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# *Management Education*

Issues in Theory, Research, and Practice

*Edited by*

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*Management Education*

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## *Preface*

This book is concerned with management education, including both its development through theory and research, and its implementation through good programs, courses, and teaching. We address the academic community as educators in universities as opposed to those who have comparable concerns in management development.

Given the size of the content domain of management education, and the myriad issues with which it is confronted, we felt that an encyclopedic approach would be too general to have immediate practical utility. Therefore, our approach has been to invite management scholars with acknowledged reputations in their respective areas of interest to write chapters within their subject domain. We believe that these chapters provide a useful context for those interested in improving their own teaching and for expanding our knowledge about management education.

The book was suggested by our common concerns about the direction and development of management education, and our mutual observation that this concern is widely shared by many management scholars. We are particularly grateful to John R. Schermerhorn Jr whose suggestions played a critical role in the development of this book. In addition, we would like to thank the many members of the Management Education and Development Division of the Academy of Management who provided many of the ideas that were incorporated into this book.

Finally, as editors we wish to acknowledge our pleasure at working with the contributors to this book.

RICHARD D. FREEDMAN  
CARY L. COOPER  
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**Part I**

**INTRODUCTION**



*Chapter 1*

# *Management Education: Its Theory, Research and Practice*

*Richard D. Freedman and Stephen A. Stumpf*

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Management education in schools of business and public administration has received less attention than other aspects of the study of management. Theory and research abound in areas such as organizational behavior and management science to the benefit of their practice; however, theory and research in management education is seriously lacking (Freedman and Stumpf, 1979). The utility of management education for developing practitioners remains more an article of faith than an empirical fact. Little is known about the process that underlies the education of managers. Research has emphasized the development of techniques and instruments that often are of questionable validity or not generalizable beyond the sites in which they were developed (Freedman and Stumpf, 1979). Furthermore, the criteria generally used in the research often are immediate measures of student satisfaction. Such measures have dubious linkages to more relevant, distal measures of managerial behavior. This may explain why those who study managerial effectiveness often do not consider management education as a determinant of managerial performance (see, for example, Campbell *et al.*, 1970). While management education generally plays a significant role in college programs, its usefulness remains a matter of conjecture.

A recent increased interest in management education may redress some of these problems. For example, the activities of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society, such as its annual meeting and its journal *Exchange*, explore issues in management education teaching and research, enhance the dialog in the field, and provide outlets for those interested in educational issues. It also identifies a growing cadre of people who have a concern with improving management education.

The purpose of this book is to help to develop an information network among those who teach management in order to increase the involvement of

management scholars in management education. We recognize that the nature and degree of interest in the field varies considerably. Some may be interested in improving their own teaching; others may wish to make important contributions to the development of the field of management education. This book is structured to address both types of issues. However, we hope that as scholars become more inquisitive about their own teaching that they may also come to be more interested in issues that can be generalized to other scholars in other institutions.

We focus on three primary areas of concern: theory, research, and practice. A vital field of management education must be strong in all three areas. Good theory is needed to develop good research; good research is needed to enhance theory and to develop sound practice.

Theory building in management education should have three thrusts. First, it should provide an explanation of the underlying process by which management education can contribute to later management performance. Such theory is required to provide an intellectual rationale for management education. Second, it should offer an explanation of how different pedagogies facilitate the underlying educational process so that the appropriate pedagogy is linked to appropriate goals. Theories should be constructed to provide researchers with conceptual frameworks and hypotheses that generate research which subsequently enhances knowledge. Third, there is a need for theoretical consideration of more philosophical issues. Management education scholars should be concerned with those managerial behaviors, though not necessarily related to success in management, that enhance the practical and social utility of management. Social responsibility is one example. We must be aware of changes and trends that suggest the need for new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities that may be required by future managers. However, it seems that a better understanding of the first two theoretical issues would enhance our ability to develop insights about the third. We do not think management education theory can go far so long as it remains primarily speculative in nature.

The second focus of the book is management education research. Management education research should be concerned with two issues: the development of knowledge in management education, and the improvement of individual teaching performance. Both are necessary elements of the field; however, their purposes and methods are often confused to the detriment of both areas. The first type of research concerns the development of knowledge that can be generalized across individuals, classes, and sites. This is the type of research that is appropriate for scholarly journals. This research may vary from the development and validation of pedagogic devices or course evaluation systems to testing relationships suggested by management education theory.

Research designed to improve individual teaching performance is often not generalizable, and one may argue that it is not research in the traditional sense. Nonetheless, it is a critical aspect of interest in the field of management education. The purpose of this research concerns those activities that individual faculty members or departments can do within their own institutions to improve their performance. In many respects each time we conduct a class or a course we engage in a field study. We all are, or should be, learning from these experiences. The issues involved in how we can better learn from our experience and effort to improve our teaching is important on its own terms. Unfortunately, our review of the management education research literature identified many examples of research that are not generalizable (Freedman and Stumpf, 1979). While the flaws in the research can often be attributed to poor methodology, it is our conclusion that much of this research was not designed to be generalized. Rather, it often represents the authors' report of research that was conducted for internal development purposes. While such efforts may represent useful pilot studies, they rarely belong in the research literature.

The third aspect of management education addressed is the appropriate design and delivery of subject matter. Ideally, the process and content of instruction should be based on sound theory and research. In the absence of such theory and research, we must do the best that we can in the context of what we know. This suggests the importance of self-directed research; our teaching should have a heuristic aspect to it.

The three areas mentioned above define a broad domain. One must consider the content variance in the functional aspects of management to appreciate its ramifications for practice. For example, teaching organizational behavior is rather different than teaching corporate strategy and policy. It is impossible for any one volume to provide thorough coverage of the issues. Therefore, we have included a sample of important aspects of each area. We believe that these contributions identify issues that merit greater consideration, provide the basis for self-development, and/or provide a basis for the development of the field. Our purpose is not to provide definitive answers to the issues in each area, but to suggest direction, to generate interest, and to develop wider participation in management education. The current need is for questions, controversy, and action.

We trust that readers will use the book as a basis for them to see how they can combine their particular interests in management with those of management education. A better understanding of management education will not only have the primary salutary outcome of improving our programs and teaching; but, more importantly, lead to a better practice of management.

The following sections integrate the contributions which make up the book into the perspective of the framework indicated above.

## THEORY IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Theory development in management education is needed to evolve a systematic program of research that can significantly enhance the field. Of prime importance in such theoretical development is an understanding of what we wish to produce. As will be discussed later, selecting attainable preferred outcomes is not obvious. Theory should also explain how pedagogy facilitates the educational process. Finally, the role of management education in the manager development process needs to be elaborated, for management education is undoubtedly a broader subject than what we do in management classrooms.

Our review of the management education literature included 25 papers that were theoretic in nature (Freedman and Stumpf, 1979). Unfortunately, few of these papers were responsive to the above needs, and they have not been successful in providing a framework for conducting research. All too often they represent vehicles for the unsupported normative speculations of their authors. Although they often advocate or criticize specific techniques such as cases or experiential exercises, they are generally based on global arguments and have made little effort to develop integrated models that suggest circumstances when various approaches to education are effective. The outcomes of such theory are suggested in teaching such subjects as organizational behavior. Cohen's chapter in this book illustrates the problem. A large number of potential goals and methods confront the professor who must choose among them. Certainly better theory and research could help the professor rely on more than his or her own background and intuition to address management education issues.

Another factor that contributes to the problems we face is that to a great extent we have been working in a vacuum. Educational problems in management are a subset of educational problems in general. A vast literature on education exists in other areas such as education psychology. While this literature is not always relevant, it often helps to provide a framework for studying management education. This is illustrated by Stone's chapter on research methodology. Stone indicates how methods often developed in educational psychology may be applied to management education. Another type of illustration is seen in House's chapter on experiential learning. House adapts social learning theory into a framework that explains how experiential learning should be conducted. Why should management educators attempt to reinvent the wheel, often in a cruder form, when much is available for us to apply to our problems?

There are a large number of needs that should be addressed in management education. More attention has been devoted to developing new methods and normative arguments than to the underlying problems that we face. We identify below areas that merit more consideration.

## **The well-educated manager**

Before an appropriate educational program can be developed, we must consider the outcomes that we wish to produce. Most of our efforts have been directed towards specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes with little consideration of the general end. It is as if we hope that specific educational inoculations somehow add up to the total—the well-educated manager. To a great extent the view of the well-educated manager that prevails today was formulated a generation ago and has received little reconsideration. This view was in reaction to the vocationalism that characterized much of early business education. The implicit goal of vocationalism was to prepare students for their first job rather than for a career in business. The most widely known articulation of this issue was produced by Gordon and Howell (1959). Their views led to a restructuring of business education in the United States, including greater emphasis on the liberal arts in undergraduate business education, consideration of ethical issues, and courses to develop general problem-solving skills.

It seems as if many of these views have been codified in business education by accrediting agencies, in particular the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), through such forms as Common Body of Knowledge requirements. Some examples of such requirements include: courses in the legal and economic aspects of business including ethical matters; an understanding of the basic concepts and applications of subjects such as quantitative methods, accounting, and organizational behavior; and, the study of organizations operating under conditions of uncertainty.

Even though this orientation is supposed to produce a well-educated manager, much of what happens within the approach remains vocational in nature. In discussing the issue of the relevance of management education, House (1975) indicates that there are still strong but misplaced pressures to provide short-run practical relevance. According to House, the professional role should emphasize the teaching of broadly generalizable principles and practices, since a vocational, or concrete orientation is not widely applicable and is rapidly obsolescent. He argues against the 'prevailing truth' in management education that there is a specific set of skills that are critical for managerial success. What he believes are required are problem-solving skills (intellectual in nature) and social skills (interpersonal in nature). Thus, one view of the purpose of managerial education is to develop those skills and abilities that are widely applicable in organizations regardless of one's hierarchical level in management or one's functional responsibilities.

We do not only deal with knowledge and skill in education, we also transmit values to our students. Cohen discusses some issues around the dilemmas this creates. Thomas (1977) also argues that management education is not an objective, value-free transmission of knowledge and skills. He demonstrates,

through conflict management, how values play an important role in the classroom suggesting that a realistic approach to value issues is more beneficial to students than absolutistic approaches.

These views are based upon what managers must contend with throughout their careers. They paint a picture of a broadly educated individual with appropriate values who is skilled in problem-solving and interpersonal relations. Yet the drive towards vocationalism remains strong as the perusal of many curricula will verify. We suggest two major reasons for this phenomenon. One resides in our students who often view relevance in terms of the concreteness and usefulness of the subject matter, an issue that we will discuss later in this chapter. The second resides in ourselves. In many areas of management and business we have developed technologies that can be directly applied. In general, these technologies are easier for us to communicate because they relate more directly to what we do in our research and consulting. They probably also satisfy our needs to fulfil our students' demands for relevance.

Another approach to defining the needs of managers centers around our growing understanding of what managers actually do. This approach to management education may permit more explicit criteria for measuring success. If we agree about what managers do and the skills that underlie those activities, then we could design an educational process to develop those skills and a measurement system to evaluate our progress on these goals in terms of individual courses and overall programs. Mintzberg's (1973) work, as one example, is widely recognized. He posits a set of activities around interpersonal, informational, and decisional roles that are viewed as generic to management. A natural question that arises is how our courses are directed at developing student performance in those roles.

If the job content and work roles approach is shown to be valid, one could go further into the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that underlie performance in those roles. The research done on assessment centers may offer some promise in this area. While assessment centers have primarily been used for selection purposes, they also have potential for management education theory development. In this instance we are not concerned with the direct potential of assessment centers for instructing students or giving them self-insight, although that potential exists (Boehm and Hoyle, 1977; Freedman and Stumpf, 1981; Slivinski and Bourgeois, 1977; Van Maanen, Schein, and Bailyn, 1977). Rather we are concerned with how the abilities measured in assessment centers relate to managerial progression (see, for example, Bray and Grant, 1966; Bray, Campbell, and Grant, 1974). To the extent that we understand which variables differentiate success in management, we can orient our programs toward those variables. Variables that have been shown to relate to success include interpersonal skills (including leadership, assertiveness,