

# Changing Face of Faculty in Higher Education: Gender Roles and Disparities

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**Abstract**—The organizations operating in a complex environment are in need of the employees who are willing to go beyond not only in terms of hard work but also ready to engage in approach which depicts learning, speed, resiliency and adaptability. Owing to such radical changes in the functioning of business organizations, employees are also expected of a consistent higher order performance with benchmark productivity and efficiency in this dynamic time. Hence, they have to cope with the increasing work pressures and inevitable competition. A willing workforce upgraded technology and a concrete knowledge base are the key drivers of an innovation process. The concept of 'Employee engagement' has thus gained a considerable attention from the researchers at global level as one of the most significant catalyst of business success in the current era. There is a difference between academic engagement and organizational engagement. Faculty working in complex institutional environment are expected to perform multiple roles which is creating a discord in academia. The present study attempts to analyze the level of engagement amongst faculty teaching management and computer science engineering courses in Government, Private and Deemed universities in Delhi-NCR. The study will also examine the differences between male and female faculty as regards their perceptions about different facets of engagement. The study will be beneficial for the management of the institutions, the regulatory bodies, academicians and faculty.

**Keywords:** Faculty Engagement, Higher Education, Changing Organizations, Faculty in Higher Education.

## Introduction

The current wave of globalization has changed the way in which organizations tend to operate. There is a huge consensus that it has led to the development and an inter-connected business place; but a huge pressure of performance and competition has also been imposed on these organizations (Green, Finkel, Fitzsimons and Gino, 2017). Owing to such radical changes in the functioning of business organizations, employees are also expected of a consistent higher order performance with benchmark productivity and efficiency in this dynamic time. Hence, they have to cope with the increasing work pressures and inevitable competition (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). A willing workforce upgraded technology and a concrete knowledge base are the key drivers of an innovation process (Inauen and Wicki, 2012). The concept of 'Employee engagement' has thus gained a considerable attention from the researchers at global level as one of the most significant catalyst of business success in the current era (Lockwood, 2007). According to Wefald and Downey (2009), there is a difference in academic engagement and organizational engagement. In the current challenging environment of Higher education in India, it is imperative that the management of the academic institutions ensure that the faculty members stay engaged through management practices which are innovative in nature. The engaged and happier faculty workforce is better equipped to combat the stressful situations at work, looks forward to having harmonious relationships with their superiors, feels much valued by the institution and ultimately are much satisfied with their life (Gladies and Vijila, 2013). The present study attempts to analyze the level of engagement amongst faculty teaching management and computer science engineering courses in Government, Private and Deemed universities in Delhi-NCR. The study will also examine the differences between male and female faculty as regards their perceptions about different facets of engagement. The study will be beneficial for the management of the institutions, the regulatory bodies, academicians and faculty.

## Literature Review

Engagement as a construct has been talked a lot. Kahn (1990, p. 694), who first gave a proper concept to this term, defines employee engagement as: “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Schaufeli et al. (2002) defines work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Maslach and Leiter (1997) explain 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, respectively. The authors developed Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure the level of engagement and disengagement on a single continuum. Engagement has been studied since a long time, but the concept of faculty engagement is relatively new. Almost all major studies on this concept have been conducted in Western nations. India, being a land popular for education since ages, and which has many educational institutions rendering programmes of varied disciplines, has never covered any study of this kind. India’s higher education system stands third to China and USA in terms of number of students enrolled (Singh, 2015). According to the latest statistics by University Grants Commission, which is the apex body for coordination, determination and maintenance of higher education institutions in India, there are 903 Universities in total out of which 399 are State, 126 are Deemed to be, 48 are Central and 330 are Private Universities. There are very limited studies available on faculty engagement (Livingston, 2011). In Indian context, the number of such studies is really scanty. Very closely related studies were selected for the literature review. Livingston (2011, p. 11) defined faculty engagement as: Perpetual focused attention, enjoyment, and enthusiasm for the activities associated with faculty work through which the individual finds purpose, senses congruence with personal values and talents, is challenged to use knowledge and skills, and experiences productivity even during difficult times. The author surveyed over 500 faculty members teaching undergraduate and graduate students in ten US higher education institutions and proposed four dimensions of faculty engagement, that is teaching, research, service and fit to the organization. Khatri and Raina (2017) established the dimensionality of faculty as a multidimensional construct consisted of three dimensions viz. Affective Involvement, Intensity of Effort and Technical Enhancement which covers all the facets of the construct. The dimensions were further confirmed in their unpublished doctoral work. According to Rothbard (1999), gender differences exist between men and women in terms of their engagement as men tend to extract more enrichment from their work rather than family whereas in case of women, the scenario is opposite. In the study conducted by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2004) on the Belgian, German, Finnish, and Norwegian men, results revealed that men scored slightly higher than women on the three dimensional scale of vigor, dedication and absorption. According to Sharma et al (2017), men exhibit better engagement than women.

## Objectives

- To ascertain the level of engagement amongst faculty teaching management and computer science engineering courses in Government, Private and Deemed universities in Delhi-NCR.
- To examine the differences between male and female faculty teaching management and computer science engineering courses in Government, Private and Deemed universities in Delhi-NCR.

## Hypotheses

**H1:** There exists a difference between male and female faculty as regards their perceptions towards Affective Involvement.

**H2:** There exists a difference between male and female faculty as regards their perceptions towards Intensity of Effort.

**H3:** There exists a difference between male and female faculty as regards their perceptions towards Technical Enhancement.

## Research Methodology

This research initiative studies the perception of faculty teaching management and computer science engineering courses in Government, Private and Deemed universities in Delhi-NCR. The research has been carried out with a self-constructed questionnaire on a five-point Likert agreement scale. Reliability of the same was computed to be Cronbach Alpha .87. According to Nunnally (1978, p. 245) the instruments used in basic research have reliability of about .70 or better. Stratified random sampling without replacement technique was applied in the study. Firstly, the researchers drew out a list of Government, Private and Deemed universities offering management and computer science engineering courses in Delhi-NCR from UGC’s website. There are 12 Government, 20 Private and 5 Deemed universities offering both these course in Delhi-NCR. From each type of university, regular full-time faculty at three levels viz. Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor were considered for the study. From each department, number of faculty contacted was in a way to ensure the minimum cadre ratio of 1:2:6. A total of 733 names were shortlisted through randomization process who were personally visited by the researchers and 609 valid questionnaires were considered for the study. The data was subjected to inferential and descriptive analysis.

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## Data Analysis

The analysis of Table 1 reveals that many respondents really look forward to come to their institutions in morning ( $m=3.688$ ,  $s.d.=0.941$ ). This is because the present workforce of the academic institutions chooses this career out of their own will and are self-guided rather than relying on others. The relationship of doing meaningful jobs and employee engagement is undeniable (Kruso, 2012), people who find meaning in their jobs and that it contributes to the accomplishment of organizational objectives ( $m=4.074$ ,  $s.d.=0.761$ ) start making extra efforts and ensure that they will readily make themselves involved in all the events of the department ( $m=3.979$ ,  $s.d.=0.770$ ). This over the board effort making seeps into the heart of the employees and they develop and emotional connect with their institution ( $m=3.660$ ,  $s.d.=0.989$ ). The peers are not competitors anymore and are like the family members ( $m=3.652$ ,  $s.d.=0.911$ ). Table 2 depicts the perceptions of the respondents towards the items pertaining to Intensity of Effort. It can be clearly seen that majority of the respondents exert their full efforts towards their jobs ( $m=4.153$ ,  $s.d.=0.660$ ) and strive very hard for their tasks' accomplishments ( $m=4.161$ ,  $s.d.=0.662$ ). Discretionary effort is what organizations aim to reach and expect their employees to do. This is an integral trait of the engaged employees and refers to the contribution of an employee that goes beyond the normal expectations. The engaged employees by the virtue of their characteristics go beyond the expected effort range ( $m=4.189$ ,  $s.d.=0.653$ ), work with their complete intensity ( $m=4.164$ ,  $s.d.=0.636$ ) and pay a lot of attention to their jobs ( $m=4.067$ ,  $s.d.=0.717$ ). This idea is prevalent amongst faculty as they understand the need of skills enhancement so as to survive in the cut throat competition in academia. This is supported by the data which reveals that majority of the respondents agree to upgrade their knowledge to enhance their technical acumen ( $m=3.603$ ,  $s.d.=0.797$ ) – Table 3, understanding the significance of regular honing of their skills ( $m=4.044$ ,  $s.d.=0.695$ ). The constantly changing UGC regulations regarding research and practical assignments undertaken, has shifted the orientation of the faculty towards research. They are now usually found to be much active in research ( $m=3.905$ ,  $s.d.=0.929$ ) and are willing to undertake real world assignments existing outside their classrooms ( $m=4.079$ ,  $s.d.=0.768$ ). The self-directed attitude of faculty has landed them in their current jobs and their value systems support it. This becomes the reason that they treat teaching as their passion ( $m=4.133$ ,  $s.d.=0.780$ ). For the purpose of testing hypothesis H1 that there exists a difference between male and female respondents as regards their level of engagement in their organization caused due to the various individual variables, Levene's t-test for equality of variances (Table 4) has been applied. It has been observed that there exists a difference between male and female respondents in terms of their perception towards affective involvement ( $t=-2.995$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and perception of male respondents has found to be greater than those of females ( $m=4.017$ ,  $s.d.=0.578$ ) Table 5. Challenging tasks, promotions and better advancement opportunities go in favor of men creating a disparity between men and women employees (Waller, 2016). Therefore, H1 stands accepted. However, no differences between male and female respondents were observed in terms of their perception towards intensity of effort ( $t=1.518$ ) and technical enhancement ( $t=0.776$ ). There is a strong perception among female employees that they need to work more or put more effort to come at par with their male counterparts. Many studies indicate that there exists a difference between male and female employees and men are found to be more engaged than women as they experience enrichment in work (Schaufeli et al, 2006). Therefore, H2 and H3 which states that there exists a difference between male and female respondents in terms of their perception towards intensity of effort and technical enhancement stand rejected.

## Conclusion and Implications

The traditional roles of the faculty have undergone a real transformation. They must play multiple and much complex roles of a teacher, researcher, mentor and on non-academic fronts too. The findings of the study reveal that the current faculty workforce which is much aware of their passions are guided by self and not by others. They understand the need for skills up gradation, exert extra efforts to accomplish their goals and are affectively involved with their institutions. This is also well depicted in the analysis of differences between the male and female faculty. There found to be no difference between the two groups about their perceptions towards technical enhancement and intensity of effort but have certain differences in their affective involvement. The Government of India is taking steps for reforming this sector and one of the major points of consideration is the "quality of faculty". The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill, 2012 has been approved for establishing new universities in public mode with private funding to promote research and innovation. Maheshwari (2014) suggests that the shortage of quality faculty in higher education needs quick attention, and administrators need to visualize their development as education rather than training to get effective results. The regulatory bodies need to collaborate with such universities to develop their faculty. The commitment so generated by nurturing satisfied faculty will create an engaged faculty workforce. Lack of autonomy, development opportunities and practices so used are far ahead in universities abroad. Though UGC in India is focusing on the improvement of teaching and research environment here, universities with potential for excellence have been recognized and are being given importance by the apex regulatory body.

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## Appendix

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of items pertaining to Affective Involvement**

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
When I get up in morning, I really look forward to come to my workplace.	3.688	0.941
I feel an emotional connect with my organization.	3.66	0.989
I understand that my job contributes to the overall objectives of my organization.	4.074	0.761
I try to ensure my involvement in all major events of my department.	3.979	0.77
My colleagues are like family to me.	3.652	0.911

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of items pertaining to Intensity of Effort**

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I exert my full effort to my job.	4.153	0.660
I strive as hard as I can to complete my job.	4.161	0.662
I try my hardest to perform well on my job .	4.189	0.653
I work with complete intensity on my job.	4.164	0.636
I pay a lot of attention to my job.	4.067	0.717

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of items pertaining to Technical Enhancement**

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Updation of knowledge is significant to enhance my technical acumen.	3.603	0.797
When I do research, time flies.	3.905	0.929
I feel it is very important to regularly hone my skills.	4.044	0.695
Teaching is my passion.	4.133	0.780
Real world assignments outside classrooms are also important.	4.079	0.768

**Table 4: Gender differences between Male and Female Faculty**

Independent Samples Test						
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intensity of Effort	Equal variances assumed	0.607	0.436	1.078	607	0.282
	Equal variances not assumed			1.076	601.066	0.282
Technical Enhancement	Equal variances assumed	1.074	0.301	0.976	607	0.329
	Equal variances not assumed			0.973	590.242	0.331
Affective Involvement	Equal variances assumed	1.721	0.19	0.998	607	0.319
	Equal variances not assumed			0.996	592.855	0.32

**Table 5: Group Statistics**

Group Statistics					
Department		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intensity of Effort	Management	312	4.1907	.55022	.03115
	Engineering (IT)	297	4.1414	.57850	.03357
Technical Enhancement	Management	312	4.1709	.53727	.03042
	Engineering (IT)	297	4.1257	.60583	.03515
Affective Involvement	Management	312	3.9487	.59506	.03369
	Engineering (IT)	297	3.8979	.66147	.03838