Educational goals, assessment preferences and approaches to learning of MBA and MPA students in Singapore

James Kwan

Assistant Professor, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the educational goals, learning approach, and assessment preferences among part-time Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Professional Accounting (MPA) students in Singapore. The quantitative study uses a questionnaire that employs a revised two-factor study process questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F) to identify students' approach to learning, and the adapted Assessment Preference Inventory (API) to examine students' preferences to different assessment types and tasks. The sample comprises 101 students (55 MBA and 46 MPA students) from various age groups, of which 57 are male students.

The results of this study showed that educational goals relating to career advancement/enhancement and improved knowledge and skills were the key motivational factors that lead students to pursue postgraduate studies. When it comes to approaches to learning, students generally reported adopting a deep learning approach. This approach to learning was also evident in the assessment preference where they preferred assessments that required problem solving and application of materials learnt during the course. Among the five assessment types, respondents have a strong preference for individual assignments and showed least preference for exams. However, there was no significant difference in the preference for any of the assessment items/format among gender and age groups.

The findings in this study can inform curriculum redesign for both programmes to suit the needs of existing students and also to increase their appeal to prospective students. The respondents' views on their learning approach and assessment preferences allow instructors and module leaders to rethink the teaching pedagogy and current assessment structure that favour assignments in order to improve students' learning experience.

1. Introduction

With the rising emphases on innovation, the knowledge-based economy, international mobility of the workforce, and the impact of globalisation, the higher education sector in Singapore is evolving. Based on a recent JobsCentral Learning Survey Report (2016), 73% of the respondents (2,932) intend to further their studies, and 45% of them intend to pursue a postgraduate course. The survey also reported that 71% of the respondents would like to pursue their studies on a part-time basis, and more than 25% of the respondents seek to pursue their education at a Private Education Institution (PEI) in Singapore where the degree is awarded by foreign universities. Career advancement, self-improvement, and improved employability were among the top three reasons for pursuing further studies. However, the survey does not show the breakdown of these reasons between respondents who intend to pursue undergraduate studies and those eyeing for postgraduate studies. In addition, in spite of this overview of students' intentions for postgraduate routes either into further study or employment, there is little known on how they relate to the learning and assessment during their studies. Informally, it has been observed by the researcher and his fellow instructors that many part-time students adopting a surface or strategic approach to studying and put in a minimal effort to their assessments as they see their job and family commitment as more important priorities. Consequently, this would have a negative impact on their career advancement, especially where their job requires them to apply the knowledge gained from their studies.

Empirically, Asian learners, particularly the Chinese students from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore are perceived as exam-oriented rote learners and adopt a surface approach to learning (Hing, 2013; Samuelowicz, 1987; Snider, 2005). However, the rote learning approach is usually employed by Chinese students pursuing their full-time studies overseas where English is the only medium of instruction (Chang & Ho, 1992). Lacking in the current literature are studies conducted in identifying part-time postgraduate students' educational goals, their approaches to learning and assessment preferences for programmes offered by overseas universities but administered by PEIs in Singapore. The rationale for this study is presented below in the dedicated literature review part via the literature background that provides an overview of relevant studies and presents the research gap the study aims to address.

The framework of this pilot study is to evaluate the educational goals, approaches to learning and assessment preferences of the part-time postgraduate students who are currently pursuing their Master of Business Administration (MBA) or Master of Professional Accounting (MPA) programme with one of the largest PEIs in Singapore, and the degree is awarded by an Australian university. The programme comprises 12 modules and each module comes with a varied assessment structure such as individual/group oral presentation or/and assignments, test, exam, and class participation. The exam component usually comes with the largest weightage (30% - 50%).

Specifically, this study aims to address the following research questions:

- What are the key educational goals of the MBA and MPA students? Are there any significant differences in the educational goals among these postgraduate students with respect to course of study, gender and age groups?

- What are the assessment preferences of the MBA and MPA students? Are there any differences between their assessment preferences with respect to course of study, gender age groups, and learning approach?

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Educational goals

Postgraduate education such as MBA or MPA is perceived as a necessity in securing a better job to live a 'good life' and minimise the risk of being unemployed (Teowkul et al., 2009; Uka, 2012). This security and risk-avoidance orientation can be seen as educational goals, which are defined as "statements that describe the competences, skills, and attributes that students should possess upon completion of a course or program" (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). Students can be led by achieving extrinsic and intrinsic gains. Extrinsic gains including career advancement, career switching, acquiring business and technical skills and financial rewards predominate over intrinsic rewards such as personal development, self-esteem and gaining respect (Bruce, 2006; Simpson, 2000; Zolfo, 2004).

2.1.1 Individual factors related to educational goals

Individual factors such as self-improvement, boosting confidence, gaining respect from others, and strong advocacy of lifelong learning play an important role in increasing a student's motivation to pursue postgraduate education (Uka, 2012). Highly motivated individuals consistently seek ways for self-improvement by gaining access to different educational programmes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Based on student development theory, a highly motivated student is more likely to spend more time and effort studying (Labosier & Labosier, 2011) and interact more frequently with instructors and peers (Astin, 1999) in achieving better academic performance (Elias et al., 2011).

Motivation theorists argue that individuals desire a need for self-esteem which is strongly associated with competencies, achievement and respect from others (Maslow, 1943; Samdal et al., 1998). Thus, students are seen to pursue postgraduate education to acquire new skills, improve their competencies and knowledge so as to boost their self-esteem, gaining higher status, and earning respect from others (Boekaerts, 2002; Gawel, 2008; Harter, 1998; Lin & Tsai, 2008; Yorke, 2006).

2.1.2 Career advancement/switching and job security as educational goals

In today's increasingly competitive economy and the emphasis of higher education across many sectors and industries, students see the need of pursuing a postgraduate degree to stay competitive in the job market (Dugan et al., 1999; Edington & Bruce, 2003; Marks & Edington, 2006; Powell, 2010; Williams & Mujtaba, 2008). Placing the initials 'MBA' or 'MPA' in their resume is more likely to boost their chances of securing jobs that will allow them to increase their earning power or to gain promotion in their current organisation (Baruch & Leeming, 2001; Dailey et al., 2006; Heslop & Nadeau, 2010; Lewis, 1992; Mihail & Elefterie, 2006; Zhao et al., 2006).

Baruch and Leeming (2001) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of MBA graduates from the UK based on 12 categories of expectations these graduates held at entry. They found that the top three expectations were: business understanding and business skills, improving or changing careers, and higher income. They also found one in six graduates identified the credential itself as an important educational goal. In another context, Selvarajah (2006) compared the perceptions of students from New Zealand and China pursuing postgraduate management studies at Massey University in New Zealand. He reported that the top three most important educational goals for the New Zealand students were "to learn new skills so that I can change my career", "to improve my management skills", and "to undertake a personal challenge". As for the Chinese students, he found that their top three motivational drivers were "to obtain a qualification essential to my career", "to discover things that may be useful for my business", and "to improve my management skills".

Postgraduate programmes provide an excellent platform to enable students to expand their social network with their classmates which may translate into many business and career opportunities (Teowkul et al., 2009). Through networking, there could be possibilities of gaining career switch and job changes, regardless of gender and current experience (Mark & Edington, 2006).

Prior studies reported mixed results on the relationship between age, gender and experience effects on pursuing an MBA (Simpson et al., 2005; Thompson & Gui, 2000; Zhao et al., 2006). For instance, Thompson and Gui (2000) reported that the younger students (under 35) placed more importance on career switching for pursuing an MBA while mature students with eight or more years of work experience placed greater emphasis on improving analytical skills as the key reason for taking an MBA. They also argued that men see an MBA as more important than women when it comes to a career switch. On the other hand, Simpson et al. (2005) reported that the most common reason for pursuing an MBA is to gain more job opportunities, especially for younger men and older women. They found that younger women placed more emphasis on career change while older men placed greater importance on intellectual stimulation. Marks and Edington (2006) surveyed 709 men and 759 women to determine which of the three categories of reasons (career enhancement, career switching, personal development) motivate them to pursue an MBA. They found that approximately one quarter of both men and women fall into all three categories, and men are more driven by career switching while women are more motivated by career enhancement. Their findings lend support to an earlier study conducted by Simpson (2000) where he reported that women are more likely to pursue an MBA to seek career enhancement while men see career switch and personal development as key motivation drivers. Other studies found no effects for gender and experience (Zhao et al., 2006). These mixed research findings on age, gender and experience are at best inconclusive, suggesting further research is needed.

2.1.3 Professional development and credentials as educational objectives

Professions in the fields of accountancy, banking and finance, information technology, and law are facing many challenges in view of the rapidly changing business environment. Thus, the professional bodies mandate their members to upgrade and keep abreast of the latest development so as to remain relevant and updated in their profession. These motivate students to pursue postgraduate qualification such as MPA, MSc Finance, MSc IT and LLM to enhance their credentials and improve their job performance (Carrel & Schoenbachler, 2001).

2.2 Students' Approaches to Learning (SAL)

One of the key areas examined by higher education scholars in describing and enhancing the quality of learning in universities is students' approaches to learning (Dickie, 2003; Entwistle & Waterson, 1988; Phan & Deo, 2007; Ramsden, 1985; Regan & Regan, 1995; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Van Rossum & Schnk, 1984; Zain, Malan, Noordin, & Abdullah, 2013). The term 'approach' is used to signify the students' intention and the way they process information (Garrison, Andrews, & Magnusson, 1995). It is perceived by many educators as a powerful means of conceptualising students' learning and the quality of students' learning outcomes (Duff, Boyle, & Dunleavy, 2002; Streitwieser & Light, 2010).

The concept of approaches to learning was first introduced by Marton and Saljö in 1976, where they identified two learning approaches, deep and surface. Theoretically, students may adopt a deep approach to learning with an intention to understand the concepts and theories, being able to link them to their prior knowledge and experience, and examine the logic of the arguments and relate the task to personal experiences outside the study context (Beattie, Collins, & McInnes, 1997; Entwistle, McCune, & Walker, 2000). In contrast, students who adopt the surface approach to learning are merely relying on rote learning with the objective of 'learn for the sake of learning' and information reproduction without having the intention to fully understand or analyse it, and they are unreflective about their learning experience (Byrne, Flood, & Willis, 2001; Eley, 1992; Hassall & Joyce, 2001; Spencer, 2003; Tiwari et al., 2006). It is believed that the use of a deep learning approach contributes to a positive and higher quality learning outcome and academic performance which are critical for the students' professional

and personal development as compared to a surface learning approach (Biggs, 1993; Diseth, Pallesen, Hovland, & Larsen, 2006; Felder & Brent, 2005; Gijbels, Dochy, Van den Bossche, & Segers, 2005; Smith & Miller, 2005; Spicer, 2004; Tiwari et al., 2006).

Biggs (1987) extended Marton and Saljio's work by including a third learning approach – achieving, where he sees students apply this approach to learning are based on the motivation to achieving good performance and having strategies to achieving high marks. These can be done by developing effective study skills such as good organisation, speed reading, effective note-taking, and 'cue-conscious' strategies that adapt to the learning environment and the degree of instructor involvement (Akande, 1998). Thus, the achieving approach is highly context driven whereas the deep and surface approaches involve general cognitive processes of coding and mere rehearsal, respectively (Entwistle, 2000). Essentially, Biggs' (1987) theoretical conception of learning approaches from other theorists in two aspects: how students approach a task (strategy), and the reasons for using the approach (motive).

Over the past three decades, there were several instruments developed to evaluate students' approaches to learning (SAL) in the higher education context. These instruments include the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) (Biggs, 1987) and its revised version, the R-SPQ-2F (Biggs, Kember, & Leung, 2001); the Approaches to Study Inventory (ASI) (Entwistle & Ramden, 1983) and its revised version, the RASI (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983); Lancaster Approaches to Study Questionnaire (Ramsden, 1983); Inventory to Learning Styles in Higher Education (Vermunt, 1994); and Approaches to Study Skill Inventory for Students (Tait, Entwistle, & McCune, 1998).

The R-SPQ-2F model has been widely used to examine SAL at undergraduate level from different disciplines such as biology (Skogsberg & Clump, 2003), information systems (Halawi, McCarthy, & Muoghalu, 2009), law (Gijbels, Van de Waterning, Dochy, & Van de Bossche, 2005), mathematics (Chan & Mousley, 2005), management (M'Hamed Taher & Chen, 2011), nursing (Bernal & Montalbo, 2014; Snelgrove & Slater, 2003), psychology (Justicia, Pichardo, Cano, Berbén, & De la Fuente, 2008; Skogsberg & Clump, 2003), science (Güner & Ali Riza, 2008; Zeegers, 2001), and statistics (Bilgin & Crowe, 2008). Most of these studies focused on undergraduate students and none of these studies examined postgraduate students in Singapore.

Prior studies reported that SAL have been correlated with personal factors (e.g. gender, age, prior experiences) and contextual factors (e.g. teaching/learning activities, assessment types, institutional values) (Biggs, 1987; Zeegers, 2001). Essentially, it is believed that surface approach to learning is generally associated with excessive workload, assessments that emphasise reproductive learning and poor teaching (Leung, Mok, & Wong, 2008; Lizzio et al., 2002; Prosser, 2004).

In terms of differences between students' learning approaches, gender and age, there were mixed results reported (Bilgin & Crowe, 2008; Duff, 1999; 2002; Gijbels

et al., 2005; Elias, 2005; Ellez & Sezgrin, 2002; Goh, 2006; Groves, 2005; Güner & Ali Riza, 2008; M'Hamed Taher & Chen, 2011; Shaari et al., 2005; Siddiqui, 2006; Wilson, Smart, & Watson, 1996). For instance, Gijbels et al. (2005) examined 133 second-year law undergraduates to assess their learning approaches to learning. They found that male students adopted a significantly higher level of SA than their female counterparts and older students adopted significantly higher level of DA. On the other hand, Goh (2006) and Siddiqui (2006) employed R-SPQ-2F to examine the SAL of 368 Malaysian and 13,331 Pakistani students respectively and both concluded there was no significant difference in the learning approaches between gender and age. Bilgin and Crowe (2008) also reported no significant difference in SAL with respect to gender in Australia. However, they concluded that the postgraduate students were more likely to adopt a deep approach to learning while the generally younger undergraduate students were more inclined to a surface learning approach. In Malaysia, Shaari et al. (2005) who examined 354 postgraduate students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and they found significant differences on SAL across age, discipline, and year of work experience. However, there were no significance difference on SAL on gender and mode of study. In a more recent study involving 208 Chinese local MBA students at Zhejiang University, M'Hamed Taher and Chen (2011) reported that deep learning approach was found dominant among these MBA students regardless of their age and gender difference. Their findings differ from several cross cultural studies where Asian students, particularly the Chinese, were perceived as surface learners (Biggs, 1990; Fan, 2007). A detailed discussion on cultural context and SAL is beyond the scope of this paper.

The use of inventories in examining SAL have been criticised by numerous higher education scholars (Chambers, 2002; Entwistle, Meyer, & Tait, 1991; Haggis, 2003; Lindblom-Ylänne, 2003; Richardson, 2004; Setlogelo, 2008). Specifically, the quantitative nature of the inventories may not provide an in-depth examination of students' epistemological believes on the relation between learning approaches and academic performance and learning outcome. In addition, the influence of context such as students' diverse cultural (Kember, 2000; Fung, 2010; Marton, Alba, & Kun, 1996; Ramburuth, 2001) and linguistic (Richardson, 2004; Setlogelo, 2008), subject discipline (Booth, 1992; Drew, Bailey & Shreeve, 2002; Ramsden, 1984), work commitment and parental responsibilities (Haggis, 2003), level of intellectual curiosity and personal relation with a subject (Marshall & Case, 2005), and overloaded curriculum (Cope & Staehr, 2005; Newbie & Hejka, 1991). It has also been noted that deep and surface approaches to learning are not personality traits or fixed learning styles as students may vary their approaches depending on the demand level of each activity, perceived difficulty level and time constraint to completing the activity (Laurillard, 1997; Trigwell & Ashwin, 2003).

In sum, SAL is influenced by students' personality, learning environment, course undertaking, and learning outcome (Skogsberg & Clump, 2003). It is believed that a deep learning approach will contribute positively to the learning outcome and academic performance (Booth, Luckett, & Mladenovic, 1999; Davidson, 2002; Gow, Kember, & Cooper, 1994; Murphy & Tyler, 2005). Adequate teaching

pedagogies and creation of a positive learning environment might move students learning approaches from a surface to a deep orientation. This means that further examination of teaching and other factors that may affect "approaches" is needed to complete "the picture" of approaches to learning. The degree and variation of SAL could be dependent on the context, circumstances, subject, and so on. Hence, it cannot be said that one student can adopt only one approach to learning. The interaction between different context and SAL are complex and often counterintuitive effects can be observed (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, & Gielen, 2006).

2.3 Assessment preferences

Assessment is a key driver of and a tool for learning as it provides learning opportunities which challenge students' intellectual and critical thinking while preserving the legitimacy of the institution (Dochy & McDowell, 1997; Pio, 2004). Traditionally, assessment is seen as a way to determine students' performance and the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved. It also forms a basis for gaining the relevant qualification which is vital for students to gain better employment and enhance their professional development (Lee, 2005; Pearson & Chatterjee, 2004; Sen Gupta, 2003; Wong, 2001).

In this study, assessment preference follows the definition provided by Van de Watering et al. (2008), where they defined assessment preference as "imagined choice between alternatives in assessment and the possibility of the rank ordering of these alternatives" (p. 647). Zoller and Ben-Chaim (1988) examined students' assessment preferences based on six dimensions: type (examination/project); mode (oral/written); time (limited/unlimited); location (class/home); support materials (allowed/disallowed); and participants (individual/group). They found that students preferred to have assessments that eased their time and memorisation pressures, and have least preference for oral examination. In terms of gender preference, they reported that female students preferred take-home assessment which they can apply a higher level of thinking and problem solving skills, and they showed less preference to oral examination. Prior studies reported that male students generally have stronger preference for multiple choice formats, or simple and de-contextualised questions over essay type assessments or constructed-response types of questions (Beller & Gafni, 2000; Traub & MacRury, 1990). Male students perform better on multiple choice questions (MCQs) than female students and female students do better on open-ended questions than male students (Ben-Shakhar & Sinai, 1991). One reason for the difference could be students perceive MCQs are easier to prepare and complete, and thus reducing stress and anxiety during test, resulting in producing better results (Birenbaum & Feldman, 1998; Traub & McRury, 1990). On the other hand, female students are more likely to adopt a deep learning approach and thus perceive essays as a better assessment of their analytical and critical thinking skills, and with adequate preparation and correct study approach (deep approach), they perform better in essay type questions (Van de Watering et al., 2008). Discussion of perceptions of assessment and the actual outcome are beyond the scope of this study.

Students' assessment preferences are considered a highly relevant and valuable source of evidence for test validity (Nevo, 1985; Zeidner, 1987). However, it must be noted that student assessment preferences do not imply effective and reliable assessment outcomes (Selvarajah et al., 2010). For instance, group assessment such as group projects would enhance team work and promote collaborative learning, which may contribute to more effective learning and better academic achievement (Bejarano 1987; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1998; Kagan 1989; Ghaith, 2002; 2003). However, group assessment may not be an equitable and accurate way of assessing student performance (Garfield & Gal, 1999). Specifically, a varied quality of contributions by each team member due to language deficiency, heavy work and family commitments, and individualistic personalities may lead to dissatisfaction among members. Consequently, it is believed that only the committed and hardworking students benefited most from group assessment (Clark, 2002; Leask, 2001). To alleviate some of these limitations, self and peer assessment ratings may be introduced (Barfield, 2003; Sherman, 2000).

In order to ascertain students' assessment preferences, Birenbaum (1994) developed a questionnaire which he called the Assessment Preference Inventory (API) for various facets of assessment. The API consists of three dimensions of measuring assessment preferences: assessment form related (assessment type, item format/task type and pre-assessment preparation); examinee-related (cognitive processes, students' role/responsibilities and conative aspects); and grading and reporting. Prior studies reported that there was a relationship between SAL and their assessment preferences (Baeten, Struyven, & Dochy, 2008; Birenbaum, 1997; Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Magnussen, 2001; Parsa & Saketi, 2006; Sabzevari, Abbaszade, & Borhani, 2013; Scouller, 1998). Essentially, assessment methods which focus on data recollection and lack knowledge application would entail students to adopt a surface learning approach (Magnussen, 2001). Students adopting a deep learning approach will favour essay type questions (Baeten, Struyven, & Dochy, 2008; Birenbaum & Feldman, 1998; Scouller, 1998).

Educators play a critical role when designing assessments to test on students' deep understanding, they may lead students to adopting a deep learning approach and improve on their critical thinking ability (Akinsanya & Williams, 2004; Morrison, 2003). They are more effective when the students are given an opportunity to gain a comprehensive assessment of their learning and understand their own learning style but also have continuous and comprehensive understanding of their performance (Watkins, Carnell, & Lodge, 2007).

Based on the prior literature discussed above, it is evident that there are numerous studies examining students' educational goals, approaches to learning and assessment preferences for both undergraduate and postgraduate students in public universities and private institutions in many countries. However, there is a big gap in the literature regarding these areas in the Singapore context, in particular part-time students pursuing postgraduate studies at Private Education Institutions (PEIs). Thus, this study seeks to shed some light on these areas and it is believed to be the first study examining postgraduates' educational goals,

approaches to learning and assessment preferences in the private higher education sector in Singapore.

3. Methodology

The target participants for this study are part-time MBA and MPA students pursuing their studies at a private education institution in Singapore. Their degree is awarded by an Australian university and the programme takes about 16 to 24 months to complete. In order to address the research questions for this study, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to these students during their lessons. The questionnaire comprises four sections (see Appendix). Section A deals with the educational goals for pursuing a postgraduate study, where the 20 statements are mostly adopted from the study conducted by Selvarajah (2006). Each question comes with a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = to a great extent). Section B employs the revised two-factor study process questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F) developed by Briggs et al. (2001) where it contains 20 items to examine students' approaches to learning. The responses for each item are measured by a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = this item is never or only rarely true of me to 5 = this item is always or almost always true of me). The R-SPQ-2F was selected as it is one of the most widely used tools to evaluate SAL (Richardson, 2004) and it has been validated (Biggs et al., 2001) and replicated by many higher education scholars (Fox, McManus, & Winder, 2001; Gijbels et al., 2005; Goh, 2006; Leung & Kember, 2003; M'Hamed Taher & Chen, 2011). Studies have shown that a two-factor model (deep and surface) has a better fit than the three factor-model (deep, surface and achieving; Kember & Leung, 1998; Zhang, 2000). Section C measures students' assessment preferences, and it covers 26 items which are mainly adapted from the assessment-form related dimensions of the Assessment Preference Inventory (API) developed by Birenbaum (1994). Each item is measured by a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = not at all to 5 = to a great extent). This section also includes additional six items where students are required to rank their preferences (from 1 = most to 5 = least) for each of the current five assessment methods. Section D covers students' background which includes the course they are pursuing, gender, and age group. Ethics approval has been obtained from the University and all participations were voluntary.

4. Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire was distributed to the students during their classes held between 25 March and 3 April 2016. A total of 101 students (55 MBA and 46 MPA) participated in the survey, which represents around 30% of the population, of which 57 are female students (27 MBA and 30 MPA) and the remaining 44 are male students (28 MBA and 16 MPA). Table 1 summarises the students' profiles by programme of study and gender. In terms of age group, the majority of the students are 35 years and below, which accounted

for more than 55% of the sample. Less than 10% of the students are above the age of 45 years. Table 2 summarises the age distribution of the students. It is evident from the table that there is a higher percentage of younger female students pursuing postgraduate studies than their male counterparts in the same age group (35 years and below), suggesting these students may see the MBA/MPA as an important credential to build their career (Carrel & Schoenbachler, 2001).

	MBA		MPA		Total	
Female	27	49.1%	30	65.2%	57	56.4%
Male	28	50.9%	16	34.8%	44	43.6%
Total	55	100.0%	46	100.0%	101	100.0%

Table 1: Sample Distribution - Program and Gender.

	MBA		MPA		Total			
Age Group	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total	%
>30	7	1	10	2	17	3	20	19.8
31-35	13	4	11	8	24	12	36	35.7
36-40	6	9	3	3	9	12	21	20.8
41-45	0	11	3	2	3	13	16	15.8
46-50	1	3	2	1	3	4	7	6.9
>50	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1.0
Total	27	28	30	16	57	44	101	100.0

Table 2: Sample Distribution - Program, Gender and Age Group.

4.1 Educational goals

Table 3 summarises the educational goals mean score and rank for the MBA and MPA students. The top three most important educational goals for the MBA and MPA students are "to learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career" (G1), "to discover knowledge that may be useful for my job" (G6), and "to improve my management/technical skills" (G2). It is telling that MPA students see the qualification as essential as many of them do not possess an accountancy undergraduate degree, and this programme is targeted at professionals who do not have a background in accounting and therefore, students with accounting bachelor's degree are not allowed into the programme. They believe the MPA credential will allow them to acquire new skills to enhance their career in the accountancy profession.[1] It must be noted that having completed the MPA programme, students can proceed to pursue the CPA Australia examinations with the maximum number of exemptions granted. The CPA Australia designation is one of the most highly sought-after accountancy qualifications in the world (Chong, 2015). Thus, it is believed that the MPA students see this qualification as a stepping stone to pursuing the CPA Australia programme to further enhance their professional status.

From the survey results, it appears that the students see career enhancement and sharpening their business and technical skills as important motivational goals when pursuing a postgraduate degree. The findings are consistent with the results reported by Baruch and Leeming (2001), Selvarajah (2006), and Marks and Edington (2006). To further examine the relationships between the educational goal variables and programme, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. The significant differences (p-value < 0.05) in educational goals between the MBA and MPA students are summarised in Table 4. Six educational goals (G8, G9, G10, G11, G13, G16) were found to be significantly different between the two groups of students.

[1] The entry requirement for MPA is the student must possess a non-accountancy bachelor degree.

No.	Educational goals	MBA (mean)	Rank	MPA (mean)	Rank
G1	To learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career	**4.42**	**1**	**4.50**	**1**
G2	To improve my management/technical skills	**4.25**	**3**	**4.15**	**3**
G3	To undertake a personal challenge	3.87	8	3.89	5
G4	To obtain a qualification essential to my current job	3.76	10	3.67	7
G5	To get a qualification that will look good on my resume	3.89	7	3.85	6
G6	To discover knowledge that may be useful for my job	**4.31**	**2**	**4.17**	**2**
G7	To help me to look for a new job	3.62	11	3.91	4
G8	To enhance my leadership skills	4.07	4	3.54	8
G9	To improve my skills of working with other people	4.07	4	3.43	9
G10	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	3.95	6	3.43	9
G11	To establish new business contacts	3.53	12	3.09	16
G12	To show my friends the importance of continuing education	2.82	18	2.70	18
G13	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	3.53	12	3.11	15
G14	To improve my standing with business associates and friends	3.36	14	3.13	14
G15	To make new friends	3.22	16	3.15	13
G16	To improve new communication skills	3.82	9	3.39	11
G17	To improve my knowledge just for the sake of it	3.22	16	3.00	17
G18	To meet my employers' requirements so that I can be promoted or to take on additional responsibilities where this qualification helps	3.25	15	3.24	12
G19	To show my parents I can do something worthwhile	2.67	19	2.52	19
G20	To use up my spare time	2.51	20	2.48	20

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 3: Educational goals of MBA and MPA students.

Rank (p-value)	No.	Educational goals	MBA (mean)	MPA (mean)	MBA vs. MPA (p-value)
1	G9	To improve my skills of working with other people	4.07	3.43	0.000
2	G8	To enhance my leadership skills	4.07	3.54	0.001
3	G10	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	3.95	3.43	0.003
4	G16	To improve new communication skills	3.76	3.39	0.006
5	G13	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	3.53	3.11	0.013
6	G11	To establish new business contacts	3.53	3.09	0.021

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 4: Significant different goals betweens MBA and MPA students.

Table 5 summarises the mean scores and rankings of the educational goals by gender for the MBA and MPA programmes. The top three educational goals (G1, G2 and G6) among the male and female MPA students are essentially the same. As for the MBA students, the female students ranked G6 as their top educational goal, which is not within the top three educational goals of their male counterparts. The male MBA students perceived enhancing their leadership skills (G8) as one of their top three educational goals. A closer examination of those MBA students who cited this as a very important goal are those whose age group fall between 41-45 years old, suggesting that these students could be in their mid-level or senior level managerial role, and thus they see effective leadership skills as of paramount importance in their job. The other two educational goals, G1 and G2, are perceived as among the top three goals for both the female and male MBA students, albeit the male students gave an overall higher mean score for these

two goals compared to the female students. The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed and on the whole, there are no significant differences in educational goals between male and female MPA students. However, there are significant differences between educational goals and gender for the MBA students: G2, G8 and G16 (see Table 6).

Further analysis on the educational goals are performed by age group for both programmes. Table 7 presents the overall mean score for each of the educational goals by age group of the MBA students. It is evident that G1 remains as one of the top three goals across all age groups. G2 is another important educational goals among the students, other than those whose age falls within 31-35. The findings are not in line with those reported by Thomson and Gui (2000) where they found that only younger students saw career switching as an important driving factor and the older students placed greater emphasis on acquiring technical skills. Interestingly, students from this group see putting an MBA in their resume (G5) as one of the top three goals, suggesting they value the three letters behind their name highly. Apart from G1, students who are 40 and below see G6 as the other important educational goal for pursuing an MBA. Those who are above 40 see enhancing leadership skills as crucial. The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed and on the whole, there are no significant differences in educational goals between age group among the MPA students.

No.	Educational goals	MBA Female (mean)	Rank	MBA Male (mean)	Rank	MPA Female (mean)	Rank	MPA Male (mean)	Rank
1	To learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career	**4.30**	**2**	**4.54**	**1**	**4.47**	**1**	**4.56**	**1**
2	To improve my management/technical skills	4.07	3	**4.43**	**2**	**4.17**	**2**	**4.13**	**3**
3	To undertake a personal challenge	3.93	5	3.82	9	4.00	5	3.69	5
4	To obtain a qualification essential to my current job	3.81	8	3.71	11	3.60	7	3.81	4
5	To get a qualification that will look good on my resume	3.81	8	3.96	8	3.93	6	3.69	5
6	To discover knowledge that may be useful for my job	**4.37**	**1**	4.25	4	**4.07**	**3**	**4.38**	**2**
7	To help me to look for a new job	3.63	10	3.61	13	4.03	4	3.69	5
8	To enhance my leadership skills	3.85	7	**4.29**	**3**	3.60	7	3.44	8
9	To improve my skills of working with other people	3.96	4	4.18	5	3.53	9	3.25	12
10	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	3.89	6	4.00	7	3.50	10	3.31	11
11	To establish new business contacts	3.41	13	3.64	12	3.07	16	3.13	13
12	To show my friends the importance of continuing education	2.56	17	3.07	17	2.77	18	2.56	18
13	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	3.30	15	3.75	10	3.17	13	3.00	16
14	To improve my standing with business associates and friends	3.44	12	3.29	18	3.17	13	3.06	15
15	To make new friends	3.07	18	3.36	14	3.03	17	3.38	9
16	To improve new communication skills	3.48	11	4.14	6	6.33	11	3.50	10
17	To improve my knowledge just for the sake of it	3.30	15	3.14	15	3.13	15	2.75	17
18	To meet my employers' requirements so that I can be promoted or to take on additional responsibilities where this qualification helps	3.37	14	3.14	15	3.30	12	3.13	13
19	To show my parents I can do something worthwhile	2.67	19	2.68	19	2.70	19	2.19	19
20	To use up my spare time	2.67	19	2.36	20	2.67	20	2.13	20

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 5: Educational goals of MBA and MPA students - Gender.

Rank (p-value)	No.	Educational goals	MBA (female)	MBA (male)	MBA vs. MPA (p-value)
1	G2	To improve my management/technical skills	4.07	4.43	0.013
2	G8	To enhance my leadership skills	3.85	4.29	0.019
3	G16	To improve new communication skills	3.48	4.14	0.009

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 6: Significant different goals between gender - MBA.

A closer examination on the important goals among the various age groups of the MPA students (see Table 8) resulted in the observation that they are largely similar to those reported for the MBA students. Interestingly the youngest group here have rated G5 as one of the top three goals, which is similar to the 31-35 years MBA group. It is also telling

that the youngest group and those aged between 36-40 perceived the MPA qualification as an important credential for seeking new jobs (G7). The findings here may suggest that some students in these two groups may be dissatisfied with their current employment and hoping to gain better opportunities with this qualification. The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed and on the whole, there are no significant differences in educational goals between age group among the MPA students.

No.	Educational goals	<30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
1	To learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career	**4.63**	4.06	4.47	4.55	**5.00**
2	To improve my management/technical skills	**4.25**	4.00	**4.20**	**4.55**	4.75
3	To undertake a personal challenge	3.88	3.88	3.87	3.91	3.75
4	To obtain a qualification essential to my current job	3.50	3.94	3.73	3.73	3.75
5	To get a qualification that will look good on my resume	3.63	**4.18**	3.73	3.73	4.25
6	To discover knowledge that may be useful for my job	**4.50**	**4.29**	**4.33**	4.18	4.25
7	To help me to look for a new job	3.63	3.53	3.73	3.45	4.00
8	To enhance my leadership skills	**4.25**	3.82	3.73	**4.64**	**4.50**
9	To improve my skills of working with other people	4.00	4.00	3.93	**4.36**	4.25
10	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	4.13	3.82	3.67	4.18	4.50
11	To establish new business contacts	3.00	3.76	3.53	3.55	3.50
12	To show my friends the importance of continuing education	2.38	2.82	2.67	3.55	2.25
13	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	3.25	3.47	3.40	3.73	4.25
14	To improve my standing with business associates and friends	3.50	3.59	2.87	3.64	3.25
15	To make new friends	3.13	3.24	2.80	3.82	3.25
16	To improve new communication skills	3.63	3.65	3.73	4.18	4.25
17	To improve my knowledge just for the sake of it	3.75	3.29	2.80	3.64	2.25
18	To meet my employers' requirements so that I can be promoted or to take on additional responsibilities where this qualification helps	3.13	3.59	2.87	3.45	3.00
19	To show my parents I can do something worthwhile	3.00	2.47	2.53	3.09	2.25
20	To use up my spare time	3.25	2.59	2.00	2.73	2.00
	Total number of students	*8*	*17*	*15*	*11*	*4*

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 7: Education goals of MBA students - Age Group.

No.	Educational goals	<30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	>50
1	To learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career	**4.75**	**4.47**	**4.67**	4.00	4.33	4
2	To improve my management/technical skills	4.08	**4.21**	**4.33**	3.80	4.33	4
3	To undertake a personal challenge	3.83	3.74	4.00	**4.00**	**4.33**	5
4	To obtain a qualification essential to my current job	3.33	3.58	4.00	**4.00**	**4.33**	4
5	To get a qualification that will look good on my resume	**4.17**	3.63	3.50	**4.00**	4.00	5
6	To discover knowledge that may be useful for my job	4.00	**4.05**	**4.17**	**4.40**	**5.00**	5
7	To help me to look for a new job	**4.50**	3.58	**4.33**	3.40	4.00	3
8	To enhance my leadership skills	3.50	3.47	3.67	3.20	**4.33**	4
9	To improve my skills of working with other people	3.67	3.16	3.83	2.80	**4.33**	4
10	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	3.58	3.11	**4.17**	3.00	4.00	4
11	To establish new business contacts	3.33	2.95	3.00	3.40	3.00	2
12	To show my friends the importance of continuing education	2.75	2.47	3.00	2.80	3.33	2
13	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	3.25	3.11	3.17	2.40	4.00	2
14	To improve my standing with business associates and friends	3.33	3.05	2.67	2.80	4.33	3
15	To make new friends	3.08	3.21	3.17	3.20	3.33	2
16	To improve new communication skills	3.50	3.32	3.50	2.80	**4.33**	3
17	To improve my knowledge just for the sake of it	2.83	2.84	2.83	3.40	4.00	4
18	To meet my employers' requirements so that I can be promoted or to take on additional responsibilities where this qualification helps	3.08	3.21	3.67	3.40	3.00	3
19	To show my parents I can do something worthwhile	2.83	2.63	1.67	2.60	2.33	2
20	To use up my spare time	2.75	2.58	1.83	2.60	2.33	1
	Total number of students	*12*	*19*	*6*	*5*	*3*	*1*

Note: A higher score suggests students agree with the statement and a score lower than 3 suggests students tend to disagree with the statement

Table 8: Education goals of MPA students - Age Group.

4.2 Learning approaches

The students' preferences for deep learning or surface learning were assessed based on the R-SPQ-2F developed by Biggs et al. (2001). The 20 items consist of 10 items for a Deep Approach (DA) and the other 10 items for a Surface Approach (SA). Within each of these two approaches, there are two subscales focusing on motive and strategy. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, students with higher DA scores (out of a maximum score of 50) than SA scores suggest a deep approach to learning while students with higher SA scores indicate a surface approach to learning.

Table 9 presents a comparison of the Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency of the two approaches and their sub-scales with the earlier studies (Biggs et al, 2001; Leung & Chan, 2001; Siddiqui, 2006). The reliability indices for both DA and SA and the four subscales are all higher than those reported in their earlier studies, and also the indices are close to, or higher than, 0.70, suggesting they show relatively high internal consistency and are acceptable for general assessment (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 10 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of students on DA and SA and its subscales. Students generally recorded a higher mean score for DA and its subscales compared to SA and its subscales, suggesting that postgraduate students are motivated and see the importance of adopting a deep approach in learning in order to gain more managerial and technical knowledge in order to propel their career to greater heights. In terms of gender, male students recorded a higher mean score across both approaches and their subscales compared to their female counterparts. Specifically male students reported the highest and lowest mean scores of 3.52 and 2.60 for DM and SA respectively whereas female students recorded the highest mean and lowest mean scores of 3.48 and 2.21 for DS and SM respectively. When it comes to courses, MBA students reported a higher mean score for both approaches and their subscales compared to the MPA students. They reported a joint highest mean score of 3.50 for DA and DS, but with the lowest mean score of 2.51 for SM. On the other hand, the MPA students reported their highest and lowest mean scores of 3.47 and 2.47 for DS and SM respectively. The t-test results between gender and course are summarised in Table 11. The results show that there are statistically significant differences in the SA and its subscales between female and male students, and also between the MBA and MPA students. Thus, the findings suggest that female students adopted a significantly higher level of SA than their male counterparts. This is in contrast to the results reported by Gijbels et al. (2005) where they found that male students adopted a significant higher level of SA than the female students. One possible reason for the difference could be the sample examined here are all part-time postgraduate students compared to the full-time undergraduate students sampled by Gijbels et al. The part-time female students may have heavy work and family commitments, with some of them having young children. Consequently, they may adopt a surface approach to learning and due to time constraints and excess workload. The results also differed from the study conducted by M'Hamed Taher and Jin (2011) when they found no significant differences in learning approach among female and male part-time MBA students in China.

Scales and Subscales	Cronbach alpha value			
	Current study	Biggs et al. (2001)	Leung & Chan (2001)	Siddiqui (2006)
Deep Approach	0.79	0.73	0.76	0.75
Deep Motive	0.65	0.62	0.61	0.58
Deep Strategy	0.66	0.63	0.63	0.63
Surface Approach	0.86	0.64	0.73	0.73
Surface Motive	0.74	0.72	0.59	0.59
Surface Strategy	0.76	0.57	0.58	0.58

Table 9: Reliability coefficient for the scales and subscales - A comparison.

	Deep Approach		Deep Motive		Deep Strategy		Surface Approach		Surface Motive		Surface Strategy	
Gender	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Female	3.43	0.95	3.39	0.97	3.48	0.92	2.40	1.11	2.21	1.07	2.59	1.12
Male	3.51	0.99	3.52	1.01	3.50	0.98	2.60	1.17	2.41	1.14	2.80	1.17
Course												
MBA	3.50	0.94	3.49	0.97	3.50	0.92	2.67	1.15	2.51	1.14	2.88	1.11
MPA	3.42	1.00	3.40	1.01	3.47	0.98	2.26	1.09	2.04	0.99	2.45	1.15

Table 10: Mean scores and standard deviations of students on Deep and Surface Approach and its subscales.

	Deep Approach	Deep Motive	Deep Strategy	Surface Approach	Surface Motive	Surface Strategy
	p-value	*p-value*	*p-value*	*p-value*	*p-value*	*p-value*
Gender	0.195	0.124	0.789	0.004*	0.041*	0.041*
Course	0.170	0.301	0.704	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*

Table 11: The p-values on gender and course of Deep and and Surface Approach and its subscales.

The t-test results also suggest that MBA students adopted a significantly higher level of SA than the MPA students. A possible explanation for this observation could be the MPA students are fully aware that they need to have a strong foundation and technical background in order to boost their chances of passing the highly demanding CPA exam after attaining the MPA qualification. Thus, many of them will tend to adopt less of a surface learning approach compared to their MBA counterparts, who may see this qualification as an end to their academic progression and the modules offered in the MBA programme are less technically demanding. Another possible explanation could be the number of modules taken by some of the MBA students within the sample period could be relatively more than the MPA students. As a result, they may be struggling with coping with their studies in addition to work and family, so they may be 'forced' to adopt a more surface approach to learning and may not be aiming to achieve high grades. Due to the confidentiality of their grades and also because they are sensitive to reveal their grades, this study is unable to examine any relationship between performance and SAL.

Table 12 presents the mean scores and standard deviations on the two broad approaches and their subscales of the students by age group. It indicates that the students within the 41-45 year-range and the 46-50 year-range recorded higher mean scores for DA and its subscales, compared to other younger age groups. The ANOVA results in Table 13 indicate there is a significant difference in deep leaning approach between age groups, suggesting that older and mature students tend to exhibit deep approaches to learning, which is in line with prior studies (Biggs, 1987; Bilgin & Crowe, 2008; Gow & Kembert, 1990; Harper & Kember, 1986; Shaari et al., 2005). There is no significant difference between age groups for surface learning approach.

Age group	Deep Approach		Deep Motive		Deep Strategy		Surface Approach		Surface Motive		Surface Strategy	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
≤30	3.46	1.05	3.42	1.08	3.50	1.02	2.49	1.10	2.23	1.05	2.74	1.09
31-35	3.42	0.90	3.41	0.94	3.43	0.86	2.50	1.10	2.32	1.03	2.68	1.14
36-40	3.34	1.00	3.37	1.06	3.30	0.95	2.51	1.16	2.31	1.15	2.70	1.14
41-45	3.65	0.96	3.61	0.92	3.83	1.00	2.56	1.23	2.41	1.20	2.70	1.25
46-50	3.64	0.96	3.46	0.95	3.49	0.95	2.33	1.24	2.17	1.25	2.49	1.22

Table 12: Mean scores and standard deviations of students (by age group) on Deep Surface Approach and its subscales.

	Deep Approach	Deep Motive	Deep Strategy	Surface Approach	Surface Motive	Surface Strategy
	F-value	F-value	F-value	F-value	F-value	F-value
Age group	0.014*	0.550	0.013*	0.738	0.781	0.858

Table 13: ANOVA results for age group of Deep and Surface Approach and its subscales.

4.3 Assessment preferences

Students were asked about their preferences for assessment types and item format/task types in Section C and the mean scores and standard deviations by course and gender are summarised in Table 14 and 15 respectively. A higher mean score suggests more preference was given to the item. A comparison between the MBA and MPA students reveal that MBA students prefer questions that require: problem solving (item 26); application of materials learnt during the course to the new situations (item 15); and provide examples (item 16). On the other hand, MPA students have stronger preference, with a higher mean score for the top three items, for: written test/exam with supporting materials (item 1); questions that require application of materials learnt during the course to the new situations (item 15); and open-ended

questions requiring short answers (item 7). The findings are in line with those reported by Van de Watering et al. (2008), Ben-Chaim and Zoller (1997) and Traub and McRury (1990) where students prefer the use of support materials. In addition, the findings also suggest that students appreciate assessments that require applied learning and in line with the earlier findings discussed in Section 4.2, postgraduate students in this study are more likely to adopt a deep approach in learning. The findings support the suggestions that students adopting a deep approach to learning favour assessment that allows them to demonstrate their understanding (Entwistle & Tait, 1990). It is also evident that both groups of students do not favour questions that require reproduction and memorisation of facts (item 12), which is what surface learners would prefer (Magnussen, 2001). In terms of gender, female students have stronger preference for open-ended questions with short answers (item 7), and questions that require: application of materials learnt during the course to the new situations (item 15); and critical thinking (item 23). Male students have stronger preference for written test/exam with supporting materials (item 1); questions that require: application of materials learnt during the course to the new situations (item 15); comparing different concepts/ideas; and data analysis and interpretation. The findings suggest that on the whole, both female and male students adopt a deep learning approach and prefer assessment types that come with higher order level of learning (applying, analysing, evaluating) under Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning. Table 14 also recorded the lowest mean score for item 12 for both sexes, which suggest they do not favour a surface approach to learning.

In order to examine further the preferences of assessment types by gender, a t-test was conducted on five types of assessment items/format which are currently used for most of their modules: individual presentation, group presentation, multiple choice questions (MCQ), open-ended questions and essay questions. The results are summarised in Table 16, which shows that there is no significant difference in the preference of assessment items/format between the female and male students. The findings are in contrast with those reported by Beller and Gafni (2000), Zoller and Ben-Chaim (1989) and Zeidner (1987) where they found male students prefer MCQ, while female students favour essay questions. The difference in the findings could be due to the current study examining postgraduate students while the sample used for the aforementioned studies comprised high school/college students, who may have different educational goals influenced by their parents. Despite there being a difference in age group between this study and the prior studies, Table 17 presents the ANOVA results for the age group of the chosen five assessment items/formats, and the results show that there is no significant difference in preference for any of the five assessment items/format among different age groups.

	Assessment Type	MBA Mean	MBA SD	MPA Mean	MPA SD
1	Written test/exam, with supporting materials (notes, books)	3.76	1.03	4.13	0.77
2	Written test/exam, without the use of supporting materials	3.05	1.17	2.65	1.22
3	Individual oral presentation	3.45	1.14	3.13	1.10
4	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, with marks awarded to each participant may be different.	3.55	1.11	3.33	1.08
5	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, and will award the group with the same mark.	3.24	1.19	2.83	1.11
6	Multiple choice questions	3.22	1.33	3.61	0.92
7	Open-ended questions requiring short answers	3.87	0.79	4.07	0.70
8	Open-ended questions requiring long answers (essays)	3.40	1.09	3.46	0.99
9	Individual assignments	3.89	0.91	3.96	0.83
10	Group assignments	3.89	0.78	3.65	0.89
11	Dissertation	2.89	1.09	2.98	1.09
12	Questions making an appeal to the reproduction and memorization of facts	2.84	1.16	2.63	1.07
13	Knowledge related questions to check the understanding of the readings provided	3.75	0.92	3.98	0.82
14	Comprehension questions related to the materials taught by the instructor	3.69	0.76	4.09	0.69
15	Questions requiring the application of material learnt during the course to the new situations	3.95	0.64	4.13	0.68
16	Questions that require you to provide examples	3.95	0.75	3.96	0.72
17	Questions that require comparing different concepts/ideas	3.91	0.69	3.89	0.79
18	Questions that require data analysis and interpretation	3.80	0.92	4.04	0.93
19	Questions that require drawing conclusions	3.78	0.82	3.80	0.92
20	Questions that require an overall view of the relations among all topics learnt	3.65	0.88	3.70	0.78
21	Questions that require creativity and imagination	3.76	0.97	3.43	0.99
22	Questions that require a personal explanation or opinion	3.93	0.89	3.76	0.86
23	Questions that require critical thinking	3.93	0.89	3.98	0.79
24	Questions in which you are asked to evaluate others' solutions or opinions	3.62	0.94	3.46	0.93
25	Questions that require scientific investigation	3.29	1.02	3.22	1.16
26	Questions that require problem solving	4.04	0.79	4.00	0.96

Table 14: Mean scores and standard deviations of assessment type by course.

	Assessment Type	MBA Mean	MBA SD	MPA Mean	MPA SD
1	Written test/exam, with supporting materials (notes, books)	3.76	1.03	4.13	0.77
2	Written test/exam, without the use of supporting materials	3.05	1.17	2.65	1.22
3	Individual oral presentation	3.45	1.14	3.13	1.10
4	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, with marks awarded to each participant may be different.	3.55	1.11	3.33	1.08
5	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, and will award the group with the same mark.	3.24	1.19	2.83	1.11
6	Multiple choice questions	3.22	1.33	3.61	0.92
7	Open-ended questions requiring short answers	3.87	0.79	4.07	0.70
8	Open-ended questions requiring long answers (essays)	3.40	1.09	3.46	0.99
9	Individual assignments	3.89	0.91	3.96	0.83
10	Group assignments	3.89	0.78	3.65	0.89
11	Dissertation	2.89	1.09	2.98	1.09
12	Questions making an appeal to the reproduction and memorization of facts	2.84	1.16	2.63	1.07
13	Knowledge related questions to check the understanding of the readings provided	3.75	0.92	3.98	0.82
14	Comprehension questions related to the materials taught by the instructor	3.69	0.76	4.09	0.69
15	Questions requiring the application of material learnt during the course to the new situations	3.95	0.64	4.13	0.68
16	Questions that require you to provide examples	3.95	0.75	3.96	0.72
17	Questions that require comparing different concepts/ideas	3.91	0.69	3.89	0.79
18	Questions that require data analysis and interpretation	3.80	0.92	4.04	0.93
19	Questions that require drawing conclusions	3.78	0.82	3.80	0.92
20	Questions that require an overall view of the relations among all topics learnt	3.65	0.88	3.70	0.78
21	Questions that require creativity and imagination	3.76	0.97	3.43	0.99
22	Questions that require a personal explanation or opinion	3.93	0.89	3.76	0.86
23	Questions that require critical thinking	3.93	0.89	3.98	0.79
24	Questions in which you are asked to evaluate others' solutions or opinions	3.62	0.94	3.46	0.93
25	Questions that require scientific investigation	3.29	1.02	3.22	1.16
26	Questions that require problem solving	4.04	0.79	4.00	0.96

Table 15: Mean scores and standard deviations of assessment type by gender.

	Individual Presentation p-value	Group Presentation p-value	MCQ p-value	Open-ended Questions p-value	Essay Questions p-value
Gender	0.576	0.473	0.542	0.130	0.928

Table 16: The p-values of assessment types by gender.

	Individual Presentation F-value	Group Presentation F-value	MCQ F-value	Open-ended Questions F-value	Essay Questions F-value
Age group	0.434	0.526	0.423	0.759	0.625

Table 17: ANOVA results for age group of assessment types.

Table 18 summarises the mean scores and standard deviations of the five assessment types (individual assignment, group assignment, oral presentation, test, exam) in terms of enjoyment, learning value, fairness, ability, and preference among MBA and MPA students. A lower mean score suggests a higher ranking compared to a higher mean score. It is telling that both groups of students gave individual assignment and exam as the highest and lowest ranking respectively for all the attributes. The findings suggest students have a strong preference for individual assignments compared to the other four assessment types. This could be because these part-time students feel that they have more control and better time management in doing individual assignments compared to group assignments where there could be difficulties faced in coordinating and meeting their group members for discussion and distribution of task among members, which may lead to issues on fairness and different degree of commitment among members. This is evident from the highest mean score (lowest rank) recorded for fairness and ability in group assignments. In a similar vein, Selvarajah et al. (2010) also reported the postgraduate students from universities in Australia, Thailand and New Zealand also favour individual assignments over group assignments.

Assessment Types	MBA Mean	MBA SD	MPA Mean	MPA SD
Enjoyment				
- Individual assignment	2.20	1.33	2.37	1.15
- Group assignment	2.53	1.25	2.61	1.52
- Oral presentation	2.98	1.24	3.22	1.30
- Test	3.45	1.23	3.07	1.07
- Exam	3.87	1.36	3.74	1.54
Learning value				
- Individual assignment	2.16	1.39	2.20	1.23
- Group assignment	2.58	1.30	2.72	1.39
- Oral presentation	3.45	1.20	3.26	1.28
- Test	3.22	1.19	3.39	1.05
- Exam	3.67	1.38	3.50	1.60
Fairness				
- Individual assignment	2.40	1.46	2.30	1.25
- Group assignment	3.58	1.34	3.72	1.26
- Oral presentation	3.35	1.28	3.54	1.23
- Test	2.84	1.22	2.74	1.05
- Exam	2.87	1.54	2.70	1.67
Ability				
- Individual assignment	2.55	1.51	2.24	1.16
- Group assignment	3.75	1.15	3.54	1.43
- Oral presentation	3.29	1.40	3.35	1.31
- Test	2.71	1.11	2.96	1.02
- Exam	2.80	1.51	2.91	1.69
Most preferred				
- Individual assignment	2.36	1.41	2.22	1.16
- Group assignment	2.93	1.33	2.80	1.47
- Oral presentation	3.18	1.24	3.28	1.39
- Test	3.02	1.26	3.07	1.09
- Exam	3.53	1.57	3.63	1.49

Table 18: Comparison of assessment preferences between MBA and MPA students.

On the other hand, students ranked exams as the least desirable, especially when it comes to enjoyment and learning value. This could be the anxiety and stress they face before (preparation), during (time management and ability to answer the questions) and even after the exam (worrying about the results). In addition, they may perceive that the exam cannot reflect and measure their ability fully. Similar results are also found between female and male students' preference of assessment types (see Table 19).

Tables 20-23 present the correlation coefficients between assessment types and learning approaches for MBA, MPA, female and male students respectively. It can be seen that there is no significant correlation between assessment types and learning approaches among these variables apart from a significant negative correlation between group assignment and Surface Approach (SA) for MBA students and a significant positive correlation between test and Deep Motive (DM) for the female students, both at 0.05 significant level. It suggests that MBA students who adopt a Surface Approach (SA) to learning may favour group assignment as they may not put in as much effort and rely on other group members, especially those committed and members who may adopt a Deep Approach (DA) to learning, to completing the assignment. Such behaviour and attitude are unacceptable and unfair to those students who put in their effort. It is also telling that the female students who adopt a DM approach to learning do not favour test assessments. Perhaps it could be due to the fact that these tests are normally conducted during the mid-trimester, which could fall within the sixth or seventh week after the trimester commences. They may not be well-prepared for it since as deep learners, they believe they need more time to learn the topics and concepts well.

Assessment Types	Female		Male	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Enjoyment				
- Individual assignment	2.26	1.18	2.30	1.34
- Group assignment	2.61	1.42	2.50	1.32
- Oral presentation	3.14	125	3.02	1.31
- Test	3.14	1.19	3.45	1.14
- Exam	3.84	1.47	3.77	1.41
Learning value				
- Individual assignment	2.35	1.34	1.95	1.24
- Group assignment	2.75	1.38	2.50	1.29
- Oral presentation	3.33	1.23	2.41	1.25
- Test	3.18	1.23	3.45	0.96
- Exam	3.39	1.58	3.86	1.31
Fairness				
- Individual assignment	2.46	1.34	2.23	1.40
- Group assignment	3.58	1.26	3.73	1.37
- Oral presentation	3.44	1.32	3.43	1.18
- Test	2.84	1.14	2.73	1.16
- Exam	2.68	1.62	2.93	1.56
Ability				
- Individual assignment	2.37	1.29	2.45	1.47
- Group assignment	2.47	1.29	3.89	1.25
- Oral presentation	3.53	1.33	3.05	1.35
- Test	2.79	1.12	2.86	1.01
- Exam	2.84	1.64	2.86	1.53
Most preferred				
- Individual assignment	2.32	1.16	2.27	1.47
- Group assignment	2.96	1.44	2.75	1.33
- Oral presentation	3.35	1.36	3.07	1.23
- Test	2.95	1.21	3.16	1.15
- Exam	3.42	1.59	3.77	1.44

Table 19: Comparison of assesssment preferences between female and male students.

MBA	DA	DM	DS	SA	SM	SS
Individual Assignment	0.030	0.185	-0.051	0.130	0.118	0.049
Group Assignment	-0.122	-0.235	0.061	-0.304*	-0.248	-0.144
Oral Presentation	0.123	0.121	-0.060	-0.042	-0.104	-0.226
Test	-0.108	-0.046	-0.106	0.172	0.179	0.170
Exam	0.056	-0.036	0.129	0.019	0.029	0.109

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
Table 20: Correlation matrix between assessment types and learning approach - MBA.

MPA	DA	DM	DS	SA	SM	SS
Individual Assignment	0.151	0.141	-0.105	-0.119	-0.142	-0.128
Group Assignment	0.066	-0.005	-0.031	0.255	0.025	-0.154
Oral Presentation	0.007	-0.021	-0.133	0.032	0.058	-0.037
Test	-0.030	0.092	0.130	-0.195	0.033	0.223
Exam	-0.168	-0.151	0.141	-0.045	0.007	0.122

Table 21: Correlation matrix between assessment types and learning approach - MPA.

Female	DA	DM	DS	SA	SM	SS
Individual Assignment	-0.012	-0.142	0.106	0.098	0.047	-0.011
Group Assignment	-0.158	-0.162	-0.087	-0.126	-0.062	-0.162
Oral Presentation	0.047	-0.108	0.086	0.103	0.138	0.215
Test	0.127	0.261*	-0.092	0.012	-0.058	0.029
Exam	0.016	0.145	-0.002	-0.054	-0.052	-0.051

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
Table 22: Correlation matrix between assessment types and learning approach - Female.

Male	DA	DM	DS	SA	SM	SS
Individual Assignment	0.177	-0.022	0.101	0.078	0.093	-0.220
Group Assignment	-0.090	-0.066	-0.230	-0.192	-0.111	0.016
Oral Presentation	-0.029	0.137	-0.195	0.107	0.134	-0.022
Test	-0.126	-0.097	-0.002	0.028	-0.067	0.156

Table 23: Correlation matrix between assessment types and learning approach - Male.

Clearly these mid-trimester tests may not fully examine and reflect their competence and ability on the subject. Another possible reason could be due to heavy work and family commitment, these students may only study hard and adopt a DA to learning just prior to the exam as it carries a heavier weightage to the overall module grade.

5. Implication of findings

This pilot study was designed to examine part-time postgraduate students' educational goals, learning approaches and assessment preferences. In terms of educational goals, the respondents cited "to learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career", "to improve my management/technical skills" and "to discover knowledge that may be useful for my job" as among the most important goals in pursuing postgraduate studies. When it comes to SAL, the respondents generally adopted a deep approach to learning, especially among the MPA respondents and those who fall under the age group of 41-45 years and 46-50 years. This approach to learning is also evident in the assessment preference among the respondents, where they prefer assessments that require higher order level of thinking such as problem solving and application of materials learnt during the course to the new situations. When it comes to the five assessment types, respondents have strong preference for individual assignment and showed least preference for exam. However, there was no significant difference in the preference for any of the five assessment items/format among gender and age groups.

5.1 Curriculum redesign

Based on the key educational goals cited by the respondents, the University may redesign the curriculum by continually updating the topics covered for each module so as to enable students to learn cutting-edge knowledge that can be applied to their work. Subjects like Effective Leadership, Risk Management, Strategic Decision Making and Strategic Marketing Management in the MBA programme may include more case studies in the Asian context and cover a wider range of industries, especially those that are of high relevance to Singapore. For the MPA course, as the accountancy profession has been undergoing many changes in the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and other regulatory changes in Singapore with respect to corporate governance, taxation and finance, the University may consider updating the syllabus for subjects like Corporate Accounting, Accounting Theory and

Governance, and Business Finance. Some respondents have also expressed their concern over the auditing, corporate law and taxation modules covered in the programme that are not in accordance with the Singapore regulatory framework. Perhaps the University may also consider revising and adapting its auditing, law and taxation subjects to the Singapore context to ensure a higher degree of relevance and applicability for the students. It must be noted that both the CPA Australia exam and the Singapore Qualifying Program exam for aspiring certified/chartered accountants have their taxation modules designed to cater to the Singapore context. Thus, it would be a big plus for the University to consider the adaptation to make the MPA programme more appealing and competitive to existing and prospective students.

5.2 Instructors' role

In order to encourage more students to adopt a deep approach to learning, instructors need to emphasise that learning is about developing meaning and understanding, especially at the postgraduate level, where students are expected to learn the concepts and theories and be able to relate and apply to their working environment and profession. Instructors can promote the deep learning approach by developing class activities that support collaborative learning in a safe, supportive and engaging learning environment (Dart et al., 2000). This can be achieved by introducing problem-based learning which involves solving complex problems in real world scenarios. Studies have shown that students taught using problem-based learning became increasingly deep in their approaches to learning (Newbie & Clarke, 1986; Scheau & Marina, 2008). In addition, instructors can present opportunities by providing practical problems that allow students to work in groups to explore, inquire, and experiment. Instructors may play the role of facilitators to encourage students to interact and share their ideas with fellow classmates. As the MBA/MPA programme offered by this university typically comes with a small class size of 10-20 students, interaction in small groups around the problem stimulates students to adopt a deep learning approach (Dolmans, Wolfhagen, & Ginns, 2010).

5.3 Re-examination of assessment types

The findings from this study suggest that students have a strong preference for individual assignments and least preference for examinations. Most of the modules in the MBA/MPA programme have summative assessments such as examinations, which typically carries a weightage between 30% - 50%. The University may re-examine the possibility of giving a higher weightage to individual assignments and less weightage to examinations. This may motivate students to work harder and hopefully help change students' approach to learning from surface to deep. Having less examination weightage may also reduce students' tension and anxiety during the exam preparation, and they may feel more motivated to perform at their best during exams, resulting in higher passing and lower attrition rates (Birenbaum & Feldman, 1998).

As most of the MBA/MPA students are part-time working adults, having heavy work and family commitments, having too many assessment components may lead them to adopt a surface learning approach as they may see career and family being more important than studies. Thus, the University may consider reducing the assessment components to just two or three instead of the current four to five components, and if feasible, some modules may not even have any exam component. The University may also introduce more electives for students to choose from. This will also motivate them to take up modules which interest them and benefit them in their workplace. Alternatively, the University may consider to let students choose their assessment types for the electives, though such an approach may require the approval from the Dean of the business school, and strong justifications are required to ensure fairness and true appropriateness in measuring students' performance.

5.4 Limitations of study

As the study focuses only on the existing postgraduate students who have not completed their degree, it did not obtain views from MBA/MPA graduates on how the qualification had benefitted them in their career and personal development after obtaining it as compared to before the programme began. Furthermore, the results gathered come from a relatively small sample size of students from two postgraduate programmes in one university, and they may not be representative of other postgraduate students within the university and other universities.

When it comes to students' approaches to learning (SAL), this study did not consider the contextual factors that may affect students adopting different approaches when faced with different circumstances. It also did not consider instructors' teaching effectiveness as prior studies suggested that instructor's teaching effectiveness may have an impact on SAL (Halawi, McCarthy, & Muoghalu, 2009). Despite these limitations, it is hoped that the findings from this study provide a valuable contribution to the scholarship on education goals, learning approaches and assessment preferences among part-time postgraduate students in Singapore. It is believed to be the first study that examines the effects of gender and course on these areas in the postgraduate studies in Singapore. Qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups can be conducted in order to gain more in-depth views and reasoning on students' perception of teaching effectiveness, assessment preferences and their educational goals. Other variables such as mode of study (part-time vs full-time vs distance learning), delivery (online vs blended vs face-to-face), years of working experience, and assessment results (if available) can be included for future studies.

6. Conclusion

This study is believed to be the first to examine part-time postgraduate students' educational goals, learning approach and assessment preference for an Australian MBA

and MPA programmes offered in Singapore. The overall findings from this study will enable the University to gain insight into the reasons for pursuing a postgraduate degree in Singapore, which will be beneficial for the University to consider redesigning the curriculum for both programmes to suit the needs of existing students as well as to increase their appeal to prospective students. The respondents' views on their learning approach and assessment preferences will allow instructors and module leaders to look into the teaching pedagogy and current assessment structure for each module so as to improve students' learning experience and satisfaction. Encouraging students to adopt a deep learning approach and changing the assessment structure aligned with this approach may motivate students and reduce their anxiety and fear in pursuing these programmes to meet their educational goals. With the rising trend of students in Singapore pursuing further studies on a part-time basis, there will be ample opportunities for higher education scholars to examine their aspirations and learning approaches, and perform comparative studies among local and international students from the public universities and PEIs.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Please shade the answer of your choice where appropriate.

SHADING INSTRUCTIONS			
Correct Shading	●	Wrong Shading	⊗ ⊕ ⊘

A. Why you study

Please provide your position with regard to the following statements connected to your current educational goals and aspirations for pursuing your postgraduate study.

Please tick the following number accordingly to indicate that you:

1 - strongly disagree

2 - disagree

3 - neither agree or disagree

4 - agree

5 - strongly agree

Or add a statement of your own.

No.	Your current educational goals and aspirations for pursuing your postgraduate study:	1	2	3	4	5
1.	To learn new skills so that I can enhance or change my career	O	O	O	O	O
2.	To improve my management/technical skills	O	O	O	O	O
3.	To undertake a personal challenge	O	O	O	O	O
4.	To obtain a qualification essential to my current job	O	O	O	O	O
5.	To get a qualification that will look good on my resume	O	O	O	O	O
6.	To discover knowledge that may be useful for my job	O	O	O	O	O
7.	To help me to look for a new job	O	O	O	O	O
8.	To enhance my leadership skills	O	O	O	O	O
9.	To improve my skills of working with other people	O	O	O	O	O
10.	To be able to work more effectively in group situations	O	O	O	O	O
11.	To establish new business contacts	O	O	O	O	O
12.	To show my friends the importance of continuing education	O	O	O	O	O
13.	To improve my ability to work with people with different culture	O	O	O	O	O
14.	To improve my standing with business associates and friends	O	O	O	O	O
15.	To make new friends	O	O	O	O	O
16.	To improve new communication skills	O	O	O	O	O
17.	To improve my knowledge just for the sake of it	O	O	O	O	O
18.	To meet my employers' requirements so that I can be promoted or to take on additional responsibilities where this qualification helps	O	O	O	⊘	O
19.	To show my parents I can do something worthwhile	O	O	O	O	O
20.	To use up my spare time	O	O	O	O	O
21.	Other: please state what:					

B. How you study

This section comprises of 20 statements about your attitudes towards your studies and your usual way of studying.

There is no *right* way of studying, there is only a way of studying that you find works for you.

If you think your answer to a question would depend on the subject being studies, give the answer that would apply to the subject(s) most important to you.

The number at the top of this questionnaire for this section stand for the following response:

1 - this item is *never* of *only rarely* true of me

2 - this item is *sometimes* true of me

3 - this item is true of me about *half* the time

4 - this item is *frequently* true of me

5 - this item is *always* or *almost always* true of me

No.	Your attitudes towards your studies and your usual way of studying.	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I find that at times studying gives me a feel of deep personal satisfaction.	O	O	O	O	O
2.	I find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own conclusions before I am satisfied.	O	O	O	O	O
3.	My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible.	O	O	O	O	O
4.	I only study seriously what's given out in class or in the course outline.	O	O	O	O	O
5.	I feel that virtually any topic can be highly interesting once I get into it.	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to obtain more information about them.	O	O	O	O	O
7.	I do not find my course very interesting so I keep my work to the minimum.	O	O	O	O	O
8.	I learn some things by rote, going over and over them until I know them by heart even if I do not understand them.	O	O	O	O	O
9.	I find that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or movie.	O	O	O	O	O
10.	I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely.	O	O	O	O	O
11.	I find I can get by in most assessments by memorizing key sections rather than trying to understand them.	O	O	O	O	O
12.	I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do anything extra.	O	O	O	O	O
13.	I work hard at my studies because I find the topics/subjects interesting.	O	O	O	O	O
14.	I spend a lot of my free time finding out more about interesting topics which have discussed in different classes.	O	O	O	O	O
15.	I find it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It is confusing and waste time, when all I need is to obtain a pass for each subject.	O	O	O	O	O
16.	I believe the lecturers shouldn't expect students to spend significant amounts of time studying material everyone knows won't be examined.	O	O	O	O	O
17.	I come to most classes with questions in mind that I want answers.	O	O	O	O	O
18.	I make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures.	O	O	O	O	O
19.	I see no point in learning materials which is not likely to be in the examination.	O	O	O	O	O
20.	I find the best way to pass examination is to try to remember answers to likely questions.	O	O	O	O	O

C. Assessment Preference

This section comprises of 32 items covering your preference with regard to assessment. There is no correct or incorrect answer as different students have different personality and preferences.

The number at the top of this questionnaire for this section stand for the following response:

1 - not at all

2 - to a small extent

3 - unsure

4 - to a certain extent

5 - to a great extent

No.	To what extent do you think your achievements in the course can be addressed by each of the following assessment methods?	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Written test/exam, with supporting materials (notes, books)	O	O	O	O	O
2.	Written test/exam, without the use of supporting materials	O	O	O	O	O
3.	Individual oral presentation	O	O	O	O	O
4.	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, with marks awarded to each participant may be different.	O	O	O	O	O
5.	Group oral presentation, where the instructor observes and assesses the contribution of each of the participants, and will award the group with the same mark.	O	O	O	O	O
6.	Multiple choice questions	O	O	O	O	O
7.	Open-ended questions requiring short answers	O	O	O	O	O
8.	Open-ended questions requiring long answers (essays)	O	O	O	O	O
9.	Individual assignments	O	O	O	O	O
10.	Group assignments	O	O	O	O	O
11.	Dissertation	O	O	O	O	O
12.	Questions making an appeal to the reproduction and memorization of facts	O	O	O	O	O
13.	Knowledge related questions to check the understanding of the readings provided	O	O	O	O	O
14.	Comprehension questions related to the materials taught by the instructor	O	O	O	O	O
15.	Questions requiring the application of material learnt during the course to the new situations	O	O	O	O	O
16.	Questions that require you to provide examples	O	O	O	O	O
17.	Questions that require comparing different concepts/ideas	O	O	O	O	O
18.	Questions that require data analysis and interpretation	O	O	O	O	O
21.	Questions that require drawing conclusions	O	O	O	O	O
22.	Questions that require an overall view of the relations among all topics learnt	O	O	O	O	O
21.	Questions that require creativity and imagination	O	O	O	O	O
22.	Questions that require a personal explanation or opinion	O	O	O	O	O
23.	Questions that require critical thinking	O	O	O	O	O
24.	Questions in which you are asked to evaluate others' solutions or opinions	O	O	O	O	O
25.	Questions that require scientific investigation	O	O	O	O	O
26.	Questions that require problem solving	O	O	O	O	O

Item 27-32 require you to rank your preference for each of the current assessment methods, where ranking from 1 = most to 5 = least.

27.   In terms of enjoyment   Rank
       -    Individual assignment   ____
       -    Group assignment   ____
       -    Oral presentation   ____
       -    Test   ____
       -    Exam   ____

28.   In terms of learning value   Rank
       -    Individual assignment   ____
       -    Group assignment   ____
       -    Oral presentation   ____
       -    Test   ____
       -    Exam   ____

29.   In terms of fairness   Rank
       -    Individual assignment   ____
       -    Group assignment   ____
       -    Oral presentation   ____
       -    Test   ____
       -    Exam   ____

30.   In terms of measuring ability   Rank
       -    Individual assignment   ____
       -    Group assignment   ____
       -    Oral presentation   ____
       -    Test   ____
       -    Exam   ____

31.   In terms of most preferred   Rank
       -    Individual assignment   ____
       -    Group assignment   ____
       -    Oral presentation   ____
       -    Test   ____
       -    Exam   ____

32.   What other assessment method(s) you would like to include in the course, if any?

       _____

       _____

       _____

D.   **Information about You**

33.   Which course are you pursuing?

       O   Master of Business Administration   O   Master of Professional Accounting
            (MBA)   (MPA)

34.   Gender

       O   Male   O   Female

35.   Age group

       O   ≤ 30   O   41 − 45
       O   31 - 35   O   46 − 50
       O   36 - 40   O   51 and above

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.