

BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD MODEL FOR AWARD OF INTERNAL MARKS TO MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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Abstract—While the level of attainment of proficiency of the university students is assessed by term end and course end examinations, their progress in the course of their education is assessed by the faculty of their educational institution. The overall performance of a particular student as declared in the university mark sheet is a combination of both assessments. However, while the marks obtained in the university level examination is in the nature of assessment, marks obtained in internal assessment are mostly in the nature of award, depending upon multitude of factors. Development and application of a standardised model for award of internal marks with clear, transparent and verifiable parameters would be welcome to the various stakeholders, like students, parents, faculty, educational institution, university, employers, government and society in their expectation and decision-making process.

Keywords: Clear, Transparent, Verifiable, Standardised Model, Internal Marks, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

DURATION OF EDUCATION, PATTERN OF EXAMINATION AND AWARD OF MARKS

University education aims to impart to the student adequate and relevant information pertaining to the chosen curriculum in a predetermined duration and course of study. Several decades back university examinations were held as course end examination only and conducted at the end of the course, say after three years or two years, as the case may be, for different subjects. Later few decades back, term end university examinations were introduced, either in two semesters or in three semesters / trimesters per year and held for various subjects of study.

While the course end examination pattern assumed the students learnt the subject during the course of study in an even phased manner, there was every possibility for a student to make last minute rush- through-study to pass the examination. Term end examinations allowed the students to learn the subject in a short duration and also to forget the same thereafter. While the course end examinations ensured the attainment level of proficiency in the course of study, term end examinations test the proficiency level at the end of such semesters and most probably no longer.

The role of the faculty was not implicit in the learning process of the student in both the pattern of examinations. In order to ensure that the student learnt the course of study in an even predetermined pace of study, the faculty concerned was given the responsibility of overlooking and guiding the student in their progress throughout their course of study. Accordingly, the internal marks system was introduced to indicate the assessment of the faculty on the progress of learning of the student. Hence the overall performance of the student was made into a combination of marks obtained in university term end examination and also the marks awarded as internal marks.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MARKS OBTAINED IN TERM END EXAMINATION AND ON INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Term-end examination comprises of written and / or practical examinations. The question papers are set and kept confidential, though the pattern of questions would remain the same until change is notified by the university, based on several factors.

External examiners would assess the answer scripts in a methodical way, set by the guidelines of the university. There would be no favoritism as the identity of the examinee and examiner are not disclosed anywhere in the process and well-guarded. Hence the marks obtained is in the nature of assessment.

Internal marks obtained suffer from the possibility of favoritism or antagonism of the faculty towards the student. It also suffers the impact of policy guidelines of the educational institution. It is generally not based on any clear, verifiable, transparent parameters. It is just an award of marks in most of the situations.

IMPACT OF MISLEADING MARKS ON STAKEHOLDERS

As such, students are happy if all of them are given the maximum internal marks, which may suit the interests of the educational institution also. As long as there is no bar on such practice, it amounts to suit the interest of the university. Does it serve any purpose for the students except to glorify their grade of passing in first class or distinction etc.? Does it mislead the prospective employer on his recruitment drive? Does it mislead the prospective students toward the status of the educational institution? Does it mislead the parents toward the progress of their wards? Does it mislead the government in case of sanction of scholarship? Does it mislead the society on the quality of its members? Would such over-rated academic performance of passing-out student have a bearing on their actual professional performance? Would it affect their employability and also that of future passing-out students from the same educational institution? Would it affect the quality rating of the university nationally and internationally? Answer for all these surmises would be affirmative to state that over-rated academic performance adversely impacts all the stakeholders in the academic, professional, and national scenario.

NEED FOR A STANDARDISED MODEL FOR AWARD OF INTERNAL MARKS

Serious study by the universities to enhance the quality of the question papers on term end and course end examinations need be taken up. Serious relook on the desirability of continuing with internal marks award system need also be taken up. In case it was not desirable to discontinue with the internal marks system, it should be ensured that the marks obtained in the internal marks system are the outcome of a continuous evaluation of predetermined parameters made in standardised model with clear, transparent, verifiable parameters. It will avoid or minimise all sorts of heart-burn, disbelief, doubts, arguments, and counter arguments of the students and also the favoritism, and antagonism of the faculty.

LITERATURE SURVEY

¹Abha Goradia of Indian Express (July 30, 2020) reports significant fall of pass percentage in Class 10 examination in Maharashtra in year 2019 on the experiment of dropping internal marks system and subsequent increase in pass percentage up to 20 percent in year 2020, when the internal marks system was revived by the government. Weightage for internal marks was 20 percent in the final marks needed for passing the examination.

²Anum Ansari (Jun 5, 2023) brings out a table showing pass percentage of higher secondary school examinations from different boards and States.

³Bairn & Co (January 31, 2023) brings out the basic function of business process reengineering as redesign of existing processes to improve customer and employee satisfaction, quality, cycle time, productivity etc. by dramatic improvements.

⁴Kritika Sharma (May 30, 2023), reports that the Government of India are looking for standardization of results of high school leaving examinations referring to the press meet by the School Education Secretary, Government of India. Ministry of Education compiled a report about the pass percentage of students of Secondary and Higher Secondary examination from sixty national and state board of examinations and pointed out the high deviations in pass percentages between all of the Boards and States. He wanted the all the Boards and States to standardise their curriculum and the process of examination, in order to provide equal opportunities for all in every aspect including contesting in national level examinations, apart from mentioning several other purposes and need for standardisation of school leaving examinations.

⁵PTI (May 31, 2023) reports the large deviations in pass percentage of board examinations and drive of government to standardise the examination assessment.

⁶Newindianexpress (Feb 11, 2020) reported that the Kerala State Higher Education Minister announced in the assembly of the government policy to do away with minimum internal marks for passing an examination, further stating that the

internal mark assessment was becoming a villain in a student's life as several instances pointed to that. He further added that Universities have been asked to follow the same at all arts and science colleges and health science colleges.

⁷The Hindu Bureau, (January 26, 2023) reported that a letter to the Vice Chancellor of Calicut University from a Syndicate Member suggested certain relaxations on internal marks requirement for girl and transgender students.

⁸Timesnownews (February 4, 2023) reported that Delhi University Executive Council passed a new scheme modifying internal assessment weightage. Faculty and students protested the change from 30:70 to 45:55 in respect of internal marks and external theory paper marks

⁹Anna University maintains 20 percent for internal marks and 80 percent for external marks obtained by examination. Both are initially given for 100 and then converted to 20 percent and 80 percent respectively for mark sheet purpose. For instance, a person getting 50 marks in theory examination of full 100 marks and 100 marks in internal marks out of 100 marks would get 40 plus 20 marks in mark sheet and fall in first class mark bracket.

¹⁰Business Process Reengineering can be applied to various organisations and industries and organisations of all sizes, and can be achieved different methodologies and techniques including process automation

RESEARCH GAP

It is clear that internal marks system is in vogue in India from school leaving certificate examination to postgraduate examination. Range of their percentage varies significantly between Boards, Universities and States. Impact of the internal marks on pass percentage is also experimentally established.

Impact of internal marks in overall grade of the student is significant and hence has a resounding effect on employment and competitive examination. Accordingly, Government of India have taken a lead to standardise the examination pattern, award of marks and resultant pass percentage at school level.

Assuming the indispensability of the internal marks system, should it not be done in a standardised model, preferably at all levels of education? Can universities themselves embark on such exercise as pioneers? Can colleges themselves embark on such exercise as pioneers?

OBJECTIVE

To devise a standardised model for award of internal marks, meeting the expectations of stakeholders

To devise the same being clearly understood, fully transparent, and verifiable by any stakeholder

To develop the same as an authenticated document of fair and equitable approach, proactively reflecting the solutions for all the likely contentions.

To devise the same as simple, elegant, easily and universally adoptable for all courses, and in all institutions

SCOPE

Scope is to develop a standardized model for award of internal marks to Master of Business Administration students. How far the internal marks system is contributing or otherwise to the academic excellence of students in any level of education is a moot point of consideration. Desirability or otherwise of its continuance is a matter of different concern. It is outside the scope of this academic exercise.

METHODOLOGY

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Students generally have an apprehension that the internal marks awarded are not fair to them, individually in comparison with others. Sometimes they compare it with other Educational Institutions, Universities and States also. Such wide variations distort the real academic performance of the candidate in all India Competitions for further studies and employment. Based on a report, Government of India are looking into sorting this anomaly in respect of school education. The same should necessarily hold well in case of higher education also including Master of Business Administration. Accordingly, a standardized model is to be developed.

The developed model should address all the contentions of the main stakeholder being the students. They should not have any doubt on the calculation and award of internal marks. There should be no basis for raising any issue later on, after the award. All possible contentions need be resolved as early as possible.

Award of marks should not come to them as a surprise in the eve of examinations. Internal marks system presupposes continuous evaluation and hence students should be continuously appraised of their earning of internal marks, as frequently as possible giving enough time for them to upgrade their performance.

Components of objective evaluation was attendance, marks got in three model tests and one review tests, and subjective evaluation by the faculty. Many colleges may have different components including assignment. It can be a policy matter for now but when the system is standardised at university level or national level, the components would be fixed.

The present model takes into account attendance and three model tests and one review test. The weightages given by educational institutions vary from 20 to 60 percent for attendance component itself. For the model, it is taken as 20 percent and 15 percent for each examination and 20 subjective assessments of the faculty.

There should be no arbitrariness in arriving at the marks though the distribution of relative weightage for different components can be arbitrary and there could be a subjective component reflecting the personal opinion of the faculty.

The factors which need to be taken into account for arriving at the personal opinion and subjective assessment are to be listed. As these factors cannot be listed exhaustively, the concerned faculty should discuss the matter with head of department and arrive at the subjective marks. A record of points taken into account need be kept. Examples being, ragging activity either proved or otherwise, partial or biased attitude toward gender etc., carrying objectionable and prohibited material in class room, all unlawful activities anywhere in the premises, not obeying discipline code of the institutions in general for all, and special requirements like mannerism, decency, etiquette, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, concentration, application of mind etc. being specific to master of business administration students. Of course, this subjective list would be different for different courses. However, this subjective component would not have major impact on the overall marks obtained.

There could be overall ranking of the students based on their performance in the various objective and subjective parameters taken into account.

Ranking should be for all equivalent students but for the same faculty, same paper of the same subject though studying in different sections or class rooms.

Based on the ranking and policy of the educational institution the internal marks can be awarded by the computer system itself based on the ranking already declared. Students can be confident of award of internal marks based on the rank they had attained.

Except from feeding the basic data manually into the computer, all other calculations and award of marks need be computer driven and protected from manipulation.

It should be reviewed by Faculty, Head of Department and Principal It should be acceptable to the policy of the educational institution and the university. Then internal marks are to be declared and fed into the examination system of the university.

The developed model should be applicable for a specific department and then for the institution and be adoptable for all other nation-wide institutions.

DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL

A Model has been developed using MS EXCEL facilities. It would be enough for departmental use. However, if a consolidated centralised utility for the purpose is required, suitable programme can be made and centrally controlled for all departments. Development of the model can be given as an exercise to students in MBA and Computer Applications.

Details about the university, college, faculty and the student are entered wherever possible using popup, to eliminate data entry errors.

All the numbers would have built in validity check. All calculations are automatic.

The headline portion of the statement is repeated in every page so as to avoid any misunderstanding or misplacement etc.

The bottom-line portion of the format being the “comments, approval, signature, and seal” would come at the close of report. Line A to J would get automatically calculated only for the relevant fields and not for others. Purpose of line A to J is to provide a quick grasp of the statement by way of minimum, maximum, average, mode, median, standard deviation, Values equal to above 75%, between 50% and 75%, between 25% and 50% and less than 25% .

Lines K, L, are for the concerned faculty, Head of Department and Principal to fill by own hand and sign with seal. In case comments and approval are made by computer entry, digital signature may be needed. However, a hardcopy taken as printout with manually written comments and signature with seal is preferable for documentation and audit purpose.

Any number of students can be entered with details. If printout is taken only the headline portions are repeated in every page while the line A to K would be printed at the last page only. Entire document would show page number as “Page Of Pages” in every page.

Model designed is as below:

Department of Management Studies														
Master of Business Administration														
Consolidated Evaluation for Award of Internal Marks									Year	Month	Day			
Curriculum	Full Time / Part Time	Academic Year			Semester			Section						
Subject Code	Subject Title			Faculty Name			Dr./Prof./Mr./MS.							
Faculty Title	Faculty Code			Faculty Name			Dr./Prof./Mr./MS.							
Weightage given in percentage		25			15			15			15		100	
No.	Register Number of Student	Name of Student	Attendance			Model Tests Marks			Review Test Marks	Faculty Marks	Score	Rank	Internal Marks so far earned	
			Total Classes	Attended classes	%	I	II	III						
1														
2														
3														
Analysis														
A	Count ≥ 75												Comments	
B	Count $>50 < 75$													
C	Count $> 25 < 50$													
D	Count < 25													
E	Mode													
F	Median													
G	Minimum													
H	Maximum													
I	Average													
J	Standard Deviation													
K	Comments / Approval / Signature with Date / Seal													
L	Faculty			Head of Department			Principal							
Name														
Comments														
Signature														
Date														

IMPLEMENTATION

The developed model was implemented in a college with two sections of 45 students each studying for MBA. The developed model was discussed with faculties and necessary corrections and improvements made. Developed model was got approved by the principal. Characteristics of the developed model was informed to the student by the faculty concerned in the class room. Implementation was started afresh in a semester with prior announcement in the notice board.

Faculty were free to take attendance anytime of their class. They would come back to the office room and personally enter the attendance details in the common department computer. They would keep the attendance book safely with them, take it to Head of Department and discuss if necessary and also hand over the attendance book to authorities as per rules of the college. Similarly, attendance would be booked for all the conducted classes for all papers by all faculty including by the Head of Department if necessary.

Whenever the model tests and review tests are conducted and marks declared to students, and after necessary reviews the marks obtained would be entered by the faculty. Computer would be so programmed that the available data are processed and the students are ranked as the data entry is in progress.

Ranking based earning of internal marks obtained on objective evaluation is calculated by the computer and indicated in the statement. Subjective evaluation would be filled in at the close of the semester when the final award of the internal marks would be known publicly for all to see there achieving full transparency. Actual award of internal marks would

not be calculated till the semester is over and the policy of the institution is known as per instruction of the principal. But the award would be strictly as per the rank obtained.

Weekly statements at close of last hour of teaching of every week would be displayed in the notice board. For instance, the faculty taking the last class on Friday or Saturday or any other day of last working day before every Sunday would take the attendance at start of the class and pass on to the Head of Department, who would enter the attendance data for that period and generate the weekly statement, when he would review all statements of all faculties also. A printout would be taken and it will be displayed in the notice board just before close bell of the college. Students used wait for the display and assure themselves of their status. In case of any discrepancy they would approach and secure necessary correction. Actually, there were scrambles as if it was examination result display on the notice board.

It was not uncommon for students to pester the faculty for review of answer papers of model and review examination even for a gain of half mark more. They know it will reflect in the ranking and hence the award of internal marks. As a such constructive competitive sportive culture among students is inculcated. Fair and reasonable approach in award is also achieved.

Absence from a single class would reflect in the ranking. Hence attendance improved even for chronic absentees.

There were no dialogues, arguments, counter arguments, doubts and misgiving on favoritism and antagonism.

Principal and college administration were happy on the development and implementation of the system for award of internal marks. The system of award of internal marks based on a standardised model went on nicely for several years without any modification right from the stage of first implementation.

Implementation of clearly understood, fully transparent, and verifiable standard model for award of internal marks was successful

RESULTS

The standardized model was found to be successfully used for several years in the M.B.A. department. Student satisfaction in respect of their internal marks was evident due to absence of any representation against the system. Overall Satisfaction with Students, Faculty, Head of Department, and Principal was evident.

CONCLUSION

Award of Internal Marks has always been a regular and difficult issue raising its head usually at the time of university examination. Continuous evaluation and declaration of the same is achieved by the standardised model. Accordingly, the contentious process has been reengineered and resolved to a smooth one, further more addressing the various aspirations of the stakeholders.

Similar Business Process Reengineering initiatives can be taken up for all fields of study, wherever internal marks are mandated.

May be implementation of a university authorised model by the constituent colleges can be doing wonders for speedy, time bound, error free data capture by the university towards their superintendence, direction and control function, so that the quality of education is improved to that extent thereby serve the intended purpose of internal marks system.

May be a national data base at every level of education from secondary to post graduation could be conceived and progressed. Such an integration could be very much useful for several micro and macro analysis and programme implementation of respective Governments.

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