

# Strategies for Increasing Professional Commitment of Private Vocational High School Teachers

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**Abstract.** Teachers' professional commitment is an essential factor in the human resource management of a school. One of the causes of high teacher turnover in private schools is their low professional commitment. The impact of high teacher turnover is low school performance. This study aims to examine the structural model of the causality relationship between personal values and transformational leadership of school principals with teachers' professional commitment both directly and through job satisfaction as a mediator variable. The participants of this study were 137 teachers randomly selected from seven private vocational schools in the Bogor Regency area. The research instrument used consisted of four questionnaires with five measurement scales to measure variables of professional commitment, transformational leadership, personal value, and job satisfaction. Path analysis techniques were used to analyze the data in this study. The research found that teachers' professional commitment is directly influenced by the Principal's transformational leadership and teachers' personal values. Another interesting finding in the study is that teachers' professional commitment is also indirectly affected by the Principal's transformational leadership and teachers' personal values. In this context, teacher job satisfaction acts as a reasonably effective mediator between the Principal's transformational leadership, the teacher's personal values, and the teacher's professional commitment. The study's findings imply that strategies for increasing teachers' professional commitment should be designed with attention to principals' transformational leadership that can create job satisfaction among teachers. In addition, the Principal should strive to create an organizational environment that fosters the teacher's personal values that align with the school's vision and culture.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Personal Values, Professional Commitment, Transformational Leadership.

## 1 Introduction

Professional teachers are the primary human resources in supporting the educational process in an educational institution. A high turnover rate in an educational institution will significantly affect

the quality of educational services at the institution. Mobility in and out of teachers in an educational institution is a severe problem due to the instability of the teaching staff [1]. The high turnover of teachers has an impact on the low quality of education delivery [2]. In addition, the effect of direct and indirect teacher turnover affects student learning [1].

Teachers' professional commitment is essential in education management, especially school human resource management. Teachers' professional commitment will affect teacher turnover and the quality of educational services, which in turn impacts school performance. Teacher turnover is a significant problem in the field of education around the world [3–5]. Recent research emphasizes leader style's importance in reducing turnover intentions [6]. Some studies have identified that stress, emotional fatigue, burnout, depersonalization, or low feelings of personal achievement in the teacher profession increase the risk of change [3, 7–9]. In addition, common professional commitment is a source of worrying teacher turnover from these factors [1, 3].

Professional commitment is essential for teachers. Professional commitment is crucial to a person's psychological condition and work life [10]. Professional commitment determines teacher behavior in making important decisions to implement their duties. Professional commitment positively influences a person's work attitude and behavior [11]. Acceptance of the goals and values of the teacher profession shows the level of professional commitment of a teacher [12]. Professional commitment reflects the high and low sensitivity related to professional ethics issues. Its embodiment will be seen in a teacher's ethical and unethical behavior in carrying out his professional duties [13].

Professional commitment is determined by harmony between the individual's beliefs and determination to persevere in pursuing his profession [14]. A person's desire to continue working in his job is determined by three factors: confidence in the goals and values of the profession he is engaged in, an effort to understand the profession's values, and a strong determination to keep working in his profession [15]. High professional commitment can reduce turnover intentions, and improve professional competence, job satisfaction, and service quality. On the contrary, a person's low professional commitment is a negative indicator that encourages the desire to leave his profession [14–16].

This study aims to increase understanding of how internal and external resources can promote teachers' professional commitment directly and through job satisfaction mediators. The internal resources in this study are personal values, while the external resources are the Principal's transformational leadership. In this study, job satisfaction is a mediator variable between transformational leadership and personal value in relation to professional commitment. In addition to analyzing its contribution and influence on professional commitment, its main objective lies in deepening the understanding of the causality relationship built by both free variables with professional commitment, directly or through the mediator of teacher job satisfaction. Formulating hypothetical structural equation models through theoretical studies is a crucial step in this study.

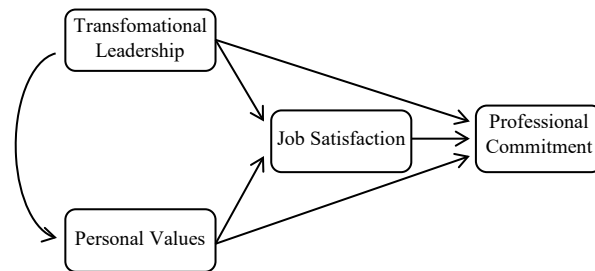
## **2. Theoretical Review**

Reasoned Action Theory (RAT) is the main theory used to formulate hypothetical structural models in this study [17]. RAT focuses on the intention to perform certain behaviors as dependent variables and predictors of behavior influenced by intention-forming factors and the relationship between intention and performance of prospective [18]. RAT assumes that the behavior under

investigation is controlled by intention, which controls perceived behavior. In this sense, this concept represents the extent to which people believe they can carry out behaviors because they have adequate or less abilities or opportunities [19].

In this context, the intentions that exist in the teacher will be manifested in the behavior when he carries out the duties of his profession. This behavior illustrates the extent of the teacher's professional commitment. The subjective norms strongly influence the teacher's behavior in his work environment. The intention is directed by the teacher's acceptance of behavior influenced by subjective norms in the work environment as an intention-forming factor. Transformational leadership is a subjective norm found in the environment, while personal value is a response to the subjective norms of the environment. Both variables are analyzed for their influence and contribution to professional commitment directly or through job satisfaction as a mediator.

Based on the above theory, a hypothetical structural model is formulated as a path analysis constellation model, as presented in Figure 1. The hypothetical structural model is developed based on theoretical studies and previous research results relevant to this study.



**Figure 1** Hypothetical structural model

Professional commitment is an attitude that shows the relationship between a person's physical, mental, and emotional relationship with his work [15]. A person is determined to continue working in his profession if there is harmony between the individual's beliefs and the profession he is engaged in [20, 21]. Professional commitment includes three factors: belief in the goals and values of the profession, the drive to understand those values, and the determination to stay in the profession [14, 15]. Professional commitment is formed due to education and training, specialization programs, and career planning that impact work [11]. Professional commitment includes three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuation [22].

Affective commitment is related to the employee's love for the profession so that he persists in carrying out his profession, normative commitment relates to the obligations that employees feel to contribute to the work team, and continuity commitment is related to considering the pros and cons experienced by employees to leave their profession. In this study, professional commitment is defined as the psychological relationship between a person and his work which is proven through the level of loyalty and confidence of the individual to be actively involved in a job based on the goals and values of his profession through the willingness to exert effort on behalf of the profession and be willing to survive in the membership of his profession.

Some studies have shown a causality relationship between professional commitment and transformational leadership, personal value, and job satisfaction. The study of several of these

studies strengthens the hypothetical structural model proposed in this study. In this structural relationship model, job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership and personal values with professional commitment.

Transformational leadership is a mutually stimulating relationship between the leader and the follower, the enhancement that turns the follower into the leader and the leader into a moral agent [23]. Leaders with a transformational leadership style set perceptions and directions and motivate subordinates to work with maximum potential in the long term [24]. Transformational leadership is a change-oriented leadership style [25]. Transformational leadership is demonstrated by mutual assistance between leaders and followers to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation [26, 27].

Transformational leadership is ideal for achieving organizational goals in the digital age [28]. In education, transformational leadership is an effort to motivate and empower teachers and teacher groups carried out by principals toward school change and improving the quality of teaching [23, 29, 30]. In addition, the Principal's transformational leadership can enhance professional commitment [6, 31, 32]. In the organizational context, transformational leadership influences organizational commitment [33].

Job satisfaction is significantly associated with work stress and teacher work burnout. Low levels of job satisfaction are congruent with depression and work fatigue experienced by teachers [34]. On the other hand, when teachers feel significantly involved in work experience, their job satisfaction rate becomes higher [35]. Furthermore, teacher work satisfaction is significantly influenced by the transformational leadership of the Principal [25, 29, 36, 37]. Similar things happened in other professional fields, such as the health sector [38] and the public sector [39–41].

Personal values evaluate abstract ideas related to essential norms as guiding principles in life [42]. Personal values are guidelines by which individuals assess various actions and their results [43]. Personal values affect the coordination and complementarity between economic and social values that often conflict [44]. The activation of individuals to think and take action is influenced by personal values, and individual activities are guided by conscious thoughts and intentions [45]. Some studies have shown a significant positive relationship between personal values, emotional and organizational commitment [46, 47], and job satisfaction [48].

### **3. Research Methods**

#### ***3.1. Participants and Procedures***

The participants of this study were teachers of the Vocational High School of the Indonesian Teachers Association of the Republic of Indonesia (SMK PGRI) in the Bogor Regency area. Participants in this study were 137 teachers randomly selected from seven SMK PGRI. Sampling using the Slovin technique. Sampling using the Slovin technique. The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics		Teachers (n = 137)	
		Total	%
Gender	Male	58	42.34
	Female	79	57.66
Age	25-35	25	18.25
	36-45	42	30.66
	46-55	67	48.91
	>55	3	2.19
Educational Qualifications	Bachelor	134	97.81
	Magister	3	2.19

The questionnaire was presented as an online survey and was distributed to the teachers selected as a sample through the Principal in July 2022. We use the Principal's network hoping that the appointed teachers will be respondents to take the questionnaire seriously.

### **3.2. Instruments**

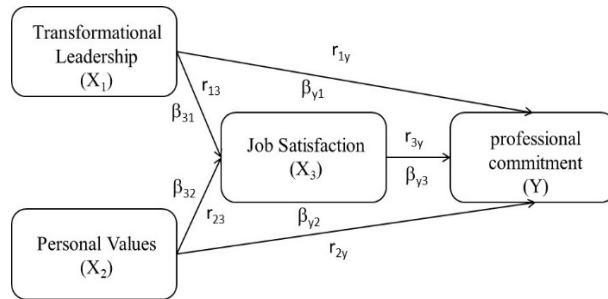
We use four instruments developed by ourselves, referring to the results of theoretical studies of each variable that is the research focus. The four instruments are questionnaires to measure the principal's transformational leadership, teachers' personal values, teacher job satisfaction, and teachers' professional commitment. Three instruments, professional commitment, personal values, and job satisfaction, use the Likert scale with a range of five choice points: strongly agree = 5 to strongly disagree = 1 for positive instrument items and vice versa for negative instrument items. Transformational leadership instruments use the Likert scale with a range of five choice points: Always = 5 to never = 1 for positive instrument items and vice versa for negative instrument items.

The professional commitment instrument consists of 40 items before being tested. Based on the trial results, the instrument items that meet the valid criteria are 35 items. Therefore, the Cronbach coefficient of  $\alpha$  indicates professional commitment instruments' reliability is 0.941. The transformational leadership instrument consists of 40 items before being tested. Based on the trial results, the instrument items that meet the valid criteria are 35 items. Therefore, the Cronbach coefficient of  $\alpha$ , indicating the reliability of professional commitment instruments is 0.946. The personal values instrument consists of 40 items before being tested. Based on the trial results, the instrument items that meet the valid criteria are 37 items. Therefore, the Cronbach coefficient of  $\alpha$  that shows the reliability of personal values instruments is 0.954. The job satisfaction instrument consisted of 40 items before being tested. Based on the trial results, the instrument items that meet the valid criteria are 37 items. Therefore, the Cronbach coefficient of  $\alpha$ , indicating the reliability of the job satisfaction instrument is 0.943.

### **3.3. Research Design**

Our research design was designed in two different steps. First, conducting theoretical studies use the RAT grand theory by setting the variables of professional commitment as a dependent variable, while the variables of transformational leadership, personal values, and job satisfaction as

independent variables or predictors. This step is formulating a structural model of causality relationships between the four variables. Based on the results of the theoretical study, a structural model of the causality relationship between the variables was produced, as presented in Figure 2. In the structural model, the job satisfaction variable functions as a mediator.



**Figure 2.** Hypothetical structural model

Second, we tested a hypothetical structural model using regression and correlation analysis techniques hierarchically according to pathways in the model to examine the causality relationship between the Principal's transformational leadership, teachers' personal values, and teachers' job satisfaction with the tendency of teachers' professional commitment.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis using path analysis techniques. Software spss version-26 is used to assist in conducting data analysis. Data analysis begins with descriptive statistical techniques, testing data analysis requirements, calculating and compiling correlation coefficient matrices, calculating path coefficients, and testing the significance of relationships between variables in the model. Path analysis is used because this method can simultaneously analyze the causality relationship of both direct and indirect and total relationships between independent and dependent variables [49].

Test the fit of the structural model using the chi-square index ( $\chi^2$ ). Model fit tests are performed to assess the extent to which the empirical data supports the conceptual model being tested.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

Table 2 shows descriptive information, including the mean, the standard deviation for the study variable, and the Pearson correlation coefficient between the variables in the tested structural model. The correlation coefficient was tested at a significant level of 0.01.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients

Variable	M	S	Correlation coefficient		
			1	2	3
1. Professional commitment (Y)	137.72	22.22	-		
2. Transformational leadership (X <sub>1</sub> )	130.80	20.26	0.581	-	
3. Personal values (X <sub>2</sub> )	138.59	22.04	0.578	0.473	-
4. Job satisfaction (X <sub>3</sub> )	140.04	20.57	0.626	0.518	0.627

The variable data of professional commitment was obtained using an instrument of 35 items. The lowest ideal score is 35, while the highest score is 175. Thus, the ideal average for the professional commitment variable is 105. Table 2 shows that the average empiric score for the professional commitment variable is 137.72, with a standard deviation 22.22. This statistic indicates that the average empiric score of professional commitment is higher than the average ideal score. Thus, the professional commitment of SMK PGRI teachers can be categorized as relatively high.

The instrument used for transformational leadership variables consists of 35 items. That is, the lowest ideal score of the transformational leadership variable is 35, while the highest score is 175. Thus, the ideal average for the professional commitment variable is 105. Table 2 shows that the average empiric score for the transformational leadership variable is 130.80, with a standard deviation 20.26. This fact indicates that the average empiric score of the transformational leadership variable is higher than the average ideal score. Thus, the assessment of SMK PGRI teachers on the Principal's transformational leadership can be categorized as relatively high.

Personal values variable data was obtained using an instrument consisting of 37 items. The lowest ideal score is 37, while the highest score is 185. Thus, the ideal average for the professional commitment variable is 111. Table 2 shows that the average empiric score for the personal values variable is 138.59, with a standard deviation of 22.04. This fact indicates that the average empiric

**Table 3.** Summary of path coefficients test results

Direct intervariable influence	Path Coefficients	Coefficients	Stand. Error	t	Sig.
1. X <sub>1</sub> againts Y ( $\beta_{y1}$ )	0.304		0.080	4.194	0.000
2. X <sub>2</sub> againts Y ( $\beta_{y2}$ )	0.231		0.080	2.901	0.004
3. X <sub>3</sub> againts Y ( $\beta_{y3}$ )	0.324		0.089	3.946	0.000
4. X <sub>1</sub> againts X <sub>3</sub> ( $\beta_{31}$ )	0.285		0.073	3.947	0.000
5. X <sub>2</sub> againts X <sub>3</sub> ( $\beta_{32}$ )	0.489		0.067	6.806	0.000

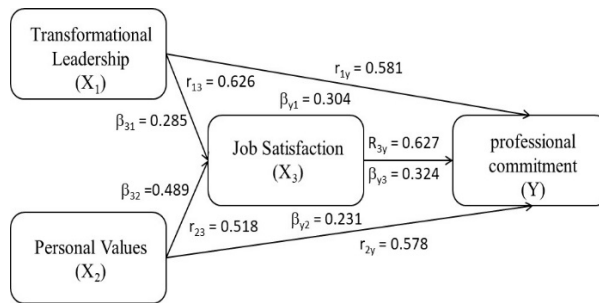
personal values score is higher than the average ideal score. Thus, the personal values of SMK PGRI teachers can be categorized as relatively high.

Data on job satisfaction variables were obtained using instruments consisting of 37 items. The lowest ideal score is 37, while the highest score is 185. Thus, the ideal average for the job satisfaction variable is 111. Table 2 shows that the average empiric score for the personal values variable is 140.04, with a standard deviation of 20.57. This fact indicates that the average empiric job

satisfaction score is higher than the average ideal score. Thus, the job satisfaction of SMK PGRI teachers can be categorized as relatively high.

The correlation coefficients between the study variables, as shown in the correlation matrix column in Table 2, were all tested to be significant at a significant level of 0.01. The results of the path analysis to test the significance of the direct, indirect, and total relationships between the variables studied are presented in Table 3. The table shows that the coefficient of direct intervariable influence paths tested is significant.

Based on the results of the correlation coefficient test and the path coefficient in the hypothetical structural model, as presented in Table 2 and Table 3, the structural empiric model can be described as follows.



**Figure 2** Empirical structural model

The results of the conformity test between the hypothetical and empiric structural models indicated by index goodness-of-fit using the Chi-Squared Technique. The test results are presented in Table 4. The information presented in the table shows that the hypothetical structural model analyzed matches the empirical data. Furthermore, the fit test results, as presented in Table 4, show that the empirical structural model obtained matches the data.

**Table 4.** Test model fit

Index	$\chi^2$	df	p.value
Value	2.088	1	0.01

## 4.2. Discussion

This study examines the causality relationship between transformational leadership, personal values, and teacher job satisfaction in the SMK PGRI environment in the Bogor Regency of Indonesia. This goal is achieved through a theoretical assessment to formulate a hypothetical structural model and continue with empirical testing.

Considering the importance of teachers' professional commitment, through this research, efforts have been made to study their relationship with transformational leadership, personal values, and job satisfaction. In this study, job satisfaction is positioned to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and personal values with professional commitment. Meanwhile, the structural model has no direct relationship between transformational leadership and personal values.



This is because transformational leadership can modify organizational values, cultures, and beliefs even though personal values and organizational culture tend to be difficult to change [22]. Therefore, the influence of such factors directly and indirectly on each other is tested. The test results of the proposed hypothetical model test showed conformity with empirical data.

The direct influence between transformational leadership and professional commitment is analyzed by testing the significance of the correlation coefficient between the two variables. The test results showed that the correlation between the two variables was significant. These results provide empirical evidence of the critical role of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher professional commitment. This finding aligns with the results of other studies in other school groups, both public and private schools [6, 31, 50, 51]. Teachers in the context of this study are teachers in the SMK PGRI environment in the Bogor Regency of Indonesia.

The direct influence between personal values and professional commitment is analyzed by testing the significance of the correlation coefficient between the two variables. The test results showed that the correlation between the two variables was significant. These results provide empirical evidence of the critical role of personal values. Personal values are the most crucial resource for dealing with moral issues [52]. Teachers' personal values are related to their attitude to inclusive education [53]. Personal values are essential when teachers adopt a learning approach [54]. Personal values influence democratic behavior and contribute to employee performance and organizational behavior on an ongoing basis [46]. There have not been many studies that directly link personal values with professional commitment. Based on this fact, we assume that personal values determine the locus of control of the teacher. Evaluation of each result contributes to a person's subjective attitude that the behavior produces the intended result [17]. In this context is the professional commitment of the teacher [12].

Testing the causality relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction showed a significant correlation between the two variables. These findings are in line with the research results showing that transformational leadership has a direct and significant effect on teacher job satisfaction [25, 55] dan work engagement [56]. The intersection between transformational leadership and work engagement in mediation by psychological security [57] and the climate of employee-perceived relationships [55]. Transformational leadership negatively affects turnover intentions [24]. Transformational leadership gives rise to job satisfaction and job comfort for teachers.

To examine the indirect relationship between the teacher's professional commitment to the Principal's transformational leadership and the teacher's personal values, confirmation of the relationship between the Principal's professional commitment and job satisfaction acts as a mediator. The results of testing the relationship of these variables showed all significance. These findings are consistent with some of the results of previous studies [6, 14, 22, 31, 58].

The path coefficient significance test results in the structural empiric model show that all path coefficients are significant. The findings of this study show that transformational leadership can predict professional commitment and job satisfaction. The correlation coefficient values of the direct effect on the structural empiric model show a relatively high correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction and slightly lower with professional commitment. These findings are consistent with the study's results [22, 51]. Job satisfaction predicts organizational or strong professional commitment [24, 59]. Theoretical and empirical reviews show that the direct influence

of transformational leadership and personal values on professional commitment can be explained by emphasizing the role of job satisfaction.

In this study, not only did we find a significant direct influence between transformational leadership and personal values with professional commitment, but we also found that job satisfaction plays a prominent mediation role in this crucial causality relationship. These key findings highlight the importance of job satisfaction mediation in interventions designed to prevent the low professional commitment of teachers within the PGRI Vocational School environment. For some teachers, the Principal's transformational leadership directly affects functional or dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors as an embodiment of the high level of professional commitment. However, for some other teachers, it depends on the effect of the Principal's transformational leadership on their job satisfaction. If it is influential, the professional leadership of the Principal will cause fluctuations in teachers' professional commitment.

On the other hand, if it does not have an effect, the transformational leadership carried out by the Principal will not affect teachers' professional commitment. The same thing will happen to the causality relationship between personal values and teachers' professional commitment. In this context, teacher job satisfaction mediates the causality relationship between personal values and teachers' professional commitment.

Thus, a hypothetical structural model of the causality relationship between teacher professional commitment and principal transformational leadership, teacher personal values, and teacher job satisfaction is empirically tested. In this case, teacher job satisfaction effectively mediates the teacher's professional commitment with the Principal's transformational leadership and the teacher's personal values. The research findings have implications for how to design appropriate strategies to increase teacher professional commitment through efforts to improve the quality of transformational leadership of principals and create a school environment conditioned to the development of teachers' values. The transformational leadership of the Principal and the school environment must be able to realize job satisfaction among teachers. In this context, strategies to increase teachers' professional commitment can be carried out: First, school principals must strive to be lifelong learners to improve their competence on an ongoing basis. Second, principals are directly involved in learning teachers using a transformational leadership style, so they are always up to date with new knowledge and skills to support their increased job satisfaction, leading to increased professional commitment. Third, the headmaster strives to create a conducive school environment by encouraging the development of personal values among teachers that are in line with the vision and culture developed in the school.

## **5. Conclusion**

The Principal's transformational leadership and teachers' personal values directly and significantly influence teachers' professional commitment. Teacher job satisfaction is an essential and effective mediator in the causal relationship between the Principal's transformational leadership and the teacher's personal values and professional commitment. In this context, principals' transformational leadership that can encourage the realization of teacher job satisfaction is highly recommended. In addition, concrete efforts to create a school environment conducive to developing teachers' personal values that are in accordance with the school's vision and culture are highly recommended.

Finally, as researchers, the results of this study reinforce our belief that every Principal is required to always be creative in implementing a transformational leadership style that can support increased teacher job satisfaction. In addition, developing the school environment and culture aligns with the school's vision and stimulates the development of positive personal values among teachers. If the Principal can realize these two things, the teacher's professional commitment will increase, improving school performance. However, these results must be tested further through similar studies in schools and respondents with different characteristics. We hope these results will encourage researchers with similar interests to conduct further research.

### **Authors' Contributions**

Hidayat: development of research concepts and design, data analysis and interpretation, theoretical review, and critical revision of manuscripts. Yuyun: drafting manuscript, editing/reviewing, and supervision. Ikhsan: data analysis/interpretation and statistical analysis. Wardani: data acquisition, technical and material support.

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