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Active Learning Methodology (ALM) implemented in Global Country Study Report (GCSR): An Innovative Pedagogy in Management Education

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Abstract: ***Active Learning Methodology fulfils a long-felt need of re-orientation of the classroom process Research and anecdotal evidence overwhelmingly support the claim that students learn best when they engage with course material and actively participate in their learning. Yet the traditional teaching model has positioned students as passive receptors into which teachers deposit concepts and information. The present study is carried out to check the perception of Management faculties of Gujarat Technological University (GTU) regarding teaching methodology used to impart a knowledge on a unique course on Global Country Study Report (GCSR) which is compulsory subject in the 3rd and 4th semester of MBA offered by GTU. The course is very unique in nature and the delivery of the same subject is also practice oriented compare to other courses of GTU-MBA. The objective of this study is to identify the factors with the help of exploratory factor analysis. The finding shows that by implementing Active learning methodology in management education would generate extra ordinary result in term of development of entrepreneurship skill for the students.***

Keywords: GCSR (Global Country Study Report), Active Learning, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Perception, GTU (Gujarat Technological University).

I. INTRODUCTION OF ACTIVE LEARNING

There are different range of substitutes for the term "active learning" i.e. learning through play, technology based learning, activity based learning, group work, project method, etc. the important factor behind these are some significant qualities of the methodology of active learning. Active learning is more than just listening. It requires active participation of each and every student. Students must be doing things and simultaneously think about the work done and the purpose behind it so that they can enhance their higher order thinking capabilities. This methodology is used to impart the knowledge of management education and the programme is characterized by the use of teaching styles which actively involve the participants in locating and using relevant information, and which promote personal responsibility, initiative, independence, reflection, self-evaluation, self-confidence and co-operation. The term Active Learning is not new for the teachers who are using it at schooling level now it the intuitions of higher learning have searched for Active Learning Methodologies. It was gratifying to discover that University departments, Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary science, Institutes of Geological sciences and a host of others have also generated much documentation on the subject. Active Learning involves students directly and engages them actively in the learning process itself. Students are involved in all stages of planning, design, execution and evaluation.

II. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE LEARNING

Research has shown that students learn best when they engage with course material and actively participate in their learning. Yet the traditional teaching model has positioned students as passive receptors into which teachers deposit concepts and information. It was only one way communication from the teacher only. The active learning model has emphasized the delivery

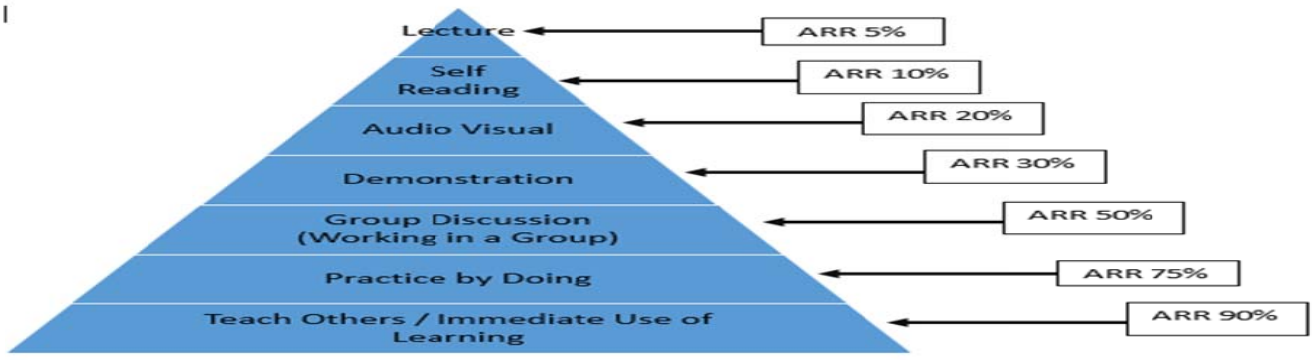
of course material and rewarded students adept at reflecting the course content in assessments. The spoils have tended to go to students with good short-term memories and reading skills.

The term "active learning" has been more understood intuitively than defined in commonly accepted terms. As a result many educators say that all learning is active. Are not students actively involved while listening to lectures or presentations in the classroom? Research however, suggests that students must do more than just listen: They must read, write, discuss or be engaged in solving problems (Chickering and Gamson 1987),. Further, students must be engaged in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, to be actively involved. Thus strategies promoting activities that involve students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing may be called active learning.

Bonwell and Eison state "...that students must do more than just listen: They must read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems. Most important, to be actively involved, students must engage in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Within this context, it is proposed that strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing."

Use of these techniques in the classroom is vital because of their powerful impact upon students' learning. Studies have shown that students prefer strategies promoting active learning to traditional lectures. Other research studies evaluating students' achievement have demonstrated that many strategies promoting active learning are comparable to lectures in promoting the mastery of content but superior to lectures in promoting the development of students' skills in thinking and writing. Some cognitive research has shown that a large number of individuals have learning styles that are best approached using pedagogical techniques other than lecturing. Below given learning Pyramid shows the Average Retention Rate (ARR) of various techniques used by teacher for teaching.

Learning Pyramid:



Source: "Active Learning and Teaching Methodologies": A Report published by Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Support Service

Above pyramid shows that the ARR of various techniques is different to each other. The lowest ARR is of Lecture method used and it is only 5%. Lecture method of learning is also known as passive learning. ARR of self-reading is doubled than lecture. It means that the student retain more than then they hear in the lecture while they read by themselves. That may be the reason for not attending classes. Recently teachers in higher education are using audio visual tools for teaching and learning process. The ARR of this method is 20% which is doubled than self-reading. Graphics with audio visual effects are used to explain the concepts and theories at the institutes of higher education. It can be seen that Demonstration attains ARR of 30% and in the technical courses this methodology is used extensively. Group Studies, Group Discussion or Working in a Group on a given topic may attains ARR of 40%. It is clear that when students work with their pears they learn faster and retain for longer period of time. The Pyramid says that Average Retention Rate of Practice by Doing is 75%, i.e. when students do the task by their own and practice it repeatedly they learn in a better way. The highest ARR attaints by the method i.e. using the learning and teaching it to others i.e. the ARR is of 90%. Many a times it is being observed that the intelligent student in the class always teaches other students and by doing so actually he revises his/her learning.

III. Structure of Global Country Study Report (GCSR)

Looking at the prospects of globalization, GTU has introduced the Global MBA program in August 2011. In order to be useful for 'Global Economy' of today, every MBA student is required to study, for two semesters, the culture, geography and business environment of one country, with a focus on Asia and Africa. The two-semester course of Global Country Study Report has been introduced at the 3rd and the 4th semesters in MBA program and the students are encouraged to establish contacts with businesses and scholars in the country, which they are studying. Under this Global Country Study Report (GCSR) Program, a class of 30 or more students is required to study one country. GCSR program is, by far, the largest such program of any University. Vision of GCSR is Scaling up the Existing Regional/National Business Practices on Global Platform and its objectives are i) To prepare GTU's Management students for their globally competitive future, ii) To impart the knowledge of international business among management students, iii) To understand the cross cultural diversity in implementing sound business policies and creating the knowledge economy, iv) To enhance the skills of management gurus as an expert of International trade and v) To develop the higher order thinking skills to meet global competitiveness. GCSR (Global Country Study Report) was introduced with a vision to enable the students to enrich their management knowledge with global perspectives in competitive scenarios. Each class of 30 or more students have been allotted a country from the university. The student carries out this practical study in small Groups of 6 Students each, partly in Semester III and partly in Semester IV during the 2nd year of MBA program. At the end of the project, group of students would submit a business plan for bilateral trade between India and a county of study with special reference to a specific product of specific industry. Year wise number of countries studied by the MBA students is mentioned here.

Sr. No.	Academic Year	No. of Countries Studied
1	2011-12	48
2	2012-13	96
3	2013-14	109
4	2014-15	110
5	2015-16	103

IV. Review of Literature

Faculty should make greater use of active modes of teaching and require that students take greater responsibility for their learning (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984).

Astin, (1985) Students learn by becoming involved . . . Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience.

Strauss & Fulwiler, (1989/1990) Experience makes it increasingly clear that purely verbal presentation - lecturing at large groups of students who passively expect to absorb ideas that actually demand intense deductive and inductive mental activity coupled with personal experience - leave virtually nothing significant or permanent in the student mind.

Bonwell & Eison, (1991) Teaching strategies that promote active learning have five common elements. These include, 1) student involvement beyond mere listening; 2) more emphasis on the development of skills and less on transmittal of information; 3) student involvement in higher order thinking skills; 4) student involvement in activities, such as reading, discussing, writing; and 5) an emphasis on students' exploration of values and attitudes.

Springer et al. (1998) similarly reported a large meta-analysis of studies examining small group learning in SMET courses (i.e., Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology). Compared to traditional lecture-based instruction, various forms of small group learning produced higher achievement test scores, more positive student attitudes, and higher levels of student persistence.

Bligh (2000) The lecture method is a relatively poor instructional approach for maintaining student attention). Research findings suggest that student concentration during lectures begins to decline after 10-15 minutes (e.g., Stuart & Rutherford, 1978). A summary of the different types of evidence offered to support this assertion is provided by Bligh (2000, pgs 44-56).

Wilson & Korn (2007) have both reviewed this literature and questioned this claim, (i.e., largely by raising legitimate methodological and interpretive questions about the early yet often cited studies done in this area). Their critique, however, does not challenge the consistent findings of recent research demonstrating that when compared to ―traditional 50-minute classroom lectures, ―interactive lectures produce superior educational outcomes.

Knight & Wood (2005), in an article titled ―Teaching More by Lecturing Less, report the results of a study completed in a large, upper-division Biology lecture course. When compared to students‘ performance when the course was taught using a traditional lecture format, students who were taught with (a) in-class activities in place of some lecture time, (b) collaborative work in student groups, and (c) increased in-class formative assessment and (d) group discussion were observed to make significantly higher learning gains and better conceptual understanding.

Simmons & DiStasi (2008) describe active learning activities that require students to use a variety of learning techniques, promote retention of large amounts of information, and encourage greater social interaction through peer discussion.

House, (2008) An ethnographic study done in Japan where students were engaged in cooperative learning experiences supports the benefits of active learning strategies in boosting content learning. The results of the study led the author to conclude that students who engaged in frequent cooperative learning experiences during classroom instruction increased their knowledge and attitudes about science.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem:

There are diverse range of alternatives for the term active learning like learning through play, technology based learning, activity based learning, group work, project method, etc. the underlying factor behind these are some significant qualities and characteristics of active learning. GTU has implemented all these techniques in its unique course of Global Country Study Report (GCSR) of MBA. It is very important to see professor’s opinion on the same. So, the statement of problem is “Active Learning Methodology (ALM) implemented in Global Country Study Report (GCSR): An Innovative Pedagogy in Management Education”

Objectives of Study:

To study the structure of Global Country Study Report (GCSR) of Management Program at GTU

To explore the factors of active learning used in the country study project

To suggest ways to improve effectiveness of active learning methodology into GCSR

Data Collection Method:

Current study is purely based on primary data which is collected through structured questionnaire. A structured questionnaire was prepared and circulated among the faculty members of the GTU affiliated institutes and response was received regarding the application of active learning methodology used by them to teach GCSR. The convenient method of sampling is used to collect data.

Population and Sample Size:

The faculty members who are working in the GTU affiliated institutes would constitute the population for this study. As far as sample is concerned, the responses of 118 faculties have been received and analysis of the same has been reported in this paper.

Scope of the Study:

Current study is based on the teacher's opinion regarding implementation of active learning methodology in GCSR subject. The current study is conducted considering only one subject of Management Program i.e. GCSR. Geographically the study covers opinion of the faculty members who are taking / guiding the students for GCSR and responses are also collected from the GCSR coordinators.

Tools and Techniques of Analysis:

Present study is based on primary data which is collected through structured questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis tool is used to identify the factors of active leaning which is used by the teachers of GTU affiliated institutes. Cronbach's Alpha is also used to check the reliability of the data which is collected.

Limitations of the Study

Current study is conducted by considering GCSR subject only. There are also various initiatives taken by GTU to implement Practice oriented methodology in almost all course of its Management Program. Compare to population the sample size is small, so the result cannot be generalized.

VI. Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Reliability Statistics

Table 2

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.748	24

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. Before using exploratory factor analysis, it is required to check the internal reliability of statements which were asked in the structured questionnaire. Technically speaking, Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test - it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency). Here, the value of alpha is 0.748 which is greater than 0.70 so, it can be concluded that the data is reliable to carry exploratory factor analysis.

2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

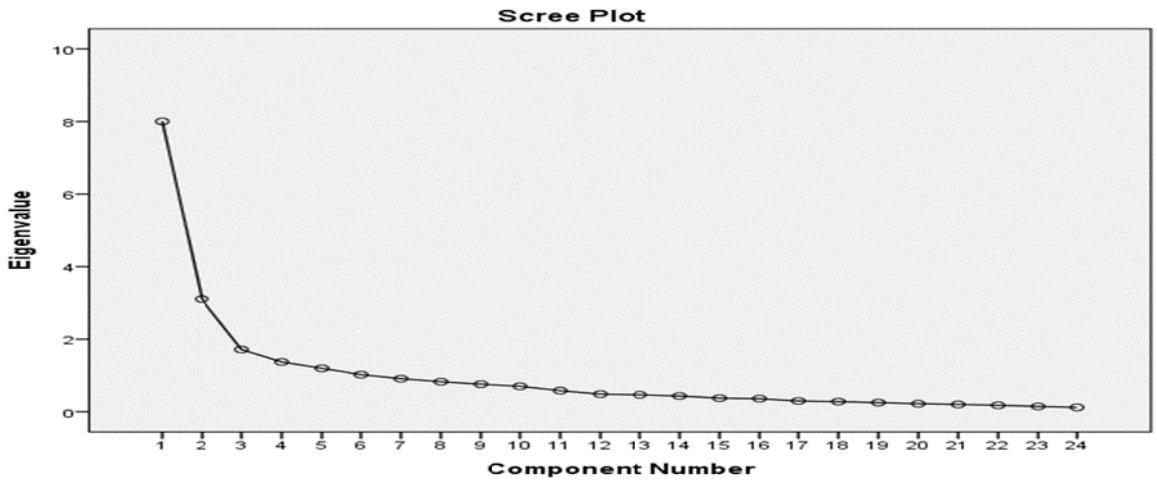
Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.849
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1544.978
	df	276

	Sig.	.000

KMO & Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a measure of sampling adequacy that is recommended to check the case to variable ratio for the analysis being conducted. In most academic and business studies, KMO & Bartlett's test play an important role for accepting the sample adequacy. The value of the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy for this set of variables is 0.849, which would be labeled as 'meritorious'. Also, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity relates to the significance of the study and thereby shows the validity and suitability of the responses collected to the problem being addressed through the study. For Factor Analysis to be recommended suitable, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be less than 0.05. Here, the value is 0.000 so, the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

3. Scree Plot



A scree plot displays the eigenvalues associated with a component or factor in descending order versus the number of the component or factor. From the above chart it is clear that there are 5 factors identified from the plot and from fifth factor the eigenvalues got stable.

4. Exploratory factors of study

Table 4
Result of Factor Analysis

Sr. No.	Extraction of Factors	Factor Loading	Commu-nalities	% of variance explained	Cummu – lative variance
1	**Skill Development for Entrepreneurship**				
	GCSR Handbook is comprehensive in nature	.724	.712		
	GCSR may open doors of international business for the students who are interested in Export-Import business	.714	.685		
	GCSR may help professor to start consultancy services in the vicinity of the industries	.694	.636		
	Guiding students for GCSR will increase the knowledge of a Professor regarding the country of	.685	.628		

	study				
	To increase involvement of a student in the GCSR project, National Day Celebration is good initiative of CGBS	.662	.621		
	The content of GCSR project is proper	.612	.586	17.995	17.995
2	**Value addition for Goal Achievement**				
	There is no relation between the employment opportunities and GCSR project	-.776	-.723		
	The study of a foreign country is of no use for the MBA students of GTU	-.752	-.710		
	GCSR may help students to achieve his/her goals	.658	.621		
	GCSR guidance is extra burden on Professors	-.647	-.611		
	GCSR does not add any value to the knowledge of the students	-.631	-.598		
	Students may develop a skill of learning the foreign country through GCSR	.622	.566	17.324	35.319
3	**Practice Orientation**				
	The gap between institute and industry should be minimized	.879	.791		
	MBA program must be practice oriented	.856	.763		
	Main focus of MBA course must be on development of Employability Skills	.784	.723		
	Management students must be prepared for global competitiveness	.745	.715		
	Knowledge of International Business Practices is essential for development of Global Competitiveness among students	.723	.689	15.499	50.818
4	**Industry Internship**				
	GCSR is the project which can be effectively completed with the help of secondary data available on Internet.	.716	.685		
	The provision of 15 days Company visit (Internship) is essential to prepare effective GCSR	.678	.632	7.599	58.418
5	**Method of Studying a Country**				
	GCSR country should be changed every year for	.772	.743		

	each institute				
	It is very easy for Professor to guide students on the same country every year	-.639	.573	5.715	64.132

Table 4 summarizes the five factors extracted using varimax rotation method. In end of analysis 22 statements identified by software which are highly related to each other. Factors 1 has six statements, Factor 2 has seven statements, Factor 3 has five statements and Factor 4 as well as 5 have two statements. So, for the purpose of analysis finally five factors have been labeled which have factor loading greater than or equal to 0.60 per cent. Factor-1 labeled as **Skill Development for Entrepreneurship** because the statements represents the core objective of GCSR for export-import business, consultancy business, etc. By doing such activities, the skill of entrepreneurship can be developed. The percentage of variance covered by this factor is 17.995. Factor-2 labeled as **Value addition for Goal Achievement** as it covers the statements which denotes the value additions to achieve personal goal of the students as well as faculties through GCSR. The percentage of variance covered by this factor is 17.324. Factor-3 labeled as **Practice Orientation** which is very important factor of Active Learning. All the statements covered under this factors represents practice orientation. The percentage of variance covered by this factor is 15.499. Factor-4 labeled as **Industry Internship** which consists statements like industry visit (internship) etc. This factor covers 7.599 percentage of variance. Factor-5 labeled as **Method of Studying a country** which includes statements regarding methodology of studying a country. This factor covers 5.715 percentage of variance. Cumulatively all these factors cover 64.132 percentage of variances.

VII. Conclusion

Students learn best when learning is active: When they are mentally involved, when they engage in hands-on activities, when they are involved in a process of inquiry, discovery, investigation, and interpretation. Thus, learning is enhanced when students repeat the information in their own words or when they give examples or make use of the information. There are various techniques used under the terminology of Active Learning i.e. Project Based Learning, Activity Based Learning, Problem Based Learning, Research Orientation, Group Study, Industry Orientation, Practice Orientation, Involvement of Students, etc. All these techniques of active learning have been used in the unique course of GCSR (Global Country Study Report) of GTU Management Program. The students are also getting benefit from this program.

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