

Employee Work Engagement An Analysis of Antecedents in Teaching Context

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Abstract: Employee work engagement has gained considerable attention since engaged employees construct positive work-related outcomes. Knowledge of antecedents of employee work engagement is essential for devising intervention strategies. Hence, the main purpose is to discover antecedents that have significant effects on work engagement in teaching context. A quantitative strategy was adopted, with a structured questionnaire administered for the entire working population. Multiple linear regression analysis and engagement scores were the statistical methods used with SPSS software version 21. According to the results, eight of the 14 antecedents evaluated had a substantial impact on teachers' work engagement. Passion for teaching shows the higher effect, while staff recognition has the lowest effect. Furthermore, only 18% of teachers are actively engaged, with 43% engaged and 39% actively disengaged. Contextual novelty, a high sample size, and testing a model with 14 antecedents provide significant originality to the study. Further, empirical evidence has been provided to fill the knowledge gap on antecedents, particularly in general educational environments in Southeast Asia. This study provides insights for both school-level administrators and national officials seeking to improve pedagogical efficacy. Furthermore, this work suggests areas for future research.

Keywords: *Antecedents, Education, Employee Engagement, HRM, Teachers' Engagement*

Introduction

Employee engagement is commonly understandable as a positive attitude relating to one's employment. Hence, an engaged employee exhibits greater energy and commitment towards his/her job tasks. Employee engagement is considered a key element of organizational effectiveness since it is linked to positive outcomes (Mann and Harter, 2016; Vuong & Suntrayuth, 2019). In the context of teaching, work involvement has a positive effect on teachers' abilities to accomplish their jobs and improves teaching performance (Siddique et al., 2022; Bakker and Bal, 2010). Learners are inclined to be unresponsive to a teacher who has deficits in commitment, enthusiasm, and interest

in what they are doing. Soto-Pérez et al. (2020) opine that the teachers can help educational institutions achieve sustainable competitive advantage to a significant degree. Hence, considerable attention has been paid to teachers' work engagement in the recent past (Holmström et al., 2023; Wang and Pan, 2023; Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021; Greenier et al., 2021; Topchyan and Woehler, 2021). Education is the foundation of a productive and intellectual nation. The aim of teaching is to improve children's education, which demands instructors to devote themselves physically, emotionally, and cognitively to their profession (Choochom, 2016). Understanding the psychological elements behind effective teaching requires knowledge of the aspects that impact



teachers' work engagement (Klassen et al., 2013).

The available studies on antecedents mainly concentrate on the association of very few factors rather than testing a considerable number of antecedents in a single model. Particularly, there is an inadequacy of learning in the teaching context in Southeast Asia (Zahari & Kaliannan, 2023; Iddagoda & Opatha, 2017; Iddagoda et al., 2022; Valenta, 2010). This is limiting knowledge on how factors interact individually and collectively on work engagement. This problem sets the stage for the current study. Hence, the current study benefits from filling these gaps and helping policymakers to prioritize and concentrate on important factors when developing intervention strategies to improve the effectiveness of pedagogy. Contextual novelty, a large sample size, and testing a model with 14 possible antecedents bring significant originality to this research. Importantly, this will contribute to the knowledge on antecedents of employee work engagement, particularly providing evidence from general teaching contexts of Southeast Asia. Therefore, the aim of this investigation is to respond to the following specific questions:

- a. What is the level of teachers' work engagement in public schools in Sri Lanka?
- b. What antecedents are significantly predicting the teachers' work engagement in public schools in Sri Lanka?
- c. What effect does each factor have on the teachers' work engagement in public schools in Sri Lanka?

Literature Review

Employee Work Engagement

Engagement is about the connecting of employees to their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees demonstrate a higher level of physical, cognitive, and emotional involvement during role performances. Job engagement and work engagement both refer to the work itself and hence refer to the same, but employee engagement has a broader meaning (Kossyva et al., 2023). Nevertheless, researchers have conceptualized engagement differently (Bailey et al., 2017) and have defined them according to the purpose and context to refer to the similar occurrence (Guest, 2014; Iddagoda et al., 2015). The definition of Schaufeli et al. 2002 (p. 74) is one of the widely used definitions. Accordingly, employee work engagement is 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind' and includes three dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Employee work engagement is considered important because it brings positive employee and organizational performance-related outcomes (Saks and Gruman, 2014; Anitha, 2014). Employee work engagement conceptually contrasts with constructs like employee commitment, satisfaction, and intention to leave (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011; Klassen et al., 2013). It also contrasts with organizational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006).

Antecedents of Work Engagement

A systematic literature review with 110 articles by Kossyva et al. (2023) categorises engagement antecedents as individual and organizational. Individual antecedents are constructs that relate to an individual employee's perceptions, physiological circumstances, skills, and capacities. Organizational-level antecedents are constructs that are attributed to the organization. Furthermore, this study claims the necessity for research on the antecedents of engagement from various countries,

economic sectors, and specialized professional groups. Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) conducted a literature assessment of 48 publications and concluded that the majority of studies on job engagement antecedents focused on specific themes rather than a holistic model that included a range of important variables. It is detectable, the inadequacy of studies representing Southeast Asia, through very few studies included from India, China, Pakistan, and Korea. There is no single study from the Sri Lankan context. Iddagoda and Opatha (2017) analyze 33 articles spanning from 1990 to 2015 to identify research gaps in the area of employee engagement. The analysis included only one study from the Sri Lankan context, that is, Wickramasinghe and Perera (2014), that focused on testing particular associations of a few variables with manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka shop-floor employees. Iddangoda et al. (2022) continue to analyze literature on employee engagement since their previous analysis in 2017. This study includes 23 studies in addition to previous studies. Literature analyses of Iddagoda and Opatha (2017), Iddangoda et al. (2022), and Zahari and Kaliannan (2023) studies validate the fact that there is a theoretical and empirical vacuum on antecedents of employee engagement, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Work Engagement in Teaching Context

In the context of teaching, employee engagement generally articulates as teachers' job or work engagement. (Holmström et al., 2023; Wang & Pan, 2023). Nevertheless, according to Rutter and Jacobson (1986), the idea of 'teachers' work engagement' goes back to the late seventies, and they cite an example from Lieberman and Miller (1978) where it is stated that engaged teachers are always on the lookout for novel ideas, materials, and ways to reach out to their students. According to Harter et al. (2009), it relates to an individual teacher's interest and

participation in educating children, and it indicates how well teachers are known and how frequently they get to do what they believe is best. The teacher is a key factor that makes the pupils fall in love with the subject, and the teacher becomes a symbol of the subject in their minds. Therefore, the role of a teacher and his/her active involvement in the teaching and learning process is crucial for students' achievements. It is clear that the majority of researchers apply the notion of work engagement in a broad corporate setting to education (Zhang et al., 2021; Wang, 2024).

However, there is an opinion that teacher engagement should differ from general employee engagement since school teaching is different from general work/corporate settings (Wilson, 2018; Sokolov, 2017; Choochom, 2016). However, it could be observed that teaching is also an occupation that requires wilful involvement for better performance, and therefore, many similarities can be observed rather than differences. Hence, researchers in this area use the definition and measurements taken from general business settings. (Klassen et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2021; Wang & Pan, 2023; Wang, 2024). The definition of Schaufeli et al. (2002) in teaching contexts (Zhang et al., 2021; Holmström et al., 2023; Wang & Pan, 2023; Wang, 2024; Greenier et al., 2021) have used by many researchers. This increases the validity and helps to develop compatible knowledge in this area of study.

It is evident that research on teachers' work engagement frequently focuses on particular associations with one or a few variables. For example, perceived autonomy and professional engagement (Zhang et al., 2021); sense of efficacy and interprofessional collaboration (Holmström et al., 2023); self-efficacy and resilience to work engagement (Wang and Pan, 2023); workload, perceived organizational support, work engagement,

and psychological wellness (Wang, 2024); emotion regulation and psychological well-being to work engagement (Greenier et al., 2021); job performance and work engagement (Siddique et al., 2022); status, gender, and work experience (Topchyan and Woehler, 2021). Thus, this analysis led to the identification of a specific gap with regard to antecedents in the teaching context, practically in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, Table 01 summarized the possible antecedents of work engagement in the context of teaching and relevant literature that has supported the

development of hypotheses. Antecedents refer to causes or conditions that precede the criterion variable. In a causal model, these causes or conditions are considered independent variables; hence, they are predictors and influence the criterion variable. Typically, theories and literature are utilized to identify antecedents, and the knowledge on antecedents is contributory to both practice and theory (Shadish et al., 2002; Baron and Kenny, 1986). However, it is vital to validate identified antecedents with adequate empirical evidence.

Table 1: Antecedents, Hypotheses and Supporting Literature

Hypothesis	Supporting Literature
<i>H1: Passion for teaching significantly influences teachers' work engagement</i>	Vallerand and Houliort (2003), Ho et al. (2011), Day (2004), Liston and Garrison (2004), Gilal et al. (2019)
<i>H2: Continuous learning significantly influences teachers' work engagement.</i>	London and Smither (1999), Jain and Martindale (2012), DiPaola and Hoy (2014), King and Newmann (2000), Villegas-Reimers (2003) Vetter (2012), Lee and Yoo (2013)
<i>H3: Leadership skills significantly influence teachers' work engagement.</i>	Billingsley (2007), York-Barr and Duke (2004), Moller (2001)
<i>H4: Self-efficacy significantly influences teachers' work engagement.</i>	Bandura (2007), Holmström et al. (2023), Maslach and Leiter (2008), Salanova et al. (2011), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014), Soto-Pérez et al. (2020), Wang and Pan (2023)
<i>H5: Manageable workload significantly influences teachers' work engagement.</i>	Ahmed et al. (2019), Siregar (2018), Van Woerkom et al. (2016), Ladyshevsky and Taplin (2018), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)
<i>H6: Outgoing personality significantly influences teachers' work engagement.</i>	Ongore (2014), Zaidi et al. (2013), Inceoglu and Warr (2011), Kim et al. (2019), Walker (2020)
<i>H7: Perceived student ability significantly influences teachers' work engagement.</i>	Rutter and Jacobson (1986), Timmermans et al. (2016)

H8: Orderly school climate significantly influences teachers' work engagement

Konold et al. (2018), Cohen (2014), Abun et al. (2021), Cohen et al. (2009)

H9: Peer collaboration significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Holmström et al. (2023), Kahn (1990), Anitha (2014), Muller et al. (2016), Mughal and Iraqi (2020)

H10: Participation in decision making significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Lin (2014), Wadesango and Bayaga (2013), Silva et al. (2019), May et al. (2004), Rana (2015),

Kahn (1990), Farndale and Murrer (2015)

H11: Distance to school significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Siregar (2018)

H12. Staff recognition significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Saks (2006), Bhattacharya and Mukherjee (2009), Baqir et al. (2020), Ghosh et al. (2016)

H13: Leadership support significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Moss (2009), Zhu et al. (2009), Tims et al. (2011), Aryee et al. (2012), Wilson (2018), Alazmi and Al-Mahdy (2022), Wanansinghe (2021), Bird et al. (2009)

H14: Fair set of policies and procedures significantly influences teachers' work engagement.

Anitha (2014), Saks (2006)

Data Analysis and Findings

Working Population and Sample

The questionnaire was distributed through email to the entire working population of teachers of the Sri Jayewardenepura education zone, which is 2,128 teachers (Grade 6 to 11) from 89 schools. This education zone records the highest results for the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) out of all the zones. 1,309 (62% response rate) completed questionnaires were collected after removing incomplete responses. As per Table 02, respondents include 73% from provincial schools and 23% from national schools. When considering civil status, married with children was 26%, married

67%, and unmarried 6%. 13% are from the age group of 20-29, 39% from 30-39, 28% from 40-49, and 18% are above 55. 69% of the population comes under the age group of 30 to 49; this is a typical situation. 69% are female and 31% are male. Typically, in the government school system of Sri Lanka, the female teachers have outnumbered the male population. Therefore, the sample also represents the same characteristic. Teachers' qualifications are an important aspect of the profile. Accordingly, 41% have degree qualifications, and 55% have degrees or above. 24% with a 3-year diploma programme from National Colleges of Education.

Table 2: Respondents' Profile

Respondents' Profile		Age Group				Total
		20-29	30-39	40-49	>50	
Gender	Male	40	157	133	86	416
	Female	141	357	242	153	893
	Sub total	181	514	375	239	1309
Civil status	Married	96	368	263	149	876
	Unmarried	85	143	109	90	427
	Other	0	3	3	0	6
	Sub total	181	514	375	239	1309
Qualification	Masters	1	18	29	6	54
	PGD	0	42	58	24	124
	Degree	48	281	138	55	522
	NCOE	119	138	67	8	332
	Trainee	1	17	66	100	184
	Non-trainee	3	3	1	1	8
	Other	9	15	16	45	85
	Sub total	181	514	375	239	1309
Residence District	Colombo	2	19	13	10	44
	Gampaha	2	4	4	2	12
	Kalutara	177	491	358	227	1253
	Sub total	181	514	375	239	1309

Validity and Reliability of the Measures

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) with nine items (Schaufeli et al., 2006) was utilized to measure the dependent variable of the study with a 5-point Likert scale. This scale has been tested in different contexts (Balducci et al., 2010; Nerstad et al., 2010; Fong and Ng, 2012; Vallières et al., 2017), including the teaching context (Klassen et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2021; Holmström et al., 2023; Wang, 2024; Greenier et al., 2021). The rationale for selecting this instrument for the current study is its simplicity, relevance, and particularly the establishment of the

validation in the teaching context. The researcher compiled one question item for each factor with a 5-point Likert scale (5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree) to measure 14 possible antecedents. As per the descriptive statistics of all the items (Table 03), there are 1309 valid cases and no missing values in the data set. Item correlation statistics (Annexure 01) do not indicate data entry errors or correlational issues. The Cronbach Alpha value is 0.856 (Table 04), and as indicated in the item total statistic (Table 05), there is no requirement of removing any items in the dependent variable; therefore, internal consistency reliability is good (Nunnally,

1978; Hinkin et al., 1997) for the dependent variable. Furthermore, unidimensionality of all the variables was

established when performing the multiple linear regression procedure.

Table 3: Item Descriptive

Items	N	Mis sin g Val ues	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error
Fair set of policies and procedures	1309	0	2	1.85	0.55	-0.065	0.068
Manageable Workload	1309	0	3	1.99	0.683	0.699	0.068
Perceived student's ability	1309	0	3	2.29	0.694	0.363	0.068
Participation in decision making	1309	0	3	2.04	0.58	0.493	0.068
Peer collaboration	1309	0	2	1.88	0.506	-0.206	0.068
Staff recognition	1309	0	2	1.86	0.542	-0.088	0.068
Leadership support	1309	0	2	1.81	0.544	-0.09	0.068
Continuous Learning	1309	0	2	1.56	0.518	-0.001	0.068
Distance to school	1309	0	4	2.59	1.235	0.585	0.068
Self-Efficacy	1309	0	2	1.79	0.537	-0.125	0.068
Orderly school climate	1309	0	2	1.96	0.569	-0.006	0.068
Outgoing personality	1309	0	2	1.73	0.535	-0.122	0.068
Perceived leadership skills	1309	0	2	1.8	0.556	-0.037	0.068
Passion for teaching	1309	0	2	1.43	0.518	0.527	0.068
Bursting with energy	1309	0	4	2.07	0.811	0.94	0.068
Strong and vigorous	1309	0	4	1.87	0.629	0.641	0.068
Like going to work	1309	0	4	1.67	0.61	0.596	0.068
Enthusiastic about job	1309	0	4	1.6	0.559	0.418	0.068
Job inspires me	1309	0	4	1.6	0.589	0.654	0.068
Proud of the work	1309	0	3	1.47	0.534	0.48	0.068
Happy when working intensely	1309	0	4	1.56	0.557	0.487	0.068
Immersed in my work	1309	0	3	1.69	0.584	0.364	0.068
Get carried away	1309	0	4	2	0.811	1.083	0.068
Valid N (listwise)	1309						

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.837	0.856	9

Table 5: Item Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Bursting with energy	13.46	11.66	0.368	0.847
Strong and vigorous	13.66	11.536	0.567	0.818
Like going to work	13.86	11.507	0.599	0.814
Enthusiastic about job	13.93	11.456	0.683	0.807
Job inspires me	13.93	11.453	0.642	0.81
Proud of the work	14.06	11.768	0.629	0.813
Happy when working intensely	13.97	11.543	0.662	0.809
Immersed in my work	13.84	11.421	0.657	0.809
Get carried away	13.53	11.829	0.335	0.851

Evaluating Assumptions for Regression Analysis

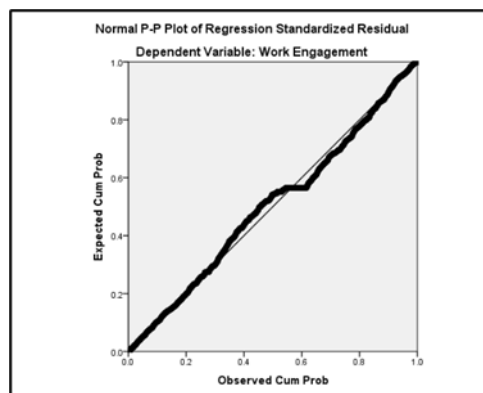
The saved 'Z' scores are within the range of +3 to -3. According to Cook's distance (Table 6), both maximum and minimum values are less than 1; therefore, there are no outliers that could have an adverse effect on the analysis. Figure 01 shows an approximately normal distribution of residuals of the dependent variable. The normal probability plot (Figure 02) indicates that the relationships between independent and dependent variables are approximately linear. As depicted in Table 07, the majority of the factors sufficiently (greater than 0.3) correlate with work

engagement, and correlations among independent variables are less than 0.7 (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Further, according to Table 10: Coefficient Results, VIF values for all the variables are less than 5, while the tolerance level is greater than 0.2, which indicates that there are no multicollinearity issues in the data set (Hair et al., 2011). According to the Durbin-Watson test, the value is within the range of 1 to 3. Therefore, there were no autocorrelation problems (Field, 2009). Hence, all the assumptions for multiple linear regression were met

Table 6: Residual Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.17	2.72	1.73	0.279	1309
Std. Predicted Value	-1.987	3.584	0	1	1309
Standard Error of Predicted Value	0.015	0.062	0.032	0.011	1309
Adjusted Predicted Value	1.17	2.72	1.73	0.279	1309
Residual	-0.966	0.932	0	0.315	1309
Std. Residual	-3.047	2.938	0	0.995	1309
Stud. Residual	-3.055	2.944	0	1.001	1309
Deleted Residual	-0.972	0.936	0	0.32	1309
Stud. Deleted Residual	-3.065	2.953	0	1.002	1309
Mahal. Distance	1.872	48.903	13.989	9.067	1309
Cook's Distance	0	0.015	0.001	0.002	1309
Centered Leverage Value	0.001	0.037	0.011	0.007	1309

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

**Figure 1: Normal PP Plot**

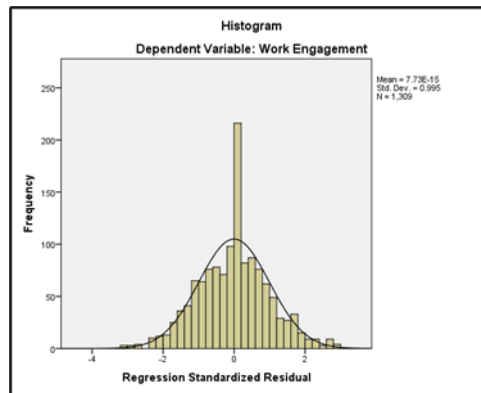


Figure 2: Distribution of Data (Dependent Variable)

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Table for the Dependent and Independent Factors

Work Engagement (Dependent)

Fair set of .. 0.268

Manageab 0.301 0.445

Student's.. 0.220 0.235 0.315

Participa... 0.273 0.368 0.350 0.343

Peer coll... 0.342 0.411 0.320 0.293 0.461

Staff reco.. 0.334 0.409 0.350 0.271 0.445 0.542

Leaders... 0.362 0.412 0.375 0.258 0.448 0.497 0.626

Continu.. 0.503 0.276 0.227 0.114 0.198 0.335 0.345 0.422

Distance.. 0.068 0.033 0.083 0.115 0.077 0.020 0.040 0.072 0.051

Self-Eff.. 0.449 0.283 0.242 0.162 0.232 0.337 0.334 0.374 0.451 0.115

Orderly... 0.349 0.405 0.326 0.316 0.372 0.454 0.486 0.519 0.299 0.124 0.376

Outgoing... 0.446 0.303 0.246 0.190 0.281 0.388 0.378 0.401 0.454 0.032 0.447 0.379

Perceiv... 0.460 0.265 0.228 0.199 0.288 0.296 0.334 0.332 0.408 0.042 0.419 0.323 0.544

Passion... 0.536 0.222 0.205 0.087 0.150 0.287 0.289 0.330 0.537 0.000 0.415 0.265 0.451 0.465

Regression Analysis and Findings

As per the model summary statistics (Table 08), adjusted R^2 is 0.433, and therefore 43% of the variance of the dependent variable can be attributed to the independent factors concerned, and the model is significant (Table 09). Hence, the prediction of the dependent variable is

accomplished not by chance. Table 10 presents the coefficient results. As summarized in Table 11, out of fourteen, only eight factors have 'p' values less than 0.05; those eight hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, and H8) were supported, and six hypotheses (H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, and H14) were not supported, as the corresponding 'p' values are greater than

0.05. Therefore, passion for teaching, continuous learning, leadership skills, self-efficacy, manageable workload, outgoing personality, students' ability and orderly school climate are identifiable as significant predictors of teachers' work engagement. Furthermore, Table 10 presents the unique effect size of each factor. Accordingly, passion for teaching has the highest effect (0.204), and staff recognition has the lowest effect (-0.001). Factors that are making significant contributions to the variance of work engagement of teachers can be clustered into two groups based on factor analysis (Table 12). This helps to understand latent

variables. The first cluster of the factors is very much related to the personality aspects (passion for teaching, continuous learning, outgoing personality, perceived leadership skills and self-efficacy) of the teachers. The second cluster is very much related to the school management environment (student's ability, manageable workload and orderly school climate). Additionally, a score and a binning variable with three levels were created in order to measure the level of engagement. Accordingly, 18% of the teachers are actively engaged in their work, while 43% are engaged and 39% are actively disengaged.

Table 8: Model Summary Statistics

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin - Watson
1	.662 ^a	0.439	0.433	0.317	0.439	72.214	14	1294	0	1.909

a. Predictors: (Constant), Passion for teaching, Distance to school, Perceived student's ability, Fair set of policies and procedures, Participation in decision making, Self-Efficacy, Manageable Workload, Orderly school climate, Perceived leadership skills, Peer collaboration, Continuous Learning, Staff recognition, Outgoing personality, Leadership support

b. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Table 9: ANOVA Results

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.682	14	7.263	72.214	.000 ^b
	Residual	130.146	1294	0.101		
	Total	231.828	1308			

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Passion for teaching, Distance to school, Perceived student's ability, Fair set of policies and procedures, Participation in decision making, Self-Efficacy, Manageable Workload, Orderly school climate, Perceived leadership skills, Peer collaboration, Continuous Learning, Staff recognition, Outgoing personality, Leadership support

Table 10. Coefficient Results

Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	Sig.	Correlations		Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.431	0.050		0.000					
Passion for teaching	0.213	0.022	0.263	0.000	0.536	0.263	0.204	0.605	1.652
Continuous Learning	0.147	0.022	0.181	0.000	0.503	0.182	0.139	0.587	1.703
Perceived leadership	0.091	0.020	0.120	0.000	0.460	0.123	0.093	0.603	1.660
Self-Efficacy	0.092	0.020	0.118	0.000	0.449	0.126	0.095	0.650	1.539
Manageable Workload	0.053	0.015	0.086	0.000	0.301	0.097	0.073	0.709	1.411
Outgoing personality	0.047	0.022	0.060	0.029	0.446	0.061	0.045	0.568	1.761
Perceived student's	0.036	0.014	0.059	0.011	0.220	0.070	0.053	0.798	1.254

Orderly school climate	0.041	0.020	0.056	0.038	0.349	0.058	0.043	0.598	1.672
Participation in decision	0.034	0.019	0.047	0.070	0.273	0.050	0.038	0.647	1.545
Peer collaboration	0.027	0.023	0.032	0.246	0.342	0.032	0.024	0.571	1.751
Distance to school	0.005	0.007	0.015	0.477	0.068	0.020	0.015	0.961	1.041
Staff recognition	-0.001	0.023	-0.002	0.957	0.334	-0.002	-0.001	0.503	1.989
Leadership support	-0.010	0.023	-0.013	0.674	0.362	-0.012	-0.009	0.480	2.081
Fair set of policies	-0.018	0.020	-0.023	0.359	0.268	-0.026	-0.019	0.664	1.507

Table 11: Hypotheses Evaluation and Unique Effect based on Regression Coefficient Results

Hypothesis	Beta	Unique Effect	P	Conclusion
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(Part)				
H1: Passion for teaching significantly influences teachers' work engagement	0.263	0.204	0.000	Supported
H2: Continuous learning significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.181	0.139	0.000	Supported
H3: Leadership skills significantly influence teachers' work engagement.	0.120	0.093	0.000	Supported
H4: Self-efficacy significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.118	0.095	0.000	Supported
H5: Manageable workload significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.086	0.073	0.000	Supported
H6: Outgoing personality significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.060	0.045	0.029	Supported
H7: Perceived student ability significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.059	0.053	0.011	Supported
H8: Orderly school climate significantly influences teachers' work engagement	0.056	0.043	0.038	Supported
H9: Peer collaboration significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.032	0.024	0.246	Not supported
H10: Participation in decision making significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.047	0.038	0.070	Not supported
H11: Distance to school significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	0.015	0.015	0.477	Not supported
H12: Staff recognition significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	- 0.00 2	-0.001	0.957	Not supported
H13: Leadership support significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	- 0.01 3	-0.009	0.674	Not supported
H14: Fair set of policies and procedures significantly influences teachers' work engagement.	- 0.02 3	-0.019	0.359	Not supported

Table 12: Pattern Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Passion for teaching	0.823	
Continuous Learning	0.79	

Outgoing personality	0.724	
Perceived leadership skills	0.71	
Self-Efficacy	0.674	
Perceived student's ability		0.848
Manageable Workload		0.698
Orderly school climate		0.566
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.		
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.		

Discussion and Implications

The absence of a model tested with a set of antecedents was a significant drawback in literature. This constraint made it difficult to grasp how a set of antecedents, both collectively and individually, may predict work engagement. The current study addressed this constraint by evaluating 14 predictors of teacher work engagement and contributing to knowledge. However, only eight factors were found to be significantly predicting work engagement, and this finding is consistent with relevant literature: passion for teaching (Ho et al., 2011; Gilal et al., 2019), continuous learning (DiPaola and Hoy, 2014; King and Newmann, 2000; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Vetter, 2012), leadership skills (Billingsley, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Moller, 2001), self-efficacy (Maslach and Leiter, 2008; Salanova et al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014; Soto-Pérez et al., 2020), outgoing personality (Zaidi et al., 2013; Inceoglu and Warr, 2011; Ongore, 2014; Kim et al., 2019), students' ability (Rutter and Jacobson, 1986; Timmermans et al., 2016), orderly school climate (Cohen, 2014; Konold et al., 2018), and manageable workload (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Ladyshewsky & Taplin, 2018; Van Woerkom et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the current study found that peer collaboration (Anitha, 2014; Muller

et al., 2016; Mughal and Iraqi, 2020) and leadership support (Wilson, 2018; Wanansinghe, 2021; Bird et al., 2009) have a positive effect on engagement, which is consistent with the relevant literature, but the effects are statistically insignificant. This could be due to context differences. The findings of the current study suggest that distance to school has a positive effect, and it is in line with Siregar (2018), but it is also statistically insignificant. However, this factor is a very novel factor that is considered a context-specific antecedent. It was hypothesised that staff recognition (Saks, 2006; Baqir et al., 2020; Ghosh et al., 2016) and policies and procedures (Anitha, 2014) have a significant effect on teachers' work engagement, but the current study's findings show that these are statistically insignificant. Such discrepancies could be explained by contextual factors.

Passion for teaching, continuous learning, teachers' leadership qualities, self-efficacy, and outgoing personality all load with a greater level of correlation values without cross-loadings, indicating a latent construct. It is clear that these five criteria are personality traits. Personality traits as determinants of employee work engagement have been studied in the literature (Ongore, 2014; Zaidi et al., 2013; Inceoglu & Warr, 2011; Kim et al., 2019). This conclusion has significant

implications for practice. Policymakers now have evidence to utilize as input when developing intervention strategies such as selection, training, coaching and counselling to promote teachers' work engagement. Student ability, manageable workload, and ordered school climate, on the other hand, are more interdependent and have larger factor loadings. These variables are essentially characteristics of school management. These findings have significant consequences for the practice. Teachers' work must be properly planned to ensure that they are not burdened and stressed as a result of job overload. If the school is disorganized and work/activities are unplanned, improvised, and messy, it creates a bad environment that leads to teacher disengagement.

The current study has a comparatively large sample size ($N = 1309$), and the questionnaire was distributed to the entire working population, and this helped to overcome the possible errors. Therefore, this study contributes to the knowledge domain by providing more reliable evidence. Empirical evidence from a developing country like Sri Lanka is providing a base for comparison within the region and outside the region. Further, antecedents of work engagement have been studied mainly in general business settings (Crawford et al., 2013; Aktar & Pangil, 2018; Saks, 2006; Kossyva et al., 2023). But the current study contributes by providing evidence from the teaching context to the overall body of knowledge on antecedents of employee engagement.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Further Research

Employee engagement has been a hot topic, particularly in general work settings, in the recent past. The education sector differs from a typical business setting and is crucial for the development of a thriving nation. Teachers are a critical factor that determines students and

institutions' performance. Engaged teachers are more committed and effective; therefore, they demonstrate better results. However, it was evident that the majority of the teachers are not actively engaged in their work, and therefore understanding the antecedents of teachers' work engagement is a central concern. This study provides evidence for significant antecedents, which could be categorized as personality attributes and school management factors.

This study contributes to the knowledge domain by providing empirical evidence from Southeast Asian countries which is lacking in the literature. Another important point of contribution is testing a model with a comparatively larger set of antecedents of teachers' work engagement in a single model. Furthermore, a comparatively larger sample and context novelty add further value to the study. This study has practical implications, as the findings are instrumental for school management and policymakers. Particularly, this study finds school management-related factors that significantly affect teachers' engagement. So, they can use this knowledge to devise intervention strategies to improve the school management environment. Policymakers also can use these findings to devise training, recruitment and selection strategies. Thus, they can create a more engaged teaching community, which will be beneficial for enhancing the institution as well as students' performance.

Nevertheless, the study specifically focuses on the Sri Jayawardenepura Education Zone of the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Therefore, other zones were excluded. Further, this study focuses only on fourteen selected factors that were considered most relevant to the context of Sri Lanka. There could be other factors that could affect teachers' job engagement in different contexts. Therefore, further

research is required to cover different countries in Southeast Asia and cross-cultural contexts to enhance generalization. Studies are also required on antecedents taken as multidimensional

constructs.

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40**

48**.407**

09** .226** .425**

$$14^{**} .252^{**} .457^{**} .537^{**}$$

59** .205** .401** .547** .626**

.30** .171** .364** .474** .587** .632**

87** .231** .392** .525** .547** .555** .641**

11** .305** .403*** .428** .540** .495** .494** .557**

19^{**} .250^{**} .243^{**} .200^{**} .236^{**} .165^{**} .193^{**} .240^{**} .359^{**}