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# Contributions of Emotional Job Demands and Emotional Intelligence in Work Engagement of Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the contributions of emotional job demands and in emotional intelligence in work engagement of teachers. Two hundred and thirty-five (235) participants, comprising two hundred and one (201) females and thirty-four (34) males within the ages of 25 to 60 years with a mean age of 43.22 and standard deviation of 6.98, were drawn through a multistage (simple, stratified, systematic, and purposive sampling techniques) sampling technique from nine schools in the Enugu educational zone. The study was a cross-sectional survey in which the 10-item Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (Davies et al., 2010), the 6-item Emotional Job Demand Scale (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013), and the 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006) were administered for data collection. Moderated multiple hierarchical regression analysis was used for data analysis. The results indicated that emotional job demands positively predicted the vigour, dedication, and absorption components of work engagement, respectively ($\beta$ =.32, $p$<.01; $\beta$ =.21, $p$<.01; $\beta$= .27, $p$<.01). Emotional intelligence did not moderate the relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption). It has been recommended that policymakers in the educational sector, especially secondary schools, should consider emotional job demands in order to enhance teachers' work engagement.

## INTRODUCTION

Studies on employees' well-being in the workplace previously focused on the negative state of burnout, most especially its connection with professions in the fields of social work, health care, and education (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Of late, however, more attention has been directed to an interest in the positive well-being of workers, specifically, work engagement and job demand. Previous research influenced by dominant work on psychological models, like Karasek's (1979) demand-control model and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), attributes employee well-being to the characteristics of work environments. These studies have supported the underlying predictions of the model, namely that job demands are the main predictors of negative job strain (Bakker et al., 2003b; Bakker et al., 2004), while job resources are the most important predictors of work engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006). However, studies on the JD-R model have been limited to work characteristics, and as such, the role of employees' personal resources, which can be important determinants of their adaptation to work environments (Hobfoll, 1989; Judge, et al., 1997), has been neglected. Against this background, the present study investigates the role of emotional intelligence in emotional job demands and work engagement relations as it concern school teachers. This study is apt because teachers can be seen as emotional workers, often needing to be sensitive to the demands that their work makes on their emotions and skilled in regulating their feelings, but few quantitative studies have examined this issue systematically (Yin, 2015).

### Work Engagements

In the past decade, increased attention has been paid not only to negative aspects of work-related well-being, such as burnout and psychological distress, but also to positive aspects, such as work engagement. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), work engagement can be defined as a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence in the face of difficulties. Previous research has shown that work engagement affects work related attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, such as, job satisfaction, intention to leave, and job performance (Park & Gursoy, 2012). As employees become more engaged, they find their work more meaningful, self-fulfilling, and inspirational, which in turn makes them more dedicated and concentrated in their jobs. Teachers who are engaged in their work are able to find meaning in their work and are perceived to be more attentive to student needs (Klusmann et al., 2008b). Teachers experiencing work engagement are better able to cope with increasing demands, generate support (Bakker & Bal, 2010), and create opportunities for themselves (Simbula et al., 2011). Work engagement among teachers is critical to teacher retention (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Despite the importance of work engagement among teachers, there are limited studies specifically on demands and work engagement among teachers.

### Emotional Job Demands

Demands are usually mentioned in relation to negative states such as dissatisfaction and burnout (Bakker, et al., 2007; Hakanen et al., 2006; Hultell & Gustavsson, 2011). Six job-demands (i.e., unmet expectations, workload, role stress, routinization, social isolation, and a passive coping strategy) were all found to be negatively associated with work engagement in a study of 1589 teachers (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2011). According to Tooren (2011), "emotional job demand" can be referred to as "work-related tasks that require emotional effort." Emotional job demands are associated with important negative outcomes (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011) for workers and organizations (e.g., job-related stress and burnout) (Karimi et al., 2014; Montgomery et al., 2015). In the context of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, emotional job demands are considered among the most significant job demands (psychological, physical, and emotional) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2003).

### Emotional Intelligence Moderating Emotional Job Demands

Personal resources, such as emotional intelligence, are functional in controlling the environment and exerting an impact on it in a successful way. Furthermore, engaged employees may have several personal characteristics, such as emotional intelligence, that differentiate them from less engaged employees. Likewise, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) recently revealed that personal resources play a significant role in the JD-R since they explain variances in exhaustion and work engagement together with job demands and job

resources. Conversely, personal resources allow individuals to address and confront external or internal demands in stressful situations (Durán et al. 2006). For the purpose of this research, the researcher is concerned with emotional intelligence as a personal resource. Emotional intelligence is the ability to regulate one's own emotions. Emotional intelligence refers to the personal ability to process, regulate, and perceive emotions (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). Research evidence has shown that emotional intelligence is related, directly or indirectly, to better adjustment or success in academic, personal, social, or occupational settings (Zeidner et al., 2006). In particular, emotional intelligence is depicted as a constellation of emotion-related perceptions framed as a personality domain (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) and could be viewed as a personal resource for promoting health and facing stressful life events (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014).

**Theoretical Review**

Theoretically, according to job demands-resources theory, the degree to which employees are energetic and enthusiastic about their work and highly concentrate on their work (i.e., engaged) is greatly affected by the work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001). Also, the job demands-resources theory assumes that emotional job demands act as a stressor and have detrimental effects if personal resources are absent or low, but may also have a motivational function (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), in the presence of high personal resources (emotional intelligence) (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Empirically, Duarte et al. (2020) embarked on intensive research to determine the association between emotional job demand, work engagement, and employees' performance. 506 participants drawn from the Canadian Security Service Commission were used for the study. The finding indicated a negative relationship between emotional job demand and work engagement, while a positive association existed between work engagement and employees' performance. Martinez et al. (2020) investigated the extent of the influence of emotional demand on employees' engagement among 1003 German employees. Emotional demand negatively and significantly predicted employees' engagement among German employees. Tsaur and Hsieh (2020) explored how emotional job demand can influence work engagement among 709 employees in the Chinese hospitality industry. Emotional job demand negatively predicted work engagement among employees in the Chinese hospitality industry. Xi et al. (2020) researched the impact of emotional job demand and work engagement among 3000 public school teachers. Emotional job demand negatively impacts work engagement among public secondary school teachers.

Furthermore, the conservation of resources theory is based on the premises that individuals strive to protect, retain, and accumulate valued resources, which are cherished in their own right and instrumental in attaining higher-order goals or desired future states (Hobfoll, 2001). Based on the conservation of resources theory, emotional intelligence is a valued resource. This theory states that when employees feel that they have accumulated resources (emotional intelligence), it will cushion the effect of emotional job demands on work engagement. whereas lower work engagement occurs when employees feel that their valued resources (emotional intelligence) are threatened or lost. For instance, Linda et al. (2014) explored the association between emotional intelligence, emotional job demand, and performance efficiency. The outcome of the research showed a negative association between emotional intelligence and emotional job demand and a positive association between emotional intelligence and performance efficiency. Again, Aiello and Tesi (2017) investigated the relationship between emotional job demands (emotional charge of job [ECJ] and dealing with users' complaints [DUC]) and emotional intelligence among 302 Italian healthcare professionals. The results showed that a negative correlation exists between emotional job demand (ECJ and DUC) and emotional intelligence. More so, Natalio et al. (2018) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on work engagement among professional health workers in Cario. Their findings indicated a significant positive influence of emotional intelligence on work engagement. Emotional intelligence positively predicted work engagement.

The job demand-resources theory is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. It can be used to explain the moderating role of emotional intelligence in emotional job demand and work engagement relations. For instance, when there are high emotional job demands, it will result in stress, thereby reducing work engagement (Bakker et al. 2004). On the other hand, when there is a personal resource such as emotional intelligence, it will buffer the negative effect of stress on employees' work engagement. The presence of personal resources such as emotional intelligence leads to work engagement (Huang et al. 2016), whereas

their absence leads to an increase in the development of job strain and a decrease in motivation towards work (Huang et al., 2016). To this end, the study investigated the role of emotional intelligence in emotional job demands and work engagement relations among teachers.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption).
2. Emotional job demands will significantly predict work engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption).
3. Emotional intelligence will significantly moderate the prediction of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) by emotional job demands.

## METHOD

***Participants***

Two hundred and thirty-five (235) teachers drawn from nine (9) secondary schools in Enugu participated in the study. They comprised 201 females and 34 males. The participants were selected using a multistage sampling technique (simple, stratified, systematic and purposive). Their age ranged from 25 to 60 ($M$ = 43.22, $SD$ = 6.98). Among the participants 219 were married while 16 were single.

***Instrument***

Three scales were used for this study, and they included:

i. Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (Davies et al., 2010)
ii. Emotional Job Demand Scale (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013)
iii. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006)

**Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale**

Emotional intelligence was measured using 10-item Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (Davies et al., 2010) designed to measure the capacity of individuals to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. The scale has subscales that measured appraisal of own emotions, appraisal of others' emotions, regulation of own emotions, regulation of others' emotions and utilization of emotions. Sample item reads "I know why my emotions changes". Ratings were made using 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Davies et al. (2010) reported a test-retest reliability of .48 for appraisal of own emotions; .35 for appraisal of others' emotions; .40 for regulation of own emotions; .41 for regulation of others' emotions and .40 for utilization of emotions. Davies et.al (2010) also obtained validity of .97 for the entire scale. Ugwu et al., (2017) obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .76 for the scale. The researchers conducted a pilot study using sixty- four (64) teachers (14 males and 50 females) and obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .74.

**Emotional Job Demand Scale**

Emotional job demands were measured using 6-item Emotional Job Demand Scale by Xanthopoulou et al. (2013) designed to measure employees' emotional job demand. The scale has two subscales: emotional charge of job and dealing with students' complaints. Sample item reads 'Is your work emotionally demanding?' Ratings were made using 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Xanthopoulou et al., (2013) obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .82. Again, Aiello and Tesi (2017) obtained a Cronbach Alpha of .70 for the scale. A pilot study was conducted using Sixty-four (64) teachers (14 males and 50 females) and the researchers obtained Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of .82.

**Utrecht Work Engagement Scale**

Work engagement was measured using 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006) designed to measure employees' work engagement. The scale has three subscales that measure three dimensions of work engagement: vigour, dedication and absorption. Sample item reads 'At my work, l feel bursting with energy'. Ratings were made using 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always true). Schaufeli et al. (2006) reported a Cronbach Alpha of .91 for the instrument. Ugwu (2013) obtained a test-retest reliability coefficient of .77 and for the sub scales-vigour dimension has a Cronbach Alpha of .73; dedication has .79 and absorption has .70. A pilot study was conducted using Sixty-four (64) teachers (14 males and 50 females) and the researchers obtained a Cronbach Alpha .78 for the instrument furthermore, the researchers also obtained Cronbach Alphas for each subscales of the instrument thus; vigour is .51, for dedication is .78 and for absorption is .57.

***Procedure***

The researchers obtained ethical approval from the Chairman of the Research Ethics Committee, Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, for this present study. An introduction letter and an approval letter were also obtained from the Head of Department of Psychology, ESUT and the Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) respectively, to carry out this research. A multistage sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the participants for this study. Stage one: a simple random sampling technique (balloting—picking without replacement) was used to select one educational zone (i.e., the Enugu educational zone) among the six educational zones in Enugu state. Stage two: schools were stratified into three based on the three local governments (Enugu North, Enugu East, and Isi-uzo) in the Enugu educational zone. Stage three, the systematic sampling technique, was used to select three schools from each local government. The names of the schools in each local government were arranged in alphabetical order. Then, every 3rd case on the list was selected. This was to ensure that each school had an equal chance of being selected and that the population was evenly sampled. Stage four, the purposive sampling technique, was used to select the teachers that met the set inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were that the teachers must be full-time secondary school teachers and must have taught for at least three years. The exclusion criteria included teachers who had not taught for at least three years, part-time teachers, and NYSC teachers. The researchers distributed copies of the questionnaire to the teachers in their different staff rooms and classes with the help of the vice principals (Vice Principal Academics and Vice Principal Administration). Hence, two hundred and eighty (280) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, twenty-three (23) were not returned, and twenty-two (22) were discarded due to incomplete data and errors in completion, leaving two hundred and thirty-five (235) which were used for analysis.

***Design and Statistics***

The researchers, moderated hierarchical regression was used for data analysis. The statistics was employed to determine if emotional intelligence would moderate the relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption).

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Summary Table of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Study Variables **(*N* = *235*)**

| | Variables | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Work Engagement | 36.05 | 11.22 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Age | 43.22 | 6.98 | .04 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 3 | Marital Stress | .93 | .25 | -.02 | .01 | 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | Gender | .14 | .35 | -.04 | -.19 | -.13 | 1 | | | | |
| 5 | Years of Experience | .60 | .49 | -.06 | .53 | .09 | -.11 | 1 | | | |
| 6 | Edu. Qualification | .83 | .37 | .01 | .12 | .11 | .02 | .22 | 1 | | |
| 7 | Emotional Intelligence | 19.52 | 5.13 | -.02 | ,03 | -.06 | .05 | .01 | .06 | 1 | |
| 8 | Emotional Job Demand | 17.37 | 4.86 | **.31**** | -.06 | .10 | -.13 | -.09 | .03 | .03 | 1 |

Note: * = *P*<.05; ** = *p <.01*. Age was coded old = 1, Young = 0; Marital status was coded 0 = single, 1 = married; Gender was coded 0 = Females, 1 = Males; Years of Experience was coded 0 = Short Years of experience, 1 = Long Years of Experience and Educational Qualification was Coded 1 = high level of education, 0 = low level of education.

Results in **Table 1**, indicate that age, marital status, gender, years of experience and educational qualification were not significantly related to general work engagement. Meaning that increases or decreases in these control variables did not significantly relate to increases or decreases in the criterion variable, work engagement. Meanwhile, on the predictor variables, only emotional job demand ($r$= .31, $p$ < .01), was

significantly related to the work engagement experienced by employees whereas emotional intelligence did not.

**Table 2:** Summary of moderated hierarchical multiple regression of predictors of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption components of Work Engagement (***N = 235).***

| | Vigour Work Engagement | | | Dedication Work Engagement | | | Absorption Work Engagement | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Step1 | Step2 | Step3 | Step1 | Step2 | Step3 | Step1 | Step2 | Step3 |
| | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* | *β* |
| Age | .18* | .19** | .19** | .02 | .03 | .03 | .01 | .02 | .02 |
| Marital Status | -.03 | -.05 | -.05 | .01 | -.01 | -.02 | -.01 | -.04 | -.04 |
| Gender | -.01 | .04 | .04 | -.05 | -.02 | -.01 | -.06 | -.02 | -.02 |
| Years of Experience | -.10 | -.07 | -.08 | -.10 | -.08 | -.06 | -.05 | -.02 | -.03 |
| Educational Qualification | .00 | -.01 | -.02 | .05 | .04 | .04 | .04 | .03 | .03 |
| Emotional Intelligence | | -.04 | -.04 | | -.02 | -.00 | | -.06 | -.07 |
| Emotional Job Demand | | .32** | .33** | | .21** | .19* | | .27** | .28** |
| EI x EJD | | | .04 | | | -.08 | | | .04 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .004 | .095** | .093 | -.012 | .022* | .023 | -.016 | .048** | .046 |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .025 | .097** | .001 | .010 | .041* | .006 | .006 | .071** | .001 |
| *F* | 1.19 | 4.52** | 3.98** | .461 | 1.74 | 1.69 | .257 | 2.69* | 2.39* |
| *ΔF* | 1.19 | 12.55** | .309 | .461 | 4.90* | 1.32 | .257 | 8.76** | .343 |

Note: * = *P*<.05, ** and ** = *p <.01*. EI = Emotional Intelligence; EJD = Emotional Job Demand;

Results in **Table 2** indicate that the first Moderated Hierarchical Multiple Regression in which vigour component of work engagement was the criterion variable, the control variables (age, marital status, gender, years of experience and educational qualification) entered in step 1 of the equation were unable to explain any significant variance in vigour component of work engagement as a block, but age individually related to the criterion variable ($\beta$ = .18, $p$< .05). In step 2, emotional intelligence and emotional job demand were entered as a block, they added 9.7% variance in vigour component of work engagement ($\Delta R^2$ = .097, $p$< .01), with only emotional job demand ($\beta$ = .32, $p$< .01) contributing significantly in predicting vigour of component of work engagement though positively, which confirmed hypothesis 2 and disconfirmed hypothesis 1. Furthermore, the entry of the two-way interaction terms at step 3 revealed an insignificant two-way interactions between emotional intelligence and emotional job demand, thus, hypothesis 3 was not confirmed. Meaning that emotional intelligence failed to interact with emotional job demand, as such, had no effect on employees' vigour in work engagement.

From the second Moderated Hierarchical Multiple Regression in which dedication work engagement was the criterion variable, the control variables (age, marital status, gender, years of experience and educational qualification) entered in step 1 of the equation were unable to explain any significant variance in dedication work engagement either as a block or as individual variables. In step 2, when emotional intelligence and emotional job demand were entered as a block, they added 4.1% variance in dedication work engagement ($\Delta R^2$ = .041, $p$< .05), with only emotional job demand ($\beta$ = .21, $p$< .01) contributing significantly in predicting dedication in work engagement of employees, which also confirmed hypothesis 2 and confirmed hypothesis 1. The entry of the two-way interaction terms at step 3

revealed no significant two-way interaction between emotional intelligence and emotional job demand, hence, hypothesis 3 was also not confirmed. Meaning that emotional intelligence failed to interact with emotional job demand, as such, had no effect on employees' dedication during work engagement.

From the third Moderated Hierarchical Multiple Regression in which absorption work engagement was the criterion variable, the control variables (age, marital status, gender, years of experience and educational qualification) entered in step 1 of the equation were unable to explain any significant variance in absorption work engagement both as a block and as individual variables. In step 2, when emotional intelligence and emotional job demand were entered as a block, they added 7.1% variance in absorption work engagement ($\Delta R^2$ = .071, $p$< .01), with only emotional job demand ($\beta$ = .27, $p$< .01) contributing significantly in predicting absorption in work engagement, which further confirmed hypothesis 2 though positively and disconfirmed hypothesis 1. The entry of the two-way interaction terms at step 3 revealed no significant two-way interactions between emotional intelligence and emotional job demand, hence, hypothesis 3 was again not confirmed. Meaning that, emotional intelligence failed to interact with emotional job demand, as such, made no relationship between emotional job demand and absorption during work engagement of employees.

**Discussion**

Considering the results, the first hypothesis which stated that emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) was not confirmed, hence rejected. This is because emotional intelligence did not relate with the dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). According to the result, emotional intelligence did not predict any dimension of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) which suggests that the level of emotional intelligence of these teachers did not determine the level of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). This is not in agreement with Eunita et al. (2013) findings which found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement. This may be because of the differences in culture and experience.

The second hypothesis, which stated that emotional job demands will significantly predict work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption), was confirmed. This is because emotional job demands moved in the same direction as dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption). According to the result, emotional job demands positively predicted the dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption), which suggests that the higher the emotional effort required of the teachers, the more they put in a high level of energy and mental resilience (vigour) while doing their job. Also, the result suggests that the higher the emotional job demands required of the teachers, the more they put in more time (dedication) into doing their job. Again, the result suggests that the higher the emotional effort required of the teachers, the more concentration (absorption) they put into doing their job. The result is not in agreement with Lopez and Bakker (2019) findings, which found a negative relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement. This is because of the differences in the direction of the relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement.

The third hypothesis, which stated that emotional intelligence will significantly moderate the prediction of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) by emotional job demands, was not confirmed. The result obtained from the third hypothesis showed that emotional intelligence failed to moderate emotional job demands relationship with dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption). This finding is not consistent with the previous studies. For example, Aiello and Tesi (2017) results showed a negative correlation between emotional job demands and emotional intelligence. This is because there was no significant interaction effect between emotional intelligence and emotional job demands. Hence, emotional intelligence failed to interact with emotional job demands, as such, had no effect on teachers' vigour, dedication, and absorption components of work engagement. Hence, the result from the third hypothesis showed that emotional intelligence did not buffer the effect of emotional job demands on work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption). This did not give credence to the theoretical framework- Job Demand-Resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which assumes that emotional intelligence will buffer the negative effect of emotional job demands on work engagement. Rather, emotional job demands served as eustress to the teachers, which enhanced their work engagement. This means that the higher the emotional effort required

of these teachers, the more energy, time, and concentration they put into their work.

**Implications of the findings**

The findings of this study have theoretical, empirical and practical implications.

*Theoretically,* the findings of this study have not given credence to the theoretical framework of this study - Job Demand-resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) which posits that emotional intelligence as a personal resource mitigates the negative impact of job demand (e.g., emotional job demand) on work engagement among teachers. This is because emotional intelligence failed to moderate the negative effect of emotional job demands on work engagement. Instead, emotional job demands served as eustress to these teachers which helped to enhance their work engagement.

*Empirically,* the findings of this study are not in congruence with the earlier findings (e.g., Lopez & Bakker, 2019) which showed a significant negative relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). This is because the researchers found a significant positive relationship between emotional job demands and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). Also, the finding is not in agreement with the previous findings (e.g., Karamustafa & Kunday, 2018) which found significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). These differences in the findings may be as a result of the differences in experience and culture of the participants.

*Practically,* in view of the findings, the employees (teachers) require certain levels of emotional job demands which may serve as eustress in order to enhance their work engagement.

**Limitations and Suggestion for Further Studies**

There are some limitations in this study. First, the study requiring cross-sectional survey did not support causal inferences. Hence, it is suggested that experimental and longitudinal approaches should be considered in future studies. Secondly, self-report measures were used to obtain responses from the participants at one point in time and so, this might create an avenue for social desirability responses. A mixed method can help to improve the quality of the data from the participants in subsequent studies. Lastly, the generalization of the findings of this study is limited to teachers within Enugu educational zone, thereby questioning the external validity and generalization of the findings. Thus, the use a wider sample that cuts across teachers drawn from other educational zones to enhance generalizability. Such studies should also be longitudinal study for more robust findings.

**Conclusion**

The positive prediction of work engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption) by emotional job demands has shown that emotional job demands in some cases may not cause distress. This therefore, suggests that in some conditions, certain levels of emotional job demands may serve as eustress, thereby enhancing work engagement. To this end, policy makers in the educational sector especially secondary school should consider emotional job demands in order to enhance work engagement.

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