

# Gen Z in Higher Education: Examining Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Commitment, and Performance

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## Abstract:

This study examines the influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on employee performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. Based on social exchange theory and Bandura's self-efficacy theory, this study aims to understand how leadership style and individual beliefs in one's own abilities can shape work outcomes in a higher education environment. A quantitative approach was employed, using a survey method with 262 Generation Z employees at a university in Yogyakarta, selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the aid of AMOS software. The results indicate that transformational leadership and self-efficacy have a direct positive effect on employee performance, and organizational commitment has been statistically proven to play a significant mediating role in strengthening this relationship. Employees with high organizational commitment translate inspirational leadership and self-confidence into higher productivity and work effectiveness. These findings emphasize the importance of creating a supportive work environment to encourage optimal commitment and performance from Generation Z employees in higher education institutions. This research implies that developing transformational leadership, increasing self-efficacy, and strengthening organizational commitment can boost the performance of Generation Z employees in higher education.

**Keywords:** *Transformational Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Organizational Commitment, Performance*

## Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional dan efikasi diri terhadap kinerja karyawan, dengan komitmen organisasi sebagai variabel mediasi. Berlandaskan teori pertukaran sosial dan teori efikasi diri Bandura, studi ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana gaya kepemimpinan dan keyakinan individu terhadap kemampuan diri dapat membentuk hasil kerja di lingkungan perguruan tinggi. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan melalui metode survei terhadap 262 karyawan Generasi Z di pada salah satu perguruan tinggi di Yogyakarta yang dipilih dengan teknik purposive sampling. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan metode Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) dengan bantuan perangkat lunak AMOS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional dan efikasi diri berpengaruh positif secara langsung terhadap kinerja karyawan, serta komitmen organisasi terbukti secara statistik memiliki peran mediasi yang signifikan dalam memperkuat hubungan tersebut. Karyawan yang memiliki komitmen tinggi terhadap organisasi cenderung mampu menerjemahkan kepemimpinan inspiratif dan kepercayaan diri menjadi produktivitas dan efektivitas kerja yang lebih tinggi. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang mendukung, guna mendorong komitmen dan kinerja optimal dari karyawan Generasi Z di institusi pendidikan tinggi. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi

bahwa pengembangan kepemimpinan transformasional, peningkatan efikasi diri, dan penguatan komitmen organisasi dapat mendorong kinerja karyawan Generasi Z di perguruan tinggi.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Self-Efficacy, Komitmen Organisasi, Kinerja*

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## INTRODUCTION

Organisational success depends heavily on effective human resource management, particularly employee performance (Agustian et al., 2023; Nyati et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2023). Transformational leadership and self-efficacy are key factors influencing employee commitment and performance, especially among Generation Z (Jasmine & Utomo, 2024; Seo, 2024). However, Gen Z employees often exhibit lower commitment and higher turnover rates, raising concerns about workforce stability (Jasmine & Utomo, 2024). Born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z values work-life balance, career development, and flexibility, but often lacks long-term loyalty. Gen Z workers change jobs within a year due to factors like inadequate salaries and job misalignment. Transformational leadership enhances performance by inspiring, motivating, and developing employees, while also fostering self-efficacy confidence in one's ability to succeed. However, previous studies report inconsistent results regarding its direct impact on performance (Widiani et al., 2023). By building trust and aligning goals, transformational leaders strengthen organisational commitment, making it especially relevant for managing Gen Z employees.

Strong self-efficacy fosters employee confidence, resilience, and engagement, leading to higher job satisfaction and organisational attachment. However, leadership support and work environment also shape commitment (Sari et al., 2024). The role of self-efficacy in shaping Gen Z commitment. Committed employees show better performance and alignment with organisational goals, while reducing absenteeism (Krisnayanti & Sriathi, 2022; Fauzan et al., 2023). Transformational leadership enhances motivation, creativity, and performance, but its impact depends on employee traits and context. Meanwhile, high self-efficacy supports perseverance, adaptability, and stress management, positively affecting performance. Nonetheless, leadership and training also play a role (Saleem et al., 2022). This study investigates the effect of self-efficacy and leadership on Gen Z performance.

Transformational leadership enhances commitment, which in turn improves performance (Dewi & Martini, 2024). Committed employees internalise organisational goals, leading to higher productivity (Gašić et al., 2024). High self-efficacy fosters more substantial organisational commitment, which, in turn, drives higher performance by increasing motivation and persistence (Dewi & Martini, 2024). However, workplace culture and leadership can influence this relationship.

Despite extensive investigation, the direct influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on employee performance is still ambiguous, as prior studies yield mixed results. Additionally, while organisational commitment is theorised to mediate these connections, its specific function among Generation Z employees in the Indonesian academic sector is an unexplored area (Jasmine & Utomo, 2024; Widodo et al., 2024). To address this, our study will investigate how transformational leadership and self-efficacy impact employee performance, with organisational commitment serving as a mediator. Previous studies have explored the relationship between leadership, self-efficacy, and employee performance, but the results have been inconsistent, particularly within the context of Generation Z. While much has been discussed about transformational leadership's role in boosting motivation and engagement, its direct influence on employee performance remains ambiguous.

The objective of this study is to understand the impact of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on employee performance, with organisational commitment as a mediating variable. Specifically, it aims to assess how these factors influence the behaviour and productivity of Generation Z employees. Based on existing theories and literature, the study hypothesises that transformational leadership and self-efficacy positively impact employee performance, and that organisational commitment mediates this relationship. The original contribution of this research lies in its application to the academic sector, particularly at higher education institutions, where the dynamics of Gen Z employees have yet to be fully understood.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach to systematically examine the causal relationships between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire survey designed to measure each research variable. The study focuses on Generation Z employees at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with a total population of 305 individuals.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) employees born between 1997 and 2012, (2) actively working at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, and (3) having a minimum of one year of work experience. To ensure representation across organizational functions, participants were selected from various departments, including academic administration, student affairs, finance, and IT services. Respondents were approached through internal communication channels such as institutional email, WhatsApp groups, and direct coordination with department heads. The questionnaire was distributed both online (via Google Forms) and in-person to accommodate different accessibility levels and ensure equal participation. A total of 262 valid responses were obtained and included in the analysis.

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The items were adapted from validated instruments in previous studies and covered four constructs: transformational leadership, self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Prior to full-scale analysis, the data underwent a series of validity and reliability tests. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS software. The SEM procedure involved two main stages: (1) testing the measurement model to confirm the validity and reliability of the constructs, and (2) testing the structural model to examine the hypothesized relationships among variables. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices, including Chi-square, CMIN/df, RMSEA, GFI, AGFI, TLI, and CFI. These steps ensured that the proposed model accurately represented the data and supported the theoretical framework of the study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The increasing participation of women in the workforce, particularly in education and public service sectors, has been widely documented as part of global socio-economic shifts. In this study, the predominance of female respondents reflects this broader trend and highlights the growing role of women in organisational dynamics. Furthermore, the use of validity and reliability testing is essential to ensure that the constructs measured truly represent the theoretical concepts intended.

### *Analysis of Respondent Characteristics*

**Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristics	Sub Characteristics	Total	Presentase
<b>Gender</b>	Male	106	40,5%
	Female	156	59,5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>262</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on gender. Out of a total of 262 respondents, the majority were female, accounting for 156 individuals (59.5%), while the remaining 106 respondents (40.5%) were male. This distribution indicates that there were more female employees than male employees in the analysed group.

## Test of Validity and Reliability

**Table 2. Validity and Reliability**

No	Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Transformational Leadership	TL.1	0,622	0,896
		TL.2	0,596	
		TL.3	0,743	
		TL.4	0,669	
		TL.5	0,707	
		TL.6	0,646	
		TL.7	0,586	
2	Self-efficacy	SE.1	0,688	0,893
		SE.2	0,701	
		SE.3	0,679	
		SE.4	0,652	
		SE.5	0,648	
		SE.6	0,679	
3	Organizational Commitment	OC.1	0,622	0,858
		OC.2	0,572	
		OC.3	0,565	
		OC.4	0,735	
		OC.5	0,657	
		OC.6	0,566	
4	Employee Performance	EP.1	0,58	0,897
		EP.2	0,75	
		EP.3	0,585	
		EP.4	0,667	
		EP.5	0,729	
		EP.6	0,689	
		EP.7	0,581	

Valid: Loading Factor > 0,5

Reliabel: Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq$  0,7

Table 2 shows that all question items on the Transformational Leadership, Self-efficacy, Organisational Commitment and Employee Performance variables are declared valid. All items are considered valid because they have a loading factor value greater than 0.5. This states that each variable question item can be used in further research. In addition, the construct reliability value presented also shows that the variables of transformational leadership, self-efficacy, organisational commitment, and member performance are said to be reliable because they have a construct reliability value  $\geq$  0.7.

## Test of Descriptive Statistic

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistic**

No	Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
1	Transformational Leadership	262	1	5	4,04	0,783
2	Self-Efficacy	262	1	5	4,09	0,814
3	Organizational Commitment	262	1	5	4,03	0,875
4	Employee Performance	262	1	5	4,08	0,866

The average value of the variables ranges from 4.03 to 4.09 on a scale of 5, indicating that respondents tend to give high ratings. On a scale of 5, indicating that respondents tend to give high ratings (>80% of the maximum value) on all variables. (>80% of the maximum value) on all variables. Self-Efficacy (4.09) is slightly higher than Employee Performance (4.08), Transformational Leadership (4.04), and Organisational Commitment (4.03). The standard deviation ranges from 0.783 to 0.875, signifying relatively moderate variation in answers (about 15-17% of the total scale). Organisational Commitment has the highest variation (SD=0.875), and Transformational Leadership showed the most homogeneous answers (SD=0.783).

### *Test of Normality*

Normality tests are conducted at two levels: univariate and multivariate. Univariate normality is assessed by skewness ( $\leq \pm 2.58$  at alpha 0.01 or  $\leq \pm 1.96$  at alpha 0.05) and kurtosis ( $\leq \pm 7$ ). Multivariate normality was determined from the critical ratio (c.r), which should not exceed  $\pm 2.58$  at alpha 0.01.

**Table 4. Assasement of Normality**

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
EP.7	1	5	-1,33	-8,672	0,897	2,922
EP.6	2	5	-0,557	-3,631	-0,091	-0,296
EP.5	2	5	-0,55	-3,584	-0,044	-0,142
EP.4	2	5	-0,551	-3,592	0,01	0,032
EP.3	1	5	-0,255	-1,661	-0,56	-1,825
EP.2	1	5	-0,776	-5,056	0,884	2,881
EP.1	1	5	-0,938	-6,118	1,258	4,099
OC.6	1	5	-0,876	-5,71	-0,136	-0,442
OC.5	2	5	-0,4	-2,609	-0,39	-1,271
OC.4	1	5	-0,461	-3,007	0,642	2,094
OC.3	2	5	-0,478	-3,118	-0,73	-2,38
OC.2	1	5	-0,813	-5,299	0,382	1,244
OC.1	2	5	-0,432	-2,813	-0,439	-1,432
SE.6	2	5	-0,436	-2,84	-0,374	-1,218
SE.5	2	5	-0,622	-4,056	-0,117	-0,383
SE.4	1	5	-0,992	-6,467	1,388	4,524
SE.3	2	5	-0,569	-3,71	-0,172	-0,56
SE.2	2	5	-0,516	-3,364	0,086	0,279
SE.1	2	5	-0,725	-4,724	0,587	1,914
TL.7	2	5	-0,328	-2,136	-0,176	-0,573
TL.6	2	5	-0,397	-2,588	0,113	0,368
TL.5	2	5	-0,458	-2,989	-0,027	-0,089
TL.4	2	5	-0,575	-3,747	0,354	1,154
TL.3	2	5	-0,646	-4,211	0,82	2,674
TL.2	2	5	-0,445	-2,904	-0,038	-0,124
TL.1	2	5	-0,768	-5,007	0,06	0,194
<i>Multivariate</i>					<b>35,935</b>	<b>7,519</b>

Table 4 indicates that the data still do not meet the assumption of normality, with a multivariate critical ratio (c.r) value of 7.519 (exceeding the  $\pm 2.58$  limit) and several indicators showing skewness  $> \pm 2.58$  and kurtosis  $> \pm 7$ . The data is the



result of post-outlier removal. When. When normality is still not met after handling outliers, the bootstrap method is the right solution because it does not require the assumption of a normal distribution and provides more accurate standard error estimates and confidence intervals. Therefore, the analysis will continue using the bootstrap approach.

### Test of Bollen-Stine Bootstrap

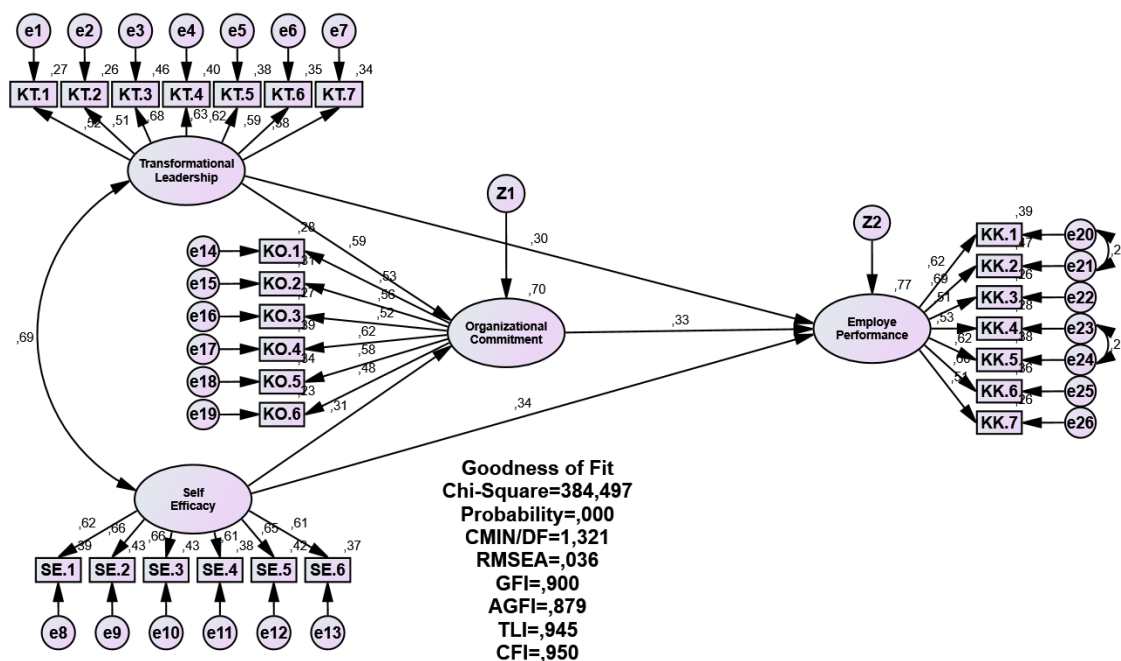
**Table 5. Bollen-Stine Bootstrap**

The model fit better in 1858 bootstrap samples.
It fit about equally well in 0 bootstrap samples.
It fit worse or failed to fit in 142 bootstrap samples.
Testing the null hypothesis that the model is correct, Bollen-Stine bootstrap $p = ,071$

After bootstrapping with 2000 samples and modification indices by connecting error terms e20-e21 and e23-e24, the analysis results show  $p = 0.071$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating a good model fit. Modification indices are acceptable if they have a strong theoretical justification. With these adjustments, the research model has achieved an acceptable level of fit.

### Goodness of Fit

The step in assessing goodness of fit is the main thing in SEM analysis to determine how far the hypothesised model can be said to be good (fit) or fit the data sample. This diagram illustrates the sequential path of the analysis process using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).



**Figure 1. Model**

Table 6. Goodness of Fit

Goodness of fit index	Cut-off value	Research Model	Model
<i>Chi-Square</i>	Expectedly small	384,497	Not Fit
<i>Probability</i>	$\geq 0,05$	0	Not Fit
CMIN/DF	$< 2$	1,321	Fit
RMSEA	$< 0,08$	0,036	Fit
GFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,9	Fit
AGFI	$> 0,9$	0,879	Not Fit
TLI	$> 0,9$	0,945	Fit
CFI	$> 0,95$	0,95	Marginal Fit

Based on Table 6, the research model meets five goodness-of-fit index criteria, namely CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, TLI, and CFI, so that it can be categorised as a fit model. CMIN/DF of 1.321 indicates a suitable model, RMSEA of 0.036 is within the recommended limit ( $< 0.08$ ), GFI of 0.9 meets the standard  $\geq 0.90$ , TLI of 0.945 also exceeds the standard  $\geq 0.90$ , and CFI of 0.95 indicates a marginal fit model. AGFI of 0.879 has not reached the recommended limit ( $\geq 0.90$ ), and the Chi-square and Probability values are still below the standard. If most of the goodness-of-fit criteria are met, the model is still acceptable. Therefore, although not all indicators reach the recommended value, the CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, CFI, and TLI results indicate that this model is fit and acceptable as a good research model.

The next stage is hypothesis testing. The analysis results in the regression weight table in AMOS show the influence of variables. The hypothesis is accepted if  $CR > 1.96$  and  $P < 0.05$ , while if  $CR < 1.96$  and  $P > 0.05$ , exogenous variables do not affect endogenous variables. The sign (\*\*\*) indicates  $P < 0.001$ .

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

No	Variable	Hub	Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Information
1	Organizational Commitment	H1	Transformational Leadership	0,681	0,16	4,245	***	Confirmed
2	Organizational Commitment	H2	Self Efficacy	0,318	0,112	2,831	0,005	Confirmed
3	Employee Performance	H3	Organizational Commitment	0,359	0,175	2,05	0,04	Confirmed
4	Employee Performance	H4	Transformational Leadership	0,372	0,179	2,077	0,038	Confirmed
5	Employee Performance	H5	Self Efficacy	0,379	0,124	3,069	0,002	Confirmed

Transformational leadership has been proven to have a positive and significant influence on organisational commitment (H1), with a C.R. value of 4.245 and  $P = 0.000$ . This suggests that leaders who inspire and motivate their employees can foster greater engagement and loyalty within the organisation. Self-efficacy also has a positive and significant effect on organisational commitment (H2), with C.R. = 2.831 and  $P = 0.005$ , suggesting that individuals who have confidence in their abilities tend to be more committed to their tasks. Furthermore, organisational commitment influences employee performance (H3), with C.R. = 2.05 and  $P = 0.04$ , meaning that the higher an individual's commitment to the organisation, the more likely they are to demonstrate better performance.



Transformational leadership also affects employee performance (H4), with C.R. = 2.077 and  $P = 0.038$ , indicating that leaders who provide vision and support can drive productivity and work quality improvements. Additionally, self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on employee performance (H5), with C.R. = 3.069 and  $P = 0.002$ , suggesting that individuals with high self-confidence are more capable of overcoming challenges and achieving optimal work outcomes. Therefore, all hypotheses in this study are accepted as they meet the criteria of  $C.R. > 1.96$  and  $P < 0.05$ .

### **Mediation Test results**

Testing the mediation effect uses a bootstrapping technique with 2000 samples and a 95% confidence level. This method was chosen because it does not require the assumption of normality. The analysis was conducted with AMOS 24 using bias-corrected confidence intervals.

**Table 8. Mediation Test**

<b>Standardized Indirect Effects - Two Tailed Significance (BC) (Group number 1 - Default model)</b>				
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Self Efficacy</b>	<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	<b>Employee Performance</b>
Organizational Commitment	...	...	...	...
Employee Performance	0,036	0,038	...	...

Transformational leadership has been proven to influence employee performance through organisational commitment as an intervening variable (H6), with an indirect effect significance value of 0.038 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that organisational commitment plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Similarly, self-efficacy also affects employee performance through organisational commitment as an intervening variable (H7), with an indirect effect significance value of 0.036 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding suggests that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to develop strong organisational commitment, which in turn enhances their performance. Therefore, both hypotheses (H6 and H7) are accepted as they meet the significance criteria ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming the mediating role of organisational commitment in these relationships.

### **Discussion**

This study empirically confirms that transformational leadership significantly and positively impacts organizational commitment, consistent with prior research (Ausat et al., 2022). Leaders who inspire, show individual care, and build trust boost employee motivation and loyalty (Wang, 2022). That suggests supportive and visionary leadership is crucial for fostering stronger emotional ties between employees and their workplaces.

Beyond leadership, self-efficacy significantly predicts organizational commitment. Employees who are confident in their abilities are better at facing challenges and tend to be more committed to their organizations (Hameli & Ordun, 2022). These individuals approach tasks optimistically, show resilience,

and develop an emotional connection to their work environment (Chiyangwa & Muponya, 2024; Hameli & Ordun, 2022). Moreover, self-efficacy not only directly contributes to commitment but also promotes positive perspectives and actions, increasing employee motivation and readiness for job demands (Opolot et al., 2024).

The data strongly support the role of organizational commitment in improving employee performance. Echoing prior research, committed employees typically show higher productivity, discipline, and persistence in their duties (Afuan et al., 2024; Ataman et al., 2024; Chiu et al., 2020). Furthermore, employees who are proud of their organization are more likely to enhance their skills and take on more responsibilities (Taho et al., 2024). These findings affirm that organizational commitment is positively correlated with employees' proactive engagement and contribution toward institutional goals.

Transformational leadership is also found to directly and positively influence employee performance. Leaders who provide strategic direction, foster innovation, and offer individualized support contribute to a work climate that promotes efficiency and effectiveness (Firdaus et al., 2025). When employees feel empowered and valued, they tend to be more engaged and perform better (Sürücü et al., 2022). Additionally, transformational leadership boosts not just productivity but also creative problem solving and innovation (Suryadi et al., 2024).

Self-efficacy significantly enhances employee performance, as employees who are confident in their abilities better handle complex tasks, show more initiative, and adapt effectively to dynamic environments (Yagil et al., 2023). This confidence fosters innovation and persistence, directly leading to stronger individual results and overall organizational success (Rohma & Khoirunnisa, 2024).

The mediation analysis highlights organizational commitment's central role as a bridge. It shows that transformational leadership indirectly boosts employee performance by first strengthening commitment (Taho et al., 2024). Leaders who cultivate trust and a shared purpose effectively elevate motivation and performance (Sudha et al., 2023; Wang, 2022).

Organizational commitment also mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and employee performance. Employees with higher self-efficacy tend to be more committed, consistently resulting in better job performance (Sari et al., 2024). This increased self-efficacy boosts an individual's drive, persistence, and overall contribution to organizational goals (Krisnayanti & Sriathi, 2022).

This study significantly advances our understanding of how transformational leadership and self-efficacy impact organizational commitment and employee performance. Practically, it shows that cultivating strong leadership and boosting employee self-efficacy are crucial for enhancing workforce engagement, commitment, and overall results. The research also uncovers that intergenerational conflicts hurt Gen Z's workplace comfort and commitment, emphasizing the need for leadership that is not only transformational but also emotionally supportive and communicatively adaptive (Pradhana et al., 2024).

This study underscores the importance of organizational commitment as a mediator, which is relatively underexplored in the existing literature, particularly

in the context of the Indonesian academic sector. For practitioners, this study highlights the need for organizations to invest not only in transformational leadership practices but also in fostering self-efficacy among employees. Leaders should focus on creating an environment that fosters confidence and resilience, particularly among Generation Z employees who may require more emotional support and development to feel truly committed. The research provides practical insights that can guide organizational leaders in cultivating a more engaged and high-performing workforce.

## CONCLUSION

This study confirms that transformational leadership and self-efficacy significantly enhance organizational commitment and employee performance, both directly and indirectly. Leaders who inspire and support their teams, and employees who believe in their own abilities, contribute to a more loyal, motivated, and productive workforce. Organizational commitment plays a key mediating role in these relationships. Given the study's limitations, such as its focus on Generation Z employees at Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, the use of cross-sectional data, and the exclusion of other relevant variables, future research should consider broader samples, longitudinal approaches, and additional factors like job satisfaction, organizational culture, and intrinsic motivation to deepen understanding of what drives employee performance.

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