

Lecturer Perceptions of Student Engagement and Goal Framing: Global Insights

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Abstract

Student engagement is a key predictor of learning, achievement, and retention in higher education, yet lecturers' perspectives on what drives and enhances it remain underexplored. This exploratory study examined lecturers' perceptions of student engagement, influencing factors, useful strategies, and role of goal framing in this process. Goal framing is the practice of introducing a class activity in terms of its contribution to intrinsic goals, such as personal growth and community contribution, or extrinsic goals, e.g., financial success and fame. Under Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic goals are expected to positively impact learning than extrinsic goals. With a pragmatic approach, a mixed-methods survey was distributed on LinkedIn, X, and closed Facebook groups. Forty-one participants, including professors and lecturers, from eight countries responded. Descriptive statistics and inductive-deductive thematic analysis were conducted. Findings indicated variation in perceived levels of student engagement. Love of the subject ($n=25$, $M=4.32$, $SD=1.07$) and marks ($n=19$, $M=4.32$, $SD=.71$) were rated as most important motivating factors. A variety of strategies were reported, with interactive activities identified as the most effective for enhancing engagement. Notably, 86% of participants agreed that goal framing is important in teaching. Six codes emerged for the use of framing: extrinsic goals (10 responses), intrinsic goals (1 response), both goals (4 responses), unspecified goals (7 responses), learning outcomes (16 responses), and challenges in goal framing (2 responses). These findings provide a baseline for understanding global lecturer perceptions and highlight the need for further research into effective goal framing practices that can support student engagement in higher education classrooms.

Keywords: Higher Education; Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals; Pragmatism; Self-Determination Theory; University Classrooms