Student Faculty Engagement towards Flourishing

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Abstract: Higher educational institutions are exploring ways towards having their faculties experience flourishing which will indirectly lead to higher level of student engagement. Faculty experiencing flourishing and student engagement is a key factor in academic achievement and degree completion, though there is much debate about the operationalisation and dimensionality of this constructs. Research indicates that there is not much literature available in educational domain in terms of measuring 'flourishing' and its influence on academic engagement and faculty productivity. However, literature also indicates that positivity experienced by the faculty in the workplace enhance better student engagement. The conceptual paper adopted descriptive methodology to understand and explore the previous research works that enables student-faculty engagement leading to higher level of productivity and flourishing at higher education. The conceptual paper highlights the importance of highlighting the perspective of faculty-student engagement, faculty productivity and faculty flourishing, apart from its theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: Flourishing; Academic Engagement; Academic institutions; Faculty Productivity

Introduction

The multifaceted demand in academic institutions to enhance successful faculty-student engagement remains a constant challenge for faculty members and leaders of educational institutions. To address this, institutions require faculty members with a passion to teach; who're both committed and competent, as this would lead them to experience a larger well-being. However, studies on well-being are mostly looked from destructive shades, when it comes to the working of faculty members e.g. burnout and stress, (Peltzer et al., 2009).Educational philosophers have developed theories on flourishing (Ruyter, 2015: White, 2011) with reference to academic institutions and centre for human flourishing. To apply these faculty members must be contented both in their personal and professional lives through mutual understanding with fellow workers, students, and their respective families to flourish (Soini, et al., 2010). These aspects do facilitate faculty members to become conscious of their objectives in teaching, and also approach their demands at work with both confidence and autonomy. Their expertise and values boost flourishing at the workplace, resulting in feelings of positivity and wellness. However, the degree of consideration, inquisitiveness, attentiveness, positivity, and passion that students demonstrate in the classroom, does indicate their level of stimulus to learn and progress in their academic pursuits. For a faculty-student engagement, this is significant, as both can experience positive outcomes. From the perspective of academic engagement, faculty productivity is very important; it relates to research publications, academic administration, mentoring students, coordinating internships and placements, apart from teaching per se (Musick, 2011). These are part of positive psychology that enables learning positive consequences (i.e., joy and educational rendezvous). Therefore, it is important to address the positive functioning of flourishing faculty members at the workplace faculty-student engagement / effectiveness towards flourishing and effect of flourishing on faculty productivity.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive methodology to review and understand the relevant research papers available. The paper presents the concepts of flourishing and its influence on faculty, faculty-student engagement / effectiveness and faculty productivity. The review strategy was to understand the antecedents /consequences of flourishing, its importance and influence on the defined key words. Inclusion Criteria: Research related to flourishing of faculty was considered across geography. Exclusion Criteria: Conference presentations, unpublished works, and Ph.D. thesis were excluded from the review.

Flourishing

Flourishing is a complex concept; researchers have shared their views as follows. Seligman (2011) "optimism, authentic happiness, flourishing as central tenets"; Csikszentmihalyi (1997) "flow, positive states one enjoys when hyper-focused on something one is passionate about as critical "and Peterson (2013) "optimism, character, and well-being in relation to characteristics of flourishing". However, flourishing has been laid open to many concepts, like Seligman's "PERMA model" (2011). This model highlighted the five aspects that are linked to the study variable flourishing. Similarly, Huppert and So (2013) advocated how these aspects influence flourishing. Over a period of time, features like positivity, proficiency, resilience, vigour, confidence, emotional stability and satisfaction with life were also included. Yet, they looked at flourishing universally with reference to a way of life besides the workplace. They believed that to flourish, individuals need to experience a high sense of social, emotional and psychological well-being, complimenting thereby the concept of subjective well-being. Organisational positive culture not only influences employees towards shaping their actions, it further supports them to experience flourishing.

As organisations expect employees to have high levels of motivation and commitment, they must develop a culture that fosters employee well-being. Positive associations have been found between employee's health and wellbeing, leading thereby to better performance and productivity. Another key indicator of flourishing is organisational practices that support personal growth and shape trust in the workplace. Experiencing positive emotions is associated to creative thinking (Fredrickson, 2004), promoting in turn an innovative and a compassionate thought process (Seligman et al., 2009), which effectively act as a base in the context of education. Individual's positive emotion was taken into consideration as the backdrop towards understanding the learning needs. Positive emotions thereby are known to spread attention and cognition behaviours. Even though positive emotions are not directly associated to certain individual behaviours, but they do stimulate diverse behavioural reactions. It is understood that the Broaden and the build-effect of optimistic feeling does lead to general wellbeing (Fredrickson, 2004). Herein, it's essential to appreciate the significance of scholar's well-being, and the faculty's influence on them. However, there is little consideration for the well-being of the faculty themselves. Research indicates that positive effect leads to increased wellbeing and better level of engagement between students and faculty members, thereby improving both their performance (Boerfijn and Bergsma, 2011). Notably, the wellbeing of a faculty is significant in educational institutions, as it reduces attrition, burnout, absenteeism, work stress and disengagement that are commonly seen in the teaching profession (Hastings and Bham, 2003).On the other hand, there is not much literature available, which looks at evaluating flourishing and its importance from a scholastic perspective, apart from faculty-student engagement and faculty productivity. In the current study, we investigate the following objectives: a) flourishing in academic institutions b) flourishing of faculty c) academic engagement d) flourishing affect faculty–student engagement / effectiveness and e) how does flourishing affect faculty productivity.

Flourishing in Academic Institutions

Flourishing at workplace consists of "emotional, psychological and social well-being", which is anticipated by "job-contextual factors and outcomes of organisation" (Rothmann, 2013). Harvey and Green (1993) gave importance to quality in higher education, considered from excellence, precision, acceptable, optimisation or ROI, and change, which influence personal flourishing. So, it is important not only to build resilience among faculty members and students towards well-being, but also create a workplace culture that encourages compassion (i.e. focusing on social, physical, emotional and spiritual health). Student flourishing is a pre-requisite for effective learning, and the same applies for faculties too. Both are equally important, and so is the academic environment that plays a predominant role in flourishing. It is therefore of utmost importance for academic institutional leaders to focus on positive functioning and promote well-being. Higher education today has increased the stress levels both among the faculty members and the students due to an increase in work load. When we look at it from the lens of 'Systems Thinking' (Vailes, 2019), which tries to balance 'holistic thinking' against 'reductionist thinking', it shows how the larger system interacts with each other through a network of interrelated movements that produce behaviours affecting one another. By integrating the idea of system thinking, it is important to understand that all participants in the system are both part of the problem and the solution too. It inspires a faculty to look at the students' concerns, their occurrence and perspective of things differently. That is faculty's ability to look at the consequences of one's own action (Senge, 1990) and how institutions positive functions convey flourishing through 'physical, mental, social, and professional' (Kern, Waters, Adler & White, 2014). However, a faculty's well-being's influence can also be due to job fitment amid

the person and their work culture of the institute or university. The adornment in turn may be explained in various stages including the compatibility amid a individuals career aspirations, goals, principles, competency, and their personality within the organization that is fitment of (individual-organization), (individual-group), or a particular job (individual-job) towards flourishing.

Flourishing of Faculty

Academia provides opportunities to get into the 'flow', communicating ones passion to teach, research work, student engagement and new learning. Flourishing promotes mental well-being and moves towards a path of growth by providing an environment of healthy learning and development through improved interactions, avoiding silos thereof (Sunil and Patrick, 2019b). For a faculty to flourish, they need to benefit from the lessons of positive psychology as much as the students they are teaching to have meaningful work lives. Research indicates that there is an association between faculty wellbeing and student performance (Briner and Dewberry, 2007). A faculty's work emphasises on maintaining the passion for teaching and research, while building relationships with students through compassion and care. However, "acknowledging the need for self-fulfilment through teaching and for engaging minds and hearts as an imperative for passion in the work of teaching" (Day, 2004). Positive emotions enhance learning and impact the students' outcomes through an experience of trust between the student and the faculty; this leads to flourishing. In fact, it creates a feeling of purpose towards the work by enhancing job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013), which in turn leads to flourishing. Researchers have focused on the well-being among teachers who are passionate towards teaching. They transfer their experiences in the classroom, and engage students as part of a holistic learning experience (Starratt, 2011).Jim Parsons, a noted educationalist, "emphasised on his four learning's that makes teaching flourish. That is to have (1) focus is on engagement, (2) formative assessment to create better student learning, (3) practice professional learning and collaborative work, and (4) collaborate with student's needs" (Cherkowski, and Walker, 2018).Apart from these factors, the faculty must equip themselves with (a) creative thinking, (b)develop collaboration Skills, (c)have transparent communication, (d) develop and demonstrate critical thinking, and (e) encourage continuous learning. However, the faculty's foremost objective is to influence a student's critical thinking and learning style, by adding value towards academic learning and has a better engagement thereof. This builds a creative work environment, which in turn develops faculty effectiveness and triggers faculty-student engagement towards flourishing.

Faculty-Student Engagement-Effectiveness

Student engagement has been linked to faculty's perceptions of their ability to participate in class room activities (Hughes & Coplan, 2010). However, a faculty's observation and evaluation of students' behavioural engagement have been associated with academic achievements (Hughes and Coplan, 2010: Fredricks et al., 2004; Furrer & Skinner, 2003).Faculty-rated behavioural engagement acts as a forecaster of long-term educational accomplishment (Skinner et al., 2009). "The National Survey of Student Engagement" (NSSE) promotes faculty-student engagement as an standard criteria for effective and instructive practice in academic institutions. Research indicates that faculty-student engagement does have a positive influence on both cognitive and affective factors in student development, enhancing thereby student satisfaction (Cox and Orehovec, 2007:). Since, cognitive and socio-psychological dimensions result in academic achievement and a relationship between a student and faculty, it would enhance the scope for better learning (Downey 2008: Hallinan (2008). However, a significant association amid faculty-student engagement is found in addition to positive learners outcomes (Hashemizade and Mahdiyan,2018: Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005); these include self-confidence, leadership skills and academic growth (Kezar and Moriarty, 2000: Marzano, 2003).Enhancing academic engagement, while encouraging positive behaviour is expected to bring about an upsurge in the students' positive 'academic enthusiasm'. This experience would lead to a higher level of student-faculty engagement (Sunil and Patrick, 2019a: Reschly et al., 2008), and thereby enhance flourishing.

Faculty-Student Engagement Enhances Flourishing

To have effective faculty-student engagement towards flourishing, institutions must ensure that there is (a) active learning through structured course curriculum and assignments to develop significant engagement between faculty members-student via classroom activities. (b) Group interaction must focus on course content, both at the beginning and end of each class. (c) Integrate academic course materials towards how one could apply it in real-life or at an organisation level. This needs to be shared in classroom presentations and discussed.

(d) Constructive feedback to encourage learning behaviour. (e) Recognise the accomplishments of students for their learning. These factors not only motivate students' academic engagement, but also drive them towards successful learning. Their engagement and performance encourage faculty members to develop new techniques to engage student towards effective learning as per their potential (Liem & Martin, 2011), resulting thereby in affective faculty-student relationship. Emotional intelligence is key to have a healthy working relationship at workplace. However, workplace relationship generally creates bonds, energises and inspires positive emotions towards flourishing of one and all.

The above factors discussed offers emotional support that improvises positive emotions, and provides opportunities for career development. At the same time, team's cohesiveness or mentoring relationships enables professional development among faculty members (Le Cornu, 2013: Soini et al., 2010). When faculty members focus on the student's well-being, they can inadvertently have an emotional impact on their self-efficacy, passion for their domain learning, and thereby articulate their own standards to flourish. Faculty members functioning collectively have a common objective towards supporting students. In terms of learning and progression this creates a sense of flourishing. This creates an emotional bond and a positive relationship with students through shared behaviour towards a mutual objective (faculty/student/institution), which in turn does contribute to a feeling of fulfilment and meaning in their assignments, helping them enhance their productivity. However, when faculty-students are engaged in their learning through innovation, and new methods of teaching, they experience a sense of better productivity. Another aspect of faculty-student engagement is when the institution creates a work climate for both to experiment and learn. This establishes tripartite trust, i.e. between the faculty, the student and the institution, which goes on to create flourishing academic engagement and better productivity of all the three stakeholders.

Academic Engagement

Academic engagement attributes to scholars vigorous participation in university pursuits for instance acquiring new learning's, competence development, research work and informal learning interactions. Appleton et al., (2008) advocates that 'academic rendezvous emphasis the influence of the institution on the student, while student engagement is looked upon from the perspective of the institution, and academic work in a classroom. However, student engagement does also include academic engagement in terms of (academic task), cognitive, behavioural and psychological engagement. Therefore, student engagement can be used to represent academic engagement. The student engagement model suggested that academic engagement involves students' participation, and provide satisfaction when assignments are completed (Skinner et al., 2009). However, Siu et al., (2014) operationalised study engagement "as the extent to which students endorse absorption, dedication, and vigour when participating in academic activities." Positive organisational behaviour allows persons to accomplish a fruitful and fulfilling lifespan due to psychological capital. This in turn allows them to experience academic engagement (Siu et al., 2014) plus educational achievement (Luthans et al., 2012). Flourishing does forecast academic achievement, behavioural and emotional engagement among students. The student's academic achievement and well-being is due to the componence of student engagement (Sunil and Patrick, 2019a: Fredricks et al., 2004 and Li & Lerner, 2011).This in turn, enhances their level of participation in classroom activities and ensures they are prepared for class assignments (Hughes and Coplan, 2010). Overall, these experiences create higher level of engagement having higher self-efficacy (Kumar & Patrick, 2022), and motivate both the student and the faculty to perform well and have better productivity (Janosz et al., 2008).

Flourishing Affects Faculty Productivity

In today's academic environment, the expectation from the faculty's all-round delivery is much high and its vital to study the effectiveness of their productivity. In terms of teaching, research, and other services relates to flourishing. Research indicates that faculty productivity is also looked from how funds are generated through research work, or tuition fees generated by the institution to equal the faculty pay. It is important to understand why faculty remunerations have continued to increase, but not productivity (Wexler, 2016).However, 'faculty efficiency' is also looked from factors that motivate faculty's career development progression in terms of their teaching ability, research publications, research funding and longevity in the institution (Mamiseishvili and Rosser, 2011). The process theory of motivation (expectancy) contends that "people make decisions among alternative plans of behaviour based on their perceptions (expectancies) of the degree to which a given behaviour will lead to desired outcomes"(Mathibe, 2008). However, faculty members would tend to engage and

absorb themselves in activities, which they value and are, interested (Wood et al., 2015). This leads them towards experiencing higher level of engagement, better productivity and flourishing.

An educational institution contributes to whether or not employees flourish; it is related to their social capital by optimising wellbeing, while enhancing productivity. Research indicates that if employees' health and wellness is managed better, it improves mental health outcomes by reducing stress and leads to better employee engagement, which in turn promotes flourishing(Sunil and Patrick, 2019b),creating a happier and more productive workforce thereof. The 'professional identities' of a faculty influence all aspects of their jobs, i.e. teaching abilities, interpersonal skills, feeling of their success. Similarly, 'productive identity 'lines up by means of faculty's job role and his/her perceptions of themselves, which drives their activities (Sachs, 2005). Though, the workplace experiences changes the needs of the faculty's and their identities.

Their "psychological perspective, the development of professional identity follows a similar process to that of individual identity; where as personal identity and social identity together create self-concept" (Sivanathan et al., 2004). Productive identity (Snyder et al., 2011) is described via satisfaction, salary and perks, proficiency, and loyalty. These will enhance job-related distinctiveness optimistically influence self-concept dimensions thus augmenting well-being. Positive effects enhance positivity towards employees, who continue with their tasks, contributing thereby to enhanced productivity. However, when educational institutional leaders invest in holistic well-being programmes, it increases both productivity and creativity, by raising the levels of employee engagement.

Implication

It is important to create a compassionate educational system, where faculties, students and administrators would thrive as inter-related communities to flourish. Flourishing helps build happiness, optimise wellbeing and enhances productivity at the workplace. So it's important to understand how faculty's productivity can be improved, bringing about a higher level of student engagement. Faculty's subject expertise, positivity, values, soft skills go on to influence students' engagement and well-being**.** This positive engagement enhances better learning in classroom, and yields better academic outcome for the student, bringing about satisfaction for the faculty. However, faculty's flourishing and productivity at workplace can be disposed via fitment amid the individual and their workplace situation through:

- Faculty development and leadership programs, which enhance positive practices among faculty towards better productivity.
- Educational leadership team must explore mentorship and coaching programs for faculty in terms of teaching delivery execution, research outcomes and managing students.
- Performance review and feedback processes must encourage and develop a culture of transparency at workplace. These processes would create a fulfilling experience and focus on faculty and students strengths towards their goals.

Conclusion

Academic institutions must create a positive workplace, which encourages faculty-student engagement; this would enhance academic engagement and satisfaction by up scaling student-faculty engagement, better productivity and flourishing. When academic institutional leaders focus on building a positive organisational climate towards improving faculty experience in terms of learning, research and innovation, there would be better student-faculty engagement, resulting in student and faculty well-being. This can take place only through good policies and practices, which would support faculty well-being, their productivity and career growth. The relationship of trust between student-faculty is vital and leads to frequent positive emotions emphasising a higher level of faculty-student engagement leading to academic achievement and flourishing. When faculty members engage in behaviour they value, they would experience higher productivity and flourishing. Flourishing provides opportunities for developing towards utilising ones competencies, nurturing relationship and well-being, and thereby indirectly contributing towards increasing productivity.

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