

Academic Performance and Application Level of Acquired Learning and Student Outcomes from MBA Courses towards the Attainment of Personal Growth

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Abstract—Application of learning from attending graduate school is a good manifestation of the immediate utilization of the acquired knowledge and skills to the work assignment. This study aimed to determine the academic performance and application level of acquired learning outcomes from MBA Courses towards the attainment of personal growth. Descriptive type of research was utilized in the study. Results revealed that the currently enrolled MBA students have an academic performance rating of average with high application of MBA courses in achieving personal growth in terms of measuring their competence as well as application in their workplace specifically in utilizing the acquired learning from International Business Management and Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective. High application levels of acquired learning and student outcomes from the MBA courses were achieved specifically in building relationships to support group effectiveness. There is a possibility that the level of application of learning and student outcomes could influence the personal growth of the MBA students in terms of competence.

Keywords— Business, MBA courses, learning and student outcomes, competence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Part of the lifelong learning process is attending graduate school for advanced studies in any specific discipline. One of these is the Master in Business Administration program, considered as one of the most popular graduate degree programs being taken by most professionals even from the fields of engineering, education, hospitality, medicine and among others. Business schools are continuously giving the graduate students an edge to become future managers and entrepreneurs. The performance of the students is considered important part of monitoring their development in the program. Academic performance is viewed as a measure on the capability of the students in accomplishing specific task [1] only in certain part of their educational undertakings. It is the result of consolidated classroom activities through discussion, presentation, examination [2] and recitation as well as field and home works through case studies and scientific research outputs. Students take responsibility for achieving their full potentials in the learning process [3].

Performance is determined and quantified through various types of assessment and evaluation, informing the students of the numerical value on how they perform academically for a specific term. The measure of academic performance in an Outcomes-based environment [4], [5], [6] as assessed through

the evidence of achieving the intended learning and student outcomes [7], [8]. This study is anchored in the Theories of Learning Outcomes of Kraiger, Ford and Salas [9] who proposed that learning during training may be classified into one of the three types of outcomes: cognitive, skill-based, and affective. In addition, each type of outcome includes particular categories and foci of measurement.

Pursuing advanced graduate studies is like climbing a ladder and seeing what opportunities are awaiting to be taken on the other side of the wall. It is not always an assurance that after taking the Master's degree, there will be a grand take off for the graduates in their professional careers. Education is a never ending development which can give new meaning and direction [10]. Acquiring and applying the higher order thinking skills [2] in the workplace during the course of action and in the process of completing the degree serve as a good habit for the knowledge and skills to be enhanced. This is a manifestation and evidence of the direct outcomes of the courses learned from the classroom and off-campus activities. Utilizing the written theories and principles into practice is always the best attempt to learn more from the experience. Graduate School students not need to wait to finish the degree before they can actually apply the knowledge they learned from the MBA program in any business related activities.

Setting good career goals drives the motivation of the learners to achieve certain direction guided with proper perspective and life's orientation. Personal and professional goals are both important part in achieving the vision and mission of any organization. Every employee should contribute to the attainment of goals and objectives of the company; therefore, meeting the demand of any work environment would be the strength of the employees to become assets rather than liabilities. Like in the tourism business industry, it starts to see the need of a more sophisticated approach to human resource management and this is reflected in a new approach to education and training of the workforce [11] through the development of human capital [12].

Graduate degree programs like Master in Business Administration help the students set their targets and be an instrument in achieving their personal goals in appropriate and professional manner. MBA is one of the most preferred career choices, students make to pursue their post-graduation studies [13]. Making things possible in the execution of any strategic plans of the organization is a form of positive attitude that triggers and brings the job performance of the employees into higher level of achievement. Giving them the chance to demonstrate their potential and apply what they have learned in the MBA program might keep the management of the targets

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realizable in different approaches. This is also part of the indirect assessment of learning and student outcomes based on constructivist methods [10] to examine certain level of competence to take leadership roles.

Competencies are identified knowledge, skills, abilities and personalities that impact the success of work performance of employees and business organizations [14]. Likewise, Valdez [15] noted that the curriculum prepares the graduates to demonstrate the core competencies expected of them in the workplace and must be supported by activities which are in the forms of actual experiences outside the classroom that could provide better learning and understanding of the difference between principles and practice [16].

This study explores the gap between the actual and immediate application to the work environment of the acquired learning and student outcomes of the students from their completed MBA courses. This would provide insights for effective and efficient management of the educational setting of objectives for the Graduate School. Supporting adequate input to the teaching and learning processes in an Outcomes-Based Environment in the graduate programs would provide a sustainable curriculum development leading towards a competitive edge for the MBA students who take advantage of the opportunities to become catalysts in building a progressive nation.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to determine the academic performance and application level of acquired learning outcomes from MBA Courses towards the attainment of personal growth. Specifically, it aims to determine the academic performance of the MBA students during SY 2014-2015; to determine the level of application of MBA courses in the work place and in the attainment of personal growth; to determine the application level of acquired learning and student outcomes from the MBA courses; to determine if there are significant relationships between the academic performance and the application level of MBA Courses in the workplace and personal growth; to determine if there are significant relationships between the application level of acquired learning and student outcomes from the MBA courses and the attainment of personal growth.

III. METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive-survey type of research method. This is appropriate in the present study to illustrate and discover some characteristics that might be considered common or rare among the MBA students that will particularly describe the level of application of MBA courses to the attainment of their personal growth.

Participants

This study focused on the 34 MBA students of LPU-Batangas presently enrolled during the third trimester of AY 2015-2016 with at least 12 units earned. Total population of the students served as the actual respondents. Students who haven't completed the 12 units were not included in the study because they cannot fully evaluate the application of what they have learned in the MBA courses initially offered to them. The

study determined the profile of the MBA students in terms of number of units earned, job position and length of service in the current position that served as secondary data in supporting the result of analysis.

TABLE 1. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Number of Units Earned	f	%
Less than 24 units	13	38.2
24 units and above	21	61.8
Position		
Rank and File	18	52.9
Mid-career/Supervisory	16	47.1
Length of Service		
5 years and below	22	64.7
6 years and above	12	35.3

There are 21 or 61.8 percent of the MBA students have completed 24 units of their MBA program while 13 or 38.2 percent have less than 24. Meanwhile, there are 18 of them have in the rank and file position in the organization and 16 or 47.1 percent are in the mid-career and supervisory position and 22 or 64.7 percent with a length of service of 5 years and below while 12 or 35.3 percent, 6 years and above, in their current job assignments. The profile variable is not considered as part of the objective because based on the preliminary test of differences on these variables it shows that the variations between groups are considered not significant.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used in the study to gather pertinent data about the level of application of MBA courses to the attainment of career goals of the students. The instrument was adapted from the Institutional Intended Learning Outcomes (IILO) and the Student Outcomes of MBA program. It was content-validated by the Program Dean of Business Administration, Assistant Vice-President for Academics and Research and one Language teacher. The checklist of the MBA courses was used to identify its level of application in the workplace to see how these courses are being utilized by the students immediately or having plans of utilization in the future. Only ten (10) courses were included in the study because these are the only courses have already taken by the participants which include: Business law, Current Trends in IT, Statistical Method in Administration, Research Method, Managerial Economics, Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective, Operation Management, Human Resource Management, International Business Management, and Corporate Planning.

Procedure

Names of the MBA students were obtained from the Office of the Graduate School. The respondents were informed regarding the purpose of the study. The data gathered were treated with strict confidentiality and were solely used for the purpose of this study. Questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers before the end of third trimester AY 2015-2016.

Data Analysis

Weighted mean, frequency count and percentage were used to describe the profile and the level of application of MBA courses towards the attainment of personal growth.

Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was utilized to test the relationship between academic performance and level of application of MBA courses because both data types have interval level of measurement.

The given scale was used to describe the academic performance of the MBA students: 1.00 – 1.25: High; 1.26 – 1.50: Average; 1.51 – 1.75: Low; below 1.75: very Low. Meanwhile, another scale was used to describe the result of the survey regarding the level of application of the MBA courses to the students' workplaces and general application of MBA courses to personal growth: 1.00 – 1.49: Strongly Disagree (SD)/ Very Low (VL); 1.50 – 2.49: Disagree (D)/ Low (L); 2.50-3.49: Agree(A)/ High (H); 3.50- 4.00: Strongly Agree (SA)/ Very High (VH).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 2. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE MBA STUDENTS

	Mean	VI	Rank
Business law	1.41	A	7.5
Current Trends in IT	1.41	A	7.5
Statistical Method in Administration	1.06	H	1
Research Method	1.50	A	9.5
Managerial Eco	1.36	A	6
Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective	1.21	H	2.5
Operation Management	1.25	H	4
Human Resource Management	1.21	H	2.5
International Business Management	1.50	A	9.5
Corporate Planning	1.25	H	4
Composite Mean	1.30	A	

Table 2 presents the academic performance of the MBA students in the courses they have taken. The MBA students who finished the Statistical Method in Administration obtained the highest performance rating of 1.06 followed by Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective (1.21) and Human Resource Management (1.21). Likewise operations management (1.25) and corporate planning (1.25) which obtained high performance rating. However, Research Method and International Business Management obtained the least average performance rating of 1.50. The overall academic performance of the currently enrolled MBA students is average with a mean value of 1.30. Results imply that the MBA students have provided quality outputs to satisfy the requirements of the professors based on the grading system. This is the amount of knowledge derived from learning [17] which the MBA students have received from their professors with good grades that demonstrate their ability and achievement to carry out tasks remarkably.

Application of MBA Courses in the Workplace

There is a very high application of International Business Management (3.75) course in the respective work place of the MBA students followed by Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective (3.67) and Operational Management (3.50).

The role of finance and the management of financial resources in the international organization are also considered along with their supporting systems [18]. Possessing the right knowledge and information on how international businesses operate on various perspectives and areas of management is an advantage for every individual employee to participate in discussions and brainstorming sessions of the group on improving the performance of the organization in the world

market. Philippine micro scale businesses need more people who can share their resources to uplift the demand of their products to global market.

Meanwhile, there is high application of the following MBA courses to the respective work places of the MBA students: Business Law (3.44), Managerial Economics (3.38) and Human Resource Management (3.38). Effective resource management can deliver competitive advantage; organizations must manage people, information, knowledge and technological resources along with tangible goods and materials if they are to be responsive, innovative, effective and efficient [18]. The experience of the MBA students in studying business law and managerial economics would always be of great help to understand the basics of managing business operations in accordance with the national and international law so that they could abide with the requirements of various agencies like Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue. Managing human resources is always important part of every business to maintain good people in a certain department or work unit. It is a leadership role of everyone in giving people with proper treatment and appropriate learning experience that would lead to personal and career development relevant to the attainment of the organization's vision.

However, Research Methodology (3.33), Cost Management (3.33), Current Trends in IT (3.11) and Statistical Methods in Administration (2.56) obtained the least MBA courses being applied to their work assignments. The composite mean score of 3.27 implies that there is high application of MBA courses in the work places of the students. Not all employees are being given the task to do actual research assignment but only few can be assigned to perform such duty due to its complicated process. Tichacek [19] emphasized that cost as the standard measure of project success—having higher visibility and requiring extremely effective methodologies for managing and communication. Cost management is usually assigned to accounting department and not all MBA students are handling direct positions related to finances of the company, therefore, this course is not highly applicable to their work places.

General Application of MBA Courses in Achieving Personal Growth

MBA students strongly agree that their completed MBA courses helped them in achieving personal growth in terms of learning new skill (3.55) and communicating more effectively (3.51). Organizing daily schedule more efficiently (3.45) and developing creativity in the workplace (3.43) were also achieved through the MBA program while eliminating tolerations or problems at work (3.12) was considered as the least achieved personal growth. Personal skills are congruent with challenges being confronted result in an inevitable sense of personal growth from the "stretching" of skills and confidence in using those skills [20]. The MBA program gives them the sense of personal development that they need to gain confidence to communicate their ideas and opinions for them to learn new skills that are beneficial to present work assignment.

They strongly agree that they become more organized with daily goals (3.50) and they agree of their capability in creating a long term career plan or strategy (3.25) and considering a career that doesn't feel like work (3.08). However, completing projects with less stress and no procrastination (3.00) and improving

profitability of their companies (2.67) were considered as the least achieved part of their personal growth. MBA program helps them to become more committed and loyal to their organizations. They keep on pushing themselves to be part of the success of the organization and contribute something to improve the performance of the company which is something remarkable positive attitude of the MBA students as employees. Their personal growth can be associated to employee behaviour from a productive and ethical stand point which emphasizes the key role of leadership [18].

Being nice to people they work with, developing relationship with clients or co-workers (3.33) is agreed by the MBA students as part of their personal growth in terms of caring as well as developing more friendships at work and less competitive with others (3.25); managing the clients better (3.08) and finding a mentor or being a mentor (2.67). However, they disagree that they get a promotion and help others to be promoted (2.42). The composite mean score of 2.95 implies that the MBA students still achieve their personal growth in terms of caring with people. Although this aspect is considered the least among the four, they still manage to be of help for others. They acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses in terms of associating what they have learned from the MBA program to apply in their respective work places. This signifies that the MBA program has a little bearing on developing the personal growth of the students in terms of collaboration.

MBA students strongly agree that their completed MBA courses help them build their personal brand (3.50) as they improve their confidence and capability to become trustworthy. Moreover, they agree in reacting less and work and respond more (3.33) and bringing balance into their job (3.17) as part of personal growth that have achieved through the MBA program. However, aiming to get for a specific award (3.08) and asking for feedback on how they can grow at work (3.08) were the least attributes achieved in terms of credibility. The composite mean score of 3.23 implies that there is high application of MBA courses in achieving personal growth of the MBA students in terms of measuring their credibility.

Application level of Acquired Learning Outcomes from the MBA courses

MBA students strongly agree that they can demonstrate interpersonal skills through effective listening, establishing rapport, monitoring non-verbal signals and expressing awareness of and respect for self and others (3.58) which is part of the acquired learning outcomes from the MBA courses followed by defining and applying different types of thinking and research skills and employing innovative strategies to solve real-life situations (3.50) and utilizing the application of computer and information technology to process information and manage data observing legal and ethical concerns (3.50).

Since interpersonal skill is inherently relational and process oriented like establishing a trusting relationship [21], this is always necessary in a work environment to maintain a communicate climate that is common to everyone. Understanding the behaviour of every member of the organization through possessing the right interpersonal skill is one way of collecting information through informal research on how people would best fit to a kind of culture that the company really valued most. Problems occur in the work place maybe

due to miscommunication and misunderstanding which need some strategies to solve the issues that would best work to the kind of people in the group.

Information Technology skill is always part of being competent learner due to the revolution of modern devices and equipment being utilized in business operations. However, engaging in projects and activities using basic knowledge and skills in business management, entrepreneurship and finance management (3.33); utilizing lifelong learning strategies and practical skills for life, survival and leadership (3.33) and demonstrating understanding of responsibility for environmental, local and global issues (3.17) are the least learning outcomes applied as competent learners in their respective work places. These skills might not be highly applicable to their work assignments at the moment but these could be utilized as they move up in the organization through giving them higher duties and responsibilities to tackle some national and international issues with the changing business landscapes. The composite mean score of 3.41 implies that there is high application of learning outcomes as competent learners among the MBA students. This signifies that students are competent in utilizing relevant information and experience acquired from the MBA program directly to their job assignments.

MBA students strongly agree that they can strive for excellence by providing continuous improvement and producing quality output (3.58) and become realistic in challenging goals and accomplish tasks with discipline, determination and sense of urgency (3.50). The composite mean score of 3.54 signifies that the MBA students are committed achievers who could deliver notable services to their clients and other stakeholders with purpose, courage, strength and resilience. Organizational commitment brings meaning and significance for the employees to pursue their career in a certain work environment where they find satisfaction to participate in various programs of the institution. Giving them enough and substantial information and knowing how they can be of help to the organization are something that the human resource managers and the administrators should work on leading to a well-informed community.

They strongly agree that they practice honesty, fairness and transparency in dealing with others (3.50). Meanwhile, they agree that they can also manifest faith in the Supreme Being / Creator (3.42) and determine decisions, actions and consequences after thoroughly examining multiple perspectives (3.41). However, identifying and recognizing personal, moral and spiritual values and beliefs (3.33) obtained the least score. The composite mean score of 3.42 signifies that there is high application of learning outcomes as credible and values-driven leaders and members among MBA students. Positive attitude drives the behavior of the employees towards work productivity based on personal values connected to the core values of the institution. It is also important to consider the congruence of values of employees and the organization in meeting the demands of work environment.

MBA students strongly agree that they are capable of building relationships to support group effectiveness by being open, cooperative, flexible and respectful of others and being a team player (3.67) and accepting diversity and demonstrate respect for difference in acceptance of cultures, ideas, opinions,

and beliefs (3.58). They also strongly agree that they can identify and apply knowledge of personal and group processes skills in specific tasks in resolving conflicts (3.50) and participate actively in uplifting the welfare of the community especially the less privileged sectors (3.50). The composite mean score of 3.56 implies that there is high application of learning outcomes as collaborative and caring team leaders and members among MBA students. Employees need to behave sensibly at workplace not only to gain appreciation and respect from others but also to maintain healthy work culture. Being a team player is an important attribute of employees that could lead them to a better work relationship among their peers.

Application level of acquired Student Outcomes from the MBA courses

Student outcomes are important measure of performance if the students have the capability to apply these outcomes on their present work assignments. MBA students strongly agree that they can communicate effectively both oral and written in dealing with customers (3.75) and think critically and makes decisions to business case studies (3.58) as well as integrate a variety of approaches and practices from various disciplines to analyze and evaluate organizational situation (3.58). Meanwhile, they agree that they can also apply knowledge necessary to ethically manage today's business operations (3.45). However, leading the community – based activities for sustainable development (3.36) and diagnosing accurately the competitive performances of both local and international enterprises (3.33) are the least applied student outcomes by the MBA students. The composite mean score of 3.52 implies that the MBA students really possessed the student outcomes that they need to acquire before they finish the MBA program. Measuring student outcomes is part of the implementation of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which is the main thrust of most Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines today to go along with the standards of foreign universities and colleges all over the world [7]. This signifies that the MBA students are well-equipped in some areas of the student outcomes but still need to be taught to enhance their qualities to become fully prepared for higher leadership roles in their respective work places.

TABLE 7. SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND THE APPLICATION LEVEL OF MBA COURSES IN THE WORKPLACE AND PERSONAL GROWTH

	r-value	p-value
Application of MBA Courses	-.526	.180
Personal Growth		
Competence	-.008	.985
Commitment	.267	.522
Caring	.373	.363
Credibility	.137	.746

**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is no significant relationship between academic performance and the application level of MBA courses in the workplace and personal growth as shown in Table 7 and as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This signifies that no matter what level of academic performance they can achieve in the MBA courses that would not be a factor to determine the application level of MBA courses in their work assignments as well as its

general application on achieving their personal growth. MBA has a diverse level of academic performance with various functions being performed in the organization. Likewise in achieving their personal growth, various degree of student performance cannot lead to form linearity when correlated to personal growth.

Significant relationships between the application level of acquired learning and student outcomes from the MBA courses and the attainment of personal growth

There is a significant relationship between the acquired learning and student outcomes and the attainment of personal growth in terms of competence as denoted by the computed p-values which are all less than the 0.05 level of significance as shown in Table 8. This signifies that there is a possibility that the higher level of application of learning and student outcomes would have a tendency to obtain a higher personal growth specifically the competence of the MBA students. Likewise, there is also a significant relationship between learning outcomes specifically as being credible and values-driven leaders and members as well as student outcomes and the attainment of personal growth in terms of credibility. This signifies that the level of application of MBA courses in learning outcomes to become credible team players could possibly influence the attainment of personal growth of the MBA students in terms of credibility.

The results reveal that the first application of what they have acquired from the MBA courses is to utilize it directly to improve their competence on their respective assignments where the students who are still trying to finish the MBA program have limited scope of mind-set on how they will utilize the acquired leaning fully in the organization.

That is why, commitment and caring variables were not considered significant because they haven't seen yet the practical application of their knowledge within a short period of time they have completed the MBA courses would also be some other factors that can be considered for its non-significance.

Proposed Action Plan

The action plan has four (4) key result areas namely: academic performance, personal growth, learning and student outcomes. It is composed of strategies that would provide learning experiences through co-curricular activities to strengthen the development of knowledge, skills and attitude of the MBA students. Some learning activities may be reinforced in the professional courses during the delivery of instruction that would motivate them to produce quality student outputs based on the requirements of individual courses.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The currently enrolled MBA students have an academic performance rating of average with the highest computed grade in Statistical Method in Administration. There is high application of MBA courses in achieving personal growth of the MBA students in terms of measuring their competence as well as application in their workplace specifically in utilizing the acquired learning from International Business Management and Entrepreneurship in Global Perspective. High application levels of acquired learning and student outcomes from the

MBA courses are achieved specifically in building relationships to support group effectiveness. There is no significant relationship between the academic performance and the application level of MBA Courses in the workplace and personal growth. There is a possibility that the level of application of learning and student outcomes could influence the personal growth of the MBA students in terms of competence. The action plan as input to the student development program of the Graduate School was proposed.

It is recommended to strengthen research output as MBA course requirement with some application of statistics in preparation for their thesis writing subject. Ensure active involvement of students in professional business organizations for them to get updates and keep abreast of the latest innovation and information about Technopreneurship. Facilitate community extension activities to SHL restoration village through an outreach program to help beneficiaries manage their small business and assess the capability of the residents to sustain a livelihood project. This study is limited to the application of MBA courses to the attainment of personal growth of the currently enrolled students which may further be investigated the impact of the MBA courses to the professional growth or productivity. The proposed action plan as input to the student development program may be implemented and evaluated as to its effectiveness and impact to the students and to the institution.

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