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Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Organisational Commitment at a Selected TVET College in Gauteng, South Africa

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Abstract

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges in South Africa continue to experience challenges related to staff commitment, organisational performance, and institutional effectiveness. These challenges highlight the need to better understand leadership approaches that sustain academic engagement and stability. This study examines the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment among academic staff at a selected TVET college in Gauteng, South Africa. Grounded in the transformational leadership theory of Bass and Avolio, the study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 203 academic staff across six campuses using a structured self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were performed using SPSS. The findings revealed low levels of organisational commitment among academic staff. While transformational leadership, as a composite construct, did not significantly predict organisational commitment, specific components—namely intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualised consideration—showed significant positive relationships with organisational commitment. Theoretically, the study refines the application of transformational leadership theory within the TVET context by demonstrating that its components may operate differentially rather than as a unified construct in predicting organisational commitment. These findings challenge assumptions regarding the holistic predictive power of transformational leadership and extend leadership scholarship within under-researched TVET settings in developing-country contexts. Practically, the results provide evidence-based guidance for TVET management to design targeted leadership development interventions that emphasise specific transformational leadership behaviours to enhance academic staff commitment.

Keywords: transformational leadership; organisational commitment; intellectual stimulation; inspirational motivation; individualised consideration; TVET colleges; South Africa

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1. Introduction

Leadership has become a central construct in contemporary organisational scholarship, widely recognised for promoting institutional effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability across public, private, and educational sectors (Bolden et al., 2023; Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025; Daft & Marcic, 2008; Mabasa, 2018). Among the various leadership paradigms, transformational leadership has attracted substantial attention due to its emphasis on vision

articulation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. This leadership style is crucial in turbulent environments characterised by technological advancement, policy reform, and shifting workforce demands (Lee et al., 2024).

Within this broader discourse, leadership assumes heightened importance in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector, which plays a strategic role in workforce development, economic productivity, and social mobility in emerging economies (Mahfouz et al., 2020; Ndlovu et al., 2018).

A substantial body of literature indicates that transformational leadership positively predicts organisational commitment across diverse organisational contexts (Mishra et al., 2023; Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Mathews, 2020; Zainuddin & Hassan Asaari, 2020; Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025). Organisational commitment, particularly affective commitment, has been linked to reduced turnover, enhanced performance, and institutional stability.

However, findings are not uniformly consistent. Some studies suggest that in resource-constrained or highly regulated environments, the effectiveness of transformational leadership may diminish under conditions of excessive workload or limited autonomy (Espejo-Pereda et al., 2025). Conversely, other research demonstrates unique effectiveness of transformational leadership in fostering commitment during periods of organisational change (Mishra et al., 2023).

Despite this growing scholarship, most studies adopt a generalised organisational lens (Mishra et al., 2023; Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Mathews, 2020; Espejo-Pereda et al., 2025). Limited empirical attention has been directed toward TVET institutions, despite their distinctive operational pressures, vocational mandate, diverse academic workforce, and frequent exposure to curriculum and policy shifts.

The paucity of TVET-specific leadership research represents a significant scholarly and practical gap. TVET institutions operate in resource-constrained and rapidly evolving contexts, where ineffective leadership may exacerbate staff disengagement, impede innovation, and undermine institutional performance (Varma & Malik, 2023). Without sector-specific empirical evidence, leadership development initiatives risk relying on generalised assumptions that may not adequately reflect the realities of vocational education environments.

Furthermore, while alternative leadership styles such as transactional, laissez-faire, and authentic leadership have been explored in other sectors by Mabasa (2018); Ndlovu et al. (2018); Mangisa et al. (2020); Yahaya and Ebrahim (2016), and Lucjan et al. (2023), their applicability to TVET settings remains insufficiently examined. Gupta (2025) indicated that transformational leadership, with its change-oriented and motivational mechanisms, may offer particular relevance; however, its relationship with organisational commitment in TVET colleges remains underexplored.

In addressing this research gap, this study aimed to determine the levels of organisational commitment among the academic staff, and to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment within a TVET college context. The study seeks to generate context-specific insights capable of informing leadership development strategies, enhancing institutional performance, and strengthening the contribution of the TVET sector to national development goals.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section presents the theoretical framework and literature review underpinning the study. This is followed by a description of the research methodology. The subsequent section reports the empirical findings, after which the discussion interprets the results in relation to existing scholarship. The paper concludes with implications for policy and practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Hypothesis

2.1. Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is described as a style whereby leaders inspire their followers to align with the organisation's goals to achieve performance that exceeds expectations (Greimel et al., 2023). Algatawenh (2018) defined transformational leadership style as the style whereby leaders inspire their followers to prioritise the organisation's interests above their own. This type of leadership style creates an environment that values and hears employees and motivates them to excel (Northouse, 2016). Furthermore, transformational leaders develop the intellectual abilities of subordinates through involvement in knowledge sharing and problem solving, which stimulates creativity and innovation in the organisation (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018). By acting as coaches and mentors, transformational leaders build strong relationships with their followers (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018).

Riaz and Haider (2011) indicated that transformational leaders motivate subordinates and are instrumental in aligning subordinates' values with those of the organisation to facilitate goal accomplishment. Transformational leadership comprises four components, namely, idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualised consideration.

Idealised influence refers to a leader's behaviour that is characterised by charisma, who can articulate a shared vision, values and instil a sense of purpose among their followers (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Transformational leaders instil confidence among followers by acting as role models (Northouse, 2016; Gachira & Ntara, 2024; Du Plessis & Keyter, 2020). Idealised influence leaders are inspirational role models whom their followers identify with and desire to emulate (Zeleke & Bekele, 2020; Mabasa, 2018). These leaders subscribe to high standards of moral and ethical conduct, which make their followers to count on them in doing the right thing and trust them (Northouse, 2016). Consequently, they are regarded with respect by followers as trustworthy and capable of giving followers a sense of direction and purpose (Mabasa, 2018). Idealised influence leaders instil admiration and pride among their followers (Mabasa, 2018). These leaders promote shared understanding of the organisation's mission (Zeleke & Bekele, 2020). Orabi (2016) opines that idealised influence leaders may have a positive effect on employee commitment and job satisfaction. Through their charisma, idealised influence leaders develop a deep sense of connection with their followers (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Gachira & Ntara, 2024). The idealised influence component is measured on two components: an attributional component that refers to the attributions of leaders made by followers based on perceptions they have of their leaders, and a behavioural component that relates to followers' observations of the leader's behaviour (Northouse, 2016; Zeleke & Bekele, 2020).

Intellectual stimulation describes a leader's behaviour that challenges followers to think creatively and find solutions to complex organisational problems (Gachira & Ntara, 2024). Leaders with intellectual stimulation promote innovative behaviour among their followers, develop their problem-solving skills and encourage followers to seek new work approaches, and find innovative solutions to organisational problems (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Metwally et al., 2014; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Northouse, 2016). According to Nuel et al. (2021), transformational leaders stimulate creativity and innovation by supporting their followers in exploring new approaches, without criticism of followers' ideas or punishing them for making mistakes and errors. Orabi (2016) asserted that intellectual simulation encourages employee commitment to the organisation and it enhances the organisation's ability to achieve goals based on employee dedication and hard work (Orabi, 2016).

Inspirational motivation refers to leaders' actions energising followers to work hard and instil their commitment to organisational goals through the creation and articulation of

an inspiring vision, which makes followers loyal and committed to the organisation (Du Plessis & Keyter, 2020; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). By instilling team spirit and communicating high expectations to their followers, leaders motivate their followers to achieve performance that goes beyond their own imaginations (Zeleke & Bekele, 2020; Northouse, 2016; Metwally et al., 2014). Leaders with inspirational motivation employ symbols and emotional appeals to keep their followers focused and motivated to pursue organisational goals rather than their own self-interest (Orabi, 2016; Zeleke & Bekele, 2020; Reza, 2019; Nuel et al., 2021). These leaders can articulate their vision clearly while displaying a positive attitude and enthusiasm (Orabi, 2016). According to the literature, inspirational motivation can serve as the foundation for knowledge sharing and facilitates organisational success (Orabi, 2016; Poturak et al., 2020; Reza, 2019).

Individualised consideration describes leaders' actions that contribute to follower satisfaction that involve advising and showing concern for followers' needs and providing support for their development and self-actualization (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Northouse, 2016). By coaching, supporting and encouraging their followers, leaders build strong relationships with their followers (Nuel et al., 2021; Orabi, 2016). Long et al. (2014) asserted that through coaching and mentoring, transformational leaders can attend to each individual follower's needs for achievement and development. Nuel et al. (2021) argued that individuals differ in terms of their needs and wants and cannot be treated the same.

Scholars converge on the four core components of transformational leadership, namely, idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualised consideration as vigorous predictors across cultures and sectors (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025). Bonsu and Twum-Danso (2018) opine that intellectual stimulation dominates in knowledge-intensive settings. Contradictory findings reveal curvilinear effects, where excessive transformational demands lead to burnout in high-pressure environments (Espejo-Pereda et al., 2025). Despite validation in corporate and higher education contexts, empirical scrutiny remains limited in vocational training institutions, particularly TVET colleges facing resource constraints and staff turnover, leaving unresolved questions as to whether this leadership style's components can be effective in volatile environments (Mahfouz et al., 2020).

2.2. Organisational Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1990) viewed organisational commitment as a psychological state that ties employees to their organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) further explained that organisational commitment is an emotional condition that classifies how an employee interacts with the organisation and affects that employee's identification with the organisation and the decision to continue membership within the organisation. Strongly dedicated employees take pride in their jobs and do more than just perform them; they own their jobs and perform them to the best of their abilities (Allen & Meyer, 1990; J. P. Meyer et al., 2015; Donkor et al., 2021). Organisational commitment can be linked with staff turnover as employees who are highly committed are less likely to leave the organisation and vice versa (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Allen and Meyer (1990) suggest that organisational commitment can be divided into three themes, namely, commitment being related to affective orientation toward the organisation, the recognition of costs associated with leaving the organisation, and moral obligation to stay in the organisation (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Hussein et al., 2022; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). These themes resulted in the development of a three-component model of organisational commitment, which includes

affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

Affective commitment refers to an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Similarly, J. P. Meyer et al. (2002) and Allen and Meyer (1990) defined affective commitment as the positive emotional attachment and involvement of employees in the organisation, which facilitates their adoption of an organisation's values, attitudes, and beliefs.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990), normative commitment describes an individual's perceived obligation to remain in the organisation and their moral and personal commitment to adhere to the values and goals of the organisation. Employees who exhibit normative commitment to the organisation can be identified by their natural sense of duty, which may have been influenced by socialisation experiences that they had both before and after joining the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Continuance commitment refers to the perceived costs of leaving the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuance commitment can be defined as an employee's psychological bond to an organisation that is driven by perceived costs and risks associated with leaving it (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Powell & Meyer, 2004; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Mabasa, 2018). The costs of leaving the organisation may include the amount of time spent there, the acquisition of company-specific skills, lost pay and attractive benefits, giving up of seniority-based privileges, disruption of family life, or a lack of other employment opportunities (Powell & Meyer, 2004; Mabasa, 2018). Mabasa (2018) asserts that the literature on employee commitment demonstrates that each type of commitment an employee develops corresponds to the likelihood of desired benefits.

A wealth of empirical evidence supports the three-component model of organisational commitment, with affective commitment emerging as the strongest predictor of desirable outcomes such as employee retention and performance across meta-analyses (J. P. Meyer et al., 2015; Hussein et al., 2022). However, normative and continuance components reveal inconsistencies: normative commitment fluctuates with cultural socialisation, which is stronger in collectivist societies yet negligible in individualistic ones (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016), while continuance commitment often correlates negatively with voluntary turnover but positively with entrapment and stress (Powell & Meyer, 2004). Contradictory findings further indicate that high continuance commitment can undermine affective bonds when perceived as "golden handcuffs" (Mabasa, 2018).

Previous research that has assessed the levels of organisational commitment in various countries reports disappointingly below-average levels of commitment among staff, with the exception of Indonesia, the United States, Brazil and Japan, where levels of organisational commitment that ranged from average (50%) to 63% were found (Susanto, 2019; Bakker & Demerouti, 2020; Santos, 2018; Wang, 2020; Kato, 2019). In countries such as Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Senegal, South Africa, Rwanda, and Philippines, levels of organisational commitment were between 46% and 49% (Kgabi, 2019; Mollel, 2020; Chanda, 2020; Osei, 2020; Diop, 2020; Kasozi, 2019; N. Meyer, 2018; Nshimyumuremyi, 2021; Garcia, 2021).

2.3. Transformational Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Extant scholarship consistently links transformational leadership with enhanced organisational commitment, across educational and public-sector contexts (Mishra et al., 2023; Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025; Timiyan et al., 2025). Prior research shows that transformational leadership positively influences employee job performance and engagement (Jiantong et al., 2022; Ntseke et al., 2022; Engida et al., 2026) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Lee et al., 2024; Udin, 2024). This means that by developing

transformational leadership behaviours among their managers, organisations can increase employee engagement and encourage their employees to go beyond and above the call for duty, which ultimately lead superior performance. Transformational leadership has been shown to have a greater effect on organisational commitment than other leadership styles such as transactional and laissez-faire styles (Ndlovu et al., 2018; Jekelle, 2021; Donkor et al., 2021; Zainuddin & Hassan Asaari, 2020), including autocratic leadership that had a negative effect on organisational commitment (Timiyan et al., 2025). Transformational leadership operates through value alignment, emotional attachment, and motivational activation mechanisms that are conceptually consistent with the psychological foundations of commitment articulated by Allen and Meyer (1990). However, evidence also suggests that the four components of transformational leadership may exert differential effects depending on contextual conditions, such as resource availability, workload intensity, and institutional culture (Espejo-Pereda et al., 2025). Similarly, Ali Alshuhumi et al. (2025) observed that transformational leadership positively impacts organisational commitment, and the right organisational culture is vital to nurture transformational leadership behaviours

Given the distinctive pressures characterising TVET institutions—including funding volatility, regulatory oversight, and curriculum dynamism—it is theoretically necessary to examine each transformational leadership component independently. According to Engida et al. (2026), a supportive organisational culture can increase the effectiveness of transformational leadership while administrative overload, political interference and bureaucracy can have the negative effects. Gauteng is the economic hub of South Africa and makes major a contribution to the country's gross domestic products (Statistics South Africa, 2024). Undertaking this study in the second province, after the Western Cape, where job opportunities are better compared to other provinces (Statistics South Africa, 2026), is particularly worthwhile in understanding how transformational leadership impacts organisational commitment.

2.3.1. Idealised Influence and Organisational Commitment

Idealised influence reflects leaders' role-modelling behaviours, ethical conduct, and articulation of a shared mission (Bass & Avolio, 1994). From a social exchange perspective, when leaders demonstrate integrity and commitment to institutional values, followers reciprocate through stronger emotional attachment and identification with the organisation. This mechanism aligns directly with affective commitment, which is grounded in value congruence and organisational identification (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Empirical studies indicate that idealised influence strengthens trust and respect for the leader and shared mission alignment, thereby reinforcing employee commitment (Orabi, 2016; Ndlovu et al., 2018). In educational contexts, leaders who embody institutional values enhance staff identification with organisational goals, particularly during periods of uncertainty.

In resource-constrained TVET environments, visible ethical leadership and mission commitment may serve as stabilising forces that enhance employees' emotional bonds to the institution. This leads to the hypothesis stated as follows:

H1. *Idealised influence (II) influences organisational commitment.*

2.3.2. Intellectual Stimulation and Organisational Commitment

Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity, innovation, and critical problem-solving (Metwally et al., 2014). By fostering psychological empowerment and supporting new ideas without punitive responses to mistakes, leaders cultivate an environment of autonomy and professional growth. Such empowerment is theoretically associated with stronger affective

and normative commitment, as employees perceive themselves as valued contributors rather than passive implementers.

Prior studies demonstrate that intellectual stimulation enhances employee engagement and strengthens commitment by promoting learning and competence development (Orabi, 2016; Mishra et al., 2023). In knowledge-intensive and educational institutions, intellectual stimulation is often a dominant predictor of positive attitudinal outcomes (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018). However, excessive cognitive demands in high-pressure environments may produce strain if not accompanied by adequate support (Espejo-Pereda et al., 2025). Within TVET colleges, where curriculum updates and industry alignment require continuous adaptation, intellectual stimulation may foster commitment by reinforcing professional relevance and growth. This leads to the hypothesis stated as follows:

H2. *Intellectual stimulation (IS) influences organisational commitment.*

2.3.3. Inspirational Motivation and Organisational Commitment

Inspirational motivation occurs when leaders articulate a compelling vision, display optimism, and set high performance expectations for their followers (Du Plessis & Keyter, 2020). Theoretically, inspirational motivation strengthens affective commitment by aligning personal aspirations with institutional goals. Leaders who allocate work that is perceived as meaningful make employees align their goals with those of the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Empirical research consistently identifies inspirational motivation as a strong predictor of organisational commitment in educational settings (Mathews, 2020). By fostering collective purpose and emotional engagement, this dimension reduces turnover intentions and strengthens loyalty. Given the strategic role of TVET institutions in national development, leaders who articulate a compelling institutional vision may enhance staff commitment despite environmental volatility. This leads to the hypothesis stated as follows:

H3. *Inspirational motivation (IM) influences organisational commitment.*

2.3.4. Individualised Consideration and Organisational Commitment

Individualised consideration involves mentoring, coaching, and attending to followers' unique developmental needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994). From a social exchange and support theory perspective, personalised attention signals organisational care, which strengthens reciprocal commitment and loyalty.

Empirical findings suggest that individualised consideration is particularly influential in high-stress educational environments, where emotional support and professional development opportunities reinforce commitment (Mangisa et al., 2020). This dimension may be especially relevant in TVET colleges, where staff face workload pressures, skills obsolescence risks, and limited advancement opportunities. By recognising individual contributions and fostering professional growth, leaders may enhance both affective and normative commitment.

H4. *Individualised consideration (IC) influences organisational commitment.*

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

Utilising a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, the study investigated the relationship between transformational leadership style and organisational commitment at a selected TVET College in Gauteng, South Africa. A cross-sectional design enables data

collection from different contexts over the same period, facilitating the identification of similarities and differences across subsets of the sample (Saunders et al., 2019; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The study employed a quantitative survey method, suitable for assessing relationships between variables through numerical measurements and statistical analysis (Schindler, 2019; Zikmund et al., 2013). A descriptive research approach was adopted to examine the relationship among variables, with demographic data presented in tables for concise summarization (Saunders et al., 2019). This design aligns with the study's objectives to explore correlations within an organisational setting (Pallant, 2013; Field, 2009).

3.2. Population and Sampling

The study initially adopted a census approach targeting all 339 academic staff at the selected TVET College across its six campuses (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Although questionnaires were distributed to the entire population, some NATED engineering staff were on recess during the data collection period, which excluded them from participating. A total of 203 completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 60.5% (see Table 1). This sample size is considered adequate for conducting robust statistical analyses, including regression (Pallant, 2013). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of anonymity, and provided informed consent prior to participation.

Table 1. Participants' demographic profile.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Campus	Soshanguve—South	48	23.6
	Soshanguve—North	14	6.9
	Pretoria campus	75	36.9
	Mamelodi campus	16	7.9
	Temba campus	28	13.9
	Rosslyn campus	22	10.8
	Total	203	100
Age	18–30 years	22	10.8
	31–40 years	46	22.7
	41–50 years	84	41.4
	51 years and above	53	25.1
	Total	203	100
Highest qualification	N6 Certificate (NQF-5)	1	0.5
	National diploma (NQF-7)	15	7.4
	Bachelor's degree/advanced diploma (NQF-8)	98	48.3
	Honour's degree/postgrad diploma (NQF-8)	87	42.8
	Master's degree (NQF-9)	2	1.0
	Total	203	100
Years of service	Under 5 years	32	15.8
	5–10 years	56	27.6
	11–20 years	82	40.4
	Above 20 years	33	16.2
	Total	203	100

In terms of location (campus), out of 203 respondents, most respondents were from Pretoria Campus (36.7%), followed by Soshanguve South Campus which counted (23.6%). While Temba Campus counted (14.3%), Rosslyn Campus (11.3%), Mamelodi Campus (7.4%), and Soshanguve North Campus counted only (6.9%).

In terms of age, data show that most respondents (41.4%) were aged between 41 and 50 years, followed by those aged 51 years and above (23.6%), and those between 31 and 40 years (22.7%). Participants aged 18 to 30 years accounted for 10.8% of the respondents.

These results suggest that the workforce at the TVET college is predominantly composed of middle-aged individuals, with a notable proportion aged 51 or older.

In terms of the highest qualification of respondents, the results indicate that 96.6% are suitably qualified to teach in the sector, while 3.4% are not. Further analysis of the respondents' qualifications, as shown in Table 1, reveals that 48.3% hold a Bachelor's Degree or Advanced Diploma (NQF-7), followed by 42.9% who have an Honours Degree or Postgraduate Diploma (NQF-8). A small proportion, 1%, possess a Master's Degree (NQF-9)—the lowest percentage. Additionally, 5% of respondents hold an N6 Certificate (NQF-5), while 7.4% have a National Diploma (NQF-6).

In terms of years of service, Table 1 shows that 40.4% of respondents have been working in the organisation for 11 to 20 years. Approximately 27.6% have been employed for 5 to 10 years, while 15.8% have been with the organisation for less than 5 years. Lastly, 16.3% of respondents have been employed for more than 20 years. These results indicate that most respondents (40.4%) have been with the organisation for 11 to 20 years, while those with less than 5 years of service represent the smallest group (15.8%).

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire divided into three sections. Section A captured demographic characteristics, including age, highest qualification, years of service, campus, and relevant teaching qualifications, using a nominal scale (Saunders et al., 2019). Section B assessed transformational leadership style using 20 items adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Avolio and Bass (1995). This section measured four dimensions: idealised influence (II), intellectual stimulation (IS), inspirational motivation (IM), and individualised consideration (IC) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Section C evaluated organisational commitment using 24 items from the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Allen and Meyer (1990), covering affective, continuance, and normative commitment, also rated on a 5-point Likert scale. These instruments were selected for their established reliability and validity in prior studies (e.g., Top et al., 2020; Mabasa, 2018), ensuring accurate measurement of the intended constructs (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3.1. Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. According to Pallant (2013), a Cronbach's Alpha value below 0.5 is considered poor, values around 0.7 are considered acceptable; and values above 0.8 are generally preferable. The results in Table 2 indicate that the Cronbach's alpha values ranged between 0.570 and 0.843. The alpha coefficients for the transformational leadership variables—Individualised Consideration (TLIC), Idealised Influence Behaviour (TLIIB), Idealised Influence Attribute (TLIIA), Inspirational Motivation (TLIM) and Intellectual Stimulation (TLIS)—ranged from 0.75 to 0.843, indicating relatively high internal consistency. The organisational commitment scale comprised 24 items which were collectively measuring normative commitment, continuance commitment, and affective commitment.

Table 2. Reliability results of the measuring instrument.

Variables	Number of Items	Items Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Interpretation
TLIIB	4	None	0.810	Good
TLIIA	4	None	0.836	Good
TLIM	4	None	0.825	Good
TLIS	4	None	0.843	Good

Table 2. *Cont.*

Variables	Number of Items	Items Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Interpretation
TLIC	4	None	0.746	Acceptable
OC	24	None	0.750	Acceptable

In short, Cronbach's α coefficients for transformational leadership subscales ranged from 0.75 to 0.84 (acceptable to good). Organisational commitment scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.75), indicating an acceptable internal consistency reliability (Pallant, 2013; Field, 2009).

3.3.2. Validity

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilised to establish construct validity of the questionnaire. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to extract factors that best represented the interrelationships among variables. The results show that the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was 0.808, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that the variables were sufficiently correlated for factor analysis and supported the construct validity (Pallant, 2013; Field, 2009).

PCA extracted 13 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which explained 67.22% of the total variance. These results further support suitability of the data for factor analysis (Pallant, 2013, p. 205).

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to all academic staff across the six campuses of the selected TVET College to ensure control, clarify ambiguities, and achieve a high response rate (Collins & Hussey, 2009, p. 193). Campus managers were contacted to arrange access to participants and encourage participation. A covering letter and consent form accompanied the questionnaire, explaining the study's purpose, completion instructions, estimated time (20 min), and contact details for inquiries. Questionnaires were distributed and collected during free periods or breaks between 17 and 28 September 2023.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means, percentages) were used to summarise demographic profiles. Multiple regression analysis was selected as the primary analytical technique due to its ability to examine the simultaneous influence of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable (Saunders et al., 2019; Pallant, 2013). Since the study's focus was on relationships between the identified factors but not on mediating and moderating variables, regression analysis was deemed appropriate.

In this study, it enabled the assessment of the relative contribution of transformational leadership dimensions (TLIIB, TLIIA, TLIM, TLIC, TLIS) and demographic factors (relevant teaching experience, years of service, highest qualification, campus, and age) to organisational commitment, while controlling for the effects of other predictors in the model.

To ensure the validity of the regression model, the Durbin–Watson statistic was used to test for autocorrelation in the residuals. As suggested by Field (2009), Durbin–Watson values should generally fall within the acceptable range of 1 to 3. Additionally, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were checked to assess multicollinearity. VIF values below the commonly accepted threshold of 10 are considered indicative of no significant multicollinearity

(Pallant, 2013). Values outside of these ranges would suggest potential violations of regression assumptions, which could undermine the reliability of the model's results.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines outlined by the Tshwane University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee (Tshwane University of Technology, 2013). Written approval was obtained from the Faculty Committee for Postgraduate Studies, the Faculty Committee for Research Ethics and the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Tshwane University of Technology. The Department of Higher Education and Training granted written permission to conduct the study. Participants provided written informed consent, were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, and data were stored securely for research purposes only. All participants were treated with respect, and no responses were traceable to individual participants (Saunders et al., 2019).

4. Results

4.1. Levels of Organisational Commitment Among Staff

The results in Table 3 show that the level of organisational commitment among the academic staff was for the most part very low and only one item per each dimension scored slightly above average. The level of organisational commitment ranged between 30.1% and 53.2% on affective commitment, between 38.9% and 58.1% on continuance commitment and from 39.5% to 50.8% on normative commitment.

Table 3. Level of organisational commitment among staff.

Affective commitment items	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	OCAC 1	21 (10.3%)	34 (16.7%)	59 (29.1%)	63 (31.0%)	26 (12.8%)	203
2	OCAC 2	25 (12.3%)	42 (20.7%)	41 (20.2%)	71 (35.0%)	24 (11.8%)	203
3	OCAC 3	28 (13.8%)	39 (19.2%)	36 (17.7%)	79 (38.9%)	21 (10.3%)	203
4	OCAC 4 (R).	23 (11.3%)	30 (14.8%)	57 (28.1%)	67 (33.0%)	26 (12.8%)	203
5	OCAC 5 (R).	29 (14.3%)	57 (28.1%)	42 (20.7%)	50 (24.6%)	25 (12.3%)	203
6	OCAC 6 (R).	27 (13.3%)	56 (27.6%)	41 (20.2%)	57 (28.1%)	21 (10.3%)	202
7	OCAC 7	18 (8.9%)	40 (19.7%)	37 (18.2%)	76 (37.4%)	32 (15.8%)	203
8	OCAC 8 (R).	32 (15.8%)	62 (30.5%)	48 (23.6%)	42 (20.7%)	19 (9.4%)	203
Continuance commitment items	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	OCCC 1 (R).	33 (16.3%)	40 (19.7%)	51 (25.1%)	53 (26.1%)	26 (12.8%)	203
2	OCCC 2	22 (10.8%)	35 (17.2%)	46 (22.7%)	68 (33.5%)	32 (15.8%)	203
3	OCCC 3	30 (14.8%)	39 (19.2%)	41 (20.2%)	67 (33.0%)	25 (12.3%)	202
4	OCCC 4 (R).	27 (13.3%)	34 (16.7%)	47 (23.2%)	67 (33.0%)	28 (13.8%)	203
5	OCCC 5	16 (7.9%)	29 (14.3%)	40 (19.7%)	88 (43.3%)	30 (14.8%)	203
6	OCCC 6	26 (12.8%)	39 (19.2%)	37 (18.2%)	78 (38.4%)	23 (11.3%)	203
7	OCCC 7	19 (9.4%)	31 (15.3%)	50 (24.6%)	80 (39.4%)	23 (11.3%)	203
8	OCCC 8	24 (11.8%)	36 (17.7%)	47 (23.2%)	74 (36.5%)	22 (10.8%)	203

Table 3. *Cont.*

Normative commitment items	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	OCNC 1	17 (8.4%)	39 (19.2%)	44 (21.7%)	72 (35.5%)	31 (15.3%)	203
2	OCNC 2 (R).	38 (18.7%)	52 (25.6%)	33 (16.3%)	47 (23.2%)	33 (16.3%)	203
3	OCNC 3 (R).	26 (12.8%)	39 (19.2%)	49 (24.1%)	66 (32.5%)	23 (11.3%)	203
4	OCNC 4 (R).	19 (9.4%)	35 (17.2%)	49 (24.1%)	78 (38.4%)	22 (10.8%)	203
5	OCNC 5	28 (13.8%)	45 (22.2%)	47 (23.2%)	62 (30.5%)	21 (10.3%)	203
6	OCNC 6	14 (6.9%)	39 (19.2%)	44 (21.7%)	75 (36.9%)	31 (15.3%)	203
7	OCNC 7	14 (6.9%)	38 (18.7%)	53 (26.1%)	77 (37.9%)	21 (10.3%)	203
8	OCNC 8	12 (5.9%)	38 (18.7%)	57 (28.1%)	76 (37.4%)	20 (9.9%)	203

4.2. Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Organisational Commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test whether age, highest qualification, years of service, campus, and relevant teaching qualification significantly predicted organisational commitment. Findings in Table 4 indicate that none of the predictors were significantly related to organisational commitment ($F(5, 197) = 0.721$, $p = 0.609 > 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.018$ (Adjusted $R^2 = -0.007$)). These findings suggest that demographic factors do not significantly affect respondents' organisational commitment.

Table 4. Regression analysis of demographic factors and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	2.097	0.665	3.156	0.002	
Age	−0.011	0.087	−0.129	0.898	1.456
Highest qualification	−0.083	0.106	−0.786	0.433	1.008
Years of service	0.111	0.085	1.309	0.192	1.449
Campus	0.038	0.043	0.890	0.375	1.008
Relevant teaching qualification	−0.159	0.382	−0.416	0.678	1.017
R^2	0.018				
Adjusted R^2	−0.007				
Durbin–Watson	1.819				
F(5, 197)	0.721				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.609				

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.819 fell within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors. Additionally, multicollinearity was not a concern, as all variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below 10.

4.3. Relationship Between Transformational Leadership Style and Organisational Commitment

Regression analysis was conducted to test whether transformational leadership significantly predicted organisational commitment. Findings in Table 5 show that transformational leadership had no association with organisational commitment ($F(1, 201) = 0.978$, $p = 0.324$, $R^2 = 0.005$ (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.000$)). These findings suggest that transformational leadership as a composite construct does not significantly affect respondents' organisational commitment. The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.820 fell within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors.

Table 5. Regression analysis of transformational leadership and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	1.797	0.166	10.855	<0.001	
Transfleadership	0.070	0.070	0.989	0.324	1.000
R^2	0.005				
Adjusted R^2	0.000				
Durbin–Watson	1.820				
F(5, 197)	0.978				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.324				

4.4. Relationship Between Idealised Influence (II) and Organisational Commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test if idealised influence (II) significantly predicted organisational commitment. The results in Table 6 show that none of the idealised influence items were associated with organisational commitment (F(8, 192) = 0.666, $p = 0.721 > 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.027$ (Adjusted $R^2 = -0.014$)).

Table 6. Regression model of the relationship between idealised influence and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	1.686	0.347	4.856	<0.001	
TLIIB-1	−0.019	0.084	−0.227	0.820	1.785
TLIIB-2	0.057	0.094	0.607	0.544	2.203
TLIIB-3	−0.146	0.105	−1.387	0.167	2.047
TLIIB-4	0.101	0.092	1.095	0.275	1.847
TLIIA-5	0.008	0.081	0.100	0.920	1.754
TLIIA-6	−0.073	0.105	−0.695	0.488	2.393
TLIIA-7	0.022	0.106	0.206	0.837	2.451
TLIIA-8	0.115	0.090	1.276	0.203	1.758
R^2	0.027				
Adjusted R^2	−0.014				
Durbin–Watson	1.796				
F(8, 192)	0.666				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.721				

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.796 was within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors. Multicollinearity was not a problem as all tolerance values were larger than 0.10, and all variance inflation factors (VIFs) were less than 10.

Hypothesis H1 asserts that "There is a relationship between idealised influence (II) and organisational commitment." Since the *p*-value > 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H0). It can be concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between idealised influence and organisational commitment.

4.5. Relationship Between Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and Organisational Commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test if intellectual stimulation (IS) significantly predicted organisational commitment. The results (Table 7) of the regression indicated that the predictors explained 5.6% of the variance in organisational commitment, with F(4, 198) = 2.964, $p = 0.021 < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.056$ (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.037$).

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.797 was within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors. Multicollinearity was not a problem as all tolerance values were larger than 0.10, and all variance inflation factors (VIFs) were less than 10.

Table 7. Regression results for intellectual stimulation and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	1.158	0.302	3.842	<0.001	
TLIS-1	−0.079	0.084	−0.934	0.352	1.749
TLIS-2	0.012	0.092	0.126	0.900	2.292
TLIS-3	0.156	0.100	1.569	0.118	2.495
TLIS-4	0.117	0.090	1.297	0.196	1.790
R-square	0.056				
Adjusted R^2	0.037				
Durbin–Watson	1.797				
F(4, 198)	2.964				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.021				

Hypothesis H2 asserts that "There is a relationship between intellectual stimulation (IS) and organisational commitment." The model was statistically significant, $p = 0.021 < 0.05$). However, none of the individual intellectual stimulation items were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Therefore, while the model is statistically significant overall, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H0) for the individual predictors. It can be concluded that intellectual stimulation, as measured by the specific items, does not have a statistically significant relationship with organisational commitment.

4.6. Relationship Between Inspirational Motivation (IM) and Organisational Commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test if inspirational motivation (IM) significantly predicted organisational commitment. The results (Table 8) indicated that the inspirational motivation explained 6.1% of the variance in organisational commitment, with $F(4, 198) = 3.229$, $p = 0.014 < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.061$ (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.042$). In this model, articulation of a compelling vision for the future (TLIM-2) ($\beta = -0.271$, $p = 0.003$) and expressing confidence that goals will be achieved (TLIM-3) ($\beta = 0.238$, $p = 0.033$) were significantly related to organisational commitment. These results suggest that leaders who articulate a compelling vision for the future and display enthusiasm when expressing goals to be achieved are more likely to experience high organisational commitment among their employees.

Table 8. Regression analysis for inspirational motivation and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	1.756	0.339	5.187	<0.001	
TLIM-1	0.067	0.085	0.795	0.428	1.646
TLIM-2	−0.271	0.091	−2.989	0.003	1.595
TLIM-3	0.238	0.111	2.142	0.033	2.446
TLIM-4	0.021	0.100	0.212	0.832	1.983
R^2	0.061				
Adjusted R^2	0.042				
Durbin–Watson	1.889				
F(4, 198)	3.229				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.014				

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.889 was within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors. Multicollinearity was not an issue, as all tolerance values were greater than 0.10, and all variance inflation factors (VIFs) were less than 10.

Hypothesis H3 asserts that "There is a relationship between inspirational motivation (IM) and organisational commitment." The model was statistically significant $p = 0.014 < 0.05$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between inspirational motivation and organisational commitment.

4.7. Relationship Between Individualised Consideration (IC) and Organisational Commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test if individualised consideration (IC) significantly predicted organisational commitment. The results (Table 9) indicate that the individualised consideration explained 5.4% of the variance in organisational commitment, with $F(4, 198) = 2.841$, $p = 0.025 < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.054$ (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.035$). In this model, TLIC-4 ($\beta = 0.179$, $p = 0.007$) significantly influenced organisational commitment, suggesting that leaders can enhance organisational commitment among their employees through personalised development that is aimed at improving their strengths.

Table 9. Regression analysis results of the relationship between individualised consideration and organisational commitment.

Variable	β	Standard Error (*SE*)	*t* Value	*p* Value	VIF
Constant	1.460	0.299	4.883	<0.001	
TLIC-1	0.095	0.073	1.290	0.198	1.371
TLIC-2	0.024	0.077	0.317	0.751	1.428
TLIC-3	−0.156	0.085	−1.839	0.067	1.775
TLIC-4	0.179	0.065	2.734	0.007	1.362
R^2	0.054				
Adjusted R^2	0.035				
Durbin–Watson	1.845				
F(4, 198)	2.841				
Sig. (*p*-value)	0.025				

The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.845 was within the acceptable range (1–3), indicating no violation of the assumption of independence of errors. Multicollinearity was not an issue, as variance inflation factors (VIFs) were all less than 10.

Hypothesis H4 asserts that "There is a relationship between individualised consideration (IC) and organisational commitment." The regression analysis provides a p-value = 0.025 < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that individualised consideration influences organisational commitment.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment in a South African TVET college context. The findings revealed notably low levels of organisational commitment among academic staff, which is consistent with previous studies that report below-average commitment levels across a variety of institutional and geographical contexts (Kgabi, 2019; Mollel, 2020; Chanda, 2020; Osei, 2020; Diop, 2020; Kasozi, 2019; N. Meyer, 2018; Nshimyumuremyi, 2021; Garcia, 2021).

No significant association was found between demographic factors and organisational commitment. These results do not align with those of Lucjan et al. (2023), which indicated the varying effects of transformational leadership on the dimensions of organisational commitment based on demographic factors.

This study showed that transformational leadership, when treated as a single aggregated construct, does not meaningfully influence organisational commitment among

academic staff at the selected TVET College. However, when the construct is unpacked into its constituent components, a more nuanced pattern emerges that indicates the varying impacts of these dimensions. The results contradict previous research that found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment (Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025; Engida et al., 2026). In addition, findings do not align with those that indicate the positive effect of transformational leadership on affective commitment (Jiantong et al., 2022) and normative commitment (Zainuddin & Hassan Asaari, 2020). The insignificance of transformational leadership in this instance could be possibly attributed to the organisational culture that may be unsupportive and failing to nurture transformational leadership behaviours among managers (Ali Alshuhumi et al., 2025; Engida et al., 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, this calls into question the assumption in transformational leadership theory that the theory operates as a universally effective and internally consistent leadership style across contexts. The absence of a significant overall effect of transformational leadership suggests that it may not operate as a uniform or universally effective leadership paradigm in resource-constrained vocational education environments. In the context of South Africa's TVET sector that is characterised by funding pressures, heavy workloads, curriculum standardisation, and limited promotion pathways, broad charismatic or visionary leadership may not automatically translate into high organisational commitment among the academic staff.

The findings of this study revealed that when transformational leadership was broken down into its constituent parts, a more distinct pattern emerged. Inspirational motivation, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation demonstrated meaningful, though modest, associations with organisational commitment. These findings indicate that academic staff are more likely to display high organisational commitment when their managers articulate a realistic and attainable vision of the organisation, are enthusiastic about the goals to be achieved and tailor development to the personal needs of their employees. These findings are in contrast with those reported by previous studies. Ali Alshuhumi et al. (2025) showed the significant association between the four components of transformational leadership and the three dimensions of organisational commitment. These findings provide support for a more component-based interpretation of transformational leadership theory, implying that the theory may benefit from being viewed as a collection of distinct but interrelated behaviours with varying degrees of influence depending on context.

This study contributes to transformational leadership theory by emphasising the context-dependent nature of its effectiveness. In resource-constrained environments such as South Africa's TVET sector—which is characterised by funding constraints, heavy workloads, rigid curricula, and limited career advancement opportunities—broad visionary or charismatic leadership may be insufficient to foster strong organisational commitment. Employees appear to respond more positively to practical, relational, and developmental leadership behaviours that are directly relevant to their current professional realities.

While the results showed the significant effect of intellectual stimulation on organisational commitment, none of the items measuring it were significant. This may indicate that while the academic staff value being encouraged to think critically and innovate, such encouragement alone does not deepen their commitment unless accompanied by tangible structural support (e.g., time, funding, or curriculum flexibility). Alternatively, the findings could suggest that managers do not create a conducive environment that stimulates academic staff's creativity and innovation. To promote creativity and innovation among staff, managers should establish an environment that allows employees to experiment with new approaches of doing the work, find solutions to existing problems, and provides developmental opportunities (Metwally et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the absence of a significant relationship between idealised influence and organisational commitment raises concerns about the assumed centrality of leader charisma and role modelling in transformational leadership theory. In this context, symbolic leadership behaviours may be less important than tangible support and meaningful engagement with employee needs.

Overall, this study advances transformational leadership theory in three key ways: First, it challenges the universality of transformational leadership as an overarching construct, demonstrating that its effectiveness may diminish when applied holistically in constrained environments. Second, it supports a multidimensional and context-sensitive perspective, where individual components of transformational leadership exert differential effects. Third, it underscores the importance of organisational context as a moderating force, suggesting that leadership behaviours must be supported by structural and institutional conditions to achieve desired outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings call for a refinement of transformational leadership theory that moves beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and incorporates contextual realities, particularly in developing and resource-limited educational environments. Future research should further explore how organisational constraints interact with specific leadership behaviours to shape employee attitudes, thereby contributing to a more grounded and contextually relevant leadership framework.

5.1. Practical Implications

This study contributes to transformational leadership theory by challenging assumptions of universal applicability. While foundational work by Bass and Avolio conceptualised transformational leadership as a holistic and broadly effective style, the present findings highlight that a better understanding of the influence of this leadership style can be acquired by analysing each of its components individually.

First, the findings reinforce the multidimensional nature of transformational leadership. The results demonstrate that its components do not exert uniform effects, particularly in vocational education contexts. This aligns with growing scholarship advocating context-sensitive leadership models rather than one-size-fits-all frameworks.

Second, by focusing on the South African TVET sector—an under-researched educational domain—this study contributes geographically and institutionally situated evidence. The study also sheds new perspectives on the role of transformational leadership components in enhancing organisational commitment in Gauteng province, the economic hub of South Africa. Much of the transformational leadership literature is derived from corporate or traditional university settings. The findings suggest that vocational institutions operating under regulatory and resource constraints may moderate the strength and direction of leadership and commitment relationships.

The findings offer several actionable insights for leadership practice within TVET colleges. College management should prioritise training that equips them with knowledge to articulate their vision and goals realistically, considering available resources and operational realities. They should hold vision-sharing forums for transparent discussions of constraints alongside realistic targets. College management should align strategic objectives with measurable milestones to enhance credibility. Embedding individualised consideration into daily leadership practice to cater for the varying developmental needs of the academic staff would signal management's care for their followers' needs for achievement and growth. More attention should be paid to aligning professional development pathways with promotion criteria. These actions would help improve levels of organisational commitment, which have been observed as very low.

The non-significance of idealised influence suggests that managers should examine how they are perceived by their employees. More efforts should be directed at role modelling behaviours that will inspire employees to emulate them. In resource-constrained contexts, managers can enhance their credibility through responsiveness rather than being rhetoric by ensuring that the set goals are aligned realistically with available resources.

For the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the findings suggest that leadership capacity-building initiatives for TVET principals and campus managers should prioritise measurable competencies in inspirational motivation and individualised consideration rather than abstract transformational leadership concepts. National TVET turnaround strategies could incorporate performance indicators linking leadership practices to staff retention rates, and structured mentorship programmes should be embedded across colleges. Policy reforms should recognise that leadership development is most effective when aligned with broader institutional support mechanisms.

5.2. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This study demonstrated that transformational leadership, when treated as a unified construct, does not significantly predict organisational commitment among academic staff at a TVET college. However, specific leadership behaviours—particularly realistic vision articulation and personalised developmental support—emerged as meaningful levers of organisational commitment.

The findings underscore that the effectiveness of transformational leadership depends on its contextually attuned application rather than the wholesale adoption of the full-range leadership model. Developmental support, clarity in vision articulation, and leaders' enthusiasm in communicating institutional goals appear to exert greater influence than symbolic or charismatic dimensions of leadership.

From a methodological perspective, regression analysis was employed as it enables the examination of predictive relationships between independent variables (transformational leadership components) and the dependent variable (organisational commitment). This approach is particularly suitable for determining the relative contribution of each leadership component while controlling for shared variance, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of which behaviours hold practical significance within the TVET context.

Despite its utility, the use of regression analysis presents several limitations. First, regression assumes linear relationships between variables, which may oversimplify the complex and potentially non-linear dynamics between leadership behaviours and organisational outcomes. Second, it does not establish causality, particularly in a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to infer directional effects. Finally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce common method bias, further constraining the interpretability of results.

The findings are limited to academic staff at a single TVET college, as other categories of staff were excluded, thereby restricting generalisability across the wider South African TVET sector.

In light of these limitations, future research should adopt longitudinal research designs to better capture causal relationships and track changes in organisational commitment and related outcomes over time. To address the methodological constraints of regression analysis, scholars are encouraged to employ more advanced analytical techniques such as structural equation modelling (SEM), which allows for the simultaneous estimation of complex relationships, including mediating and moderating effects.

Furthermore, future studies should explore non-linear relationships and interaction effects between leadership dimensions to better reflect on the complexity of leadership processes. Expanding the sample to include administrative and support staff across mul-

tiple TVET colleges would enhance external validity and enable comparative analysis of leadership effects across different staff categories.

In conclusion, incorporating mixed-method approaches combining quantitative modelling with qualitative insights could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how and why specific leadership behaviours influence organisational commitment within resource-constrained educational environments.

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