

**A STUDY OF THE FACTORS THAT
DETERMINE STUDENTS' DECISION TO
PURSUE THE MBA DEGREE: A CASE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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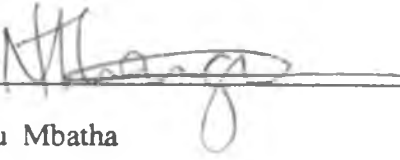
MBATHA NTHANGU MARY

A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION,
FACULTY OF COMMERCE,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the following people for their love: -To my dear Parents, Mr. Gabriel Mbatha Nzomo and Mrs. Jane Francis Ndunge Mbatha ,To my dear husband, Mr. Cappitus Chironga and my dear son, Thomas Ryan.

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I wish to record my gratitude first and foremost to my supervisor Mr. Duncan Ochoro who devoted much of his time to supervise the writing of this project through his expert guidance, encouragement and constructive criticisms I was able to complete this arduous task.

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May God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

The human resource is generally acclaimed as the most valuable resource. This is because it is through the human resources that a company can make the most telling contribution to its competitive edge and ultimately, its bottom – line profitability and the realisation of its objectives.

Employees can make a difference to the overall success of their organizations through improving their skills at work. Furthermore, employers find that management is an important component in their organizations if set objectives have to be achieved. In an attempt to improve their competence, employees can aim at obtaining various academic qualifications. The MBA degree is becoming increasingly recognised as a ‘must have’ for those aiming at moving up the corporate ladder.

Of those institutions offering this degree in Kenya, The University of Nairobi has consistently recorded high enrolments for this degree since it’s inception in 1972 and more so, since the introduction of the part –time programme in 1998. A cursory look at the students registered for the programme shows that they are drawn from a wide spectrum of disciplines that are not necessarily business oriented.

This is in spite of the fact that the University of Nairobi offers a wide variety of Postgraduate degrees from which students can choose.

It is these salient features characterizing the MBA degree offered at the University of Nairobi that prompted this study. The research participant included students pursuing the MBA degree in both the part – time and full-time programmes and was aimed at establishing what factors influence students' decision to pursue the MBA degree.

The research considered both full and part-time students as a homogenous population of approximately 921 students. Stratified Random Sampling based on the areas of specialization was used to obtain a proportional representation of the population. Data was collected using a questionnaire in which a four-point Likert's Scale ranging from 'Very important' to 'indifferent' was used to rank the key factors under study. Data was analysed by the use of percentages, tables and charts. Finally, the key factors were condensed by the use of SPSS to determine the most important factors considered by students in choosing to pursue MBA.

The study found out that the significant factors prompting students to pursue the MBA degree included personal development, a desire to achieve a personal goal and to improve their academic qualifications. Other important factors were job related.

These included development of management skills and abilities, acquiring new knowledge in an area of specialization, seeking a qualification that would lead to a promotion in the current job and job security. Lack of employment and the threat of retrenchment in an increasingly competitive business environment were yet other reasons that were driving many people back to the classroom to acquire this important qualification.

On the basis of the finding mentioned, the study reveals a need to conduct similar studies that would have a much wider scope given that this was a case study that considered only the University Of Nairobi.

The need to train managers in the key managerial roles cannot be overemphasized. This is because it is through their expert guidance that organizations thrive and grow.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent times, Kenyan universities have experienced unprecedented increases in enrolment of students wishing to pursue the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree course. The students are drawn from a wide spectrum of disciplines ranging from engineering, medicine, science, arts, education and business itself.

The MBA degree is one of the most popular and sought-after degrees available today. As the world moves to an increasingly corporate and service-based economy, companies have an ever-growing need for business expertise and certain sets of technical skills. An MBA - holder is likely to have those skills and expertise. "Indeed the term MBA has become synonymous with raw business talent. Pay scales have risen accordingly, and overall, the future looks bright for MBA students", (www.degree.net/mba-guide, 22/05/2002).

What is an MBA? (Randall, 2001) defines this degree as a Masters of Business Administration degree granted after one or two years of graduate study at the University level, that provides training in theory and practice of business management. The MBA certificate is basically a document that certifies that one has a competence in all the major functional management roles found in the modern corporate world.

The number of MBA graduates has grown dramatically over the past 100 years since the first graduate business degree was offered in 1900 at Dartmouth College's Amos Tuck School in New Hampshire, USA. There are now about 900 MBA programs offered throughout the world, with about forty of these in Australia. Students are thus ever facing the challenge of deciding which of these programs is best suited to their needs.

A masters degree in business administration involves the study of management -that is, the process of organizing and directing resources which include people, finances, materials and information. The MBA program provides an opportunity to become a business leader by developing skills in ethical decision-making, financial planning, quantitative analysis, policy formulation and interpersonal relationships. It further helps one to understand how these skills are applied in achieving business and organizational goals in an international environment, (Melvin and Booth, 2000).

The MBA is one of the most flexible degree programmes available in many academic institutions today. It prepares students for leadership in organizations, in independent business, and in their own communities. It gives future managers the knowledge, concepts and skills necessary to direct resources to meet specific organizational goals.

The MBA can help one to aim for a more fulfilling career. Its versatility is a special advantage. Although the MBA is not a guaranteed ticket to success, it can provide access to many personal and professional opportunities and can help one to achieve greater responsibility, higher earnings, more job satisfaction and greater visibility and advancement at work and in the community. Given the high value many organizations place on decision-making and problem solving abilities, MBA graduates are most sought after by majority of these institutions to meet these growing needs.

The University of Nairobi is among the Kenyan Universities offering a masters degree in Business Administration. Since the launch of MBA degree programme on full-time basis in 1972, the University of Nairobi has continued to record the largest number of student admissions per annum. The introduction of part-time programme in 1998 has seen the enrolment more than double every subsequent year.

MBA at the University of Nairobi is co-ordinated by the Faculty of Commerce under three main departments:

- Accounting and finance
- Business Administration
- Management Science

On the basis of these departments, students may specialise in any of the nine functional areas of business viz:

- Accounting
- Finance
- Marketing management
- Operations management
- Human resources management
- Management Information Systems
- Strategic management
- International Business management
- Insurance

This study seeks to determine whether a student's decision to pursue MBA at the University of Nairobi is influenced by the range of specialization options on offer among other factors.

In terms of management development, the MBA programme of the university of Nairobi seeks to equip students with the skills, techniques and understanding required for successful managerial careers. In both public and private sectors of the economy. The MBA programme caters for the needs of both students with and without prior knowledge of business training.

This programme specifically aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a rigorous and critical base in key areas of management
- Enhance self-confidence and ability to evaluate business establishments from academic, practical and critical perspectives
- Create awareness on the fast changing local and global business environment
- Provide specialised knowledge of the chosen area of study
- Instill professional approach to problem solving attitude in the management practice

(Faculty of Commerce Handbook, University of Nairobi, 1982)

1.2 Benefits of pursuing the MBA program

Why should someone who is currently employed or who has recently received their bachelor's degree pursue masters in business administration degree? Studies done elsewhere and especially in the western world cites many reasons why individuals opt to pursue a postgraduate degree in business administration. According to Carl Voigt Associate Dean

(UCLA), the experience and discipline learned in an accredited MBA program trains individuals for the rapidly changing global economy. This is because MBA programs are designed to train the generalist to have a deep understanding of the functional areas (such as marketing and finance) but also to understand how all the functional areas fit together. (www.arabamericanbusiness.com/issue3/sr-economy, 22/05/2002)

Other reasons as to why people study for an MBA degree include personal development, promotion or career change and gaining a recognized qualification. People who study for personal development reasons want to acquire critical knowledge which they can apply at their workplace and which will help them manage more effectively in an increasingly complex and changing environment. These are the skills needed by accountants, engineers, nurses, lawyers, technicians, scientists, schoolteachers and others as they are promoted within their organizations.

These people often discover that their original specialized or perhaps technical qualifications do not prepare them to manage complex situations and people. The skills they possess may be very different from those required to be a good manager or supervisor. These people often enroll in an MBA program as a way of supplementing existing specialist skills with a range of general management skills.

It is a way of updating their qualifications and skills so that they can take on these new roles completely and confidently. People who wish to change careers often study for an MBA in the hope of gaining a management position or of starting up their own consultancy. The interdisciplinary nature of an MBA is considered to be its strength for those wanting to manage organizations in a holistic manner. The broad range of subjects studied means that a manager can be able to gain an understanding of how to deal with the many issues, which will arise on a daily basis in their organizations.

Then there are those who believe that the 'piece of paper' is what is important. They believe that employers require an MBA for certain positions and so they obtain one even though they believe that they have acquired the necessary skills 'on the job'. These people are often surprised by what they learn. They find that knowing why they have managed the way they have in the past helps them to do their jobs even better. Most employers believe that a person who has undertaken MBA study has a good level of understanding of the 'Big Picture' and

has obtained the skills, which will enable them to manage in the ever changing complex environment.

Other reasons that have been cited (www.arabamericanbusiness.com/issue3/sr-economy, 22/05/2002) as benefits or advantages of obtaining an MBA degree include the following:-

- ◆ career entry and/ or advancement
- ◆ development of management abilities and business related knowledge
- ◆ personal satisfaction
- ◆ making more money
- ◆ other reasons such as receiving a scholarship or using the MBA to gain entry to other academic programs
- ◆ it increases the self-confidence and personal effectiveness of the person concerned
- ◆ it provides students with a deep understanding of what is required to make organizations more successful.
- ◆ it also equips students to identify and implement the change required to ensure an organization achieves success (or remains successful) within a rapidly changing business environment

Some of the reasons above are born out of the fact that the professional practices of accountants, lawyers, doctors and other healthcare providers (such as physiotherapists) are facing growing pressure to consolidate, to increase in size, to utilize more sophisticated marketing, information technology, customer service and financial strategies as means to achieve business success. Professionals in these fields are resulting to studying MBA in order to reinforce their business skills and hence the profitability of their practices.

MBA graduates are also becoming more and more sought after in the public sector organizations under intense pressure from governments for improved performance at a reduced cost. Thus on-going public sector reforms that embody commercialisation, corporatization, outsourcing and/or privatisation necessitate the skills possessed by MBA graduates if they are to be implemented more effectively.

A recent study done by Accountemps (2000), a global temporary staffing service for accounting and finance professionals, 80 percent of executives responding to the survey said

that a graduate degree in business is still important to reach senior management ranks within most companies. There is also growing evidence that having an MBA not only gives one more leverage in dictating new job titles and salary, but also it gives one leverage in achieving a better balance between work and life outside work, (www.quintcareers.com/MBA-degree, 22/05,2002).

A report on education entitled “ Developing Thinking Analysis Capabilities Key Advantages of MBA” published by the Arab-American business, uses the following table to show the most common reasons cited by students in the USA for choosing a particular school, pursuing the MBA degree and satisfaction with the degree:

Table 1.0: Reasons cited by students in the USA for pursuing MBA, satisfaction with the degree and choice of a particular business school.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING SCHOOL	
School reputation	74%
School location	59%
Formal ranking by major publication	57%
REASONS FOR PURSUING AN MBA	
Increase in career options	75%
Development of management knowledge/ Technical skills	52%
Increase in earning power	51%
REASONS SATISFIED WITH MBA	
Increase in career options	67%
Development of management knowledge/ Technical skills	62%
Opportunity to improve personally	47%
Increase in earning power	44%

Source: Graduate Management Admission Council, 2000

From Table 1.0 above, Students in the USA chose to pursue MBA on the basis factors such as the reputation of the college or graduate school, career choice and advancement and personal development. School reputation was the leading factor in influencing the choice of whether to pursue MBA in a particular Graduate School. This reason accounted for 74% of the choices. School location and a formal ranking by a major publication accounted for 59% and 57% of the responses respectively.

Of those who chose to pursue MBA, 75% of the students aimed at increasing their career options. Other students were motivated to pursue MBA by the possibility of improving their earnings. This pay related reason accounted for 51% of the responses whereas 52% of the students saw MBA as a pathway to developing Management knowledge and skills. Students found satisfaction with MBA if it led to improved career options and when they acquired the relevant management skills and knowledge.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Kenya's development plan of the year 2000 has targeted the country to industrialise by the year 2020. To realize this dream, human capital development was cited as a crucial impetus in all sectors of the economy. This calls for productive and efficient managers to drive the economy towards this goal. As a response to this goal, we have seen higher education in Kenya expand at a relatively high rate.

The University of Nairobi has been involved in the training of managers at all levels since 1972, through its MBA programme. Inception of the part time MBA programme in 1998 saw the number of enrolment in this programme rise very fast. This indicates popularity of this programme and the job market demand. Unfortunately, increased enrolment does not match with expansion of facilities. There have been concerns that this imbalance may compromise the quality of the program. However, this has not affected the enrolment numbers as more and more students seek enrollment.

Furthermore, pursuit of any training programme calls for investment in terms of time and money on the part of the student. It is therefore important to know whether the cost for the programme justifies the students' expectations. This study seeks to establish factors that prompt individual students to opt for this programme at the University of Nairobi.

Before one considers enrolling into this programme, the following questions may be important; when is it appropriate to enroll for MBA? What should one consider before joining the Programme? Is it worth the time, effort and cost? Does the increased enrolment compromise the quality standards of this degree at the University of Nairobi? These among other questions lead us to the following objectives of this study.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to establish key factors that influence students' to pursue MBA degree at the University of Nairobi.

Specifically, the study will look at the factors behind the recent explosion in admission figures of those pursuing the MBA degree in the University of Nairobi. (See Appendix 1)

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of the study will be useful to the following stakeholders;

1. Human resource managers in Kenyan organizations will be informed of the personal expectations by those seeking managerial positions so that they can align their job descriptions and organizational climates in favor of the labour market demands.
2. The higher institutions of learning so that they can tailor their training programs to better prepare students for the job market, at the same time meeting their personal expectations

3. The educational policy makers so that they can better understand the needs of those students seeking higher education especially in the business field.
4. Future researchers will also be motivated in carrying out further research in other areas of interest on graduate training in business administration.
5. Society at large will be able to evaluate whether the cost of graduate training in business courses, (which is very high), is eventually justified by the postings that they finally receive on graduating.
6. MBA students: Many MBA students in other countries have confessed that their main reason for obtaining an MBA was not necessarily to improve on their business acumen but because the degree was what was required to “get in the door”, (Jeffrey Pfeiffer, 1998). This has been cited as the wrong reason for seeking an MBA degree. Our MBA students will be able to reassess their objectives for seeking training in MBA in line with the aggregate findings of the study.
7. People or organizations involved in funding higher education such as the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) here in Kenya, to understand the benefits derived from funding students undertaking the MBA degree relative to other studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on the MBA degree in the context of Management Development. This has remained a relatively unexplored area by researchers in Kenya and yet the MBA degree is the main qualification to be attained by those students aiming at management jobs the world over. The present research is meant to fill this gap by exploring the factors that motivate students to pursue MBA and in particular at the University of Nairobi. The chapter looks at both theoretical literature concerning management in general and empirical literature on previous studies concerning the MBA degree.

2.1 Theoretical literature

2.1.1 Management as a Discipline

Since the nineteenth century, rapid industrialization and the growth of capitalism have given rise to the 'separation, extension and dispersion of management processes', (Hales, 1993). The classical and traditional approaches to management as propounded by such theorists as Fredrick Taylor, Henry Fayol and Elton Mayo have thus been expanded to recognize these aspects. Management is now seen as a unique set of activities and responsibilities, (Keeble, 1992). (Torrington et al, 1994) defines management as that group of people employed by organizations to get things done through people.

(Child, 1969) on the other hand, provides one of the most enduring contributions to this debate. He views management from three perspectives:

- ◆ An economic resource performing a set of technical functions associated with the administration of other resources e. g the organization of work.

- ◆ A system of authority through which policies and strategies are translated into the execution of tasks e. g defining roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ An elite social group which acts as an economic resource and maintains an associated system of authority e. g status, power and control over others.

It is important understand the complexity of management as a prerequisite to understanding management development because;

1. Different people at different times have different conceptions of what 'management' is about and this will shape their views about how managers ought to be developed.
2. Development itself must be pragmatic, located, embedded and practiced within what managers themselves consider being their unique organizational context for it to be meaningful.
3. Any development investment or action has to keep pace with and match the 'reality' of what managers actually do and not to be rooted in abstract or rapidly redundant models of what others might think they should do or used to do. Rigidity and inflexibility must be eliminated.

2.1.2 The MBA degree in the context of management development

(Mumford, 1987), defines management development as; 'An attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through a planned and deliberate process'

This process should aim at creating a more holistic, integrated framework for development that incorporates;

- ◆ frameworks for setting, linking and balancing individual and organizational objectives
- ◆ systems for identifying and selecting managers
- ◆ structures to support, motivate and reward
- ◆ plans to enable career progression
- ◆ mechanisms to measure and evaluate performance

(White, Ready, Vicere, 1994)

A cursory look at the kind of skills required of any manager so as to be successful in his/her work shows a wide array of skills. As organizations aim for higher productivity in an increasingly competitive workplace, they must either recruit qualified managerial staff from the marketplace or aim at imparting on their managers the requisite skills through training and development programs, (Beardwell and Holden, 1997). Today, the Kenyan business environment is characterized by rapid transformation in all aspects. This calls for high level Business Administration and Management graduates to guide this change (Munge, 1997).

What is more? Within organizations there is now growing awareness that the managerial role has become a 'critical' component in business strategies designed to deliver competitiveness, change and renewal, (Kanter, 1982; Jackson and Humble, 1994; McClelland, 1994; and Salaman, 1995).

This has led many organizations to review the nature of their managerial assumptions, attitudes and behaviors to determine the degree of 'fit' with strategic goals and the desired levels of business performance, (Fulop, 1991). One way of doing this has been through the training and development of their managerial staff

However, these expectations will remain largely unmet if managers are not provided with the necessary levels of training, commitment, resources, support and encouragement to do their work. In spite of this growing awareness of management as a strategic 'tool', (McClelland, 1994) often there has been a tendency by organizations to isolate management development at the expense of wider environmental, political and social, issues, (Lees, 1992).

A study carried out in the UK and greater Britain by (Hussey, 1988) partly to investigate the most suitable level of education for those aspiring for management positions showed that most companies felt that "...most MBA graduates can cope better under pressure, are more mature, and are more competent than other graduates or potential applicants". Fast movers, such as top MBA graduates, were seen as ideal for these companies. The study further revealed that company culture plays a key role in determining whether to recruit MBA graduates or not. When a company with a hostile culture had recruited an MBA in the past, the predictable failure of the experiment had reinforced the prejudices. An ambitious MBA graduate would rarely remain in a company, which was slow moving, old-fashioned, and

scornful of the methods he/she had learned. It is this dynamism in MBA graduates that is most sought after by employers in progressive organizations.

For the reasons cited above and many others, many organizations consider a qualification in MBA as a prerequisite for recruitment into management positions if their organizations are to cope with the challenges they face at the marketplace competitively.

2.1.3 Goals of management development

(Storey, 1989), cites the following as the reasons as to why management development is undertaken

- ◆ to enable managers to respond effectively to pressures and challenges of organizational change and renewal.
- ◆ as a 'tool' in the pursuit of quality, cost reduction and profitability through excellence.
- ◆ to facilitate the introduction of new roles and responsibilities for managers.

Research has however shown that management development has at times been relatively ineffective in bringing about the desired changes, (Doyle, 1995). This was attributed not only to traditional development approaches but also to structural, political and cultural barriers, which 'interfered' with the organizations' objectives of changing managerial attitudes and behaviours (McClelland, 1994; Molander and Winterton, 1994).

In view of these findings therefore, management development ought to be viewed as a source of competitive advantage and a strategic tool for developing organizational effectiveness. Consequently, as strategic missions, goals and objectives evolve in response to organizational and environmental pressures, so must development processes. It is also true that as managers are developed, new skills, attitudes and behaviours produce new outlooks, perspectives and orientations. These have been observed to 'act-back' on strategic goals and objectives to further change and develop the organization. In practice, a lack of appreciation of the strategic importance of people has contributed to failure in integrating management development processes within the strategic goals and objectives of the business.

In most organizations, identifying, measuring and evaluating management development as a source of competitive advantage is a difficult task, which is often ignored in favour of an ideological commitment to development. A good management development process must therefore ensure that the key competencies in the following areas of activity are inculcated;

- ◆ management of operations
- ◆ management of finance
- ◆ management of people
- ◆ management of information

The MBA degree through the various specializations offered seeks to inculcate competences in the above named key areas.

2.2 Previous Research

Numerous studies have been carried out on MBA students and graduates in various parts of the world. Research done by The Graduate Management admission Council (GMAC, 2000) has shown that in 1965, there were fewer than 10,000 MBA degrees granted to US students. In 1977, this number rose to 48,000 and in 1998, it was 94,000. Even more interesting was the fact that some two thirds of these degrees are awarded not to full-time students, but to part-time or distance-learning students, often subsidized by their employers. Majority of these students comprise people looking to be promoted at their places of work, move to a more rewarding career or even to start their own businesses. According to a survey conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council, about 20 percent of the people who get MBA's are planning to go into business for themselves, (www.degree.net/guides 22,05,2002)

The Survey revealed that the ages of students who undertake the MBA degree lie between about 20 to about 70 years of age. The majority of students are about 30-45 years old. The average age of an MBA student is about 35 years of age. About one third of MBA students are women and the average amount of work experience before commencing study is about 10 years, although this varies immensely. Some programs allow students to commence study immediately after completing undergraduate degree, with little or no work experience but most require students to have completed 3-5 years work as a minimum. In the USA, there are

more women pursuing the degree than men. Furthermore, the majority of the students have a background in the study of Business related subjects (see table below). These statistics are reflected in the table below showing MBA students at the University of Montana, USA:

Table 2.0: MBA student statistics at the University of Montana

MBA STUDENT STATISTICS	
Average age	36 years
Men	46%
Women	54%
Full-time work experience	11 years
Median undergraduate GPA	3.2
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND (as a % of total)	
Business/Commerce	58%
Economics	4%
Social science	6%
Engineering	12%
Mathematics/Computer science	5%
Physical sciences	5%
Life sciences	9%
Humanities	1%
Graduate/multiple degree holders	13%

Source: Graduate Management Admission Council, 2000

Table 2.1 above shows that the majority of students pursuing the MBA degree in the USA are relatively young at only 36 years of age. Women were relatively older than their male counterparts probably owing to the family commitments that occupy them when they are much younger.

When we consider the academic backgrounds of students, those with a Business/Commerce background were the majority at 59%. Humanities and multiple degree holders accounted for a

combined 27% of the students. Other fields such as Mathematics, Economics, Physical and Life Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences accounted for less than 10% each. These statistics are important in understanding the reasons behind students' decisions not only to pursue MBA but also to take up a given specialization.

Another survey was carried out among students and employees in Singapore (Kohl, 1999). This study examined the importance of an MBA degree for promotion or appointment to managerial positions. A questionnaire was administered to 600 organizations and to 120 MBA students yielding a 43.9% response rate.

The objectives of the study were two-fold: to assess employers' and MBA students' perception of the importance of an MBA degree for promotion or appointment to managerial positions Vis-a-Vis other criteria. Secondly, to investigate whether a perception gap existed between employers and MBA students with respect to the importance of an MBA degree.

A survey methodology was used in the research. The first section of the questionnaire comprised of five criteria commonly used by employers for promoting or appointing employees to management positions. These criteria were:

- ◆ Seniority in the firm
- ◆ Relevant experience
- ◆ Relevant university degree
- ◆ Diploma in Business Administration
- ◆ Master of Business Administration (i.e. MBA track record and personal attributes)

These criteria were obtained through interviews with employers in a pilot study. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each criterion on an 8-point scale, with '1' representing 'extremely important' and '8' representing 'extremely unimportant'. This section was designed to measure the respondents' perception of the importance of an MBA vis-à-vis job performance, seniority in the firm, relevant experience, relevant university degree, and diploma in Business Administration, track record and personal attributes such as character.

To investigate whether a perception gap existed between the employers and the MBA students with respect to the criteria for promotion or the appointment to managerial positions,

tests of significant differences were performed. The results of the study indicated that employers and MBA students were generally in agreement with respect to the importance of personal attributes, track record, relevant experience, relevant university degree, seniority in the firm, and diploma in Business Administration for promotion or appointment in to managerial positions. However, descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and Duncan results showed a perception gap between employers and MBA students regarding the importance of MBA. While both employers and MBA students perceived job performance, personal attributes, track record and relevant experience to be the most important criteria, MBA students perceived an MBA degree to be significantly more important than the employers did, (Koh (1999)).

Another study was carried out in the UK between 1989 and 1991 by a newly formed organisation-Prospect Centre, entitled 'Growing an Innovative Work-force'. It was to test a new approach to the design and management of learning. The results revealed the need to educate beyond the job in what are described as 'over-arching capabilities', if individuals within the workforce are to operate effectively. This is because old hierarchical organizations where workers simply took orders and not responsibility are not adequate to meet the challenge of the future, (Kay, 1998).

Other studies (Pfeifer, 1998 and Edward, 2000) have shown that people want more out of their jobs than just money although conventional wisdom would have it that people work for money. Numerous surveys of second year MBA students who frequently graduate with large amounts of debt indicate that money is far from the most important factor in choosing a job or remaining in one. Examples of factors they often cited as to why they retained their low-paying jobs even when they have an alternative of getting higher salaries especially for the more competitive job categories include the following: (Jeffrey Pfeiffer, 1998).

- ◆ Plentiful opportunities to work with the latest and most up-to-date equipment
- ◆ The ease with which they can move back and forth between being a manager and being an individual contributor
- ◆ How much variety there was in the projects they worked on
- ◆ How intelligent and nice the people they worked with were
- ◆ How much the organization cared for and appreciated them

Both experts and researchers agree that consulting firms pay the highest salaries to new MBA graduates. Graduate Management Admission Council's (GMAC, 2000) data show that graduates working in consulting earned a median of \$100,000. Finance/ Accounting jobs paid the next highest median salary, \$85,000. The table below shows the pre and post MBA salaries for different categories of students in a study that was carried out to value the MBA degree in the USA.

Table 2.1: Pre and Post MBA salaries for various categories of students in the USA

PRE- and POST- MBA SALARIES		
Category	Pre-MBA	Post-MBA
Gender		
Male	\$48,000	\$80,000
Female	\$40,000	\$75,000
Mode		
Full- time	\$40,000	\$80,000
Part- time	\$54,000	\$80,000
Executive	\$75,000	\$100,000
Race		
Whites	\$50,000	\$80,000
All others	\$50,500	\$80,000
Age		
27 and under	\$35,000	\$70,000
28 to 34	\$46,400	\$80,000
35 and above	\$65,000	\$85,000
Specialization		
Finance/Accounting	\$45,000	\$85,000
Consulting	\$45,000	\$100,000
General Management	\$46,500	\$80,000
Marketing	\$42,000	\$80,000
Operations	\$43,000	\$80,000

Source: Graduate Management Admission Council, 2000

Table 2.2 above reveals that male students earned significantly higher salaries than their female counterparts, both before and after acquiring MBA qualifications. We can also infer that younger students earned much less than the older ones. This may explain why younger people opt to pursue MBA degree to improve their pay. Consulting as an area of specialisation had the highest pay in post MBA period. Generally the MBA holders had significant salary increment than before.

(Kamau, 2001) carried out a survey of the performance of Daystar University Business Administration and management graduates as perceived by their employers. The study comprised a survey of 40 organizations within the Nairobi metropolitan area where Daystar University Business Administration and Management graduates who qualified between 1989 and 1999 were working. Out of the whole study population, 55% of the organizations responded. This being less than 30 ($n < 30$) a t-test statistic was used to analyse the data in addition to means, frequencies and percentages.

The study indicated that a majority of the Business Administration and Management graduates are employed in the commercial and services sector (66.7%). It was also shown that majority of these graduates entry levels was in middle management (71.4%). The t- test statistic indicated that there was a relatively high correlation (1.645) between areas of training and the expectations of employers in the organizations at 95 percent confidence limits.

Most of the colleges offering MBA programs in our country are not serious in their emphasis of the need for working experience required of a prospective MBA student. This is in direct contrast of most top ranked programs abroad. (Randall, 2001) advises "... the top ranked programs will not even admit you if you don't have at least several years of experience. A freshly minted MBA with little or no job experience is often in a much tougher job hunt than recent college graduate with little or no job experience."

For the job seeker, the question about getting an MBA involves how as much as when. He/she must decide on whether they will keep working while studying for their MBA degree on a part-time program or whether they have the financial resources to quit their jobs for and return after full-time study. They must decide on who will foot the costs and whether they viewed the MBA as part of a career change.

The student will also have to take into consideration the state of the country's economy. This is not only as far as the costs are concerned but also because some people think that it is a good hedge to get an MBA during an economic slowdown rather than face a tough job market. However, when the economy is bad, even having an MBA is no guarantee of obtaining a lucrative job offer. Research (www.quintcareers.com/mba-degree 22/05/2002) carried out in the US showed that enrolment is influenced by the economy and that as the economy turns towards a downturn, both recent graduates and displaced workers head back to earn their MBA's.

A survey (www.qmac.com/research/surv.at.us.html 22/05/2002) conducted to determine the program type, degree, and area of study showed that of those enrolled in a graduate business school, 82% are full-time students of which 91% are taking MBA. Top areas of specialisation are Finance (25%), General Management (14%), Marketing (12%), and Strategy (11%). Out of the total applicants/enrolled, 77% indicated an increase in career options as a reason for pursuing MBA; 66% indicated the development of management knowledge/technical skills; and 64% indicated to increase their earning power. These reasons continue to be predominant for pursuing an MBA qualification even here in Kenya.

The MBA Status Survey, 2001 research further showed that because of the growing number of graduate business programs that confer more and more MBA degrees, the degree itself is not as special or highly valued as it used to be in the past. An MBA alone will not be the magic key to the door of career and job-hunting success. (www.qmac.com/reserch/sur.at.us.html 22/05/2002).

There is a great bulk of studies on school-going behaviour that focus on the factors determining whether or not to pursue higher education. Leslie and Brinkman, (1987) for example, summarize more than two dozen studies investigating the effects of college cost on average enrolment levels. More recent examples include; McPherson and Schapiro (1991), and Kane and Spizman (1994). Another study by Bezmen and Depken (1998), examined how application rates at 772 United States of America colleges responded to school characteristics like costs, size and state unemployment rates. Whereas, Wetzel, O'Toole and Peterson (1998), Erhenberg and Sherman (1994), Moore, Studenmund and Slobko (1991) focussed on enrolment or application rates for a single institution.

Only a handful of studies have used data on individuals to model a student's choice among discrete set of alternative institutions. (Kohn, Manski, and Mundel, 1976) used the SCOPE (School to College: Opportunities for Post-Secondary Education) survey to develop a Conditional Logit model for the choice of the model and finally, the decision whether to attend the college or not. They found out that tuition, room and board costs, and the distance from home negatively affect the likelihood of choosing a particular graduate school. The quality of the graduate school, as measured by the average ability of its students, increased the likelihood it would be chosen. Another study by Manski and Wise, (1983) found tuition and scholarship aid to be significant determinants of whether to attend a given graduate school and which one to choose. Forgone earnings were a significant impediment to choosing any of the school alternatives.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out the research methodology that will be adopted so as to meet the objectives stated in chapter one of this study. The research design, the population of interest, sample, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques are discussed.

3.1 Research Design

This is an exploratory research. It is aimed at finding out why MBA students at the University of Nairobi find it necessary to acquire the degree. It further seeks to establish the reasons behind the increased enrolment into the course and especially since the inception of the part-time Programme in 1998.

3.2 Research Setting

Among the Kenyan Universities offering a Masters degree in Business Administration are: -

- ◆ University of Nairobi
- ◆ Kenyatta University
- ◆ Moi university
- ◆ United States International University (USIU)

Of these, the University of Nairobi records the largest number of student admissions for the MBA course per annum. It started offering MBA as early as 1972 on a full-time basis. The part-time Programme was launched in 1998. The choice of the University of Nairobi as the institution of study was made in consideration of the pivotal role it plays as the Centre of knowledge in Kenya's higher education system (given that it is the oldest university).

The fact that the University of Nairobi also offers a wide variety of postgraduate courses was also considered since students have a wide variety of courses from which to choose from and they do not necessarily have to study MBA.

3.3 Population

The target population of this study comprised of all those who are currently registered in the MBA Programme (2001/2002 academic year) at the University of Nairobi's Faculty of Commerce.

This comprised of the following groups of students: -

- First year full-time - 48
- Second year full-time -34
- Part-time students - 839 (As of April, 2002)

The study has considered part-time and full-time students as a homogeneous population. This is because part-time students are comprised largely of older working-class students and the full-time students are younger, and sometimes even fresh graduates with no working experience at all. However, with time the differences within the two groups are becoming more and more obscure as the Faculty of Commerce moves towards integrating the two programmes.

3.4 Sample frame

To make the sample representative, caution was taken so that the units were not picked from concentrated areas. Stratified Random sampling was deemed appropriate to obtain a sample from the population. The total population of approximately 921 students was stratified according to their areas/subjects of specialization. This gave strata based on the subjects below:

- Finance/Accounting
- Strategic Management
- Marketing Management
- Human Resource Management
- Management Information System
- Operations Management
- Insurance

- International Business Management

Based on the above, a Stratified Random Sample of 100 taking care of proportional representation was considered. This conforms to the widely held rule of the thumb that to be representative, a sample should have 30 or more test units, (Wayne and Terrell, 1995). (Cooper and Emory, 1995) also observed that in a population of 10 million, a sample of 2 million would be misleading while a sample of 1000 drawn in a proper manner from the same population can be more accurate.

This sampling technique was carefully chosen to minimise on cost and time, thus giving acceptable results. This is because the researcher avoids the possibility of either double-counting or erroneous omissions and lack of representation of some members in the population.

3.5 Data collection methods.

The secondary data used in the study comprised of information on enrolment records of MBA students in the faculty of Commerce since the inception of the course in 1972 (see Appendix 2). Course information material and subsidiary information on the MBA course at the university of Nairobi was obtained from specific yearbooks published by the university.

The primary data used in the study on the reactions of students to questions regarding the importance of an MBA course to them was collected using questionnaires consisting of both closed and open-ended questions. (See Appendix 4). A four point Likert's scale was used to rank the factors being studied from the most important to the one the respondents were indifferent to. The researcher oversaw the administration of all the questionnaires. This ensured coverage of all relevant information not explicitly covered in the questionnaire as well as explaining to the students any parts of the questionnaire not clear to them.

3.6 Data analysis and findings.

Once data had been collected, the questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Data were then analysed by use of tables, charts and percentages to represent the response rate and information on the other variables that the study considers. These tools were selected because of their clarity, preciseness, ease of understanding and interpretation.

Factor analysis using SPSS was used to analyse data and make conclusions and recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. Analysis is done on the basis of the questions contained in the questionnaire. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are analyzed vis-à-vis their decision to pursue MBA. Other important areas such as the academic backgrounds and areas of specialization are also considered. Tables and graphs showing the percentages of students falling under each category of study were used to represent data. Finally factor analysis using SPSS is carried out to determine the key factors by condensing the twenty factors under consideration that prompt students to enroll for MBA.

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 61 out of 100 questionnaires distributed were returned. This accounts for 61% response rate, which is considered more representative as it caters for all the targeted groups. All responses were coded and descriptive statistics used to analyse the data. Out of the collected data, twenty respondents are in the first year of study whereas the remaining 41 are in their second year. See the table below:

Table 4.1: Number of respondents by Gender and Marital Status

Marital Status		N = 61	
Gender	Single	Married	Total
Male	23	18	41
Female	12	8	20
Total	35	26	61

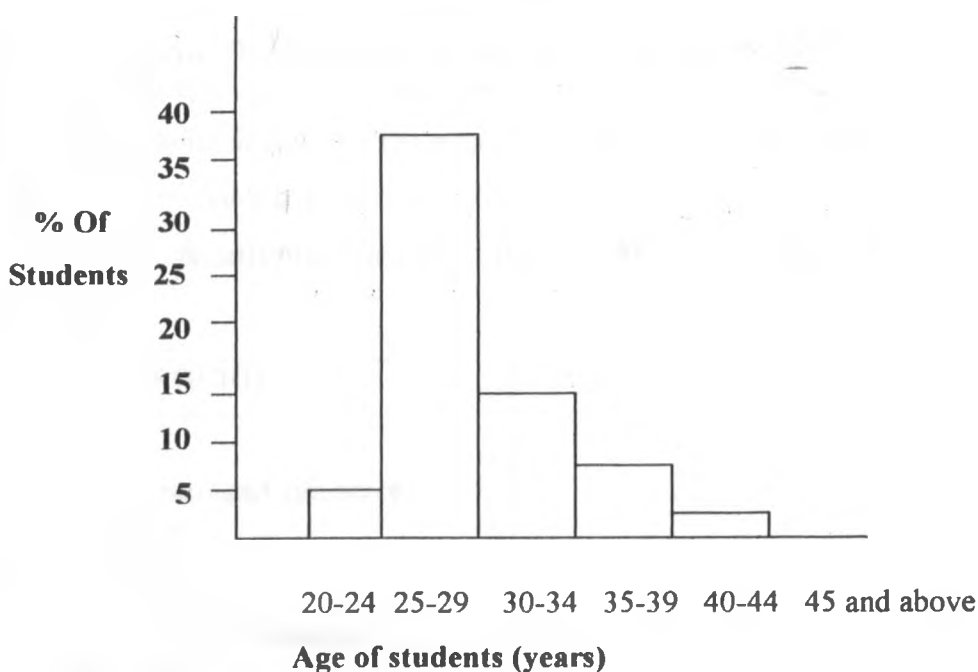
Source: Field Data

Only a handful of studies have used data on individuals to model a student's choice among discrete set of alternative institutions. (Kohn, Manski, and Mundel, 1976) used the SCOPE (School to College: Opportunities for Post-Secondary Education) survey to develop a Conditional Logit model for the choice of the model and finally, the decision whether to attend the college or not. They found out that tuition, room and board costs, and the distance from home negatively affect the likelihood of choosing a particular graduate school. The quality of the graduate school, as measured by the average ability of its students, increased the likelihood it would be chosen. Another study by Manski and Wise, (1983) found tuition and scholarship aid to be significant determinants of whether to attend a given graduate school and which one to choose. Forgone earnings were a significant impediment to choosing any of the school alternatives.

The data shows that 67% of the interviewed students were male while the rest, 33% were female. The majority of the respondents were single, accounting for 35 out of the total 61. From the data, it can be deduced that most people prefer to pursue their MBA degree before marriage due to commitments involved in bringing up the family. The same reason could explain why there is lower enrolment for female students, given that they play a crucial role in family management. In fact, married female students are eight as compared to 18 for males.

The number of single female students accounted for 60%, which is more than married females. Married male students accounted for 67% of the total respondents. Single male students were significantly higher than their female counterparts. This compares well with inferring that single people find it easier to pursue MBA irrespective of their gender.

Figure 1: Bar Chart Shows Students by AGE



This analysis indicates that majority of MBA students are aged between 25 and 29 years. In fact, the data results show that none of the respondents falls in the 45 and above age brackets. People are building their careers after completing their first degrees in these age brackets. Below is table 4.2 that explains the above analysis:

Table 4.2: Respondents by Gender, Marital Status and Age

AGE (Years)	SINGLE		MARRIED	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
20 - 24	1	3	0	0
25 - 29	21	5	5	4
30 - 34	2	1	6	6
35 - 39	0	0	0	6
40 - 44	0	2	0	0
45 - 49	0	0	0	0
Total	24	11	11	16

N = 61

Source: Field Data

The table clearly shows that there are fewer MBA female students in the 30-39 age bracket as compared to males. These analyses are crucial in finding out the factors behind younger people pursuing their MBA than the older ones.

4.2: Academic Background of Students Pursuing MBA

Academic background of an individual is quite important in determining ones decision to pursue a graduate degree and the area of specialisation. To substantiate this introduction, see the results in the table below:

Table 4.3: Academic Background of MBA Students at the University of Nairobi

BACKGROUND	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Business Studies/Commerce	15	25
Economics	5	8
Humanities	20	33
Social Sciences	6	10
Physical/ Health Sciences	4	6
Engineering	5	8
Maths/Computer Sciences	3	5
Multiple degree holders	3	5
Total	61	100

N=61

Source: Field Data

From the table, most MBA students have humanities background, standing at 33% of the total sample size. Business Studies and Economics combined yielded the same results. This shows that students lacking a business orientation account for 67% of the total. It further indicates that MBA is quite important in providing relevant knowledge and skills necessary for managerial positions foreseen by the respondents.

Another aspect relevant aspect of the respondents looked at was academic qualifications. This measures the quality and ability of the selected students to pursue the MBA successfully. This also affects directly the quality of managers in various institutions. The table below shows that all the respondents had at least a first degree:

Table 4.4: Academic qualifications of MBA students

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	0	0
Bachelor's degree	52	85
Graduate degree	4	7
Multiple degrees	5	8
Total	61	100

N=61

Source: Field Data

Further analyses show that majority of MBA students admitted at the University of Nairobi had attained a minimum of Second Class Honors, Upper Division. This reflects how competitive this course is, meaning that only highly qualified students are admitted.

Area of Specialization in the analyses became quite important to capture the market demand of MBA in the Kenya's job market. The results in the table below, shows that Finance and Accounting Options had the highest number of enrolment. They accounted for 41% of the total sample size. Insurance, International Business Management, and Management Information Systems Options recorded the least number of respondents, accounting for less than 3% of the total sample. See table 4.5 below that describes the above analyses:

Table 4.6 Work Experience of respondents

Years of Experience	Number of Respondents
Less than 1	8
1 – 4	15
5 – 9	16
10 – 14	7
15 – 19	1
Above 20	1
Total	61

N = 61

Source Data: Field Data

4. 4 Reasons For Pursuing MBA

Most of the respondents interviewed had many and diverse reasons as to why they chose to pursue their MBA program at the University of Nairobi (See Appendix 3). The most common reason identified was personal development, fulfillment or interest in a particular field. Other key factors were job related. These included; career change, career entry, and requirements by the employer, seeking promotion and job security.

Other factors were related to the individuals' environment and social life. These consist of family, workplace and global changes. These reasons range from challenges from friends, colleagues, spouse or children, global business trends and the need to understand management skills necessary in the corporate sector.

4. 5 Importance of MBA Degree

In a scale of 1-3, respondents with work were experience asked to indicate how MBA has helped them in carrying out their duties effectively. Out of the total sample size of 61, 37 respondents (61%) showed that the degree has been of great help to their careers. However, a few, accounting for 21(34%), saw little gain in attaining this qualification. This implies that the program has not fully met the students' expectations. Consequently, 72% of the total

respondents rated the University of Nairobi's MBA degree program as satisfactory, 23% as outstanding, and only 5% as unsatisfactory.

4. 6 Suggested Ways to Improve the Program

Given the immense challenges facing managers in the corporate world today, most respondents suggested improvement of the quality of the program to capture issues such as leadership, information technology, and global business practice strategies among others.

Respondents felt that the university should improve the program through reviewing study content, incorporating modern teaching methods, providing adequate and quality facilities, and establishing university-industry linkages. The study content needs to be revised to address management challenges cited above. This is particularly in areas of information technology and business strategies. They proposed that the university should expose their students to the corporate sector challenges through arranged internships during the period of study.

The students also suggested that teaching methods should shift from traditional lecture-notes method to more practical ones like, industrial experience, seminars, field studies and simulations. Respondents noted with concern that in some courses, lecture notes were recycled without revising them to meet the current management demands. Physical facilities were cited as old and inadequate to accommodate students properly.

Factors considered important by students in choosing whether to

Pursue MBA at the University of Nairobi

FACTOR ANALYSIS USING SPSS

Factor analysis is a statistical approach that can be used to analyze interrelationships among a large number of variables and to explain these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors). The statistical approach involving finding a way of condensing the

information contained in a number of original variables into a smaller set of dimensions (factors) with a minimum loss of information (Hair et al., 1992).

The main applications of factor analysis techniques are: (1) to *reduce* the number of variables and (2) to *detect structure* in the relationships between variables, that is to *classify variables*. Therefore, factor analysis is applied as a data reduction or structure detection method (the term *factor analysis* was first introduced by Thurstone, 1931).

In this study, Factor Analysis is used to identify how important the following twenty factors/Variables were considered by students pursuing the MBA degree in The University of Nairobi.

1. Personal Development
2. Promotion
3. Career Entry
4. Career Change
5. Understanding the functional areas of Management
6. Developing Management Skills and Knowledge
7. Achieving a personal Goal
8. To get a Pay rise
9. To make use of a scholarship
10. Lack of Employment
11. To avoid Retrenchment
12. To try something new
13. To learn a new skill
14. To seek Knowledge
15. Pressure from colleagues, spouse or children
16. Availability of a variety of interesting areas of Specialization
17. Requirement by the Employer
18. To start own Consultancy Firm
19. Challenge from friends
20. To improve academic qualifications

Table 4.7.0 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR1	3.86	.35
VAR2	2.70	.94
VAR3	2.95	1.01
VAR4	2.81	1.05
VAR5	3.22	.85
VAR6	3.35	.90
VAR7	3.63	.63
VAR8	2.41	1.01
VAR9	1.94	1.09
VAR10	2.19	1.09
VAR11	1.86	.96
VAR12	2.65	1.09
VAR13	3.03	1.00
VAR14	3.43	.67
VAR15	1.79	.79
VAR16	2.60	.96
VAR17	1.76	.76
VAR18	2.48	1.09
VAR19	2.54	.95
VAR20	3.40	.85

From the descriptive statistics above, most of the respondents consider variables 8 (to get a pay rise), 10 (lack of employment) and 18(starting own consultancy firm) as not being important reasons for pursuing an MBA degree.

Respondents were indifferent with respect to variables 9 (making use of scholarship), 11 (to maintain the current job and/or avoid retrenchment), 15 (due to pressure from spouse, children, friends and colleagues) and 17 (requirement of the employer). They however consider variables 5 (understanding the functional areas of management), 6 (developing management abilities and skills), 13 (to learn a new skill/area of specialization), 14 (to seek new knowledge), 20 (to improve academic qualifications by having an extra degree), 2, (promotion), 3, (career entry), 4, (career change), 12, (to try something new), 16, (availability of a variety of interesting areas of specialization), and 19, (challenge from friends and colleagues) to be important.

Most of the respondents identified variable1, (personal development) and 7, (achieving a personal goal) to be very important in influencing their decision on whether to pursue the MBA course or not.

Factor analysis was done using principal components analysis. This method provides a *unique solution*, so that the original data can be reconstructed from the results. It looks at the total variance among the variables, so the solution generated will include as many factors as there are variables, although it is unlikely that they will all meet the criteria for retention.

The communality estimate for a variable is the estimate of the proportion of the variance of the variable that is both error free and shared with other variables in the matrix. We should not expect that the factors will extract all variance from our items; rather, only that proportion that is due to the common factors and shared by several items. In the language of factor analysis, the proportion of variance of a particular item that is due to common factors (shared with other items) is called *communality*. The communalities generated from the data are shown in the table below.

Table 4.7.1 Communalities

Variable	Initial	Extraction
VAR1	1.000	.639
VAR2	1.000	.741
VAR3	1.000	.640
VAR4	1.000	.784
VAR5	1.000	.704
VAR6	1.000	.733
VAR7	1.000	.743
VAR8	1.000	.609
VAR9	1.000	.728
VAR10	1.000	.766
VAR11	1.000	.722
VAR12	1.000	.687
VAR13	1.000	.698
VAR14	1.000	.726
VAR15	1.000	.596
VAR16	1.000	.645
VAR17	1.000	.738
VAR18	1.000	.603
VAR19	1.000	.566
VAR20	1.000	.734

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



It is clear from table 4.7.1 above that the factors will extract for at least 56.6% of the variance (in respect to variable 19) and at most 78.4% of the variance (in respect to variable 4). Therefore, we can be confident in the extracted factors because they account for most of the variance in the variables.

Determining the optimal number of factors to extract is not a straightforward task since the decision is ultimately subjective. The "eigenvalue greater than one" rule has been most commonly used due to its simple nature and availability in various computer packages. It states that the number of factors to be extracted should be equal to the number of factors having an eigenvalue (variance) greater than 1.0. The rationale for choosing this particular value is that a factor must have variance at least as large as that of a single standardized original variable. The table below shows the extracted factors or components. From the 20 variables, 9 factors were extracted which account for 69% of the total variance.

Table 4.7.2 Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	%Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	%Of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.338	11.692	11.692	2.338	11.692	11.692	1.762	8.812	8.812
2	1.957	9.787	21.479	1.957	9.787	21.479	1.753	8.764	17.576
3	1.836	9.178	30.657	1.836	9.178	30.657	1.646	8.229	25.806
4	1.569	7.846	38.503	1.569	7.846	38.503	1.642	8.212	34.018
5	1.453	7.263	45.766	1.453	7.263	45.766	1.612	8.062	42.080
6	1.309	6.543	52.309	1.309	6.543	52.309	1.561	7.803	49.883
7	1.221	6.103	58.412	1.221	6.103	58.412	1.473	7.367	57.250
8	1.092	5.462	63.874	1.092	5.462	63.874	1.233	6.163	63.413
9	1.025	5.125	69.000	1.025	5.125	69.000	1.117	5.587	69.000
10	.925	4.627	73.627						
11	.884	4.420	78.047						
12	.729	3.645	81.692						
13	.693	3.465	85.157						
14	.629	3.146	88.303						
15	.547	2.737	91.040						
16	.504	2.522	93.562						
17	.417	2.083	95.646						
18	.343	1.713	97.359						
19	.332	1.660	99.018						
20	.196	.982	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Once the factors have been extracted, the next logical step is to determine the method of rotation. The fundamental theorem of factor analysis is invariant within rotations. That is, the initial factor pattern matrix is not unique. We can get an infinite number of solutions, which produce the same correlation matrix, by rotating the reference axes of the factor solution to simplify the factor structure and to achieve a more meaningful and interpretable solution. The idea of simple structure has provided the most common basis for rotation, the goal being to rotate the factors simultaneously so as to have as many zero loadings on each factor as possible.

The simplest case of rotation is an *orthogonal rotation* (consecutive factors extracted are uncorrelated with each other) in which the angle between the reference axes of factors is maintained at 90 degrees. A number of orthogonal rotation procedures have been proposed. The VARIMAX method (this type of rotation is called *variance maximizing* because the criterion for (goal of) the rotation is to maximize the variance (variability) of the "new" variable (factor), while minimizing the variance around the new variable) has been the most commonly used orthogonal rotation procedure. The table below shows the rotated component matrix.

Table 4.7.3 Rotated Component Matrix

	Factors								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
VAR1	.615	3.291E-02	-.234	-.127	-.247	-.158	1.459E-02	-9.681E-02	.305
VAR2	1.587E-03	-4.181E-02	-2.719E-02	-1.992E-02	-7.577E-02	.847	4.579E-02	3.975E-02	.103
VAR3	.539	-.293	8.252E-02	.133	.194	.204	.358	.179	-1.261E-03
VAR4	-.354	.217	-.331	.248	-.129	-.185	.104	-.603	.124
VAR5	.137	.208	.596	-.221	-.367	-.166	-.217	.164	2.970E-02
VAR6	-.168	-9.473E-02	-3.295E-02	2.269E-02	.800	-.163	-9.025E-02	6.982E-02	.121
VAR7	-.113	.784	-4.443E-02	7.385E-02	-.104	2.799E-03	.248	2.368E-02	.186
VAR8	-9.655E-04	-.745	3.979E-03	.108	-4.351E-02	6.514E-02	.169	-4.917E-02	7.276E-02
VAR9	-2.577E-03	.472	3.586E-03	-.124	.521	.325	-.265	-.187	-8.812E-02
VAR10	-.189	.131	-.214	9.231E-02	-5.746E-02	-3.683E-02	9.592E-03	.807	-4.813E-02
VAR11	-1.180E-02	6.764E-02	-7.348E-02	.113	-1.204E-02	.104	.822	-2.864E-02	-.111
VAR12	.118	-.150	.432	.175	.249	-.428	.129	9.134E-03	.415
VAR13	-.197	2.692E-02	.707	.187	.170	-.164	7.948E-03	-.198	-.166
VAR14	7.918E-02	-7.030E-02	4.105E-02	4.231E-02	-5.817E-02	-.130	.148	7.798E-02	-.814
VAR15	-7.715E-02	.197	-4.526E-02	.393	.183	.256	-.542	2.057E-02	3.782E-02
VAR16	4.280E-02	-2.121E-02	5.658E-02	.735	7.548E-02	-.251	-3.649E-02	-.134	-.105
VAR17	.521	.163	.129	-.127	.508	-.210	.300	-.121	-3.268E-02
VAR18	-.729	6.344E-02	-2.088E-02	-7.613E-02	.122	-3.342E-02	9.750E-02	4.868E-02	.180
VAR19	4.748E-02	-.209	.580	.179	-8.939E-02	.364	2.534E-02	-5.457E-02	8.617E-02
VAR20	-7.898E-03	-9.611E-02	.130	.792	-.120	.181	8.861E-02	.144	6.548E-02

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a rotation converged in 22 iterations.

A *factor loading* or *factor structure matrix* is a n by m matrix of correlations between the original variables and their factors, where n is the number of variables and m is the number of retained factors. The meaning of the rotated factors is inferred from the variables significantly loaded on their factors. A decision needs to be made regarding what constitutes a significant loading. A rule of thumb frequently used is that factor loadings greater than .30 in absolute value are considered significant. From the above table the following factor loadings are identified.

Table 4.7.4 Factor Loadings

Factor	Variable(s)
1	1, 3,17,18
2	7,8
3	5,12,13,19
4	16,20
5	6,9
6	2
7	11,7
8	4,10
9	14

Once all significant loadings are identified, we need to assign some meaning to the factors based on the patterns of the factor loadings. To do this, we examine the significant loadings for each factor (column). In general, the larger the absolute size of the factor loading for a variable, the more important the variable is in interpreting the factor. Considering the factor loadings above, the following are considered significant.

Table 4.7.5 Significant Factors Extracted

Factor	Variable(s)
1	Personal development
2	Achieve personal goal
3	To learn a new skill/area of specialization
4	To improve academic qualifications by having an extra degree
5	Developing management abilities and skills
6	Promotion
7	To maintain the current job and/or avoid retrenchment
8	Lack of employment
9	To seek new knowledge

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of this research. The recommendations arising from the findings are set out in term of suggestions for further research. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are discussed as impediments to the research process. Finally, conclusions are made based on the objectives of the study.

5.1 Summary of findings

The key findings of this study are: -

- Individuals pursue MBA for personal development. They set out to achieve a personal goal and to improve their academic qualifications.
- Respondents decided to pursue MBA in order to achieve a qualification that would place them in a better position to compete for the few opportunities at the job market. Job related factors such as developing management skills and abilities, learning a new skill or area of specialization, acquiring new knowledge as result of personal interest in a given subject area and seeking a qualification that will lead to a promotion in the current job also lead other individuals to seek an MBA degree.
- Lack of employment and a desire to avoid retrenchment, which has become an ever-present threat to those who are employed, has also contributed to increased need for an extra qualification such as MBA according to some respondents.

The other findings that relate to the demographic characteristics, the areas of specialization and work experience of the respondents include the following:-

- Majority of the students fall in the 25-29 age bracket

- Students with a humanities background account for the highest number of enrolment in the MBA programme, which stood at 33% of the total sample size. Once enrolled, Finance and accounting options was the most popular attracting 41% of the respondents whereas Insurance and International Business Management were the least attractive options accounting for only 2% of the respondents. Thus availability of a variety of interesting areas of specialization was found to be among the factors that determine student choices at The University of Nairobi. The cumulative percentages of all other non-Business subjects when combined yielded a 66% response rate much higher than both Business Studies and Economics combined. This implies that majority of the respondents had an non-business background, a possible explanation of their desire to acquire management skills and knowledge
- Career entry, career change and job security as motivating factors are best explained by the limited work experience (< 10 years) recorded for most of the respondents.
- Of the total respondents, 81% were employed. They cited career change, career entry, promotion, job retention and employer's requirements as reasons for pursuing the course. For the 19% unemployed students, reasons such as career entry and lack of employment were cited as important.

5.2 Recommendations

This paper critically and empirically sought to analyse the factors considered for graduate degree selection. It mainly focussed on the University of Nairobi. This is not adequate. The study recommends further expansion of areas of study and factors to be included in subsequent studies. It also suggest further research in the quality of the MBA offered at the University of Nairobi for necessary policy decisions, by the institution and prospective managers. There is need to come up with more modern tools of analysis to capture hidden information especially in developing countries. Specifically, future researchers can look at the following key issues: -

- Performance of MBA graduates from the University of Nairobi at their places of work.
- Specific factors that influence the likelihood that the MBA offered in a particular University would be chosen by a majority of students. Such factors could include distance of the University from home or workplace, quality of school, tuition, and physical facilities.

- Decisions Models that would be used to determine not only which University to attend but also how intensively to do so (part-time or full-time).

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Existing literature

The available literature on factors considered important by students intending to pursue MBA degree, were mainly obtained from studies carried out in the United States of America, Britain and Australia. The researcher could not get similar studies carried out in African, and in particular, Kenyan Universities.

Population

Another limitation was concerned with population of study. The sample size could have been large to capture more part time students. However, due to their tight schedule, it proved difficult to capture them. In spite of this limitation, the data collected was considered a sufficient and fair representation of the population under study.

Access to secondary data

Getting secondary data on students' enrolment at the University of Nairobi since inception of the program was very difficult. This is due to the bureaucracy involved and files mix up. Computerised, easy to access data had not been kept and the researcher had to spend a lot of time going through the available written information manually. Even then, the data on enrolment figures was still incomplete.

Cost

For a more detailed study, there is need to increase research money to cater for the enormous costs involved. Whereas this study was partly sponsored by the University, the researcher still had to provide for a large part of the cost. In line with cost, time is was also a limitation.

5.4 Conclusions

The area of management training and development is one of the fastest evolving components of business in the world today. As an inevitable consequence, most people in management today and those wishing to take up management roles are finding it necessary to acquire the requisite qualifications.

Whereas it may be argued that this is an entirely personal decision, there is need to understand the reasons that spur individuals to pursuing various qualifications. This research set out to identify the factors that influence students' decision to pursue the MBA degree because of the observed increase in enrolment trends of those individuals pursuing the degree in the university of Nairobi.

It is evident from the study that the challenges of the modern workplace are driving more and more people back to the classroom to acquire that extra qualification young and old alike. Whereas there may be different reasons for making individuals to choose MBA as an area of study, there is consensus that they are seeking to acquire a qualification that will make them better workers. Personal development, personal goals and the challenges they receive from those who have qualified with a degree like MBA have contributed to individuals' decision-making processes.

The wider environmental impacts because of poor economic performance are also causing concern as people lose their jobs due to the impact of downsizing and retrenchment. Individuals are finding it necessary to acquire a degree like MBA as a buffer to shield them from this risk of job loss. Young, fresh graduates are also seeking MBA due to lack of current job engagements and a weapon to face the competition for the available jobs.

It is clear from the study that as long as the trends observed above continues affecting the job market, the observed increase in enrolments for MBA will continue rising into the foreseeable future.

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APPENDIX 1

ENROLMENTS FOR MBA STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (1972 – 2002)

ACADEMIC YEAR	No. OF STUDENTS IN 1 ST YEAR	No. OF STUDENTS IN 2 ND YEAR	TOTAL	No. OF GRADUANDS
1972	12	-	12	-
1973	14	8	22	8
1974	15	14	29	7
1975	26	14	40	6
1976	15	15	30	10
1977	15	15	30	2
1978	15	15	30	0
1979	12	12	24	4
1980	14	12	26	9
1981, 82, 83	12	27	39	16
1984	NOT	AVAIL	BLE	22
1985	NOT	AVAIL	BLE	11
1986	NOT	AVAIL	BLE	13
1987	25	NOT	AVAILABLE	13
1988	NOT	AVAIL	BLE	14
1989	29	16	45	19
1990	31	19	50	16
1991	45	17	62	19
1992	44	25	69	25
1993	16	9	25	26
1994	20	16	36	9
1995	22	11	33	27
1996	32	14	46	14
1997	26	22	48	20
1998	26	20	142*	34
1999	21	20	253*	47
2000	22	22	571*	89
2001	48	34	839*	-
2002			-	

Source: Enrolment records: University of Nairobi, Faculty of Commerce

NOTE: The figures in asterisks include the part –time students.

APPENDIX 2:
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (FOC),
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
P.O BOX 30197,
NAIROBI.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN -

Dear Respondent,

REF: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, Faculty of Commerce. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree in Master of Business Administration, I am conducting a study entitled; **"FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENTS' DECISION TO PURSUE AN MBA DEGREE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI"**

I am confining my study to postgraduate students pursuing the MBA degree in the University of Nairobi in both the full and part-time programs.

For the purpose of enhancing my research work, I wish to collect data through the questionnaire method. I shall be grateful if you would kindly extend to me the help I may need to have this questionnaire completed. Need less to say, this information is purely for the purpose of my project work and I pledge to you that it shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

Thank you for your valuable cooperation in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

MARY .N. MBATHA
D/61/7210/2000

MBA CANDIDATE

MR.DUNCAN .O. OCHORO
SUPERVISOR

APPENDIX 3

REASONS FOR PURSUING MBA

Reason **(No. of Respondents)**

Reason	4	3	2	1
Personal Development	54	9	-	-
Promotion	14	24	14	7
Career Entry	22	23	9	3
Career Change	20	14	13	2
Understanding Mgt	27	24	6	1
Developing management. Skills	36	20	1	-
To adhere a personal Goal	43	16	-	-
Get a Pay rise	9	20	18	9
To make use of Scholarship	4	8	14	31
Lack of Employment	6	10	16	23
To avoid retrenchment	4	10	17	29
Try something new	19	12	19	7
Learn a new skill	25	22	9	3
Seek Knowledge	33	26	2	
Due to pressure (Colleagues, Spouse children)	1	9	25	24
Interesting specialization	11	23	19	7
Requirement by employer	1	9	25	26
To start own consultancy	14	17	15	14
Challenge from friends	8	25	19	6
To improve Academic grounds	35	20	3	2

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS UNDERTAKING THE MBA DEGREE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

PART 1: Background of the Student

(Please help to answer the following questions)

1. What is your year of study?

.....

2. Please tick the age bracket in which you fall

- 20 to 24 years ()
- 25 to 29 years ()
- 30 to 34 years ()
- 35 to 39 years ()
- 40 to 44 years ()
- 45 to 49 years ()
- 50 to 54 years ()
- Above 55 years ()

3. What is your gender? (Please tick)

Male () Female ()

4. Please indicate your marital status

Single () Married ()

5. What is your academic background? (please tick)

- Business/ commerce ()
- Economics ()
- Social Science ()
- Engineering ()
- Mathematics/ Computer Science ()
- Physical Sciences ()
- Biological Science ()
- Humanities ()
- Multiple degree holders ()
- Other (please specify) ()

6. Please indicate your highest educational qualification.

- Diploma ()
- Bachelors degree ()
- Postgraduate degree ()

7. For those who are graduates, please indicate your undergraduate qualification.

- First class honours ()
- Second class honours, upper division ()
- Second class honours, Lower division ()
- Pass ()

8. What is your area /subject of specialisation? (For those who have already chosen/ OR
What subject/area of specialisation do you intend to choose? (For those who are yet to
choose)

- Finance/Accounting- ()
- Strategic Management- ()
- Marketing Management- ()
- Human Resource Management- ()

- Management Information System- ()
- Operations Management- ()
- Insurance- ()
- International Business Management ()

9. What prompted you to choose this subject/area and not any of the others?.....

PART 2

1. Are you employed? (Please tick)

Yes () No ()

2. If yes, is your employer aware that you are pursuing the MBA degree?

Yes () No ()

3. For how long have you worked? (Please tick as appropriate)

- Less than 1 year ()
- Between 1 to 4 years ()
- Between 5 to 9 years ()
- Between 10 to 14 years ()
- Between 15 to 19 years ()
- Over 20 years ()
- Not at all ()

4. For those with work experience, how do you consider work experience as a pre-qualification for those intending to pursue the MBA degree?

- Very important ()

- Important ()
- Indifferent ()
- Not important ()

5. What is your position and level of management in your place of work?

(a) Title:.....

- (b) Level: (i) Top Management ()
- (ii) Middle Management ()
- (iii) Lower Management ()

6. Please indicate how important the following reasons were to your decision to pursue an MBA?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Indifferent
	4	3	2	1
1. Personal development	()	()	()	()
2. Promotion	()	()	()	()
3. Career entry	()	()	()	()
4. Career change	()	()	()	()
5. Understanding the functional areas of management	()	()	()	()
6. Developing management abilities and skills	()	()	()	()
7. To achieve a personal goal	()	()	()	()

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 8. To get a pay rise | () | () | () | () |
| 9. Making use of a scholarship | () | () | () | () |
| 10. Lack of employment | () | () | () | () |
| 11. To maintain the current job/
and avoid retrenchment | () | () | () | () |
| 12. To try something new | () | () | () | () |
| 13. To learn a new skill/area
of specialization | () | () | () | () |
| 14. To seek knowledge | () | () | () | () |
| 15. Due to pressure from
spouse, children friends
or colleagues | () | () | () | () |
| 16. Due to the availability
of a variety of interesting
areas of specialization | () | () | () | () |
| 17. Requirement of the
employer | () | () | () | () |
| 18. Starting own consultancy
firm | () | () | () | () |

19. Challenge from friends
colleagues () () () ()

20. To improve academic
qualifications by having
an extra degree () () () ()

21. Any other (please specify).....

6. For those who are working, to what extent has the MBA programme helped
you do a better job?

- To a large extent ()
- To some extent ()
- Very little ()
- Not at all ()

11. Considering everything, how would you rate the MBA Programme offered
by the University of Nairobi?

- I. Outstanding ()
- II. Satisfactory ()
- III. Unsatisfactory ()

12. Please give any suggestions on how the MBA degree programme offered at the University of
Nairobi can be improved to effectively meet your
expectations.....

.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION