

# The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Professional Commitment and the Mediation Role of Teacher Academic Optimism

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of the principal's transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment and the mediating role of teacher academic optimism. This research was conducted on teachers in 10 schools in Bengkalis district, Riau Province, there were 232 respondents as the research sample, while the research time was carried out between October and December 2021. Data analysis techniques were in the form of validity and reliability tests with SEM-analysis. PLS via software WarpPLS Version 7.0. This study has found that transformational leadership indirectly affects the professional commitment of teachers in carrying out their duties, which is 0.423. In addition, this study also shows that the effect of transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment is mediated by teacher's academic optimism of 0.535. This study found that transformational leadership directly affects teachers' professional commitment by 0.112. The principal's transformational leadership has a positive predictive effect on teacher academic optimism of 0.603 and teachers' academic optimism has a direct effect on teacher professional commitment of 0.702.

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## Introduction

Organizational commitment, as defined by Mowday (Steers and Porter, 1979; Anita R & Adi Rahmat, 2022; Rafida et al., 2022; Rahmat, 2015; Rizal et al., 2022), is "the relative The association between school scholarly positive thinking and educator scholastic hopefulness affects understudy learning and instructor education. Directors' job is critical, and their administration straightforwardly affects showing quality, proficient educator mentalities, and the general school air. The head's groundbreaking administration can work on the capacity of educators, reinforce the school environment, and get support from guardians and understudies, all of which can further develop understudy scholastic accomplishment. (Burns, 1978) proposed a hypothesis of groundbreaking authority to help a kind of administration in which people penance their circumstances to seek after some aggregate interest (Bass & Avolio, 1991). In instruction, groundbreaking administration is viewed as a successful initiative style (Ogawa & Hart, 1985); (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998). As well as rousing subordinates to accomplish more work than anticipated, the groundbreaking initiative can satisfy the higher needs of associates, as proposed by (Maslow, 1954); (Bass, 1985). Simultaneously, ideas, for example, groundbreaking administration, instructor

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scholastic good faith, and school scholarly confidence are connected with positive brain research, idealism, mental capital, and social capital (Beard & Hoy, 2009); (Toor & Ofori, 2010). "As per (Bass & Riggio, 2008), groundbreaking pioneers will urge subordinates to accomplish greatness; By defining objectives for assistants and giving them authority, pioneers mirror subordinates' requests and assist them with looking for individual improvement.

Transformational leadership (TL) is based on intellectual excitement, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Intellectual excitement means that the leader challenges the current situation and encourages subordinates to increase creativity, explore new methods and seek new learning opportunities to complete tasks. TL maintains open communication so that associates feel free to share ideas. In addition, the leader is aware of the special contributions of subordinates. Inspirational motivation means that the leader understands the vision clearly and shares the vision with the subordinates. They even help the subordinates increase their experience, enthusiasm, and inspiration to fulfil the vision. The idealized influence shows that the leader sets the model for the subordinates, and the subordinates trust and respect the leader. They follow the model and turn it into their ideas (Bass & Avolio, 2007).

Teacher academic optimism (TAO) includes a personal academic emphasis, success, and trust in parents and students. Academic optimism refers to the atmosphere in the school where all the emphasis is on the importance of the academic aspect, and there is collective efficacy and trust in parents and students. Although the concept components are similar, the levels are different. TAO is personal and individual, while school academic optimism is at the school level. (A. W. Hoy et al., 2008) assume that the principal's TL has the same predictive effect on TAO. To increase TAO, academic emphasis on success, confidence, and trust in parents and students must be increased first (Hoy, 2006a). Several studies have shown that principals with KT skills have a positive predictive effect on teacher efficacy and confidence; (Brissie et al., 1988); (Hipp & Bredesqn, 1995); (Riehl & Sipple, 1995) and on principal teacher trust (Podsakoff et al., 1990); (Pillai et al., 1999); (Zeinabadi & Rastegarpour, 2010).

This study has three limitations. First, because the principal's leadership is TL, group leadership behaviour in other fields, such as education and training, social support, democratic behaviour, positive feedback, and the avoidance of totalitarian leadership behaviour, does not always show the same results as the analysis of TAO, CTP, and other variables. In the future, further investigation of teachers' academic optimism can be carried out to cross-validate the results of this study. This study focuses on principal-based transformational leadership, teacher academic optimism, and teacher professional commitment.

## **Theoretical support**

### **Job- Demand Resource Theory**

In building the theoretical model, the assumptions made in this study are based on the job-demand resource theory", Hobfoll (2002). Based on this theory, job resources (physical, psychological, social, and organizational characteristics of a job) stimulate positive attitudes such as organizational involvement and commitment. "Leadership has been recognized by researchers in the fields of management and organization as one of the resources in the workplace, Abdillah et al, (2020) Cooper et all (2018) which can stimulate the attitudes and work behavior of subordinates." The process of leadership as a resource in the workplace includes an important emotional component which indicates that leaders can influence the happiness of followers which will ultimately shape work attitudes and work behavior of subordinates.

### **Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership according to Terry in Kartono (1998:38) is the activity of influencing people so that they like trying to achieve group goals. Leadership is a form of domination based on personal abilities that are able to encourage or invite other people to do something according to Young in Kartono (1998), based on acceptance by the group and having special skills that are appropriate for specific situations. The essence of transformational leadership is turning potential into real energy, transforming institutional potential into energy to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes. It can be concluded that the principal's leadership is a style that is applied in influencing subordinates consisting of teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents of students.

According to Bass (1990) transformational leadership is leadership that has the power to influence subordinates in certain ways. Subordinates will feel trusted, valued and loyal to their leaders by implementing transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a leadership style used by a manager when he wants a group to expand boundaries and have performance beyond the status quo or achieve a whole new set of organizational goals, this was stated by O'Leary (2001). Transformational leadership in principle motivates subordinates to do better than what can be done, in other words it can increase the confidence or self-confidence of subordinates which will affect increased performance. The first time the conception of transformational leadership was put forward by James McGregor Burns.

In relation to transformational leadership, Bernard Bass Stone et al (2004) says as follows: "Transformational leaders transform the personal values of followers to support the vision and goals of the organization by fostering an environment where relationships can be formed and by establishing a climate of trust in which visions can be shared". Operationally, Bernard Bass in Gill et al (2010) describes transformational leadership as follows: "Leadership and performance beyond expectations". Meanwhile Tracy and Hinkin in Gill et all (2010) define transformational leadership as follows: "The process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organization members and building commitment for the organization's mission or objectives". So, transformational leadership, the term transformational stems from the word to transform, means transforming or changing something into another, different form.

A transformational leader must be able to optimally transform organizational resources (human resources) in order to achieve goals according to predetermined targets. Human

resources in question can be in the form of facilities, funds, and external factors of the organization. The indicators of transformational leadership are: innovator, setting an example, encouraging the performance of subordinates, harmonizing the work environment, empowering subordinates, acting on the value system, continuously improving capabilities, and being able to deal with complex situations.

### ***Teacher Professionalism***

Septi Riana Putri et al (2002) said the capability or ability of human resources can Teachers as an extension of the school principal are required to be professional in their duties. According to Pidarta, a profession is an ordinary position or job as is the case with other jobs, but that work must be applied to society for the benefit of the general public, not for the benefit of individuals, groups or certain groups, Pidarta (2008:112).

The development of teacher professionalism is focused on mastery of knowledge or management skills and their implementation strategies. The demand for meeting professionalism standards for teachers is a manifestation of the desire to produce teachers who are able to foster students in accordance with the demands of society, as well as demands that must be met by teachers in achieving the title of professional teacher.

In fact, being a teacher is not enough just to fulfill one's calling, but also requires a set of special skills and abilities in the form of mastering teacher competence, in accordance with the qualifications of the type and level of education. Teachers are professional educators with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education. Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (2007: 73). The main task will be effective if the teacher has a certain professional degree which is reflected in the commitment to competence, proficiency, skills or skills that meet quality standards.

The low quality of education has had a direct impact on the low quality of the Indonesian nation's human resources. The process of producing quality human resources can only be through quality education and learning processes. The quality of education is determined by the education system, both in terms of management and the education process itself, directed effectively to increase the added value of input factors in order to produce the highest possible output. Educational input factors consist of: (1) students, (2) educational staff including teachers, budget, curriculum, infrastructure and administration, (3) environment which includes socio-economic, political, and security factors, Mulyana (1992:49) . Improving the quality of education is determined by how far the educational actors carry out their duties and responsibilities in managing education. Brandt in Supriadi stated that teachers are the key to improving the quality of education, they are at the central point of any educational reform effort directed at qualitative changes

### ***Teacher Academic Optimism***

The social cognitive theory put forward by Bandura (1997) provides a theoretical structure to explain the relationship between teacher academic optimism and school academic optimism. The basic assumption of social cognitive theory is human agent. When an individual and an organization make decisions, they demonstrate human agency. According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs are key in organizations. When individuals believe they have the ability to complete tasks independently, such behavior is more likely to occur. When teachers, both individually and collectively, believe in the

importance of students' academic achievement, trust parents and students, and have the belief that they can overcome difficulties, they will demonstrate teaching behaviors that can improve student academic achievement.

In addition to the agency assumption, the concept of academic optimism applies to the school and personal levels and includes cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects. Efficacy belief is a cognitive aspect, and belief is an affective aspect. Academic emphasis is a cognitive emphasis on certain behaviors in school, Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, and Kurz (2008). Academic optimism at the school level includes three components: academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and teachers' trust in parents and students. The relationships between these three components and their interaction effects result in a school's culture of academic optimism, which emphasizes that teachers have the ability to create and maintain a positive and productive educational environment. For example, if there is a collective decision between teachers, parents and students that students should achieve higher academic success, then higher academic standards will be set, and trust is strengthened. When teachers believe they are capable of carrying out these behaviors to have a positive impact on student achievement, they will encourage students to aspire to higher academic achievement.

Furthermore Hoy (2006a). The result of the interaction between academic emphasis, collective efficacy and teacher trust in parents and students will become a culture of school academic optimism that influences the school environment to emphasize academic achievement, trust in students and parents, and trust in students' professional abilities. Faculty, Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, and Pape (2006); Bryk and Schneider (2002) suggest that there are at least four kinds of social situations in schools that can improve student education: (1) teachers have a "can" attitude; (2) schools often deal with parents; (3) emphasis on cooperation and commitment to enhance professional commitment; and (4) high expectations. Belief in independence, trust and academic emphasis that shape school academic optimism can improve the school environment. The attitude of "can do" results from the teacher's sense of self-efficacy. The trust that teachers have in parents and students results in an environment where students, parents and teachers can work together, and have close contact.

Finally, an academic emphasis results in high expectations and standards, Beard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2010). In a school climate such as this where teachers can develop collegiality through conversation and observation of one another and sharing personal teaching experiences, they can screen out inappropriate academic behavior. This concept of normative behavior can lead to respect for teachers who exhibit appropriate teaching behavior, Coleman (1990). Therefore, in schools with high academic optimism, teachers will be influenced by a positive normative culture, thus increasing teacher academic optimism, trust in parents and students, and an emphasis on higher student academic achievement.

## Research Framework

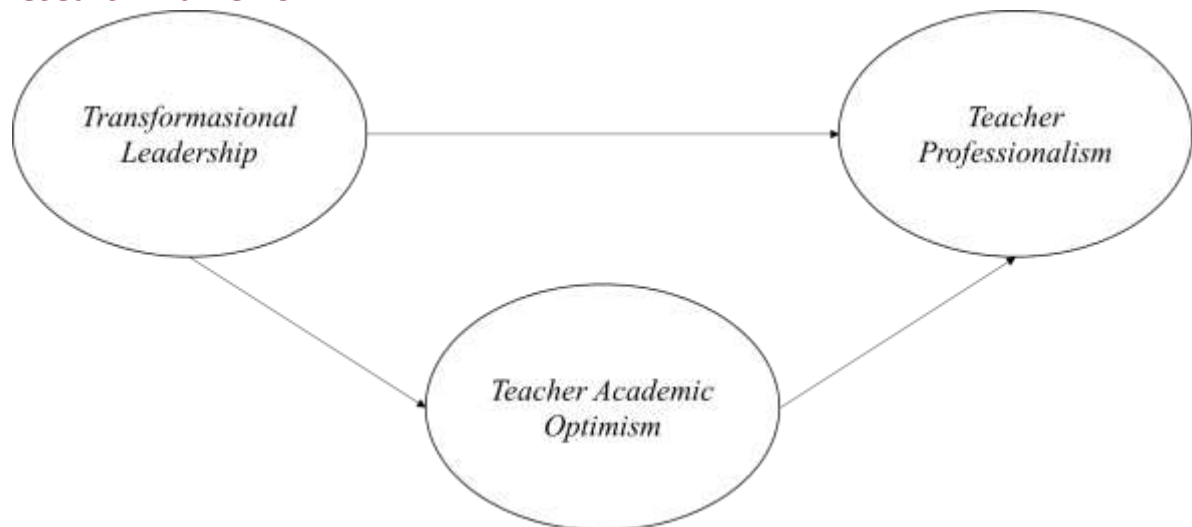


Figure 1. Research Framework.

## Research method

### Quantitative Method

This research approach uses quantitative methods. In this quantitative research, the researcher formulates a new problem by identifying it through a hypothesis, namely a temporary answer to the research problem formulation. According to Sugiyono (2014) quantitative research methods are research methods used to examine certain populations or samples, sampling techniques are generally carried out randomly, data collection uses research instruments, data analysis is quantitative/statistical in nature with the aim of testing hypotheses that have been set.

## Results

### Analisis SEM-PLS

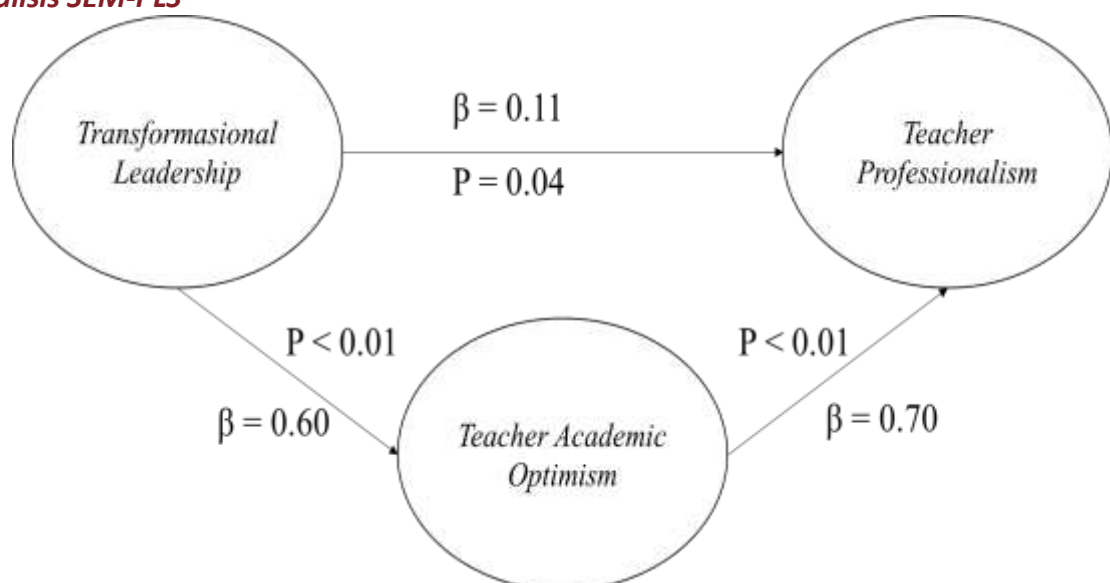


Figure 2. Path Chart.

### Significance Test Results

Table 1. Significance Test Results

Hypothesis	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Note:
Transformational Leadership > Teacher Professional	6,898	<0,001	Received
Transformational Leadership > Teacher Academic Optimism	7,519	<0,001	Received
Teacher Academic Optimism > Teacher Professional	2,815	<0,001	Received

Notes. Data Olahan, 2023

The first hypothesis (H1) predicts that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher academic optimism. Judging from table 4.16 and figure 2 shows that this hypothesis is supported statistically ( $\beta=0.603$   $p<0.01$ ). The table shows that transformational leadership variables positively affect teachers' academic optimism.

The second hypothesis (H2) predicts that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher professional commitment. The results of table 4.16 and figure 2 show that this hypothesis is supported by statistics ( $\beta=0.112$   $p=0.04$ ). The table shows that transformational leadership directly has a positive effect on teacher professional commitment.

The third hypothesis (H3) predicts that teacher academic optimism has a positive effect on teacher professional commitment. The results in table 4.16 and figure 2 show that this hypothesis is supported statistically ( $\beta=0.702$   $p<0.01$ ). The table shows that the teacher's academic optimism variable has a positive effect on the teacher's professional commitment.

Furthermore, the fourth hypothesis (H4) predicts that teacher academic optimism mediates the effect of transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment. The results in table 4.16 and figure 2 show that this hypothesis is supported statistically ( $\beta=0.535$   $p<0.001$ ). The table shows that the variable of teacher academic optimism significantly mediates the effect of transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment. The table also shows that when the mediating variable (teacher's academic optimism) is included in the model, the value of the effect of transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment increases from 0.112 to 0.535 which is very significant. This shows that the variable of teacher academic optimism in this study fully mediates the effect of transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment.

### Discussions

This study seeks to explain the relationship between transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment and the mediating role of teacher academic optimism in schools. Based on job-demand resource theory (Hobfoll, 2002), this study seeks to answer two main questions: whether transformational leadership positively affects teacher professional commitment or vice versa? And whether teacher academic optimism can mediate transformational leadership on teacher professional commitment. In particular, this research has found that transformational leadership indirectly affects teachers' professional commitment to carrying out their duties.

Furthermore, the teacher's optimistic attitude in the running can mediate the influence of transformational leadership on the teacher's professional commitment. This research

provides valuable input in understanding the underlying mechanism between transformational leadership and teacher professional commitment.

### ***Transformational leadership and teacher professional commitment***

The findings in this study extend existing evidence (Hong, 2017), regarding the important role of transformational leadership in motivating and increasing teacher professional commitment. This study found that transformational leadership directly affects teachers' professional commitment (hypothesis 2). This finding shows that the principal, as the highest leader in the school, can optimally transform the resources in the school. The principal can be a motivator, stimulator, consideration, and influencer for all school members. This study also examines the factors that can explain the professional commitment made by teachers, such as their belief in their educational abilities, belief in students and emphasis on the importance of education, and striving to be better at teaching. The principal's transformational leadership is predictive and positively related to teachers' professional commitment. This finding supports hypothesis 2 and is consistent with (Bogler & Somech, 2004) and (Lee & Nie, 2017).

### ***Teacher's academic optimism***

The results show that the development of academic optimism encourages positive and optimistic teachers to become efficient, cooperative, and productive teachers. The principal's transformational leadership has a positive predictive effect on teacher academic optimism. The findings support hypotheses 1 and 3. (W. K. Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006) suggest that to increase teachers' academic optimism, it is necessary to increase several factors of academic emphasis, collective efficacy, and trust.

It is known that if principals display transformational leadership, they can motivate and teach effectively, thereby increasing teacher academic optimism. More importantly, with high academic optimism, teachers can spend more time and energy teaching, thereby developing confidence in their teaching abilities and students. This finding supports hypothesis 3. When teachers develop such an attitude and strive to achieve professionalism in teaching, they will be motivated to continue their teaching careers. Teachers with high academic optimism will help their students mature and achieve academic success, which is a teacher reward, while salaries, social welfare, greater power, and other benefits are unmatched.

### ***Utilization of transformational leadership functions***

This study found that transformational leadership can lead to an attitude of teacher academic optimism towards teacher professional commitment. This explains that leaders who can transform themselves can play a very important role in providing additional social resources to stimulate positive attitudes and behaviour in the workplace, with the ability to transform attitudes such as motivating subordinates, harmonizing the work environment, acting according to the existing system, making updates, continuously improving abilities, being a role model, and being able to deal with complicated situations, (Danim & Suparno, 2009). A leader or principal can make teachers more optimistic at work. "A leader can stimulate positive attitudes of subordinates such as being optimistic in carrying out their duties, having a high commitment to the organization" in job-demand resource theory (Hobfoll 2002).

In addition to these findings, managers or principals need to encourage teachers to promote academic optimism in the workplace to encourage positive attitudes and behaviours in the



workplace. Efforts that school principals can make are by holding training or workshops and making visits to places or schools that have better academic achievements. In addition, it can also collaborate with other schools or with local agencies. It takes hard work to implement professional development programs (Barth, 1991), growing teacher academic optimism.

The findings of this study explain that teachers' academic optimism mediates the effect of transformational leadership on teachers' professional commitment. Practically speaking, to increase school academic optimism, principals need to demonstrate transformational leadership and improve the school's academic optimism climate, increase teaching effectiveness, and foster trust in parents and students. To achieve the above, principals can honour good teacher performance, set high and achievable goals, demand a clean and severe teaching environment, and provide opportunities for teachers to succeed in fostering a climate. Furthermore, principals need to assign teaching assignments according to their abilities and needs, respect good teachers to increase their confidence, and provide interactive teaching communication channels and classroom management structures to strengthen collective effectiveness.

Therefore, when schools want to increase teachers' academic optimism, they must encourage teachers, appreciate their efforts, set them as positive role models, and facilitate them to learn from each other. Furthermore, through communication, the principal's transformational leadership indirectly affects the professional commitment of teachers. The principal's transformational leadership directly affects teachers' academic optimism. In other words, teachers' academic optimism needs to be increased to increase their professional commitment.

## **Conclusion**

This study has three limitations. First, because the principal's transformational leadership is transformed, group leadership behaviour in other areas, such as education and training, social support, democratic behaviour, positive feedback, and avoidance of totalitarian leadership behaviour, does not necessarily show the same results as the analysis of academic optimism. Teachers, teacher professional commitment, and other variables. In the future, further analysis of teachers' academic optimism can be carried out to cross-validate the results of this study.

As this study is limited by sample size, future research may consider expanding the sample size to explain the multilevel effect of teachers' academic optimism and professional commitment. Furthermore, this study focused on the relationship between principal-based transformational leadership, teacher academic optimism, and teacher professional commitment.

All scales of this study are based on independent scales. For example, the teacher's academic optimism scale is based on the academic emphasis scale, the teacher success scale, and the confidence questionnaire, like the other three scales. Demonstrative factor analysis was carried out in this study. The constructs that were originally on the scales can be lost in making the scale and factor analysis, making it impossible to reflect the concept of other dimensions of the variable. It is hoped that further research will adopt the multi-trait-multi-method method to verify the validity of this research scale further.

This study supports a significant relationship between principals' transformational leadership, teacher academic optimism, and teacher professional commitment. However, the model developed here cannot analyze the causes of the transformation of principals' leadership, teacher academic optimism, and teacher professional commitment. Future research can use experiments to study how transformational leadership affects teachers' professional commitment.

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### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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