

A study on contributing factors for achieving academic excellence in higher education institutes and its impact on students' performance w.r.t. Mumbai region

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Abstract

A nation advances when its citizens are engaged, resourceful, and responsible. Higher education contributes significantly to the creation of such citizens. Higher education is crucial for a nation's overall prosperity since it creates knowledgeable workers with specialized abilities. India is seeing an increase in postgraduate management programs, which has raised questions about the country's business schools and management colleges' ability to retain their level of excellence. Several factors affect the overall quality of higher education and help in gaining academic excellence. Analysis of the numerous aspects that go into achieving academic excellence and an understanding of its effects on students' performance at higher education institutions in Mumbai is the study's main objectives. This study also examines the students' perceptions of academic excellence and its impact on their learning process. From Mumbai-based B-schools, 350 students have been selected. In this study, a random sample technique is used. Surveys were conducted to collect data. Pearson's correlation coefficient test and descriptive statistics were used to determine the study's conclusion. The research study found that there is a strong impact of academic excellence on students' performance.

Keywords: Contributing factors to achieve Academic Excellence, B-Schools, and Students' performance

Introduction

When a country's population are active, resourceful, and accountable, the country advances. Such citizens are created in large part as a result of higher education. Higher education is essential to the overall growth and development of a country because it produces knowledgeable human resources with specialised skills. It disseminates in-depth, insightful knowledge about various facets of life. These days, having a higher degree is necessary to survive. Building a modern, technologically aware, knowledge-oriented, and value-based society is a powerful way to transform a nation into a global superpower.

Postgraduate programs in management education are rising in India, which has at the same time led to concerns about the country's business schools and management colleges maintaining their level of excellence. One of India's most effective and cutting-edge higher education programs is the management-teaching stream. Like other service providers, higher

education focuses on all the characteristics of the service sector. The overall quality of higher education is influenced by various factors, including infrastructure, knowledgeable and experienced faculty, curriculum, adequate funding, research, accreditation, legal considerations, and, perhaps most importantly, the incorporation of cutting-edge technological tools into the teaching and learning process.

To engage students, several educational systems throughout the world are developing personalised learning experiences. Higher education institutions have faced intense competition, which has accelerated technological development in B-Schools. With an increase in B-Schools, it is crucial for institutions to comprehend what level of academic excellence students must reach in order to improve their performance and stay competitive.

Academic excellence at educational institution is determined by teaching-learning process & relevant research activities carried out in order for institution to maintain highest level of quality in its institutional activities.

Literature Review

R. Gopal (2010)

According to his article, "Measuring Effectiveness of Management Education in B-School," each student has certain goals and objectives that are evaluated in terms of placement, including compensation, job satisfaction, and knowledge gains. Students are the absolute most crucial aspects for any Business schools existence. The B-Schools are able to evaluate performance in relation to some predetermined goals and objectives. These criteria include Human Resource—the quantity and quality of faculty, both in terms of their educational backgrounds and the level of their lectures. Infrastructure is defined as having sufficient classrooms with LCDs, computers, and overhead projectors, as well as computer laboratories with 24-hour internet access and libraries with a choice of Indian and international publications. Work environment as the third parameter consists of creation or simulation of work like environment which is friendly and motivating and the last parameter was Product offering which is measured in terms of specialized courses, or modification of existing courses and syllabi so as to make them compatible with the industry needs. These factors aid an institute in identifying its USP, and the USP eventually aids in bringing about or achieving competitive advantage. The study also suggested that the most important factors in academic excellence as seen from the perspective of students are placements, alumni networks, curricular relevance, competent professors, contemporary pedagogy, solid infrastructure, and overall brand image. The study came to the conclusion that B-Schools must communicate with the students and the corporate sector in order to draw in a large number of best brains. Additionally, schools must adapt to the constantly changing needs of business, which necessitates regular revisions to the curricula and the creation of specialised courses to meet those needs.

Pablo D. et. al.(2013) in their research on “The pursuit of academic excellence and business engagement: is it irreconcilable?” throws a light on strategic management of Higher Education institutes. According to the author, universities must meet the needs of various stakeholders. Universities should adapt new approaches into their established research and teaching processes. The research study examined the connection between academic excellence and university-business connections. To attain academic excellence, academic institutions should balance all of their operations. According to the study's findings, academic institutions should work with industry to produce excellent research.

Rahman and Bhanu (2014) According to their research, world university rankings place more emphasis on the scientific temperament of the universities—specifically, on students who

produce high-quality research and who have strong industrial ties that support faculty, research scholars, advancement, and technology-related activities. According to the study's findings, the Indian government and some of the top HEI-related organisations have taken initiative and adopted a futuristic strategy to the promotion of high-quality education in order to attain academic excellence in higher education. Through the adoption of advanced Technology in education, quality education may be achieved. It enables learners to interact and communicate while achieving overall academic performance.

Amit S. & Singh S. (2016) conducted a research study on academic excellence in management education. Academic Excellence in Management Education (AEM) is conceptualized in the Indian context by the research study. According to the author, a set of traits called AEM considerably and favorably contribute to a variety of activities related to academics in management education from the viewpoint of faculty. For the creation of an instrument to measure AEM, the study used a grounded theory approach. In a three-stage study, 634 faculty members participated and data were gathered using qualitative and quantitative methods from 17 Business Schools in India. According to the study, the most important aspect in AEM is the performance and attitudes of faculty members.

Neha Bhardwaj et. al.(2020) in their research study on “Understanding the Role Of ICT In Achieving Excellence in Higher Education” described that in today’s world technology has become inseparable from higher education. ICT is essential to next-generation education. Due to the current pandemic, offline education has been replaced with internet education. Learning management systems (LMS), which make it simple for teachers and students to share and use information, have significantly altered the traditional classroom teaching model as a result of the rapid advancement in technology. According to further research, cutting-edge ICT has altered the way higher education is managed, and these changes promote academic excellence. Innovative ICT was incorporated into the administrative, teaching, and learning processes at higher education institutions in India. In order to attain excellence in higher education, this research study focused on the role of innovation in ICT in higher education and how it affected students and academics. The research study used conceptually designed to elaborate on the function of innovation in ICT with respect to various stakeholders in higher education. Secondary data sources (academic papers, published reports) were also used to gather information, and it was discovered that technological innovations are essential for achieving academic excellence in higher education because they enable remote accessibility, performance management, and resource sharing.

Research Objectives

1. To find out the various contributing factors to achieve academic excellence in higher education institutes in Mumbai.
2. To study the impact of academic excellence on Students’ performance.
3. To find out the relationship between Student performance and academic excellence.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no relationship exist between Academic Excellence and students’ performance

H_a: There is a positive relationship exist between Academic Excellence and students’ performance

Research Methodology

In this research study, exploratory and conclusive research types were used. To identify the important variables, under the exploratory research the secondary resources analysis and expert opinion survey were conducted. The exploratory phase focused to gather information from the BBA and MBA students from Business Schools in Mumbai. Further, descriptive research describes the characteristics of the respondents and the degree of association between the variables.

By using questionnaire primary data was collected from 350 BBA and MBA students from various business schools of Mumbai region through random sampling technique.

Academic Excellence & Business Schools

Almost all business schools compete for academic excellence. Academic excellence can be attributed to a wide range of factors. Academic excellence and quality are mutually exclusive. Academic excellence is a difficult concept to define, but there are many tangible resources and intangible factors that contribute to the overall success of higher education institutions. Below, some of them are explained.

Use of innovative ICT tools in teaching & learning

Innovative technology use has a significant impact on how students are taught and how they learn. At this point, interaction is student-driven. It improves the nature of learning and teaching. According to the researchers, using innovative ICT tools enables business schools to access the worldwide education market. It increases trust in both the staff and students. It encourages the continued improvement of student performance and so aids in achieving academic success.

Talented and Experienced Faculty

The academic image of a business school is influenced by numerous factors. Faculties have a significant role among the remaining components. They set an excellent example for their students. They determine a student's academic success. They have an impact on youngsters and motivate them to flourish. These are pillars of the educational system. Their duties also include coaching, supervising, and leading students in addition to educating. Qualified personnel can create a testing environment that will fit their students' learning capacities. Growing technological adoption has changed how faculties take on their duties in the classroom.

Industry focused Curriculum

There is wide gap between expectations from industry & what is being taught to students by education institutes. Many young graduates when they actually start working in corporates, they fail to apply basic logic to programs. This is mainly because, most of the educational institutions have still not renewed their curricula to match the needs of ever-changing industry. To teach specialized courses proficiently, faculties need to have sufficient corporate experience. State Government of Maharashtra & Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have decided to emphasize more on industry centric syllabus which will help students for employment who pass out with industry knowledge from educational institutes.

Placements

Placements considered one of the key components of academic excellence. It enhances the overall quality of education. A quality placement is related to the academic performance and employability of the student. Students have the chance to learn more about a particular business through placements. Also, it gives students an opportunity to collaborate, which differs from the academic institutions' self-centered attitude. It takes a similar experience to improve your problem-solving and self-management abilities.

Students' academic results & progress

Excellent educational institutions are those with strong academic records. Academic performance is crucial, but so is a student's entire development in terms of management skills, soft skills, analytical skills and problem-solving skills, and. Technology benefits student progress on both a quantitative and qualitative level.

E Administration

Technology is utilised in administrative management, including financial management, human resource management, office management, and management records & communication. Modern administrative technology lessens burden and streamlines procedures. Using current technologies, the institute's entire range of operations is kept to a high standard.

State of the art Infrastructure

Students spend the majority of their time away from home in educational institutions. The physical infrastructure of a business school includes the college building, furniture, classrooms, canteen, library, computer laboratories, playground, auditorium hall, and restrooms. More students are more likely to engage in business schools with safe, modern structures. The effective learning environment influences learning, supports learning, and encourages students to explore ideas and knowledge.

Academic Excellence & Student Performance

The quality in education has impact on student learning. It encourages their learning capacity, increases their competency & make their performance better. They become more efficient & enthusiastic to solve problem through technology.

1. It promotes active, engaged, and exploratory learning, energises student responsibility for learning, involves students in the improvement of the educational plan and instructional strategies.
2. It offers students a variety of options for intuitive interactions that will aid in their learning and influence them to do well on exams.
3. Technology aids in the improvement of students' academic performance. It enhances learning through collaborative learning and supports students' ability to think differently. Community-based education encourages students' friends to use critical thinking techniques.

Contributing Factors for Achieving Academic Excellence

To study this, information is collected from seven different contributing factors related to academic excellence. Responses given to each of these factors are recorded. Classification of responses for each individual factor is introduced in next table.

Opinion of students about Use of Innovative ICT tools in teaching & learning

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	11	3.1	6.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	40	11.4	17.4
	Agree	169	48.3	65.7
	Strongly Agree	120	34.3	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0

Explanation

From above table, it was noticed that out of 350 students, 169(48.3%) students were agree, 120(34.3%) were strongly agree, 40(11.4%) students were neither agree nor disagree, 11(3.1%) were disagree & 10(2.9%) students were strongly disagree that use of innovative ICT tools in teaching & learning is one of important contributing factor towards achieving academic excellence of B Schools.

Opinion of students about Experienced & talented faculty

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	4	1.1	1.1	5.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	26	7.4	7.4	12.6
	Agree	121	34.6	34.6	47.1
	Strongly Agree	185	52.9	52.9	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table, it was noticed that out of 350 students, 185(52.9%) students were strongly agreeing that experienced & talented faculty contributes more in achieving academic excellence of B- Schools, whereas, 121 (34.6%) were agree & 4 (1.1%) were disagree that experienced & talented faculty is essential to achieve academic excellence of B Schools.

Opinion of students about Students' academic results & progress

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	4	1.1	1.1	5.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	71	20.3	20.3	25.4
	Agree	166	47.4	47.4	72.9
	Strongly Agree	95	27.1	27.1	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table, it was noticed that out of 350 students, 166 (47.4%) students were agree with factor students' academic results & progress is very important to achieve academic excellence of B-Schools, whereas, 95(27.1%) students were strongly agree, 71(20.3%) students were neither agree nor disagree with factor students' academic results & progress is very important to achieve academic excellence of B Schools.

Opinion of students about Research based curriculum

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	7	2.0	2.0	5.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	58	16.6	16.6	22.0
	Agree	180	51.4	51.4	73.4
	Strongly Agree	93	26.6	26.6	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table, it was noticed that out of 350 students, 180 (51.4%) students considered research based curriculum is important factor for achieving academic excellence, 93(26.6%) students were strongly agree with contributing factor research based curriculum, & 7(2%) students did not Study that research based curriculum is important to achieve academic excellence.

Opinion of students about Placements

		Frequency Percent		Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	Strongly disagree	20	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Disagree	5	1.4	1.4	7.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	43	12.3	12.3	19.4
	Agree	102	29.1	29.1	48.6
	Strongly Agree	180	51.4	51.4	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

It was noticed from above table, out of 350 students, 180(51.4%) students were strongly agree that placements are most important contributing factor for achieving academic excellence of business schools, 102(29.1%) students were agree & 5(1.4%) students were not considered placements are important to achieve academic excellence.

Opinion of students about E-Administration

		FrequencyPercent		Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	Strongly disagree	13	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Disagree	6	1.7	1.7	5.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	71	20.3	20.3	25.7
	Agree	159	45.4	45.4	71.1
	Strongly Agree	101	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that out of 350 students, 159(45.4%) were agree that E administration is also important to achieve academic excellence. 101(28.9%) were strongly considered e administration is essential to achieve academic excellence & 71(20.3%) students were neither agree nor disagree that e-administration is important contributing factor to achieve academic excellence of business schools.

Opinion of students about State of the art Infrastructure

		Frequency Percent		Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	Strongly disagree	16	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Disagree	9	2.6	2.6	7.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	52	14.9	14.9	22.0
	Agree	140	40.0	40.0	62.0
	Strongly Agree	133	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table, it was noticed that out of 350 students, 140(40%) students were agree that state of art framework is also important for achieving academic excellence of B- Schools. 133(38%) students strongly agree that state of the art infrastructure is essential for academic excellence & 9(2.6%) students did not agree state of the art infrastructure is important for academic excellence of B-Schools.

Impact of Academic Excellence on Students' Performance

Perception of students on increased confidence

		Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	1 Strongly disagree	14	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2 Disagree	14	4.0	4.0	8.0
	3 Neither agree nor disagree	105	30.0	30.0	38.0
	4 Agree	152	43.4	43.4	81.4
	5 Strongly agree	65	18.6	18.6	100.0

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 152(43.4%) students were agreeing with question Preparation of own study materials, ppts, work on excel, etc is easier now, 65(18.6%) students were strongly agree & 14(4%) were strongly disagree with question.

Perception of students on improved methodological techniques

		Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	1 Strongly disagree	13	3.7	3.7	3.7
	2 Disagree	13	3.7	3.7	7.4
	3 Neither agree nor disagree	114	32.6	32.6	40.0
	4 Agree	145	41.4	41.4	81.4
	5 Strongly agree	65	18.6	18.6	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 145(41.4%) students were agreeing with question Methodological techniques have improved, 65(18.6%) students were strongly agreeing & 13(3.7%) students were disagree with question improvement in methodological techniques.

Perception of students on improved practical approach

		Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accurate	1 Strongly disagree	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
	2 Disagree	24	6.9	6.9	10.3
	3 Neither agree nor disagree	95	27.1	27.1	37.4
	4 Agree	145	41.4	41.4	78.9
	5 Strongly agree	74	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 145(41.4%) students were agreeing with question academic excellence improves practical approach because of adoption of technology, 74(21.1%) students were strongly agreeing & 12(3.4%) students were strongly disagree with question.

Perception of students on interaction between student & faculty

	Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 Strongly disagree	8	2.3	2.3	2.3
2 Disagree	30	8.6	8.6	10.9
3 Neither agree nor disagree	126	36.0	36.0	46.9
4 Agree	132	37.7	37.7	84.6
5 Strongly agree	54	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 132(37.7%) students were agreeing with question Due to technology, interaction between student & faculty has become amicable, 54(15.4%) students were strongly agreeing & 8(2.3%) students were strongly disagree with question.

Perception of students on improvement in technical skills

	Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 Strongly disagree	11	3.1	3.1	3.1
2 Disagree	12	3.4	3.4	6.6
3 Neither agree nor disagree	114	32.6	32.6	39.1
4 Agree	141	40.3	40.3	79.4
5 Strongly agree	72	20.6	20.6	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 145(41.4%) students were agreeing with question, students are now seeing improvement in their technical skills, 72(20.6%) students were strongly agreeing & 11(3.1%) students were strongly disagree with question.

Perception of students on quantitative improvement in academic results

	Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 Strongly disagree	14	4.0	4.0	4.0
2 Disagree	17	4.9	4.9	8.9
3 Neither agree nor disagree	124	35.4	35.4	44.3
4 Agree	139	39.7	39.7	84.0
5 Strongly agree	56	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 139(39.7%) students were agreeing with question, there has been quantitative improvement in academic results, 56(16%) students were strongly agreeing & 14(4%) students were disagree with question.

Perception of students on qualitative improvement in academic results

	Frequency	Percent	Accurate Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 Strongly disagree	14	4.0	4.0	4.0
2 Disagree	27	7.7	7.7	11.7
3 Neither agree nor disagree	106	30.3	30.3	42.0
4 Agree	146	41.7	41.7	83.7
5 Strongly agree	57	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Explanation

From above table it was noticed that, out of 350 students 146(41.7%) students were agreeing with question, there has been qualitative improvement in academic results, 57(16.3%) students were strongly agreeing & 14(4%) students were disagree with question.

Relationship between Academic Excellence and students' performance Correlations

		overall performance improved
Relationship between Academic Excellence and students' performance	Pearson Correlation	.143**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	350

** . Correlation is important at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From above table, it was noticed that there is a positive correlation relationship between Academic Excellence and students' performance. ($r^2=0.143$, $p\text{-value}=0.007^{**}$).

Major Findings

- Out of 350 students, 185(52.9%) students were strongly agreeing that experienced & talented faculty contributes more in achieving academic excellence of B- Schools, whereas, 121 (34.6%) were agree & 4 (1.1%) were disagree that experienced & talented faculty is essential to achieve academic excellence of B Schools.
- It was found that out of 350 students, 166 (47.4%) students were agree with factor students' academic results & progress is very important to achieve academic excellence of B-Schools, whereas, 95(27.1%) students were strongly agree, 14(4%) students were strongly disagree with factor students' academic results & progress is very important to achieve academic excellence of B Schools.
- The study reveals that out of 350 students, 180 (51.4%) students agreed research based curriculum is important factor for achieving academic excellence, 93(26.6%) students were strongly agree with contributing factor research based curriculum, & 7(2%) students did not agree that research based curriculum is important to achieve academic excellence.

- It was noticed that, out of 350 students, 180(51.4%) students were strongly agree that placements are most important contributing factor for achieving academic excellence of business schools, 102(29.1%) students were agree & 5(1.4%) students were not agree placements are important to achieve academic excellence.
- It was found that out of 350 students, 159(45.4%) were agree that E administration is also important to achieve academic excellence. 101(28.9%) were strongly agree e administration is essential to achieve academic excellence.
- Out of 350 students, 140(40%) students were agree that state of art infrastructure work is also important for achieving academic excellence of B- Schools. 133(38%) students strongly agree that state of art infrastructure is essential for academic excellence & 9(2.6%) students did not agree state of art infrastructure is important for academic excellence of B-Schools.

Recommendations and Suggestions

- There is massive young population in India's education system, who by 2030 will enlarge country's labour pool by near about 100 million workers. This shows growing need for strong Higher Education framework in country. In India, many of students are intended to go for overseas education & to change this scenario there is strong need for Business Schools to change way they operate. This can be best achieved with formulation of strategies in Higher Education, which will not improve institutes but will help them to construct fair Brand Image worldwide.
- The Business schools should utilize predictable assessment of incorporated educational climate that could be utilized in structure of giving quality education.
- The proper combination of the internal educational resources and external environment is necessary for academic excellence. A specific focus should be placed on fostering close cooperation within the educational institution throughout the process in order to achieve the essential synergy across functional areas.
- Proper consideration to be given to the growth of ICT infrastructure in the Business Schools like classrooms should be well equipped with modern teaching tools and equipment's, Digital library, E-Administration.
- This research recommends that faculties should adopt pedagogical changes and become tech-savvy. They should be encouraged to upgrade their knowledge and skills regarding modern ICT tools with appropriate training and awareness campaigns.
- Business schools should have a sufficient number of faculties. They should have their own strategies to provide continuous motivation for quality teaching. Recruitment and selection strategies should reciprocate a continued relation with experienced and talented faculties.
- Encouraging research activities and consulting services by faculties should be given adequate significance. The research culture in management institutions should be nurtured to establish ideas in favour of management.
- Business Schools should update course curriculum and its learning outcomes to stay abreast with the industry for its survival in competitive era. The survival of any business school depends on three factors: the ability to adapt to change, increase the relevance of its course to new courses, and maintain a high level of curriculum.
- Business Schools should focus on improving students' overall performance by enhancing the quality of entrepreneurship in students by focusing on the qualities of initiative, perseverance, problem solving approach, risk taking ability, innovation etc.

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