

A STUDY ON PERCEIVED BENEFITS FROM MODES OF INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA INTERFACE

B. Lavanya

Assistant Professor, Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, India
Email: lavanya_sama@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT

It is observed that the changing Complexity of the Business environment has necessitated the industry and the academia to develop close links to create the synergy. The interface between these two has led to increasing mutual dependence to ensure their better survival in their domains. From previous research it was found that there was immense emphasis laid by researchers on building organic relationship between academia and industry, instead of mechanic. In light of this understanding academia has designed different modes of industry-academia interface (IAI). The present study titled “A study on perceived benefits from modes of Industry-Academia Interface”, attempts to understand University affiliated colleges’, management students’ perception about industry- academia interface, to examine the different modes IAI adopted by the colleges and to analyze the students perception about the benefits from modes of Industry –Academia interface. By getting understanding in to these insights Academia can further develop the programmes which add more authenticity to the interface. The study primarily involves first hand information from the students of University affiliated colleges in Hyderabad through questionnaire. Secondary sources are also used for the study.

Keywords: Business Environment, Industry-academia interface, Organic relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Academia- Industry Interface could be defined as interactive and collaborative arrangement between academic institutions and business corporations for the achievement of certain mutually inclusive goals and objectives. Bisoux (2003) has explored the relationship between academics and industry. He says that corporations are placing growing emphasis on finding the “right person”. It forces the academia to think more carefully on whom they hire, and therefore the role of industry in the entire business school model becomes important. Today the industry is playing an increasingly important role in activities of academic institutions to incubate the talent they need so the colleges have to provide a unique platform for interaction between Industry-Academia, where in the actors of the interaction understand the latest trends of Industry-Academia interface keeping in view the perceived benefits and accordingly equip themselves with the skills required in a fast-changing global scenario.

Theoretical & Literary Reflections

There have been focused studies on the academy-industry relationship. Many researchers are of the view that institutions must be responsive to demographic shifts that have occurred in higher education by engaging in ongoing strategic planning similar to that which is done in

the business world and they express that the gap between academic output and industrial requirement must be bridged to improve the employability of the students and enhance the quality of higher education.

According to Elliot *et al.* (1994) MBA programmes place too much emphasis on quantitative and analytical skills and neglect human skills and do little to produce managers who are capable of meeting challenges of global business environment and cope with increasingly diverse workforce. Smith and Tamer (1984) said the historically, colleges and universities have been extremely slow in adapting to social change. Sutliff (2000), in an article about Technical Communication pedagogy, found a nice middle-ground when she acknowledged, “[. . .] the best teaching and learning incorporates both theory and practice through projects that yoke the two. Realizing that part of their job is to ready students for the workforce; the best professors will tie theory to practical skills and strategies that can be applied on the job.”

Montgomery and Porter (1991) found that academia traditionally has trailed business in its grasp of trends. It must be and remain aware of trends-not fads-in business so that it continues to be relevant in its "production" of graduates who will be seeking employment after finishing their degrees & leaving the institution. Ghosh et al (2007) discovered that at present, there are several mechanisms operational in India, with 'Academia-Industry interaction,' as a fulcrum of technical education. He focused that by involving the industries right from the stage of drafting syllabi to absorbing the trained students, they are allowed to shape the CORE into a highly productive Human Resource Centre. This also enables them to reduce the time required to orient a fresh graduate before s/he could be inducted into shop floor and to upgrade/ re-skill their existing employees at a very competitive cost.

Modi (2009) concluded that fresh graduates, who join the industries, require six months to 2 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, R&D labs should become partners with the centers of higher learning. Patel and Popker (1998) has emphasized on ensuring a common platform for industry and education institutions to work out value-based curriculum taking into consideration the needs of industry. Prem chand (2009) expressed that the Industry interface has a strong bearing on a school's intellectual capital. In India, the level of interface is very low and there are some misconceptions, too. Public relations work done for placing students such as organizing guest lectures and seminars are often the activity that B-schools do in the name of industry interface. Good interface with industry ensures that faculty members are keeping pace with the fast changing scenario of industry which is mirrored in the knowledge and skills of students who don't need much training on being hired.

At “AIMA -industry-academia panel discussions “emphasized, in his keynote address Amith expressed that, to meet the demand of technically qualified employees from the industry, many colleges have mushroomed in the area, churning out thousands of B. Tech and MBA students every year. However, there is a huge gap between the expectations of a company from job aspirants and the curriculum taught to the students in the colleges. Vinay and Cashmira (2011) through their model on IAI concluded that Academia-industry relationship is not like that of technology donator-acceptor, but is of interactive and collaborative nature, acknowledging and ensuring mutual respect for each other's role and contributions with an eye to attaining the true purpose of such relationships, namely, bringing about research outcome synergy.

Gupta (2009) has pointed out that there is lack of substantial integration with industry and other stakeholders in India and urged for adoption of new and innovative strategies to face the mammoth global challenges. Partners (2006) found that there is huge gap between the rapidly evolving skill need of Indian businesses and those provided by our higher education system; there is a growing realization amongst the government, academic institutions and the industry, of the urgent need to bridge these skill gaps. Rao (2004) in his report on Management Education in India states that development of industry interactions is an evolutionary process. The main strength of top business schools like Kellogg, Harvard, Sloan, Wharton etc. is their strong relationship with industry through teaching, research, student's placements, problem solving and case study preparations.

Beard (1994) has a number of recommendations towards increasing and enhancing academia-industry interface, which include:

- Greater degree of industry-school collaboration to integrate employer's needs into the programmes on offer;
- Real involvement with industry to allow students to gain valuable practical experience and also to facilitate development of business;
- Improve the programmes by encouraging the participation of a number of guest speakers who can offer their own practical experiences;

Academic staff should be encouraged to keep their skills updated by undertaking practical consultancy on regular basis.

Byrne (1991) says that companies demand more relevance today. He adds that MBA programmes provide less relevance with the job, are felt to be too long and insufficiently flexible. To improve the quality of output, more and more business corporations are looking to collaborate in more detail with business schools to create programmes, which can be customized according to company's individual needs and requirements. According to Rizvi (2003), Academia-Industry collaboration is a must if industry has to benefit from research and development activity at business schools, and such a relationship should be encouraged across cultures for the benefit of global business. Miller (1993) identifies significant revisions in curriculum and contents, which are undertaken in business schools, with an objective of including industry recommendations. Many business schools in India have been inviting suggestions from industry to update their curriculum and include the topics of present day relevance. This is done with a view of imparting the knowledge and skills set, needed by graduating students in constantly changing global business environment

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Business education now moved beyond the domains of government control with establishment of many private institutions. The trends of evolution of management education indicate that knowledge creation is becoming more students based. This will usher in a variety of changes including paradoxically a trend towards close interaction among students, industry and the faculty. Multi-level collaboration is needed so that the Academia and Industry can contribute to each other's growth. It is important to identify these areas where optimum collaboration is Possible rather than giving business corporations a *carte blanc*' in this matter. Much of the research has emphasised on the importance of IAI in Business schools. So the present study is conducted to see how the IAI is in University affiliated

colleges offering Management education as many students still feel that they are under prepared for the real time challenges, while the organizations who hire them complain that new employees lack all the critical professional skills.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present is initiated with the following objectives:

1. To understand the student's perception towards the Industry- Academia interface.
2. To examine the different modes of the Industry- Academia interface adopted by the colleges.
3. To analyze the student's perception about the benefits from modes of Industry – Academia interface.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data required for the study is gathered through the well framed questionnaire, which was administered to the 100 students (convenient sample) pursuing MBA in University affiliate colleges. The Questionnaire consists of three sections which contain Questions relating to, Sec1: Students perception, Sec2: Different modes of the Industry-Academia interface, Sec 3: student's perception about the benefits from modes of Industry – Academia interface, where the respondents have to rate on a five-point scale. Secondary sources of data like texts, journals, newspaper and websites are also used for the study. Data from 85 Questionnaire is used for analysis, as there was no proper response from others. Percentage analysis was used for Sections 1 &2 of Questionnaire, where as for Sec3 in which students are asked to give ratings on a five- point scale about their perception towards IAI descriptive statistics have been used.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The present has made an attempt to understand the Industry-Academia Interface in the university affiliated colleges. The summary of the responses for the foremost objective i.e., Students perception towards the Industry-Academia Interface are depicted in the Table-1.

Table 1: Students perception towards the Industry-Academia Interface (IAI)

Statement	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS	
	YES	NO
Academia & industry need to build organic relationships	94.7	5.3
IAI results in growth and development of both academia and industry	88	12
IAI results in growth an development of industry only	9.3	90.7
IAI results in growth an development of academia only	6.6	93.4
IAI enhances the overall teaching-learning experience	88	12

It is evident from the above table that the majority of the students have a good perception about the Industry –Academia interface. i.e., 94.7 percent feel that there should exist organic relationships, 88 percent feel that this interaction may results in growth and development of both an it also enhances the overall learning experience. It can also be observed from the table that very least percent of the students (less than 10%) perceive that the interface

between the Academia and the industry benefit only either of them. Finally it can be inferred that the respondents perceive the interface to be growing importance which is in really need to be encouraged.

There exist different modes through which the Academia and industry can interface. From previous research, the most common forms of interface are selected and respondents were asked to indicate which of them were adopted in their respective colleges. The results are depicted in the table-2

Table 2. Different modes of Industry Academia Interface adopted by various colleges

Modes of IAI interface	Percentage of respondents	
	YES	NO
Guest lectures by industry experts	75	25
Joint seminars by industry & academia for students	40	60
Industrial visits	85	15
Workshops & seminars by academia	70	30
Internships	55	45
Project Works for the students	100	0
Training programs according to industry requirements	50	50
Financial & infrastructural support by industry	30	70
Choosing Faculty with Industry Experience	37	63
Outsourcing the subject to industry persons	30	70

It is to be noted from the table-2 that majority of the colleges are adopting project works (100%), industrial visits (85%), guest lectures (75%), Workshops & seminars (70%) as their usual modes of interface with the industry. It is also observed that only few (30%) colleges have Financial & infrastructural support by industry. Outsourcing of the subject to the industry persons is done by only 30% of the colleges and the colleges that conduct seminars in collaboration with industry are of 40%, An average number of colleges are recruiting the faculty with industry (37%), they are allowing the students to do internship (55%) and organizing training programs according to industry requirements (50%). So the most active forms of interaction are the Project works which the students have to carry as a part of their curriculum, guest lectures by industry experts, who come to the students to share the real time experiences and finally the Workshops & seminars. From observation of the active modes of the interaction of the colleges and the industry it was evident that, guest lectures , workshops and seminars had good results as many colleges are not going for expedition of project works and industrial visits.

Further the respondents were asked to give rating on a five point Likert scale (as 1- strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 -neither or nor, 4 - agree and 5- strongly agree) about their perception of benefits of each mode of Industry-Academia interface. Based upon the responses under the study, mean values are calculated and the ranks are allotted. Table-3 gives the brief summary of the results.

Table 3. Student's perception about the benefits from modes of Industry –Academia interface

Modes of Industry –Academia interface	Mean Value	Rank
Guest lectures by industry experts	4.30	3
Inclusion of industry experts in syllabus designing	4.21	4
Joint seminars by industry & academia for students	3.98	7
Industrial visits	4.65	1
Workshops & seminars by academia	3.90	9
Internships	3.94	8
Project Works for the students	4.18	5
Research & Consultancy projects	3.58	12
Training programs according to industry requirements	4.49	2
Financial & infrastructural support by industry	4.09	6
Choosing Faculty with Industry Experience	3.85	10
Outsourcing the subject to industry persons	3.85	10

When noticed the mean score for the various modes adopted, it is above 3 which indicates that the respondents perceive all these modes to be fetching some or the other benefits. According to the results the order (rank) of most preferred modes i.e., the modes from which the students expect more benefits are Industrial visits (1), Training programs according to industry requirements (2), Guest lectures by industry experts (3), Inclusion of industry experts in syllabus designing (4), Project Works for the students(5) and Financial & infrastructural support by industry (6) as all of these have mean score above 4 indicating that the respondents strongly agree that these modes fetch awesome benefits. The second set of modes is the ones which have mean score below 4 inferring that they are just preferred interfaces i.e., students perceive these modes to be fetching little less benefits than the others. They are Joint seminars by industry & academia for students (7), Internships (8), Workshops & seminars by academia (9), Choosing Faculty with Industry Experience (10), Outsourcing the subject to industry persons (10) and Research & Consultancy projects(12). Though the students perceive the first set of modes to be more beneficial from the previous discussion it was evident that the students of only few colleges are fortunate enough to enjoy such benefits and more over majority of the colleges are not really paying attention to the increasing importance of the various modes of Academia-Industry Interface. It is still ambiguous if this relation is really giving fruitful results or only a superficial in nature.

CONCLUSION

The study can be concluded saying that the Industry-Academia Interface enhances the overall teaching-learning experience as the majority of the students perceive this interface to be of growing importance. The active modes of the interface are the Project works which the students have to carry as a part of their curriculum, guest lectures by industry experts, who come to the students to share the real time experiences and finally the Workshops & seminars. Though the students perceive various modes to be giving some or the other benefits, it is inferred from the study that the interface between the industries –academia in University affiliated colleges which are offering management education is very weak. The colleges need to examine the effectiveness of the various modes of the interface so that

synergistic and organic relationship can be built between the academia and industry and all the actors to the interface i.e., the faculty, students and the industry get benefited thereof.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Management of CBIT, Dr. B. Chennakesava Rao, principal, CBIT, the department of School of Management Studies, my family members friends and last but not the least the students who helped me in accomplishing the work successfully.

REFERENCES

1. Amit Seth (2012) "AIMA -industry-academia panel discussions" <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/manav-rachna-aima-organise-industry-academia-panel-discussions/451280/>
2. Beard C., (1994) "Educating the star fleet captin-making business schools more relevant to their stakeholders:", Working paper, University of Paisley, June 1994.
3. Byrne J.A, (1991) "Back to School", Business Week, October 1991, pp 94-9-39.
4. Bisoux Tricia (2003), "B-Schools with Global Perspective", Bized September/ October 2003, AACSB Publication pp 28-39.
5. Elliot, C.J., Goodwin J.S & Goodwin J.C., (1194) "MBA programmes and business needs: is there a mismatch?" Business Horizins, July-August 1994, pp 55-60.
6. Ghosh Debabrata, Deepak Bhatnagar, Jancy A, Neeraj Saxena and S k Muneshwar (2007). Innovative mechanism to improve effectiveness of technical education – A case study of mission mode approach in India, Retrieved from www.indianjournal.com on Oct 10, 2009.
7. Miller C. (July 1993), "MBA programs revised to meet leaner demands of business", Marketing News, American Marketing Association, pp 1-19.
8. Modi Sanjay (July 04, 2009). The task of shaping skills & employability, The Financial Express, July 04, 2009. Retrieved from www.finacialexpress.com/news/the-task-of-shaping-skills-&-employability/484760 on Oct 09, 2009
9. Montgomery, C. and Michael E. Porter, eds (1991). Strategy: Seeking and securing competitive advantage, Boston: Harvard business school publishing.
10. Partners. K, "Industry – Academia Convergence. Bridging the Skill Gap", FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry), NMIMS, Mumbai, March23rd,2006.http://www.ficcihen.com/Knowledge_Paper_Industry___Academia_Convergence_Bridging_t%85.pdf
11. Patil, M. R. and Popker, T. M. (1998). Business education: Emerging challenges, The Indian journal of commerce, Vol 51 – No.
12. Premchand Palety (Sun, Feb 08 2009) "Good industry interface critical for B-schools" <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/gDPkyBxWVCIEoVJ5RJFQiM/Good-industry-interface-critical-for-Bschools.html>
13. Rao S.L. & Bowondor B. (2004), "Management Education in India, its evolution and some contemporary issues", Research paper published by All India Management Education.

14. Rizvi I.A & Popli S. (2002), “Models of Excellence in Business”, Chapter 7, edited book by Institute of Directors.
15. SenGupta A.K , and Parekh V, “Excellence in Higher Education in India: Way Forward”, Journal of Emerging Knowledge on Emerging Markets, Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp.
16. Smith, L. and Tamer, S. (1984). "Marketing planning for colleges and universities", Long range planning, 17 (6), 104-117.
17. Sutliff, K. (2000). Integrating Academics and Industry: A Challenge for Both Sides. ACM Journal of Computer Documentation, 24(1), February 2000, 33-38.
18. Vinay K. Nangia, Cashmira Pramanik, “Towards An Integrated Model for Academia Industry Interface in India”, World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology 49 2011, pp 333-342