

# SECTION B

## The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership Styles and University Adjunct Faculty Work Engagement

Thomas G. Henkel, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

### Author Note

Thomas G. Henkel, Department of Business Administration, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University – Worldwide.

Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to Thomas G. Henkel via Email: [henke900@erau.edu](mailto:henke900@erau.edu).

### ABSTRACT

Adjunct faculty bring on-the-job experience and reality to the classroom. The problems associated with using adjuncts include lack of teaching experience, and not being fully engaged with the students. The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to determine whether relationships exist among adjunct faculty work engagement and their perceptions of the transformational leadership styles of the campus academic director. Study participants were asked to respond to two validated and reliable survey instruments: the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17). Results revealed that all five transformational leadership styles of university campus academic directors showed a moderate to strong relationship to adjunct faculty work engagement ( $p < .001$ ); Pearson's  $r$  ranged from .35 to .43.

## **Introduction**

For a university to be a first-class institution of learning, it must have outstanding performing and fully engaged faculty to meet the ever-changing educational demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century university student (Hainline et al., 2010; Hovey, 2011). Because teaching is a vital link to student success, faculty should master the subject being taught and have the ability to present the subject material as to ensure a student's academic progress (Aslam & Sarwar, 2010). University full-time faculty play a critical role in ensuring effective delivery of university-degree programs (Ballantyne, Berret, & Harst, 2010). However, financial considerations and the need to replace retiring full-time faculty have caused universities to employ an increasing number of adjunct (part-time) faculty members (Meixner & Kruck, 2010).

An important role of adjunct faculty is to enrich a university's curriculum by teaching courses in which they have particular areas of expertise. Therefore, the use of adjunct faculty provides the university a wide range of expertise they bring to foster learning success by teaching subjects involving real-world experience in the classrooms (Ballantyne et al., 2010). On the negative side, adjunct faculty are less engaged than full-time faculty with scholarly research, in acting as effective mentors to students outside the classroom, and in providing service to the university (Stenerson, Blanchard, Fassiotto, Hernandez, & Murth, 2010). To amplify the situation, more and more universities are required to report faculty work engagement as part of their response to demands of accountability for institutional effectiveness and accreditation (Tavanti, 2006). On the positive side, research has shown that when adjunct faculty feel that they are part of a collegial organizational culture and find meaning in their work, they are more likely to be engaged with their work (Colbeck & Wharton-Michael, 2006).

Work engagement is characterized by employees who are energetic, have a sense of connection with their work activities and are involved with the demands of their job (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Work engagement has shown to be correlated positive employee attitudes, feeling energetic and enthusiastic, having proactive job behaviors, and increased individual job and organizational performance (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). Therefore, it is in the best interest for university management to explore every possibility fully to engage adjunct faculty for mission success (Ballantyne et al., 2010). In sum, both full-time and adjunct faculty should be fully engaged to maximize student engagement and university academic performance (Tavanti, 2006).

Consequently, it is imperative for a university's leadership to understand the factors that prompt adjunct faculty to be fully motivated and engaged with the university's operations and mission (Stenerson et al., 2010). Establishing individual and organization-wide rewards and incentives such as recognizing the faculty member of the month, quarterly, certificates, or increased academic rank are a few of the ways university management can begin creating an organizational environment that encourages motivation and engaged employees (Hongping, 2006). However, there is no significant evidence that such awards build adjunct faculty members' motivation or deepen their engagement to the university operations or mission (Glenn, 2010). Therefore, getting adjunct faculty fully engaged with their work is much more complicated than handing out these so called extrinsic motivational rewards (White, 2009).

One approach by which university management can accomplish this responsibility is by fostering an organizational work environment that assists faculty in finding true value and meaning in their work, which can lead to work engagement (Tipple, 2010). Research has shown

that a faculty member that is actively involved in learning and participating in newer teaching techniques can translate that involvement into improved performance leading to increased quality and accountability (Trahan, 2009). Therefore, a university's management should study faculty work engagement to produce an environment that motivates faculty to action (Wade & Demb, 2009), and take necessary actions to improve the quality of teaching and student interaction by adjunct faculty (Ballantyne, 2010). Understanding how to inspire faculty work engagement can lead university academic directors to provide flexibility, inspire innovation and encourage adaptation to an ever-changing work and learning environment (Bresciani, Griffiths, & Rust, 2009). In sum, a university with an engaged adjunct faculty workforce will allow for a greater focus on student engagement, educational needs, instructional quality, and strengthening academic programs (Hongping, 2006).

A transformational leadership style has been shown to be correlated with many positive outcomes to include inspiring and stimulating employees to achieve extraordinary performance in accomplishing the organization's mission (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2008). The university campus academic director serves in a leadership role, and as such, is in a position to have a positive influence on adjunct faculty engagement. The specific problem is that it is not known if the perceived transformational leadership style of the campus academics director is associated with the level of work engagement among adjunct faculty. Without this information, stakeholders such as campus academic directors and other college administrators may not have all the information, they need to maximize adjunct faculty work engagement and thereby maximize student learning.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question guiding this study was: What, if any, relationship exists between work engagement and the perceived transformational leadership style of the campus academics director among assigned adjunct faculty at a degree-granting university located in the United States?

## **Literature Review**

**Faculty Engagement.** Recent studies have noted that the level of faculty engagement and responsiveness at colleges and universities is an important facet of institutional quality and effectiveness (Stenerson et al., 2010). One study indicated that teachers who showed higher commitment to their work also reported greater engagement in the organization (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008). However, research addressing university faculty engagement is limited largely to previous research concerning community service, service-learning, or community-based research (Wade & Dumb, 2009). Such research is important but the need for validation from professional organizations and accrediting bodies requires employment of full-time faculty to meet the responsibilities of teaching, curriculum development, and scholarly activity along with community service in the professorate, regardless of the institution size or research efforts (Stenerson et al., 2010).

To complicate matters, many colleges and universities facing financial challenges are employing increasingly larger numbers of adjunct faculty members to supplement classroom teaching (Hainline et al., 2010). Given the convenience and affordability of adjuncts, colleges and universities can benefit from what adjunct faculty members bring to the classroom in terms of their knowledge and experience gained from their daytime jobs or from their professions prior to retirement (VanderMeulen, 2008). Obviously, hiring adjuncts can be a sound move for

colleges and universities that are trying to cut costs and still meet classroom mission requirements (Martinak et al., 2006).

To emphasize further the importance of engaging faculty, the need for adjunct faculty members at colleges and universities is predicted to grow over the next few years (Kerby, Harrison, & Fleak, 2009). Therefore, adjunct faculty's lack of teaching experience in the classroom must be addressed because students do not want to wait for an adjunct faculty member to become proficient in teaching at the collegiate level. In addition, the lack of departmental support for adjunct faculty is another issue, particularly at a large university. Moreover, adjunct faculty members typically do not have a campus office, and in many instances, their only contact with the campus is by email or visiting the campus directly. The good news is that assigning a full-time faculty member as the campus academic manager can provide the needed leadership to mentor and train adjunct faculty to offer sound instruction in the classroom. As a result, university campus academic managers should be proactive in addressing these issues to improve the role and use of adjunct faculty (Ballantne et al., 2010). However, to date, few studies have addressed faculty engagement, and none have addressed adjunct faculty engagement and such faculty member's perceptions of the leadership style of the campus academic director.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to investigate whether any correlations exist among campus- assigned adjuncts' work engagement and the perceived transformational leadership styles of the campus academic directors. Although a growing body of literature describes how engaged employees contribute to the overall success of a university, further studies are needed to determine factors related to university faculty engagement.

Understanding the factors that lead to faculty engagement will be valuable to university leadership in establishing a motivational work environment in which engagement can occur (Wade & Demb, 2009). For this present study, research was conducted to determine whether any relationship exists between the dependent variable of adjunct faculty work engagement and the independent variables of the perceived transformational leadership styles of the campus academic directors. In addition, basic demographic variables were collected for descriptive purposes, including gender, academic rank, educational level, number of university courses taught per annum, and assigned academic department.

**Research Design.** This research study used a quantitative correlation design to investigate the relationship between the styles of leadership of campus academic directors and adjunct faculty work engagement. A quantitative correlation research methodology was chosen for this study because it has the advantage of identifying attributes of a large population such as faculty located at campuses worldwide (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2009).

**Hypotheses.** The following null and alternative hypotheses were tested:

H1<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived attributed transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H1<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived attributed transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H2<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived behavior transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among

adjunct faculty.

H2<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived behavior transformational leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H3<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived transformational inspirational motivation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H3<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational inspirational motivation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H4<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived transformational intellectual stimulation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H4<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational intellectual stimulation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H5<sub>0</sub>: No correlation between work engagement score and the perceived transformational individualized consideration leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H5<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational individualized consideration leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H6<sub>0</sub>: The idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leadership styles do not contribute independent information in predicting adjunct faculty work engagement.

H6a: The idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leadership styles do contribute independent information in predicting adjunct faculty work engagement.

**Data Collection Instruments.** The components of Transformational Leadership that include Idealized Influence Attributed (IIA), Idealized Influence Behavioral (IIB), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC), the independent variables, were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X (MLQ-5X). Adjunct faculty work engagement, the dependent variable, was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Survey (UWES). These surveys were accompanied by a demographic survey asking the respondents to disclose the following information: gender, educational level, academic rank, academic department assigned, and number of courses taught at the university. The participation pool for this study consisted of adjunct faculty members assigned to a university's campus locations in the eastern United States. These campus locations offer undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, and certificate programs via traditional classroom presentation, online, and the new modality of distance synchronous learning.

**Data Collection Procedure.** An e-mail invitation to participate in this study was sent to adjunct faculty assigned to university campuses located in the eastern region of the United States. Data were collected using an online survey hosted by SurveyMonkey.com. All survey responses were automatically coded numerically by the SurveyMonkey.com system. The data were exported from SurveyMonkey.com into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet was then imported into the SPSS software for analysis.

### **Analysis of Findings**

This section provides results of the hypothesis testing completed on the dependent and independent variables used in this study.

### **Hypothesis 1**

H<sub>10</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived attributed transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H<sub>1a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived attributed transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

Table 1 shows there was a statistically significant, moderately positive relationship between the work engagement score and idealized influence attributed score,  $r(148) = .41, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that adjunct faculty who perceive the campus academic director to have a high level of idealized influence attributed transformational leadership style tend to be more engaged with their work.

Table 1

*Pearson's Correlation Statistics for Work Engagement versus Idealized Influence Attributed*

		Idealized Influence (Attributed)
Work	Pearson	.406
Engagement	Correlation	
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001
	<i>N</i>	148

## Hypothesis 2

H2<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived behavior transformational idealized influence leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H2<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived behavior transformational leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

Table 2 shows there was a statistically significant, moderately positive relationship between the work engagement score and idealized influence behavioral score,  $r(148) = .40, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that adjunct faculty who perceive the campus academic director to have a high level of idealized influence behavioral transformational leadership style tend to be more engaged with their work.

Table 2

*Pearson's Correlation for Work Engagement versus Idealized Influence Behavior*

		Idealized Influence (Behavioral)
Work	Pearson	.400
Engagement	Correlation	
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001
	<i>N</i>	148

**Hypothesis 3**

H3<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived transformational inspirational motivation leadership style of the campus academics director among adjunct faculty.

H3<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational inspirational motivation leadership style of the campus academics director among adjunct faculty.

Table 3 shows there was a statistically significant, moderately positive relationship between the work engagement score and inspirational motivation transformational leadership score,  $r(148) = .43, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that adjunct faculty who perceive the campus academic director to have a high level of inspirational motivation transformational leadership style tend to be more engaged with their work.

Table 3

*Pearson's Correlation for Work Engagement versus Inspirational Motivation*

		Inspirational Motivation
Work	Pearson	.430
Engagement	Correlation	
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001
	<i>N</i>	148

**Hypothesis 4**

H4<sub>0</sub>: No correlation exists between work engagement and the perceived transformational intellectual stimulation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H4<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational intellectual stimulation leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

Table 4 shows there was a statistically significant, moderately positive correlation between the work engagement score and intellectual stimulation transformational leadership score,  $r(148) = .35, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that adjunct faculty who perceive the campus academic director to have a high level of intellectual stimulation leadership style tend to be more engaged with their work.

Table 4

*Pearson's Correlation for Work Engagement versus Intellectual Stimulation*

		Intellectual Stimulation
Work	Pearson	.350
Engagement	Correlation	
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001
	<i>N</i>	148

**Hypothesis 5**

H5<sub>0</sub>: No correlation between work engagement score and the perceived transformational individualized consideration leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty.

H5<sub>a</sub>: A correlation exists between work engagement score and the perceived transformational individualized consideration leadership style of the campus academic director among adjunct faculty. Table 5 shows there was a statistically significant, moderately strong positive correlation between the work engagement score and individualized consideration score,  $r(148) = .34, p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that adjunct faculty who perceive the campus academic director to have a high level of individualized consideration leadership style tend to be more engaged with their work.

Table 5

*Pearson's Correlation for Work Engagement versus Individualized Consideration*

		Individualized Consideration
Work	Pearson	.337
Engagement	Correlation	
	<i>p</i> -value	<.001
	<i>N</i>	148

**Hypothesis 6**

H6o: The idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leadership styles do not contribute independent information in predicting adjunct faculty work engagement.

H6a: The idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leadership styles do contribute independent information in predicting adjunct faculty work engagement.

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to test this hypothesis. First, a correlation matrix of the five transformational leadership styles was produced in order to evaluate the potential for a multicollinearity problem. As a result of the high multicollinearity among the five transformational leadership style scores, instead of entering all five leadership styles scores into the model simultaneously, the variables were entered into the model using a stepwise model selection procedure. Only those transformational leadership style scores that

were statistically significant at the .05 level of significance were entered into the model. Other assumptions for linear regression were evaluated. The normal probability plot was inspected and there was no indication of a violation of the normal assumption was violated. A scatter plot of the standardized residuals against the standardized predicted values did not give an indication of a violation of the constant variance assumption.

The independent variables entered into the stepwise model selection procedure were the idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration transformational leadership style scores. Table 6 shows that only the inspirational motivation leadership style score was statistically significant,  $F(1, 146) = 33.1, p < .001$ . The  $R^2$  attributed to the model was .19, which means inspirational motivation explains 19% of the total variance in work engagement scores.

Table 6

*Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Scores*

Independent Variables <sup>a, b</sup>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.558	.171		20.8	< .001
Inspirational	.311	.054	.430	5.75	< .001
Motivation				2	

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

b.  $F(1,146) = 33.1, p < .001, R^2 = .19$

The equation of the model was:  $WE = 3.56 + .31*IM$ , where: WE = Work Engagement, and IM = Inspirational Motivation. The interpretation of the model is the average work engagement score is expected to increase by .31 points for every one-point increase in the inspirational motivation score. Since only one of the five transformational leadership style scores was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It was concluded that combinations of transformational leadership styles do not collectively contribute to better predict work engagement than any single transformational leadership style alone. It was further concluded that, among the five transformational leadership styles, inspirational motivation was the strongest predictor of adjunct faculty work engagement.

### Summary

The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to determine whether a relationship exists between the dependent variable of adjunct faculty work engagement and the independent

variable of perceived transformational leadership style of the campus academic directors. If one or more transformational leadership styles were found to be positively correlated with faculty work engagement, then university campus academic directors may wish to adopt a certain transformational leadership style in an effort to have a positive influence on the adjunct faculty. A change in leadership style, in turn, could have such positive effects on a university as a higher level of instructional quality and use of new classroom teaching methodologies and technologies.

The present study results revealed that perceived transformational leadership styles of the campus academic directors were moderately correlated with adjunct faculty work engagement. In addition, it was concluded that combinations of transformational leadership styles do not collectively predict work engagement better than any single transformational leadership style alone. It was further concluded that, among the five transformational leadership styles, inspirational motivation was the strongest predictor of adjunct work engagement. Ideally, the results of this present study will help university campus academic directors to take a more positive approach to stimulating faculty work engagement to meet the university's academic mission and goals.

## References

- Aslam, H. & Sarwar, S. (2010). Improving performance management practices in it firms of Pakistan. *Journal of Management Research*, 2(2), 1-15.
- Bakker, A. B., Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Taris, T. W. (2008). Work engagement: An emerging concept in occupational health psychology. *Work & Stress*, 22(3), 187-200.
- Ballantyne, S., Berret, B., & Harst, W. (2010). Fulltime faculty perceptions of leadership in adjunct faculty to maintain Franciscan identity. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 9(1), 518-526.
- Borrego, M., Douglas, E., & Amelink, C. (2009). Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods in engineering education. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 98(1), 53-66.
- Bresciani, M., Griffiths, J., & Rust, J. (2009). Assessment at North Carolina State University: adapting to change in the workplace. *Research Practice and Assessment*, 3(1), 3-11.
- Chan, W., Lau, S., Nie, Y., Lim, S. & Hogan, D. (2008). Organizational and personal predictors of teacher commitment: the mediating role of teacher efficacy and identification with school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(3), 597-630.
- Colbeck, C., & Wharton-Michael, P. (2006). Individual and organizational influences on faculty members' engagement in public scholarship. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 105, 17-26.
- Glenn, D. (2010). Educators mull how to motivate professors to improve teaching. *The Chronicle of Higher Learning*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Educators-Mull-HowtoMotv/63718>

- Hainline, L., Gaines, M., Feather, C., & Padilla, E., & Terry, E. (2010). Changing students, faculty, and institutions in the twenty-first century. *Association of American Colleges and Universities, 12*(3), 7-10.
- Hongping, Z. (2006). Motivating teaching staff in times of change in Chinese universities. *Canadian Social Science, 2*(6), 37-45.
- Hovey, R. (2011). The twenty-first century university: Developing faculty engagement in internationalization. *International Educator, 20*(4), 12.
- Kerby, D., Harrison, K., & Fleak, S. (2009). Teaching: a win-win opportunity for practitioners. *CAP Journal, 79*(10), 66-68.
- Matinak, M., Karlsson, R., Faircloth, R., & Witcher, P. (2006). We're so glad you asked: Maryland adjuncts speak out on their status, needs, and opinions. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 54*(3), 42-47.
- Meixner, C. & Kruck, S. (2010). Inclusion of part-time faculty for the benefit of faculty and students. *College Teaching, 58*(4), 141-147.
- Piccolo, R. & Colquitt, J. (2008). Transformational leadership and job behaviors: The mediating role of core job characteristics. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(2), 327-340.
- Schaufeli, W., Bakker, A., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement of with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 66*(4), 701-716.
- Stenerson, J., Blanchard, L., Fassiotto, M., Hernadez, M., & Muth, A. (2010). The role of adjuncts in the professoriate. *Peer Review, 12*(3), 23-26.
- Tavanti, M. (2006). Engaged Vincentian leadership: The values and competencies that inspire

leaders to serve in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul. *Journal of College & Character*, 8(1), 1-10.

Tipple, R. (2010). Effective leadership of Online Adjunct Faculty. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, XIII, (1).

Trahant, B. (2009). Driving better performance through continuous employee engagement. *Public Manager*, 38(1), 54-58.

VanderMeulen, R. (2008). Adjunct instructors bring real-life experiences to students. Reading Eagle. Retrieved from <http://readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=103392>

Wade, A. & Demb, A. (2009). A conceptual model to explore faculty community engagement. *Michigan Journal of Community Service*, 5-16. White, M. (2009). Employee engagement now! *Motivationstrategies*. Retrieved from [http://mostrat.sellingcommunications.com/employee engagement now.701.0.html](http://mostrat.sellingcommunications.com/employee%20engagement%20now.701.0.html) or Tr Online Maga Pm.