

# A Study on Student Engagement among MBA Graduates

V. Uma Maheswari



**Abstract:** This study aims to understand the moderating role of demographic and behavioural variables on student engagement among MBA graduates. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-S) was used to assess the student engagement. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test were applied to find out the moderating role of the demographic and behavioural factors. It was found out that gender, medium of instruction at school level, frequency of late coming and interaction level in the class discussions had an impact over student engagement, and variables like family monthly income and the type of occupation of the parents did not impact the student engagement.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, UWES-S, Dedication, Absorption, Vigour, MBA Graduates,

## I. INTRODUCTION

The disruption of technology and the rampant development of entertainment devices has definitely impacted the level of engagement of students in the class room. Understanding the level of student engagement will provide an understanding of the students' receptiveness and their subsequent performance in the academics. This study aims at understanding the student engagement in learning using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-S) The engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption [1][15][16]. Thus this study measures student engagement level among the MBA graduates on three constructs namely Vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is characterized by "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties" [1 p.74]. Dedication is characterized by "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" [1 p.74]. Absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work [1 p.74]

The UWES-S is a validated scale as the three-factor structure of the UWES-S (i.e., vigour, dedication, and absorption) fits to the data of each sample drawn from three countries separately in the cross national study conducted by the Schaufeli et al. [2].

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The present study tries to understand the variability in the engagement level based on demographic factors like age, gender, family income as well as the behavioural factors like level of interaction in the class room and frequency of late coming to the college.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past student engagement was measured in terms of attendance, test scores, graduation rates than on their interest and their enjoyment in learning [3]. It's also observed that students have shorter attention span due to the exposure to media and also because of them not getting taught to have longer attention span [4]. Students belonging to the digital era have the tendency to get bored with traditional methods of teaching [5]. The technology gives an edge to the educator in educating the digital natives on not just what to learn but how to learn [6][18]. student engagement declines as students move from upper elementary grades to middle school, reaching its lowest levels in high school. Some studies estimate that by high school, 40 to 60% of youth are disengaged [7]. Low level of student engagement is viewed as one of the key reasons for problems such as low achievement, boredom and alienation and high dropout rates [8]. Vigorous and dedicated students are energetically emerged in their studies, which makes them successful as well [9][18]. Thus Institutions are looking for ways to encourage students in formal curricular and co-curricular activities and identifying the key important engagement behaviours have on student outcomes [10]. Improved student learning is influenced by practioners and the methods they use to engage student learning. Engagement practices that stem from faculty, staff and students actions help students to develop intellectually and personally [11][14].

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the moderating role of demographic variables on student engagement
- To identify the moderating role of behavioural variables on student engagement.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

This study uses Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (UWES-S) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002. The study was conducted among the MBA graduates in Arts and Science Colleges in the city of Chennai. The non probability convenient sampling method was used and the questionnaire was given to 200 students and out of 200, 158 questionnaires were usable. SPSS 20.0 was used for analyzing the data.



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Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis Test were used in order to find out the moderating role of demographic and behavioural variables on student engagement among the MBA graduates.

## V. HYPOTHESES

**H1: There is a Significant difference between Gender and Student Engagement**

H1(a): There is a significant difference between Gender and Vigour

H1 (b): There is a significant difference between Gender and Dedication

H1 (c): There is a significant difference between Gender and Absorption

**H2: There is a Significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the School Level and Student Engagement**

H2 (a): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Vigour

H2 (b): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Dedication

H1 (c): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Absorption

**H3: There is a Significant difference between Frequency of Late Coming in a Week and Student Engagement**

H3 (a): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming and Vigour

H3 (b): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming and Dedication

H3 (c): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming and Absorption

**H4: There is a Significant difference between the Level of Interaction in the Class and Student Engagement**

H4 (a): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Vigour

H4(b): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Dedication

H4 (c): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Absorption

## VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The sample profile reveals that male students are more than the female students and more than 50% of the students' monthly family income is below Rs.30,000 as well as their parents are in blue collar jobs. 28% of the students in the sample survey never come late to college and nearly 42% of the students come late less than 2 times in a week. 86% of the respondents had English as their medium of instruction at school level and 80% of the students sometimes interact with teacher during the teaching session.

**Table 1: Sample Profile: (N= 158)**

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	102	65
	Female	56	35
Monthly Family Income	Less than 30000	92	58
	30001-50000	36	23
	More than 50000	30	19
Medium of Instruction at the School Level	Tamil	22	14
	English	136	86
Occupation of Parents	Blue Collar	92	58
	White Collar	66	42
Late Coming to College in a week	Never	44	28
	Less than 2 times	66	42
	More than 2 times	48	30
Level of Interaction in the Class room	Sometimes	126	80
	Always	32	20

**Table 2: Gender and Student Engagement**

**H1: There is a Significant Difference Between Gender and Student Engagement**

Hypothesis	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Standard Error	Standardized Test Statistic	Asymptotic Significance	Decision
H1(a): There is a significant difference between Gender and Vigour	Male= 60.79	4764	273.886	6.966***	.000	H1(a) is accepted
	Female= 113.57					
H1 (b): There is a significant difference between Gender and Dedication	Male= 63.30	4508	273.683	6.036***	.000	H1(b) is accepted
	Female= 109					
H1 (c): There is a significant difference between Gender and Absorption	Male= 62.81	4558	274.356	6.204***	.000	H1(c) is accepted
	Female= 109.81					

Notes: \*p< 0.05, \*\*p <0.01, \*\*\*p <0.001; NS = not significant.

From the above results, it can be inferred that student engagement level differs based on the gender. It can be seen all the three-alternative hypothesis at 99.99% level of confidence. Female students have more vigour (Mean Rank = 113.75), Dedication (Mean Rank =109), and Absorption (Mean Rank =109.81) than the male students. Female students have more energy, perseverance, resilience and vigourous in their studies. Their dedication level in terms of

their enthusiasm, feeling proud and inspired about their studies, considering their studies more meaningful, purposeful and challenging are also very high in comparison with male students. Female students' absorption level measured by attachment, engrossment, and their feeling of getting carried away with studies is also high than their male counterparts.

**Table 3: Medium of Instruction at the School Level and Student Engagement**

**H2: There is a Significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the School Level and Student Engagement**

Hypothesis	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Standard Error	Standardized Test Statistic	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided Test)	Decision
H2 (a): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Vigour	Regional Language: 101.59	1010	198.077	-2.454*	.014	H2(a) is accepted
	English: 75.93					
H2 (b): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Dedication	Regional Language: 102.23	996	198.224	-2.522*	.012	H2 (b) is accepted
	English: 75.82					
H3 (c): There is a significant difference between Medium of Instruction at the school level and Absorption	Regional Language: 92.86	1202	198.565	-1.481(NS)	.139	H2 (c) is rejected
	English: 77.34					

Notes: \*p< 0.05, \*\*p <0.01, \*\*\*p <0.001; NS = not significant.

When the medium of instruction is different at school level and college level, then this could impact the engagement level of the students in academics. The Mann-Whitney U test results confirm that vigour and dedication are very high for the students who had their medium of instruction in the regional language (Mean Rank =101.59 and 102.23) than the students who studied in English both at

the school and college level. The difficulty of the new medium of instruction must have made the students perseverant, resilient and hardworking. These two results are significant at 95% confidence interval. The level of absorption does not differ for the students based on their medium of instruction at school level.

**Table 4: Frequency of Late Coming in a Week and Student Engagement**

**H3: There is a Significant difference between Frequency of Late Coming in a Week and Student Engagement**

Hypothesis	Standardized Test Statistic (Kruskal Wallis Test)	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided Test)	Degrees of Freedom	Decision
H3 (a): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming and Vigour	6.863*	.032	2	H3 (a) is Accepted
H3 (b): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming 1 and Dedication	7.205*	.027	2	H3 (b) is Accepted
H3 (c): There is a significant difference between Frequency of late coming and Absorption	2.784 (NS)	.249	2	H3 (c) is Rejected

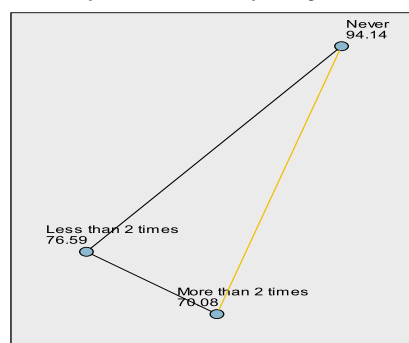
Notes: \*p< 0.05, \*\*p <0.01, \*\*\*p <0.001; NS = not significant.

Based on the Independent Sample Kruskal Wallis test, it is found out that vigour and dedication levels are high for the students who never come late to the college (Mean Rank = 94.14 and 93.55) and this is significant at 95% level of confidence. Pair wise comparison reveals that there is stark difference in the vigour and dedication level between the

students who never come late and the students who come late more than 2 times in a week (Refer Chart 1 and Chart 2) and these references are significant at 95% confidence interval. Absorption level remains the same irrespective of the frequency of late coming.

**Chart 1: Pairwise Comparison of Frequency of Late Coming with Vigour**

**Pairwise Comparisons of Frequency of Late Coming**



Each node shows the sample average rank of Frequency of Late Coming.

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
More than 2 times-Less than 2 times	6.508	8.641	.753	.451	1.000
More than 2 times-Never	24.053	9.507	2.530	.011	.034
Less than 2 times-Never	17.545	8.865	1.979	.048	.143

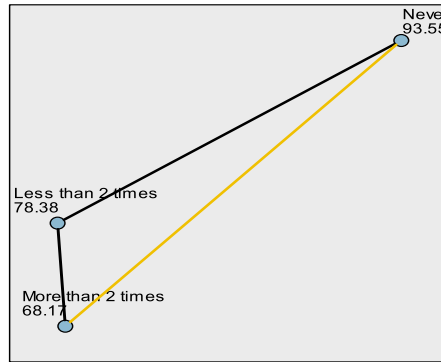
Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.



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Chart 2: Pairwise Comparison of Frequency of Late Coming with Dedication

Pairwise Comparisons of Frequency of Late Coming



Each node shows the sample average rank of Frequency of Late Coming.

Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
More than 2 times-Less than 2 times	10.212	8.635	1.183	.237	.711
More than 2 times-Never	25.379	9.500	2.671	.008	.023
Less than 2 times-Never	15.167	8.859	1.712	.087	.261

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Table 5: Level of Interaction in the Class and Student Engagement

### H4: There is a Significant Difference Between the Level of Interaction in the Class and Student Engagement

Hypothesis	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Standard Error	Standardized Test Statistic	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided Test)	Decision
H4 (a): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Vigour	Always: 96.75	2568	230.110	2.339*	.016	H4 (a) is accepted
	Sometimes: 75.12					
H4(b): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Dedication	Always: 98	2608	229.939	2.575*	.010	H4(b) is accepted
	Sometimes: 74.80					
H4 (c): There is a significant difference between level of interaction in the class and Absorption	Always: 94.31	2490	230.506	2.056*	.040	H4(c) is accepted
	Sometimes: 75.74					

Notes: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001; NS = not significant.

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test result, it is understood that vigour, engagement and absorption are high for the students who interact regularly in the class (Mean Rank = 96.75, 98 and 94.31) than the students who interact sometime (Mean Rank = 75.12, 74.80 and 75.74). The results are significant at 95% confidence interval. Thus, the engagement level of the students influence the level of interaction of the students during the class room sessions and vice versa.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Demographic factors like type of job of the parents and Monthly income of the family are not impacting the student engagement. Type of Job of the parents does not significantly impact the student engagement level in terms of Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. Similarly Monthly Family Income does not significantly impact the student engagement level in terms of Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. The female students and the students who regularly interact during the classroom sessions have a high level of dedication, energy, involvement and also consider the studies challenging and inspiring. The students who

always come late to class and the students who had the same medium of instruction that is English have low of energy dedication, perseverance and resilience than the students who never come late to the college and those students who had regional language as their medium of instruction at the school level but the absorption level is the same. In order to increase the student engagement level, students should be prompted to interact during the classroom discussions. More activity-oriented sessions like case analysis, debates, role play and the like will pave way for better interaction which in turn will improve the vigour, dedication and the absorption level of the students towards learning. Some of the strategies that can be adopted by institutions to increase student engagement are exploring on curriculum, creating a conducive environment that captures the interest of students, introducing project –based learning and opening up avenues for choice by offering electives in curriculum. Integration of technology and social media in the learning environment will have positive impact on the student engagement level [12].





These would definitely lead to personality development and achievement amongst the students. Engaged students perform well in academics and are less likely to drop out of college as there is a positive relationship between student engagement and retention [13]. The conditions that lead to student engagement contribute to a safe, positive and creative college climate and culture.

**VIII. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

This study has thrown light on the variables that has an influence over the student engagement level in the class room. The study has revealed the family income or whether the parents are from white collar or blue-collar job do not have an impact on the enthusiasm of the students in the learning process. Instead, the students who interact and participate in the class and the students who are regular and on time to class show high level of dedication, absorption and vigour. This clearly indicates that teachers play a major role in enhancing the engagement level of the student by using andragogical teaching methods like case study, role play, quizzes, presentations and group discussions. The role of the teachers in making learning immersive is very important in improving the student engagement level.

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Authors Contributions	I am only the sole author of the article

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