

Insights of Work-Life Balance: Crafting Enterprise Success

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Abstract - Some say that "Managers are born and not made" whereas few are of the opinion that "Some are born with it and some imbibe it". Gone are the days when education was treated as a mere product and not a wholesome process. In today's rapidly changing world, the emphasis is on how the budding managers and students can tackle a situation and can apply their knowledge through an effective teaching and learning process. In today's managerial world, the element of work-life balance is one of the key factors for the employees to achieve success. Keeping this in mind, we can see that organizations have devised various policies, programs and initiatives to help their employees to achieve the work-life balance between the work commitments and family responsibilities. The effectiveness of such programs and initiatives depends upon the extent of usage by the employees to achieve work-life balance. It has been found that outcome-based education will play a major role in establishing a proper work-life balance in the days to come. Taking these aspects into consideration; this paper tries to study the effect of the outcome-based education on the professional world; to find out how the various skills acquired through outbound learning systems can be effective in professional practice. The paper would deal with the concept of work-life balance in this regard.
Keywords: Work, life, balance, outcome, education, employees, organizations, enterprises

I. INTRODUCTION

To maintain a proper work-life balance means it is about managing both our personal and professional lives together without allowing one to encroach on the other, since both are equally important in one's life and should never be neglected. Unfortunately, it is seen that not all employers or companies place enough importance and seriousness on mental health of the employees at the workplace. Various studies have shown that the dangers and risks of a poor work-life balance could lead to a variety of other issues and these become detrimental for a person, both in professional life and personal life, such as stress-related illness and high level of depression.

A very common problem showing up nowadays is of "Burnout" which means that an employee is facing "chronic stress" because of undue pressure put onto a person which can be due to various targets which one has to achieve in order to survive in today's world of cut-throat competition, or due to the feeling that the employee is not properly valued for the hard work he/she has put in. However, many companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of helping their employees to achieve this balance as more staff are

experiencing conflict between their work and personal roles (Leiter MP, Maslach C. 2000.), (Zapf D, Seifert C, Schmutte B, Mertini H. (2001)).

This is where the concept of "Outcome based education" comes into play where the aspiring managers in a professional institute are given more of practical and skill enhancing knowledge rather than mere rote learning of theories. In foreign countries such systems of education are very much prevalent where the students can pass examinations by taking live projects and having practical exposures which actually constitute 90% of their curriculum and the remaining 10% part is of written theoretical examinations; a system that significantly differs from the one that we have in our country.

Through an analysis it has been found that such conventional systems of educations are the major reason why the present generation of young managers cannot strike a proper work-life balance, this would not have been the case if the students during their initial years of training in the professional institutes had been given a practical approach where they are encouraged to think on their own to a given real life problem in the corporate world. It is then that they can use their own brain and thinking capability to deal with a probable problem.

Often, in many B-schools, students are given readymade notes which they simply cram without understanding the essence and the importance of that subject, sometimes even scoring very high marks. In this case they are just good at memorizing the subject matter and this is often associated with little understand in grand eventually do not develop the right acumen that a dynamic manager must possess; which is need of the fast-paced corporate world right now. Thus, this paper attempts at throwing some light on the importance and the various positive aspects of "Outcome based education" during the initial years of training in professional institutes where the students are taught to maintain both their personal and professional lives in a balanced manner so that they can succeed and lead a happy life ahead.

If the students can understand these parameters and aspects, then the organizations' various plans, policies, programs to help their employees to achieve the balance between the work commitments and family responsibilities will become more successful. If students and employees are exposed to

outcome-based education during their training period that teaches and prepares them to inculcate in themselves the “work-life balance”, then such initiatives actually become a boon to them where they can develop themselves in a way which will increase their efficiency and productivity, leading to overall growth in organizational output.

So, this is why it is so important in today’s world that the training and professional institutes impart “Outcome based education” to their students so that they get the real flavour of what the corporate world is like and prepare themselves accordingly both mentally and physically so that they don’t fall prey to the corporate rat-race.

II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The study objectives of the paper are as follows:

1. To study the effect of the outcome-based education on the professional world.
2. To find out how the various skills acquired through outbound learning systems can be effective in professional practice.

The Research Methodology adopted for this paper is essentially secondary in nature; this has been done by way of a detailed conceptual survey from relevant books, journals and other sources of management literature.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

William Spady & K. J. Marshall (1991, 1994) saw Outcome Based Education as a tool of focusing and organizing an institute’s entire academic program structure and instructional based efforts around the clearly defined outcomes or results.

However Glatthorn, A. A. (1993) and Hansen, J.M. (1989) were of the view and opinion that the Outcome Based Education is characterized by the proper development of well-defined results which can be measured and analyzed, from the designing of the various learning and training activities to assure the demonstrated performance to the monitoring and assessment of individual performances through the use of the set criterion referenced assessment and the provision of remediation and enrichment from time to time on a periodic basis.

Some reports and research papers revealed the benefits and the positive results of Outcome Based Education (McGhan, B. 1994, Haack, M.K. 1994, Jasa, S. & Enger, L. 1994, Fitzpatrick, K. A. 1991). It has been highlighted that the influence of outdoor training is to create impact and embed managerial skills, particularly leadership. The paper suggests that competency driven training activities need to be included in outdoor training to reach to the accuracy of accomplishing skill development which will lead to the elimination of permanent failure and compromised standards in the education and training systems (McGhan,

B. 1994), how the focus has shifted on true learning of a subject rather than just teaching the students how to memorize and check their memory retention power during times of assessment.

Tracey, J. Bruce, Hinkin Timothy R., Tannenbaum, Scott I., Mathieu, John E. (2001), are of the opinion that pre-training motivation has direct influence on two levels of training reaction and on application level of cognitive learning. Self-efficacy and motivation are two important factors for relevant training outcomes.

Now, the shift towards OBE has been predominantly propelled because in the modern days it is being used as a framework by various international and local academic accreditation bodies in school and program level surveillance, which many schools invest their efforts into. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) even emphasized the need for the implementation of OBE by issuing a memorandum order (CMO NO. 46, s.2012) entitled, “Policy-Standards to enhance quality assurance in Philippine higher education through an outcome-Based and typology-based QA”. Then, in 2014 it was followed by a release of the Handbook of Typology, Outcomes- Based Education, and Sustainability Assessment.

IV. ANALYSIS AND VIEWPOINTS

A. To Study the Effect of the Outcome-Based Education upon the Professional World

According to (Brandt, R. 1994b, p3) in the modern times it becomes very important and essential that the educators and the public in general understand why society will be better served if schools, colleges and universities across the globe clarify their purposes of imparting quality education, reorganize their curriculum as necessary which can be achieved by implementing Outcome Based Education practices, and through which it can be expected that the students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills which they will imbibe during their years of schooling will be very much needed for success in life and surviving in the business world.

So according to (Darling-Hammond, L. 1994b, p.25) it becomes very important that we rethink the uses of assessment and the need for taking such assessment, since our main concern is not to take these assessments through the traditional way of imparting education, but the goal should be to educate all children well in a way that they really understand the importance of education and its real life implications in order to survive in the business world which is getting more and more fierce and competitive. Since various educational institutes still follow the traditional way of imparting education, it is becoming quite challenging for these students to understand the way of survival and that is becoming one of the major reasons of various stress related problems.

So, taking all the above possibilities and implications into consideration we must contemplate not only whether our suggested innovations will work, but also how we can manage them so that they will flourish in practice, in the field, at a considerable distance from the experts. Including case studies as a part of the curriculum also becomes very important where the students can do enough brainstorming leading them to think what they would have done if they were a company's stakeholders and how they would have solved challenging problems and by practicing such ways it will give them an immense exposure to real life situations. This is where the practical aspects come into education system. Things should also be taken into consideration that under no circumstances the educational institutes should get any credit for promoting promises which are ultimately preaching impractical ideas. (Oliver, J. 1992)

So, it becomes quite evident that how important the practice of "Outcome Based Education" is on the professional world. OBE gives the taste of real-life problems and challenges or the practical aspects of a given theory and that enables the students to think rationally and take decisions practically and tackle various challenges in the road ahead.

B. To Find Out How the Various Skills Acquired Through Outbound Learning Systems Can Be Effective in Professional Practice.

Outbound training or outbound learning is a training method for enhancing team performance through experiential learning. Outbound training generally revolves around activities designed to improve leadership, communication skills, planning, change management, delegation, teamwork, and motivation.

The modern-day organizations need a workforce that besides having the required educational qualification, domain skills and talent must also possess and exhibit interpersonal skills, project management skills, technical skills, cognitive aptitude, leadership skills, and many more.

According to (Bourne, Lynda & Walker, H.T. Derek 2004) human skills are very much important. Humans in any organization deliver performance and results using their diverse skills and creativity. Gone are the days when people used to get into an organization using their report card marks nowadays, companies prefer candidates with skills and techniques rather than rote learning of theories. Companies want candidates who can think rationally and practically taking each possible aspect into consideration, before coming up with any decisions in an organization. That is why it becomes so important to imbibe skills and techniques early, in order to survive in the competitive world. One of the most difficult challenges for managers or supervisors is people management as it requires extensive usage of relationship management skills. Organizations require dexterous employees who are endowed with certain

crucial soft skills such as communication, organizational effectiveness, leadership, problem solving, team building, flexibility, creativity and trustworthiness. According to (Muzio, D., Leblebici, H., Brock, David M., 2014) it has been observed that soft skills can compensate for the lack of customary cognitive intelligence, and they often differentiate adequate and astronomical performance.

According to Donald Kirkpatrick who was Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin in USA and a past president of the American Society for Training and Development suggested that training can be measured or evaluated at four different levels:

- Level 1: Measurement of participants' reaction (during the training)
- Level 2: Measurements of participants' learning in terms of content of the training
- Level 3: Measurement of participants' use of newly learnt skills and knowledge when on the job
- Level 4: Measurement of the organizations return on the training investment

Outdoor Management Development (OMD) program is gradually being acknowledged as a faster way of developing managerial efficacy. Kurt Hahn founded the Outward Bound, in 1941, which is an international network of outdoor education organizations and it aims to foster the personal growth and social skills of participants by using challenging expeditions in the outdoors. Hahn was the first to employ an outdoor experience that was created.

This experience offered challenges and could be used for improvement of the employee as an individual and also the development of groups and team. This Outward-Bound movement (OMD) started by Hahn continues to be operational in education and in the corporate, all over the world even today.

Organizations carry out training programs, both in-house and outdoor, for developing employee skills. Increasingly, companies are supporting the idea of learning outside the work environment, called as Outdoor Training Programs or Outdoor Management Development (OMD) programs.

In this study, these Outdoor training programs are expected to create awareness and promote out of the box thinking.

V. CASE STUDY: TCS (TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES)

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is the biggest Indian multinational Information Technology (IT) service and consulting company. The workforce at TCS is diverse and the organization does a lot in the direction of personal development of its employees besides their professional development, which leads to the leveraging of its key resources.

Outbound training is an activity-based training program for the employees of an organization that aims at employee development based on experiential learning technique of “learning-by-doing” and “hands-on-experience” that comprises of sports, adventure, team building activities, fun activities, that helps the employees learn and grow on the personal front by means of bringing about the desired learning outcomes.

TCS has always staunchly endorsed a progressive work environment. It is one of the world’s largest employers of women. Its progressive policies include extended parental leave, mentoring program for junior women employees, special leadership development programs for senior employees, parenting workshops for working parents, etc.

TCS mentors its employees in order to groom them for higher roles under its flagship leadership development program called Ambassador Corps- a learning and development program that prepares its employees to take on global sales roles.

TCS has leadership development programs that are modelled on Harvard Business School courses. It also invites renowned faculty members from Harvard and other top institutions to conduct leadership development programs for its senior executives.

TCS’ ASCENT- “The Foundation for Your Leadership Journey” is a learning program that focuses on coaching and equipping first-time managers in Project Leader/Project Manager (PL/PM) roles to deliver high-end business results, transformative leadership and to become a reliable helmsman for success. ASCENT is a full-fledged, six-day instructor-led workshop which uses synchronized learning from multiple resources that make the participants engage in fruitful experiential and self-directed learning.

At TCS, college hires enter through Initial Learning Program (ILP) which trains them on latest technology, soft skills and an introduction to TCS culture. Continuous learning is offered through its digital platforms, hackathons, boot camps, etc. TCS conducts various programming contests such as TESTimony, EngiNX, Game On, and Code Vita to spot and hire top talent.

TCS believes in a unique way of teamwork and team building. It makes the point that those agile programs that have teams which are dispersed, distributed and are location-independent can more quickly develop new processes and systems that cater well to customer needs. However, only after assessing the organization, choosing the right location model, and improving the agile capabilities of the team does it decide on team building, because after observing several hundred projects that depend on location-independent agile teams and after studying the challenges involved, it becomes certain that one way of working does not fit the bill always.

TCS’ “Digital Re imagination” is all about creating fundamentally new projects whose foundation lies again on team building. It all starts with a Kick-off week which aims to create a cohesive team by creating a bond among the team members who come from diverse fields and backgrounds. The kick-off week includes various fun and engaging activities. The kick-off week includes team building activities, touring of the Tech shop and its resources, learning design methodologies, training on prototyping and all this aims at nothing but building cohesion among the team members.

Teamwork and Team building have always been a priority for TCS as can be reinforced with the following statement from the former CEO and Managing Director of TCS, N. Chandrasekaran, “With a strong team, you get a lot of things done.” Career Hub of TCS also provides mentoring programs to its employees and helps in their career growth. TCS follows the Tata Group Safety Policy and its Occupational Health and Safety Policy (OHS) to ensure the well-being of its employees. TCS regularly conducts counselling sessions on domestic issues, personal stress and relationship issues. Training and Awareness sessions about self-harm are also conducted.

TCS continuously and on a regular basis undertakes various outbound training programs that include leadership development programs, team-building programs, behavioural skills training, employee engagement programs, sports, team outings, recreational activities, adventures and outdoor programs that augment its employees’ overall personality development. Without a hint of doubt, therefore, TCS is one of the best learning organizations that aids both the personal and professional development of its employees.

VI. CONCLUSION

The salient aspects in implementation of OBE at various levels of institutions and their possible outcomes have been critically analysed and discussed in this paper taking the objectives into consideration. It has been found that various educational institutes still follow the traditional way of imparting education. It is becoming quite challenging for the students to understand the way of survival and that is becoming one of the major reasons of various mental health and work-stress related problems. Now for the successful implementation of OBE it is very much essential that the institutions should concentrate on content delivery and assessment methods in line with the current trends in the industry and in the business world, so that the students can develop themselves accordingly due to successful implementation of OBE. Not only this, it has also been seen that various business organisations across the world are resorting to training programs, both in-house and outdoor, for developing employee skills. Increasingly, companies are supporting the idea of learning outside the work environment, called as Outdoor Training Programs or Outdoor Management Development (OMD) programs. So, from this paper we can learn how both the educational

institutes and business organizations are actually trying to implement the concept of OBE in order to make sure that all the students and the employees can maintain a proper work-life balance which will ultimately lead to greater productivity and self-satisfaction with very less “Job Burnout and Chronic-stress”, and various health related problems.

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