

Antecedence for Valuable MBA Projects: A Case Study of Graduate School of Business, Universiti Sains Malaysia

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to study on the antecedence needed to make the Master of Business Administration (MBA) research project valuable, so that it will be suitable for further utilization that can enhance image among the students, academician and practitioners. This in turn will optimize student employment opportunities and school's student enrolment.

Keywords: Antecedence, Value, MBA, Project, Supervision

1. Introduction

The researcher observed that MBA projects conducted in Graduate School of Business (GSB) of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia are not leveraged and have been merely academic pieces of work after completion. Thus, the researcher seeks to identify the antecedence that will induce students to produce valuable projects that can be leveraged by future researchers. It can be either utilized by DBA Candidates, PhD Candidate or academics for further research, consultancy and training project or commercialization. The main objective of the study is to determine whether the following factors will assist GSB in leveraging the MBA projects, i.e. (i) identifying suitable topics for the MBA candidates which they will enjoy and commit to produce valuable outcomes, (ii) identifying topics that can be enhanced as a research or consultancy project subsequently either by DBA candidates or academics, and (iii) commercializing the research by engaging with others such as inter-disciplinary faculties, government agencies, private organizations to enhance GSB graduates' employability and reputation. This study is important to GSB as well as other business schools as it will convey to students that the School takes pride of the research project and would only like to produce valuable ones. It improves the School's image and enhances future cooperation between the School, public, academics, government agencies and corporate Sectors. In turn, it improved the School's students' enrolment and employability of its graduates.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Background of the Study

In a survey of leading academic critics, executives and recruiters with data collected on program design, enrollment trends and compiled a curriculum analysis of eleven schools, the result found the reputation of an MBA education is no longer among the best [4]. A study among 208 MBA students concluded that personality type and students' approaches to learning are the factors impacting upon the education of management graduate students [1]. Thus, institutions providing MBA programs must be designed to allocate more interest to examine their students' characteristics, in correlation with their performance rating. Another study found that MBA programme puts greater emphasis on conceptual, technical and analytical skills than on problem solving, innovation, communication and entrepreneurial skills which are perceived to be most needed by employers, implying a relevance gap [5]. Three questions were used as basis to evaluate and understand the future perspective the future of business Schools, i.e. Is there a common body of management knowledge and where do MBA fit in? Facing the demographic challenges, where will the next generation of business school students come from and what type of business model needed to leverage their core competences and dynamic capabilities? What type of deans, administrators and leadership process needed to fulfill the needs of the business schools in future? [3]. University should address CSR within their MBA programs by developing a broader variety of specific programs that focus directly on CSR and sustainability issues, while curricula strategies in university MBA programmes should advocate the very ideas of social

responsibility and sustainability [2]. Thus, identifying the antecedence of valuable MBA research project will be appropriate to improve the value of MBA.

2.2. Research Theoretical Framework

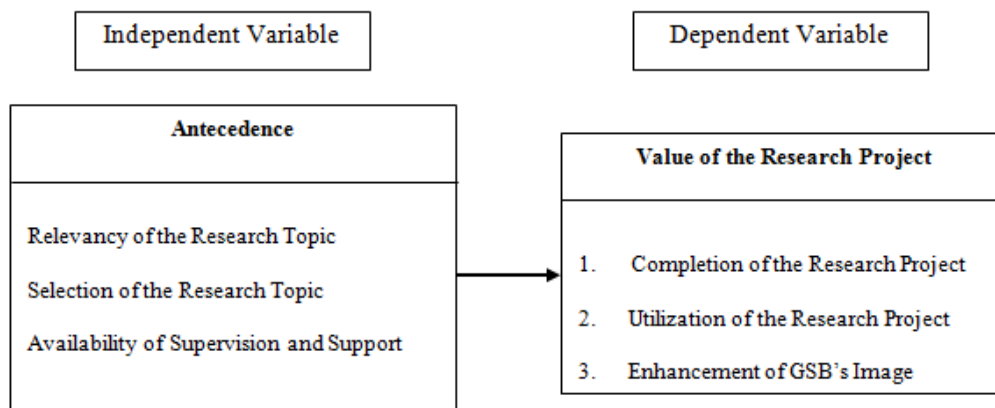


Figure 1: Research Theoretical Framework

The Dependent Variable is Value of the Research Project, comprises of three dimensions, i.e. Completion of the research project, Utilization of the research project and Enhancement of GSB's image. The Independent Variable is Antecedence for valuable research comprises of three dimensions, i.e. Relevancy of the Research Project, Selection of the Research Project and Availability of Supervision and Support.

2.2.2 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Positive Antecedence will lead to better Value of the MBA Research Project.

Hypothesis 2: Relevancy of the Research Topic has significant influences on the Value of the MBA Research Project.

Hypothesis 3: Selection of the Research Topic has significant influences on the Value of the MBA Research Project.

Hypothesis 4: Availability of Supervision and Support has significant influences on the Value of the MBA Research Project.

3. Research Design

A hypothesis testing used past GSB MBA graduates as unit of analysis. The population size was about 100. A sample size of at least 30% was targeted. Data were collected via questionnaires based on random sampling to MBA graduate from Graduate School of Business through e-mail, mails and direct delivery. Inferential statistics via correlation were used to study the significance of the antecedents on the value of MBA projects. The measurement variables were categorized into dependent variable and independent variables as depicted in the framework.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents is divided into three categories, i.e. personal data, university related data, and job related information, depicted in the following tables.

Table 1: Personal Data

No	Category	Item	Frequency	Valid Percent
Q1	Gender	Male	21	46.7
		Female	24	53.3
Q2	Age	< 25 year	2	4.4
		25 =< x =< 35	34	75.6
		36 =< x =< 45	8	17.8
		> 45 year	1	2.2
Q3	Marital Status	Married	20	44.4
		Single	25	55.6
Q4	Number of Children	None	34	75.6
		1-2	10	22.2
		3-5	1	2.2

Table 2: University Related Data

No	Category	Item	Frequency	Valid Percent
Q5	Tenure in GSB Alumni	< 1 year	14	31.1
		1 =< x =< 2 years	15	33.3
		> 2 years	14	31.1
		Other	2	4.4
Q6	Type of MBA	MBA General	28	62.2
		MBA IB	12	26.7
		MBA Online	5	11.1
Q7	Time taken to complete the research	< 1 year	21	46.7
		1 =< x =< 2	16	35.6
		> 2 years	7	15.6
		Others	1	2.2
Q8	Mode of Study	Fulltime	17	37.8
		Part time	23	51.1
		Out Campus	1	2.2
		Online	4	8.9

Table 3: Job Related data

No	Category	Item	Frequency	Valid Percent
Q9	Type of Industry	Information Technology	4	8.9
		Internet Companies	2	4.4
		Entertainment, Leisure and Transportation	5	11.1
		Manufacturing	19	42.2
		Speciality Retailing	8	17.8
		Others	7	15.6
Q10	Type of Organization	Malaysian SMEs	7	15.6
		Malaysian Enterprise	1	2.2
		Malaysian Private Limited Company	8	17.8
		Malaysian Public Listed Company	8	17.8
		Malaysian Government Linked Company	2	4.4
		Multinational Corporation	12	26.7
		Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	1	2.2
		Educational Institution	3	6.7
Q11	Management Level of Current Position	Other	3	6.7
		Lower Management	18	40.0
		Middle Management	20	44.4
Q12	No. of years in	Senior Management	7	15.6
		< 1 year	13	28.9

	current position	1 =< x =< 5	18	40.0
		5 < x =< 10	13	28.9
		>10 years	1	2.2
Q13	Highest Academic Qualification	Degree or Equivalent	38	84.4
		Post-graduates (Masters)	7	15.6
Q14	Country of Graduation	Local	36	80.0
		Foreign	9	20.0

4.2. Reliability Analysis

Table 4: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Antecedence	21	0.877
Relevancy of the Research Topic	6	0.879
Availabilities of supervision and Support	6	0.820
Selection of the Research Topics	9	0.782
Value of The Research Project	13	0.912
Commercialization of the Research Project	3	0.649
Utilization of the Research Project; MBA/DBA/CAT/PhD/Industry	7	0.882
Enhancement of GSB Reputation and Student Enrolment by the Research Project	3	0.837

4.3. Factor Analysis

Table 5: Factor Analysis

Variable	Eigen Values	KMO Value	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	Sig
Relevancy of the Research Topic	3.806	0.702	168.325	15	0.000
Availabilities of supervision and Support	3.466	0.700	161.017	36	0.000
Selection of the Research Topics	3.253	0.718	105.712	15	0.000
(i) Value of The Research Project (B1-B13)	6.775	0.731	478.531	78	0.000
(ii) Value of The Research Project (w/o B1 & B6)	6.675	0.787	415.509	55	0.000

5. Findings

Table 6: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Adjusted R	Significance Level	Correlation
Value (V)	Antecedence (A)	0.604	0.000	$V=0.76 + 0.894A$
Value (V)	1. Relevancy (R) 2. Selection (SE) 3. Supervision (SU)	0.585	0.005 0.027 0.001	$V=0.77+0.307R$ $+0.26SE +0.32SU$
Completion (Com)	1. Relevancy (R) 2. Selection (SE) 3. Supervision (SU)	0.441	0.557 0.009 0.010	$Com= 0.472+ 0.079R +$ $0.407SE +0.316SU$
Utilization(Uti)	1 Relevancy (R) 2. Selection (SE) 3. Supervision (SU)	0.413	0.031 0.032 0.081	$Uti= 0.221+0.299(R) +$ $0.331SE + 0.209SU$
Enhancement (Enh)	1 Relevancy (R) 2. Selection (SE) 3. Supervision (SU)	0.512	0.000 0.711 0.001	$Enh= -0.461 + 0.544(R)$ $+ 0.059(SE) + 0.434(SU)$

Antecedence comprises of (Relevancy, Selection & Supervision) has significance influence ($p<0.05$) on Value of the Research Project. All the 3 variables; Supervision, Relevancy and Selection has significant

influence on Value of the Research project, i.e. Supervision ($p=0.001$, $p<0.05$) Relevancy ($p=0.005$, $p<0.05$), Selection ($p=0.027$, $p<0.05$).

Only Selection and Supervision has significance influence on Completion of the Research Project, i.e. Selection ($p=0.009$, $p<0.05$) and Supervision ($p=0.010$, $p<0.05$). Only Selection and Relevancy has significance influence on Utilization of the Research Project, i.e. Selection ($p=0.032$, $p<0.05$) and Relevancy ($p=0.031$, $p<0.05$). Only Supervision and Relevancy has significance influence on Enhancement of the Research Project, i.e. Relevancy ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$) and Supervision ($p=0.001$, $p<0.05$).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 is supported well by the findings. All the elements of Antecedence have significant influence on the usefulness of the research project. It shows that in order to produce an useful MBA Research project, the Relevancy of the topics and Availabilities of support and supervision is important.

Selection of the topic of research also support towards it. Relevancy of the Research Topic has significant influences on Usefulness of the Research Topic via Utilization and Enhancement. For further utilization of the Research Project and Enhancement of GSB image, the relevancy of the topics is important. Selection of the Research Topic has significant influences on Usefulness of the Research Topic via Completion and Utilization. For further Utilization and completion of the project, selection of the appropriate topic is important. Availability of Supervision and Support for the Research Topic have significant influences on Value of the Research Topic via Completion and enhancement. For completion and further enhancement of the project, Availability of Supervision and Support is important. The finding of this research shows that the antecedence comprising of Availabilities of Supervision and Support ($p=0.001$), Relevancy of Research Topic ($p=0.005$) and, Selection of Research Topic ($p=0.027$) has significant influences on the Value of the GSB-MBA Project in a descending order. Availabilities of Supervision and Support ($p=0.001$) being the most significance, has influences on completion and enhancement. Relevancy of Research Topic ($p=0.005$) has influences on further utilization and enhancement. Selection of Research Topic ($p=0.027$) has significant influences completion and utilization.

In conclusion, good supervision that helps the MBA candidates to choose the topic relevant to them will help in completion of the research on time motivates researchers to further utilize the findings that will enhance GSB's Image, which in turn will improve GSB's Enrolment.

7. References

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