

EXPLORING THE COMPETENCIES OF BUSINESS SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBERS IN BENGALURU – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract : The main characteristic feature of the 21st century is the dynamic combination of globalization and digital technologies. The pace at which information transfer is happening has distorted the traditional boundaries of businesses, thereby placing greater responsibilities on the educational institutions to meet the new challenges. In view of these challenges, expectations from faculty members are high. Therefore, the need of the hour is to recognize and develop the competencies of teachers and to help the teachers achieve success in this endeavour. The main objective of this study is to explore the competencies of Business school faculty in the domain of knowledge, skills and abilities. The review of related literature helped explore and identify an all-inclusive list of competencies for teachers. Full-time faculty working as Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors in University affiliated institutions in urban Bengaluru were the focus of the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The responses were rated on a numerical score based on a 5-point Likert scale and competency proficiency scale was used for analysis.

IndexTerms- Competency, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the growth of Indian industries in the last two decades have contributed to the growth of Business Schools in India. Presently, global economies are undergoing structural transformation and Higher Education (HEI) in India is on a high growth track, with HEIs significantly placed on the global higher education map. Existing jobs are getting redundant due to technological advancements and new job roles are created based on changing business needs. There is a growing demand for knowledge workers, specialists, and innovative creators. With the right matrix of relevant skills and competitiveness, graduates from Indian Higher Education Institutions can be strategically positioned to benefit in the service and manufacturing sectors. (EY Analysis, 2014).

With the increase in the number of Business Schools in India in the last two decades, corporate recruiters, media academics, students, etc have criticized that there is a mismatch between what is expected of MBA graduates and what is actually learned. While MBA has become more and more specialized, technical and content driven, employers admit that employees need to have capabilities in handling change, interpersonal and communication skills, leadership, strategic thinking and creative problem solving (Rao, 2006).

Today, management education has entered an era of perceptive transition that is driven by technology, demographics and the pressing social imperative. There is a need for Business Schools to reposition themselves to manage the present wave of change in the business (Mamun & Mohammed, 2009). A management teacher's function in higher education is vast and quality based teaching is the major challenge in the higher education system. Along with this, teaching needs to be sustained by research, experimentation, and innovation (Rymbai, 2011). Therefore, faculty needs to analyze and upgrade their skills and abilities to be able to provide MBA students with the necessary skills and talents to help them accept the challenges and compete in the global scenario.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The management education system of today demands the intellectual, ethical and skill development of the student to manage the dynamisms of the business world. Thus the management teacher has a challenging and demanding role in developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the business students. Academic activities of a HEI teacher include classroom activities, curriculum development, developing learning resource material, student assessment and evaluation activities including examination work of university, participation in co-curricular activities, students guidance and counselling, keeping abreast of new knowledge and skills, helping generate new knowledge and dissemination of such knowledge through books, publications etc., self development through upgrading qualification, experience and professional activities. The second category includes research, development and research guidance, industry sponsored projects, providing consultancy services and promotion of industry institution interface. Administrative activities consist of academic and administrative management of the institution, preparing project proposals for funding in areas of R & D, monitoring and evaluation of academic and research activities, developing and updating and maintaining of MIS, planning and implementing staff developing activities. Extension activities comprise of interaction with industry and society, providing consultancy and R&D support services to industry and user segments, dissemination of knowledge, participation in community services.

In the research conducted by Debnath (1971), knowledge of subject matter, academic qualification, mastery of different teaching methods, use of teaching aids and questioning was important competencies of teachers. Eble (1971) acknowledged five components of effective teaching as perceived by students. It includes the analytic/synthetic approach of teachers, well organized, teacher-group interaction, teacher individual student interaction and dynamism/enthusiasm manner.

According to Oliva (1972) teacher preparation in his/her subject, understanding different roles, demonstration effective techniques of instruction and classroom management was identified as characteristics of teachers. George (1975) identified the use of teaching aids, use of illustrating material, effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication, holding student attention, ability to give directions and mentoring as important teaching skills of teachers. Knowledge of subject, communication skills, attitude towards students, the organization of course content and subject, fairness in examination and preparation of class are some of the attributes of teacher effectiveness acknowledged by Centra (1977). Passy & Lalitha (1976) in their research identified and recorded twenty-one teaching competencies and grouped into five factors namely; planning skills, presentation skills, management skills, evaluation skills and closure skills.

Dixit (1977) in his study found a positive relationship between socio-economic status and teaching competency. Male teachers were more competent in teaching. According to Gray & Gerrand (1977), teaching skills comprises of knowledge of subject matter and related areas, ability to personalize teaching, participation in professional activities, and experience in teaching. Organizing content for teaching, structuring classroom sessions, explanation and personalized teaching to suit student needs, giving illustrations with examples, using different teaching aids, encouraging student participation, diagnosing student learning patterns and their difficulties are the teaching skills identified by Jangira (1977). Mathew (1980) identified desirable teaching competencies of teachers. The general teaching competencies compiled in the study were: teacher's concern for students, competency in using audio-visual aids, competency of professional perception, classroom management and initiating student participation.

Balachandran (1981) in his doctoral thesis identified subject mastery, ability to communicate and concern for student progress as important factors from classroom management point of view. A study undertaken by Rama (1980) to study the teaching competencies of secondary school physics teachers identified competencies in using audio-visual aids, illustrating the subject, ability to use a variety of evaluation techniques, inducing maximum involvement among students as some of the teaching competencies. Passi & Sharma (1982) analyzed the relationship between teachers' demographic variables and their professional competency. They also studied the relationship between variables of teachers' attitude towards teaching and teaching competency. Competencies listed by them include asking questions, creating interest in students, improving students reading behavior, managing classroom etc.

According to Frost and Fukami (1997), management teachers need to have a strong knowledge base as the subjects they teach are different and unique contextually. Their competencies include : (1) Disseminating up-to-date knowledge with the help of lectures, up-to-date textbooks, handouts, 'guest' lectures, exercises, library resources, use of the internet, open learning; (2) Teaching methods that help in developing the capability to use ideas and information are case studies, practical, projects, demonstrations, group work, simulations, debate, and discussions; (3) Developing the student's ability to test ideas and evidence - can be achieved by seminars and tutorials, presentations, literature reviewing, exam papers, critical assessment; (4) Research based projects, workshops, group working, brainstorming, mind-mapping, problem-solving helps in developing the student's ability to generate ideas and evidence; (5) To facilitate the personal development of students role plays, experiential learning, structured experiences in groups, feedback and learning logs can be used, and (6) Projects, mentors, reflective logs and diaries, dissertations help in developing the capacity of students to manage own learning.

III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The strength of good education in any institution is based on the quality of teaching and this is dependent on the competencies of the teachers (Anderson and Van Dyke, 2000). Many studies highlight the fact that competency management helps organizations achieve competitive advantage. Although competency management assumes a lot of interest amongst organizations, many studies have not been carried out with the use of competency mapping in educational sector exclusively focusing on framing a competency model or identifying the importance and advantage of using competency management in the area of education (Nair, 2012).

This research will help in analyzing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Business School faculty in Bengaluru. It analyses the faculty on teaching, research and development parameters. Since the primary responsibility of quality improvement rests with Business Schools itself, this research will assist in faculty development activities for enhancing their skills and competencies.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective is to explore the competencies of Business School faculty in the domain of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.

V. METHODOLOGY

The study includes full time faculty members working in Business Schools in urban Bengaluru. The sample element for the study consists of Assistant Professors, Associate Professors; Professors. Two stage simple random sampling without replacement using Tippett's random number is used for sample selection. 500 questionnaires was distributed among the 47 colleges, 441 were received and 28 questionnaires were discarded as they were incomplete, yielding a response rate of 82.6%.

The review of related literature helped explore and identify an all-inclusive list of competencies for teachers. This list is matched with the job responsibilities and Academic Performance Indicator (API by UGC) and verified with academic experts. The variables that form the basis for the HEI teachers' self assessment can be grouped into three categories. The first category is Teaching, Learning and Evaluation, the second category is Co-curricular, Extension and Professional Development and Research and Academic Contribution is the third category.

The questionnaire was framed with the following sections namely: i) Demographics, ii) Knowledge, iii) Skills, iv) Knowledge Updating Abilities, v) ICT abilities vi) Ability in using Teaching methods, vii) Organising abilities, viii) Research and Development Abilities, and ix) Knowledge Dissemination Abilities.

The responses were rated on a numerical score based on a 5-point Likert scale. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection and the data was analyzed with SPSS version 23.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Demographic Profile

Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test whether the data was from normally distributed population. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.874 indicated a good level of internal consistency for the scale with this specific sample.

Table 1: Demographic profile

Respondents Characteristics		Number of Respondents (%)	Total (%)
Gender	Male	242 (48.8)	413 (100%)
	Female	231 (51.2)	
Age	26 – 35 yrs	183(38.7)	413 (100%)
	36 – 45 yrs	200(42.3)	
	46 – 55 yrs	78(16.5)	
	56 – 65 yrs	12 (2.5)	
Education Qualification	MBA	230(48.6)	413 (100%)
	MPhil	58(12.3)	
	PhD	185(39.1)	
Designation	Asst. Professor	250 (52.8)	413 (100%)
	Assoc. Professor	128 (27.1)	
	Professor	95 (2.5)	

The gender distribution of the sample in the above Table indicates that 49% of the respondents of study are female and 51% of the respondents are male. Majority of the respondents i.e. 81% are in the age group of 25 – 45 years. 48% of the respondents have MBA as their highest educational qualification and 39% have attained their doctorate degree. Majority of the respondents are Assistant Professors (52.8%) and 27.1% are Associate Professors while 2.5% are Professors.

6.2 Knowledge

The construct 'Knowledge' comprises of 19 statements. The items in the questionnaire were rated on a 5 point rating scale: 1 for 'Never', 2 for 'Rarely', 3 for 'Occasionally', 4 for 'Frequently' and 5 for 'Always'. Factor analysis helped in extracting five clusters of the construct. They are Curriculum Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, Content Knowledge, Knowledge of Assessment and Knowledge of Learners. The mean and Standard Deviation (SD) is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge

Variable	Mean	SD
Knowledge of Curriculum	4.49	0.65
Knowledge of Pedagogy	3.91	0.95
Knowledge of Content	4.28	0.69
Knowledge of Assessment and Feedback	4.01	0.93
Knowledge of Learners	4.29	0.70

The mean and SD of Curriculum Knowledge is 4.49 and 0.65 respectively. This indicates that all the faculty members agree that they have a clear understanding of their subject curriculum. Knowledge of curriculum creates a guideline for contouring implementation of subject content with the syllabus. This helps in effective implementation of the subject content and also provides scope for course improvement.

This complements with the study of Alquiwi and Ezzeldin (2015) who states that proficiency in teaching a subject in accordance with the curriculum helps in defining the pre-requisite knowledge for content learning. Akram (2010) identified that subject mastery and teaching methodology influences teacher's presentation.

The Pedagogical Knowledge cluster has an average mean and SD of 3.91 and 0.95 respectively. All the respondents agree that knowledge of pedagogy is essential for management teachers in HEI. Faculty members have to be able to represent their subject content with relevant examples and illustrations that facilitates student understanding. It also includes the understanding of usage of different instructional methods to support effective explaining of the information. This enhances their ability to integrate theory with real life. This result is supported by the findings of Brown et al.,(2010); Alquiwi and Ezzeldin (2015). Magnusson et al., (1999) highlights that pedagogical knowledge helps in better organization of the content. This assists in better content representation for student understanding.

With respect to content knowledge cluster the mean and SD is 4.28 and 0.69 respectively. All the faculty members opine that as teachers their intellectual capability is based on content knowledge. Content knowledge refers to knowledge of subject concepts, theories, and ideas. It also includes adapting contents to impart and transmit knowledge for the learners and to integrate knowledge with practice. According to Blaskona et al., (2014), good command of the subject knowledge includes concepts along with latest knowledge and current trends. When a management teacher is able to interconnect theory with practice, teaching quality improves and absorption capacity of student increases.

The mean and SD of Knowledge of learners is 4.29 and 0.70 respectively. Faculty members are in accordance that effective teaching involves keeping in mind the concern for student. Knowledge about student learning style helps in understanding characteristics of learners and adjusts the instructions accordingly (Shulman, 1987).

6.3 Skills

The construct 'Skills' comprises of 35 statements. Factor analysis helped in extracting five clusters of the construct. They are Classroom Management Skills, Planning and Organising Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Use of differing Teaching Methods, and Information and Communication Technology Skills (ICT) and is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Skills

Variable	Mean	SD
Classroom Management Skills	4.45	0.66
Planning and Organising Skills	4.36	0.71
Interpersonal Skills	4.26	0.68
Use of Different Teaching Methods	3.52	0.91
ICT Skills	3.50	0.94

The mean and SD of Classroom Management Skills of the respondents is 4.45 and 0.66 respectively. All the respondents agree that effective classroom management skills are essential for teachers of HEI for effective teaching. Teachers need to have clarity in giving explanation to the topic of discussion. At times teacher needs to adapt different teaching methods to facilitate student learning. Better understanding is possible when teachers give examples pertaining to the context. Effective communication helps in managing classroom discipline and also brings clarity in the explanation. Classroom productivity increases when teacher is able to link teaching with research. According to Bandura (1997) ability to communicate and effective delivery improves the teacher's classroom management skills.

The mean and SD for Planning and Organising skills is 4.36 and 0.71 respectively. It is opined by the respondents that planning and organising the content of the lesson for teaching helps in organized presentation of class sessions. The availability of additional study material is helpful in better understanding by the students. Likewise is helps in teaching within the preview of the curriculum. Planning for the class sessions help in adapting the subject content to suit the understanding ability of the students.

Subject knowledge (Sheffield 1974; Grunerwald & Ackerman 1986), lectures and instructions, orderly prepared planned (Sheffield 1974), subject related to life or practical, encouraging questions (Sheffield 1974; Kelley et al., 1991) and opinions from students (Sheffield 1974; Suydam 1983), and effective use of teaching aids (Sheffield 1974) are some of the characteristics related to teaching skills.

The Interpersonal skills with an average and SD of 4.26 and 0.68 respectively specify that the respondents prefer to involve students in classroom discussion; this indicates two way communication and exchange of information. It also indicates the understanding capability of the learners. Teachers build a friendly rapport with the students; this enables them to monitor the progress of the student. Teachers are more of a facilitator rather an instructor.

The skills in using different Teaching Methods with a mean and SD of 3.52 and 0.91 respectively indicate that faculty have skills in using the traditional teaching methods like case study, seminars and group discussions apart from lecture. These are the regular activities associates with the course curriculum and the planning of the course also includes these techniques. The learner centric methods like role plays, workshops and field studies are less used as their mean is less than the average of 3.52. Use of innovative teaching approaches helps in minimizing the gap between theory and practice in Business Schools in India (Angelo, 1996).

The ICT Skills of the respondents with the mean and SD of 3.50 and 0.94 respectively indicate that respondents prefer to use technological teaching aids to support their teaching sessions. Respondents are well versed with regular general computer application software. However their usage of advanced tools like simulation exercises and online instructions and courses is limited. This concurs with the findings of Babu and Jayabal (2005).

6.4 Abilities

The construct 'Abilities' comprises of 37 statements. Factor analysis helped in extracting six clusters of the construct. They are research and mobilisation abilities, research extension, administrative abilities, professional development, academic contribution and extension activities, presented in Table 4.

Table 4 : Mean and Standard Deviation of Abilities

Variable	Mean	SD
Research Publications and Mobilisation Abilities	0.84	1.27
Research Extension Abilities	0.52	0.94
Administrative Abilities	1.82	1.72
Professional Development Abilities	3.27	2.17
Academic Contribution Abilities	1.53	1.73
Extension Abilities	0.74	0.57

The mean and SD of Research Publications and Mobilisation abilities of the respondents is 0.84 and 1.27 respectively. Respondents pursuing their PhD are involved in presenting research papers at conferences and publishing papers in national and international journals. Respondents with PhD are involved in research mobilisation activities such as applying for funded research projects and consultancy work.

With respect to Research Extension Abilities the average and SD is 0.52 and 0.94 respectively. Involvement in research extension activities are pursued by respondents with doctorate degree with reference to research guidance, appointment as BOS or BOE, they also are involved in knowledge dissemination activities such as experts at conferences, workshops and FDPs.

The Administrative Work Abilities of the respondents is 1.82 and 1.72 respectively. These activities are mostly contributing to the holistic development of the students. In this regard, the respondents are involved with organising expert lecture sessions, organising training sessions, induction activities and project placement of their students. This coincides with the findings of Nandan et al., (2010), where they specify that administrative work of business management teachers include student training related activities, placement activities, admission related activities and organising conferences with industry interaction.

The growth of a teacher's career life is fostered by the process of self development activities undertaken by the teacher (Glatthorn, 1995). The average and SD of the Professional Development Abilities of respondents is 3.27 and 2.17 respectively. The respondents are involved in informal mostly in interactions with resource persons and experts, reading literature, books, journals publications; publishing papers in journals. The structured forms of professional development like attending FDPs, workshops and seminars' organized or funded by statutory bodies and premium Institutions have lower mean.

The mean and SD of Academic Contribution Abilities of the respondents is 1.53 and 1.73 respectively. It includes examination duties of setting question paper and evaluation of answer scripts and also executing the duty of external examiner for viva voce.

The Extension Abilities of the respondents has a mean and SD of 0.74 and 0.57 respectively. The third dimension of higher education teaching plays an important role in instilling a sense of social responsibility in the students. Involvement with NGOs provides an opportunity for the learning the areas of social transformation. Likewise NSS activities help in voluntary contribution towards community service that will assist in sustaining social development.

VII. CONCLUSION

The descriptive statistics of the respondents divulge that out of total population of the faculty members, 49% were female and 51% are male faculty members. Ratio of male faculty was more than female faculty in some colleges.

Out of the total 231 female respondents, 88% of them were in the less than 45 years age group and 74% of 242 male respondents were in the less than 45 years age group.

Majority (48.6%) of the faculty members surveyed were MBA qualified and 39% were Ph.D qualified.

Out of the 473 faculty members surveyed, 250 respondents were Assistant Professors of which 82% were in the less than 45 years of age and only 18% were Ph.D qualified.

Among the five clusters of Knowledge viz., Knowledge of Curriculum, Knowledge of Pedagogy, Knowledge of Content, Knowledge of Feedback and Assessment and Knowledge of Learners the highest mean was observed for course improvement, knowledge about different instructional methods, knowledge about facts beyond textbooks and concern for student progress. Among the five dimensions of Knowledge, Knowledge of Curriculum had the highest mean of 4.49.

The Skills Construct comprised of 5 clusters namely Classroom Management, Planning and Organising, Interpersonal Skills, Skill in Using different Teaching Methods and ICT skills. The Mean and SD of Classroom Management was the highest with 4.5. Faculty's skill in adopting different teaching styles and preference to give examples to facilitate student learning teachers' capability in interpreting complex ideas and concepts into simple explanations are the key areas.

The six clusters of Abilities construct include Research Publication and Mobilisation Abilities, Research Extension Abilities, Administrative Abilities, Professional Development, Academic Contribution and Extension Abilities. The mean of 3.27 for Professional Development Abilities was found to be the highest. It was noted that publishing in journals, journal reading, discussing with experts and journal subscription were the most used methods of professional development among the faculty members.

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