Management Education: Towards a Fusion of Horizons

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With modern management scholars expressing their dissatisfaction with management education, efforts are on to develop a more open and holistic approach to this field. The challenge of preparing executives to compete globally is forcing business schools to adapt to the need for more reflective and flexible B-school graduates with cross-cultural sensibilities. This paper explores the possibility of drawing from non-conventional sources of knowledge to enrich management education. Unraveling concepts from philosophy, sociology, literature and the fine arts, it is an attempt to frame a conceptual model and develop insights that may help to bring about a fusion of horizons.

Keywords: Management Education, Holistic Approach, Fusion of Horizons, Conceptual Model, Arts and Management Education

1. Overview

> *Business schools are on the wrong track…Today…MBA programs face intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior—and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs.*

Thus write Warren Bennis and James O'Toole in the *Harvard Business Review* article 'How Business Schools Lost their Way' (2005). What are these "useful skills" that graduates from Business schools need to possess and how may these be imparted? The eminent writers go on to explain why the scientific approach alone cannot prepare managers and leaders: "(As Business is) essentially a human activity in which judgments are made with messy, incomplete, and incoherent data—statistical and methodological wizardry can blind rather than illuminate." Ironically, the writers' argument about the danger of being led by the scientific model alone, strikes at the most valued and touted 'blessing' of science: objectivity. "However reassuring the halo of science, it can also lull us into a false sense of confidence that we are making objective decisions." Later in the article, the former provost of the University of Dallas is quoted as explaining that executives fail due to lack of interpersonal skills and practical wisdom, not lack of expertise. Further, in order to inculcate moral reasoning in B-school students, the curriculum must include history, philosophy, literature, theology and logic.

In his article 'Asian Management Education: Some Twenty-first Century Issues' David Montgomery (2005), the Dean of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business,

Singapore Management University, writes of the business dissatisfaction with MBAs and Executive Education. In this article he also quotes London Business School's Dean Laura Tyson, who was reported by the September 18, 2004, issue of *Straits Times* as saying:

> *The hard commercial reality is that business schools simply have to change. The corporate leaders produced an extensive list of the qualities they desired in future recruits, but almost none involved functional or technical knowledge. All their requirements could be summed up as follows—the need for more thoughtful, more aware, more sensitive, more flexible, more adaptive managers capable of being molded and developed into global executives.*

Modern management scholars and practitioners alike have been expressing their dissatisfaction about the limitations of management education. The former are largely interested in imparting the perfection of logic, reasoning and the knowledge-component in decision making, while the latter lament the lack of human skills in management graduates. In a recent interview in the Times of India (2005) Warren Bennis pointed out that while business leaders are looking for "skills in areas like communication, negotiation, leadership and team building" in fresh recruits, they are disappointed to find that B-schools are producing merely "quantoids".

Efforts are on to develop a more open and holistic approach to the field of Management education. The challenge of preparing executives to compete globally is forcing business schools to adapt to the need for more reflective and flexible B-school graduates with cross-cultural sensibilities. This paper explores the possibility of drawing from non-conventional sources of knowledge to enrich management education and help develop a more open approach to it. Unraveling specific concepts from philosophy (fusion of horizons), sociology (communicative action), literature and the fine arts (understanding of human nature, poetic justice, appreciation of beauty and interconnectedness of the universe) it is an attempt to develop insights that may help to bring about a broadening of horizons. It is a plea for widening the scope and purview of management education to open other avenues of learning, provide more choices and prepare the students better for the new roles they have to play in modern organizations.

2. Need of the Hour

The challenge of modern Management education is to find a balance between theories and practice in a situation in which neither, arguably, is a constant. Recruiters are no longer impressed merely by knowledge or expertise in the functional areas of management. The qualities in demand include fluency and flexibility; adaptability and the ability to see the whole picture. Graduates sought after are expected to be creative and imaginative—and yet have their moorings in reality. In other words, have the ability to analyze problems based on facts and figures. Where do we find these qualities? How does one develop them? How can educators expose management students to such concepts or possibilities? Surely pure scientific knowledge alone cannot suffice! The truth is knowledge alone does not

create leaders and decision makers: there are many more complex issues involved in a decision and the character/natural inclination of the decision maker is crucial.

The case Freemark Abbey Winery (Krasker, 1980) for instance, involves a problem faced by a Napa Valley wine producer who has to decide whether to pick the grapes in his vineyard early or let a warm storm hit the region bringing with it the possibility of sweet red wine. The calculations show that the profits are likely to be the highest when the grapes are left on the vines in the hope that a warm storm will hit Napa valley turning the grapes sweeter by far. However, a risk-averse decision maker, playing safe to ensure that he does not lose his harvest to a cold and detrimental storm will be inclined to harvest early. The character and intent of the decision maker therefore assumes greater importance than the numbers. How does one convey the nuances of character in a strictly formalized course dealing merely in facts, figures and numbers? What ways are there to convey to the student that as a consultant to the Napa valley farmer and wine maker his task not as simple as getting the calculations right? Understanding his customer and building trust has deeper implications than just giving him/her an estimate of numbers. What does the customer want—how can he achieve it—what are the dangers and what are the alternatives/options? Rather than assume profit orientation alone, surely such questions need to be addressed. But in order to find out what the customer wants often one has to read between the lines—understand implied and hidden messages that lie beyond the overtly stated ones. If the subtleties of the human mind are to be grasped one must turn to the humanities for inspiration. Literature has wonderful resources that Management education can draw from.

3. Blending Literature with Management

Dipak Jain (2005), Dean, Kellog School of Management, Northwestern University, in his article 'All the world's a market' (p. 6) writes,

> *Not only did Shakespeare display a profound appreciation for, and understanding of, human nature as manifested in an array of characters, from rogues and clowns to merchants and royalty…but he articulated themes whose universal quality ensures they remain viable 400 years later.*

He goes on to write about themes that are relevant to modern management education today,

> *… themes, such as the duties of leader to act responsibly (and the social costs when they do not) emerge repeatedly. These are governance and social responsibility issues that remain vital. Good rulers in Shakespeare govern with wisdom and care for their citizens; these citizens in turn understand their roles and responsibilities in the social order.*

From Shakespeare's works alone there are numerous lessons to be drawn for the modern manager or leader on trust, power, communication, etc (Whitney & Packer, 2000). The tragic flaw in the characters of the towering heroes of Shakespearean tragedies gives us insights into the pitfalls that even seemingly infallible leaders must

guard against: in Macbeth it was towering ambition, in Hamlet indecision, in Othello suspicion and lack of trust, in Lear it was the satisfaction of the ego. The sense of poetic justice prevails in plays like Macbeth, in which the fallen hero is punished for his deeds and the viewers are placated in some measure for justice has been served. The message, that one has to pay for one's misdeeds irrespective of high rank or powerful position can be conveyed very well through literary inputs. The lessons from literature are profound and infinitely suited to the modern business audience with the moral and ethical questions taking centre stage and important issues like scams and scandals breaking out in even seemingly "safe" companies and countries. There is no denying the power of poetry and drama in conveying messages that may otherwise seem too trite and therefore avoidable. Positioning literature in vantage points in the management curriculum will surely reap benefits that a merely 'dry' and quantitative or technical course does not have the capability to provide.

For instance, in order to motivate students to follow their dreams in all earnestness one could give them a lecture, ask them to read Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, or just quote a few lines of poetry. Consider the powerful message conveyed by Langston Hughes' poem, A Dream Deferred:

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it just explode?

Professor Sampat Singh (2003) in his book *Leading—Lessons from Literature* writes of the lessons in leadership that one may learn from literary sources. He quotes a beautiful story about hearing the unheard from the Harvard Business Review. A prince, sent to the temple to be educated in preparation for his role as the future ruler, was considered ready by the master only he could hear sounds otherwise unheard: the sounds of flowers opening, the sun warming the earth, etc. The Master explains (p. 70):

To hear the unheard is a necessary discipline to be a good ruler. For only when the ruler has learned to listen closely to people's hearts, hearing their uncommunicated feelings, their unexpressed pains, and the unspoken complaints, can he hope to inspire confidence in his people, understand when something is wrong, and meet the true needs of his citizens.

There is a profound lesson in this story for those who wish to lead. Leaders must develop the sensitivity to read between the lines and interpret more than they are told explicitly by their followers.

Regional epics and mythological stories may be used very effectively in the classroom. Subtle nuances of characters can be studied with the help of situations that the class in general would familiar with. These stories have the power to carry home profound messages. The Indian epics *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* can be used to great advantage in the classroom. For instance, to convey the idea that even great men have their weaknesses the example of Yudhishtir [*Mahabharata*] may be used. In spite of his moral stature he gave in to his "game instinct" to gamble and staked his wife and brothers in the game of dice. Respect for the elder brother and loyalty to him (leader) was such that the brothers did not protest, though they may have had a sense of what was coming. This in some ways represents the old hierarchical model and would provide excellent insight to students. Again from the same epic, the issues of gender and equality may be introduced using the situation where the wife [now lost in the game of dice] is dragged into the court room as a prize booty. Draupadi's brave and very valid questions to Dhritarashtra and those present in the court room could be cited as an example of someone using logic and reasoning to move the opponent even from a vulnerable position. She proved herself to be an excellent negotiator in the end having got back everything her 'worthy' husbands had lost.

The rich oral tradition of story telling in India is a wonderful store house that one can draw from. Recent research shows that storytelling is one of the most effective tools leaders can use in organizations to get their points across effectively (Denning, 2004). However, the stories must be chosen with care to fulfill the purpose that they serve. David Armstrong (1992) in his book *Managing by Storying Around: a new method of leadership* (p.11) writes of storytelling as "a much simpler and more effective way to manage." He introduces the reader to stories for specific purposes: stories to inspire self-management; stories about core-values, heroic people; stories to boost creativity and inspire innovation and even stories about how to tell stories. The stories are drawn from real organizational situations and told simply to convey a clear message and they work according to the writer.

Literature in all its forms has great utility for Management education. It is just a question of choosing the right poem/story/speech to convey one's message with clarity and artistry. The famous speech of Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* for instance, is an excellent example of persuasive communication. It combines all the elements of skillful communication to achieve an end: Antony uses facts to support his arguments and emotion to get the audience to his side. He moves adroitly from emotion to logic and back again to achieve his end. Facing a hostile crowd that supports his enemies, Antony harps overtly on the credibility of the so-called "honourable men" while slowly taking the trust of the people away from them. By the time the speech ends the tables are turned: the crowd is screaming for revenge on his enemies—those who murdered Caesar in cold blood. I have personally found this speech better than conventional text books to teach persuasive and assertive communication. This gem from Shakespeare is a powerful tool for anyone seeking to learn how to influence people and hold sway over their minds: leaders, public speakers, even sales promoters selling ideas or other products. The richness of characters and styles that literature provides has immense potential for teaching us

about human behaviour and it would be a pity if such resources remained untapped in Management education.

Based on their research for the book *In Search of Excellence—lessons from America's best run companies*, the authors Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman point out (1982) that productivity is affected most by the attention paid to employees. Management is a human science. Human organization requires much more than mere knowledge of numbers and fixed formulae about life and success. Pursuing facts can help in analysis but making a decision involves more than the obvious solutions offered by mathematical justice, if I may use the expression. One may be adept at logic and quantitative techniques and yet fail as a leader of people, or even as a team player. As we have to deal with people it is important to remember that two and two do not necessarily add up to four. People are not machines: they have minds of their own—in other words, an input does not guarantee the same output on every occasion. Every individual is bound by a horizon that enables him/her to comprehend the world around. The interpretation of a message received is based on this finite but fluid horizon, which adds meaning to a message sent. The human science of interpretation should form a part of management education. This would help the graduates understand and appreciate the uncertainties involved when one deals with human factors.

4. Fusion of Horizons

The practice of management also has a nebulous quality as one has to deal with changing realities often conflicting with 'present' knowledge. A leader/manager has to renew and reinvent new approaches to problems that may have no precedence. Therefore, listening and understanding are extremely important, so is the development of interpersonal skills through interactions (one-to-one or one-to-many with peer groups/subordinates and seniors). Organizations today are more demanding in terms of individual and group output. Team players and leaders who can lead a team successfully are both in demand. Are the traditional functional areas enough to deal with this change? In this quarter the concept of *fusion of horizons* introduced by Hans-Georg Gadamer can help develop the insights necessary to become sensitive to the 'other' in interpersonal relationships and in turn this understanding can lead to better communication, building of trust, loyalty and commitment to the task at hand.

The concept of fusion of horizons is about rising above one's limited world view to envision how the other's world view might be and in so doing creating a new horizon for oneself that is larger than the limited horizons of both as it existed before the fusion took place. Thus it is not about giving up one's individuality, rather it is about developing a broader understanding and an orientation towards universality. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer (1999) explains this process by introducing the expression "transposing ourselves". We must transpose ourselves for fusion of horizons to happen (p. 305):

> *Transposing ourselves consists neither in the empathy of one individual for another nor in subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes*

> *not only our own particularity but also that of the other. The concept of "horizon" suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand—not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion.*

This view of developing understanding is germane not just to management education, but to modern life itself: fraught with strife as it is. This awareness or consciousness about the "other" and the ability to develop a universal rather than a parochial or self-serving view is essential in the modern organization for healthy and conducive work atmosphere.

Moreover, the demands of the modern workplace, job and stress make people close up—therefore counseling is very important: finding an anchor, who is empathetic and understanding encourages openness and helps one to cope in stressful times. Understanding the other, empathizing and being more flexible and open—more caring as a leader and decision maker, as a participant or coworker is the need of the hour. But is the curriculum helping to develop such skills in the students? The environment must be conducive for interactions as structured and rigid hierarchy has failed—uncertainties have increased and change is imperative. The implications are complex, therefore it is important to pursue techniques and possibilities that help to integrate knowledge rather than remain fragmented and aloof. Persuasive techniques are more in line with today's needs and working towards a shared goal with compassion for dreams and understanding of the purpose is the best alternative. In this context the concept of communicative action can prove to be very useful to management students who hope to be successful team leaders. Every time I meet someone who tries to force an opinion on me or wants me to act in a manner that I do not agree with I try this approach and when it works it is better for us both.

5. Communicative Action

Modern workplaces need people to work together in heterogeneous, cross-functional teams and come up with solutions to problems. Building consensus, sharing the onus of decision making, being oriented towards understanding the purpose and reaching the goal is vital. Old hierarchical models and lone workers are no longer welcome. Under these changed circumstances developing an understanding of the theory of communicative action propounded by Jurgen Habermas will be very useful to management students. In his book *The theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas (1984) explains the concept in these words (286-87):

> *Reaching understanding …is considered to be a process of reaching agreement…among speaking and acting subjects. …A communicatively achieved agreement…cannot be merely induced through outside influence; it has to be accepted or presupposed to be valid by the participants. To this extent it can be distinguished from merely de facto accord…A communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing the decisions of opponents.*

Table 1

Types of Action

Action Orientation / Action Situation	Oriented to Success	Oriented to Reaching Understanding
Nonsocial	Instrumental action	
Social	Strategic action	**Communicative action**

Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* Vol. 1. p.285

Habermas distinguishes between communicative action and strategic action chiefly in terms of orientation: while the former aims at understanding, the latter aims at success.

In other words, strategic action may use coercion in order to achieve an end, but communicative action aims at consensus.

As suggested by a researcher on the subject (Herda, 1999):

> *Habermas claims that our ability to communicate reveals that those who learn to speak a language learn more than merely the ability to produce grammatical sentences. In speaking, we relate to the world about us, to others, and to ourselves. In each of these spheres we are always making claims, explicitly or implicitly, concerning the validity of the truth of what we are saying in relation to the objective world; concerning the sincerity of our own intentions; and concerning the legitimacy of our values and norms in our social world. (p. 66)*

According to Habermas, the principle of communicative action is characterized by the validity claims of comprehensibility, shared knowledge, trust, and shared values that help conversation partners to reach an understanding. There is no force involved in it. In other words, when one is able to communicate with comprehension and the basis is trust, shared knowledge and values, communicative action becomes possible.

With the increased awareness of the erosion of values and trust in modern organizations, this concept is very relevant. The utility of the theory also stems from the fact that Habermas puts interaction with others at the centre. Therefore it has great learning potential for the present times and holds promise for the future as well. Besides, realizing the possibility of reaching an understanding before action, accepting other points of view without being overly possessive about one's own, and helping to build and cherish relationships assumes greater importance in the modern day workplace.

6. The Present Global Context

With the advancement of globalization, new language, products and ideas are making inroads into our previously sheltered lives. The realization that the world has shrunken is overpowering even the common man/woman. The B-school graduates have to work in the changed environments that require greater other-orientation. This requires superior cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding of professional and ethical values of the people/parties one deals with. Developing a sense of what is acceptable universally is extremely significant and has the power to make or mar a professional or personal relationship. In situations where one has to deal with alien cultures a biased or polarized view can immobilize or destroy present/potential options and possibilities for growth.

Professionalism, trust and integrity

Professionalism is a value no business school graduate can afford to ignore if he/she wishes to be taken seriously by peer groups and the management of any company of national or global significance. The standards of expectation may differ from organization to organization but one must take the trouble to develop an understanding of the culture of the organization one is dealing with and the nuances of professional behaviour expected at the global level. For instance being on time, dressing appropriately, greeting those one may meet suitably and respecting other cultures would be universally acceptable. Respecting oneself and others in professional relationships and creating a milieu of comfort and trust is essential for the well-being of the individual and the organization. According to Shaw (1997):

> *Trust among organizational members increases the likelihood of successful change…the likelihood that people will abandon past practices in favor of new approaches. Trust is a resource, a form of "collaborative capital" that can be used to great advantage*[1] *(p. 3)*

Organizational citizens who are perceived to be trustworthy are entrusted with greater responsibility and receive more support in their ventures. In his book *Trust in the Balance* Robert B. Shaw points to three factors that he calls "trust imperatives." These are:

1. Achieving results: following through on business commitments
2. Acting with integrity: behaving in a consistent manner
3. Demonstrating concern: respecting the well-being of others

Integrity cannot be taught, perhaps, except by example and it is for the student to emulate or not. Live examples of business leaders who have shown integrity and been successful may help. At the end of the day it is not where a person studied or how well he/she scored in the examinations that count but the mark one makes as a person of integrity who can be trusted as a colleague, or even a competitor. Effective communication in organizations revolves around such unspoken faith in one's credibility and makes a person stand out like a giant among pygmies. However, credibility is earned over time (Kouzes and Posner, 1993).

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[1] The author credits the last line of the quotation to F. Fukuyama's *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity* 1995; and P. Pascarella's "The High Price of Low Trust" *Industry Week*, 6 Nov 1995.

Cultural sensitivity, interdependence and moral values

Today one may remain in one's own country and yet be in professional situations that demand interaction with customers abroad. Apart from instances in the BPO industry, there are several multi-national organizations that set up offices in distant countries and members from the parent country work there. In my own recent experience of teaching an Executive Education batch from one such multi-national company, I came in touch with participants from India, China and Brazil. While the latter seemed neutral, I sensed that the class had to be very cautious while venturing opinions about the two neighboring countries of India and China. Being sensitive and tolerant to other cultures, treating them well and respecting them must become a way of life.

Answering a question on the critical attributes for managers in the present scenario, Warren Bennis in the Times of India interview (2005) says, "…we need to educate people in cultural sensitivity… (and) in judgment, which is basically what leaders and management people will be evaluated on." He goes on to suggest the need for "an ethical, moral compass" to deal with the contemporary imperatives brought about by the need for interdependence. The greater interdependence brings about increased concern for integrity: "we need ethical moral discernment because you are always subject to conflict of your interdependencies." With the increase in interdependence comes the added responsibility to be true to the values—both personal and organizational. Professor Bennis concludes by pointing out the need for inculcating these principles in our students and refers to the models from law school, medical school and schools of architecture for more innovative ways of working together with seniors and faculty members to add value to learning and practice.

As interdependence is impossible to ignore or do away with, one can make it a positive experience by raising the bar with regard to expectations and value systems. Personal narratives about the efficacy of setting high moral standards can be used very effectively to drive home a message. I recall the case of a wealthy and 'respectable' restaurant owner in California who had been charged with bringing into the country two young girls illegally to work in his restaurant. But that was not all, he was said to have been sexually abusing them as well. The situation was even more pathetic as the victims were living in a flat under his care. This news broke when one of the girls died suddenly and the man was caught trying to dispose off the body. The other girl on being questioned came out with the truth. Several human rights and women's welfare groups came forward to help her. However, what impressed me most was that people stopped visiting the restaurant and the thriving business was affected. The message was clear.

Creativity and innovation

It is a modern day cliché to point out that no organization can afford to be stagnant: change is the only reality. However, very little is actually done to foster or nurture creativity and innovation in business schools. Bringing about awareness that everyone can be creative and developing creativity in the students early in the B-school curriculum is important because it is easier to introduce new concepts while they are open-minded and curious to learn. A large number of the entrants to premier B-schools come from an academic background of engineering/sciences. Conditioned

to perceive life in quantifiable and measurable terms, they need to be initiated into other ways of thinking and other possibilities of problem solving. Workshops on creativity and innovation can be very useful. In the interview quoted above, Warren Bennis also speaks of the potential for using literature and theatre in this context. Certainly it is not an area that management education can afford to neglect.

Professor Pradip Khandwalla (2003) considers organizational creativity "an enterprise that is indispensable in our times." Arguing that globalization has increased competitiveness and forced organizations to innovate, he writes (p. 3):

> *We live in a century in which market economy and democracy have become dominant institutions of the globe. Both are based on competition, and competition induces parties to innovate ways of outwitting their competitors…*
>
> *Thanks to competition and technological developments, practically every industry is becoming a knowledge industry, with knowledge workers, knowledge vendors, and knowledge customers, whose rising expectations for working conditions, commercial relations, and product/service quality is another force driving organizational creativity and innovation.*

Thus, one may infer that in the present context creativity and innovation do not fall in the domain of the arts alone, they have become an essential part of modern organizational life and therefore deserve a more significant place in management education. Besides, as planners and executers of the B-school curriculum we may temper the sensibilities of our students drawing upon the resources provided by literature (story, poetry and drama) music, fine arts and cinema. The inputs would have to be selected with care, keeping in mind the purpose of the course. For instance, organizational success stories using creative techniques could form a part of the curriculum. Students could be encouraged to study live organizations trying to introduce change by using new approaches to old problems. Lessons in coming together and performing together as in a symphony, creation of synergy between members, developing a sense of balance, precision, rigour, synchronization, synthesis and many other aspects can be conveyed subtly to the students through arts and aesthetics. Appreciation of the arts would also help to develop an aesthetic sense and bring refinement to the learners. Moreover, in times of stress such interests serve to provide relaxation, prevent burn out, give strength to tide over difficult times and much needed solace when one is down. Painting or playing a musical instrument, writing, or even reading poetry provides catharsis. As Octavio Paz writes (1987):

> *Between what I see and what I say,*
> *between what I say and what I keep silent,*
> *between what I keep silent and what I dream,*
> *between what I dream and what I forget:*
> *poetry. (p. 5)*

7. Closing Comments

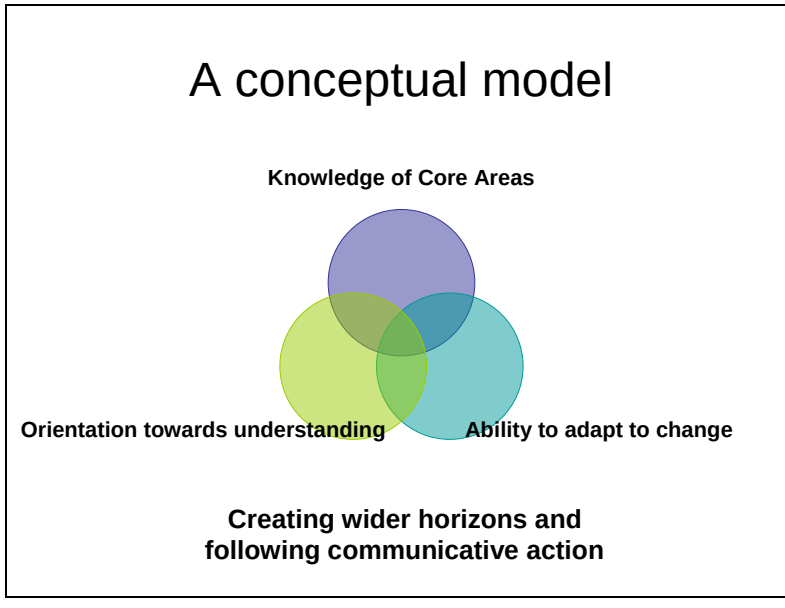
Management should be viewed as a more holistic and comprehensive field now—as several management scholars and practitioners have pointed out (Bennis *et al*. 2005; Montgomery 2004; Narayanswamy 2001). Having an undeniable kinship with the business world, management education is directly affected by the demands of globalization, quick technological changes and the pressure to innovate or perish (Friga, Bettis & Sullivan 2003). Given the unpredictable nature of modern day problems and the inherent uncertainties related to global organizations, the B-school graduates require greater exposure to concepts in the humanities that are or may be relevant to management education. Some of these concepts are fusion of horizons and communicative action. The other-orientation that will help understand cultures, appreciate other perspectives and develop sensitivity can be brought about through the fusion of horizons. Communicative action (the concept and possibility of practice) will teach future leaders the importance of succeeding through an orientation towards understanding rather than bringing about strategic or instrumental action. The validity claims suggested by Habermas: comprehensibility, shared knowledge, trust and shared values form the basis of such action. It helps to develop oneness in teamwork and makes a task possible by shared ownership of the responsibility. In circumstances where these validity claims can be redeemed, there is less conflict as the team has chosen to be a part of the decision-making process. This also brings about a culture of shared decision making in an organization.

Exposure to literature can help a management student in several ways. It can give him/her a better understanding of human nature; the concept of poetic justice can help develop an ethical sense of doing the right thing and staying on the right track, though it may be *less traveled*. Literature has immense potential that a skilful management teacher can unravel to portray powerful images and moving ideas to the students. The material for such interaction may be selected to achieve a specific end or may be used in more creative ways to open discussions for larger purposes. Arts and aesthetics in any form may be brought in as suggestive measures for learning useful management concepts. Additionally, these may unfold larger and more holistic perspectives like the interconnectedness of the universe, the appreciation of beauty, etc. which in turn would help develop wider vision beyond narrow limits.

To conclude, the student in his preparation for the corporate world needs to be oriented towards understanding and develop adaptability to change. The concepts discussed in this paper are aimed at providing him with such preparedness along with the knowledge of core areas. Table 2 provides a conceptual model of how I visualize this. Management education gains much and loses nothing in becoming more inclusive in terms of offering more options and opening up wider avenues for thought, reflection and practice to students who need to prepare themselves for the changing times. Educational institutions fostering management teaching have an important role to play in taking a step in the direction of change. Some of these new concepts and ideas are slowly creeping into management education. In fact some institutes have already started on the path of innovation with restructured programmes and thematic thrust (Gupta: 2005). There are several new areas being explored like Unlearning and Creativity. There is a climate for developing integrated courses and working together to create something better than what would have been

achieved by individual efforts. In some sense we [management educators] have put into practice fusion of horizons. However, there are still *promises to keep before we sleep*.

Table 2



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