

Developing Professionalism in Business Education

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Abstract

Profession is an economic domain in which an individual enjoys high amount of expertise in the shape of knowledge, skill, autonomy, ethics and moral uprightness. While as, business education refers an education system that deals with business trade, commerce and industry. More specifically, it is a form of education that educates, trains a learner about the conceptual, theoretical and practical aspects of the domain and enables him to apply such knowledge for his individual, societal and corporate benefits . Accordingly, it has emerged a most cherished branch of education among all the stakeholders mainly from student's sense. Consequent upon, it is overwhelmingly demanded, the business education has to produce more competent and visionary professional degree holders to meet the needs of business and corporate houses. Nevertheless, the argument is raised that business education today is largely delivered on conventional lines and lacks the over all professional touch and approach. This results in production of army of business education degree holders who prove worthless in the real world and competitive labour market. Therefore, to improve the relevance, utility ,employability of the degree holders of business education , the study advocates that there is a strong need to develop the business education on professional lines .And accordingly ,the paper suggests the appropriate methodology for developing the professionalism in business education .

Key words. Professionalism , Business Education, Competitiveness

Introduction

Business education is overwhelmingly viewed an education system that deals with teaching system and training of students concepts and theories of business and management education and their practical application in the real organizational and business life. Factually, today a vast number of the students are opting for business education all across the Globe and the number of business schools offering such education is increasing at spectacular pace. The panorama has give the birth to many ills and odds associated with business education. Consequent upon undeserving students are jumping into business education and many ineffective and non professional business schools have emerged on the seen. Consistent to this Mehraj (2010) observed that every third student after 10+2+3 seriously evaluates the option of choosing business education irrespective of his/her acceptable grade. Similarly, Astin (1997) indicated that business schools proliferated during a time when there were numerous unresolved questions about the role of business and corporations in society as well as un- certainty about their willingness to include broader social objective in their education. Accordingly, business schools attempted to tape quantitative market benefits at the cost of delivery of quality business education. Therefore, today grave concern is raised that business schools have virtually belied the expectations of its stakeholders and have failed to come up to the expectations of the students community and as result needs planned and well managed overhaul. A growing concern is raised that business graduates lack critical thinking and moral reasoning in their work behavior and pattern, therefore majority of them prove no longer effective human resource for

their organizations. Globally business schools are witnessing the wrath of business community and general public that their graduate have unsucceeded to deal with the financial crises and ethical social disorder. Therefore to tide over these fallacies of the business education, it is significantly held that business graduates overwhelmingly lack professionalism in their education and knowledge basket. Therefore, to orient business graduates professionalism in their education, this paper sits on the judgment that business education need to be transmitted and taught significantly on professional lines to make them more competent, reliable and ethical.

Literature Review

Professionalism is somewhat a slippery concept and is wide in scope and explanation. The past research of Freidson (1985) has indicated that professionalism is a vivid ability in an individual about his profession that he/she belongs. It is adherence to the professional benchmarks and standards say Astin (1997); Goris (2003). Profession is an economic domain in which an individual has number of precursors of professionalism, including professional expertise, and autonomy, prudence or social trustee and moral uprightness or moral code of conduct (Mehraj, 2014). These precursors are the indicative of professional attitude that business students should possess as they graduate from college and enter their professional careers. Professional expertise here means the knowledge and skill of business graduate. It may include both discipline and inter-disciplinary knowledge. The research of Basi and Vanburean (1997) has indicated that business graduates more often desire to have expert knowledge so that they are recognized by the colleagues. The professional knowledge is an inclusive concept. It indicates the micro level understanding and comprehensive comprehending of

specialized domain. In the context of business education professional knowledge encompass the knowledge of the core subjects of specialized discipline along with its allied and other associated subjects (See the Appendix NO: I). while the other indicator of professional expertise include skill. It refers the art, ability and compatibility that an individual has to deal varied situations, problems etc. Here in business education, the concept of skill is quiet broad. It means how best a business graduate is able to manage typical situation and arrive with a viable solutions for complex issues besides understanding ramifications of each situation. Moreover, it include critical thinking, communication skill and above all team building skill (Freidson, 1985). The next precursors of professionalism encompass professional Autonomy (Basi and Vanburean 1997) means liberty and total freedom to act independently on issues that are connected with professional domain. It deals with developing professional judgment based on professional knowledge and understanding. Further, the precursors prudence indicates rationality and acting with an impartial approach and understanding. It includes maintaining equity and parity between people and groups within organizations and beyond. Moreover, the other precursors the moral uprightness or moral code of conduct means upholding professional tenets and laws with high amount of devotion, loyalty, reliability ethics and values(See the Appendix NO: II) .

The earlier research (Anderson and Byerly) 2002 has emphasized that institutions engaged with teaching and learning of different courses including law, medicine, engineering, business, accounting, advertising, architecture etc have a consistent goal to disseminate professional education. Therefore, the present universities has other option but provide professional education if their desire is to survive in the present competitive environment

(Astin 1997; Goris , 2003). They opine that university should focus on all the elements like autonomy of judgment, desire for expertise, self concept, and social agency. Similarly, Knox (1997) attempted to hint that structural and attitudinal facets are very significant and affect the professional standards. While as, Knox (1997) examined professional values like feeling of superiority, job autonomy, empathic support, expertise, self confidence, societal role and impact and viewed they determine professional acumen of an individual.

Objectives

The study was undertaken to attain the following objectives

1. To study professional level and acumen of the business graduates
2. To study the factors for effective or adverse professional level or acumen of business graduates
3. To suggest the appropriate model for business education to produce professional business graduates.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study is confined to business education with reference to Business Graduates of the State of Jammu and Kashmir

Nature of the Study

The study is descriptive by nature

Hypothesis

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0)** = The business graduates significantly lack professional acumen and ability
2. **Null Hypothesis (H_0)** = The business education is significantly delivered on conventional lines and lack professional footing.

Research Methodology

The study is significantly based on primary data which was collected from the employers of about 150 business graduates working with various employers in different organization in Kashmir division including communication service companies, financial service organizations, insurance companies, State and Central government departments besides some private organizations. For this purposes systematic random sampling approach was adopted. The data was collected from the sample respondents by administering a questionnaire spread over 32 items/variable covering under seven broad dimensions. These dimensions were chosen from the literature review and as per the need of the study after holding discussion with the experts in the field. The data collected was tabulated, analyzed to draw meaningful results and conclusion.

Moreover, course curriculum of business education of select institutions was examined to study its merit in building professional acumen of business graduates of such institutions. In the light of conclusion of primary data and study of course curriculum an appropriate model for business education was developed to inculcate professionalism among the business graduates in the State.

Analysis and Discussion

Professionalism in business education is more or less a huge casualty. This is largely attributed to number of factors and reasons. Therefore, to underline such factors a field level survey was undertaken wherein about 150 sample respondents (employers) were selected to report about professional acumen of business graduates. The profile of sample respondents is as under.

Table No : 1

Profile of Sample Respondents (Employers)

S.NO	Employer/ Organizations	Percentage
1	Communication Companies	30.00 (15)
2	Financial Service Companies	40.00 (60)
3	Government Companies	10.00 (15)
4	Private and other organizations	20.00 (30)
5	Total	100.00 (150)

4. Figures in brackets refer the number of sample respondents

Indicators of Professionalism

Professional indicators are the elements on the basis of which a profession is identified and acknowledged. In the context of the business education, a professional business graduate should possess the basic and core indicators to prove effective for the organization and society as well. Accordingly on the basis literature review and subject matter of the domain the main indicators of professional for business graduates identified for this study include knowledge, skill, social trustee, moral uprightness, tolerance, autonomy and pro-activeness. The visibility of these indicators among business graduates lead to their professional maturity and development. Nevertheless, in reality the picture is somewhat quiet different at ground level as can be seen in the following table.

Table : NO 2

Descriptive Statistics and Parametric Statistics of Professional Indicators in Business Graduates (Employers Perception)

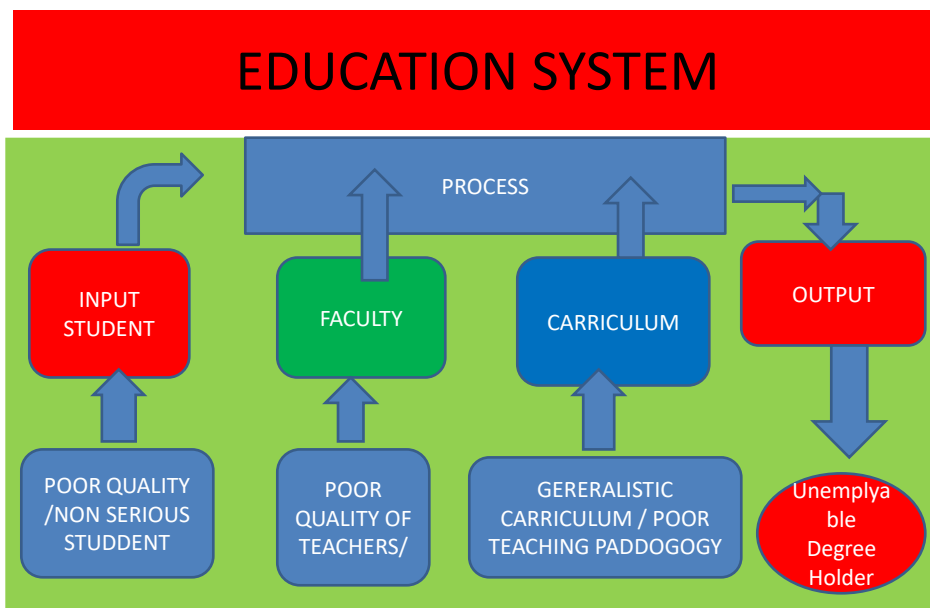
S.NO	Statement	Mean	St. Dev	Z test	Sig	Result
1	Knowledge	2.45	1.23	4.24	0.12	H ₀ Accepted

2	Skill	2.64	2.34	1.45	0.23	H ₀ Accepted
3	Social trustee	2.00	1.24	2.56	0.08	H ₀ Accepted
4	Moral uprightness	1.47	1.22	3.68	0.10	H ₀ Accepted
5	Tolerance	1.38	0.22	1.22	0.23	H ₀ Accepted
6	Autonomy Proactivity	2.76	1.25	1.34	0.14	H ₀ Accepted

Majority of the sample respondents have extremely low mean value of professional ability with tolerance and moral uprightness being the most adversely absent among the business graduates. This implies that sample respondents observe that business graduate are no longer holding the basic indicators which are necessarily required for their successful service span. The parametric statistics clearly support the fact that business graduates significantly lack most of professional qualities as the null hypothesis is accepted for all indicators implying that professional inability business graduates is quiet visible. The past research of (Astin, 1997) has confirmed similar findings. These professional bottlenecks lead to professional immaturity and thus is responsible for un-employability of business graduates.

Understandably, professional immaturity is the outcome of many factors and causes. The past research has shown that there are number of factors responsible for the professional immaturity among the business graduates. They include some faulty areas in the overall education system like poor student intake, poor standard of faculty and of course the sub standard curriculum. In this context, the earlier research of (Meraj and

Bhat, 2008) has revealed that students who otherwise do not deserve to be management graduate have obtained business education degrees from institutions which do not add anything to their overall knowledge and personality development. Consequent upon such students utterly fail even to bag a very low level job in the real competitive market.



Moreover, there are other sticky areas that significantly contribute to the professional immaturity of the business graduates. They include extremely low standard of faculty who teach business graduates. The past research has show that faculty associated with the teaching of business graduates overwhelmingly lack both knowledge and skill and are not exposed to practical operation of business and industry. They significantly are not well trained and experienced and more often than not do not link their subjects to

real life situations of business etc. Moreover, many business schools do not have required teaching faculty to teach the students.

Besides the two human factors, there is other third factor curriculum responsible for creating low professionalism in business education. In most of the business schools, the quality of curriculum is significantly poor and is not as per the needs of market. The past research has revealed that business schools do not update and revise their course curriculum as per the market demands but prefer to continue with the existing one (Mehraj and Bhat 2008)

Methodology for Developing Professionalism in Business Education

Professionalism in business education refers to developing expert, competent, independent, ethical and humanistic business graduates who can prove effective and valuable workforce for any organization or for their self enterprise. Understandably, professionalism does not emerge among the business graduates overnight. It takes some time to inculcate this form of spirit among the business graduates in their post academic life.. However, the seeds of the professionalism need to be sown among the students of business education during the course of their education. Accordingly, this paper offers a valuable methodology for the same. The methodology is spread over the following three important components :

- Specialized Curriculum based Approach
- Quality Student and Faculty Based Approach
- Value Based Approach

These three methodological components are discussed hereunder

Specialization curriculum Based Approach

The specialization curriculum based approach deals with developing the professional knowledge and skill among the graduates of business education. It attempts to impart a comprehensive doze of knowledge in an exclusive specialized area of the course to enable a degree holder to understand and get well versed about the micro and macro aspects of the specialized area. As per this approach, student pursuing business education should select a particular specialization domain at the inception of his degree course (Like Finance, Human Resources Management, Marketing Management, Information Technology, Operations Management etc) and accordingly must comprehend all the subjects pertaining to domain. Here, it is pertinent to mention that overwhelmingly in business schools generalistic degrees are imparted rather than specialist degrees as a result, pass out graduates seldom to act as true professional business graduates. This approach will give students full exposure in the specialized area and may considerably develop in them a great deal of knowledge, skill and overall professional footing as can be seen in the following two pictures.

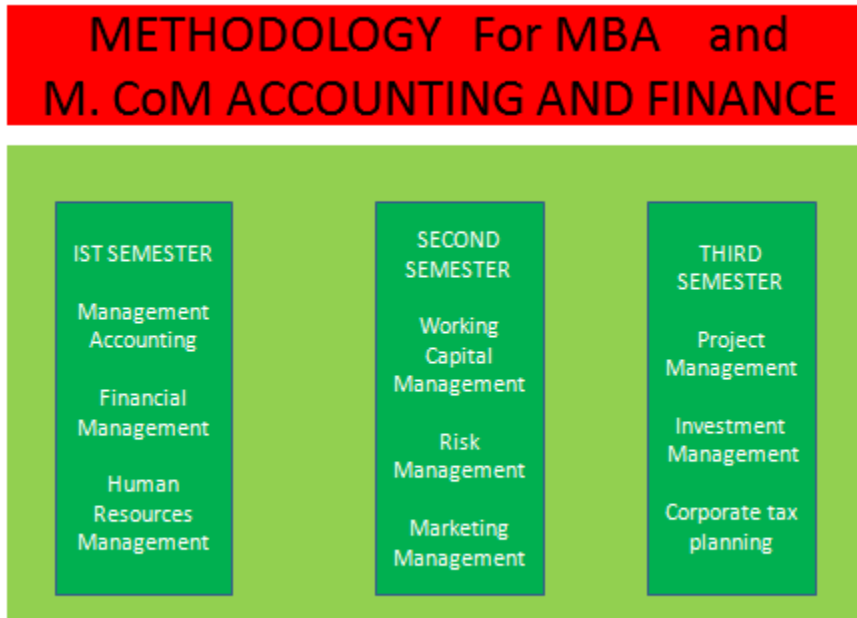
METHODOLOGY For B.CoM ACCOUNTING



Student and Faculty Based Approach

Student and faculty are the core inputs in education process. No education system can function without these two basic factor inputs. It is seriously observed that quality of students and faculty which enter into business education process is overwhelmingly poor and usually are not up to the mark and needs of its stakeholders (Mehraj and Bhat 2010). The research () has established that nowadays more and more students are becoming crazy for management education in view of its lucrative employment emoluments and high professional mobility. This panorama drives even more ordinary and un-deserving students towards the course and has led the proliferation of business schools. Consequent upon the low quality input of students coupled with certain weak quality benchmarks set by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi and respective institutions for opting such education, the undeserving and non serious

students get easy through in business education thereby leads to the total deterioration of professionalism



Along with students, the quality of faculty that business schools usually employ is very poor and of sub standard level. The research has confirmed that teaching is not a primary choice for the most of competent and efficient individuals but rather a last resort. As a result, the people who join as faculty in business schools do not find them themselves there by convection but by compulsion. Therefore such faculty usually more often fails to come up as true human resources for business schools. Thus the situation calls for identifying, employing, developing and retaining competent teachers for business schools which can be seen as the brand individuals in their area of domain.

Value Based Approach

This approach emphasizes that the students of business education be groomed to live and practice a value based life within and outside their professional life. They should be made to understand, trained and taught the core competence of human values and their virtues for successful professional and non professional life. For this purpose the students must be exposed to various real life case problems inside and outside the class. The value based life principles include tolerance, ethics, empathy, moral uprightness, and above all social trustiness.

Conclusion

Business education degree holders need to be made more market oriented by developing their professional abilities in the core areas of curriculum based on the scheme of comprehensive specialization besides to inculcate in them an attitude of tolerance, empathy and ethics. Otherwise, the mismatch or gulf between the industry needs and what business schools produce would widen and ultimately may raise questions to the basic existence of business schools.

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