

The Effect of Principal's Transformational Leadership and Teacher Work Commitment on Instructional Performance Outcomes in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the influence of principals' transformational leadership and teacher work commitment on instructional performance outcomes in public elementary schools in Padang Pariaman Regency, Indonesia. This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design. The sample consisted of 182 teachers selected through cluster multistage stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a validated and reliable Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, simple regression, and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that principals' transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on teachers' instructional performance outcomes. In contrast, teacher work commitment did not have a significant partial effect, although teachers generally demonstrated a good level of commitment. Simultaneously, transformational leadership and work commitment had a significant effect on instructional performance outcomes; however, their combined contribution was relatively small, explaining only 4.0% of the variance. Transformational leadership emerged as the dominant predictor in the model. The study concludes that improving instructional performance outcomes requires strengthening principals' transformational leadership, particularly intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, while also supporting teachers through professional development, adequate resources, and conducive school conditions.

Keywords

Transformational Leadership; Work Commitment; Instructional Performance Outcomes; Elementary School

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education isn't just about transferring knowledge it's about building a nation's future. And it all starts with primary education. UNESCO made this clear when they stated that primary education is the very foundation of lifelong learning. If this foundation is weak, everything that follows is shaky (UNESCO, 2016).

Now, who holds the key to making this work? Teachers. In primary schools, teachers aren't just instructors. They're lesson designers, motivators, facilitators, and even role models. As Mulyasa put it,



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teachers are the single most important factor that determines whether learning actually happens or not (Mulyasa, 2013). So when we talk about improving education, we're really talking about improving what teachers do in the classroom.

But let's be honest: "what teachers do" isn't just about showing up and talking. Bernardin and Russell defined performance as measurable outcomes quality, timeliness, and meeting standards (Bernardin & Russell, 2013). In education, this translates into instructional performance outcomes: how well teachers plan, carry out, and evaluate lessons, and most importantly, how much students actually learn from it. Gagné, Briggs, and Wager added that effective learning is all about producing real changes in students' behavior and thinking (Gagné et al., 2005). Fatmi agreed, saying learning outcomes cover cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Fatmi et al., 2013). That's the real output of a teacher's hard work.

And the research backs this up. Darling-Hammond found that teaching quality matters more than any other school factor when it comes to student success (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Guo famously showed that effective teaching practices have a huge impact on learning outcomes (Guo et al., 2020). So if we want better schools, we need better teaching performance outcomes. Simple.

But here's the problem. Things don't always look that good on the ground. Fullan (2016) pointed out that weak learning quality is often marked by boring, conventional teaching methods, a lack of innovation, and poor use of technology. Students get disengaged. Learning suffers.

Take Padang Pariaman Regency as an example. According to the 2024 Education Report Card, the quality of learning in public elementary schools is still stuck at a moderate level indicated by yellow scores. Even worse, the inclusiveness climate score is low, and there's actually a downward trend compared to previous years. What does this mean in plain language? Students aren't building deep understanding. Classrooms aren't always supportive. Teachers aren't giving enough pedagogical or psychological support. And you can see the result in literacy and numeracy scores, which are also stuck at moderate.

So why is this happening? It's rarely just one thing. Robbins and Judge (2017) explained that individual performance is shaped by leadership, commitment, motivation, and work environment. In a school, one of the biggest influences is the principal's leadership.

Specifically, transformational leadership matters here. Bass and Riggio (2006) described transformational leaders as those who inspire, motivate, and empower their teams. In schools, such principals create a positive work climate, strengthen teachers' commitment, and push for better learning quality. Without that kind of leadership, teachers often just go through the motions.

Then there's teacher work commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) defined commitment as emotional attachment, a sense of duty, and a rational decision to stay and contribute. Teachers who are committed show up ready. They put in the effort. They plan well, teach well, and evaluate well. But when commitment is low? You see late submissions, minimal use of learning media, inconsistent assessments, and little participation in professional development. And unfortunately, that's what's been observed in Padang Pariaman. Many teachers still haven't shown optimal commitment.

So here's where we stand. Instructional performance outcomes the real output of teaching are still not optimal in Padang Pariaman's public elementary schools. Two key factors seem to influence this: the principal's transformational leadership and teachers' work commitment. But we need actual empirical evidence to confirm this.

That's exactly what this study aims to do. We want to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and teacher work commitment on instructional performance outcomes in Padang Pariaman. And hopefully, the findings will help shape better strategies for sustainable improvement in primary education.

2. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. explanatory research aims to explain how independent variables (in this case, the principal's transformational leadership and teachers' work commitment) influence the dependent variable (teachers' instructional performance outcomes). We chose a quantitative method because it deals with numbers and allows us to collect measurable data within a specific time frame.

The population of this study includes all public elementary school teachers working in Padang Pariaman Regency. Based on data from the Padang Pariaman Education Office, there are 3,783 teachers spread across 401 schools in 17 districts.

Because the population is quite large, we drew a sample. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula, and we used a multistage stratified random sampling technique with clustering. Here's how we did it step by step.

Step 1. Forming Clusters. We grouped schools into four geographic regions: (1) North, (2) South, (3) East, and (4) West (coastal area). Table 2 shows how the districts were grouped.

Step 2. Random Selection of Districts. After clustering, we randomly selected two districts from each region. The selected districts were: (1) North region: Aur Malintang and Batang Gasan; (2) South region: Batang Anai and Lubuk Alung; (3) East region: VII Koto Sungai Sarik and 2x11 Kayu Tanam; (4) West region: Nan Sabaris and Ulakan Tapakis.

Step 3. Identifying Strata. We used two stratification variables: years of service and rank. Years of service were split into ≤ 15 years and > 15 years. Rank was split into Grade III and Grade IV. We chose these two because we suspected they might influence teachers' instructional performance outcomes. Table 3 shows the population distribution after clustering and stratification.

Table 1. Population Distribution by Cluster, District, and Strata

No	Region	Subdistrict	Number of ASN teachers based on school with A accreditation			
			Years of Service		Strata	
			≤ 15	> 15	≤ III	IV
1	North	Aur Malintang	16	8	18	6
		Batang Gasan	7	9	9	7
2	South	Batang Anai	26	38	32	32
		Lubuk Alung	9	15	15	9
3	East	VII Koto Sungai Sarik	18	22	22	18
		2 X 11 Kayu Tanam	18	14	14	18
4	West	Nan sabaris	43	29	29	43
		Ulakan Tapakis	26	22	14	34
Total 320			163	157	153	167

Step 4. Determining Strata Proportions. For rank strata: $p_1 = 153/320 = 0.478$; $q_1 = 167/320 = 0.521$. For years of service strata: $p_2 = 163/320 = 0.509$; $q_2 = 157/320 = 0.490$.

Step 5. Calculating Sample Size. We used Cochran's formula:

$$n_o = t^2 pq / d^2 \quad n = (n_o) / (1 + ((n_o - 1) / N))$$

Where:

- n_0 = initial sample size before correction
- n = final sample size after correction
- N = population size
- t = significance level (5%, value 1.96)
- d = margin of error (5%)
- pq = product of population proportions ($p = n^1/N$, $q = 1-p$)

Table 2 shows the results. The highest value came from the years of service stratum (174.6). So we based our sample size on that. This means we took about 55% of the population ($174.6/320 \times 100\% = 54.56\%$, rounded to 55%).

Table 2. Sample Size Calculation Results

No	Clasifikasi of Teacher	P	Q	n_0	Ini
1	Strata	0,478	0,521	382,4	174,3
2	Years of service	0,509	0,490	383,24	174,6

Step 6. Selecting Subjects. Based on the 55% calculation, we determined the final sample distribution. Table 3 shows exactly how many teachers were sampled from each district and years-of-service group.

Table 3. Sample Distribution by District and Years of Service

No	Region	Subdistrict	Number of ASN teachers based on school with A accreditation					
			Years of service ≤ 15 (55%)			Years of service > (55%)		
			Population	Sample	Rounding	Population	Sample	Rounding
1	North	Aur Malintang	16	8,8	9	8	4,4	5
		Batang Gasan	7	3,85	4	9	4,95	5
2	South	Batang Anai	26	14,3	15	38	20,9	21
		Lubuk Alung	9	4,95	5	15	8,25	9
3	East	VII Koto Sungai Sarik	18	9,9	10	22	12,1	13
		2 X Kayu Tanam	18	9,9	10	14	7,7	8
4	West	Nan sabaris	43	23,65	24	29	15,95	16
		Ulakan Tapakis	26	14,3	15	22	12,1	13
					92	90		
Total 92 + 90 = 182								

We analyzed the data in three stages: descriptive analysis, prerequisite assumption tests, and hypothesis testing. All analyses were done using SPSS version 29.00.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe each variable's condition. We calculated minimum and maximum scores, mean, standard deviation, and the respondent achievement level (TCR). TCR was calculated as:

$$TCR = \frac{\text{Skor Rata-Rata}}{\text{Skor Maksimum Ideal}} \times 100 \%$$

Table 4. Respondent Achievement Level Classification. We then categorized the results using Sudjana's (2011) classification

No	Range Percentage (%)	Interpretation
1	90 – 100	Very Good
2	80 – 89	Good
3	65 – 79	Fair
4	56 – 64	Poor
5	0 – 55	Very Poor

Before running regression analyses, we tested four classical assumptions. We used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (since our sample >50). Data are considered normally distributed if the asymptotic significance (2-tailed) > 0.05.

We checked for strong linear relationships between independent variables using Tolerance and VIF values. Criteria: if Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10, no multicollinearity exists. We used the Glejser test. If the significance value > 0.05, heteroscedasticity is not present.

We checked whether the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable is linear. If the significance F-value > 0.05, the relationship is considered linear.

We used inferential statistics with simple and multiple regression techniques.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 (Simple Regression and Correlation). We used Pearson's product-moment correlation to test the relationship between each independent variable (X_1 and X_2 separately) and the dependent variable (Y). The regression equation is:

$$Y = a + bX$$

Where:

$$- b = \frac{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})^2}$$

$$- a = \bar{Y} - b\bar{X}$$

Hypothesis 3 (Multiple Regression and Correlation). We used multiple correlation coefficients (R) to test the combined effect of X_1 and X_2 on Y . The equation is:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2$$

Where b_1 and b_2 are the regression coefficients for each independent variable, and $a = \bar{Y} - b_1\bar{X}_1 - b_2\bar{X}_2$.

We also used partial correlation to examine the pure relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable while controlling for the other independent variable.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics

This study examined three variables: instructional performance outcomes (Y), transformational leadership (X_1), and teacher work commitment (X_2). Below is a detailed description of each.

Instructional Performance Outcomes (Y)

The instrument for measuring instructional performance outcomes had 37 items, so the minimum

possible score was 37 and the maximum was 185. Based on data from 182 respondents, the actual minimum score was 113, the maximum was 164, the mean was 138.37, the median was 138.00, the mode was 136, and the standard deviation was 9.430.

The differences between the mean, median, and mode were smaller than the standard deviation, suggesting the data are roughly normally distributed.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Instructional Performance Outcomes (Y)

Class of Interval	fo	%fo	Fk	%fk
113 – 119	6	3,3	6	3,3
120 – 126	15	8,24	21	11,54
127 – 133	33	18,13	54	29,67
134 – 140	52	28,57	106	58,24
141 – 147	44	24,18	150	82,42
148 – 154	23	12,64	173	95,05
155 – 161	8	4,4	181	99,45
162 – 168	1	0,55	182	100
Total	182	100%		

The highest frequency (52 respondents, 28.57%) fell in the 134–140 interval, followed by 141–147 (44 respondents, 24.18%) and 127–133 (33 respondents, 18.13%). This means most teachers had moderate instructional performance. Very few were at the extreme low or high ends.

Table 6. Shows The Respondent Achievement Level (TCR) for Each Indicator.

No	Indicator	Ideal Max Score	Mean	%TCR	Category
1	Instructional planning	65	52,1	80,15%	Good
2	Instructional implementation	60	48,75	81,25%	Good
3	Assessment of learning outcomes	30	24,4	81,33%	Good
4	Follow-up	30	23,12	77,07%	Good
	Overall	185	138,37	74,79%	Good

Overall, teachers' instructional performance outcomes were in the good category, with a mean of 138.37 out of 185 (TCR = 74.79%). Looking at individual indicators, implementation and assessment scored highest (81.25% and 81.33%, respectively), while follow-up scored lowest (77.07%). This suggests that although teachers are doing well in planning, delivering, and assessing lessons, they still need to improve how they act on assessment results (remedial teaching, enrichment, reflection).

Transformational Leadership (X₁)

The transformational leadership instrument had 35 items (possible range: 35 to 175). For 182 respondents, the actual minimum was 94, maximum 175, mean 139.10, median 139.00, mode 137, and standard deviation 16.485. Again, the small differences between mean, median, and mode suggest normal distribution.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Transformational Leadership (X_1)

Class Interval	fo	%fo	fk	%fk
170 – 175	8	4,4	8	4,4
164 – 169	11	6,04	19	10,44
158 – 163	14	7,69	33	18,13
152 – 157	17	9,34	50	27,47
146 – 151	22	12,09	72	39,56
140 – 145	26	14,29	98	53,85
134 – 139	30	16,48	128	70,33
128 – 133	23	12,64	151	82,97
122 – 127	17	9,34	168	92,31
116 – 121	9	4,95	177	97,25
110 – 115	5	2,75	182	100
Total	182	100		

Most respondents scored in the mid-range intervals (134–139 and 140–145), indicating moderate to high levels of perceived transformational leadership.

Table 8. Respondent Achievement Level by Indicator (Variable X_1)

No	Indicator	Skor Maks.	Ideal Max Score	Mean	%TCR	Category
1	Idealized Influence	45		35,75	79,44%	Good
2	Inspirational Motivation	45		34,52	76,71%	Good
3	Intellectual Stimulation	45		33,48	74,40%	Enough
4	Individualized Consideration	40		35,35	88,38%	Good
Overall		175		139,1	79,49%	Good

Overall, transformational leadership was rated as good (TCR = 79.49%). Individualized consideration scored highest (88.38%), meaning principals were seen as personally attentive and supportive. Intellectual stimulation scored lowest (74.40%, "fair" category), suggesting principals need to do more to encourage teacher innovation, creativity, and critical thinking.

Teacher Work Commitment (X_2)

The commitment instrument also had 35 items (possible range: 35 to 175). For 182 respondents, the minimum was 101, maximum 175, mean 142.15, median 142.00, mode 135, and standard deviation 14.870.

Table 9. Frequency Distribution of Teacher Work Commitment (X_2)

Class Interval	fo	%fo	fk	%fk
170 – 175	7	3,85	7	3,85
164 – 169	8	4,4	15	8,24
158 – 163	14	7,69	29	15,93
152 – 157	17	9,34	46	25,27
146 – 151	27	14,84	73	40,11

Class Interval	fo	%fo	fk	%fk
140 – 145	33	18,13	106	58,24
134 – 139	28	15,38	134	73,63
128 – 133	25	13,74	159	87,36
122 – 127	15	8,24	174	95,6
116 – 121	6	3,3	180	98,9
110 – 115	2	1,1	182	100
Total	182	100		

Most teachers scored in the 140–145 range (33 respondents, 18.13%), followed by 134–139 (28 respondents, 15.38%) and 146–151 (27 respondents, 14.84%). Very few had low scores.

Table 10. Respondent Achievement Level by Indicator (Variable X₂)

No	Indicator	Ideal Max Score	Mean	%TCR	Category
1	Komitmen Afektif	60	48,35	80,58%	Good
2	Komitmen Normatif	60	47,28	78,80%	Good
3	Komitmen Kontinuan	55	46,52	84,58%	Good
Overall		175	142,15	81,23%	Good

Overall, teacher work commitment was good (TCR = 81.23%). Continuance commitment scored highest (84.58%), meaning teachers stay largely because of career and economic considerations. Affective and normative commitment were also good but slightly lower.

Prerequisite Assumption Tests

Before testing hypotheses, we checked several assumptions.

Normality Test

Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (SPSS version 26.00), we found that all variables had significance values > 0.05: transformational leadership (0.902), work commitment (0.934), and instructional performance outcomes (1.000). This means all three variables are normally distributed.

Autocorrelation Test

The Durbin-Watson value was 1.872, which is close to 2. Therefore, no autocorrelation is present in the regression model. The R-squared value was 0.041, meaning X₁ and X₂ together explain 4.1% of the variance in Y.

Multicollinearity Test

Both independent variables had Tolerance values of 0.976 and VIF values of 1.025. Since Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10, there is no multicollinearity issue.

Heteroscedasticity Test

We used the Glejser test. The residuals had a mean of 0.000 and standard deviation of 5.41498, with no extreme deviations. This indicates homoscedasticity (constant variance of residuals).

Linearity Test

For the relationship between transformational leadership and instructional performance outcomes, the Linearity significance was 0.005 (< 0.05), confirming a linear relationship. The Deviation from Linearity significance was 0.149 (> 0.05), indicating no significant deviation from linearity.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Effect of Transformational Leadership on Instructional Performance Outcomes

We used simple correlation and regression analysis to test whether transformational leadership significantly influences teachers' instructional performance outcomes.

Table 11. Simple Correlation Between X_1 and Y

Correlation	Correlation Coeffisien (r)	Coeffisien of Determination (r^2)	q
rxly	0,199	0,04	0,007

correlation coefficient was 0.199 with $p = 0.007 < 0.05$, meaning there is a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and instructional performance outcomes. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.040$) means transformational leadership explains 4.0% of the variance in Y.

Table 12. Simple Regression (ANOVA) for $X_1 \rightarrow Y$

Source	JK	dk	RJK	F	q
Regression	1944,257	1	1944,257	7,408	0,007
Residual	47241,963	180	262,455		
Total	49186,22	181			

$F = 7.408$ with $p = 0.007 < 0.05$, confirming a significant effect.

Table 13. Regression Coefficients for $X_1 \rightarrow Y$

Source	Coeffisient	t	Sig.
Constant	91,008	5,139	0,000
Transformational Leadership	0,348	2,722	0,007

The regression equation is: $\hat{Y} = 91.008 + 0.348X_1$

Interpretation: For every one-unit increase in transformational leadership, instructional performance outcomes increase by 0.348 units. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Effect of Teacher Work Commitment on Instructional Performance Outcomes

Table 14. Simple Correlation Between X_2 and Y

Correlation	Correlation Coeffisien (r)	Coeffisien of Determination (r^2)	q
rxly	0,064	0,004	0,389

The correlation coefficient was only 0.064, and the p-value was $0.389 > 0.05$, meaning the relationship is not statistically significant. Work commitment explains only 0.4% of the variance in Y.

Table 15. Simple Regression (ANOVA) for $X_2 \rightarrow Y$

Source	JK	dk	RJK	F	q
Regression	164,764	1	164,764	0,744	0,389
Residual	39854,928	180	221,416		
Total	40019,692	181			

$F = 0.744$ with $p = 0.389 > 0.05$, confirming no significant effect.

Table 16. Regression Coefficients for $X_2 \rightarrow Y$

Source	Coefficient	t	Sig.
Constant	128,154	7,878	0,000
Work Communication	0,101	0,863	0,389

The regression equation is: $\hat{Y} = 128.154 + 0.101X_2$

However, the coefficient is not statistically significant. Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Combined Effect of Transformational Leadership and Work Commitment on Instructional Performance Outcomes. We used multiple correlation and regression to test whether X_1 and X_2 together significantly influence Y .

Table 17. Multiple Correlation (X_1 and X_2 with Y)

Correlation	Correaltion Coefisien (r)	Coefficient of Determination (r^2)	P
rx1x2y	0,199	0,04	0,007

The multiple correlation coefficient was 0.199 with $p = 0.007 < 0.05$, indicating a significant combined effect. Together, both variables explain 4.0% of the variance in Y .

Table 18. Multiple Regression (ANOVA)

Source	JK	Dk	RJK	Fhitung	q
Regression	654,642	2	327,321	3,794	0,024
Residual	15441,951	179	86,268		
Total	16096,593	181			

$F = 3.794$ with $p = 0.024 < 0.05$, so the combined effect is significant. Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 19. Multiple Regression Coefficients

Source	Coefficient	t	Sig.
Constant	119,892	14,574	0,000
Transformational Leadership	0,111	2,612	0,010
Work Comitment	0,022	0,461	0,645

In the combined model, transformational leadership remains significant ($p = 0.010$), but work commitment does not ($p = 0.645$). This means that although both variables together produce a significant model, the contribution comes almost entirely from transformational leadership.

Table 20. Relative and Effective Contributions

Variable	KR (%)	KE (%)
Transformational Leadership	91,00%	3,64%
Work Comitment	9,00%	0,36%
Total	100%	4,00%

Transformational leadership contributes 91% of the explained variance (relatively) and 3.64% effectively, while work commitment contributes only 9% relatively and 0.36% effectively.

Partial Correlation Analysis

To understand each variable's unique contribution, we ran partial correlations.

Table 21. Partial Correlation Results

Partial Correlation	Correlation Coeffisien (r)	Coeffisien of Determination (r ²)	Sig.
r _{1Y-2} (X1 with Y controlling for X2)	0,192	0,037	0,010
r _{2Y-1} (X2 with Y controlling for X1)	0,034	0,001	0,645

When controlling for work commitment, transformational leadership still has a significant positive correlation with instructional performance outcomes ($r = 0.192$, $p = 0.010$). Its unique contribution is 3.7%.

However, when controlling for transformational leadership, work commitment shows almost no correlation ($r = 0.034$, $p = 0.645$) and explains only 0.1% of the variance uniquely.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important empirical evidence regarding the role of principals' transformational leadership and teacher work commitment in explaining instructional performance outcomes among public elementary school teachers in Padang Pariaman Regency. Overall, the results show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on instructional performance outcomes, whereas teacher work commitment does not have a significant partial effect. When examined simultaneously, transformational leadership and work commitment significantly influence instructional performance outcomes; however, the explained variance is relatively small, and the contribution is mainly driven by transformational leadership. These findings suggest that instructional performance is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped not only by teachers' psychological attachment to their work but also by the quality of school leadership, professional capacity, organizational climate, resources, and broader educational support systems.

The significant effect of transformational leadership on instructional performance outcomes is consistent with recent educational leadership literature, which emphasizes that principals influence teaching quality by shaping school vision, professional culture, teacher motivation, collaboration, and opportunities for instructional improvement. Transformational leadership enables school principals to articulate a shared vision, provide individualized support, model professional values, and encourage teachers to develop innovative instructional practices (Leithwood, Harris, et al., 2020; Leithwood, Sun, et al., 2020; Wilson Heenan et al., 2023). In this study, the effect of transformational leadership was statistically significant, indicating that principals who inspire teachers, provide personal attention, and build professional trust can support better instructional performance. This aligns with studies showing that transformational school leadership improves teacher performance, teacher commitment, teacher motivation, and school culture (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; El Achi et al., 2025; Parveen et al., 2022; Sarinah et al., 2024; Suryati et al., 2023).

However, the relatively small contribution of transformational leadership, which explained only about 4% of the variance in instructional performance outcomes, requires careful interpretation. A statistically significant relationship does not necessarily indicate a large practical effect. The small coefficient of determination suggests that transformational leadership is important but not sufficient as a single predictor of instructional performance. This finding is consistent with contemporary school effectiveness research, which argues that leadership usually affects teacher and student outcomes indirectly through multiple mediating factors, such as teacher efficacy, professional learning, instructional collaboration, organizational culture, school climate, and learning resources (Aydın et al., 2025; Daniëls et al., 2019; Hallinger, 2018; Hsieh et al., 2024; Leithwood, Harris, et al., 2020). Thus,

principals' leadership may create enabling conditions for instructional improvement, but actual performance depends on whether teachers possess adequate pedagogical competence, classroom management skills, assessment literacy, professional autonomy, and access to continuous development.

The descriptive findings also reveal that individualized consideration was the strongest indicator of transformational leadership. This means that teachers perceived principals as relatively capable of providing personal support, listening to teachers' needs, and recognizing individual differences. This dimension is important because individualized consideration strengthens relational trust, psychological safety, and teacher well-being, which are essential for improving instructional engagement and professional commitment (Kim & Lee, 2025; Mahmutoğlu et al., 2025; Sariakin et al., 2025). In school organizations, teachers are more likely to improve their instructional practices when they feel supported, valued, and trusted by school leaders. Studies on leadership and teacher performance indicate that supportive principal behavior enhances teacher motivation, professional responsibility, and willingness to engage in school improvement efforts (Jeno et al., 2017; Nellitawati et al., 2024; Pardosi & Utari, 2021).

In contrast, intellectual stimulation received the lowest score among the transformational leadership indicators. This finding indicates that principals still need to strengthen their role in encouraging teachers to think critically, experiment with new teaching strategies, use evidence-based instructional practices, and reflect on classroom problems. Intellectual stimulation is central to transformational leadership because it promotes innovation, inquiry, and professional learning. Recent studies show that transformational leadership contributes to teacher innovativeness, digital adoption, creative teaching, and adaptive instructional practices when principals actively encourage experimentation and professional agency (Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025; Hsieh et al., 2024; Indra et al., 2022; Laursen & Weiss, 2025). In the context of elementary schools, this dimension is especially relevant because teachers are expected to respond to diverse student needs, curriculum changes, digital learning demands, and the increasing emphasis on student-centered learning.

The non-significant effect of teacher work commitment on instructional performance outcomes is another important finding. Although teachers demonstrated good levels of work commitment, particularly in continuance commitment, such commitment did not significantly predict instructional performance. This suggests that teachers' willingness to remain in the profession or organization does not automatically translate into higher instructional quality. Commitment may reflect loyalty, emotional attachment, professional responsibility, or career stability, but instructional performance requires more direct professional capacities, including pedagogical knowledge, subject mastery, classroom management, assessment competence, and the ability to adapt learning strategies to students' needs (Anwar et al., 2021; Kumari & Kumar, 2023; Li et al., 2022; Trigueros et al., 2020).

This finding differs from several previous studies that found a significant relationship between commitment and teacher performance (Izwar & Kristanti, 2023; Maharani et al., 2025; Nellitawati et al., 2024). However, the difference may be explained by contextual and measurement factors. First, the dominant form of commitment in this study appears to be continuance commitment, which is often associated with job security, economic considerations, and career stability rather than intrinsic professional engagement. Teachers may remain committed to their work because of employment stability, but such commitment may not necessarily lead to innovative or high-quality instructional practices. Second, instructional performance is more strongly related to professional competence and opportunity structures than to commitment alone. If teachers face limited resources, insufficient professional development, heavy administrative workload, or weak instructional supervision, their commitment may not be effectively converted into improved teaching performance.

The simultaneous analysis showed that transformational leadership and teacher work commitment together had a significant effect on instructional performance outcomes. Nevertheless, the contribution remained small, and the regression model indicated that transformational leadership was the dominant

predictor. This means that the combined effect was primarily explained by principals' leadership rather than teachers' work commitment. This finding supports the view that leadership functions as an organizational mechanism that directs, activates, and channels teacher motivation and commitment toward instructional goals (Leithwood, Harris, et al., 2020; Parveen et al., 2022; Wilson Heenan et al., 2023). In other words, commitment may become more meaningful for instructional improvement when it is supported by effective leadership, clear expectations, professional feedback, and a collaborative school culture.

The limited explained variance also indicates that many other factors influence instructional performance outcomes. Contemporary studies show that teacher performance is affected by professional learning communities, teacher collaboration, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, organizational culture, school climate, work environment, digital competence, and policy support (Karakose et al., 2024; Olmo-Extremera et al., 2024; Papadakis et al., 2024; Vanblaere & Devos, 2016; Vangrieken et al., 2017). Therefore, instructional improvement should not rely solely on strengthening transformational leadership or increasing teacher commitment. A more comprehensive school improvement strategy is needed, combining leadership development, teacher professional development, instructional coaching, peer collaboration, adequate facilities, data-based supervision, and supportive education policies.

From a practical perspective, the results imply that education authorities should prioritize principal development programs focused on transformational leadership competencies. Such programs should not only emphasize inspirational motivation and role modeling but also strengthen intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Principals need to be trained to facilitate reflective dialogue, encourage lesson innovation, support teacher inquiry, use classroom observation data constructively, and create professional learning communities. This is particularly important because research shows that school leadership becomes more effective when it is linked to teacher learning, collaborative instructional improvement, and school-based professional development (Flessa et al., 2018; OECD, 2025).

At the same time, schools should not interpret the non-significant effect of work commitment as evidence that commitment is unimportant. Teacher commitment remains valuable for organizational stability, retention, morale, and school culture. However, commitment must be accompanied by professional competence, instructional support, and enabling work conditions. Teachers who are committed but lack access to pedagogical training, technology, learning resources, or constructive feedback may struggle to improve instructional performance. Therefore, school improvement policies should integrate commitment-building strategies with teacher capacity development and supportive leadership practices.

In conclusion, this study confirms that transformational leadership is a significant and more dominant predictor of instructional performance outcomes than teacher work commitment. Nevertheless, the small explained variance highlights the complexity of instructional performance and the need for a multidimensional approach. Strengthening principals' transformational leadership, especially intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, is a strategic step, but it must be accompanied by continuous teacher professional development, adequate resources, collaborative school culture, and evidence-based instructional supervision. Future studies are recommended to include additional variables, such as teacher competence, self-efficacy, professional learning community, school climate, work motivation, and instructional supervision, to provide a more comprehensive model of instructional performance outcomes in elementary schools.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on

teachers' instructional performance outcomes among public elementary school teachers in Padang Pariaman Regency, although its contribution is relatively small. Principals who demonstrate individualized consideration, provide inspiration, and serve as role models can support better instructional performance. However, intellectual stimulation remains an important area for improvement.

Teacher work commitment does not significantly affect instructional performance outcomes. Although teachers showed good levels of commitment, particularly related to career stability, such commitment did not directly translate into stronger instructional performance. When examined simultaneously, transformational leadership and work commitment significantly influence instructional performance, but the effect is mainly driven by transformational leadership.

Therefore, strengthening principals' transformational leadership, especially intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, should be prioritized. Efforts to improve instructional quality should also be supported by teacher professional development, adequate resources, conducive working conditions, and supportive school policies.

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