

Concurrent Session J
Wednesday 2 September
11.10am – 12.00noon



Session 5

Effects of Leadership Styles on Employee Wellbeing and Organisational Outcomes at an Australian Regional University

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Ataus Samad is a PhD candidate at CQUniversity Australia and his topic is the effect of leadership styles on employee well-being and organisational outcomes within an Australian regional university. He completed his Masters by Research from CQU with the project Work-life conflict in the university setting; the role of strain and hours of work. He is a student member of the Australian Human Resources Institute. In his professional career, Ata worked in a diverse range of organisations including university, United Nations, defence forces and settlement support organisations. Ata's research includes leadership, employee well-being and human resources management.

Dr Heather Davis is the Program Director Awards at the LH Martin Institute of Tertiary Education Leadership and Management, at the University of Melbourne. She has a background in research management, knowledge work, adult education and professional development. Heather is an ATEM Fellow and holds a BBus, RMIT, Master of Professional Education & Training, Deakin University and PhD from the School of Management, RMIT.

Heather's research interests include: university leadership and management; distributed leadership; qualitative inquiry, social complexity theories and e-learning. Heather completed a PhD research project in 2012 Leadership Literacies for Professional Staff in Universities, under the supervision of Prof Sandra Jones, School of Management at RMIT.

Academic leadership has become a major focus for researchers in the higher education sector (HES). Previous studies have shown that different leadership styles play a significant role in promoting both employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes. However, there is a lack of clear understanding of how leadership, employee wellbeing and organisational outcome such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intention interact together in the HES context, in Australia and elsewhere. There is even less understanding about these issues in Australian regional university settings.

The HES has two distinct cohorts, academic and professional staff, who have a stake in tertiary education leadership and management, adding further to the complexities of investigating HES leadership. Moreover, research into leadership within the HES uses many different leadership theories and results are primarily focused only on academic leadership. More expansive and pluralist approaches are necessary if we are to better understand the contextual complexities for leadership in the HES today. A review of leadership studies literature also suggests that researchers have either focused on the relationship between a specific leadership style and well-being; leadership styles and organizational outcomes' or the relationship between well-being and organizational outcomes, but rarely do studies combine all three.

For a complex organisation such as a university, an effective way of examining leadership may be by applying leadership theories that examine a diverse range of leadership styles concurrently. Transformational leadership theory, for example, has transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles within a single continuum that might provide a way to examine concurrently

how these leadership styles may impact on leadership effectiveness in the HES context.

The proposed PhD research project that this paper draws upon aims to examine the lived experiences of leadership amongst academic and professional staff working in an Australian regional university by exploring the relationships between leadership style, employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes. The proposed project takes a mixed method approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis. Given the timing of the project, the focus of the paper and presentation for tertiary education managers at TEMC15 will be a position paper exploring the literature review and research design for this project.