Faculty Generatively and IDEA Evaluations

Francesca De Francisco

Point Loma Nazarene University

May 3rd, 2019

ABSTRACT

Recent research has suggested that student evaluations of courses and professors are predicted by a variety of factors, ranging from rapport (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010) to nonverbal behavior (Ambady, & Rosenthal, 1993). However, research has yet to examine how such evaluations are predicted by professors' strivings and philosophy of student-professor interactions. The present research study will investigate the relationship between professors' (self-reported) generativity scores, their "generosity of care," and students' course evaluations for the same professors college professors on a Christian college campus. The main goal of this study is to better understand the role of Generativity as defined by Erik Erikson (1994) and how it may predict student ratings of professor and course quality at PLNU. The generativity scores will be measured using the Loyola Generativity Scale (McAdams & de St Aubin, 1992) and a revised Generosity Care Scale (Leffel, Oakes Mueller, Ham, Curlin, & Yoon, 2017). To measure student feedback, professors will be asked to provide their most recent IDEA evaluation scores on two random classes. We hypothesize that professors who report higher Generativity scores will have receive higher IDEA evaluation scores. Data collection will be through a survey using Qualtrics, which will be accessed by professors using an anonymous link. No students will be taking the survey. The professors taking part in the survey will voluntarily participate with full knowledge of what they are being asked about and scored on.

Intro

What makes a good professor "good"? In the world of academics, universities around the world are adamant on hiring professors that will guide and lead the next generation. There have been many different rating systems developed for measuring a professor's success in relating to students, both with respect to providing students the information they need as well as with respect to establishing personal connections. One of these methods is called the IDEA Evaluations (CITE). This method of professor evaluation focuses on student perceptions both of the professor's ability to teach course material and of the professor's ability to foster a connection with their students. An example of these questions would be "Overall I rate this professor as excellent," "Overall I rate this course as excellent". All questions on the IDEA Evaluation scale are measured on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (definitely false) to 5 (definitely true). The IDEA evaluation is an online survey technique used by Point Loma Nazarene University to enhance their professor's teaching abilities and their students learning both inside and outside the classroom. This survey takes into account how well the course was taught as well as how well the professor did at teaching the required material. Additionally, there is a short optional comment section at the end of the survey where students can write what they liked or disliked about the course and or the professor. A review written by Heidi M. Anderson, Jeff Cain, and Eleanora Bird, evaluated the effectiveness of online student course evaluations. They found that it was a more efficient manner of receiving feedback and faculty were able to make immediate changes to their teaching because of the automatic feedback (Anderson et al, 2005).

Professors are expected to be models of character traits society considers to have a positive impact on the world around them. Additionally, professors should exemplify qualities that "pull" their students into action and encourage them to be positive members of society. Such traits are known as virtues, specifically, generosity, elevation, and gratitude.

Although multiple criteria of evaluation exist for what makes a "good professor," some general characteristics of good professors may include being organized, respectful of students, and visible care about what and who they are teaching. In contrast, professor's that are Generative may have the capacities to nurture, teach, lead, and promote the next generation (McAdams & St. Aubin). All of these traits can be measured and defined by what psychologist Erik Erikson (1950) classified as Generativity. According to Erikson, generativity "is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (p. 267). In Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, generativity is contrasted by stagnation around the time of adulthood (Bradley & Marcia). Stagenation includes feelings of self absorption and poor or lacking interpersonal relations. The Generativity-Stagnation stage emerges during adulthood because society needs adults to express concern for how the next generation will affect the earth and therefore take responsibility in shaping the next generation and trusting that they will take care of the planet once they are gone. Specifically, generativity involves both the ability and the motivation to shape the next generation through contributions in knowledge, character, and creativity. Non-generative individuals, in contrast, tend to be more self-absorbed, or "stagnant," and tend to have more impoverished interpersonal relations (Bradley & Marcia). Bradley and Marcia continue to define stagnation as having low self and social involvement, which is an active concern for growth of self and others, as well as low self and social inclusivity, which they

define as the range of one's caregiving activities. Erikson's suggestion was that every adult would (ideally) progress through this stage of development in order to one day look back on their life with a sense of 'ego integrity' rather than 'despair. When hiring, training, and cultivating professors to teach and guide the next generation, it is important for universities to consider the degree of generative care the professor will give.

In recent years, psychologists have re-examined Erikson's notion of generativity in light of virtue theory and Christian theology (Leffel, Fritz, & Stephens) suggest that a Christian understanding of generativity might better be framed by four key virtues associated with taking care of the next generation; reparation, reciprocity, attachment, and altruism. The key to all of these characteristics is that the individual must actively be participation in them. This relates back to Leffel's notion of Relational Generativity being closer to what Erikson defined as Generativity. Leffel defines Relational Generativity as focusing on the virtues that generative individuals have. Specifically, how those virtues relate to a moral telos and the notion of neighborly love.   Relational Generativity focuses on four main facets which are; the telos or taking care of the next generation by being involved, having the inner motivation, and having the psychological capacity and willingness to invest themselves for the sake of others (Leffel). The goal is to build relationships that catalyze the strength development of others. One of these virtues or characteristics that relational generativity focuses on is generosity. Originally building upon research done by the Mayo Clinic (Bendapude et al) regarding virtuous qualities of physicians, in other words, a "good physician" is one who is "confident, empathetic, humain, personal, forthright, respectful, and thorough" (pg. 1). Leffel et al categorized these characteristics as virtues of care or harm from a physician onto their patients in need. They

suggested that physician generosity could be defined by three factors: time, kindness, and information (Leffel et al). These three factors are especially relevant to professors because, in their role as educators and mentors, they are required to provide their students with time and information (both in and out of the classroom). Furthermore, at Christian institutions that values care, faculty modeling of kindness may be especially relevant to student character growth.

The presence of professor generosity is likely to trigger "moral emotions" in the student one such emotion is gratitude. Gratitude, as defined by Emmons (Emmons, 2009), is a response to kindness that has been received. Furthermore, he suggests that it serves multiple relational functions. One of these is known as the Moral Motivator, which is the notion that feelings of gratitude activate the desire for prosocial behavior. Gratitude also strengthens social social relationships and increases one's sense of personal self worth by combating the pervasive thoughts that the world is devoid of goodness. (THEN DISCUSS MORAL BAROMETER, MORAL MOTIVATOR, AND MORAL REINFORCER). Not only that, by it becomes a motivator for the recipient to pass on those feelings and actions performed by the benefactor. A crucial component of gratitude is that it is relational. Gratitude is always express and received inside of a relationship between two or more parties. This relates back to the necessity of relational generativity. Generosity and gratitude both require two parties in order for them to function. They help establish and maintain social relationships. This becomes apparent in a relationship between a professor and their students when the student works hard because they feel motivated by the professor. This produces a sense of gratitude in the student towards the professor and strengthens the relationship, driving the student to become the best they can be. In The Psychology of Gratitude by Emmons (Emmons), he points out that the person receiving

gratitude understands that they did nothing to deserve the gift or benefit; it was freely bestowed. Gratitude, according to Fitzgerald (1998), also produces a sense of goodwill towards the benefactor. This is what can be measured in student's responses towards their professors. If the student is grateful for their professor's generosity towards them, they will rate them higher in kindness, time, and information.

Gratitude is not the only virtus trait that is being examined in a classroom setting between a student and their professor. Elevation, first articulated by Thomas Jefferson, is a bodily response to feelings of generosity and gratitude (Algoe & Haidt, pg). People, who elicit feelings of elevation, tend to be charitable, grateful, and generous. Common responses to feelings of elevation are an opening of the chest and the feeling that one has been uplifted. Elevation, like gratitude and relational generativity, is a pull from the benefactor towards the recipient to emulate the behaviors bestowed upon them. The idea of passing it forward is an example of feeling the pull from feelings of elevation. In a classroom setting, students should feel elevated to emulate their professor's charitable acts demonstrated inside and outside of the classroom setting. Professors that exhibit observable generosity and gratitude behaviors towards their students should receive a positive response when evaluated.

The present research study will evaluate the relationship between Generativity, as defined by Erik Erikson, and professor's IDEA Evaluation scores on a Christian College Campus. Generativity will be measured using the Loyola Generativity Scale. Generosity will also be measured through an adapted Generative Care scale with the units of time, information, and kindness. Our hypothesis is that professors with a higher Generative and Generosity score will receive higher IDEA Evaluation scores from students. A follow up study will be conducted

measuring how students perceive their professors Generative Care, Gratitude and Elevation scores. Our second hypothesis is that professors with higher Generosity, Gratitude, and Elevation ratings will also receive higher IDEA Evaluation scores.

Method

Participants

In study one, seventy one university professors from a private Christian university in Southern California participated in this study. The participants were primarily female at 55.07% and 42.03% were male . Faculty were a variety of ages, 17.39% were 35 or under, 28.09% were 36-50, and 55.07% were 51 or over. Faculty teaching at PLNU for 35.29% teaching for zero to five years, 23.53% teaching for six to ten years, 25.53% teaching 10-20, and 16.67% teaching over 20 years. Participants were recruited through an email from the school. No incentives were given to motivate participation in this study.

In study two, NUMBER undergraduate students from a private Christian university in Southern California participated in this study. The participants were primarily GENDER (%). All participants were undergraduate students graduating between Fall semester 2018 or after Fall Semester 2022 (SD =). Participants were recruited through an email from the school. No incentives were given to motivate participation in this study.

Instruments

We used the Loyola Generativity Scale (20 items) (McAdams and Aubin, 1992). The LSG as used to measure generativity scores of professors. Sample items include "I try to pass along the knowledge I have gained through my experiences.", "I do not feel that other people need me.", "I think I would like the work of a teacher.". Participants rated each statement on a 4

point scale ranging from 0 (never applies to me) to 3 (nearly always applies to me). This scale has an average reliability of .83 and .84 suggesting high internal consistency. Regarding validity, this scale correlates with high convergent validity and low discriminant validity.

We used a Revised Generative Care Scale to evaluates levels of generative care in professors. The Revised Generative Care Scale (RGC) chose questions relating around time, kindness, and information offered by professors towards their students. Some sample questions are "I really try to slow down and give students the time and help they need." "I make time to pay extra careful attention to student's problems." and "I go the extra mile to help take care of my students." The overall internal consistency of the RGC was alpha = .69. The internal consistency of the Kindness subscale was .56. The internal consistency of the Time subscale was .65. The internal consistency of the Information subscale was -.01. The RGC scale was derived from The Generative Care Scale (Leffel, Oaks, Ham, Curlin & Yoon, 2016) which is composed of 10 questions measured on a 4 point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). This scale had an internal consistency of .76. The Generative Care Scale was derived from the Interpersonal Generosity Scale (Hill, 2009) composed of ten items; attention, compassion, openhandedness, self-expression, courage, and verbal expression. The reliability was .87 and a high face, content, and criterion validity.

In study two, we used a Moral Elevation Scale (Leffel, Oakes Mueller, Ham, Curlin & Yoon, 2016) to evaluate levels of Elevation from students by their professors. The Moral Elevation Scale was adapted from the Good Physician study by G. Michael Leffel, Ross A. Oakes Mueller, Sandra A. Ham, Farr A. Curlin & John D. Yoon (2016), which was composed of 7 questions measured on a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly

agree). Some sample questions are "When you were with this professor, how often did they make you feel... 'admiration for this professor', 'feelings of admiration towards others', and 'feelings of generosity.' This scale had an internal consistency of .76. The Generative Care Scale was derived from the Interpersonal Generosity Scale (Hill, 2009) composed of ten items; attention, compassion, openhandedness, self-expression, courage, and verbal expression. The reliability was .87 and a high face, content, and criterion validity.

We used a Social Desirability Scale (Leffel, Oakes Mueller, Ham, Curlin & Yoon, 2016) to evaluate levels of self preservation bias from professors. The Social Desirability Scale was adapted from the Good Physician study by G. Michael Leffel, Ross A. Oakes Mueller, Sandra A. Ham, Farr A. Curlin & John D. Yoon (2016), which was composed of 3 questions measured on a multiple choice sequence from No (strongly disagree) to Yes (strongly agree). Some sample questions are "Are you always a good listener, no matter whom you're talking to? ", "Do you sometimes feel resentful when you don't get your own way?", and "Are you always willing to admit when you make a mistake?" This scale had an internal consistency of .76. The Generative Care Scale was derived from the Interpersonal Generosity Scale (Hill, 2009) composed of ten items; attention, compassion, openhandedness, self-expression, courage, and verbal expression. The reliability was .87 and a high face, content, and criterion validity.

To measure gratitude towards professors from students, we used a Revised Gratitude Scale. The Revised Gratitude Scale was derived from Neal Krause's Gratitude Toward God Scale (Krause, 2006) used in the study Gratitude Toward God, Stress, and Health in Late Life. Some sample questions are "I am grateful for this professor and all they have done for me.." "If I were to make a list of all the things this professor has done for me, it would be a very long list.."

and "As I look back on my semester, I feel that I have been richly blessed by this processor."

The original Gratitude Toward God scale is composed of 4 questions measured on a 4 point likert

scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). This scale had an internal

consistency of .964. and a high face, content, and criterion validity.

Procedure

For this study, participants were recruited through an email sent out to all faculty

members at Point Loma Nazarene University. The email read as follows:

"Hello,

My name is Francesca De Francisco, a Junior in Point Loma Nazarene University's Psychology

Program. I am conducting a study for my Honor's Research Study on the relationship between

faculty beliefs about their responsibilities in the classroom and students' response to your

teaching methods. It will greatly benefit my team if you participate. In addition to helping me,

this study will benefit the PLNU academic community at large, especially in the realm of the

teaching philosophies and student learning outcomes. We want your most honest answers, and

for that we have made sure our questionnaire is completely confidential and anonymous. You

will be self-reporting your own IDEA evaluation scores into the survey (using a generic link) and

you will not be asked to report your name. You will be asked to complete a consent sheet for the

research study. This is so that you will stay completely anonymous to my team and anyone else,

who views this study. The survey should only take about 8 minutes.

Thank you for considering participating! We greatly appreciate it! At this time, to view the

consent form, please click on the anonymous link below and begin the questionnaire. https://

pointloma.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3jHztmci92pJUfb"

Faculty was and directed to the Qualtrics instrument where they were presented with the

Informed Consent sheet. After agreeing they would and answer several demographic questions.

The participants were and presented with questions from the LGS and the RGC scale. After the

survey was completed, the researchers included the following debriefing statement:

I understand that I have the right to have all questions about the study answered in sufficient

detail for me to clearly understand the level of my participation as well as the significance of the

research. I understand that at the completion of this study, I will have an opportunity to ask and

have answered all questions pertaining to my involvement in this study. If you wish to know

more about the study or the general findings, you can contact Ross Oaks Mueller at

rmueller@pointloma.edu or Francesca De Francisco at fdefrancisco159@pointloma.edu. Again,

if you have any concerns about the nature or ethics of the study please contact Holly Irwin, IRB

Chair at hirwin@pointloma.edu. Thank you again for your participation.

Results

The data on Generativity and IDEA Evaluation scores were analyzed with the Pearson

product moment correlation. Contrary to prediction, higher Generativity did not predict higher

IDEA Evaluation scores (r (44) = .07, p = .32). The data on Generosity and IDEA Evaluation

scores were also analyzed with the Pearson product moment correlation. We found that higher

Generosity did predict higher IDEA Evaluation scores (r (44) = .26, p = .04). Subscales of the

Generosity Scale and IDEA Evaluation scores were analyzed with the Pearson product moment

correlation. The data for the Time subscale did not predict higher IDEA Evaluation scores (r (44)

= .07, p = .31). The data on for the Information subscale did not predict higher IDEA Evaluation

scores (r (44) = .14, p = .17). In contrast, the data for the Kindness subscale did predict higher

IDEA Evaluation scores (r (44) = .32, p = .01).

Study two data on student ratings of professor Generosity and IDEA Evaluation scores, and student experiences of elevation and gratitude were measured with a series of Pearson product moment correlations. The data on student ratings of professor generosity positively predicted IDEA evaluations for both GE professors (r (52) = .53, p < .001) and Major professors (r(53) = .59, p < .001). Furthermore, student ratings of professor generosity positively predicted student's experiences of moral elevation (r(53) = .71, p < .001) and gratitude (r(53) = .68, p < .001). In addition, IDEA evaluations were positively predicted by both student experiences of moral elevation (r(53) = .65, p < .001) and student experiences of gratitude (r(53) = .78, p < .001). As predicted, when controlling for moral elevation and gratitude, the relationship between professor generosity and IDEA evaluations dropped to non significance in both ratings of GE (rpartial(51) = .21, p = .14) and Major professors (rpartial(51) = .08, p = .59).

The relationship between IDEA evaluations and sub scales of generosity were analyzed with a series of Pearson product moment correlations. For GE professors, IDEA evaluations were best predicted by the generosity of time (r(53) = .58, p < .001) and the generosity of information (r(53), = .58, p = .004) but not by the generosity of kindness (r(53) = .14, p = .30). For Major professors IDEA evaluations were best predicted by the generosity of time (r(53) = .63, p < .001) and the generosity of information (r(53), = .51, p < .001) and by the generosity of kindness (r(53) = .42, p = .002).

Discussion

Our original hypothesis for study one was that higher scores on the Loyola Generativity Scale would be a predictor of higher IDEA Evaluation score. However, what we found was that Loyola Generativity Scores did not predict higher IDEA Evaluation scores. Instead, we found that generosity measured with the Revised Generative Care Scale was a significant predictor of higher IDEA scores. Further examination of the subscales of time, kindness, and information revealed that neither self-reported time dedicated to students nor how much information professors reported giving to students by professors were predictors of higher IDEA scores. Instead, professors' self-reported kindness, was the only statistically significant predictor of higher scores. The higher a professor rated themselves in kindness, the higher their overall average IDEA Evaluation score was. The issue with using the Loyola Generativity Scale and the Revised Generative Care scale to measure generativity and generosity in professors is that both scales are self reported. This caused us to worry about self-presentation bias in the findings. Our hope was that by doing a follow-up study eliciting the reports of students, we could limit the bias given by professors from study one.

For study two, we sought to elicit students' feedback on professors' generosity—specifically kindness—to see if professors' self-reporting scores were as predictive of IDEA evaluations as student reported scores. Our hypothesis was that because kindness—unlike time and information—is not required of professors to their students (and is, therefore, "extraordinary"), kindness from professors would be the strongest predictor of higher IDEA scores from students. What we found was that students' reports of kindness from professors did not predict higher IDEA scores. Indeed, in contrast to the first study, we found that time and information were stronger predictors of higher IDEA scores than kindness. This led us to believe

that extraordinary professors are the ones that show their students kindness both inside and outside the classroom. Contradictory to that, students that receive adequate information and time from their professors are what may lead them to rate their professors higher on their course evaluations.

We also added in a scale to measure gratitude and elevation felt by students toward their professors. In previous literature, the moral emotions of gratitude and elevation have been shown to be strong predictors of feelings of openness and of the motivation to become a better version of oneself. Our predictions was that students that rated higher gratitude levels and feelings of elevation toward their professors would give those professors higher IDEA scores. We ran a correlation test and found that both gratitude and elevation were strong predictors of higher IDEA scores. To test whether such moral emotions mediated the effect of generosity on IDEA scores, we then controlled for gratitude and elevation to see if generosity was still a statistically significant predictor of IDEA scores. When controlling for gratitude and elevation, we found that generosity was no longer a statistically significant predictor of higher IDEA scores, suggesting that such moral emotions mediate the relationship between generosity and IDEA evaluations. When running the correlation results, we made sure to test for both GE and Major classes, and found the results to be consistent in both.

In summary, the IDEA Evaluation scores can be best predicted by the moral emotions of gratitude and elevation felt by students toward their professors. We found no support for our original hypothesis from study one that more generative adults would receive higher IDEA scores from students. From study one, we discovered that professors' self-reported efforts to show kindness was the most important virtue in the classroom, but students from study two

offered evidence that their perceptions of professors' efforts to offer more time and information were more important to them. Finally, partial correlations suggested that the effect of such generosity was at least partially mediated by the moral emotions of gratitude and elevation. In future research studies conducted in the realm of virtues, we hope that school systems will reevaluate what virtues make a 'good' professor.

References

Algoe, Sara B. and Haidt, Jonathan(2009)'Witnessing excellence in action: the 'other-praising'

emotions of elevation, gratitude, and admiration',The Journal of Positive Psychology,

4:2,105 — 127

Anderson, H. M., PhD, Cain, J., MS, & Bird, E., MS. (2005). Online Student Course

Evaluations: Review of Literature and a Pilot Study. American Journal of Pharmaceutical

Education,1-10.

Bendapudi, N. M., PhD, Berry, L. L., PhD, Frey, K. A., MD, MBA, Parish, J. T., PhD, &

Rayburn, W. L., MD. (2006). Patients' Perspectives on Ideal Physician Behaviors. Mayo

Clinic Proceedings,81, 338-344.

Bradley, C. L., & Marcia, J. E. (1998). Generativity−Stagnation: A Five−Category Model.

Journal of Personality,66(1), 39-64. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00002

Emmons, R. A. (2009). Greatest of the Virtues? Gratitude and the Grateful Personality. Narvaez

& Lapsley Personality, Identity, and Character, 256-270.

Emmons, R. A. (2004). The Psychology of Gratitude. The Psychology of Gratitude, 3-16. doi:

10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195150100.003.0001

Emmons, R. A. (n.d.). Personal goals, life meaning, and virtue: Wellsprings of a positive life.

Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well-lived.,105-128. doi:

10.1037/10594-005

G. Michael Leffel, Ross A. Oakes Mueller, Sandra A. Ham, Farr A. Curlin & John D. Yoon

(2016): Project on the Good Physician: A Proposal for a Moral Intuitionist Model of

Virtuous Caring, Teaching and Learning in Medicine, DOI:

10.1080/10401334.2016.1205497

Krause, N. (2006). Gratitude Toward God, Stress, and Health in Late Life. Sage Publications,28,

163-183. Retrieved from http://roa.sagepub.com

Leffel, M. G. (2008). Who Cares? Generativity and the Moral Emotions, Part 1. Advancing the

"Psychology of Ultimate Concerns". Journal of Psychology and Theology,36(3), 161-181.

Leffel, M. G., Fritz, M. E., & Stephens, M. R. (2008). Who Cares? Generativity and the Moral

Emotions, Part 3. A Social Intuitionist "Ecology of Virtue". Journal of Psychology and

Theology,36(3), 1-21.

McAdams, D. P., & St. Aubin, E. D. (1992). A Theory of Generativity and Its Assessment

Through Self-Report, Behavioral Acts, and Narrative Themes in Autobiography. Journal

of Personality and Social Psychology,62(6), 1003-1015.

Smith, C., & Hill, J. P. (2009). Toward the Measurement of Interpersonal Generosity (IG): An IG

Scale Conceptualized, Teated, and Validated. 1-8.