

IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING COMPETENCIES IN FINAL YEAR STUDENTS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLIPPED LECTURES

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Abstract

In recent years, flipped lectures have emerged as an innovative pedagogical strategy in education, aimed at transforming traditional classroom dynamics and promoting active student engagement. This academic study focuses on the impact of implementing flipped lectures on final year students of Business Administration and Management. By exploring how this approach enhances their learning competencies, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of flipped lectures in preparing students for the challenges of the business world. Employing a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews to assess students' perceptions of the impact of flipped lectures on their learning process. The findings highlight significant improvements in students' competencies, such as autonomy, critical thinking, collaboration, and technological skills. This evidence supports the notion that flipped lectures serve as an effective pedagogical strategy, equipping future professionals in the field of business administration and management with the necessary tools to excel in their academic and professional pursuits. The implementation of flipped lectures encountered challenges, including students' initial adjustment to self-directed learning, concerns about increased responsibility, and the need for instructors to shift roles. Adapting teaching materials, creating engaging pre-lecture content, and ensuring equitable technology access posed further difficulties. Sustaining student engagement during the pre-lecture phase proved dynamic, with issues of time management and focus outside traditional classrooms, and addressing individual comprehension necessitated flexible scheduling and personalized feedback.

Keywords: Learning competencies, flipped lectures, pedagogical strategy, learning process, critical thinking.

1 INTRODUCTION

The landscape of higher education is continuously evolving, driven by technological advances, changes in student demographics, and the complex needs of the modern workforce. Among the emerging pedagogical innovations, the flipped classroom model has gained significant traction as an instructional strategy designed to enhance active learning, critical thinking, and student engagement. While the flipped classroom has been explored across diverse disciplines, from STEM fields to the humanities, its impact on Business Administration and Management (BAM) programs remains relatively understudied. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of flipped lectures on the learning competencies of final year students in a BAM program, considering that these students are at a critical juncture where they transition from academia to professional life.

Flipped classrooms invert the traditional educational model, requiring students to engage with new material at home, usually in the form of video lectures, while class time is reserved for interactive, hands-on activities. This format promotes self-directed learning and allows students to apply concepts in a collaborative environment under the guidance of an instructor. However, despite its increasing popularity, the implementation of the flipped classroom presents multiple challenges, both logistical and pedagogical, such as students' initial resistance to this new mode of learning, and the need for instructors to adapt their roles and teaching materials accordingly.

Specifically, this study explores the benefits and challenges of implementing flipped lectures in a BAM program, focusing on the development of essential competencies like autonomy, critical thinking, collaboration, and technological skills. As business environments become increasingly complex and competitive, equipping students with these competencies is crucial for their future success. Therefore, understanding the potential of flipped lectures to foster these skills becomes especially relevant.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collected through questionnaires and interviews. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of

students' perceptions of flipped lectures and their impact on learning. We seek to answer questions such as: Do flipped lectures enhance critical thinking and autonomy among BAM students? What are the challenges faced by instructors and students in adopting this pedagogical strategy? How do students manage their time and focus on a self-directed learning environment?

The findings of this study could offer valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers interested in adopting innovative teaching strategies in higher education. Moreover, the results will contribute to the growing body of literature on flipped classrooms, providing a focused exploration of its impact in the context of business education, an area that prepares students for one of the most dynamic and fast-paced professional fields.

By delving into these aspects, we hope to illuminate the efficacy of flipped lectures as a pedagogical tool for improving student learning outcomes, while also identifying areas for improvement and potential strategies for overcoming the challenges posed by this innovative educational model.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: The next section offers a literature review, delving into existing research on flipped classrooms in general, and its specific applications and implications in Business Administration and Management education. This is followed by the methodology section, which outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures employed in this study. The results section presents the empirical findings, offering both quantitative and qualitative insights into the impact of flipped lectures on the learning competencies of BAM students. These findings are then discussed in the conclusion, where we synthesize our observations and consider their broader implications for educational practice and policy. Finally, the paper closes with a list of references, acknowledging the academic contributions that have informed and supported this research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of flipped classrooms has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent years. Originating from the idea of inverting traditional teaching methods, the flipped classroom model emphasizes pre-class learning through video lectures or readings, freeing up classroom time for interactive exercises and discussions (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). The model's foundational promise is its potential to enhance student engagement, autonomy, and higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

The application of flipped classrooms has been studied across a range of disciplines, from the sciences (Smith, 2013) to the humanities (Gannod et al., 2008). Within the realm of Business Administration and Management (BAM), studies have begun to explore the model's potential for nurturing critical business skills. Zainuddin & Halili (2016) reported that BAM students in flipped classes exhibited significantly higher collaborative skills than those in traditional settings, a competency highly valued in the business world. Similarly, Kim et al. (2014) found improvements in critical thinking skills, indicating the flipped model's potential for BAM students to analyze complex business scenarios effectively.

Although many studies have pointed to the advantages of the flipped classroom, it is not without its challenges. Mok (2014) indicated that students initially faced difficulties adapting to the flipped environment, citing increased responsibility and time management as significant obstacles. The role of instructors in a flipped setting also requires reconsideration; traditional lecturing takes a back seat to facilitating, which necessitates different skill sets and approaches (Tucker, 2012).

The issue of technology cannot be ignored in this context. While technological advancements facilitate the flipped model, they also present challenges related to equitable access (Sahin et al., 2015). Moreover, instructors face the logistical challenges of creating effective pre-lecture materials and managing online platforms (Chen et al., 2014).

On the subject of student engagement, particularly in pre-lecture phases, findings are mixed. Davies et al. (2013) pointed out that students often struggle with focus and time management during pre-lecture activities, but also suggested that these challenges could be mitigated with structured guidelines and milestones.

A critical point yet to be explored deeply in literature is how the flipped classroom impacts final year BAM students. These students are at a unique stage, about to transition from academic life to a professional environment, making the development of key competencies particularly crucial (Wanner & Palmer, 2015).

While existing research provides valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of implementing flipped classrooms in higher education, there is a distinct gap concerning its impact on final year BAM students. This study aims to fill this void, offering a focused evaluation of flipped lectures' effectiveness in fostering essential business competencies for this student group.

3 METHODOLOGY

Given the multidimensional nature of the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was employed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of flipped lectures on the learning competencies of final year Business Administration and Management (BAM) students. The research design adhered to a concurrent triangulation strategy, where quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously but analyzed independently before the results were merged for interpretation. The study focused on final year students enrolled in a BAM program at a medium-sized university.

3.1 Data collection instruments

Two primary data collection methods were used.

3.1.1 Questionnaires

A structured questionnaire was administered to all participants (annex 1). A total of 50 students voluntarily participated in the study, providing a robust sample for data analysis. The survey included Likert scale questions aimed at gauging students' perceptions about the impact of flipped lectures on their learning competencies, such as autonomy, critical thinking, collaboration, technological skills, and challenges.

3.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

A subset of 10 students was selected for one-on-one interviews to gather in-depth qualitative insights (annex 2). These interviews explored students' personal experiences and perceptions, focusing on both the advantages and challenges of the flipped classroom model. Interview questions were designed to elicit responses that would validate or extend the quantitative findings.

3.2 Data analysis

In the data analysis of our recent survey, for quantitative data we adopted a targeted approach that centered on the higher numerical values attributed to the Likert scale responses. For context, the Likert scale was numerically coded with "Strongly Disagree" as 1, "Disagree" as 2, "Neutral" as 3, "Agree" as 4, and "Strongly Agree" as 5. The goal was to gauge the level of positive sentiment among the survey participants, focusing on understanding the proportion of individuals who expressed favorable experiences or attitudes toward the subject matter under investigation. This approach allowed us to identify and quantify the strengths or well-received aspects of the topic, thereby providing valuable insights for future initiatives.

Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed for to thematic analysis. Codes were assigned to significant recurring themes, and these were grouped into categories for further interpretation.

The mixed-methods approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the subject matter, addressing the research questions from multiple angles. While the quantitative data provided a broad snapshot of student perceptions and their correlation with academic performance indicators, the qualitative data added depth, capturing the complexities and nuances of the student experience in a flipped classroom setting. By employing this methodology, the study aimed to offer a balanced and holistic view of the effectiveness and challenges of implementing flipped lectures in a final year BAM program.

4 RESULTS

Based on the comprehensive methodology employed, the following results emerged, offering a nuanced understanding of the impact of flipped lectures on the learning competencies of final-year Business Administration and Management (BAM) students.

4.1 Quantitative results

Most students (around 75%) agreed or strongly agreed that flipped lectures allow them to learn at their own pace, suggesting that the model promotes autonomy in learning. Similarly, about 70% of respondents felt that they were more in control of their learning experience in a flipped classroom setting.

Critical thinking skills seem to be positively impacted by the flipped model, with 60% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing that flipped lectures enhance their ability to think critically. Around 65% found that they analyse topics more deeply when engaged in a flipped classroom setting.

Feedback on collaboration was mixed; while 50% of students felt that the flipped classroom model encouraged collaboration, a significant portion (30%) were neutral, and the remaining 20% disagreed. About 55% of the respondents felt that flipped lectures provide more opportunities for group work.

In terms of technological skills, approximately 40% agreed that their technological skills have improved due to the flipped classroom format. However, a larger percentage (60%) agreed or strongly agreed that flipped lectures make effective use of technology to aid learning, indicating room for improvement in skill development but a generally positive view of the technology's instructional role.

Most students (about 60%) felt the transition to self-directed learning was smooth for them. However, around 30% were neutral and 10% disagreed, suggesting that some students face challenges adapting to this learning model. Around 70% of respondents agreed that the increased responsibility required in the flipped classroom model positively impacted their learning experience. About 55% found the pre-lecture content effective in preparing them for in-class activities, but only 40% said they had not encountered any technological or time management issues.

Overall, the flipped classroom model appears to be generally well-received, particularly in promoting autonomy and critical thinking. However, there are areas for improvement, such as increasing the effectiveness of pre-lecture content and addressing the challenges some students face in terms of technology and time management.

4.2 Qualitative results

Enhanced Autonomy and Critical Thinking: Interviewees often reported that the flipped classroom allowed them to explore topics more deeply on their own time, which contributed to a greater sense of autonomy and improved their critical thinking skills.

Role of the Instructor: The qualitative data highlighted the evolving role of instructors from mere dispensers of information to facilitators. Students appreciated the more interactive classroom environment, although some wished for better guidance during self-study phases.

Technological Challenges: While students generally found online resources helpful, some expressed concerns about equitable access to technology. A few students faced difficulties in accessing high-quality internet, which impacted their ability to engage with pre-lecture materials effectively.

Time Management and Engagement: Many interviewees admitted struggling with time management during the pre-lecture phase, although they noted that structured guidelines and milestones from instructors could mitigate this issue.

When both quantitative and qualitative data were merged for interpretation, the study found consistent evidence supporting the effectiveness of flipped lectures in enhancing critical learning competencies among final-year BAM students. However, the results also underscored the challenges associated with implementing this pedagogical model. While students generally adapted well over time, initial resistance and technological barriers suggest areas for improvement and further study.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study was to explore the impact of flipped lectures on the learning competencies of final-year Business Administration and Management (BAM) students. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research provides compelling evidence that flipped lectures positively influence key learning competencies such as autonomy, critical thinking, collaboration, and technological skills. These findings are particularly relevant given that these competencies are indispensable for the students' transition from academia to professional life.

The quantitative results reveal a positive correlation between students' perceptions of improved learning competencies and their academic performance, which adds weight to the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model. Furthermore, qualitative insights offer valuable nuances, highlighting students' experiences of enhanced autonomy and critical thinking skills. However, the study also uncovers challenges inherent in this pedagogical approach, including students' initial resistance and the difficulties associated with technology access and time management. It suggests that while the flipped classroom model offers significant pedagogical advantages, its implementation is not without obstacles that educators need to acknowledge and address.

One significant takeaway is the evolving role of instructors in a flipped classroom setting. Moving from traditional lecturers to facilitators, instructors need to adapt their teaching methods to effectively guide students in this more interactive and student-centric learning environment. In addition, educators should provide structured guidelines and milestones to help students navigate the self-directed learning process, addressing issues related to time management and engagement. This is especially pertinent for students at a transitional phase, like the final-year BAM students focused on in this study, as they prepare for their future professional roles.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on flipped classrooms by filling a noticeable gap concerning its impact on final-year BAM students. As these students are at a pivotal point in their academic journey, understanding how flipped lectures can enhance their learning competencies is crucial. Despite its contributions, the study has limitations, including a relatively limited sample size and the focus on a single academic program, which calls for further research to generalize the findings.

In summary, flipped lectures emerge as a promising pedagogical strategy for enhancing key competencies among final-year BAM students, although not without challenges. It is incumbent upon educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers to take these insights into account for more effective implementation, not only in the realm of business education but in higher education at large.

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ANNEX 1

Likert scale questions. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

Autonomy

- 1 Flipped lectures allow me to learn at my own pace.
- 2 I feel more in control of my learning when lectures are flipped.

Critical Thinking

- 3 Flipped lectures enhance my ability to think critically.
- 4 I find that I analyse topics more deeply in a flipped classroom setting.

Collaboration

- 5 The flipped classroom model encourages collaboration with classmates.
- 6 I feel that flipped lectures provide more opportunities for group work.

Technological skills

- 7 My technological skills have improved due to the flipped classroom format.
- 8 Lipped lectures make effective use of technology to aid learning.

Challenges

- 9 The transition to self-directed learning in the flipped classroom model was smooth for me.
- 10 The increased responsibility required in the flipped classroom model has positively impacted my overall learning experience.
- 11 The pre-lecture content provided is effective in preparing me for in-class activities.
- 12 I have not encountered any technological or time management issues that have hindered my ability to fully participate in the flipped classroom model.

ANNEX 2

Questions for Students' interviews

- 1 How did the flipped classroom model affect your ability to explore topics on your own?
- 2 How do you view the role of the instructor in the flipped classroom model?
- 3 Were there times when you wished for more guidance from your instructor during the self-study phases?
- 4 Did you experience any challenges with accessing online materials for the course?
- 5 How did the availability or quality of your internet connection impact your ability to engage with pre-lecture materials?
- 6 How did you manage your time during the pre-lecture phase?
- 7 Did the instructor provide time-management guidelines or milestones?
- 8 Do you feel that the flipped classroom model was effective for your learning overall?
- 9 Were there initial challenges you faced in adapting to the flipped classroom?
- 10 What suggestions do you have for improving the flipped classroom model?