

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Output from Master of Business Administration programs are perceived to be more knowledgeable, efficient strategy making, visionary leaders and effective problem solvers accompanied with humane skills and excellent communication skills. However, there are both proposing and opposing arguments in terms of the perception of MBAs globally and locally. In the Sri Lankan context, environment of MBAs has been questioned many times due to unregulated education structure for MBAs, degrading quality and increasing number of institutes prepared to offer MBAs. Accordingly, the survey was designed to ascertain the level of perception of MBAs by those who do not hold such qualification (non-MBAs) in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, this study specifically focused on the information and technology sector.

IT industry in Sri Lanka is identified as one of the emerging industry. Further, the political backing is also largely increasing as government objective declared to become the IT hub in Asian subcontinent. In addition, over the past decade contribution from IT sector to the economy has been significantly increasing and growth of the IT workforce is also remarkably increasing. Therefore, to seize the opportunities created both locally and globally the requirement of knowledge workers in both technical and business managerial aspects to adopt sustainable business models, visionary leaders to win the global, and innovative thinking to build world class brand-names in Sri Lanka has been demanding over the years. In order to build such skills and competencies, business schools, regulatory bodies must create supportive atmosphere such a way the expected level of professionals are build.

Thus, the study framework for the study was developed based on the previous studies on the same subject area, how people perceive MBAs. Different dimensions were found within literature such as knowledge, leadership, problem solving skills, self-confidence, extroversion, professionalism and innovation. Then the study was conducted from the developed operationalization framework based on the dimensions rationalized from previous studies. Valid responses of 1017 sample collected from the non-MBA IT employees in IT companies which their core business operation is to provide IT services and large conglomerates who have dedicated IT services departments which are established

in Sri Lanka. Primary data collection was done through questionnaires printed and distributed as hard-copies to ascertain how non-MBAs in the IT sector of Sri Lanka perceive MBAs. All the data collected through questionnaires were entered and recorded in SPSS statistical software in order to obtain the graphical representation and in-depth analysis of the output of the study. In addition, three focus group interviews were conducted with the participation of 4-5 members per group. Objective of the interviews was to conduct qualitative analysis of the study while giving the opportunity to freely convey participants viewpoints towards perception of MBAs.

The findings uncovered that non-MBAs still perceive that MBA is essential in order to obtain the dimensions deployed in the study framework. Despite the value of the MBA, Sri Lankan MBA education system is falling short when delivering the expected outcome; hence, negativities are surpassing the positive aspects of MBAs. Findings further enlightened, that negative perceptions were aroused due to degrading quality of MBAs, students are attracted to programs based on the convenience, outdated content and delivering methodologies followed by business schools and their financial objectives are more concerned over providing a content, which intended output is delivered.