

Aligning Teaching, Technology, and Faculty Development in Business Schools: A Triangulated Study on Educational Innovation and Employability

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Abstract: This study examines how global Business Schools (BSs) integrate teaching practices, educational technologies, and faculty development within their institutional and instructional practices, and how these relate to students' employability. A mixed-methods sequential design was applied, combining a conceptual content analysis of the official websites of the top 100 BSs in the *Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2024–2025* with an online survey completed by 614 faculty members of the same institutions. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data enabled comparison between declared institutional orientations and enacted educational practices across three dimensions: Teaching Approaches (TAs), Educational Technologies (ETs), and Faculty Development (FD). Results show that experiential and active learning methods, digital technologies, and professional training initiatives are widely implemented but often underrepresented in institutional communication. No significant correlation was found between perceived TA, ET, FD effectiveness and employability rates, suggesting that employment outcomes depend on external factors beyond pedagogical quality alone. The study highlights the need for Business Schools to bridge the gap between educational practice and institutional discourse by adopting transparent communication strategies and by recognizing Faculty Development as a visible driver of teaching quality and innovation.



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Keywords: Business Schools; Teaching Approaches; Educational Technologies; Faculty Development; Students' Employability.

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century has profoundly reshaped both the labor market and higher education systems. The advent of Industry 4.0, characterized by artificial intelligence, automation, and data-driven processes, has generated new professional profiles and demanded graduates capable of continuous learning, adaptability, and digital fluency (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023; Saleem et al., 2024). In this changing context, Business Schools (BSs) play a strategic role in preparing future leaders able to act in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments (Baldegger et al., 2022; Riashchenko, 2023).

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However, several studies highlight a persistent skills gap between academic training and the competences demanded by employers (Mantai & Calma, 2022; Rahman et al., 2024). Employers increasingly expect graduates who not only master technical and managerial knowledge but also demonstrate employability competences—critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, collaboration, and adaptability—essential for professional success in dynamic organizations (Jackson, 2014; Arsenis et al., 2021; Livas & Karali, 2023).

Within this framework, the literature identifies three key dimensions of educational innovation in management education. The first concerns Teaching Approaches (TA) grounded in experiential and active learning theories (Kolb, 2014; Joham & Clarke, 2012; Riebe et al., 2017), which connect conceptual knowledge to authentic professional practice. The second relates to Educational Technologies (ET), whose effective integration into pedagogical design enhances interaction, engagement, and personalized learning (Bond et al., 2020; Ghasemi et al., 2023). The third dimension is Faculty Development (FD), which supports instructors' professional growth and strengthens institutional teaching quality (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012; Donnelly, 2021; Da Silva et al., 2024).

Although each of these dimensions has been extensively studied, few empirical studies have explored their interconnection within Business Schools and their combined contribution to graduate employability (Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025a; Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025b). Existing research often examines pedagogy, technology, and faculty training as isolated phenomena rather than as integrated components of a unified educational strategy.

Building on this gap, the present study aims to analyze the alignment between declared institutional orientations and enacted educational practices in the areas of TA, ET, and FD, and to examine their relationship with employability indicators in global Business Schools. Specifically, the study pursues three objectives:

- To map the pedagogical, technological, and faculty development practices formally communicated by the world's top 100 Business Schools.
- To explore the actual adoption and perceived effectiveness of these practices from the perspective of Business School faculty.
- To triangulate institutional and faculty data within themselves and with external measures of employability (Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2024–2025) to assess potential convergences, complementarities, or discrepancies.

This framework seeks to contribute to the international debate on how Business Schools can integrate teaching, technology, and professional development into a coherent educational strategy aligned with labor market relevance.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research design

The study followed a mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches in sequential phases. The first phase consisted of a conceptual content analysis performed on the official websites of the top 100 Business Schools (BSs) worldwide, aimed at identifying declared practices in three key areas: Teaching

Approaches (TA), Educational Technologies (ET), and Faculty Development initiatives (FD).

The second phase involved an online faculty survey, designed to explore the same dimensions from the perspective of instructors, capturing both the actual adoption of those practices and their perceived impact on student learning (SL) and employability/employability skills (ES).

Only after these two independent phases were completed, the datasets were merged and triangulated, enabling a comparative interpretation between institutional declarations and faculty practices.

2.2 Content Analysis (CA)

The content analysis aimed to systematically identify the presence or absence of TA, ET, and FD practices as officially declared by Business Schools through their institutional websites. The unit of analysis was each Business School included in the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2024², adding also the new BSs present in the FT 2025 ranking³.

The codebook was initially conceptually grounded in a deductive approach informed by the literature and was later enriched through an inductive process as new patterns emerged during the analysis. A final codebook was developed, including 31 codes distributed across three macro-dimensions:

- Teaching Approaches (TA) – e.g., experiential learning, problem-based learning, simulations, blended learning;
- Educational Technologies (ET) – e.g., learning management systems, AI-based learning tools, virtual classrooms;
- Faculty Development (FD) – e.g., teaching and learning centers, mentoring programs, pedagogical workshops.

Website sections were manually and automatically searched using targeted keywords, and coding reliability was ensured through a peer-blind validation process with an external coder (Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025a).

2.3 Online Survey

The survey was designed to investigate the actual use and perceived effectiveness of TA, ET, and FD practices by Business School faculty. The target population included instructors employed at the top 100 BSs of the Financial Times ranking. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The questionnaire was constructed on the basis of the same coding scheme used for the CA, ensuring conceptual alignment between the two datasets.

It comprised four sections:

- Demographics and professional background – age, gender, teaching experience, affiliation, teaching subject, etc;
- Teaching Approaches (TA) – checkbox items indicating the types of TAs adopted, plus Likert-scale ratings (1–5) for frequency of use and per-

² <https://rankings.ft.com/rankings/2951/mba-2024>

³ <https://rankings.ft.com/rankings/2997/mba-2025>

ceived impact on students' learning and employability, and multiple-choice grid for employability skills;

- Educational Technologies (ET) – same structure as TA;
- Faculty Development (FD) – checkbox items and Likert-scale items for frequency of use and perceived impact on students' learning and employability.

The survey, preceded by a three-month pilot phase, was formally administered via Google Forms between April 8 and August 5, 2025, using email addresses automatically collected from Business Schools' websites through Python scripts in Google Colab, and yielded 614 responses, providing a statistically significant sample for quantitative analysis (Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025b).

2.4 Triangulation procedure for CA and Survey data

The triangulation process followed a multi-step operational pipeline implemented in Microsoft Excel.

1. Business School names were harmonized and integrated with updates from the Global MBA 2025 ranking.
2. Individual faculty responses were grouped by BS, excluding schools with fewer than three respondents.
3. The CA results and aggregated survey data were merged into a joint display file ("Triangolazione Master"), containing for each BS and each code: institutional declaration (CA 0/1), mean usage rate, computed UsedFlag (0/1), and State.
4. To align the dichotomous CA data (0/1) and the proportional survey data, a threshold parameter $\tau = 0.20$ was applied, meaning that a code was considered "used" if at least 20% of faculty reported adopting it.
5. Based on CA and UsedFlag values, four alignment categories were derived:
 - Convergence (CA=1 & UsedFlag=1)
 - Declared but not used (CA=1 & UsedFlag=0)
 - Used but not declared (CA=0 & UsedFlag=1)
 - Absence (CA=0 & UsedFlag=0)

This framework provided the basis for the comparative triangulation analysis across TA, ET, and FD dimensions.

2.5 Employability Triangulation

To explore the relationship between educational practices and students' employability, a secondary dataset was constructed by integrating survey data with the "Employed at three months" indicator from the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking 2024–2025.

For each BS, mean faculty ratings of the perceived effectiveness of TA, ET, and FD on employability were correlated (using Pearson's r and Spearman's ρ) with the external employability rate (% of graduates employed within three months).

Analyses were conducted using Microsoft Excel (CORREL) and Jamovi (Correlation Matrix) software packages.

3. Results

3.1. CA and Survey triangulation

Triangulation results were obtained by integrating the Content Analysis (CA) and Survey datasets for 70 Business Schools (BSs) that met the inclusion criterion of having at least three valid faculty responses. This methodological choice enhanced internal validity and reduced the likelihood of bias due to random variability in small samples. The results are presented by macro-category: Teaching Approaches (TA), Educational Technologies (ET), and Faculty Development (FD).

3.1.1. Teaching approaches (TAs)

A clear pattern of “used but not declared” emerged for consolidated pedagogical practices such as active learning (96%), problem-based learning (93%), project-based learning (90%), and collaborative learning (74%). These approaches are widely adopted by instructors but receive limited visibility on institutional websites.

Conversely, real-world learning (86%) and experiential learning (83%) exhibited the highest convergence between CA and Survey data, confirming that experiential and situated learning represent the most recognized paradigms in MBA teaching. Less frequent practices, such as creative, service, and transformative learning, showed low adoption and declaration rates, indicating their peripheral role in current pedagogical models (Table 1).

Table 1. State of “Used but not declared” for TA

Row Labels	Count of Active learning_State	
Absence	1	1%
Convergence	2	3%
Used but not declared (blank)	67	96%
Grand Total	70	

Row Label	Count of Problem-based learning_State	
Convergence	5	7%
Used but not declared (blank)	65	93%
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Project-based learning_State	
Absence	6	9%
Convergence	1	1%
Used but not declared (blank)	63	90%
Grand Total	70	

Overall, TA data reveal a communication gap: Business Schools implement active and experiential strategies far more than they officially report, reinforcing the

interpretation of Experiential Learning as an “umbrella category” encompassing diverse active methodologies (Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025a; Dicataldo & Dipace, 2025b).

3.1.2. Educational Technologies (ETs)

Results for ET mirror the same trend. Most categories display a predominance of “used but not declared” status—learning resources (90%), methods (89%), teaching tools (73%), and learning environments (71%) (Table 2).

Table 2. State of “Used but not declared” for ET.

Row Labels	Count of learning_Resources_State	
Absence	1	1%
Convergence	6	9%
Used but not declared	63	90%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Method_State	
Absence	4	6%
Convergence	4	6%
Used but not declared	62	89%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Teaching_tools_State	
Absence	18	26%
Convergence	1	1%
Used but not declared	51	73%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Learning_environment_State	
Absence	11	16%
Convergence	8	11%
Declared but not used	1	1%
Used but not declared	50	71%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

These findings indicate that digital tools and learning technologies are already embedded in instructional practice but remain underrepresented in institutional communication. The analysis highlights a systematic underreporting of technological integration, suggesting that technology use is normalized in practice but not strategically emphasized in Business Schools' public discourse.

3.1.3. Faculty Development (FD)

Similarly, most FD initiatives are implemented but not declared: training activities (81%), research activities (79%), support activities to the didactics (77%), consulting activities (74%), and faculty awards (70%) (Table 3).

Table 3. State of Used but not declared" for ET.

Row Labels	Count of Training activities_Stato	
Convergenza	13	19%
Usa ma non dichiara	57	81%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Research activities_Stato	
Assenza	3	4%
Convergenza	11	16%
Dichiara ma non usa	1	1%
Usa ma non dichiara	55	79%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Support activities to the didactics_Stato	
Assenza	1	1%
Convergenza	15	21%
Usa ma non dichiara	54	77%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Row Labels	Count of Consulting activities_Stato	
Assenza	4	6%
Convergenza	14	20%
Usa ma non dichiara	52	74%
(blank)		

Grand Total	70	
Row Labels	Count of Faculty awards_Stato	
Convergenza	21	30%
Usa ma non dichiara	49	70%
(blank)		
Grand Total	70	

Although the CA revealed limited formal references to FD programs, Survey data show that faculty engagement in professional development is widespread. This discrepancy points to a visibility gap rather than a lack of implementation—faculty development is an established but poorly communicated institutional practice.

3.2. Employability Triangulation

The correlation analysis between the perceived effectiveness of TA, ET, and FD practices (Survey data) and the Financial Times indicator “Employed at Three Months” revealed no significant associations. The correlations, in fact, were weak and nonsignificant (TA $r = -.089$; ET $r = -.193$; FD $r = -.191$; all ns).

Moderate, positive correlations were found among the perceived effectiveness dimensions themselves—TA–ET ($r = .482$, $p < .001$), TA–FD ($r = .336$, $p = .004$), ET–FD ($r = .370$, $p = .002$)—indicating internal perceptual alignment: instructors who value one dimension tend to rate the others positively (Table 4).

Table 4. Integrated dataset.

BS	N_docenti	Employed 3M (%)	Mean TA employability effectiveness	Mean ET employability effectiveness	Mean FD employability effectiveness
Alliance Manchester Business School	12	86	4,166666667	3,333333333	2,833333333
Arizona State University: WP Carey	6	96	4,333333333	3,166666667	3
Audencia	6	97	4,166666667	3	3,333333333
Babson College: Olin	15	74	4,533333333	4,333333333	3,866666667
Bayes Business School (formerly Cass)	5	90	4,8	3,8	2,2
Boston University Questrom School of Business	6	83	4	3,5	4

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Brigham Young University: Marriott	14	91	4,571428571	3,714285714	3,571428571
Carnegie Mellon: Tepper	9	92	4,333333333	3,888888889	3,222222222
Chicago Booth	4	94	3,75	1,5	3,25
Copenhagen Business School (CBS)	23	86	4,217391304	3,739130435	3,608695652
Duke University's Fuqua School of Business	4	92	4,75	1,75	2,75
Edhec Business School	6	95	3,666666667	3,5	3,666666667
EM Lyon Business School	9	95	3,888888889	3,111111111	2,777777778
Emory University: Goizueta	4	96	4,75	4	3
Esade Business School	12	91	4	3,25	3,583333333
ESCP Business School	18	99	4,277777778	3,722222222	3,5
Essec Business School	11	93	3,727272727	3,545454545	3,181818182
Fordham University: Gabelli	9	88	4,333333333	4,111111111	3,888888889
Frankfurt School of Finance and Management	9	82	4,111111111	3,333333333	2,555555556
George Washington University	6	72	4,666666667	4,5	3,666666667
Grenoble Ecole de Management	8	90	4	3,375	3,25
Harvard Business School	6	80	3,666666667	3,333333333	2,666666667
HEC Paris	9	90	3,555555556	3,333333333	3,777777778
IE Business school	40	96	4,475	4,025	4,025
IESE	7	94	4,571428571	4,285714286	3,285714286
Imperial College Business School	4	93	3,5	3,75	2,75
Indian Institute of Management Bangalore	3	100	4,666666667	4	2,666666667
INSEAD	11	84	4,272727273	3,727272727	3,636363636
Johnson Cornell	3	93	4,666666667	4,333333333	3,666666667

Kellogg	4	92	4,75	3,5	2,75
London Business School	3	90	4	3,666666667	3
Mannheim Business School	6	93	4	3,666666667	3,833333333
Michigan State University: Broad	5	90	4,2	4,2	4
New York University: Stern	3	94	4,333333333	4,333333333	4
Northeastern University:	22	81	4,590909091	4,045454545	3,909090909
D'Amore-McKim					
Polimi School of Management	18	88	3,777777778	2,944444444	3,555555556
Queen's University: Smith	3	96	3,666666667	4,333333333	1,666666667
Rice University: Jones	6	87	3,666666667	3,5	2,166666667
Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University	9	83	3,833333333	3,25	3,25
Rutgers Business School	11	78	4,363636364	3,818181818	3,272727273
SDA Bocconi	19	95	4,5	4	3,444444444
Singapore Management University: Lee Kong Chian	10	78	4,5	3,9	3,4
Texas A & M University: Mays	4	79	4,5	3,5	3,5
Tias Business School, Tilburg University	5	100	4,2	3,2	2
Trinity College Dublin, Trinity Business School	3	84	4,333333333	4	3,666666667
UCLA Anderson School of Management	5	86	4,4	3,6	2,6
University College Dublin: Smurfit	15	80	4,133333333	3,866666667	3,6
University of California at Berkeley: Haas	5	88	4,8	4	3,8
University of	3	82	5	4,333333333	3,333333333

California at Irvine: Meringue	4	94	3,75	2,75	2,5
University of Cambridge: Judge	7	90	4	3,571428571	2,857142857
University of Edinburgh Business School	10	90	4,4	3,8	3,7
University of Florida: Warrington	8	77	4,125	3,375	3,375
University of Glasgow: Adam Smith	3	84	4,333333333	3,666666667	3,666666667
University of Michigan: Ross	3	88	4,666666667	3,666666667	4
University of North Carolina: Kenan-Flagler	3	90	4	4	3,333333333
University of Notre Dame: Mendoza	6	87	4	3,833333333	3
University of Oxford: Saïd	4	91	4,5	3,5	3,25
University of Rochester: Simon Business School	6	86	4,5	4,5	3,833333333
University of Southern California: Marshall	4	100	4,25	3	3,5
University of Sydney Business School	13	89	4,230769231	3,615384615	3,076923077
University of Texas at Austin: McCombs	3	90	5	4,75	3,75
University of Texas at Dallas: Jindal	8	81	3,75	3	3,375
University of Toronto: Rotman	4	95	5	4	4,25
University of Virginia: Darden	3	86	3,666666667	2,666666667	2
University of Washington: Olin	6	75	4,666666667	4,166666667	3,333333333
University of Western: Ivey	4	92	4,5	3,5	2,75
Wharton					

William & Mary: Mason	3	88	4,666666667	4,333333333	4,333333333
Wisconsin School of Business	3	84	5	4,333333333	3,666666667
XLRI — Xavier School of Maagement	6	95	4,166666667	3,833333333	3,333333333

4. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a complex picture of alignment and misalignment between institutional discourse, faculty practices, and perceived effectiveness in the field of management education. The triangulation of Content Analysis and Survey data shows that Business Schools (BSs) are more innovative in practice than in communication, especially in their adoption of experiential teaching approaches, educational technologies, and faculty development initiatives.

The prevalence of experiential and active learning confirms their centrality in management education. Consistent with Kolb's (2014) experiential learning theory and Wijnia et al. (2024), results indicate that Business Schools widely implement strategies such as project-based, problem-based, and collaborative learning to foster student engagement and authentic skill development. However, these approaches are often subsumed under the broader label of experiential learning in institutional discourse, which tends to overlook their specific pedagogical nuances. This creates a rhetorical "practice–communication gap," not between actions and claims, but between the actual diversity of teaching practices and their simplified representation in official narratives.

Educational technologies (ET) appear to be deeply integrated into teaching practices but underrepresented in formal narratives. This finding aligns with Bond et al. (2020) and Huang (2019), who observed that technology use in higher education has become so normalized that it often loses explicit visibility. Faculty perceptions highlight technology's role as an enabler rather than a driver of innovation — supporting blended and hybrid models rather than replacing pedagogical intent. This reinforces the need for BSs to strategically integrate ET into their learning design frameworks, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and learner-centered paradigms (Garrison & Vaughan, 2013).

Faculty Development (FD) emerges as a silent but pervasive driver of quality improvement. Despite limited visibility on institutional websites, faculty report high participation and perceived impact of FD initiatives, confirming Steinert's (2014) argument that professional development is a key determinant of teaching quality and innovation adoption. The discrepancy between institutional underreporting and actual engagement suggests that BSs may treat FD as an internal resource rather than a public-facing strategic asset. This calls for a cultural shift towards recognizing FD as a visible dimension of educational excellence (Sorcinelli, 2020).

The absence of significant correlations between perceived TA, ET, FD effectiveness and Financial Times employability indicators indicates that educational quality alone does not predict employment outcomes. As suggested by Jackson and Bridgstock (2021) and Andrews and Higson (2008), employability is a multi-factor

construct influenced by institutional prestige, labor market dynamics, and social capital. Nonetheless, the strong internal correlations among TA, ET, and FD perceived effectiveness confirm an integrated professional mindset among faculty, recognizing the interdependence of pedagogy, technology, and professional growth in fostering employability skills.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the relevance of experiential learning as a shared framework linking teaching practices, technological mediation, and faculty development — an intersection rarely addressed empirically in Business Education research. Practically, the study highlights the need for BSs to bridge the gap between declared innovation and enacted practice, adopting transparent communication strategies and evidence-based reporting of teaching excellence. Integrating ET and FD within an experiential pedagogical model could enhance coherence, sustainability, and visibility of educational innovation.

However, the study's correlational design and the focus on top-ranked BSs limit the generalizability of findings. Future research should extend this approach to emerging and non-Western institutions, employ longitudinal designs to explore causal dynamics, and investigate how emerging technologies, such as AI-based learning analytics and immersive simulations, reshape employability-oriented curricula.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of evidence emphasizing the central role of experiential and technology-enhanced learning in contemporary management education. Despite the absence of a direct statistical relationship with employability outcomes, the study reveals a strong internal coherence between pedagogy, technology, and faculty development, supporting the idea that sustainable educational innovation emerges from their mutual reinforcement. Bridging the gap between institutional discourse and instructional practice remains a key challenge for Business Schools aiming to align their identity narratives with their educational realities. Promoting transparent communication, investing in visible faculty development policies, and grounding innovation in experiential frameworks represent essential strategies for strengthening both academic quality and societal impact.

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