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THE USE OF BUSINESS GAMING IN HONG KONG ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the usage of business gaming and how and why they are used in seven Hong Kong Government funded tertiary educational institutions. A 22.5% response rate of a population of *632* was recorded. Results indicated 10 out of *35* past users still use business gaming in their teaching. General evaluation on computer simulations is above average; however, reasons cited for not using business gaming are attributed to 'lengthy preparation time'. 'start-up cost is too *high',* and lack of formal training'.

INTRODUCTION

Much have been explored of the use of business games in academia of North America (Wolfe. 1985: Roberts & Strauss. 1975: Hegarty, 1976: Faria. 1987: Decker. et al 1993; Williams. 1993. and Keeffe. et al 1993) but less has been mentioned on the use of business games in academia of Hong Kong. Thus, it is the author's interest to examine how popular the usage of business gaming-simulation in business-related courses and to understand reasons why these simulations are not used so often as a teaching tool in Hong Kong tertiary academic institutions.

METHODOLOGY

A survey questionnaire was sent to 632 teachers of all seven tertiary educational institutions funded by Hong Kong Government. which offers an undergraduate or graduate degree in business during the period of December 15. 1994 to March 15 1995, List of faculty members was developed by direct inquiry, and confirmed by reference to prospecti and telephone directories. Out of 632-survey questionnaire. 142 usable questionnaire were received.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Usage of Business Gaming

The use of business game in teaching was recorded with 24.5% (35 out of 142 respondents). With only 10 of 35 past users claimed they still continue to use them in their current teaching. Only 9 of 107 non-users plan to use simulations in their future teaching.

Simulations Used for Particular Subjects

A total of 50 respondents was recorded in nine business subjects with the majority of 17 responses from areas of business policy and strategy and 14 responses from marketing and related subjects.

Grade Weights Assigned to Subjects

Respondents were asked to give information regarding grade weights assigned to four major activities: examination, computer simulation, case study, and student participation. The modal response on grade weights for examination was 41%-60% (54.3 % of respondents): for computer simulations, I 1%-20% (53.1% of respondents): for case study. I l%-20% (70.4% of respondents); for student participation. l%-10% (60% of respondents).

Usefulness of Computer Simulations

Twelve subject objectives (Decker. et al 1993) were used for respondents to evaluate the usefulness of computer simulation to achieve

the various subject objectives on a four-point Likert scale: critical (1). important (2). less important (3). and not an objective (4). Respondents gave a rating between critical and important rating to the following objectives: understanding functional interrelationships (overall mean of 1.870). 'general problem identification and analytical skills' (overall mean of 1.914), and 'developing decision making skills' (overall mean of 1.971).

Evaluation of Computer Simulations

Based on a five-point Liken Scale: excellent (1). above average (2). average (3), below average (4), and poor *(5),* respondents were asked of their 'general impressions of computer simulations' and their 'rating on computer simulation contribution to students learning.' The result showed a overall mean of 2.081 and the standard deviation of 0.722 for their general impression. The responses spanned from below average to excellent. As for the second question, result indicated a overall mean of 2.000 for their rating on simulation contribution to student learning and a standard deviation of 0.586. The responses ranged between an average to excellent in general.

Reasons for Not Using Simulations

Two major reasons for 85 past non-users who plan no future use of simulation were 'lengthy preparation time with 32.9% and 'start-up cost is too high' with 27%. These two reasons account for 59.9 percent of the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The study reported here represents a first major attempt to examine the use of business gaming in Hong Kong tertiary educational institutions. The usage of business gaming is rather low with only 10 who still use it. Most of the users are in the business policy and marketing areas. Their views on usefulness and evaluation of business gaming are important and well above average. Reasons for not using them are related to lengthy preparation time and high start-up cost. A cross-cultural examination of usage of business games is valuable in future research. An in-depth comparison between US and Hong Kong users will provide further insights in the use of business games as a teaching tool.

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