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The Preference for Teaching Methods by Students and Professors in the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University

تفضيلات الطلبة والأساتذة لطرق التدريس في كلية العلوم الإدارية بجامعة الكويت

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the preference of students and their professors for 17 specific teaching methods in the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University. A questionnaire has been designed and distributed to a sample of 315 students and another questionnaire was distributed among a sample of 41 professors. Towards the professors the questionnaire probed their preference as well as the actual use of these 17 teaching methods. Finding shows that the students prefer traditional teaching methods. They prefer lecture as their first choice, second choice is teacher student discussion and then group discussion. There is a similarity between student preference and the preference of their professors for teaching methods. There is also a strong similarity between professors' preference and their actual use of teaching methods.

Keywords: teaching methods, preference of students, preference of professors, actual use of teaching methods

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص تفضيلات كل من الطلبة والأساتذة في كلية العلوم الإدارية - جامعة الكويت للطرق المختلفة للتدريس. ومن المعلوم أنه إذا تطابقت تفضيلات الطلبة مع تفضيلات الأساتذة كان الأمر جيد. وسيكون الوضع مثالياً لو كان هذا التطابق متماشي مع ما يقوم به الأساتذة فعلاً من تدريس. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف فقد تم تصميم قائمة أسئلة تم توزيعها على عينه من طلبة الكلية والسؤال في هذه القائمة عن درجة تفضيل الطلبة لعدد كبير من طرق التدريس أما القائمة الموجهة إلى الأساتذة فقد احتوت على سؤالين أساسيين هما درجة التفضيل للطرق المختلفة للتدريس، ودرجة الاستخدام الفعلي لهذه الطرق. وتشير النتائج إلى تفضيل الطلبة لطرق التدريس التقليدية، على الأخص طريقة المحاضرة، والمناقشة بين الأستاذ والطالب، والمناقشة الجماعية. كما تشير النتائج أيضاً إلى تطابق بين تفضيلات الطلبة لطرق التدريس وبين تفضيلات الأساتذة لطرق التدريس، وأن هناك تطابق بين هذه التفضيلات وبين ما يستخدمه فعلاً الأساتذة من طرق التدريس.

Introduction

In a study sponsored by the American Assembly of Collegiate School of Business (AACSB) and the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (AACSB, 1998), results revealed that students' satisfaction for the educational system in business school depends on the effectiveness of professors and their teaching methods.

Many teaching methods are available to professors. Some methods provide concepts and information, other methods enhance social interactions among students. Some other methods prefer information processing. For example, working in groups allows students to participate, but the group sometimes get side tracked from the objective. Discussions pool ideas and experience from the group, but a small number of students may dominate in the scene. Lectures give a good coverage of concepts, but students may get distracted. Projects encourage for self-directed problem solving and creativity, but most of the attention is placed on the final report and a little is given to the process itself (Dean and Hubbell, 2012).

The aim of this study is to describe the preference of both students and professors for different teaching methods and the actual use of these methods by the professors. The study starts by reviewing the literature in this area. This is followed by the methodology, results and practical implications.

Selection of the Teaching

Method

The selection of proper teaching method depend on many aspects. What educational objective should the college and professors seek to attain is an im-

portant aspect. Specification of the content of course and its scientific domain is another aspect. One cannot deny the preference of professors to use specific instructional method. The characteristics of students and their behavior is another important factor affecting the choice of the teaching method by professors (Tyler, 2013).

The characteristics of the course taught have an impact on the selection of teaching method. Some marketing courses, for example, need experiential learning approach, which will focus on building the skills of students. New technology, specifically information technology is availing the opportunity to use specific teaching methods such as simulation and management games (Young.et.al., 2003).

Culture is another aspect that has an impact on teaching method. Different cultures have different history, values, behavior, and social experiences. This will result in different teaching strategies and methods. Western education is influenced by pragmatism, democracy, problem solving and individuality. For East Asian countries, culture respects social harmony, human relationship, respect, hierarchical authority and cooperation (Anderson, 1988; Chuang, 2012).

Professors' Preference for Teaching Methods

In the absence of guidelines and without training in teaching methods, professors tend to use the methods and materials with which they are most familiar, often those that they experienced as students (Weston and Cranton, 2012).

Research in teaching methods shows that professors were and still using traditional methods of teaching. Specifically, professors prefer to use lectures. They are utilizing lectures all the time, or part of the time (Csapo and Wilson, 2001). In spite of the fact that many professors are competent in using different teaching methods, they prefer to use them along with lecture. Combining lectures with other methods yields effective teaching/learning results (Sarawat,2014).

Business schools are introducing new and creative methods of teaching, along with the fast advancing information technology. In this case schools can use methods such as: distance learning, internet-based teaching methods and management games in achieving progressive teaching goals. Besides, the nature of new courses of management and the societal pressure from business organizations to develop new skills are pushing schools to use new methods of teaching. Some schools, hence, are overhauling their teaching systems in many different aspects; courses, materials, text books, teachers, students, information technology and mainly creative teaching methods (Becker and Watts, 1995). However, many professors still prefer using traditional methods of teaching and they resist using the new creative methods. Reasons for resistance are due to ignorance of new methods, lack of training, unsuitable teaching settings, low motivation and lack of monetary and moral incentives (Csapo and Wilson, 2001; Unger 2010; Sarawat, 2014)

Students’ Preference for Teaching Methods

College students are good source of judging the quality and usefulness of teaching methods. In class students are exposed to all kinds of teaching methods. Accordingly, they can express their perception about these methods. Students are valid and reliable source to report how these methods are informative, amusing and effective (Ory, 2001). Most universities allow students to anonymously evaluate their professors. Administrators in Colleges can use results in hiring, promotion, retention, tenure and rewarding professors (Franklin, 2001).

Research yields conflicting results about students’ preference for teaching methods (Sarawat, 2014). Most of the results find that the most preferred method of teaching is lecture. This method is usually well organized and helps students in covering all the material in the course (Qualters, 2001; Sarawat,2014). In the same direction, it has been found that students prefer lecture when it is used with other methods such as discussion. This combination avails for active learning. This mean that students are engaging in discussion and learning and not passively listening to the lecturer (Ismail, 2014; Carpenter, 2006). Sometimes, students do not favor this active learning because it consume lots of in-class time. Moreover, students experience anxiety when using the active learning (Qualters, 2001). However there are some evidence that students prefer other teaching methods such as presentations, projects, exercises and discussions (Casado, 2000; Hunt et.al., 2003).

Objective of the Study

The study aims at the following:

1. Describing the preference of students and professors for teaching methods.
2. Identifying the similarity between the preference of students and the preference of professors for teaching methods
3. Identifying the similarity between the preference of students for teaching methods and the actual use of these methods by professors
4. Identifying the similarity between the preference of professors for teaching methods and their actual use of them

Variables, Measurement and Sample

1. Preference of students and professors for teaching methods refers to the degree that students prefer certain teaching method. This is measured by a direct question to students and professors to specify the degree of their preference to 17 different teaching methods, the preference is specified on a 5 point scale, where 5 means “totally prefer it” and 1 means “not at all preferred”

2. Actual use of methods of teaching: This refers to how far a professor is using the same 17 teaching methods. This is measured by a direct question to professor to specify how often they use the teaching methods. This is done of a 5 point scale, where 5 means “ always use” and 1 means “don’t use it at all”.

The sample of the study consists of 315 students from the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University. Students were among those who declared their areas of specialization like: accounting, management, marketing and management information system. This was necessary to make sure that student have spent few years in the college and accordingly they know the different methods of teaching. The sample include 41 professors, all of them have Ph.D. degree from reputed universities.

Results

Table (1) shows the descriptive statistics for the preference of students, professors and the actual use of teaching methods by professors. The table includes sample size, means , standard deviations and rank for teaching methods.

Table (1) Descriptive Statistics

	Preference of students				Preference of professors				Actual use by professors			
	Sample	Mean	SD	Rank	Sample	Mean	SD	Rank	Sample	Mean	SD	Rank
Lecture	312	4.29	0.87	1	40	4.5	0.75	1	40	4.6	0.81	1
Individual discussion	315	4.22	0.94	2	41	4.49	0.93	2	40	4.3	0.76	2
Group discussion	310	4.09	0.97	3	40	3.85	1.1	3	39	3.38	1.23	4
Individual in-class exercises	314	3.15	1.35	8	38	3.29	1.31	9	37	3.08	1.36	6
Group in-class exercises	313	3.88	1.93	4	38	3.24	1.3	10	38	2.95	1.37	9
Home works	313	2.73	1.33	11.5	37	3.68	0.97	4	39	3.46	1.35	3
Short cases	312	3.45	1.28	7	37	3.43	1.21	7	38	2.84	1.37	10
Long cases	313	1.99	1.08	17	37	2.14	1.34	15.5	37	1.81	1.05	14
Individual project	314	2.72	1.40	13	38	3.13	1.38	12	38	2.61	1.41	11
Group project	312	3.49	1.32	5	37	3.46	1.43	6	37	3.19	1.54	5
Extra readings	312	2.43	1.32	16	39	3.36	1.59	8	38	3.0	1.25	7
Field trips	313	3.46	1.45	6	39	2.92	1.35	13.5	38	1.74	0.95	15
Workshops	307	3.11	1.28	9	39	2.92	1.24	13.5	38	2.21	1.12	13
Presentations	313	2.71	1.41	14	39	3.54	1.3	5	38	2.97	1.46	8
Role playing	310	2.45	1.3	15	38	2.13	1.23	17	36	1.44	0.94	16
Management games	313	2.73	1.33	11.5	36	2.14	1.22	15.5	35	1.34	0.73	17
Internet activities	314	3.1	1.35	10	41	3.2	1.36	11	40	2.33	1.33	12

It is evident that students prefer lectures than individual discussion, group discussion, group in-class exercises and group projects. Students don't prefer long cases, extra readings, role playing presentations, individual projects, management games and home works.

When it comes to professors they prefer using the lecture method, indi-

vidual discussion, home work, presentation and group projects. Professors tend to actually use the lecture method, individual discussion, home works, group discussions and in-class exercises.

Table (2) shows results related to the similarity (and correlation) between the different variables of the study.

Table (2) Correlations between Variables of the Study

Relationships	r	Sig:
Correlation between preference of students and the preference of professors for teaching methods	.59	0.014
Correlation between preference of students and the actual use of professors for teaching methods	.54	0.024
Correlation between preference of professors their actual use of for teaching methods	.95	0.000

Table (2) shows that there is significant correlation between the preference of students and the preference of professors for teaching methods. At the same time there is a significant correlation between the preference of students and actual use of professors for teaching methods. There is also a significant relation between the preference of professors for teaching methods and their actual use of these methods.

Discussion

Students of the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University clearly prefer lectures as a teaching method. This is followed by individual and group discussions then group discus-

sion inside the class room and group projects. The first three methods show that students prefer traditional teaching methods. Students in traditional societies prefer traditional teaching methods (Chuang,2012; Csapo and Wilson,20-01). Professors share their students in the same results. The similarity between the preference of both students and professors may be a good predictor for the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Chamrro Premuzic et.al., 2007; Tulbure, 2012).

Table (3) shows the ranks of the most preferred teaching methods for both students and their professors.

Table (3) Most Preferred Teaching Methods

	Students	Professors
Lecture	1	1
Individual discussion	2	2
Group discussion	3	3
Individual in-class exercises	4	10
Group project	5	6
Home works	11.5	4
Presentations	14	5
Short case study	7	7

There is a perfect match between students and their professors with regard to the first 3 teaching methods; lecture, individual discussion and group discussion are considered the most traditional teaching methods. This result goes with some previous studies (Qualters,2001; Sarawat,2014). Some studies refer to the fact that using lecture with some other teaching methods makes teaching and learning more effective (Ismail,2014; Carpenter, 2006).

Students prefer teaching methods that are administered in groups. In group students feel better participation, safer and ability to complete topics and home works from different perspective (Dean and Hubble,2012).

Professors prefer using home works. It is seen as a good method to apply th-

eries and principles. Home works are also a good evaluative techniques for students. Students do not prefer it. It is an extra burden. Students can tolerate home work if professors can change it into in-class exercises, yet professors loose some of their control over students in the class room (Dean and Hubble, 2012).

Short cases have a peculiar feature. It is well preferred by both professors and students, however the actual use of it is at the minimal level. Short cases are not available and professors are not well trained to use them. When it comes to long cases, both students and professors don't prefer them. Both parties see it as a waste of time to the point that they will not cover all aspects of the

course. Both of them feel uncertain in steps of using long cases (Dean and Hubbell, 2012).

Researches in the field shows that when there is a match between preference of professors for teaching methods and their actual use of these methods, it is expected that teaching and learning will be highly effective (Chammoro – Premuzic et.al., 2077; Tulbure, 2012). The current study indicates a high significant match between these two variables. Add to this, the preference of students goes with this match.

Contemporary trends in business made it necessary for organization to ask for new skills. Traditional teaching methods may be not enough in training business students the new skills. Fortunately, there are many new teaching methods, if they are used with the lecture, teaching and learning will be more effective (Kumar, 2014). There are few things that limit the use of these new methods. These are the lack of technology and resources from the side of business schools, and the lack of training and motivation from the side of professors (Unger, 2010).

Recommendation

There is a great need to improve the skills of the professors in the College of Business Administration, Kuwait University and in the Gulf region with regard to using the new teaching methods. These methods are role playing, management games, cases, workshops and internet related activities. This intention is feasible through training programs and by establishing teaching and learning centers in business colleges. The main function of these centers is to conduct research in the field to avail modern teaching technology and to develop teaching methods such as long and short cases, management games workshops and role playing activities.

Conclusion

There is a significant match among the preferences of students, the preferences of professors and the actual use of teaching methods by the professors. The traditional methods are the most preferred ones and if they are used with the some other methods, the learning and teaching activities will be more effective. This situation needs more resources, training and incentives.

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