



Quality Enhancing Parameters in Mba Education

KEYWORDS

Pedagogy, Assessment, MBA Program Evaluation, journals

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on an exploratory research effort in which the extent of MBA student learning on twelve specific competencies relevant to effective business performance was assessed. The article focuses on the extent to which differences in student learning outcomes may be influenced by one of three different types of instructional delivery: on-campus, distance, and executive MBA. It affirms the high quality of learning that can occur via distance education and proposes a strategy to conduct summative, program-level assessment. Specific findings include participants in all three groups self-reporting significantly higher scores on seven of twelve outcomes (e.g., goal setting, help, information gathering, leadership, quantitative, theory, and technology skills). It also notes that distance MBA students self reported significantly higher scores than on-campus students on the learning outcomes related to technology, quantitative, and theory skills, and higher scores on technology skills than the executive MBA group. Implications for further research are discussed.

Introduction

During the 1990s, there was serious discussion about the need to fundamentally reform higher education more than at any time in the previous 100 years (Angelo, 1996). There was growing concern that the escalating cost of higher education was not linked to an increase in educational quality (Bragg, 1995). This sentiment continues and is reflected by the continuing pressure on universities, colleges, and academic departments to demonstrate the effectiveness of their efforts through some sort Assistant Professor, DBM, Osmania University, Hyderabad- 500007 of performance measurement or "outcomes assessment" (Angelo and Cross, 1993; Banta, 1993; Ewell, 1997, 2000; Palomba and Banta, 1999; Palomba and Palomba, 1999).

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business – International (AACSB) adopted a position that requires business schools to measure the outcomes of their curriculum (Edwards and Brannen, 1990; AACSB, 1996). Previously, accreditation efforts focused on input measures such as teacher-student ratios, numbers of terminally- degreed faculty, number of volumes in the library, and the breadth and depth of curricular offerings (AACSB, 1980, 1984, 1987). In many of the specialized accrediting bodies, such as AACSB International, the focus has now shifted to value-added measures that assess what students have actually learned as a result of their participation in specific courses or in an entire academic program (Davenport, 2001).

This research effort was undertaken as part of the college of business preparations for its re-accreditation review. Because our MBA program is presented using three forms of delivery, we were interested in identifying if the learning outcomes, as determined by an established assessment instrument, in each of the three programs were equivalent. The curriculum is approximately the same, meaning the course syllabus for each course across the three forms of delivery was the same, and in two of the three learning contexts, the instructors were typically the same. There are no elective courses in the MBA program. Although students graduating from the program receive the same AACSB-accredited degree, an important question remains

unanswered:

Literature Review

The industrial economies of the world have been transformed into information-based economies creating a greater need for higher education (Levine, 2001). This increase in demand, combined with technological advances, has had a significant influence on the way higher education is delivered. Correspondence courses, audio taped lectures, video taped classes, online, Web-based courses – all of these technologies have made it possible for education to be delivered in multiple ways to learners throughout the world.

The nature of distance education has changed dramatically over the years as technological advances have led to innovations in distance education delivery (Carter, 1996). The explosive growth of personal computer usage and the Internet have fueled the rise in distance learning available via the World Wide Web. Instruction using such technology is typically asynchronous, allowing students access to course materials whenever time permits and from wherever they may have access to the Internet (Barber and Dickson, 1996). Today, it is possible for students to enroll in and graduate from degree-granting programs at accredited institutions without ever having to be physically present on the campus (Fornaciari, Forte and Mathews, 1999; Kretovics, 1998). We recognize there are many interpretations of what constitutes distance education. In the specific case reported on in this article, we are referring to the use of mailed videotapes of classroom instruction to students' homes or places of work, and subsequent, online interaction to accomplish program objectives.

Distance education, once viewed as an anomaly on the traditional campus, has now become an accepted and, in some instances, an expected alternative delivery system (Murphy, 1996; Moore, 1997; Cook, 2000). Institutions with distance education programs have demonstrated that these programs are an effective method to deliver classes to a diverse population.

Objectives:

- 1) To study the impact of student psychological aspects towards MBA education
- 2) To analyse the quality of facilities to improve standards in MBA education
- 3) To identify various requirements to improve MBA education standards.

Sample:

Students’ faculties, Principals and academic experts like Professors/Assoc.Prof/Asst.Prof of various private and government MBA colleges across Andhra Pradesh considered as sample to study the proposed research.

Sample size:

A Total of 318 above said sample responses are considered to analyse the present study.

Data Collection Procedure

A structured questionnaire was designed to on various parameters like facilities from the management. Quality of faculty etc... are designed in the form of likert scale to capture the respondents opinions.

Analysis

H₀₁: There is no significant association between type of college and their opinions on sufficient journals are available for MBA students.

Chi-Square Tests	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.672 ^a	8	.371
Likelihood Ratio	10.674	8	.221
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.981
N of Valid Cases	331		

From the above table chi square is not significant (sig. value is greater than 0.05), no evidence to reject null hypothesis. It means that there is no significant association between type of college and their opinions on sufficient journals are available for MBA students.

Factor Analysis is a data reduction technique. It also helps in structure detection among the variables and further helps in studying the underlying crucial factors that cause the maximum variation. Before we proceed for factor analysis first the researcher tested the eligibility of the data by checking KMO- Bartlett’s test which is a measure of sampling adequacy. The KMO value is 0.832 >0.5 indicates multivariate normality among variables. Further significance value is less than .005 the researcher proceeds with factor analysis.

Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.832	
	Approx. Chi-Square	2861.460
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	435
	Sig.	.000

The PRINCIPAL COMPONENT MATRIX gives the component matrix which is rotated using the VARIMAX rotation technique which gives the ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX .Rotation of factors helps in the better interpretation of factors. Since the first factor in the ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX is heavily loaded with psychological climate. Factor loading Value of 0.750 which is the highest for the first factor the first factor represents psychological climate.

The second factor is heavily loaded with MBA books in district libraries (0.776) hence factor 2 represents MBA books in district libraries and thus the subsequent factors can be interpreted based on their Eigen value. The final list of 07 factors which collectively account for 61% of the variance in the data is shown below

S.NO	Factor name	Factor loading
1	Psychological climate	0.750
2	MBA text books in libraries	0.776
3	Salaries to faculties as per AICTE	0.869
4	Journals availability for MBA students in library	0.839
5	E-Class rooms	0.717
6	Awareness on Business Environment	0.664
7	Quality project work	0.694

Conclusion

If learning is the ultimate goal of the educational experience, it is up to members of the academy to ensure that this goal is met. "Outcome assessment is perhaps the best vehicle available at this time with great potential for affecting positive change and addressing the issues of accountability within higher education". That this research represents an attempt at "program-level," as distinct from "course" or "certificate" level assessment is an important additional step toward achieving the larger outcome assessment goal.

Summative evaluations are common at the course level. Most faculty conduct some form of end-of-course assess-

ment to determine student satisfaction, areas for course improvements, and to assign a final grade. In many cases, formative evaluations occur during the progress of courses to determine if they are progressing in the intended direction. Professors conduct mid-course reviews of their courses and may adjust how and what they are teaching as a result. Examinations, peer evaluations, and other forms of assessment are also used to improve student learning and the overall course experience.

Such assessments (both summative and formative) are not as common at the program level. Our effort was to explore how one might do an empirically based, summative evaluation of an entire program and incorporate the critical component of assessing learning outcomes of distance students as well as those experiencing a more traditional learning context. We used an objective learning assessment instrument designed specifically to explore the extent of student learning in twelve key business skill areas identified as critical for our students' ultimate success. We focused not on individual course evaluations, but on student gain scores at the beginning and at the end of this defined learning experience. Such assessments are necessary in order to identify what students are learning in our MBA program and to identify in what areas additional attention may be required in order to achieve our overall program objectives.

Because of the unique nature of our program, we were also able to investigate differences across instructional delivery formats, adding a level of complexity to the design, but also providing additional insights to consider as we continue to refine our learning outcome assessment strategies in increasingly sophisticated learning environments.

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