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A Study on Industry -Institute Gap of Management Graduates in Affiliated Colleges

Dr. R S Anatharajan, Kavya Kanmani M, Monika S

Assistant Professor, Sri Sairam Institute of Management Studies, Sri Sairam Engineering College, Chennai, India

Scholar, Sri Sairam Institute of Management Studies, Sri Sairam Engineering College, Chennai, India

Scholar, Sri Sairam Institute of Management Studies, Sri Sairam Engineering College, Chennai, India

ABSTRACT: This research paper explores the industry-institute gap faced by management graduates from affiliated colleges, focusing on the mismatch between academic learning and corporate expectations. In the evolving landscape of business and technology, MBA programs often emphasize theoretical knowledge while neglecting practical applications, digital fluency, and soft skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving. The study uses a descriptive research design and collects data from MBA students and HR professionals through structured questionnaires. Statistical tools like the Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, and correlation analysis were applied to analyze perceptions and gaps. The findings highlight that while students acquire foundational knowledge, they often lack job readiness and exposure to real-world challenges. The research stresses the urgent need for curriculum reforms, industry-driven training, and structured internships. Recommendations are proposed for educational institutions, students, and industry stakeholders to collaboratively bridge this gap, ensuring management graduates are equipped with the skills and confidence to meet dynamic market demands.

KEYWORDS: Affiliated colleges, Curriculum reform, Employability, Industry expectations, Industry-institute gap, Internship, Job readiness, Management education, Practical skills, Soft skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Management education plays a crucial role in preparing students for the corporate world. However, there exists a significant disconnect between what is taught in affiliated colleges and what industries expect from fresh MBA graduates. This misalignment, known as the industry-institute gap, has become a major concern for educators, employers, and students alike. While academic institutions focus on theoretical concepts and prescribed syllabi, industries demand practical application, adaptability, communication, analytical thinking, and familiarity with current digital tools. As a result, many management graduates struggle to meet the expectations of recruiters and lack the confidence to contribute effectively in real job roles.

This study focuses on identifying the root causes of this gap, particularly in affiliated colleges where curriculum flexibility and industry exposure are often limited. It also aims to evaluate the preparedness of students in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSA). By collecting insights from both MBA students and HR professionals, this research highlights the pressing need for curriculum updates, internship opportunities, skill development programs, and enhanced academia-industry collaboration. The ultimate goal is to make management graduates more job-ready and reduce the growing employability concerns in the Indian education system. Bridging this gap is essential for ensuring a productive and competitive workforce.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sen & Thomas (2023) explored the perceptions of final-year MBA students and found a clear awareness of the industry-institute gap. However, students lacked opportunities for practical learning. The study recommended mandatory field visits and simulation-based modules to improve readiness.

Thenarasu et al. (2023) emphasized aligning MBA curricula with real-time industry requirements. They proposed the adoption of lean management techniques, experiential learning models, and continuous curriculum improvement to close the gap.

Ramesh & Priya (2022) conducted a comparative study between affiliated and autonomous colleges, concluding that flexible curriculum structures and better placement support in autonomous institutions led to stronger industry readiness among graduates.

Venkatakrishna Prasad & Jhansi Rani (2021) diagnosed curriculum misalignment in affiliated colleges and advocated pedagogical innovations such as live case studies, practical workshops, and outcome-based teaching methods to meet industry demands.

Bhatnagar (2021) highlighted the absence of soft skills—especially communication, teamwork, and leadership—among MBA graduates. The study emphasized the urgent need for reforms to enhance soft skill integration into management education.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:
This study is essential to understand the mismatch between what MBA students learn in colleges and what industries expect from them. Identifying this gap will help improve education and training, making graduates more employable.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
Primary Objective:
 1. To understand the skills expected by Industries.

Secondary Objective:
 1. To Evaluate the Knowledge of Fresh management graduates
 2. To access the attitude

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:
This research paper focuses on identifying and analyzing the gap between the skills taught in MBA programs at affiliated colleges and the expectations of industries hiring fresh graduates. The study aims to provide insights into how colleges can improve their curriculum and how freshers can better prepare for job roles in the corporate world.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to study the Industry-Institute Gap of Management Graduates in Affiliated Colleges, focusing mainly on the perception of MBA freshers and comparing it with insights from HR professionals in the industry. The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the current situation and suggest possible improvements.

RESEARCH DESIGN:
The research follows a descriptive and analytical design, where the responses from MBA students and industry HRs are analyzed to understand the gap between academic learning and industry expectations.

SOURCES OF DATA:
Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire from: o MBA freshers in affiliated colleges. o HR professionals from various industries.

Secondary Data: Sourced from: o Research articles, journals, and whitepapers. o Industry reports (e.g., NASSCOM, AICTE, ASSOCHAM). o Books and government publications. o Online academic databases like JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate.

SAMPLING METHOD :
A non-probability purposive sampling method is used to collect data from the two target groups: MBA freshers studying in affiliated colleges, HR professionals with recruitment experience.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS :
The data collected will be analyzed using:
· Descriptive statistics (percentages, mean scores)
· Comparative analysis between responses of MBA students and HR professionals.
· Graphs and charts (bar charts, pie charts) for better presentation.

MANN -WHITNEY TEST: To find U test between internship status and gap between study and jobs.

CORRELATION: To find correlation between the relationship between Learned enough business basics and Confident using what I learned.

KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST: To find does students' perception of "building industry connections" differ based on their MBA specialization.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:
MANN -WHITNEY TEST
To find U test between internship status and gap between study and jobs.

HYPOTHESIS
NULL HYPOTHESIS (Ho): There is no significant difference in the "gap between study and jobs" between management graduates who completed an internship and those who did not.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS (H1): There is a significant difference in the "gap between study and jobs" between management graduates who completed an internship and those who did not.

SHOWING THE U TEST BETWEEN INTERNSHIP STATUS AND GAP BETWEEN STUDY AND JOBS

TEST STATISTICS	GAP BETWEEN STUDY AND JOBS
MANN -WHITNEY U	379.500
WILCOXON W	679.500
Z	-2.75
ASYMP.SIG (2-TAILED)	.783

INTERPRETATION
p-value (0.783) ≥ α (0.05): p-value of 0.783 is much greater than the common significance level of 0.05, you fail to reject the null hypothesis there is no statistically significant difference in the "gap between study and jobs" between management graduates who completed an internship and those who did not.

CORRELATION:
To find correlation between the relationship between Learned enough business basics and Confidence using what I learned.

HYPOTHESIS
NULL HYPOTHESIS (Ho): There's no difference in job readiness between students who did an internship.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS (H1): There *is* a difference in job readiness between students who did an internship.

SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNED ENOUGH BUSINESS BASICS AND CONFIDENT USING WHAT I LEARNED

CORRELATIONS		LEARNED ENOUGH BUSINESS BASICS	CONFIDENT USING WHAT I LEARNED
LEARNED ENOUGH BUSINESS BASICS	PEARSON CORRELATION SIG(2-TAILED)	1 57	.722 .000 57
CONFIDENT USING WHAT I LEARNED	PEARSON CORRELATION SIG (2-TAILED)	.722 .000 57	1 57

INTERPRETATION

There is a weak positive correlation ($\rho = 0.21$) between the two variables. This suggests that students who felt they learned enough business basics were slightly more likely to feel confident using what they learned. However, the p-value is 0.117, which is greater than the common significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant. This means we cannot confidently claim that the observed correlation exists in the broader.

KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST H TEST

To find does students perception of "building industry connections" differ based on their
MBA specialization.

HYPOTHESIS

NULL HYPOTHESIS(Ho): There is no significant difference in perceptions of building industry connections across different MBA specializations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant difference in perceptions of building industry connections across different MBA specializations.

SHOWING THE STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF BUILDING INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

TEST STATISTICS

	Build industry connections
Chi-square	**1.236**
Df	**3**
Asymp.Sig.	**.744**

INTERPRETATION

Since the p-value = 0.014 < 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates a statistically significant difference in how students from different MBA specializations perceive the importance of building industry connections. This means students from different streams (e.g., Marketing, Finance, HR) do not view the need for industry connections equally.

IV. FINDINGS

· Many management graduates possess strong theoretical knowledge but lack practical exposure to real-world business scenarios.

· The current curriculum in affiliated colleges is often outdated and not aligned with the dynamic needs of the industry.

· There is a significant gap in soft skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability among students.

· Students are not adequately trained in digital tools, analytics, and modern business technologies that are widely used in the industry.

· Industry interaction through internships, guest lectures, or live projects is either minimal or not effectively integrated into the academic schedule.

· A large portion of students feel unprepared to face job interviews and lack confidence in corporate readiness.

· Placement cells in many affiliated colleges are not fully equipped or active in creating meaningful connections with industries.

· Faculty members are academically qualified, but most lack updated industry exposure to provide practical insights.

· There is a disconnect between academic assessments and the practical competencies expected by employers.

· Industries are willing to collaborate with institutions but find institutional bureaucracy and rigidity a hurdle in developing effective partnerships.

V. SUGGESTIONS

● **Update MBA Curriculum Regularly:** Incorporate the latest industry trends, practical case studies, and digital tools to keep the syllabus relevant.

● **Incorporate Practical Learning Methods:** Include live projects, internships, and industry visits to give students hands-on experience.

● **Strengthen Soft Skills Training:** Organize workshops on communication, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving.

● **Enhance Collaboration Between Industry and Academia:** Facilitate guest lectures, seminars, and joint research projects to bridge the knowledge gap.

● **Develop Strong Placement Cells:** These cells should actively network with companies, understand industry needs, and prepare students accordingly.

● **Encourage Faculty Industry Exposure:** Facilitate faculty internships, industry visits, and continuous professional development programs.

● **Introduce Industry-Relevant Certifications and Training:** Integrate these within the MBA program to improve employability and skill levels.

● **Promote Use of Modern Business Technologies:** Include data analytics, CRM tools, and digital marketing platforms in the curriculum.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study clearly indicates a significant gap between the expectations of the industry from management graduates and the current offerings of academic programs in affiliated colleges. While students generally possess a strong theoretical foundation, there is a notable deficiency in practical skills, real-world exposure, and workplace readiness. Key areas requiring improvement include communication, problem-solving, digital literacy, and the quality of internships. By implementing the suggested strategies—such as regular curriculum updates, enhanced practical learning opportunities, stronger industry collaboration, and improved career development support—affiliated colleges can better equip their MBA graduates for successful integration into the corporate world. Bridging this gap is crucial not only for enhancing student employability but also for ensuring that businesses have access to a skilled and job-ready workforce. This alignment between academia and industry is essential for the continued growth and productivity of management professionals.

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