

Synopsis

Research Topic

Expectations and Experiences of Corporate India on the
Essential Business Communication Skills of B-school Campus
Recruits – A Gap Analysis

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Introduction:

The topic for my research is “Expectations and Experiences of Corporate India on the Essential Business Communication Skills of B-school Campus Recruits – A Gap Analysis“

The research work is based on the exploratory study of Business Communication skills of B-school graduates from the point of view of corporate requirement. In this study dynamics of Business Communication was understood with the help of extensive literature review and then identified the essential business communication skills with help of Expert panel (Senior Professionals from the corporate India).The scale was developed to measure the gap between the expectations and experiences of corporate India for the identified essential business communication skills. The corporate viewpoint has been taken for the B-school campus recruits (India) on the identified essential attributes of business communication with the help of questionnaire. The collected information was analysed to find out the gaps between the corporate expectations and B-school graduates skill set in respect to Business Communication. To understand why such identified gaps exist, Business communication syllabus and teaching methodology of sample B-schools were explored. This study will suggest the gaps to all the stakeholders of business communication subject and help them in developing a improvised syllabus and pedagogy of the subject so that students can be equipped with the required skills and meet the corporate expectations.

Rationale: The prime responsibility of the B-school is to train their management students as per the corporate requirement. Corporate also recruits management graduates through campus selection. While recruiting corporate know about the fact that they will have train and mould these campus recruits as per their specific requirement but they anticipate that these management graduates must be trained in some basic managerial skills. Business communication is one of those basic managerial skills and perhaps that is the reason why, business communication is an integral and a compulsory subject in every B-school in India. The study aims to identify whether the business communication skills of b-school campus recruits are as per the expectations of corporate or if there is any gap between the corporate expectations and experience.

Justification: The study is based on the perception that there are gaps between corporate expectations and B-school graduates skill sets with reference to the Business Communication. In this study gaps shall be identified and suggest the possible ways to overcome them.

Importance: The study will give the required understanding on Business Communication as a subject and will emphasize on its importance in contemporary business environment. The outcome of the study will be beneficial for all the stakeholders like B-schools, subject faculty, students & corporate executives. This study will help B-schools and business communication subject faculty to design the subject curriculum which is as per the requirement of corporate India, help students in developing essential business communication skills and Corporate India will get benefitted by getting resources who are skilled in Business communication

What is Business Communication?

Communication needs to be effective in business as it is the essence of management. The basic functions of management - Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing and Controlling cannot be performed well without effective communication. Business communication involves constant flow of information and it is goal oriented.

If communication is a process by which people interactively create, sustain and manage meaning” (D&Z, p 2), Business Communication is Competent communication: both effective (achieving goal) and appropriate (follow social expectation). Business Communication is the sharing of information related to business activities and their results. “It is the exchange of business related ideas and information to achieve the organizational goals.”

According to Professor W.H. Meaning, “The exchange of ideas, news and views in connection with business among the related parties is called Business Communication.”

According to Mr. Brennan, “Business Communication is the expression, channelling and interchanging of ideas in commerce and industry.”

Prof. J. Haste opines, “Communication occurred between two or more businessmen for organizing and administering business efficiently is called business communication

Business Communication Operational Definition:

Business communication is used to promote products, services and organizations and to communicate with all the stakeholders of the business. It is the appropriate communication in the business environment with an objective to achieve the organizational goals.

Communication Theories

Business communication skills are an extension of the basic communication skills. A professional must develop and understand the dynamics of communication related to the business environment. To acquire business communication skills it is important that the communication theories must be understood clearly from the context of business requirements. The related communication theories include,

Theories of Intrapersonal Communication
Theories of Persuasion Communication

Theories of Leadership Communication
Theories of Interpersonal Communication

Theory of Mediated Communication
Theories of Group Communication

Theories of Culture
Theories of Organizational Communication

Five Factor Model of Personality

Based on the above communication theories, theoretical framework for business communication was developed.

Literature Review:

Importance of Business Communication

Raina & Pande state that there is no denying of the fact that effective communication is at the root of virtually all success which mandates that even engineers, scientists and technocrats need to translate their work into understandable communications so that it can be applied outside their own level of expertise. [Raina R. & Pande N. (2012)]

In the business world, good communication is not only important for the daily operation of the company, but can also affect sales and profitability. Without good business communication, the internal and external structure of a business can face numerous challenges that can ultimately lead to its demise. [<http://smallbusiness.chron.com>]

Bennis describes skills of a leader as four management competencies. Central to each of these competencies is effective communication. They are as below:

1>Management of Attention: describes how leaders encapsulate a vision, which other people are able to endorse and buy into as their own

2>Management of Meaning: Ability to communicate clearly and successfully

3>Management of Trust: It binds the followers and leaders together

4>Management of Self: Is what gives leader credibility [Bennis, W and Nanus, B (1985)]

Communication: A necessary leadership skill

In fact this is not something which has been realized only now. Importance of right communication skills was emphasized long ago. In the ancient times, the famous king maker Kautilya had also put lot of emphasis on communication skills (verbal and non verbal) for the leaders. According to Kautilya, an ideal leader is one who has the highest qualities of leadership, intellect, energy and personal attributes. Kautilya says the potential exists within the person, however appropriate training is required to develop it further. A man attains greatness by its merits, not simply by occupying an exalted seat. [Nitishastra]

Kautilya's teaching holds very true for the modern management. Even in today's world we can see superior communication skills in political leaders, business leaders and modern day management gurus. Some top of the mind leaders with distinct communication skills include our current Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, Anna Hazare, Dhru Bhai Ambani, Ratan Tata, Narayan Murthy, Shiv Khera, Deepak Chopra etc. We also have numerous examples wherein people have suffered with their position because of their impact less communication skills.

Challenges of Business World:

Perception gaps between the leader and follower de-motivate the follower, impair the business relationship between them and reduce the business performance of both. There are two gaps in perception. The first is between the conscious intent of the leader and the manifestation of that intent. Key causes are stress, subconscious intent or poor communication by the leader. The second gap is between manifestation of intent by the leader and the impact on the follower. The causes here are the environment in which the

communication occurs and the poor listening skills or mind-set of the follower. [Rupert Eales-White, (2004)]

The extent to which the use and evaluation of information provided by the management, at the start and throughout the implementation of the organizational change, correlates with perceived positive and negative responses regarding the organizational change among survivors.[Paul Nelissen, Martine van Selm, (2008)]

Areas of essential learning for the new entrant in the corporate world:

1. **Life skills** - The skills of living together, of social interactions, of relating actions and consequences, of understanding and managing money, of problem-solving and creative thinking, of value judgments, of future planning, of reasoning.

2. **Work skills** - These are the skills required to perform and to grow in one's chosen occupation and will be gained in various ways – experience, apprenticeship, trainee schemes, attachment and in today's environment, if one is to be successful this learning must be continuous.

3. **The workplace** -This is the area of the unknown which one enters with a measure of uncertainty. Obviously there is much to learn but it is suggested that there are things which can and should be learned before appointment, regardless of the occupation. Consider, for instance: the structure of organizations and their interactions; the meaning and the management of money in business including the components of profit and loss in the corporate, the public sector, and small business (in general terms); defining the market and its dominance; business relationships and goodwill; teamwork with purpose and direction; the nature of competition; the communication process; the significance of “If you can't measure you can't manage”; and the need to build personal stepping stones.[Gordon Rabey, (2008)]

4. **Communication skills** – spoken, written, computer; an ability to meet defined standards of quantity, quality, cost, completion, and time keeping; interpersonal skills – a team player; good public relationships; acceptance of appropriate authority; initiative – a self-starter; a sense of purpose and direction; problem solving skills, constructive thinking; and show whether one is job hunting or career seeking[Gordon Rabey, (2008)]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Research work are as below:

- To identify factors and their attributes affecting Business Communication
- To identify the essential attributes of Business Communication skills from the corporate perspective
- To find out the expectations and experience of corporate executives for the identified attributes of business communication skills of B-school campus recruits
- To analyse the pedagogy and syllabus related issues of the Business Communication
- To evaluate the gaps between corporate expectations and experience , if any

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research work is based on the exploratory study of Essential Business Communication skills of B-school graduates from the point of view of corporate requirement. The research technique is the blend of Quantitative and Qualitative approaches.

RESEARCH WORK

Based on the research objectives, the work has been divided in three phases and they are as below,

Phase 1: Identification of factors and their attributes affecting Business Communication and find out essential attributes of Business Communication skills from the corporate perspective

Phase 2: Identification of expectations and experiences of corporate executives of major campus recruiter companies for the identified attributes of business communication skills of B-school campus recruits through a questionnaire derived from Business Communication Assessment Scale

Phase 3: Quantitative Analysis of the data collected

Qualitative Analysis of pedagogy and syllabus of the Business Communication for the identified B-schools and evaluate the gaps between corporate expectations and experiences, if any

PHASE 1

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

With the help of extensive review of communication theories and literature on the subject, attempted to gain a deep insight into Business Communication and its dimensions. Business Communication can be said to incorporate the following eight critical skills:

1. Written Communication
2. Oral Communication
3. Listening Skills
4. Non Verbal Communication
5. Reading Skills
6. Communication Technology
7. Ethical and Cultural Diversity
8. Personality

1. **Written Communication:** Written means of business communication includes - agenda, reports, manuals etc. Effective writing involves careful choice of words, their organization in correct order in sentences formation as well as cohesive composition of sentences. Written Communication helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for running of an organization. (<http://www.managementstudyguide.com>)

2. **Oral Communication** - Oral communication implies speeches, presentations, meetings, discussions, conferences, interviews etc. – be it face to face or remote. Oral Communication is generally recommended where a direct interaction is required.

3. **Listening Skills**– Listening is not same as hearing; it involves the process of selecting, attending, understanding and remembering [Beebe S & Beebe S. (1991)]. Listening is a significant part of communication process. Communication cannot take place until and unless a message is heard and retained thoroughly and positively by the receivers/listeners. Effective listening promotes organizational relationships, encourages product delivery and innovation, as well as helps organization to deal with the diversity in employees and customers it serves.

4. **Reading Skills** - Reading correctly is as important as Writing. In day to day Business, it is required to read mails, memos, letters etc. and respond to them. Poor reading skills increase the time it takes to absorb and react in workplace. Active reading is asking questions while reading using recall techniques, structure, annotation and summarizing.

5. **Non Verbal Communication skills**- It is communication of feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body movements / gestures / eye contact, etc. Body language is the strongest signal we emit at all times, without even realizing it.[Mitra.B(2011)] According to Burgoon and Saine, nonverbal communication is defined as the “Attributes or actions of humans, other than the use of words themselves, which have socially shared meaning, are intentionally sent or interpreted as intentional, are consciously sent or consciously received, and have the potential for feedback from the receiver.”[Burgoon,J.K. &Saine ,T.(1978)]

6. **Communication Technology**-In early times, business communication was limited to paper-work, telephone calls, etc. But now with advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, e-mails and satellite communication to support business communication. Networked computer systems, like the internet, intranet and extranets are the enabling platforms that support communication (Swati.S, 2006). Internet, email, cell phones and blackberries have made it easy to work from home.

7. **Ethical and Cultural Diversity** - Increased and improved communication in today’s internet age has led to intercultural communication. People talk and communicate across states, cultures, and / or religion. While technology has made communication faster and easier, it is important that intercultural communication is handled with a lot of sensitivity.

8. **Personality** -Physical appearance always contributes towards how people perceive a person. Neatly combed hair, ironed clothes and a lively smile will always carry more weight than words. Confidence and a positive approach are very helpful in effective communication. Nervousness and over excitement lead to stammering and ineffective communication. One should learn to keep control on self-emotions and be very careful about what is being said and how it is said.

From all these above factors which affect business communication, 68 attributes were identified.

IDENTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS FROM CORPORATE PERSPECTIVE:

To identify the essential business communication skills for the corporate world constituted an expert panel of corporate executives to identify most important attributes from the identified list of factors and their attributes affecting Business Communication. This Expert Panel consists of 30 senior corporate executives who were having more than 15 years of experience in different industry segments. While identifying the panel members it was made sure that they belong to diversified industries (like banking, non-banking financial services, consultancy, IT, IT enabled services, Service, Hospitality, FMCG, and Consumer Durables etc.) and have diversified work domain. Expert panel members were requested to give their point of view about factors and their attributes affecting Business Communication without considering the industry or work area they are in and rate those attributes from the general management perspective.

EXPERT PANEL ANALYSIS

Each panel member was personally explained the purpose of the survey and approach adopted. The relevant factors and attributes of Business Communication were shared with them and requested them to categorize each attribute as Critical, Important, Desirable or Not relevant. Only those attributes were ratified which were categorized as Critical or important by more than 60% of panel members (i.e. 18 panel members).

Essential attributes affecting Business Communication selected by expert panel:

S. No.	Skill	Attribute
1	Written communication	Using correct English grammar
2	Written communication	Using correct sentence structure
3	Written communication	Completeness of communication
4	Written communication	Being precise /accurate in quoting figures
5	Written communication	Etiquettes for email writing
6	Written communication	Having lucidity (clarity) of thought and ideas
7	Written communication	Being affable and courteous while writing
8	Written communication	Writing Reports
9	Oral Communication	Giving individual oral presentation
10	Oral Communication	Using correct pronunciation
11	Oral Communication	Using effective interpersonal skills
12	Oral Communication	Style of communication
13	Oral Communication	Participating in meetings
14	Oral Communication	Closing conversation (those lead to nowhere) politely

15	Oral Communication	Clarity of thought while speaking
16	Oral Communication	Using correct grammar while speaking
17	Oral Communication	Analytical and organized
18	Oral Communication	Telephone etiquettes
19	Oral Communication	Using appropriate wordings
20	Oral Communication	Using precise / crisp sentences
21	Oral Communication	Negotiation skills
22	Oral Communication	Resolving conflicts
23	Listening Skills	Ability to understand the discussion
24	Listening Skills	Ability to understand the instructions
25	Listening Skills	Attentive listening
26	Listening Skills	Amicable listener
27	Reading Skills	Ability to read between the lines
28	Reading Skills	Analytical skills
29	Non verbal communication	Facial expression
30	Non verbal communication	Body language
31	Non verbal communication	Eye contact with the audience
32	Technology	Using work related software packages like word , excel, PowerPoint etc.
33	Technology	Using Email
34	Technology	Using Internet/Web
35	Technology	Using audio visual aids for making presentations
36	Ethical and cultural diversity	Recognizing discriminating languages
37	Ethical and cultural diversity	Knowledge about International / cross cultural communication issues
38	Personality	Professional etiquettes and mannerism
39	Personality	Dressing sense
40	Personality	Emotional maturity /emotional intelligence
41	Personality	Being courteous

PHASE 2:

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT SCALE

BCA scale is developed to assess the business communication skills of management graduates in the corporate environment of India. The scale consists of 41 essential business communication attributes identified in phase. BCA scale measures the gap between expectations and experiences of the respective corporate Supervisors/ Mentor for the essential business communication skills of their candidate.

How the Scale Works:Scale is developed on the identified 41 essential attributes of business communication. We can consider that the supervisor is aware about the specific business communication requirement pertaining to the organization. In this scale the supervisor is supposed to mention his / her expectation on each mentioned business communication attribute and his / her experience (Actual/Observed level) with the concerned candidate. In the scale, Expectation and Experience both have 4 point ratings.

Expectation			
Critical	Important	Desirable	Not Relevant
4	3	2	1

Experience			
Strongly	Satisfactorily	Less than Satisfactorily	Not at all
4	3	2	1

Upon comparing the Expectation and Experience, the scale would identify whether the gap exists or not and if gap exists then what are potential areas of improvement. The ratings can be compared and observed by any of the below mentioned approach,

- a) Statistical Tool (SPSS)
- b) MS Excel
- c) Self Observation

Based on this scale, a questionnaire was developed which was used to collect data for the research.

HYPOTHESES

There are 8 identified factors affecting business communication thus 8 null hypotheses were developed.

They are as below,

H₀₁: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Written Communication

H₀₂: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Oral Communication

H₀₃: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Listening Skills

H₀₄: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Reading Skills

H₀₅: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Non Verbal Communication

H₀₆: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect

to use of Technology in communication

H₀₇: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Ethical & Cultural Diversity in communication

H₀₈: There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Personality

SAMPLE DESIGN:

To understand the corporate expectations and their experience on the business communication skills of B-school campus recruits, 90 companies were identified, who are actively involved in campus recruitment all across India. The companies were identified after referring to the past 3 years campus recruitment data(Economic Times Article-2011,2012 and 2013)

A questionnaire was sent to the Human Resource (HR) Managers of all those companies wherein the purpose of this study was explained in detail and they were requested to forward the questionnaire to the concerned corporate executive/trainer/mentor (who works directly with fresh B-school recruits) for their inputs. Responses were received from 331 executives of 48 companies

SAMPLE SIZE JUSTIFICATION

Response received from 48 companies out of the considered universe of 90 companies (more than 50% response rate). The response rate of more than 50 percent is adequate to carry out the analysis. Questionnaire has 41 questions and data collected from 331 executives. Thus ratio between variables and responses is more than 8 times

Reference: The most widely used rule uses the ratio of the number of subjects (*N*) to the number of items (*p*), and this varies from three to 10 depending on authors (Cattell, 1978; Everitt, 1975; Gorsuch, 1983; Nunnaly, 1978)

PHASE 3

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:

In this phase the responses from corporate were analyzed through SPSS by conducting the t-Test (Paired sample) to find out the gap between the expectation of the corporate and business communication skills of B-school campus recruits

Table 1:T-Test (Paired Sample)Summary:

Factor	Mean		Mean Difference	Sig.(2 Tailed)	Remarks
	Corporate Expectation	Corporate Experience			
Written Communication	3.38	3.21	0.17	0.000	Null Hypothesis (H01)rejected
Oral Communication	3.22	3.08	0.14	0.001	Null Hypothesis (H02)rejected
Listening Skills	3.37	3.03	0.34	0.000	Null Hypothesis (H03)rejected

Reading Skills	3.06	2.84	0.22	0.000	Null Hypothesis (H04)rejected
Non Verbal Communication	3.23	3.10	0.13	0.002	Null Hypothesis (H05)rejected
Communication Technology	3.47	3.50	-0.03	0.397	Null Hypothesis (H06)Accepted
Ethical &Cultural	2.98	2.70	0.28	0.000	Null Hypothesis (H07)rejected
Personality	3.37	3.18	0.19	0.000	Null Hypothesis (H08)rejected

Reliability Test: To find out the reliability of the corporate responses Cronbach's alpha was determined.

Table 2: Reliability on Corporate Expectations

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Written Communication	0.728
Oral Communication	0.893
Listening Skills	0.727
Reading Skills	0.783
Non Verbal Communication	0.792
Communication Technology	0.854
Ethical & Cultural	0.868
Personality	0.712

Table 3:Reliability on Corporate Experience

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Written Communication	0.877
Oral Communication	0.944
Listening Skills	0.839
Reading Skills	0.795
Non Verbal Communication	0.861
Communication Technology	0.88
Ethical & Cultural	0.901
Personality	0.813

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Qualitative study has been conducted to examine the pedagogical issues related to the subject and implementation of various components of Business Communication through subject faculty interaction and syllabus study. The study has been conducted by three step approach

Step 1: Ranking of B-schools was referred and considered top 50 colleges for the study with the assumption that the campus recruitment happens mostly in these colleges. Further 5 colleges were elected from the ranking interval of 10 (Source: Business Today, B-school Rankings 2013).

Step 2: Interaction with Business Communication faculty of the identified sample B-schools to identify the pedagogical issues related to the subject by using a framework.

Step 3: In depth analysis of the Business Communication syllabus of identified B-schools to understand implementation of various components of Business Communication. Structuring Content analysis was used to evaluate the syllabus.

DATA ANALYSIS& INTERPRETATION

Based on the results of T-test, content analysis of business communication syllabus of identified B-schools and interaction with subject faculty, each factor affecting business communication has been evaluated. Please find below the analysis and interpretation using quantitative and qualitative approach:

1. Written Communication:

H₀₁ > There is no gap in the knowledge of management students and corporate expectations with respect to Written Communication

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.000 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on written communication of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for written communication expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly 1978)

Qualitative Analysis:

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis

Written communication is part of the syllabus in all the identified colleges. Students are provided with theoretical and practical aspect of written communication in one of the semester /term. Out of the identified sample of 5, only in one college the business communication subject in one of the semester is fully dedicated to written communication while in rest of colleges written communication is part of the subject wherein only few lecture/tutorials are allocated to improve writing skills.

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Subject faculty has pointed out that unlike yesteryears; these days' people give more emphasis on verbal communication rather than written communication. They further elaborated and said "Courtesy technology, people get lesser opportunities for writing as contact is made through face

to face interactions. That is the reason people are not skilled in written communication and they try to cover this with superior verbal communication skills.”

Certain suggestions which came from business communication faculty to improve the standard of writing skills are as below,

Written communication should be given more emphasis while designing the syllabus. There should be more practical classes (tutorials / labs) to improve this skill. There should be small groups (Not more than 15 students in each group) for practical classes so that the faculty can give individual attention to the students. Students do not take writing skills seriously so the faculty must emphasize and create the importance for written communication skills among students. Students are habitual of using short text/casual language in writing, which is not appropriate in professional environment. Corporate should also give their suggestions to improve the pedagogy and syllabus of written communication

2. Oral/Verbal Communication:

H₀₂> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Oral Communication

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.001 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Oral/Verbal communication of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for verbal communication expectations and experiences is greater than 0 .70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly (1978)

Qualitative Analysis

(A)Syllabus Content Analysis

It is observed that verbal communication is covered both theoretically and practically in all the B-school of the sample. Not only in Business communication subject but in other subjects also students get many opportunities for individual/group presentations and discussions and through them they get enough exposure to improve their verbal communication skills

(B)Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has stated that verbal communication is covered theoretically as well as practically. B-school environment provides lot of exposure to students for verbal communication in their two years course. Mostly students join B-schools with decent verbal communication skills and thereafter the interaction while teaching (Lectures/Presentations/Discussions) gives them required understanding and exposure on verbal communication.

During interaction, business communication faculty has shared certain observations/ suggestions to improve the verbal communication further and they are as below:

Mostly students speak in fluent English but they use casual approach while speaking. Students do not pay much attention on the usage of correct grammar. Students use slangs and modern vocabulary abruptly which may not be taken inappropriately in the corporate world. Such usage should be noticed and discouraged by

the faculty while teaching. Students realize that in the dynamic and work oriented corporate environment, people hardly bother about verbal communication mistakes and think that maybe it is “cool” to use casual language. Group size in the practical classes (Tutorial/Lab) should not be more than 15 students so that Faculty can pay individual attention and point out the mistakes of the students and emphasize on correct and appropriate use of language. It was also suggested that students presentation should be recorded to analyze the grammatical/punctuation mistakes that they make and the same should be improvised through mentoring and guidance.

3. Listening skills:

H₀₃> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Listening Skills

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.000 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Listening skills of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach’s alpha for Listening skills expectations and experiences is greater than 0 .70(Table 2&3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly (1978)

Qualitative Analysis

(A)Syllabus Content Analysis

Listening is very much part of the business communication syllabus in 4 out of 5 B-school samples but its emphasis is limited to only 1 lecture /Session. There are no labs/tutorials to improve the listening skills specifically. In one B-school, listening skills are not at all part of the syllabus

(B)Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has confirmed that the theoretical aspect of listening is emphasized in the subject syllabus. They further point out that students have enough exercise on listening skills while attending lectures/discussions on various subjects. As mostly teaching is done through delivering lectures, students have to be attentive listener to score good marks in exams/assessments and to participate in the class room (Class participation also carries certain weight age of marks in the faculty assessment).

They added that this exposure is sufficed to develop basic fundamental listening skills. However listening can be improved significantly if audio visual aids (specifically designed for improving listening skills), are used in tutorial/ lab classes. They also shared that it would be better if we use some scale to measure the reading skills of students.

4. Reading:

H₀₄> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Reading Skills

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.000 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Reading skills of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for Reading skills expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnally (1978))

Qualitative Analysis

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis

It is observed through structuring content analysis that Reading skills are not the part of the business communication syllabus in any B-school of the sample

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has pointed out that the students of the B-schools are at the post graduate level and they have well developed reading skills. They further added that reading skills are more to do with the analytical skills and students develop them as a part of the professional training. They have defended the exclusion of reading skills from the business communication syllabus by pointing out that the reading skills are particularly developed while reading case studies and case studies are a regular feature of almost all the management subjects. They further added that the gap in reading skills is mainly due to the casual approach of the B-school students.

5. Non Verbal Communication:

H₀₅> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Non Verbal Communication

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.002 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Listening skills of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for Non verbal skills expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnally (1978))

Qualitative Analysis

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis

Non-verbal skills are integral part of the syllabus and it is present in all the B-schools which were included in the sample. Nonverbal skills are explained theoretically and through practical classes also. Non verbal skills majorly include Kinesics.

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has agreed that non verbal communication is very important and students should give due importance to it. They further added that it is very critical for new joiners in the organization as their seniors are making a perception about them and body language and gesture influence the perception greatly.

They further pointed out that although non verbal communication is part of the syllabus but it is limited to only 2-3 sessions (Lecture & Tutorial). Considering the criticality of the topic it should have more content and more contact hours. Students tend to take this aspect of communication lightly and commit some obvious “don’ts” while dealing professionally. Content should also cover Vocalics, Haptics and Proxemics along with the Kinesics.

6. Communication Technology:

H₀₆> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to use of Technology in Communication

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.397 which is more than 0.05 (Table 1), thus Null hypothesis is accepted. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Technological skills of B-school campus recruits. The cronbach’s alpha for Communication Technology expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly (1978))

Qualitative Analysis

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis

It is observed that communication technology is not covered in the Business communication syllabus with much emphasis. Use of Internet is practiced only in one B-school of the sample. Mostly communication technology is present only to the extent of making good quality audio visual presentations.

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has agreed the importance of communication technology but students at this level are very much aware about the functioning of mentioned essential attributes. These attributes need not be covered along with the subject as students are already very well versed to the usage of technology. They further added that if they realize that there are students who are not familiar with these basic things, then they deal with them separately and make them learn, however there is no need to cover this in the syllabus.

7. Ethical & Cultural Diversity:

H₀₇> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to Ethical & Cultural Diversity

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.000 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Ethical & Cultural knowledge of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for Ethical and Cultural diversity expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly (1978)

Qualitative Analysis

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis:

This aspect of business communication is covered in only two B-schools as cross cultural communication wherein the emphasis on ethical and cultural diversity is limited to only one session. However in rest of the sample B-schools, it is not the part of syllabus

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has agreed the importance of understanding ethical and cultural diversity while communicating. They defended the non-inclusion of this particular topic by mentioning the limited contact hours that are allotted for this subject wherein they will have to cover many aspects of business communication. They further added that ethical and cultural diversity is emphasized in other behavioural subjects.

8. Personality:

H₀₈> There is no gap in the knowledge of Management students and corporate expectations with respect to the importance of good Personality

Quantitative Analysis

Interpretation: SPSS output shows that sig. (2 tailed) value is 0.000 (Table 1) which is less than 0.05, thus Null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between corporate expectation and experience on Personality traits of B-school campus recruits.

The cronbach's alpha for Personality expectations and experiences is greater than 0.70 (Table 2 & 3), which is acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly, 1978)

Qualitative Analysis

(A) Syllabus Content Analysis

The mentioned attributes of personality are concisely present in the syllabus of business communication. Out of the 5 B-schools considered in the sample, only in one B-school, Business Etiquettes was covered in the syllabus and in another one B-school Emotional Intelligence is covered as a subject. In one of the B-school business etiquettes are emphasized along with employment skills and not as a separate subject. However in all the B-schools of the sample, Business etiquettes and mannerism were emphasized along with appropriate body language and gestures during the non verbal communication sessions.

(B) Learning outcome through Faculty interaction

Faculty has pointed out that the Personality is not the direct part of the business communication but has agreed that good personality helps in making effective business communication. They further said in today's world where interpersonal communication is very critical to become a successful professional, having pleasant personality holds the key. They agreed that more emphasis can be given on personality development especially for the topics like emotional intelligence and professional etiquettes in the syllabus. They also stated that students can take this as a self-development exercise rather than just depending on syllabus or class room teaching. Faculty further added that mostly students know what the desired personality is in the professional world but they keep a very casual approach towards it and their slackness is more responsible for this gap in personality attributes.

Feedback/Observations of the Faculty:

Students lack seriousness: Faculty has shared that students take this subject lightly and give more emphasis towards their specialization subject. They perceive business communication as a side subject and have a very casual approach towards it. In spite of knowing the appropriate way of communication they choose to use casual communication.

Students who have work experience pay more attention towards the subject as they realize the fact that business communication is very important for success and growth no matter what is the specialization.

Group size for tutorial classes: Group size should not be more than 15-18 students for tutorial classes then only faculty can give individual attention to them.

Business Communication Subject in each semester/ Term: Business communication needs to be practiced and learn on continuous basis and that is why it is desirable that in every semester/term there should be a subject related to business communication. Also all communication subjects should be integrated rather than being treated individually.

Importance of the subject: Faculty must establish and create the importance of the subject in the very beginning of the course. Faculty should make the students realize the importance of having good communication skills. Faculty should also make the subject interesting and contemporary.

Feedback from the Corporate: It is very important that corporate share their feedback from B-school and suggest the area of improvement. Corporate executives should be invited to interact with the students and explain the importance of business communication.

Time slots for the Subject: Faculty has pointed out that usually while allotting the time slots business communication subjects take the back seat and better slots are assigned to the specialization subject. The business communication classes are arranged at such a time when students have a very limited attention.

Etiquettes and Mannerism: Faculty has stated that in the modern world students don't have the etiquettes and manners even at the personal level and this is reflected in their professional dealings. Students must be given adequate training on etiquettes and mannerism and this should be imbibed as an integral part of their life by continuous monitoring in the entire duration of their course / training.

CONCLUSION

The essential factors and their attributes of business communication skills for B-school graduates were identified and explored with reference to the expectations and experiences of corporate executives of major campus recruiter companies, subject faculty perspective and course curriculum. The quantitative and qualitative study has highlighted that gap exists in the skill level of B-school graduates in all the parameters of Business communication skills except in technological communication where students have the basic understanding and are not dependent on class room teaching to develop them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed that there are gaps between the skills sets of fresh management graduates and expectations of their superiors in all the considered aspects of business communication except technological communication. Since business communication is very critical for the management graduates from the corporate perspective, it is must to make substantial efforts to improve the skill set of student's and bridge the gap between their skills and corporate expectations. Below are few suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the business communication subject.

- Make subject contemporary and include more role plays / cases related to the business environment so that students can relate themselves with their future work place
- Invite guests from the industry to talk about the importance of the business communication in the professional environment
- Faculty must create the importance of the subject among students from the beginning of the course
- Business communication related subjects should be included in every semester/session of the course
- The pedagogy of the course should be more practical exercises based rather than theory based
- The subject faculty preferably should be having industry experience so that they can blend their own experiences in teaching and make the delivery more relevant and interesting

Research Papers

- 1) Verma,D.,Pande, N. (2013), "Exploratory Study Of Most Critical Business Communication Skills In Contemporary Corporate India", International Journal of Management & Information Technology(ISSN-2278-5612),Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 1101-1109.**Impact Factor 1.29**
- 2) Verma,D.(2013),"Communication-A Necessary Leadership Skill", Management Guru: Journal Of Management Research(ISSN-2319-2429), Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 95-101
- 3) Verma,D.,Pande, N. (2014), "An Exploratory Study Of the E-mail Writing Skills of B-School Campus Recruits In Contemporary Corporate India", LBS Journal of Management & Research (Print ISSN:0972-8031,Online ISSN: 0974-1852),Vol.12,No.1,Jan-June 2014,pp.01-05