

Divergent Thinking – It's Time to Change the Box!

¹Puja Khatri & ²Sumedha Dutta

¹Professor, University School of Management Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi (India)

²Assistant Professor with Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management Studies, Delhi & Research Scholar at University School of Management Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi (India)

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*Corresponding Author

Email: sumedha.maims[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The fast paced environment with ever evolving technology necessitates an education system facilitating creativity, innovation and critical thinking. The Indian management education system needs to make rigorous efforts to create a nation of thinkers capable of changing the box; rather than thinking out of the box. We need to move towards an approach wherein students' autonomous learning and self expression is put in front. This self – directed and open – ended learning will inculcate 'divergent thinking' among the students; equipping them with higher level of potential to handle the uncertainties enveloping any situation. Divergent thinkers are capable of identifying gaps and inconsistencies in life, and they often derive contentment by exploring or filling those gaps by applying their intelligence (Maxwell, 2009). As educators we should present conditions where solutions are not apparently visible, where students are encouraged to search for order in a seemingly chaotic situation. Simply 'telling' will not work; we need to make the students capable of finding clarity amidst all the obstacles of confusion and complexity. Learning as a productive process should produce stages of disequilibrium brought on by novel ideas to foster and cultivate divergent thinking among the students. Divergent thinking will empower the students to come up with creative ideas or solutions and augment their problem – solving skills. Management teaching strategies that hone divergent thinking skills not only makes the classroom environment vibrant but also helps the students in developing an understanding and appreciating differences in various approaches directed towards solving a problem. With this background, the objective of our present work is to promote an approach which encourages divergent thinking among the students in management educational institutes. Deliberation on the concept and benefits of divergent thinking will lead to identifying various means/methods of cultivating and strengthening divergent thinking skills among the budding managers of tomorrow.

Design / Methodology / Approach - Through different keywords, relevant research papers on Google scholar were taken for the study. In addition, various databases like Questia on – line library, EBSCO Host, Emerald Management, Elsevier, etc were selected for conducting the present exploratory work.

Originality / Value - The findings of the study will offer guidance to the management institutes towards developing a teaching pedagogy which encourages divergent thinking among the students; thus preparing them as the backbone of innovation in our economy. The outlined management teaching strategies to hone divergent thinking skills among students will make the classroom environment vibrant and will also help them in developing an understanding and appreciating differences in various approaches directed towards solving a problem.

1. Introduction

The early 21st century strikes with the start of a novel 'dynamic era' of business. The vibrant and multi-faceted environment is characterized by cut-throat competition, rapid changes and turbulence. The operations in modern organizations is characterized with expressions, such as, Digitalization, Information Age, Internet era, the Web economy, knowledge – based economy and a time filled with vagueness and disruptions. These listed expressions necessitate fresh approach towards working of the organizations with a view to earn competitive advantage. Under such conditions, it is imperative for managers to keep abreast with the current trends, concepts, techniques, methods and principles for continuous improvement and effective management of the organizations. Sustainable competitive edge is earned by

organizations which are able to carve a niche for themselves by significantly outperforming their rivals. Such organizations augment their performance and break their own performance benchmarks by implementing innovative techniques, introducing unique quality products and providing services; building a strong and positive brand image in the minds of target audiences. Thus, organizations hunt for managers, who are well equipped with unparalleled challenges arising on account of technological pace, technological advances, diverse workforce, etc. The managers need to be effectual in generating sustainable growth for the future by making the most of the opportunities.

In this connection, the management institutes should strive towards creating divergent thinking environment in their

classroom teaching so that the same can be extended by the students when they enter into the corporate world. They should encourage the students to challenge and overcome the traditional techniques and concepts of management in the advent of a new dynamic era. Not only should they develop attributes like integrity, communication, vision, inquisitiveness among students; they should also be equipped with the skills of identifying unexplored and not-so apparent solutions in the face of challenges. In other words, the institutes need to create more 'divergent' managers for the organizations.

Research suggests that, as children, our divergence ability is at its peak; however, this ability tends to significantly decrease as we attain adulthood. Perhaps, as faculty and adults, we should lay focus on encouraging imagination into everyday life in our educational curriculum. Yet, at times, teachers become frustrated with the inability of the students to think creatively, as illustrated by Sir Ken Robinson's celebrated Ted Talk, identifying fault in education system itself for putting an end to this imagination. In educational institutes, divergent thinking is discouraged when students worry about doing or saying 'wrong thing' in class. This scenario has become quite common in the educational institutes as teachers and peer groups keep a watch on those who say or do things which are 'off - script'. Such a system of overt - convergence in a consciously established tolerant environment is imposed by a grading culture that emphasizes on penalizing the students for acting 'wrong' or going 'off the script.' And thus, in such an educational environment students exhibiting non - normative behaviours are ridiculed by other students. Hence, if divergent thinking is critical to facilitate creativity, it explains why students face inhibitions in spelling out their imagination and divergent thoughts.

In our classrooms, we can observe certain well-founded reasons for discouraging divergent thinking. In divergent thinking, all ideas are treated at par irrespective of applicability or context and discounts criteria or any assessment process. It refers to a way of thinking in which ideas breeds into the mind with the knowledge that there are no incorrect answers. Starting from the elementary education, divergent thinking is important as it provides freedom to students to practice putting imagination at front in almost every situation. This imagination, in the long run, may yield to improved problem - solving skills among students as they grow up and become mature adults. At times, in specific situations, like chemistry lab or playground, divergent behaviour may actually result in physical impairment. Moreover, we expect display of good judgement from our students; we expect them to follow convergent thinking so as to arrive at right decisions. When rules or guidelines are discarded by students, divergent thinking and behaviour becomes a challenge to be addressed by the educators at all levels.

The onus of viewing good judgement from a different lens and taking into account what is best for our student's humanity and character lies on the academia. Continuously evolving job landscape makes it imperative for educational institutes to prepare students for an unpredictable future. Thus, divergent thinking is possibly the most significant skill we ought to teach students. It is in this spirit, that the current work is presented to

highlight the importance of divergent thinking and also clarify the factors inhibiting the spread of divergent thinking and behaviours, in the educational environment. We have also enumerated how divergent thinking skill will prepare our students to handle the unpredictable changes taking place in the business environment. Towards the end, strategies encouraging divergent thinking in the classroom environment are also enumerated.

2. Literature Review

The term 'divergent' refers to the tendency to stand apart or identify a different direction. It describes the capability of the mind to produce ideas beyond the agreed expectations and rote thinking. In simple terms, it is 'thinking outside the box'; frequently associated with creativity. 'Divergent thinking' denotes the strategy of resolving problems/issues by considering various possible solutions with a view to search for a workable one. This happens in a spontaneous and a free - flowing manner; wherein numerous creative ideas are stimulated and appraised. Various possible solutions are deliberated in a short time - span and unconventional connections may be sketched. Maintaining a journal, meditation, bubble mapping, subject mapping, creating artwork, preparing lists of questions, free - wheeling, brain storming, etc are some of the activities which prompt divergent thinking. The two process comprising of divergent thinking are free writing and brain storming. This divergence indicates the capacity to generate various complex or complicated ideas from a single idea. This requires making unexpected permutations, altering information into unexpected forms, recognizing links among far-off associates, etc. In their book, titled, *Visionizing*, both Osborn and Parnes, highlight the need for breaking all the barriers restricting the area of divergent thinking. In their opinion, adverse criticism should be avoided. To augment the quantity as well as quality of ideas, free - wheeling should be used in management teaching. Through this we encourage students to chalk out as many as solutions related to a problem or concept. Students should be consistently exposed to this exceedingly vital skill.

Razumnikova, Olga (2012) states that J.P Guilford characterized divergent thinking as a mental process having the following main attributes in The Encyclopaedia of the Sciences of Learning (1028):

- Fluency - refers to the ability to rapidly identifying many varied solutions to an issue or problem at hand.
- Flexibility - implies the feature of being capable to change effortlessly according to the situation. The element of flexibility focuses on the ability to approach a problem from varied view points or perspectives.
- Originality - is the ability to discover unique, novel or fresh ideas. It refers to the aspect of creating or inventing a work which is novel or unique or fresh and thus discernible from forgeries, clones, reproductions or derivative works.
- Elaboration - refers to the ability to actualize each and every element of ideas and see their role towards

a bigger solution. It refers to the process of accumulating more information to already available, comparatively straight – forward information to craft a more multi – faceted, evolving whole. Elaboration involves initializing an idea by integrating aspects to magnify the original idea. It has the capacity to put in weight to ideas by adding details.

3. Elements of Divergent Thinking

The structure of divergent thinking firmly rests on the following elements as indicated in The Encyclopaedia of the Sciences of Learning (ESL):

- Lateral thinking – Dr. Edward de Bono, a UK psychologist, coined the term lateral thinking in 1967 in his book *The Use of Lateral Thinking*. Dr Bono elucidated usual problem solving techniques comprises of step-by-step, linear approach. He proposes a more creative solution can be arrived at by following a step sideways to re-assess an issue, situation or a problem from a completely different point – of – view. Lateral thinking attempts to solve a problem by employing indirect and creative approach, usually by considering the problem in a novel and atypical perspective. This unconventional thinking aids an individual in identifying a creative solution which otherwise may not be apparent in a given situation.
- Deducting and Inducting – Numerous scholars of repute have established a link between creativity and reasoning ability (Cattell, 1971; Sternberg & O'Hara, 1999). Kris (1952) drew a comparison between primary process thinking (analogical and free associative) and secondary process thinking (nonfigurative and target – oriented). It is believed that creative persons exhibit flexibility along the primary process – secondary process continuum, and that creative view or perspectives have higher chances of formation in primary process mode of cognition (Martindale, 1989; Suler, 1980). Creativity, categorized by idea – generation and imagination, is typically coupled with inductive reasoning (Johnson – Laird & Wason, 1977; Nickerson, 1999); while deductive reasoning symbolizes the eventual kind of secondary process thinking (Martindale, 1995).
- In induction reasoning an individual makes an effort to strike at the best existing estimate of the right solution to problem at hand (Rescher, 1980). It is an attempt to regulate observations in accord with mental economy.
- Identifying – One needs to be alert to identify the problem so that one can identify the various possible sources from which relevant information can be solicited. Identification helps in discovering the strong links or associations with not so apparent information sources related to the problem.
- Synthesizing – The word 'synthesis' implies merging diverse range of ideas or parts to arrive at a new /

original theory or solution. In divergent thinking, synthesizing information is of vital importance. Synthesizing information, comprises of three parts, namely, accurate reporting of information solicited from vivid sources, clear and concise organization of the information to identify traces of correlation between the ideas that these sources share and finally, an unambiguous communication of the information. This enables one to draw conclusions and create novel ideas based on information so learnt.

- Differentiating – Just like identification of traces of correlation among different sources of information is necessary, in the similar lines identifying traces of difference among these sources also holds equal importance. This helps in generating a pool of possible solutions which share some dissimilarity with each other, though they pertain to the given problem or issue.
- Problem solving – refers to the process of finding solutions to a complex or difficult issues. It also implies the process of working through aspects of a problem to strike at a solution. In other words, it is the act of defining a problem, recognizing its origin, discovering, prioritizing and deciding on various possible alternatives for a solution and then application of the solution.
- Critical thinking – refers to a particular mode of thinking, - in which the thinker skilfully analyzes, assesses and reconstructs his / her thinking about any issue, subject or problem and thus, augments the quality of his / her thinking. Critical thinking helps an individual to comprehend the logic associations among ideas; recognize, develop and appraise arguments; identify inconsistencies or errors in reasoning; systematically solve problems; recognize the appropriateness and value of ideas and reflect on the rationalization of one's own values and beliefs. In other words, critical thinking enables an individual to infer end results from what is known to him / her, seek out sources of information to update and use information to find solution to problems.
- Creating – In divergent thinking creating a solution holds as much importance as creating a problem. Asking students to create the problem helps them to discover all the various perspectives of the problem which results in a better understanding of it.

4. Importance of Divergent Thinking

Researchers have taken a fancy to the concept of divergent thinking for varied reasons. For instance, divergent thinking is often viewed as a good metaphor for cognition – type leading to creation of original ideas. Divergent thinking stands strikingly apart from convergent thinking, which characteristically produces predictable and 'correct' thoughts and explanations instead of imaginative or unusual alternatives. Yet divergent thinking, which is referred as

divergent production by Guilford (1950, 1968) goes beyond the label of a metaphor. One major reason accounting for the attraction offered by this concept is that it guides straight to testable hypotheses and provides dependable evaluation of the probability for creative thought.

Divergent thinking is considered as a significant constituent of creativity as the generation of various retorts to a single situation enhances the possibility of an individual of arriving at a unique and fresh idea (Eysenck, 1995; Mednick, 1962). Undoubtedly, creativity is seen an asset in the place of work, for individuals as well as organizations.

A movement in education considers divergent thinking as a potential means for creating more resourceful students. Divergent thinking provides open – ended problems and promotes students to build up their own answers to problems rather than offering a chain of problems for rote memorization. Students demonstrate better mode, a higher level of confidence and scholastic ability and proclivity for entrepreneurship when they are encouraged to use divergent thinking methods (Mrochuk, Aliya, 2016). In the views of intelligence scholar, James Flynn, divergent thinking tends to have a cascading effect on a standardized scale. At a global level, there has been a consistent increase in average IQ scores since 1930. One rationalization associates this enhancement to improvements in human being's 'mental artillery'; skill to organize, apply logic on abstract concepts as well as to seriously consider the imaginary situation. The ability to construct and evaluate hypothetical situations by using divergent thinking facilitates individuals to become better thinkers.

Divergent thinkers are fervent learners. The dynamism in business scenario continues to rise higher, leaving no room for inflexibility. Organizations require flexible employees having eagerness to face unique challenges and look at diverse opportunities. Divergent thinkers retort to change exceptionally well. They unhesitatingly come forward to try something dissimilar. Such employees can be a valuable asset for an organization which wishes to control costs and develop leaders from within its manpower.

5. Divergent Thinking vs Convergent Thinking

Though the present work essentially focuses on the need for nurturing divergent thinking among management students, we also need to deliberate upon its important counterpart – convergent thinking. Joy Paul Guilford is credited for coining this problem solving technique, called, convergent thinking. It entails combining varied ideas from diverse areas or participants to settle on a single finest answer to a coherently spelled out problem. Thus, convergent thinking lays emphasis on identifying a single best solution to a problem in hand. Convergent thinking is apt for situations for which a readily available answer is present or it has to be recollected by decision – making strategists. Such thinking primarily rests on knowledge as it involves using present knowledge via standard procedures. Convergent thinking lays stress on speed and depends on high precision and judgment.

Divergent thinking indicates solving problems by identifying varied possible solutions with an effort to find out a workable one. This stands in contrast to convergent thinking wherein the focus is on identifying a pre –determined or finite number of solutions instead of suggesting manifold solutions. Divergent thinking rests on the idea that at times, numerous unrelated solutions may have the potential to bring forth a best one.

Colzato, Ozturk & Hommel (2012) disputed that convergent thinking necessitates a sturdy top – down control since it symbolizes a securely inhibited look for very few or just a single solution. Whereas, divergent thinking thrives on weak or frail top – down control because it requires a broad, freely delineated exploration space with a view to trigger as many varied solutions or items satisfying the comparatively supple criterion (Hommel, 2012). Therefore, convergent and divergent thinking are expected to vary from each other in their dependence on managerial control for information processing.

Both the above thinking strategies show many shades of similarity as they both are applied to determine solutions to problems. Moreover, both strategies aim at identifying the best solutions. In practical situations, a blend of divergent and convergent thinking is frequently observed. Best outcomes are determined through divergent thinking when it is applied for open – ended problems which facilitate creativity. On the other hand, convergent thinking is supremely apt for situations characterized by the possibility of a single best correct answer which can be derived at by valuation of accessible accumulated information. Since, the focal point of divergent thinking is on ideas generation rather than process; any solution arrived at via divergent thinking invariably requires convergent thinking to transform the idea into a practicable one.

6. In the classroom – Strategies for Divergent Thinking

As educators, we need to push management students to engage in divergent thinking so that their knowledge can be taken to the next level. The researchers have enumerated a set of 10 strategies that can be conveniently conducted in the class – room environment without compromising on syllabus curriculum.

Strategy 1 - Reverse the Question / Answer Concept

As educators we should strive towards adopting 'problem – based learning approach'. This approach is based on a simple premise: rather than posing a question for which a correct answer is readily available, ask students to craft / construct the problem. Students create their problem by initially focussing on their own wishes and goals which may contain actual – life outcomes. Questions such as "How to increase sales without a substantial increase in the expenditure budget?" or "How can the entire population be fed in a sustainable manner?" Such questions prompt students to think in a divergent way.

In other words, we are encouraging the students to 'Start from the end'. Rather than soliciting solutions from students by

using brainstorm techniques, we are encouraging them to formulate a problem. The problem can be framed either by giving reference to a subject, location, demographic, or anything deemed fit, provided that a lucid, crisp and purposeful problem is framed towards the end.

Few psychometricians hold a very negative view of tests used to assess divergent thinking capability as they believe that such tests merely tap the predictable expressions of intelligence. While there are some who view divergent thinking as an unreliable, dry and unexciting characteristic of the intellect. This criticism reminds us the criticism attached at the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) which was at the outset held in high regard (Cox, 1926), then condemned and ultimately acknowledged as a flawed but valuable measure (Jensen 1979). Perhaps, divergent thinking tests are also surfacing along a comparable dialectical trail.

Strategy 2 - Let us celebrate the Differences

A classroom should resonate with vibrancy wherein differences of any kind, be it gender, taste, are celebrated. This would help in creating an environment in which judgment of each other is tardy, controlled and more considerate. Student's ability to defer judgement opens the learning environment to other thoughts and influences. Deferring judgment doesn't imply having no judgement; it simply implies 'hold your horses for a while'. Students freely express their thoughts and opinions when they have no fear of being immediately judged by their taste. Thus, they become less fearful of expressing or sharing our divergent thoughts and ideas. In specific terms, we can say that, in the divergent – thinking phase, avoid judging ideas as either good or bad.

Strategy 3 - Inquiry – based feedback

A value based feedback should be replaced by an inquiry based feedback. Such an inquiry based feedback tied with deep observation motivates students to adopt a more in – depth and open – ended approach for appraising students' work. Rather, than coming straight way to expressing their likes and dislikes, students should be first encouraged to spare few minutes in silently observing things around them and then coming forth with queries prefixed by phrases such as, "why" and "I observed that..." and "how it works...".

Strategy 4 - Encourage Play and Handle Failure

Land & Jarman (1992) conducted a study on 1,600 children aged between 4 – 5 years to measure their progress. 98% of the 1,600 participants who took the test lied at the 'genius level'. The implausible findings motivated them to conduct a longitudinal study on these subjects. The same subjects were again given the same test after a time gap of 5 years. The scores of these subjects saw a reduction of 68% as it stood at 30%. After another 5 years the same test was re-conducted on the same set of participants, who were now in high school – and now the scores had drastically dropped to mere 12%. Generally, we as well as students are likely to fall back upon our efforts and we are afraid of committing mistakes. This can be corrected when failure doesn't attract penalty; rather it is framed by iteration and reflection. Play and experimentation can become a dominant feature of class room

environment when the students are not afraid of making an error in their attempts. A failure is presented as a situation wherein students get time to introspect and draft new strategies for 'scaling up' their projects or ideas.

Divergent thinking flourishes when people play. This interesting link between divergent thinking and playfulness has been explained by researchers as "physical, social and cognitive spontaneity; manifest joy and sense of humour" (Spenser, 2018, <http://www.spencerauthor.com/divergent-thinking/>). Given the tight curriculum maps and narrow time lines, encouraging play activities presents a challenge to educators. However, a success in discovering means to incorporate joy, play and humour into the curriculum opens avenues for students to think divergently.

Divergent thinking strategies go a long way in nurturing creativity in the learning environment. They help in acknowledging, appreciating and celebrating differences in varied fields of our student's lives. A plethora of benefits can be reaped from these creative possibilities when our budding students are given the freedom to be who they actually are.

Strategy 5 - Seek Wild Ideas - Brainstorming

Separating divergent thinking from convergent thinking helps in the creation of new ideas; it helps in generating lots and lots of opinions without any analysis. Brainstorming techniques help in the generation of wild ideas as it rests on the principle of free – wheeling. Such wild ideas may not work directly; however moving away from the line of conventional thinking helps in embarking on an 'extra – ordinary idea'; an idea which is 'out of the box.'

Strategy 6 - Alternate Uses Task

Divergent thinking represents a style of thinking which permits generations of varied fresh ideas, in a framework where many correct solutions are possible. In this line, we have Alternate Uses Task (AUT) pioneered by Guilford, a renowned American Psychologist, in 1967. Guilford uses AUT to gauge the productivity of divergent thinking. In this exercise, participants are given an object, like a scale and their task is to produce / list out as many possible uses of that particular object.

Strategy 7 - Play Devil's Advocate

'Devil's advocate', a well – known term, implies to a situation when someone debates with you only for the sake of raising an argument, irrespective of whether one's believes or does not believe in the position he / she is arguing. It is a very frustrating moment when someone plays devil's advocate for us. However, there is a brighter perspective attached to it. When someone plays devil's advocate, the person inspires you to engage in divergent thinking by questioning reasoning and assumptions.

In the class room setting, faculty may promote students to play devil's advocate to attain two objectives. At the outset, students' thinking is challenged in their thinking by their peers. Moreover, the student playing devil's advocate also has to challenge his own thoughts to formulate a dissimilar

perspective than what was there in his mind before stepping into the discussion. A faculty has to execute a small activity repeatedly to support students attain familiarity with the role of devil’s advocate. In this activity, students are placed in pairs and then they are provided with two cards having contrasting arguments or opinions. Randomly students select one of the cards, ponder upon their argument and take on the discussion. The underneath principle is that students need to solemnly argue their side, whether they agree or not.

Strategy 8 - Establish a Tolerant Environment

For divergent thinking to flourish, we need to create an environment which allows failure, approves varied expression and encourages risk. As teachers, we should facilitate and support individual expression to encourage divergent thinking among the students.

The above outlined strategies will make a definite contribution towards making the class –room environment more innovative and creative. These strategies will also help significantly in familiarizing students will problem – solving topics, like, discovering more than one workable solution, altering view-points and valuing diversity in thinking.

Strategy 9 - Embrace Creative Constraint

Divergent thinking flourishes in when we are looked with impediments; this being the central idea of creative constraint. When an individual faces paucity of resources, he / she is stimulated to unearth unusual means to use the existing resources available to him / her.

Creative constraint can be incorporated in class – room environment in a few dissimilar ways by educators. One of the ways is to restrict the time by rapid prototyping. Rapid prototyping involves a speedy, time bound challenge, wherein one has to move through iterations swiftly. Or it might be a timed free write, where students pen down their words without any formal planning beforehand. Through this activity, students develop the ability to take risk in their creativity endeavours. Additionally students also develop creative fluency which helps them to plan, execute and rework a creative work speedily and with a sense of control as well as agency. Educator may also put constraint on material or options provided. These constraints do not restrict creativity rather they stimulate divergent thinking among students. Quite often, we come across the term ‘think inside the box’, but divergent thinking lays stress on ‘think differently about the box.’

Strategy 10 - Collaboration

Collaboration with faculty and students belonging to different streams or disciplines helps to broaden our horizons. The discourse formed between you and your collaborator helps in diversifying your perspective as both benefit from new-fangled insights for present and future endeavours. We are more prone to involve in divergent thinking when we are faced with unusual viewpoints. Collaboration unearths many prospects to discover unconventional approaches and explanations to our problem or issue at hand. Also, these enriching collaborative experiences may impel the educators to

develop a link with other schools of thoughts in their future research.

Here, we would like to make a mention of several divergent thinking tests which are readily accessible (Guilford, 1968; Meeker, 1982; Torrance, 1974; Wallach & Kogan, 1965). Each of the test shows striking difference from tests administered to measure conventional intelligence. The conventional intelligence test focuses on the single conventional or right answer. For instance in an IQ test, an individual may be asked to tell the number of legs a dog has or to report the number of major left – bank tributaries of River Ganges. Score on this kind of test apparently reveals convergent thinking and is viewed to project proficiency in academic and other interrelated areas (Wallach & Wing, 1969). In sharp contrast to these IQ and other academic achievement tests, divergent thinking tests present open – ended questions to participants, like, ‘List down all the things which in your opinion are flexible’. Such open – ended questions are deliberately presented to invite an array of diversified ideas.

Figure 1 - Strategies to Usher Divergent Thinking in the Class - Room



7. Research Methodology

Appropriate study and research work on Google scholar were selected by using relevant keywords. In addition, quality databases were searched for conducting the present exploratory work. Scholarly work of renowned researchers has been studied to assemble all the pertinent aspects related to the construct of ‘divergent thinking’. Researchers have taken care to include latest study in the domain of divergent thinking; with a view to identify and present new dimensions in the selected construct. After presenting the literature review, the researchers have deliberated upon various strategies through which divergent thinking can be encouraged by the teachers in the classroom. We propose that educational institutes can play a dominant role towards inculcating divergent thinking among the management students and thus, preparing them for a better role in the years to come. The specific objectives of our study are:

- Identify the need to inculcate divergent thinking in educational institutes
- Identify the benefits of divergent thinking.
- Identify the strategies encouraging divergent thinking in classroom environment.

8. Conclusion and Implications

Divergent thinking helps us to think about various means which initiate creativity and innovations. Divergent thinking is more than realizing totally new possibilities; it's reasoning without the any structure or boundary or limitation. It focuses on generating varied ideas about a particular subject or topic in less time. It involves breaking a topic down into sub parts with a view to deeply examine the several dimensions of the topic. It typically takes place in an environment market with spontaneity; wherein ideas originate in a casual, disarranged fashion. Unanticipated associations are often sketched through divergent thinking. It is thus, an integral process in creativity which predicts creative achievement (Jauk, Benedek, Neubauer, 2014; Plucker, 1999). Absence or lack off divergent thinking among employees acts as an impediment to individual creativity in organizations.

Encouraging divergent thinking among the management students has the potential to offer multiple benefits. The need to develop a teaching pedagogy stimulating divergent thinking among the students has become all the more prominent as more and more organizations are searching for employees with this capability. Its importance has increased all the more in the present times as organizations value skills over knowledge. Divergent thinkers have a propensity to unearth fresh opportunities, search for new – fangled explanations or solutions, are more customer - oriented, easier to train and possess a wider viewpoint.

Research has revealed that students who are encouraged at an early stage to think divergently tend to be more imaginative, both instantly and later on in life. A study conducted in Cornell University in 2012 identifies that divergent thinking brings improvement in language proficiency and performance. Divergent thinking stimulates positive activating moods (Baas, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2008; Davis, 2009).

Scientists also report a positive relationship between divergent thinking and entrepreneurial potential (<https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/features/divergent-thinking/>)

J. P. Guilford (1950, 1968) established a strong association between divergent production and creative potential. Divergent thinking has the potential to empower the students to come up with creative ideas or solutions and augment their problem – solving skills. It will encourage students to apply new concepts in thinking and while finding a solution to the given problem, to think in a different manner by using imagination, intuition and common sense. Moreover, students will learn to appreciate other's perspective and learning while observing others will become a fruitful as well as an enjoyable experience. Management teaching strategies that hone divergent thinking skills not only makes the classroom environment vibrant but also helps the students in developing an understanding and appreciating differences in various approaches directed towards solving a problem. The deliberations in the study will offer guidance to the management institutes towards developing a teaching pedagogy which encourages divergent thinking among the students; thus preparing them to serve as the backbone of innovation in our economy. Without divergent thinking, we will not be in a position to produce new ideas that have the potential to revolutionize our lives.

Towards the end, the researchers would like to state that in order to think of ways to change the box; we need to change our belief system. We need to appreciate that whatever view of the world is upheld by us, it is partially – if not completely – on account of some type of societal or cultural indoctrination. Irrespective of how much knowledge is possessed by us, room for ignorance will always be there. Struggle to solve life's problems is never – ending and in this endless journey of learning, a lot needs to be discovered and explored. So always stay curious and modest.

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