

Factors Influencing Student Engagement: A Study on Private Universities of Jaipur, Rajasthan

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Abstract

Student engagement occurs when 'students make a psychological investment in learning. Through this research, people will know more about factors that affect the students most in the college. The factors this research talks about is; feedback for improvement, classroom structure, mentor personality and behaviour, faculty behaviour, career advancement, course advancement and environment. To measure all of these factors a survey was conducted and 15 responses out of these 515 responses were incomplete so it was omitted and continued with 500 responses. According to the review of the literature, it was identified that most of the researches take place outside the India. So through this research, it can easily be identified the perception of the college students. The calculation is done on the basis of z-test. The researches used z-test as a part of methodology through which they can easily identify and analyse the difference between the population of two factors like UG and PG and can identify the results.

Keywords

Student engagement, student engagement, career advancement to the student engagement.

I. Introduction

Engagement is a state having an enormous impact on people's interest and indulgence towards a particular work. It is a higher level of motivation and results in deeper involvement by people towards the attainment of organizational goals. Student engagement refers to the attention, curiosity, interest and experience that students show while they are learning something new and pay their whole attention towards their learning process, which extends to higher degree of learning and progress on the part of student while helping the Universities/institutions to achieve its goals – both apparent and implied. Student Engagement is a construct that can be measured in three dimensions:

- Behavioral engagement - focusing on participation in academic, social, and co-curricular activities;

- Emotional engagement - focusing on the extent and nature of positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school;
- Cognitive engagement - focusing on students' level of investment in learning.

Excited and engaged students learn more, they memorize and recall better. It should, therefore, be the focal point of any institution/university to ensure that their students are engaged and to identify the areas that affect student engagement. Student Engagement is a constantly changing phenomena and varies in intensity and duration. For example, a student may feel very engaged in one semester but not so much in the next; another student might enjoy some of his or her classes but be bored in others. There can be various variables that have a bearing on the feeling of engagement felt by the student. It is, hence, important for the academic institutions to know about such factors and their subsequent effects on the overall perception of engagement among students. Hence, the present research is carried with the objectives of

- measuring the status of student engagement in private Universities in Jaipur.
- identifying the factors influencing student engagement.

II. Review of Literature

Delfino (2019) suggested that student engagement is a result of interplay of many variables. The careful review of literature also pointed out towards several factors that have been reported to have impact on student engagement encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Bedenlier, Bond, Buntins, Zawacki-Richter & Kerres (2020) suggested linkage of use of technology and student engagement. Hughes & Kent (2019) found relationship between academic environment and student engagement. Villier (2018) found that the overall environment of the institution plays an important role on pupil's behavior which consequently have impact on student engagement. Martin and D.U (2018) & Rashid (2016) pointed out that demographic factors such as age, gender, place of origin etc. have impact on student perception of engagement strategies. Myran (2018) and Boekaerts (2016) pointed out towards the self-motivation such as focus on goals, need for growth as crucial in engagement. Halm (2015) suggested that the bond between the student and the teachers impacts the student engagement to the core. Also, the goals (personal, academic, and professional) that many students bring to class and the experiences they take home from class also have important bearing.

Carey (2012) pointed that enhancing engagement requires institutions to respond flexibly to create an environment for meaningful engagement between students and staff. The review of

literature has also pointed out towards some other influencing factors like feedback for improvement, classroom structure, mentor personality and behaviour, faculty behaviour, career advancement, course advancement and environment. Most of the studies are carried out in the countries like Saudi Arabia, United States, South Africa, North Carolina Charlotte and UK with a dearth of studies in this area in India. This probably can be attributed to the gap in overall demand and supply of quality education and lack of appropriate educational reforms having effective student engagement into account. This research tries to delve into the level of student engagement in private universities in Jaipur with a view to understand the variables which contribute towards the student engagement. This will help to have a deeper insight about student's perception of engagement efforts of Universities and identifying the areas that require attention.

III. Research Methodology

For the purpose of the research, students across 10 private universities in Jaipur selected randomly were contacted and data was collected through a structured questionnaire circulated online. The respondents were prompted to forward the online form's link to their acquaintances to increase participation. Hence, a combination of convenience, snowball and random sampling technique were used. A total of 515 responses were received out of which 15 responses were found incomplete and were discarded. Hence, a sample of 500 students were used for further analysis. The research was carried out with objectives of

1. Identifying the status of student engagement in private Universities in Jaipur
2. Identifying the difference of perception of engagement between UG and PG students
3. Identifying various contributing variables in defining the student's perception of engagement.

The data was tabulated using MS Excel and was analyzed using statistical analysis software SPSS. A Z-test was employed as statistical tool to identify the significance of difference of observed means. *The results of the statistical test are exhibited in Table 1 and Table 2.*

Table 1: Comparison of Mean Scores

Particular	Mean	S.D	Z
Overall Engagement	3.65	0.47	21.16*
Feedback for improvement	3.92	0.69	20.84*
Classroom structure	3.61	0.99	15.83*
Mentor personality and feedback	3.34	0.86	9.74*
Faculties behaviour	3.52	0.79	10.37*
Career advancement	3.66	1.12	21.07*

Course advancement	4.04	0.7	30.05*
Environment	3.62	0.77	17.14*

n=500; *p<=.05

Source: Field Survey

Table 2: Comparison of UG and PG mean scores

Particular	UG		PG		Z
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Overall Engagement	3.57	1.43	3.74	0.92	4.57*
Feedback for improvement	3.72	1.16	3.94	0.89	2.10*
Classroom structure	3.56	0.7	3.6	0.94	0.57
Mentor personality and feedback	2.93	0.76	3.59	0.7	8.88*
Faculties behaviour	3.2	1.19	3.71	0.98	4.68*
Career advancement	3.78	0.75	3.56	0.62	-3.17
Course advancement	3.85	0.96	4.14	0.57	3.65*
Environment	3.6	0.8	3.58	0.86	-0.21

n=240; *p<=.05

Source: Field Survey

IV. Findings and Discussion:

The status of student engagement in the Private Universities when compared to the neutral value is found to be towards higher side. The observation was similar across all variables contributing to student's engagement. The main contributing factors were found to be *the* opportunities like industrial visits, seminars and apart from that the universities also provide the opportunities for career enhancement provided by the Universities. The findings of the present research are clearly indicative of the student friendly initiatives taken by private universities, especially in such competitive times. In addition to this, the perception of the students seems to be impacted by their evaluation of the opportunities given by the state-run Universities and academic institutions which are generally seen as highly bureaucratic and sluggish in terms of their response towards the changes and demands of the environment.

The comparison of PG and UG students revealed that the PG students had a perception of better engagement. There was no difference between the perception of UG and PG students found across the factors of classroom structure, career advancement and environment. For all other factors, PG students were found to have a more empathetic view of the student engagement initiatives of their universities. The findings indicate that the UG students need more engagement in comparison to the PG student who, probably due to better emotional

maturity and focus on academics and career, have more considerate view of the student engagement efforts taken by their respective universities.

The results of the present research suggest that the private universities are doing sufficiently good with respect to their student engagement efforts, but their efforts need to be more focused towards the UG students in order to make their efforts more fruitful. Also, more personalised, and focused feedback would improve the perception of student engagement initiatives to a great extent, especially for UG students. However, the findings of the present research need more validation and therefore, more studies in this area are highly recommended. It is suggested that comparative studies to compare private and state-run institutions needs to be taken up to find out the difference and the gaps in student engagement. Also, similar studies across different geographical, social, cultural, and urban/rural setups would give a deeper understanding on the matter. Similarly, inclusion of various demographic and psychographic variables would add to the present literature and understanding of the concept.

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