

**A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHER  
ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Education is an indispensable need to live in the modern world. Though we have many universities, colleges, schools and other kinds of educational institution to uphold education, Teachers play a crucial role in renovation of it and make the students to be aspired. Teachers are the precise human resources who create the education as a powerful instrument for a social, economical and cultural transformation for the augmentation of our nation. Thus, engagement of a teacher is very much needed for the consistent growth of education which has a say in students and nations empowerment. The aim of the current article is to identify the significance of teacher engagement towards higher education. It also explores in detail about various measures taken to improve teacher engagement.

**KEYWORD:** *Employee engagement, Teacher Engagement, Higher education*

**INTRODUCTION**

Teacher engagement is nothing but the emotional and physical commitment of a teacher towards their profession, student and curriculum. If all the teachers are engaged there will be a huge improvement in the quality of higher education. But the fact is that engaged teachers are tremendously in low ratio due to certain factors (i.e., Pay, Infra, Scope etc.). Engagement depends on how much an institution stimulates their teacher to be engaged through the execution of various financial and non-financial mechanisms. These guarantee the teachers to portray positive attitude towards student and institution. Though teaching is a complex practice with many challenges, Joseph S. Renzulli (*American educational psychologist, Professor at University of Connecticut's Neag School of education*) recommends that the teacher himself/ herself should develop the three EEE's (i.e. Enjoyment, Engagement and Enthusiasm) so that they will be productive and overcome the challenges. This paper focuses on the importance of teacher engagement which itself resembles that how much a teacher, specially engaged one is needed for this education system.

## **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Usually Engagement could be defined as a multidimensional construct, consisting of Operative, Cognitive and Affective domains. It is very difficult to identify and measure Employee engagement. But it can be ascertained based on how much they love the job and their willingness to put extra efforts. There is no general definition of employee engagement. However, many studies on employee engagement have tried to define it. Using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, *Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker (2004)* defined “Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. *Kevin Kruse (2012)* defined Employee Engagement as “The emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals”. *Saks, 2005* defines Employee Engagement as "a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components associated with individual role performance". *Shuck and Wollard (2013)* define employee engagement as "an emergent and working condition as a positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward organizational outcomes". According to *Pramod Kumar Tripathi (2018)* an engaged employee is competent for radiating a positive energy among his peers and colleagues, creates not only a positive energy and better surrounding but also better humans of tomorrow.

## **TEACHER ENGAGEMENT**

“You must capture the heart of supremely able man before his brain can do its best ”*Andrew Carnegie (2015)*. The engagement of a teacher not only depends on fair treatment and adequate compensation they receive, but also on the freedom they get to do what they want and do it well. And the most powerful factors are their bond with the institution and their relationship with the students which improve mutual motivation. *Bruce Beairsto(2012)*.

## **CATEGORIES OF TEACHER ENGAGEMENT**

According to recent Gallup survey on Engagement, only 30% of the workforce is engaged. Of the remaining 70%, 50% are disengaged and 20% are actively disengaged. Based on this Gallup classification of Engagement, Teachers are classified into three levels. They are

***Engaged Teachers:*** They are identified as highly potential faculties with emotional commitment towards the welfare of the institution. They are the ones who are ready to put discretionary effort to achieve the objectives and goals of the institution.

***Disengaged Teachers:*** They are those who are not ready to put extra effort other than the work assigned to them. They won't work beyond the regular time. They do not undertake any additional work. These people are considered as just an ordinary workforce who are not innovative and have little passion towards their job.

**Actively Disengaged Teachers:** They are considered as the most destructive teachers in the workplace. Their attitudes and actions in the workplace are miserable. They are negative minded and dispassionate towards their job. These kinds of teachers are a huge trouble for the institution. They are considered as a weed to be removed by the Institution.

## **STUDIES OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT**

**Arup Barman, Roy Saikat (2011)** identify the proposed model to measure the faculty engagement of Higher educational institutions among the faculties of Management studies institutions in Tripura State by using the factors such as Institutional attachment, Primary involvement, Secondary involvement, Recognition and networking, Career orientation and guidance and Credibility which are enacted from the 10 C's of Employee engagement.

**Dr. Namrata Sandhu (2016)** in the article "Employee Engagement in the Education Industry" identified six factors such as Work Environment, Emotional Satiety, Compensation System, Career Progression, Clear Communication and Quality of Leadership to measure the Work Engagement of nearly 370 faculties chosen from different Institutions of North India who were engaged in teaching the UG, PG and Doctoral courses from the period of January 2015 to June 2015. After the analysis of various determinants with the demographic factors it is identified that the first four factors have more impact on Employee engagement. From the four factors which have more impact on engagement level of Faculties, author proposed a model for Employee Engagement. Finally the author insists that the Institutions should concentrate more on the factors which have more influence on Employee Engagement.

## **IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ENGAGEMENT**

The contribution of engaged teachers in the educational sector is praiseworthy. They are very much needed for the fortification of the higher education system in our society. Teacher Engagement is helpful to various groups such as students, institutions etc. Its importance to each of these groups is detailed below:

### **Profession**

Teaching is the noble profession which is considered as the mother of all occupation. Teaching is "a professional occupational group of education sector possessing social, cultural, economical, scientific and technological dimensions" *Davut Hotaman (2016)*. It is the teachers who help the students to acquire knowledge and competency skills. Though they are teachers, they are also like any other human beings who have their own needs and demands in their lives. Only the teachers who are engaged can do their profession effectively by taking efforts. Engaged teachers would be able to generate a committed, knowledgeable students who will have to build up our nation. Only engaged teachers can keep up the reverence that society has for teaching profession.

Therefore engagement of a teacher has a direct impact on the teaching profession as well as on all other professions.

### **Institution**

From the Gurukulam age to the current modern digital era of educational system, Institutions play a vital role in the enrichment of the educational system in our country which starts from Nalanda to present IIT and Other ranking Universities. But these Institutions are highly reputed only due to the quality of their huge immeasurable resource i.e. Teachers, who have made a large amount of contribution to it. The role of a teacher in the development of educational institution cannot be ignored. The quality which an Institution seeks can only be given by the Teachers who are physically and emotionally committed towards the Institution. Only the engaged teachers can say, stay and strive for the Institution, according to Aon Hewitt's Model of Engagement. Finally Engaged Workforce is needed to the Institution because it leads to productivity and profitability. Engaging the employees in the Job is very much needed in order to retain them and to reduce employee turnover. Most of the time, employees get disengaged due to the absence of new learning in their work environment.

### **Student**

Quality of the educational system can be fully measured through the qualities of the students who come out from it. The attention, curiosity, interest and passion of students towards learning are entirely in the hands of teachers who are engaged. The engagement level of teachers is going to reflect in the students who depend on them. Engagement of a teacher surely has a direct impact on the students. *Michelle E. Cardwell (2011)* states that high levels of teacher engagement are needed to achieve an optimal level of student engagement. This level of engagement of both students and teachers are influenced by factors of cultural differences and perpetual basis. Here we study various factors such as body language and behaviours, consistent focus, verbal participation, confidence, interest and enthusiasm, individual attention, clarity of Teaching or Learning, Meaningfulness of Work, Rigorous thinking and Student Performance which are included in teacher and student engagement measurement tools to find out the overall level of engagement of both.

### **Colleague**

Engagement of an Employee also depends upon the peer relationship that arises in the working environment. This relationship normally affects the emotional commitment of an employee. Also only the Engaged employees can create a friendly work environment and relationship with their colleagues. Thus the peer relationship is essential for innovation and

productivity in the institution. As we all know decisions taken by the group are far better than the decisions taken by an individual. So the Co-ordination and Co-operation arise only when the employees have mutual understanding and a friendly relationship. In case of educational institution, the innovative ideas are very much needed to make a change to students and institutions to be differentiate from others. This will be done only when there is a healthier relationship among the colleagues and management.

### **Society**

We all know that whatever happens in business as well as service sector, its surely going to affect the Society. This impact will be positive or negative depending on the nature of those events. Education is also one of the service sectors which play a major role in the change of society. In fact the product of education which is the students form the future of the society and revolutionary changes can happen due to this product (Students) from the educational system. The enrichment of the educational system usually requires active participation of teachers. Thus teacher engagement is an essential element for the educational system which has the ability to balance the society. It is in the hands of educational institutions to develop an engaged and responsible citizen who are capable to bring changes to the society. With the knowledge and skill they acquire through education, empowered and critical Citizens will be able to contribute to a better world. This cannot be done without the help of a teacher; the contribution of teacher is very much needed to it. Our teaching is directly connected with society. Thus Developments in society have an immediate influence on our teaching, and over time our teaching has an important impact on society.

### **Research**

Teacher engagement in Research provides a platform for professional development. This research is classified into Internal Research, Administrative data and Statistical analysis and External Research. (*Janice Tripney 2018*). Only the engaged teacher can actively participate in the research work and able to reveal the true picture of research they have undertaken. They are the one who take part in research activities with full enthusiasm and fair manner. The action of research activities taken by the engaged teachers will be beneficiary one for the society. Insisted Institution should make research centre to provide opportunities to get involved with research in such a way for novel and challenging experience. Thus by implying this research centre model will foster the research engagement and professional learning. He also states that Time and Money becomes a major barrier for the teacher to be engaged in research activities (*Jonathan Firth 2019*). Thus even though the teacher has the knowledge, skill, talent, capacity and willingness to do research, Teacher engagement is very much needed to accomplish it. For that the certain barriers such as time, money and infrastructure has to be identified and solved.

**CONCLUSION**

Is Engagement a kind of medicine given to the human body by external force? No it's a kind of medicine/hormone/antibiotic which is secreted from the human body itself. Thus engagement is an inner feeling or commitment towards their job and reveal how much the teacher is passionate. Overall it's the primary duty of teacher to be engaged and passionate towards their profession. But at the same time to sustain the teachers' passion consistently, it's the duty of institution to motivate the teacher financially or Non-financially to eradicate a tremendous change in Higher Education.

Engagement of a teacher is not fully in the hands of the Institution, it is also with all those stakeholders who belong to this educational sector. But to conclude that even though we have identified many factors to measure and improve engagement of a teacher. Human wants and needs are changed and increased day by day, in that sense the engagement is only being fulfilled when a teacher is satisfied and felt happy on those factors which are fulfilled by the stakeholders of education Industry.

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