



ROLE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN INFLUENCING STUDENT'S GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE AS A CONSUMER OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES AND FACILITATING HOLISTIC LEARNING IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Student Engagement is the time that the student devotes in the educational activities and the holistic learning, facilities and opportunities that the institution provides to the student in the form of learning. This paper highlights the relationship between the four essential variables of the student engagement with the performance and growth of the student. The association of the four benchmarks of National survey of student's engagement was studied with that of the performance of the students. The aim of the study was to identify the role and impact of NSSE benchmarks on the student's performance and growth which was analyzed with the help of system dynamic models using Stella software. For gaining more insights into the contributions and facilities that the colleges provide to the students the researcher interacted with the staff as well as the students of the colleges of Agra and Mathura region. The study reveals that the Academic Challenges, Learning with the Peers and Campus Environment are highly interrelated factors that affect a student's performance. The impact of Experiences with the Faculty is indirectly prominent in the study. All the four plays an important role in the outcome of learning and elimination of any may result into breakage in the process of student engagement as well as holistic learning from the institute at under graduate and post graduate level courses.

Keywords: Student Engagement, Performance, Academic Challenges, Learning with the Peers, Experience with the Faculty, Campus Environment, Holistic Learning

JEL classification: I23, I24, I25, I29, M10, M12

INTRODUCTION

The term student engagement was first propounded by Alexander Astin in the year 1984 as student involvement. But with time now student engagement has gained its existence becoming the focal point of the education in numerous institutions providing higher education. The institutions by making student engagement as their priority attract a huge amount of new admissions, keep hold on to be existing enrolled students and aid future prospects of the students. It has now become a demanding job to measure student engagements direct effect on the student's holistic learning and development. Now, the abundance of literature validated the importance of the concept. Institutions are still looking for the tools and modus operandi to measure the effectiveness of the learning and impact of engagement on the performance of the student in the institution. (B. Jean Mandernach, 2015)

The term student engagement was described as the time a student daily devotes in the educational activities of the college or university during his entire course. The involvement of the student in the institution by learning some or the other thing is termed as student engagement. (Kuh, 2003)

The current studies in this area acknowledged the increasing attention of the researches as well as the researchers towards the new classification of engagement, which talks about cognitive, behavioral and emotional development of the student. These efforts and facilities are the future prospects that are offered by the institutions for the holistic development of the student which must be availed to the fullest. Hence, it becomes the responsibility of the student as well as the faculties to encourage engagement. A feedback loop should be followed by both the parties in order to ensure proper implementation and improvement of the practice of student engagement in the institute. Engagement does not just include the activities conducted inside the campus but also outside. The society in which these institutions operate is dynamic in nature and therefore, the up gradation of the standards has become must. But due to the lack of the student voice and preferences in the system a gap is found in the literature towards the efforts made in order to curb this problem. The point needs to be addressed considering the students perception and therefore, this paper aims at suggesting measures and looking into the issue from the student's point of view and

responses. (Taylor, L. & Parsons, J. 2011, Vicki Trowler,2010)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The existing literature has a variety of points, views and arguments when it comes to the concept of student engagement. It works as a system having various other sub systems, having both advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, a variety and mix of thoughts and ideas are found in the literature regarding engagement. Also the results and views from the student's perspective and the faculty perspective may differ. Therefore, for this reason a survey was conducted and both the national as well as international literatures were used to throw light on the concept and role of student engagement in the country.

An exhaustive and extensive review of the literature was conducted by the researcher based upon the three dimensions of NSSE which were further classified into the following categories:

Review of the Literature Based upon the Input Variables

Carini and Kuh (2004) have contributed by establishing association and connection between various variables of student engagement and performance. **Connell and Klem (2004)** have explained about how the teacher can contribute in enhancing the performance of the student. **Kuh and Cruce (2008)** have deliberately studied the impact of proper implementation of student engagement on the student outcomes. The study was conducted on graduate level students pursuing courses in different universities providing higher education. **Ward (2009)** in the study entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Student Engagement and Common Business Knowledge: A Pilot Study" has used the multi field test and NSSE benchmarks by comparing them. The results of the study demonstrated that all the variables turn positive towards in each other under controlled environment. A sample size of 41 was used the result of which was surveyed by the researcher and the result of which was highly positive.

Taylor and Parsons (2011) stated the ways of enhancing and improvising engagement in various universities and colleges. **Inceoglu (2011)** has contributed in the learning based upon the work done by the student. **Bótas, Velden, Naidoo, Lowe and Pool (2012)** have highlighted the importance of quality assurance making efforts to make the university experience of the student's the best. **Fredricks, McColsky (2012), Gunuc (2014)** and **Mandernach (2015)** have thrown light on the measurement of the student outcomes.

Review of Literature Based Upon the Environmental Variables

Skinner and Belmont (1993) have stated that the behavior of the faculty in the classroom affect the performance of the students either positively or negatively. **Rhoades (2012)** has explained that the amount of the support provided by the faculty and the interaction of the

faculty with the student influences the performance of the students. **Atnip (2015)** in his work “Assessing the Relationship between Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Engagement at Central Mountain College” has compared the students and the faculty. The results of the study measured a low involvement of the students in the classroom. The study recommended increasing the amount of interaction between the student and the faculty.

Review of Literature Based Upon the Output Variables

Kuh and Bridges (2006) determined the factors affecting the success and academic performance of the student.

Korobova (2012) carried out a study on national as well as international students Satisfaction, academic outcome and student’s involvement by making a comparison between all the three.

There are various studies focusing on student engagement but almost none of them have highlighted the relationship and linkages between all the three dimensions of student engagement given by NSSE. Therefore, this study aims at presenting a clear picture of the present scenario and the relationship, role and impact these benchmarks and NSSE dimensions play in attaining success by the student. There are other benchmarks as discussed below that are also missing from the past literature. Learning with the peers and Campus environment being amongst those rarely discussed and studied variables of student engagement is discussed in this paper. The researcher has made all the possible efforts in bridging the gap between the existing literature and the current scenario.

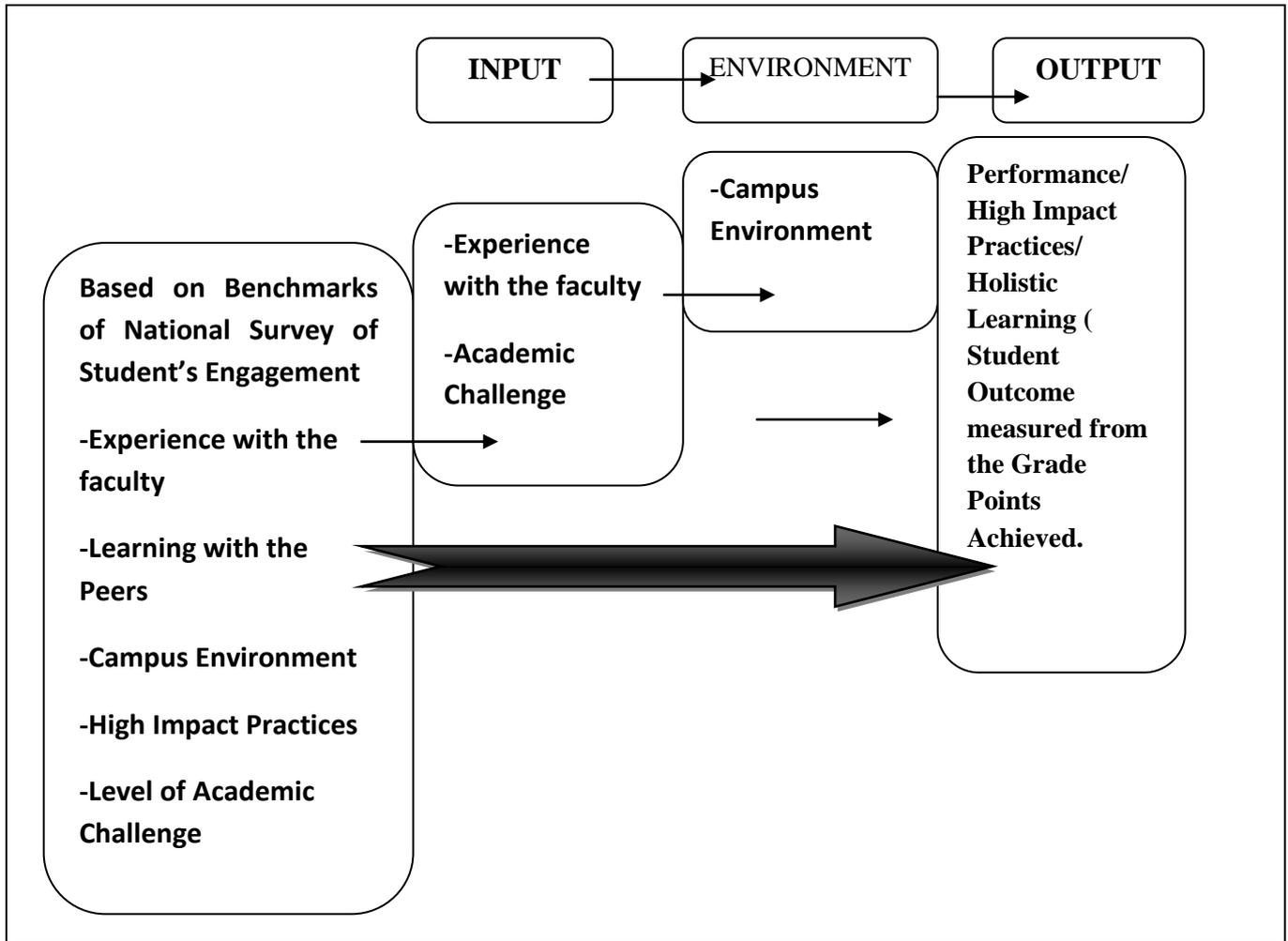
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the engagement variables affecting Student’s Performance and growth in higher education Institutions.
2. To examine the impact of Student Engagement on the Student’s academic outcome and holistic learning.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

To develop a conceptual framework, two distinct literature streams were incorporated: Student Engagement literature, Institutional Progress literature and literature on relationship among different variables of student engagement.

Figure 6: Conceptual Framework Based on Astin's (1962, 1993, 1999) and Nadia Korobova, (2012) Input-Environment-Output Model



(Source: Constructed by the Researcher)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study is descriptive in nature. The period of the study was August – February 2017. A structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions was used for collecting the primary data. Also various secondary data sources like articles, journals, reports, websites and review of literature from various studies were used. The study was conducted in the Agra and Mathura District. The sample size determined for the study was of 80 respondents. The data collected was further analyzed was using content analysis and clearly depicted with the help of system dynamics modeling. The researcher has used Casual loop diagram and stock flow diagrams for accomplishing the objectives of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Reasons of Poor Student Performance

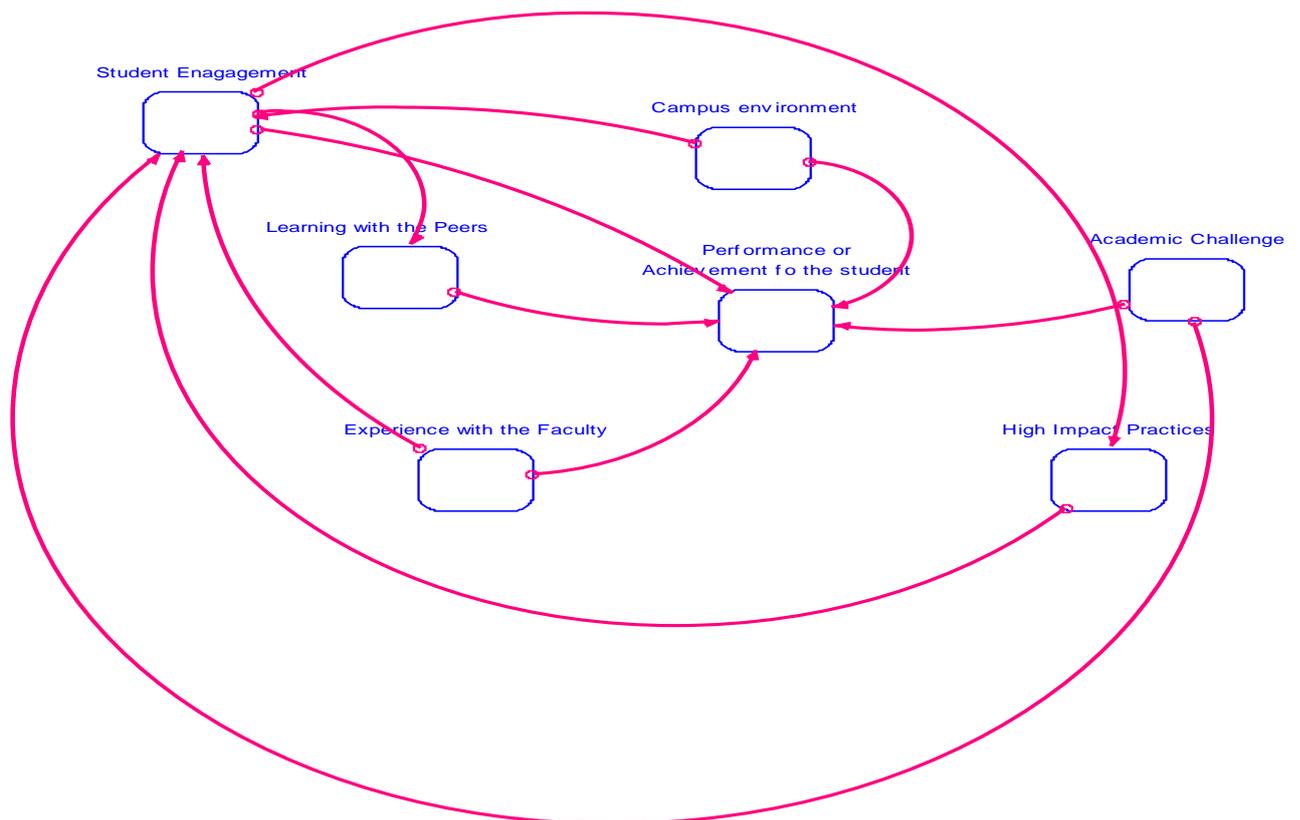
From the interaction that took place between researcher and the students and faculties of various colleges the following were the reasons resulting into poor academic performance of the student in India.

- **Lack of Interaction With The Faculty :** Most of the students face this problem of hesitation with their teacher which results into fear, lack of interest in the classroom, lack of clarity, lack of confidence while answering and talking to the teacher, fear of being scolded or insulted etc.
- **Lack of Friendly Campus Environment:** This was another important reason highlighted by many of the students that the environment of their schools and colleges is not friendly. Therefore, a healthy campus environment is important for the student to devote and invest is time inside the campus happily learning and practicing any new concept.
- **Lack of Peer Group Interaction:** The lack of group activities in the classroom result into hesitation and other negative emotions inside the mind of the student. Therefore, it is essential for the teacher to maximize the number of group tasks, presentations etc so as to give the students the chance to interact and learn from each other.
- **Stress Related To Cope Up With The Academic Challenge:** Now a day's students due to higher level of competition deal with lot many health problems. One of the mostly occurring problems is of stress, hypertension and depression in the youth
- **Past Performance:** The poor past performances of the student also affect the future results and demotivate the student. Therefore, the engagement helps the student with coping the student with the problems of the past.
- **Effects of Lack of Student Engagement:** In summing up all the reasons mentioned above the common factor that is lacking in the institutions is of student engagement. It is assumed that for practicing engagement additional efforts are not needed. Whereas, treating engagement as having a separate identity efforts should me made to implement the strategies of student engagement and keep a check whether they are benefitting in any of the ways or not. The five benchmarks launched by the NSSE are in themselves a complete solution to all the problems highlighted above by covering them all.

Effect of Student Engagement

After reviewing the literature the following relationships were found amongst the different variables of engagement that affect the performance, learning, growth and holistic development of the student. The relationship amongst the dimensions and variables are shown with the help of the causal loop diagram (CLD). The following figure shows the positive or negative relationship of the variables with each other.

Figure 7: Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) of Student Engagement and NSSE Benchmarks



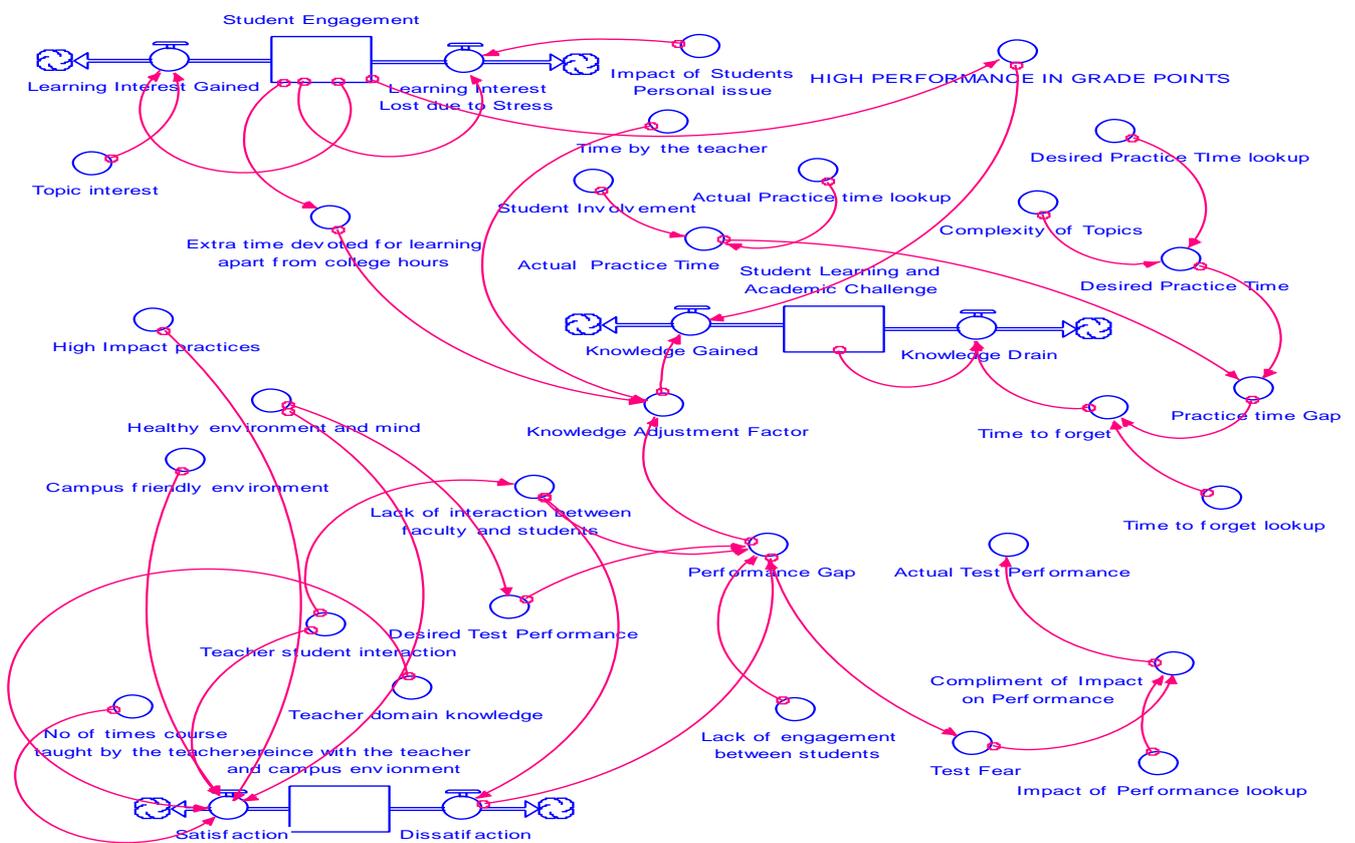
Source: Constructed By Authors

The relationships between the various factors that all together form the five dimensions of engagement are interrelated and interdependent on each other which is shown in the figure 1. The causal loop diagram highlights the linkages between learning with the Peers, Campus environment; high impact practices, Academic challenge and experience with the faculty are positively affecting the performance of the student. The lack of any of them may result in affecting the performance of the student as all together are needed in proper implementation of the practice of student engagement in the institutions.

Impact of Student Engagement On The Students

After reviewing the existing literature in the area of student engagement and based upon the interaction with the respondents the following relationships, impact and factors were found which positively or negatively affect the success, growth and performance of the student. The contribution of practicing student engagement in the institutions is demonstrated below with the help of the stock flow diagram. The different dimensions are linked together showing their impact of the performance of the student. Therefore, the following diagram has more than two stock flows.

Figure 8. The Combined Impact of Engagement on Student’s Performance Using Stock Flow Diagram



Source: By the authors

Figure 8. shows all the variables of student engagement that affect and leave an impact on the Performance of the student at the end of the course. In the first stock flow the stock variable is Student Engagement.

The Stock flow diagram the Extra time devoted, topics of interest, learning interest, time devoted by the teacher, etc are some factors that positively affect the students performance if

are practiced positively in the institutions by the teachers. Stock flow diagram the Lack of peer group interaction, lack of teacher interaction, less time devoted for practicing, time to forget, teachers knowledge, teachers experience, unfriendly campus environment, lack of healthy environment and lack of experience with the teacher etc are factors that adversely affect the performance of the student which is measure in the form of low grade points in the examination. The performance gap is linked with all the variables that are negative in nature.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has focused in depth on the variables of student engagement that help in increasing the performance of the student. The reasons why the performance of the students decrease and what measures should be adopted to improve and increase the performance. Therefore, with the help of this study it was made possible to suggest measures that can be implemented in the institutions and by the faculties in order to increase student's involvement in the institutions the measure of which is their performance. The increased grade points of the graduate and post graduate can be seen and compared in order to see the pre and post result of implementing student engagement in the institutions. It would help in decision making of what changes are necessary for better future of the students and for attracting maximum enrollment and retaining the talent in the institutions. The study would help in bringing better placement opportunities for the institutions after the holistic development of the student. The success of a student is measured in the terms of his grade points and the getting placed in a renowned company. This study would be beneficial for all the institutions teachers, student's, organizations as well as the readers who are yet not aware of the need and importance of Student Engagement and Engagement being a universally applicable term similar to the concept of Employee Engagement.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY & SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For the purpose of the study the research has devoted full time and effort for making the best possible out of this research work. Due to the time constraint the sample size of the study was kept limited and restricted to Agra and Mathura region only. The sample size and the region can also be expanded to other regions of the country. The major portion of the study was based on the secondary data sources due to the time and resources constraints. A study with a larger sample and having a portion of primary data can be conducted in near future. Also,

simulation and level of impact can be measured in quantifiable terms in another study using some advance factors and software like Vensim etc.

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