



## Principals' Leadership Styles and Secondary School Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Ethiopia

Mesfin Molla Demissie\*

\* Department of Educational Planning and Management, Dilla University, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

*This study investigates how principals' leadership behaviors influence teachers' organizational commitment within selected Ethiopian secondary schools. Drawing on the Full Range Leadership framework and the three-component model of organizational commitment, the research examines the relative contribution of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles to affective, continuance, and normative commitment. A quantitative cross-sectional design was implemented using data collected from 287 teachers selected through stratified random sampling from six administrative regions. Leadership behaviors were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1997), while commitment dimensions were assessed through the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation analysis were conducted to determine patterns and associations. The results indicate that transactional leadership practices were more prominently perceived than transformational behaviors. Normative commitment emerged as the strongest dimension of organizational commitment, followed by continuance and affective commitment. "Transformational and transactional leadership styles" demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships with all commitment dimensions, "whereas laissez-faire leadership" displayed weak or negative associations. The findings suggest that structured performance expectations and exchange-based leadership practices coexist with motivational leadership processes in shaping teachers' institutional attachment. Strengthening transformational competencies while maintaining constructive accountability mechanisms may enhance teachers' commitment within Ethiopian secondary schools.*

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Educational organizations across the world continue to struggle with achieving their intended goals despite having access to financial, material, and technological resources. While infrastructure and capital are important, institutional effectiveness ultimately depends on how well human resources are engaged and sustained (Gberevbie, 2017). In school settings particularly, the commitment and dedication of teachers constitute a decisive factor in determining whether educational objectives are realized.

Teacher organizational commitment does not emerge in isolation. It is shaped by multiple organizational conditions, including reward systems, professional development opportunities, work climate, alignment with institutional values, recognition practices, and overall job satisfaction (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Among these influences, leadership consistently appears as the most influential determinant of teachers' commitment levels. Empirical investigations have demonstrated a strong association between the way leaders exercise authority and the extent to which staff members internalize institutional goals (Trot-

tier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008; Yasir *et al.*, 2016).

Within secondary schools, principals function not merely as administrators but as strategic leaders who shape the professional environment in which teaching and learning occur. Their role involves guiding instructional improvement, restructuring ineffective routines, and cultivating collaborative cultures that support academic success. Leadership practices therefore directly influence the teaching–learning process and school effectiveness (García-Morales, Lloréns-Montes, & Verdú-Jover, 2008). Because principals differ in how they interact with teachers, each school environment reflects a distinct leadership orientation that shapes motivation, morale, and institutional climate.

However, not all leadership approaches yield positive outcomes. Authoritarian or rigid management practices can generate resistance, reduce collegial harmony, and weaken teachers' professional engagement (Akinbode & Fagbohunde, 2012). When leadership behaviors are perceived as unsupportive, teachers may experience reduced attachment to their institutions and diminished motivation, even when alternative employment options are limited (Nasuridin *et al.*, 2014).

Extensive scholarship on school leadership has categorized leadership behaviors into identifiable styles (Sudha, Shahnawaz, & Farhat, 2016; Yukl, 2013; Kelly & MacDonald, 2019;). The most widely applied theoretical model is the Full Range Leadership (FRL) framework, which differentiates transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership patterns (Rukmani, Ramesh, & Jayakrishnan, 2010; Rehman *et al.*, 2012; Abasilim, 2014). Parallel to this, organizational commitment research commonly conceptualizes commitment in three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative (Othman *et al.*, 2013).

Prior empirical evidence suggests that transformational and transactional leadership behaviors are generally associated with stronger levels of employee commitment, whereas laissez-faire leadership tends to weaken attachment and loyalty (Abasilim *et al.*, 2018b; Garg & Ramjee, 2013; Dariush *et al.*, 2016; Fasola *et al.*, 2013; Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Abasilim *et al.*, 2018a).

Despite growing international evidence, limited contextualized research has examined how these leadership patterns operate within Ethiopian secondary schools. Given ongoing challenges such as teacher turnover, motivation gaps, and inconsistent academic performance, understanding the leadership–commitment relationship remains critically important. This study therefore investigates how “principals’ leadership styles influence teachers’ organizational commitment in Ethiopian secondary schools using the Full Range Leadership and Organizational Commitment frameworks”.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Schools are the main organizations in the instructional framework. A central figure who has a significant degree of inspiration is expected to satisfy the objectives of the learning process. Researchers in organizational commitment show that principals play an extraordinary role in raising the responsibility of teachers (Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal, 2013). Principals perceive teachers' viability and proficiency as their top priorities when it comes to achieving school goals. The principal is responsible for everything that occurs in the school, and the way he or she works with the staff and interacts with them affects how satisfied the teachers are with their work and how they feel about their commitments to the school, to their profession, and teaching.

Moreover, a proficient and talented teacher is expected to accomplish school objectives. Be that as it may, how to use and prepare quality teachers matters. Enlisting, choosing, arranging, and setting representatives are, by all accounts, not the only basic issues for the accomplishment of school objectives. To use such assets, leadership style is the essential and most significant element for the ideal usage of the labor force, which is an impression of organizational responsibility.

As a result of different investigations by researchers, organizational commitment (OC) has crucial consequences for teachers and schools. According to Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2013), schools are moving “toward structures in which rank” denotes responsibility rather than “authority, and the supervisor’s goal” is to convince rather than command. As a result, principals need to persuade their subor-

dinates, colleagues, and superiors to support their goals and urge them to follow through with their decisions to be effective. Similarly, the organization must understand what factors have a significant impact on teacher dedication.

Furthermore, for a school to successfully implement plans, establish a competitive edge, and optimize human resources, leadership styles that foster teacher dedication are critical. As a result, if the state of commitment is the functional product of the leadership style in existence, committed teachers are a crucial success factor for schools to reach their targeted goals. Leadership styles are also important for the school's effectiveness since they motivate teachers and communicate the school's strategic goals and policies (Keskes, 2014; Kelly & MacDonald, 2019).

Ethiopian secondary schools put a strong emphasis on delivering top-notch instruction, research, and development. The organizational culture, teacher-motivation strategies, and rules and regulations of these institutions are distinctive. A deeper understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment is required to develop a leadership style that would encourage and strengthen organizational commitment at the school level.

3,739 secondary schools in Ethiopia offer instruction. The main issues that secondary schools in the nation have had to deal with are low student academic achievement, high teacher turnover, a lack of motivation and commitment on the part of teachers, a lack of communication between school principals and the administrative and teaching staff, and high rates of dropout and repetition.

As a result, this article tried to address the following crucial questions:

1. What type of leadership style is most common in Ethiopian secondary schools?
2. How committed are secondary school teachers in Ethiopia?
3. How much do leadership styles influence teachers' commitment in Ethiopian secondary schools?

### 1.3 Literature review

Ineffective leadership practices within schools have been linked to teacher dissatisfaction and withdrawal behaviors. Research consistently demonstrates that transformational leadership plays a significant role in strengthening teachers' organizational commitment, particularly during periods of educational reform and institutional change (Mowday, 1998; FDRE, 1994; Mottoh, 2015). Principals who articulate a compelling vision, encourage innovation, and provide individualized consideration tend to foster stronger professional attachment among teachers.

Transformational leadership strengthens commitment through several mechanisms. It aligns teachers' efforts with institutional goals, reinforces shared values, and cultivates intrinsic motivation by recognizing individual potential (Keskes, 2014). By involving teachers in decision-making processes and encouraging intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders create a sense of ownership that enhances emotional and moral commitment to the school.

In contrast, evidence regarding transactional leadership has been mixed. Some studies suggest limited or weak associations between transactional behaviors and commitment dimensions (Hayward, Goss, & Tolmay, 2004). Nevertheless, transactional leadership—particularly contingent reward practices—can provide structural clarity and reinforce performance expectations, which may indirectly sustain certain forms of commitment.

Meta-analytic and empirical investigations affirm that transformational leadership generally demonstrates stronger and more consistent relationships with organizational commitment than laissez-faire leadership (Yukl, 2013). Laissez-faire leadership, characterized by passivity and avoidance of responsibility, is often negatively associated with staff morale and institutional loyalty.

Organizational commitment itself has been conceptualized through multiple frameworks. Meyer and Allen (1990) identified "affective, continuance, and normative commitment as distinct yet related dimensions. Affective commitment reflects emotional attachment; continuance commitment relates

to perceived costs of leaving; and normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation to remain". In educational contexts, Singh and Billingsley (1998) further emphasized teachers' commitment to students, the profession, and the institution as critical components of school effectiveness.

High teacher commitment is linked to improved instructional quality, reduced absenteeism, lower turnover rates, and stronger student outcomes. Conversely, weak commitment is often reflected in disengagement behaviors and reduced institutional participation. Given the central role of school principals in shaping working conditions, leadership style remains a decisive predictor of teachers' organizational commitment.

The present study is anchored in two complementary theoretical traditions: the Full Range Leadership model (Bass & Avolio, 1997) and the Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Rather than treating these frameworks as abstract taxonomies, they are employed as analytical lenses for interpreting leadership–commitment dynamics within Ethiopian secondary schools.

The Full Range Leadership model conceptualizes leadership behavior along a continuum extending from transformational through transactional to laissez-faire orientations (Bass & Avolio, 1997). "Transformational leadership is operationalized through four interrelated behavioral dimensions—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration". These dimensions reflect leaders' capacity to articulate vision, foster professional growth, and stimulate innovation. In educational environments, such behaviors are theorized to shape teachers' value alignment and emotional attachment to institutional goals (Bass, 1997).

Transactional leadership, by contrast, emphasizes structured exchanges between leader and follower, typically manifested through contingent reward and management-by-exception practices (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Rather than inspiring identification with collective vision, transactional leadership stabilizes organizational functioning through clarified expectations and corrective feedback mechanisms. Its relevance in school contexts lies in its poten-

tial to generate predictability and accountability in performance systems.

At the opposite end of the continuum, laissez-faire leadership represents an absence of proactive engagement. Characterized by avoidance of decision-making and delayed intervention, this approach has frequently been associated with diminished organizational effectiveness (Buciuniene & Kudiene, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

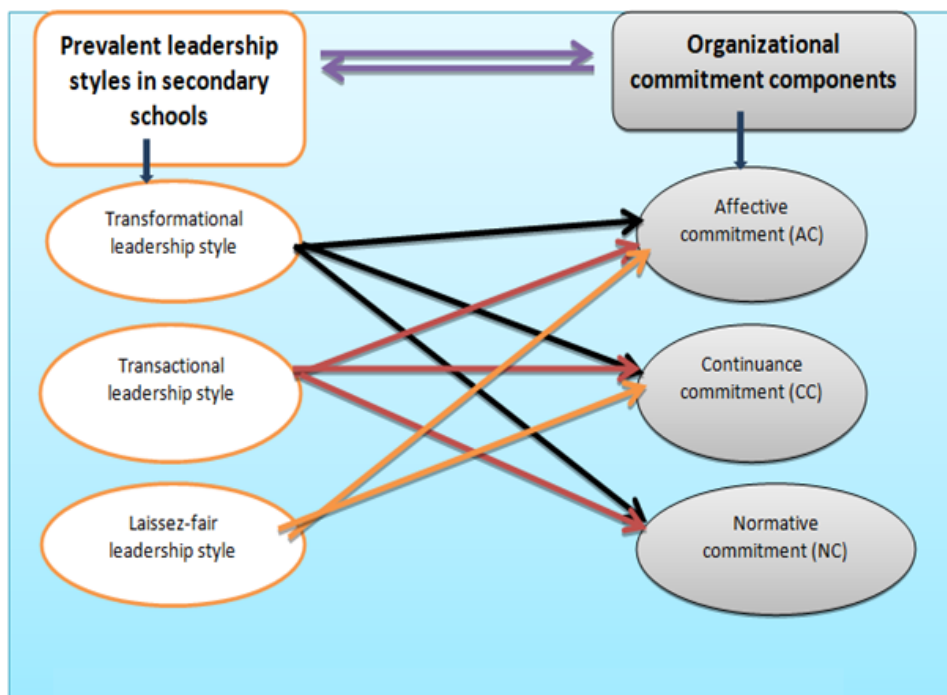
Organizational commitment is conceptualized through the framework proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990), which distinguishes affective, continuance, and normative attachment. Affective commitment reflects emotional identification with the organization; continuance commitment derives from perceived costs associated with leaving; and normative commitment arises from a felt obligation to remain. Subsequent empirical investigations (Brockner *et al.*, 1992; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004) have demonstrated that these dimensions may vary in prominence depending on contextual and leadership conditions.

Within the present study, leadership styles are examined as potential antecedents shaping these three forms of commitment. Transformational practices are theorized to strengthen affective attachment through value congruence, transactional mechanisms are expected to reinforce normative and continuance considerations through structured reinforcement, and laissez-faire tendencies are anticipated to weaken institutional bonds due to reduced engagement.

By integrating these frameworks analytically rather than descriptively, the study situates leadership behaviors as active mechanisms influencing teachers' psychological attachment within Ethiopian secondary schools.

#### 1.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual model guiding this study is informed by the Full Range Leadership framework (Bass & Avolio, 1997) and the three-component model of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). These theoretical perspectives provide the structural basis for examining how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework of the study

behaviors relate to affective, continuance, and normative commitment within Ethiopian secondary schools.

With the use of the MLQ and OCQ, the FRL and organizational commitment (OC) were researched to assess the effect of principals’ leadership styles on teachers’ commitment in Ethiopian secondary schools. The link between FRLS and OC dimensions is depicted in the diagram.

## 2 Research Design and Methods

### 2.1 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine how “principals’ leadership styles relate to teachers’ organizational commitment in Ethiopian secondary schools” . The design was selected because it allows systematic collection and quantitative analysis of participants’ perceptions within naturally occurring school environments. Rather than manipulating variables, the study sought to describe existing leadership practices and assess their statistical association with commitment dimensions.

Descriptive survey approaches are widely applied in educational research when the purpose is to cap-

ture current conditions, attitudes, and relationships among variables (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Such designs enable researchers to analyze trends and patterns as they exist in real settings (Williams, 2007; Orodho, 2005; Salaria, 2012). In the present study, the design facilitated the examination of teachers’ evaluations of leadership behavior and their reported levels of organizational commitment.

### 2.2 Target Population

The study focused on secondary school teachers working in selected Ethiopian regions. Six administrative areas were included: five regional states (Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR), Gambela, and Somali) and one city administration (Addis Ababa).

A multistage selection process was employed to ensure representation across administrative levels. From each region and city administration, one zone was selected; from each zone, one district (woreda); and from each district, one secondary school. This procedure ensured geographic diversity while maintaining feasibility in data collection. The total teacher population across the selected schools was 956.

### 2.3 Sampling Procedure

To obtain a representative subset of teachers, stratified random sampling was applied. This approach ensured proportional representation from each selected school, thereby increasing the generalizability of the findings (Burns, 2010).

The sample size was determined using the standard finite population formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{e^2(N-1)+1}, \text{ Where:}$$

$N$  represents the total population (956 teachers) while  $e^2$  represents the acceptable sampling error.

Based on this calculation, 287 teachers were selected proportionally from the six schools. This sample size was considered adequate to examine relationships between leadership styles and commitment dimensions using inferential statistics.

**Table 1:** Sample size of the study

Secondary schools	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	Total
Number of teachers in each school	109	242	139	156	184	126	956
Sample size of teachers selected from each school	32	73	42	47	55	38	287

### 2.4 Data Collection

Two standardized instruments were utilized to collect quantitative data. Principals’ leadership styles were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1997). This instrument assesses transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors under the Full Range Leadership framework. “Teachers’ organizational commitment was assessed using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), which measures affective, continuance, and normative commitment”.

Prior to the main study, a pilot test was conducted at Dilla Secondary School in the Gedeo Zone of SNNPR to evaluate reliability and clarity of the instruments. “The MLQ yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.83, indicating strong internal consistency”. The OCQ subscales also demonstrated acceptable reliability, with coefficients exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Griffith, 2015). Construct validity was supported through alignment with established leadership and commitment theories (Northouse, 2013).

### 2.5 Data analysis techniques

The collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 21. Both “descriptive and inferential

statistical procedures were employed.” Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the prevalence of different “leadership styles and levels of organizational commitment”. To examine the relationship between principals’ leadership styles and teachers’ commitment dimensions, Pearson’s product–moment correlation coefficient was computed. This analysis determined both the strength and direction of associations between “transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and affective, continuance, and normative commitment”.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Leadership styles in secondary schools

Table 2 shows descriptive data for the five transformational leadership variables, three transactional leadership aspects, and one laissez-faire element that respondents stated.

“According to the results in Table 2”, the mean scores for the transformational leadership indicators varied between 2.90 and 2.32. In comparison, the transactional leadership factors showed mean values ranging from 2.68 to 1.64. The laissez-faire leadership style, however, recorded the lowest mean score of 1.08.

**Table 2:** Mean scores for the full range components of leadership styles

Full range leadership	Teacher respondents		
	N	Mean	SD
<b>1 Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>1.22</b>
Idealized influence	287	2.33	1.34
Idealized behavior	287	2.32	1.29
Inspirational motivation	287	2.90	1.06
Intellectual stimulation	287	2.62	1.16
Individual consideration	287	2.54	1.26
<b>2 Transactional leadership</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>1.26</b>
Contingent reward	287	2.68	1.17
Management by exception active	287	2.63	1.17
Management by exception passive	287	1.64	1.44
<b>3 Laissez fair</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.31</b>

**3.2 Organizational Commitments in Secondary Schools**

“Table 3 shows the mean scores of the three dimensions of organizational commitment as perceived by the teachers”. As per the aforementioned findings, “affective commitment” had the lowest mean score of 2.38 & normative commitment had the highest mean score of 2.62. As a result, affective commitment is the least prevalent type of organizational commitment among secondary school teachers in the present study.

**Table 3:** Mean Scores on the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Dimensions	N	Mean	SD
Affective commitment	287	2.38	1.29
Continuance commitment	287	2.47	1.26
Normative commitment	287	2.62	1.15

According to the aforementioned findings, “affective commitment” had the lowest mean score of 2.38 & normative commitment had the highest mean score of 2.62. As a result, affective commitment is the least prevalent type of organizational commitment among secondary school teachers in the present study.

**3.3 “The relationship between principals’ leadership styles and teachers’ organizational commitment”**

A Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the three leadership philosophies and the three organizational commitment components. The information as evaluated by the teacher respondents is shown in Table 4, which also shows their leadership styles and organizational commitments in the context of the schools.

As shown in Table 4, transformational leadership exhibited a positive statistical relationship with all

three dimensions of organizational commitment. The Pearson correlation coefficients (*r*) were .354 for affective commitment, 0.400 for continuance commitment, and 0.407 for normative commitment. In the same way, transactional leadership also showed significant positive associations with teachers’ organizational commitment. The corresponding coefficients were 0.454 for “affective”, 0.472 for continuance, and 0.559 for normative commitment. These results suggest that transactional leadership is moderately connected with both affective and continuance commitments, while its association with normative commitment was comparatively stronger.

Table 4 “further indicates that laissez-faire leadership was negatively correlated with normative commitment and showed only a weak positive relationship with affective commitment”. No meaningful association was found between this leadership style and continuance commitment.

**Table 4:** Pearson correlation matrix between principals' leadership styles and teachers' commitment dimensions

Leadership styles	Organizational Commitment		
	Affective	Continuance	Normative
Transformational	.354**	.400**	.407**
Transactional	.454**	.472**	.559**
<i>Laissez-faire</i>	0.021	-0.049	-.101*

\* Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed)

## 4 Discussions

The present study examined the prevalence of leadership styles among secondary school principals and their association with teachers' organizational commitment in Ethiopia. The findings provide insight into how leadership practices are perceived within the specific educational context studied.

### 4.1 Leadership Style Patterns

The mean scores obtained for transformational leadership dimensions fell below the benchmark values suggested by Bass and Avolio (1997), who proposed that averages of 3.0 or higher reflect a strong demonstration of transformational behaviors. In this study, the observed values ranged between 2.90 and lower levels across subdimensions. This suggests that although elements of transformational leadership were present, they were not consistently exhibited at optimal intensity.

In contrast, the transactional leadership scores were situated within the range recommended by Bass and Avolio (1997), who indicated that transactional behaviors commonly fall between 2.0 and 3.0. The overall mean of 2.68, alongside comparable scores for contingent reward and management-by-exception (active), suggests that principals were perceived as relatively consistent in clarifying expectations, monitoring performance, and responding to deviations. However, the comparatively lower scores for management-by-exception (passive) and laissez-faire leadership indicate that overt neglect or avoidance behaviors were less dominant, though still observable in certain cases.

Teachers' responses further imply that principals were more likely to rely on structured exchanges and performance monitoring than on inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, or intellectual

stimulation. Transformational attributes such as fostering pride, articulating a compelling shared vision, or mentoring teachers were perceived as less pronounced. This pattern contrasts with arguments presented by Trottier, Van Wart, and Wang (2008), who emphasized the comparatively stronger predictive capacity of transformational leadership in public sector effectiveness.

### 4.2 Organizational Commitment Patterns

With respect to organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer (1990) did not prescribe normative benchmarks for interpreting mean levels across affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Nevertheless, prior empirical investigations (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Brockner *et al.*, 1992) have frequently reported affective commitment as the most prominent dimension, followed by normative and then continuance commitment.

The present findings depart from that general trend. Normative commitment emerged as the strongest dimension, followed by "continuance commitment", while "affective commitment" recorded the lowest mean. This suggests that teachers' attachment to their schools may be driven more by a sense of obligation and moral responsibility than by deep emotional identification. Such a configuration may reflect contextual influences in Ethiopian secondary schools, where institutional loyalty and professional duty carry significant weight.

"Normative commitment, which reflects perceived moral obligation to remain with an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990)", may be shaped by principals' guidance, role modeling, and structured reinforcement practices. Continuance commitment, on the other hand, is associated with perceived

costs of leaving and considerations such as employment security, benefits, and alternative opportunities (Meyer *et al.*, 2004; Hunt & Morgan, 1994 ; Allen & Meyer, 1990). The moderate presence of continuance commitment suggests that pragmatic considerations also influence teachers' retention decisions.

### 4.3 Leadership and Commitment Relationships

The “correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive associations between transformational leadership and all three commitment dimensions.” This outcome reinforces theoretical expectations that transformational behaviors cultivate deeper attachment by aligning individual values with institutional goals (Bass, 1997). Research by Lo *et al.* (2010) similarly identified transformational leadership as a meaningful predictor of “affective, continuance, and normative commitment”. Within the Ethiopian secondary school context, these results indicate that when principals demonstrate vision-oriented and supportive behaviors, teachers are more likely to internalize institutional objectives.

Transactional leadership also exhibited significant positive relationships with commitment dimensions, particularly normative commitment. Practices such as contingent reward and active performance monitoring appear to strengthen teachers' sense of responsibility toward their schools. Earlier studies have documented comparable patterns, including positive links between transactional leadership and commitment (Buciuniene & Kudiene, 2008; Ponnu & Tennakoon, 2009; Lo *et al.*, 2010; Marmaya *et al.*, 2011). The present findings contribute additional contextual evidence by demonstrating that structured reward-based leadership can foster moral obligation and sustained participation among teachers.

The association between transactional leadership and affective as well as continuance commitment suggests that clearly defined expectations and reinforcement mechanisms provide teachers with both emotional reassurance and practical stability (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Shann, 2001). In settings where institutional resources and oppor-

tunities may be constrained, structured leadership practices may offer predictability that strengthens organizational attachment.

By contrast, laissez-faire leadership demonstrated weak or negative relationships with commitment dimensions, particularly normative commitment. The passive and avoidant characteristics of this leadership style—such as delayed decision-making or failure to address challenges—appear to undermine teachers' sense of obligation and loyalty. Previous research has similarly documented the adverse or negligible effects of laissez-faire leadership on organizational commitment (Buciuniene & Kudiene, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016). The present findings reinforce the conclusion that absence of leadership engagement diminishes teachers' institutional attachment.

### 4.4 Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the findings suggest that leadership style plays a central role in shaping teachers' organizational commitment in Ethiopian secondary schools. Although transformational leadership demonstrated meaningful positive associations with commitment, transactional leadership appeared slightly more dominant in practice. This pattern indicates that principals may rely more heavily on performance-based exchanges than on inspirational or developmental strategies.

Nevertheless, both transformational and transactional approaches were linked to stronger commitment, whereas laissez-faire tendencies weakened it. These results underscore the importance of deliberate leadership practices that combine motivational vision with structured accountability mechanisms.

## 5 Conclusion

The study demonstrates that principals' leadership behaviors are meaningfully associated with teachers' organizational commitment within Ethiopian secondary schools. Transactional leadership practices were more visibly enacted, while transformational behaviors appeared less consistently demonstrated. Among commitment dimensions, normative attachment predominated, indicating that teachers' institutional ties are shaped more by perceived obligation than by emotional identification.

Both transformational and transactional leadership styles were positively related to affective, continuance, and normative commitment, whereas laissez-faire tendencies weakened these associations. These findings underscore the dual importance of motivational leadership and structured accountability mechanisms in cultivating institutional attachment.

Strengthening principals' capacity for individualized consideration, inspirational articulation, and intellectual stimulation may enhance affective commitment, while maintaining transparent performance expectations can sustain normative and continuance bonds. Leadership development initiatives in Ethiopian secondary education should therefore balance visionary competencies with structured reinforcement practices to foster durable organizational commitment.

## 6 Recommendations

The following recommendations for practitioners and researchers were made based on the outcomes of descriptive and correlational analysis. As a result, principals who want to improve organizational commitment should think about the following:

1. Provide teachers with an effective leadership style that will increase the academic achievements of the students and organizational commitment.
2. Encourage their teachers to be more satisfied to improve organizational commitment.
3. Make principals aware of the full range of leadership styles to boost levels of organizational commitment among teachers by creating an information exchange system that allows them to improve their knowledge and skills for competence and organizational commitment. In this context, theoretical and practical seminars should be provided in partnership with MOE, the Regional Education Bureau, universities, and principals on the issue.
4. It is hoped that the findings will spur future research into other equally essential factors that influence leadership style. "The influence of leadership style on organizational

commitment" was the main area of interest in this study, which focused on one particular form of work-related behavior. As a result, future studies in this area could expand to include other dimensions related to teacher dedication.

5. In educational institutions, much more research is required. It could be repeated in a variety of secondary education settings. Additional research might be done with private secondary schools from a wider range of backgrounds, as well as a comparison of all employees. Another aspect that has to be addressed is leadership and teacher commitment.

## Competing Interest Declaration

This research was fully sponsored by "Dilla University". The institution bears no responsibility for the findings other than for reporting purposes. The author is a staff member of Dilla University engaged in both teaching and research. All intellectual property rights (IPR) and relevant ethical standards were carefully observed throughout the study.

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## Availability of the data

The author informs the journal editors that the dataset generated during this study is available and can be provided upon request.

## Ethical Approval

Consent was sought from the research participants. Confidentiality was maintained in reporting information.

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