

# Skills required by a Teacher in ‘Business Communication’

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**Abstract:** Teaching methodologies in management education have witnessed extensive changes within last two decades. “Business Communication” (referred to as “Managerial Communication” or “Communication Skills” with some universities/ institutions) is one of the most essential and imperative subjects in Management Education. The Teacher teaching Business Communication must possess following skills:

Basic English Inputs, Soft Skills for presentations, team development, counseling, negotiating, interviewing, telephone manners and etiquettes, conducting meetings & conferences, and public speaking-Interoffice memos and Business Letters-Language of Business and Management-Managing Video Conferences-Knowledge of Theatre Techniques with kinesics, vocalics/ paralinguistic, proxemics, chronemics, touchemics/ haptics, artifacts and other non-verbal cues-Role Play-Case Presentations-Group Dynamics and so on. Business Communication Teacher must be technologically updated-Available to the students on Chats, Voice Mails, Mobiles, and through Personal Portals, Corporate and Personal blogs. He/ she should be able to provide input on cross cultural and cross gender communication. He/ she must possess dedicated WAC skills, impactful written communication with ability of conversational, transactional and genre analysis. He should have developed EQ and SQ and a potential to develop the same amongst students with the help of excellent interpersonal skills.

The researcher has designed an extensive “**Skills Assessment Instrument**” which can be used by a Business Communication Teacher to assess himself/ herself whether he/ she has the skills required for teaching business communication. The instrument makes it possible to identify strong and weak areas of a teacher. The areas in which a teacher is found weak can be improved on his/ her own through committed efforts and concerned developmental techniques.

## 1. Introduction

Management Education has witnessed many changes since its inception in India as well as in the world. The beneficiaries of management education are mainly the institutes providing education in management, teachers associated with these institutions and students. Due to the governance of controlling bodies over the Institutes providing management education, mentionable changes have taken place in criteria for admission, criteria and aptitude required of students, norms and rules regulations of infrastructure, syllabus, teacher’s roles and responsibilities, teaching methodologies, characteristics of teaching and learning process and so on. Pioneering Institutes in management education have been always looked at as icons of quality education. ‘Quality of the Teacher’ has proved to be one of the important factors defining the success of the institute.

## 2. Teacher in Management Education

Quality of the management education depends on the quality of a teacher to a substantial extent. Teacher in management education is expected to possess certain fundamental skills those are quite different than

possessed by a school or a college teacher. Some of the fundamental skills required by a teacher in management education are communication, planning, motivation, team building, case handling etc. The skills mentioned may vary from teacher to teacher; those may vary even due to the regions, religions, geographical and demographic characteristics influences on people, even schooling, graduate and post graduate education and many such factors. Teacher in management education shall be facing many more challenges as against those today. Due to the trends such as foreign universities branching out in India, tie-ups of Indian universities with foreign universities, increasing number of autonomous institutes offering management education, changing requirements and demands of Indian industries, reverse brain drain and many such aspects, it has become absolute necessary for the teacher in management education to exercise 'management of change' to keep pace with what is expected of management education in the most happening, changing and demanding situations. The teacher must keep himself updated with the latest happenings in business world, current trends in the field of business, profession and education.

### 3. Skills required by a Teacher in Management

A teacher in management definitely needs different skills as compared to a teacher in non-professional courses. An exhaustive list given below of skills for a management teacher may not be all encompassing but more or less all of them must be necessarily possessed by him/ her: Communication Skills, Convincing Skills, Explanation Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Question Handling Skills, Demonstration Skills, Presentation Skills, Stress Management Skills, Time Management Skills, Case Handling Skills, Case Development Skills, Query Solving Skills and so on. In addition to these skills, the teacher is expected to have research orientation towards the topics he is studying and teaching.

### 4. Teacher teaching Business Communication

A teacher dealing with the subject "Business Communication" for the students of management needs to follow following points:

- Business Communication is one of the most needed subjects in management education. Especially for the students in management institutes in semi-urban and rural areas, the subject is of concern as they face problems right in communicating in their local language. Students in such areas must be given Basic English inputs.
- The Management Teacher should think whether he is giving the students what employers want. Employers need versatile skills from a management graduate due to the faster growth of the service sector and awareness of services even in manufacturing sector. Some skills related to communication are soft skills, presentation skills, team development skills, counseling skills, negotiating skills, interviewing skills, telephone communication/ manners skills, etiquettes and manners during meetings, conferences, public speaking, board meetings, standing committee meetings, drafting of inter-office memos, business communication to forward and backward integration representatives, emails, attending webinars, making use of application software and many more.
- "Teachers must understand that the effective communication does not mean only fluency in English but understanding of 'language of business' or 'language of management' which is defined as set of linguistic symbols incorporating an informal elements necessary for conceptualizations, description and execution of management tasks a sharing of management information" as proven by *Naoki Kameda from Doshisha University, Japan*. In this context students should be taught global business language
- Teacher must be able to demonstrate the skills required at the time of interviews specifically during web interviews/ telephonic interviews/ distance interviews.
- Teacher must be able to exhibit how video conferences can be managed and how can it be used as a tool for overseas/ distant meetings.
- Teacher in communication must possess the knowledge of theatre techniques that shall help him to make students understand the practical implications of kinesics, vocalics, proxemics, chronemics, touchemics/ haptics, artefacts and other relevant aspects of non-verbal communication.

- In connection with above, more role-play sessions, case presentations would help students understand the dynamics of real life situations such as group dynamics, negotiating, building trust through leadership, resolving grievances, solving conflicts, brain storming and many more. Teacher must possess a balanced knowledge of theatre/ acting as well as music to give justice to the subject.
- With the advent of technology, he must learn to use the technologically upgraded channels of communication such as making conference calls, attending video conferences, conducting interviews through web, using internet, creating, receiving and processing emails effectively, using application software, WAP/ wi-fi relevance, and even operating contemporary electronic gadgets such as laptops, palm-tops, i-pods, and even mobile handsets. Teacher must know how to deal with these Artificial Intelligence and virtual communication doodads. As he shall have to teach these techniques as a need of future. Though some of these techniques are being used, most of them are not.
- With the increasing trend of on-line education, a teacher must be aware of the necessities for such fast-developing drift. He must learn the tools and techniques of on-line classes, on-line assignments, and their evaluation and feedback modus operandi.
- It shall be the need for being available to the students on chats, voice mails, mobiles etc. The author of the paper has followed the method since 1999 of being available on yahoo chat, gtalk, skype etc. almost everyday late evening from 10 pm to 11.30 pm for the students and even at the daytime when possible. Many students ask him queries related to his subjects to which answers are provided in chat window.
- Individual teacher shall have personal portal on which he can upload assignments and ask the students to revert.
- It shall become necessary for a teacher to be able to contribute to corporate blogs.
- The teacher should include cross cultural and cross gender inputs in want of the current trends in industrial culture for which he must keep himself well-run about the different country cultures and traditions of communication.
- Dedicated WAC skills are needed with communication teacher where WAC aims at analysis of given managerial situation and its convincing representation to the audience. The teacher has to develop an aptitude of case generation, analysis and its presentation as well.
- Students in B-schools in the state are observed to have poor written communication due to many proven facts of pedagogy of learning English. In precise words, using “keep it short and simple” principle, avoidance of using ornamental language, using standard abbreviations in writing as well as in emails, highlighting the facts than beating around the bush and many such written communication skills are still not observed taught.
- Assignments on conversational analysis, transactional analysis, and genre analysis shall be required which is not taken much cognizance as in today’s communication exercises.
- Emotional Intelligence and effective communication have been proved to have close connection. It is going to be the task of the teacher in communication to develop EQ and SQ of his students.
- A teacher teaching business communication should possess excellent interpersonal skills and he should be able to make people understand and learn the skills.
- About written communication, the teacher himself should be perfect in written aspects of Business English in addition to fundamental English. Association of business communication contents with the disciplines of management for its application is must.

Summarily, Teacher teaching business communication should be a multi-faceted personality. Merely a postgraduate in English won’t be able to shoulder over the responsibility of the subject. The teacher should possess a combination of H R skills, language skills, and performing arts’ orientation. He himself should be an all-round person with a smile on his face & decency in behaviour.

## 5. Skills Assessment Instrument

The Researcher has developed an Instrument that assesses the skills the teacher in communication is expected to possess. The instrument is designed considering the skills mentioned in 4.0 above.

### **5.1 Structure of the Instrument:**

The instrument designed for assessing the skills teacher possess, is structured in a simple way for the respondents. The instrument consists of a questionnaire of 64 statements with 'Yes' and 'No' options. The teacher teaching communication is expected to select either 'Yes' or 'No' option for each statement.

### **5.2 Scoring of the Instrument:**

After selecting either yes or no for all the statements, the teacher shall give "1" point for each "Yes" answer and "0" for each "No" answer. Then the total of all "Yes" (1s) is taken to get the grand total of all "Yes" answers. The points for the "Yes" options of statement numbers 1, 9, 17, 25, 33, 41, 49, 57 and 2, 10, 18, 26, 34, 42, 50, 58 and 3, 11, 19, 27, 35, 43, 51, 59 and 4, 12, 20, 28, 36, 44, 52, 60 and 5, 13, 21, 29, 37, 45, 53, 61 and 6, 14, 22, 30, 38, 46, 54, 62 and 7, 15, 23, 31, 39, 47, 55, 63 and 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 48, 56, 64 are to be separately noted down to assess individual skills assessment.

- For Grand Total, if the total of "Yes" answers is more than 48, then the teacher may be said to possess the skills required for teaching communication subject. If the score is less than 48, the teacher teaching communication is lacking in some of the skills.
- For 'individual skills', if the total of each set is more than 6, then teacher may possess the skills mentioned in the concerned set of skills. In some cases the grand total may be more than 48 but the scores of individual skill sets may not be more than 6 in all sets. In such case, the Skill Set in which the score is less than 6, the teacher shall come to know that he/ she is lacks the concerned skills to some extent.
- Scores less than 6 in individual skill sets do not mean that the teacher doesn't possess that skill at all. He/ she is weak in that skill which can be further developed.
- At the same time the total score less than 48 doesn't mean that teacher cannot teach communication but he may be ineffective.

### **5.3 Skill Sets for the Instruments:**

The teacher teaching communication is expected to possess specific skills. These skills are identified, for the purpose of research, by the researcher. The skills (with reference to 4.0 above) are broadly classified by the Researcher as under:

#### **5.3.1 Skill Set I: Fundamentals of English Language**

Teacher in communication must be clear about the fundamentals of English Language and Grammar. He/ she should be well-versed in the fundamental principles of articles, prepositions, tenses, and all constituents of grammar. As if he/ she is not perfect in English fundamentals, he cannot communicate the same implications and meanings of what he intends to. Statement Nos. 1, 9, 17, 25, 33, 41, 49, 57 are the indicators of Fundamentals of English Language. These statements endorse the awareness of fundamental.

#### **5.3.2 Skill Set II: Verbal and Vocabulary including pronunciation**

Teacher in communication is expected to have a sufficient inventory of words. He/ she should be able to know synonyms of the words at a given point of time. He/ she should have emphatic verbal communication. At the same time, he/ she should know the standard pronunciation of words, symbols of phonetics, if possible, rising and falling tones etc details of linguistics. Statement Nos. 2, 10, 18, 26, 34, 42, 50, 58 are the indicators of Verbal and Vocabulary including pronunciation.

#### **5.3.3 Skill Set III: Technological Updating-Email, Chat, blog, Portal etc**

Teacher in communication must keep pace with the frequent and fast track changes in the technology. He/ she should be able to communicate through email, portals, blogs, mobile messages. He/ she should be

available for the students on internet, chat, or sites such as orkut, hi5 etc which keeps him/ her in continuously in touch with them. He/ she should be able to adopt technological changes in the field of communication. Statement Nos. 3, 11, 19, 27, 35, 43, 51, 59 are the indicators of Technological Updating-Email, Chat, blog, Portal etc.

#### ***5.3.4 Skill Set IV: Non-verbal Skills including kinesics, proxemics, chronemics, haptics etc***

Teacher in communication must possess strong non-verbal communication skills. He/ she should be expressive, able to use proper gestures and facial expressions, have proper skill of body language to display etiquettes and manners. In short he/ she must be able to express without uttering a word but only through non-verbal cues. He/ she must be able to use effective props to demonstrate and explain the concepts. The teacher must have an acute sense of individual's personal and intimate zones. He/ she must follow time commitments as far as submission/ assessment/ scoring/ feedback of assignments etc are concerned. Identifying individual's needs of haptics, teacher should be able to understand students. Statement Nos. 4, 12, 20, 28, 36, 44, 52, 60 are the indicators of Non-verbal Skills including kinesics, proxemics, chronemics, haptics etc

#### ***5.3.5 Skill Set V: Theatre Techniques including Paralinguistic, role play etc***

To enhance the verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic skills, teacher is expected to have exposure to theatre techniques such as dialogue delivery, facial expressions, expressing required emotions, modulation of voice, maintaining a typical bearing, miming etc. Theater techniques can make teacher in communication more effective and categorical. He/ she should learn, if not done before, theatre techniques. Paralinguistic teaches to use the voice effectively by having undulations in voice, controlling speed, pitch and volume and so on. Knowledge and understanding of music also add up to round development of communication teacher. Theatre techniques are a must for any communication teacher. For developing theatre techniques amongst students more role play sessions would be helpful and the teacher can guide students to get more realistic representation through role play. Role-play sessions by the students, along with the trained teacher, who have learnt theatre techniques become highly effective and easy to understand. Statement Nos. 5, 13, 21, 29, 37, 45, 53, 61 are the indicators of Theatre Techniques including Paralinguistic, role play etc

#### ***5.3.6 Skill Set VI: Written Skills including case analysis/ WAC***

Written communication is one of the crucial branches of communication science. Teacher in communication must possess impressive written communication. He/ she should know the international standards in the areas of written business communication. In most of the management schools, teacher in communication is expected to teach case study analysis. WAC includes analysis, solutions, presentation, and written submissions of cases. In connection with cases, teacher must know the techniques of presenting analysed cases in written form. Teacher should learn WAC skills and effective written skills. Written skills include proper usage of words, formulation of well structured and grammatically correct sentences, correct spellings, and last but not the least the systematic presentation on paper. Statement Nos. 6, 14, 22, 30, 38, 46, 54, 62 are the indicators of Written Skills including case analysis/ WAC.

#### ***5.3.7 Skill Set VII: Manners, Etiquettes and Ethics including EQ and SQ***

Teacher in communication is expected to teach not only communication in formal situations but in all walks of life. Communication in general includes behavior at public places, manners and etiquette, emotional and spiritual balance of personality. The teacher in communication can inculcate all these in students only if he/ she himself/ herself possesses high standards of manners, etiquette, and ethics of societal behavior. He/ she is expected to have balanced Emotional and Spiritual Quotients. Statement Nos. 7, 15, 23, 31, 39, 47, 55, 63 are the indicators of Manners, Etiquettes and Ethics including EQ and SQ.

#### ***5.3.8 Skill Set VIII: Interpersonal Skills including availability to students and cross culture/ cross gender communication***

Teacher in communication must possess excellent interpersonal communication skills. He/ she should be extrovert and develop ability amongst students to learn effective interpersonal communication. To make

interpersonal communication effective understanding cultures of different class of people-local, national as well international is necessary. Understanding of decorum and codes of behavior while communicating with opposite sex is also must. Statement Nos. 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 48, 56, 64 are the indicators of Interpersonal Skills including availability to students and cross culture/ cross gender communication

## 6. Instrument Designed for Assessment

Based on the Skills Sets I to VIII mentioned above in points 5.3.1 to 5.3.8, the instrument designed by the Researcher. The 'Instrument' is appended as Annexure.

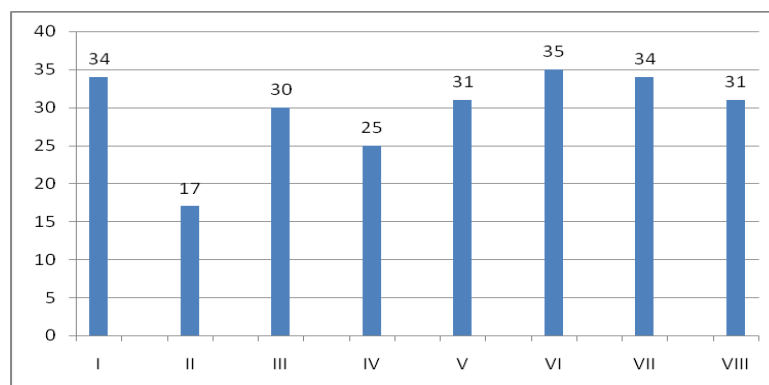
For the purpose of getting accurate results, the 64 statements in the instrument are not in the same sequence as that of the Skill Sets; the statements are purposefully staggered.

## 7. Observations and Findings

The researcher has confirmed the strength of the instrument with the help of pilot study. 10 teachers teaching communication and related subjects were given the questionnaire to fill in. The results of the instrument were verified. The instrument has proven to give accurate results in identifying ability of a teacher to teach communication. At the same time the instrument exactly identified the skills set in which the teacher was either strong or weak.

On testing the instrument for its feasibility and effectiveness, the Instrument was given to 50 teachers teaching the subject Communication Skills in different institutes. The selection of the teachers was done by convenient sampling method. From the scores of total and individual skills sets following are the observations:

- There were 6 (9.38%) teachers who can be excellent teachers in Business Communication as they have the score more than 48.
- The highest score teacher had a score of 51. The teacher had comparatively low scores in skills set nos. 3,4 and 8 (5 each) and 100% on skills set no. 5 and 6 (8 each)
- There was not a single teacher who had the score less than 25 (40%). The minimum score observed was 29 (45.31%). The teacher having 29 score had mentionable low score in skills set no. 3 (1 of 8)
- Overall
  - 6.25% teachers' score was less than 50%
  - 23.44% teachers had scores between 50 and 60%
  - 29.69% teachers had scores between 60 and 70%
  - 18.75% teachers had scores between 70 and 80%
  - Not a single teacher was found with scores more than 80%
- Hence the teachers with a score lower than 60% (19 teachers) need to improve on the skills required to teach the subject.
- The graph indicating the scores on Skills Sets from I to VIII indicates that the teachers under study have highest scores on Skills Set No. VI (Written Skills including case analysis/ WAC) and high on I and VII.
- The graph indicating the scores on Skills Sets from I to VIII indicates that the teachers under study have lowest score on skills set no. II (Verbal and Vocabulary including pronunciation)



**Fig 1: Scores of Skills Sets for Respondents**



Summarily, teacher in communication may have high or low scores in some or the other identified Skills Sets. That simply proves the teacher's ability or inability and strength or weakness in the concerned areas respectively. Weakness in a particular area does not mean that the teacher is unable to teach communication, but it only means that he/ she needs to work out on the skills in which he/ she is weak. Hence the Grand Total of the scores of all the Skills Sets indicates teacher's overall ability to teach communication irrespective of individual Skills Set skills.

Communication teacher is expected to understand the subject 'communication' not only from the viewpoint of the syllabus but also in real sense perspective that he/ she should be proving his/ her aptitude for teaching communication by practically demonstrating the use and application of the subject. The subject, as mentioned earlier, is not confined to business communication or managerial communication but has its wings spread to day-to-day communication as well. This aspect of the subject should be deeply rooted in the minds of the students for which the teacher has to have the awareness of the same.

## 8. Conclusion

Teacher in business communication should possess varied skills mentioned in 5.3 above. He/ she can be successful and efficient only if these skills are possessed. Teacher can validate the skills in which he/ she is competent and in which he/ she is not. The Skills Inventory Instrument designed by the Researcher may be used for the purpose.

### (The above research paper is the ORIGINAL work of the Researchers)

(The researchers have identified and classified the skills set mentioned in the paper on his own based on his experience of teaching communication skills, business communication and managerial communication at undergraduate, graduate and post graduate level for last 18 years. The 1<sup>st</sup> Author of the research paper has authored a book on "Communication Skills for Engineers" which is referred as a textbook by the students of polytechnic under MSBTE, Mumbai, India. Researchers have articles and papers published on Communication Perspectives including two papers at "International Conference on Communication and Media-Contemporary Roles and Challenges" in 'Malaysia'. Researchers possess the overall experience of teaching and training Business Communication at various levels.

**Annexure: Instrument of the Research Paper**

Sr	Statements	Options	
1	I had got more than 70% marks in 10 <sup>th</sup> standard 'English' subject	Yes	No
2	I have dictionary at my home which is easily accessible	Yes	No
3	I write blogs/ I plan to have my personal website	Yes	No
4	I get confused what to do with my hands when there is no dias/ rostrum in front of me	Yes	No
5	In my school/ college days, I had participated in drama/ road shows/ compeering/ announcements	Yes	No
6	I prefer speaking than writing	Yes	No
7	When some student is in a bad mood, I prefer not to speak to him/ her	Yes	No
8	I try to get information about different countries and their culture	Yes	No
9	"One of my friends is an engineer." This sentence is grammatically wrong	Yes	No
10	I try to use the word with more general understanding and meaning than wasting time for finding out the precise and specific word	Yes	No
11	My students call me on my mobile when they need any clarification	Yes	No
12	I observe the expressions of the students when I am teaching	Yes	No
13	I like to watch movies or dramas	Yes	No

14	I prefer cases than role play sessions	Yes	No
15	When some student is in a bad mood, I think over what must have happened	Yes	No
16	I won't mind watching Japanese, Chinese, Russian etc movies with subtitles in English	Yes	No
17	I used to like the subject 'English' in my school days	Yes	No
18	I am aware of phonetics symbols	Yes	No
19	I am available for chatting with students online	Yes	No
20	I don't like when someone doesn't follow time commitments	Yes	No
21	Dialogues in Male Voice have more clarity of speech than Female voice	Yes	No
22	I have written articles for newspapers, magazines, souvenirs	Yes	No
23	I get irritated when students call my landline/ mobile	Yes	No
24	Usually I follow open door policy for my students/ I am easily approachable for my students	Yes	No
25	"The murderer was hung till death". The past participle 'hung' is correct	Yes	No
26	I find difficult to understand English movie dialogues	Yes	No
27	I prefer to write a letter than e-mail	Yes	No
28	I become cautious when some one stands too close to me	Yes	No
29	Male voice pitch is said to be in upper octave	Yes	No
30	Any type of case can be solved by SWOT analysis	Yes	No
31	When I wish some senior person, I bow down a bit	Yes	No
32	When someone complains about the other, I say, "Give it to me in writing"	Yes	No
33	There are 5 consonants and 21 vowels in English	Yes	No
34	I use thesaurus on computer or in a book form	Yes	No
35	I think mobiles should be used only for making and receiving calls than other features	Yes	No
36	I hate crying	Yes	No
37	I am able to say the same sentence in 6 to 7 different tones	Yes	No
38	I prefer 'indented' format of letter writing than 'fully blocked' format	Yes	No
39	I get irritated when someone doesn't follow time commitments	Yes	No
40	I have 'pen-pals' from different countries	Yes	No
41	While typing sms on mobiles, I prefer using directory option	Yes	No
42	Solving crosswords is sheer wastage of time	Yes	No
43	I insist on print outs than soft copies submissions	Yes	No
44	I can hide expressions on my face	Yes	No
45	Pictures and photos of non-verbal communication are better explainable than demonstration, gestures and facial expressions of a teacher	Yes	No
46	I find it difficult to express my feelings through written messages	Yes	No
47	I don't have major grudges about my life	Yes	No
48	Under "University's Foreign Students' Exchange Program", I would not mind to allow the foreign students to stay at my home for the prescribed duration	Yes	No
49	English grammar is difficult for Indians to understand	Yes	No
50	I think English speaker should try to avoid regional accent and try to follow standard pronunciation	Yes	No



51	I accept auto downloads of software and install the newer versions at the earliest possible	Yes	No
52	I come to know the time without looking at watch	Yes	No
53	I shall be conscious when I am supposed to play a role of 'an opposite sex person' in a drama	Yes	No
54	I had many friends who used to write letters to me and I used to write letters to them/ I have many friends who write letters to me and I write to them	Yes	No
55	I get disturbed when any of my family members is disturbed	Yes	No
56	I am not cautious while communicating with opposite sex	Yes	No
57	We subscribe English newspaper at our home	Yes	No
58	I watch information and news channel to improve my vocabulary	Yes	No
59	As far as possible I try to learn new computer techniques/ software on my own. I don't find it so cumbersome	Yes	No
60	I believe in a saying " A touch can say better than words"	Yes	No
61	Sometimes my colleagues/ students have given me the feedback that I speak in a loud voice evenif there are very few students in the class	Yes	No
62	I can't write properly on blank (unruled) paper. My handwriting gets indisciplined	Yes	No
63	I practice stress management techniques at individual level	Yes	No
64	Malaysia's currency is "Euro"	Yes	No