RECENT TRENDS IN STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Müberra Yüksel

Kadir Has University, Istanbul (TURKEY)

Abstract

Lately applied positive psychology aims at generating quasi-experimental design tools such as simulations or games to generate policy recommendations for real life issues to promote well-being in different contexts such as schools and workplaces. In this paper, we will focus on a specific learning program based on a simulation game called FLIGBY (which is an acronym for “flow is good business for you”) based on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s state of flow model.

Keywords: Applied positive psychology, Flow theory, FLIGBY, Game-based learning, Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), Leadership Competencies.

1 INTRODUCTION

In this article, we will discuss how “positive psychology” can contribute to the design as well as the role of positive emotions and preferences in a particular serious on-line game by focusing on connected and participatory gaming, that is, combining instructionist with constructionist perspectives (Isbister, 2016). While the first is on having learners play conventional educational games; whereas the latter is on having them make their own games based on generic ones, or co-designing together with experts, i.e., designers and psychologists. The first part will be emphasized in this research paper.

While Luthans et al. highlight designing personally meaningful work-related goals focusing on individual values and competencies such as resilience and mastery, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1991), emphasizes engagement, focus and flow at both individual and collective levels. We will ask two major research questions by using FLIGBY with a few students as a pilot run:

- What does flow look like in a workplace and how is it experienced?
- What are the main leadership competencies that are at the crux of this state of flow?

The state of flow can be created on-line if the following essential conditions are combined: user motivation, user telepresence and interactivity of the web-based application. In the “optimal autelic experience”, he highlighted eight major factors that are applicable to digital games:

1. A challenging activity requiring skill and a dynamic balance between the two,
2. A merging of action and awareness,
3. Clear proximal goals and norms,
4. Direct, unambiguous, and immediate feedback,
5. Focused concentration on the task at hand in the present,
6. A sense of control of one’s activities,
7. A loss of self-consciousness, and
8. An altered sense of time, that is, loss of time awareness or time acceleration The last two components leading to full immersion and deep state of flow, and finally to:

On the whole, “State of flow is a mental state in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment” according to Csikszentmihalyi.
2 METHODOLOGY

Professor Csikszentmihalyi himself has been involved in the creation of FLIGBY to apply the three aspects of games: flow/learning, technology/simulation, and fun/game. In his flow theory, Csikszentmihalyi (2003) highlights the importance of having sufficient level of challenge and discomfort is necessary for learning and development, since one cannot grow and become humane unless confronted with ethical dilemmas to choose and draw lessons from the consequences of the actions.

By extending his flow theory into leadership, both learning and teaching of flow-compatible leadership values, skills and practices through blended learning pedagogy in a kind of “flipped classroom” where lecture followed by homework and theory followed by practice are reversed, and focus is on action of both individuals and groups in classrooms. At the workplace, benefits for the individual employees lead to benefits of the whole organization. The intended purpose of this game is to help individual leaders/managers and organizations to create a flow-friendly workplace so that well-being of both individuals and groups are achieved.

Moreover, the twenty-nine skills as a competency system can act as a useful tool for strategic human resource management (SHRM). Multiple feedbacks during (de)briefings not only strengthen tolerance toward alternative perspectives, but also teaches empathy with others. Task and relation based satisfaction improves performance and commitment at work (Buzady, 2017).

3 RESULTS

In the pilot run of FLIGBY with five students, only four leadership competencies are found to be directly related with the state of flow are as follows:

- Strategic thinking,
- Applying personal strengths for the common goal,
- Balancing skill and challenge level, and
- Getting frequent feedback.

In short, when a person’s competencies are in alignment with the opportunities for action, fulfillment may be achieved since engaging in challenging activities will create a feeling of mastery and control leading to learning and personal growth. In an action research mode along with the simulation game of FLIGBY, where application and experience come before theory, students acting as if they are employees at a virtual workplace can enhance their learning capacity and well-being either in classroom or at home, and do their on-line readings along with their assignments.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Such a serious game (namely FLIGBY) that can be played either at universities or workplaces that are embedded in social media are beyond isolated mental contests against computers, since they are interactive experiences of both a second self and a shared group action. Getting immediate feedback is also of critical importance for inducing high levels of engagement in the game itself and enhancing competency development and mastery. Meanwhile, these games may provide the highest degree of concentration simultaneously with social networking; thus aiming at commitment and collaboration, both of which are necessary for “good business” in the future.

By and large, the point of the interactive process in a game like FLIGBY is to make students/employees realize their potential as individuals who contribute themselves to the overall needs of the organization or the community. In essence, this is the point of a communal sense of living with sharing and caring – realizing one’s potential and limits as an autonomous self, and then contributing this selfhood to the community of which they are a part. The main philosophical aspect of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow is meaning, which is at the heart of well-being, is found through the delicate balance between the self and group/community; to achieve ultimate goals is not possible if one of them is ignored...

REFERENCES


