

# An Exploratory Study on the Application of Multiple Intelligences to MBA Andragogy with Particular Reference to ERP-Controlling Configuration Course

Sophia S. Gaikwad, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India

S. Vijayakumar Bharathi, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to elicit the application of Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory to a course taught in the MBA Andragogy. Administered to a sample of 47 students of the first year MBA Information Technology Business Management (ITBM) program at a private university in India the study brought out certain interesting implications. Foremost, the written report, prescribed a clear route map for the preparation and planning of the MI activities to become the SAP ERP-Controlling Configuration course in the MBA (ITBM) program. Second, the administration of the MI Andragogy to the target sample by applying three well-defined tools. Foremost, the MI profile of the students, second, the most preferred MI activity of the student and third, the observation schedule with the instructor. The statistically significant pre and post test scores validated the strength of the work. The third implication is the triangulation of the three tools to ensure the credibility and validity of the results. It was found that a little over 50 percent of the sample resulted in complete corroboration and the balance partially corroborated. Overall the research extends and enhances the scope and application of MI theory to MBA Andragogy and serves every bit a broad citation to the MBA teaching ecosystem.

## KEYWORDS

Andragogy, Configuration, ERP, Management Curriculum, MBA, Multiple Intelligences (MI), SAP-CO

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The constant upheaval in the area of education is proposing nothing but change. There is a paradigm shift seen in the field of education from being teacher-centric to student-centric (Baeten et al, 2010; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016; Rao, 2016). The function and responsibility of the teacher have moved from being a 'sage on the stage' to a 'guide on the side'. Such a transition calls for the potency of the teachers who have to be innovative, resourceful and reflective all the same time (Kahu, 2013; Azam & Kingdon, 2015; Xiao & Wilkins, 2015; Richmond et al, 2016). It is a high calling indeed. Students seek quality education and innovative learning methods. The emphasis is on the shift from 'subject-centered education' to 'competency-based education' to tap and develop individual abilities, talent, and aptitude. It is important to address market-driven competencies in the curriculum-building process and execute the curriculum using well-proven intelligences theory (Moon, 2007). Today it is important for faculty members in higher education to be not only good researchers but also impart quality training. Because there is no dearth of information - the need of the hour is to 'transmit' this

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information in such a way that it will ‘transform’ the young minds to reach new heights by being better human beings (Gade et al, 2014; Savory, 2016). Educational activity goes beyond than just standing before a class and utilizing a few specific techniques. Teaching is an intricate, exacting, challenging job. According to Gupta et al., (2005), the teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be multidimensional. The teacher will cease to be an instructor or a task master. The teacher’s business will be to suggest, not impose. The teacher will inspire rather than dictate. The instructor will show how to acquire knowledge, foster creativity and develop the proper capacity and ability for thinking in the correct direction. The challenge for a teacher in today’s higher education is that he/she has to liberate the learner from a traditional textbook-centered teaching to technology-enabled learning and has to put the student on the road of self-actualization through a process of self-learning (Tomei, 2003). The research motivation of this study is drawn from three different perspectives, namely MBA Education, Andragogy and Multiple Intelligences. In the subsequent paragraphs, we discuss these perspectives in detail.

The research question is devoted as “How can we administer and evaluate the application MI-theory to an MBA-degree class? The objective of this research work is to explore, define and apply MI-based teaching methodology in a course offered in the MBA program.

This paper is structured into five sections as given below. Section one presents the introduction, research motivation and objective. Section two presents an extensive review of the literature to identify the research gap(s) and reinforce the need for this work. Section three proposes a detailed methodology of executing the research plan. Section four is about the analysis of the results and interpretation. The fifth and last section concludes by discussing the practical implications, limitations and future direction of the study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the last two decades, there has been great research interest from several dimensions of MBA education or so to say business management education. One of the main causal agents is that the many of the learning outcomes of an MBA education are used to solve real-life business problems. In other words, the students are equipped with a certain degree of industry-readiness and are capable of approaching business challenges more practically than theoretically. The success of MBA education vests with a high degree of participant-centric learning approach and advocates a paradigm shift from a teacher-lead instructional method for a student-led learning style. Industrial, business, technological, global developments keep the MBA education constantly evolving. MBA education draws more of a student- centered approach than teacher-centered approach. There are no one-size fits all instructional approach. MBA education calls for such a learning approach. Teacher-centric instruction style has been widely challenged as inadequately effective if not delivered without understanding the pulse of the participant (Kain, 2003; Jepsen et al., 2015; Oluwade and Oluwade, 2015). This contributes to the unfitness of the students to internalize the learning and relate to real-life scenarios, which hampers their employability. Technology, innovation, market requirements continue to pressurize business administration education domain. Learning theories like MI can foster a collaborative learning environment and simulate real-life scenarios by better understanding the acumen of students. Chen and Yang (2010) examined the MBA education offered in China in light of the economic transition requirements of China. They establish that the current MBA practices, lack individuality, and graduates are mass-produced by just copying the teaching methodologies from around the globe. Schoemaker (2008) called for a paradigm shift from the traditional curriculum, administration styles of the business schools to a more skill-focused curriculum that can invoke intense students’ interest in learning rather than just getting taught. Integration of technology and learning is imperative for higher education to enhance students’ market-readiness (Bernauer and Tomei, 2015). MI can be one of the most widely recognized techniques, though less tested in management education. Datar et al., (2011) examined several challenges in administering MBA curriculum and emphasized the need for bringing innovative andragogic styles to enhance the learning, retaining and relating ability of the students.

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