

## **Dispositional Positive Emotions and Employee Engagement in University Teachers: Mediating Role of Appreciative Inquiry**

**Iqra Ameer and Aisha Zubair**

Quaid-i-Azam University

The present research was conducted to explore the role of dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry in employee engagement among university teachers and mediating role of appreciative inquiry in predicting employee engagement from positive dispositional emotions. A convenient sample ( $N = 237$ ) of university teachers including both men and women with age ranged from 29 to 54 years (mean age = 39.22) was acquired. The major constructs of the study were assessed with Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale (Shiota, Keltner, & John, 2006), Appreciative Inquiry Scale (Clayton, 2015), and Employee Engagement Survey (Wilson, 2009). Results showed that dispositional positive emotions were positively associated with appreciative inquiry and employee engagement, while appreciative inquiry displayed positive association with employee engagement. Appreciative inquiry mediated the relationship between dispositional positive emotions and employee engagement. Findings further showed significant gender differences indicating that women were high on positive dispositional emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement as compared to men. Group differences on job experience showed that employees with more work experience exhibited better dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, and work related engagement as compared to other groups. 2x2x3 analysis revealed that women teachers with more work experience displayed more dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement.

*Keywords.* Dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, employee engagement, university teachers

---

Iqra Ameer and Aisha Zubair, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Iqra Ameer, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. E-mail: iqra70243@gmail.com

The earlier version of this article has been presented in the 7<sup>th</sup> International conference titled "Positive Psychology: Developing A Flourishing Community" (November 29-30, 2018) organized by National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Various organizations, for example, administration, business, and technical enterprises of the globe today confront conditions which require to discover approaches to manage and bolster their perseverance in maintaining their competitive edge and managing them productively as well as gainfully. Undoubtedly, any organization for fulfilling this thought need skilled and committed employees with extraordinary enthusiasm to combat the challenges of the contemporary work scenarios.

According to Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, and Finkel (2008), dispositional positive emotions are traits based on positive feelings as a part of genetically transferred qualities. Broaden and build theory, also hypothesized that positive feelings are dynamic components inside trait flexibility (Fredrickson, 2013). An examination of the literature (Shiota & Keltner, 2006) shows diverse constructs related to positive or constructive feelings which empowers person to get benefit from available chances, assembling assets which upgrade long time endurance as well as regenerative wellness. According to Fredrickson (2013) and Shiota, Keltner, and Mossman (2007), the major dispositional positive emotions included contentment (an emotion that enable individuals to take pleasure in their present life situations and most recent achievements); compassion (characterized by sentiments of concern for another's prosperity, empowers nurturing activities and inspired by signs of defenselessness, vulnerability, adorableness, and trouble); amusement (when one experiences a subjective move from use of generalized learning in the examination of a target); and awe (characterized by feelings which are felt through quick endeavors by subjective convenience). The theoretical underpinnings of dispositional positive emotions lies in broaden and build theory (Frederickson, 2004) which portrays frame as well as capacity of a subset of positive feelings, including happiness, curiosity, satisfaction and love. Positive emotions are a key element in joy, personal well-being and personal growth in all domains of life. In addition, positive emotions play an inevitable role in increasing employee engagement, fostering a continuous learning culture, building positive leadership skills and enhancing the customer connection.

Appreciative inquiry is a process to revolutionize and bring intrusion to organizations. It emphasizes on the positive aspects of an organization to bring change (Clayton, 2015) and a constructive transformation in the organization started for the progress of organizations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007). Appreciative inquiry term consists of two words, first appreciate, that means to draw attention to and esteem which is believed as certain and great, second inquire, that means to take interest in something and explore.

According to Watson (2013), appreciative inquiry has four stages namely discovery (involving appreciative meeting, presenting positive values, and individuals met and inquired what are the best viewpoints from the present condition of the organization); dream (characterized by inquiring from employees by considering most excellent of anything in what capacity would they be able to utilize to make a surprisingly perfect prospect circumstances); design (starts the preparation procedure of making functional arrangement of activity in order to manage association in constructive way which includes cooperation or support from individuals required in the appreciative inquiry procedure); and destiny (in which invitation is given for taking action which includes almost the entire partners as well as headship for deciding the most excellent course in order to acknowledge change in an association).

Employee engagement is defined as "a particular and rare variable comprising of psychological, enthusiastic, and behavioral segments that are related with singular part of execution" (Saks, 2006). Employee engagement is more than basic employment fulfillment rather reflects the completely occupied workers, who are physically thrilled, psychologically associated, rationally engaged, and feel lined up with the objectives behind the organization (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Wilson (2009) characterized it as an individual's passion, involvement, and contribution to employment. Schaufeli (2013) elaborated upon employee's involvement and engagement by defining it through capabilities of the workers to handle their duties and workloads in a better way to prosper the organization. Involvement in work concentrates on work done and more centered on their work or duties, and is a constant constructive feeling portrayed through force, devotion, and incorporation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Hundreds of researches in organizational sector have shown that when the environment in any organization will be positive and the employees' efforts will be appreciated rather than criticized, then the employees will show more engagement towards their work (Wilson, 2009). Researches highlighted that those employees who work in an organization since long and have much working experience, tend to be more engaged in their work specially women and they also show work involvement by exhibiting positive emotions at work rather than bizarre attitude (Saenghiran, 2013). Therefore, literature suggested positive relationships among dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, and employee engagement.

### **Dispositional Positive Emotions, Appreciative Inquiry, and Employee Engagement: Empirical Evidences**

Numerous studies have been conducted which provide rigorous insight about the possible association in relation to study variables. For instance, Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doornen, and Schaufeli (2006) utilized two dimensional personality model (neuroticism and extraversion) in predicting engagement and found that neuroticism is negatively linked; while extraversion positively predicted engagement. Later, a more comprehensive study by Kim, Shin, and Swanger (2009) incorporated the Big Five personality characteristics and found that exclusively conscientiousness is essentially identified with engagement. This notion has been further strengthened by Schaufeli (2013) stating that conscientiousness is positively related with engagement, however, neuroticism is negatively related with it in controlling work related outcomes. In pursuit of determining the role of positive emotions in predicting desirable work behaviors, Saenghiran (2013) inferred that enhancing happiness at work is in linear relationship with elevated levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and occupational fulfillment. Peelle (2006) revealed that those individuals who have positive emotions which are dispositional in nature are more motivated toward their work and most often they show more employee engagement. Frederickson (2004) also posited that subjective experiences of positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pleasure, contentment, absorption, and internal drive) at workplace are well-connected with subsequent pro-social actions at work (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior), positive states (e.g., work-related flow), and positive organizational outcomes (e.g., enhanced productivity and increased organizational effectiveness). Another study (Mohsen, Rasoul, & Ali, 2015) revealed the role of positive affect as a buffering variable, in the relationship between dispositional positive emotions and creativity among training staff and management of teaching sector. According to Saenghiran (2013) gender differences exist in having dispositional positive emotions; women tend to have more positive emotions as compared to men. Women as being nurturing and loving by nature, they have more positivity inside them.

In relation to appreciative inquiry, relatively latest evidences (Clayton, 2015) indicated that employees' involvement in developing organizational culture and active participation in seeking solutions to organizational problems helps in bringing about numerous positive engagement factors like correspondence, collaboration, work inclusion and cooperation. Several researches (Berrisford, 2005; Conkright, 2011; Doggett & Lewis 2013; Peelle, 2006) demonstrated that

appreciative inquiry intervention brings about various degrees of worker related results identified with engagement and positive work practices. Moreover, it has also been found that constructive results in the workplace could be brought by the utilization of appreciative inquiry as an instrument for intrusion in the organization. As indicated by Cooperrider and Godwin (2011), appreciative inquiry empower flourishing supportive activities towards progress and moving from a shortfall approach to a combined investigation into shared possibilities which serve as the nurturing beginning stage for the new connection with work engagement. In an appreciative inquiry, workers are urged to share their greatest experiences, to interface with each other in stepping up and to co-make what they feel as the best thing for the organization. Appreciation and interfacing are the two critical vectors in the AI-model. Work engagement develops in work atmospheres where sufficient employment and individual assets are accessible.

Hence, it is assumed that the accomplishment of appreciative inquiry contributes in the attainment of essential mental needs, and the intrinsic inspiration, thus making an effect on work engagement.

### **Mediating Role of Appreciative Inquiry**

Although, there is scarcity of direct evidences of appreciative inquiry as a mediator; however, few investigations does provide a glimpse of the indirect effect of appreciative inquiry in health care settings. For instance, a study conducted (Richer, Ritchie, & Marichionni, 2009) to determine the mediating role of appreciative inquiry to advance creative thoughts for better health care surroundings. Results demonstrated that method of appreciative inquiry gave rise to artistic thoughts and activity based strategies for constructive change in health care surroundings. Additionally, the direct path between participation of administration and creative thoughts is effectively mediated by the vital procedure of appreciative inquiry. Conkright (2011) also empirically establish that involvement of appreciative inquiry mediates the relationship between working environment and workers' engagement factors (e.g., occupation association, collaboration, vitality and efficiency). Drew and Wallis (2014) investigated the mediating role of appreciative inquiry and reported that process of appreciative inquiry facilitates the large scale organizational change in attaining short and long term organizational goals.

Aforementioned literature offer several substantial reasons to design the present study; for instance, firstly, prior studies primarily focus on the relationship of state positive emotions and job related

outcomes referring to the currently experienced emotions of a person at workplace arising from some situational factors rather perpetual components. On similar note, Big Five personality model overwhelms the empirical investigations focusing on the interplay of personal attributes and organizational factors in predicting work behaviors. However, literature is relatively silent about the possible role of dispositional emotions (enduring component of personality) that may influence the work behaviors. Secondly, appreciative inquiry is quite a novel construct, mostly explored qualitatively in Western organizational domains; whereas there is scarcity of studies in the context of quantitative exploration of this construct in the existing literature. On indigenous level, there is less familiarity with the construct of appreciative inquiry in both qualitative and quantitative aspect within Pakistan; therefore, it may necessitate the exploration of this construct in generating positive work outcomes. Thirdly, a greater part of organizational research has been conducted on work engagement which is a sub dimension of employee engagement along with other dimensions of efficacy and energy; hence, highlighting the need to empirically investigate the comprehensive construct of employee engagement in order to fill this gap and provide a thorough understanding of the theoretical model of employee engagement. Finally, organizational studies majorly focus on employees rendering their services in management and banking personnel; while, education and academic sector also require equal attention with reference to the construct of appreciative inquiry. It is imperative to determine the role of positive emotions and appreciative inquiry that would provide them with great deal of intrinsic motivation and would make them more engaged in their work to deliver quality education.

Therefore, present study attempted to explore the role of dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry in employee engagement among university teachers. It was also intended to determine the mediating role of appreciative inquiry in relation between dispositional positive emotions and employee engagement. Moreover, group differences were also investigated along gender, job experience, and type of university among teachers.

### **Hypotheses**

Following hypotheses were phrased to achieve the above mentioned objectives.

1. Dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry positively predicted employee engagement.

2. Appreciative inquiry mediates the relationship between dispositional positive emotions and employee engagement.
3. Women are likely to express more dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement than men.
4. University teachers with more work experience would reflect increased dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement in comparison to their counterparts.

### Sample

A convenient sample of university teachers ( $N = 237$ ) was acquired from different universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Sample included both men ( $n = 109$ ) and women ( $n = 128$ ), with age ranged from 29 to 54 years ( $M = 36.22$ ,  $SD = 9.73$ ). Education of the respondents included MS/M.Phil ( $n = 145$ ), and PhD ( $n = 92$ ). Marital status of employees included both unmarried ( $n = 77$ ) and married ( $n = 160$ ); while, type of institutions from where respondents were working involved private ( $n = 109$ ) and public ( $n = 128$ ) sector universities. Overall, work experience of the employees ranged from 1 to 27 years ( $M = 12.07$ ,  $SD = 7.30$ ); whereas, job period in the present university ranged from 1-10 years ( $M = 6.16$ ,  $SD = 2.59$ ).

### Instruments

**Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale.** Shiota, Keltner, and John (2006) developed the Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale which constituted 21 items with four subscales, that is, Contentment (5 items,  $\alpha = .85$ ), Compassion (5 items,  $\alpha = .76$ ), Amusement (5 items,  $\alpha = .84$ ), and Awe (6 items,  $\alpha = .87$ ). Responses were rated on 6-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Agree* (6) to *Strongly Disagree* (1). Possible score range on Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale was 21-126 with high score indicating higher level of dispositional positive emotions which means that more positive emotional traits were present within the personality of individual, whereas low scores indicate lower level of dispositional positive emotions. The Cronbach alpha for the total scale was reported as .84 (Shiota et al., 2006), and coefficient of .84 as an index of internal consistency was achieved in the present sample.

**Appreciative Inquiry Scale.** This construct was explored qualitatively in most of the prior studies and by using those qualitative dimensions the Appreciative Inquiry Scale was developed by Clayton (2015). It consisted of 18 items related to different dimensions; Job

Involvement (4 items), Energy (3 items), Efficacy (3 items), Communication (4 items), and Teamwork (4 items). Responses were rated on 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Agree* (5) to *Strongly Disagree* (1). Possible range of scores on Appreciative Inquiry Scale was 18-90; where, high scores on this scale indicate high level of appreciative inquiry which shows that individuals would be inclined toward self-reliance change in a positive manner, whereas low scores indicate lower level of appreciative inquiry. The Cronbach alpha values for the total scale was reported as .84 (Clayton, 2015), and alpha coefficient of .91 was achieved in the present sample indicating the scale as reliable measure of the said construct.

**Employee Engagement Survey.** This short survey version of Employee Engagement Scale (Wilson, 2009) consisted of 8 uni-dimensional items. Responses were to be rated on 6-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Agree* (6) to *Strongly Disagree* (1). Possible score range on Employee Engagement Scale was 8-48 with high scores reflecting higher level of employee engagement which depicts that the workers would be more engaged and sincere toward their work and low scores indicate lower level of employee engagement. The Cronbach alpha for the total scale was reported by original authors as .77 (Wilson, 2009); though reliability index of .85 was achieved in the present study.

**Demographic sheet.** A customized demographic form was designed to acquire basic information about the respondents both in the domains of personal (gender, age, education, and marital status) and organizational (job designation, work experience, and job period in the present organization) characteristics.

## **Procedure**

In order to carry out this study, prior visits to different private and public universities were carried out. Appointments were settled over the call before visiting every university and official permissions from administrative heads of different departments of respective universities were acquired. The concerned employees were informed about the whole process verbally and informed consent was attained from every participant and was made sure that their information would be kept confidential. Respondents were also briefed about their right to quit at any time if they feel uncomfortable. Verbal and written instructions were given to the respondents to fill the questionnaires properly and accurately. Queries from the participants while filling the questionnaires were clarified immediately in order to enhance genuinely of responses. Data was mostly collected during tea or lunch



breaks as respondents were more at ease to be available to spare their time for attempting the questionnaire booklet. Respondents were graciously thanked for their valuable input and support towards the study.

**Results**

To determine the direction and strength of relationship of variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was tabulated while multiple regression was performed for mediation and group differences were examined through *t*-test and MANOVA. Alpha reliability coefficients, mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the general average scores of participants on particular scales used in this study, whereas the value of skewness shows the distribution of scores among variables. Skewness and kurtosis -1 to +1 showed that data is normally distributed.

Table 1  
*Intercorrelations Among Study Variables (N = 237)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. DPE	-	.57**	.69**	.54**	.61**	.49**	.44**
2. Contentment		-	.47**	.40**	.37**	.45**	.39**
3. Compassion			-	.35**	.31**	.38**	.33**
4. Amusement				-	.29**	.27**	.36**
5. Awe					-	.23*	.21*
6. AI							.55**
7. EE							-

*Note.* DPE = Dispositional Positive Emotions; AI = Appreciative Inquiry; EE = Employee Engagement.

\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01.

Results presented in Table 1 showed relationship among dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, and employee engagement. It has been observed that dimensions of dispositional positive emotions (contentment, compassion, amusement, and awe) are significantly positively associated with each other as well as with the total construct of dispositional positive emotions, thereby exhibiting the construct validity of dispositional positive emotions. In addition, dispositional positive emotions is significantly positively associated with appreciative inquiry and employee engagement; while appreciative inquiry is significantly positively linked with employee engagement; hence offering substantial support for first hypothesis.

Table 2

*Indirect Effect of Appreciative Inquiry in Predicting Employee Engagement Among University Teachers (N = 237)*

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variable	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
				LL	U
Direct Effects					
Emp. Eng.	Dispositional Positive Emotions	.21	.01	.15	.27
App. Inquiry	Dispositional Positive Emotions	.36	.00	.26	.46
Emp. Eng.	Appreciative Inquiry	.42	.00	.37	.47
Indirect Effect					
Emp. Eng.	DPE Through App. Inquiry	.06	.39	-.02	.11

*Note.* DPE = Dispositional Positive Emotions; Emp. Eng. = Employee Engagement; App. Inq. = Appreciative Inquiry.

Table 2 shows the direct and indirect effects of dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry on employee engagement; while exploring the role of appreciative inquiry as a mediator. Direct effects reveal dispositional positive emotions as a significant predictor of employee engagement and appreciative inquiry and direct path between appreciative inquiry and employee engagement is also significant. However, indirect effect becomes non significant when appreciative inquiry is introduced as a mediator; thereby, providing empirical support for hypothesis number 2.

Table 3

*Differences on Gender Across Study Variables Among University Teachers (N = 237)*

Variable s	Women ( <i>n</i> = 128)		Men ( <i>n</i> = 109)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			LL	UL	
Gender									
DPE	88.30	10.53	83.12	11.21	3.75	.01	1.31	3.67	0.41
App. Inq.	67.87	10.54	55.46	10.23	5.81	.00	3.97	7.77	0.65
Emp. Eng.	39.16	6.83	33.38	5.39	2.16	.02	2.91	5.13	0.36

*Note.* *df* = 235; DPE = Dispositional Positive Emotions; App. Inq. = Appreciative Inquiry; Emp. Eng. = Employee Engagement.

Table 3 explains group differences on gender (men and women) and type of university (private and public) along study variables. Results show that women exhibit more inclination of dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, and employee engagement as compared to their male counterparts; hence, providing evidence in support of hypothesis number 3.

Table 4

*Differences on Work Experience Along Dispositional Positive Emotions, Appreciative Inquiry, and Employee Engagement Among University Teachers (N = 237)*

Variables	Group-1 (n = 98)		Group-2 (n = 75)		Group-3 (n = 64)		F	p	Tukey's PostHoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
DPE	82.84	13.43	83.45	10.02	90.09	11.52	5.37	.00	3 > 1, 2
App. Inq.	62.39	10.10	64.94	12.76	69.00	11.17	8.30	.00	3 > 1, 2
Emp. Eng.	30.36	9.30	34.51	10.44	39.86	10.30	7.68	.00	3>1,2; 2>1

*Note.* DPE = Dispositional Positive Emotions; App. Inq. = Appreciative Inquiry; Emp. Eng. = Employee Engagement. Group-1 = 1-7 years, Group-2 = 7.1-16 years & Group-3 = 16.1-24 years of Work Experience.

Results presented in Table 4 showed group differences in relation to work experience of the university teachers along study variables. It has been found that teachers with maximum work experience demonstrate augmented inclination of dispositional positive emotions; enhanced perceptions of appreciative inquiry and increased experience of employee engagement in comparison to the other two groups, that is, group 1 and 2. Thus, providing support for hypothesis number 4.

Table 5

*Combined Effect of Gender, Institutional Affiliation and Job Experience on Study Variables*

Variables	Wilk's		Hyp Error		p	n <sup>2</sup>	power
	λ	F	df	df			
Gender	0.93	2.64	6	220	.01	.06	.85
Type of University	0.98	2.51	6	220	.01	.07	.70
Job Experience	0.94	3.15	12	440	.01	.09	.81
Gender x Type of University	0.96	1.29	6	220	.25	.03	.50
Gender x Job Experience	0.92	5.46	12	440	.00	.13	.89
Job Experience x Type of University	0.98	1.35	12	440	.97	.01	.20
Gender x Job Experience x Type of Institution	0.93	1.28	12	440	.22	.03	.72

As significant group differences are observed on gender, type of university (public versus private), and job experience; therefore, multivariate analysis utilizing MANOVA is tabulated to determine the combined interaction effect on study variables. It has been found that combined effect of gender and job experience is significant; whereas,

interaction effect of type of university with gender and job experience turned out to be non significant (see Table 5).

### **Discussion**

The present study examined the role of dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry in predicting employee engagement among university teachers.

Findings of the study indicated that dispositional positive emotions are positively related with appreciative inquiry and employee engagement. These findings can be comprehensively explained in the context of appreciative inquiry approach which concentrates on positive and constructive aspects around the association that is capable of prompting enormous revolutionary adjustment in involvement of its workers as well as in other positive worker behaviors (Clayton, 2015). Similarly, positive experiences and emotions are capable of producing positive work outputs such as job performance, job satisfaction, and employee well-being (Doggett & Lewis, 2013). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) further declared that employees who experience positive emotional connectivity to their work and show more employee engagement have more powerful linkage to association as well as minor inclination toward leaving the organization. Success and feelings are also linked with work involvement as positive emotions and psychological well-being enhance efficacy of the workers (Drew & Wallis, 2014). According to Saenghiran (2013), feelings of happiness, pleasure and other positive emotions at workplace enhances positive and desirable work related behaviors such as employee engagement.

Findings of the present study indicating that appreciative inquiry is positively associated with employee engagement is substantially supported by the prior studies (Subramanian, 2003; Watson, 2013) proposing that appreciative inquiry at workplace increases the tendency of industrious and useful work-related outcomes specifically involving creative and imaginative ideas for organizational change. Watson (2013) further explained that appreciative inquiry approach makes the organizational obligations satisfactory and individual employee strive to fulfill the essential mental needs with the comfort of elevated intrinsic motivation, thus making a rigorous effect on work engagement. Mache et al. (2014) and Martinez (2002) also asserted that employee engagement is a positive experience which is triggered by the personal (efficacy, optimism, resilience, and happiness) and organizational factors (appreciative inquiry, supervisory support, and organizational development).

It has been found that appreciative inquiry mediates the relationship between dispositional positive emotions and employee engagement. A reasonable explanation of this finding could be well understood through the earlier investigations of Mache et al. (2014), Mohsen et al. (2015), and Watson (2013) asserting that appreciative inquiry facilitates the relationship between various cognitive and emotional characteristics of the individual (such as self-efficacy, hardiness, resilience, psychological distress, contentment, and happiness) with desirable work related cognitions and behaviors (such as experiencing flow, job satisfaction, psychological commitment with work). On similar note, Morsillo and Fisher (2007) elaborated that appreciative inquiry when paired with positive emotions may result in enhanced experience of meaningfulness in every domain of one's life including appropriate behaviors at workplace. A relatively direct evidence (Peelle, 2006) on the mediating role of appreciative inquiry inferred that appreciative inquiry plays a central role in predicting creative problem solving behaviors and work based engagement among members of cross-functional teams.

Additional findings of the study indicated that women show more dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement than men. This pattern of finding receive partial, yet, convincing support from Kong (2009) demonstrating dissimilarity which exist in worker's involvement amongst men and women in an organization; where more importance to their employments have been reported by women rather than men. Sarwar and Awan (2010) also reported that there is a huge contrast in male working environment deviation, and organizational deviation of male and female teachers. Women tend to find more fulfillments in their duties and experience more engagement with their work (Johnson, 2004). However, Shuck et al. (2011) argued that positive potentials of male employees are more prominent in (especially) non-work related interactions in the department and increasing incentives or bonuses may be useful strategy in making them more likely to want to stay at the institution and become more engaged.

Results also showed that university teachers with extended job experience displayed more dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement as compared to those having lesser job experience. The imperative role of work experience and knowledge of employees in determining desirable work behaviors has been extensively established in organizational studies. For instance, empirical derivations of numerous studies (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014; Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011; Doggett & Lewis, 2013; Shuck et al., 2011) asserted that acknowledgement that is received by

the senior employees of any organization is associated with several progressive and constructive outcomes that are cherished by the experienced employees. Likewise, employees with extensive work experience in any organization are likely to receive more recognition and obedience from their subordinates; hence, more positivity is viewed and reported by them. The greater job experience serve as a catalyst in a reciprocal manner by highlighting the virtues and rewards associated with longer affiliation of the employees in a specific organization and may result in enhanced feelings of positive emotions, favorable perceptions of the workplace, and augmented levels of engagement with work. However, contradictory evidences (Wilson, 2009) indicated that work engagement may diminish over time and workers engagement at workplace has no relation to the years of job which means that workers show engagement to their organization irrespective of their duration of job and experience.

Finally, multivariate analysis showed the combined effect of gender and job experience exhibiting that women with extensive work experience expressed more dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry, and employee engagement; whereas non significant interaction effect of type of institution is found in relation to study variables. This trend can be reasonably explained within the context of commitment theories (Hellevig, 2012) that explain the interplay of demographic influences and circumstantial impacts in which workers can experience forcefulness toward employment, while involvement hypotheses focus on such events in which the workers with open judgment desire to work for the success of an organization. Later research (Clayton, 2015) has also emphasized on building up a superior comprehension of how demographic features (e.g., gender, education), organizational dynamics (e.g., nature of work connections, values of the association interface, and organizational support) play an essential role in relation to essential work output in organizational change (Drew & Wallis, 2014). Ferguson (2007) also establish the role of demographic aspects of employees such as gender, work experience, job tenure in the organization, and organizational designation that bring about individual differences in examining worker's viewpoint about task output, subjective well-being, and perceived fulfillment with their work.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

The present study has some limitations which should be kept in consideration while inferring generalizability of the research findings regarding average population. Secondly, the use of self-report

measures may offer perceived views of the employees in relation to major constructs of the study and may also limit the variation of responses which could have been explored through qualitative measures that would enhance the in-depth understanding of the variables. Thirdly, the target sample comprised of university teachers only which may induce the confounding role of the specific occupation. On the basis of these limitations; it is, therefore suggested that future investigations may employ longitudinal and mixed method approach to explore factors that are contributing in employee engagement among university teachers because the cross sectional research method limit our ability to make a causal inference between dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry. In addition, inclusion of diverse occupational groups may broaden our understanding of the interconnected role of study variables across various organizational settings. The role of various personal attributes (such as personality traits) and organizational factors (such as supervisory support, leadership styles, and organizational justice) should be considered in upcoming studies so as to provide a much comprehensive representation of relatively less explored construct of appreciative inquiry.

### **Implications**

The findings of the present study may serve as a baseline evidence specifically with reference to appreciative inquiry in the backdrop of our educational setting. Therefore, the implication of the study would be more pertinent in maximizing the performance of university teachers. Keeping in view the findings of the study, it is important to have university teachers showing dispositional positive emotions, moral goodness unconditionally and appreciating or highlighting the positive aspects towards each other because it is important for both the institutions and the individual teaches himself these values, which will increase the engagement of employees towards their personal goals (job satisfaction) and organizational goals (job performance). To enhance the inquiry through appreciation and engagement in employees this should be introduced to HR specialists of the company, thereby, guiding the HR managers to bring the goodness out of the employees working in their organization, to produce an engaged workforce having lesser negative emotions. Furthermore, it is equally important for the organizations to promote appreciative inquiry in management practices because this may have positive effect on the degree to which employees can succeed in holding their valuable workforce as keeping highly engaged employees can enhance the productivity of the organizations.

## Conclusion

This study completed an effort to scrutinize the relationship among dispositional positive emotions, appreciative inquiry and employee engagement. Results showed that dispositional positive emotions and appreciative inquiry positively predicted employee engagement among university teachers and also establish mediating role of appreciative inquiry in predicting employee engagement from dispositional positive emotions. Group differences revealed significant variations in relation to gender, job experience and type of institution; however, multivariate analysis indicated significant interaction between gender and job experience across study variables.

## References

- Berrisford, S. (2005). Using appreciative inquiry to drive change at the BBC. *Strategic Communication Management*, 9(3), 22-25.
- Bhuvanaiah, T., & Raya, R. P. (2014). Employee engagement: Key to organizational success. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 11(4), 61-71.
- Clayton, M. (2015). *Appreciative inquiry and employee engagement* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Department of Psychology, Washington University, USA. Retrieved from [https://www.trinitydc.edu/bgs/files/2014/07/7\\_CLAYTON-PUB-COPY-2015.pdf](https://www.trinitydc.edu/bgs/files/2014/07/7_CLAYTON-PUB-COPY-2015.pdf)
- Conkright, T. A. (2011). Improving performance and organization value through a virtual appreciative inquiry summit. *Performance Improvement*, 50(6), 31-37.
- Cooperrider, D., & Whitney, D. (2007). Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change. In P. Holman (Ed.), *The change handbook the definitive resource on today's best methods for engaging whole systems*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p. 75). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Godwin, L. (2011). Positive Organization Development: Innovation-Inspired Change in an Economy and Ecologys of Strengths. In K. Cameron & G. Spreitzer (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 737-750). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Doggett, C., & Lewis, A. (2013). Using Appreciative Inquiry to facilitate organisational change and develop professional practice within an Educational Psychology Service. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 30(4), 124-143.
- Drew, S. W., & Wallis, J. L. (2014). The use of appreciative inquiry in the practices of large-scale organizational change. *Journal of General Management*, 39(4), 3-26.



- Ferguson, A. (2007). Employee engagement: Does it exist, and if so, how does it relate to performance, other constructs and individual differences? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 23, 133-147.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). Gratitude, like other positive emotions, broadens and builds. *The psychology of Gratitude*, 3(12), 145-166.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(1), 1-53.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(5), 1045-1062.
- Hellevig, J. (2012). Employee Engagement: Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(5), 740-756.
- Johnson, G. (2004). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1(1), 3-30.
- Kim, H. J., Shin, K. H., & Swanger, N. (2009). Burnout and engagement: A comparative analysis using the Big Five personality dimensions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(1), 96-104.
- Kong, Y. (2009). A study on the job engagement of company employees. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 1(2), 65-68.
- Langelaan, S., Bakker, A. B., Van Doornen, L. J., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement: Do individual differences make a difference?. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40(3), 521-532.
- Loehr, J., & Schwartz, T. (2003). The power of full engagement: What is engagement. *Employee Engagement in Theory and Practice*, 15, 326-333.
- Mache, S., Vitzthum, K., Wanke, E., David, A., Klapp, B. F., & Danzer, G. (2014). Exploring the impact of resilience, self-efficacy, optimism and organizational resources on work engagement. *Work*, 47(4), 491-500.
- Martinez, C. D. (2002). Appreciative inquiry as an organizational development tool. *Performance Improvement Journal*, 41(8), 34-39.
- Mohsen, G., Rasoul, R. E., & Ali, M. (2015). Relationship between dispositional positive emotions and creativity: Synergistic role of trait positive affect. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 4(42), 42-49.
- Morsillo, J., & Fisher, A. (2007). Appreciative inquiry with youth to create meaningful community projects. *The Australian Community Psychologist*, 19(1), 47-61.
- Peelle, H. E. (2006). Appreciative inquiry and creative problem solving in cross-functional teams. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 42(4), 447.
- Richer, M., Ritchie, J., & Marichionni, C. (2009). If we can't do more, let's do it differently: Using appreciative inquiry to promote innovative ideas

- for better health care work environments. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 17(8), 947-955.
- Saenghiran, N. (2013). Towards enhancing happiness at work: A case study. *Social Research Reports*, 25(21).
- Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(7), 600-619.
- Sarwar, M., & Awan, R. N. (2010). Location and gender differences in deviant behavior among primary school teachers. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(12), 97-101.
- Schaufeli, W. (2013). What is engagement. *Employee Engagement in Theory and Practice*, 15, 321-323
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Baker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and the relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample studies. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293-315.
- Shiota, M. N., Keltner, D., & John, O. P. (2006). Positive emotion dispositions differentially associated with Big Five personality and attachment style. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(2), 61-71.
- Shiota, M. N., Keltner, D., & Mossman, A. (2007). The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept. *Cognition and Emotion*, 21(5), 944-963.
- Shuck, B., Reio, T. G., & Rocco, T. S. (2011). Employee engagement: An examination of antecedent and outcome variables. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(4), 427-445.
- Subramanian, R. (2003). Appreciative inquiry: change at the speed of imagination. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 2(1), 103-105.
- Watson, S. E. (2013). Who owns the gap? (part two): The application of appreciative inquiry to evaluation. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 45(7), 392-396.
- Wilson, K. (2009). *A Survey of Employee Engagement*. University of Missouri, Columbia.

Received 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019

Revision received 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2020