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Preference for Innovative Teaching Methods: A Study with Business Management Students

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Abstract - Although India produces a large number of management graduates (estimated to be approximately 95,000 students annually with over 1,700 business schools in the country); scholarly debate on curriculum, pedagogy, and innovation is negligible. The purpose of this study is to survey the teaching methods (both common and innovative adopted by faculty members to teach four major management courses namely marketing, HR, finance, information technology; and find out the preference of MBA students for different innovative teaching methods. This study sample was conducted in two colleges of Rajasthan Technical University offering MBA program. The result of this study showed that :1)the teachers adopt common methods and also aware of many innovative methods 2) about 35-70% consider interactive methods to be effective 3) besides a management degree ,skills, knowledge of the industry are important for freshers hence involvement of students has to be maximum. Experiential learning can offer students the opportunity to develop these skills and practice discipline knowledge.

Training and encouragement of faculty to experiment in an open learning environment will foster changes in the pedagogy through increased usage of innovative methods .

Keywords: Pedagogy; Management Teachers; Management Students; Experiential Learning; Simulation; Questionnaire survey method.

1. Introduction

India has the third largest higher education system in the world, next to China and the US. In 2007, India's school and college going population below the age of 20 years was 466.87m, which was 20.03% higher than China's.

Overview of Management Education in India

Table 1.1 There are over 1,700 business schools in the country today distributed over different states as follows:

Management Schools		
State	Number	Percentage
AP	239	13.5
BIHAR	14	0.8
DELHI	60	3.4
GUJARAT	50	2.8
HARYANA	34	1.9
KARNATKA	116	6.6
KERALA	247	14
MP	51	2.9
MAHARASHTRA	202	11.5
ORRISA	247	14
PUNJAB	25	1.4
RAJASTHAN	56	3.2
TAMIL NADU	139	7.9
UTTAR PRADESH	181	10.9
UTTARANCHAL	18	1
WEST BENGAL	47	2.9
*OTHERS	35	*1.9
Total	1761	100

*Others: Himachal Pradesh, Chattishgarh, J&K, Jharkhand, Manipur Assam, Meghalaya, Jharhkand, Goa

There appears to be a correlation between the number of schools in a state and its economic and industrial development. The regional imbalances in development and the creation of capacity for management education in the state are probably related.

Table 1.2 Growth of Business Schools in India during 1950-2006

Period	No. of B-Schools added	Average annual addition
1950-1980	118	4
(30 years)		
1980-1995	304	20
(15 years)		
1995-2000	322	64
(5 years)		
2000-2006	1017*	169*
(6 years)		

Source: Adapted from Dayal, I., "Developing Management Education in India", Journal of Management Research, 2(2), August 2002, page: 101

NB: The figures attributed for 2000-2006 is estimation from current data and therefore shown with an asterisk (*)

Although India produces a large number of management graduates (estimated to be approximately 95,000 students annually), perhaps next only to the U.S., scholarly debate on curriculum, pedagogy, and innovation is negligible. There are, as already noted, many reports prepared on behalf of, or addressed to, the Government or the regulatory authorities but little generated by or addressed to the professional community, which has to deliver the results.

II. Literature Review

Management education denotes those activities traditionally conducted by colleges and universities that focus on developing a broad range of managerial knowledge and

abilities. The traditional management education curriculum, as presently constituted, may not be adequately preparing individuals for the challenges they experience as professional managers (Peffer, 1977). However, despite a growing body of literature examining learner needs, motivation, and skills (Cook 1997; Cross and Steadman 1996; Mclean 2001; Sander, Stevenson, King, and Coates 2000; Wright 1996), little research has been conducted with regard to student preferences among the multitude of teaching methods.

III. Methodology

3.1. Objectives

The purpose of this study is: 1) to list and rank the common teaching methodologies adopted by management teachers; 2) to identify five innovative teaching methodologies practiced according to course needs; 3) the most effective methodologies perceived by students

3.2 Participants and Instruments

The study employs a survey method using questionnaires to explore the preference of students and academic staff members. Data were collected through questionnaires from 100 students from two colleges enrolled in a Management degree in both years of study at Rajasthan Technical University and 20 faculty members teaching four specializations namely marketing, finance, human resource management, and information technology.

Table 3.1 Constitution of Sample

Sampling unit	Size	Percentage
Students (I year)	50	50
Students (II year)	50	50
Total Students	100	100
Faculty (Marketing)	5	25
Faculty (Finance)	5	25
Faculty (HR)	5	25
Faculty (IT)	5	25
Total Faculty	20	100

IV. Results and Discussion:

Table 4.1 is a list of different teaching methods adopted by the faculty members and their preferences for the four courses.

Teaching Method/Course	Faculty (Marketing)	Faculty (Finance)	Faculty (HR)	Faculty (IT)
One-on-one	6	4	4	2
Cases	2	3	2	5
Group sessions /Discussions	4	8	3	14
Guest lectures/ speaker	9	7	9	10
Lecture	1	1	1	1
Supplemental Reading	7	9	6	12
Role playing	8	15	5	17
Simulations	10	11	17	6
Management Games	7	12	7	15
Tutorials	3	5	8	3
Research papers	12	10	14	13
Team Projects	11	8	12	7
Learning labs	14	13	18	11
Problem-solving sessions	13	2	16	8
Quiz	9	6	10	9
Films	15	18	11	18
Internet Activities	16	16	15	4
Seminar	5	14	13	16
Three Common Methods Adopted Coursewise	Lecture ,Cases , Group Discussions	Lecture ,problem solving Exercise, One to one	Lecture, Cases, Group Sessions	Lecture ,One to one, Tutorials

Table 4.2 Innovative Teaching Methods Used for MBA Courses

Faculty (Marketing)	Faculty (Finance)	Faculty (HR)	Faculty (IT)
Management Games	Meet Business Owners	Role playing	Team Projects
Role playing	Project work	Management Games	Computer simulations
Simulations	Research papers	Team Projects	Multi-media learning techniques
Learning labs	Supplemental Reading	Internet Activities	Internet Activities
Internet Activities	Simulation	Films	Learning labs

The above table indicates the 5 innovative methods most commonly used by faculty members.

It was observed that 40 % faculty members adopted the common methods like lecture and cases. Although known to them, they do not use these innovative methods as they lack training in implementing them.

Table 4.3 summarizes the overall effective scores of the learning alternative tools. Students ranked one-on-one meetings with instructors as the aggregate most effective learning tool (very effective minus very ineffective = 64% effective rating) .Guest speakers (18% effective rating) was judged to be the least effective.

Table 4.3 Students' Evaluations of Alternative Teaching Methods

Teaching Method	Very Effective (1)	Very Ineffective (2)	Neither Effective Nor Ineffective (3)	Overall (1-2)
One-on-one	70	6	24	64
Cases	38	14	48	26
Group sessions	61	9	30	52
Guest lectures/ speaker	35	17	48	18
Lecture	51	13	36	38
Supplemental Reading	40	16	44	24
Role playing	44	15	41	29
Simulations	43	11	46	32
Management Games	50	11	39	39
Tutorials	48	16	36	32
Research papers	43.76	10.23	46.01	33.53
Team Projects	49.09	9.55	41.36	39.54
Learning labs	41.15	20.78	38.07	20.37
Problem-solving sessions	50.46	13.53	36.02	36.93
Quiz	60	8	32	52
Films	52	6	42	46

The results show that:

- 1) The teachers adopt common methods and also aware of many innovative methods
- 2) About 35-70% considers interactive methods to be effective
- 3) Besides a management degree, skills, knowledge of the industry are important for fresher's hence involvement of students should be maximum.

V. Conclusion

This study identifies an important dimension of management education - the different methods adopted to teach management courses and preference of students for the same. The teachers require training & encouragement to experiment with innovative methods in an open learning atmosphere to ensure maximum student participation. The main limitations are: only two colleges and four common management courses could be included.

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