

Reconstructing academic supervision in higher education: The role of lecturers' transformational leadership in fostering student autonomous learning and academic achievement

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Academic supervision in higher education has often focused on administrative monitoring and procedural compliance, limiting its role in fostering students' independent learning and academic development. This study explores how lecturers' transformational leadership reconstructs academic supervision to strengthen students' self-directed learning and improve academic achievement.

Method – This study employed a qualitative approach with a thematic case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 students from the Economics Education Study Program at Universitas Jabal Ghafur (Unigha), Aceh, selected using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding to identify key themes.

Findings – The findings indicate that lecturers' transformational leadership is reflected in role modeling, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and constructive academic feedback. These practices transform academic supervision from an administrative activity into a developmental process that encourages students to set learning goals, manage their learning independently, seek academic resources, conduct self-evaluation, and enhance their academic performance. The study proposes a conceptual model in which lecturers' transformational leadership fosters transformative academic supervision, strengthens students' self-directed learning, and ultimately improves academic achievement in higher education.

Keywords: Transformational leadership; academic supervision; self-directed learning; academic achievement; higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions face growing pressure to produce graduates who are independent, adaptive, and able to manage their own learning. This demand cannot be met through formal lectures alone. Students need academic guidance that helps them understand the goals of their study, overcome learning obstacles, build self-discipline, and develop effective learning strategies. Within this framework, lecturers cannot serve only as instructors; they must also act as academic leaders who shape students' learning behavior and orientation. National policy reinforces this urgency. Permendikbudristek No. 53 of 2023 affirms the importance of higher education quality assurance oriented toward

student autonomy in designing learning, making academic decisions, managing time, and taking responsibility for academic outcomes (Kinsella et al., 2024; Sahri et al., 2025).

Field conditions reveal a clear gap. Many students still show strong academic dependence on their lecturers. They are not yet accustomed to setting independent learning targets, reading scholarly references consistently, maintaining discipline in completing assignments, or understanding academic standards without intensive guidance. Self-directed learning does not grow automatically; it must be cultivated through academic supervision that is purposeful, dialogic, and transformative. Academic supervision in higher education therefore needs to be reconstructed, shifting from an administrative activity toward a guidance process that builds students' awareness, responsibility, and reflective capacity (Arshad & Naz, 2024; Usman et al., 2023).

A number of studies have shown the relevance of transformational leadership in educational contexts. Lecturers' transformational leadership has been shown to contribute to students' learning motivation, engagement, self-efficacy, and competence (Lin & Wang, 2025; Sánchez-García et al., 2024). Research on self-regulated learning confirms that planning, monitoring, self-evaluation, and effort-regulation strategies are strong predictors of students' academic progress (Campione et al., 2026; Saifi & Raj, 2025).

Earlier studies on academic supervision largely focused on the context of school and madrasah principals rather than university lecturers. Studies on lecturers' transformational leadership have also mostly used quantitative approaches and focused on its relationship with motivation, technology acceptance, and learning behavior, without examining in depth how such leadership reconstructs academic supervision practice from the perspective of students' experience (van Dun & Kumar, 2023). A summary of relevant prior studies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Summary of Relevant Prior Studies

No	Author (Year)	Research Title	Method	Instrument	Key Findings
1	(Al-Aamri et al., 2024)	Influencers of academic staff performance in higher education: the role of motivation, transformational leadership and involvement in strategic planning	Correlational quantitative	SEM PLS	Academic staff motivation has a significant and positive impact on their involvement in SP and performance in HEIs. It is also revealed that employee involvement in SP activities is significantly affected by transformational leadership, while

No	Author (Year)	Research Title	Method	Instrument	Key Findings
					the latter does not affect academic staff performance.
2	(Xu et al., 2022)	The Impact of Self-Regulated Learning Strategies on Academic Performance for Online Learning during COVID-19	Quantitative	OSLQ, MSLQ-B, GPA data	Self-evaluation, metacognitive regulation, and effort regulation are positive predictors of academic progress.
3	(Theobald, 2021)	Self-Regulated Learning Training Programs Enhance University Students' Academic Performance	Meta-analysis	Coding protocol (49 studies)	SRL training improves students' academic achievement, learning strategies, and motivation.
4	(Susilowati et al., 2025)	Investigating the Role of Teacher's Transformative Leadership	Quantitative PLS-SEM	TAM questionnaire and transformational leadership scale	Transformational leadership increases perceived ease and usefulness of learning technology.
6	(Peng et al., 2025)	Exploring the Effect of Transformation Leadership on Student Generic Skills	Quantitative CFA and PLS-SEM	Questionnaire on TL, self-efficacy, collaborative learning, generic skills	Transformational leadership increases students' self-efficacy and collaborative learning.
7	(Lin & Wang, 2025)	The Impact of University Teachers' Transformational Leadership	Quantitative SEM	MLQ, TSR, LE, SE, SEC	Transformational leadership affects socio-emotional competence through the lecturer-student relationship.
8	(Hoferichter et al., 2022)	How Teacher and Classmate Support Relate to Students' Stress and Academic Achievement	Multilevel quantitative	Questionnaire on lecturer and peer support, stress, and achievement	Academic support relates to coping ability and academic achievement.
9	(Aedi & Gorni, 2025)	Lecturer-Learner Leadership and Its	Quantitative	Questionnaire	Lecturer leadership has a positive

No	Author (Year)	Research Title	Method	Instrument	Key Findings
10	(Apriliansyah, 2023)	Impact on Student Learning Behavior Kepemimpinan Transformasional Dosen di Dunia Pendidikan yang Berlandaskan Revolusi Industri 4.0	Conceptual study	Literature review	effect on students' learning behavior. Lecturers must apply transformational leadership to respond to educational change in the Industry 4.0 era.
12	(Pratiwi & Hernawan, 2025)	Correlation Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Student Self-Awareness	Correlational quantitative	Questionnaire	Lecturers' transformational leadership correlates with students' self-awareness.
13	(Assefa et al., 2025)	The Influence of Teacher Leadership on Student Self-Determination in Higher Education	Quantitative SEM	Questionnaire on lecturer leadership, self-determination, institutional support	Lecturer leadership positively affects student self-determination, moderated by institutional support and classroom climate.
14	(Haryaka et al., 2026)	Transformational Leadership in Educational Management: Encouraging Student Motivation and Engagement	Mixed methods	Survey (n=276), interviews (n=30)	Transformational leadership increases student motivation and engagement.
15	(Luo & Zhou, 2024)	The Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Learning Strategies in Higher Education Blended Learning: A Five Years Systematic Review	Systematic review	Review of 16 studies (2018-2023)	Planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies are most effective in improving student learning outcomes in blended learning.

This gap opens space for qualitative research that explores the meaning, experience, and mechanisms of transformation in academic supervision from the student's point of view. The novelty of this study lies in integrating lecturers' transformational leadership into the framework of academic supervision in higher education, something that has not been widely examined qualitatively in the existing literature. The study was conducted at the

Economics Education Study Program, Universitas Jabal Ghafur (Unigha), Aceh, a private university in Sigli that serves students from diverse social and academic backgrounds. These conditions require lecturers to perform a role beyond delivering material; they must also become mentors, motivators, facilitators of dialogue, and academic role models. Lecturers' transformational leadership, which emphasizes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, becomes the foundation for academic supervision that is more humanistic, adaptive, and oriented toward student growth. This transformative supervision fosters self-directed learning that encompasses the capacity to manage goals, time, strategy, motivation, and self-evaluation, which in turn contributes to academic achievement understood multidimensionally: grades, mastery of material, study progress, and academic self-confidence (Wei & Luo, 2025).

Based on the above, this study is designed to answer the question: how does lecturers' transformational leadership in academic supervision foster students' self-directed learning and academic achievement at the Economics Education Study Program, Universitas Jabal Ghafur, Aceh? The study aims to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of scholarship on lecturers' transformational leadership and academic supervision in higher education, as well as a practical contribution to strengthening student academic guidance at the study-program level.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a thematic case study design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to understand students' experiences in depth as they receive academic supervision from lecturers. The study does not test statistical effects but interprets the meanings, patterns, and relational mechanisms that emerge in academic supervision practice.

Research Participants

The research participants comprised 15 students of the Economics Education Study Program at Universitas Jabal Ghafur, Aceh, who had attended academic guidance or supervision sessions with lecturers. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on a set of explicitly defined criteria. First, active students enrolled in semester 6 or semester 7, so that they had sufficient learning experience to reflect meaningfully on the academic supervision process. Second, students who had attended at least two intensive academic guidance sessions with the course lecturer. Third, students with an attendance record above 80% to ensure sufficient intensity of academic interaction. Fourth, students who were willing to participate voluntarily and able to articulate their learning experience reflectively.

Demographically, of the 15 participants, 8 students were in semester 7 and 7 students were in semester 6. By gender, the group consisted of 9 female and 6 male students. Participants' Grade Point Average (GPA) ranged from 3.08 to 3.60, reflecting a diversity of academic attainment. Some participants held part-time jobs and therefore

faced more complex challenges in time management and academic workload. The full participant profile is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Research Participant Profile

Code	Semester	Gender	Latest GPA	Supervision Experience	Additional Notes
MHS-01	VII	Female	3.42	> 3 sessions	Active, attendance >85%
MHS-02	VII	Female	3.55	> 3 sessions	Active, part-time work
MHS-03	VI	Male	3.30	2 sessions	Active, attendance >80%
MHS-04	VII	Female	3.48	> 3 sessions	Active, past academic difficulty
MHS-05	VI	Male	3.10	2 sessions	Active, high workload
MHS-06	VI	Female	3.25	2 sessions	Active, attendance >80%
MHS-07	VII	Male	3.38	> 3 sessions	Active, part-time work
MHS-08	VI	Female	3.20	2 sessions	Active, attendance >80%
MHS-09	VI	Female	3.15	2 sessions	Active, time-management difficulty
MHS-10	VII	Male	3.60	> 3 sessions	Active, improved achievement
MHS-11	VI	Female	3.22	2 sessions	Active, attendance >80%
MHS-12	VII	Female	3.45	> 3 sessions	Active, high-achieving student
MHS-13	VI	Male	3.08	2 sessions	Active, past below-average grades
MHS-14	VII	Female	3.52	> 3 sessions	Active, attendance >90%
MHS-15	VI	Male	3.18	2 sessions	Active, attendance >80%

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview questions covered experiences of academic supervision, lecturer role modeling, motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, feedback, self-directed learning, and academic achievement. The interviews were conducted face to face on the Unigha campus and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes per session. All interview sessions were recorded with participants' consent and then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through three stages of coding. First, open coding was used to identify units of meaning from the interview transcripts. Second, axial coding was used to group codes into categories such as role modeling, motivation, intellectual stimulation, self-directed learning, time management, self-reflection, and academic achievement. Third, selective coding was used to build the main themes and the conceptual model. The trustworthiness of the data was strengthened through source triangulation, repeated reading, consistency across informants, and alignment of field findings with the literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Lecturers' Transformational Leadership in Academic Supervision

The findings show that lecturers' transformational leadership consistently manifests through five main dimensions in academic supervision practice: role modeling, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and academic feedback. These five dimensions do not stand alone but reinforce one another in shaping a productive pedagogical relationship between lecturer and student.

Role modeling emerged as the most dominant dimension in the field data. Students reported that the discipline, responsibility, and seriousness of their lecturers in providing guidance directly motivated them to reorganize their academic behavior. MHS-01 stated:

"Our lecturer is very disciplined and serious. He always arrives on time and prepares the material in detail. Seeing that, I feel ashamed if I do not study seriously. The way he guides us makes me motivated to be more serious in my studies." (MHS-01)

A similar statement was made by MHS-04, who emphasized that the lecturer set a concrete example of discipline and responsibility, so that students felt encouraged to follow that pattern. These data show that students not only receive verbal direction but also internalize the lecturer's academic behavior as a model to emulate.

Inspirational motivation appeared in contexts where lecturers offered encouragement, confidence, and emotional support when students faced academic difficulties. MHS-02 described her experience:

"When I got a poor grade in the midterm exam and almost gave up, my lecturer did not immediately judge me. He said that failure is part of the learning process. I was asked to identify for myself where my mistakes lay, not simply told to study harder. That is what made me rise again and try." (MHS-02)

The motivation the lecturer provided was dialogic and empathic rather than mere rhetoric. The lecturer encouraged students to reflect on the process, not only the outcome. This motivation functioned as psychological energy that helped students persevere when

facing difficult material, complex assignments, or academic results that were not yet optimal.

Intellectual stimulation was evident in lecturers' strategies that pushed students to think analytically and seek solutions independently. MHS-03 explained:

"The lecturer never gave the answer directly. He always asked back: 'What do you think is the root of the problem?' or 'Have you tried looking at other sources?' At first I felt frustrated, but over time I got used to searching on my own, and my understanding became deeper than before." (MHS-03)

This pattern indicates that the lecturer deliberately created intellectual space so that students could trace problems, seek references, and formulate academic solutions independently. This intellectual stimulation was not merely the assignment of tasks but a process of cognitive empowerment that took place through academic dialogue.

Individualized consideration emerged as an important finding that illustrates the lecturer's sensitivity to the academic needs of each student. MHS-07 said:

"My lecturer knew that I work part-time and often struggle to divide my time. He did not force me to submit assignments by the same deadline as classmates who do not work. He adjusted and helped me set priorities. That meant a great deal and kept me from giving up." (MHS-07)

MHS-13, who had once received below-average grades, also affirmed that the additional explanations the lecturer provided personally helped him understand material that had previously felt confusing. This finding shows that effective academic supervision cannot be carried out uniformly, since every student brings a different background, set of obstacles, and academic needs.

Constructive academic feedback became a key instrument in improving the quality of learning. MHS-02 and MHS-10 illustrated how the lecturer's feedback worked in practice:

"For every assignment I submitted, the lecturer always gave specific notes. Not just 'needs improvement,' but an explanation of which part needed fixing, why it needed fixing, and how it should be. So, I knew exactly where to start." (MHS-02)

"Feedback from the lecturer made me realize that the way I analyzed data was still too shallow. He showed me where the weakness was and gave additional references I could study. After that my grades improved quite significantly." (MHS-10)

Both quotations show that effective feedback has three elements: identifying the weakness, explaining the reason for improvement, and guiding the next step. Feedback therefore functions not only as evaluation but as concrete, actionable learning instruction

Student Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning emerged as a consistent result of transformative academic supervision. Students showed real progress in their ability to set learning goals, manage

time, find learning resources, monitor their understanding, and evaluate their learning strategies.

The most striking change appeared in reference-seeking habits. MHS-02 described the transformation she experienced:

"I used to rely only on the material the lecturer gave. Now I am used to searching for journals myself, reading books from the digital library, and even watching open lectures from other universities on YouTube. I feel more confident because I have a wider range of sources." (MHS-02)

Self-direction was also evident in the capacity for self-reflection and the awareness to improve learning strategies. MHS-08 described the change she felt after receiving feedback from the lecturer:

"After getting specific feedback from the lecturer, I began to evaluate my own way of studying. I realized that all this time I only studied right before exams, not continuously. Now I try to make a weekly study schedule and stick to it." (MHS-08)

MHS-08's reflection shows that students no longer merely react to academic demands but begin to proactively identify their weaknesses and redesign the way they learn. This is an important marker of authentic self-directed learning.

Time management also emerged as a concrete indicator of self-direction. MHS-09 and MHS-07 offered two sides of the picture: the challenge and the effort to overcome it:

"I now make a daily study schedule and try to be consistent. Sometimes I am still tempted to procrastinate, but at least I am now aware that this is my weakness, and I am trying to overcome it." (MHS-09)

"Because I work, I have to be truly disciplined about time. My lecturer helped me set priorities: which tasks must be finished first, and which can be scheduled later. That helped me a lot." (MHS-07)

Although some students still faced obstacles such as procrastination and difficulty dividing their attention between study and work, the data show a growing awareness of the need to build a more organized learning structure. This awareness is the starting point of genuine self-directed learning.

Student Academic Achievement

Academic achievement in this study is understood broadly, encompassing not only grades and GPA but also mastery of material, study progress, academic stability, and self-confidence. Most participants stated that their academic attainment improved in ways they felt tangibly.

MHS-03 and MHS-10 described experiences of improved achievement accompanied by a change in the quality of their understanding:

"My GPA rose from 3.10 last semester to 3.30 this semester. But what matters more to me is that I now truly understand what I am studying, not just

memorizing for the exam. I can explain the concept in my own words.” (MHS-03)

“After receiving intensive guidance from the lecturer, the grade for my final assignment rose quite significantly. But more than the grade, I am now no longer afraid of doing data analysis. I used to always avoid it.” (MHS-10)

The data also show that academic achievement is not always linear. MHS-05 expressed a more complex reality:

“My grades go up and down depending on the course. If the material is hard and I cannot manage my time well because of work, my grades can drop. But I now notice it more quickly and seek help earlier.” (MHS-05)

MHS-05's statement is important because it shows that academic achievement is influenced by a complex interaction among the quality of self-regulation, the difficulty of the course, and the capacity to manage academic and non-academic loads. Achievement is not merely a function of intelligence but also of self-management.

Academic self-confidence, a dimension of achievement that is less measurable yet highly meaningful, also emerged in the data. MHS-06 and MHS-12 described the psychological change they felt:

“I am now braver about asking questions in class and more confident in expressing my opinions. I used to be afraid of being wrong and judged. But after the lecturer gave room for discussion without judgment, I became more confident.” (MHS-06)

“My confidence increased not because my grades are good, but because I now know the way of studying that suits me. I have a strategy. That is what makes me calm when facing exams.” (MHS-12)

The data from these two informants show that academic self-confidence is not merely a byproduct of good grades, but the result of a learning process supported by a supportive academic relationship, constructive feedback, and a growing awareness of effective learning strategies.

Discussion

Lecturers' Transformational Leadership in Academic Supervision

The finding that role modeling is the most dominant dimension is consistent with (Zhao et al., 2021), who showed that lecturers' transformational leadership contributes positively to students' learning motivation through idealized influence. This dimension does not work through instruction or rules but through consistency between what the lecturer says and what the lecturer does, and between the standard the lecturer demands of students and the standard the lecturer applies to himself. Students who see their lecturer truly live the academic values being taught tend to internalize those standards voluntarily rather than out of fear of sanctions. Reinforce this by showing that lecturers who display integrity, an inspiring vision, and empathic communication can raise students' self-confidence, self-esteem, and enthusiasm for learning. These three elements depend on one another. Integrity builds trust that the lecturer's word can be relied on, vision gives

students a reason to care about what they are learning, and empathic communication ensures that students feel safe enough to ask, fail, and try again without embarrassment. If one is absent, the other two weaken as well. Research also found that transformational leadership in educational institutions manifests concretely through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Khan et al., 2025).

The role of inspirational motivation in this finding aligns with (Raboca & Carburnarean, 2024), who showed that lecturer support relates positively to students' academic motivation, particularly when that support comes in the form of psychological and functional help. The two forms of support need to be distinguished. Psychological help touches the affective dimension: a lecturer who trusts in the student's potential, who does not immediately criticize when something is wrong, and who is willing to be present not only at formal moments such as exams or defenses but also amid the impasses of the process. Functional help is more technical: timely feedback, methodological guidance, and availability to be contacted. Both need to be present at the same time. Reinforce this finding by showing that lecturers' emotional support increases academic self-efficacy, learning resilience, and learning engagement (Guo et al., 2025; He et al., 2024). The order matters: it is not engagement that comes first but self-efficacy. Students who feel emotionally supported begin to believe they are capable, and from that belief engagement grows. Paper confirm that perceived lecturer support affects learning engagement through self-efficacy and intrinsic goal orientation (Liu et al., 2023). Students who feel supported are not only more behaviorally active but also shift motivationally, from studying to avoid poor grades toward studying because they genuinely want to understand.

The finding on intellectual stimulation is in line with who showed that students' perceptions of lecturers' encouragement toward independent learning relate significantly to proactive learning-regulation strategies such as goal setting, elaboration, and mastery orientation. The key word is perception, not how often the lecturer assigns independent tasks, but how strongly students sense that their lecturer genuinely wants them to think for themselves. Research found that lecturers' autonomy support affects students' learning engagement through self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (Miao & Ma, 2023). Learning engagement therefore does not grow directly from the freedom given; there are two prior stages, namely students must first feel capable and then develop an organized way of learning. (Hartanti et al., 2025) confirms that lecturer support relates positively to self-regulated learning, both directly and through self-efficacy, so the lecturer's role does not end at the point of granting freedom. (Luo & Zhou, 2024) add that planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies supported by lecturer guidance are the most effective self-regulated learning strategies for improving learning outcomes. When lecturers provide concrete guidance for these three processes, students not only learn better for the current semester but also build habits that endure.

The finding on individualized consideration supports, who found that lecturers' transformational leadership operates through the quality of the lecturer-student

relationship and learning engagement. (Olayide Odutayo et al., 2024) confirm that a positive lecturer-student relationship grounded in trust and open communication is an important foundation for the quality of learning in higher education. Research show that perceived lecturer support relates directly to increased learning engagement, motivation, and academic performance (Prananto et al., 2025; Tao et al., 2022). Research found that lecturer empathy plays a significant role in creating a psychologically safe learning environment (Brandao De Souza & Jacomuzzi, 2025; Meyers et al., 2019). Lecturer leadership positively affects students' self-determination, with institutional support and classroom climate as important moderating factors (Assefa et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2023).

The finding on academic feedback is reinforced who emphasize that feedback must be learning-centered and position the student as an active agent who interprets and uses feedback to update learning strategies. Feedback is often treated as a one-way affair: the lecturer evaluates, the student receives, and that is the end of it. Molloy et al. reverse that logic. Feedback only works when students not only read the lecturer's comments but actively decide what they will change and how. What matters is not the length of the lecturer's notes in the margin but the extent to which students truly engage in making sense of them. Explain that authentic feedback does not stop at correction but must encourage students to take improvement actions relevant to academic and professional practice (Nguyen, 2024; Williams, 2024). The term authentic here means feedback that not only improves the paper currently being worked on but helps students understand the standards they will face after graduation. Correction that is disconnected from a larger context produces only students who are skilled at fixing one particular task, which differs greatly from students who know how to judge the quality of their own work in situations they have never encountered before.

Student Self-Directed Learning

The finding on self-directed learning is consistent with whose meta-analysis of 49 studies showed that self-regulated learning training programs improve students' academic achievement, learning strategies, and motivation. The number of 49 studies matters because the emerging pattern is not the result of a single experiment on one campus under one particular condition but a pattern that recurs across various contexts. Self-directed learning is therefore not an innate talent possessed by some students and not by others; it can be trained, and when trained with a structured program the results are fairly consistent: achievement improves, learning strategies become more deliberate, and motivation no longer depends entirely on the pressure of exams or deadlines. Reinforce this by finding that self-evaluation, metacognitive regulation, and effort regulation are positive predictors of students' academic progress in online learning environments (ElSayad, 2024; Teng & Yang, 2023). All three predictors are internal: self-evaluation means students can read their own progress without waiting for external feedback, metacognitive regulation means they know when a strategy in use is not working and needs changing, and effort regulation means they do not stop when a task feels heavy. The field data of this study show that these three elements began to appear in students' learning behavior after they received transformative academic supervision. Their emergence is gradual and

uneven, but it signals that transformative supervision shifts something deeper than mere semester grades, namely the way students relate to the learning process itself.

The shift from dependence toward self-directed learning is reflected in the findings of (Ishaq, 2024) who showed that applying a heutagogical approach significantly develops students' self-confidence, initiative, responsibility, motivation, self-regulation, critical thinking ability, and reflective capacity. In this approach, students are no longer positioned as passive recipients but as active agents who design and manage their own learning process. In line with this, paper confirms a positive relationship between lecturer support and students' self-regulated learning, indicating that the lecturer's presence as a facilitator, not a controller, remains relevant in fostering effective learning regulation. found that self-directed learning strategies act as a mediator in the relationship between intellectual capacity and academic achievement, meaning that students' cognitive potential does not automatically lead to academic attainment without the support of the ability to regulate the learning process independently. This finding is reinforced by who showed that lecturers' autonomy support contributes to maintaining and improving students' self-regulation throughout the learning process, underscoring that self-regulation is not a static capacity but something prone to weakening without an academic ecosystem that consistently provides room for student autonomy.

Student Academic Achievement

The finding of academic achievement as a multidimensional construct aligns with, who confirm that student success in higher education cannot be reduced to a single indicator but encompasses academic performance, study progress, attainment of learning goals, satisfaction, and career readiness (Kassaw et al., 2024). This view shifts the understanding of achievement from mere grade figures toward a fuller picture of students' development as individuals preparing to enter the professional world. Within this framework, found that academic self-efficacy does not directly determine achievement but works through learning engagement as a mediating mechanism. Students who believe in their ability tend to engage more actively in the learning process, and it is that engagement which ultimately drives academic attainment. Research reach a consistent conclusion, namely that academic self-efficacy relates to achievement through the same pathway of learning engagement, indicating that this mediation pattern is fairly stable across studies (Zhang et al., 2022). The field data of this study reinforce that view. Students who reported increased self-confidence and a more organized learning strategy also reported better academic attainment, showing that changes in the psychological and regulative dimensions go hand in hand with changes in the performative dimension.

The finding on achievement fluctuation influenced by non-academic workload enriches the existing understanding. Showed that lecturer and classmate support relates to coping ability and academic achievement. This implies that external pressures such as part-time work do not stand alone as confounding variables; their impact on achievement is largely determined by the presence or absence of adequate academic support around the student. When that support is present, external pressure is more manageable; when it is absent, the same burden can become far more damaging. showed that educators'

transformational leadership positively affects students' self-efficacy and collaborative learning, which in turn supports the development of generic skills. This finding affirms that the impact of transformational leadership does not stop at motivation or learning engagement alone but reaches students' capacity to collaborate, build self-confidence, and develop competencies needed beyond the formal academic context.

Overall, these findings strengthen the argument that academic supervision in higher education needs to move toward a transformative model, one that places lecturers' transformational leadership as its foundation, transformative academic supervision as its operational mechanism, self-directed learning as the internal process growing within the student, and academic achievement as an outcome that is not singular but encompasses various dimensions of students' development as a whole.

The findings have significant implications, both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study broadens the understanding of academic supervision as a process that is not merely administrative but laden with dimensions of leadership, relationship, and empowerment. The study also strengthens the view that academic achievement is a construct that is not merely cognitive but also affective, reflective, and regulative, as affirmed by (Sun & Zhang, 2026). Practically, higher education institutions need to develop academic supervision policies that are more structured, dialogic, and transformative. Lecturers need capacity strengthening in academic mentoring, coaching, empathic communication, the provision of constructive feedback, and autonomy-based learning facilitation. Study programs need to provide adequate space and time for individualized supervision processes that go beyond formal consultation sessions, so that sustained academic dialogue between lecturers and students can take place in a structured way.

Future research is recommended to broaden the scope of data by involving the perspectives of lecturers, study-program heads, and formal academic documents to strengthen data triangulation. Research using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches can be conducted to test the conceptual model proposed in this study more broadly across different study-program and university contexts. Comparative studies across institutions would also provide a more comprehensive picture of the variation in transformative academic supervision practices in Indonesian higher education, including the contextual factors that moderate the relationship among lecturers' transformational leadership, academic supervision, self-directed learning, and student academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that academic supervision in higher education requires fundamental reconstruction. Supervision practice is not sufficient when carried out as an administrative routine; it needs to transform into a meaningful pedagogical practice. Lecturers' transformational leadership becomes the foundation of that transformation, concretely realized through role modeling, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and academic feedback.

The field findings affirm that students' needs in the supervision process go beyond procedural guidance. Students need an open academic relationship, mentoring that is responsive to individual needs, intellectual challenge that encourages deeper thinking, and feedback specific enough to be translated into concrete action. When all of these elements are present consistently, students show development in self-directed learning that encompasses goal setting, independent reference-seeking, time management, self-evaluation, and adaptive adjustment of learning strategies.

Academic achievement, as reflected in the findings of this study, is a construct that cannot be narrowed to grade attainment alone. The construct involves substantive mastery of material, continuity of study progress, stability of the learning process, and the growth of students' academic self-confidence. On the basis of all these findings, the study proposes a conceptual model that describes a sequential relationship among the variables: lecturers' transformational leadership shapes the quality of academic supervision, transformative supervision fosters the development of self-directed learning, and the self-directed learning that forms ultimately contribute to improved student academic achievement.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contribution

Kasmalinda., Conceptualization, Writing – Original Draft, Editing, and Visualization.
Aedi, N., Writing – Review & Editing, Formal Analysis, and Methodology.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI Use

No generative AI tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Additional Information

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