
**THEORY AND PRAXIS IN THE MARKET: GUIDELINES TO
ALTERNATIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY PEDAGOGY FOR
BUSINESS EDUCATION**

Ishaan Anand

Pathways School Gurgaon

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ABSTRACT

Business education and entrepreneurship training has become a matter of importance for developing countries who have identified its unique advantages. There have been increases in business programs adopted in universities, as well as people leaving to pursue business education abroad. Given this important issue, it is important to critically examine the pedagogies of business programs both in developing and developed countries, and find solutions for a more interconnected approach to tackle the new requirements brought about by globalization. A market oriented approach may be useful in theory, but the new world has brought issues of diversity, sustainable development, new technologies and a myriad of cultural contexts. Therefore, it is important for business programs across the world to adopt an interdisciplinary pedagogy. This paper will shed light on business education and practices, and suggest policy recommendations for a more inclusive and interdisciplinary curriculum, due to the benefits of the same.

Keywords: Business, Entrepreneurship, Education, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Two billion people currently live in countries impacted by fragility, conflict and violence, with the percentage of individuals living in extreme poverty in conflict-affected areas expected to rise to more than 60% by 2030 (Rashid, 2019). It is being recognized across the world, and especially in developing economies and regions of conflict, that business and entrepreneurship education comes with several advantages. Entrepreneurship education has been globally recognised as a key tool to fight unemployment. Entrepreneurship and business has the potential to reduce poverty, stimulate economic growth and boost innovation, in addition to enhancing social and

environmental sustainability (Rashid, 2019). In accordance with the human capital theory and previous empirical studies, it is assumed that entrepreneurship and business education and training directly correlates with positive entrepreneurial outcomes and therefore sustainable development (Rashid, 2019).

Adequately preparing future generations of managers, executives and entrepreneurs is a challenge for all societies. This is especially so for developing countries and transitioning economies, due to a general lack of infrastructure, lack of adequate training for teachers, etc (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). Business education in the way of the developed world is still in the nascent stage for developing countries. Therefore, the usual practice has been to for the business and economic elite class to be trained overseas (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). Business schools in developing countries have adopted the practice of ‘importing’ ready-made Western style business programs and curriculum to meet the demand for training at a local level (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). However, this model may not always be conducive to the national need for managerial talent, people from different cultural contexts and social classes, and evolving market dynamics along with the advent of technology (McIntyre and Alon, 2014; Nelson, 1977). Therefore, it is important to critically examine practices in business and entrepreneurship education not only in developing countries but also in the developed countries that they borrow from.

This paper will provide a review of current global practices in business and entrepreneurship education, critique those practices, and examine how alternative pedagogical tools can prepare and create better businesspeople. The paper will then pose recommendations for alternative pedagogical tools for a more interdisciplinary and culturally inclusive approach to business education. Finally, the paper will provide guidelines and solutions for the future of business and entrepreneurship education for more sustainable development and innovation.

BACKGROUND

The internationalization of the business curriculum has become essential and a precondition to competitiveness on a global scale. The major challenge of all education and especially business and entrepreneurship education is to develop an efficient, proactive and quality oriented education system which is capable of adaptation to the changing demands of the global market, and the new requirements of globalization (McIntyre and Alon, 2014; Nelson, 1977). Trends in the pursuit of this objective include, for example, replacement of rote learning with field/case studies and experiential learning.

For example in India, changes have been made to internationalize the business curriculum to suit global markets. The undergraduate program (Bachelor of Business Administration, or BBA), was

introduced in India as a response to fulfill the emerging corporate expectations (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). The BBA programs in different business schools were in line with MBA programs, but tailored towards young people with no work experience to foster entrepreneurship and business knowledge at an early stage. However, this has been an issue of contention given the social context of India wherein it is still a prevailing feeling that management education is the domain of older people, with more work experience who are suited to the top line positions (McIntyre and Alon, 2014).

Research into India's experience with the under graduate program in business education has revealed that the degree most often espouses a corporate orientation, and develops curricula and delivery systems that are market oriented and tailored to the Indian context (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). The research has shown that the curriculum is linked with employability in new businesses. Major sectors, where most commercial or frontline jobs are opening have been identified. Require competencies and skills at the undergraduate level have been linked with the emerging needs of these sectors in the design of the programs (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). Research into similar programs in Nepal has also found that innovation in business and entrepreneurship education is a response to the evolving needs of Nepali businesses for educated managers with a certain expert skill set. Even when the country is in political flux, business education programs manage to thrive (McIntyre and Alon, 2014).

The main takeaways from the research conducted in the Indian subcontinent has great relevance for all developing countries. Modifications of business curricula and tailoring it to the social context of the country is not only advisable but necessary, in order for business schools to add value to their respective communities and their needs (McIntyre and Alon, 2014; Nelson, 1977). The first step towards such modernization could be to borrow from the programs and curricula of developing nations, but the unique characteristics of the particular country require an evaluation of the environment and appropriate organizational responses (McIntyre and Alon, 2014; Nelson, 1977). It is important that business programs and the focus of business schools should be on identifying major business issue that affect the world but at the same time, rooted in the socio cultural context of the country.

DISCUSSION

In order to address the issues raised in the previous section, and mainly the issue of tailoring business education to the social context of the country, particular attention should be paid to the pedagogies, and any possible alternative pedagogies. Today's business graduates need a more integrated approach to their learning (Bajada and Trayler, 2013). Business schools and governments must consider methods of fusing the sciences, social sciences, and business

education for interdisciplinary learning in an interdisciplinary world, and ways of enhancing education policy to better incorporate cultural contexts in curriculums (Bajada and Traylor, 2013; AAC&U, 2004).

To this end, certain solutions are available. Opportunities exist for partnerships and collaboration in research and student and faculty exchanges focused on the opportunities and challenges that exist in developing countries (Lynn et al, 2018). Social media, videoconferencing, and electronic communication can facilitate cross-cultural student exchanges and research collaborations between universities (Lynn et al, 2018). Examples might include a supply chain research project involving students from the United States and Kenya or a cross-border marketing plan for a business developed by students in the United States and Mexico. Cross-cultural collaborative exercises in marketing enable students across countries to engage in activities that expose them to differing cultural insights in marketing (Lynn et al, 2018).

As business schools increase the number of courses they offer online, some have implemented mission-driven discounted programs for students in developing countries (Lynn et al, 2018). A school might partner with a business school in a developing country and allow faculty from the school abroad to access their graduate courses to help develop and enhance their academic credentials and gain access to new ideas and resources (Lynn et al, 2018). Harnessing the online space and effective use of technology is especially important to provide education and vocational training to underserved areas.

Further, there must be education about the uses of technology which is important to critically examine how such technology is shaping cultural contexts in an increasingly interconnected world. Relatedly, as populations in developing countries continue to expand and the costs of studying in the United States or Europe continue to increase, online graduate courses offer an alternative mechanism for increasing the knowledge base of faculty in developing countries (Lynn et al, 2018). Student participation from a variety of developing countries enrich the diverse thinking found in their respective graduate programs and their input and presence will broaden exposure to developing country issues and perspectives for other students in the program can focus on business in developing countries (Lynn et al, 2018). Examples include the activities of multinational corporations in developing countries and the explosive growth of smart phone usage, financial technology, and mobile innovation in developing countries and their impact on poverty and economic development (Lynn et al, 2018).

In addition, it is important to design curricular offerings that move beyond the traditional split between the domains of liberal arts and business education (Bajada and Traylor, 2013). Blending the liberal arts with business curricula, rather than bridging, is a strategy for educators to explore

that may produce business graduates who are truly liberally educated (AAC&U, 2004). Integrating a market oriented approach with the social sciences and liberal arts can benefit several areas and skills such as oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and analysis, breadth of perspective shaped from multiple points of view, understanding of one's own sense of values, ethical frames and perspectives, and the ability to understand time, place, and culture from a global perspective (AAC&U, 2004). In addition to gaining a broad and enriched perspective of the purposes and objectives of business over time, the process of responding in writing and orally to thought-provoking discussion questions enables and ensures that the student dedicates the time it takes to hone both cognitive skills and communication skills; mandatory sessions with the division of humanities' writing tutorial service are required, to instill the value of continuous improvement of self expression (AAC&U, 2004; AAC&U, 2003).

The blending of content and processes from psychology, the concepts of emotional intelligence, and an understanding of personal life planning, enriches students' personal development, enhances their understanding of the interplay of individuals in business organizations (AAC&U, 2004; AAC&U, 2003). Effectively producing a genuinely liberally educated business professional is hampered by both the curricular structures that separate liberal arts from business education as well as from fragmented, disconnected, independent courses throughout the general education and business curricula (AAC&U, 2004). These issues very likely reinforce the business student's perception that the course work in liberal arts lacks relevance to the business major, or indeed, to future career pursuits (AAC&U, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The future for business and entrepreneurship education is without a doubt, sustainable development. Globalization has brought with it its own set of issues such as climate change, scarcity of resources and inequality. Therefore, there is a need for business education to promote and foster responsible, inclusive, sustainable business knowledge, and lead to a future where innovators are being more ethical. A crucial first step in this direction is new and more holistic research. Research seems to indicate that there is less focus on the world's most underprivileged areas, which are in the most pressing need for sustainable development (Rashid, 2019). The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International's (2011) *Globalization of Management Education Report* concluded, "The scarcity of pedagogical tools that focus on business contexts and practices outside of Europe and North America is especially alarming given the rapid growth of management education in many emerging markets" (Rashid, 2019). Basic and applied business research on important business topics in developing countries can be encouraged and rewarded (Lynn et al, 2018). Critical social theory

can provide a lens for questioning assumptions regarding global commerce and a host of other topics invite attention (Lynn et al, 2018).

Technology-based entrepreneurship training is proposed as a possible mitigation to the challenges in fragile contexts, as several educational technologies do not only allow for the personalized, collaborative learning needed for entrepreneurial skill and mindset development, but could potentially tackle specific education challenges such as lack of access to learning centers, qualified educators and innovative teaching materials in the absence of sufficient financial resources (Rashid, 2019). In addition, such technologies provide alternative research avenues by easing some of the barriers associated with conducting research in alert and warning countries (Rashid, 2019). Future research evaluating how various technological tools and approaches could be best implemented in business education and vocational training is needed in addition to research focusing on using educational technology as means to research and evaluate these initiatives (Rashid, 2019).

A more culturally sensitive curriculum would require a more interdisciplinary approaches and bridging the gap that exists between business education and the liberal arts, which would contribute to more sensitive, inclusive and ethically conscious entrepreneurs. Rather than isolating the content and objectives into separate learning experiences, blending liberal arts and business learning outcomes in course experiences may hold promise for meeting the challenge to end "the traditional, artificial distinction between liberal and practical education" (AAC&U, 2003). In turn, the result could be an effective, liberally educated business professional, who would be trained to observe facts with accuracy, quickness and certainty in seizing upon the main points of a new subject, and discrimination in separating the trivial from the important in great masses of facts, as well as a sense of morality (AAC&U, 2004).

A uniquely indigenous professional business education system, based on best practices and lessons, will ensure of steady, high quality and motivated pool of talent. Domestic qualified managerial talent, who are capable of mastering both local and international business environments, is a precondition to attracting foreign direct investment which will in turn create more employment and opportunities (McIntyre and Alon, 2014). This will also reduce the issue of brain drain, securing greater shares of global markets with attendant supply chains, ensuring continuous productivity gains and finally, generating strong export sectors for growth and diversification (McIntyre and Alon, 2014).

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