A study on Antecedents of Learners’ Motivation towards Management Education

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ABSTRACT
The need for management education has been realized ever since India got its independence and the number of educational institutes providing management education has increased by leaps and bounds. Indeed, in the postmodern model of higher education when knowledge is often outdated before it can be used, the knowledge content of the curriculum becomes less important in comparison to the role of motivation to learn management and the ability to keep updated forever (Kinman et al., 2007). Internationalization of management education is another option considered owing to the new business landscape and lot of work is in progress in connection to the depth, scope and module delivery (Sharma and Roy, 1996; ). Nevertheless, there is a lacuna in the studies on motivation of management students towards learning.

In brief, management education can be described as a formal classroom (off-site) learning experience the exposes the managers/future managers to new concepts, theories, models, situations, case studies, problems etc. that can be applied later in the workplace. So, the management courses are packed with specialized topics that include leadership, customer service, decision making, team-building, negotiation skills, financial management, strategic planning, conflict resolution, performance appraisal etc. If these topics are closely observed, none of them can be learnt effectively unless the learner is motivated towards these topics as there are ‘soft’ aspects attached to them. So, this calls for a study on motivation towards learning.

Key Words: Antecedents, Motivation, Higher Education, Management Education, Learning, Off-site learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Management Education in India
Indian Government has set a target of increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education from the present level of about 12% to 15% by the end of XI Five Year Plan and to further increase the number to 30% by the year 2020 (MHRD Report, 2011). As of the AICTE report in 2011, there are about 3,556 management institutes and about 2,30,660 students pursue management education in the country. Management education plays a major share in higher education in India and in recent years there have been an unprecedented number of management institutions being set up, mostly through private capital. Since the management graduates and post-graduates produced by these institutions are primarily absorbed by the industry, there is a growing need to match the curriculum and structure of management education to meet the needs of the country, and also, cater to the changes in the industrial and services sectors within the country. Having realized the proper assessment of the quality of management education imparted to the students of various institutions, strict measures have been taken by the governing bodies such as AICTE, NBA and NAAC since the past several years.

While all the above mentioned initiatives are positive moves from the side of education providers, there exists and lacuna in the undertaking of the study from the students’ point of view. This may include several aspects, among which, student motivation towards management education is an important one, as it finally decides whether the opportunity provided to the students is utilized or not.

1.2 Student motivation towards learning
World recognized bodies such as Accreditation to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), which is considered as the mark of ‘excellence in management education’, promotes excellence and ensures stakeholders that business schools are subject to review and held to a high level of scrutiny on a continual basis (Dahl and Smimou, 2011). Teaching quality is the sine qua non of excellence as far as the university education is concerned. It is not only the essential component of the university brand, but also, the standard expectation for student performance and promotion of research culture. Indeed, this growing awareness across countries has led to the recognition and fostering of the innovative and effective teaching methods (Covington and Mueller, 2001; Gatfield et al., 1999; Guolla, 1999; Kember and McKay, 1996; Bensimon, 1995) that take place every day in classrooms. Dahl and Smimou (2011) through their extensive research postulate that interaction between students’ intrinsic and
extrinsic motivational orientations and perceived teaching quality have not been fully studied. So, relating student motivation to teaching quality is a potential area for research.

Elton (1988) and Boud (1990) opine that meaningful learning is more likely to occur when students engage with the subject-matter for its own sake, and not in order to satisfy an extrinsic demand. Kroll (1988) and Boggiano et al. (1992) have argued that intrinsic motivation will lead the learner to seek out or accept ambiguous and complex learning experiences and such students are likely to apply less rigid and more flexible analytical thinking leading to the solution of complex problems. In simple terms, students with intrinsic motivation are prepared for solving complex set of problems. On the other hand, the research literature suggests that extrinsic motives, such as money, status and perceived external pressures, might impair academic performance and are likely to show relatively inferior performance (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Amabile et al., 1990). Condry (1977) opines that extrinsically motivated individuals might appear to work harder, but their performance is likely to be of a lower quality than that of the intrinsically motivated students.

Finally, Rauh (2004), based on the questions appeared in the AACSB’s magazines Business Education about the foundations required for managers’ and future managers’ education to transform them as leaders gives two forms of solution: the first addressing the ‘hard domain’ which is basically the technical domain, and the second the ‘soft domain’ which refers to motivation and leadership issues. So, even though motivation to learning is an age old generic concept, there seems to be a growing concern on management student motivation for learning which is now opening up as a research area.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The need for management education has been realized ever since India got its independence and the number of educational institutes providing management education has increased by leaps and bounds. Indeed, in the postmodern model of higher education when knowledge is often outdated before it can be used, the knowledge content of the curriculum becomes less important in comparison to the role of motivation to learn management and the ability to keep updated forever (Kinman et al., 2007). Internationalization of management education is another option considered owing to the new business landscape and lot of work is in progress in connection to the depth, scope and module delivery (Sharma and Roy, 1996; ). Nevertheless, there is a lacuna in the studies on motivation of management students towards learning.

In brief, management education can be described as a formal classroom (off-site) learning experience the exposes the managers/future managers to new concepts, theories, models, situations, case studies, problems etc. that can be applied later in the workplace. So, the management courses are packed with specialized topics that include leadership, customer service, decision making, team-building, negotiation skills, financial management, strategic planning, conflict resolution, performance appraisal etc. If these topics are closely observed, none of them can be learnt effectively unless the learner is motivated towards these topics as there are ‘soft’ aspects attached to them. So, this calls for a study on motivation towards learning.

The educational institutes supply the management educated professionals both to the industries as well as the academia. The shortage of teaching faculty in the country is an indication of lack of motivation towards management education (Table 1). Unless, these vacancies are filled, there is little hope to meet the country’s requirement of management professionals in the industries as well as the growing need for management professionals round the globe. So, this calls for an in-depth study to find out what are the antecedents of learner motivation towards management education and try to figure out what could be the strategies to motivate the learners to a higher level of operation.

Table 1: Faculty positions sanctioned and vacant positions in random locations of the country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sanctioned positions</th>
<th>Vacant positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>2423</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>1537</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University news Vol. 49 No. 51 December 19-25, 2011.

While the source (Table 1) provides data for only four random states of the country, similar trend can be observed throughout the country. This shows that there are no adequately qualified management post graduates or Ph. Ds. who are inclined towards teaching. In other words, there is a general lack of motivation towards pursuing management education. Hence, there is a need to study what are the student motivation related factors, which influence their orientation towards management education. Secondly, the perception of teaching quality by the most important stake holders of management education viz. the students, decides the educational excellence of the university. While, teaching quality by itself is student perception based, which in turn, depends largely on the student motivation (Dahl and Smimou 2011). So this underscores the need for a thorough investigation of the
antecedents of learner motivation in management education.

The research literature is inundated with knowledge on learners’ motivation and is rich in theoretical models and frameworks but there is a dearth of information and knowledge available about learners’ motivation towards management education in particular despite the fact that it is one of the most sort after higher education in the present globalized scenario. So, there is a burgeoning need to add to the body of knowledge that is available in learners’ motivation in management education.

It has been realized long back that the technical and functional content of the present management curriculum alone is unlikely to be of long-lasting value to managers (Burgoine and Reynolds, 1997). Having entered the era of Learning Organization (Senge, 1990), until the managers have academic competence they will not be equipped for the constant updating of operational competence that will become part of their everyday working experience. Moreover, the ability to learn faster and more effectively than their competitors will give the winning edge in the race of the business world. But to develop the academic competence and lifelong learning skills they need to be very well motivated towards management education. Hence, there is a need to undertake an in-depth study to identify the antecedents of learners’ motivation in management education as the future depends on their ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Contemporary research

The literature is rich in very well focused research on different aspects of management education. Longenecker & Ariss (2002) have focused on competitive advantage through effective management education. They have given measures to be taken in management education system and practices to attain competitive advantage. Jagadeesh, (2000), has focused on assuring quality in management education in Indian context and emphasized more outward look towards management education to become more competitive. Agarwala (2008) has found that skills, competencies, and abilities were the most important factor and their father was the most significant individual influencing the career choice of Indian management students.

Nguyen and Nguyen (2010), have identified the determinants of learning performance of business students in a transitional market and found that instructor capability has positive influence on learner motivation. Covington and Mueller, (2001), Pintrich (2003), Roth et al. (2007), and Dahl & Smimou (2011), associate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to higher perception to teaching quality.

Novack (1982) observed that ‘learning’ is the main and basic aim of teaching and Brown and Atkins (1988) found that teaching and learning are two interrelated processes. Ruiz-Molina and Cuadrado-Garcia (2008) state that in this process, didactic methods (instructive processes) and resources that allow developing satisfactorily the teaching-learning process are necessary. In particular, specific teaching methods and resources will be developed and these methods allow the students to acquire the necessary skills for their professional career, through the development of analytical, reasoning, problem resolution and communication competences, among others. Thus, these lectures must be developed through the interaction and ‘active participation’ of the students. Or in other words, the success of teaching learning process is possible only when the learner is motivated well towards absorbing what is available in written, spoken or audio-visual form.

Researchers have taken many different streams of research to study in-depth the issue of teaching and learning raised in the preceding section. Fernandez et al. (1984) recommend the conjoint use of all the available material, as the simultaneous use of more than one channel facilitates the perception in the communication process and reinforces the teaching-learning process. Slavin (1990) considered the less structured or more informal techniques, where active and cooperative learning with a collection of teaching strategies that use students to help each other learn could be effective. Cebrian, (1994) focuses on pedagogical resources which constitute an important part in every educational programme as they determine the other elements (objectives, contents and methodologies) and are oriented, designed and produced depending on these elements. According to Loranger (1994), taking responsibility for learning requires active participation by the learners to initiate and control their learning process along with supportive learning strategies. There is evidence that creating an active learning environment, as compared to the traditional classroom, can be been linked to higher student motivation (Garcia and Pontrich, 1996; Stipek et al., 1998).

One group of researchers has focused on the technologies available to facilitate teaching-learning. Rada, (1998) has proved that web-based peer-to-peer learning activities are more efficient, effective and satisfactory for students than other activities and/or alternative scenarios. Garcia (2002), Mir et al. (2003) have taken the approach of exploiting technology in facilitating teaching-learning and focus on the important advances in multimedia programmes and the development of telecommunications and suggest the development of new pedagogical alternatives oriented towards facilitating the teaching-learning process. Chiu et al., (2007) have focused their study on e-learning and found that learners’ intention to continue using web-based learning have greater influence, thus the intrinsic value and interactional fairness play important roles in learning.

According to Boekaerts (1997), traditional learning models, where the teacher prescribes and students perform, do not support self-regulated learning and, in fact, can deter it. Alternatively, creating classroom environments that actively engage students both
experimentally and cognitively have the potential of stimulating the development of self-regulated learning (Young, 2005).

A group of researchers have focused their research in the specific context of Marketing Education and have found that student management groups (Lilly and Tippins, 2002), documented course participation (Peterson, 2001), experiential learning exercises (Gremler et al., 2000), student-operated internet businesses (Daly, 2001) and web-based projects (Siegel, 2000) could be of immense use in promoting teaching-learning.

Attempts to study the theories of motivation in the context of higher education have also been made. Researchers have found that Cognitive theory approach supports the hypothesis that performance is influenced by the will to reach ‘specific academic objectives’, that can be learning-oriented or goal-oriented (Ames and Archer, 1988; Elliott and Dweck, 1988; Ames, 1992; Dupeyrat and Marine, 2005). It is rather difficult to fit one single model for motivation towards learning in management education. Schein (1980), for instance, sees human nature as complex, with human needs and motivations varying according to the different circumstances people face, their life experience, expectations and age. This is very much applicable to management students as they join B-schools with many different experiences, backgrounds, aspirations etc.

Student social motivations have been also proposed as antecedents of academic goal achievement (Wentzel, 1989, 1993; Urdan and Maehr, 1995; Covington, 2000; Humphrey, 2004). Thus, social acceptance, academic self-esteem, classmates and teacher personal assessment can play important roles in the students’ involvement in their learning process (Cuestas et al., 2006). Martin (2007) has related student motivation with participation. Contrarily, Davies and Graff (2005) conclude that the students who participated more frequently online not being significantly awarded with higher grades.

Influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci, 1972; Wiersma, 1992) has been another stream of study in motivation towards management education. Individuals are considered to be intrinsically motivated if they perform an activity for no apparent reward except the activity itself, and when they perceive their behaviour to be self-directed. Intrinsic motivation, like any attitude, is thought to have cognitive and affective components. Deci and Ryan, (1985) have related cognitive element to self-determination and the drive for mastery and competence, and thus, it has some form of reward or goal attached to it. Literature also supports extensive research on intrinsic and extrinsic components of motivation, particularly in the area of higher education. While there are several ways of looking into it, the study converges to some common understanding. In general terms individuals driven by internal or intrinsic motivation engage in seeking and conquering optimal challenges (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and typically have high levels of interest, excitement, and confidence (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Amabile et al. (1994) conceptualize the components of intrinsic motivation broadly as: self-determination (preference for choice and autonomy), task involvement (task absorption and flow); competence (mastery orientation and preference for challenge); curiosity (preference for complexity); and interest (enjoyment and fun). On the other hand, the extrinsic components generally involve a cognitive assessment of some activity as a means to an anticipated outcome: i.e. behaviour performed not for its own sake, but for its consequences and has firm base in the operant tradition (Lepper and Greene, 1978; Skinner, 1953). Extrinsic motivation to work is thus primarily in response to something apart from the work itself. It is concerned with material, social or symbolic rewards, such as, for example: competition, evaluation, status, money or other tangible incentive, the avoidance of punishment, or the dictates of other people (Amabile et al., 1994).

Kinman and Kinman (2001) have identified nine factors that motivated individuals to participate in the degree programme: To catch up with younger degree qualified managers, Promotion prospects, Fear of redundancy, Managerial pressure, Peer competition, Worries concerning diminished Authority and credibility resulting from poor results or failure to complete, Fear of diminished self-image and of letting oneself down, A wish to continue education, Interest in the syllabus. Through their research they have found that even though intrinsic motivational orientation is a prerequisite for the development and maintenance of an organizational culture of generative learning, the research has revealed the fact that the learner motivation in management education is extrinsic in nature and it subscribes to the view of Amabile et al. (1994). Further, the research literature, in the context of type of motivation of learners of management education, is not stable and fixed to a view, but is mainly context dependent (France and Beaty, 1998). However, Self-determination theory is very much in progress and most empirical research has focused on how external rewards influence intrinsic motivation in work and educational settings (Wiersma, 1992; Deci et al., 2001 and Haines et al.).

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

With over two and a half lacks of management post-graduates being produced in the country and the number increasing each year exponentially, a model which describes the antecedents of learner motivation towards management education is a dire necessity. The empirical evidence on the significance of relationship of these variables with learner motivation would immensely benefit the policy makers of management education in the form of strategies to strengthen the components which need attention so that the motivational level of learners is raised to a higher level. The significance of the research also extends to the preparation, validation and application of a
metric that can be used as a tool by future researchers in this area.

V. THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

A conceptual framework has been developed to have a basic idea about the inter-relationship between the associated variables (figure 1).

![Conceptual framework of learner motivation towards management education](image1.png)

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Higher education is under a stage of radical change in terms of administration and policy implementation so as to gear up to the international needs of the industries and organizations both in service as well as manufacturing sectors. A large number of management graduates and post graduates are being produced in the country and a lot of focus has been directed towards the enhancement of quality of the education. Nevertheless, not much has been done to have a thorough understanding from the point of view of students' needs, demands, aspirations, and expectations about management education. So, having scanned through the existing literature a need was felt to study in-depth the motivational aspects of the students pursuing management education.

Preliminary literature review leading to the formation of a conceptual framework has been undertaken. The outcomes of this study is sure to contribute to the betterment of management education in the country as it would establish the empirical evidence to the link between the variables of interest to the student motivation. Finally, the suggestions that emerge out through this research would be useful for policy makers of management education and they may consider implementing the same to enhance the learner motivation towards management education.

REFERENCES


