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Factors Affecting Faculty Student Rapport- A Study of Private Universities/Institutions in National Capital Region, India

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Abstract: This paper analyses factors impacting faculty-student rapport. The instrument used for this research was professor-student scale by Wilson et al (Georgia Southern University, 2010). 800 students from eight private universities/institutions of NCR, India were the respondents for this research. These private universities/institutions imparted engineering and management education. SPSS version 20 was used for data analysis. Factor analysis showed that all the items of the questionnaire can be categorized among seven (7) components. These seven components were named as student interest and motivation, expertise and problem-solving, personality/attributes of the faculty, open communication, approachability, authenticity and congruence. These components and the extent to which they impact FSR have been explained in the full-length paper. Practical implication of the paper is that faculty should pay due attention to these factors while building rapport with the students in higher education. Paying attention to these would lead to optimum rapport with the students.

Keywords: Factor analysis, Faculty-student rapport, Higher education, Determinants, Antecedents, Engineering, Management.

1. Introduction

Teaching as a profession demands formal training, body of specialized knowledge, procedure for membership in the profession, performance related benchmarks (intellectual, practical and ethical. The list doesn't end here. Another major requirement in teaching profession is people-skills. To be precise, one's ability to build relationship with students is a basic requirement in teaching. One may be great with the books and the objects but a relationship and genuine connection with students is challenging. This attribute gives long-term stability at the workplace and in the industry. Government universities/institutions or government-funded institutions may give some relaxation in this area but private sector of teaching faces imposes tough competition among its players. In a high faculty student rapport environment, students feel highly motivated, more comfortable, high quality of service, trust and satisfaction. Faculty student rapport may not necessarily impact performance of students but it certainly creates an environment conducive to learning. Rapport is something that can be built through actions and these actions are not difficult to be implemented if teachers know about these and get sensitive towards these. Moreover, rapport is a two-way process. Knowing what factors influence

rapport between faculty and students is a must rather than making assumptions. This paper empirically tests the items given by Wilson et al (Georgia Southern University, 2010) [1].

University/institution level teaching is certainly different from school level teaching where teacher drives the entire class and his/her word is the final word. Teaching adults demands facilitation rather than forcing any decisions because students have their own well-developed brains. They don't need to be tamed; they need to be directed. So it's the faculty that sets tone and the context of the class. Classroom management that fosters positive, conducive environment makes use of the super glue called rapport. A disciplined yet positive environment would result in overall value addition.

2. Literature Review

Mutual attentiveness, positivity, and coordination are the three components of rapport [2]. Impact of components has variable relationship with one another. These components were contributed without taking into account the context and consider that rapport has dyadic qualities. Movement synchrony and posture similarity [3], different non-verbal cues such as co-ordinated movement, mutual silence, posture sharing and background similarity [4], mutual gaze and proper turn-taking in speaking and listening along with other non-verbal cues [5] are the enablers of rapport in general interactions. In education, environmental features and mirroring of the non-verbal cues [6] were given as the enablers of rapport.

Attention, empathy and shared expectations mark the domain of rapport as its three dimensions [7] from the perspective of marketing and sales. These dimensions are said to enhance the quality of mutual interaction. In services context, enjoyable interaction is the first dimension whereas personal connection is the other dimension of rapport [8]. Personal connection is based on the bond perceived by the customer between the two parties.

In the context of higher education, three components of rapport are [9]: approach, homophily and personality. Approachability covers psychological as well as physical dimensions. Personality factors circumscribe psychological processes. A touch of care, humor and surprise along with tonal quality of speech help in formation of good rapport between faculty and students. Homophily helps develop connection between different individuals.

Literature suggests that teacher student relationship, engagement and achievement are correlated [10]. There's evidence that faculty-student rapport and student motivation have significant correlation [11]. High degree of performance can be encouraged with the help of good faculty student rapport [12]. Since human relationships lubricate high productivity [13], it is important to understand the ingredients of faculty-student rapport. Teacher-student relationship works as a safe heaven and a secure base and makes students achieve more [14]. Faculty and students share affective-emotional relationship [15]. Since outcomes of faculty-student relationships are multifold, hence it is important to understand empirically which factors determine and contribute to faculty-student rapport.

3. Objective

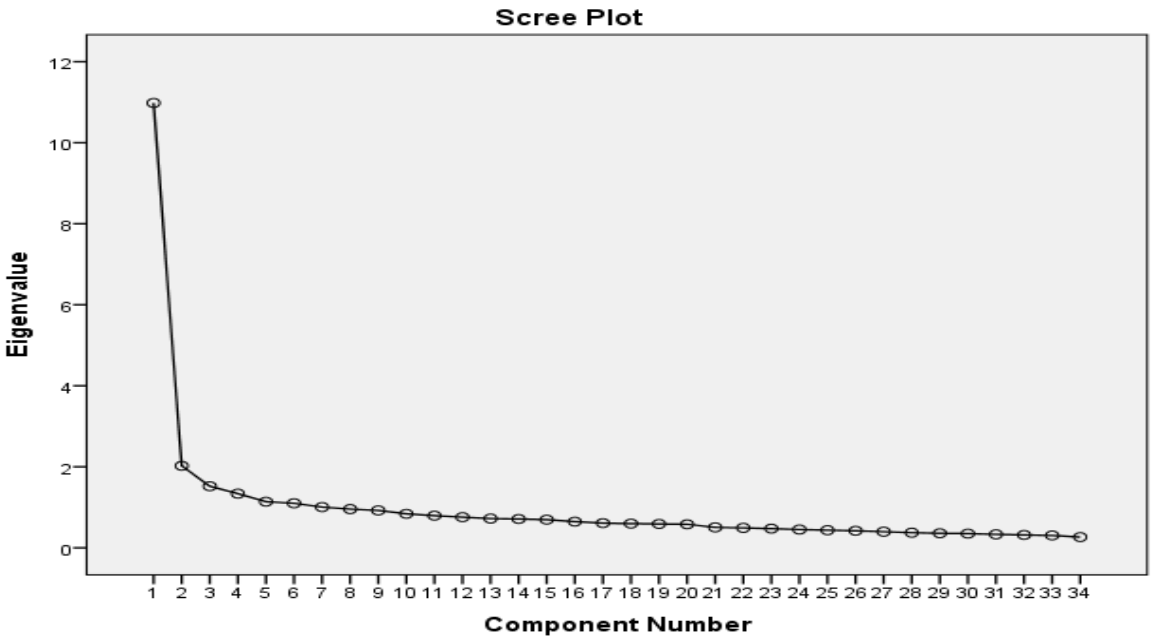
The objective of this study is to conduct empirical evaluation of the significance of important factors/determinants that affect the rapport between faculty and students in higher education.

4. Research Methodology

Data collected through primary research has been analysed in this paper. Data

from 800 students studying in 8 private universities/institutions in the field of engineering and management education was collected. A structured questionnaire contributed by Wilson et al (2010) [1] was used to collect data in National Capital Region (NCR), India. These 800 respondents were selected based on non-probability judgemental sampling method. Respondents filled total 34 items/factors in the questionnaire which affect FSR and respondents were asked to mark their choice on 5 point Likert's scale where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 5 denotes strongly agree. The original questionnaire has been annexed in the Annexure 2. The questions in red were asked in reverse order so as to get the best results from sub-conscious minds of the students. Respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire from their first thoughts.

In order to determine various factors affecting faculty student rapport, factor analysis has been used using SPSS version 20.



Annexure 1

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.936
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10780.980
	df	561
	Sig.	.000

5. Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics of the items revealed that the weighted arithmetic mean of responses (800) towards all 34 questions is 3.744 which means that all respondents have given 74.88 percent (3.744/5*100) weightage to these 34 items which affect rapport between faculty and students in higher education.

Factor Analysis has been applied in order to find out various determinants of faculty student rapport. Results of KMO

Statistics and Bartlett's Test are shown in table 1. These results indicate that factor analysis can be applied to this selected data as KMO statistics is 0.936 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity holds significant value.

The results of factor analysis has divided all the 34 items into 7 components as their Eigenvalue is more than one as shown in Scree Plot in Annexure. Total variance (Table 2) and rotated component matrix (Table 3) have been given in Annexure. The factor analysis has composed total 7 components explaining total 56.188 percent variation as shown in Table 2(Annexure). Following is the categorization of these items depending on the items included in these seven components.

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.981	32.297	32.297	10.981	32.297	32.297	3.562	10.477	10.477
2	2.024	5.953	38.250	2.024	5.953	38.250	3.279	9.643	20.120
3	1.520	4.471	42.721	1.520	4.471	42.721	3.066	9.018	29.138
4	1.337	3.931	46.652	1.337	3.931	46.652	2.549	7.497	36.635
5	1.139	3.349	50.001	1.139	3.349	50.001	2.387	7.019	43.654
6	1.099	3.233	53.234	1.099	3.233	53.234	2.239	6.584	50.239
7	1.004	2.954	56.188	1.004	2.954	56.188	2.023	5.949	56.188
8	.956	2.812	59.000						
9	.922	2.713	61.713						
10	.839	2.468	64.181						
11	.793	2.332	66.513						
12	.757	2.226	68.738						
13	.722	2.124	70.862						
14	.711	2.090	72.952						
15	.694	2.042	74.993						
16	.647	1.902	76.895						
17	.610	1.794	78.688						
18	.598	1.758	80.447						
19	.590	1.734	82.181						
20	.582	1.711	83.891						
21	.504	1.482	85.373						
22	.492	1.448	86.821						

23	.474	1.395	88.216						
24	.451	1.328	89.543						
25	.435	1.279	90.822						
26	.421	1.239	92.061						
27	.397	1.168	93.229						
28	.373	1.096	94.326						
29	.360	1.058	95.384						
30	.350	1.030	96.413						
31	.332	.976	97.390						
32	.318	.934	98.324						
33	.304	.895	99.219						
34	.266	.781	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
VAR00001	.418	-.081	.045	.110	.561	.122	.260
VAR00002	.050	.150	.699	-.001	.090	.230	.123
VAR00003	.168	.021	.689	.289	.092	.066	-.039
VAR00004	.401	.186	.399	.089	.433	.062	.149
VAR00005	.367	.071	.501	.107	.453	.029	.084
VAR00006	.063	.274	.706	-.044	.158	.154	.086
VAR00007	.129	.100	.190	.082	.281	-.026	.687
VAR00008	.314	.038	.000	.287	-.006	.138	.634
VAR00009	.011	.475	.464	-.050	.164	.022	.394
VAR00010	.241	.313	.351	.312	.188	.023	.239
VAR00011	.118	.471	.215	.093	.425	.147	.092
VAR00012	.318	.135	.370	.172	-.074	.515	-.007
VAR00013	.038	.199	.153	.211	.527	.189	.129
VAR00014	.352	.075	.415	.274	-.082	.492	.130
VAR00015	.666	.303	.185	.152	.167	.071	-.011
VAR00016	.715	.052	.081	.054	.097	.160	.126

VAR00017	.007	-.001	.377	.462	.006	.496	.018
VAR00018	.392	.435	.003	.050	-.007	-.012	.417
VAR00019	.677	.155	.106	.123	.110	.103	.376
VAR00020	.483	.242	.104	.231	.254	-.020	.344
VAR00021	.249	.354	.136	.202	.546	.194	.104
VAR00022	.333	.306	.050	.304	.331	.064	-.031
VAR00023	.053	.361	.136	.275	.231	.269	.383
VAR00024	.177	.113	.147	-.054	.269	.636	-.117
VAR00025	.111	.694	.210	.130	.101	.131	.080
VAR00026	.228	.770	.064	.084	.056	.099	.015
VAR00027	.257	.399	.089	.341	.232	.263	.149
VAR00028	.395	.310	.117	.334	.272	.288	.047
VAR00029	.489	.167	.163	.419	.256	.040	.050
VAR00030	.136	.129	-.067	.695	.157	.047	.124
VAR00031	.288	.169	.180	.560	.019	-.104	.118
VAR00032	.009	.196	.135	.482	.298	.173	.208
VAR00033	-.035	.175	.028	-.021	.205	.718	.187
VAR00034	.083	.561	.140	.326	.125	.090	.100

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Annexure 2 Questionnaire on Faculty Student Rapport (developed by Wilson et al (Georgia Southern University, 2010) to be filled by students

Encircle the right answer, please. SD- strongly disagree D- disagree NDNA- neither disagree nor agree A- agree SA- strongly agree

1	My professor and I get along.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
2	My professor is not helpful.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
3	My professor is inconsiderate.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
4	My professor is understanding.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
5	My professor is thoughtful.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
6	My professor is disrespectful.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
7	I understand what my professor expects of me.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
8	My professor is aware of the amount of effort I am putting into this class.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA

9	I respect my professor.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
10	My professor is a mentor to me.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
11	My professor encourages questions and comments from students	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
12	My professor is not friendly	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
13	My professor is approachable	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
14	I dislike my professor's class.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
15	My professor makes class enjoyable.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
16	I want to take other classes taught by my professor.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
17	My professor's body language says, "Don't bother me."	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
18	My professor maintains eye contact with me.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
19	I really like to come to class.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
20	My professor and I communicate well.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
21	My professor is eager to help students.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
22	My professor is compassionate.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
23	My professor encourages me to succeed.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
24	I feel I have learned much less from this Professor compared to others in the past.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
25	My professor is confident.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
26	My professor enjoys his or her job.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
27	My professor cares about students.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
28	My professor is enthusiastic.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
29	My professor is a role model.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
30	My professor wants to make a difference.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
31	My professor is receptive.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
32	My professor is reliable.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
33	My professor is unfair.	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA
34	My professor will spend extra time going over a concept if students need it	SD	D	NDNA	A	SA

5.1 Components of Faculty Student Rapport

5.1.1 Student Interest and Motivation:

Enjoyability in the class, students' liking to come to class and students' willingness to take more classes taught by the faculty make the first component affecting faculty-student rapport in higher education. This component accounts for 10.47% in determining the extent of faculty student rapport.

This implies that faculty should work on making his/her class enjoyable. Students should like to come to classes and be willing to take more classes taught by him/her. This can be done by finding out different ways to teach the topics by exploring interesting activities/projects/audio-video ways of delivery etc.

5.1.2 Expertise and Problem-solving:

Confidence level of the faculty in his/her subject area, the fact that he/she enjoys the job and readiness to spend more time explaining a concept on demand of students make the second component affecting FSR. This component accounts for 9.64% in determining the extent of faculty student rapport. This implies that faculty should spend due time in preparing material to be taught. Confidence level on the subject material will certainly uplift confidence of the faculty in delivering the topics. He/she should be ready to exhibit patience also so that students thoroughly understand the topics well even if these need repeated explanations by the faculty.

5.1.3 Personality/Attributes of the faculty:

Being helpful, considerate and respectful towards the students builds strong foundation for FSR. This component accounts for 9% in deciding the level of FSR.

This implies that faculty should be generous and helpful. Mutual respect is mandatory for any relationship to prosper.

5.1.4 Open Communication:

Faculty's willingness to make a difference through new ideas and suggestions from students accounts for 7.49% in deciding the level of FSR. Students of today's generation come with a great deal of knowledge as well as confusion in the classroom. However, they come with new ideas and suggestions. This is possible only through open communication. Any big change or transformation begins with a small idea. Faculty should be willing to listen to ideas and suggestions coming from students, filter them and put them to use. This will help in boosting faculty student rapport too.

5.1.5 Approachability:

Faculty gets along with the students well, his/her approachability for students and eagerness to help builds another component. This component accounts for 7.01% in determining FSR. Faculty should be pleasant to talk to and his/her body language should be approachable when students face difficult situations. Approachability for easy and lighthearted interactions is appreciated but approachability in tough situations confirms authenticity.

5.1.6 Authenticity:

Faculty being friendly with all and yet being fair makes another component. This component is also reported to include the perception of students that they have learnt much more from this faculty than any other in the past. This component accounts for 6.58% in deciding the impact of FSR.

Friendly demeanor yet equal treatment calls for authenticity towards students in terms of caste/creed, giving recognition or evaluation of performance is very important towards building strong faculty student rapport.

5.1.7 Congruence:

Students' understanding what the faculty expects of them and faculty's awareness of the amount of effort students put in the class is another component. This

component accounts for 5.94% in determining the impact of FSR in higher education.

Faculty should be totally alert and understand the kind of efforts students put in class. An eye for detail and observation is desirable. In return, students should also understand what is expected of them. A clarity in expectations minimizes confusion and brings more discipline.

6. Conclusion

This research paper concludes that It's not only development of student interest and motivation in the class that leads to good rapport between faculty and students rather expertise and problem-solving is also important to build strong rapport. Student Interest and Motivation holds 10.47% and expertise and problem-solving hold 9.64% place in rapport between faculty and students. Personality/attributes of the faculty (being helpful, considerate, respectful) account for 9% for rapport building. Open Communication (faculty's willingness to receive ideas from students) attributes to 7.49% in rapport-building. Approachability determines rapport to an extent of 7.01%. Authenticity bearing fairness accounts for 6.58% of rapport between faculty and students. Congruence in terms of expectation mapping and awareness about student efforts attributes to 5.94% of rapport between faculty and students. Altogether these factors account for 56.13% in rapport-building between faculty and students.

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