

**DETERMINING FACTORS HINDERING THE
ACCEPTABILITY OF ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY
COLLABORATION IN AIDED COLLEGES: A CASE OF
“MANAGERIAL SKILLS FOR ENTREPRENEURS”
PROGRAM**

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ABSTRACT

Academia and Industry have different meaning for the term ‘collaboration’. When collaboration is realized, academicians and students reach the knowledge in practice. It becomes important for one more reason that students from colleges and universities join industry after completing their education. That is why it is essential to have knowledge and interaction with industry. In turn, collaboration with universities is crucial for organizations in order to get solutions for different problems in the form of projects and to get specific industry trained human resource. According to enterprises, the level of success of academia-industry collaboration is evaluated by the measurement of business financial acquisitions and the rate of transfer of new scientific-based knowledge and technology that contributes to the work results. Both parties should collaborate with the aim of fulfilling their objectives. They may launch certain programs for the students. A program with strong curriculum, methods and technology can add value to this collaboration. The success of these programs depends on how students perceive and understand the program’s relevance. These kinds of programs may get different response in different type of educational institutions. Professional colleges may easily understand the essence and join them but the scenario in aided colleges is totally different. The objective of the paper is to identify the hindrances in accepting academia-industry collaborated programs by the students. The study reveals that there exists a large variety of potential motivations for accepting these programs.

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But challenges are more. Students' decision of joining these programs is affected by many factors like educational, psychological and social that restricts them to accept this outcome of academia-industry collaboration. The study is useful for the academicians, especially of the aided colleges for understanding the challenges to overcome. On the other side it will help the industry in drafting their strategy to make the program popular and their easy entry to the colleges providing traditional degrees. Besides this, the study may be useful for government in changing their rules and regulations and for the society which is ready for the development.

Key Words: Academia-Industry collaboration, Entrepreneurial activities, Knowledge transfer



Introduction

The 'collaboration' arising between academia and industry has different meanings for both parties. When collaboration is realized, academicians reach the knowledge in practice. In a study of academia-industry collaboration, it was stated that the primary aim of academicians was to discover scientific knowledge using new and different applications, whereas financial profit and procuring funds for existing or future research were of secondary importance (Turk-Bicakci & Brint, 2005). It becomes important for one more reason that students from colleges and universities join industry after completing their education that is why it is essential to have knowledge and interaction with industry. In turn, collaboration with universities is crucial for organizations in order to get solutions for different problems in the form of projects and to get specific industry trained human resource. According to enterprises, the level of success of academia-industry collaboration is evaluated by the measurement of business financial acquisitions and the rate of transfer of new scientific-based knowledge and technology that contributes to the work results. Both parties should collaborate with the aim of fulfilling their objectives. They may launch certain programs for the students. A program with strong curriculum, methods and technology can add value to this collaboration. The success of these programs depends on how students perceive and understand the program's relevance. These kinds of programs may get different response in different type of educational institutions. Professional colleges may easily understand the essence and join them but the scenario in aided colleges is totally different. In professional colleges, students are more aware in contrast to their counterparts in traditional colleges. They can understand the relevance of these courses but traditional colleges have different challenges and hindrances in accepting these collaborated courses or programs. The present study reveals the hindrances due to some factors in accepting the collaborated program.

Objective

The main objective of the paper to identify factors creating hindrances in accepting the academia-industry collaborated program.

Scope of the study

The study has been conducted in the colleges in Faridabad and is restricted to one case of Professional Certificate Program on “Managerial Skills for Entrepreneurs” jointly started by Manav Rachna College of Engineering Faridabad and Integrated Association of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises of India .

About the program

The program “Managerial Skills for Entrepreneurs” is a four month program and has features like training sessions by Industry & Business Professionals, assistance & Training in writing bankable Project Report, assistance to avail bank loans, mentoring for overcoming day to day challenges. Integration of these entrepreneurs with industry bodies will provide access to various services and assistance through

- a) Entrepreneurs Information & Facilitation Center
- b) Credit Facilitation Center
- c) Export-Import Help Center
- d) Assistance in Govt. Registrations/ Subsidies.

Methodology

Literature review on programs started from University-Industry Collaboration

As a first step, a literature review has been conducted on programs started from University-Industry collaboration. The relevant motivation sources, barriers and solutions for overcoming these barriers were identified. The data have then been clustered and a preliminary questionnaire designed. A pre-test has been conducted to ensure that all relevant aspects in the promotion of academia-industry collaborated program were discovered and well described in the questionnaire.

In-depth interview with students studying traditional courses

Gathering of the main data consisted of qualitative in-depth interviews in which a questionnaire was used as a guideline. Twenty interviews have been done with the students of first, second and final year to identify the motivation and problems regarding the stated program. In addition, quantitative data have been collected in order to identify the problems in accepting this program.

Sample Description

A sample of 100 undergraduate students of traditional courses was selected through judgmental sampling from one aided college which is running traditional, vocational and self finances courses. They were given questionnaires to answer the questions and put their preferences. 50 respondents were male and 50 respondents were female.

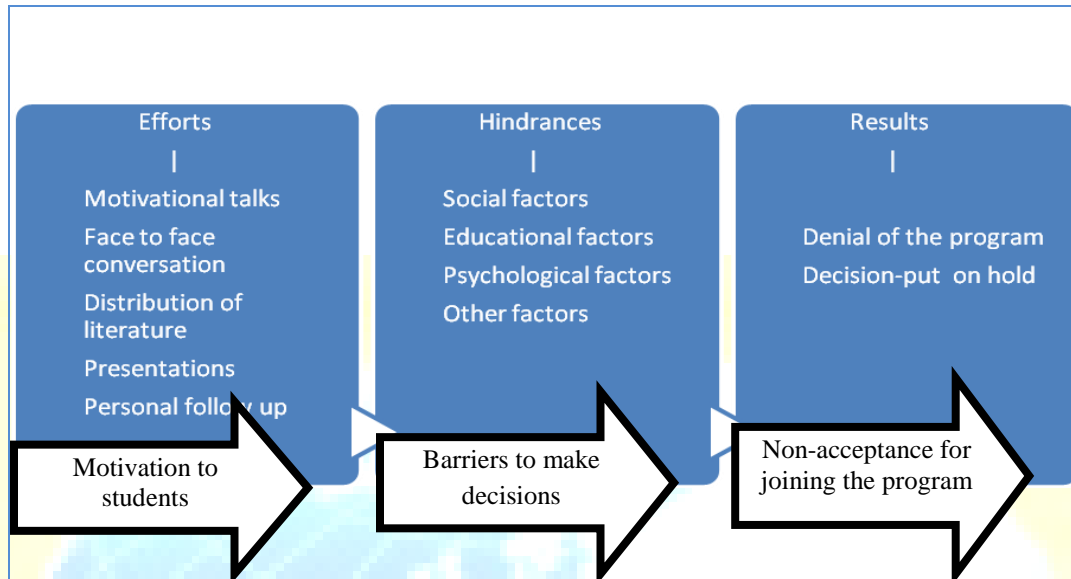
Considerations for joining the program

The study reveals that there exists a large variety of potential motivations for joining this program. Students were introduced to various motivations for joining the same. Introduction to entrepreneurship and starting their own venture are the motivators which can give them a new direction. Many of us have new ideas to start ventures but don't know how. The program helps in this by providing training and mentoring. Mentoring results in solving routine problems in establishing own venture and guiding to have access to various services provided by industry associations. Knowledge gain from industry trainers and researchers are also considered as a strong motivation source. This source can make them strong in performing entrepreneurial activities. Another motivator added to the list is course completion certificate which is the main attraction for students. It can be another star in their bio-data. Another motivational aspect is the enhancement of job opportunities for graduates that foster both the reputation of the college and the readiness of its students to pay a premium for the tuition fees. Networking is an important reason for joining hands with industry through this program.

Factors hindering the acceptability of the Program

Although the potential gains from this academia-industry collaborated program have been well recognized, there are obstacles remaining on the road to the successful realization of these gains. These obstacles have been identified in the form of factors which affected decisions of the students and they have given their non-acceptance for joining the program. The efforts put in motivating students, factors which came out as hindrances and the results are given in the model.

MODEL



Source: self constructed

Social Factors

Human beings are social animal and their behavior and decision are greatly influenced and shaped by social factors .The findings of the study show that students were not ready to join the program due to the influence of social factors like family and reference group.

Family

Family is a powerful social group having influence on the decisions of individuals. 50% of the respondents didn't join the program because of the denial by their family. The depth interview revealed that in some cases the parents were not convinced about the relevance of the program and in some cases they wanted their children to finish the regular graduation course first.

Reference group

Every individual associates or wishes to associate with one or other social or professional group. A reference group may be a social or professional group of people which influences a person's attitude, belief and behavior. Here in the study, students were influenced by their friends' group. 40% of the students agreed that they are not joining the program because their friends are also

not joining. The detailed discussion revealed reference group of friends insisted some students to join the program later on and they feel more comfortable in going together.

Social environment

A social environment is the aggregate of social factors or conditions that influence individuals or groups. It is a sad reflection on our society that women feel unsafe and unprotected. 60% of female respondents blamed social environment of the city also for not joining the program. They said that their family is concerned about their safety as the program will be over daily in late hours.

Educational Factors

Educational factors here means the factors related to the regular course of the students. The findings of the study reveal that educational factors put their decision of joining the program on hold. These factors include their joining of coaching classes, associated with other vocational programs and completion of their regular course.

Joining of coaching classes

One fifth of the total respondents is engaged in their coaching classes after college hours. This consumes their lot of time. The depth interview revealed that the consumption of their time provides them less time for self study. This affects their class performance in the college.

Association with other vocational programs

Since the program has been introduced in the month of February, students find it difficult to take decisions. 30% of the respondents refused to join the stated program because they have already joined other vocational and job oriented programs in the beginning of the session. Probing the respondents come out with the fact that they take these type of decisions in the beginning of the session for timely completion of the vocational courses.

Completion of their regular course.

Since the program has been introduced in the closing session, students are more interested in their regular studies. 60% of the respondents feel that they will prepare for their exams. They deferred their decision for the next year after completing their regular course.

Psychological Factors

Human behavior is the outcome of his/her mental process. This mental process is affected by psychological factors like personality and attitude.

Personality

The personality of an individual refers to his personal traits and qualities which determine his behavior. 30% of the respondents were shy, less confident and less adaptable. The interview revealed that they were not sure of comfortably moving and interacting with their colleagues after joining the program as it is open for the entrepreneurs also.

Attitude

Attitude is a mental predisposition or orientation which determines behavior pattern with regard to an object or idea. It consists of cognitive evaluation, emotional feelings, set of beliefs and action tendency towards something or idea. 20% of the respondents were very casual in their attitude and responded negatively. Their set of belief discouraged them to think about making good career and to restrict them from stretching their usual and comfortable routine.

Other Factors

Besides social, educational, psychological factors there are some other factors which also forced them not to join the program.

Conveyance

Female respondents who were half of the total strength cited the conveyance problem as a major hurdle. 70% of the female respondents and 40% of male respondents found it difficult to reach the destination which is 9km far from the college. Further study reveals that most of the students in the college belong to NIT area. They don't have personal vehicles. Female respondents have shown their helplessness to reach the destination because they don't have any help in their house to drop and pick them.

Timings

The other hindrance which respondents highlighted is timings (3pm to 6pm) of the program. Their regular timings for the college are (9 am to 2.15pm). 45% of the respondents have shown their denial on the basis of timings of the program. They described in the detailed interview that this time will not suit them as they need to rush immediately after their regular classes. Moreover they will have to cover the distance by taking care of traffic and waiting time for the conveyance.

Overcoming the hindrances

The number of measures can be taken to reduce these hindrances which are summarized as follows:

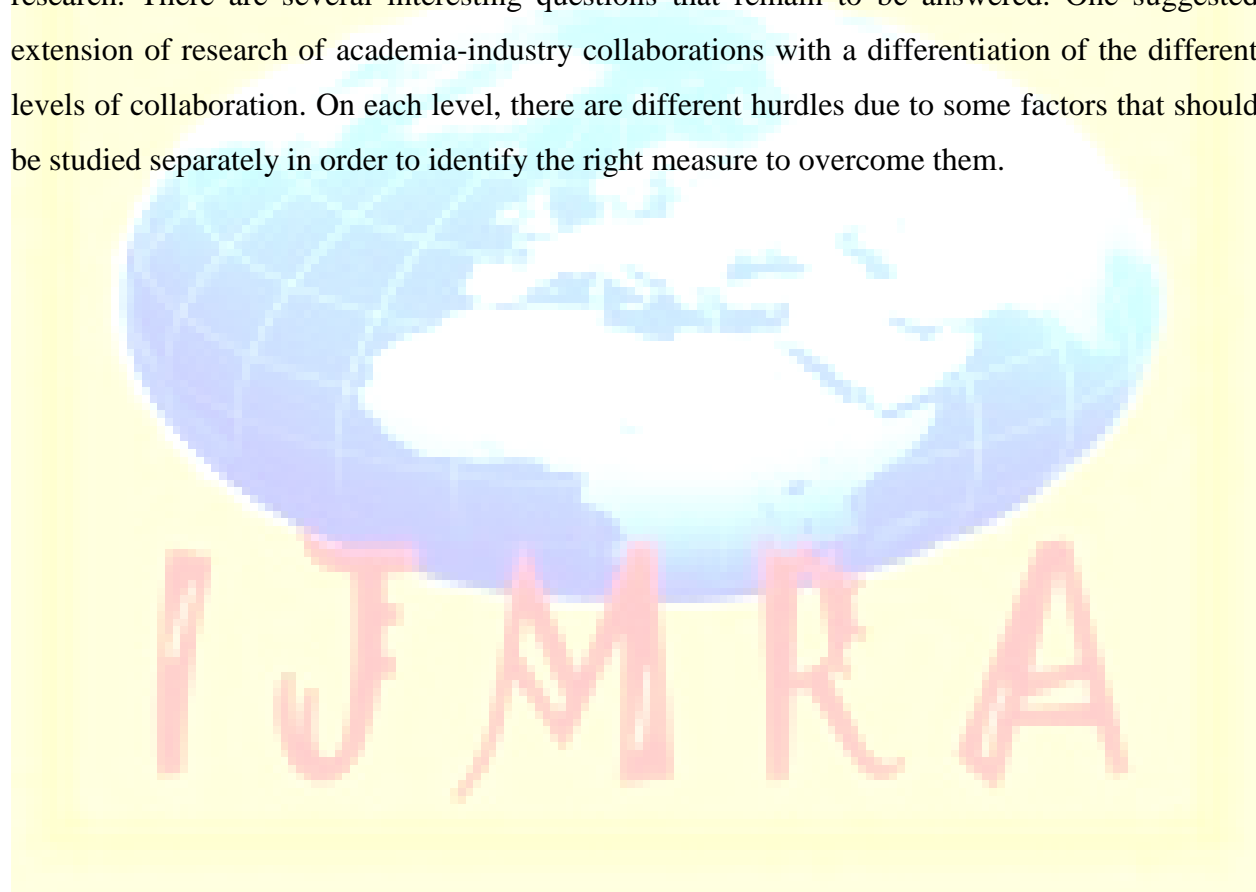
Table 1 Solutions for overcoming the hindrances due to factors identified

<i>Solutions for hindrances due to social factors</i>
Meeting and convincing the parents.
Timely information to the students so that their parents could think over it seriously.
Finding out the leader among the reference group of friends and to convince him.
Holding meetings with the complete reference group.
Pick and drop facility can provide security to the female students.
<i>Solutions for hindrances due to educational factors</i>
Starting these type of programs in the beginning of the session
Open interaction between students and the trainers at the beginning of the session.
<i>Solutions for hindrances due to Psychological factors</i>
Involving faculty to change the attitude of the students.
Regular motivational talks by their faculty and short discussion about the outcome.
Continuous work on the personality of the students by faculty to improve their self confidence and clearing all their doubts, hesitations about the program.
Providing incentives to the students who have joined these kind of courses.
<i>Solutions for hindrances due to other factors</i>
Pick and drop facility from the college or associations.
Classes may be conducted on alternate days.

Source: Interviews with students

Conclusion

Creating and designing a separate academia-industry collaborated program is perceived by students as very fruitful and career oriented. The program will definitely result in better project selections, better proposal preparations, increased number of self confident entrepreneurs, strong networking, mentoring, mutual sharing of ideas, *mutually shared mission and goals, environment of trust and transparency, team-building activities.* Further Educational institutions involved in these type of programs will sure increase their placement ratio and a strong network of entrepreneur alumni. But there is always a gap in research which is the outcome of previous research. There are several interesting questions that remain to be answered. One suggested extension of research of academia-industry collaborations with a differentiation of the different levels of collaboration. On each level, there are different hurdles due to some factors that should be studied separately in order to identify the right measure to overcome them.



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