Chapter – II

Design of the Study
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2.1 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to present the research design. The research design, research approach, research strategy, sample collection methods, data collection methods and data analysis are the main constituents of research methodology.

2.2 Research Approach:

Since the purpose is to establish relationship between students, faculties, industry and directors of management institutions about soft skills the research scholar has profiled number of questionnaires from various publications and websites and formed a format related to the titled topic. Additionally to supplement the qualitative research approach regarding soft skills, small quantitative study was conducted. Below titled are the tools and techniques involved in framing questionnaire.

2.3 Research Strategy:

Questionnaire has been used as a research strategy in this study. The questionnaire is quite popular and most common strategy in management research. The questionnaire allows the collection of large amount of data from a sample in most economical way. The questionnaire, observation and interview are some of the methods coming in this strategy.

2.4 Data Collection:

For collection of data, a structured interview schedule has been constructed. The interview schedule consists of many questions which are both open and closed ended questions. The questions framed are easy in style with specific content in order to facilitate the respondents’ reply.
Lot of efforts have been initiated to format and frame questionnaire in order to get maximum information, comments, opinions and data from faculty, students, recruits and management people. It was a four dimensional approach to bring justification to the study. This is basically to collect primary data. The questions were framed which are combination of both open and close ended questions. Initially the questionnaire started with close-ended questions and later on shifted to open ended and ultimately questions emphasized in depth. Many techniques were utilized with an urge to get the best out of the respondents. Indeed it was interesting, informative, enriching and enlightening.

The questionnaire began with socio-economic conditions of the respondents and then about the study keeping the objectives of the study in view. Efforts have been made to avoid deviating from the main track. In the socio-economic perspective, it highlights the questions related to name, age, sex, caste, religion, place of birth, whether rural or urban background, address with email id, educational qualification, occupation, annual income and languages known.

The questions are basically related to Soft Skills, Hard Skills, Education, Training methods, present Learning environment, the influence of technology, teaching methodology, Communication Skills, Body Language, Practical Education, Problems in the Present education system, employability, gap between the Campus and Industry and finally encouraged the participants to come out with creative solutions and suggestions.

The questions related to effective and efficient coordination amongst Faculty, Students, Industry and Management Institutions were focused.
2.4.1 Primary Data:

Primary data was collected through observation, questionnaires and interviews. A well structured questionnaire was framed by considering the problems being faced by students, faculties, recruiters and directors of educational institutions vis-à-vis soft skills. The researcher has collected primary data during 2008-2009.

2.4.2 Secondary Data:

The researcher has collected the secondary data from various sources, like internet website, books of management, government publications, journals of management and engineering institutions, newsletters and newspapers. The secondary had also been collected from select books of management.

2.5 Universe and Sample:

While conducting a survey, a question is usually asked: Should all people (entire population) be studied or only a limited number of persons drawn from the total population is studied and then extended our findings about the sample to the entire population? In the present study the population is the students, faculties, management people and industry (recruiters).

A large population cannot be studied in its entirety for reasons of size, time, cost or inaccessibility. Limited time, lack of large amount of funds, and population scattered in a very wide geographical area often make sampling necessary.

For this study Nizamabad district has been selected purposively because taking a district as a universe will do justification of the study. Seven colleges, which include engineering colleges offering both management (MBA) and engineering (B.Tech) education and other colleges that are offering BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) including ICFAI University and Telengana University. ICFAI
University provides MBA by flexible learning to graduates and while Telangana University provides management education through regular classes.

2.6 Sample Size:

Amongst all the management and engineering institutions, the total strength of students totaled 6400, Faculty 600, Industry-300, Management Directors 70. The researcher took a sample of 5 per cent of the Students, Faculty, Industry (Recruiters) and Directors. The total number who actually were provided the questionnaires is Students-320, Faculty-45, Industry-15, And Directors-5. However, less number of people responded to the questionnaires. The Recruiters are mostly from Infosys, Wipro, Tata Consultancy (TCS), Satyam, Cognizant Technology Services (CTS) etc.,

Hence, approximately 02% of existing strength of the stakeholders has been selected for present study and interpreted properly. So, the researcher has selected 129 samples randomly from different categories such as students, faculties, industry, directors of management institutions for the present study.

2.7 Data Analysis:

After collecting all the data the process of analysis begins. To summarize and rearrange the data several interrelated procedures are performed during the data analysis stage. Data are analyzed statistically to get result. The statistics were presented with detail description and analyzed in combination with qualitative data.

The critical review of the literature has focused on developing soft skills in students, developing soft skills in higher education and soft skills for engineers. All these things dwell at length about the development of soft skills in students of management and engineering institutions.

It talks of the valuing of soft skills in various areas. It dwells the relevance of soft skills in avoiding the hard knocks. All major companies are investing in soft skills
these days. Everyone focuses the importance of soft skills and hard skills and nobody touches upon the importance of soft skills by linking students, faculty, management and industry. Hence the same becomes the significance of the problem.

After collection of data the information had been coded and categorized. Analysis of the data has been carried out through horizontal percentages as well as cross tabulation. This has been facilitated by a paradigm of independent and dependent variables.

2.8 Scope and limitations of the study:

The study is handicapped on account of the following limitations:

1. The research scholar has made the study exhaustive and interesting and has put in lot of efforts and energies. However, money and limited management and engineering institutions in the district of Nizamabad are the main limitation.

2. Besides, the study is confined to the district of Nizamabad only. All the information and inputs furnished by the respondents is treated as correct.

3. The results obtained by the faculties, students, recruiters and management are only 5 per cent of the entire population. It highlights purely from the perspective of soft skills that can determine the employability for the students. Besides, there could be other skills for not getting employment opportunities for the students.

4. The study is confined to management and engineering institutions not of non-professional institutions. Therefore, these are the limitations of the study

A large population cannot be studied in its entirety for reasons of size, time, cost or inaccessibility. Limited time, lack of large amount of funds, and population scattered in a very wide geographical area often make sampling necessary.

A sample is a portion of people drawn from a larger population. It will be representative of the population only if it has same basic characteristics of the population
from which it is drawn. Thus, our concern in sampling is not about what types of units (persons) will be interviewed/observed but with how many units of what particular description and by what method should be chosen (Singleton and Straits. 1999:134).

For our study Nizamabad district has been selected purposively because taking a district as a universe will do justification of the study. Seven colleges, which include engineering colleges offering both management (MBA) and engineering (B.Tech) education and other colleges that are offering BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) including ICFAI University and Telangana University. ICFAI University provides MBA by flexible learning to graduates and while Telangana University provides management education through regular classes.

2.9 Paradigm of Independent and Dependent Variables:

2.9.1 Independent Variables:
1. Age
2. Caste
3. Education
4. Marital status
5. Urban or rural Occupation
6. Income
7. Languages known

2.9.2 Dependent Variables:
1. Body language is the least significant component in communication process.
2. Feelings and emotions can act as barriers in communication.
4. Women should always wear a sari for a job interview.
5. Teams are always beneficial.

6. Assertiveness is the ability to put people down.

7. It is important to profile your audience before making a presentation to them.

8. Decisions taken individually normally differ from decisions taken in a group.

9. Do you think the learning environment is changing?

10. Do you know anything about soft skills?

11. What are soft skills and hard skills?

12. Are soft skills in any way related to practical education?

13. Are soft skills important in engineering and management institutions?

2.10 SPSS (Software Products for Statistics Solutions – formerly called Statistical Package for Social Sciences):

SPSS is powerful statistical software, which was earlier known for its applications in social sciences only. It is Windows-based and shares all the facilities with other Windows applications. It is a comprehensive integrated system for statistical data analysis. The current versions in use are SPSS 11.5, 12.0 and 13.0. SPSS has all major analytical tools for handling large volumes of data as well as complicated multivariate analyses. Working knowledge in one of the statistical packages like SPSS is a must for contemporary research analysis. We can also write custom oriented statistical procedures by using SPSS language and syntax. The help features of SPSS are very useful to the user in understanding the utility of various statistical tools. In fact the user can take the help from SPSS help files to know what a tool is and where it is applied. The SPSS output is very conveniently arranged in the form of tables so that they can be copied and pasted in MS-Word or MS-excel for documentation. We can also export the output to distant clients by Internet communications.
Just like in any Windows application we start working with SPSS files. These facilities would also support navigation to other documentation facilities like MS-Office.

2.11 Reliability and Validity:

Reliability refers to the degree to which data collected method or methods will yield consistent finding, similar observations would be made or steps taken the same type of questions was used during all these sessions in order to increase the reliability.

Validity is defined as the extent to which data collection method or methods accurately measures what they were intended to measure.

Steps taken for validity data was collected with open ended questions by structured questionnaire.

Data were collected from the reliable sources, from customers, who are more experienced getting customer services.
10. Sontosh Gupta – “Research Methodology and Statistical Techniques”.
Web References:

