

HR Education, HR Students perception and need for paradigm shift : An Analysis of B-School Perspective¹

Urs Gururaj B¹ and Bagali MM²

¹Professor (HR) & Head (QUICAI), ²Professor (HR) & HoD,

^{1&2}Department of Management Studies, ^{1&2} Acharya Institute of Technology, Bengaluru, India

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to understand the significance of HR education in India for its structured revision. Management education in India, has reached a phase where there are umpteen number of differentials & integrals, which in turn create multiple scenarios; some of these issues are growth oriented on one hand and chaotic, negatively connotated on the other. Thus, creating many a unwarranted situation for all the stakeholders. One major question is – Do we need to restructure due to the changing scenario. The University structure of traditional procedure of imparting management education and in turn training tomorrow's business leaders has been rendered redundant. The process of privatization and globalization demands drastic changes in the traditional teaching learning approach, but also stress a need for introduction of new age employability based knowledge, skill sets and attitude, which have more economic value. This paper tries to explore the current issues of HR management education of B-schools in India, especially based on the HR students' perspective. A questionnaire has been developed and used to collect the data from the HR students. A total of 238 students studying in twenty-three institutions include State Universities, Central University, Technical University, National Institute of Technology, Private University and Autonomous Institutions were covered throughout the state of Karnataka. The data was analyzed using statistical tools reflecting Coefficient of Correlation and Chi-Square. The results have been analyzed and discussed based on appropriate hypothesis. There exists a critical and crucial requirement to shape the HR education in accordance with the changes at the national & international levels of both the industry and the academia to bring about effective competitiveness and sustained employability amongst the work force in India in the near future.

Keywords: HR education, Project work, Industry-Institute Interaction, Pre Placement training & Campus placement.

¹This paper is a part of Doctoral work by the first author under the supervision of the second author in understanding the rigour and relevance of HR education in B-schools.

INTRODUCTION

Business schools have come around successfully to establish a strong presence for themselves within collegiate institutions in almost all countries of the globe¹. Quality management education contributes to society in many ways beyond just formal education and skilling. The research, training and consultancy undertaken by faculty on businesses, practices of its people & organizations, markets, and environment together contribute to an enlarging repository of knowledge. This ensures that pedagogy being adopted by the B-school, remains current and relevant, and also helps organizations and companies to acquire a compact understanding of the strategies that will ensure their success. Faculty expertise, along with their students', is sought by members of the business community ranging from small family firms, to technology start-ups, to multinational corporations to name a few. In fact, many business schools include outreach acts as part of their mission, and devote significant resources to address and evolve a particular need within their local business environment. Thus, high quality business schools provide nations with an advantage, not only in the form of a skilled workforce, but also through intellectual, social, philanthropic contributions to general business knowledge and to the community. These contributions lead to rising income levels and economic growth in any given community (Senge, 1994; Abel & Dietz, 2015).

Higher education, and in this case Management Education stands at crossroads. Changes in methods and processes are made imminent, as the traditional University structure of training and educating the business manager of tomorrow is being surpassed in the increasingly technological and complex global economy. The need of the hour is in the creation of a platform which could provide Management students with the talent and skills, necessary to work and compete in the ever changing industry, and also there is a felt need to understand and accept the challenges. Management education is considered as an elitist kind of a educational course, as it attracts young men and women, who are motivated by the positive occupational and social consequences associated with management education. In fact, it is sort of after the Medical and Engineering education, and that the GER is higher for Management education in India, higher education especially management education is witness to an exponential growth in terms of number of institutes imparting management education which are usually termed as a Business School.

Apart from the IIMs, management education is offered by university's own department in campus, affiliated colleges of universities in same place or the entire state, now technical universities have been given this role. Moreover autonomous institutes approved by AICTE, universities running distance education program and open mode, are offering courses in management. Some recognized institutes and universities are also offering 3 years part time program (in evening) for working executives. (Chanana,

2007; Agarwal and Gopalan, 2013; Chandra and Kabra, 2000) Foreign universities having collaborations in India and those having students exchange program with limited-time studies abroad are also imparting management education. New private universities and several others are now coming up (Bakru, 2011; Datar, *et al*, 2010). Looking at the scenario, there is a need to look at how the program is structured, the methodology followed and due to changing economy, there is a need to restructure.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Relevant research studies in the above mentioned issues are discussed in brief. Institutions offering MBA programmes must respond to market needs (Baruch and Leeming, 1996; Shipper, 1999). Those who are unwilling to change, according to Schmotter (1994), may experience dissatisfied students and staff as well as a low demand for their programmes. In commenting whether business schools are delivering what business really needs, and reports that business schools have not imparted their Management students how to manage across business functions globally. Carnall (1995) agreed that management problems generally require solutions drawn from different disciplines and business schools must prepare Management students for that. This had also prompted Porter (1997) to propose the removal of individual subject disciplines and the implementation of a cross-functional curriculum in business schools. Indeed, employers today are looking for skills that would allow Management students to handle international businesses, develop new businesses and manage flatter organizations. Malaysia is aware of the explosive growth and competitiveness of global business that demands speed, flexibility and agility in responding to consumer demands. Any shortcomings perceived by practicing managers should therefore be attended to immediately. Those who participated in Eberhardt's (1997) survey raised concerns about the theoretical MBA curriculum. They feel that classroom knowledge of Management students does not match with the interpersonal and supervisory skills that are essential for managers. Porter and McKibbin (1988) noted that some business schools are not doing enough to develop the "soft skills" of managers, which resulted in suggestions to include courses in public speaking, conflict resolution, negotiation and teamwork techniques be offered as a part of MBA programmes.

Neelankavil (1994), supported by the Managing Director of Oracle Systems Malaysia, said that companies hire management students, because they are generally equipped to solve business problems. The latter added that management students are bright, self-motivated and pro-active individuals. The key issue today is whether business schools have the relevant curriculum and delivery system to prepare future leaders for the dynamic changes in business. In the twenty-first century, the way forward for business schools in Asia is to collaborate closely with corporations. Eberhardt (1997) found that, in spite of several criticisms hurled at MBA degree holders, firms are still hiring them. In a survey of Human Resource Managers, he found that 78 percent had employed Management students in their organizations. The remaining 22 percent gave three important reasons for not doing so, company's policy to promote internal staff, lack of leadership training in Management students and insufficient work experience of management candidates. Some Asian companies, especially family-owned ones, consider Management students as luxuries in their organizations and hire those with Bachelor degrees in Business instead (Altbach, 2005; Aman, 2009). The consultancy sector has the most demand for Management students because of the significant market growth in their services (Quacquarelli, 1997; Arnone, 1998; Datar, *et al* 2010).

In terms of skills acquired after pursuing an management programme, Eberhardt (1997) established that employers were most satisfied with their leadership potential and least satisfied with their written communication skills. Baruch and Leeming (1996) defended MBA programmes as they enhance the learning skills, research enquiry and written presentation of individuals. In an exclusive interview with CEOs, Shanker (1999) of Management Times highlighted several attributes that corporate leaders look for in Management students. The MD of Smith and Nephew (Asia) for example, prefers executives with good management and interpersonal skills as well as positive work attitudes and a drive for achievement. According to its General Manager, Management students have good analytical skills, a network of contacts, are supporters of teamwork, innovative, able to solve problems and write good business reports (Dealtry, 2000; Doh et al, 2011; Enders, 2001; Dowling and Welch, 2004).

Rationale for the Research Study

Higher education especially the field of management education with special focus on HR education in India stands at crossroads. Without change, the traditional university structure of educating and training tomorrow's business leaders is being surpassed & discarded in the increasingly diverse and technological global economy (Crotty and Soule, 1997; Carnall, 1995). With an aim to provide management students with the best of knowledge, skill sets, attitudes and the necessary talent to compete in this marketplace, we must recognize and accept the reality before us. Internationalization of the business school curriculum is no longer a luxury, but the need of the hour (Chait, 1999; Ezenwafor, 2008; Ginsberg, 2010; Goldhaber & Antony, 2004). Further, people are the organization's greatest asset, providing the intellectual capital and the necessary push and pull, which drives differentiation and promotes value added services. Growth from macro perspectives is possible only when micro activities are initiated and preserved by the organizations. To keep pace with globalization modern organizations have to deal with each individual differently and tactfully, thereby fulfilling the demands of employee as well as taking steps towards growth plan of the organization (Goel & Goel, 2012; Giaque & Woosley, 1981; Hansen, 2002). Hence this research study has been planned, i.e., HR student as a stakeholder provides his / her perspective of HR education as of today and tomorrow. As the HR student stakeholders are the end users of the products of Management Institutions, their perspectives provides us with information, regarding those issues that needs to be reworked at all levels of the HR Education in India. It is this section of sample, who have experienced the 21st century change and what is relevant and what is redundant, thus the need for a paradigm shift.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To understand and the HR student's perception on their teaching & learning process, evaluation systems, training in HR skills, internships, scope of HR in the market & future directions, amongst various types of B-schools.

Table No 1 : Demographic data of the HR students (respondents)

SI No	Parameter	Frequency	Percent
	Overall	238	100
Age groups	22-26	210	88.2
	27-31	26	10.9
	32+	2	.8
Gender	Male	90	37.8
	Female	148	62.2
Educational Background	Traditional (BA, BSc)	38	16.0
	Managerial (BBM, BBA, BCom)	177	74.4
	Technical (BE, BTech, BCA)	23	9.7
Type of University	State run Universities	11	58.4
	Central University	1	2.9
	Deemed Universities	3	18.9
	Autonomous Organizations	7	13.4
	NIT	1	6.3
Residence	Urban (metro)	106	44.5
	Semi Urban	37	15.5
	Rural (non-metro)	95	39.9

Hypothesis development

H1: There are no strengths and opportunities in the HR program of any B-school.

H2: There are no weaknesses and threats in the HR program of any B-school.

H3: There are no issues to strengthen in the HR program.

H4: There are no issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program.

Geographical Area

With Karnataka state, as the region, the universe consists of all the HR students, (studying in Departments of Management studies located at all types of B-schools), viz, Bangalore University, Bengaluru, Davangere University, Davangere, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, VKSU Bellary, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka State Women University, Bijapur, Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta, Mangalore University, Mangalore, Mysore University, Mysore, Tumkur University, Tumkur, Visveswaraiah Technological University, Belgaum. Central University of Karnataka, Gulbarga, Christ University Bangalore, Jain University, Bangalore, Manipal University, Manipal, Mount Carmel Institute of Management, Bangalore, MS Ramaiah Institute Of Management Sciences, and Ramaiah Institute of Management Science, Bangalore and St Josephs College of Business Administration, Bangalore.

Sample Design

Stratified random sampling procedure was adopted to collect the data. All those HR students who are at their final year were part of the inclusion as sample.

Tool

A questionnaire (to collect the data) was developed by the researcher. This tool consists of the socio-demographic data wherein the age, sex, education, occupation, income, marital status, and the like. The second part of the questionnaire consists of why HR education was selected as a postgraduate education, its impact on the HR student, HR subject contents and course offerings, HR internship and project work, examination systems, future scenario and others.

Process of Research work

The research design adopted for this study is Descriptive - Explanatory. The entire work was done in two phases, i.e., pilot study and main study. This pilot study was conducted over a period of three months, on a total of 20 samples. For the main study, the researcher had obtained permission, visited all the universities and autonomous B-schools and collected the data; this took about a period of nine months. The tool was finalized as per the results of the pilot study, with the necessary changes. The data collected was coded, entered into computer systems using SPSS 20.0.1 version and using statistical analysis as in - Descriptive statistics like frequencies & percentages; Chi-square and Contingency Coefficient analysis. These statistical tests were applied to find out the association between different types of students, universities and other categories of demographic variables used.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Table No 2 : Frequency and percent responses for "strengths and opportunities of the HR program" and results of test statistics

Strengths and Opportunities	F and %	Type of Institution					Total	Test Statistics
		1	2	3	4	5		
1,2 and 3	F	20	1	9	0	1	31	$X^2 = 12.207$ $p=.429$ CC =.221 $p=.429$
	%	14.4%	14.3%	20.0%	0.0%	6.7%	13.0%	
4,5, 5a and 6	F	40	2	13	12	2	69	
	%	28.8%	28.6%	28.9%	37.5%	13.3%	29.0%	
1,2,3,5 and 5a	F	44	3	12	11	5	75	
	%	31.7%	42.9%	26.7%	34.4%	33.3%	31.5%	
3, 4, 5 and 5a	F	35	1	11	9	7	63	
	%	25.2%	14.3%	24.4%	28.1%	46.7%	26.5%	
Total	F	139	7	45	32	15	238	
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	

1- State University; 2 - Central University; 3- Deemed University; 4 - Autonomous B-school; 5-NITK.

1 = Teaching Learning Ambiance and exposure; 2 = HR Academician; 3 = Guest Academician from Industry; 4 = Campus Placements and Career; 5 = HR Curriculum; 5a = Flexibility and Innovativeness in Curriculum; and 6 = Co and Extra-curricular Activities.

Institution-wise comparison amongst HR students with respect to the components of strengths and opportunities of their respective HR programs, is highest around 31% as the students have revealed that "teaching learning ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from Industry; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum" are important components; they were followed at 29% by those students who opined that "campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum; Co and extra-curricular activities" formed the second level. Lastly, around 26% of the students informed that "guest Academician from industry; campus placements and career; HR Curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum" formed the third level of components, in terms of strengths and opportunities, in their respective HR program. Chi-square test revealed no difference between these frequencies ($X^2=12.207$; $p=.429$), even though students had expressed different views about the strengths and opportunities of their respective HR programs.

Contingency coefficient revealed a non-significant association ($CC=.221$; $p=.429$), between these frequencies, indicating that amongst those in the State run University, students around 32% who reported that "teaching learning Ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from Industry; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum"; this was followed by around 29% of the students informing that "campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum; Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities". Lastly, at 25% "guest Academician from industry; campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum" as the strengths and opportunities in the HR program. Amongst the Central University, students around 43% have opined that "teaching learning Ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from industry; campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum"; this was followed by around 29% of the student population reporting that "campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum; Co and extra-curricular activities" as the strengths and opportunities in their HR program.

Students in Deemed Universities have reported that around 29% have "campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum; Co and extra-curricular activities "; this was followed by 27% of the students with "teaching learning Ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from Industry; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum" as the strengths and opportunities in their HR program.

The students at NITK have reported that around 47% of the population that "guest Academician from Industry; campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum"; this was followed by 33% of the student population informing that "teaching learning Ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from Industry; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum", as the strengths and opportunities of their HR program.

Lastly, amongst the students of Autonomous b-schools, at around 37% of the population have opined that "campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum; Co and extra-curricular Activities"; these were followed by around 34% of the population informing that "teaching learning ambiance and exposure; HR Academician; guest Academician from industry; campus placements and career; HR curriculum; flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum", as the strengths and opportunities of their HR program. Thus, no difference was revealed between these groups of frequencies, even though students had expressed various responses about the strengths and opportunities of their respective HR programs, across different types of institutions. Thus, we can say that the strengths and opportunities in any HR program, must involve a deep look and to strengthen, by the interest and knowledge of all the stake holders concerned, there by helping the HR program and the institution to grow and evolve as per the needs of its environment.

Table No 3 : Frequency and percent responses for “weaknesses and threats of the HR program” and results of test statistics

Weaknesses and threats	F and %	Type of Institution					Total	Test Statistics
		1	2	3	4	5		
1,2,3	F	23	1	6	5	1	36	$X^2 = 10.207$ $p=.586$ $CC = .204$ $p=.586$
	%	16.5%	14.3%	13.3%	15.6%	6.7%	15.1%	
4,5,6	F	37	3	17	14	3	74	
	%	26.6%	42.9%	37.8%	43.8%	20.0%	31.1%	
1,7 and 8	F	46	2	13	10	5	76	
	%	33.1%	28.6%	28.9%	31.3%	33.3%	31.9%	
2,3, 7 and 8	F	33	1	9	3	6	52	
	%	23.7%	14.3%	20.0%	9.4%	40.0%	21.8%	
Total	F	139	7	45	32	15	238	
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	

1- State University; 2 - Central University; 3- Deemed University; 4 - Autonomous B-school; 5-NITK.

1 = Everything is Mandatory / Compulsory; 2 = HR as a discipline is looked down by people, other specializations; 3 = HR Academician are biased and Lack knowledge; 4 = Type of Academic term based; 5 = Less Placements (Qualitatively and Quantitatively) in HR; 6 = Location of the Campus / College; 7 = Academic - Industry gap is huge and 8 = Exposure to practical / corporate world is the need.

Institution-wise comparison amongst HR students with respect to the weakness and threats of their respective HR programs, at 31.9% of the students have revealed that “everything is mandatory / compulsory; HR as a discipline is looked down by people, specializations; HR Academician are biased and lack knowledge”, they were followed by around 31% of the students who opined that “type of Academic term based; less Placements (Qualitatively and Quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college”. Lastly at 22% of the respondents who informed that “HR as a discipline is looked down by people; HR Academicians are biased and lack knowledge; academic-industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need”. Chi-square test revealed no difference between these frequencies ($X^2=10.207$; $p=.586$), thus informing that students had differential responses regarding the components of weaknesses and threats of their respective HR programs.

Contingency coefficient revealed the existence of a non-significant association ($CC=.204$; $p=.586$), between the frequencies, indicating that amongst the State run University students around 33% reported that “everything is mandatory / compulsory; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need, type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college”. At around 27% the respondents have replied that the “type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college” is important. Lastly, followed by around 24% of the respondents saying that “HR as a discipline is looked down by people, specializations; HR Academician are biased and lack knowledge”.

Amongst the Central University students at around 43% who have opined that “type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college; in curriculum”; At around 29% of students have informed that “everything is mandatory / compulsory; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need” as components of weakness and threats of their HR program.

The Deemed University students at around 38% opined that “type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college”. This was followed by around 29% of the respondents “everything is mandatory / compulsory; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need” as components of weakness and threats of their HR program.

The Autonomous B-school students informed that at around 44% “type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college” was important; they are followed by around 31% of the students with “everything is mandatory / compulsory. Academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need”. They are followed by 15.6% of the population who informed that “everything is mandatory / compulsory; HR as a discipline is looked down by people, specializations; HR Academician are biased and lack knowledge; type of academic term based; less placements (qualitatively and quantitatively) in HR; location of the campus / college; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need” as components of weakness and threats of their HR program.

In the NITK, with around 40% of students have opined that “HR as a discipline is looked down by people, other specializations; HR Academician are biased and lack knowledge; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need”. They are followed by 33.3% of the respondents, opined that “everything is mandatory / compulsory; academic - industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need”. Thus, based on the results of the study, we can say that the weaknesses and threats of the HR program, must be looked into and eliminated completely by all the stake holders concerned, there by helping the program and the institution to grow and evolve as per the needs of its environment and its people.

Table No 4 : Frequency and percent responses for “issues not strengthened by the HR program” and results of test statistics

Issues not strengthened by HR program	F and %	Type of Institution					Total	Test Statistics
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	F	4	0	1	2	0	7	$X^2 = 57.351$ $p = .000$ $CC = .441$ $p = .000$
	%	2.9%	0.0%	2.2%	6.3%	0.0%	2.9%	
2	F	10	3	8	2	6	29	
	%	7.2%	42.9%	17.8%	6.3%	40.0%	12.2%	
3	F	14	0	9	7	7	37	
	%	10.1%	0.0%	20.0%	21.9%	46.7%	15.5%	
4	F	4	0	4	0	0	8	
	%	2.9%	0.0%	8.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	
5	F	10	0	1	0	0	11	
	%	7.2%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	
6	F	3	0	0	0	0	3	
	%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	
7	F	94	4	22	21	2	143	
	%	67.6%	57.1%	48.9%	65.6%	13.3%	60.1%	
Total	F	139	7	45	32	15	238	
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	

1- State University; 2 - Central University; 3- Deemed University; 4 - Autonomous B-school; 5-NITK.

1= Practical HR / New Theories and concepts from the HR Industry; 2 = In-depth analysis of HR trends / Real time analysis of any scenario; 3 = Core HR concept / HR Analytics; 4 = Current happenings in HR industry / Global HR situation; 5 = Career guidance / HR - KSA needed upon entry into the industry; 6 = Avoid too many internal tests and giving more work load during the semester; 7 = NA / Do not know.

Institution-wise comparison amongst HR students with respect to "issues not strengthened by the HR program", has revealed that around 60% of the respondents reported that "they do not know / NA". They were followed by around 15% of HR students, who reported that "core HR / HR Analytics" could be added to strengthen the program. These were followed by around 12% who informed that "in-depth analysis of HR trends / real time analysis of any scenario" is important which could change the HR program. Chi-square test revealed significant difference between these groups of frequencies ($X^2=57.351$; $p=.000$), thus informing that students differed significantly in their responses regarding their perception of issues leading to strengthening the HR program.

Contingency coefficient revealed that a significant association exists ($CC=.441$; $p=.000$) between the groups of frequencies, i.e., amongst the State and Central University students at around 68% and 57% of them reporting that "NA / do not know". This was followed by around 10 and 42% of the students reporting that "core HR concept /HR Analytics" respectively were important. Amongst the Deemed and Autonomous b-schools, at around 48% and 65 of the respondents who have replied that "NA / do not know" respectively. They are followed by 20% and 21% of the respondents replying "core HR concepts / HR Analytics" respectively. Amongst the NITK students, around 47% and 40% have replied that "core HR concepts / HR Analytics" and "in-depth analysis of HR trends / real time analysis of any scenario" respectively. Lastly, at 13% of the respondents replied with "NA / Do not know", as the answer. Thus, we can say that some of the issues pertaining to HR concepts, subjects, scope and such issues have to be strengthened in the HR program by the students, Academicians and Staff concerned in the respective institution, only than would HR students be able to appreciate the program.

Table No 5 : Frequency and percent responses for “the issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program” and results of test statistics

Issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program	F and %	Type of Institution					Total	Test Statistics
		1	2	3	4	5		
a	F	6	0	5	1	0	12	X ² = 52.874 p=.000 CC = .426 p=.000
	%	4.3%	0.0%	11.1%	3.1%	0.0%	5.0%	
b	F	13	0	10	5	1	29	
	%	9.4%	0.0%	22.2%	15.6%	6.7%	12.2%	
c	F	12	0	0	4	2	18	
	%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	13.3%	7.6%	
d	F	5	0	4	5	0	14	
	%	3.6%	0.0%	8.9%	15.6%	0.0%	5.9%	
e	F	14	0	9	10	0	33	
	%	10.1%	0.0%	20.0%	31.3%	0.0%	13.9%	
f	F	89	7	17	7	12	132	
	%	64.0%	100.0%	37.8%	21.9%	80.0%	55.5%	
Total	F	139	7	45	32	15	238	
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	

1- State University; 2 - Central University; 3- Deemed University; 4 - Autonomous B-school; 5-NITK.

a=Need industry exposure since the beginning of the HR program; b = Admit students with industry experience; c = Give lot of Learning and Development inputs to students; d = By providing chance and guiding students to do research in HR; e = Need to study organizational / industry requirements and then develop curriculum accordingly; f = NA / Do not know

Institution-wise comparison amongst HR students with respect the “issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program”, has revealed that around 55% of the respondents that “NA / do not know”; followed by around 14% of them saying that “need to study organizational / industry requirements and then develop curriculum accordingly”; lastly followed by around 12% of the respondents saying that “admit students with industry experience”. Chi-square test revealed significant difference between these groups of frequencies (X²=52.874; p=.000), thus than informing that students differed significantly in their responses regarding their perception of issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program.

Contingency coefficient revealed that a significant association exists (CC=.426; p=.000) between the groups of frequencies, i.e., indicating that before HR students joined the HR program, certain pre-requirements were observed as important. State and Central universities students reported that at around 64% and around 100 said “not applicable” respectively. They were followed by 10% of the State University respondents saying that “need to study organizational / industry requirements and then develop curriculum accordingly”. Deemed University students at 38% reported that “NA / do not Know”. They were followed by around 22% of them saying that “admit students with industry experience”. Lastly being followed at "need to study organizational / industry requirements and then develop curriculum accordingly" at 20%.

Autonomous B-schools students reported at around 31% with “need to study organizational / industry requirements and than develop curriculum accordingly”; to be followed by “NA / do not know" at around 22%. Lastly being followed by around 15% of them reporting that "by providing chance and guiding students to do research in HR" and "admit students with industry experience". NITK students reported at 80% that “NA / do not know” and followed by around 13% with “give lot of Learning and Development inputs to students”. Thus, we can say that certain issues are to be made clear to the HR student before entry into the HR program by the faculty and other staff concerned in the respective B-school and Institutions, only then the students would be able to better appreciate the worth of a program.

MAIN FINDINGS

A : Strengths and opportunities of the HR program

- Teaching learning ambiance and exposure, Quality of HR Academicians, Guest Academicians from the Industry, quality of HR Curriculum; Flexibility and innovativeness in the Curriculum, are some of the strengths and opportunities of the HR program, as informed by one third of all HR students across all Institutions.
- Campus placements and career, quality of HR Curriculum, Flexibility and innovativeness in Curriculum, Co and extra-curricular activities are some of the strengths and opportunities, as informed by one fourth of all students across all institutions.
- Teaching learning ambiance and exposure, HR Academician, Guest Academician from Industry, HR Curriculum, Flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum, as informed by one third of the State run Universities & Autonomous B-

schools, two fifths of Central University and one fourth of Deemed University students, are some of the strengths and opportunities in their respective HR programs.

4. Campus placements and career; HR curriculum, Flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum, and Co and Extra-curricular Activities, are some of the strengths and opportunities as informed by one fourth of the State Universities, Central University and Autonomous B-school students.
5. Guest Academician from industry, Campus placements and career, quality of HR curriculum, Flexibility and innovativeness in curriculum, are some of the strengths and opportunities, as informed by half of the NITK students.
6. No significant difference was revealed between the various groups of students across various institutions, even though students had expressed different responses regarding the strengths and opportunities of their respective HR programs.

B : Weaknesses and threats of the HR program

1. Everything is mandatory / compulsory, HR as a discipline is looked down by people, other specializations, HR Academicians are biased and lack knowledge, are some of the weaknesses and threats as opined by one third of all the students across all Institutions, in their respective HR programs.
2. Type of academic term based, Less placements in HR, Location of the campus / college, as opined by one third of all students across all institutions, are some of the weakness and threats in their respective HR programs.
3. Students' responses are varied in terms of the weaknesses and threats of their respective HR programs across various Institutions, but there exists no significant difference amongst the various groups of students.
4. Everything is mandatory / compulsory, Academia - Industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need of the day, and, the type of academic term based, Less Placements in HR, Location of the campus / college, as reported by one third and one fourth of State run University students respectively.
5. Type of Academic term based, Less Placements in HR, Location of the campus / college, rigidity in the curriculum, were weaknesses and threats, as informed by a majority of Central University, one third of the Deemed University students, two fifths of the Autonomous B-school students, respectively.
6. HR as a discipline is looked down by people, other specializations, HR Academicians are biased and lack knowledge, Academic - Industry gap is huge and exposure to practical / corporate world is the need, were the weaknesses and threats, as revealed by one fourth of the Central University, one fourth of Deemed University, one third of Autonomous B-school and two fifths of NITK students.

C : Issues not strengthened by the HR program

1. The "issues that are not strengthened by the HR program are not known to them", as revealed by a majority of the HR students across all the institutions in their respective HR programs.
2. A minority amongst all the HR students reported that "Core HR areas / HR Analytics" could be added to strengthen the HR program.
3. State, Central, Deemed University and Autonomous B-school HR students reported that they were un-aware or did not know of those issues that could be strengthened in their respective HR programs.
4. Issues pertaining to "HR concepts, subjects, scope of HR" and other related issues have to be strengthened in the HR program by the Academicians and Staff concerned in their respective Institutions, only then would HR students be able to appreciate the program.
5. Students differed significantly in their responses regarding their perception of issues leading to strengthening the HR program in their respective institutions.

D : The issues to be made clear to the HR student before entry into the HR program.

1. Half of all the HR students have informed that, "they are not aware or it is not applicable to them", regarding the issues to be made clear to the HR student before entering the HR program in their respective institutions.
2. Majority amongst the State run & Central University based students have reported, "They are not aware or it is not applicable", regarding the issues to be made clear to the HR student before entering the HR program in their respective institutions.
3. One third of the Autonomous B-schools students have informed that, "the need to study organizational / industry requirements, and then develop the HR curriculum accordingly", was important from their perspective.
4. Majority of the NITK students have reported that "they are not aware or it is not applicable to them", regarding the issues to be made clear to the HR student before entering the HR program.
5. Students differed significantly in their responses regarding their perception of issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program.

HYPOTHESIS TEST

H1: There are no strengths and opportunities in the HR program of any B-school. This has been rejected, as there are certain strengths and opportunities in the HR program of any B-school.

H2: There are no weaknesses and threats in the HR program of any B-school. This has been rejected, as there are certain weakness and opportunities in the HR program of any B-school.

H3: There are no issues to strengthen in the HR program. This has been rejected, as there are certain issues to be strengthened in the HR program of any B-school.

H4: There are no issues to be made clear to the HR student before the entry into the HR program. This has been rejected, as there are certain issues to be made clear to the HR student in the HR program of any B-school.

Ambiguities in vision, mission, purpose, and core values of majority among Indian B-Schools have further worsened the prospects of management education in the country. It has been observed that there are fundamental flaw in strategic perspectives on managing especially the private B-Schools. Governing bodies of most of the private B-Schools have been constantly focusing on unmindful expansion while neglecting market realities, societal needs and stakeholders' interests (Sahu, 1991; Sahney, *et al*, 2004). Business education in India has grown mostly as a channel to make quick profits rather than nurturing managers with required skills, ability, aptitude and knowledge (Chaturvedi 2012; Gill, 2005; Ghoshal, 2005; Kaul, 2011).

No wonder, the industry complains of unavailability of competent managers despite a large number of management graduates joining the labor market every year. The society looks at the B-Schools with suspicion in terms of their abilities to create solutions to social problems. The students, on the other hand, are reluctant to undertake management education due to seemingly uncertain employment opportunities after graduation (Kumar & Jha, 2012; Khurana, 2007; Panandiker, 1991; Rao 2012; Sarkar, 2011).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE

A : Strengths and Opportunities of HR programs

Implications for Theory

1. HR students possess a sense of positiveness towards themselves in terms of the Curriculum, Guest Faculty, Classroom ambience, HR Academicians, Training and Campus placement, all of which are feel good factors. This good feeling is not just for the HR student, but also for the other stakeholders as well.
2. Further, the actions and behaviors of the HR Academicians are positive as well, with regards to their completion of curriculum; along with themselves available as Proctors and guides as and when required by the students, are good indicators of strengths and opportunities of HR programs.

Implications for Policy and Practice

1. The positive feeling generated amongst the HR student should suffice for yesterday and today, but not for tomorrow.
2. To make a successful and happy tomorrow, all the stakeholders must gear up to take this good feeling to the next level of exuberance. To do so, the individual, coordinated and perseverant efforts are required.
3. This feel good factor must be allowed to prevail in the HR student, after their successful completion of the program and a campus placement, i.e., being an alumnus.
4. An alumni's feel good factor is a result of a good construct and outcome. The alumni will keep informing all people while meeting during the course of his work and life. This in-direct form of spreading goodness amongst the community must happen.

It can indeed be deduced that management education has generally not responded well to the change in the management paradigms; as in the higher education based management education continues to emphasize abstract conceptualization and less importance to the development of cognitive skills and analytic ability, as well as knowledge, understanding and application of a wide range of management theories to the field. In an attempt to address the deficiencies of the traditional higher management education model, certain initiatives have been evolved in recent years, which emphasize certain approaches which are based on active experimentation in management interventions. This could either happen through organizational based projects or through action learning type activities, aimed at executing the management theories in specific organizational contexts (Talbot, 1997; Hammonds, 2005; Harris, *et al*, 2002; Schmotter, *et al* 1999). Action learning must be made a part of the teaching learning process in any educational institution, as it involves many stakeholders, as in a group of managers, offering mutual support, questioning and criticism of one another in developing solutions to their individual management problems. This mixes traditional teaching and assessment with action learning sets and peer assessments (Talbot, 1997; Leitch & Harrison, 1999; Mintzberg, 2004; Porter, 1997; Neelankavil, 1994). Attempts to alleviate the theoretical and prescriptive focus of conservative management education have brought in the introduction of case study based teaching, organizationally based relevant projects and consultancy assignments. The emphasis should specifically be on active experimentation, reflective observation and nurturing the ability to deal with new problems in its context specific ways, so that teaching learning process becomes holistic (Sinha & Kumar, 2012; Nasscom, 2012; McNamara *et al*, 1990; Kumar & Dash, 2011)..

B : Weaknesses and threats of HR students

Implications for Theory

1. The gap between the 'academia' and the 'industry' is one of the major issues, which have to be tackled upfront. As the gap exists with respects to the practice of the application of the particular concept to the field.
2. All activities during the two-year course of the postgraduate, many institutions make everything compulsory. This 'compulsory' behaviour (drawn by the management / academicians of the concerned institute / B-school) drains the focus and concentration amongst the students; also the drive to excel and the level of motivation is at times brought down, causing lot of disturbance.
3. The type of the academic term, as in a trimester or even a semester system at times, does not give enough time to learn and adapt one-self to the new concept or a methodology, both in terms of theory and in practice.
4. The exposure to the practical / applicable side of any concept is an important attribute in the learning process.

Implications for Policy and Practice

1. Industry – Academia gap has to be tackled systematically, by having the industry based practitioners coming into the academia and vice versa, for set period and levels, domains of exposure and work orientation.
2. The transfer of the Academicians and Practitioners to each other's domains should demonstrate involvement in all the activities during their stay.
3. Curricular and Co-curricular activities in any Institute / B-school has to be made flexible and individualized to suit the student's needs. Else, this 'compulsory expected behavior in the student' drains the energy levels, focus and concentration. This would naturally have a detrimental effect on the learning experience of the student.
4. A structured yet sufficient and time bound exposure to the functional / practical / applicable side of any concept makes sure that the HR student learns his way through and subject / concept concerned.
5. Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) to be made decisive between the Industry – Academia; but dependent on the need and the extent of the KSA of the HR student vis-à-vis, the organization / company concerned.

The B-schools generally considered as the success story of the last century, now face the responsibility of rising to the challenge (Vinten, 2000; Baruch & Leeming, 1996; Baird & Msehoulam, 1988; Barksdale, 1998). There is a growing ambivalence towards B-schools stemming from their core stakeholders and host institutions, criticizing their complacency, ossification and irrelevance (Porter and McKibben, 1988; Carnall, 1995; Chang & Huang, 2005). Similar to their corporate counterparts, B-schools have now been challenged to respond by involving in new set of orientations and thought processes, which are to be imbued with notions of effectiveness, responsiveness and creativity; also by adapting their educational programs to an increasingly competitive socio-economic business environment (Dearlove, 2002; Donald & Susan, 1981; Evans & Barsouz, 2002). A pressing need at this point, is to encourage relevant research relating to curriculum development, program content and methods of conceptual delivery and its practice. One of the major challenges of higher education based management education and training is indeed the appropriateness of the curricula and training programs for preparation and learning in the outside world. These challenges are to be made truly global; and could be so done by obtaining the sustained attention and collaboration between management schools, and partnering with specific industries, so as to identify appropriate guidelines for curriculum to be renewed, based on the specific mechanisms for delivering management education that meets the needs of contemporary managers (Vinten, 2000; Schmotter, 1994; Shankar, 1999).

C : Issues not strengthened by HR program

Implications for theory

1. Issues pertaining to the teaching learning process, subjects / papers being taught, evaluation and assessment issues, practice / field components, roles and responsibilities of the HR students and HR Academicians have to be clearly understood, as these could be its core areas, which need to be strengthened.

Implications for policy and practice

1. Based on understanding the above mentioned (along with other issues), the execution leads to a phase of strengthening the core issues from all the stakeholders perspective. This leads to sustained growth and development of any subject / concept in the right direction.

Management institutes are often criticized for the following reasons (Kaul, 2011; Reddy 2012), viz.,

1. Theoretical focus and quantitative analysis are given value, while neglecting interpersonal relationship and quantitative findings.
2. It is often stated that higher education based management education could be made experience-based, active, problem oriented and be modifiable by feedback, coupled with action learning, serves the existence and purpose.
3. Critics view MBA training as having limited value in preparing students for their careers, with less practical experience.
4. Most courses emphasize analytical frameworks and quantitative techniques, not softer, hard-to-measure organizational skills.
5. Students learn analytics, but not action. They develop skill in attacking problems, but learn little about finding problems and implementing solutions.
6. They become knowledgeable about business, but remain untutored in the art and craft of management. Postgraduate Management Education is argued that "is creating technocrats, people with a great toolbox who are not able to accomplish the things that organizations need them to accomplish".
7. Thus, it is a must to look at management education from the market oriented perspective and take a strategic view to better align business education with the requirement of the global market.
8. Globalization of higher education based management education has been promoted along several dimensions such as curricula challenge, research activities with both contents and outlet being relevant and executive development programs, but even after doing so a lot of motivation and push remains to be done.

Educational institutions and supplementary providers of management education have no choice but to rise to the challenge of global competition and overcome the same. To sum it all, today we get much less cutting edge knowledge on business inputs from the management graduates (Sharma & Roy, 1996; Shipper, 1999; Tymon *et al*, 2011).

CONCLUSION

India, has seen structured investments and systematic efforts in the higher education field especially management education. Outcomes of such initiatives are at times predictable and at times do not convey sense. During these times of uncertainties, younger HR Academicians must be taken in and groomed by the senior HR Academics in terms of teaching, training, research and other activities, so that the young teacher feels confident and takes ownership of the task given as on today and also in the future. So also, there are capacities which are underutilized, causing loss in revenues and on the other, the industry is deprived of skilled management graduate, leading to a scenario, in which there is excessive thrust on quantity, rather than quality, which the management education, has be addressed and over-hauled from the HR Academician's perspective. There also needs an comprehensive document by each B-school about the best practices adapted and this can be bench marked among all.

SUGGESTIONS

Globalization affects and effects anything and everything it touches in the industrial scenario; and one has to a regular, to understand it's happenings. The HR Practioner's are one such set of industry experts who are in touch with their happenings and are often found to be genuinely informative and decisive in their approach to their profession and to their respective organizations. The perception of the corporate houses and their HR Practitioners, when it comes to evaluating and hiring B-school graduates, views the graduate's skills, knowledge levels, competencies and employability, with suspicion. This perception may have grown, over the years into a mental set thus becoming a practice. This practice may have lead to the creation of a large pool of management graduates who are un-employable, and their employability to the higher echelons of an industry is a rarity.

To conclude, this paper and the outcome of the present work stresses the need and sustenance for the development and use of HR Practitioner's perspective in designing, development and use in HR management education, as an important component, in the development of a holistic and industrially relevant syllabi, consisting of many a value added skills, practice and attitudinal set. Also up-date and up-tool the HR student in their respective functional area of choice. This would culminate in helping the HR Education, to persevere with all its stakeholders needs and wants, well into the next decade.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, the authors thank and convey gratitude to all the HR students, studying for their MBA in various Universities and B-schools in Karnataka state. We are thankful for all the HR Faculty, Heads of Departments & Officials at Jain University & Acharya Institutes, Bengaluru for permitting the research scholar, to conduct this doctoral research work, without whose help & support, this study would not have been possible.

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