Development of Creative Skills through Knowledge Management in B-Schools

Anil K S*
Shubha Muralidhar**

Abstract

In today's scenario, the industry is faced with challenging jobs, ever changing in their character, needing quick solutions. To solve these types of challenging tasks there is a necessity to learn and master creative thinking. The industry requires Human Resource (HR) which can solve such problems. The HR for industry is supplied by B-Schools which have to gear up towards the needs of the industry. Knowledge Management (KM) not only leads to competitive advantage but also helps in developing creative thinking. Thus, teaching of creativity in the B-Schools becomes a necessity. A few papers on creativity are reviewed. Some of the factors responsible for teaching creative thinking are identified and discussed. Faculty have to develop the creative thinking to cope with the industry. This paper highlights the introduction of knowledge creation in B-Schools and its growth. A simple example involving six institutions is considered wherein some effort in the creative thinking is adopted. There is a need for a paradigm shift for the top-level management to encourage creativity for the sustenance and growth of the institution.

Keywords: *Challenging Job, Creative Thinking, Knowledge Management, B-Schools, Human Resources.*

Introduction

Plenty of data that is available at present has to be converted into knowledge. Data collected is transformed into information and the knowledge so available is put to use in decision-making to sustain the competition. There are number of factors that contribute to the success of Knowledge Management projects. Society needs a knowledge-based education which ultimately leads to competitive advantage for the educational institution. The student acquires the knowledge from the time he joins the B-School and leaves with a degree. At present the industry is facing with challenging tasks, ever changing in its nature, need quick solution. The solutions for such difficult tasks require personnel who have learnt and mastered creative thinking. The human resource in the industry is provided by the graduates passing out of B-Schools. Thus B-Schools have found the necessity to introduce and grow the creative thinking in students. The faculty has to learn and master the creative thinking process by close association with the industry engaged in such activities. The top level management in the B-Schools, even to sustain has to encourage the faculty and students to get intensely involved in providing curriculum for the nourishment of creative thinking. Conducive atmosphere in the B-Schools are also required for the growth of creative thinking both at faculty and student levels. The present paper discusses the several factors which promote the creativity in B-Schools. As and when the graduates passing out of such B-Schools secure better employment with good pay packets, the B-Schools grow and branding with the B-Schools will also happen. B-Schools have to prepare the students to face the challenges during their tenure of work by solving many challenging problems. The creative thinking learnt in the B-School, will help them in solving such difficult problems.

Literature Review

Guiney and Petrides (2002) have dealt with how the data that is collected and how a framework can be

*Research Scholar, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), VTU Main Road, Jnana Sangama, Machhe, Belagavi - 590018, Karnataka, india. E-mail: anilks94@gmail.com
**Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration (MBA) B.M.S. College of Engineering (BMSCE), P. O. Box No. 1908, Bull Temple Road Bengaluru – 560019, India. E-mail: shubhamuralidhar.mba@bmsce.ac.in

made use of in transformation of data into useful information. Petrides and Nodine (2003) discuss that schools can teach the corporate world about balancing people, processes and technology in education. They also mention about the barriers to knowledge sharing and utilization. Basu and Sengupta (2008) talk about the knowledge being the driving force and provide a way to enhance knowledge management activities in creating a learning environment in B-School. The issues raised here are about quality and sustainability in the education sector and that the activity of knowledge management creates a learning environment in B-Schools. Hargreaves (1999) discusses about creating knowledge in B-Schools by examining the four elements namely-auditing, managing, validating and disseminating the knowledge that is so created and focus on problems that can be addressed to be promoted in B-Schools. Tahir, Ozay, Sumintono and Matzain (2013) talk about the knowledge created by Hargreaves can be implemented in B-Schools in exploring the faculty knowledge creation. Ghosh (2014) discusses about building the positioning of human creativity with context of B-Schools and how the development amongst the graduates are able to justify the requirement and the latest trends that are in the scenario for which a fishbone analysis is developed. Pillania (2008) talks about the India's knowledge economy where the B-Schools have lot of challenges faced and to fight the competition the knowledge management could be the best tool for B-Schools. Anil and Muralidhar (2018a) illustrates the need and benefits of knowledge management in B-Schools. Anil and Muralidhar (2018b) have also touched on Entrepreneurship education in B-Schools. Gurteen (1998) discusses about the link between the knowledge management and creativity along with the barriers in implementing the knowledge management process to achieve the creativity. Knowledge@Wharton (2014) mentions that there exist differences from one individual to another to be creative. If one trains oneself then there are methods to do and one can become creative. Creativity can be developed and so can be taught. The culture among corporates is no way less as they are hungry to have creative leaders. Clifford (2019) says that creativity has been existent for quite some time. E. Paul Torrance has dedicated his entire lifetime for creativity in education. The lack of creativity in present times is due to the traditional education systems. The author mentions several factors which foster creativity in classrooms. Rollo May states that "the process of bringing something new into the being is creativity, it brings out what we are aware, what was hidden earlier and points to a new life" (as cited by Creativity at Work, 2014). Davies (2014) says that in the twenty-first century class room creativity is a big deal, it is vital and happens to be a core aim of students as they recognize its need amongst B-Schools. The interest of creativity among the teachers, academics is partially driven with a belief that with the existing growth of the fast economy it is required to have a flexible mind set to accept the changes every now and then instead of always following the career path which is a traditional one. Covey (2012) mentions about the seven habits of highly creative people. Degraff (2015) says that B-Schools are designed to encourage critical thinking quantitatively in pricing the options, brand maps building and supply chain optimization. There are also the revolution of creativity happening with regards to cultural change and the business education functioning. Rowe (2017) says that creativity is an important factor which contributes to the enterprises success. For this reason, B-Schools have started adding courses and lessons on creativity and critical thinking in the curriculum as students come up with ideas to have their own startups. Woods and Menzies (2017) state that the need to be innovative and creative in MBA delivery was a challenge to the staff and the second challenge was in recruiting enough number of students for the programs. Harris (2008) says that for existence of organization managing human knowledge is an important dimension. Knowledge is the basis and Knowledge Management (KM) the concept. KM, though, has limitations, and it the concept of knowledge enabling is proposed. It is about creating knowledge by facilitating conversations, relationships and by sharing the local knowledge.

The literature briefly deals with conversion of data into knowledge and its use in the form of knowledge management in B-Schools. Knowledge management leads to competitive advantage for the B-Schools. The industry is facing with challenging tasks and requires such human resources who can solve such problems. Creative thinking is essential for solving such challenging tasks. Realizing this necessity B-Schools start teaching creative thinking to the students. Some of the factors responsible for teaching creative thinking are identified and shown in Figure 1. This paper discusses those factors and elaborates the working of knowledge creating school. This paper also deals with the link between knowledge management and creativity and also on enhancing creativity. A simple example is provided to illustrate the progress made in six institutions. This

paper deals with the development of creativity and innovation in the student of B-Schools.

Objectives of the Study

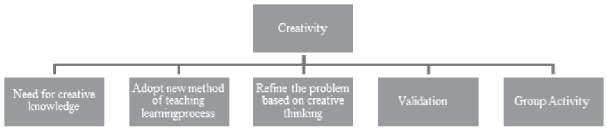
1. To find out the factors contributing to creative thinking at B-Schools.
2. To analyze the knowledge creating values for some selected B-Schools.

Research Methodology

The methodology consists of preparing a questionnaire based on the literature survey conducted. The questionnaire consists of several questions and the responses is expected to be in a 5-point Likert scale (5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree). The questionnaires are distributed to 80 faculty members in various institutions (management colleges and B-Schools). Management colleges are those which are a part of technical institutes under the umbrella of a university, while B-Schools are independently dealing with business and management studies. A little more than 50% of the faculty has responded.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1: Factors contributing to Creative Thinking at B-Schools



Source: Authors' Analysis

1. Need for Creative Knowledge

The present day industry is faced with non-routine and challenging jobs. Unlike in the past the personnel in the industry have to address challenging tasks in their day to day business. In order to solve the challenging jobs it is necessary for the industry personnel to think creatively. Graduates passing out from B-Schools have to be creative thinkers. Thus there is a need in the B-Schools to teach creativity and make the students to be well acquainted with this process. Needless to say that the faculty in B-Schools must be well versed in critical thinking and must have also solved some practical problems of industry. The students on the other hand must be motivated to be good critical thinkers. The top level management in B-Schools must be aware of the advantages of critical thinking in the industry and promote that culture in their B-Schools. Thus the student, faculty, top level management of B-School and industry contribute towards teaching, developing and use of creative thinking.

2. Adopt New Method of Teaching-learning Process

Sir William Bragg is quoted as saying "The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them". Bragg is of the opinion that this applies to business also. The knowledge and information that we normally have is enough but what we look for is a new way of thinking. The problem in achieving this is there are several barriers to overcome unless these are removed critical thinking will not develop. The first barrier is the traditional way of teaching. The curriculum has to be modified to introduce critical thinking. The other barriers are having a feeling of creativity not required and are of specialized nature too difficult to learn. The first thing the faculty has to teach that creativity is essential in the industry and thus provides more job opportunities. The faculty has to emphasize that creative thinking is not difficult to learn. The next barrier is self-judgment about the creativity which has to be inhibited. Another barrier to creativity is the fear of punishment for not completing the job in a given time. This barrier has to be removed from the policy of the top level management that creative thinkers are not going to be punished for incomplete jobs occasionally. The next serious barrier is overloading of information. The faculty has to incorporate steps in the curriculum to avoid the above said barriers.

3. Refine the Problem based on CreativeThinking

Creative thinking is a process of first understanding the given task and gather information. While looking for the solutions it is better to avoid borrowing the scripts and schemas already available. It is essential to avoid thinking soon, not allowing enough time to contemplate on the given task. Too many assumptions are not conducive for good solution. Creative thinking should also consider the audience for whom the task is performed.

4. Validation

The validation of the creative thinking is required in order to build confidence. Construct a point of view which matches the needs of the user. Allow a brainstorm so as to arrive at the creative solution which fulfills the needs of the user. If possible build up prototype and test the satisfaction of required conditions. Refer the prototype to the original user to get the feedback. If the feedback is not satisfactory modifications have to be carried out. The experts also invited to examine the suitability of creative solutions for a given task

5. Group Activities

A challenging task is taken up by the faculty to test the creative thinking so far developed. The faculty divides the students into number of groups and assigns the tasks. Sufficient time is allowed for all the groups to arrive at the creative solution. The evaluation of the creative solution is carried out by the invited experts who have sufficient experience in evaluation. From the results it can be observed that the successful group had inspiration in them and put in lot of best effort to achieve the success.

Top management can motivate the faculty members to energize the student community to create learning initiatives which in turn grooms the process in B-Schools. Faculty members can give exposure to communication channels and get response from students; they can invite professionals from industry to involve, design and create activities, projects and courses. The faculty can develop with specific plans for the development of creative thinking among B-School candidates. They are (Anil and Muralidhar, 2018a):

1. To upgrade with technology and put it to use.
2. During courses give exercises to students to develop creative thinking.
3. Industry collaboration by observing changes.
4. Foreign faculty collaboration to understand emerging trends.
5. With creative works develop research clusters.
6. Through interactions face-to-face, group discussions and interpersonal skills stress on cooperative learning.
7. For creative works recognize and encourage the merits.

Knowledge Creating B-School

The expectations of the students and faculties are on the rise, so what is demanding for them now is the change that is happening and moving into the knowledge society. Existing practices are getting outdated and the capacity to generate professional knowledge demands a knowledge-creating B-School. In a knowledge-creating B-School we should also provide opportunities for the students to learn the method of solving the challenging problem that they face during their tenure of work. Creativity and innovation will help the students to solve the challenging problems.

Creativity and Innovation in the B-School

Creativity is generation of new ideas and innovation zis the implementation of the idea. An ideal knowledge-creating B-School is one which can audit the school's professional knowledge; managing the process of creating new professional knowledge and validation and dissemination of the created knowledge.

The faculty members have to be at the heart of creating knowledge about effectiveness in teaching and learning and the researchers are able to get closer to them. Knowledge can be the outcome when faculties engage in the research. Top management support is essential to encourage and support faculty in acquiring knowledge and creating knowledge (Creativity at Work, 2014).

For knowledge creation in B-Schools the teachers have to be trained with research skills and to be a research practitioner; create opportunities to enhance knowledge of teachers as a part of learning and teaching process; build academic networks which enhance, validate and audit the teacher's knowledge; select mentors to share their experiences; and support teachers to share their idea and knowledge (Davies, 2014).

In today's institution, the two words of business are innovation and creativity. There is a constant pressure to come up with new processes in this fast changing times and quick changes are happening, all these make a path for creativity and innovation at the workplace. With such changes comes the role of B-Schools to create future managers to align with changes in environment. A different mindset is needed for long-term growth and sustainability. Students and faculty are exposed to out-of-the-box thinking, paving the way for knowledge sharing among industry and academia along with competitiveness and work place innovation. The gap can be bridged by the institutions converting data

and information into knowledge and intelligence. This would mean improvement at individual, organizational level and societal level at large.

In order to sustain uncertainty and complexity the academicians have felt the need for continuous innovation in developing a new knowledge base. Managing the Knowledge Management systems effectively, meaning taking care of errors, taking risks, communicate openly and collaborate networks which bring out the knowledge with high creative potential.

Values and new knowledge with alternative exposure for thinking, seeing, being and doing constitutes transformative learning. Thus the thinker becomes more critical and reflexive; more open to others perspectives; and in accepting new ideas he is less defensive. There are 2 views of transformative learning: critical reflection (rational approach) and the other rely more on emotion and imagination. This learning can be supported as long as the needs of the learner are defined by the educator and learner. For creativity and innovation, realizing its value one has to nurture it, take initiatives, have persistence and persuade things with confidence. There are no short cuts or any tricks by which all happens is what the educators need to understand and give ample support. Such thinking can be said to be like building blocks which in turn builds culture of creative innovation. The management education needs to facilitate the leaders who can set creativity goals and invest in transformative learning programs in becoming learning leaders.

Enhancement of Creativity

Let us now look at a systematic way of looking at the causes and effects. Root cause analysis can be used to find a structured approach and data to be collected. Primary factors (enablers) include: faculty, industry, institute, management, society and students. Secondary factors (facilitators) have a direct impact on enablers. Three enablers lie on the upper zone of the root-cause line (individual stakeholders) and another three under the collective stakeholder scheme in the creativity enhancement process (Ghosh, 2014).

Interfacing between the internal and external environment and management is done by the institute to depict the changes in the business environment. Faculty members now are like role models who happen to be an important point for the young students who can be encouraged to think out-of-box to bring in creative thinking and also can do experiment on teaching-learning process in B-Schools. The students taken as inputs can be converted into outputs of B-Schools delivered to both business and society. This provides them opportunities for them to adapt to new mind sets, new areas of thinking by which they improve their capability and ability to deliver the deliverables (Ghosh, 2014).

Candidates can be helped in the recruitment process and in job engagement from time-to-time. Creative development can be broadened by the social stake holders can broaden the scope of creative development of students by assigning them with project; provide opportunities to work in government and non-government sectors which build relationships. In doing so the outcome of root-cause analysis is that the interests and components get aligned which in turn produce enhanced creativity for Business School graduates which is very much required for today (Ghosh, 2014).

Link between Knowledge Management (KM) and Creativity

Everywhere we see hype being created about India as an emerging economy. The knowledge economy depends on the knowledge workers. In B-Schools there is seen a vital role of knowledge creation and the supply of knowledge workers. To address this problem and fight the competition, Knowledge Management (KM) could be the best tool for B-Schools. It is a tool accepted globally to create sustainable competitive advantage. The true treasure of India is its intellectual capital. We have to now see if the management education is competitive enough to face all these and be able to take advantage of the opportunities that are emerging from time to time. There are two issues being identified one is equality and the other is efficiency. KM can provide the solutions to the challenges that are faced as it is a source of sustainable competitive advantage and cannot be copied easily. The way to have competitive advantage is through innovation and upgrading. KM consists of three elements: New Knowledge Application, Knowledge Dissemination and Knowledge Generation.

Knowledge Generation: is possible in B-Schools through research. The schools have selected the option of acquiring the knowledge from USA as our B-Schools are not identified as centers of knowledge creation. The Top Management should involve and

make commitment to assist financially for Knowledge creation centers, research culture its quality, credibility and collaborate to globalize the research activities. Institutions have to provide good environment for healthy faculty-student ratio and the teaching and administrative workload has to be reduced. The links between industry and B-School is weak and in B-Schools there are knowledge repositories and relevant experience but the industry looks at them as a recruiting ground. Management education has to be globalized by making education global and its content multidisciplinary.

Knowledge Dissemination: means that there has to be a collaboration of different functional areas, the policies should be liberal and go for globalization. The B-Schools need to create quality in development programs which provides value addition to the participants and go in for knowledge mapping where the student knows whom to look for a specific knowledge.

Knowledge Implementation: implies that current research issues should be taken and discussed in class rooms which give the latest knowledge to the students. There are lot of ideas and suggestions but they all need to be put into actions to see lot of knowledge creation happening and new knowledge being learnt by student community on a continuous basis. (Anil and Muralidhar, 2018b).

The engineering graduates who are technically sound look for and come in to pursue their management courses at the post-graduate level. The reason for this is learning to manage the knowledge and gaining knowledge when they study through various case studies, in which process they learn the trade of decision-making. All these make them more suitable to have good job prospects as they have gained enough knowledge, experience and have learnt to make and take correct decisions independently.

Table 1: Knowledge Creation Values for Six Institutes

Institute	A	B	C	D	E	F
Values	3.1428	3.3	2.88	3.63	3.87	4.1428
% values	62.85	66	57.6	72.6	77.4	82.85

Source: Author's Analysis

Assesment of Knowledge Creation

It can be observed from the Table 1 that the knowledge creation value varies from 2.88 to a value of 4.1428 on a scale of 5. This being converted to a percentage scale transforms from 57.6% to 82.85%. From the values in Table 1 it is noticed that the institute F is having the highest score indicating that the atmosphere for knowledge creation is conducive. The institute C is having a least value implying that the conditions are not fully conducive for the knowledge creation. It is interesting to note that the number of faculty members in institute F is much larger than the institute C thereby some of the faculty might have been encouraged to take up the The questionnaires are processed based on the average values of the individuals and then the institutions. Table 1 shows the average values of knowledge creation for various institutions.

It is also observed from the responses that in institute F the faculty discuss openly the problems they encounter, have good interaction with the alumni who encourage creative knowledge and creative workers are rewarded for their work. In the institute C where the value is the least it is observed from the responses that the faculty is not enthusiastic about the knowledge creation and its benefit to the institution. The reason for this may also be the institute management may not be very encouraging to do activities of knowledge creation.

Conclusion

This paper brings out the changes that take place in the industry in terms of challenging jobs which require creative thinking. The human resource for the industry is supplied by B-Schools which have to gear up towards the needs of the industry. Thus teaching of creativity to the students in the B-Schools becomes a necessity. Faculty has to develop the creative thinking to cope with the industry. The paper highlights the introduction of knowledge creation in B-Schools and its growth. A simple example involving six institutions is considered where in some effort in the creative thinking is adopted. It is also observed that some of the B-Schools who encourage knowledge creation have been successful. There is a need for paradigm shift for the top level management to encourage creativity for the growth of the institution.

Implications for Future Research

Adoption of knowledge creation in B-Schools will promote the job opportunities for the graduates passing out of B-Schools. The research activity regarding the implementation and growth are plenty in terms of new curriculum and attitude of both students and faculty. Research promotes knowledge generation in B-Schools. The areas of research are acquisition, networking, creation, rental/leased, adaptation and collaboration. In India only acquisition is opted and purchased from US and research in other areas has to be initiated.

References

Anil, K. S. & Muralidhar, S. (2018a). Need and benefits of knowledge management in B-Schools. *Shanlax International Journal of Management, 5*, 85-89.

Anil, K. S. & Muralidhar, S. (2018b), Entrepreneurship education in business schools. *International Journal of Exclusive Management Research,* 1-6.

Basu, B. & Sengupta, K. (2008) Assessing success factors for learning in a business school: Exploratory study of an Indian business school. *The ICFAI University Journal of Knowledge Management, 6*(4), 52-67.

Clifford, M. (2019). *30 Ideas to promote creativity in learning.* Retrieved from https://www.teachthought.com/learning/30-ideas-to-promote-creativity-in-learning/

Covey, S. (2012). *Seven habits of highly creative people.* Retrieved from https://www.creativityatwork.com/2012/03/06/seven-habits-of-highly-creative-people/

Creativity at Work. (2014).*What is Creativity? (And why is it a critical factor for business success?)*. Retrieved from https://www.creativityatwork.com/2014/02/17/what-is-creativity/

Davies, D. (2014). *How to promote creativity in the classroom*. Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/how-to-promote-creativity-in-the-classroom-51838

Degraff, J. (2015). *The secret to teaching creativity at business school*. Retrieved from https://www.inc.com/jeff-degraff/the-secret-to-teaching-creativity-at-business-school.html

Ghosh, K. (2014). Creativity in business schools: Towards a need based developmental approach. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management, 15*(2), 169-178.

Gurteen, D. (1998). Knowledge, Creativity and Innovation. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 2*(1), 1-13.

Hargreaves, D. H. (1999). The knowledge-creating school. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 47*(2), 122-144.

Harris, A. (2008). Leading innovation and change: Knowledge creation by schools for schools. *European Journal of Education, 43*(2), 217-221.

Knowledge@Wharton (2014). *Can creativity be taught?* Retrieved from https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/can-creativity-be-taught/

Petrides, L. A. & Guiney, S. Z. (2002). Knowledge management for school leaders: An ecological framework for thinking schools. *Teachers College Record, 104*, 1702-1717.

Petrides, L. A. & Nodine, T. (2003). What schools can teach the corporate world. *Knowledge Management Review, 6*(2), 28-31.

Pillania, R. K. (2008). Knowledge management for Indian Business Schools. *Journal of Services Research, 7*(2), 183-192.

Rowe, T. (2017), *Business schools teaching creativity.* Retrieved from http://blog.startupdigest.com/2017/04/13/business-schools-teaching-creativity/

Tahir, L. M., Ozay, M., Sumintono, B., & Matzain, I. (2013). Creating knowledge practices in school: exploring teachers knowledge creation. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3*(1), 147-154.

Woods, D. & Menzies, J. (2017). *Innovation and creativity in MBA delivery: The biggest challenge to world-leading business schools*. Retrieved from https://www.mbaworld.com/news/press-releases/2017/july/innovation-and-creativity-in-mba-delivery---the-biggest-challenge-to-world-leading-business-schools