

Optimizing Lecturer Engagement through Educational Human Resource Development: A POP-HR Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study examined educational human resource development strategies using the Modeling and Optimization of Management Resources (POP-HR) approach to strengthen lecturer engagement in higher education. The study was conducted to address the limited effectiveness of human resource management in fostering lecturer engagement. A mixed-methods design was employed, beginning with qualitative exploration and followed by quantitative modeling using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), and prioritization through SITOREM analysis. Data were collected from lecturers and analyzed to identify key factors influencing engagement. The findings indicated that lecturer empowerment, reward effectiveness, and leadership aligned with the Tut Wuri Handayani principle significantly influenced professional commitment and organizational culture, which in turn enhanced lecturer engagement. Mediation analysis showed that professional commitment provided the most consistent pathway in translating managerial interventions into increased engagement. The study concluded that the POP-HR approach offered a systematic framework for optimizing human resource strategies through factor mapping, causal modeling, and priority setting. These findings suggested that targeted investments in empowerment, meaningful rewards, organizational culture, and adaptive leadership were essential in improving lecturer engagement.

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Introduction

The role of university lecturers is critical in shaping high-quality, competitive human resources. As the frontline in knowledge development and education, lecturers are expected to exhibit high professional commitment to support the enhancement of educational quality. Professional commitment encompasses responsibilities in teaching, research, and community service, as outlined in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Recent changes in technological developments, shifts in educational policies, and the challenges of globalization, particularly the impact of Industry 4.0, have raised new demands for lecturers. These shifts require them to continuously develop their competencies, not only in mastering teaching content but also in adapting to digital learning and technology-based research (Setyaningsih & Hardhienata, 2026)

In addition to external pressures, factors such as lecturer well-being, including workload, career opportunities, and the working environment, play significant roles in shaping professional commitment. Research suggests that lecturers who feel valued financially and socially, and have access to career development, tend to demonstrate higher levels of professional commitment. (Chen et al., 2024) However, observations in several educational institutions indicate that not all lecturers exhibit optimal professional commitment. Factors such as unsupportive institutional policies, inadequate research facilities, and a lack of intrinsic motivation among individual lecturers may contribute to this issue. This lack of commitment can negatively affect the quality of teaching and the caliber of graduates produced by higher education institutions (Widiastuti, 2025).

Recent trends highlight the importance of innovation within higher education institutions to remain competitive. Enhancing lecturer performance through strategies such as professional development and a supportive work environment is essential. Universities must empower their lecturers to align with institutional missions, thereby fostering high commitment to their roles. Such efforts can strengthen the overall academic culture and competence of lecturers, ensuring long-term institutional success, especially in dynamic educational landscapes (Zainuri et al., 2025). In examining professional commitment, local wisdom plays an essential role. The integration of local values into academic environments can foster a stronger connection between lecturers and their institutions. Local wisdom, as applied in this research, involves leveraging cultural values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), leadership role modeling, organizational support, mutual respect, and work-life balance to enhance professional commitment. Previous studies have shown that these cultural elements can positively influence organizational behavior and performance. However, gaps remain in understanding how these values can be systematically integrated into enhancing professional commitment among lecturers (Aditya & Khoiriyah, 2021; Mulyana, 2021).

This research aims to develop a model for optimizing the enhancement of professional commitment among lecturers at Pancasila University, using the POP-SDM (Professional Organizational Performance - Human Resource Management) approach. The study will investigate the direct and indirect effects of variables such as mutual cooperation, leadership role modeling, organizational support, mutual respect, and work-life balance on professional commitment. By employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and SITOREM analysis, this research will identify the factors that significantly contribute to improving professional commitment and suggest strategies for leveraging these factors effectively (Setyaningsih et al., 2021; Sahrazad et al., 2022).

The research will begin by exploring the existing literature on professional commitment, particularly focusing on the influence of local wisdom and organizational factors. The study will analyze the relationships between various independent variables and their effects on lecturers' professional commitment. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research will provide both qualitative insights and quantitative models to suggest optimal strategies for enhancing professional commitment in the context of Pancasila University. The following sections of this article will present the literature review, research methodology, findings, and discussion of the results (Hair et al., 2017; Gibson, 2012).

Method

This research combines qualitative and quantitative research designs. The method chosen for this study is the POP-SDM (Professional Organizational Performance - Human Resource Management) approach, which is effective in developing and optimizing professional commitment among lecturers. The qualitative phase of this study aims to explore key factors influencing professional commitment, such as reciprocal collaboration, exemplary leadership, organizational support, mutual respect, and work-life balance.

This research uses the POP-SDM approach, which structures the study as a comprehensive modeling and optimization workflow. In line with the POP-SDM logic, the research begins with qualitative fieldwork to identify the dominant factors influencing the focal resource (lecturer engagement) and uses these insights to build a theoretically defensible structural model for quantitative testing (Astuti et al., 2025).

Quantitatively, this study uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis with an embedded two-stage hierarchical component model: reflective indicators at the lower level and formative indicators at the upper level. The measurement evaluation followed established criteria (e.g., outer loadings, AVE, HTMT, composite reliability) and included Confirmatory Tetrad Analysis to support reflective versus formative decision-making (Hair, 2022; Magno, 2024).

Finally, this strategy translated the results into prioritized improvement actions using SITOREM (Scientific Identification Theory to Conduct Operation Research in Education Management), which integrates statistical weighting with expert judgment to rank indicators for improvement versus maintenance (Hermawan, 2023; Astuti et al., 2025).

The research design was exploratory and correlational, with the goal of identifying causal relationships between variables of interest. The population in this study consisted of full-time lecturers at Pancasila University. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of lecturers from various faculties at the university. The target sample size was 200 respondents, which was deemed sufficient for conducting robust statistical analysis, thus ensuring the generalizability of the results. To collect data from these lecturers, a combination of surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions will be used.

Results and Discussion

The research conducted aimed to explore the factors influencing the professional commitment of lecturers at Pancasila University, using the POP-SDM approach. The findings from the qualitative data analysis were presented in the following sections.

The qualitative phase of the study involved interviewing 30 lecturers from various faculties at Pancasila University. The results indicated that several factors were significant in influencing professional commitment, with the most dominant being work-life balance, mutual respect, and leadership modeling. From the interviews, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and organizational support also emerged as important factors that positively influenced lecturers' professional commitment. These findings are consistent with previous research (Anwar et al. 2023), which highlighted the role of organizational support in enhancing commitment (Mulyana, 2021), who noted the impact of mutual respect and cooperation on employee satisfaction and commitment (Anwar et al., 2023).

One of the key findings from the analysis is that leadership modeling and organizational support play pivotal roles in strengthening professional commitment. As seen in Figure 1, these two variables had direct positive effects on mutual respect and work-life balance, which, in turn, influenced overall commitment to the profession. This supports earlier research (Luthans, 2011), which found that effective leadership and support structures significantly impact organizational commitment (Luthans, 2011).

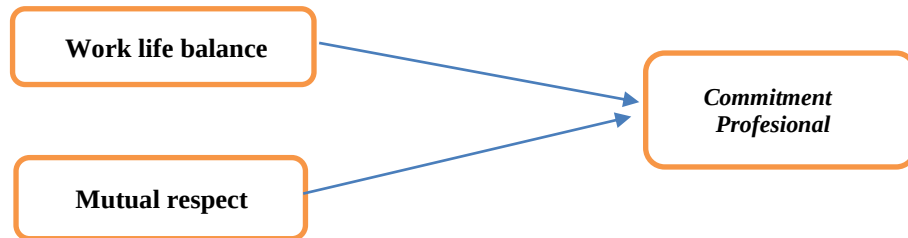
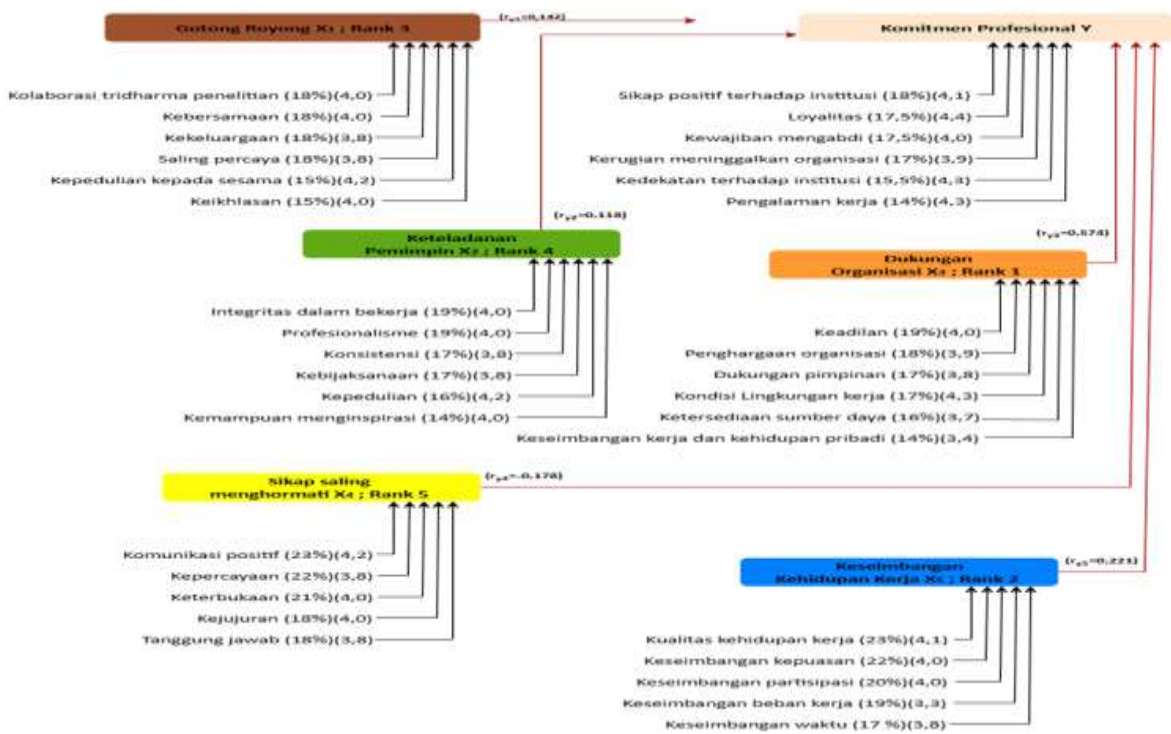
The model constructed from the results also confirmed that the most dominant variables influencing professional commitment were work-life balance, mutual respect, and leadership modeling, with other variables like mutual cooperation and organizational support acting as supporting factors. The triangulation process conducted through expert validation further confirmed the robustness of the model, with experts recommending minimal revisions. This verification step ensures that the model accurately reflects the realities within the academic environment of Pancasila University and is supported by established theoretical frameworks (Hair et al., 2017).

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that interventions aimed at improving work-life balance and fostering mutual respect among lecturers could lead to enhanced professional commitment. Institutions should consider these findings when designing policies and initiatives to increase lecturer satisfaction and performance. Additionally, the integration of local wisdom and cultural values, as suggested (Agustin & Warsono, 2022), could further strengthen these efforts by promoting a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

The results of this study contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the significant role that mutual cooperation, leadership modeling, and organizational support play in enhancing professional commitment. The findings offer valuable insights for educational administrators seeking to improve the overall work environment and professional dedication of lecturers, ensuring that higher education institutions remain competitive and effective in fulfilling their educational missions.

Table 1 The results of qualitative research that influence commitment professional

No	Variabel Name	Code	Responden	Tally Mark	%
1.	Work Enviroment	WE	4	IIII	4/30 x 100%= 13%
2.	Mutual Cooperation	GR	15	IIII IIII IIII	15/30x100%= 50%
3.	Reward and Compensation	RAC	3	III	3/30x100%= 10%
4.	Mutual Respect	SM	9	IIII IIII	9/30x100%= 30%
5.	Exemplary Leadership	KP	15	IIII IIII IIII	15/30x100%=50%
6.	Community Training	CT	4	IIII	4/30x100%=13%
7.	Devotion	PG	3	III	3/30x100%=10%
8.	Tolerance	TR	8	IIII III	8/30x100%=26%
9.	WorkLifebalance	WL	15	IIII IIII IIII	15/30x100%=50%
10.	Religiusitas	RL	4	IIII	4/30x100%=13%
11.	Obeys the Rules	TA	9	IIII IIII	9/30x100%=30%
12.	Organizational Support	DO	15	IIII IIII IIII	15/30x100%=50%
13.	Environmentally friendly	RL	4	IIII	4/30x100%=13%

Figure 1 Constellation of variable models that influence the professional commitment lecturer**Table 2** The results Analysis SITORE research that influence commitment professional

From the description above, this study can conclude that to increase the professional commitment of lecturers, it is necessary to strengthen work-life balance, mutual cooperation, mutual respect and organizational support.

Based on SITOREM's analysis, ways to strengthen mutual cooperation, mutual respect, exemplary leadership, organizational support, and work-life balance are:

1. Strengthening mutual cooperation by improving weak indicators, namely: family and mutual trust, and maintaining and developing existing indicators, namely: (a) collaboration in the three pillars of research, (b) togetherness, (c) concern for others, and (d) sincerity,
2. Strengthening Mutual Respect by improving weak indicators, namely: Trust and Responsibility by maintaining and developing good indicators, namely: (a) Positive Communication, (b) Openness, (c) Honesty,
3. Strengthening Leadership Exemplary Behavior by improving weak indicators, namely: Consistency and Wisdom, and maintaining and developing good indicators, namely: (a) Integrity in Work, (b) Professionalism, (c) Caring, (d) Ability to Inspire,
4. Strengthening Organizational Support by improving weak indicators, namely: (a) Organizational Recognition, (b) Leadership Support, (c) Availability of Resources and Work-Life Balance, and maintaining/developing good indicators, namely: (a) Fairness, (b) Work Environment Conditions,
5. Strengthening Work-Life Balance by improving weak indicators, namely: (a) Workload Balance and (b) Time Balance, and maintaining/developing good indicators. namely: (a) Quality of work life, (b) Balance of satisfaction and (c) Balance of participation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that lecturers' professional commitment at Pancasila University is shaped by an interplay of psychosocial, cultural, and leadership-related factors that reinforce one another. The qualitative phase, based on interviews with 30 lecturers, indicates that the most dominant influences were work-life balance, exemplary leadership, organizational support, and mutual cooperation (gotong royong) (each identified by 50% of respondents), followed by mutual respect and obedience to rules (30%). These findings suggest that professional commitment does not emerge from a single determinant, but rather from an enabling institutional ecosystem where fairness, support, and healthy interpersonal relations are consistently cultivated.

The constellation model further shows that exemplary leadership and organizational support function as key upstream drivers that positively affect mutual respect and work-life balance, which then contribute to stronger professional commitment overall. In other words, leadership that models desired behavior and an institution that provides consistent support can strengthen collegial respect, improve the quality of working relationships, and help lecturers manage academic demands alongside personal responsibilities. The expert-validation triangulation confirmed that the proposed model is robust, closely reflects academic realities, and aligns with established theoretical frameworks, making it suitable as a foundation for institutional decision-making.

The SITOREM analysis clarifies strategic priorities for enhancing professional commitment by improving weak indicators while maintaining and developing strong ones. For mutual cooperation, the improvement focus should be on family-like relationships and mutual trust, while sustaining effective indicators such as collaboration across the tridharma pillars, togetherness, concern for others, and sincerity. For mutual respect, the most critical indicators to strengthen are trust and responsibility, while continuing to develop positive communication, openness, and honesty. This pattern highlights that

commitment is reinforced when interpersonal norms are institutionalized through both relational quality and consistent accountability.

Practically, Pancasila University should translate these priorities into measurable interventions: (1) redesigning workload and time management policies to strengthen workload balance and time balance; (2) institutionalizing culture-building routines that promote trust, responsibility, and togetherness; (3) strengthening exemplary leadership through targeted development in consistency and wisdom, while sustaining integrity, professionalism, care, and the capacity to inspire; and (4) improving organizational support through stronger institutional recognition, leadership support, and resource availability, while maintaining fairness and healthy work-environment conditions. Implemented as an integrated HR roadmap, these actions are expected to strengthen lecturers' professional commitment and, in turn, improve the effectiveness and sustainability of higher education performance.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: DNA, MAI; Methodology: DNA, MAI, FFW; Formal analysis: DNA, MAI, AYM; Investigation: FFW, AYM, FAA; Writing – original draft: MAI, FFW; Writing – review & editing: DNA, MAI, AYM; Supervision: DNA, MAI.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors used Gemini for language editing and grammar improvement. The authors reviewed and verified all AI-assisted revisions and take full responsibility for the final content.

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