Absence of Respect in University Students: Critical Analysis

Authors have conducted studies that suggest the absence of respect in not only an individual's daily university life but also cultural differences leading to the absence of respect. University students across many universities and variety of different degrees were surveyed to help achieve a study to understand what it is that students desire the most. The answers prove to be shocking as ‘respect’ was the one thing students came to a consensus in their desire. Students quoting “I just want to be treated like a person 'proved to be extremely surprising for the author as he expected all teachers/lectures to automatically be treating their students with the utmost respect.

Other research has been done towards cultural diversity; researchers surveyed students finding that students respect one another but when faced with unknown cultures they tend to feel fear, contempt and apprehension. Teaching such cultures can be extremely difficult for an educator as there are a wide range of cultural differences and its near impossible to cover them all. The primary goal for the survey was to enable children to be respectful to the range of cultures out there and be aware of differences in cultures that may offend a culture but not offend another. Thus, increasing respect in communities enhancing the dimensions of health ‘social, spiritual and mental.’

The first article surveyed 1000 students to understand what the students thought of the education system, whether the efforts of teachers was appreciated and what they thought of their teachers. The responses were mostly positive except for one “there was an unsettling, underlying narrative in the responses which felt shocking. Students were essentially asking: why don’t academics have more humanity?” (Anonymous academic:2018).

The author was surprised to such responses as it highlighted a ‘‘lack of kindness, integrity and understanding’’ demonstrated by the academic staff as he thought that all staff would show those traits without a need of complaint. To the authors surprise kindness and integrity was ‘’the most important things that would improve or change their student experience.” (Anonymous academic:2018).

The lack of respect demonstrated by the academic staff has shown to have negatively affected them, portraying that respect is of utmost importance not only to students but staff as well. Many lecturers don’t recognize how ‘'their behaviour is [impacting students]'' leading them to being unaware that such unrespectful behaviour even exists. Students were then asked of their understanding towards different cultures many believed that it was the academic staff that didn’t understand their different cultures and treated them like a ‘’homogenous group’’, this had led to students believing they don’t fit in and are unaccepted within certain communities portraying a lack of respect by academic staff towards their students. The author uses many rhetorical questions to emphasize on the disrespect and lack of kindness shown by teachers ‘'how did this happen?'', “Was I wrong to have assumed that all academic staff would simply be kind and treat students with respect?” (Anonymous academic:2018).

The author also uses inclusive language alluding to the need for change in academic staff,” We

could change the culture and be more collegiate, care a little more and perhaps even begin to reprioritise the most important things” (Anonymous academic:2018). Having a good mental health is believed to be essential for the success of students so it's of utmost importance to allow students to feel respected improving their mental health and wellbeing.

In a research conducted by Johannes Giesinger “to respect children is to treat them in a way that enables them to see themselves as persons endowed with dignity; that is, as having the equal standing to make claims on others.” (Johannes Giesinger:2012) implying that teachers are making students feel without dignity and unequal standing, they're beneath teachers and don’t deserve respect.

Respect for cultural diversity has proven to be a well-supported idea by many, the author believes that teachers should teach about different cultures in schools teaching children that “people that don’t look like them are, at the core, people just like them” (Matthew Lynch:2012). Implying that students should not feel fear because of individuals that don’t look like them, and by no means should they bully or discriminate against certain individuals.

Through promoting respect study shows that culturally responsive institution (CRI) aims “to teach students that differences in viewpoint and culture are to be cherished and appreciated rather than judged and feared” (Matthew Lynch:2012) proves to be a positive goal which could make the difference to future generations by enabling them to understand and appreciate cultures. Teachers could promote such aims by teaching in class of cultures and allowing students to show and tell stories and items exclusive to their home. Through this, student may begin to understand that they may have a lot more in common with different cultures than what they initially had thought and would come to a better understanding of the cultural diversity between their culture and others.

A cultural day where students dress in clothing exclusive to their culture and donate a 2-dollar gold coin towards the school to help fundraise future cultural diversity promotions and help fund it to enable more activities and events for example, “Teaching students about multicultural role models, Showing students everyday photographs of people of different ethnicities, shapes, sizes and tailoring classroom activities and lessons toward multicultural appreciation” (Matthew Lynch:2012).

In conclusion, a respectful relationship between students and academic staff will increase the mental health and well-being in students allowing them to prepare for work better and build to shape the world to be a more advanced society. As well as improving the spiritual health and wellbeing of students as they will feel that they belong somewhere and are not some ‘homogenous group’. Through promoting respect of cultural diversity children will understand cultures better and not feel fear, contempt or discrimination towards another culture enhancing their morals and ethics, improving their social health of wellbeing, (ability to socialise with other cultures freely without fear or contempt), mental health and wellbeing (ability to respect all cultures and not feel fear) and spiritual health and wellbeing (allowing individuals the ability to feel a sense of belonging and not be isolated by the community they're in).