

Group Flow States of Intergenerational Networks Within Age Friendly Academic Settings

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The Problem

Organizations emerge from communication.

An online open university under intergenerational transition?

Does communication figure into the renewal, regeneration and evolution of a living organization?

Is communication constitutive of an open university in its liminal moments of transition?

UP Open University



- 5th Constituent Unit of the University of the Philippines System
- UP's Cyber Campus
- 100% of its courses are offered on line
- Established a Faculty of Information and Communication Studies in 2004



Faculty of Information and Communication Studies

Living systems are open self-organizing life forms maintained by flows of information, energy & matter

Living systems occur at different levels of existence

Autopoiesis, the process of self-creation, self-organization & self-maintenance, is driven by cognition

Cognition is achieved through communication

Communication is a critical function among living systems and its substance is information

Theoretical foundation: COMMUNITAS

- A flow state is described as an optimal state of consciousness where we feel our best and perform our best
- Kotler and Wheal (2017) enumerate four attributes of flow states, which come under the acronym, STER: selflessness; timelessness; effortlessness and richness
- Flow states may be experienced not only by individuals but also among groups, the latter referred to as group flow or *communitas*, defined as a “group’s pleasure in sharing common experiences” or “collective joy”

Conditions

Novelty of subject matter appear to contribute to the manifestation of individual and group flow states

Atmosphere of collegiality even between generations

Communicational abilities of the participants

Implicit awareness of what participants can bring to the table

Shared recognition of relationships among concepts discussed

A build-up of a spontaneous discovery of emerging patterns in the discussion that may lead to new knowledge

Indications of Group Flow

During these intense episodes of intergenerational exchanges, participants individually & collectively:

Feel less conscious of themselves

Loose their normal sense of time

Generate ideas effortlessly

Experience the richness of the moment joyfully

Theoretical foundation: AUTOPOIESIS

- Intergenerational experiences carry resonance in autopoietic discourse since it is concerned with renewal, regeneration & evolution of living systems
- A university, constituting different generations of academics, would represent such a living system engaged in a continuing effort of self-renewal & self-reinvention
- Oftentimes, age, generational & ideological chasms are wide resulting in tensions that lead to system dysfunction
- During the states of *communitas*, intergenerational differences are diminished in a manner conducive to system renewal & reinvention

Proposition

Communication may indeed be constitutive of any social system, be it a network, an organization, a community or society. The flow states that manifest individually and collectively during intergenerational engagements and exchanges may be indicative of autopoietic progression within that system.