

## An Investigation of Faculty Members' Engagement in Saudi Arabia

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### Abstract

Faculty engagement has been proved to be a critical driver of the universities' efficiency and effectiveness. The first step towards building an engaged workforce is to get a measure of faculty perceptions of their engagement level to their universities. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the faculty members' engagement in the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. It examines the relationship between the faculty professional variables and their level of engagement to their institutions. William Kahn's (1990) three-component model of employee engagement was partially adapted as a framework to measure the faculty members' engagement. A questionnaire was used to better address the objective of this study. The data were obtained from the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (Dammam University) through an internet-based survey. The validity and the reliability of the questionnaire has been evaluated and reported. Results of the analyses show that cognitive engagement is reported to be higher than both the emotional and physical engagement, with a mean rating of 4.040 and a standard deviation of .487, based on the five-point scale. Given the engagement level of the faculty members in this study, the university administrators should develop policies, and strategies that encourage and support engagement among faculty members at the University in order to maximize their engagement. Policy makers must also take into consideration the needs of the faculty members

**Keywords:** Faculty engagement, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, faculty members, Saudi universities

### Introduction

Faced with competitive pressures, universities pay more attention to develop engagement among its members. According to Dale Carnegie Training White Paper (2012), employee engagement is considered to be a significant driver and a critical factor of the organization's success in today's competitive environment. The employee engagement does not only have to critically affect employee performance, loyalty, satisfaction, and retention, but also to ensure graduates' satisfaction (Lockwood, 2007). Employee engagement is also considered as a source of development and innovation (Ghafoor et al., 2011). It has been proved to be one of the most significant indicators and predictors of success in universities.

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A review of literature shows that employee engagement to the organization is positively associated with overall organization performance (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006; Saks, 2006; Dale Carnegie training White Paper, 2012). For example, Harvard Business Review (2013) undertook a global quantitative study of more than 568 managers. More than 42% of the respondents were from organizations of 10,000 or more employees. The research also involved in-depth interviews with 12 best practice leaders. The results of the study show that although 71% of the respondents rank employee engagement as a very important factor to achieving overall organizational success, 24% of the respondents state that the employees in their organizations are highly engaged, while three quarters of those surveyed said that the majority of the employees are not engaged. They also found a challenge to measure engagement and there is much to be done to ensure that they have a highly engaged working environment (Harvard Business Review, 2013). Consequently, employee engagement has recently received extensive practical attention by the both HR departments and academic researchers.

Although employee engagement has been a focus of some studies (Swaminathan & Ananth, 2009; Jaupi & Llaci, 2015) in the last few years, there remains a shortage of scholarly review on the topic. Moreover, quantitative analysis of employee engagement in Saudi Arabian Universities has been less extensive. The objective of this paper is to understand the nature of engagement among the members of the faculty at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. It also examines the relation between the faculty personal and professional variables and their engagement to their work.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Research on employee engagement has settled a strong correlation between engagement and organizational commitment, and work role performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Pati & Kumar, 2010; Ghafoor et al., 2011), and negative relation of turnover (Jones & Harter, 2005). The notion of employee engagement is a relatively new term in management literature that has appeared for nearly two decades. The term coined by the Gallup Research Group (The Gallup Organization, 2004) has been attractive for the reason it has been shown to have a statistical correlation with performance, commitment, and satisfaction. According to Markos and Sridevi (2010), employee engagement derives from two related terms that have been the theme of extensive experiential and conceptual attention: organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Rafferty et al., 2005). Both employee engagement and organizational commitment catch some aspect of "employees' perceptions of themselves, their work, and their organization" (Harter et al., 2009, 269). Moreover, both positively correlate with job satisfaction and performance, and negatively correlate with turnover (Jones et al., 2009).

However, Robinson et al. (2004) reveal that although employee engagement interferes with the definition of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, neither organizational commitment, nor organizational citizenship behavior show the two-way nature of the construct of employee engagement. Rafferty et al. (2005) also distinguish between the two prior terms and employee engagement on the ground that

engagement is a two-concurrent process between the staff and the work environment. It is a construct that is more related to the bilateral component of the staff experience with the supervisors and administrators (Jones et al., 2009). Moreover, according to Saks (2006), employee engagement is also distinguished from organizational commitment in that commitment means the employees' attachment and attitude to the organization, while engagement is not just an approach, it is the extent to which the employee is involved in their organization. Also, while organizational citizenship behavior includes informal behaviors that support the organization, its leaders, and co-workers; the engagement focuses on the individual's formal role performance rather than informal or voluntary behaviors (Kular et al., 2008).

According to May et al. (2004), engagement might be also overlapped or associated with 'job involvement' which is represented and described as a 'cognitive or state of psychological identification'. Engagement is also distinguished from involvement in that engagement focuses on the way the employees express themselves during their achievement of work. Moreover, while engagement includes emotions and behaviors, job involvement encompasses only cognitions (Kular et al., 2008). Thus, Saks (2006) states that although the definitions of employee engagement in the practical literature often interfere with other terms such as satisfaction, OCB, and commitment, in the theoretical literature engagement is defined a 'distinct and unique construct'. According to Pati and Kumar (2010), the academic work related to the construct of engagement is limited to three approaches: the role theory approach (Kahn, 1990; Rich, LePin & Crawford, 2010; May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), the burn-out approach (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli et al., 2002), and the social exchange approach (Saks, 2006).

The role-theory approach was initiated by William Kahn (1990) who conducted one of the earliest and most influential works on engagement. The theoretical foundation of Khan's work is based on Goffman's work (1961) which states that people's involvement and detachment to their roles varies (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn (1990), engagement is defined as "the harnessing of organization member selves to their work, roles; in engagement people employee and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally, during role performances" (p. 694). The cognitive component of engagement focuses on the employee's perceptions about the institution, its managers and its environment (Kular et al., 2008). It is defined as the "the intense focus of the employee's attentions on the work duties leading to through absorption and resistance to disturbances" (Rothbard, 2001, p. 655). On the other hand, cognitive disengagement is defined as the little concentration on one's work role duties and tasks (Rich, 2006). The emotional aspect of employee engagement, the employees' feelings about the organization, its managers and co-workers, and the work involves the environment (Kular et al., 2008). It is also defined as the intense connection between the employee's true feelings, views, and emotions with the work role, which lead to emotions and 'feelings of pride and enthusiasm' (Rich, 2006).

The emotional aspect of engagement also concerns the nature of the attitudes that the employees have to the organization and its managers. The physical component of engagement focuses on the physical activities exercised by the employees to achieve their tasks in the organization (Kular et al., 2008). In other words, it is the immersion of the employee's physical energies toward a specific job duty. Physically engaged employees are the

ones who are committed to spend "substantial force in their tasks and powerfully performing their roles efficiently even in challenges" (Alvi et al., 2014, p. 821). For example, Kahn (1990) in his own study states that one of the participant states that he is "just laying around instead of doing his real job duties" (p. 692). Thus, according to Kahn (1990), employee engagement means that the employee has to be emotionally and physically attached to the organization when performing his job / work role.

The Burn-out approach initiated by Maslach and Leiter (1997) as a positive antithesis of burn-out, emphasizes that engagement is identified by energy, attachment, competence and productivity. According to Maslach et al. (2001), six aspects lead to engagement which are appropriate assignments, feelings of choice and authority, relevant compensations, recognition, supportive-work community and social support, meaningful and valued work, and fairness and values. Engagement like burn-out is to mediate the relation between the six-factors and the organizational outputs. The employee's valued work was found to be strongly associated with engagement and the employees' role performance (May et al., 2004). They argue that high levels of engagement are found in the organizations where there is a shared sense of objectives that connects the employees.

Saks (2006) refutes the burn-out approach and puts forth the Social Exchange Theory (SET). The social exchange theory (SET) is based on the assumption that relations grow overtime into mutual communities as long as the organization and the employees follow specific rules. So, the activities of the managers lead to a reaction from the employees and the other way. Faculty members are expected to interchange their engagement to different levels based on the socio-emotional and economic resources (Pati & Kumar, 2010). In other words, when the employees are treated positively, they believe that they are obliged to repay their organization, and the employees can usually respond to their employers through the level of engagement" (Saks, 2006, p. 603). Consequently, the Exchange Social theory (EST) explains why employees become more or less engaged. Saks's theory is compatible with Robinson's (2004) view of engagement as an interactive relationship between the employee and the managers (Memon et al., 2014). It is also consistent with Bakker's et al. (2012) view of employee engagement as affected by emotional and rational factors, including socio-economic factors.

Most researchers negate the burn-out, because they believe that they cannot expect the two concepts to be completely negatively associated (Maslach, & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). However, the role theory approach and the social exchange theory provide a more profound ground for analyzing the concept of employee engagement. While the EST explains why employees become engaged in the performance of their work, the role theory approach defines engagement in terms of the cognitive, emotional and physical state of the engaged employee. The present study utilizes the classic 1990 William Kahn three-component model of organizational engagement in order to understand the level of engagement among the faculty members in the Imam Abdul Rahaman Bin Faisal University. William Kahn three-component model of organizational engagement model is one of the comprehensive models on employee engagement. It is also one of the first models to view employee engagement as a versatile concept. According to Kahn, employee engagement is that relation between the employee and the organizational where the staff must be fully involved cognitively, emotionally, and physically.

A literature review on the relationship between employee engagement and the demographic variables of faculty members shows that this topic is still unresolved. Some studies have investigated the relationship between academic rank and the faculty engagement. The results prove contradictory. While, for example, Insync Surveys (2009) found that academic rank has a positive impact on faculty engagement, Dale Carnegie Training White Paper research (2012) has found that academic rank is negatively associated with engagement. Moreover, other researchers have examined the association between employee engagement and gender. The results were also unresolved. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (2006) survey of 2,000 employees has stated that gender is positively associated with the level of employee engagement. However, other researchers (Swaminathan and Ananth, 2009; Dale Carnegie Training White Paper, 2012; Jaupi and Llaci, 2015) have found that gender is negatively associated with employee engagement.

Some other studies (Carnegie, 2012; Jaupi and Llaci, 2015) have investigated the association between the work experience or the duration of service and engagement. Some investigations found that the work experience is positively associated with faculty engagement (Swaminathan and Ananth, 2009; Insync Surveys, 2009; Dale Carnegie Training White Paper, 2012; Jaupi and Llaci, 2015); other studies reported that the work experience is negatively associated with engagement (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2006).

Very few papers have studied the relation between the faculty's college cluster and nationality and employee engagement. Consequently, the purpose of the this paper is to measure the engagement level among faculty members and investigate the relationship between the faculty's professional variables including gender, academic rank, years of experience, and nationality, and the engagement level to their colleges.

### **Problem and Questions of the Study**

This study has been designed to examine the level of engagement among faculty members in the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. The study further investigates the relationship between the faculty's demographic variables (duration of service, academic rank, college cluster, gender and nationality), and their engagement to their institutions. William Kahn's three-component model of employee engagement (1990) was partially adapted as the framework in order to measure faculty members' engagement in the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. The three-component model is still not well investigated in other cultures, other than in Western English-speaking countries.

The following questions were developed to address the problem of the study:

1. What is the level of faculty member's engagement to their institutions?
2. Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the overall engagement, based on duration of service at the University?
3. Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement, based on academic rank?

4. Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement, based on college cluster?
5. Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement, based on gender?
6. Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the overall engagement, based on nationality?

### **Significance of the Study**

The employee engagement has been proved to be a significant factor and indicator of the performance of faculty members. It is also a critical driver of organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007) notes that the first step towards building an engaged workforce is to get a measure of employee perceptions of their engagement level to their institutions. Accordingly, understanding faculty's perceptions of their engagement level to their colleges is central to providing university administrators and policy makers in higher education with evidence-based options on how to develop strategies and design programs that might improve the level of the faculty engagement.

### **Methodology**

#### **Population and Sample**

The population of this paper was all full-time faculty members employed at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, excluding those on sabbatical or other study leaves / vacations. The research sample size has been calculated to be (n=107) with a marginal error of (0.084) and a confidence level of 95%.

#### **Research Setting**

The data were obtained from the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. This university is one of the premier universities and one of the top academic institutions in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This university was selected for this research because it was undergoing vital reform efforts and because the author had contacts that could assist with identifying representative participants for the overall population. Participation of the staff was on voluntary basis.

#### **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire was used in order to better achieve the objectives of the study. A structured faculty engagement questionnaire, based on the classic 1990 William Kahn model of employee engagement, was developed by the

researcher. The questionnaire was also based on some items of the instrument developed by a team of Society for Human Resource Management researchers (2011). The questionnaire (see appendix 1) measures three dimensions of faculty engagement. It involves two parts. The first part of the questionnaire requires data regarding the professional and the personal characteristics of the participants. This includes gender, academic rank, and work experience at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal, college cluster, and nationality. The second part of the questionnaire consists of 35 statements that are divided into three dimensions (emotional, cognitive, and physical engagement). The instrument is tested on a pilot sample of the faculty members from the population of the study. The faculty selected for the pilot study was not included in the sample of the study. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to the participants. The data for this study was collected during the second semester of the 2015/2016 academic year. The participants took about 8 to 10 minutes to complete all the sections of the instrument.

### Validity and Reliability

The Questionnaire was reviewed and approved by a group of professors in the field. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is used in order to measure the internal reliability and the consistency of the instrument (Black, 1999; Ahmed, 2011). The Pearson Correlation is also a good indicator of the validity of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and the Pearson Correlation were calculated using SPSS and are presented in Table 1 below. Overall, the percentage of both Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and the Pearson Correlation are relatively strong, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha by Survey Sections

Dimensions	Number of statements	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional Engagement	12	0.85
Cognitive Engagement	12	0.83
Physical Engagement	11	0.82
Overall Employee Engagement	35	0.89

The obtained Cronbach alpha results indicate that all the questionnaire sections had values over .77 as represented in table 1, which is a good indicator of reliability (Black 1999). To check the validity of the instrument, Person correlation was calculated between each dimension and its subscale, accordingly, positive values and ranges from (.94 – .89) were found.

## Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data gathered from the respondents, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for responses to each item on the instrument. For interpretation purposes, the rating was segmented into five categories. Faculty members who strongly agreed were those whose rating among the items pertaining to a certain category of involvement averaged at least 4.50. Averages of (3.50-4.49) indicate faculty who agree, and averages of (2.50-3.49) indicate faculty who are neutral; averages of (1.50-2.49) indicate faculty who disagree, and averages less than 1.50 indicate faculty who strongly disagree. The responses to the survey questions were coded and analyzed using SPSS. Moreover, t-test and ANOVA (analysis of variances), and LSD were also employed for analyzing the study variables.

## Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

This section focuses on describing certain professional characteristics of the participants in the study, including attributes such as: college affiliation, academic rank, nationality, and years of experience. Table 2 below indicates the professional breakdown of the sample data.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	Number	%
College Cluster:		
Health Professions and Sciences Cluster	44	41.1
Arts & Education Cluster	63	58.9
Academic Rank:		
Professor	33	30.8
Associate professor	24	22.4
Assistant Professor	50	46.7
Gender:		
Male	44	41.1
Female	63	58.9
Nationality:		
Saudi	63	58.9
Expatriate	44	41.1
Duration of service in the University:		
5yrs or less	52	48.6
>5 – 10	36	33.6
>10 yrs	19	17.8
TOTAL	107	100



The participants are categorized as 58.9% who are Saudi and 41.1% who are expatriates. In terms of gender, 58.9% of the respondents were females and 41.1% - males. In terms of academic rank: 30.8% of the respondents were professors, 22.4% - associate professors, and 46.7% - assistant professors. By examining the duration of service in Saudi universities, 48.6% of the participants have (5 years or less) years of work experience 33.6 of the respondents have (> 5 – 10 years), and 17.8% (> 10 years). In terms of college cluster, 41.1 represents Health Profession path, while 58.9 % represents Arts & Education.

## Results and Analysis

In order to measure the faculty engagement among the participants in the study, the data obtained were analyzed by using SPSS. Data analysis consisted of frequency distribution, descriptive analysis, t-test, and one-way ANOVA. T-test and ANOVA are used to measure the differences between the means of gender, nationality, college cluster, academic ranking, and work experience in the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University among the sample for the overall engagement.

*Research question 1: What is the level of emotional, cognitive, physical and overall faculty engagement?*

Descriptive statistics was used as shown in tables 3 in order to answer the first research question and investigate the level of faculty member's engagement.

**Table 3.** Means and Standard Deviations for the Level of Faculty Member's Engagement

Variables	N	Mean	St D	Levels	Frequency		
					High	Mode-rate	Low
<b>Emotional Engagement</b>	11	3.9201	.45174	Good	149 (84.7%)	26 (14.8%)	1 (0.6%)
<b>Cognitive Engagement</b>	11	4.0408	.48752	Good	90 (52.0%)	72 (41.6%)	11 (6.4%)
<b>Physical Engagement</b>	10	3.8944	.57410	Good	127 (72.6%)	47 (26.9%)	1 (0.6%)
<b>Overall Employee Engagement</b>	32	3.9536	.47261	Good	127 (73.4%)	45 (26.0%)	1 (0.6%)

Note: Low (1-2.59), Moderate (2.6- 3.39), Good (3.14- 4.19), High (4.2-.5)

Table 3 illustrates descriptive statistics for the level of engagement among faculty members in the University. It shows that a good level of faculty engagement is reported for cognitive, emotional, physical, and overall employee engagement with (M=4.0408 and SD=.48752), (M=3.9201and SD=.45174), (M=3.8944 and SD=.57410), (M=3.9 and

SD=.47) respectively. The results also indicate that cognitive engagement is higher than both the emotional and the physical dimensions of employee engagement.

*Research question 2: Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the overall engagement based on duration of service at the University?*

Descriptive statistics and analysis of variances were used as shown in tables 4 and 5 in order to answer the second research question and investigate whether or not there are significant differences in the faculty's perceptions regarding the engagement level to their colleges due to their duration of service at the University.

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations for the Faculty Member's Engagement based on the Duration of Service

Variable	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional engagement	5yrs or less	52	3.5629	.15801
	>5 – 10	36	4.0328	.22178
	>10 yrs	19	4.6842	.15853
	Total	107	3.9201	.45174
Cognitive engagement	5yrs or less	52	3.7815	.23697
	>5 – 10	36	3.9949	.36165
	>10 yrs	19	4.8373	.34361
	Total	107	4.0408	.48752
Physical engagement	5yrs or less	52	3.6231	.31661
	>5 – 10	36	3.8250	.44102
	>10 yrs	19	4.7684	.50006
	Total	107	3.8944	.57410
Total	5yrs or less	52	3.6569	.18174
	>5 – 10	36	3.9549	.30714
	>10 yrs	19	4.7632	.30357
	Total	107	3.9536	.47261

**Table 5.** Analysis of Variance for Faculty Engagement due to Duration of Service at the University

Variable	ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional engagement	Between Groups	18.184	2	9.092	274.300	.000
	Within Groups	3.447	104	.033		
	Total	21.632	106			
Cognitive engagement	Between Groups	15.627	2	7.814	84.943	.000
	Within Groups	9.567	104	.092		
	Total	25.194	106			
Physical engagement	Between Groups	18.516	2	9.258	58.634	.000
	Within Groups	16.421	104	.158		
	Total	34.937	106			
Total	Between Groups	17.031	2	8.516	133.278	.000
	Within Groups	6.645	104	.064		
	Total	23.676	106			

The analysis of variance in table 5 indicates significant differences in the faculty's perceptions regarding the engagement level to their colleges and these differences are attributed to their duration or length of service at the University  $f=133.268$ ,  $P=000$ . However, the results indicate no significant differences in the level of faculty's cognitive engagement  $f=84.943$ . LSD statistical analysis is used in order to investigate the source of these differences as shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6.** LSD Analysis for the significant results

Variable	(I) experience	(J) experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Emotional engagement	> 5 – 10	5yrs or less	.46989*	.000
	> 10 yrs	5yrs or less	1.12127*	.000
		> 5 – 10	.65138*	.000
Cognitive engagement	> 5 – 10	5yrs or less	.21348*	.002
	> 10 yrs	5yrs or less	1.05585*	.000
		> 5 – 10	.84237*	.000
Physical engagement	> 5 – 10	5yrs or less	.20192*	.021
	> 10 yrs	5yrs or less	1.14534*	.000
		> 5 – 10	.94342*	.000
Total	> 5 – 10	5yrs or less	.29801*	.000
	> 10 yrs	5yrs or less	1.10631*	.000
		> 5 – 10	.80830*	.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 indicates that the duration or the length of service at the University is highly significant with faculty engagement. In other words, the more the years of experience the faculty member has at the University, the more he/she is engaged to his institution / college. This finding is consistent with that of Swaminathan and Ananth (2009), Insync Surveys (2009), Dale Carnegie Training White Paper (2012) and Jaupi and Llaci (2015), who reported that the duration of service at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University is highly significant for the level of faculty engagement. However, very few studies, for example, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2006) and Kular et al. (2008) found insignificant association between duration of service and the level of faculty engagement. The more the length of service the faculty member has at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, the better financial conditions he/she has. This may help to explain why the length of service at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University has a positive impact on the level of faculty engagement.

*Research question 3: Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement based on academic rank?*

Both descriptive statistics and the analysis of variances were also used as shown in tables 7 and 8 below in order to investigate whether or not there are significant differences for the faculty's engagement to their colleges due to the faculty's academic rank or career stage.

**Table 7.** Means and Standard Deviations for the Faculty Member’s Engagement Based on Academic Rank

Variable	Academic Rank	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional engagement	Prof	33	4.0496	.45289
	Associate prof	24	3.7500	.22469
	Assistant prof	50	3.9164	.50827
	Total	107	3.9201	.45174
Cognitive engagement	Prof	33	4.0964	.56221
	Associate prof	24	3.8333	.20180
	Assistant prof	50	4.1036	.51130
	Total	107	4.0408	.48752
Physical engagement	Prof	33	3.9576	.65193
	Associate prof	24	3.5833	.22586
	Assistant prof	50	4.0020	.59126
	Total	107	3.8944	.57410
Total	Prof	33	4.0369	.53693
	Associate prof	24	3.7266	.18913
	Assistant prof	50	4.0075	.49522
	Total	107	3.9536	.47261

**Table 8.** Analysis of Analysis of Variance for Faculty Engagement based on Academic Rank

Variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional engagement	Between Groups	1.248	2	.624	3.185	.045
	Within Groups	20.383	104	.196		
	Total	21.632	106			
Cognitive engagement	Between Groups	1.333	2	.666	2.904	non
	Within Groups	23.861	104	.229		
	Total	25.194	106			
Physical engagement	Between Groups	3.033	2	1.516	4.943	.009
	Within Groups	31.904	104	.307		
	Total	34.937	106			
Total	Between Groups	1.612	2	.806	3.798	.026
	Within Groups	22.065	104	.212		
	Total	23.676	106			

The analysis of variance as shown in table 8 indicates that significant differences exist in the faculty's perceptions regarding the engagement level to their colleges and these differences are attributed to the faculty's academic rank for the physical dimension of engagement at 0.01 level  $f = 3.798$ ,  $P=0.026$ . The higher the academic rank is, the more the faculty member is engaged to the university. The results of the analysis of variance also show significant differences in the faculty's perceptions regarding the emotional engagement to their colleges at 0.05,  $f = 3.185$ ,  $P=0.045$ . However, the results indicate no significant differences in the level of faculty's cognitive engagement  $f=2.904$ . LSD statistical analysis is used in order to investigate the source of these differences as shown in table 9 below.

**Table 9.** LSD Analysis for the Significant Results

Variable	(I) academic rank	(J) academic rank	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Emotional engagement	Prof	associate prof	.29959*	.013
Physical engagement	Prof	associate prof	.37424*	.013
	assistant prof	associate prof	.41867*	.003
Total	Prof	associate prof	.31037*	.014
	assistant prof	associate prof	.28094*	.016

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 9 reveals that academic rank or career stage has a positive impact on faculty engagement. The results of the LSD test indicate that professors are more engaged to their organization than the other academic ranks in the overall engagement level. This result is in line with that of Insync Surveys (2009) who found that academic rank or career stage has a positive impact on faculty engagement and is significantly associated with the level of employee engagement. On the other hand, this finding is inconsistent with that of Dale Carnegie Training White Paper (2012) who has found that academic rank is negatively associated with engagement. In Saudi Higher education institutions, the professors have excellent working life conditions, benefits, and financial compensations. Moreover, they have a lower teaching load than the holders with other academic degrees. This may help to explain why academic rank has a positive impact on faculty engagement and why professors are more engaged to their institutions than the other academic ranks.

*Research question 4: Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement based on college cluster?*

Both descriptive statistics and analysis of variances were used as shown in table 10 below in order to investigate whether or not there are significant differences in the faculty's engagement to their colleges due to the college cluster.

**Table 10.** T-Test analysis for Faculty Engagement Based on College Cluster

Variable	Academic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional engagement	Arts	63	3.9596	.46435	1.082	105	non
	science	44	3.8636	.43200			
Cognitive engagement	Arts	63	4.0346	.51229	-0.155	105	non
	science	44	4.0496	.45537			
Physical engagement	Arts	63	3.8619	.60199	-0.699	105	non
	science	44	3.9409	.53497			
Total	Arts	63	3.9549	.50535	0.034	105	non
	science	44	3.9517	.42707			

Table 10 shows that significant differences exist for the engagement among the participants based on the college clusters  $t = 0.034$ ,  $P > 0.05$ . The work conditions and the financial compensations and benefits in the University are equally distributed regardless the college clusters. This helps to explain why no significant differences are found between the faculty members and the level of engagement based on the college clusters.

*Research question 5: Are there statistical differences in faculty's perceptions towards the engagement based on gender?*

Descriptive statistics and T-test were used to answer the fifth question of the study as shown in table 11 below in order to investigate whether or not there are significant differences in the faculty's engagement to their colleges due to gender.

**Table 11.** T-Test Analysis for Faculty Engagement Based on Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional engagement	Male	44	4.0041	.46560	1.620	105	non
	Female	63	3.8615	.43594			
Cognitive engagement	Male	44	4.1074	.53846	1.184	105	non
	Female	63	3.9942	.44712			
Physical engagement	Male	44	3.9977	.63813	1.567	105	non
	Female	63	3.8222	.51789			
Total	Male	44	4.0376	.50297	1.548	105	non

\* $p < 0.05$  Tot N= 107

The results of t-tests in table 11 show insignificant differences between male and female faculty members for the engagement,  $t = 1.548, P > 0.05$ . In other words, the results of the t-test show that gender is negatively associated to faculty engagement to their colleges. This finding is consistent with that of Swaminathan & Ananth (2009), Dale Carnegie Training White Paper (2012) and Jaupi and Llaci (2015) who have also reported no significant differences between gender in relation to employee engagement. However, this finding is inconsistent with that of the Gallup's study who stated that females seek to be more engaged and involved in their jobs and are more engaged than men are (Johnson, 2004). In Saudi higher education institution, no gender biasness was found. Moreover, financial rewards in Saudi universities are fairly assigned between male and female faculty, and this may be related to the overall male and female faculty engagement (BinBakr & Ahmed, 2015). This may help to explain why no significant differences are found between male and female faculty and overall engagement.

*Research question 6: Are there statistical differences in faculty's perception for engagement based on nationality?*

Descriptive statistics and t-test were also used to answer the fifth question of the study as shown in table 12 below in order to investigate whether or not there are differences in the faculty's engagement to their colleges due to the nationality.

**Table 12.** T-Test Analysis for Faculty Engagement based on Nationality

Variable	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
emotional engagement	Saudi	63	3.7749	.33496	-4.29	105	0.01
	Expatriates	44	4.1281	.51587			
cognitive engagement	Saudi	63	3.8802	.31611	-4.41	105	0.01
	Expatriates	44	4.2707	.59160			
Physical engagement	Saudi	63	3.7095	.36927	-4.30	105	0.01
	Expatriates	44	4.1591	.70292			
Total	Saudi	63	3.7907	3.7907	-4.66	105	0.01
	Expatriates	44	4.1868	.56566			

\* $p < .05$  Tot N= 107

The analysis of the t-test in table 12 indicates that there are significant differences between Saudi ( $M=3.7907, SD=3.7907$ ) and Non- Saudi ( $M= 4.1868, SD=0.56566$ ) for all the dimensions of engagement and the overall faculty engagement,  $t = -4.66$  and  $P < 0.05$ . The faculty distribution by nationality that are exhibited on the university website shows that 75% of expatriate faculty comes from Arab countries in the region (e.g. Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan) with challenging working and life conditions and benefits (BinBakr and Ahmed, 2015). This may help to explain the high engagement among the non-Saudi faculty members.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations could be offered:

Given the engagement level of the faculty members in this study, the College administrators should develop policies, strategies, and programs that encourage and support engagement among faculty members in the University in order to maximize their engagement.

- Policy makers must take into consideration the needs and expectations of the faculty members in order to help improve their level of engagement to their institutions; especially in areas addressing their development, their work environment and conditions, and their compensations.
- Engagement needs to be considered as an organizational strategy that involves the whole organization (Kular, 2008), a string of actions and steps (Shaw, 2005), which require the contribution and involvement of organizational members (Robinson et al. 2004).
- Since the present study indicates that the duration of service at the university and academic rank are highly associated with engagement, it is recommended that further research should be carried out to investigate what elements they are so highly engaged with in their work. Once these elements are identified, administrators and HR department will be able to predict the factors associated with faculty engagement and maintain high levels of engagement among their faculty members.
- College and department leadership should be able to foster a sense of community among faculty members and ensure that favorable behaviors are reflected. They should also show care for their faculty in a way that would help them to be more engaged to their institutions.

## Conclusion

This paper reports a quantitative assessment of engagement among faculty members at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. Faculty engagement has been proved to be a significant factor of the performance of the higher education institutions and the universities. It is also a key indicator and driver of the university effectiveness. This paper is significant as it may provide a new perspective about the association between faculty engagement and demographic variables in one of the biggest higher education institution in Saudi Arabia. Given the general level of engagement among faculty members at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, college management should develop a set of strategies, and programs that encourage and support engagement especially emotional and physical engagement among faculty members in the University in order to maximize their engagement. Management should also work out incentives for faculty who seem to be more engaged and involved in their work. Theories have revealed that when faculty gets more recognition and appreciation, they aim to strive more effort into their work; there should be a clear association between achievement and compensations given to the faculty (Markos & Sridevi., 2010). However, the results of this paper could not be generalized to faculty members in other universities. Therefore, further investigations are needed to examine faculty's engagement in other higher

education institutions. Future research could investigate predictors that are associated with the different dimensions and forms of engagement. Moreover, further empirical investigations and assessment of the Khan three – component model of employee engagement would add to the knowledge of engagement among faculty members in other universities and other types of organizations and to the scientific credibility of this model.

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## Appendix 1

An Investigation of Faculty Members' Engagement at the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University

### SECTION I: Demographics

#### 1. College Affiliation:

- Sciences Colleges
- Arts & Education Colleges

#### 2. Academic Rank:

- Professor
- Associate professor
- Assistant Professor

#### 3. Gender:

- Male
- Female

#### 4. Nationality:

- Saudi
- Other

#### 5. Years of work experience at The University:

- 5 years or less
- >5 years – 10 years
- >10 years

### SECTION II: Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a process in which employees express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.

**How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

**1. Emotional engagement:** It focuses on the employee's feelings, ideas, and views about the job.

Statements	Level of agreement				
	Strongly Disa (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sur	Agree (4)	Strongly Agr (5)
1- I get excited about going to work.					

2- I enjoy volunteering for activities beyond my job requirements.					
3- I have passion and excitement about my work While at work.					
4- I feel completely involved in my work.					
5- I am highly motivated by my work goals.					
6- I am often so wrapped in my work that hours go like minutes.					
8- I am emotionally attached to the workplace on campus.					
9- My job brings me personal fulfillment and satisfaction.					
10- I care to maintain relations with other members of the organization.					
11- I enjoy my work experience on campus.					
12- I am comfortable taking thoughtful risks in my work.					

**2. Cognitive engagement:** It is defined as the intense focus of the employee's attention on the work tasks"

Statements	Level of agreement				
	Strongly Disag (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sur	Agree (4)	Strongly Agr (5)
1- I am almost always completely focused on my work projects.					
2- I am putting all my effort into my work.					
3- I am determined to accomplish my work goals and confident I can meet them.					
4- I quickly adapt to challenging or problematic situations.					
5- I am determined to give my best effort at work each day.					
7- When at work, I am completely focused on my job duties.					
8- I am willing to take on new tasks as needed.					
9- I will proactively identify future challenges and opportunities.					

10- I am determined to continuous improvement in my work.					
11- At work, I am absorbed by my job.					
12- At work, I forget everything else around me.					

**3. Physical engagement:** It is the strong involvement of one's physical energies toward a certain duty.

Statements	Level of agreement				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not Sure	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1. I always take the initiative to help other employees when the need arises.					
2. I am always flexible in expanding the scope of their work.					
3. I often volunteer for new projects.					
4. I am physically involved in my work to meet my job goals.					
5. I am physically willing to do more than what the task defines.					
6- I am willing to do tasks even if there is no clear reward or punishment.					
7- I am committed to exert my physical energies to do the job tasks.					
8- I am participating vigorously in doing my job tasks.					
9- I feel completely plugged in at work, like I'm always on full power.					
10- I am eager to spend substantial force to do the job tasks.					
11- I am powerfully performing my work proficiently even in problematic and crisis situations.					