

# The Effect of Servant and Transformational Leadership on Pastor Performance through Organizational Commitment

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the effect of servant leadership and transformational leadership on pastor performance, with organizational commitment as an intervening variable, in the Classis of GKI Port Numbai-Jayapura. The study employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 257 elders and deacons from 19 sampled churches (out of 51 churches) and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 10 pastors and analyzed using grounded theory. The results show that servant leadership has no significant effect on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.046$ ;  $p = 0.409$ ) or on pastor performance directly ( $\beta = 0.074$ ;  $p = 0.347$ ). By contrast, transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.814$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) and pastor performance ( $\beta = 0.322$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ). Organizational commitment has a significant effect on pastor performance ( $\beta = 0.560$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and functions as a mediator. Mediation tests indicate that commitment fully mediates the servant leadership path ( $\beta = 0.237$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) and partially mediates the transformational leadership path ( $\beta = 0.148$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). The qualitative findings reinforce that effective church leadership integrates a serving disposition with transformational vision, yielding a conceptual model of Servant-Transformational Leadership for GKI Papua.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational success is inseparable from the role of leaders capable of influencing individuals and groups toward the achievement of goals. In the context of religious organizations, the Synod of the Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of

Papua (GKI-TP) requires leaders who possess integrity, vision, and a transformative capacity. Within the church, the leader is the pastor, who—according to the GKI-TP Church Order—holds both a ministerial office and an organizational office that are

interrelated. This provision positions the pastor as a congregational leader from the outset of ministry, consistent with the concept of transformational leadership that emphasizes vision, commitment, and the capacity to develop the congregation.

Field observations reveal several problems. The GKI-TP Synod has not yet established a structured center for developing pastoral leadership, resulting in weak leadership cadre formation and, in turn, low pastor performance. Synod GKI data for 2025 record a congregational attendance rate of approximately 35% in worship services, while the 2026 Work Meeting of the Port Numbay–Jayapura Classis records approximately 60%. In financial terms, the realization of 2025 revenue reached only 62.43% of the plan, while the report of the Fourth Synod GKI Work Meeting in 2025 indicated a financial-support participation rate of approximately 60%. Based on the March 2024 Sinar GKI-TP statistical database, there are 833,418 members spread across 2,058 independent congregations and 70 classes, with a total of 1,298 serving pastors.

Two leadership styles are proposed as solutions. Servant leadership was introduced by [1], who emphasized that leaders prioritize the interests and welfare of others above their own; this concept was further developed by [2] through the principles of servant leadership. Transformational leadership was introduced by [3] and developed by [4], describing leaders capable of inspiring, motivating, and transforming followers to reach their fullest potential. Organizational commitment is understood as members' belief, willingness, loyalty, and pride toward the organization [5].

A review of prior research reveals inconsistent findings (a research gap). Regarding the effect of servant leadership on performance, some studies find a positive and significant effect [6], whereas others show that the effect is inconsistent or even double-edged—capable of producing both beneficial and detrimental outcomes depending on the motivational climate that emerges. Regarding the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment, positive results

have been reported across various organizational contexts [7] however, a number of studies find no significant effect, particularly in non-profit organizations and the education sector. A study of universities in Eastern Indonesia found that servant leadership had no effect on organizational commitment or performance, whether directly or through the mediation of commitment [8], and the effect of leadership style on commitment has been shown to depend on its type and context [9]. A pattern in which the direct effect is not significant yet becomes significant through a mediator has likewise been found in Indonesian organizational contexts [10].

For transformational leadership, recent literature consistently reports a positive and significant effect on both performance and organizational commitment, whether directly or through the mediation of affective commitment [11]. Direct comparisons between the two styles indicate that servant and transformational leadership are both associated with follower work outcomes but operate through different. As for the effect of organizational commitment on performance, it is consistently reported as positive and significant in the Indonesian public-sector context [12], including its mediating role in the performance of government apparatus in Papua and through affective commitment [13].

The novelty of this study lies in its context and model. Studies on church organizations remain very limited [14]; thus, this study of the GKI Port Numbay–Jayapura Classis fills a gap in the literature on church ministry contexts in the Land of Papua. This classis was selected because it represents the dynamics of urban church ministry facing declining congregational participation, weakening financial support, and increasing complexity of pastoral needs.

On this basis, the study tests five direct-effect hypotheses: H1 servant leadership has a significant effect on organizational commitment; H2 servant leadership has a significant effect on pastor performance; H3 transformational leadership

has a significant effect on organizational commitment; H4 transformational leadership has a significant effect on pastor performance; H5 organizational commitment has a significant effect on pastor performance. Two mediation hypotheses are tested as H6 (servant leadership → commitment → performance) and H7 (transformational leadership → commitment → performance).

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Design, Location, and Time

The study applies a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, in which the quantitative phase is followed by a qualitative phase that serves to explain the quantitative results [15]. The research site is the GKI Port Numbai-Jayapura Classis, and data collection was conducted from November 2024 to April 2025.

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The quantitative population comprised all congregational board members (elders and deacons) who evaluate pastoral leadership across 51 churches, totaling 2,423 persons (1,409 elders and 1,014 deacons), with 54 serving pastors. Sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum sample of 344. Of 344 questionnaires distributed across 19 congregations, 257 responses were collected and used (a ratio of  $257:2,423 = 10.61\%$ ). Sampling was conducted proportionally across the offices of elder and deacon, with a minimum tenure of three years. The sample of 257 respondents satisfies the sample-size adequacy requirements for PLS-SEM [16].

The qualitative sample was determined purposively based on the principle of theoretical sampling within grounded theory [17]. From 54 pastors, 10 informants were selected on the basis of ministry experience, structural/functional office, a minimum tenure of 15 years, and willingness to be interviewed. Informants varied in age (47–59 years), gender, level of theological education (bachelor's and

master's), and length of ministry (17–32 years).

### 2.3 Variables and Indicators

The study uses four latent variables: two exogenous variables—Servant Leadership (X1) and Transformational Leadership (X2); one intervening variable—Organizational Commitment (Y1); and one endogenous variable—Pastor Performance (Y2). The two leadership styles are treated as distinct constructs that operate through different mechanisms [18]. The servant leadership indicators used are love, humility, dedication, and trust. Transformational leadership was measured through charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, drawing on the concepts of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration [4], [19]. Organizational commitment was measured through belief, willingness, loyalty, and pride [5]. Pastor performance was measured through quality, quantity, timeliness, and effectiveness. All indicators were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

### 2.4 Instruments and Data Collection

The quantitative instrument was a closed, structured questionnaire that had undergone a pilot test. The qualitative instrument was a semi-structured interview guide, complemented by field observation notes, analytic memos, and supporting documentation. Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews that were recorded and transcribed.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS version 4, following current PLS-SEM reporting guidelines [20]. Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) covered convergent validity (outer loading  $\geq 0.70$ ; AVE  $\geq 0.50$ ), discriminant validity (the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT  $< 0.90$ ), and construct reliability (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq 0.70$ ). Evaluation of the structural model (inner

model) covered R-Square, f-Square, VIF < 5, and predictive relevance Q-Square [21], with path significance tested through bootstrapping ( $t > 1.96$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Qualitative data were analyzed using grounded theory through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding with the constant comparative method until data saturation was reached [17]. Data validity was maintained through triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail. Quantitative–qualitative integration was carried out through joint interpretation, with the qualitative findings serving to explain the quantitative results.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Respondent Characteristics

Of the 257 respondents, the majority were male (130 persons; 50.6%) compared with female (127 persons; 49.4%). The most common age range was 44–53 years (98 persons; 38.2%), followed by 54–63 years (76 persons; 29.6%) and 34–43 years (52 persons; 20.2%). By education, the largest groups were senior high school (111 persons; 43.18%) and bachelor's degree (104 persons; 40.47%). By functional office, the majority were elders (159 persons; 61.86%), with the remainder deacons (98 persons; 38.14%). By tenure, the largest group was 1–5 years (144 persons; 56.04%). Respondents were spread across 19 congregations, with the largest representation from GKI Eden Basige and Sion Padang Bulan (20 persons each; 7.78%) and the smallest from GKI Paulus Dok V (6 persons; 2.33%).

#### 3.2 Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Respondents' perceptions of the four variables ranged from positive to very positive (all indicator means > 4). For servant leadership, the indicator means were: love 4.43; humility 4.38; dedication 4.40; and trust 4.49. For transformational leadership: charisma 4.49; inspiration 4.36; intellectual stimulation 4.33; and individualized consideration 4.29. For organizational commitment: belief 4.23; willingness 4.49; loyalty 4.50; and pride 4.21. For pastor performance: quality 4.46; quantity 4.48; timeliness 4.45; and effectiveness 4.36. These descriptive values indicate that servant leadership values have been well implemented, even though—as shown by the inferential analysis below—this does not translate directly into commitment and performance.

#### 3.3 Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Reliability across all constructs was excellent: Cronbach's Alpha ranged from 0.926 to 0.945 and Composite Reliability from 0.935 to 0.951, both well above the 0.70 threshold (Table 4). Convergent validity was partially met—transformational leadership (AVE = 0.550) and pastor performance (AVE = 0.532) exceeded the 0.50 threshold, whereas servant leadership (AVE = 0.475) and organizational commitment (AVE = 0.489) fell slightly below it. Because all Composite Reliability values exceed 0.60, an AVE below 0.50 remains tolerable (Hair et al., 2019); convergent validity is therefore deemed adequate, with a note that this is a measurement limitation.

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

| Construct                        | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | AVE   |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Servant Leadership (SL)          | 0.926            | 0.927 | 0.935                 | 0.475 |
| Transformational Leadership (TL) | 0.945            | 0.946 | 0.951                 | 0.550 |
| Organizational Commitment (OC)   | 0.929            | 0.935 | 0.938                 | 0.489 |
| Pastor Performance (PP)          | 0.941            | 0.942 | 0.948                 | 0.532 |

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 5).

All square roots of AVE (diagonal values: 0.689–0.741) were greater than the inter-

construct correlations, so the criterion was satisfied.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| Construct | SL    | TL    | OC    | PP    |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| SL        | 0.689 |       |       |       |
| TL        | 0.537 | 0.741 |       |       |
| OC        | 0.482 | 0.839 | 0.699 |       |
| PP        | 0.515 | 0.832 | 0.866 | 0.729 |

*Diagonal values = square root of AVE; below-diagonal values = inter-construct correlations.*

The HTMT test showed that five of the six construct pairs fell below the 0.90 threshold (0.512–0.879), whereas the organizational commitment–pastor performance pair was 0.914, slightly exceeding the threshold. This value reflects

the strong conceptual relatedness between commitment and performance in the church ministry context and is noted as a limitation in the discriminant separation of the two constructs.

Table 6. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

| Relationship | HTMT  |
|--------------|-------|
| TL ↔ SL      | 0.568 |
| OC ↔ SL      | 0.512 |
| OC ↔ TL      | 0.879 |
| PP ↔ SL      | 0.545 |
| PP ↔ TL      | 0.877 |
| PP ↔ OC      | 0.914 |

Most indicators had outer loadings above 0.70 (overall range 0.407–0.810); several indicators on SL, OC, and PP fell between 0.40 and 0.70 and were retained because they did not lower Composite Reliability below the threshold. All indicator VIF values were below 5 (1.327–3.115), indicating no multicollinearity in the measurement model.

### 3.4 Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The coefficient of determination showed that organizational commitment had  $R^2 = 0.632$  (63.2%) and pastor performance  $R^2 = 0.675$  (67.5%), both in the moderate-to-

strong category. The effect size  $f^2$  for transformational leadership on organizational commitment was large (0.36), and that for organizational commitment on pastor performance was medium (0.18). The  $Q^2$  values for both endogenous variables were greater than zero, indicating good predictive relevance, and all VIF values in the structural model were below 5, so there was no multicollinearity problem. Model fit quality was supported by an SRMR of 0.062 (below the 0.08 threshold), indicating good model fit.

### 3.5 Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Direct Effect Test Results

| Hypothesis | Path    | Path Coefficient | t-Statistic | p-Value | Decision |
|------------|---------|------------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| H1         | SL → OC | 0.046            | 0.825       | 0.409   | Rejected |

| Hypothesis | Path    | Path Coefficient | t-Statistic | p-Value | Decision |
|------------|---------|------------------|-------------|---------|----------|
| H2         | SL → PP | 0.074            | 0.942       | 0.347   | Rejected |
| H3         | TL → OC | 0.814            | 3.479       | 0.001   | Accepted |
| H4         | TL → PP | 0.322            | 3.019       | 0.003   | Accepted |
| H5         | OC → PP | 0.560            | 5.538       | 0.000   | Accepted |

Servant leadership had no significant effect on organizational commitment (H1 rejected) or on pastor performance directly (H2 rejected). By contrast, transformational leadership had a very strong, significant effect on organizational commitment (H3 accepted) and a positive, significant effect on pastor

performance (H4 accepted). Organizational commitment had a strong, significant effect on pastor performance (H5 accepted).

### 3.6 Indirect Effect (Mediation) Testing

Table 8. Indirect Effect Test Results

| Hypothesis | Path         | Path Coef. | t-Statistic | p-Value | Decision | Mediation Type    |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| H6         | SL → OC → PP | 0.237      | 3.928       | 0.000   | Accepted | Full mediation    |
| H7         | TL → OC → PP | 0.148      | 3.104       | 0.002   | Accepted | Partial mediation |

The indirect effect of servant leadership on performance through organizational commitment was positive and significant (H6 accepted). Because the direct effect was not significant while the indirect effect was, this relationship is classified as full

mediation. By contrast, transformational leadership had both direct and indirect effects and is therefore classified as partial mediation (H7 accepted).

### 3.7 Total Effect

Table 9. Total Effect Test Results

| Relationship | Direct | Indirect | Total | Note                      |
|--------------|--------|----------|-------|---------------------------|
| SL → OC      | 0.046  | –        | 0.046 | Not significant           |
| SL → PP      | 0.074  | 0.237    | 0.311 | Significant via mediation |
| TL → OC      | 0.814  | –        | 0.814 | Very strongly significant |
| TL → PP      | 0.322  | 0.148    | 0.470 | Significant               |
| OC → PP      | 0.560  | –        | 0.560 | Strongly significant      |

The total effect confirms transformational leadership as the most dominant factor, while servant leadership becomes significant for performance only through the mediation of organizational commitment.

### 3.8 Qualitative Findings

Grounded-theory analysis of interviews with 10 pastors yielded a core category: *"Servant-Transformational Leadership as a Catalyst of Pastor Performance through the Strengthening of Organizational Commitment*

*and Congregational Support."* Through open coding, informant narratives produced concepts such as prioritizing the congregation, humility and love, encouragement of innovation, faithfulness amid challenges, spiritual example, and the need for training. In axial coding, these concepts were grouped into the dimensions of servant leadership (humility, service orientation), transformational leadership (inspiration and motivation, transformation of congregational mindset), organizational commitment (affective commitment,

normative commitment), and pastor performance (effectiveness of worship ministry, efficiency of congregational administration).

Pastors understood servant leadership as a spiritual calling to serve with love, humility, and sacrifice, whereas transformational leadership was understood as the capacity to bring vision, change, and renewal to ministry. The findings underscore that the application of leadership is strongly shaped by local congregational culture, resource constraints, and the pastor's personal experience; transformational vision requires the full support of the church board to be implemented.

#### **Discussion Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment (H1)**

Although the implementation of servant leadership values was descriptively high, this did not translate into organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with a study of universities in Eastern Indonesia that likewise found servant leadership to have no effect on organizational commitment [8], and with evidence that the effect of leadership style on commitment depends on organizational type and context [9]. The finding challenges the mainstream literature, which generally reports a positive relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment. In the church ministry context, servant leadership is oriented more toward spiritual calling and pastoral relationships than toward structural attachment to the organization; pastors carry out their duties not merely as organizational workers but as servants of God, with a commitment that is more transcendental in nature.

#### **Servant Leadership and Pastor Performance (H2, H6)**

Servant leadership had no direct effect on pastor performance. This pattern aligns with findings that servant leadership has no significant direct effect on performance yet becomes significant through a mediating path [22]. The indirect-effect test (H6) shows

that organizational commitment fully mediates the effect of servant leadership on performance ( $\beta = 0.237$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). That is, servant leadership becomes effective in improving performance only once it has built organizational commitment—consistent with the view that servant leadership influences follower work outcomes through attitudinal and satisfaction mechanisms rather than directly.

#### **Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment (H3)**

The very strong, significant effect ( $\beta = 0.814$ ) makes transformational leadership the dominant factor in building commitment. This result is consistent with [3]: the charisma and inspiration dimensions build affective commitment, intellectual stimulation increases engagement, and individualized consideration strengthens loyalty. The finding supports recent literature that consistently finds transformational leadership to enhance organizational commitment [11] and confirms that servant and transformational leadership operate through different mechanisms in influencing followers [23].

#### **Transformational leadership and pastor performance (H4, H7)**

Transformational leadership had a positive, significant effect on performance directly ( $\beta = 0.322$ ) as well as indirectly through commitment (H7;  $\beta = 0.148$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ), and is therefore classified as partial mediation. The role of affective commitment as a mediator between transformational leadership and performance is consistent with recent empirical findings [11]. Organizational commitment proves to be an important psychological mechanism bridging the effect of transformational leadership on performance.

#### **Organizational Commitment and Pastor Performance (H5)**

The strong, significant effect ( $\beta = 0.560$ ) confirms commitment as a key variable for performance. This result aligns with empirical evidence in the Indonesian public sector [12] and with the mediating role of

commitment in the performance of government apparatus in Papua, as well as through affective commitment [13]. In the church context, commitment encompasses affective (attachment to the congregation as the body of Christ), normative (awareness of calling), and continuance (faithfulness in ministry) dimensions; the higher the commitment, the more optimal the pastor's ministerial performance.

### Synthesis and Mixed-Methods Integration

The main pattern of findings is that servant leadership has no direct effect, transformational leadership is highly dominant, and organizational commitment is the key determinant of performance. The qualitative findings enrich this pattern by underscoring that effective church leadership integrates a serving disposition with transformational vision. This integration yields a novel contribution in the form of a Servant-Transformational Leadership Model for GKI in the Land of Papua that combines Christian spiritual values, Papuan culture, and modern management principles.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Servant leadership has no significant effect on organizational commitment or on pastor performance directly, but it does affect performance indirectly through the full

mediation of organizational commitment. Transformational leadership has a significant effect on both organizational commitment and pastor performance, whether directly or indirectly (partial mediation). Organizational commitment has a significant effect on pastor performance and serves as the key variable bridging the relationship between leadership and performance. Qualitatively, effective church leadership is the integration of servant and transformational leadership, yielding a Servant-Transformational Leadership Model for GKI in the Land of Papua.

This study recommends that the GKI-TP Synod build a structured system for developing pastoral leadership and strengthen organizational commitment and congregation-based performance evaluation. The study's limitations include reliance on perception-based instruments, the scope confined to a single classis, the limited number of qualitative informants, the complexity of the mixed-methods approach, and the convergent validity of two constructs ( $AVE < 0.50$ ) and the discriminant validity of the commitment–performance pair (HTMT 0.914), which lie at the threshold boundary. Future researchers are advised to broaden the geographic scope, employ longitudinal methods, and add variables such as organizational culture, spiritual leadership, congregational satisfaction, and work motivation.

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