

Digital Learning: Adoption of Innovative Pedagogical Practice to Scale Management Education

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ABSTRACT:

In today's digital age, the aptitudes and high level manpower are required in the field of management for the development and improvement of any country and are created by the Institutions which provide synchronous and asynchronous learning environments in the form of digital learning for delivering Biz management programmes which continuously advance business management practices that combine the vision and insights of the faculty to navigate the shift towards being global, embrace technology trends and initiatives such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) that impact outcomes of B-School management graduates and alumnae in the dynamic environment. Business management institutions have seen distinctive challenges such as subsiding student engagement, growing diversity, redundant skills and limited resources which have hindered outcomes among graduates such as employment opportunities, better remuneration, skills and abilities for career success; these outcomes can be influenced by the adoption of digital learning strategies in B-schools. Therefore, technological innovation and other empowering strategies are particularly important for the adoption of digital learning strategies and enhancing outcomes for the B-Schools graduates such as personal, financial and professional growth, apart from providing employment opportunities and a means of career success through acquisition and assimilation of knowledge and niche skills by continuously imparting programmes for student and alumnae to compete in an ever evolving Industry trends in business and management. In the present study the realm of Digital Learning and its strategies in particular is explored to promote and encourage Institutions and learners to adopt of state-of-the-art learning environment which is learner-centered and that will positively impact the learning process and outcomes of Biz School students and alumni by enhancing the scholastic learning of B-School graduates to realize the outcomes. This has also contributed and brought about significant changes in cultural, social, technological and educational outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *Digital Learning, Digital Strategy, Digital Platforms, Pedagogy, Higher Education, B-School*

INTRODUCTION:

B-Schools need to endeavour to overcome constraints and concerns in adopting a digital learning environment to facilitate management learning circles with an equal opportunity for learning and research. Management institutions are facing steep challenges in making their programs globally relevant due to lack of availability of cyber-infrastructure and state of the art technology. The digital learning strategies should be incorporated to improvise on the learning process and to advance higher education standards and quality of education to reduce skill disparities and prepare themselves to be future ready by providing a digital environment for continuous learning, professional development and innovation in management schools which may suffice to engage students in the process of learning of

evolving business trends and technology in today's dynamic business environment and fulfill their personal, professional and financial expectations.

Management education in India is facing challenges to keep pace with global trends in higher education which are arising out of globalization and liberalization. According to International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - an agency of United Nations that publishes ICT development index (IDI) report annually since 2009, has assessed and ranked India 134 globally in 2017 after monitoring and comparing countries and overtime. IDI indicates a country's progress towards being an information society, which means there is a lot to be desired in terms of improvement in ICT infrastructure, accessibility and connectivity to Internet, ICT usability and skills which are significantly important for human interactions and transactions. There is an innovation deficit in higher education which is clearly indicative from the country's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), according to the latest edition of the All India Higher Education Survey (AIHES) launched by Union Human Resource Development (HRD) the GER is as low as 25.2% in 2016-17 and is much behind China's GER of 43.39% and USA's GER of 85.8%. Also, there hasn't been any substantial improvement in the globalization of Indian education. According to Financial Times Global MBA ranking 2017, Indian management schools do not feature in the top 25 business school rankings in the world. Education in India is at its tipping point as 45 million 10th graduates, 50 thousand more colleges and 800 more universities are needed to push the GER to 30%.

The B-schools should adopt and provide a digital learning environment to management students and alumni with diverse learning approaches so that their learning and training needs are accomplished to compete in the world of Business, Administration, and Management. The problem is to keep the B-School graduates and alumni abreast with technological and Biz trends to achieve favourable outcomes which are in line with global standards and also deliver the personal, professional, financial gratification to graduates. The fast changing Industry landscape due to adoption of digital technology will need graduates with updated knowledge, skills and abilities and this offers a challenge and opportunity to adopt digital learning initiatives and innovations to succeed outcomes for management graduates and enhance reputation for B-Schools.

India provides poor quality higher education outside its top tier of universities, the quality of the faculty is uneven, research opportunities are not generally available to either students or faculty, and there is a tension between providing a good management education to a limited number of people and providing access for all. The unique characteristics and expectations that students bring to their professional programs require new methods of addressing classroom activities and student learning. Because both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in academic success, educators need to be better equipped to promote student engagement both inside and outside of the classroom through purposeful learning opportunities. (Julene Ensign & Amelia Mays Woods, May 2013)

Developments such as the Internet and satellite communication have formed new medium through which institutions can disseminate their information through to the end user. Innovation in learning is helping educationalists to grow past linear, content based learning so as to provide flexibility in learning and engage students who learn best in different ways. The role of Institutions which deliver professional education has advanced from a confined "Computer class" into a malleable learning instrument that could transform how we exhibit ideas, allocate activities and evaluate growth. Blend more technology with traditional learning in Institutions, and should leverage Internet and computing applications in Classrooms for exploring educational possibilities of technology and to become a critical user of ICT tools in providing a blended approach to learning. Digital Media when consolidated with Internet and computing applications has caused disruption in learning for graduates, alumni and professionals.

The present study explores the realm of digital learning that will benefit higher education institutions vis-à-vis management institutions and bring about scalability in adoption of

digital learning strategies, the acceptance of the stakeholders to embrace technology in creating an innovative, ubiquitous and novel learning environment in B-schools is a challenge that should be confronted to motivate, upskill, and keep the stakeholders engaged in life-long learning. Siu & Song, (2016) observed that the environment needs to enable the Bring Your Own Device to be employed in the environment; on the other hand, the intention and capabilities of the teacher in taking the pedagogical actions are also critical. Therefore, the stakeholders' technology acceptance, readiness and behavioural intention to use play an important role in creating a ubiquitous learning environment to scale new heights in accomplishing outcomes in the field of business, management and administration. This paper gives an understanding of Digital Learning modality in making an advanced learning condition to enrich learners by building a student centered condition to accomplish their execution objective. Ensuring student readiness by utilizing instructional techniques that fit the mixed condition and controlling them to encounter the technology aided learning methodology by giving a way to students to team up synchronously and asynchronously with guides, tutors and specialists by adept utilization of innovation and aptitude to provide with the latest skills and knowledge for the student.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Baldwin-Evans, (2006) gives an understanding on making an advanced learning condition to enrich students by building a student centered condition to draw in them in the learning procedure and the keep the students propelled consistently to accomplish their execution objectives. Ensuring student readiness by utilizing instructional techniques that fit the mixed condition and controlling them to encounter the computerized learning methodology by giving a way to students to team up synchronously and non-concurrently with guides and specialists whenever and adept utilization of innovation and aptitude to stay up with the latest for the student.

Lee, Laue, & Yip (2016) investigate in their study if digital learning can accommodate diverse academic backgrounds among students-teachers. The study revealed positive outcomes in learning subject without background knowledge of the subject and also found that the students reflected knowledge gain and wanted to gain further knowledge on the subject, the students were found to be receptive to self-paced e-learning approach, to further augment students achievement the learning process the teachers need to engage students in the learning process. The complexity of the content being delivered to different target groups is adjusted so that students of any background can understand and prepare themselves to study subjects which are unrelated to their field of expertise.

Rana, Ardichvili, & Polesello (2016) in their study emphasize the importance of self-directed learning in realizing the goals of the learning organizations through flexible approaches to learning that incorporate technology and adaptable ways to deal with incorporating technology and diminishing the provision of conventional learning have given rise that required learners be more self-directed in the learning process. The organizations should be developing programs that are aligned with the objective of enhancing self-directedness which allows people to expand their knowledge and skills to achieve the results they truly desire which keeps them motivated throughout the program. The organizations should know that the learning organizations and self-directed learning are interdependent since they encourage learning initiatives which are based on collaboration and teamwork.

Heidi & Neo (2015) aims to utilize an innovative approach towards the development of a digital learning environment with the help of multimedia and web technologies. This paper indicated that the students became more engaged with the content provided through the online sources and are actively involved in the learning process. The digital learning strategies should be assessed for their feasibility to implement them in the learning environment.

Wall & Ahmed (2008) highlights professional undertaking of blended learning platforms can engage with a range of ICT technologies to provide an effective programme for professional development. This will help develop a learning model for industry professional to provide optimal learning and allows complex skill acquisition, bridge gap between academia and industry. ICT has become the basic building block of society which are transforming the way individuals learn and continuing professional development. The professional learning that occurs is formal and informal: formal consists of Technical and Contextual, Informal consists of resource based, practice based, and practice related, interpersonal. The blended learning environment helps establish relationships with instructors and peers encouraging collaborative learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This work is based on secondary sources of data published by in periodicals, conference proceedings, annual reports and websites. Peer reviewed national and international journals relating to higher education and management were also reviewed for the paper. This is an exploratory study and a conceptual work.

DIGITAL LEARNING:

The term digital learning includes and is not restricted to any pedagogical practice that effectively uses information and communication technology (ICT), digital technology, digital tools and resources for collaboration and communication, interactive learning software and simulations, data and information processing to develop curated content and prepare targeted supplementary learning by experts for providing a personalized learning experience with some element of control over place, time, and pace of learning. Digital learning should be leveraged to transform pedagogical practice from an instructivist to constructivist approach which is a learner-centric model to reinforce student learning experience by addressing the distinct learning needs of the learners.

Digital learning provides flexibility in learning through synchronous and asynchronous mode of learning. Therefore, greater importance has been given in adoption, augmentation and effective utilization of technology to implement an adept instructional practice to reinforce learning experience and advance outcomes which are: personally, professionally and financially rewarding for the stakeholders of B-Schools around the world. This study is to comprehend and conceptualize the influence of embracing innovative model of learning in business education through proficient use of technology that may provide greater accessibility to global resources and foster equity in quality of learning, besides the development of knowledge, skills and abilities required for achieving scholastic and career success in management education which is discrete with observable and measureable characteristics of students, faculty and administrative staff. Measurement of digital learning initiatives can help refine, strengthen, and build scalable pedagogical models. Studies have suggested that information and communication technology (ICT) seems to have a reflective influence in institutions of higher learning and plays a vital role to propagate innovative pedagogical practices and proliferate digital tools to improve quality of learning and advance stakeholder outcomes in B-Schools. This study is to explore and comprehend innovative learning strategies in management education which would provide accessibility and flexibility in learning through proficient use of technology, besides be passionate for coupling innovation and creativity in cultivating ubiquitous management education to advance the outcomes of management graduates and B-Schools.

DIGITAL LEARNING STRATEGY:

The digital learning strategy may include a mixture of or just merely any one of the digital learning concepts for the purpose of effective teaching-learning and the digital strategies may

be formulated by technology integration specialists. The digital learning strategies should be incorporated to improvise on the learning process and to advance standards of higher learning and quality of education to reduce skill disparities in indigenous institutions and universities. In today's digital realm, it is pragmatic to consider having web-based learning to reduce the digital divide and promote a learner centric environment for continuous learning. With modernization the world is going to become more digital every day and the culture of our institutions will help us to navigate to the future and be more globally relevant. All universities and colleges should implement digital initiatives envisioned and outlined by the ministry to build a student-centric and institution-wide digital competency. Responsibility should be taken by the institutions to develop and manifest innovative pedagogy in learning to nurture talent unbound, thus improving standards of management education and making management graduates employable and viable leaders to lead business organizations in the digital economy. Digital Learning strategy is a change that we use to internalize change and transform an individual's knowledge, skills and attitude.

The below concepts have been listed for the sake of brevity which are all inclusive to the realm of digital learning, since digital learning is often confused with online learning or e-learning among stakeholders.

Personalized Learning – is an instructional practice supplemented by services and tools that align pedagogy according to the individual student needs, the learning environment and curriculum are designed to suit the student requirement and interests of different learning styles. The personalized learning environment is tailored in such a way that the instructional practice and culture is enhanced along with transforming the role of a teacher from being an instructor to a facilitator and a guide. This method of learning will be able to cater to students with varied learning styles and setting of learning goals will be based on academic and career interests. With personalized learning, one can provide focused learning trail for individuals by providing individual attention, feedback and assessments.

Self-paced Learning - is an instructional practice which proceeds based on the convenience of the learner as the students will have complete control over pace and time.

Mobile Learning – any learning that happens through interaction with content being accessible from anywhere via a handheld portable electronic device such as PDA's, smart phones, notebooks and other electronic devices. M-learning has grown as a popular learning aid with interactive online apps which provide digital content for self-learning at a cost effective rate.

E-learning – a course or program that is delivered over the internet and is accessed by the learners utilizing electronic technologies outside of the traditional classroom, this form of learning can happen completely online by using collaborative tools to interact in real-time with teachers or can access curated content online presented by experts, coaches, and talent trainers.

Online Collaborative Learning – also known as computer mediated or networked learning, is a constructivist approach which is aided by the development of internet, which creates a collaborative environment for learning in which peers and teachers are encouraged to interact to seek conceptual knowledge and develop problem solving behaviour where learning building knowledge mainly through the discourse process.

Blended Learning – learning that takes place over a combination of different delivery media and is usually a mixture of various instructional approaches such as web-based technology, face-to-face instructional practice, and classroom technologies.

Singh (2003) sees blended learning rather as a combination of multiple delivery media designed to complement each other and promote meaningful learning. From an organizational perspective, Driscoll (2002) identifies four different ways in which blended learning can be defined. Blended learning can be seen as:

- a mix of modes of web-based technology;
- a mix of various pedagogical approaches (e.g., constructivism, behaviourism, cognitivism);
- a combination of any form of instructional technology with face-to-face instructor led training;
- a combination of instructional technology with actual job tasks (in order to create an effective mix of learning and working).

Virtual Reality (VR) learning – This is an advanced learning approach which provides remote access to learning content. Virtual Reality gives students a sense of practical experience as they are able to visualize complex things in the classroom as VR creates a virtual world that enriches the students learning experience. Virtual Reality enables a learning environment which provides an immersive experience that motivates the students to learn and keep them engaged by providing an interactive experience.

Adaptive Learning – learning approach which is data-drive to adjust and enable the delivery of content as per the learners pace of learning and supports varied learning styles by providing a range of content formats to support the students. The adaptive learning systems gradually improve overtime with accumulation of data on more students as the systems learn from human interactions, these learning systems employ algorithms to cater to students with different learning abilities and maximise learning outcomes by providing personalized tutoring and timely student feedback.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – This web-based learning platform has courses for learners to enrol and complete them within a given timeframe where learners from around the world participate in studying structured, collaborative, distributed, open access courses and continue to be lifelong learners in a networked learning environment.

Digital tools – digital infrastructure that enhance the learning environment by providing access to a number of tools and resources such as Dropbox, YouTube, Google+, Whatsapp, social media, open educational resources (OER's), Weblogs and Discussion forums.

DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORMS:

The Digital Learningplatform is a dynamic market place which extends to the workspace to create and extend credentials. New customers are acquired by learning platforms globally as learners want to earn a credential to keep pace and they will be rewarded in workspace. Continued globalization contributes towards adoption of digital learning platforms at less marginal cost at scale. The Digital Learning platforms will not be successful by just by placing content but the same content needs extensive curation by experts and tutors to suits the needs of leaners with varied learning styles. Institutions offering digital learning platforms should focus to create market, build credibility, and build content for the learners with timelines and also focus on shortening timelines and deep drilling of knowledge. Online learning which is Omni channel can be applied to virtually any skills as education becomes modular. When credentials come from competent authority it provides key value proposition

The classroom is designed to support the educational technology and other synthesized product to developthe creative and critical thinking skills which will be highly valued in the workspace.Unbundling in higher education is required to provide modular education or credentials to suit the needs of the learners as they can pick and choose from a range of courses which are academically equivalent of what a university can offer.With the advent of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics, Process Automation and the like it is predicted that 38% jobs will be replaced over the next 15 years.The Video-taped lectures, Short videos and quizzes, user generated content, Programming exercises, Short videos with reflection points, etc., can be shared through digital platforms to reskill people and to provide deep learning of a specialization. The technology used should not be disparate but needs to be all in one platform for feasibility of access to resources.

CONCLUSION:

In today's digital era the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) should rethink and reimagine the pedagogy by demolishing the silos of knowledge and combine future modular education, so that micro packages are leveraged for better flexibility and promote effective learning. In this regard the Digital Learning realm can facilitate development of 21st century digital skills and competencies for academic and career success. The Universities and Institutions should adopt an innovative learning environment and teaching practice such as digital learning environment and pedagogy so that we could develop learner-centric strategies and models which significantly help beneficiaries in scholastic attainment. Adoption of Digital Learning in higher education would mean no exclusiveness, but it's about inclusiveness and democratization of education. Digital learning will help bridge the digital divide between the urban and rural landscape by bringing about equity in learning as the same quality is available anywhere and anytime since the content is unbundled and distributed through digital learning platforms and the future learning spaces will be built collaboratively between academia and industry to help learners overcome obstacles and discover their hidden potential.

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