

# Work Engagement and Emotional Intelligence

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**Abstract:** Education is one of the important factors which formulate the persona of a person and is a productive and beneficial factor in a person's life which develops a meaningful outlook in life. One may be highly educated, but without meaningful combination of thoughts and feelings, our lives are incomplete and clashing. Only an effective educational setup can bring out the best from the learners, thus improving the quality of life and establishing a progressive and productive society (Mohan et al., 2007). Teaching profession has historically been viewed as the labor of love and kindness. It has many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for people entering the pedagogical arena. However, teaching is not without its inherent problems. According to Salovey et al. (2000), individuals differ as to their abilities to practice effective control over their emotional lives. Such individual differences are now thought of as difference in emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Oginska-Bulik (2005) held that the ability to effectively deal with emotions and emotional information in the workplace assist employees in addressing occupational stress and retaining psychological health.

The main objectives of the present study were:

- To study the degree of prevalence of Work Engagement among college teachers.
- To study the role of Emotional Intelligence in Work Engagement.

Total Work Engagement among male teachers was found to be positively and significantly related with Vigor, Dedication, Absorption, and Emotional Intelligence. The results of the present study have clear implications for promoting Work Engagement in college teachers.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement

## 1. Introduction

Everything starts with teachers and the mentality they possess to drive students to new levels. Teachers make the lifeboat because they are the first to interrupt the field of unknown and transform thoughts into reality by learning and passing it on to the body. They have the opportunity to leave an indelible impression on their students' lives. The effective attitudes and actions employed by teachers ultimately can make a positive difference on the lives of their students and the teacher's deeper sense of purpose includes maintaining an attentive attitude towards learners thus making them excellent teachers (Sehgal, 2007).

**Keeping all this in mind, the present study aimed to study the relationship Work Engagement with Emotional Intelligence among college teachers.**

## 2. Emotional Intelligence

In a layman's language emotional intelligence could be defined as knowing what feels good, what feels bad and how to get from bad to good. A more formal academic definition refers to emotional awareness and emotional management skills which enables one to balance emotion and reason so as to maximize long-term happiness. Emotional Intelligence includes qualities such as self-awareness, ability to manage moods, motivation, empathy and social skills like cooperation and leadership.

When Salovey and Mayer in 1990, coined the term Emotional Intelligence they described Emotional intelligence "as a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use them.

## 3. Work Engagement

The psychological functioning of teachers has recently become the focus of particular attention. Highly motivated and less stressed teachers can increase the productivity of the organization whereas negative emotions and low level of motivation are associated with impairments in individual health and with increased cost for the organization. Maslach and Leiter, (2008) assumed that 'engagement' is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy which are considered the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy.

**Vigor** is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. **Dedication** is ones sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. **Absorption** refers to the state in which one is highly concentrated and happily engrossed in work.

## 4. Principles of Work Engagement

1. Communicate a compelling message.
2. Build a guiding colation.
3. Create principle based versus compliance based guidelines for decisions and behaviours,
4. Identify early engagement indicators.
5. Generate continuous opportunities for dialogue at all levels.
6. Plan assimilation strategies for new members and new leaders.

## 5. Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement

Salovey et al. (1999) claimed that emotionally intelligent individuals coped with stress more effectively as a result of their basic emotional skills, greater emotional knowledge, and more effective emotional regulation. People high on Emotional intelligence tended to use strategies such as eliciting social support and disclosure of feelings, in place of the maladaptive coping strategy of rumination and appraised their emotional states accurately, they knew how and when to express their feelings, and could effectively regulate their mood states.

Fredrickson (2001) opined that various emotions tended to encourage employee development, such as learning new skills and forming closer interpersonal relationships. It also fostered reasonable levels of risk taking and constructive responses to feedback. Positive emotions facilitated the use of cooperative interpersonal tactics and reduced work place conflict implying better performance and the employees being engaged in their work.

Mendes (2003) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher burnout on 49 secondary teachers and found that emotional intelligence correlated with burnout. He also found that teacher's ability to regulate emotions was related to their perceived levels of depersonalization, self-realization, and emotionality. Emotionally intelligent teacher has the ability to understand and manage moods and emotions in himself and in others thereby contributing to the effectiveness of controlling prolonged stress resulting from job burnout.

## 6. Aims and objectives

The main objectives of the present study were:

- To study the degree of prevalence of Work Engagement among college teachers.
- To study the role of Emotional Intelligence in Work Engagement.
- To study gender differences on Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement

Based on the review of literature the following hypotheses were proposed:

## 7. Hypothesis

- There is expected to be positive relationship between Work Engagement and Emotional Intelligence among college teachers.
- No differences are expected among male and female teachers on Emotional Intelligence.
- No differences are expected among male and female teachers on Work Engagement and its dimensions.

## 8. Design

The primary aim of the present study was to develop a model which could capture the notion of Work Engagement in its multiplicity among college teachers. The present study was designed to study the **relationship of Work Engagement with Emotional Intelligence among college teachers**. For this purpose, 50 male and 50 female college teachers in the age range of 35-45 years were taken.

The subjects comprised of 100 college teachers selected randomly (Stratified Random Sampling and Convenient sampling). Equal number of male and female teachers of arts and science stream were selected from colleges of tri-city within the age range of 35-45 years.

### Inclusion criteria

- All the teachers were regular teachers who had minimum five years of teaching experience. These teachers belonged to middle and upper middle class.
- No co morbidity or any mental disorder was found among these college teachers.

The following standardized tests and tools were used:

1. Work Engagement Scale ( **Schaufeli et al., 2002**).
2. Emotional Intelligence Scale for teachers ( **Schutte et al., 1998**).

General information schedule was also administered to gather information about the demographic variables viz age, sex, educational qualifications, marital status, number of children, hobbies, belief in God, concept of forgiveness, stressors and ways to deal with them etc.

## 9. Scoring

Scoring for all the given tests was done as per the instructions provided in the scoring manuals of the tests. The scores were then subjected to various statistical treatments and analysis. Descriptive Statistics, t-ratios and Correlations were carried out to analyze the data as per the objectives of the study. t-ratios and Correlation analysis was done to study the relationship, Total Work Engagement and its dimensions viz. Vigor, Dedication and Absorption with Emotional Intelligence.

## 10. Results

- There are no significant differences among male and female college teachers on Work Engagement and its dimensions and Emotional Intelligence.
- Total Work Engagement among teachers was found to be positively and significantly related with Vigor, Dedication, Absorption, and Emotional Intelligence

**Table 1:** Showing Mean and SD and t-ratio for college teachers (n=100)

S. No	Variable	Mean males	SD males	Mean females	SD females	t-ratio
1	Vigor	25.98	4.33	24.86	5.48	1.133
2	Dedication	26.02	3.73	25.58	5.26	.483
3	Absorption	26.04	4.99	25.66	5.42	.365
4	Engagement	77.66	11.17	76.10	14.52	.602
5	Emotional intelligence	124.16	12.83	122.28	10.65	.797

It is observed from the table 1 that the 't' value between two groups, male and female teacher educators with regard to Emotional Intelligence on the basis of gender is not significant. Non-significant gender differences in emotional intelligence are reported by some researchers (Tyagi, 1996; Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Aquino, 2003; Brackett and Mayer, 2003; Bansibihari and Pathan, 2004; Tiwari and Srivastava, 2004; Cakan and Altun, 2005; Browne and Schutte, 2006; Depape et al., 2006; and Shah and Thinugam, 2008).

**Table 2:** Showing Correlation Work Engagement and Emotional Intelligence among college teachers

Variable	Total Sample	Males	Females.
Vigor	.414**	.46**	.374**
Dedication	.404**	.49**	.344**
Absorption	.290**	.42**	.290**
Total Work Engagement	.419**	.52**	.419**

All the dimensions of Work Engagement were found to be positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence. It reveals that higher scores on Emotional Intelligence are generally paired with high scores on Vigor, Dedication and Absorption. This means that these teachers are attentive to social behavior and are conscious and aware of the appropriateness of their own actions. They are generally adept, tactful and self-confident in almost all type of situations. They have the ability to regulate the reactions of others and they judiciously select strategies to regain energy, including socializing, meditating and exercising. Aspinwall and Taylor (1987) describes that there is a reason to believe that individuals who have well developed psychological resources, including sense of personal control, high self esteem and optimism are more likely to cope proactively with respect to health which may minimize the effects of stress.

The means clearly show that these teachers are highly Engaged and high on Emotional Intelligence. This means that these teachers are flexible, optimistic and put difficulties behind them and redirect their attention towards their students and their work.

Highly engaged teachers are better able to regulate self awareness, self management and social awareness. They have high capability that results in outstanding performance at work and capacity to respond to emotional stimuli elicited by various situations and to have high self esteem and optimism among personal and professional life.

Fredrickson (2001) opined that various emotions tended to encourage employee development, such as learning new skills and forming closer interpersonal relationships. It also fostered reasonable levels of risk

taking and constructive responses to feed back. Positive emotions facilitated the use of cooperative interpersonal tactics and reduced work place conflict implying better performance and the employees being engaged in their work.

Singh (2003) found that teachers need to be high in their Emotional Intelligence to be successful. between two groups, male and female teacher educators with regard to Emotional Intelligence on the basis of Gender is not significant.

Bakker and Leiter (2010) supported the view that work engagement be considered a domain specific psychological state that corresponded with positive affect. The dimensions of positive affective scale of PANAS included, among others, attentive (absorption), alert (absorption), enthusiastic (dedication), inspired (dedication), proud (dedication), determined (vigor), energized (vigor) and strong (vigor). They also found that some employees were dispositional more prone to being engaged to work than others.

Throwing glance at obtained relationship between components of Work Engagement and Emotional Intelligence, it is observed that all the components of Work Engagement are significantly and positively related to Emotional Intelligence. These teachers possess high capabilities, which imply their personal and social skills lead to superior performance in their work. They are better able to regulate their emotions, find it easier to initiate or achieve targets and capacity to avoid emotional exhaustion and negativity of emotions. (Sahu, 2010).

## 11. Implications of the Study

The ability to manage feelings and handle stress is an important aspect of Emotional Intelligence that has been found to be important for success. It is the capacity to create positive outcomes in the relationships with others and oneself. Increasing Emotional Intelligence has been correlated with better results in leadership, research work, good academic performance of the students, marriage, friendship and health. It is important for success in work and life. Both Goleman (1998) and Mayer and Salovey (2001) have argued that by itself, Emotional Intelligence probably is not a strong predictor of job performance. Rather, it provides the bedrock for the competencies of being engaged in their work. Success of students depends upon teacher's guidance and teaching.

An Emotionally Intelligent teacher will be a better guide. The greatest asset of education system will then be its Emotionally Intelligent teachers. We need Emotionally Intelligent teachers to activate educational process, An emotionally intelligent teacher will serve as an important role model for students, particularly as the extraordinary challenges of the classroom of the future become more evident. This will require infusing emotional intelligence into teacher preparation programs and therefore will serve as part of the goal of "creating new visions" for teacher education. For this, in the first place, teacher educators need to be trained in Emotional Intelligence, to manage their own

emotions and those of others. Feelings are crucial for success in education (Kusche and Greenberg 2006). In the occupational context, Jordan et al. (2002) suggested that emotional intelligence was an important moderator of stress reactions to job insecurity.

## 12. Suggestions for Further Research

Current research on Emotional Intelligence in India is sparse. It needs to be reviewed from Indian perspective. Extensive theoretical and applied research from Indian context, particularly indigenous theories of emotional knowledge. There is a need to develop performance based measures of Emotional Intelligence relevant to the Indian culture with specific focus on different samples like academic settings, family adjustment etc.

## 13. Conclusion

Emotional Intelligence is a relatively new and growing area of behavioral research. It is now increasingly recognized that feelings, moods and emotions constitutes an essential component of social life in general, and behavior in organizations in particular.

The present investigation contributes to two important research streams. Firstly the present study intends to contribute empirical experience on how Emotional Intelligence is associated with Work Engagement which helps in better work environment and more positive outcomes at workplace.

Secondly it has focused on the very important area of teaching. It is generally felt that teaching is a female domain. But this study tried to highlight the fact that male teachers besides being Emotionally Intelligent are highly engaged in their profession thus producing highly motivated students. According to Sutton (2004), teachers believed that the ability to regulate emotions helped them to be more effective in achieving academic goals, building quality social relationships, and maintaining good classroom management and discipline practices.

Teachers with higher emotion regulation ability are better at preventing negative emotion-related situations from occurring in their classroom because they are able to forecast how certain situations would make them (and their students) feel and they take preventive actions beforehand. Higher emotion regulation ability was also found to be associated with both self and peer ratings of interpersonal sensitivity, social support, and pro-social behavior. (Lopes et al. 2004, 2005). It is important for the Govt. agencies to see to it that there are special workshops, orientation programmes for the teachers to enhance their Emotional Intelligence which is again helpful in producing highly effective and engaged teachers.

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