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THE EFFECT OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON PERFORMANCE, WITH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AMONG LECTURERS

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyse the influence of transformational leadership and the work environment on lecturer performance, with organisational commitment as a mediating variable. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that emphasises value transformation, integrity, and individual empowerment within educational organisations. Meanwhile, a conducive work environment is believed to foster collaboration and support the achievement of institutional goals. The Research used a quantitative approach, distributing questionnaires to 41 lecturers as respondents, resulting in a saturated sample. The data were then analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine the relationships among variables. The results indicate that transformational leadership and the work environment positively affect organisational commitment, which, in turn, improves lecturer performance. This finding underscores the important roles of leadership and the work environment in strengthening organisational commitment, enabling educational institutions to encourage continuous improvement in academic performance.

Keywords: *Work Environment; Transformational Leadership; Organizational Commitment; Lecturer Performance.*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Indonesia is positioned as a strategic instrument to develop professional human resources, enhance competitiveness, and strengthen innovation capacity and public service delivery (Retno Kemala & Farlis, 2025a). In this context, higher education institutions are required to manage internal resources effectively in order to achieve institutional objectives on a sustainable basis (El Achi et al, 2025). Human resource management is one of the key determinants because academic service quality, stakeholder satisfaction, and the achievement of organizational performance are substantially supported by the quality of individual performance within the institution (Subandi et al, 2023). In the higher-education environment, HR

management agendas include recruitment processes, competency development (Lestari et al, 2025), remuneration arrangements, and the structuring of workloads and structural assignments so that they are aligned with the priorities of the Tri Dharma of higher education (education, research, and community service) and the institution's quality targets (Khasanah et al, 2025).

Lecturers are the primary actors in the delivery of higher education because they contribute directly to teaching and learning, research, and community service (Halim et al, 2025). Lecturer performance therefore has direct implications for the quality of learning, publication productivity, community service outcomes, and ultimately contributes to a university's reputation and accreditation results (Subagio & Putri, 2024). Policy-level indicators of lecturer performance have also been defined, including education and teaching, research, community service, and self-development (Jonatan & Masman, 2025), plus additional indicators according to specific academic ranks or assignments (for example, academic leadership, supervision, innovation, and collaboration), as referenced in the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kepmendikbudristek) Number 500 of 2024 (Anggi Prabowo & Wenny Desty Febrian, 2025). Within this framework, universities need supportive organizational conditions so that lecturers can meet performance indicators consistently and measurably (Retno Kemala & Farlis, 2025).

However, lecturer performance in institutions that are in a phase of organizational and infrastructure transition often faces specific challenges. At Universitas Wirahusada Medan, initial findings based on observation and internal data indicate several operational constraints that may hinder academic productivity, particularly in research and community service (Pambayun, 2024). These constraints include limited internet connectivity (Wi-Fi) and incomplete management of the institution's domain, which affects access to university email accounts for grant administration processes (Febriyanti & Chairun Nisa, 2025). In terms of work facilities, the availability of equipment and furniture remains inadequate; for instance, limited supporting devices (such as printers) must be shared across study programs, creating queues and inefficiencies (Dewanti & Wahyudi, 2025). This situation is reinforced by the relocation of the campus from the old building to the new building, resulting in a gradual fulfillment of facilities (Nasution & Hermawan, 2024). Practically, some lecturers choose to work in non-work areas (such as the cafeteria) to obtain more stable internet access, indicating that office comfort and support from the work environment have not yet been optimized (Mulyadi et al, 2024).

From an organizational behavior perspective, two groups of factors often associated with performance are leadership factors and work-environment factors (Astika et al, 2025). A conducive work environment provides physical and psychosocial support so that individuals feel more comfortable, focused, and productive in completing tasks; several empirical findings also show an association between the work environment and performance (Dimple & Tripathi, 2024). At the same time, leadership effectiveness affects the clarity of direction, the work climate, and the level of motivation and engagement among organization members (Mulyarta et al,

2023). Transformational leadership, which emphasizes value transformation, integrity, exemplary conduct, and individual empowerment (Anggraeni & Cahyono, 2024), is considered relevant for educational organizations because it can foster collective commitment to academic goals and continuous improvement. A number of studies show that transformational leadership is positively associated with individual performance (Satish et al, 2025).

Nevertheless, the influence of leadership and the work environment on performance is not always direct (Wulandari & Wibowo, 2024). One widely discussed mechanism is organizational commitment, namely a psychological state that reflects an individual's attachment to the organization (Pasya et al, 2024), encompassing dimensions of emotional attachment, a sense of obligation to remain, and cost–benefit considerations if leaving the organization (Zulher et al, 2025). When lecturers view the organization as a place that is worthy for contributing and growing, they tend to demonstrate loyalty, active participation, and consistent performance (Nugroho & Tahwin, 2023). Conversely, low commitment can manifest in high turnover intention and turnover (Stiawan et al, 2023). In the context of Universitas Wirahusada Medan, there are indications that organizational commitment is not yet strong, as reflected by a relatively high lecturer turnover rate over a short period, underscoring the importance of understanding the antecedents of commitment and its consequences for performance (Sutanto et al, 2025).

Prior studies also indicate that organizational commitment can act as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership and the work environment and performance (Aisyah et al, 2025). However, empirical evidence in the context of developing universities that are undergoing transitions in infrastructure and digital systems, and that face dynamics in leader–subordinate relationships and educator workforce stability, still requires reinforcement (Sutoro, 2024). Therefore, this study focuses on examining the effect of transformational leadership and the work environment on lecturer performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable, at Universitas Wirahusada Medan.

Conceptually, this study is expected to contribute to two domains. First, a theoretical contribution through testing an organizational-commitment mediation model to explain the relationship between transformational leadership and the work environment and lecturer performance in an educational organization (Ahmad Refqi et al, 2025). Second, a practical contribution in the form of policy recommendations for university leaders, particularly related to strengthening leadership patterns that are more communicative and empowering (Henky Andrian et al, 2023), improving work-environment support (facilities, office comfort, and support for digital systems), and strategies to increase organizational commitment to reduce turnover and promote the achievement of lecturer performance indicators (Yu & Jang, 2024).

Based on this background, the main objective of the study is to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and the work environment on lecturer performance, both directly and through organizational commitment. The next section of this article presents the literature review and hypothesis development, research methods, results of the SEM-PLS analysis, discussion of

the findings, as well as the implications and limitations of the study for future research agendas.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design. Its primary objective is to test the causal relationships between transformational leadership and the work environment on lecturer performance, both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment as a mediating variable. The unit of analysis is the individual (lecturer) at Universitas Wirahusada Medan.

Research Design Summary

Component	Specification
Type of study	Quantitative, explanatory survey
Location	Universitas Wirahusada Medan
Study period	October 2025–February 2026 (±5 months; preparation through data processing)
Population	All permanent lecturers at Universitas Wirahusada Medan (N=41)
Sampling technique	Saturated sampling (census), n=41
Instrument	Closed-ended questionnaire, 5-point Likert scale
Variable	X1: Transformational leadership; X2: Work environment; Z: Organizational commitment; Y: Lecturer performance
Data analysis	PLS-SEM (SmartPLS): measurement model and structural model evaluation; mediation test via bootstrapping

Research Site and Timeframe

The study was conducted at Universitas Wirahusada Medan. Data collection was planned to start in October 2025 and was completed through the data processing stage and report preparation within approximately five months.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised all permanent lecturers at Universitas Wirahusada Medan (N=41). Because the population size is relatively small and all elements are accessible, the sampling technique used was saturated sampling (census), so the number of respondents equals the population (n=41).

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

The study includes the dependent variable (lecturer performance/Y), independent variables (transformational leadership/X1 and work environment/X2), and an intervening/mediating variable (organizational commitment/Z). All constructs were measured reflectively using indicators adapted from the literature and tailored to the higher-education organizational context.

Operational Definitions and Indicators

Variable	Main Dimensions/Indicators	Number of indicators (items)	Reference source	Scale
Lecturer performance (Y)	Quality; quantity; timeliness; effectiveness; independence; work commitment	12 item (KK1–KK12)	Bernardin & Russell (2013) – adapted	Likert 1–5
Transformational leadership (X1)	Idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; individualized consideration	8 item (TL1–TL8)	Robbins & Judge (2017) – adapted	Likert 1–5
Work environment (X2)	Lighting; temperature; noise; use of color; workspace; work safety; work relationships	14 item (LK1–LK14)	Sedarmayanti (2017) – adapted	Likert 1–5
Organizational commitment (Z)	Affective commitment; continuance commitment; normative commitment	9 items (KO1–KO9; KO8 may be removed if it does not meet the criteria)	Meyer & Allen (1991; 1997) – adapted	Likert 1–5

Instrument and Measurement

Primary data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Item development was based on the indicators for each construct. Prior to structural analysis, instrument quality was evaluated through validity and reliability testing using PLS-SEM.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to all permanent lecturers either directly or via the university's internal online media. Respondents were provided with information about the study objectives and assurances of data confidentiality. Questionnaires that were not completely filled out were excluded from data processing.

Data Analysis Technique (PLS-SEM)

Analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for predictive models with relatively small sample sizes and does not

require strict normality assumptions. Evaluation was carried out in two stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and (2) evaluation of the structural model (inner model).

PLS-SEM Model Evaluation Criteria

Aspect	Criteria/Measure	Threshold used	Main reference
Convergent validity	Outer loading	>= 0.70 (0.40–0.70 dipertimbangkan bila CR/AVE memadai)	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Convergent validity	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	>= 0.50	Hair et al. (2017/2022); Fornell & Larcker (1981)
Internal reliability	Composite reliability (CR)	0.70–0.95	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Internal reliability	Cronbach's alpha	>= 0.70	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Discriminant validity	HTMT	< 0.90	Henseler et al. (2015)
Structural model	Path coefficient	t-statistic > 1.96; p < 0.05 (two-tailed)	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Structural model	R-square (R^2)	Contextual interpretation; higher values indicate better prediction	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Effect size	f-square (f^2)	0.02 small; 0.15 medium; 0.35 large	Hair et al. (2017/2022)
Predictive	Q^2 (Stone-Geisser)	> 0 indicates predictive relevance	Ringle et al. (2022)

Parameter significance was tested using a bootstrap procedure (e.g., 5,000 resamples). The mediating effect of organizational commitment was assessed via the significance of the indirect effect; mediation was considered significant when the bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero.

Software

Data were processed using SmartPLS for PLS-SEM estimation and spreadsheet/statistical software (e.g., Microsoft Excel or SPSS) to support descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The study respondents comprised 41 lecturers of Universitas Wirahusada Medan (census sampling). A summary of respondent characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Characteristic	Category	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	19	46
Gender	Female	22	54
Age	≤ 30 years	32	78
Age	31–40 years	8	19,5
Age	41–50 years	0	0
Age	≥ 51 years	1	2,4
Education	S2	40	98
Education	S3	1	2
Length of service	≤ 1 year	10	24
Length of service	1,5–5 years	31	76

Note: N = 41. Source: processed questionnaire data, 2025.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics indicate respondents' rating tendencies for each construct. The measurement scale used a 1–5 Likert scale. A summary of descriptive statistics is presented in Table 2.

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Lecturer Performance (Y)	41	3,90	4,65	3,00	4,90
Transformational Leadership (X1)	41	3,70	3,62	2,70	4,70
Work Environment (X2)	41	3,59	4,80	2,29	4,90
Organizational Commitment (Z)	41	3,93	3,90	3,53	4,34

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Overall, the mean values range from 3,59–3,93, indicating that respondents' perceptions tend to be positive. Organizational commitment has the highest mean (mean = 3,93), whereas the work environment has the lowest mean (mean = 3,59).

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of reflective constructs. The criteria used include: (a) convergent validity via outer loadings and AVE, (b) reliability via Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, and (c) discriminant validity via Fornell–Larcker and HTMT.

Convergent Validity

All indicators retained in the final model have outer loadings ≥ 0,70, thus meeting the convergent validity criterion. Furthermore, the Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0,50 (Table 3), indicating that the proportion of indicator variance explained by the latent constructs is adequate.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Transformational Leadership (X1)	0,93	0,94	0,66
Work Environment (X2)	0,96	0,96	0,66
Organizational Commitment (Z)	0,92	0,94	0,65
Lecturer Performance (Y)	0,95	0,96	0,64

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs exceed 0,70; therefore, the instrument's internal consistency can be considered good.

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell–Larcker test shows that the square root of AVE on the diagonal is higher than the correlations among constructs, indicating that discriminant validity is satisfied (Table 4). The HTMT results are also all < 0,90 (Table 5); hence, the constructs in the model are empirically distinct.

Construct	X1	Y	Z	X2
X1 (TL)	**0,809**			
Y (KD)	0,50	**0,800**		
Z (KO)	0,49	0,46	**0,81**	
X2 (LK)	0,43	0,59	0,59	**0,81**

Note: the diagonal values (bold) are the square root of AVE. Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Construct	X1	Y	Z	X2
X1 (TL)				
Y (KD)	0,53			
Z (KO)	0,51	0,48		
X2 (LK)	0,46	0,62	0,62	

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model evaluation was conducted to assess the model's predictive capability and the strength of relationships among constructs through the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs are presented in Table 6.

Endogenous Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Organizational	0,41	0,40

Commitment (Z)		
Lecturer Performance (Y)	0,22	0,21

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

The model explains 41% of the variance in organizational commitment and 22% of the variance in lecturer performance. Practically, the contribution of the predictors to organizational commitment is moderate, whereas their contribution to lecturer performance is relatively limited, indicating that other determinants outside the model still influence lecturer performance.

Effect Size (f^2)

A summary of effect size (f^2) is presented in Table 7.

Relationship	f^2	Classification
Transformational Leadership (X1) → Organizational Commitment (Z)	0,12	small–medium
Work Environment (X2) → Organizational Commitment (Z)	0,29	medium
Organizational Commitment (Z) → Lecturer Performance (Y)	0,28	medium

Note: f^2 interpretation refers to the criteria 0,02 (small), 0,15 (medium), 0,35 (large). Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The blindfolding results show the Q^2 values for the endogenous constructs (Table 8).

Construct	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1−SSE/SSO)
Lecturer Performance (Y)	1.020.000	889.390	0,13
Organizational Commitment (Z)	680.000	509.406	0,25

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Because the Q^2 values for both endogenous constructs are > 0, the model is considered to have adequate predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. The significance criteria used were $\alpha = 0,05$ (p-value < 0,05) and t-statistics > 1,96.

Direct Effects

Relationship	Koefisien (O)	Std. Dev	t-stat	p-value	Decision
X1 → Z	0,30	0,10	3,05	0,002	Significant (+)
X2 → Z	0,46	0,10	4,55	0,000	Significant (+)
Z → Y	0,46	0,10	4,83	0,000	Significant (+)

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

The results indicate that transformational leadership and the work environment have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. Furthermore, organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on lecturer performance.

Indirect Effects (Mediation)

Mediation Path	Koefisien (O)	Std. Dev	t-stat	p-value	Decision
X1 → Z → Y	0,14	0,06	2,35	0,01	Significant (+)
X2 → Z → Y	0,21	0,07	2,90	0,004	Significant (+)

Source: SmartPLS output, 2025.

Thus, organizational commitment is proven to mediate the effects of transformational leadership and the work environment on lecturer performance.

Discussion

Transformational Leadership → Organizational Commitment

The path coefficient indicates that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0,30$; $t = 3,05$; $p = 0,002$). Substantively, these findings confirm that leaders' behaviors that provide inspiration, role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration encourage lecturers to internalize organizational goals, feel part of the institution, and maintain commitment to the university. In higher education settings, transformational leadership is important because academic work requires autonomy, clarity of direction, and a climate that supports innovation in teaching and research (Sunaryo et al, 2023).

Work Environment → Organizational Commitment

The work environment has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0,46$; $t = 4,55$; $p < 0,001$) and shows a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0,29$). This means that the quality of the work environment—both physical aspects (facilities, comfort, availability of resources) and non-physical aspects (work relationships, communication, support from colleagues and supervisors)—makes a real contribution to shaping lecturers' attachment to the institution. In the context of a relatively new university, the readiness of academic facilities and organizational support are important factors in fostering pride and lecturers' willingness to stay and contribute (Xuan et al, 2025).

Organizational Commitment → Lecturer Performance

Organizational commitment has a positive and significant effect on lecturer performance ($\beta = 0,46$; $t = 4,83$; $p < 0,001$) with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0,28$). This finding indicates that lecturers with a higher level of commitment tend to demonstrate better performance, both in carrying out core duties and in completing work in a more disciplined, effective, and responsible manner. Strong commitment strengthens intrinsic motivation and lecturers' willingness

to exert extra effort (extra-role behavior) to achieve institutional targets (Gündüz et al, 2025).

Mediation of Organizational Commitment in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Work Environment on Lecturer Performance

The specific indirect effects results show that organizational commitment mediates the effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance (β = 0,14; t = 2,35; p = 0,01) and mediates the effect of the work environment on lecturer performance (β = 0,21; t = 2,90; p = 0,004). This means that improvements in lecturer performance do not depend only on leadership practices and work-environment conditions directly, but primarily through strengthening lecturers' commitment to the organization. Consequently, managerial interventions targeting improvements in leadership and the work environment will be more effective when accompanied by institutional strategies to build commitment (e.g., clarity of career direction, performance recognition, support for competency development, and governance fairness) (Huang et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that transformational leadership style and the work environment have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment at Universitas Wirahusada in Medan. In addition, transformational leadership style and the work environment also have a positive and significant effect on lecturers' performance, both directly and indirectly through organizational commitment. Thus, organizational commitment is proven to play an important role because it has a positive and significant effect on lecturers' performance at Universitas Wirahusada in Medan and serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of transformational leadership style and the work environment on lecturers' performance.

Based on the magnitude of the coefficients, the work environment shows a larger effect on organizational commitment than transformational leadership. Therefore, improvement priorities can be directed toward strengthening facilities and supporting resources for teaching/research, improving work systems and cross-unit communication, and developing a collaborative work culture. On the leadership side, strengthening transformational behaviors (clear vision, inspiration, coaching, and empowerment) needs to be formalized in leadership evaluation and development mechanisms.

The R^2 value for lecturer performance of 0,22 indicates that most of the variance in performance is still influenced by other factors outside the model (e.g., workload, incentive systems, competence, research support, and individual factors). Future research is recommended to include these constructs and test the model on a larger sample to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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