The Relationship between Focus and Execution of Goals and Performance Elements of the Business Strategy Game

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In business simulations, a lack of student engagement and strategic thinking by all members within a team can be a problem in terms of effective student learning. According to Cadotte (1995), strategic thinking requires a student's understanding, selection, and coordination of tactical options to achieve a desired outcome, and involvement has been found to be correlated with increased learning (Randel, Morris, Wetzel, & Whitehill, 1992). The purpose of this research is to investigate a student's ability to focus and execute their most important goals while participating in the Business Strategy Game (Thompson, Stappenbeck, Reidenbach, & Thrasher, 2013).

Students enrolled in a Strategic Analysis course take part in the Business Strategy Game which is a full-enterprise simulation. During the simulation, students are given three extremely important goals to focus on instead of trying to significantly improve everything all at once. These goals are what McCheney, Covey & Huling (2012) define as Wildly Important Goals (WIGS). The three WIGS that students are to focus on are Gross Margin, ROE, and Image Rating. Additionally, each student must concentrate on at least one lead measure that will help predict and influence the Wildly Important Goals. Lastly, during the final year of the simulation, students complete the Execution Quotient Survey (McChesney and Covey, 2012) which measures the student's ability to focus on and execute their most important goals.

The Execution Quotient, or xQ score, is an indicator of the likelihood of executing current goals as well as any future goals. There are 27 questions (22 objective; 5 open-ended) in the survey. The factors measured by the XQ include goal clarity, goal commitment, translation of goals into action, enabling of goals, synergy of goals, and accountability for goals. These factors will be correlated with learning measures reported in the Business Strategy Game. The learning measures include the following performance variables: Leadership Skills, Collaboration and Teamwork, Financial Analysis, Operations Management, Marketing Management, Human Resource Management, Strategic Analysis and Planning, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Financial Management. The demographic variables of group size, years of work experience, and gender will also be investigated. It is hypothesized that individuals with higher XQ ratings will perform significantly better on the learning measures within the simulation.