

Visionary Leadership and Vision Achievement in Higher Education: The Mediating Role of Lecturers' Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Large universities often struggle to convert visionary leadership into tangible institutional achievement, particularly when bureaucratic inertia and a heterogeneous lecturer population fragment a shared sense of purpose. This study examines the mediating role of lecturers' organizational commitment in linking visionary leadership to the acceleration of higher education vision achievement. An explanatory quantitative approach was employed, drawing on a sample of 335 permanent lecturers at a large private university selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4, evaluating both the measurement and structural models through a bootstrapping procedure. The findings reveal that visionary leadership influences vision achievement directly (0.350) and, more strongly, by shaping organizational commitment (0.493), which in turn drives vision achievement (0.220). The significant indirect effect (0.108; $t = 3.724$) confirms partial mediation, and the model explains 51.2% of the variance in vision achievement. The implication for transformational education and learning is that committed lecturers are the carriers of educational change, translating institutional vision into classroom practice. Strengthening leadership and lecturer commitment together therefore offers a sustainable pathway toward durable, learning-centered transformation in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Why do many large universities fail to convert leadership into tangible achievement despite holding comprehensive strategic blueprints? Institutional competitiveness now depends on how quickly a university can move from stated vision to measured results. Yet weak governance routinely stalls progress on Key Performance Indicators and the Gross Enrollment Ratio, which in turn slows national education goals (Anderson et al., 2024; Garcia & Morgan, 2025; Gurantz & Tsai, 2023). The problem is rarely a missing vision. It is bureaucratic inertia: rigid structures that limit managerial flexibility and weaken the connection between institutional policy and lecturers' organizational commitment, the factor that actually drives the institution forward (Aksom, 2022; Normansyah et al., 2024; Sulistiasih & Widodo, 2025). The gap between an articulated vision and its operational execution is the central concern of this study.

Leadership has been studied extensively, but research on how lecturers' organizational commitment mediates outcomes within large university systems remains limited (Basri et al., 2021; Behery, 2023; et al., 2021). This matters because large institutions face managerial complexities that smaller ones do not when translating leadership values into action. In theory, visionary

leadership mobilizes organizational elements by articulating an inspiring vision (Buss & Kearney, 2025; Widodo et al., 2023). But its effectiveness depends on how far lecturers internalize that vision as commitment (Irnawati & Nuryani, 2023). Leadership that is too conservative tends to leave bureaucratic barriers in place at large universities, and this erodes the continuance commitment that keeps the institution stable (Mizrahi-Shtelman & Drori, 2023, 2025). Commitment is the mechanism that explains how leadership values turn into the collective action needed to meet strategic targets (Al-Dossary, 2022; Khumalo et al., 2022; Mollah et al., 2024).

Large-scale institutions face a particular problem: heterogeneous lecturer backgrounds mean the institutional vision gets interpreted differently across the organization. In this kind of environment, organizational commitment is not uniform. It depends on how well leaders connect individual aspirations to institutional goals (Achtenhagen et al., 2022; Vale et al., 2023). When this heterogeneity goes unmanaged, lecturer contributions drop, and policy becomes overly centralized and disconnected from operational reality, which works against national education objectives (Fleet et al., 2024). Most prior research has focused on relatively homogeneous institutions, so the dynamics of large-scale heterogeneity are still underexplored (Akgun et al., 2021; Woelert, 2023). What is missing is a model that treats lecturers' organizational commitment as a strategic asset that mediates leadership and institutional achievement, not just a formal outcome to be reported.

This study examines the mediating role of lecturers' organizational commitment in connecting visionary leadership to the acceleration of vision achievement in large-scale universities. Good University Governance requires more than one-way policy; it requires real coordination between leadership capacity and how responsive organizational members are. This study treats leadership's influence as something that must first convert into lecturer commitment before it can move the institutional vision forward, with commitment, particularly lecturers' desire to remain at the institution, as the mechanism that secures long-term strategic stability amid heterogeneity. The study uses an explanatory quantitative approach with PLS-SEM to estimate both the direct and indirect pathways from leadership to vision achievement, which means the mediating mechanism is tested, not assumed.

The novelty of this study is that it positions lecturers' organizational commitment as a link between leadership and outcomes during the rapid, large-scale expansion of higher education, something conventional educational management research has rarely addressed. Most existing work looks at leadership effectiveness on its own. This study instead examines how the heterogeneity of human resources at the operational level can be managed by deliberately strengthening commitment, so the institutional vision is achieved on a sustainable basis. Beyond testing statistical relationships, the study develops a governance framework for private higher education suited to global change. By tracing the indirect pathway from leadership to vision, the study identifies a mechanism that large bureaucratic institutions have largely overlooked, and treats commitment as a decisive factor in institutional achievement rather than a peripheral attitude. That reframing is the study's conceptual contribution.

This mediating role matters because the link between leadership and organizational performance works through psychological and behavioral processes, not mechanically. A model that captures only direct effects misses the pathway through which a leader's vision becomes shared institutional action. The study therefore pursues three aims: to estimate the direct effect of visionary leadership on vision achievement, to test the mediating role of lecturers' organizational commitment, and to formulate a strategic acceleration model for large heterogeneous universities. The contribution is twofold. Theoretically, it adds commitment to the leadership-achievement relationship as an explanatory bridge in higher education governance. Practically, it gives institutional managers a roadmap for turning an articulated vision into measurable achievement, supporting the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of large universities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships and mediation mechanisms among the investigated variables (Penga, 2023; Zhou, 2024). The explanatory design was appropriate because the study sought not only to describe conditions but to test how visionary leadership shapes the achievement of the institutional vision, both directly and through the mediating role of lecturers' organizational commitment. The research population consisted of all permanent lecturers at Pamulang University, totaling 2,043 individuals. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a significance level (α) of 0.05, which produced a representative sample of 335 lecturers. The sampling technique applied proportional random sampling to ensure the representation of respondents from the various work units within the heterogeneous ecosystem of a large-scale university. All participants provided informed consent prior to completing the instrument, in fulfillment of research ethics requirements. This procedure secured a sample that reflected the structural diversity of the institution before measurement began.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 1–5 Likert scale from June to September 2025, measuring three main latent variables: Visionary Leadership (X1), Lecturers' Organizational Commitment (X2), and the Achievement of Higher Education Vision (Y). Each variable was operationalized into five specific indicators adapted from published scientific literature to ensure content validity, and the questionnaire consisted of 120 items in total. Within the research model, Lecturers' Organizational Commitment was positioned as a mediating variable that links Visionary Leadership to the effectiveness of institutional vision achievement, as illustrated in

Figure 1. The conceptual framework therefore specifies two routes through which leadership reaches the institutional vision: a direct path and an indirect path channeled through lecturers' commitment. This structure provided the basis for the four hypotheses that the analysis was designed to test.

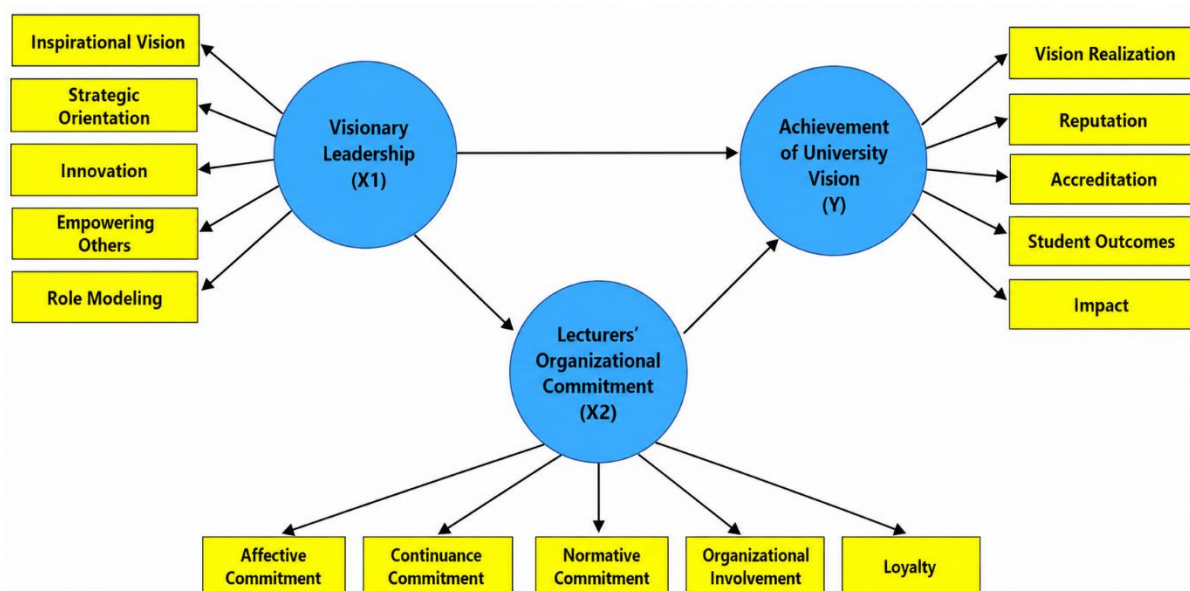


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

The hypotheses derived from this framework are formally stated in **Table 1**, which distinguishes the three direct effects from the single indirect effect tested in the model.

Table 1. Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	Path
H1	Visionary Leadership has a direct effect on the Achievement of Higher Education Vision.	$X1 \rightarrow Y$
H2	Lecturers' Organizational Commitment has a direct effect on the Achievement of Higher Education Vision	$X2 \rightarrow Y$
H3	Visionary Leadership has a direct effect on Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	$X1 \rightarrow X2$
H4	Visionary Leadership has an indirect effect on the Achievement of Higher Education Vision through Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	$X1 \rightarrow X2 \rightarrow Y$

Source: Developed by the authors (2025).

The comparison between direct and indirect effects aimed to identify which strategy higher education institutions should pursue to reach their vision faster: strengthening leadership directly, building organizational commitment, or strengthening leadership through commitment as a mediator. Data analysis followed two stages. The first used descriptive statistics to profile respondents. The second used inferential analysis through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM fit the study because it handles complex mediation models and holds up when data depart from normality, which is typical in large, heterogeneous samples. Evaluation started with the measurement model (outer model), assessed using Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extracted, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio to confirm reliability and validity. It then moved to the structural model (inner model), where R^2 measured predictive strength and bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples tested the significance of direct and indirect paths against the 1.96 threshold.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The structural model was tested using SmartPLS 4 on data gathered from 335 lecturers, and the evaluation began with the measurement model before the structural relationships were estimated. The first stage assessed construct reliability and convergent validity for the three latent variables. Reliability was judged through Cronbach's alpha, and convergent validity through the Average Variance Extracted, following the thresholds of 0.700 and 0.500 respectively (Karakaya & Alparslan, 2022). These two criteria together confirm whether each construct is measured consistently and whether its indicators converge on a single underlying dimension. Establishing this foundation matters because any weakness at the measurement stage would compromise every structural estimate that follows. The reliability and convergent validity coefficients obtained for the three constructs are reported in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

No	Variable	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	AVE
1	Vision Achievement	0.862	0.647
2	Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	0.856	0.637
3	Visionary Leadership	0.953	0.842

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2025).

Table 2 shows that every construct cleared both thresholds, yet the figures carry a sharper message than mere adequacy. Visionary Leadership reaches a reliability of 0.953 and an AVE of 0.842, which means the construct captures roughly 84 percent of the variance in its own indicators. Such a tight result signals that lecturers perceive leadership as a coherent and unambiguous quality rather than a loose bundle of behaviors. Vision Achievement and Lecturers' Organizational Commitment also cohere convincingly, with AVE values of 0.647 and 0.637 that sit comfortably

above the cutoff. The instrument therefore measures what it claims to measure, and each construct holds together as a unified dimension. This dependable measurement base allows the subsequent structural estimates to be read with confidence, since the relationships among constructs are not distorted by unreliable indicators.

The next step verified that the three constructs are empirically distinct rather than restatements of a single idea. Discriminant validity was evaluated through the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), which is currently the most sensitive criterion for detecting construct overlap in variance-based structural equation modeling. A ratio below the conservative ceiling of 0.85 indicates that two constructs, however correlated, still occupy separate conceptual territory and can legitimately be modeled as distinct drivers. This check guards against the risk that an apparently strong relationship is merely an artifact of two measures capturing the same thing. The pairwise HTMT values for the three constructs are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Values

No	Variable	Visionary Leadership	Organizational Commitment	Vision Achievement
1	Visionary Leadership			
2	Organizational Commitment	0.769		
3	Vision Achievement	0.816	0.755	

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2025).

Table 3 confirms discriminant validity across every construct pair, since all ratios stay beneath the 0.85 ceiling, and the internal ordering of the values is itself revealing. The strongest association binds Visionary Leadership to Vision Achievement at 0.816, a result that foreshadows the dominant structural path yet remains far enough below the threshold to rule out conceptual redundancy. Leadership and commitment correlate at 0.769, while commitment and vision achievement sit at 0.755, so each pair stays within its own conceptual boundary. These figures describe constructs that move together in the way theory predicts while remaining distinct enough to function as separate variables. The model can therefore treat leadership, commitment, and vision achievement as three genuine drivers rather than overlapping proxies, which preserves the integrity of the mediation analysis that follows.

With the measurement model validated, the analysis turned to the structural model and the standardized path coefficients that quantify the strength of each relationship. A path coefficient expresses how much an endogenous construct shifts, in standard deviation units, for a one standard deviation change in its predictor, which makes the coefficients directly comparable in magnitude. Reading them side by side reveals not only whether the hypothesized links exist but also which connections carry the greatest structural weight within the model. This comparison is central to the study because it shows where leadership exerts its force most powerfully and how that force is distributed between the direct and the mediated routes to vision achievement. The estimated path coefficients among the three constructs are set out in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Path Coefficients of Each Variable

No	Variable	Vision Achievement	Lecturers' Organizational Commitment
1	Vision Achievement	-	-
2	Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	0.220	-
3	Visionary Leadership	0.350	0.493

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2025).

Table 4 reveals a clear hierarchy of influence inside the model. Visionary Leadership presses hardest on Lecturers' Organizational Commitment at 0.493, a coefficient that overshadows

the others and locates the core of the mechanism in the leader's capacity to shape how lecturers bond with the institution. Its direct reach toward Vision Achievement, at 0.350, remains substantial but is visibly weaker, while commitment contributes 0.220 to the same outcome. Taken together, these three values narrate a structural story in which leadership approaches institutional vision along two routes at once, a direct managerial route and a longer psychological route that travels through lecturer commitment. The comparative size of the 0.493 path signals that the mediated route is no minor supplement but a substantial channel in its own right, a possibility that the formal mediation test examines directly in the analysis that follows.

The explanatory power of the model was then gauged through the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the two endogenous constructs, a statistic that reports the proportion of variance in an outcome that the model accounts for. The full structural model, displaying the outer loadings, the path coefficients with their t-statistics, and the R^2 value of each endogenous construct, is presented in **Figure 2**.

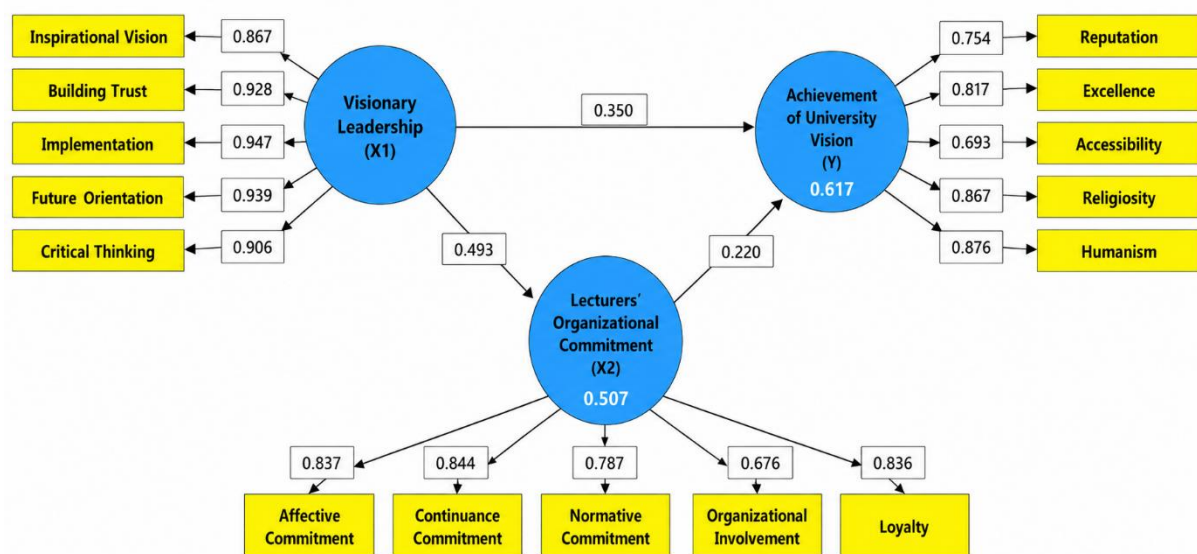


Figure 2. Path Coefficients in the Research Framework

Source: SmartPLS 4 output, processed by the authors (2025).

Figure 2 demonstrates that the model explains a substantial share of the variance in both outcomes. Visionary Leadership alone accounts for 50.7 percent of the variance in Lecturers' Organizational Commitment ($R^2 = 0.507$), which establishes leadership as the principal antecedent of how firmly lecturers attach themselves to the institution. The more consequential figure is the 51.2 percent of variance explained in Vision Achievement ($R^2 = 0.512$), a value generated by leadership and commitment working in concert. The rise from a single predictor to the paired predictors is the analytical crux of the study, because it shows that institutional vision is accelerated not by visionary leadership on its own but by leadership already converted into lecturer commitment. Judged against the benchmarks of (Al-Adwan et al., 2021), both coefficients fall within the moderate to substantial band and mark the model as a robust account of strategic success at Pamulang University.

The final stage tested the statistical significance of every direct and indirect path through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, which generates empirical t-statistics without assuming a normal distribution and is therefore appropriate for the non-normal data typical of survey research. The significance of the mediation mechanism was confirmed through the specific indirect effect produced by the same procedure, so that the direct and indirect paths were evaluated within a single consistent framework. A relationship is judged significant when its t-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level, and every path in the model surpasses that

benchmark. The path coefficients, t-statistics, significance levels, and decisions for the four hypotheses are compiled in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Testing

No	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Results
1	Direct Effect of Visionary Leadership on Vision Achievement	0.350	3.452	$p < 0.001$	Hypothesis Accepted
2	Direct Effect of Lecturers' Organizational Commitment on Vision Achievement	0.220	2.973	$p < 0.001$	Hypothesis Accepted
3	Direct Effect of Visionary Leadership on Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	0.493	5.892	$p < 0.001$	Hypothesis Accepted
4	Indirect Effect of Visionary Leadership on Vision Achievement through Lecturers' Organizational Commitment	0.108	3.724	$p < 0.001$	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: SmartPLS 4 bootstrapping output, processed by the authors (2025).

Table 5 establishes that all four hypotheses are supported, yet the decisive finding lies in the relationship between the third and fourth rows. The direct path from leadership to commitment is the strongest in the model at 0.493 with a t-statistic of 5.892, and the indirect path of 0.108 is significant in its own right, with a t-statistic of 3.724, so commitment operates as a partial rather than a full mediator. Because the direct effect of leadership on vision achievement at 0.350 also survives the test, leadership retains its own direct force even as a meaningful share of its influence is routed through lecturer commitment. This pattern does not weaken the case for visionary leadership but explains why it works, identifying lecturer commitment as the conduit through which a leader's vision becomes measurable institutional achievement. The result confirms that strengthening leadership and cultivating commitment are complementary rather than competing strategies for accelerating attainment of the institutional vision.

Discussion

This study tested how visionary leadership accelerates the achievement of the institutional vision, and the results are clear. All four hypotheses were supported, but their relative magnitudes reveal a deeper narrative. Visionary leadership acts most strongly not on the vision directly but on lecturers' organizational commitment (0.493), while its direct reach toward vision achievement is weaker (0.350), and commitment in turn drives the vision at 0.220. Together the predictors explain 51.2% of the variance in vision achievement ($R^2 = 0.512$). The mediation is partial. Leadership retains an independent direct effect even as part of its influence travels through commitment, with a significant indirect effect of 0.108 ($t = 3.724$). The point is not that leadership matters, which is well established. It is that leadership matters most once it has been converted into the attachment lecturers feel toward their institution. Commitment is where a leader's vision becomes measurable institutional movement.

Read against the existing literature, the finding both confirms and extends what scholars have argued. The strong leadership-to-commitment path echoes Ayça and Çiçekçisoğlu Kaya (2025), who reported that visionary and transformational leadership lift institutional performance by strengthening employee commitment, and it aligns with Yang and Yang (2024), who found that future-oriented, participatory leadership deepens lecturers' organizational loyalty. Where this study departs is in showing that the relationship is sequential, not parallel. Much prior work treats leadership and commitment as separate predictors of performance, whereas the present results show that one feeds the other before either reaches the vision. This speaks to a gap noted by Judeh et al. (2022), Sulistiasih and Widodo (2025), and Zerner et al. (2021), whose work on lecturer commitment stopped short of modeling the mechanism through which leadership produces it. By locating commitment as the conduit, the study clarifies an ambiguity the literature has tended to

leave implicit, and it does so in a large heterogeneous setting that earlier studies, focused on homogeneous institutions, rarely examined.

The partial nature of the mediation deserves a closer look, because it carries a theoretical implication that fuller mediation would obscure. Had commitment fully absorbed the leadership effect, one might conclude that leaders matter only by inspiring loyalty. The surviving direct path of 0.350 says otherwise. Leaders shape the vision through two channels at once. One is managerial, where they set direction and clear bureaucratic friction. The other is psychological, where they build the belonging that makes lecturers willing to act on that direction. This dual structure complicates the cleaner mediation models common in the field, and that complication is the point. It explains why leadership-only interventions often underperform in large universities, and why commitment-building alone, without credible leadership behind it, tends to fade. The two work together, and the data suggest that neglecting either one holds the vision back.

The contribution of this study to higher education management is both conceptual and practical. Conceptually, it reframes lecturers' organizational commitment from a desirable outcome into a working mechanism, an explanatory bridge that the leadership-achievement literature has named but seldom modeled directly in mass, heterogeneous institutions. This shifts the discourse beyond whether leadership works toward how it works at scale. In practical terms, the findings give institutional managers a sequenced logic for intervention. Because the heaviest path runs from leadership to commitment, investment in lecturer welfare, recognition, and career development is not a peripheral perk but a principal lever through which leadership becomes achievement. The study thus offers a roadmap for private universities navigating rapid expansion, where the diversity of lecturers' backgrounds can fragment a shared sense of purpose. Managing that diversity through deliberate commitment-building, rather than centralized control, is the more sustainable route to accelerating the institutional vision.

Beyond governance, these findings speak directly to transformational education and learning. An institution accelerates its vision only when its lecturers are committed enough to carry strategic direction into the daily work of teaching and curricular renewal. Committed lecturers are the carriers of educational transformation, the place where institutional ambition reaches the classroom and shapes what students actually experience. Visionary leadership that builds such commitment does more than improve administrative metrics. It creates the human conditions under which transformative learning can hold. The wider implication is that change cannot be mandated from the top alone; it has to be internalized by those who enact it. Future research could follow this pathway further, linking lecturer commitment to concrete learning outcomes and testing the model across different institutional types and cultural settings. By grounding educational transformation in the commitment of those who deliver it, this study treats leadership and commitment as the paired drivers of lasting, learning-centered change in higher education.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that a university accelerates its vision not through visionary leadership by itself, but through the commitment that leadership builds among its lecturers. Leadership works hardest by shaping that commitment, which then carries it into real institutional achievement, while a direct leadership effect still holds on its own. The mediation is partial, and that matters. Leaders reach the vision through two routes at once: a managerial route that sets direction and a psychological route that earns belonging. Commitment is where strategic intent turns into collective action, and that is most fragile in large, mixed institutions where a shared purpose easily splinters. The lesson for managers is to sequence, not scatter. Because the heaviest path runs from leadership to commitment, investing in welfare, recognition, career growth, and participatory governance is the main way leadership ever reaches the vision. Treating commitment as a mechanism rather than a perk gives managers a workable model for turning vision into lasting, learning-centered change. Future studies could test this across different institutions and cultures.

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