

# Master of Business Administration (MBA) student outcomes in Vietnam

## Graduate student insights from a qualitative study

Salman Ahmed, Asma Khatoon, Dr. Irfan Khan

Department of MBA

[salmanmbaislec@gmail.com](mailto:salmanmbaislec@gmail.com), [asmambaislec@gmail.com](mailto:asmambaislec@gmail.com), [irfanmbaislec@gmail.com](mailto:irfanmbaislec@gmail.com)

[ISL Engineering College](http://www.isl-engineering.com).

International Airport Road, Bandlaguda, Chandrayangutta Hyderabad - 500005 Telangana, India.

### Abstract

The goal of this article is to provide some preliminary ideas on what it's like to be a graduate student in an offshore MBA program in Vietnam. Due to the recent changes in HE around the world, the associated changes in business education, the lingering questions around the quality of MBA programmes, and the need to consider how all of these factors might influence the MBA student experience in a developing economy like Vietnam, the perspectives of students were sought. The evidence indicates a gap between what MBA programs promise and what students really get in terms of management education, particularly in terms of expectations, needs, and results. In this paper, we report some preliminary results from a broader exploratory, descriptive, qualitative research conducted in Vietnam. Postgraduates discuss their motivations for enrolling in offshore MBA programmes in Vietnam and how these aims were realized by the courses they took. In light of these results, several suggestions are provided for enhancing the curriculum's planning, evaluation, management, and execution. This study intends to tackle these questions. Exploratory descriptive qualitative research was conducted in Vietnam, and its results are provided here. A sample of alums from three different Vietnamese tertiary education (HE) providers' offshore MBA programs were interviewed semi-structured. The interviews were transcribed word-for-word into Vietnamese and then translated into English.

**Conclusions** - Recent alums discuss their experiences and perspectives as active participants in the development of offshore MBA programs in Vietnam. Insights into their mentalities, beliefs, and background info about offshore MBA courses in Vietnam were uncovered via qualitative research. The stories and their interpretations provide light on the pros and cons, and provide data on whether or not the original goals were accomplished. Research limitations/implications - This was a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive study, deliberately undertaken in the absence of others like it in the literature. The research relies upon interview and focus group data gathered from three case study organisations and exploring the perceptions of three different stakeholder groups: graduates of offshore MBA programmes (findings shared here); employers of offshore MBA graduates; and MBA programme providers (including programme managers, administrators and/or teaching staff). This paper includes only the perspective of graduates of offshore MBA programmes in Vietnam, on the basis that rich exploratory information can be derived from a few cases (Perry, 1998).

**Practical implications** - The literature confirms a potential for disconnection between what management education providers offer in MBA programmes and what management education graduates actually receive, compared to graduate's original expectations, needs and wants. Here, empirical evidence of this intersection is examined.

**Social implications** - The graduate narratives share crucial exploratory evidence offering a better understanding of the needs and expectations of MBA graduates who might be considering enrolling in

offshore MBA programmes in Vietnam. These findings are especially important with regard to understanding the sustainability and value of offshore MBA programmes being delivered in Vietnam, especially given the country's current state of economic, political and cultural transition, and the associated need for businesses and workers to be able to operate successfully in an international business environment.

**Originality/value** - No previous studies evaluate the value of MBA programmes in Vietnam have been located. At a time when Vietnam is in economic, cultural, and political transition, knowledge to assist and support their HE sector is crucial. Recommendations are made as to potential improvements in Vietnamese offshore MBA programme curricula design, review, administration, and processes in response to these findings.

**Keywords:** Vietnam, MBA, Higher education, Management learning, Graduate student experience

Paper type Research paper

## Introduction

This article offers perspectives from Vietnamese MBA alums who completed their degrees in offshore programs in Vietnam. These are taken into account in light of current developments in the Vietnamese economy and in the fields of higher and business education throughout the world, particularly as they relate to changing attitudes of the value of an MBA degree. One of our main concerns is the growing gap between what institutions of higher learning promise and what their customers (in this case, students) really get in the form of management education. We wanted to know whether the offshore MBA courses in Vietnam were living up to the expectations of their students. The offering of offshore programs is one example of how higher education has been internationalized with the aim of making HE (more) accessible internationally and at home in response to the problems posed by Europeanization and globalization (Vossensteyn et al., 2007). While these efforts have been started, their viability is still up for debate.

We start by providing some background on the topic at hand, including some discussion on international transnational trends in the HE sector and their potential relevance to modern Vietnam. Next, we take a look at the present global landscape of management and business education. Prior to discussing the MBA programme in the context of Vietnam, a developing and transitioning economy increasingly expected to operate in a global and entrepreneurial business environment, we consider the specific challenges facing current MBA programmes, including nagging questions around their perceived relevance and sustainability.

How well business schools adapt to the plethora of seismic shifts occurring in the global HE sector will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the caliber of the next generation of business executives. This is especially true for the fields of business and management education, which are undergoing profound change as a result of global trends that are forcing service providers to reconsider their strategies (Acito et al., 2008, p. 1). Increased competition in the MBA market, expanding acceptance of online delivery, and heightened expectations, and from many stakeholders, are all variables impacting the present and future landscape of business education (Acito et al., 2008). The provision of transnational education is a crucial part of the goal for internationalizing higher education (Wilson, 2007).

## Worldwide Learning

Providing access to education on a worldwide scale is the goal of transnational education, which necessitates international exchange among students, faculty, academic programs, and educational institutions (Huang, 2006a; Hussain, 2007).p. vi Sugimoto, 2006). Over the last decade or two, several educational institutions have broadened their scope to include work in other countries (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2007). This model of education delivery has the potential to accommodate a huge number of students and spread knowledge beyond the borders of a single country or even a single state (Hussain, 2007) , although international education has been around for some time, many universities' worldwide expansions are very new. The risk of inferior teaching and a failure to meet the needs of the students is also increased.

More and more higher education institutions (HEIs) are getting in on the action of delivering transnational educational programs, therefore the emphasis and growth of internationalized education programmes is in line with the corporatisation of education (Choudaha et al., 2012). This is recognized as a significant challenge for the sector (Goh, 2008; Sugimoto, 2006; Mok, 2006; Sanderson and Watters, 2006; UNESCO, 2012; Yang, 2006), and it has shifted the focus of HE institutions from their traditional missions of teaching, learning, research, and community service to what some see as a worrying, business-centric one (Sanderson and Watters, 2006, p. 317). Student interest in obtaining a foreign credential is high, according to Pimpa (2009), because of the potential cost savings associated with transnational education.

When "learners are situated in a nation other than that in which the awarding institution is headquartered," the student is the most important party involved in the transaction (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2007, p. 21). Multinational and global enterprises, as well as host or local employers and governments, appreciate transnational education opportunities.

may be considering provision of human resource training and other staff development options. However, the complexities of global business operations present considerable challenges to the ways and means HE providers might offer a solid, relevant body of knowledge to students, even as they work to revise their MBA degree requirements with this in mind (Cabrera and Bowen, 2005).

This "corporate-mercantile" approach, which argues that much money can be gained in this industry, has had a direct or indirect impact on attracting a growing number of foreign and local HE providers and rivals. The expansion of the international higher education market has also made it possible for Vietnamese institutions to form partnerships with highly regarded universities abroad in order to provide a wide range of distance and online courses to its students. However, this puts more of a burden on Vietnamese universities, leading to increased competition in many areas of Vietnamese higher education (HE), such as academic program and curriculum development, teaching methodologies, staff compensation policies, and the availability of financial support from the private sector. As the standard of living in Vietnam rises, more people there may decide to pay for their own international education. The United States and several European countries used to be the only destinations for Vietnamese students pursuing this kind of higher education, but now they are joined by Vietnam's neighbors, including Japan, Korea, China, Thailand, Singapore, and Australia. More and more Vietnamese students are looking to these nearby countries as potential study abroad options. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia; National University of Singapore; Nan Yang Technical University, Singapore; and the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand are just few of the institutions that have established themselves in such a market. However, other colleges and universities have been able to join the market thanks to the supply of sufficient facilities, institutional reputation, course quality, access closeness, and fair price. (Nguyen, 2009) This includes the introduction of corporate universities, a relatively new competitor in the HE market (Nelson and Watt, 1999). The provision of higher education (HE) is also being actively and aggressively participated in by large firms, who have established their own institutions to cater to specified, specialized training and developmental market niches, and who are pushing very hard to attract prospective students.

Even historically communist nations, such as China and Vietnam, have been permeated by the corporatization of HE and the import of foreign education, with the establishment of a user-pays education system regarded as helping to alleviate the burden on government and public expenditure (Mok, 2006). As an additional competitive challenge to local Vietnamese HE providers, corporate colleges pose a risk even if they have not yet entered the Vietnamese market. Questions about the quality of education received, its relevance to graduates and employers, and the value of graduates produced arise, particularly in the context of an emerging e-learning market, as a result of the increasing "corporate-mercantile" focus (Sanderson and Watters, 2006, p. 317) and the aggressive expansion of marketing efforts (Hopstaken, 2012). (Anto, 2012).

Vietnam has a population of 86 million, with 60 percent of them being 65 or older. Over the age of 30. This, together with Vietnam's rapidly expanding economy and cultural norms favoring education, makes the country a promising destination for foreign HE providers (Ngo, 2011). Quality management is essential to the success and survival of HE institutions (Bon, 2010), and to ensuring positive student outcomes, especially for those operating in a developing and transitioning country like Vietnam. This is because greater access to communication, information, and technology has raised awareness of issues of programme quality and curriculum. Entrepreneurs are essential in economies like this because they refresh commercial procedures and create novel goods, services, and methods of doing business (Schumpeter, 1926 cited in Taatila, 2010). Because of this, it is widely

acknowledged that higher education institutions need to turn out more graduates with an entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurs with advanced degrees are more likely to be creative, to use cutting-edge business strategies, and to build their enterprises on cutting-edge technology, according to studies (Taatila, 2010). A highly educated population that includes many entrepreneurs is ideal for a rising economy because of the educated population's greater tendency for risk taking, internal locus of control, capacity to accomplish and make choices in circumstances of ambiguity, and ability to manage uncertainty (Taatila, 2010). Modern Vietnam, with its still-evolving economy, calls for graduates with the right mix of theoretical and practical training, the ability to take measured risks and make judgments with little data. MBA graduates in emerging economic and national environments are highly sought after because of their perceived ability to integrate academic theory and knowledge with professional commercial practice (Nguyen, 2010). Adults, i.e. those older than 30. Foreign higher education institutions may benefit from these and other factors, such as Vietnam's fast growing economy and cultural norms promoting education (Ngo, 2011). Higher education institutions (HEIs) in a developing and transitioning country like Vietnam, in particular, recognize the importance of quality management to their continued existence and growth, as well as to the achievement of their stated goals of improving the lives of their students (Bon, 2010). This is because concerns about program quality and content have been brought to the forefront as a result of increased access to communication, information, and technology. Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in economies like this by innovating new products, services, and ways of conducting business (Schumpeter, 1926 cited in Taatila, 2010). Therefore, it is generally agreed that universities should produce more students who have an interest in and aptitude for entrepreneurship. Research shows that entrepreneurs with graduate degrees are more likely to think outside the box, implement innovative tactics, and base their businesses on cutting-edge technology (Taatila, 2010). Because of their stronger propensity for risk taking, internal locus of control, capability to achieve and make decisions in settings of ambiguity, and ability to handle uncertainty, a highly educated population that includes many entrepreneurs is perfect for a booming economy (Taatila, 2010). Graduates in today's Vietnam, with its still-developing economy, need to be able to take calculated risks, make educated guesses, and use limited information to make sound decisions. In the new economic and national contexts, MBA graduates are in great demand because of their proven ability to apply theoretical concepts and research to the real world of business (Nguyen, 2010).

#### Management and business studies

The goal of business education is widely acknowledged to be "preparing students for future global business problems," which necessitates the transmission of skills and information (Emiliani, 2006, p. 364). Karpin (1995) noted the importance of this information and skill sharing in Australia, noting that it was necessary to accommodate national and worldwide growth and development, and was particularly important in light of globalization and its attendant problems for the (Australian) economy. Historically, the goal of management training programs has been to help students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to increase productivity in the workplace (Krishman, 2008). Particularly in emerging markets, entrepreneurs are in great demand, and studies have shown that they may improve their entrepreneurial abilities via higher education, particularly through immersion in real-world projects and settings (Taatila, 2010). Modern management education, however, has had to place an even greater emphasis on the goals and developmental needs of businesses operating in an uncertain, dynamic, and international environment, and to successfully manage the challenges that such a context poses, due to the rapid changes in the external environment of many businesses, such as increasing globalization, shifts in demographics, and changes in the social, cultural, and technological contexts (Anto, 2012). Studies in Management and Commerce

It is generally agreed that the purpose of business education is to "prepare students for future global business

issues," which calls for the dissemination of knowledge and training (Emiliani, 2006, p. 364). In light of globalization and its effects on the (Australian) economy, Karpin (1995) emphasized the significance of such exchanges of knowledge and expertise, writing that they were essential for facilitating national and global growth and development. Management courses have traditionally been designed to provide its participants with the information and abilities that would allow them to contribute more effectively to workplace efficiency (Krishman, 2008). Entrepreneurs are in high demand, especially in developing economies, and some research suggests that they may enhance their skills via formal schooling, particularly by participating in real-world projects and environments (Taatila, 2010). However, with the rapid changes in the external environment of many businesses, such as increasing globalization, shifting demographics, and changes in the social, cultural, and technological contexts, modern management education has had to place even greater emphasis on the goals and developmental needs of businesses operating in an uncertain, dynamic, and international environment, and to successfully manage the challenges that such a context poses (Anto, 2012). Although there is clear evidence of shifting patterns in the business education programs offered, institutions have been warned against reacting by delivering more of the same (Acito et al., 2008). Instead, service providers should use careful planning in the creation of their programs in order to better serve the needs of their target audiences in different geographic areas. Anto (2012), for instance, suggested that businesses use the Indian context, working as offshore firms in developing markets to indigenize their curriculum. While it's true that understanding western management theory is helpful for competing in international markets, it's also true that teaching only western theory wouldn't be enough to equip Vietnamese students with the skills they'd need to manage a global business successfully, especially given the country's cultural background.

The learning experiences of students in offshore locations, particularly those from emerging markets and developing countries, may be hindered by a lack of exposure to global enterprises. It is crucial that offshore MBA courses be acceptable and successful for students from various local, national, and regional contexts, and therefore programmes should offer opportunities for, and requirements for, local management skill and competence development. It is prudent to take into account cultural variations when transferring vocational programs to countries with economies in transition, such as those in Asia (Dana, 2001). According to Hopstaken (2012), localizing MBA programs is essential in Vietnam. Hall and Young (2008) and Anto (2012) confirm that some business schools have successfully aligned their business programme design and curricula with local contemporary knowledge requirements, and business needs and practices. Many other business schools are now responding to market challenges by attempting to better align their curricula with modern, local, business practice (Hall and Young, 2008). A Master's in Business Administration An international and culturally varied clientele and set of stakeholders make up the MBA market, each with its own unique set of priorities, expectations, and views on what constitutes a "excellent" MBA program and degree (Ray and Jeon, 2008). Administrators and teachers in higher education may try to strike a middle ground between the sometimes-opposing goals of students and businesses, all while maintaining viability in a cutthroat marketplace and making do with limited resources (Madu and Kuei, 1993). MBA programs that are able to accommodate a wide range of students' individual circumstances are rapidly being seen as the most highly regarded.

The proliferation of MBA programs has resulted in increased competition for traditional MBA programs. This is because new and creative institutional offerings are being developed to address the challenges of today's corporate needs (Wilson, 2007; Hubbard, 2007). The shift toward part-time education alternatives among working managers has led to a drop in the demand for conventional full-time MBA programs (Edgington, 2004; Hall and Young, 2008).

The question of whether or not MBA programs have the necessary curriculum and delivery infrastructure to train the next generation of business executives to adapt to globalization is also crucial. The corporate world has pinpointed three main areas of perceived weakness:

one) insufficient attention paid to developing sectors; and

Two: not paying enough attention to problem-solving in a global corporate context; and

Thirdly, more focus is being placed on collaborating with a wide variety of business people and international organizations (Saban et al., 2000).

An Analysis of the Vietnamese Business School Environment B Institutional uncertainty and underdevelopment make entrepreneurship crucial in developing nations like Vietnam (Davey et al., 2011). In economies in transition, vocational education and training may be difficult to implement since it is hard to inculcate in pupils the required management and entrepreneurial abilities (Dana, 2001). As Dana (2001) put it, "How is an entrepreneurial class developed in an environment where capitalism has not yet been institutionalized?"

things were around just recently?" As far as Dana is concerned, all that's required is to maintain your focus on the

educational needs of a culture used to being told exactly what to do, and the lack of a proven strategy for creating an entrepreneurial spirit (Dana, 2001). It is not enough to teach western managerial methods and approaches to people with a different cultural history and mindset, even if students from those developing economies envision careers as entrepreneurs and the developing nations believe entrepreneurial skills are a vital source of economic growth and competitiveness, job creation, and advancement of societal interests (Dana, 2001). This is particularly true in countries like Vietnam, which are part of Asia's rising transitional economies (Davey et al., 2011).

In many nations, including Vietnam, managers are expected to have an MBA (Hopstaken, 2012). Students in developing nations may feel an increased need to develop their business acumen in the face of limited or unappealing employment prospects (Davey et al., 2011). The value of a master's in business administration (MBA) resides not in the fact that its bearer is inherently deemed more competent to operate a firm than those without one, but rather in the fact that people with an MBA are more likely to be trusted to do so. Hopstaken (2012) claims that by 2015 in Vietnam, all top-level managers will need at least a master's degree. In this industry, an MBA is still highly valued. This is seen by many prospective Vietnamese students as crucial. Many students enroll, yet many lack the necessary skills to succeed in management positions, making the job market very competitive. Many prospective students are concerned that they won't get the quality education they need from their chosen business school. However, as we are about to discover, it is not always possible to live up to such strict criteria.

Hopstaken (2012) claims that the MBA curriculum owes much of its American bias to the origin of the field. For students in developing countries operating in a global world where appropriate and effective managerial competencies and skill sets are required to make well-informed, timely decisions, the MBA curriculum often provides out-of-date and irrelevant texts, teaches out-of-date and flawed business models, and employs a teaching model of limited utility (Hopstaken, 2012). Colbert et al. further underlined the need of MBA schools adapting to the needs of corporate recruiters for graduates with these skills (2000). Managers in the field often go back to school so that they can better handle the language and cultural challenges that come while working in a



foreign country (Edgington, 2004; Hall and Young, 2008). Because today's managers are also today's students, there is a pressing need for a shift in the delivery of management education that places more focus on the specific requirements of each student (Driver, 2002).

Both the number of individuals who want to get an MBA and the number of people who actually get one have increased (Baruch and Leeming, 2001). More opportunities for potential students to choose from

B There is now a greater variety of programs and courses accessible than ever before because to the proliferation of independent and private universities, cooperative partnerships, and franchise operations (Ivy and Naudé, 2004). The best MBA programs are those that can be tailored to the specific goals of each student, preparing them to succeed in an ever-evolving corporate world (Baruch and Leeming, 1996).

Globalization's effects on Vietnam's economy, business, and communications have been substantial since the 1970s. Because Vietnam was so late to the modern world, there is now a greater need for and interest in education (World Bank, 2008). Despite this, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) has become a popular degree in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2009), suggesting that Vietnam's business schools will play a significant role in providing highly trained human resources to support the development of Vietnamese firms operating in a transitional economic environment (Neelankavil, 1994). However, despite increased student interest in MBA courses in this environment, Nguyen (2009) has expressed issues about the requirement to focus on good quality and relevant MBA degrees being delivered in Vietnam, especially within a volatile national setting of quick transformation. Business administration degrees are becoming more common.

providers has also come under fire, and questions regarding the long-term viability of both new and existing programs linger, especially in light of the cutthroat competition now present amongst academic institutions offering MBA services.

#### Methodology for Research

The study was motivated by the following research question:

RQ1. Does Vietnam have any problems with the quality or longevity of its offshore MBA programs?

Research that is exploratory, descriptive, qualitative, and multi-perspective should be conducted utilizing a multiple case study design, as a response. This publication provides exploratory descriptive results from a research conducted with the intent of better comprehending the viewpoints of one of these crucial players: Vietnamese MBA graduates. Students in offshore MBA programs in Vietnam were surveyed to see whether their requirements and expectations were being fulfilled.

Answering the research question at hand and ensuring that the planned methods will produce results are the two main goals of any successful research plan (Creswell, 2009; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). This exploratory descriptive study was well-suited to a qualitative, interpretive research paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2009) because it allowed for the analysis of hitherto unstudied variables critical to the success and sustainability of offshore MBA programs in Vietnam. The study aimed to shed light on critical challenges confronting Vietnam's higher education system in the context of the country's rapidly evolving economy, hence its research questions were essentially exploratory. Researchers might define the salient elements of an interesting phenomenon from human, organizational, industry-oriented, or other perspectives in descriptive studies, whereas in exploratory investigations, the goal is to get a deeper understanding of the problem at hand (Sekaran&Bougie, 2010). Based on research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). With this study, we want to learn more about how offshore MBA programs in Vietnam are received, taught, and perceived by a broad range of stakeholders, including students,

companies, and faculty. The ontological and epistemological viewpoints, as well as the management orientation of the topic under inquiry, were taken into account while selecting the qualitative and interpretive paradigms used in this analysis (Silverman, 2006). ( Jonsen and Jehn, 2009).

The research plan as a whole should inform the selection of research techniques, with certain paradigms and methodologies dictating the final approach used (Silverman, 2010). Because of its theoretical and practical compatibility with the specified paradigms and research topic, a case study approach was adopted. The case study method, as confirmed by Yin (2009), is also helpful for describing real-world situations, particularly when trying to: understand the dynamics present within settings (Eisenhardt, 1989); uncover the interaction of significant factors within those settings; capture complex perceptions and interpretations (Merriam, 2009); and describe the phenomenon under investigation. By facilitating comparisons, highlighting similarities and contrasts within the data, and posing new questions and concerns for further investigation, case study research also helps and encourages theory construction (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). (Neuman, 2009). The purpose of this study was to investigate and characterize (Merriam, 2009) the efficacy of offshore MBA courses in Vietnam from the viewpoint of their students (Merriam, 2009). Data important to understanding each of the unique stakeholder viewpoints was taken from diverse organizational examples based on several offshore MBA course providers. A multi-case method provided insights into the practical difficulties at hand, and even employing a small number of instances yielded useful results (Perry, 1998). (Eisner and Peshkin, 1990). Graduate students (including the results reported here), employers (of offshore MBA graduates), and HE MBA course providers (including programme managers, administrators, and/or teaching staff) were all recognized as interested parties to be explored in the entire research. Stakeholders from each of the indicated categories were recruited using a mix of purposeful, systematic, and snowball sampling methods. Two graduate students, two corporate representatives, and three programme providers were interviewed semi-structured for the complete research, with participants chosen at random from each of the three case study organizations. Twenty interviews were completed and transcribed word for word. In order to triangulate data from many sources, we also held focus groups with seven additional participants representing students, program providers, and employers from each of the three case organizations (Veal, 2005). Semi-structured interviews provide a framework of a few selected open-ended questions. This allowed the interviewer to get into the full breadth of the participant's experience by allowing them to ask follow-up questions on related topics (Collis and Hussey, 2009). After conducting individual interviews, researchers used focus groups to go further into the topics discussed and draw additional conclusions (Eisenhardt, 1989). The result was a method for gathering qualitative data that shed light on the topic under study ( Jonsen and Jehn, 2009; Veal, 2005). These results are presented from the stakeholder viewpoint of MBA students exclusively.

Graduates of offshore MBA programs in Vietnam made up the student responders. Participants' ages, on average, were below 25 years old, and they



minimum of one year of professional experience after finishing their offshore MBA in their case organization of choice. It was hoped that the participants, all of whom had recently completed an offshore MBA programme in Vietnam, would be able to recall details about the delivery and quality of the programme with relative ease, and so provide evidence of students' attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge relating to the programmes, as well as valuable insights into the perceived benefits and limitations of the programme delivery, including whether or not their original expectations were met. All case organizations and persons were presented in an anonymous manner to prevent any disclosure of private information. The research project was sanctioned by the Human Ethics Review Committee at the University of Western Sydney.

With this method, researchers may "[...] make sense of the themes that emerge from the data since it provides for rich, thorough, and complicated description of the data," as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79). Following this recommendation, the researcher analyzed transcripts of interviews and focus groups and coded and annotated the data. Coding the themes included two main steps. The researcher began by reading through the transcripts to look for recurring themes that had been identified in the background reading and that may provide answers to the study question. The second thing the researcher did was go over the transcripts for any recurring or developing themes. These newly discovered motifs were in keeping with a grounded theory methodology.

The analysis process consisted of reading the transcripts multiple times, highlighting key ideas and making notes in the margins, spotting recurring themes and assigning each one a unique color, and annotating the transcripts with observations (like how often a certain idea was brought up and by how many people). Is there a trend here? ; verifying that these topics do not overlap with what has been written about before to ensure that they represent novel insights looking for and explaining patterns of recurrence and connection within themes/codes determining what has to be addressed in order to answer the research questions; a rundown of the codes and themes that came out of the first round of examination; Sorting the raw data (excerpts of interview transcripts) under the emergent themes; Reviewing and revising, as needed, the fit between transcript extracts and code themes; Reviewing the findings and looking for overlap and redundancy; Laying out the codes graphically to see the relation between variables to aid in explanation development; Selecting verbatim narrative texts from the data to elaborate and depict elements of each theme.

Insightful data were uncovered on the viability and quality of offshore MBA programs from the viewpoint of their students.

Conclusions: the wants and hopes of advanced college students

Participants were questioned about their motivations for enrolling in an MBA course offered in a foreign country. Most respondents said they hoped to better themselves and their companies as a consequence of higher productivity and performance. Some employees mistook these hopes for actual chances of advancement in their current positions. In addition to the common hopes of expanding one's horizons and enhancing one's abilities, several students also highlighted the appeal of being exposed to foreign academic settings, with their unique teaching and learning styles. Another common theme across graduates was a desire to improve their writing and research abilities. My second goal is to improve my abilities in managing both time and people, as well as my critical thinking.

thinking skills. Moreover, I want to gain broader international knowledge (Case C, grdstdinterview1)[1].

I want to take this chance to continue to explore this sophisticated research and learning methodology from the programme [...] Firstly, I expect to improve global management knowledge, to learn how to state the problem and write up a proposal. Secondly, the teaching staff with different teaching methods we could improve our study as well as have an opportunity to go abroad to experience (Case C interview gradstd2).

Other graduate students believed that the offshore MBA programme would provide them with opportunities to study abroad

as well as improve specific skills for them, including improved decision-making and research methodology knowledge, and enhanced English language skills:

I can improve my English skills and I will have a chance to study abroad after successfully completing the course (Case A interview grad std 2).

My main expectation [of ] the MBA programme was through the course could help me to reform my work and business experiences systematically, based on MBA studies could help my business grow up and I can improve decision-making skill. Besides that, I got qualification MBA degrees that hopefully can I get promotions during my working (Case A interview grad std 1).

Graduate participants also spoke of their expectations to learn the most up to date management theory to enhance their career prospects:

Firstly, I'm not really good [handling real-life] situations. I want to be a manager so what I expect most is to learn modern knowledge in management to develop my career. Secondly, I want to work in an international environment. Finally, I want to master an international language which is English (Case A interview grad std 2).

The text above underscored enrolling students' desire for significant learning outcomes, including knowledge of modern management and skills, and was based on their perception that such learning would assist their potential for career development and provide them with opportunities to successfully operate in global business environments. This gives a glimpse at the perceptions of recent MBA graduate students' perception that guided their selection and choice of both offshore MBA programme and provider. Their narratives highlighted that students' selection criteria included: opportunities to study overseas; developing specific skills including, but not limited to, research; as opportunities to enhance their communication skills, specifically those involving English written and speaking skills; and, a desire for improved problem solving and decision-making capabilities. We now turn to share what graduates said about whether (or not) the MBA study experiences met their expectations.

Findings: were needs and expectations met  
K  
The interviews also explored whether participants' expectations and needs were met during their enrolment of their selected offshore MBA. Responses included discussion of many positive assessments of the programmes by graduates, including their espoused belief in having achieved: enhanced practical business skills; enhanced application of specific business skills and required knowledge; improvement to professional and personal mindset; and improved English skills. The following excerpts provide evidence that many, but not all, of their pre-enrolment expectations were met:

Yes, absolutely. I didn't get more specialised knowledge. However I adopt a manager's mindset and a lot of practical skills that is really valuable for my career in the future (Case C interview grad std 1).

Notable in this quote is the student's assertion that, while they felt they didn't really get the more specialised management knowledge that they had anticipated, they felt more able to adopt a manager's "mindset" and had learned a lot of work-based practical skills that they believed valuable for their future career. The same student emphasised that it was their ability to respond today-to-day business problems that they felt was their biggest outcome from doing the MBA:

It mainly improved my visionary view to daily problems that I faced in doing business. That I thought is my biggest improvement from studying MBA (Case A interview grad std 1).

Before I did my MBA, I haven't had particular skills for business management. After the course I learn how to approach management problem logically and carry out my task efficiently (Case A interview grad std 1).

These views were reflected in the remarks of another graduate student, from another case study organisation, who also listed numerous areas of improved skills as a result of their MBA study:

Time management skills, how to organise, self-

independent skill, and teamwork skill, how to think logically and critically, how to guide the others. Those are the skills that I acquired from the programme. After graduation, for the first month, I was assigned tasks by my manager but one month later I have the right to develop the plan and to improve the autonomy. When I work I can improve how to organise and think logically and critically as well as I argue on the basis of evidence (Case C interview grad std 2).

Another graduate student cited similar benefits in their enhanced capacity to deal with problems during their working lives, citing their enhanced critical thinking and analytical skills, and knowledge of research methodology, not previously held by them prior to doing the MBA:

Yes, I can improve critical thinking and analytical skills and research methodology. I can also learn how to search articles, and to search for data base (Case C interview grad std 2).

Evidence is also provided below showing that, not only did this same student have their expectations met, but that they also suggested that the programme outcomes, for them, delivered more than they anticipated. The MBA met, and exceeded, this graduate's expectations:

Even better than what I expected. Firstly, I learned up to date modern information, understand thoroughly about management. Most of the subjects spread over all aspects of management such as finance, law and policies. This broadens my knowledge and helped a lot for my job. Secondly, I learned how to work in a team, develop my personal advantage and work well with my teammates. Finally, I learned to apply my English skills in reality situation (Case A interview grad std 2).

Another student discussed their expectations being met with regard to the course delivery, especially with the delivery being in English, as well as their assessment of, and perception of, the expertise of the Lecturers on that programme:

Yes, the programme met my expectations. Because my course was delivered in English and I could improve my English and all the lecturers are qualified in order to teach us, no matter where they come from xxx [named country] or Vietnam (Case B interview grad std 1).

The receipt of English skills, and their perceived importance to graduate students, was confirmed by another:

Yes, I have been offered English course before the main course so I can write up or develop an essay or a report more easily or in other words I can improve my English writing skill (Case C interview grad std 2).

This same participant also confirmed enhanced practical skills, including: knowledge of marketing; presentation and communications skills; and, critical thinking skills:

My marketing knowledge has improved. I have learnt new practical things from lecturers from [name of country]. I also improved my presentation and communications skills from the MBA course, which I learnt from my lecturers in this programme. Critical thinking skills also helped me a lot during my studies and in my work. I have been able to apply those skills when working (Case B interview grad std 1).

The narrative above shares evidence of the participant's explicit acknowledgement of the learning they received as being very valuable. They singled out improved practical presentation and communication skills as being of particular value to them in their work since graduation. This participant had become a lecturer after completing their MBA. The response of participants was, overall, positive about their needs being met, and even exceeded in some areas. However, this was not a universal outcome. Some of

the graduates complained about the poor curriculum administration and management on the part of the Vietnamese partner of the offshore programme provider. The following extract provides some insights into the nature and rationale for one student's dissatisfaction with their offshore MBA programme:

There were some regulations which were causing problems to students such as they [the local partner] forced every student in MBA programme to study one compulsory subject "Advanced Philosophy" that should have been an optional subject because [...] MBA

programme is an international programme [...] This Advanced Philosophy should not be graded or considered as part of MBA programme. [The] problem occurred when we did a thesis defence presentation in front of the thesis committee (which normally had one member from the foreign partner, and 2-3 members from the Vietnamese partner). [While the [...] foreign partner tended to focus on our [thesis] content [...] the Vietnamese committee members [tended to] focus on our thesis structure and [...] presentation. [The] foreign partner guided [advised] us [that the] final project is kind of [a] case study, but Vietnamese members considered it as "Master by Research" thesis' (Case A interview gradstd 1).

This narrative confirmed what the literature also signalled as being a concern around the potential quality of some of the current MBA offerings; this graduate student's evidence gave a precise indication of where they perceived the administrative and pedagogical problem to be. In this example they cited clear (and conflicting) differences in the learning outcomes perceived by the different thesis committee members, with the advice from the offshore partner education provider, and the Vietnamese local IHE organisation, differing significantly. Such a variation in expectations by examiners of student work would be highly likely to create confusion, dissatisfaction, and possible anger in students trying to achieve the best possible grades, and learning outcomes, for themselves during their MBA studies. Such a disparate approach, and from members of the same dissertation committee, would have been most unhelpful for any student. The student's comments reflect their confusion and frustration with the unspecified and inconsistent approaches to student learning outcomes.

Another graduate student's narrative clearly shows dissatisfaction directed towards their current employer, rather than the MBA programme itself. She reportedly believed that her employer had limited her ability to apply her new MBA-sourced knowledge in

her employment context, and she felt the employers should be taking a greater role in supporting her ability to apply knowledge from her studies in her job:

My workplace environment could not provide me the opportunity to apply [the] knowledge and skills learnt from MBA programme into my job to develop my capacity to improve

effectiveness as an economics researcher and adjunct professor. My teaching schedule at the university leaves me with little time for study (Case B interview gradstd 2).

She elaborated, saying, "I opted to pursue my education [...] so that I might become a [better] economics educator and researcher." I made significant strides in perseverance and effort toward future objectives (Case B interview gradstd 2).

Obtaining an MBA degree was seen as crucial by the participant to both her professional growth and future job success. This student also provided concrete suggestions on how the programs should be enhanced to better help future students reach their goals:

More internship opportunities with real-world impact should be included into the MBA curriculum. Time has to be added so that students may absorb the material at their own pace [...]. The training must also enhance students' linguistic competence to qualify. In addition, the curriculum must regularly include new material to keep up with the dynamic nature of the modern world (Case A interview gradstd 2). efficiency as a researcher and part-time professor in economics. No matter how hard I try, I just can't find the time to study with my busy university teaching schedule (Case B interview gradstd 2).

She went on to explain that she had made the decision to return to school "so that I could become a [better] economics instructor and researcher." Significant progress was achieved in my determination and hard work toward my long-term goals (Case B interview gradstd 2).

The participant saw earning an MBA degree as critical to her development as a professional and to her future success in the workforce. Moreover, this student offered specific recommendations on how the programs should be improved to better assist future students in achieving their objectives:

The MBA program might benefit from more internships with practical application. Some extra time has to be

included in so that students may go at their own speed while learning [...]. Language skills are another area where training could help pupils qualify. Moreover, new content should be added to the curriculum on a consistent basis to reflect the ever-evolving character of today's environment (Case A interview gradstd 2).

effectiveness as an economics researcher and adjunct lecturer. Despite my best efforts, I just cannot fit studying into my hectic schedule of university teaching (Case B interview gradstd 2).

She said, "so that I may become a [better] economics lecturer and researcher," as the reason for her choice to enroll in classes once more. Thanks to my perseverance and hard effort, I've made significant headway toward my ultimate ambitions (Case B interview gradstd 2).

The graduate student participant considered an MBA degree essential to her continued professional growth and career advancement. Further, this student suggested concrete changes that may be made to the courses in order to better aid future students in accomplishing their goals.

More relevant internships could help the MBA curriculum succeed. There has to be more leeway for pupils to study at their own pace [...]. Training may also improve students' chances of qualifying in the field of language ability. To further represent the dynamic nature of the modern world, new material should be introduced to the curriculum on a regular basis (Case A interview gradstd 2).

Critical in-depth data about the requirements and aspirations of MBA graduates seeking enrollment in offshore MBA courses in Vietnam is shared in the student narratives. Narratives highlighted student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, such as the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies. The ability to adapt to changing market conditions and meet the demands of an increasingly globalized corporate climate were also mentioned.

Management education courses, such as an MBA, have been under scrutiny for their capacity to appropriately educate students for future positions as managers and leaders in business organizations, and this literature supports the widespread, continuous, and considerable levels of concern in this area. For students to succeed in the corporate, economic, and social environments of a growing country like Vietnam, as well as the increasingly global marketplace, this is an absolute need. The reported findings from this exploratory study shows the need for and acknowledgment of the importance of ensuring that MBA teaching curricula supplied by Vietnam's HE education providers are planned, assessed, and implemented to meet these demands. MBA students at the graduate level have confirmed the importance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials in response to changing business, economic, and social needs, and of providing curricula that is designed with strategic, student-centric options being available, so that courses continue to be responsive to the noted challenges in the current HE business and management education market (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanja, 2010). Although respondents acknowledged the usefulness of existing MBA programs, they also observed that certain courses fell short of meeting their needs or those of potential employers. The stories of current and former students provide crucial insight into the motivations, experiences, and challenges of Vietnamese students taking part in offshore MBA programs. Narratives emphasized student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, including the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition. The capacity to

adjust to a shifting business environment and adapt to a more international economy were also highlighted. This study corroborates the pervasive, ongoing, and significant levels of concern over the efficacy of management education programs like an MBA in preparing students for careers as effective managers and leaders in business organizations. There is a critical need for students to acquire these skills in order to compete in the increasingly globalized business, economic, and social contexts of a developing nation like Vietnam. This study's results highlight the need of planning, assessing, and implementing MBA teaching curricula given by Vietnam's HE education providers to satisfy these objectives, as well as the recognition of the need to do so. In order to continue to be responsive to the noted challenges in the current HE business and management education market, graduate-level MBA students have confirmed the importance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials in response to changing business, economic, and social needs (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanja, 2010). Though respondents agreed that current MBA programs are beneficial, they also noted that certain classes didn't go far enough to prepare them for the workforce.

Current and previous students' accounts provide light on the reasons for, benefits of, and difficulties associated with studying abroad for an MBA in Vietnam. Narratives emphasized student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, including the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition. The ability to evolve with the business climate and the globalization of the economy were also emphasized.

This research lends credence to the widespread, continuous, and substantial levels of worry about the effectiveness of management education programs like an MBA in preparing students for careers as successful managers and leaders in corporate organizations. The ability to compete in the increasingly international commercial, economic, and social environments is essential for students in a developing country like Vietnam. The findings of this research emphasize the necessity for Vietnam's HE education providers to create, analyze, and execute MBA teaching curricula in order to meet these goals. It has been confirmed by graduate-level MBA students the importance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials to respond to changing business, economic, and social needs in order to continue to be responsive to the noted challenges in the current HE business and management education market (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanja, 2010). Respondents generally agreed that today's MBA programs are useful, but they also remarked that certain courses didn't provide them with sufficient practical experience.

The experiences of current and former students provide light on the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing an MBA in Vietnam. Narratives emphasized student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, including the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition. The need of being flexible in response to changes in the corporate environment and the globalization of the economy was also stressed.

The findings of this study add weight to the pervasive, ongoing, and significant concerns about the ability of management education programs like an MBA to successfully prepare students for careers as effective managers and leaders inside corporate organizations. Students in a growing country like Vietnam need to be prepared to compete in an increasingly globalized commercial, economic, and social arena. This study's results highlight the importance of MBA teaching curriculum development, analysis, and implementation by Vietnam's HE education providers in achieving these aims. In order to remain responsive to the aforementioned challenges in the present HE business and management education market, graduate-level MBA students have confirmed the significance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials to respond to changing



business, economic, and social needs (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanía, 2010). Those polled were in agreement that today's MBA programs are beneficial, but they also noted that certain classes didn't provide them enough hands-on experience to be really effective.

Current and previous students provide light on the pros and cons of earning an MBA in Vietnam by sharing their own experiences. Narratives emphasized student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, including the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition. It was also emphasized how important it is to maintain a degree of adaptability in light of the rapid pace of change in the workplace and the globalization of the economy.

The results of this research provide credence to the widespread, persistent, and substantial doubts that exist concerning the efficacy of MBA and other management education programs in preparing its graduates to be effective managers and leaders in corporate settings. Students in a developing nation like Vietnam need to be ready to compete in a commercial, economic, and social field that is becoming more international. The findings of this research emphasize the significance of MBA curriculum creation, analysis, and implementation by Vietnam's HE education providers for realizing these goals. Graduate business administration students have confirmed the significance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials to respond to changing business, economic, and social needs in order to remain responsive to the aforementioned challenges in the current HE business and management education market (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanía, 2010). The majority of those surveyed agreed that today's MBA programs are useful, however some expressed frustration that they didn't get enough practical training.

Note

## REFERENCE

Students both currently enrolled and who have graduated from MBA programs in Vietnam share their insights about the benefits and drawbacks of completing an MBA in the country. Narratives emphasized student concerns that often confirmed those expressed in the literature, including the quality of program management and administration, the need to ensure program quality and relevance of content, including the need for continual evaluation and updating of materials, the attention to consistency in student evaluation measures, the need for high-level English tuition to support students in their studies, and the highlighted need for high-level English tuition. Given the speed with which things are changing in the workplace and the spread of globalization, it was also stressed how crucial it is to be flexible.

The findings provide credibility to the widespread, persistent, and serious reservations that exist about the effectiveness of MBA and other management education programs in educating its graduates to be successful managers and leaders in corporate environments. The commercial, economic, and social fields are becoming more global, and students in emerging nations like Vietnam need to be prepared to compete in this new environment. This study's results highlight the relevance of MBA curriculum development, analysis, and implementation by Vietnam's HE education providers in achieving these aims. In order to remain responsive to the aforementioned challenges in the present HE business and management education market, graduate students in business administration have confirmed the importance of designing and reviewing curricula in a way that allows for constant updating of materials to respond to changing business, economic, and social needs (Reddy, 2009; Henry and Rezanía, 2010). The majority of respondents said that current MBA programs are beneficial, although some were dissatisfied with the lack of hands-on experience they received.