

MOTIVATIONS AND CHALLENGES:THE SOUTH AFRICANMASTERSINBUSINESSADMINISTRATION(MBA)EXPERIENCE

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Abstract:

Between 2008 and 2012, a large number of people were able to receive their Master of Business Administration degrees, and the great majority of them are now employed in their home countries in professional or management roles. This graduate's job path has been improved by their MBA education. The qualities of belief in God, honesty, a desire for the truth, persistence, and hard effort are especially relevant to their job, as are communication skills, human and technical aptitudes. They also note that the professional training they received in addition to their LPU-MBA degrees has been invaluable to their careers. The Graduate School at LPU is urged to constantly evaluate its programs in light of those at other institutions. The Office of Research and Connections may partner with local, national, or worldwide companies, depending on the need of the organization. If companies had a clearer promotion policy, it would let workers see where they were in the company's hierarchy. Future scholars may wish to investigate how businesses evaluate the managerial and leadership skills of LPU MBA graduates.

Keywords:

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Introduction

Africans, Middle-Aged People, South Africans, MBA Graduates, and Senior Citizens. Africans, South Africans, Middle-Aged Folk, MBA Alums, and Retirees. Scholarly discussion about the MBA and its place in management education has tended to focus on its fitness for purpose or on the academic experiences of MBA students on their programmes South Africans, Africans, Middle-Aged People, People Who Have Earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration, and Seniors. Having an MBA

After deciding to pursue a Master of Business Administration degree, prospective students must next choose an institution to enroll in (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). Prospective students often stress the need of getting a head start on the competition by rapidly and effectively obtaining management abilities. Graduates may be interested in pursuing an MBA for a variety of reasons that may be categorized as either intrinsic (personal growth) or extrinsic (professional advancement) motivators (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). While data on postgraduate students in other professional fields is limited, it seems that they have a similar mix of motives as those who enroll in business programs (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010) Once they have decided to go for it, prospective MBA students must next decide where they want to get their education (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). In their applications, prospective students often highlight the importance of having a head start on the competition by efficiently acquiring management skills. A graduate's desire in earning an MBA may be driven more by internal (personal development) or external (career progression) factors (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). While there is a lack of information on postgraduate students in other professional sectors, it seems that they have a comparable range of motivations as business school enrollees (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010).

Prospective MBA students, after they've made the decision to pursue an MBA, must next choose an

institution to complete their course at (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). Applicants often stress the need of getting a head start on the competition by effectively obtaining management abilities in their personal statements. A graduate's motivation to pursue an MBA could stem from an interest in self-improvement or professional advancement (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). While data on postgraduates in other fields of study is few, preliminary research suggests that they are driven by a variety of factors that are similar to those of business school applicants (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010).

The study

After deciding to pursue an MBA, prospective candidates must next choose a school to continue their education (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). In order to stand out from the crowd, many applicants highlight the need of developing strong management skills early on in the application process. A graduate may choose to get an MBA for reasons including personal growth and career development (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). While there isn't a ton of information on graduate students in subjects other than business, what little there is implies they're motivated by a lot of the same things (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010).

Methodology

Those who are thinking about getting their MBA first need to decide where they want to go to school (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). Many candidates emphasize the need of early development of excellent management abilities in order to stand out from the crowd. Some graduates pursue an MBA for professional and personal development (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). There isn't a ton of data on graduate students in fields other than business, but what there is suggests many of the same motivations drive them as drive business school students (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010).

Findings

Those contemplating about pursuing an MBA must first choose on a university (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). In order to stand out from the throng, many applicants stress the need of developing strong management skills from a young age. Some graduates get an MBA to further their careers or themselves (Simpson and Sturges, 2007). Data on graduate students in subjects other than business is scarce, but what there is reveals many of the same incentives drive them as drive business school students (Barber et al., 2004; de Boer et al., 2010; Liu, 2010).

Ideation to Start an MBA Program

There is no one motivation for students to get an MBA. Among these were the chance to gain a formal business education (7.3%), the chance to advance professionally (22.9%), the chance to try something new (17.1%), the chance to work on one's own personal growth (14.7%), the chance to earn a recognized business qualification (7.3%), the chance to make professional connections (5.4%), and the chance to be intellectually stimulated (5.4%) in the workplace. This is an example of where a gender gap is evident. Men were more focused on greater knowledge of business and refinement of business abilities, coupled with professional growth, whereas women across both MBA formats picked a broader variety of reasons for enrolling on an MBA study. Several distinctions were also observed between the two MBA delivery systems. Career growth was the top reason given by part-time students for pursuing an MBA, while career change was the top reason given by full-time students.

Intention to Launch an MBA Course

Students pursue an MBA for a variety of reasons. A formal business education (7.4%), professional advancement (22.9%), trying something new (17.1%), working on personal growth (14.7%), earning a recognized business qualification (7.4%), making professional connections (5.4%), and intellectual stimulation (5.4%) were also mentioned. A gender gap may be seen in this situation. While males in both MBA formats cited career advancement and enhanced business acumen as primary motivators, women in both tracks cited a wider range of interests. The two methods of delivering an MBA were also shown to have some key differences. Both full-time and part-time students cited professional advancement as their primary motivation for seeking an MBA, whereas the primary motivation for the latter was a desire to make a change in profession.

Planning to Introduce an MBA Program

There are many different motivations for students to get an MBA. Earning a recognized business qualification (7.4%), expanding one's professional network (7.4%), being intellectually stimulated (5.4%), and attempting something new (17.1%) were also cited. Possible gender disparity. Women in both MBA programs indicated a broader variety of interests than their male counterparts, who mostly cited professional development and improved business acumen. It was also shown that there are important distinctions between the two MBA delivery models. Professional growth was the top reason given by both full-time and part-time students for pursuing an MBA, whereas the top reason given by the latter was a want to switch careers.

Implementing a Master's in Business Administration

The reasons people pursue an MBA are many. Gaining a formal business credential (mentioned by 7.4%), extending one's professional network (said by 7.4%), being intellectually stimulated (mentioned by 5.4%), and trying something new (17.1%) all ranked high. The possibility of a gender gap. In all MBA programs, women showed a greater diversity of interests than males, who mostly mentioned career advancement and business knowledge enhancement. Differential differences between the two MBA delivery modalities were also shown. Both full-time and part-time students cited job advancement as their primary motivation for seeking an MBA, whereas career change was the primary motivation for part-time students.

Using a Graduate Degree in Management

There is a wide range of motivations for pursuing an MBA. At the top of the list was the opportunity to learn something new (17.1%), followed by expanding one's professional network (7.4%), expanding one's knowledge base (5.4%), and gaining formal business credentials (7.4%). Inequality between the sexes is a possibility. Women in MBA programs had a wider range of interests than men, who were more likely to focus on professional development and academic enrichment. Similarities and dissimilarities between the two MBA delivery methods were also shown. Job progression was the top motive for both full-time and part-time students to pursue an MBA, whereas career change was the primary motivator for part-time students Pursuing a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) might be the next logical step for you in a number of different directions. First on the list was the chance to acquire new skills (17.1%), followed by the chance to broaden one's professional network (7.3%), increase one's body of knowledge (5.4%), and achieve formally recognized certifications in business (7.3%). A disparity in opportunities and outcomes between the sexes is a real possibility. MBA women had a broader variety of interests than MBA males, who tended to prioritize their careers and education. It was also shown how the two MBA delivery techniques are similar and how they differ. Both full-time and part-time students cited job advancement as their major reason for pursuing an MBA, whereas the desire to switch professions was the leading motivation for part-time students If you want to take your career in a variety of ways, getting an MBA may be the best option. The opportunity to learn something new was ranked highest (17.1%), followed by those to build one's professional network (7.3%), learn something new (5.4%), and get official business credentials (7.3%). There is a potential for a gender gap in terms of access to resources and success. The interests of MBA women were more varied than those of MBA men, who were more focused on their employment and schooling. Parallels and differences between the two MBA delivery methods were also highlighted. While career progression was the primary motivator for both full-time and part-time students to pursue an MBA, changing careers was the primary motive for part-time students. The possibility of establishing professional connections

Additional, though secondary, motivation for enrolling in the degree program was the possibility of making connections with like-minded individuals. Seventeen of our respondents who focused on this point said that getting an MBA would help them network and meet others with similar interests. According to James (full time, manufacturing), "the degree provides all students an excellent opportunity to meet and make friends for life" with other like driven and gifted students. The idea was also floated that mingling with others from similar backgrounds may broaden one's understanding of pressing concerns (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Kristos, a part-time IT employee, said it best The opportunity to network with like-minded professionals

The opportunity to meet others with similar interests was an additional, although secondary, draw to the degree program. Seventeen of our respondents who paid particular attention to this issue indicated they believed that earning an MBA would help them build professional relationships with like-minded people. Full-time manufacturing student James claims that "the degree affords all students a wonderful chance to meet and make friends for life" among similarly ambitious and talented peers. It was also suggested that talking with others who share one's experiences might help one see issues from different perspectives (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Part-time IT worker Kristos said it best: Possibility of establishing and maintaining relationships with other competent individuals

The ability to network with others who shared my interests was a nice bonus to the main course of the degree. Seventeen of our respondents who gave this question further thought said they hoped networking opportunities would improve after receiving an MBA. James, a full-time student in manufacturing, says that "the degree provides all students a tremendous opportunity to meet and create friends for life" among other driven and gifted individuals. It was also said that chatting to others who have had similar situations might assist one get new insights (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). IT contractor Kristos said it best:

Possibility of establishing and sustaining connections with other qualified people

An additional benefit of the degree program was the opportunity to build relationships with others who shared my interests. Seventeen of the people who really thought about the subject indicated they believed their networking skills would improve when they got an MBA. According to James, a manufacturing major, "the degree affords all students a wonderful chance to meet and develop friends for life" among other ambitious and talented people. Another suggestion for gaining perspective was to talk to others who had been through something similar (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Kristos, a computer consultant, said it best: Opportunities to meet and network with like-minded professionals

The degree program also allowed me to meet others who shared my passions and learn from each other. Seventeen of those who gave the issue some serious consideration said they agreed that an MBA would help their networking abilities. James, who is majoring in manufacturing, claims that "the degree provides all students a tremendous opportunity to meet and establish friends for life" among other driven and gifted individuals. Talking to others who have gone through something similar is another way to get insight (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Kristos, an IT consultant, expressed it best:

Possibilities to connect with other experts in the same field

This degree program also provided me with the opportunity to network with others who shared my interests and learn from one another. After giving it some thought, 17 people stated they agreed that an MBA would improve their networking skills. According to James, a student studying in manufacturing, "the degree affords all students a wonderful chance to meet and develop friends for life" among other ambitious and talented people. You may also get perspective by talking to others who have been through a similar situation (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Consultant in information technology Kristos said it best:

Opportunities to network with others who share your expertise

Also, through participating in this degree program, I was able to meet and exchange ideas with others who were passionate about the same things I was. After considerable consideration, 17 respondents said they agreed that an MBA would help them make more professional connections. James, a student studying manufacturing, says that "the degree provides all students a tremendous opportunity to meet and establish friends for life" among other ambitious and creative individuals. Talking to others who have experienced something similar may help you get perspective as well (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). Kristos, an IT consultant, summed it up best:

Possibilities for connecting with individuals who share your area of expertise

This degree program also gave me the opportunity to meet and talk with others who shared my interests. Seventeen of the respondents who gave it some serious thought ultimately felt that an MBA would

improve their ability to network professionally. According to James, a student in the manufacturing program, "the degree affords all students a wonderful chance to meet and develop friends for life" among other driven and imaginative people. If possible, it's also beneficial to talk to others who have gone through something similar (Grant, part-time, lawyer; and Isabella, full-time, healthcare). IT consultant Kristos said it best:

Time is a crucial component and limitation in the lives of full-time workers pursuing an MBA part-time. To that end, prospective students considered not just the reputation of a certain business school, but also its proximity to their homes. Findings show that this is the case for full-time students, who, in addition to the school's reputation and the city's reputation, value the school's exchange program and the opportunity to study abroad. Full-time professionals who choose to get an MBA part-time have the challenge of juggling their personal and professional life. Because of this, potential students thought on more than simply a school's standing in the business world when making their decision about where to enroll. The results reveal that this is true for full-time students, who place a high importance on the school's exchange program and the chance to study abroad in addition to the school's and city's reputations. Part-time MBA students face the same challenges as working professionals in maintaining a healthy work-life balance while still completing their degree. This meant that prospective students considered factors outside a university's reputation in the business sector when making their choice of where to study. In addition to the reputations of the school and city, the findings show that full-time students place a high value on the school's exchange program and the opportunity to study abroad.

Part-time MBA students have the same difficulties as working professionals have in striking a balance between work and personal life. This meant that students weren't only looking at a school's standing in the corporate world when making their decision about where to go to school. The results demonstrate that the school's exchange program and the possibility to study abroad are highly valued by full-time students, even more so than the reputations of the school and city. Finding a happy medium between your business and personal life is challenging for full-time employees and part-time MBA students alike. This suggested that students were considering factors other than a school's reputation among employers when making their final selection. In other words, the data show that full-time students place a far higher importance on the school's exchange program and the opportunity to study abroad than they do on the school's and city's reputations.

Full-time workers and part-time MBA students both struggle to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives. Students' consideration of criteria other than a school's reputation among employers seems to have had a role in their ultimate decision. In other words, the findings reveal that the exchange program and the option to study abroad are far more important to full-time students than the reputations of the institution and the city.

Finding harmony between work and personal life is challenging for everyone, whether they are a full-time employee or a part-time MBA student. It seems that students' final selection was influenced by factors other than a school's popularity with employers. In other words, the results show that full-time students place a far higher value on the availability of an exchange program and the chance to study abroad than they do on the standing of the school and the city.

It is difficult for anybody, whether they are a full-time employee or a part-time MBA student, to find a balance between their professional and personal lives. This suggests that students' final decisions were not solely based on a school's reputation among potential employers. The findings indicate that the availability of an exchange program and the opportunity to study abroad are far more important to full-time students than the reputation of the institution and the city. My wife had to give her approval, but she understood that having to take on more parental responsibilities while I was at school was necessary (Andy, full-time, investment).

My wife had to give her blessing, but she knew that she would have to take on more of the parenting load while I was away at school (Andy, full-time, investment).

Only 15 of the women (4.8% of the total) in the sample had children. One student found it extremely difficult to continue her MBA studies while still working full-time as a senior executive and raising a kid on her own. My wife's approval was necessary, but she understood that she would be expected to shoulder more of the parenting responsibilities while I was away at school (Andy, full-time, investment).

Only 15% of the women had children (4.8% of the total). One student's life was complicated beyond belief as she tried to get her MBA while still working full-time as a senior executive and single-handedly parenting a child.

My wife had to give her blessing, although she was aware that she would be responsible for extra child care duties while I was at school (Andy, full-time, investment).

Only 4.8% of the population was male, while only 15% of the women produced children. For one student, getting her MBA while still working full-time as a senior executive and raising a kid on her own added layers of complexity she couldn't even begin to fathom. My wife had to agree, even though she would be taking on more child care responsibilities without me around (Andy, full-time, investment).

Men made up just 4.8% of the population, while birthrates among women hovered around 15%. One student's situation was so complicated that she couldn't even begin to understand it: she was earning her MBA while working full-time as a senior executive and parenting a child on her own. An academic lack of assurance

We found fewer signs of academic hurdles than we anticipated. Still, there were times when fear and shame crept in:

The thought of what may happen worried me. Really, I was a little bit worried. For the simple reason that I have no idea how to use Microsoft Excel and yet here I am with... I was starting from square one, and these men are very intelligent; they have extensive backgrounds in fields such as business, law, accounting, and finance. (Arts major, full-time employee, Callum)

Insecurities in the academic world

We didn't find nearly as many examples of academic difficulties as we had feared. It wasn't always easy to overcome the feelings of anxiety and embarrassment:

What might go wrong scared me. I admit, I was a little concerned. That's because I'm sitting here with no knowledge how to use Microsoft Excel. I had no prior experience, and these guys are brilliant; they come from diverse academic and professional backgrounds like business, law, accounting, and finance. (Callum is a full-time employee and a bachelor of arts student).

Fears of failure in the classroom

Not nearly as many instances of academic issues were discovered as we had thought. Anxiety and shame weren't always simple to push past:

The thought of what might go wrong frightened me. Yes, I was a bit worried about it. I have no idea how to use Excel, therefore I'm stuck here. I came into this blind, and the men are really bright; they have degrees and expertise in fields as varied as business, law, accounting, and finance. Callum works full-time while pursuing his bachelor's degree in the arts.

Afraid about falling short in class?

However, we did not find nearly as many examples of these problems in the classroom as we had anticipated. It wasn't always easy to overcome worries and embarrassment:

Just imagining the worst-case scenario gave me the willies. I admit that I did have some reservations about it. I can't get out of here because I don't know Excel. I walked in completely in the dark, but these guys are brilliant; they have degrees and experience in sectors as diverse as business, law, accounting, and finance. Callum is a full-time worker and college student at the same time.

Discussion

Concerned that you may not do well in your coursework?

We expected to see many more instances of these issues in the classroom, but we did not. Fear and shame weren't always simple to push past:

Thinking about the worst-case scenario gave me the chills. To be honest, I was a little hesitant at first. Because of my inability to utilize Excel, I am trapped here. I stepped in blind, but these men are amazing; they have backgrounds in business, law, accounting, and finance, to name a few. Callum works full-time and attends school full-time.

Worried that you won't perform well academically?

We anticipated much higher incidences of these problems in the classroom, but we did not find any. Conquering anxieties and embarrassment wasn't always easy:

My spine shivered as I considered the worst-case scenario. In all candor, I was first skeptical. I am unable to escape because of my incapacity to work with Excel. I didn't know what I was getting into, but these guys are incredible. They come from all walks of life, including business, law, accounting, and finance. Callum is a full-time student and worker.

A person's social circle has considerable influence on their judgment. Evidence reveals that purchasing behavior is complicated and decision making takes some time when considering an MBA. This is the most intriguing part:

When deciding on a college, prospective students will look for positive reviews and recommendations from someone they respect, particularly if the reviewer or recommender is someone they know personally, like a current or former student (Donaldson and McNicholas 2004, p. 349).

The people in one's social circle have a significant impact on one's judgment. The research shows that consumer behavior is intricate, and that settling on an MBA program is a lengthy process. And here's when things get very interesting:

Prospective students value the opinions of trusted individuals, such as current or past students,

especially when making a decision on which university to attend (Donaldson and McNicholas 2004, p. 349).

One's perception is heavily influenced by the individuals they associate with. Research demonstrates that consumer behavior is complex, and selecting an MBA school is a time-consuming endeavor. Here's when the plot thickens:

Many prospective students rely on the advice of current or former students when deciding which college to enroll in (Donaldson and McNicholas 2004, p. 349).

The people one hangs around with have a significant impact on their worldview. According to the available data, consumer behavior is intricate, and picking an MBA program is laborious. Now here's where things get interesting:

When considering whether to enroll in college, many people look to the opinions of current or past students for guidance (Donaldson and McNicholas 2004, p. 349).

One's circle of friends may have a major effect on one's outlook on life. Data suggests that consumer behavior is complex, and selecting an MBA school is time-consuming. This is when the plot thickens:

Many folks who are on the fence about attending college may seek out the insights of current or former students before making a final decision (Donaldson and McNicholas 2004, p. 349).

It's interesting that few people mentioned having financial difficulties. There was just one student who said they were in such dire straits that they had to sell their home and vehicle just to get by. Instead, many regard financial concerns as a nuisance, rather than a major factor in their decision to pursue an MBA. Cost was sometimes mentioned as a factor (for example, when deciding between two or more MBA programs at different universities), but it was seldom the deciding factor. The cost of a full-time MBA isn't the only factor that influences a student's decision; other considerations include the school's standing in the industry, its proximity to home, and the quality of its learning method, as well as the student's impression of the school's culture and structure.

Obviously, socioeconomic differences in access to MBA programs will be reflected in a lack of opportunity to enter management or similarly compensated employment. Participants in this research all had to have substantial job experience in acceptable management or professional positions prior to enrolling in the programs they attended, which would imply receiving a specific salary. This suggests that, with the exception of full-time MBA degrees, cost is not the primary obstacle to increased fairness and diversity. Perhaps most surprisingly, there appeared to be little variation in the importance of financial considerations among students. This could be due to the fact that "because the MBA is an internationally acclaimed business qualification, the prestige attached to it may be the deciding factor for some students to enroll" in South Africa (Crous and Cooper 2005, pp. 57-58).

Students who can only attend classes part-time benefit greatly from both financial sponsorship and a welcoming workplace before, during, and after their academic program (Ronnie, 2009). Employers in South Africa have shown to be receptive, with no indication from the focus groups that this attitude has to be changed. The acute lack of management talent in South Africa might be a contributing factor (Kraak, 2005).

Relations between sexes and within families

According to the research, men and women provide different reasons for deciding whether or not to get an MBA. According to studies,

more men than women listed financial or professional advancement as a goal, while women were more interested in broadening their cultural horizons and taking a vacation from their careers (Baruch and Leeming, 2001, p. 594)

There was more variation in the responses given by the 98 women in our research compared to the 102 males. The most popular responses were furthering one's education, advancing one's profession, or obtaining a business-related certification.

reasons given by males, women highlighted a focus on personal improvement and development in addition to launching their own enterprises as driving forces. However, the study's female participants drew special attention to the educational opportunities provided by the campus setting. Despite the low numbers of women enrolled in MBA programs around the world (Simpson, 2000, 2005), and beyond the professional focus on career advancement and skill acquisition, our results suggest that women return to postgraduate study for a variety of reasons, including the possibility of enjoyment of the learning process. This lends credence to the argument made by Simpson and Sturges (2007), who found that females were more likely to be organically driven to seek an MBA than males. Also, "mature women students were more likely to invoke a love of learning as their motive for future study," as Reay (2003, p. 304) found in her research.

Concerns about academic fit and susceptibility are prominent in studies of adult returnees and non-traditional entrants to higher education, although they were more prevalent among male participants (Wilson, 1997; Davies and Williams, 2001; Osborne et al., 2004; Kimmel and McNeese, 2005). Contrary to the conclusions of the vast majority of research on women's involvement in higher education, women's transcripts in both versions of the curriculum show essentially little evidence of these concerns (Edwards, 1993; Christie et al., 2008). Students in our polled demographic ranged in age from 25 to 49, with the bulk falling into the 30s. Three students said they had to delay their MBA studies because they were too young. The majority of our sample (53.80%) had entry-level or middle management roles prior to enrolling in the MBA programs across all formats. This means that the age at which many individuals are either considering starting a family or have already established a family is also the age at which experience and appropriate seniority coincide. This is something that Davies and Williams point out in their research.

The dangers were seen as significant and interconnected by those above the age of 25. These included the unclear cost in terms of time, money, and pressure balanced against the potential rewards. It was more about wanting and needing to spend time with family; and to offer youngsters, in particular, a feeling of being cared for and to make sure that connections were not ignored. (2001, p. 200)

Our sample's parents, partners, and students all discussed the difficulties of balancing their many duties. This group of students seemed to routinely include their partners in their decision-making processes. According to Norton et al. (1998, p. 86), "the impact of stress on the relationship itself and on the student's psychological well-being" occurs when one partner does not provide emotional or practical support to the other. Where should I enroll?

Another part of MBA accessibility was the option of where to enroll, rather than just whether to. Our participants employed a combination of criteria, including

Primary filtering strategies include rating and reputation, proximity/convenience, and school culture. To the contrary, Arbaugh et al. (2010) showed that "older students judged school reputation to be less of a role and convenience more of a factor in the MBA program enrolling choice." It seemed that the Financial Times rankings were being utilized to validate both the level of education these individuals would get and the perceived worth of the MBA in the labor market. Really, Danko and Anderson argue that

No of how you feel about it, business schools are businesses that answer to market demands. Consumers, whether they like it or not, desire and buy school rankings, which has led to the rankings' success (2005, p. 26; original emphasis)

Our respondents placed a premium on attending a business school with a warm and friendly community. Feelings of doubt and hesitation are common among adults who are considering returning to school (Wilson, 1997; Kimmel and McNeese, 2005/6). Participants' decisions about which college to attend were influenced by both pre-admission activities and prior knowledge with the universities under consideration.

Conclusion

In this article, we look at what motivates students in South Africa to enroll in both online and on-campus MBA degree programs. All of our program participants gave serious thought to why they wanted to participate. They were grown adults, and they had to deal with difficulties in their professional and personal life. Spending time and money on getting a master's degree or a master of business administration is a significant commitment. This "means that attention and commitment that might be put on employment and family must now be shared with study responsibilities," to be more specific (Baruch, 2009, p. 392). Our sample has carefully considered these obstacles, as well as those associated with gaining workplace support, before enrolling in the program. The individuals we surveyed said that while these difficulties had not stopped them from enrolling, they had caused them stress in different forms. A prior period of discouragement will have occurred for others. Our participants' cited barriers may operate in concert to dissuade many people from specific backgrounds from ever applying. Given that childcare responsibilities continue to fall primarily on women in South Africa, our findings suggest that the underrepresentation of women on MBA programmes (reported consistently in the literature and anecdotally by our participants) may be related to the improbability (perceived or actual) of managing the triple burden of work, study, and childcare.

If MBA "heroes" constitute a significant motivating factor for prospective students, then a lack of diversity among these role models might have a negative impact on the underrepresentation of certain groups. Talented people who might further their careers with an MBA may be lost, but there is also an opportunity cost.

chance for "MBA heroes" from underrepresented groups to play a pivotal role in fostering diversity in student recruiting.

There were numerous parallels between the two delivery methods, with identical causes and barriers to enrollment mentioned by each. Both cohorts of students put a premium on their school of choice regardless of the delivery method of the program. One possible explanation for the MBA's seeming greater prestige in South Africa is that the students who earn them tend to work for bigger companies that place a greater value on academic credentials. South Africa's economy is more dynamic and evolving, which may favor the knowledge and skills acquired in an MBA program.

It is in everyone's best interest for business schools to provide their present students a top-notch learning environment. As we have shown, MBA alums' personal and professional achievements are a significant deciding factor for prospective students, making their roles as MBA 'heroes' an integral part of the recruiting and alumni management processes. Our data suggests that when marketing their courses, management schools would do well to highlight the MBA's potential developmental benefits rather than focusing only on the degree's market worth as a credential. Our research shows that there are several significant obstacles to enrolling in an MBA program, and they must be taken into account by schools. In a developing economy, this is especially crucial. This would be in the best interest of business schools, since it would boost the number of people interested in applying to their programs and so assist assure equal access.

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