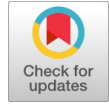


# A Study on Student Engagement among MBA Graduates

V. Uma Maheswari



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

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

## I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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\*Correspondence Author(s)

**Dr. V. Uma Maheswari\***, Assistant Professor, Department of MBA, Sastra Deemed to be University, Chennai (Tamil Nadu), India. E-mail: [umaagaanesh@gmail.com](mailto:umaagaanesh@gmail.com), ORCID ID: [0000-0002-0620-9628](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0620-9628)

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The present study aims to understand the variability in engagement levels based on demographic factors, such as age, gender, and family income, as well as behavioural factors, including the level of interaction in the classroom and the frequency of late attendance at college.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

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

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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

## IV. METHODOLOGY

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



# A Study on Student Engagement among MBA Graduates

The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to investigate the moderating role of demographic and behavioural variables on student engagement among MBA graduates.

## V. HYPOTHESES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The sample profile reveals that male students outnumber female students, and more than 50% of the students' monthly family income is below Rs. 30,000, with their parents holding blue-collar jobs. 28% of the students in the sample survey never come late to college, and nearly 42% of the students come late less than twice a week. Eighty-six per cent of the respondents reported that English was their medium of instruction at the school level, and 80% of the students occasionally interacted with their teacher during the teaching sessions.

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

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

**Table 2: Gender and Student Engagement**

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

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

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

Based on the above results, it can be inferred that the level of student engagement varies by gender. It can be seen that all three alternative hypotheses are rejected at a 99.99% confidence level. Female students have more vigour (Mean Rank = 113.75), Dedication (Mean Rank =109), and Absorption (Mean Rank =109.81) than the male students. Female students tend to have more energy, perseverance, resilience, and vigour in their studies. Their dedication level,

in terms of enthusiasm, pride, and inspiration for their studies, as well as their perception of their studies as more meaningful, purposeful, and challenging, is also very high in comparison with that of male students. Female students' absorption level measured by attachment, engrossment, and their feeling of getting carried away with studies is also higher than that of their male counterparts.



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

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

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

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

When the medium of instruction differs between school and college levels, it can impact the students' academic engagement levels. The Mann-Whitney U test results confirm that vigour and dedication are very high for students who had their medium of instruction in the regional language (Mean Rank = 101.59 and 102.23) compared to those who studied in English at both the school and college

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

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

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

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

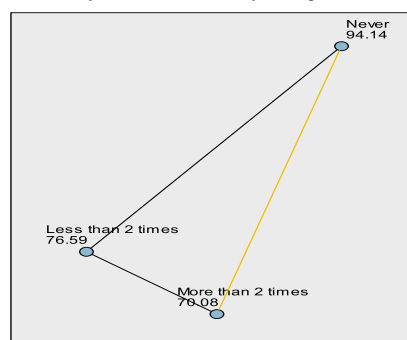
Notes: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; NS = not significant.

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

students who never come late and those who arrive late more than twice a week (Refer to Charts 1 and 2). These differences are significant at a 95% confidence interval. The absorption level remains the same, irrespective of the frequency of late arrivals.

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

**Pairwise Comparisons of Frequency of Late Coming**



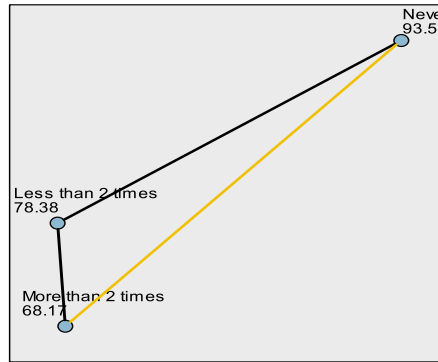
Each node shows the sample average rank of Frequency of Late Coming.

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

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

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

Pairwise Comparisons of Frequency of Late Coming



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Demographic factors, such as the type of job held by the parents and the family's monthly income, do not significantly impact student engagement. The kind of Job of the parents does not substantially affect the student engagement level in terms of Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption. Similarly, Monthly Family Income does not significantly impact the student engagement level in terms of Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. The female students and those who regularly interact during classroom sessions exhibit a high level of dedication, energy, and involvement, considering the studies both challenging and inspiring. The students who always come late to class and the students who

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

These would lead to personality development and achievement amongst the





students. Engaged students perform well academically and are less likely to drop out of college, as there is a positive relationship between student engagement and retention [13]. The conditions that lead to student engagement contribute to a safe, positive and creative college climate and culture.

### VIII. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study has shed light on the variables that influence student engagement levels in the classroom. The study has revealed that family income or whether parents have white-collar or blue-collar jobs does not significantly impact students' enthusiasm for the learning process. Instead, the students who interact and participate in class, as well as those who are regular and on time, show a high level of dedication, absorption, and vigour. This suggests that teachers play a significant role in enhancing students' engagement levels by employing andragogical teaching methods, including case studies, role-plays, quizzes, presentations, and group discussions. The role of teachers in making learning immersive is crucial in enhancing student engagement levels.

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Authors Contributions	I am the sole author of the article.

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### AUTHOR PROFILE



**Dr. V. Uma Maheswari** holds an MBA with specialisations in finance and marketing. She also holds an M.A. in Economics. She is qualified in NET in Economics and SET in Management. She has more than 15 years of teaching experience. She has a PhD in Management from Pondicherry University. She is currently working as an assistant professor in the Department of MBA at Sastra Deemed to be University, Chennai Campus. She has completed the certificate course on Public Financial Management offered by the International Monetary Fund. She is skilled in statistical analysis using the SPSS package, and she is passionate about discerning meaningful insights from the data to understand the behaviour of the subject area of the research. Her research interests include Consumer Behaviour, Services Marketing and Financial Services Marketing.

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