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Short Communication

Seriousness and responsiveness of the myth of campus selection by management institutes and corporate

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ABSTRACT

Recruitment is the process of identifying and attempting to attract candidates who are capable of filling vacancies existing and likely to arise appropriately. Selection is generally made from available qualified applicants who have potential to meet the organization's needs. As such, effective sourcing and selection decides efficient recruitments.

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1. Introduction

Among external sources of recruitment, educational institutions like Business Management institutes, professional colleges and universities are excellent sources of potential employees particularly for entry level positions in organizations.¹ Although the graduates from these institutes lack work experience, they have conceptual and technical knowledge that organizations are looking for.

Though the cost of campus recruitment is stated to be relatively higher than other methods of traditional and modern sourcing, the importance of campus selection for management graduates has gained grounds for various reasons. Mainly it is because; the jobs in business in today's volatile market have become increasingly technical and complex to the point where specific knowledge and skills are demanded. Consequently, many companies make special efforts to establish constructive relationship with educational institutions and also learned faculty. Nature of assignment, degree of responsibility and possibilities of the future expansion of organizations and advancement of

candidates influence the campus hiring.

1.1. Demand for management graduates

Increased economic activities, burgeoning service industry, intervention of IT solutions like ERP and SAP even in the manufacturing industries, have put an unprecedented demand on management graduates. The underlying reason being multi-level multi-tasking abilities of management graduates who are exposed to the functions of merchandising and management. Flattening structure of organizations, shrinking time zones, globalization of activities, increase in the IT, ITES and BPO sector business have further accentuated demand for management graduates with varied basic qualifications. The shrinking time zones, right sizing organizational structure require any number of knowledge workers to main positions at different levels.² In service industry, knowledge workers are preferred over others at the functional, operational and even at front line levels unlike in manufacturing units. The demand is expected to grow much more in the coming days due to the shifting pattern of economy, India emerging as a strong market, tremendous change in domestic and international

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trade and also progressively catching up market oriented life styles.³ To cater this latent demand, the country is equipping by way of opening up the education sector; particularly in the management education field.

1.2. *Mushrooming management institutions*

When education has become more of a business proposition with better yield and assured returns, Business Management institutions are perceived to be greener pastures with higher ROI. Apart from the state run institutes and universities, private self-financed universities, business colleges and schools have sprang up all over, offering PG degrees, diplomas, certificates of various hues and versions. Some institutes are offering simultaneous certificates of more than one for the same course and examination and few even from 'foreign' institutions. These bodies are offering management education through regular, semi-regular, correspondence, on-line, off-line, one time and various other methodologies.

Even selections of students are also based on varying standards. Today, management education of PG level is available with almost no basic qualification. The reason for this kind of unprecedented 'foray' into the market is the value addition by the way of management education and certification. From basic qualification to syllabus, affiliations to accreditation, fee structure to course structure, everything is varying from institute to institute which seem to be vying to set new standards.

1.3. *Placement as a sweet lure*

Almost all management institutes today have made placements as a plank for attracting students. Every institute has equipped itself with an active placement wing to market its 'products'. The bait can be seen in the advertisements and attractive brochures.⁴ The prospectus or handouts of the institutes boast of their effectiveness by listing the organizations that have been sourcing from the institute. Some smarter institutes have made working/on-job studying i.e., earn while you learn as a grand hook and a designer bait. 'Placement ability' is certainly being viewed as the new rating standard by the student community of the business management institutes. Even organizations are cooperating willy-nilly for achieving better resourcing and bargaining power. Thus, for the management institutes today, campus selection has become a marketing compulsion rather than their capability conviction.

1.4. *An effective tool blunted*

Campus Selection is a very effective tool both for companies and institutes. Companies can match the specifications of the knowledge and skill required for the job with direct relationship and evaluation in consultation with institute and faculty. This makes the selection process easy, apt and

reliable. In such an event the person selected is sure to perform and bring laurels to the institute and credit to the selection process. Further, the institute which has 'placed' its person can be assured of the product to be an anchor for further and future placements by which the relationship of the organization and institute gets strengthened and reinforced.⁵ It is supposed to be a win-win situation at both ends. This also helps to a larger extent as a brand building activity for both.

But if the students' admission criteria to the institutes, i.e., the input level are at variance it is bound to have larger variance at the output level which could render the whole exercise ritual in futility driven by compulsions. To circumvent this, a few institutes have invented newer methods of student leasing, placing them temporarily in their own research, marketing or consultancy wings and after that letting the products to fend for themselves. This has affected the market value of institutes and firms who co-operated for such exercises.

1.5. *Sorcerer's apprentice or devil's advocate*

When the newly recruited becomes a success and turns out to be a performer, he symbolizes whatever he and the institute stand for. At this level he could be a touch stone for the institute. But if the product characteristics are weak at the institute level and profile of the job at the organizational level or even the firm itself or the climate of the work do not suit, he could become advocates diabolic proposing object whatever the institute stands for or the firm is looking for. Studies conducted regarding the attrition rate within one year of placement or campus selection has thrown much light into this aspect. Though increasing opportunities due to higher economic activities and widening horizon of the person could be the reasons, the feeling of disillusionment is attributed to be the prime factor for change.⁶ This is vindicated by and large as they shall be moving just horizontally rather than vertically.

1.6. *Criticality of early period*

As Pygmalion theory in management has established, managerial expectations have their magical influence on young men. As the recruits mature and gain experience their self-image hardens, and they begin to see what they are. Their own aspirations and expectation of superiors become increasingly a reality in their performance. Thus, the early period in a business organization when a young man can be strongly influenced by managerial expectations, are critical in determining his future performance and career progress.⁷ Effects of expectations by an exceedingly successful manager on the performance of the new recruit are tremendous. This is established beyond any doubt by the land mark studies conducted by Berlew and Hall in American Telephone Co.

1.7. First boss scripts young man's career

A new recruit's first boss is likely to be the most influential person in his career. If this manager is unable or unwilling to develop the skills the young man needs or if he sets lower standards than he is capable of achieving, the recruit's self-image is impaired. As a result he will develop negative attitudes towards his job, his employer and in all probability his career and the institute which could not equip him and place him suitably. Since his chances of building a successful career with his employer declines rapidly, he leaves the job if he has high aspirations with a view to find better opportunities and in search of greener pastures.⁸ If on the other hand, he accepts the low performance or no performance as his standard, he vegetates and becomes an anti-thesis for what was intended. By all probabilities his career graph will be like an ECG report of a dead heart. In case he finds his manager a role model who helps him to achieve and extend his potential, he blooms and builds a firm foundation for a successful future and career.

1.8. Lopsided campus recruitment

Even in the process of campus selection the 'picking order' depends upon the quality of the company's manager. Successful managers pick their subordinates carefully. They will sense the quality of success objectively, subjectively and at times intuitively. Studies have shown that they have a knack to select the best.¹ Even if they make mistakes in the selection process they do not 'give up' on the recruited as it means giving up on them.

Now, how many organizations put the successful managers; the winners, for campus recruitment process from management institutes and it is anybody's guess. Normally it is handled by the front line officials from the field or from HR and rarely by the team head.⁹ Even the initial reporting of the new recruits is to the executives at the lower rung.

Very rarely the new graduates work closely with experienced successful middle or senior level executives who can mould them. Normally, they are 'supervised' by the first line managers with least experience and/or less effective. If they are least experienced, they have little to train or inspire. If they are more experienced 'oldies', they have remained in the base line as they have been not so successful and are found to be lacking the competence to make it to higher level.¹⁰ Either way, the productive capabilities of the new recruit is neither tested nor honed. As a consequence, there is every possibility that these young men recruited from business colleges begin their careers in actual business organization under the unfavorable, uninspiring and at times worst conditions and circumstances. Once these new recruits come to know or realize that their abilities are not being used or developed, they naturally turn to be negative towards their jobs,

employers, institutes and may be even to business careers.

2. Conclusion

It is anybody's guess as to how many management institutes and organizations are aware of the disservice they are doing by the kind of marketing their products and services. The new graduates of these management schools with varied background and standing are pulled in and pushed out which may do an irreparable loss to their personal image, self-esteem and also erode the image of institution and in turn the faculty. From the organization's point, perhaps they are yet to diagnose the problem and seriousness of the issue. The point of failure of the young men could be at their own doorstep. But the question that grows bigger day by day along with the growing management education industry and remains unanswered as the management industry's greatest challenge; who is responsible for the under development, under utilization and ineffective management of the valuable resource; its young aspiring managerial professional talent.

3. Source of Funding

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4. Conflict of Interest

None.

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