



Does transformational leadership shape lecturer performance? The mediating role of organizational engagement

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Abstract. This study investigates the effects of transformational leadership, academic culture, and workload on lecturer performance, with organizational engagement as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative survey of 210 permanent lecturers at Indonesian state Islamic universities and analyzed through SEM (AMOS 24), the study finds that transformational leadership and academic culture positively influence both engagement and performance. At the same time, workload negatively impacts engagement and has no direct effect on performance. Engagement partially mediates the influence of leadership and culture, and fully mediates the effect of workload on performance. These findings emphasize the importance of supportive leadership, strong academic culture, and effective workload management in enhancing lecturer engagement and performance, offering strategic insights for institutional reform in higher education.

Introduction

In the context of higher education, the performance of academic staff is increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor in driving institutional excellence and achieving national quality standards. Academic staff are expected not only to excel in teaching but also to actively contribute to research productivity and community engagement in alignment with the “*Tri Dharma*” of Indonesian higher education (Akbar & Ahmad, 2024). Despite strategic reforms and capacity-building programs across universities, persistent disparities remain in lecturer performance, particularly in balancing academic responsibilities and institutional engagement (Mugimu et al., 2013; Wilson & Kelley, 2021). These challenges have underscored the need to identify the antecedents that influence lecturers’ performance beyond individual attributes, especially within the organizational context (Lo et al., 2024; Poláková et al., 2023).

In recent decades, the quality of higher education has been a central focus of global academic discourse. Universities are increasingly required to demonstrate not only academic excellence but also social impact through research and community engagement (Kayyali, 2023; Wanjiru & Xiaoguang, 2021). Central to this agenda is the performance of academic staff, whose roles in teaching, research, and service are critical to institutional success. Numerous studies underscore that lecturer performance significantly contributes to institutional rankings, student learning outcomes, and knowledge production (Mujiburrahman et al., 2022). However, many higher

education institutions, particularly in developing countries, continue to face challenges in optimizing lecturer performance. These challenges often stem from complex interactions between personal capabilities and organizational contexts. Factors such as leadership, institutional culture, workload management, and psychological engagement are increasingly recognized as pivotal in determining performance outcomes (Ismail et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2024; Siraj & Hågen, 2023; Tarraya, 2023). Nevertheless, integrative studies that capture these multidimensional influences remain limited (McCarthy & McNamara, 2021).

Among the organizational factors that have drawn scholarly attention, transformational leadership has emerged as a key determinant of individual and collective performance in academic settings. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to exceed expectations, foster intellectual growth, and build strong affective bonds with their institutions. In higher education, such leadership has been linked to greater job satisfaction, creativity, and teaching effectiveness (Overstreet, 2022; Vikaraman et al., 2021; Yaw et al., 2024; Zahra, 2024). A growing body of empirical research has emphasized the importance of transformational leadership in shaping employee behavior and performance in academic institutions (Hanafiah et al., 2023; Yasa et al., 2023). Transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration, is positively associated with higher work engagement, organizational commitment, and innovative performance among university faculty (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018; Caniëls et al., 2018). However, the effectiveness of such leadership practices remains contingent upon the institutional environment in which faculty operate. The urgency of this research stems from the pressing need to understand the organizational factors influencing faculty performance, as failure to effectively manage variables such as leadership, academic culture, and workload directly impacts academic productivity and the overall quality of higher education.

Despite the benefits of transformational leadership, its effectiveness may depend on the broader academic culture in which it operates. Academic culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices that define the intellectual and ethical environment of an institution (Alessandri et al., 2018; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). A culture that promotes integrity, collegiality, and scholarly freedom is likely to support innovation and productivity among lecturers (Luna & Cullen, 1995; Ngo, 2024). Several studies have shown that a supportive academic culture enhances faculty morale, reduces turnover, and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration (Gonder, 1994; Johan, 2018; Siswanto et al., 2023). In particular, academic culture, the shared values, norms, and beliefs that govern academic interactions, has been identified as a contextual variable that may either reinforce or hinder professional performance (Heenan et al., 2023; Şengönül, 2022).

Preliminary interviews with 15 lecturers from three state Islamic universities revealed that over 70% perceived their workload as imbalanced with the available institutional support. Internal evaluation documents from one university also indicated a decline in research productivity over the past two years. These findings reinforce the importance of reexamining the relationship between organizational factors and faculty performance comprehensively.

On the other hand, the academic workload assigned to lecturers often poses significant constraints on their performance. In addition to teaching obligations, faculty members are expected to engage in research, attend meetings, perform administrative tasks, and contribute to community service (Hanaysha et al., 2023). These overlapping demands can lead to role overload and professional fatigue, especially when institutional support is lacking. Empirical evidence suggests that high workloads negatively affect job satisfaction, reduce research output, and impair teaching quality (Ertürk, 2022; Hanaysha et al., 2023; Herdiana & Sary, 2023; Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Olaifa et al., 2024). Studies have shown that excessive workloads can negatively affect lecturers' intrinsic

motivation and reduce their capacity to deliver high-quality academic output (Ertürk, 2022; Janib et al., 2021; Kanwal et al., 2023; Mandjar & Turangan, 2023). While workload has been extensively discussed in organizational studies, its interaction with other organizational determinants, such as leadership and academic culture concerning performance, remains underexplored (Widana et al., 2023).

To bridge this gap, recent theoretical developments have suggested that organizational engagement, defined as the psychological presence and absorption of an individual in their organizational role, may serve as a mediating mechanism between organizational variables and performance outcomes (Jr et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2023; Pranitasari & Purnomo, 2024). In this regard, organizational engagement has been identified as a potential mediating construct. Engagement serves as a motivational state that translates organizational support into proactive work behavior (Junusi et al., 2023; Jankelová et al., 2025; Citrawan et al., 2024). Engaged lecturers are more likely to internalize institutional goals, exhibit proactive behavior, and demonstrate higher levels of performance. Nevertheless, empirical investigations into the mediating role of organizational engagement in the academic context remain limited, particularly in non-Western higher education systems.

Recent research highlights that employees who are psychologically engaged exhibit greater resilience, initiative, and commitment to organizational goals. In academic contexts, engaged lecturers are more likely to undertake challenging tasks, pursue research funding, and mentor students effectively (Fasco et al., 2024; Nuis et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the role of engagement as a mediator in the relationship between organizational factors and lecturer performance remains under-theorized and under-researched, particularly in non-Western and resource-constrained universities (Herminingsih, 2024). Moreover, despite the extensive literature on leadership and culture in education, empirical studies that simultaneously examine transformational leadership, academic culture, and workload in one integrated model are still scarce (Gede & Huluka, 2024; Pham et al., 2018; Wang & Shakibaei, 2025). Existing research often treats these variables in isolation, which limits our understanding of their combined and potentially interactive effects on faculty performance. This fragmentation in the literature creates an urgent need for holistic models that capture the organizational ecosystem influencing academic work (Al-Adwan et al., 2021; Coplan & Evans, 2021; Rabelo Neto et al., 2024; Yi et al., 2022).

Against this backdrop, the current study investigates the influence of transformational leadership, academic culture, and workload on lecturer performance, with organizational engagement as a mediating variable. By integrating these constructs into a comprehensive model, the study seeks to advance theoretical insights on faculty performance and contribute to evidence-based strategies for organizational development in higher education institutions. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) examine the direct effects of transformational leadership, academic culture, and workload on organizational engagement; (2) assess the effect of engagement on lecturer performance; and (3) test the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between organizational factors and performance. The findings are expected to inform policymakers and university leaders on how to optimize faculty engagement and productivity through strategic leadership and institutional reform.

This study contributes a novel perspective by integrating three significant organizational variables—transformational leadership, academic culture, and workload—into a single structural model that examines the mediating role of organizational engagement on faculty performance. Previous studies have primarily examined these variables in isolation. This comprehensive approach offers a more holistic understanding of the dynamics influencing faculty performance at Indonesian Islamic universities.

Method

This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a survey method, aimed at empirically testing the structural relationships between transformational leadership, academic culture, workload, organizational engagement, and lecturer performance. The explanatory design was chosen to identify causal pathways and test the mediating effect of organizational engagement within a comprehensive structural model. This study employs a cross-sectional survey design, in which data were collected at a single point in time from a predetermined sample to describe the causal relationships among the investigated variables.

The research population consisted of permanent lecturers at state Islamic universities in Indonesia, specifically those actively involved in teaching, research, and academic service during the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of 210 respondents were selected using proportional stratified random sampling, based on faculty and academic rank. The population comprises tenured lecturers from state Islamic universities in Indonesia. The sample size was determined following the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which recommends 5–10 respondents per indicator (Hair et al., 2020). Samples were drawn from cities in Sumatra and Java, including Jambi, Padang, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta. Given the total of 30 measurement indicators used in this study, a minimum sample of 150 was required, with oversampling applied to ensure robustness and account for incomplete responses. The research instrument was a structured Likert-scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was adapted from validated scales in previous studies and underwent expert judgment and a pilot test.

Before distribution, the questionnaire underwent content validity assessment through expert review and construct validity testing using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability (Bernardi, 2008; Taber, 2018).

Data collection was carried out over two months through both online and offline survey distribution. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. All responses were anonymized to protect confidentiality. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the AMOS 24 software. The analysis involved two stages: (1) the measurement model to evaluate the validity and reliability of the latent constructs, and (2) the structural model to assess the hypothesized causal relationships among variables. The model's goodness of fit was evaluated using multiple fit indices including Chi-square/df, GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). A model was deemed acceptable if it satisfied minimum thresholds in at least three major indices (Dash & Paul, 2021; S S & Thangamuthu, 2024). Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the institutional review board of the Faculty of Education at the affiliated university. The study adhered to the ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis revealed that respondents generally held positive perceptions of transformational leadership, academic culture, and organizational engagement. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for each research variable, including the mean and standard deviation values. These results reflect respondents' favorable views regarding transformational leadership, academic culture, organizational engagement, and faculty performance, as well as a moderate perception concerning workload.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Results

| Variabel | Mean | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|----------------------------------|------|-------------------------|
| Transformational Leadership (TL) | 4.12 | 0.53 |
| Academic Culture (AC) | 4.07 | 0.49 |
| Workload (WL) | 3.56 | 0.61 |
| Organizational Engagement (OE) | 4.05 | 0.51 |
| Lecturer Performance (LP) | 4.11 | 0.47 |

The mean scores of the main variables indicate a positive perception among faculty members toward transformational leadership ($M = 4.12$; $SD = 0.53$), academic culture ($M = 4.07$; $SD = 0.49$), and organizational engagement ($M = 4.05$; $SD = 0.51$). This suggests that faculty members highly value the inspirational and supportive leadership practiced by their superiors, as well as institutional values that foster scholarly collaboration and academic integrity. In contrast, the workload score ($M = 3.56$; $SD = 0.61$) implies that faculty experience a relatively high, and at times excessive, workload. Faculty performance also received a high rating ($M = 4.11$; $SD = 0.47$), indicating that professional responsibilities are being fulfilled optimally. Overall, the data suggest that the work environment is generally conducive to performance, although task-related pressure remains an area in need of mitigation.

This study found that organizational engagement is the strongest predictor of faculty performance among all tested variables, underscoring the strategic importance of fostering academic engagement to enhance institutional outcome

Measurement Model Evaluation

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model. Table 2 presents the results of the CFA-based measurement model evaluation, including the values of Construct Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the range of factor loadings, and discriminant validity based on the Fornell and Larcker criterion. All constructs met the required thresholds for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 2. Results of Measurement Model Evaluation

| Construct | CR | AVE | Factor Loading Range | Discriminant Validity |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|------------------------|--|
| Transformational Leadership (TL) | >0.70 | >0.50 | >0.60 (all indicators) | $\sqrt{AVE} > \text{correlations}$ (Fornell & Larcker) |
| Academic Culture (AC) | >0.70 | >0.50 | >0.60 (all indicators) | $\sqrt{AVE} > \text{correlations}$ (Fornell & Larcker) |
| Workload (WL) | >0.70 | >0.50 | >0.60 (all indicators) | $\sqrt{AVE} > \text{correlations}$ (Fornell & Larcker) |
| Organizational Engagement (OE) | >0.70 | >0.50 | >0.60 (all indicators) | $\sqrt{AVE} > \text{correlations}$ (Fornell & Larcker) |
| Lecturer Performance (LP) | - | - | - | - |

The CFA results indicate that all constructs satisfy the conditions for validity and reliability. Specifically, the Construct Reliability (CR) values exceed 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50, confirming the internal consistency and convergent validity of each construct. All indicator factor loadings are above 0.60 and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating a substantial contribution of each item to its respective construct. Discriminant validity is also confirmed, as the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs, under Fornell and Larcker's criterion. These findings affirm that the measurement instrument employed in this study is robust and appropriate for further structural analysis.

Structural Model Fit

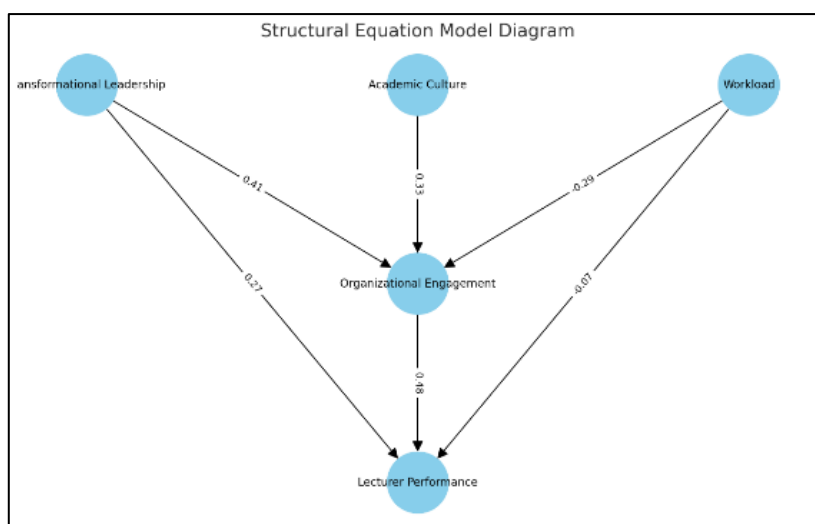


Image 1. Structural Equation Model

The structural model demonstrated a strong fit with the empirical data. Table 3 presents the structural model fit indices, all of which fall within the recommended thresholds, indicating that the proposed model adequately represents the observed data. The Chi-square/df ratio was 1.88, which is within the ideal range (<3.00), signifying acceptable model fit. Other indices, including RMSEA (0.049), GFI (0.91), CFI (0.95), and TLI (0.94), met or exceeded the suggested minimum cutoff values (≥ 0.90), suggesting that the tested theoretical model effectively captures the relationships among the variables. These results strengthen the validity of the conceptual model and confirm that path analysis can be interpreted with confidence. These findings support the adequacy of the hypothesized model in explaining the relationships among the variables.

Tabel 3. Structural Model Fit Indices Based on Empirical Data

| Fit Index | Value | Recommended Threshold | Status |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------------|----------|
| Chi-square / df | 1.88 | < 3.00 | Good Fit |
| RMSEA | 0.049 | < 0.08 | Good Fit |
| GFI | 0.91 | > 0.90 | Good Fit |
| CFI | 0.95 | > 0.90 | Good Fit |
| TLI | 0.94 | > 0.90 | Good Fit |

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 reports the results of hypothesis testing using structural equation modeling (SEM) path analysis. The standardized coefficients (β) and their significance levels reveal the direct effects among the variables. Most of the proposed hypotheses were supported, except for the direct effect of workload on faculty performance, which was not statistically significant.

Tabel 4. Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients) Results

| Path | Standardized Estimate (β) | p-value | Significance | Hypothesis |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------|
| Transformational Leadership → Organizational Engagement | 0.41 | <0.001 | Significant positive | H1 supported |
| Academic Culture → Organizational Engagement | 0.33 | 0.002 | Significant positive | H2 supported |
| Workload → Organizational Engagement | -0.29 | 0.009 | Significant negative | H3 supported |

| Path | Standardized Estimate (β) | p-value | Significance | Hypothesis |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|------------------|
| Organizational Engagement → Lecturer Performance | 0.48 | <0.001 | Significant positive | H4 supported |
| Transformational Leadership → Lecturer Performance | 0.27 | 0.012 | Significant positive | H5 supported |
| Academic Culture → Lecturer Performance | 0.24 | 0.016 | Significant positive | H6 supported |
| Workload → Lecturer Performance | -0.07 | 0.274 | Not significant | H7 not supported |

The hypothesis testing results indicate that transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on organizational engagement ($\beta = 0.41$; $p < 0.001$), as did academic culture ($\beta = 0.33$; $p = 0.002$), suggesting that both factors enhance faculty members' engagement within the institution. In contrast, workload exhibited a significant adverse effect on organizational engagement ($\beta = -0.29$; $p = 0.009$), indicating that higher workloads tend to diminish faculty engagement. Furthermore, organizational engagement had a strong and positive impact on faculty performance ($\beta = 0.48$; $p < 0.001$), meaning that increased engagement contributes to improved faculty outcomes. The direct effects of transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.27$; $p = 0.012$) and academic culture ($\beta = 0.24$; $p = 0.016$) on faculty performance were also statistically significant. However, the direct effect of workload on faculty performance was not significant ($\beta = -0.07$; $p = 0.274$), implying that its influence on performance is likely mediated through other variables rather than exerted directly. This study found that organizational engagement is the strongest predictor of faculty performance among all tested variables, underscoring the strategic importance of fostering academic engagement to enhance institutional outcomes.

Mediation Analysis

Table 5 presents the results of the mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method (5,000 samples, 95% confidence interval). The analysis revealed that organizational engagement partially mediated the relationships between transformational leadership and academic culture with lecturer performance, and fully mediated the relationship between workload and lecturer performance. Mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method demonstrated significant indirect effects for the following pathways: 1) Transformational leadership → organizational engagement → lecturer performance (indirect effect $\beta = 0.20$, $p = 0.004$), 2) Academic culture → organizational engagement → lecturer performance (indirect effect $\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.006$), 3) Workload → organizational engagement → lecturer performance (indirect effect $\beta = -0.14$, $p = 0.011$).

Tabel 5. Mediation Analysis Results

| Indirect Path | Indirect Effect (β) | p-value | Mediation Type |
|---|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Transformational Leadership → OE → Lecturer Performance | 0.20 | 0.004 | Partial Mediation |
| Academic Culture → OE → Lecturer Performance | 0.18 | 0.006 | Partial Mediation |
| Workload → OE → Lecturer Performance | -0.14 | 0.011 | Full Mediation |

The mediation was partial in the cases of transformational leadership and academic culture, as their direct effects on lecturer performance remained statistically significant. In contrast, the direct effect of workload on performance was not significant, indicating complete mediation, suggesting that the effect of workload on lecturer performance is entirely channeled through the level of organizational engagement. These findings underscore that improvements or declines in lecturer performance related to workload are contingent upon the extent of their emotional and professional engagement within the institution.

The descriptive findings indicate that faculty members perceive transformational leadership, academic culture, and organizational engagement at high levels. In contrast, workload is perceived as relatively high but tending toward a moderate level. This suggests that the higher education institution under study has successfully fostered a supportive work environment in terms of leadership and academic culture. These results align with previous research emphasizing that positive perceptions of the work environment enhance individual motivation and commitment within organizations (Kurniawan et al., 2022; Piliang, 2022; Purnadewi & Widana, 2023).

Transformational leadership is found to exert a significant influence on organizational engagement. Faculty who experience inspiration, support, and a clear vision from their leaders tend to be more emotionally and cognitively engaged in their roles. This finding supports the theory of transformational leadership proposed, which emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation (Alkhaja & Miniano, 2019). Contemporary studies also confirm the positive impact of this leadership style on engagement and job satisfaction (Adrian Putra Ariussanto et al., 2020; Endayani¹ & Putri, 2024; Ghrairi, 2024; Klein, 2023; Muttalib et al., 2023). Moreover, these results reinforce the existing literature, asserting that transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering engagement and enhancing academic performance in higher education settings (Bohari et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2020; Ponting, 2023; Saif et al., 2024; Trimulyo et al., 2025; Yakob & Sahudra, 2025). Leaders who can inspire, support, and articulate a shared vision are instrumental in motivating faculty to contribute actively, ultimately impacting performance outcomes positively.

The findings also indicate that academic culture positively contributes to organizational engagement. A campus environment that emphasizes scientific values, collaboration, and intellectual autonomy strengthens the affective bonds and institutional identification of faculty members (Abduraimi et al., 2023; Ashley & Parumasur, 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024). This aligns with research showing that a strong organizational culture enhances employees' sense of belonging and loyalty (Ghaleb, 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Novianti & Ayuni, 2024; Ponting, 2023; Van Tran et al., 2023). Furthermore, a robust academic culture has been proven to improve faculty engagement and performance. Cultures that promote scholarly collaboration, academic freedom, and professional integrity foster a healthy and productive work climate (Hidayat et al., 2024; Ponting, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of institutional norms that support professionalism and collective responsibility within the academic community.

Conversely, workload harms organizational engagement. The greater the perceived workload among faculty, the lower their engagement level. This suggests that excessive work demands act as a dysfunctional factor in fostering organizational commitment. Previous studies have highlighted that excessive workload can lead to emotional exhaustion and decreased performance (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Tarraya, 2023; Walker et al., 2020). Moreover, this finding reveals that the impact of workload on performance is indirect, mediated through decreased emotional and professional engagement with the institution (Herdiana & Sary, 2023; Janib et al., 2021; Kanwal et al., 2023; Olaifa et al., 2024). Therefore, proportional workload management is crucial to sustaining faculty engagement and performance.

Organizational engagement emerges as a strong predictor of faculty performance. Academics who are actively engaged tend to demonstrate higher levels of achievement in teaching, research, and service (Alessandri et al., 2018; Hanaysha et al., 2023; Pranitasari & Purnomo, 2024; Wanjiru & Xiaoguang, 2021). High engagement drives initiative, task completion, and loyalty to the institution. This finding affirms the work engagement theory, which posits that engagement is a critical mediator between organizational factors and work outcomes (Arefin et al., 2019; Fasco et al., 2024; Hee et al., 2018; Mansor et al., 2023). It also aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model,

which explains that engagement increases when organizational resources support individual work and decreases when job demands are not sufficiently counterbalanced.

In addition to its indirect effect, transformational leadership also directly influences faculty performance. Leaders who can motivate, act as role models, and articulate a shared vision significantly enhance faculty productivity and work quality. This corroborates Bass and Avolio's (1994) findings that transformational leadership positively correlates with organizational effectiveness. Recent studies have likewise confirmed that transformational leaders can improve performance by shaping a positive psychological climate (Kayyali, 2023; Ngo, 2024; Sukdee, 2021).

Similarly, academic culture has a direct effect on faculty performance. Academic environments that value intellectual freedom, scholarly collaboration, and integrity foster a conducive atmosphere for professional achievement. Research by (Azila-Gbetteor et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2022; Kayyali, 2023; Siswanto et al., 2023; Tikhonova et al., 2023; Wanjiru & Xiaoguang, 2021; Yang & Hoque, 2023) supports the view that a healthy academic culture contributes to satisfaction and academic excellence. Recent evidence further substantiates that academic values such as autonomy, academic freedom, and collaboration significantly enhance faculty performance (Janib et al., 2021; Ngo, 2024).

Interestingly, workload does not have a statistically significant direct impact on faculty performance. This indicates that a high workload does not necessarily impair performance, provided faculty remain actively engaged with the institution. These findings highlight the mediating role of organizational engagement in managing work-related stress (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Mandjar & Turangan, 2023; Olaifa et al., 2024). In other words, high engagement can serve as a buffer against the negative effects of job demands. This supports the JD-R theory, which states that work engagement can mitigate the adverse effects of excessive demands (Brevaart & Bakker, 2018; Ghairi, 2024; Gonder, 1994). Unlike previous studies, this research confirms that workload does not directly influence performance but rather operates through organizational engagement. This introduces a new perspective in the literature on workload management in higher education.

Mediation analysis reveals that organizational engagement partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and academic culture with performance, and fully mediates the relationship between workload and performance. This suggests that without strong engagement, the effects of leadership and culture on performance are diminished. These findings emphasize that organizational engagement is a crucial psychological mechanism linking workplace conditions to individual performance outcomes (El Junusi et al., 2023; Fasco et al., 2024; Ghairi, 2024; Hee et al., 2018; Janib et al., 2021; Ponting, 2023).

The practical implications of these findings highlight the importance for higher education institutions to prioritize strategies for enhancing faculty engagement. Transformational leadership and supportive academic culture must be synergistically managed to foster a work climate that encourages faculty dedication and active participation (Heenan et al., 2023; Şengönül, 2022; Van Tran et al., 2023). Engagement can be enhanced through involvement in decision-making, recognition of academic achievements, and flexible work arrangements. These strategies have been empirically shown to boost educator loyalty and performance (Shuck et al., 2011; Saks & Gruman, 2018; Llorens et al., 2020; Tuan, 2022; Park et al., 2021).

In the context of workload management, these findings offer critical insights into the importance of balancing administrative duties, teaching responsibilities, and research activities to sustain faculty engagement. The formulation of proportional job descriptions, equitable workload distribution, and the provision of reflective and recreational spaces are essential. Prior studies have

demonstrated that workload balance has a direct impact on mental health and academic productivity (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018; Herdiana & Sary, 2023).

Theoretically, this study reinforces the role of organizational engagement as a mediating variable within the structural model of individual performance in higher education settings. Moreover, the findings extend the current understanding of the complex interactions between leadership, organizational culture, and workload in knowledge-based institutions. Consequently, this research not only offers practical relevance for university administrators but also contributes to the broader literature on human resource management and organizational behavior in the higher education sector. Theoretically, this study extends the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by positioning engagement as a central mediating variable. Practically, it provides policy insights for university administrators to develop psychological and organizational strategies that enhance performance.

Conclusion

This study concludes that faculty performance is significantly influenced by transformational leadership, academic culture, workload, and organizational engagement, both directly and indirectly. Transformational leadership and academic culture have a positive impact on both engagement and performance, while workload negatively affects engagement and has no direct influence on performance. Organizational engagement serves as an important mediating variable, showing full mediation in the relationship between workload and performance, and partial mediation in the relationships between leadership and academic culture and performance. Therefore, efforts to improve faculty performance should focus on strengthening organizational engagement through positive leadership, a conducive academic culture, and balanced, humane workload management. It is recommended that higher education institutions focus on strengthening transformational leadership, cultivating a supportive academic culture, and ensuring a fair workload distribution to holistically improve lecturer engagement.

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