'SUPPLY CHAIN – MARKETING SHARK TANK' EXPERIENTIAL LAB GAME IN INTERDISCIPLINARY BUSINESS EDUCATION: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

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ABSTRACT

The SC-Mark Shark Tank experiential lab game is a real-life business environment simulation exploring complexities in the advertising and marketing supply chains. The qualitative analysis of the game feedback provided by students saw the emergence of Center for Occupational Research and Development’s (CORD) “applied, understanding, enactive, and cooperative” teaching styles of instructors involved in SC-Mark experiential lab game. We used structural equation modeling using LISREL to analyze the data collected over a two semester period after the completion of each game. The analysis provides statistical evidence that the emerged teaching styles have a positive effect on the teaching effectiveness. The other significant finding from statistical evidence suggests that learning styles of the learners (students) may not have any positive effect on the measured teaching effectiveness; while teaching styles elaborated through the SC-Mark game has a positive significant effect on teaching effectiveness of instructors.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and technology advances have enforced the global view of the business environment as a chain of suppliers and caused the emergence of management concept, known as Supply Chain Management (SCM) for managing the relationship and the synergy between the global supply chains (Al-Turki et al., 2008). From a business perspective, there is a huge evidence of the interactions between interdisciplinary areas of SCM and Marketing (especially, advertising and branding). The students in business and marketing become experts in individual areas of their major business disciplines but have difficulties in working in interdisciplinary environments which requires varied skill sets. Strategic experiential gaming is an answer to teaching interdisciplinary areas of business and creating elaborate solutions for the issues of both individual behavioral control and collaborative strategy techniques (Arora, 2012). Keeping in view of the existent gaps in literature and the extreme needs and benefits of interdisciplinary business education, the objective of our research is twofold. First, we establish an SCM-Marketing experiential lab game in our SCM and marketing (advertising) courses. Second, we evaluate the qualitative and quantitative effectiveness of our experiential lab game. Our experiential gaming exercise is based on the popular reality television series on ABC network called ‘Shark Tank’.

SC-MARK EXPERIENTIAL LAB GAME - FIVE PHASED APPROACH

Supply chains are prevalent in advertising industry. Many companies prefer to hire outside ad agencies in order to provide the client with the services of highly skilled individuals who are specialists in their fields. As a part of the course, the students were divided into the following teams - two clients representing different industries (one ‘electronics’ giant and the other as ‘quick service restaurant’ company), one full service ad agency (with a team of one account...
planner, one account executive, one research person for copy testing, two copywriters, one creative head and one media specialist, two creative boutiques, one media specialist company, and two production companies. These teams signified the supply chain relationships within advertising industry. The goal of SC-Mark experiential lab game project was to satisfy the clients’ needs along with increasing sales for the product or service. The game was played in five phases of the SC-Mark lab game project which are illustrated in Figure 1.

![FIGURE 1. SC-Mark Experiential Lab Game](image)

### Teaching Effectiveness

Most studies of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness have focused on understanding and use a global measure of instructor effectiveness (Webb, Gill, and Poe, 2005). In practice, teaching and learning effectiveness remain predominantly determined by student performance in the recall and application of learned concepts and skills (Webster and Hackley, 1997). Bradley et al. (2007) concluded that it is critical to use research methodologies to evaluate perceived and actual learning improvements. In order to gauge the effectiveness of our ‘SC-Mark’ game, we used 20 items from student evaluation forms used for obtaining course feedback towards the end of each semester for teaching effectiveness.

### DISCUSSIONS

The SC-Mark lab game ascertained and highlighted the positive impact of teaching styles on teaching effectiveness for students’ academic performance (as seen in Table 1). This experiment helps in evolved SCM mindset and thinking for an effective advertising supply chain. The four teaching styles of Applied Concept Representation, Enactive Cognitive Processing, Understanding Learning and Cooperative Groups Interaction are elaborated through the SC-Mark project.
TABLE 1. Logistics and Effectiveness Questions for SC-Mark Experiential Lab Game: Team Experience, Effectiveness and Overall Feedback

Team Experience

What did you learn while designing creative and media strategy for the client?
What did you learn while presenting creative and media strategy for the client?
What did you learn from other teams’ creative and media presentations?

Team Effectiveness

What was the biggest challenge involved in the SC-Mark project?
What was particularly effective in your team’s work on creative and media strategy?
What was particularly effective in your team’s delivery on creative and media strategy?
What was effective regarding your team, especially in terms of winning approval of clients and customers?
What was effective regarding the other teams, especially in terms of winning approval of clients and customers?

Overall Feedback

What was the most intriguing and effective part of your SC-Mark project?
How did your SC-Mark work help you to better understand the two subject areas – Advertising and Supply Chain Management?

We did not find strong relationship of learning styles on teaching effectiveness even though there exists a strong positive relationship of teaching styles on teaching effectiveness. We can argue that teaching effectiveness can be impacted only over a long term when the professor understands his students well and takes their feedback into perspective every time s/he teaches a class. Teaching Effectiveness is dependent on the learning styles from a long term perspective but for short term, a professor may not be able to implement the learners’ learning styles effectively in his teaching methodologies resulting in teaching effectiveness, because it takes time and energy to understand the learners’ learning styles completely on one-on-one basis. Hence, the hypothesis showing strong positive relationship between learning styles and teaching effectiveness was rejected.

CONCLUSION

The SC-Mark experiential game is a real-life business environment simulation exploring complexities in the advertising and marketing supply chains. It provides knowledge about the importance of information sharing, information visibility and dissemination across all business partners of any complex supply chain including the ones existent in the advertising industry. The students realized the importance of information systems and technology as a unified and coordinated link in a supply chain system through this game project. Communication and collaboration amongst the SCM partners of ad-agencies were elaborated and illustrated as key
indicators for the success of this experiential game. The students were sensitized greatly to their clients’ needs and their own advertising businesses. Understanding clients, clients’ partners and all players in the clients’ supply chains, advertising business, and most importantly, end-consumers along with difficult 'sharks' of the Shark Tank, was important for the success of the integrated marketing communications (IMC), as a whole.

REFERENCES

Available on Request