

## IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KALMUNAI ZONE IN AMPARA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA

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### Abstract

*Emotional intelligence becomes one of the important and popular tools for an organization to gain highly engaged workforce. The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the emotional intelligence on employee engagement among government school teachers working in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district of Sri Lanka as the population of the study. 200 teachers were selected from the sample population for the study adopted with simple random sampling method. Emotional intelligence was measured in terms of self-awareness, self-management, relationship management and social-awareness while employee engagement was measured with the dimensions of physical engagement, Emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. The results of the regression analysis reveals that nearly 49% of the variance in the employee engagement can be enlightened by the model comprising emotional intelligence. And their emotional intelligence has noteworthy and direct impact on their employee engagement. The main recommendation for the leadership of the school is, should take emotional intelligence as serious one and should take necessary actions to reduce the negative mood of the employees by organizing some engagement programs. The major suggestions of the study are, should develop or organize some intervention programs that would able the teachers to recognize their level of emotional intelligence and encourage them to perform better in their job.*

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Employee Engagement, School Teachers.*

### Introduction

Human resource is set of people who contribute to attain organizational micro as well as macro level execution and considered as an energetic resource an organization (Serasinghe and Opatha, 2007). Equating with other organizational resources it is appeared as noteworthy one (Aroosiya and Hussain Ali, 2014) and investment in employees deliberated as critical for organizations' current as well as upcoming performance (Opatha, 2009). To provide outstanding performance, workers are today compulsory to be much more involved in their work, not only bodily but also mentally and emotionally (Turner, Barling and Zacharatos, 2002). More than the technical skill which desired to performs the organizational functions, becoming

emotionally intelligent is one of the major responsibilities of the workers to increase the organizational performance level and achievement of the organizational objectives also (Ravichandran, Arasu and Kumar, 2015).

Employees are very significant to the personal and organizational effectiveness that have the skill to do their task and maintain smooth relationship with their associates (Yoon, 2016). Emotional intelligence is agreeable feeling of own and others (Goleman, 1998). According to (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) emotional intelligence is accept, realize, and control emotions of other peoples and themselves. Sulaiman and Al Shaikh, (2007) stated that emotional intelligence is the skill that an employee has to face issues which are from

outside of the internal environment and also used to create, recognize, understand and measure the feelings of others and themselves. Employee engagement has the ability to induce the outcome of the organization both personally and collaboratively with in the firm (McBain, 2006) and also if the organization have engaged employees inside the organization it will help to get the employees, who are committed, wish to stay within the organization and more productive (Gupta and Kumar, 2015). Generally, employees become more engaged to their work as well as their workplace. and it will enhance the positive consequences and reduce the negative consequences such as turnover and absenteeism. To enhance the level of engagement among employees motivating emotional intelligence of employees is very important (Ravichandran, Arasu and Kumar, 2015).

Education sector is very important one to get a complete human being with adequate abilities, skills and knowledge. Technology plays major role in this sector today and its impact are at higher levels which associated with the education sector. This technological advancement may give both pros as well as cons to various peoples such as managers, academicians and teachers (Kaur, Shri and Mital, 2018). The most challengeable work place is school and the job which has more demand for teacher (Pervis, et.al, 2017). School education is very important to everyone and which is provides youth development, satisfying life and democratic society and for this, teachers are very important (Cohen et al., 2009). Teachers' emotions are very powerful one which has the absolute effect on efficiency of their work and quality and internal as well as the external enhancement of the students they teach.

To deliver a complete human being to the society teaching profession is crucial one. It is highly depending on the effectiveness of the teacher performance. Teachers are the back born of all other professions. However, the peoples who are working in teaching profession enjoy minimum level of satisfaction in their field. People choose teaching profession when other alternative choices of professions have failed (Anari, 2012). Contribution of education sector is matter for wellbeing of the society. It plays a key role for

the development of the society and produce successful future leaders. However, Sri Lanka's school education sector is facing numerous challenges. Liyanage, (2014) emphasized that there are some challenges in Sri Lanka's current system of education. According to Kaur, Shri and Mital (2018), education sector technological advancement has emerged so that nemours challenges such as higher expectations of the top authority of the school as well as the parents, meeting their work demand, extensive course contents, and increased stress level in career life. These types of challenges have increased the emotional disturbance of the teachers.

So emotional intelligence of teachers is matter in this concern. If they are lack in emotional intelligence, it will enhance their stress level and can demolish the good relationship with the students, staffs and superiors and they become less engaged in their job. Therefore, it is one of the major responsibilities of the leaders of the school to enhance the emotional intelligent level of the teachers by providing proper professional training to them (Adepoju, 2001). There are some researches done under the study between emotional intelligence and employee engagement" but there is not much research about government school teachers in Sri Lankan context. This study focuses on how and what extend the emotional intelligence impact on employee engagement of government school teachers in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district. With the objective of identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement of government school teachers in Kalmunai zone, this study was conducted.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Bar-On, (2000), the concept of emotional intelligence outlines as an effective understanding about ourself as well as others to have a very good association with other people and to embrace and cope with their environment in which they live to become more positive in dealing with their environmental demands. Furthermore, it is the capability to understand and explain emotions also means to the emotional intelligence. However, another side, the concept emotional intelligence is to enhancement in thinking (Mayer & Caruso, 2002).

The concept employee engagement refers to that how the psychological experiences of work and work contexts shape the process of individuals presenting and absencing themselves during task performance in the work place. Work engagement was further developed and conceptualized as a positive and fulfilling state of mind of an individual characterized by the following things such as: vigor, dedication, and absorption in his or her work. Vigor involves higher levels of energy and mental resilience while performing their job, dedication refers to being strongly involved in individual's work and experiencing a sense of importance, enthusiasm, and challenge and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and engrossed in individual's work (Khan, 1990). Moreover, Kahn, (1990 and 2010) described engagement as the harnessing of people's selves to their job, such that they fully invest their physical, cognitive and emotional resources in their work roles. In essence, work engagement is manifested as energy, involvement and a focused striving toward the attainment of organizational objectives (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Teachers who have the ability to control their stress and frustration and also who have the ability to accept the feelings of their students can provide success to their students (Iqbal, 2017) not only it enhances the achievement level of the students and also it will produce highly engaged teachers who can maintain better interaction with their students and who can actively contribute to the success of their students (Alam and Ahamad, 2017). Furthermore, researchers identified that the criticality of the emotional intelligence for promising organizational significances. Teachers who are highly intelligent in emotions can show higher level of engagement in their work than the people who are less emotionally intelligent. So, teachers' emotions are controlling one (Anari, 2012).

Emotional intelligence, as a construct, adds perception into the potential influence the various emotional intelligence competencies have on work performance and organizational performance (Boyatzis, 2009). Employee engagement, carries forth the influence of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components into the work place (Truss, Delbridge, Alfes, Shantz, & Soane, 2014). Understanding both brings the importance of

emotion into the workplace from a leadership perspective and employee staff contribution to organizational performance. A review of the various contexts within which emotional intelligence has emerged will help set the stage for understanding the theory. Initial research focused on the cognitive aspects of intelligence, but today psychologists and business researchers have begun to understand that the non-cognitive aspects of intelligence are also important (Cherniss, 2000). This new form of intelligence has emerged over the past decade in discussions among business leaders, industrial psychologists, social scientists, and others (Cote & Miners, 2006). A generally accepted definition for emotional intelligence is the aptitude to manage one's own and other peoples' feelings and emotions; to distinguish between different emotions and label them accurately; and to use the emotional information assessed to guide thinking and actions (Cherniss, 2000; Shoostarian, Ameli, & Aminilari, 2013). Polychroniou (2009) describes emotional intelligence as being a combination of interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. Goleman (2005) submits that EI consists of the social competencies of empathy, motivation, and social skills. Loannidou and Konstantikaki (2008) point out that EI not only involves the ability to recognize, determine, and manage the emotions of one's self and others, but also includes managing the emotions of groups. Emotionally intelligent leaders use self-awareness and self-control to influence others by understanding how their behavior affects others (Goleman, 2005). There are three major emotional intelligence theories (Webb, 2009), and they differ in how they delineate the critical factors that make up emotional intelligence; how they define EI; how EI works inter and intra personally; and the instruments they use to measure the concept (Codier, et.al., 2008). The first of the three major theories that have emerged from the research is the trait or personality model developed by Reuven Bar-On (1999). The theory focuses on the individual's skill to process emotional information and use it to interact within a social setting. Bar-On initially used the term emotional quotient to describe his model. He later abandoned the name and adopted emotional intelligence as the descriptor (Codier, et.al, 2008).

Employee engagement has gained the interest of business organizations due to the current economic challenges they face, specifically doing more with fewer resources in an increasingly competitive environment (Albrecht, 2010). Organizations are also attracted to the dual goals employee engagement comprises. The importance from an organizational leadership perspective is that employee engagement offers strategies to enhance the contribution of the individual worker and the improvement of the organization's overall performance (Truss et al., 2014). Employee engagement is focused on understanding the degree to which employees commit to something or someone within their workplace, how hard they work, and how long they stay because of that commitment (Alvi, Haider, Haneef, & Ahmed, 2014). De Clercq, Bouckenoghe, Raja, and Matsyborska (2014) posit that employee engagement is a set of positive emotions that brings congruence and focus on goal alignment, resulting in the reduction of organizational nonconformity. A critical factor that influences goal congruence is the alignment of the employee-supervisor relationship. Earlier research has determined that this relationship may affect job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay by the employee (De Clercq, Bouckenoghe, Raja, & Matsyborska, 2014). In addition to the influence of the employee-supervisor goal congruence, employee engagement is affected by the employee's feelings, ideas, and views about his or her job. Employee engagement leads to enthusiasm, passion for the work, and a sense of pride (Alvi et al., 2014). The employee engagement construct has been challenging to develop due to numerous potential operational variations, such as job engagement, personal commitment, organizational involvement, staff engagement, and work engagement (Truss et al., 2014). It is believed that sufficient evidence now exists to suggest that employee engagement is a unique psychological state (Truss et al., 2014).

By understanding the evidences between emotional intelligence and employee engagement, this study conceptualizes those relations among teachers concerns. Accordingly, the conceptual model was developed as follows;

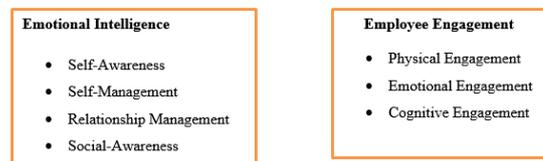


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Based on the conceptual model, hypothesis was formulated as follows:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a relationship between Emotional intelligence and Employee engagement of government school teachers working in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district of Sri Lanka.

## Methods and Materials

The study covers all the teachers working in government schools (1 AB) in Kalmunai Zone in ampara district of Sri Lanka where there are ten (1 AB) category schools in the zone where total population consist 972 teachers. 200 teachers were selected among the total population with the adoption of Simple random sampling technique to analyse the impact of emotional intelligence on work engagement. Ampara district is one of rural area district where education is at higher level in related with other districts in Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected through self- administered questionnaire. Emotional intelligence was measured in terms of self-awareness, self-management, relationship management and social-awareness while Employee engagement was measured with the dimensions of physical engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. 22 questions were included in emotional intelligence while 18 questions were included in employee engagement. 188 responses were received out of 200 samples which was represented to 94 percent response rate.

## Results and Discussion

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Variables	No. of scale items	Cronbach's Alpha value
Emotional Intelligence	22	0.766
Employee Engagement	18	0.744

(Source: Survey Data)

The reliability analysis for Emotional Intelligence is 0.766 and the Employee Engagement is 0.744. According to George and Mallery (2003), the alpha value of variables involved in this study is acceptable. Consequently, this instrument seems to be fairly reliable measure of evaluating the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement. In order to ensure whether the scales used in the research have construct validity, factor analysis was done. Consequently, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett's Test) is significant  $p < 0.05$  for the factor analysis to be deliberated as apposite. According to KMO values of EI and EE are 0.686 and 0.714 respectively which are above the standard of 0.5 and the recorded chi-square values from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of EI is 765.286 (df=231) and the recorded chi-square values from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity of EE is 573.817 (df= 153) respectively both at the significant level of  $p < 0.000$ .

*Descriptive statistics of Emotional Intelligence and its dimension*

The mean value overall emotional intelligence is 4.3344, this suggests higher level of emotional intelligence among the respondents (Teachers) and they supposed the emotional intelligence have influence on their employee engagement significantly. The standard deviation is 0.24306, exposed that there was a low variation in the levels of emotional intelligence among the respondents (Teachers). This was definite by inspecting the minimum and maximum scores of the emotional intelligence. Where, the minimum score was 3.82, whereas the maximum scores were 5.00. Though there is no big dissimilarity between the mean values of dimensions of emotional intelligence such as: self-awareness and social-awareness competencies were high among the respondents (Teachers) as these generated a mean value of 4.3812 and 4.4486 respectively. The standard deviations are 0.45153 and 0.36034 respectively, displayed low variations in the level of self-awareness and social-awareness among the teachers. Equaled to these two dimensions, respondents' self-management and relationship management were somewhat less, produced a mean value of 4.2547 and 4.3537 respectively. And standard deviations were 0.32559 and 0.27248 respectively, infers a significant level of

disparities among the respondents (teachers) comparatively.

*Descriptive statistics of Employee Engagement and its dimension*

The mean value overall employee engagement is 4.3915, this high level of employee engagement among the teachers. The standard deviation is 0.25138, displayed that there was a low variation in the levels of employee engagement among the teachers. This was established by examining the minimum and maximum scores of employee engagement. Where, the minimum score was 3.83, though the maximum scores were 5.00. Although, there is no a big variance between the mean values of dimensions of employee engagement, cognitive engagement was high midst the respondents (teachers). The standard deviation is 0.32943 exposed that there was a low variation in the levels of employee engagement midst the respondents. This was established by examining the minimum and maximum scores. When, the minimum score was 3.75, whereas the maximum score was 5.00. The emotional engagement supposed as the second most noteworthy domain of the employee engagement among the respondents. It harvests a mean value of 4.4032.

Compared to these two dimensions, teachers' physical engagement was somewhat less, generated a mean value of 4.3205. Standard deviations of emotional engagement and physical engagement are 0.38438 and 0.29757 separately, suggests a significant level of disparities among the respondents (teachers) comparatively.

*Correlation Results*

Table 2: Correlations between EI and employee engagement

Variables	Employee Engagement	
Emotional Intelligence	Person Correlation	0.700**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000
	N	188

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

*(Source: Survey Data)*

Correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.700 which displays that there is a strong positive relationship between emotional

intelligence and employee engagement, followed by the significance level. 0.000. It specifies a very small value smaller than 0.01, and well below the 0.05 cut – off value or standard value. It designates that the found relationship is statistically highly significant as correlation is significant at 0.01 level (p-value=0.000 < 0.05). Consequently, it can be statistically appealed that there is a significant strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement.

### Regression Results

Simple linear regression analysis enumerates the relationship between two variables (dependent and the independent) by producing an equation for a straight line of the form ( $Y=a+\beta x$ ) which uses the independent variable, emotional intelligence (x) to forecast the dependent variable, employee engagement (y). Regression analysis involves estimating the values of the gradient ( $\beta$ ) and intercept (a) of the line that best fits the survey data.

Table 3: Model Summary of Simple Linear Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.700	0.490	0.487	0.17997

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence  
 b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement  
 (Source: Survey Data)

Model summary is presented in the above Table 3 In terms of the table, R square and adjusted R square exposed the values as 0.490 and 0.487 respectively. The crucial information from the table above is the adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.487. This point out that nearly 49% of the variation in the employee engagement can be enlightened by the model comprising emotional intelligence. This is relatively high so predictions from the regression equation are fairly reliable. It also means that 51.3% of the variation is still inexplicable therefore; accumulating other independent variable could recover the fit of the model.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.792	1	5.792	178.836	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.024	186	0.032		
	Total	11.817	187			

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence  
 (Source: Survey Data)

In terms of the statistics of ANOVA charted in the above Table 4, value of SS regression is 5.792 which mentions to sum of squares elucidated by the regression equation, shadowed by SS residual is 6.024 denotes to the erraticism in dependent variable (employee engagement) which is left unexplained by the regression equation of the study and SS total is 11.817 respectively with 1, 186 and 187 df (degrees of freedom). Values of MS regression and MS residual are 5.792 and 0.032 respectively. The F value is attained by in-between the MS regression by the MS residual. The F statistics is 178.836 which are also significant. Here as F is significant (p value = 0.000 which is lesser than the standard of 0.05), it can be decided that there is linear relationship between the emotional intelligence and the employee engagement and that the regression equation permits to predict the employee engagement (dependent variable) at great level. The table of coefficients is the most essential table. It encompasses the coefficients for the regression equation and tests of significance.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	Constant	1.253	0.253	0.700	5.331	0.000
	Emotional Intelligence	0.724	0.054		13.373	0.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement  
 (Source: Survey data)

According to the above tabulated table, unstandardized beta values for constant and emotional intelligence are 1.253, 0.724 respectively. The unstandardized regression coefficients of emotional intelligence in the regression model designate the extent of effect of emotional intelligence on employee engagement of government school teachers. A linear regression equation between an independent (Emotional intelligence) and dependent variable (Employee Engagement). The resulting regression equation is:  $EE = 1.253 + 0.724 (EI)$

The above formulated equation points out that if the independent variable emotional intelligence changes by one unit, there will be 0.724 units change in the employee engagement. It also displays the way of the relationship. The coefficient is positive, which point out direct positive effect of emotional intelligence on employee engagement of government school teachers. The t-value contrary to emotional intelligence regression coefficient in the model is reported to measure whether the emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of the employee engagement. Since  $t = 13.373$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is significant predictor of employee engagement.

The results of the study express the nature of the constructs which were associated. There was a hypothesis developed to see the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Employee engagement of government school teachers working in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district of Sri Lanka. The alternative hypothesis articulated for the study was that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement of government school teachers in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district. The appropriate null hypothesis is indicated that there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement of government school teachers in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district. The suitable statistical test Person Correlation Coefficient was performed in order to test alternative hypothesis. Preferred level of significant level was 0.05. Considering the alternative hypothesis, Emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with employee engagement, it is very flawless that this can be proven to be truthful based on the descriptive and correlation statistics that has been exposed  $EE = 1.253 + 0.724 (EI)$ , since the states specify a mean value of 4.3344, for the questions that were tested with respect to the emotional intelligence (independent variable). Moreover, Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is strong positive which is 0.700 at 0.01 significant levels. It specifies that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. As the significant value (0.000) is very smaller than the preferred level of significance (0.05), the identified correlation coefficient (0.700) is

statistically significant. Further regression model expressions that increase of one unit in emotional intelligence will upsurge the employee engagement by 0.724 units with 0.000 significance levels. Therefore, alternative hypothesis is accepted though null hypothesis is rejected with rationalization through the data collected and analyzed. Consequently, there is statistical proof to claim that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. Findings of the study are in line with those of related studies highlight the significance of emotional intelligence in employee engagement across a multiplicity of settings. For example, Liu and Cho, (2017) found that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement among the hotel managers and non-managers. Goyal and Ajawani, (2017) also proofed that a positive relationship among emotional intelligence and employee engagement IT professionals.

## Conclusions

The findings of the study determined that there is a significant and strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement of government school teachers who are working in Kalmunai zone in Ampara district of Sri Lanka. The exposed that around 49% of variance in employee engagement is explained by emotional intelligence and their emotional intelligence has noteworthy and direct impact on their employee engagement which means that higher levels of emotional intelligence of government school teachers central to higher levels of employee engagement. The results display that government school teachers with higher level of emotional intelligence are representing higher level of employee engagement. Teachers who are not emotionally intelligent cannot maintain a better relationship with their students and their engagement level is very low. So, there is a major responsibility for necessary parties to enhance the level of emotional intelligence of teachers for their engagement and better performance. Ministry of education should organize intervention programs that would able the teachers to recognize their level of emotional intelligence and encourage them to perform better in their performance, offerings that may help include counseling programs and training sessions. As

understanding the prominence of emotional intelligence in employee engagement, teachers and other parties of the schools can take responsibility of their own exertion to study emotional intelligence and frequently practicing on it.

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