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Impact of MBA Programs in Fostering the Development of Professionals: The Case of Bangladesh

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Abstract

The human capital theory suggests that individuals can significantly enhance their knowledge, skills, and marketability by participating in education and training programs relevant to their job. Many professionals in Bangladesh are returning to academia, since they consider the MBA degree as an advanced managerial degree for their professional development. Enrolling in an MBA program represents a strategic investment in one's human capital. The impact of the MBA degree on the development of employability and the factors contributing to it remains undetermined. Thus, this study aims to evaluate how managerial education enhances employability and shapes attitudes in Bangladeshi professionals. An explanatory sequential approach based on mixed methods research design was followed for collecting and analyzing data. The study population consisted of the alumni of evening MBA programs conducted in public universities in Bangladesh and their employers. The analysis was based on 390 valid questionnaire responses and 10 comprehensive interviews with employers. The alumni of MBA programs acknowledged substantial improvement in managerial knowledge, skills, and attitudes, a viewpoint endorsed by their employers. These results may inspire individuals without an MBA to consider pursuing the degree, aiming to improve their understanding and abilities in management with the purpose of developing their future careers. The results present a persuasive case for employers to support their employees in pursuing managerial education. It is important to recognize that the growth of the knowledge and skills of professionals is closely linked to organizational development. An employee with proper managerial capabilities is considered as a valuable resource for any organization and also contributes to national development.

Keywords: attitude, employers, employees, knowledge, managerial expertise, professional development, skills

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Introduction

Education, including managerial education, can significantly contribute to enhancing national human capital and employability. Countries should recognize that investing in human capital cultivates a robust pool of future business and economic leaders (Aras & Öztürk, [2017](#)). To this end, the management education sector should exhibit diversity in student profiles. The task lies in nurturing students with varied attributes to ensure the attainment of program outcomes and enhancing their employability. The industry is confronted with the task of acquiring graduates who are employable and possess the appropriate skill set to assume managerial positions at both the entry- and mid-levels (Mayur, [2021](#)). The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is a globally respected advanced degree program designed to foster the expertise required for professional roles in the fields of business and management. Individuals with a high potential who pursue an MBA gain confidence in their abilities and also enhance their capability to effectively utilize their human capital upon graduation. MBA has become the most widely sought-after professional business degree program globally and is the foremost qualification provided by business schools, worldwide (Kalgi, [2023](#)).

Working executives increasingly find it necessary to enhance their management practices, skills, and leadership abilities through management education programs, such as an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA). This enables them to embrace changes, tackle challenges, and eliminate obsolescence in their workplaces (Chen et al., [2012](#)). MBA serves as the cornerstone of management education, providing a dedicated approach to systematically equip its graduates for their managerial duties. Nevertheless, MBA programs are facing mounting criticism due to their diminishing relevance, as they fail to adequately incorporate the essential skills identified by managers in the fundamental MBA courses (Tan & Ko, [2018](#)). A disparity exists between the offerings of MBA programs by management education providers and the actual educational experiences of students, particularly in relation to their expectations, needs, and desired outcomes. In recent times, there has been a rising assessment of the quality of MBA programs, with a greater emphasis on their capacity to address the diverse and multifaceted needs of the student population (Ly et al., [2015](#)). An MBA program ought to be meticulously crafted to enhance the candidates' practical and applied

business knowledge and skills (Lešer & Berginc, [2023](#)). It is necessary to revitalize existing EMBA programs to align with the evolving needs of organizations. The importance of enhancing curriculum and teaching methods in this field has been emphasized as well (Kitchlew et al., [2021](#)).

A variety of MBA programs are also offered by many private and public institutions in Bangladesh (Shamsuddoah et al., [2005](#)). The MBA program has gained significant popularity in the country due to its growing demand across corporate and other sectors. In the present competitive and global business settings, executives need to have thorough expertise in business and adept management skills (Islam & Jahan, [2014](#)). The MBA program, influenced by market forces, has evolved into a commodity within higher education. The main source of revenue for educational institutions in Bangladesh is generated through students enrolling in MBA courses (Alam et al., [2020](#)). Moreover, employees without an MBA receive less attention during performance appraisals than those with an MBA (Baruch, [2006](#)). Since graduates from non-business disciplines in Bangladesh joining banks, insurance companies, leasing firms, or other business organizations have insufficient business knowledge, they frequently feel the need to acquire business education to develop their careers, as well as to maintain their job responsibilities, effectively. Still, there have been relatively few studies conducted on MBA programs in Bangladesh over the last few decades. Further, none has specifically focused on the impact of MBA degree on improving the employability skills of professionals and their transformation into valuable organizational assets. Hence, there is insufficient knowledge available about the contribution of MBA programs for the development of professionals in Bangladesh.

The current study is expected to fill these gaps and contribute to the existing body of knowledge. It aims at evaluating the impact of MBA programs on improving the employability of professionals. It may convince employers to allow employees to attend various education programs to acquire job-related knowledge and skills. The findings can help prospective MBA students to understand the reasons for enrolling in the program. If educational programs do not achieve the desired results for professionals, they may hesitate to enroll in them again, potentially impeding overall national development in the long-run. Therefore, an in-depth study is crucial to explore the knowledge regarding the performance of MBA programs in meeting the expectations of professionals.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The current research is based on the principles of human capital theory. The management views human capital as a valuable asset of the company, contributing to its intellectual capital and overall market worth. Human capital encompasses the collective expertise, skills, creativity, and proficiency of individual employees within the company, enabling them to fulfill their duties effectively (Kucharčíková, [2011](#)). Human capital theory presents its fundamental concepts concerning education, learning, productivity, and earnings as essential and comprehensive truths regarding higher education and employment (Marginson, [2017](#)). This theory, pioneered by neoclassical economists such as Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, is widely regarded as a valuable framework for elucidating how employees can augment their worth within organizations, resulting in heightened skills, autonomy, and socioeconomic prosperity (Fleming, [2017](#)). In today's world, there is widespread acknowledgment of the fact that the society is progressing towards a future era where the key determinant would be individual adeptness to utilizing knowledge and skills with the aim to adapt to shifting economic and social dynamics (Badea & Rogojanu, [2012](#)).

Fostering competitive human capital is a paramount objective in the development of an innovative economy, making it an indispensable focal point. During economic crises, there is a significantly heightened demand for the formation and development of effective human capital. Fulfilling this endeavor involves fostering and activating all the factors that contribute to the advancement of human potential (Chulanova, [2017](#)). Human capital development involves the acquisition of both academic and technical skills by the labor force to achieve impressive levels of productivity (Olusadum & Anulika, [2020](#)). Human capital theory suggests that formal training, such as that provided by institutions of higher education, enhances the productive abilities of individuals (Merwe, [2010](#)). It also highlights the way education boosts workers' productivity and efficiency by elevating the cognitive resources of economically valuable human capacity. This capacity results from both inherent abilities and investment in human development. Offering formal education is viewed as a means of investing in human capital (Almendarez, [2013](#)). Presently, educational programs, especially those such as the Master of Business Administration (MBA), have a

heightened influence on improving the quality of human capital. Hence, it is crucial to evaluate the caliber of human capital attained through education, particularly within MBA programs (Aras & Öztürk, [2017](#)).

In recent times, many professionals have been going back to academia, particularly enrolling in MBA programs, to improve their managerial knowledge and skills to meet career demands (Alam et al., [2023](#)). Part-time MBA education opportunities are regarded as a blessing for employees, helping them to develop their managerial knowledge and skills (Alam, [2021](#)). Employers prioritize job-related tasks as the primary factor in assessing employee performance. In general, employers have expressed satisfaction with the role-based performance of their graduate employees after completing an Executive MBA (EMBA) program (Kitchlew et al., [2021](#)). Employers place greater emphasis on soft skills as compared to hard skills when assessing the professional capabilities of MBA graduates. On the other hand, the competencies and knowledge obtained by MBA graduates are apparent not only in their professional pursuits but also in their job search efforts (Devkota et al., [2020](#)). Students have indicated high levels of acquisition of MBA-oriented skills. They seem content with their education, indicating high rates of skill attainment (Hollis et al., [2020](#)). Participants in the Executive MBA program generally have a positive view regarding the practical value of the majority of the outcomes of their program (Kitchlew, [2020](#)). Students utilizing the knowledge and skills gained from the MBA program in their work assignments are seen as providing an enriched experience for ongoing learning, as well as vital work-related skills that significantly contribute to productivity and efficiency (Buenviaje et al., [2016](#)). The MBA qualification is highly esteemed in the Guyanese market as a valuable achievement in higher education, capable of playing a significant role in enhancing the country's development status (Allahar & Sookram, [2018](#)). Possessing an MBA significantly enhances the human capital of graduates. Employers can benefit from these contributions, which also imply an indirect positive impact at the national level (Baruch, [2009](#)).

Managerial Knowledge and Skills Development

Human capital encompasses positive qualities that reflect the dynamism, experience, knowledge, and skills of a workforce. An MBA, alongside other masters degrees, significantly enhances personal development, motivation, and career progression, thereby enriching human

capital (Aras & Öztürk, [2017](#)). It is essential to maximize human capital and develop professional managers (Zhao, [2008](#)). The desire to enhance knowledge and skills is one of the primary reasons students enroll in MBA programs (Al-Mutairi & Saeid, [2016](#)). The acquisition of competency and personal skills among students can be interpreted as the supplementary value conferred by an MBA program (Sulaiman & Mohezar, [2008](#)). An MBA program helps to enhance effective writing abilities (Saba et al., [2011](#)). Completing written assignments enhances the communication competency of MBA graduates. These tasks facilitate the development of skills in organizing papers effectively and expressing ideas succinctly (Neelankavil, [1994](#)). Many business operations within various industries necessitate strong writing abilities, making employees with excellent writing skills highly sought after by organizations (Verma & Verma, [2023](#)).

Management courses also emphasize the development of students' problem-solving skills as a learning goal (He, [2015](#)). The MBA curriculum highlights the importance of applying theoretical concepts from textbooks to practical problem-solving scenarios, fostering hands-on experience. It enables the students to acquire valuable competencies in handling intricate client management and interpersonal relationship matters (Boehner & O'Neil, [2010](#)). MBA graduates believe that their performance, particularly in problem-solving, is superior to that of their peers who haven't earned an MBA (Cruz & Wood, [2015](#)).

Improving decision-making skills is another reason of pursuing MBA degrees by the executives, as MBA programs are mainly tailored to refine the decision-making capabilities of managers (Joshi, [2019](#)). Hiring managers hold the belief that employees possessing an MBA degree demonstrate superior decision-making abilities (Kang & Sharma, [2012](#)). The capacity for decision-making is recognized as the primary distinguishing factor, with MBA holders exhibiting notably superior competency in this aspect (Saxena & Bendale, [2014](#)). The extent of satisfaction with job attributes was discovered to be greatly affected by the degree of employees' involvement in decision-making processes (Muindi, [2011](#)). Moreover, many business managers seek an MBA degree to enhance their leadership abilities (Joshi, [2019](#)). Employees with an MBA degree exhibit enhanced leadership attributes (Kang & Sharma, [2012](#)). The EMBA program boosts leadership skills and capabilities (Campos et al., [2020](#)). Corporate sectors express interest in employing MBA graduates because of

their enhanced leadership abilities (Sulaiman & Mohezar, [2008](#)). Based on the above discussion, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: MBA program positively influences managerial knowledge and skills development among professionals.

Attitude Development

Increasing human capital inevitably enhances an organization's chances of success. MBA programs allow their alumni to acquire tools that enable them to maintain a positive attitude toward the success of their organizations (Gupta & Bennett, [2014](#)). The value of MBA studies for graduates and their employers lies in the development of human capital and subsequent career attitudes (Baruch & Lavi-Steiner, [2015](#)). Business education encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Bratianu et al., [2020](#)). A positive attitude, regarded as a fundamental employee skill, greatly influences service performance in a direct and beneficial manner. Managers should prioritize monitoring and fostering favorable employee attitudes to warrant successful service outcomes (Hanafi & Ibrahim, [2018](#)). Business employees must communicate effectively, maintain positive relationships with their colleagues, and embrace teamwork (Robles, [2012](#)). Teamwork activities are thought to foster an environment conducive to exchanging knowledge and information, which are essential for enhancing job autonomy and boosting job satisfaction (Hanaysha, [2016](#)). MBA programs concentrate on teaching and learning methods to improve their graduates' teamwork capabilities (Joshi, [2019](#)). MBA graduates are generally seen as having superior abilities in team collaboration as compared to employees who do not hold an MBA degree (Baruch & Peiperl, [2006](#); Zhao et al., [2006](#)).

Employers have been examining closely stress management issues stemming from dissatisfaction and high turnover that lead to decreased employee job performance, ultimately impacting organizational goals and objectives (Ekenabor, [2016](#)). Workplace stress has emerged as a significant concern for both employees and organizations (Jayashree, [2010](#)). MBA graduates are proficient in techniques used to manage stress in the workplace (Saba et al., [2011](#)). It appears that individuals who have completed an MBA program possess valuable abilities, such as handling stress, managing time effectively, and making sound decisions (Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, [2014](#)).

Self-confidence is another vital issue for an individual's mental and emotional well-being. Maintaining a healthy level of self-confidence is crucial to achieve success in both personal and professional endeavors (Saban & Saban, [2022](#)). Management education, including MBA programs, equips manager-students to operate confidently and effectively within constantly evolving social and political environments where management practices are implemented (Warhurst, [2011](#)). MBA educators should contemplate the necessity of crafting courses that foster confidence and enthusiasm among MBA graduates, encouraging them to apply their acquired knowledge effectively in their professional endeavors (Cheng, [2000](#)). Obtaining an MBA degree can increase the confidence level of graduates (Baruch, [2009](#); Baruch & Peiperl, [2006](#); Leeming & Baruch., [1998](#); Saba et al., [2011](#)). The courses taught in MBA programs also aid graduates in adapting to the constantly evolving business landscape (Nyaribo et al., [2012](#)). According to managers, employees who possess an MBA degree exhibit superior learning capabilities and are more adaptable to changing situations, as compared to those without MBAs (Kang & Sharma, [2012](#)). Based on the above discussion, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: MBA programs positively influence the attitude of professionals toward job behavior.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Model of the Study



Method

In this study, the researchers utilized an explanatory, sequential, mixed methods approach, starting with the collection of quantitative data and

subsequently gathering qualitative data to enrich the understanding of the quantitative findings. The focus was on evening MBA programs in selected public universities in Bangladesh. Universities were categorized into three tiers based on their founding period. Two universities from each tier were chosen through simple random sampling. The population of the study comprised the universities' MBA alumni and their employers. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect quantitative data from the alumni admitted during the period 2010-2017.

A structured questionnaire was sent via email for data collection with the help of Google Forms. It was distributed to 639 potential respondents selected from the list maintained by the academic sections of the evening MBA programs. This resulted in 390 valid responses, with 89.2% responses from male participants and 10.8% responses from female participants. Notably, 80% of the survey participants were employed by private organizations, while only 10% were government employees. Moreover, 54.9% of the respondents had job experience ranging from 3 to 5 years, 27.9% had job experience of less than 3 years, while 15.1% had between 6 to 8 years of experience. Notably, 27.7% of the respondents were business graduates, while the remaining participants were graduates of various faculties including social sciences (20.3%), engineering and technology (19.2%), sciences (13.3%), and arts and humanities (12.3%). Additionally, MBA was the second master's degree for 56.7% of the respondents. However, the survey questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert-type scale, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.930. Statistical analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Amos (version 23).

Table 1
Demographics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	348	89.2
Female	42	10.8
Age		
26-30	48	12.3
31-35	187	47.9
36-40	82	21
>40	73	18.8

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Discipline		
Social science	80	20.5
Life Science	12	3.1
Science	53	13.6
Business	108	27.7
Agriculture	12	3.1
Arts and Humanities	46	11.8
Engineering and Technology	75	19.2
Others	4	1
Type of Employment		
Private	312	80
Government	39	10
Autonomous	23	5.9
Others	16	4.1
Job Experience (Post-MBA Degree)		
Less than 3	109	27.9
3-5	212	54.4
6-8	61	15.6
More than 8 years	8	2.1
Status of MBA		
First master degree	169	43.3
Second master degree	221	56.7

Purposive sampling was used to select employers for 10 comprehensive interviews. Both audiotape recorder and interview protocols were employed to take notes during the in-depth interviews. Subsequently, qualitative data was transcribed to convert audio recordings and field notes into textual data. The data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach. The content from the interviews and discussions was categorized and coded to identify the themes. Coding is the process of breaking down and labeling the text to create descriptions and broad themes within the data. While there are no strict guidelines for coding, some general procedures are typically followed. Generally, for codes, selected words are used as labels, whereas themes involve combining similar codes to develop key concepts within the database. The researcher prioritizes the themes that emerge by focusing on the predominant topics of the conversation (Creswell, [2012](#)). The results section of the qualitative part of this study was organized around these key

procedures. The researchers conducted the study meticulously to ensure the data's reliability. They built rapport with interviewees and crafted interview questions carefully, taking into account the power dynamics between the interviewer and the participants. Triangulation and member checking strategies were employed to validate the findings.

Common Method Bias

An explanatory sequential approach under a mixed methods framework was adopted for this study. This approach is conducive to mitigating the common method bias (Ivankova et al., [2006](#)). Moreover, Harman's single-factor analysis revealed 39% variance, which is significantly below the 50% threshold, suggesting that common method bias was not a concern in this study (Podsakoff et al., [2003](#)).

Results

Analysis with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Amos 23 was employed to analyze the quantitative data. Initially, the measurement model (factor analysis) assessed how each item contributed to the latent variables under study. In the subsequent step, the structural model was examined to gauge the strength of the hypothesized relationships between these constructs.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) assesses the adequacy of a measurement model's fit through the examination of different fit indices. The overall adequacy of the model was evaluated based on multiple standards including the Comparative Fit Index ($CFI \geq 0.90$), Goodness of Fit Index ($GFI \geq 0.90$), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index ($AGFI \geq 0.80$), Root Mean Square Residual ($RMR < 0.05$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA < 0.10$), Tucker-Lewis Index ($TLI \geq 0.89$), and Incremental Fit Index ($IFI \geq 0.90$) (Brown, [2015](#)).

The findings suggest that the measurement model meets or surpasses the acceptable thresholds for each fit index, implying a strong alignment between the model and the observed data. More precisely, the values for CMIN/DF (2.42), CFI (.971), GFI (.955), AGFI (.927), RMR (.027), RMSEA (.061), TLI (.961), and IFI (.971) all lie within acceptable thresholds, indicating that the model effectively captures the underlying structure of the data.

Table 2
Measurement Model Fit

Measure	Score	Model Fit	Acceptable Baseline
CMIN/DF	2.42	Passed	<3
CFI	.971	Passed	≥0.90
GFI	.955	Passed	≥0.90
AGFI	.927	Passed	≥0.80
RMR	.027	Passed	<0.05
RMSEA	.061	Passed	<0.10
TLI	.961	Passed	≥0.89
IFI	.971	Passed	≥0.90

Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of a measurement model is evaluated by analyzing the factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable and its related items. Convergent validity pertains to how closely various items, which are theoretically intended to measure the same construct, are interconnected. The factor loadings for each variable (MBA programs, knowledge and skills, attitude) indicate the degree of association between the items and their underlying latent factors. Greater factor loadings signify stronger relationships. AVE denotes the proportion of variance explained by the items based on their latent factors, where values nearing 1 signify superior convergent validity (Brown, [2015](#); Hair et al., [2014](#)). In this analysis, all items exhibit moderate to high factor loadings, suggesting significant associations with their respective factors. Additionally, the AVE values exceed the threshold of 0.5 for all variables, indicating satisfactory convergent validity for most constructs.

Table 3
Convergent Validity

Variables	Item	Factor Loadings	AVE
MBA Programs	Learning climate	0.659	0.80
	Curriculum	0.872	
	Teaching methods	0.877	
Knowledge and Skills	Report writing	0.68	0.56
	Diagnosis skills	0.791	
	Decision-making skills	0.823	
	Leadership skills	0.7	

Variables	Item	Factor Loadings	AVE
Attitude	Ability to work in team	0.857	0.68
	Ability to manage work stress	0.833	
	Made more conflict	0.835	
	Adaption with changing situation	0.786	

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity of a measurement model is evaluated by examining the correlations between different variables. Discriminant validity assesses the degree to which distinct constructs or variables are truly different from one another (Brown, [2015](#); Hair et al., [2014](#)). The correlations between each variable and itself (diagonal elements) are equal to the square roots of their respective AVEs, indicating that each variable accounts for its own variance. The correlations between variables off the main diagonal are less than the square roots of the AVE values for the respective variables, suggesting adequate discriminant validity. This indicates that the variables are distinct from each other and measure unique constructs. Overall, the analysis implies that the measurement model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity, as the correlations between the variables are lower than the square roots of their AVEs, indicating that the variables are adequately distinct from each other.

Table 4

Discriminant Validity

Variables	MBA Programs	Knowledge & Skills	Attitude
MBA Programs	0.809		
Knowledge and Skills	0.339	0.675	
Attitude	0.192	0.597	0.828

Table 5

Hypothesis Testing

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Remarks
MBA Programs→ Knowledge and Skills Development	.393***	.047	8.420	Supported
MBA Programs→ Attitude Development	.271***	.063	4.329	Supported

The first row indicates the relationship between MBA programs and knowledge and skills development. The estimate of 0.393 with a high critical ratio (8.420) and a low p -value (***) suggests a strong support for this relationship. The second row shows the relationship between MBA programs and attitude development. The estimate of 0.271 with a high critical ratio (4.329) and a low p -value (***) indicates a strong support for this relationship as well. Overall, the analysis suggests that the relationship between MBA programs and knowledge and skills development, as well as the relationship between MBA programs and attitude development, are statistically significant, providing support for the hypothesized connections.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative results are structured and delineated as follows: (a) The effect of MBA programs on augmenting knowledge and skills (b) The impact of MBA programs on fostering attitude development. The subsequent sections present the key themes and quotes related to each one of these two domains.

Contribution of MBA Programs to Knowledge and Skills Development

Four (04) key themes emerged concerning the impact of MBA programs on the development of knowledge and skills: (i) enhancement of report writing abilities; (ii) improvement in problem diagnosis skills; (iii) enhancement of decision-making capabilities; and (iv) development of leadership skills. The employers of MBA graduates participated in extensive interviews to clarify these themes and improve their understanding.

Report writing skills are essential in any job as they facilitate clear communication and accurate documentation. Employees with strong report writing abilities are seen as capable of delivering valuable insights, thus contributing significantly to the success of projects and organizations. Report writing skills of MBA graduates are highly valued by employers. An employer specified that

In many instances, noticeable improvements are observed. After completing an MBA, communication skills, including employees' report writing abilities get better. It appears that the ability to choose proper words and structures improves as a result of obtaining an MBA degree [KSA01].

Problem diagnosis skills are crucial in any job as they enable employees to identify issues efficiently, analyze root causes, and devise effective solutions. These skills not only streamline workflow processes but also contribute to innovation and organizational success by addressing challenges proactively and ensuring continuous improvement. According to an employer,

In most cases, professionals bring a strategic mindset after completing their MBA, enabling them to apply analytical approaches to problem-solving and contribute to driving business success. Employers highly appreciate MBA graduates for their capacity to systematically tackle challenges, engage in critical thinking, and find innovative solutions, making them valuable assets in the workplace [KSA04].

Effective decision-making not only influences immediate outcomes but also shapes the long-term trajectory of companies, making it a cornerstone for MBA graduates in their professional endeavors. Employers place significant emphasis on the decision-making abilities of MBA graduates, recognizing their crucial role in guiding the direction and success of a company. An employer mentioned that

MBA programs provide students with a comprehensive understanding of business principles, analytical tools, and strategic frameworks, all of which contribute to the development of strong decision-making abilities. While individual experiences may vary, employers typically perceive MBA education as a valuable asset in improving the decision-making skills of graduates [KSA02].

The collaborative nature of MBA programs fosters teamwork and communication skills which are integral to effective leadership. Employers generally hold the belief that MBA education enhances the leadership skills of MBA graduates. They recognize that MBA programs often include coursework, projects, and experiential learning opportunities that specifically focus on developing leadership capabilities. An employer stated that

Improvement of leadership capacities along with progress of different managerial skills of the employees are considered as affirmative outcomes of the MBA program in most of the cases. While the extent of improvement may vary depending on individual

experiences and the specific program attended, employers generally view MBA education as a valuable asset in enhancing the leadership skills of graduates [KSA01].

Contribution of MBA Programs to Attitude Development

Four (04) key themes regarding how MBA programs contribute to attitude development were identified: (i) development of team building capacity; (ii) stress management; (iii) self-confidence; and (iv) adapting to changing situations. The employers of MBA graduates participated in comprehensive interviews to clarify these themes and improve their understanding.

Team building capacity contributes to the achievement of shared goals, the development of a positive work culture, and the overall success of an organization. The ability to build teams is essential for MBA graduates as it provides them with the necessary skills to effectively lead, collaborate with, and manage diverse groups. According to an employer,

Employers generally perceive that MBA education enhances the team building capacities of MBA graduates. Employers value MBA graduates who can demonstrate strong team building abilities, as they are often required to lead and collaborate with diverse teams in professional settings [KSA01].

Effectively managing stress enables individuals to maintain optimal performance, make sound decisions, and adapt to challenging situations. Moreover, it fosters a positive work environment, reduces absenteeism and turnover rates, and enhances overall job satisfaction. The significance of the stress management capacity for MBA graduates is profound, given the demanding nature of their professional roles. MBA graduates often face high-pressure situations, tight deadlines, and complex challenges in their careers. An employer mentioned that

Employers generally believe that MBA programs can help students learn to thrive in high-pressure environments and manage stress more effectively. While MBA programs may not explicitly focus on stress management techniques, they often provide students with opportunities to develop skills such as time management, prioritization, problem-solving, and resilience—all of which are integral to effective stress management [KSA03].

MBA programs not only equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for the business world but also cultivate self-confidence through hands-on experience, networking, and career development initiatives, enabling them to excel in varied and demanding contexts. One of the employers narrated his experience as follows,

Most of the time, I observe various kinds of positive changes in the knowledge domain and skill levels of employees after they obtain their MBA degree. They appear more confident in their assigned tasks than they did before. Employers value self-confident employees as they are more likely to take initiative, communicate effectively, and contribute positively to the organization's success [KSA01].

The ability to adapt to changing situations is a critical skill cultivated through MBA programs. By providing a comprehensive understanding of business principles and practices, along with practical experience in applying them to real-world situations, MBA education prepares graduates to adapt quickly and effectively to changing circumstances. An employer specified that

The MBA program has a favorable effect on the attitude and mindset of employees. Participation in this MBA program fosters the employees' ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Employers commonly perceive that MBA education aids individuals in adjusting to evolving situations [KSA03].

Discussion

The high mean score reflects the positive attitude of the alumni regarding the role of MBA programs in developing report writing skills. Previously, the significance of MBA programs in improving report writing skills was noted in the literature by Neelankavil (1994), Saba et al. (2011), and Sulaiman and Mohezar (2008). The findings of the current study are consistent with the results of Mihail and Kloutsiniotis (2014). Moreover, both male and female participants were found to have the same perception toward their professional development. Most of the respondents agreed that their report writing skills improved during MBA. Furthermore, the interviewees expressed a similar attitude regarding the role of MBA programs in developing the report writing skills of the graduates. The contribution of MBA programs to enhancing report writing skills was also

reflected on in the literature by Neelankavil ([1994](#)) and Saba et al. ([2011](#)). Their findings align with the findings of this study.

The alumni reported that their problem diagnosis skills were enhanced during MBA, as stated by most of the respondents in this study. The interviewees also acknowledged the role of MBA programs in the development of problem diagnosis skills among employees. The role of MBA programs in enhancing problem diagnosis skills of graduates was highlighted by Cruz and Wood ([2015](#)). MBA programs contribute to enhancing decision-making skills and MBA graduates are often regarded as better decision makers than other business graduates (Baruch, [2009](#); Joshi, [2019](#)). Most participants in this research concurred regarding the impact of MBA programs on improving the decision-making abilities of graduates. This observation aligns with the findings of Mihail and Kloutsiniotis ([2014](#)). The graduates acknowledged that their MBA contributed to the development of their leadership abilities, a sentiment shared by the majority of respondents in the study. Gupta and Bennett ([2014](#)) and Joshi ([2019](#)) supported the notion that employees holding an MBA degree exhibit superior leadership skills. Similar results were also reached in the study by Zhao et al. ([2006](#)). The MBA degree holders perceived themselves better at working in teams than their peers without an MBA (Baruch & Peiperl, [2006](#)). A large number of respondents believed that MBA programs increase the ability of graduates to work in teams. The findings of this study about enhancing team building capacity by MBA programs are similar to the results of Zhao et al. ([2006](#)).

Likewise, most of the respondents in this study expressed satisfaction regarding the impact of MBA programs on developing stress management capacity in the workplace. The perception of male and female respondents was found to be similar in this regard. Mihail and Kloutsiniotis ([2014](#)) and Saba et al. ([2011](#)) also observed that an MBA degree enhances the stress management capacity of individuals. According to the respondents in the current study, an MBA degree makes the graduates more confident. It enhances the self-confidence of the participants, which is also reflected in the findings of the qualitative analysis. This discovery aligns with the outcomes of the research conducted by Mihail and Kloutsiniotis ([2014](#)) and Saba et al. ([2011](#)).

As per the viewpoint of numerous participants in the current study, students improve their career management ability by enrolling in MBA

programs. The contribution and significance of MBA programs in developing career management skills of individuals was also reflected on in the literature by Baruch and Leeming (2001). Many participants in the current study indicated that MBA programs encourage graduates to develop the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Kang and Sharma (2012) and Nyaribo et al. (2012). Moreover, no significant difference was found between male and female participants in terms of acquiring the ability to adapt to changing situations. The results of the study are also similar to the findings of Allahar and Sookram (2018), Devkota et al. (2020), Hollis et al. (2020), Kitchlew (2020), and Kitchlew et al. (2021). MBA programs can enhance the knowledge and skills essential to achieve successful professional growth, as supported by Aras and Öztürk (2017), Kalgi (2023) and Turgumbayeva et al. (2023).

Conclusion

These days, professionals are highly motivated to develop their managerial knowledge and skills to meet their job demands and to advance their careers. The majority of universities in Bangladesh have responded to this demand by offering MBA degrees through evening or weekend programs. The success of an MBA program can be measured by the managerial knowledge and skills gained by the students. The majority of MBA program alumni agreed that their managerial knowledge and skills improved after obtaining their MBA degree. It is important to recognize that the development of knowledge and skills among professionals is closely tied to organizational development. It is also crucial for higher educational institutions in the country to remain attentive and responsive to their various demands, as they have the potential to become valuable resources for the nation.

Implications

The demand for MBA programs among professionals in Bangladesh is note worthy. This is mainly because individuals from non-business backgrounds who venture into sectors such as banking, insurance, leasing, and other business fields frequently realize that they lack the vital business and managerial expertise necessary for career progression. Hence, the findings of this study can serve as motivation for non-MBA holders to pursue an MBA degree to enhance their managerial knowledge, skills, and

career prospects. These findings can also serve as a convincing argument to encourage employers to allow their employees to have a convenient work schedule so they may pursue managerial education. Furthermore, the study contributes to educational theory by emphasizing the importance of learning climate, curriculum, and teaching methods employed in MBA programs in shaping professionals' attitudes towards their job roles and behaviors. This insight has the potential to enrich theories concerning adult learning and professional development.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study followed a cross-sectional survey design which expresses the perceptions, feelings, and beliefs of the respondents at a specific point in time. The exact change or improvement is quite difficult to address using this method. A longitudinal survey, especially panel study, can be more appropriate to address the findings with greater precision. Therefore, an attempt can be made to conduct a similar study with service holders at the time of their admission to the MBA program and after completing their degree, in accordance with the panel studies based on the longitudinal method. Moreover, the moderating and mediating variables and their mutual relationship haven't been considered which signifies another limitation of this study. Further research can be conducted considering work experience as a moderating variable and self-efficacy as a mediating variable to measure the effectiveness of the MBA program for professionals.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study is not available due to ethical restrictions, however, data will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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