Case study method: Investigating the Impact of Motivational Factors on Learning Experiences in MBA Programs

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A B S T R A C T

This extensive research investigates how motivating factors can shape the learning experiences of students in (MBA) programs. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative data collected through mixed-methods approach to examine how faculty interaction and social engagement influence students' motivation and their academic self-efficacy. According to the findings of the study, supportive faculty involvement, opportunities for significant peer collaboration as well as relevance of course content to future professional goals significantly enhance students' confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to practical business challenges. By identifying intrinsic motivational aspects like competence, autonomy, and relatedness that create a stimulating learning environment, this research contributes to educational psychology literature. Insights from these finding have major implications for MBA program curricula development that need motivational strategies incorporated in order to improve student engagement and success. The limitations of this study include its focus on a single university setting which limits generalization across diverse educational contexts through further studies. In brief, this research aims at understanding the dynamic nature of motivation within MBA programs and underscores the criticality of addressing student motivation to optimize learning outcomes.

1. Introduction

Motivation plays a vital part in student learning outcomes and experiences in education programs such as MBA degrees. The purpose of these MBA programs is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to thrive in the ever-changing, competitive business environment. Thus, the success of these programs depends on how much motivated their students are.

It can be defined as a force that makes one act towards some goal. This paper shows that motivation has an impact on students' performance in class as evidenced by many experienced professors that say motivated students tend to participate more actively during lessons. This implication becomes more complex when discussing it in terms of motivating factors which influence learning experiences within MBA program. In this case, motivating factors may be divided into two groups: internal and external ones. Internal motivation is derived from inner satisfaction and pleasure; while external motivation refers to rewards or punishment resembling money or good grades. In courses like MBAs, intrinsic motivators would include personal growth aspirations, curiosity among others and gratification arising from mastering new skills.

This study aims are to explore as to how the motivational factors impact the learning experiences of MBA students. By examining the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, as well as the role of environment, this research seeks to provide an in-depth as to how MBA programs foster student motivation and improve their learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

Vogel (n.d.) conducted a study on What Influences the Long-Term Sustainability of Service-Learning? Lessons from Early Adopters. The study found that factors such as institutional support, faculty involvement, and community partnerships influenced the long-term sustainability of service-learning programs.

Online Peer Learning: What Influences the Students' Learning Experience (2015) provides insights into the factors that influence students' learning experience in online peer learning environments. The study found that factors such as student motivation, group dynamics, and instructor support influenced students' learning experience in online peer learning environments.

Ho (2010) conducted a study on FAMILY INFLUENCES ON SCIENCE LEARNING AMONG HONG KONG ADOLESCENTS: WHAT WE LEARNED FROM PISA. The study found that family background and parental involvement influenced science learning outcomes among Hong Kong adolescents.

Tao et al. (2009) conducted a study on What influences college students to continue using business simulation games? The Taiwan experience. The study found that factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and social influence influenced college students' continued use of business simulation games.

Watkins (1982) conducted a study on Factors influencing the study methods of Australian tertiary students. The study found that factors such as student motivation, course design, and assessment methods influenced the study methods of Australian tertiary students.

Ramsden (1979) conducted a study on Student learning and perceptions of the academic environment. The study found that students' perceptions of their departments and their teachers are shown to exert important influences on their approaches to learning. It is also suggested that a student's perception of a particular learning task influences the level at which he tackles it.

What Influences Learning? A Content Analysis of Review Literature (n.d.) is a meta-review and synthesis of research on variables related to learning, including both cognitive and affective schooling outcomes. The study found that intrinsic motivation factors such as interest in the subject matter, desire for personal growth, and enjoyment of learning were more important than extrinsic motivation factors such as grades or rewards.

Oxford et al. (1993) conducted a study on Learning a language by satellite television: What influences student achievement? The study found that factors such as student motivation, teacher support, and program design influenced student achievement in language learning.

Liao and Hsieh (2011) conducted a study on What Influences Internet-Based Learning? The study found that factors such as learner characteristics, course design, and instructor support influenced internet-based learning outcomes.

Sammalisto et al. (2016) conducted a study on Learning about Sustainability—What Influences Students' Self-Perceived Sustainability Actions after Undergraduate Education? The study found that factors such as student motivation, course design, and instructor support influenced students' self-perceived sustainability actions after undergraduate education.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the factors influencing the adoption of the case study method among MBA students, with a particular focus on student motivation in MBA Marketing programs. A mixed-methods approach allows for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, providing richer insights into the research questions.

Data Sources

Primary Data: Data was collected through:

- **Interviews and Focus Groups:** In-depth discussions with students and educators to explore perceptions and experiences regarding the case study method.
- **Questionnaire:** Distributed to a large sample of MBA students to gather quantifiable data on motivation, attitudes, and experiences with the case study method.
- **Secondary Data:** Existing research literature was reviewed to provide context, identify knowledge gaps, and inform the development of research questions.

Population and Sampling

- **Population:** The target population consists of 1700 MBA students enrolled in relevant programs.
- **Sample Size:** The sample size was 318 students. This sample size was determined using appropriate statistical power calculations to ensure adequate representation of the target population.
- **Sampling Method:** A random sampling method ensured unbiased selection and representativeness of the sample while minimizing selection bias.
- **Sampling Frame:** A comprehensive list of all MBA students within the relevant programs acted as the sampling frame.

Data Analysis

- **Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis was applied to interview and focus group transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns in student experiences and perceptions.
- **Quantitative Data:** Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze questionnaire responses, examining trends, correlations, and the influence of different factors on motivation and adoption of the case study methodology.

4. Data Analysis

Faculty Interaction Motivation:

H1a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who strongly disagree and those who strongly agree that instructors create a supportive learning environment.

H1b (Alternative): Students who strongly agree that instructors create a supportive learning environment will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who strongly disagree.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
B	0	4.00	4	0.000	0.0000	0	4	4
	1	3.94	4.00	0.233	0.0543	1	3	4

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who strongly disagree and those who strongly agree that instructors create a supportive learning environment.
The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that students who strongly agree that instructors create a supportive learning environment will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who strongly disagree.
The ANOVA results show an F-value of 3.21 and a p-value of 0.074. Because the p-value (0.074) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we can say that there is a significant difference in student confidence based on their perception of the instructor creating a supportive learning environment.

ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
B	0.412	1	0.412	3.21	0.074
Residuals	44.539	347	0.128		

2. H2a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who are very dissatisfied and those who are very satisfied with opportunities for interaction outside of class.
H2b (Alternative): Students who are very satisfied with opportunities for interaction outside of class will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who are very dissatisfied.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
C	0	1.98	2	0.820	0.673	2	1	3
	1	3.70	4.00	1.123	1.260	4	1	5

The mean score of 3.70 on a scale of 1 to 5 suggests that, on average, students feel moderately comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions in group settings. However, the median score of 4.00 indicates that the majority of students reported a higher level of comfort. The standard deviation of 1.123 and the range of 4 indicate a significant spread in the responses, with some students experiencing discomfort or lack of confidence in this area.

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who strongly disagree and those who strongly agree that instructors create a supportive learning environment.
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ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
C	13.0	4	3.2468	34.9	< .001
Residuals	32.0	344	0.0929		

3. H3a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel instructors demonstrate not at all of a genuine interest and those who feel instructors demonstrate a great deal of a genuine interest.
· H3b (Alternative): Students who feel instructors demonstrate a great deal of genuine interest in their learning and success will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel not at all of a genuine interest.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
D	0	2.00	2	0.832	0.692	2	1	3
	1	4.11	5.00	1.182	1.397	4	1	5

The mean score of 4.11 on a scale of 1 to 5 suggests that, on average, students feel relatively comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions in group settings. However, the median score of 5.00 indicates that the majority of students reported the highest level of comfort. The standard deviation of 1.182 and the range of 4 indicate a significant spread in the responses, with some students experiencing discomfort or lack of confidence in this area.
The frequency distribution for variable "D" further supports these findings. While 44.7% of students reported the highest level of comfort (rating of 5), a notable portion (20.1%) reported feeling uncomfortable (rating of 4), and 35.2% reported varying degrees of discomfort (ratings of 1, 2, or 3).

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel instructors demonstrate not at all of a genuine interest and

those who feel instructors demonstrate a great deal of a genuine interest.
The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that students who feel instructors demonstrate a great deal of genuine interest in their learning and success will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel not at all of a genuine interest.
The F-value of 34.9 and the highly significant p-value of less than .001 suggest that there is a statistically significant difference in the confidence levels of students in applying their knowledge and skills to real-world business problems based on the extent to which they feel challenged by their classmates. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), which posits that students who are very satisfied with the level of challenge provided by their classmates report significantly higher confidence in applying their knowledge and skills compared to those who are very dissatisfied.

ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
D	15.6	4	3.8947	45.6	< .001
Residuals	29.4	344	0.0854		

Social Interaction Motivation:

4. H4a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who find collaborating with classmates with similar goals not important at all and those who find it extremely important.
· H4b (Alternative): Students who find collaborating with classmates with similar goals extremely important will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who find it not important at all.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
E	0	1.66	2	0.478	0.229	1	1	2
	1	4.23	5.00	0.937	0.878	3	2	5

The mean score of 4.23 on a scale of 1 to 5 suggests that, on average, students feel relatively comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions in group settings. However, the median score of 5.00 indicates that the majority of students reported the highest level of comfort. The standard deviation of 0.937 and the range of 3 indicate a spread in the responses, with some students experiencing discomfort or lack of confidence in this area.
The pie chart for variable "E" further supports these findings. While 44.4% of students reported the highest level of comfort (rating of 5), a notable portion (20.6%) reported feeling uncomfortable (rating of 4), and 34.9% reported varying degrees of discomfort (ratings of 1, 2, or 3).

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who find collaborating with classmates with similar goals not important at all and those who find it extremely important.
The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that students who find collaborating with classmates with similar goals

extremely important will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who find it not important at all.
The ANOVA results for variable "E" show an F-value of 252 and a p-value of <.001 which indicate that the extent to which instructors create a supportive learning environment, where students feel comfortable asking questions and participating in discussions, has a highly significant impact on students' confidence in applying their knowledge and skills to real-world business problems.

ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
E	33.5	4	8.3772	252	< .001
Residuals	11.4	344	0.0333		

5. H5a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel their classmates never challenge them to think critically and those who feel they are challenged always.
· H5b (Alternative): Students who feel their classmates challenge them to think critically always will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel they are never challenged.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
F	0	1.66	2	0.478	0.229	1	1	2
	1	3.82	4.00	1.150	1.323	3	2	5

The mean score of 3.82 on a scale of 1 to 5 suggests that, on average, students feel relatively comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions in group settings. However, the median score of 4.00 indicates that the majority of students reported a higher level of comfort. The standard deviation of 1.150 and the range of 3 indicate a significant spread in the responses, with some students experiencing discomfort or lack of confidence in this area.
The frequency distribution for variable "F" further supports these findings. While 34.7% of students reported the highest level of comfort (rating of 5), a notable portion (24.9%) reported feeling uncomfortable (rating of 2), and 40.4% reported varying degrees of comfort (ratings of 3 or 4).

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel their classmates never challenge them to think critically and those who feel they are challenged always.
The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that students who feel their classmates challenge them to think critically always will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel they are challenged never.
The ANOVA results show an F-value of 98.8 and a p-value less than 0.001. This statistically significant result allows us to reject the null hypothesis. There is evidence to suggest that students who feel their classmates challenge them to think critically always will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel they are challenged never.

ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
F	24.0	4	6.0079	98.8	< .001
Residuals	20.9	344	0.0608		

6. H6a (Null): There is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel very uncomfortable expressing their ideas and those who feel very comfortable.
· H6b (Alternative): Students who feel very comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel very uncomfortable.

Descriptives

	A	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Range	Minimum	Maximum
G	0	1.34	1	0.478	0.229	1	1	2
	1	3.54	4.00	0.977	0.955	3	2	5

The mean score of 3.54 on a scale of 1 to 5 suggests that students are moderately satisfied with their opportunities to interact with instructors outside of class. The median score of 4.00 indicates that more than half of the students are satisfied, rating their satisfaction at or above 4. The standard deviation of 0.977 and the range of 3 indicate some variability in satisfaction levels among students.
The frequency distribution for this question, as represented in the pie chart, further supports these findings. A significant portion of students (29.8%) are very satisfied (rating of 4), while 15.2% are extremely satisfied (rating of 5). However, there is a notable percentage of students (19.8% and 25.2%) who rated their satisfaction as 2 and 3, respectively, indicating that a considerable number of students feel that there is room for improvement in this area.

The null hypothesis (H0) states that there is no significant difference in student confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems between those who feel very uncomfortable expressing their ideas and those who feel very comfortable.
The alternative hypothesis (Ha) states that students who feel very comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions will report significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills compared to those who feel very uncomfortable.
The ANOVA results show an F-value of 205 and a p-value less than 0.001 for variable "G". This statistically significant result allows us to reject the null hypothesis (H0). There is strong evidence to suggest that students' satisfaction with opportunities to interact with instructors outside of class has a significant impact on their confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world business problems.

ANOVA - A

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
G	31.6	4	7.9117	205	< .001
Residuals	13.3	344	0.0387		

5. Findings

The ANOVA analysis revealed several significant relationships between the independent variables and students' confidence in applying their knowledge and skills to real-world business problems:

- Classmate Challenge: The extent to which classmates challenge students to think critically had a statistically significant impact on confidence, with an F-value of 34.9 and a p-value less than 0.0011.
- Comfort Expressing Ideas: Students' comfort level in expressing their ideas and opinions in group discussions was also found to have a statistically significant impact on confidence, with an F-value of 45.6 and a p-value less than 0.0011.
- Supportive Learning Environment: The degree to which instructors created a supportive learning environment had a highly statistically significant impact on confidence, with an F-value of 252 and a p-value less than 0.0011.
- Instructors' Genuine Interest: The extent to which instructors demonstrated a genuine interest in students' learning and success was found to have a statistically significant impact on confidence, with an F-value of 98.8 and a p-value less than 0.0011.
- Interaction with Instructors: Satisfaction with the opportunities to interact with instructors outside of class had a statistically significant impact on confidence, with an F-value of 205 and a p-value less than 0.0011.

6. Conclusion

The research aimed to investigate the impact of motivational factors on learning experiences in MBA programs, focusing on the role of faculty and social interactions. The study's hypothesis testing through ANOVA provided a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between students' perceptions of their learning environment and their confidence in applying knowledge and skills to real-world problems.

Faculty Interaction Motivation

The findings indicated that the null hypothesis H1a could not be rejected, as the p-value of 0.074 was greater than the significance level of 0.05, suggesting no significant difference in student confidence based on their perception of the instructor creating a supportive learning environment. However, this result contrasts with the alternative hypothesis H3b, which was supported by a highly significant p-value of less than .001, indicating that students who perceive a genuine interest from instructors in their learning and success report significantly higher confidence. Similarly, the hypothesis H2b was confirmed, with a p-value of less than 0.001, demonstrating that students who are very satisfied with opportunities for interaction outside of class have significantly higher confidence in applying knowledge and skills.

Social Interaction Motivation

Regarding social interaction motivation, the study revealed that students who find collaboration with like-minded peers extremely important (H4b) and those who feel consistently challenged by their classmates to think critically (H5b) exhibit significantly higher confidence in applying their knowledge and skills, as evidenced by p-values of <.001. Additionally, the alternative hypothesis H6b was supported, showing that students who feel very comfortable

expressing their ideas and opinions have significantly higher confidence, with a p-value of less than 0.001.

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