

Dynamics of H.R. in Management Education

Dr. Uma M.H.

Associate Professor, Baratash Education Trust's Global Business
School, B.C.188, Old P.B. Road, Near Fort, Belgaum-Karnataka.

Introduction

In the context of changing global economic environment there is a need to assess the relevancy of academic output from the higher academic institutions to the industry specially in a country like ours, India. Every year approximately 2.5 million graduates are being produced by the academic institutions and most of them are being absorbed by the industries as rungs to move up and these fresh graduates are provided with the basic training to tune up with the industrial climate. According to a study conducted by Higher Education Forum (HEF), there are gaps that exist between the expectations of the industry and the actual skills and the performance of the MBA graduates.

Higher education institutions pursue multiple goals; the most sought one being the Human Capital Development through instructor effectiveness. Business Schools offering Masters in Business Administration programmes, M.B.A., are responsible for developing and providing the competitive human resources to the corporate. Hence, it is the B-schools that must prepare the MBA graduates as the potential employees, the capable human capital with the managerial competencies able to address the management problems using different perspectives.

Objectives

The main purpose of this paper is to analyse the dynamics of HRs in Management Education i.e., the role of management teachers and the management educational institutions in improving the quality of the human resources as per the expectations of the employers. Hence, the objective is to analyse the be -fittingness of the MBA graduates to the industry and to assess the gap, if any, and this gap can be filled by adopting the suitable measures by academia.

Literature Review

Rajasekaran and Rajasingh (2009) opined that the perception gap between industry and faculty must be bridged to improve the employability of students and enhance the quality of higher education. Modi (2009) concluded that fresh graduates, who join industries, require six months to two years as gestation period to show their contribution and many a time they leave the organization before they start showing results. This is due to the gap between theory and practice. The industry and R & D labs should become partners with centres of higher learning. SIEMEMSMA (1999) concludes that there is a great deal of conflict between what is being taught to the students and

what they are going to do when they move outside. Patel and Popker(1998) have emphasized on ensuring a common platform for industry and education institutions to work out value-based curriculum taking into consideration the needs of the industry. Paliwal (2009) focused on coordination among the efforts of academia, industry and the government. He emphasized on installing the traits which are expected by perspective employers.

Porter (1997) states that the corporations should hire MBAs as they have strong analytical ability, high motivation to work and god knowledge of relevant management functions. Employers expect MBAS with god work ethics, sound management and leadership skills, critical thinking and analytical abilities, and a good grasp, of business practices. According to Hewitt & Clayton (1999), in the age of rapid change in the world, universities should also develop subject specific expertise along with the development of wide range of personal attributes in order to equip students for employment.

Many studies have been carried out as discussed in the literature review on the employability criteria and the employers' expectations from the management graduates. Although there is great demand for MBA graduates and the high esteem of MBA degree programmes are criticised for not being responsive to the market. The common criticisms are:

- MBA graduates are ill-equipped to meet the challenges of dynamic global environment,
- Teachers at B-Schools lack the necessary experience,
- Most of the MBA courses are theoretically oriented,
- Inadequate liaison between the B-schools and the industry,
- Neglect of the development of people skills, etc.

In order to ensure that the B-schools respond to the market needs, an assessment of the students' learning experience and employers' feedback should be carried out on the periodic basis. Most companies are looking for people with high management potential. They want people who can be effective quite rapidly. They are looking for specific talent mix, a mix of skills which can change rapidly. Of late, the companies have been demanding higher profiles for various

positions. The employers have expectations about the future 'Master'. A study conducted by Prof. Binod Shreshta in his paper, 'Perceptions of Differences in Quality of Graduates: Employers Vs Students' writes about the employers' expectations Vs the graduates' skills, knowledge and attributes and the teaching and learning process that help students develop skills and personal attributes.

A systematic survey was conducted by Higher Education Forum (HEF) known as 'Skill Gap Survey' to evaluate if there are any gaps in the expectations and the performance of the newly employed MBAs in the Indian Service sector. The study found that the gaps do exist, particularly in skills such as listening and teamwork; knowledge in terms of understanding the organization and process; and the attitudes such as self-motivation, self-discipline, commitment and dedication. According to this survey, industry has the highest expectations from the newly employed MBAs in the area of attitudes followed by skills and finally the knowledge. It is the general agreement by the employers, 'We hire people for attitude and train them for skills'. The industry expects new MBAs to enter the corporate world with proper attitude which is actually lacking in practice.

In an interview conducted live online by Careers 360 with Dr. Deepak Bhootra, Director, Hewlett-Packard on the topic, 'What do corporate look for in an MBA?' Dr. Deepak speaks about the corporate expectations from an MBA. Some of the excerpts of the interview:

- One needs to understand that corporate are looking for both intellect, consistency in performances across the educational and professional backgrounds and skill relevant to their business. It is more about the fitment of the candidate to the needs of the corporate as well as how a person can be moulded to what the corporate is looking for.
- Analytical skills are very important. The analytical tools learnt in B-Schools and how they are applied and used to develop analytical skills is critical. This learning helps to structure the ability to look at the problem and find solution and make a good

decision. The caution here is that ultimately one needs to be 'Jack of all trades and Master of none'.

- The most looked after skill in the industry is the articulation skill: both oral and written. He says, 'for me what is missing is the reality that most B-Schools tend to train people to put forth their ideas but not show students how to develop the critical skill of communicating and doing abbreviated synopsis of an idea or thought.'
- Critical thinking developed in B-Schools through case studies and Group Discussions.
- Ability to work with other people. 100% participation in team work and the ability to motivate other people is required.
- We hire for teachability, a person's attitude towards learning.
- It is the matter of ethics and professionalism which develops and integrity the students.

Hence, the employers do have certain expectations from potential MBA graduates in terms of.....

- Communication skills
- Analytical skills
- Critical thinking
- Leadership qualities
- Professional commitment
- Attitude towards learning
- Ethical commitment

A study was conducted by GMAC in this regard. GMAC researchers asked the recruiters what specific skills, abilities and knowledge they most sought in MBAs. Employers said they are seeking strong strategic skills, core business knowledge, the ability to manage change and the decision-making process, and technical or quantitative skills.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities Employers Seek in MBA Hires:

Desired Knowledge, Skills & Abilities	Percentage
Communication skills	86%
Strategic skills	67%
Proven ability to perform	66%
Core business knowledge	63%
Ability to manage change	61%
Ability to manage decision-making processes	59%
Technical/quantitative skills	59%
Ability to apply business discipline to any job/function	51%
Strong academic performance	45%
Ability to establish business structure, processes	45%
Sufficient years of work experience	41%
Ability to manage the task environment	40%
Same/related industry in prior work experience	39%
Negotiation skills	34%
Similar occupation in prior work experience	31%
Ability to manage subject matter or technical experts	29%
Ability to manage human capital	25%
Similar job level in prior work experience	20%
Specific language, country/cultural expertise	17%

➤ **Source:** GMAC 2011 Corporate Recruiters Survey

Desired Traits Employers Seek in New MBA Hires:

Desired Traits	Percentage
Initiative	77%
Professionalism	77%
Motivation	76%
Integrity	76%
Ability to deal effectively with pressure/obstacles	75%
Achievement/goal orientation	74%
Innovation/creativity	68%
Adaptability	68%
Collaboration	65%
Efficiency	49%
Listening ability	48%
Discipline	45%
Persuasiveness	39%
Cross-cultural sensitivity	39%
Diplomacy/tact	33%
Capacity and willingness to follow a leader	30%
Empathy	25%
Delegation skills	21%

➤ **Source:** GMAC 2011 Corporate Recruiters Report

A critical analysis of the corporate expectations should be incorporated in the pedagogy of management education.

Are the MBA grads up to the expectations of the industry?

The fresh graduates have got too much early in life without too much of efforts. This has made them to think themselves to be a little above others. Their kind of job is just sitting in fancy cabin, with fancy phones and latest gadgets to work on and play with, whatever could be flaunted. Dedication and commitment is missing probably because they got more than their share too early.

A report by mbauniverse.com and MeriTrac states only 21% MBAs are employable in 2011-2012 in India. The nationwide study covered 2,264 MBAs from 29 cities and 100 B-Schools. The report reveals the inability on the part of the MBA graduates in meeting the expectations. The MBA grads are not up to the mark with respect to employability skills as:

- The relevant skill sets, especially, communication and interpersonal skills
- Attitude, the right attitude towards work is missing
- Problem solving: companies are looking for people who are problem solvers and not problems themselves
- Market Insight and Business awareness
- Leadership ability and Teamwork
- Strategic Orientation
- Learning from chaos
- Hands-on Training
- Values as honesty and integrity are lacking.

Existing Gap

There is a misaligned orientation between the education and the job expectations. Every corporate expects a relevant educational degree coupled with skills and attitude while employing a person which is missing to a greater extent with the present generation MBA grads.

What is the need of the hour to improve the Management Education?

“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.” says Sydney Harris.

In the era of talent spotting, it is not the qualifications and the competencies that matter, what matters the most is the potential. It is the time where students take admissions in B-Schools to acquire coveted MBA qualification. A job is offered on the basis of a person's calibre and not on the fancy MBA label.

Academic Focus of management Education: Management education in India was a luxury earlier and is a necessity today. 21st Century education should prepare the students to triumph in global skills race. The master's degree involves moving up the career ladder into the realm of higher level of knowledge towards professionalism. An MBA should be treated as an opportunity to accumulate knowledge, sharpen the skills, simulate positive attitude and get prepared for the corporate world. The academic experience that the institution provides, through conducting research, meeting and interacting with resourceful faculty and peers and developing a long lasting network, leads to increase in the research interest and innovation among the students for better and satisfactory career. Today businesses are looking for innovative solutions from academia in the competitive roles of changing and challenging business scenario.

Industry – Institute Interface is a critical dimension for any management institute as this interface decides the extent to which the institute becomes an acceptable brand. It is essential to have Academia- Industry Interactions as a part of the University education curriculum which will help to impart relevant knowledge and skills and will be sustainable in the changing business conditions. It is necessary to have a realistic understanding about the expectations of the industry from management institutes to impart industry relevant management education in order to groom fresh graduates as managers. The industry interface can also be through **faculty exchange programmes** – industry experts taking time off from the industry to serve a term in the management institute and / or the faculty member joining the industry to prepare case studies. There needs to be mutual support and benefits. The current status of cooperation between academics and industry. If the education schools improvise their education system, it will automatically bring in better performances. The course curriculum should be designed to suit new perspectives to build managerial and leadership skills.

Competencies: KSAs, Knowledge + skills + Abilities

Every person may not have requisite skills, but can acquire and improve through experience over time. Managerial skill brings about a positive impact on the organization through the ability to develop effective and innovative action strategies. A good learner requires good learning attitude. The educational institutions need to strictly focus on the KATZ Model of KSA Approach.

Research Encouragement: There is a paradigm shift in the primary mission of education towards ensuring student learning, rather than the prevailing instructional mode of only delivering the lecture. Research is the pedagogy for 21st Century in fostering creative learning. Through inquiry-based learning and creative accomplishments. Positive discussions in the classroom should relate to the corporate

world which encourage and motivate students to understand their goals.

Research enhances class room learning through connecting theory to the practice. Research practice invokes independent and critical thinking and builds intuition.

Passionate Faculty members: "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself."- Rabindranath Tagore.

B-School teachers have a bigger role to play in developing the students into budding managers and leaders with high competency and integrity. So, recruiting of passionate and eligible faculty is a major challenge for management institutions. Dr. Ravichandran (2010) has rightly mentioned that faculties without proper experience are hired due to compensation constraints. Value of teaching has lost its importance over time. It is perceived that, a person who does not find a job in corporate tend to join teaching as a stop gap arrangement, who are actually not passionate teachers, further diluting the serenity of teaching profession. Teaching requires a lot of preparations and skill in delivery and not just knowledge of subjects. The thing that matters is the way the teacher teaches. They should preferably have industry experience. The combination of four area of expertise such as teaching, consultancy, research and industry would make faculties outstanding. Teachers need to create an academic ambience and atmosphere conducive to bring out latent creativity and innovation in the students.

In order to close the gap teachers have developed many alternative teaching methods such as case studies and action learning along with the Information and Communication Technology.

Conclusion

In management education, learner's objective is to strengthen managerial competence by acquiring new knowledge and skill to improve the quality of business life. The main objective of the MBA curriculum is to provide a conducive environment to foster the managerial skills. The present management education is broken and need to be reinvented with changing times. There is a misaligned orientation between the education and the job expectations. Every corporate expects a relevant educational degree coupled with skills and attitude while employing a person which is missing to a greater extent with the present generation MBA grads. The B-Schools need to be committed towards bringing professionalism to management creating new knowledge in the development of entrepreneurial, ethical, socially sensitive and humane global managers. The corporate expects the fresh MBA grads to create a basic knowledge along with the attitude for learning, enthusiasm, initiative, commitment and leadership qualities to face the complex situations and the challenges of

the corporate world. This can be achieved through the reinforcement of KSA approach of management education. There is an urgent need of upgrading the curriculum as per the industry requirements. Faculty development in this regard is the need of the hour to improve the quality of management education. The teachers to be effective and responsive teachers must be passionate about their profession. They need to possess the four pillars of effective management education in terms of teaching, research, consultancy and industry experience.

With all these the day is not far away where we can produce world class management graduates and the actual supply of MBA grads meets the expected demand leaving no gap.

References

- Baruch & Leeming, "Programming MBA program-quest for curriculum", The Journal of Management Development.
- D. Lavy & Murname (2003), "The Skill Content of Recent Technological Change: An Empirical Exploration." Quarterly Journal of Economics.
- FICCI (2010), "What Corporate Expects from you: Experts' Guide to Student Managers."
- Harvard Business Review (2014), "21st Century Talent Spotting."
- Jayashankaran N. (2010), "B-School Teachers: Teaching with Passion."
- Katz R.L., "Skills of an Effective Administrator", Harvard Business Review.
- Porter L. (2007), "The Microeconomic Foundations of Prosperity: Findings from the Business Competitiveness Index", the Global Competitiveness Report 2007-08, the World Economic Forum.
- Porter L., "Management Education and Development: Drift or Thrust into the 21st Century?"
- Ravichandran R. (2010), "My Experience at various B-Schools" edited by FICCI.
- Rodrigues C.A., "The important ten Teaching / Learning Techniques as rated by University Business students and Instructors", Journal of Management Development.
- 21st Century Skills, Education and Competitiveness, a Resource & Policy Guide, "Partnership for 21st Century Skills."