

AUTHENTICITY AND WORK ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHERS: A MULTIGROUP ANALYSIS BASED ON GENDER

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession is one of the most demanding professions due to internal as well as external influences impacting the work environment. Work engagement is crucial for survival in challenging environments. Teachers experiencing their true selves are likely to experience increased work engagement. Based on this premise, the aim of the present study was to determine the impact of authenticity at work on work engagement among teachers. Further, the study also analyzed gender as a moderator variable between authenticity at work and work engagement. Data were collected from 263 teachers working in different colleges of Jammu & Kashmir (India) using cross-sectional design through convenience sampling. A structural equation modelling technique was used for model testing. This study shows a significant and positive relationship between authentic living and the dimensions of work engagement. Results reveal that self-alienation and accepting external influence have a significant and positive relationship with vigor. Gender was not supported as the moderator between authenticity at work and work engagement except in self-alienation and dedication. The study highlights the importance of authenticity at work and describes how teachers' vigor, dedication and absorption can be enhanced. Our results provide clarity on how management in higher education institutes should focus on developing authenticity to enhance work engagement for better productivity.

Keywords: *Authenticity at work, Gender, Teachers, Work engagement, and Higher education*

INTRODUCTION

A variety of prominent scholars acknowledged higher education sector is vital for the development of a nation (Chankseliani et al., 2020; Jyoti & Bhau, 2016). Teachers are considered key stakeholders. Past research documented that through teaching, research, and engagement teachers contribute to the progress of the nation (Chankseliani et al., 2020; Heleta & Bagus, 2021). The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, in his address on Teacher's Day on September 5, 2014, articulated the requirement for good quality teachers (Modi, 2014). However, The Ministry of Education, Government of India in its All India Survey on Higher Education Report 2019-20 revealed a pupil-teacher ratio in universities and colleges (online and regular modes) is

1:32 which is beyond the recommended teacher-student ratio by University Grants Commission (AISHE-2019-20). This might affect the performance of the teachers. World over, the higher education sector seems to be struggling with drained vitality and negative attitudes toward work (Li et al., 2022; Tian et al., 2022) stress, and burnout (Alves et al., 2019) in teachers. The problem is further aggravated by the University grant commission which sets a weekly limit for “direct teaching” and adds administrative work, practical classes, seminars, and tutorials to the teaching load. This demonstrates a complete ignorance of the “invisible” labour that goes into a lecture, especially given the semester system (The Telegraph, 16 January, 2019). Further, the teacher evaluation system, with performance-based, results-driven, and accountability-oriented academic evaluation strongly emphasizes on academic research while downplaying pragmatism and instrumental rationality, which can be particularly harmful to the progress of young faculty members in higher education (Li et al., 2022). Therefore, it becomes crucial to explore the factors that could promote the performance of teachers.

Work engagement is considered to be increasingly important for enhancing performance and self-efficacy (Staden & Nel, 2023), thereby resulting in the success of higher education institutions (Misu et al., 2022; Sharafizad et al., 2020). There has been growing interest in examining teachers’ work engagement (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Misu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021) but research on the exploration of the antecedents of work engagement in teachers is scant (Salmela-Aro et al., 2019). Given that engaged teachers are assets to the institution as they invest energy and remain committed to the work, it becomes imperative to discern the factors that are vital for their work engagement (Ji, 2021; Slemp et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

Authenticity is conceptualized as knowing oneself or behaving consistently with one’s thoughts, feelings, and values, which helps in becoming conscious of self-fulfillment (Hicks et al., 2019). Being authentic at work is important (Maunz & Glaser, 2022; Sutton, 2020; Wessel et al., 2020). Excavating literature in organizational settings reveals promising benefits of “being true to oneself” as paramount. Researchers have associated authenticity with a worker’s ability to work, stress, and intrinsic motivation (e.g., Emmerich & Rigotti, 2017; Maunz & Glaser, 2022). In corporate settings, authenticity is positively linked with several positive outcomes, including work engagement (Biermeier-Hanson et al., 2020; Cha et al., 2019; Sutton, 2018; van den Bosch & Taris, 2018; Wang & Li, 2018). Although authenticity has become a widespread research trend, empirical research on authenticity in teachers is scant (for example de Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2022; Kuntz & Abbott, 2017). Previous studies report authenticity relates to teachers’ satisfaction, self-efficacy, improves intrinsic motivation, commitment, and self-determined motivation and reduces burnout (Biermeier-Hanson et al., 2020; Maunz & Glaser, 2022; Ma et al., 2020; van den Bosch & Taris, 2018). Nevertheless, previous studies in academia attempted to understand the authenticity of teachers as perceived by the students only (de Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016; Johnson & LaBelle, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to research to ascertain teachers’ expression of authenticity. Notably, authenticity in teachers can have different meanings in different cultures (Cha et al., 2019; Xia & Xu, 2022). In the literature, most previous studies were conducted in western, prosperous, and highly industrialized countries (for example Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Henry & Olsén, 2021; Maunz & Glaser, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Researchers have come across few studies in the Asian context which was limited to the information and technology sector (Rathi & Lee, 2021), the housing sector in India (Vandrewala, 2020). Therefore, it necessitates more research to understand the authenticity of teachers in the Indian context.

In addition, comparative studies of the gender differences in authenticity at work and work engagement are almost non-existent (e.g. Sutton, 2020). The impact of authenticity at work on work engagement can differ between male and female teachers (Gulzar & Teli, 2018; Tzinerr & Barsheshet-Picke, 2014). To our knowledge, no earlier study has examined the role of authenticity at work in teachers’ work engagement. Taking into account the importance of work

engagement in teachers and the possible role of authenticity at work in enhancing it, our study contributes to extant research in three ways. Firstly, this study offers insight into the relevance of authenticity for higher education faculty in the Indian context. Secondly, this study makes a theoretical contribution by examining the impact of authenticity at work on work engagement in the light of self-determination theory (Guay, 2022). Finally, the present study investigates the moderating role of gender in the relationship between the dimensions of authenticity at work and dimensions of work engagement (Sutton, 2020).

Authenticity is either conceptualized as a state or a trait. The trait authenticity posits that the personality is consistent across situations. The state-based conceptualization of authenticity explains the unity between the person and the environment in which one person lives (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b; Wood et al., 2008). Because of the dynamic nature of the working environment, the relationship between the employee and the working environment may also change. The present study follows the state approach toward authenticity. Roger's tripartite person-centered construct of authenticity includes self-alienation, authentic living, and accepting external influence (Wood et al., 2008). Further, previous studies emphasized the multifaceted analysis of authenticity at work (Cha et al., 2019). Thus, considering self-alienation, authentic living and accepting external influence are crucial for experiencing authenticity.

Work engagement constitutes another variable of the present study. Work engagement is a "positive, preferred, and absorbing work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p.74). Vigor describes the ability to confront any challenging situation and infuse all of one's efforts into it. Dedication refers to that characteristic of work engagement in which an individual feels satisfied with their work and becomes a role model for others. Absorption occurs when an individual is deeply involved with the work and feels one. Work engagement refers to employees' expression of their desired self to their task behavior during a performance at work (Kahn, 1990). This definition carries the elements of authenticity (expression of self) and wellbeing (meaningfulness of work). In other words, engagement requires people to bring psychological conditions of meaningfulness, psychological safety, and personal resources. Literature reveals that employees who feel more engaged at work are likely to experience job satisfaction, are physically healthier, and are less likely to leave their jobs (Grubert et al., 2022; Peker & Ersoy, 2022; Reissová & Papey, 2021). Engagement research includes elements of authenticity and shows that the more authentic a person is at work, the more engaged she/he will be (de Carvalho et al., 2015). Authentic employees are expected to be more consistent with their true selves, are less likely to be influenced by external pressures, and thus they are likely to be engaged in their work. Authenticity, therefore, may act as an antecedent of work engagement (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b).

Engaged teachers are an asset for the institution. Employing and retaining engaged teachers is important for the success of an educational institution (Misu et al., 2022). As pointed out by Staden and Nel, (2023) work engagement enhances performance. Thus, highly engaged teaching faculty might show high level of performance too. The large numbers of students are likely to be attracted and get enrolled in such institutions where the teaching faculty is highly engaged. Therefore, this study could be crucial from the business perspective.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Self-determination theory

This study uses the self-determination theory (Gulzar & Teli, 2018; Tzinerr & Barsheshet-Picke, 2014) to support the theoretical model. According to the self-determination theory, actions motivated by self-determined motivation have a natural tendency toward authenticity. There is no need for a separate evaluation of employee sense of authenticity if the motive for that specific

attribute is self-determined. Self-determination theory focuses on the reasons behind the decisions of the people, thinking that these decisions are either self-motivated and self-determined or that they are the result of outside forces (Deci et al., 2017). Feeling self-determined means feeling autonomous, and those who feel autonomy take direct action. Actions that are congruent with one's values and goals reflect autonomy. There are six forms of self-determined behaviours: non-regulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic regulation. These behaviours characterised the degree to which the activities are self-determined or brought on by other, external (or non-self-determined) factors. For instance, employees may engage in activities, as a result of peer pressure, rewards, or the desire to avoid penalties. The first three results in controlled motivation, constituting qualitatively inferior types of motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005), whereas rest three identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic regulation are relatively autonomous and therefore qualitatively superior forms of motivation (Deci et al., 2017).

Further, within self-determination theory autonomous motivation is important. Being autonomous has a definitional similarity to authenticity; when authentic, a person feels more engaged and acts consistent with one's values and preferences (Ryan & Deci, 2004). Furthermore, autonomy represents an essential component of authenticity, as one is "acting in ways congruent with one's values, preferences, and needs" (Kernis & Goldmen, 2006, p.302). Further, research using the self-determination theory perspective has suggested that employees who feel authentic at work are more likely to attribute their actions to internal drives, thus reporting a high level of autonomous motivation (Leroy et al., 2015). Therefore, authenticity is considered a natural response driven by self-determined motivation. Studies has shown that teachers adopting an autonomy-supportive teaching style contribute to more autonomous motivation in their students (Guay, 2022). According to Guay, (2022) in order to enhance teaching and educational methods and help students reach their full potential, educators should make use of the research that is already available on the postulates of self-determination theory.

According to self-determination theory, self-determined activities are the "prototype" of behaviours that are intrinsically driven (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These conventional behaviours immediately result from the inner self. The term "authentic" is used in its broadest definition to describe these prototype acts. However, externally motivated behaviour can also be self-determined. Therefore, for people to allow their action to be self-determined, they must identify with their work (Deci et al., 2017). This suggests that if employees experience greater levels of authenticity at work, the ratio of self-determined to non-self-determined behaviour will move in favour of the former and draw more from the self (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This acknowledgment of internal purposes increases one's commitment to a course of action and, thus, the likelihood of investing energy in one's work. Organizational virtues like supportability and transparency may have an impact on individual motivation; specifically, the need for autonomy and relatedness (Colaco & Natasha, 2019). The employee engagement construct fits within the theoretical framework and overlaps with autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2013). Fundamentally, employees who experience high degrees of authenticity will participate in work activities more consistently because they genuinely like doing so, or because they are naturally motivated to do so (van den Bosch & Taris, 2018). According to Emmerich and Rigotti (2017), authentic behaviour is self-determined by nature and leads to better intrinsic motivation since it has its roots in a person's genuine self. For instance, employees with low levels of authenticity are more likely to be extrinsically motivated for their work than intrinsically motivated employees, who engage in activities for the satisfaction or pleasure they gain from their work. Engagement in such tasks is likely to be associated with low, rather than high degrees of authenticity because these activities are not self-determined and do not, therefore, have their source in the genuine self of a worker (Emmerich & Rigotti, 2017). Self-determination theory suggests that three needs are innate and essential for human functioning. These needs energize people to engage in more fulfilling activities (Ryan & Deci, 2004). Thus, constructs of authenticity and work engagement

are separately studied from the perspective of self-determination theory (Ryan & Ryan, 2019; Wiedemann, 2016).

Relationship between authentic living and dimensions of work engagement

Authentic living is how an individual is true to themselves in most situations and acts following those values and beliefs (Wood et al., 2008). The consistency of personal values across situations will lead to several personal benefits such as satisfaction with life, positive feelings, and flourishing (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). For instance, contented teachers may provide more meaningful experiences to their students by teaching authentically (Johnson & LaBelle, 2017). Furthermore, the work engagement definition suggests that substantial personal investment, a significant amount of energy, and cognitive resources are required at work. Authenticity can provide the ground and fuel these personal resources. Thus, a climate of authenticity will serve as a resource to work engagement. Similar results were reported in previous studies where a positive climate of authenticity is positively related to work engagement at the personal level as well as at the organizational level (Peker & Ersoy, 2022). Furthermore, the three autonomous regulatory styles mentioned in self-determination theory provide base to this argument. Identified regulation displays an intentional assessment of a goal in a way that the behaviour toward obtaining this goal is taken on as personally significant. Behavior that results from identification, such as with a job task, is mostly independent and self-contained. Integration has occurred when identified regulations are fully internalised by the self and are consequently consistent with one's other values and beliefs, resulting in integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Employees that are intrinsically motivated, on the other hand, mostly participate in job activities because they find them to be fun, fascinating, difficult, or gratifying (Deci et al., 2017).

Meta-analysis of authenticity and work engagement also provides support for the positive relationship between the two (Sutton, 2020). Further, it was found in the previous studies that the subjective wellbeing of the employees at work was positively related to authenticity via work engagement (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). The positive association between authentic living and work engagement is confirmed (de Carvalho et al., 2015; Metin et al., 2016, van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). It has also been reported that authentic living has a significant relationship with the dimensions of work engagement namely vigor, dedication, and absorption (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2020; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b; Tekin & Satici, 2014). Considering this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Authentic living is positively correlated to, and significantly predicts (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption.

Relationship between self-alienation and dimensions of work engagement

Self-alienation is the subjective experience of not knowing who one is or feeling out of touch with one's true self (Wood et al., 2008). It means when a person experiences a contradiction between one's physiological state and the conscious awareness of that state. Alienation tends to have negative work-related outcomes (Kanungo, 1992; Fedi et al., 2016; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). It could be said that self-alienation is a predictor of negative work experiences. Work alienation and work engagement are not always bipolar opposite (Pati & Kumar, 2015). Several researchers found that self-alienation has a negative correlation with work engagement (de Carvalho et al., 2015). Earlier research also confirms that self-alienation has a negative relationship with vigor (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b; Tekin & Satici, 2014), dedication, and absorption (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). Conversely, researchers reported a positive relationship between self-alienation with work engagement (Metin et al., 2016). Similarly, previous researchers have reported a positive correlation between self-alienation with vigor,

dedication, and absorption (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2020). These findings are inconclusive which leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Self-alienation is correlated to, and significantly predicts, (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption.

Relationship between accepting external influence and dimensions of work engagement.

Acceptance of others' influences at work and feelings of obligation to comply the expectations of others constitute the third dimension called accepting external influence. In a recent study, Bakker (2022) revealed the importance of social-psychological perspective of work engagement. This study clearly mentions the importance of colleagues, leaders, and intimate partner as the importance influencers of employees work engagement. Further, employee's evaluation of how public value the organization (external influence) influences the employee engagement (Grubert et al., 2022). Employees engagement, thus to a large extent is influenced by other. The external and introjected regulations of self-determination theory provide the support for this hypothesis (Guay, 2022). Earlier research also reveals a positive correlation between accepting external influence with the negative work outcomes (de Carvalho et al., 2015) and a negative correlation with work engagement (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). Furthermore, researchers reported that accepting external influence has a positive association with dedication and a negative association with vigor and absorption (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). Researchers have also reported a positive correlation between accepting external influence with all the dimensions of work engagement (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2020). Though accepting external influence seems to have an impact on the dimensions of work engagement, the direction of the relationship is yet to be ascertained. So, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Accepting external influence is correlated to, and significantly predicts (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption

Authenticity at work and work engagement: The moderating role of gender

Extant research reveals that females have higher perceived authenticity which is associated with increased life satisfaction and reduced distress (Boyras & Kuhl, 2015). The evidence of the role of gender in authenticity comes from authentic leadership studies (Eagly et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2015). Although work engagement is considered gender-neutral, researchers propose that work engagement is gendered. Banihani et al. (2013), emphasized an exploration of the gendered nature of work engagement across different areas and cultures. By now, few researchers have investigated gender differences and the role of gender on employees' work engagement (e.g. Gulzar & Teli, 2018; Sharma et al., 2017). While these studies provide evidence for the gender differences, this study attempts to investigate if gender influences the strength of the relationship between dimensions of authenticity at work and dimensions of work engagement in the current study. The studies provide the ground for the following hypothesis:

H4: Gender will moderate the relationship between authentic living and (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption.

H5: Gender will moderate the relationship between self-alienation and (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption.

H6: Gender will moderate the relationship between accepting external influence and (a) vigor; (b) dedication; (c) absorption.

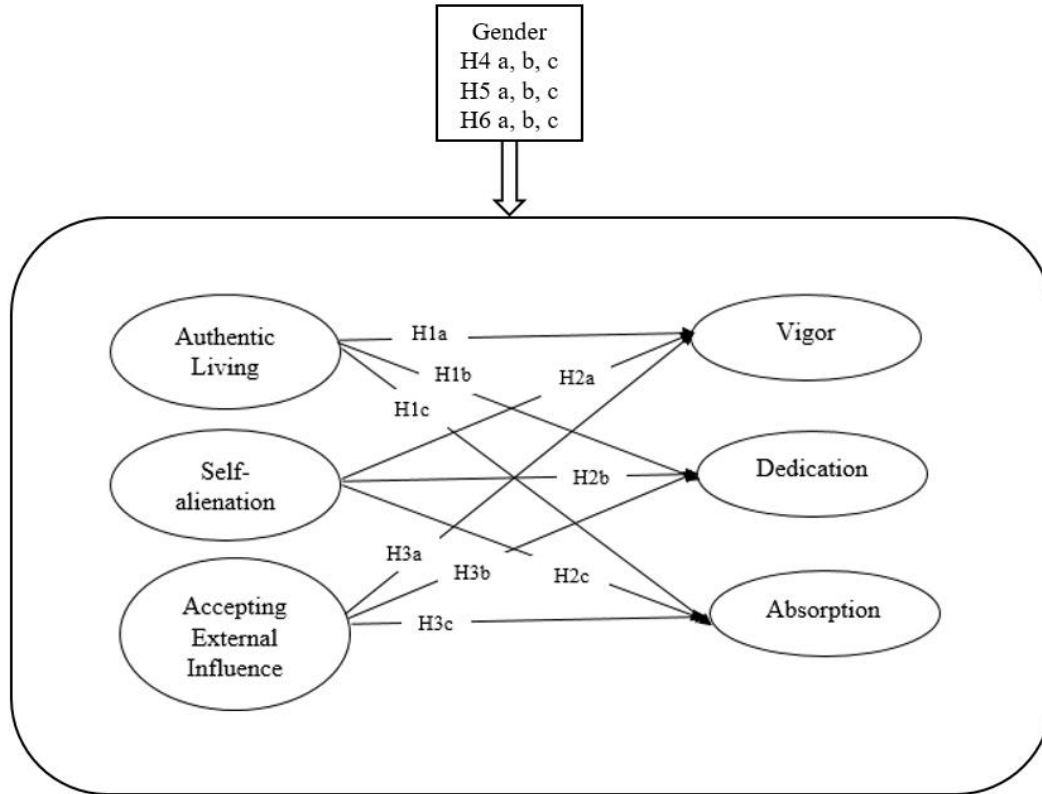


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

METHODS

Participants and Procedure

In North India, Jammu is considered an emerging educational hub (Union minister Jitendra Singh, 22 August 2021). Owing to the strategic and geographic location of Jammu city, students not only from the far-flung areas of the Union Territory (UT) but students from neighboring states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and UT of Leh seek academic opportunities. Therefore, the teachers working in higher education institutes in Jammu were considered appropriate for the study.

A cross-sectional research design was followed in this study. Using the convenience sampling technique, data were collected from 263 teachers working in colleges in Jammu, India. To avoid disruption in the teaching schedules the survey was conducted only on those teachers who were available at the time when the researchers visited the institution. Only the teachers who have been teaching in the same institution/college for at least a year were contacted. Before the data collection, permission was obtained from the head of the each institution. Next, written informed consent was obtained from the participants and voluntary participation was sought. Confidentiality of responses was assured. The objective of the research was explained before administering the survey which comprised demographic profile and questionnaires. The survey was in English language as the participants were proficient in the said language. Initially, 350 teachers were contacted, out of which 294 returned filled in questionnaires. 31 responses were deleted for being incomplete. Thus, the final sample comprised 263 responses.

Participants took nearly 10 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The sample comprised 153 (58.2%) females, and 110 (41.8%) males. The age range of the participants was 25 to 60 years ($M=39.1$, $SD=8.1$). The majority of the participants were married 215 (81.7%), while only 48 (18.3%) were unmarried. The age range of the participants was 25 to 60 years with a mean age of 39 years ($SD= 8.14$). The teachers had at least one year of work experience (minimum 1 year to maximum 36) with a mean of= 10.

To carry out partial least squares structural equational modeling (PLS-SEM) recommended minimum sample size as per the inverse square root method is 160 (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Further, the sample size was also determined based on the 10:1 ratio of cases to the parameters (Bentler & Chou, 1987). The most extended scale used in the study has 17 items. Hence, a minimum of sample 170 teachers was required for the study. Thus, our sample size of 263 teachers was appropriate for the present study.

Measures

Authenticity at work: To measure the three dimensions of authenticity at work (authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence), the Individual Authenticity Measure at Work (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a) was used. It comprises 12 items on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (“doesn’t describe me at all”) to 7 (“tell me very well”). The sample item is “I am true to myself at work in most situations.” The internal consistency of the overall scale was 0.79 with authentic living at 0.76, self-alienation at 0.85, and accepting external influence at 0.67.

Work engagement: Dimensions of construct work engagement were measured using 17 items Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) tapping vigor, dedication, and absorption e.g., “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”. Items are rated on a 7-point scale (0= “never” to 6 = “always”). The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the original scale was vigor = 0.83, dedication= 0.92, absorption= 0.82.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The descriptive analyses were done using SPSS version 23. For model testing, the PLS-SEM technique was applied using ‘Smart PLS software version 3.3.7’ (Ringle et al., 2015).

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations (SD), and Pearson’s correlations were estimated to gain an initial overview of the relationships between the study variables (Table 1). The correlation results indicated a low but highly significant relationship between authentic living and dimensions of work engagement namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. The sub-dimension of self-alienation shows a significant and positive correlation with vigor, Similarly, accepting external influence reveals a significant and positive correlation with vigor.

Common Method Bias

For identifying common method variance, Harman’s single factor test was done. The unrotated factor solution was examined in exploratory factor analysis to determine the number of factors required to account for the variance in the variables. There was no problem with common method bias in this data since the total variance extracted by one aspect was 27 percent which is less than the recommended threshold of 50 percent.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for the variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
1 Gender (0=M, 1=F)	-	.041	.131*	-.154*	-.052	-.004	.000	-	-
2 AL		-	-.069	-.021	.197**	.298**	.216**	23.51	3.62
3 SA			-	.507**	.166**	.094	.093	12.01	3.67
4 AEI				-	.147*	.066	.110	13.40	5.18
5 Vigor					-	.661**	.671**	29.10	3.22
6 Dedication						-	.739**	25.25	3.26
7 Absorption							-	29.74	3.40

Note(s): F=female; M=male; SD=Standard deviation; ** correlation significant at 0.01 level; * correlation significant at 0.05 level.

Measurement model

The first step in the assessment of the reflective measurement models is to evaluate the reliability of the constructs. The present study assessed the indicator reliability assessed by examining the indicator loadings. The loading above 0.60 is acceptable if a value of 0.50 is achieved for the average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 displays the items as the criterion was fulfilled. Next, we evaluated composite reliability (CR) to establish an internal consistency, a value above 0.70 was considered (Henseler et al., 2016). Table 2 shows the value of CR for all the constructs is above the threshold. Next, the convergent validity was analyzed which was above 0.50 (Banihani et al., 2013). Hence, the convergent validity of each construct was established.

For the discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) method was used. The HTMT should be less than 0.90 (Goldet al., 2001; Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015). As shown in Table 3, the discriminant validity of the constructs was established.

Structural model assessment

Next, for the assessment of the significance of the model bootstrapping technique (5000 re-samples) was applied. Table 4 shows the results of the hypothesis testing for the overall sample. The results alluded to a positive and significant effect of authentic living on the three dimensions of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption). Thus, H1a, H1b, H1c are supported in our study. Authentic living had the strongest influence on the dedication of the teachers. A positive and significant effect of self-alienation on vigor was indicated in our results. This leads to the acceptance of H2a. In addition, a positive and significant effect was identified in the results for accepting external influence on vigor. Our findings support H3a. No significant effects were found in the results for self-alienation and the teachers' work engagement. Similarly, the path coefficient between accepting external influence and dedication ($\beta=0.100$, $p=0.174$) and accepting external influence and absorption ($\beta=0.104$, $p=0.176$) was not significant. Figure 2 clearly shows the structural model.

Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity

	Loadings	AVE	CR
Vigor		0.500	0.857
WE1	0.688		
WE4	0.734		
WE8	0.750		
WE12	0.745		
WE15	0.643		
WE17	0.674		
Absorption		0.543	0.876
WE3	0.732		
WE6	0.741		
WE9	0.775		
WE11	0.824		
WE14	0.584		
WE16	0.746		
Dedication		0.614	0.887
WE2	0.696		
WE5	0.828		
WE7	0.863		
WE10	0.828		
WE13	0.685		
Authentic Living		0.605	0.859
AW1	0.740		
AW2	0.810		
AW3	0.857		
AW4	0.694		
Self-alienation		0.565	0.832
AW5	0.458		
AW6	0.877		
AW7	0.845		
AW8	0.753		
Accepting external influence		0.658	0.885
AW9	0.833		
AW10	0.818		
AW11	0.854		
AW12	0.734		

Note(s): CR=composite reliability, AVE=average variance explained.

Table 3: Discriminant validity of constructs

	Vigor	Absorption	Dedication	AL	SA	AEI
Vigor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Absorption	0.818	-	-	-	-	-
Dedication	0.804	0.879	-	-	-	-
AL	0.246	0.268	0.341	-	-	-
SA	0.250	0.135	0.140	0.117	-	-
AEI	0.251	0.176	0.158	0.108	0.670	-

Note(s): AL=authentic living, AEI=accepting external influence, SA=self-alienation.

Table 4: Path-coefficients

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient/ Std Beta	t Statistics	STDEV Values	Confidence Interval (95%)	Status
H1a- AL -> V	0.197	3.536	0.054	0.094,0.313	supported
H1b-AL -> D	0.283	5.035	0.059	0.184,0.403	supported
H1c-AL -> A	0.239	4.589	0.154	0.142,0.348	supported
H2a -SA -> V	0.140	1.960	0.116	0.013, 0.280	supported
H2b -SA -> D	0.069	0.909	0.114	-0.086, 0.216	not supported
H2c -SA -> A	0.070	0.831	0.115	-0.099, 0.231	not supported
H3a -AEI -> V	0.136	2.142	0.080	0.020, 0.270	supported
H3b - AEI-> D	0.100	1.402	0.077	-0.032, 0.244	not supported
H3c -AEI-> A	0.104	1.392	0.072	-0.038, 0.257	not supported

Note(s): AL=authentic living, SA=self-alienation, AEI=accepting external influence, V=vigor, D=dedication, A=absorption.

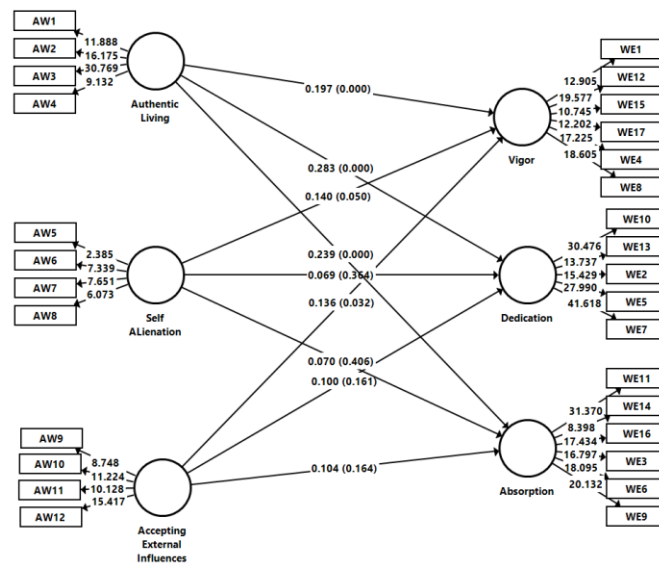


Figure 2: Structural model with path coefficients, p values, and t-values

To assess multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated. The VIF values for the independent variables namely authentic living (1.007), self-alienation (1.363), and accepting external influence (1.357) were less than the cut-off value 3 (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, there was no issue of multicollinearity.

Next, we evaluated the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect size (f^2). The variables authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence explained the 10 percent variance of the vigor ($R^2 = 0.100$). The R^2 value of the dedication was 0.105 which indicated that the 10 percent variance of dedication was explained by authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence. Only 8 percent variance in absorption ($R^2 = 0.083$) was explained by authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence. This established the in-sample predictive accuracy of the model. The R^2 values in our study are low. Further, the f^2 values were found to be small for authentic living. In behavioral science, f^2 values 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 are assessed as large, medium, and small respectively (Cohen, 1988).

Further, to establish the predictive relevance this study calculated the Q^2 value (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) through the blindfolding procedure. An omission distance ($D=7$) was applied. A Q^2 value for the endogenous variables (vigor=0.045, dedication=0.058, absorption=0.036) is larger than zero which shows that our model has predictive relevance (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Only the q^2 effect size for our exogenous variable authentic living had small predictive relevance. The effect size for self-alienation, and accepting external influence were lower than the Henseler criteria (Henseler et al., 2009) (0.02=small effect, 0.15=medium effect, 0.35=large effect).

Multigroup Analysis

To evaluate the moderation effects for multiple relationships, multigroup analysis (MGA) is suitable (Hair et al., 2017). For the model comparison across gender MGA with 5000 bootstraps were performed using Henseler's MGA (Henseler et al., 2009) and the permutation test (Chin & Dibbern, 2010).

The sample adequacy for males and females was ascertained using G* Power analysis (Faul et al., 2009) before applying MGA. Next, invariance across the groups was ascertained using the measurement invariance of the composite model (MICOM) approach (Henseler et al., 2016). This study applied 5000 permutations for step 2 and step 3. MICOM results show that in our model configural, compositional, and partial invariance is established (Table 5). The path model for males and females was specified equally. To run MGA, at least configural, and compositional variance should be established (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

Next, the moderation effect was tested. The MGA results clearly show (Table 6), that gender has a significant influence on the relationship between self-alienation and dedication. The path coefficient difference of 0.337 shows gender differences. Therefore, the results support hypotheses H5b. Further, a p-value of differences between path coefficients as per Henseler's method and permutation test for the path between self-alienation and dedication was lower than 0.05. This establishes significant gender differences in the path coefficient (Sarstedt et al., 2011). However, the path coefficients for other paths do not significantly differ between males and females. No significant difference was established across gender for the relationship between the authentic living and the dimensions of work engagement, accepting external influence and the dimensions of work engagement. In addition, the relationship between self-alienation and vigor as well as self-alienation and absorption did not differ between males and females. Therefore, other hypotheses for the moderating role of gender in our study could not be supported.

Table 5: Summary of MICOM results

Constructs	Configural Invariance (Same Algorithms for Both Groups)	Compositional Invariance (Correlation=1)		Partial Measurement Invariance Established Differences	Equal Mean Assessment		Equal variance assessment		Full Measurement Invariance C=1		
		C=1	Confidence Interval		Confidence Interval	Confidence Interval	Equal	Differences		Equal	
Vigor	Yes	0.978	[0.961, 1.000]	Yes	0.104	[-0.244; 0.239]	Yes	0.021	[-0.276; 0.273]	Yes	Yes
Dedication	Yes	0.998	[0.979, 1.000]	Yes	0.007	[-0.248; 0.247]	Yes	0.220	[-0.288; 0.262]	Yes	Yes
Absorption	Yes	0.982	[0.964, 1.000]	Yes	0.008	[-0.246; 0.243]	Yes	-0.110	[-0.233; 0.222]	Yes	Yes
AL	Yes	0.967	[0.946, 1.000]	Yes	-	[-0.250; 0.238]	Yes	-0.242	[-0.398; 0.391]	Yes	Yes
SA	Yes	0.982	[0.596, 1.000]	Yes	0.278	[-0.246; 0.245]	No	0.084	[-0.274; 0.250]	Yes	No
AEI	Yes	0.969	[0.897, 1.000]	Yes	0.244	[-0.246; 0.245]	Yes	-0.037	[-0.290; 0.276]	Yes	Yes

Note(s): AL=authentic living, SA=self-alienation, AEI=accepting external influence.

Next, the model was compared based on gender. Table 5. Shows the results of Henseler’s MGA (Henseler et al., 2009)and the permutation-based MGA (Chin& Dibbern, 2010).

Table 6: Multi-group analysis (MGA) summary

Hypothesis	Relationships	Path Coefficient		Confidence Interval (95%)		Path Coefficient Difference (Females- Males)	P-Value Difference (2 Tailed)	Henseler's MGA	Permutation	Supported
		Males	Females	Males	Females					
H4a	AL -> V	0.265	0.208	[0.139,0.424]	[0.047,0.357]	0.056	0.593	0.614	No/No	
H4b	AL -> D	0.337	0.280	[0.221,0.486]	[0.136,0.442]	0.057	0.577	0.632	No/No	
H4c	AL -> A	0.274	0.247	[0.151,0.432]	[0.087,0.387]	0.027	0.786	0.794	No/No	
H5a	SA -> V	0.226	0.084	[0.018,0.415]	[-0.199,0.320]	0.143	0.356	0.270	No/No	
H5b	SA -> D	0.234	-0.102	[0.041,0.413]	[-0.323,0.168]	0.337	0.046	0.030	Yes/Yes	
H5c	SA -> A	0.192	-0.009	[-0.013,0.401]	[-0.305,0.255]	0.201	0.266	0.202	No/No	
H6a	AEI-> V	0.079	0.190	[-0.103,0.289]	[-0.142,0.367]	0.111	0.397	0.378	No/No	
H6b	AEI-> D	0.059	0.182	[-0.124,0.258]	[-0.186,0.361]	0.123	0.375	0.385	No/No	
H6c	AEI-> A	0.138	0.105	[-0.062,0.352]	[-0.113,0.315]	0.032	0.844	0.826	No/No	

Note(s): AL=authentic living, SA=self-alienation, AEI=accepting external influence, V =vigor, D=dedication, A=absorption.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this research was to check whether the dimensions of authenticity at work are positively associated with the dimensions of work engagement among teachers in higher education. Further, an attempt was made to examine the moderating role of gender in this relationship. Although, extant research revealed the association of authenticity with work

engagement, the empirical investigation of the teaching profession in collectivist culture remained scant (de Carvalho et al., 2015; Rathi & Lee, 2021). Thus, the present study provides practical grounds for the theoretical assertion of authenticity in the teaching profession.

Firstly, the results revealed that authentic living is a positive and significant predictor of vigor, dedication, and absorption. This indicates that authentic living enhances work engagement in college teachers. In other words, when teachers feel authentic, they are more engaged in their work in comparison to those who do not feel authentic. Our findings are in line with the earlier studies (de Carvalho et al., 2015; Kuntz & Abbott, 2017; Leroy et al., 2015; Reis et al., 2016; Sutton, 2020; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014b). Authentic living had the strongest influence on the dedication of the teachers. It can be said that teachers who work in alignment with their values and beliefs are more likely to experience positive outcomes. The self-determination theory provides a reasonable explanation for the linkages between teachers' feelings of authenticity at work and work engagement. It appears that authentic teacher, when intrinsically motivated, exerts efforts that ultimately affect their intention for career growth in the same organization. Probably, it happens because they feel more engaged at work and are determined to continue with their job (Reissova & Papay, 2021). This indicates authenticity is a determinant of work engagement (de Carvalho et al., 2015) in teachers. Therefore, authenticity, or the experience of being true to oneself is essential for both happiness and employee engagement (Sutton, 2020). Possibly allowing and encouraging various authentic expressions of self is likely to have far-reaching positive effects at work and in society. In addition, it might be crucial for determining economic and societal success. Intrinsic regulation is characterized by feelings of joy and a pleasant experience; employees participate in work activities because they really enjoy it. This assertion is also in line with the basic premise of self-determination theory as experiencing feelings of joy is related to experiencing higher levels of work engagement, whereas a lack of pleasurable experiences is associated with higher levels of burnout. It appears that teachers who perceive high levels of authenticity at work are strongly intrinsically motivated to carry out their work activities and remain engaged in their work. Engaged teachers are attracted to their work. This attraction may be the result of high identification with their jobs which means they also feel authentic at work.

Another major finding of the present study is the positive and significant effect of self-alienation, and accepting external influence on vigor. This is in line with the findings of a previous study (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2020). The teachers working in government institutions are made to work in a time-bound and scheduled manner leaving little scope for exploring the self. In addition, teachers get less opportunity to know themselves and are required to respond to the orders of their superiors. Continuous compliance with others' demands may drain one's resources. Hence, the teachers might feel exhausted when not allowed to work authentically. Another, reason behind such findings might be the work culture of the given institution and the training given to the teachers. The non-significant relationship of self-alienation and external influence with dedication and absorption can be explained by the assertion made by the contemporaries (van den Bosch & Taris, 2018). Ambiguity might be the reason for the non-significant association of these dimensions with dedication and absorption. Accepting the influence of others at work might have the opposite effect on work-life. For instance, on the one hand, accepting the influence of others at work indicates a problem in authentic living while on the other hand accepting the influence of others also signifies one's good adjustment to the job.

This study also examined the moderating role of gender in the association of the dimensions of authenticity at work with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Gender was not found to moderate the association of authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence with the dimensions of work engagement, except for self-alienation and dedication. Results confirmed that females are least likely to give their time and energy when they are out of touch with their real selves at work. As opposed to females, males are more likely to invest their time and energy when they are not in touch with their core selves. Further, our findings show that work engagement is

not a gendered variable. Hence, this study rejects the notion that work engagement is gendered for teaching professionals. Our findings are in line with Mulaudzi et al. (2015). The similar nature of work for the male and female teachers appears to be the reason for no difference in their work engagement. Since the work in which the teachers are involved demands output in a time-bound manner and a gender-neutral way, they seem to leave their gender identities aside and work in the same manner at the workplace. Based on the findings of this study, it is confirmed that there is no gender difference in perceiving authentic living, self-alienation, accepting external influence, and the dimensions of work engagement in teachers.

The present study contributes to our understanding of authenticity and work engagement literature in higher education settings. Further, our study reveals that employees who live by their true selves and beliefs are more likely to experience work engagement irrespective of their gender. This positive experience of engagement is not restrained to the role of gender.

This study has a particular limitation that needs to be recognized. First, our study employed a cross-sectional design. Despite this limitation, the present study provides preliminary evidence of teachers' engagement predicted by their state authenticity at work. Secondly, our study suffers from the generalizability of the findings as the data for the present study was collected from the colleges of the Jammu region only. Therefore, the findings of our study cannot be extrapolated.

Given the limited number of empirical studies, more research is needed for an in-depth understanding of the relationships among the dimensions of authenticity at work and vigor, dedication, and absorption. Future studies should focus on the relationship between authenticity at work and work engagement in the light of other determining factors such as job crafting and perceived fit. In addition, in future research, an attempt should be made to bring clarity to the concept of authenticity at work (self-alienation and accepting external influence).

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical implications

First, the present findings extend the scarce theoretical knowledge on the concept of authenticity at work in relation to self-determination theory in the context of teachers (Guay, 2022). This study confirms the importance of authenticity in the work, showing that subjectively experienced authenticity at work can be related to autonomous motivation and identification among teachers as postulated by self-determination theory (Deci et al., 2017), supporting the assumption that authenticity at work is a possible antecedent of work engagement. According to self-determination theory, it is crucial for a good teacher to be equipped with motivational resources, such as autonomous motivation for teaching, a sense of professional fulfilment, and the capacity for teaching exploration aspects that prior research revealed to be connected to students best learning experiences (Kaplan & Madjar, 2017). According to Roth et al. (2007), teacher actions that encourage students autonomy act as a mediator between teachers autonomous motivation for teaching and students' autonomous drive for learning. This means that teachers' who are independently motivated are more supportive of their students' autonomy.

According to the self-determination theory, behaviours that are driven by internal motivation are the template for self-determined actions. These entirely self-determined act (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggest that individuals who are able to be completely authentic at work will exhibit higher levels of intrinsically driven behaviour and be more interested in their work (van den Bosch & Taris 2018). The current data provide credence to this idea. This implies that employees who maintain a sense of self, act in accordance with their own values and views, and refuse to submit to outside pressure will exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation behaviour. Employee conduct that is

driven by intrinsic motivation will decline if they feel less authentic. Employees who are less authentic exhibit greater degrees of non-self-determined actions.

Practical implications

In light of the findings, our study has important practical implications for higher education institutions. The higher education institutions should allow the expression of authenticity to teachers. Since authentic living promotes work engagement, the management should reinforce authentic behaviors by rewarding the teachers who remain true to themselves and perform to the best of their ability. In addition, incentives should be given to encourage those teachers who work authentically. Incentives such as such as promotion, rise in pay scales, conferring with awards, etc could be rewarding for the teachers. The institutions can also conduct workshops to sensitize the teaching faculty about the benefits of living authentically.

Furthermore, our findings emphasize the importance of people discovering or developing a career that allows them to feel authentic at work. Those who perceive a fit between their personal and professional values are more likely to choose and stay in the professions that provides them a match.

Management are required to provide specific work environment and opportunities that further might boost morale of the teachers to confront any challenging situation. In this regard an interesting finding of the present study suggests that self-alienation and accepting external influence could enhance vigor. Therefore, an assessment of the dimensions of the authenticity in teachers should be done to recognize those who could be more energetic while carrying out teaching-learning related activities.

Our research shows that a self-determination viewpoint applies to teachers. Authentic teachers are more likely to be driven by their intrinsic motivation thereby resulting in increased productivity for the organization. Authentic behavior can aid in the promotion of extrinsic motivation to supplement intrinsic motivation. Thus, present research has implications for higher education institutions, those at managerial positions, supervisors, and teaching faculty. Appropriate interventions to foster authenticity should be designed. Essentially, these interventions should be aimed to benefit at the organizational level and at the level of the employees.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the impact of authentic living, self-alienation, and accepting external influence on the teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption. The results demonstrated a positive relationship between authentic living and dimensions of work engagement. Self-alienation as well as accepting external influences and vigor were also associated positively. Our study is the first one to provide empirical evidence of the relevance of authenticity for the work engagement of teachers. Further, the study also investigated the role of gender as a moderator between the association of authenticity at work and work engagement, which is non-significant except for self-alienation and dedication. However, the findings should be applied with caution as a small effect size was reported in our study. It necessitates cross-validation of the findings. Our study tried to fill the gaps by paying attention to the authenticity at work in collectivist cultures, the teaching profession, and the role of gender in understanding work engagement. This study has also provided implications and suggestions for future research.

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