WESTMINSTER
International University in Tashkent

The Impact of Instructional Leadership on Teachers Work Engagement: Evidence from Vocational Education Sector

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Employee Work Engagement

Work engagement - a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that drives employees to invest effort, demonstrate creativity, and strive for excellence.

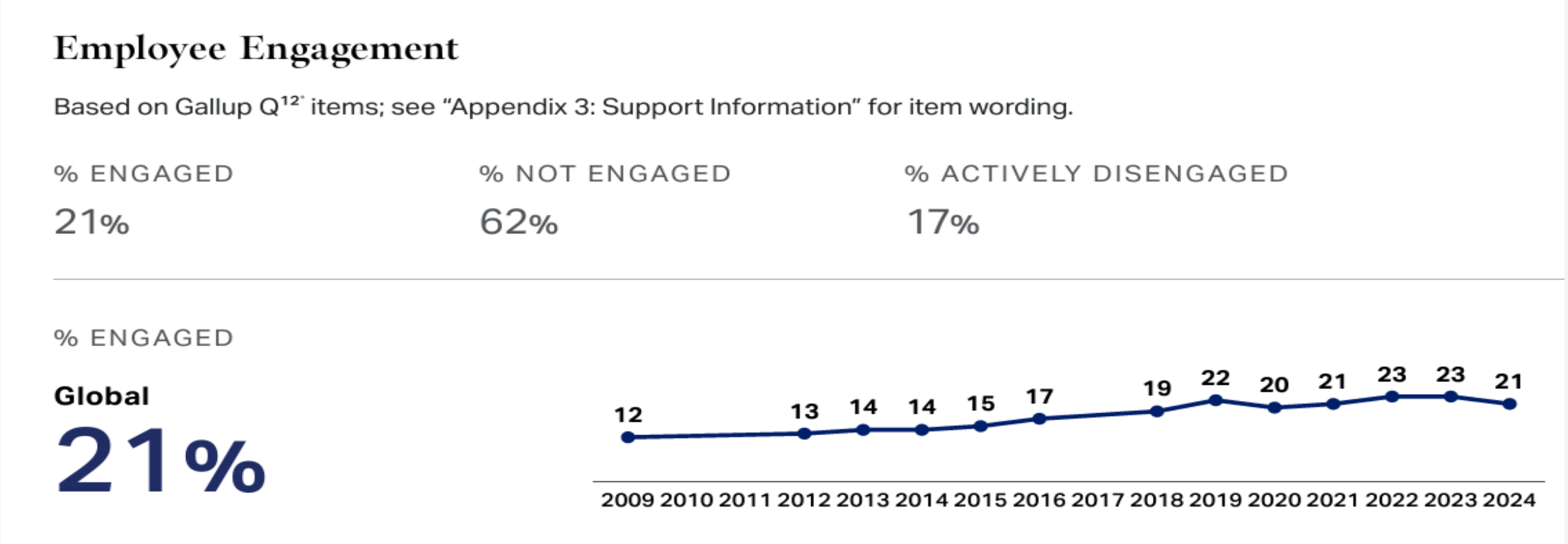
- **Vigor** – high energy and persistence even during difficulties,
- **Dedication** – deep involvement, enthusiasm, and a sense of pride, and
- **Absorption** – full concentration and enjoyment in work, where time seems to fly.

Schaufeli et al., 2002

Employee Work Engagement

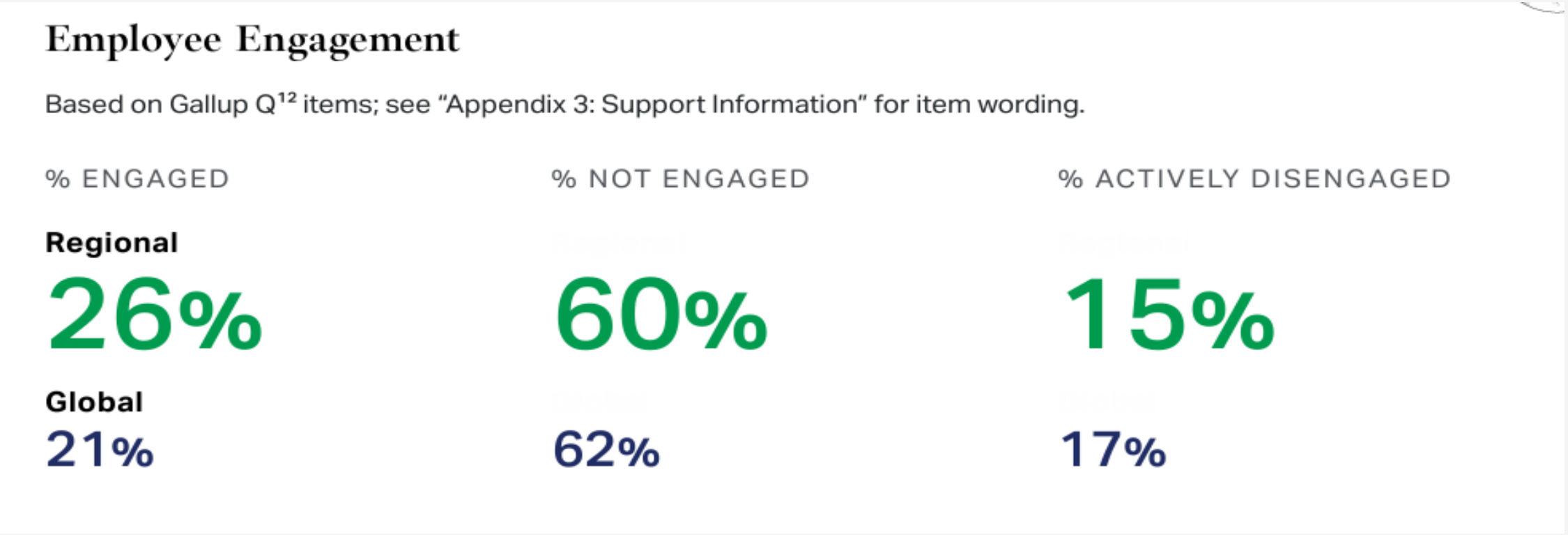
- Strong WE **enhances retention** (Yıldız, 2023), improving employee **psychological well-being** (Hamzah & Nordin, 2022)
- Engaged employees enhance both performance and **organizational image**. (Ahmad et al., 2022)
- Employees **show effort** toward the organization, peers, and customers. (McManus et al., 2025)
- Engaged employees possess energetic and affective connections with their work, see themselves as **capable of dealing with job demands** (Demerouti et al., 2010)

Employee Work Engagement Crisis: Global



In 2024, the global percentage of engaged employees fell from 23% to 21%.
This decline in engagement comes with a steep price—$438 billion in lost productivity

Employee Work Engagement Crisis: Post Soviet Countries



Problems with Low Work Engagement

1. Low work engagement → Dissatisfaction → Resignation

   Kuzior et al., 2022;
   Varavallo et al., 2024

2. Low work engagement → Quiet Quitting

   Bennett, 2025;
   Serenko 2024

Teachers Work Engagement Crisis

Work engagement is particularly **critical for teachers**.

Research indicates that, **compared to many other professions,** teachers often experience higher levels of exhaustion (the opposite of vigor) and cynicism (the opposite of dedication)—the core dimensions of burnout.

Angelini, 2024;
Shu, 2022.

Research Gap: Teachers Work Engagement at VET

Despite the **critical role of VET teachers** in

- enhancing student achievement and employability,
- fostering institutional innovation and reputation, and
- strengthening the alignment between education and labor market needs

their work engagement remains under-researched.

Edokpolor, 2022;
Anshori, 2023

Research Gap: Teacher Work Engagement in Uzbekistan

Empirical studies are particularly scarce in non-Western settings, including Uzbekistan, where limited evidence exists on the factors influencing teachers' engagement in the VET sector (Khusanova, 2021).

Despite the national reforms (**PD#5812, 2019; PD#158, 2024),** there is a lack of empirical research examining the actual level and determinants of work productivity, efficacy, and engagement among VET teachers in Uzbekistan (Tulanbaeva, 2025)

The Role of Leadership in WE

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Leaders often play a vital role in both the increase and reduction of work engagement of their followers.

Bakker and Albrecht, 2018

Direct Link: Boosts vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, 2008), Increases work engagement (Azarmehr, 2024). Emotional, social, role modelling (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020)

Mediated Link: Provides resources (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020), increases autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), enhances org commitment (Ly, 2024)

The Role of Leadership in WE

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Supportive supervisors act as organizational agents, providing guidance and resources that increase motivation and engagement

Hamzah & Nordin, 2022;

McManus et al., 2025

Inclusive leadership to enhance EWE and AOC, contributing to improved organizational outcomes

Ly, 2023

Recent researchers have reported **ethical leadership** to be a key driver of work engagement in government organizations

Mostafa & AbedEl-Motalib,2020

Research Gap: Instructional Leadership and Work Engagement

Instructional leaders emphasize guiding teaching and learning, supporting teacher development, and promoting academic excellence—behaviors that may directly strengthen teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption at work.

Hallinger, 2018;
Shaked & Schechter, 2020;
Azarmehr, 2024.

Yet, empirical research on how PIL enhances teachers' work engagement remains scarce.

Dami et al., 2022

Mediator: Leadership and Engagement Studies

Leadership and Engagement studies have produced **inconclusive and contradictory outcomes**

Some studies reporting direct positive effects while others find that leadership exercises its influence indirectly via

- trust in leadership (Ugwu et al., 2021),
- psychological empowerment (Kim & Park, 2020),
- organizational commitment (Breevaart & Bakker, 2024),
- job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023),
- self-efficacy (Xanthopoulou et al., 2020), and
- emotional intelligence (Li et al., 2023).

Wang et al, 2023;
Maheshwari & Kha, 2023.

Research Gap: Mediating Role of Organizational Culture

1. Leadership shapes culture: Principals influence shared values, norms, and professional practices that define school culture (Srimulyani et al., 2022).

2. Culture shapes engagement: A positive, collaborative culture fosters teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption—core components of work engagement (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

3. Organizational culture has rarely been examined as a mediator in the leadership–work engagement relationship (Agustini & Hermanto, 2022) especially in VET and non-Western contexts such as Uzbekistan.

Theoretical Framework: JR-D theory

JD–R Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008) explains how job characteristics influence employee motivation and engagement.

1. Principals' Instructional Leadership → provides key job resources (guidance, feedback, development). (Trummer & Bakker, 2021)
2. Organizational Culture → acts as a contextual resource that reinforces motivation and collaboration.
3. Together, PIL and OC stimulate teachers' work engagement through the motivational pathway described in the JD–R model.

Conceptual Framework

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H1. Instructional Leadership is positively related to Work Engagement
H2. Organizational Culture mediates the relationship between Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Work Engagement.

Research Methodology

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Approach: Quantitative Cross-sectional survey

- Enables the collection of numerical data from a large group of respondents at a single point in time.
- Appropriate for examining relationships among variables (PIL - OC - WE)

Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling

- Suitable when participants are readily accessible (e.g., teachers from selected schools).
- Time-efficient and cost-effective for large-scale data collection in educational settings.

Research Participants

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Region	Female	Male	Total
Tashkent region	72	138	210
Sirdarya region	87	60	147
Samarkand region	121	116	237
Ferghana region	144	209	353
Total	424	523	**947**
	45%	**55%**	**100%**

Research Instruments

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1. **Principals Instructional Leadership Scale:** A 21 item scale by Lai & Lien (2023)

2. **Organizational Culture.** Denison Organizational Culture Model: an 8-item short form (1990, refined in 2012)

3. **Teacher work engagement.** UWES 9-item short form (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004)

Rating: a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (always).

Reliability & Discriminant Validity

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	Cronbach's alpha	Average variance extracted (AVE)
OrgCulture	0.899	0.586
PILS	0.971	0.634
WE	0.912	0.587

	Org. Culture	PILS	WE
Org. Culture			
PILS	0.804		
WE	0.758	0.657	

	R-square adjusted
WE	0.471

Results

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	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
PILS -> WE	0.520	0.029	18.125	0.000

	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
PILS -> OrgCulture -> WE	0.384	0.040	9.523	0.000

Discussions and Conclusions

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1. Effective principals motivate and support teachers, boosting their vigor, dedication, and absorption.
2. A culture with high involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission amplifies leadership's positive impact on teacher engagement.
3. Instructional Leadership impacts engagement indirectly through culture, highlighting the importance of collective values and shared purpose.

Research Implications

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For school leaders: Focus on professional dialogue and feedback.

- The central role of principals in shaping a positive, supportive school culture
- Training programs for principals should emphasize instructional leadership skills.

For researchers: Extend model across school types or include longitudinal data:

- Extends the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) theory
- Provides empirical evidence of OC as a mediating mechanism
- Contributes to leadership and engagement literature

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Thank you

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