

Influence of leadership styles: A case study on select Indian B-Schools

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Abstract

Indian B-Schools are facing stiff competition and struggling to sustain their positions in terms of their Ranking, as many of the agencies are doing their Study Analysis with a scientific approach. Transparency is becoming the order of the day for B-School administration is concerned. The managements of B-Schools are also bringing in International culture in terms of Organizational structure by introducing Executive Directors and Deans, but the Leadership qualities among them are varying for development of the Institutions. Qualified Academic and Administrative Heads who possess rich experience with a proven track record, may not be in a position to make a shift in business when they come to a different Institution. Always there will be a debate on “Academic Freedom” in any Institute offering the autonomous Programs. In this article, the authors have taken six private B-Schools as a case study, based on their consistency in the top ranks in a specific survey over three years and discussed on issues and challenges of Input, Process and Output of a B-School. It was observed that Leadership has very important role in bringing the Institutions to top level, as two of these six Institutions acquired International Accreditation – AACSB and all of them are on top on the parameters (a) Input - Student Quality, Teacher Quality and Engagement; (b) Process – Living, and Learning; and (c) Output – Placement, Research and Alumni.

Keywords: B-School, Leadership, Management Education, B-School Ranking.

Introduction

About Management Education in India

Management Education in India has taken twists and turns in last six decades. Andhra University, Visakhapatnam started its Management Department in India as the first public University to offer MBA degrees with more on knowledge dissemination to students. MBA degree is offered by the Universities but the game changed when PGDM was introduced. The first generation of IIMs (Calcutta, Ahmedabad and Bangalore) along with Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI, Jamshedpur) and Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management (IISWBM, Kolkata) started their Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) Programs in order to give practical exposure in addition to knowledge sharing.

Due to LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) in late eighties and early nineties, Technical Education, mainly, Engineering and Management Programs were offered by several Institutions without having even the basic facilities. B-Schools mushroomed and regulatory authorities were unable to control the market. When quality took a back-seat, Input (Intake of students), Process (Teaching & Learning) and Output (Placements) affected the Performance of B-Schools as a whole. When a larger number of private institutions entered the scene to offering PGDM program in past three decades, the real and competitive business started, as focus shifted mainly to Placements. All public universities gave approvals to offer the MBA courses by their affiliated colleges. Private and Autonomous Institutions took advantage of the situation and offered a variety of PGDM courses and sectoral programs to attract more students.

While the economy of the country got opened, more and better job opportunities pushed the B-Schools for larger enrolment of students in last two decades. There were situations where it was not very clear on how many Institutions were offering different types of Management Programs in India, sometimes with or without necessary approvals and resources.

Environmental changes like, Governmental Policies, Revised Norms laid down by Regulatory Authorities, Media intervention through B-School Rankings, flourishing of Coaching Centers and their influence, introduction of Technology Platforms, Accreditations by domestic and global Organizations, Middlemen acting as Admission Agents, etc., brought in cut-throat competition. With primary concern on Return on Investment (ROI), managements of B-Schools resorted to ‘cost-cutting’ instead of on ‘developmental activities’. Employee Loyalty diminished and Faculty Attrition increased in B-Schools. Assurance of Contemporary Curriculum, Research and Case Study Teaching/Writing etc., has taken a beating. Institutions are depending more on outsiders’ opinions (Key Performance Indicators) rather than insiders’ view point, which created dissatisfaction among the employees – both teaching and non-teaching, who are among the key stakeholders.

The following Tables (Table-1 and Table-2) give information on various aspects like number of Institutions, their student enrolments, Fees charged and Placement Status, along with Pay offers, etc., from Recruiters that differentiate the Tier-I B-Schools from others:

Table 1: Research Report on the Survey conducted by CRISIL– 2014

Category	No. (in %)	Enrolment (in %)	Fees (Average, in Rs. Lakhs)	No. of Students Placed (in %)	Pay Offered (Average CTC in Rs. Lakhs)
Tier-I (Top B-Schools)	1	95-100	12-15	98-100	9 +
Tier-II	10	80-95	8-12	80-98	5-9
Tier-III	52	70-80	5-8	60-80	3-5
Tier-IV	37	0-70	0-5	0-60	0-3

Table 2: Status of B-Schools and Intake (source: AICTE website)

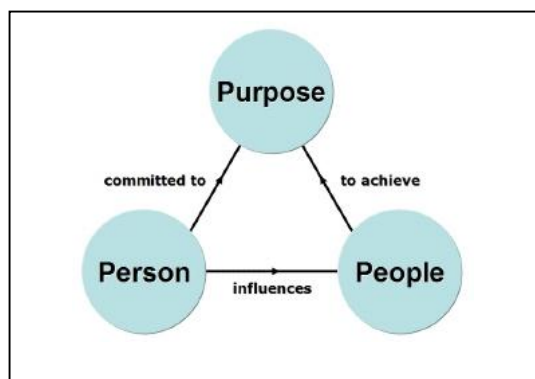
Year	No. of B-Schools	Status of B-Schools	MBA Intake	Status of Intake
2013-14	3364	-107	354421	+5052
2012-13	3471	-70	349369	14504
2011-12	3541	+72	334865	6808
2010-11	3469	+179	328057	16928
2009-10	3290	+170	311129	16077
2008-09	3120	+205	295052	19386
2007-08	2915	+301	275666	28465

The above information also raises doubts about the sustainability of some B-Schools, as these lower tier B-Schools may slowly disappear in long-term when they cannot withstand competition and offer high quality education and services. Government was also not very keen for regulating such a mushrooming business till some major issues cropped up like abnormal fees, lack of quality in teaching, increase in un-employability, etc., which reflected on poor enrolment as well as moderate placements of MBA students.

This information also creates interest on how the top B-Schools are able to sustain in this competitive environment and what types of leadership styles prevail at these B-Schools for their development and growth.

About Leadership

A leader is "a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal". A mnemonic for this definition would be 3P's - Person, People and Purpose as given below:



History on Leadership

A Chinese General, Sun Tau, wrote the "Art of War" in the 6th Century BC. It may be the first book on Leadership – specifically leadership in war. The "Great Man Theory" emerged in the early 1900's and suggested that great leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Julius Caesar and Mahatma Gandhi were born to lead. In the 1930's, social scientist explored "Group Theory" and how leadership emerges and develops in small groups.

During the 1940-50's, studies were conducted to see which traits were inherited and common among great leaders. This ideology was called "Trait Theory". It is similar to "Great Man Theory". "Behaviour Theory" which came about in the 1950's – 60's and focused on what key behaviours resulted in leadership. This revolution reflected a shift in thinking since it focused on actions of leaders, not traits and attributes.

In the 1960's – 70's, "Contingency Theory" was born as leadership studies looked at which behaviours succeeded in specific situations. From 1980's and beyond, there have been numerous studies into what interaction of traits, behaviours, and situations prompts people to lead organizations to excellence.

Theories of Leadership

The following are the defined theories of leadership:

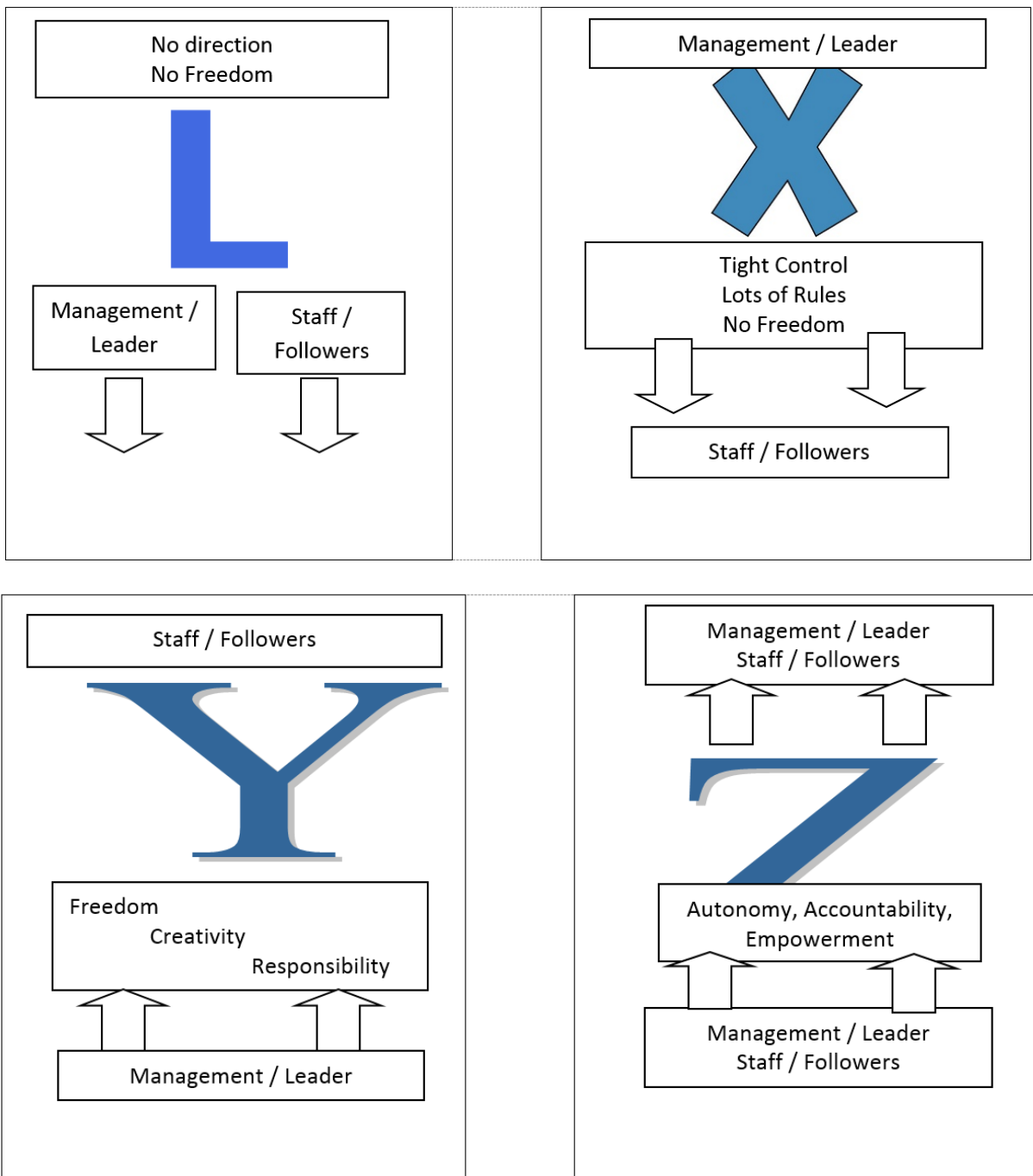
1. Theory L: "Missing Management"
2. Theory X: "My Way or The Highway"
3. Theory Y: "Country Club"
4. Theory Z: "Good Manager"

It is evident that the output of the Theories of Leadership is as follows:

Benevolent Leader (Y)	Team Leader (Z)
Laissez – faire Leader (L)	Autocratic Leader (X)

The following pictorial representation indicates input, process and output of the above theories:

Pictorial Representation



Each one will lead to a different result as outcome. Theory L leads to low productivity, Theory X leads job stress, low satisfaction, and unions' formation, Theory Y leads low achievement and good people leave the organization, and Theory Z results high productivity, cooperation, low turnover, employee commitment.

Institutions should work to make a shift in the Theories of Leadership and the Practices, to get a better mileage in terms of the desired output.

Leadership Styles:

When a leader follows any of the above theories, the way the leader uses these theories into action makes the leadership styles which are as follows:

1. Autocratic –dictatorial way the leader/management wants to function
2. Bureaucratic – more of bossism with self-importance
3. Democratic – independent with more freedom
4. Coercive – using force to persuade people to do things that they are unwilling to do
5. Transactional – an interaction of an individual with one or more persons, especially as influenced by their assumed relational roles
6. Transformational – able to produce a big change or improvement in a situation
7. Laissez-Faire – non-interfering, lenient, untroubled and laid-back

Leadership Practices in Indian B-Schools

B-Schools are Management Institutions which put in practice of Teaching, Training, Research, Administration and Consultancy in managing the Institutions with the support of Students, Faculty and Industry. Managing the Management Institutions is always a challenging job and leadership of these B-Schools make them to attain a position in terms of their Branding.

Even though the abovementioned leadership styles prevail in most of the Indian B-Schools, basically due to the Socio-Economic and Demographic culture at the three phases of any B-School – Top Management (mainly the promoters), Administrators (Executive Directors/Deans) and Faculty (Academics), the cross-cultural issues will vary and make a resultant effect either positive or negative for development of the B-Schools.

In some B-Schools, the Promoters drive the activities by adopting a specific type of Leadership. In others, the Promoters identify right Administrators who drive the activities as per the desired way of the Promoters' style of leadership. The Administrators in some cases, drive the activities by pushing the Faculty members. Accordingly, the student learning will result in and hence we find some B-Schools move to the top and the rest remain stagnant as average performers.

Review of Literature

The authors have done a Literature Survey to understand the Leadership Styles in B-Schools.

Green, Ronald F. and Spritzer, Allan D (2002) ^[1] suggested that Business school leaders are faced with a myriad of challenges as they lead their organizations. Particularly challenged are new Deans who must learn to cope with the rigors associated with the delivery of higher education today. The purpose of his paper was to share the insights of a number of successful business Deans with regard to their views on what every new Dean should know about being the Dean. The paper reports the results of a content analysis of videotaped interviews with twenty-eight business Deans and provided insights into what these Deans felt to be the essence of effective business school leadership. K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2002) ^[6] studied on how Indian B-Schools operate by focusing on the leadership aspects at the three nodes: Student, B-School and Recruiting Company. It was indicated that these nodes are the vertices of a Bermuda Triangle. Any unprofessional leadership aspects either by a Recruiting Company or a B-School or by the Student may lead to "collapse" or "disappearance" of the vertex from the scene. K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2003a) ^[7] developed a Case Study on Change of Leadership in a hypothetical Indian B-School. It was mentioned in the case on how the type of Leadership style makes the change in the environment of B-Schools and reflects its culture as one style is more on the academic rigour and second one is focused on the traditions and the culture and questions which one is good or bad for the growth of a B-School. K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2003b) ^[8] questioned that whether there is a place for Indian B-Schools in the Global Village as the practices and leadership styles are not professional and create hurdles due to globalization.

I.M. Pandey (2004) ^[3] analyzed on the governance of Higher Education Institutions in India with a focus on the leadership styles in Indian B-Schools.

K.S. Srinivasa Rao and Chowdari Prasad (2005) ^[13] studied on management of Indian B-Schools in the Global Context by

giving four pillars model for their development. The authors mentioned that leadership is one of the key aspects in globalization.

K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2008) ^[10] identified various Issues and Challenges of Indian Management Education and how the cross-functional leadership at the B-Schools in India is facing such problems.

K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2009) ^[11] pointed out various Management Practices in Indian Management Institutes. It was focused on the cultural challenges within the Promoters, Administrators, Faculty and Students, if Institutions are able to attract talent across boundaries within the country and abroad.

K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2010) ^[12] pointed out the need for leader and co-leader for Indian B-Schools. It was mentioned that the succession planning in Indian B-Schools are not professionally managed. A comparison was given as an analogue that in Indian B-Schools the leader and co-leader behave like Mother-In-Law and Daughter-In-Law (Saas vs. Bahu) and Institutions develop only if they conduct like a Mother and Daughter.

Jamuna A.S. and K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2013) ^[4] studied on the role of communication and its impact on developing the leadership qualities among Management Students and how it makes their Professional Life a better one. Howard Thomas, Peter Lorange, and Jagdish Sheth (2013) ^[2] focused on various aspects of development of B-Schools and how leadership plays an important role in the Twenty-First Century to make them competitive globally.

Jamuna A.S. and K.S. Srinivasa Rao (2014) ^[5, 15] analysed on various Leadership Qualities among the B-School Students and how these qualities can be inculcated in students through the cross-cultural environment of B-Schools. K.S. Srinivasa Rao, Chowdari Prasad and Jamuna A.S. (2014) ^[5, 15] analysed on autonomy in Higher Education and questioned that whether it will be a boon or bane as the freedom given by the system in terms of Assessment and Grading may lead to downfall of the Institutions. They proposed Relative Grading System in assessment of B-School Students. They also indicated that either the promoters or the administrators of B-Schools and their leadership styles are key aspects in these autonomous Institutions' growth or downfall.

K.S. Srinivasa Rao and Chowdari Prasad (2015) ^[14-15] indicated the importance of Big Data in managing business competitiveness among B-Schools in India. They have taken Case Study of a B-School and used various tools of Data Analytics to predict the future behaviour in terms of Ranking of a B-School. It was mentioned that leaders of B-Schools should be tech-savvy to deploy these analytics for understanding them.

Methodology

In India, Management Institutions are operating at different levels. Level-1 is Institutions controlled by Government like IIMs, Management Departments of IITs, Institutions like IIFT, IISc, NIFM, IIPM, IIFM, etc. Level-2 is Deemed Universities offering MBA Program and Affiliated colleges working under State Universities. Level-3 is Autonomous Institutions which are offering PGDM Programs.

The authors have considered the Level-3 Institutions only where there is a scope for the effect of Leadership on development of the organizations which can be measured by means of several parameters that are normally used while the agencies do ranking of B-Schools. Interestingly, these agencies

change the parameters of assessment every year due to various reasons - either influenced by the competitors or may be due to market demands. A B-School ranked by one agency in top 10 in a year may appear in a lower rank in the survey by another Agency in the same year even when the parameters are almost similar. Public always doubts about the genuineness of these rankings, even though numbers are lucrative but sometimes misleading. Out of several ranking agencies, the authors found that Careers360 from Pathfinder Publishing Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, India, maintained consistency in the assessment parameters while measuring B-Schools for three consecutive years. Hence, the authors have taken data for years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 on three parameters – Input, Process and Output. The parameters were well explained by the Agency as Input - Student Quality, Teacher Quality and Engagement; Process – Living, and Learning; and Output – Placement (Maximum Salary, ROI, Minimum Salary), Research and Alumni.

As the number of B-Schools coming into the top positions is like a Birth and Death Stochastic Process, the authors considered a closed model which takes those institutes that are consistently performing well in all three years of the study period. Hence, the authors have not considered Institutions like IMI and SP Jain, even though they have done well otherwise during the study period but consistency was not maintained. Interestingly, of the six select B-Schools, two each are located in North, South and Eastern regions, while West is not represented.

These six select Private B-schools are analyzed as a case study by collecting more information from their respective Institutional Websites. Some details about these B-schools are given in Annexure-I.

Table 3: Top Private B-Schools in year 2015-16

Rank 2015-16	Institute	Input (125)	Process (100)	Output (275)	Total (500)
1	XLRI – Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur	97.73	95.2	159.64	352.57
2	Management Development Institute, Gurgaon	88.63	90.8	153.06	332.49
3	TA Pai Management Institute, Manipal	89.25	92.7	111.00	292.95
4	Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai	86.44	79.0	127.22	292.66
5	Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad	87.79	78.4	125.05	291.24
6	Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar	82.71	85.5	113.69	281.90

Source: B-School Careers360.Com

Table 4: Top Private B-Schools in year 2014-15

2014-15 Rank	Name of the institute	Input (125)	Process (100)	Output (275)	Total (500)
1	Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur	117.36	94.00	154.68	366.04
2	Management Development Institute, Gurgaon	111.30	98.00	152.92	362.22
3	<u>Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad</u>	110.60	86.00	117.25	313.85
4	TA Pai Management Institute, Manipal	93.27	99.00	116.89	309.16
5	Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar	100.15	86.00	121.22	307.37
6	Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai	94.09	89.00	124.17	307.26

Source: B-School Careers360.Com

Table 5: Top Private B-Schools in year 2013-14

2013-14 Rank(*)	Name of the institute	Input (125)	Process (100)	Output (275)	Total (500)
1	Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur	118.40	77.78	194.58	390.76
2	Management Development Institute, Gurgaon	111.93	94.44	173.15	379.52
3	<u>Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad</u>	91.17	88.89	157.57	337.63
4	TA Pai Management Institute, Manipal	91.82	100.00	116.41	308.23
5	Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar	84.84	88.89	128.01	301.74
6	Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai	82.51	83.33	129.54	295.38

Source: B-School Careers360.Com

(*) Note: for the year 2013-14, the input (110), Process (90) and the Output (300) was considered and hence the figures were taken on proportion for comparison

It is observed from the above three tables that the total score for the top B-Schools is gradually decreasing during the observation period for various reasons such as faculty attrition,

student intake policy, varying market conditions for placements, etc.

Analysis

Average of parameters for the three years of study period was taken and arranged in the order of total scores as follows:

Table 6: Rank order of Top Private B-Schools based on the parameters

Average Rank	Name of the institute	Input (125)	Process (100)	Output (275)	Total (500)
1	Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur	111.16	88.99	169.63	369.78
2	Management Development Institute, Gurgaon	103.95	94.41	159.71	358.07
3	Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad	96.52	84.43	133.29	314.24
4	TA Pai Management Institute, Manipal	91.45	97.23	114.77	303.45
5	Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai	87.68	83.78	126.98	298.44
6	Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar	89.23	86.80	83.08	259.11

It was observed that an Institute which got highest score under ‘Process’ was positioned at “No.4” only based on total performance.

Table 7: Correlation Matrix of the Parameters

Correlation Matrix	Input (125)	Process (100)	Output (275)	Total (500)
Input (125)	1			
Process (100)	0.2	1		
Output (275)	0.9	0.2	1	
Total (500)	0.9	0.3	1.0	1

Interestingly, from the correlation matrix, it was evident that Input and Process are not correlated and similarly, Process and Output are also not correlated.

Also, it was observed that both Input and Output are highly correlated with Total scores.

Observations

It is observed that age of the Institution seem to be playing a prominent role in achieving a better ranking, which may be due to long term existence with stability and offering a bouquet of programs successfully with a better control of systems in place. Background of the Founders was from diverse areas like Political, Professional / Educational, Institutional, Industrialist, Religious Organization, Local State Government, etc., which might have had a strong influence on the successful offering of programs and delivery of the promises to the student community of Management Education.

Even though the role of Director of a B-School is ideally the first point of contact for academic and administrative issues, frequent changing of the person in the position by the managements or allowing the position vacant for longer periods, seem to have seriously hampered smooth functioning, thus affecting the top-rankings year over year. Some Institutions are managing the show through “In-charge” or ‘Officiating’ for such important positions due to various reasons. Such a situation prevailed at one or two of the B-Schools under this study too.

Conclusions

When we focus on a B-School, each and every aspect is important. Managements of B-Schools are focusing on various levels, competing with their peers and struggling for survival for some times.

When we focus on Input, it is a mix of (a) Student Quality, (b) Teacher Quality and (c) Engagement.

Institutions mainly depend on Advertisements or other methods of publicity to attract the Students and use services of Counselors and Tele-callers or Middlemen by offering incentives. Some Institutions have no Admissions Committee nor is the Admissions Policy, as filling up the seats itself is a serious problem. In case of B-School Rankings, agencies expect the rejection applicant over total applications as one of the parameters for quality Input. Every Institute is making their net ready to catch fish almost 6 months ahead of completion of the Qualifying exams by the students – i.e. in October month, as they may doubt that otherwise students will be joining other competitor Institutions. For some good Institutions, more revenue will be generated by selling the Applications Forms itself.

Finding and retaining a well-qualified Faculty member in a good B-School is a problem. Due to various issues and challenges connected to organizational dynamics, Qualified, Experienced and Quality Faculty will be shifting between Institutions, to gain some marginal benefits. On the other hand, B-Schools are not spending sufficient funds on their Staff Developmental activities compared to the budgets allotment to media and publicity in terms of Brand Building. How many Institutions can proudly announce that these are the faculty associated with an Institute and are instrumental for the growth of the Institute for the given year? On the other hand, in some Institutes, faculty are also not very keen to take any higher responsibilities, as it may lead to some problems later and hence they also play a safe game. The Management of any B-School is doubting that if they invest on faculty now in terms of Faculty Development, but if the faculty moves out to other Institutions subsequently, it will be a loss of Investment.

As a basic principle of HR, Engagement of students with right design of the courses and schedule is a challenge to the Institute and also the same way, engaging the Faculty with the right

courses and activities is also a big problem to the B-School managements. A dissatisfied Student / Faculty / Alumni gives a bad publicity even by word of mouth, will severely affect the Ranking of a B-School.

All faculty expect “great” students to come to their classes without understanding that students also expect vice-versa i.e., “great” teachers to come and teach them in classes.

When we focus on Process, it is a combination of (a) Living Environment and (b) Learning environment.

Majority of the B-Schools, even though they publicize more about the Infrastructure, a student once joins, will find lot many issues with reference to the Living Environment. This can be the Hostel facilities or Classroom facilities or the other Amenities in Library or Computer Lab required for the academic activities.

In some Institutions the “Assurance of Learning” is not taken very seriously. Students sometimes get an opinion that “internal” marks are their right to get full and hence they won’t exhibit their full talents. How many Institutions are having their policies that are based on the Semester performance, the promotion to the next semester is to be reviewed rather than making it as an automatic promotion to next semesters? Good Premier B-Schools, instead of taking attendance, the assessment will be counted on the day’s Classroom Participation. Faculty are asking the students to submit the Assignments, but very few of them check the Quality of the submissions. Faculty always criticize about student’s malpractices in terms of plagiarism while submitting Assignments / Reports etc. but very few Faculty take stringent action and communicated the same across the entire student community, so that others never enter into such issues later.

How many Institutions are taking Student Feedback on Faculty seriously and initiating remedial actions on the same?

When we concentrate on Output, it is a portfolio of (a) Placement (in terms of Maximum Salary, ROI, and Minimum Salary), (b) Research, and (c) Alumni.

All B-Schools face music to the end result – “Placement” and use lucrative statistics to please others in terms of Maximum Salary, Median Salary and Minimum Salary by projecting the good companies visiting for Campus Placement. Majority of the Placement Coordinators will engage the external agency to develop soft skills in last two months, just before Placement season starts. Very few Institutions are doing the Complete Personality Development activities for the students spread across the two years period in order to prepare students job ready for Campus Placements.

In some B-Schools, faculty will have a full teaching workload and due to which they are unable to work on any Research Publications. Even if they attend any conferences to present their research papers, it’s another issue as attracting good number of Participants to the Conferences is becoming a big problem to B-Schools. Impact Factor is becoming a buzz word and Research Journals are struggling for their sustenance and ensuring quality.

If any Institute is claiming about their long innings, it should have its Alumni Database at that multiplicative level, but B-Schools are unable to have a grip on their own “old Students” who are becoming Alumni. This is mainly because, Alumni are not satisfied customers when they were as students in the B-Schools. Contrary to this, IIMs/IITs will have a strong network of Alumni expanding their Chapters at different cities.

Interestingly, one can learn very good lessons from the above 6 B-Schools given in Table-6. One Institute has got its AACSB Quality Accreditation long back and one Institute recently got the same. This speaks about the Indian B-Schools meeting the International Standards by taking the regional and national competition in a rough climate of B-School Management. Three of the Institutions are mainly named after their Training Programs that cater to Corporate and this will become their USP in terms of revenue model as also Industry Interface. Two of the Institutions are popular in terms of Contemporary Programs and Courses they offer which attract majority of the students.

As a conclusion, any B-School in India in order to withstand the competition, the Management of the B-School should have a clear understanding about the type of Leadership they are interested to operate with, the amount of freedom that they can give to their Administrators, the priority they can give to Input, Process and Output that makes the B-School in to a better position in terms of Ranking by any Agency. One can go through the websites of all the Six B-Schools to get a clear understanding about various aspects of activities these B-schools are operating and hence are able to lead in the industry. Also, by studying the profiles of these Institutions, one can understand the role of Leadership in influencing the growth of the Institution. Autonomous B-Schools should follow the “Theory Z” and promote the Institutions by motivating the internal Teams.

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