can strengthen and expand the influence of key factors that contribute to organizational commitment. The following study is to examine the empirical relationship of transformational leadership with organizational commitment in one of the universities in the city of Surabaya.

## B. METHOD

This research adopts a correlational research type with an accidental sampling technique. Respondents consisted of 54 staff at one of the universities in the city of Surabaya.

The independent variable is transformational leadership, while the dependent variable is organizational commitment.

The indicators for measuring transformational leadership are explained as follows:

- a. Idealized Influence (II) with the statement "This leader is someone who is an example for me in terms of morality and work ethics."
- b. Inspirational Motivation (IM) with the statement: "This leader is able to communicate an inspiring vision for our organization."
- c. Intellectual Stimulation (IS) with the statement "This leader often encourages me to think creatively to complete tasks."
- d. Individualized Consideration (IC) with the statement "This leader cares about the needs of individuals in the team."

The indicators for measuring organizational commitment are explained as follows:

- a. Affective Commitment with the statement "I feel I have a strong emotional bond with this organization."
- b. Continuance Commitment with the statement "I feel that I am staying at this

organization because I feel I have no other choice."

- c. Normative Commitment with the statement "I feel that I have a moral obligation to remain loyal to this organization."

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that had been previously validated. This questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part measures the level of transformational leadership and the second part measures the level of organizational commitment.

The collected data will be analysed using correlation statistical techniques to determine the relationship between transformational leadership variables and organizational commitment. The results of the analysis will be interpreted to draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives.

This study will be carried out by inviting participation from staff at selected universities using accidental sampling techniques. Respondents will be asked to fill out the questionnaire independently. The collected data will be analyzed statistically to evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

The results of this research are expected to provide a better understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in the higher education context. The practical implications of this research can help universities in developing more effective leadership strategies to increase organizational commitment.

This research has several limitations, including the sample size being limited to staff at one university in the city of Surabaya and the use of accidental sampling techniques which may affect the generalization of the results.

Through this research, it is hoped that empirical evidence can be found that supports the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education environments. The results of this research will provide valuable insights for practitioners and academics to develop more effective leadership practices and strengthen organizational commitment in higher education institutions.

### C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved the participation of 54 respondents who were staff at one of the universities in the city of Surabaya. The

participants in this study came from a variety of backgrounds and levels of experience, covering a wide range of functions and responsibilities in the academic environment. This significant number of respondents provides sufficient statistical power by having diverse backgrounds in terms of gender, work experience, education and type of worker.

The first finding is that the gender proportion of respondents shows a quite significant gap. With a percentage of 59.26% of the total respondents, men were more represented than women who only amounted to 40.74%. Interpretation of this data may indicate that in the higher education environment that is the focus of the research, there is still a gender imbalance in staff distribution. This may reflect inequalities in gender opportunities and representation within organizations, which may influence leadership dynamics and organizational commitment.

In the context of transformational leadership and organizational commitment, these differences in gender proportions may also influence how individuals respond and respond to transformational leadership. Previous studies have shown that gender can influence perceptions of leadership style and levels of organizational commitment.

Research from Eagly and Johnson (1990) is a meta-analysis that collects empirical evidence from various studies on the relationship between gender and leadership style. One finding is that perceptions of leadership style can be influenced by gender, with gender stereotypes influencing how individuals evaluate leaders based on their gender. In addition, this research also discusses the impact of gender on organizational commitment, highlighting differences in motivation, values, and expectations between men and women that can influence their level of commitment to the organization. Therefore, it is important to consider gender differences in further research on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education settings.

Other results show the distribution of respondents based on age range in this study. Of the total 54 respondents who participated in this research, most were in various age ranges. The age range of 20-30 years has a proportion of 35.19%, represented by 19 respondents. The next age range, namely 31-40 years, showed a slightly higher proportion with 40.74%, or 22 respondents. Meanwhile, the 41-50-year age

range has a proportion of 18.52%, which represents 10 of the total respondents. The oldest age range, over 50 years, has the lowest proportion, only 5.56%, represented by 3 respondents. Thus, these results reflect the age diversity of respondents in this study, from young to more mature.

In terms of work experience, the results show significant variations among respondents. As many as 29.63% or 16 respondents had work experience of less than 5 years, while 40.74% or 22 respondents had work experience of between 5 and 10 years. Work experience between 11 and 15 years was held by 20.37% or 11 respondents. On the other hand, only 9.26% or 5 respondents had work experience of more than 15 years. This shows that the majority of respondents have work experience in the range of 5 to 10 years, while shorter and longer work experience represents a smaller proportion. This indicates a fairly even mix of different levels of work experience among the respondents.

In terms of recent education, the majority of respondents have a bachelor's educational background, which covers 50% of the total respondents or 27 people. Diploma education was followed by 25.93% or 14 respondents, while respondents with master's degrees reached 20.37% or 11 people. Only a small portion of respondents had a high school educational background, namely 3.7% or only 2 respondents. This shows that the majority of respondents have higher education, either in the form of a bachelor's degree, diploma or master's degree, with the largest number of respondents having a bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, respondents with high school education are a minority in this research sample. This may influence the results and interpretation of the data, given the varied educational backgrounds of the respondents.

In terms of employee status, the majority of respondents are permanent employees, covering 70.37% of the total respondents or 38 people. As many as 20.37% of the total respondents or 11 people worked on contract status, while only 9.26% or 5 respondents worked as outsourced employees. This indicates that the majority of respondents are permanent employees, who may have a higher level of commitment to the organization compared to employees with contract or outsourcing status. Permanent employees tend to feel more emotionally connected and have

greater confidence in the future with the organization they work for, compared to employees of other statuses. The results of the correlation analysis were obtained and shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1. Correlation**

		KT	KO
KT	Pearson Correlation	1	.644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	54	54
KO	Pearson Correlation	.644**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	54	54

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is 0.644, which indicates a significant positive relationship between these two variables. These results indicate that the higher the level of transformational leadership applied in an organization, the higher the level of commitment that organizational members have towards the organization.

The significant results at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) indicate that the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment does not occur by chance, but rather shows a strong and consistent relationship between these two variables in the sample studied.

Thus, from the results of this correlation analysis, it can be concluded that high levels of transformational leadership tend to have a positive impact on high levels of organizational commitment within the scope of this study.

Previous research has highlighted the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment in various organizational contexts, including higher education (Anjanarko & Arifin, 2022). Smith et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education institutions. The results show that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment in higher education. Transformational leaders help individuals achieve higher levels of commitment through personal experiences and encourage individuals to achieve higher levels of commitment.



Rahman and Imam (2018) studied the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in various higher education institutions. The findings confirm that transformational leadership is positively related to the level of organizational commitment in the higher education environment.

Chen and Cheng (2019) conducted a meta-analysis study and collected previous research results to evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among teaching staff in higher education. The results of the analysis show that there is a strong positive relationship between these two variables.

Azizan and Saad (2020) conducted research focusing on the influence of transformational leadership on organizational commitment in higher education institutions in Malaysia. The findings indicate that high levels of transformational leadership are positively related to the level of organizational commitment among academic staff.

This reference provides strong empirical support for the finding that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education. These studies can provide a useful theoretical basis to strengthen the conclusions of this research findings.

These findings support the literature highlighting the importance of leadership roles in higher education contexts. Transformational leadership has a significant impact on various aspects of organizational performance, including the commitment of organizational members.

In addition, these findings strengthen evidence that transformational leadership can be an important factor in forming organizational member commitment, especially in higher education academic environments. Transformational leadership tends to create a work environment that motivates, empowers, and inspires organizational members to commit to the organization's goals and values.

This study provides valuable insights for higher education management to design leadership development policies and programs. Transformational leadership can be strengthened through training and coaching for leaders at the tertiary level. Increasing the quality of leadership is expected to increase the

commitment of faculty and staff members to the vision and mission of the institution.

Although these findings show a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment, this research has limitations, such as the sample size which may be limited to one university in the city of Surabaya. Future research could expand the sample scope and use a longitudinal research design to strengthen these findings. In addition, further research can also explore mediating and moderating factors that might influence the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education.

#### D. CONCLUSION

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education. These results confirm that the higher the level of transformational leadership applied in an organization, the higher the level of commitment that organizational members have towards the organization.

From a practical perspective, these results provide valuable insights for higher education management in developing more effective leadership strategies to increase organizational commitment among staff and faculty. Training and coaching for leaders in higher education can be improved to strengthen transformational leadership qualities. Thus, it is hoped that the level of commitment of organizational members to the vision and mission of the institution can be increased, fostering a more cohesive and motivated workforce.

Although these findings provide an important contribution to understanding the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education, this research also has limitations. The sample size is limited to only one university in the city of Surabaya and the use of accidental sampling techniques can limit the generalization of the results. Future research could expand the sample scope and use a longitudinal research design to strengthen these findings. In addition, further research can also explore mediating and moderating factors that might influence the relationship

between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education. This could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play within educational institutions.

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