

INVESTIGATING THE SALIENT DETERMINANT FACTORS FOR THE CHOICE OF EVENING MBA PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF ISLAMABAD PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper is to explore the salient considerations of the students who are fulltime employees of several organizations for joining MBA programs in the evening classes in the private universities of Islamabad - Pakistan. To get appropriate influence and relation about different variables on joining of MBA programs at evening, the questionnaire constructed by considering Likert rating scale. About 160 questionnaires floated out of which 152 questionnaires selected for appropriate analysis. SPSS 17 version was used to get the statistical results. To get the intention/objective of students on selection of MBA in evening programs, descriptive statistics (Mean, Median and Mode) and Pearson Correlation applied. The Pearson correlation results revealed a significant correlation among variables and proliferated, career growth, knowledge & skills, higher salaries, high education and flexibility and proximity are the basic motives to opt MBA evening in different private universities of Islamabad. Among all these factors, it is worth noting that career growth and higher salaries are the most influential factors intend the students to join this program.

Keywords: MBA Program, Higher salaries, Career Growth, Knowledge & skills, Flexibility and proximity

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, Business management program has taken the spotlight, as prospect of prosperity seemingly believe rest in this field of knowledge. More importantly the wave of globalization and the demand of this knowledge based economy have driven many towards the shore of Business management as a career and development of skills.

The study of MBA or Business management programs is not confine with the developed world, rather there has been a massive mushrooming of tertiary institutions offering related course of Business management. Interestingly, both the private and public sector universities take the share in this.

Islamabad the capital of Pakistan is one of the cities having significant number of universities offering Business management, the program is not limited for morning students, and rather there has been an extension as in evening classes, wherein both corporate and non-corporate persons from the private and public sectors chose to study.

The growing interest in the evening program demands an adequate and careful probe, thus this research attempts to dig into the root causes why evening classes is increasingly preferred by many.

Eddy's research (1996) underpins certain imperatives upon which the choice of MBA program revolves around. The result of the findings depicted a mixed reaction of respondents towards the choice of MBA in developing a career. Substantial number of students enrolled

in MBA program identifies tuition, fellowship, distance from home, and quality of the school as strong determinants. Numerous researches have attempted to grapple the extent to which the marketing strategy of universities contribute to decision making for the choice of MBA program (Nicholls 1995; Mark 2002; Mayte 2003; Schoenfeld and Bruce, 2005). Setting aside the role of educational institutions to impart knowledge, there is growing sentiments that institutions are increasingly market-oriented, thus the necessity for a standard marketing strategy focused on certain target customer (Conway et al, 1994; Nichols et al, 1995) and target market which crave to having MBA degree to either consolidate organizational profile or enhance job opportunity (Mark 2002).

Personal prestige, career exploration opportunities, goals for developing and improving interpersonal skills, entrepreneurial aspirations, and increasing career mobility are the respondent responses from (Simmering and Wilcox, 1995) research. (Bruce, 2010) looks at the affordability and conduciveness of a full-time, part-time, or Executive MBA. The level of competition among educational institutions underlines the argument of how competition drives in innovation in a capitalist environment. Prospective MBA students now place their choice of MBA on the level of innovation, ability of institution to shift from the traditional general to specialized MBA areas (Gupta, 2007). Not everyone would like to rush into undertaking MBA program without a pre-MBA work experience, which sometimes make classes of MBA more fruitful, though other make swift decision following an undergraduate degree (Yeaple, 2010). A study of associate degree (AD) and bachelor degree (BS) nurses found that the individual and social returns on investment in higher education could result in reported differences in job satisfaction and career retention (Rambur, McIntosh, Palumbo, Reinier, 2005). Reports such as these may motivate undergraduate students to explore opportunities to expand their career options by continuing their education beyond the Bachelor's degree.

Among the internal and external factors cited in studies aimed at identifying the primary determinants for career decisions are salary, influence by parents and family, perceived ability/personality fit, high job demand, image/prestige, and interest in an area (Duffy & Dik, 2009). Duffy and Dik found that the common assumption of "free choice" in making career decisions can be limited significantly by "life experiences and circumstances." One would expect the recent recession, for example, to be a prominent factor in decisions related to job searches and enrollment in education programs (Bruce, Edgington, and Olkin, 2003).

Successful career management ideally results in a fulfilling and satisfying work life that contributes to a well-rounded life experience. Reported satisfaction with career choice varies, however. One poll indicates that only 50% of Americans would choose the same career again if given the choice ("Half Would Pick," 1992). Although reports vary from one profession/career to another, Sariato (1996) reports that a number of people do indeed dislike their current jobs and related career paths but feel "stuck." A more recent study seemed to confirm this bleak prognosis of job satisfaction as approximately 50% of the staff in a state child welfare agency stated they would indeed prefer to leave their current jobs, but stayed because of salary and benefits (Strand, Spath, Bosco-Ruggiero, 2010).

Empirical research on students taking distance MBA program in Hong Kong did not break from the assertion that MBA degree is not just a career enhancer but offers the holder employment security (Chiu, 1999). Giving the marketability of MBA program and the prospect attached with it, certain degree of research suggest that the choice of MBA is never uncharacterized by positive prospect holding MBA degree can bring to the holder (Zhao et al., 2000).

Most universities offering MBA program are into competition and their relevance in the competitive market is obviously measure by the standard, quality and innovative ideas added to their programs. This indeed enchants prospective MBA candidate and conjures an imagination of better, improved and innovative managerial responsibility, opportunities and performance (Lewis, 1992; Mihail and Elefterie, 2006; Wellman, et. al). MBA does not just offer better job prospect but it often times improves the analytical propensity of the holder of the degree, augment skills and job dexterity (Thompson & Gui, 2000; Simpson et al, 2005).

The choice of MBA program carries monetary intention and better job standing as with many professional programs. But the fact remains, earning such degree from a top-notch institution increases excellent chances (Arcidiacono et al, 2008). However, less substantial benefits were associated with a degree program with lower rankings and lax admission standards.

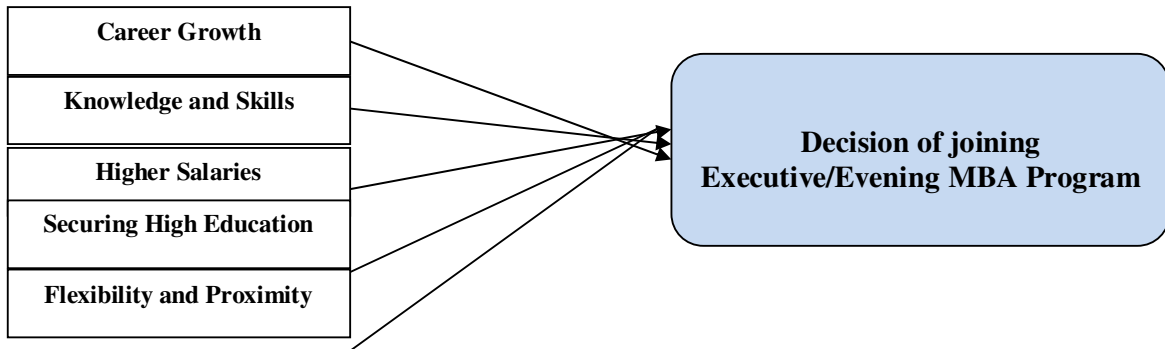
The idea that MBA is career enhancer does not settle well with Pfeffer and Fong (2002) "there is little evidence that mastery of the knowledge acquired in business schools enhances people's careers, or that even attaining the MBA credential itself has much effect on graduates' salaries or career enhancement." Bolstering the position of Pfeffer and Fong, Mintzberg's (2004) opines "MBA programs are specialized training in the functions of business, not general education in the practice of management," while Bennis and O'Toole's (2005) holds that "to impart useful skills--failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior, and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs."

A 2005 survey calculated the return on investment in an MBA degree over the past decade to be 17.6 percent, about three times the return on Treasury Bills and four percent greater than the Dow Jones Industrial Average (Davis & Cline, 2005). Alternately, a survey by Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business of 1000 senior executives reported the MBA degree to be perceived as "useful" but not "extraordinary" with executives indicating preference for experiential learning coupled with a strong ethical grounding (Livingstone, 2007). A series of articles published in Business Week refer to the job outlook for MBAs as being "murky," "savage," and "dim" (Cornuke, 2008; VanderMey, 2009; MBA, 2009).

Interestingly, a recent report published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics projected the fastest growing occupations between the years of 2006 and 2016. None of these fastest growing occupations listed the MBA as the "most significant source of postsecondary education or training" (Dohm & Shniper, 2007). Among the occupations with the largest job growth during this same time frame, "management analysts" is the only job title listed as possibly requiring a degree higher than a Bachelor's with the exception of mental health counselors, social workers, therapists, and physician assistants. These projections may not bode well for the perceived value and choice of an MBA degree. Total job openings due to growth and net replacement needs were predicted to increase during the 2006-2016 time frame by 6,706 (13.2%) for persons with Bachelor's degrees and by 819 (1.6%) for persons with Master's degrees. Additionally, the median annual wages in 2006 for a Bachelor's degree employee were reported at \$53,330 and \$51,380 for a Master's degree employee.

Despite these harsh criticisms, using three years of data collected from the annual Global MBA Graduate Survey of graduating MBA students conducted by the GMAC, Bruce (2010) found that the majority of students surveyed rated the overall value of the MBA degree as "outstanding" or "excellent". Satisfaction with the faculty, fellow students and the curriculum were rated highest among the determinants of satisfaction. Differences in satisfaction levels of students enrolled in Executive vs. traditional MBA programs did not appear to be significant, but satisfaction levels among full-time and part-time students did vary significantly, with full-time students reporting higher levels of overall satisfaction and clearer career prospect.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Research Hypothesis

After going through a thorough literature review the following hypothesis are constructed to test through a statistical tool.

H1: MBA degree holders have enhanced openings for career growth through shifting field of work or attaining promotion than persons without MBA.

H2: The knowledge and skills individuals achieve after MBA program provide them more confidence at workplace than those who do not have an MBA degree.

H3: MBA degree helps alumni earn higher salary paralleled to employees without an MBA.

H4: Securing higher education bids explanations are the main factors disseminate people to make decision of joining evening MBA program.

H5: Flexible and relaxed timings, proximity of universities are the pivotal features that broadcast people to make judgment of joining evening MBA program.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The basic objective of the study is to evaluate the factors that motivate students to opt MBA in evening program. Understanding the motives demand methodic approach and thus questionnaire is furnished for this purpose. The questionnaire carries 25 questions with five major categories (career growth, knowledge and skills, higher salaries, high education and flexibility & Proximity) highlighting the influential parameters and factors worthy to inform the decision to join MBA. The questionnaire was rated using the Likert rating scale. MBA students of private universities in Islamabad (PRESTON University - Islamabad, IQRA University Islamabad, and ZABIST Islamabad) all offering evening programs were considered as target population. Total 160 questionnaires were floated in these universities and 152 students were considered as the sample size of the study. Convenient random sampling method was used for the data collation. Firstly, the reliability of the data was checked through Cronbach Alpha. The value (0.631) of Cronbach Alpha (α) reveals that data was reliable and could be used in subsequent research effectively. The under mentioned reliability table shows the reliability statistics.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.631	6

The statistical package SPSS 17 version is used. The descriptive statistics (Mean, Median and mode) was used to ascertain the frequency and tendency of the respondents, thus highlighted the factors and deriving forces for the choice of MBA in evening session. To find out appropriateness and strongest variable among different variables, Pearson co-relation was used at 95% confidence interval.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The inherent desire of every person is to make ones as distinguish and respectable, for this one has to build goodwill in different aspects like talk courteously with others, do sacrifice monetary and socially, stand side by in stiff days and most significantly securing a good job in this society. Now to attain this job in competitive environment has to fulfill the criterion, necessary requirements especially education. So, by focusing on the predominant requirements we considered an MBA program that mostly opted in the evening in private universities. The basic objective of this study is to discover the central factors or driving forces that motivate students to choose MBA in evening at private universities in Islamabad. The Pearson correlation table exposes that career growth has a positive correlation with the age, gender, marital status, income, experience and job position whereas affordability has a negative correlation with the sector of job. It is fascinating to note that knowledge and skills having a negative correlation with the age, gender, marital status, income, experience and job position but having positive insignificant correlation with monthly income.

The analyzed data discovered that most of the respondents have an intention to select MBA at evening to escalate their salaries and career growth. It is broadly noted that knowledge and skill has significant positive correlation with career growth, higher salaries, higher education and flexibility & proximity. Through this discussion it can be affirmed that the hypothesis H1: “MBA degree holders have enhanced openings for career growth through shifting field of work or attaining promotion than persons without MBA”, H2: “The knowledge and skills individuals achieve after MBA program provide them more confidence at workplace than those who do not have an MBA degree”, H3: “MBA degree helps alumni earn higher salary paralleled to employees without an MBA” are being accepted. H4: Securing higher education bids explanations are the main factors disseminate people to make decision of joining evening MBA program. H5: Flexible and relaxed timings, proximity of universities are the pivotal features that broadcast people to make judgment of joining evening MBA program. It has been generalized that all factors (career growth, knowledge and skills, higher salaries, high education and flexibility & Proximity) have significant intention to join MBA at evening in private universities in Islamabad.

CONCLUSION

The prominent features of the study are to latch out the salient factors those motives to ignite students to opt MBA in evening program. About 160 questionnaires drifted in three private universities of Islamabad, whereas 152 questionnaires considered for analysis. The convenient random sampling technique is used to accumulate the data. The questionnaire that considers 25 questions under the prominent factors (career growth, knowledge and skills, higher salaries, and flexibility etc.) was asked. Out of the 152 respondents 114 were male and 38 female. The Pearson correlation table 2 shows that independent variables have significant positive correlation to each other. The analyzed results revealed that most of the respondents have the opinion that career growth, knowledge and skills, higher salaries, high education and flexibility & Proximity are the basic factors motivate the students to join evening MBA program in private universities of Islamabad. It is further being noted that high salaries and career growth are most important features to join this program.

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Appendix-A

Table 1. Results from descriptive statistics

S. No.	Question / Item	% Agree	% Disagree
1	I joined this university for MBA program because HEC recognizes its master degree	90.8	4.6
2	I will recommend my friends or colleagues to join this university for MBA program	83.5	1.4
3	Someone convinced me to join this university for my MBA program in relation to experienced faculty and learning	63.1	2.6
4	To pay fee on monthly basis was the major reason to join MBA program	63.5	12.5
5	I am satisfied with my current income at my workplace so I don't desire to join any MBA program	18.4	59.9
6	Holders of MBA degree are prone to have rapid promotions in our organization therefore I joined MBA program	61.9	11.9
7	Holding an MBA degree does not have anything to do with promotion in our organization	27.6	47.4
8	MBA graduates will have a lot of job opportunities in variety of fields	73.7	7.8
9	My MBA degree will help me to advance in my career	88.9	2.9
10	MBA degree does not help to change one's career	11.2	72.4
11	I joined MBA program because of my organization's requirement	28.9	36.1
12	Having an MBA degree will help me to find more significant job	82.3	14.5
13	MBA graduates bring more new ideas to work than non-MBA graduates, so I joined this program		
14	In my organization, MBA degree holders have more business knowledge than non-MBA graduates, so I joined MBA program	61.8	15.2
15	I joined this MBA program to sharpen my skills and to get more knowledge		
16	MBA graduates are better at solving complex business problems than non-MBA graduates	82.9	4.0
17	After MBA I will feel more confident when dealing with business issues at work		
18	In my organization, higher salaries are paid to MBA graduates than non-MBA graduates	46.7	24.3
19	My salary will be increased after I done MBA	44.7	21.7
20	The choice of my MBA program is determined by class timing flexibility	86.2	2.7
21	My interest to join MBA program is simply to further my higher education	87.5	3.3
22	My main goal of MBA program is just to get the degree	34.2	40.1
23	I have joined this university for my MBA program because of its easily accessible location	69.1	12.5

Table 2. Results of Correlation

		<i>Brand</i>	<i>Packaging</i>	<i>Bottle Design</i>	<i>Fragrance</i>	<i>Quality of Perfume</i>	<i>Availability of Perfume</i>	<i>Prior Experience</i>	<i>Recommendations of Friends/Family Members</i>	<i>Personal Care Budget</i>	<i>Expertise/Sales Technique</i>	<i>Special Offers/Promotion/Stall</i>	<i>Advertisement</i>
Brand	Pearson Correlation	1											
	Sig. (2-tailed)												
	N	138											
Packaging	Pearson Correlation	.367**	1										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0											
	N	138	138										
Bottle Design	Pearson Correlation	0.129	.443**	1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.13	0										
	N	138	138	138									
Fragrance	Pearson Correlation	0.133	-0.056	0.003	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.119	0.515	0.975									
	N	138	138	138	138								
Quality of Perfume	Pearson Correlation	.209*	-0.121	-0.084	.609**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.014	0.157	0.327	0								
	N	138	138	138	138	138							
Availability of perfume	Pearson Correlation	.181*	0.08	-0.048	.172*	.201*	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.034	0.354	0.576	0.044	0.018							

	N	138	138	138	138	138	138						
Prior experience	Pearson Correlation	.194*	0.152	0.036	0.154	.194*	0.123	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.022	0.076	0.673	0.071	0.022	0.15						
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138					
Recommendations of Friends/Family Members	Pearson Correlation	.179*	-0.042	.203*	0.098	0.069	0.036	.187*	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.035	0.628	0.017	0.252	0.421	0.673	0.028					
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138				
Personal Care Budget	Pearson Correlation	-0.008	.233**	0.157	0.057	0.009	.303**	0.102	-0.04	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.925	0.006	0.066	0.509	0.918	0	0.232	0.643				
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138			
Expertise/Sales Technique	Pearson Correlation	-0.009	0.158	.214*	-0.025	0.012	.295**	0.063	0	.336**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.92	0.064	0.012	0.772	0.893	0	0.463	1	0			
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138		
Special Offers/Promotion/Stall	Pearson Correlation	.196*	.282**	.318**	0.077	0.094	.190*	0.127	0.144	.176*	.361**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	0.001	0	0.371	0.272	0.026	0.139	0.092	0.039	0		
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	
Advertisement	Pearson Correlation	0.126	0.077	0.012	-0.15	0.016	.232**	0.019	-0.077	0.087	.435**	.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.141	0.371	0.888	0.08	0.848	0.006	0.829	0.372	0.308	0	0	
	N	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138	138

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).