

Study of a Psychometric Test to find out the Apt Specialization for MBA Students

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Abstract

Introduction: Choosing a specialization is the only question that keeps toiling around in the brains of MBA students during the first two semesters¹. It is often observed that MBA students are confused about selection specialization. General trend is that students select specialization based mainly on peer pressure, what is more in demand in the market and the job opportunities rather than their aptitude. In fact, it is vital to make yourself aware of all of them and select your area of study carefully and not follow the crowd².

Purpose: To help students select the specialization that matches with their personal, psychological, behavioural make-up.

Methodology: Author, being a Certified Psychometric Test Professional, has devised a psychometric test titled as 'Apt Specialization Test'. The Test is a combination of two psychometric tests; one being brain dominance test and other MBA specializations test. Combined scores of both tests yield at most preferred and recommended specialization for students. For this research paper, the Apt Specialization Test is administered on group of 105 students of 1st year MBA from B-School DYPIMS, Pune, India. Author has been conducting the test for last few years in different B schools. Cronbach Alpha Value of reliability and validity is arrived at 0.896.

Findings: This Research Paper findings provide the details of 'apt specialization test' conducted on target group. Test gives students recommendations from most suitable to least suitable specialization for individual based on psychometric analysis of individual.

Conclusion: Apt Specialization Test helps MBA students to select the specialization as per individual's aptitude, natural inclination and connectivity & suitability with self. The confusion & ambiguity in the minds of the students, while selecting MBA specialization, is nullified.

Future Scope: The Test is useful to avoid non-suitable specialization and regression & frustration due to it. An online-app can be developed for the same.

Key words

Psychometric Test, Apt Specialization, Brain Dominance, Aptitude, MBA

1. Introduction

Most of the MBA students are confused about choosing the right specialization. It matters a lot in which field you shall have your career, job, growth and advancement. Hence selection of apt specialization is vital. Usually MBA students chose specialization based on the trend in the market, availability of jobs, faster promotion opportunities, lucrative likely job offers etc instead of their aptitudes.

MBA students choose specialization on the basis of job prospects, quality of faculty resource at the institute, institute branding for the specialization and of course advise from seniors and buddies!!!! Many times students choose wrong specialization due to lack of awareness or by using herd mentality. The students who are good with numbers should opt for finance or operations specialization. While choosing specialization, passion and interest should be the key, rather than external reasons like market condition, job prospects and following the herd³. This paragraph taken from 'Specialization Selection – A Dilemma, Institute of Management, Nirma University'-1-Dec-2017

Leaving the decision of MBA Specialization on external factors like suggestions, popular sectors, and random choice is highly inadvisable⁴.

Most of us are so blinded by the market statistics and surveys' about what is "in" and what is outdated that we stop applying our own common sense. Although these market trends do show a general perspective of how the economy of the country is shaping up, they are not enough to reach a definitive conclusion regarding which specialization is better than the other⁵.

It is necessary for each MBA student to know which specialization suits him/ her better than what peer pressure makes him/ her to take the decision. In general, if a student is interested in dealing and managing people then HR should be a choice. If student is good with numbers and has quantitative tendencies, then Finance should be the best option. If a student can understand the nerve of a customer and customer attitude in relation to market scenario, Marketing can be best suited specialization. Student with aptitude towards logistics, scm, standardization, process and project orientation should opt for Operations. Student who is too techno savvy and understands computers, automation, logic, technology, ICT etc should go for IT as a specialization. If student is keen in EXIM policies and procedures, travelling abroad, ideology of global perspective etc, IB can suit him. However, it is not so easy to determine the specializations only on these bases. Above all, what matters is aptitude, skills, abilities, capabilities, liking, natural inclination, behavioural & psychological make-up etc towards a specific specialization than to go with the herd.

"Choosing MBA specialisation would definitely be crucial for you now since after MBA you will not afford to change decisions and career track. Finance, HR, Marketing, International Business, Operations are the specialisations available. To decide which can be suited to your capability and interests, I would suggest you to undergo a psychometric test from Career Guide which will help you understand yourself in respect of your strengths, weaknesses, emotional quotient, etc. and will exactly tell you which stream is good for you. <https://www.careerguide.com/psychometric-career-assessment>." As said by Dr Anand Wadadekar, Founder Director and CEO – Discovering Careers in India⁶.

"There's no such test conducted at B-Schools, or I haven't heard of any. I believe the school presumes that students figure it out themselves and offers optional/elective

courses meeting then current trends and requirements." As said by Mr Ranjit Singh on Nov 14, 2018⁷.

2. Purpose

Purpose of the research paper is to guide students to understand their aptitude and natural inclination towards the specialization which shall be apt to suit his/ her personality and psychological make-up.

3. Methodology

3.1 Hypothesis

H0: Psychometric test, AST, conducted has no significant impact on selection of specialisation of MBA students.

H1: Psychometric test, AST, conducted has significant impact on selection of specialisation of MBA students.

3.2 Instrument for Research Paper

Author, being a Certified Psychometric Test Professional, has devised the MBA Specialization Test. Author has titled the Test as 'Apt Specialization Test' (Referred to as 'AST' henceforth). AST is a combination of 2 psychometric tests.

In AST's 1st test, students get to know the dominance of either Left or Right Brain. And in 2nd Test of AST, 36 statements in a specific format give scores for the specializations. Combination of 1st and 2nd test under AST specifies the most suited apt specialization. Highest of Test 1 and Test 2 yields at the most suitable and apt specialization for the student.

3.2.1 Test 1

As mentioned earlier, AST is in fact a combination of 2 psychometric tests. One of the tests is brain dominance test. Brain Dominance Test identifies the dominance of Left or Right Brain for an individual. Brain Dominance Test has 50 questions/ statements each having option a) and b). Student has to opt for either option for all 50 questions/ statements. After completion of selection of options for all 50 questions as per the guiding table, student is expected to get the score of L and R; L being Left and R being Right. Highest Score decides which of the brains is

dominant; whether L or R. There are many tests to check the brain dominance available; even online. Since the Author is a Psychometric Test Professional, he has designed the test which is more precise and accurate.

3.2.2 Test 2

The second part/ test of AST is the test devised by the Author. This part has six specializations included in it: Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, Production/ Operations, Information Technology and International Business Management. The test has 36 statements. Each time two statements appear on the screen. Student is expected to weigh both the statements for their relative importance to him/ her on the scale of 0-3, 3-0, 1-2, 2-1. This can be made simple by following example. Suppose the two statements are A] I like playing outdoor games and B] I love black colour. In fact, there may not be any connection between two statements, but student must decide relative importance to him/ her between two statements. This means if student is not much interested in outdoor sports but may like black colour; he/ she may give 1 and 2 to A] and B]. If student may not like black colour much but it may be ok if he has no option to black colour and is comparatively less interested in outdoor sports, then he/ she may give 2 and 1 to A] and B]. If student doesn't like black colour at all and extremely interested in outdoor sports, he/ she may give 3 and 0 to A] and B] respectively and vice a versa (0 and 3 to A] and B]) if he dislikes outdoor sports and loves black colour.

Such 36 statements are made to decide the relative importance to students amongst six specializations. The highest score amongst the 6 indicates the most suitable specialization for that student but there is a twist in the test. Since the test takes into consideration the dominance of left and right brain, it plays important role in final decision of specialization.

3.3 Execution of Research Instrument

The AST is administered on 105 students of 1st year MBA from DYPIMS. Before the AST, each student was asked to write the choice of their specialization. Then the AST is conducted for the group of 105.

4. Findings and Conclusion:

Based on administering the test on 105 students of MBA Class, following are the findings:

Table No. 1

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
TEST OF LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN	2.0952	.95599	105
RESULT AFTER TEST	2.8190	1.74742	105

Table No. 2

Correlations

		TEST OF LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN	RESULT AFTER TEST
TEST OF LEFT AND RIGHT BRAIN	Pearson Correlation	1	.246*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	105	105
RESULT AFTER TEST	Pearson Correlation	.246*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	105	105

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above table of data analysis, it is found that the value of 2 tailed Pearson Correlation is 0.011 which is less than 0.05 and hence significant. Hence Null Hypothesis to be rejected and Alternate Hypothesis gets accepted. Hence the Hypothesis "Psychometric test, AST, conducted has significant impact on selection of specialisation of MBA students" is proved.

Hence it is concluded that Psychometric Test AST can definitely help MBA students to choose the right specialization

5. Discussion:

The AST is a combination of 2 tests as mentioned in methodology. 1st test is the test of brain dominance. Every human being's brain has two halves, or hemispheres: Left and Right.

Psycho-biologist and Nobel Prize winner Roger W. Sperry in his research in 1960s concluded⁸ that the left brain is more verbal, analytical, and orderly than the right brain. It's better at things like reading, writing, and computations. It's sometimes called the digital brain. Left brain is more connected to facts, logic, mathematics, language, sequencing, meticulousness, accuracy and so forth. Whereas the right brain is more visual and intuitive. It's sometimes referred to as the analog brain. It has a more creative and less organized way of thinking. Right Brain is more connected to creativity, intuition, rhythm, holistic thinking, arts, imagination and so forth⁸.

As per the competencies required for each specialization; Finance, Operations and International Business are more suited for a Left Brain dominated person while Marketing, HR and IT are more suitable for Right Brain dominated person. 2nd Psychometric Test as a part of AST takes care of suitability of specialization based on certain trait characteristics expressed in the form of statements those weigh relative importance of different specializations.

Hence as per the AST, the apt specialization for Left Brain dominated person can be the highest scored amongst Finance, Operations & International Business and that for the Right Brain dominated person can be the highest scored amongst Marketing, Finance & Information Technology.

5.1 Scope of Further Research

Apt Psychometric Test in the paper speaks about only 6 specialization. The paper/ further research can be done and test can be developed for other add-on specializations offered by universities across the globe so that a generalized test can

be developed. Furthermore, test can be made available online so that it can benefit all those opting for masters courses in business management.

5.2 Limitations of Research

Paper has a limitation of no. of specializations included in the test. As mentioned in 5.2 above, add-on specializations can be included to make the test more applicable/ include most of the specializations offered by universities/ institutes across.

6. Annexures:

6.1 AST 1: Brain Dominance Test

Since this is a copyrighted test, only few statements are given to understand the logic behind the test and the entire test cannot be copied and used.

Table No. 3

Brain Dominance Test

1. Do you believe in taking risks
2. Do you remember people by names or faces?
3. Are you good at reading maps or understanding directions from a person
4. Do you believe in details or the bigger picture?
5. Do you believe in planning your activities for the day or go about it as and when you have to do them?
6. Are you organized by nature?
7. Do you believe in preparing yourself for the unexpected or face things as they happen?
8. Do you have a good imagination
9. Are you good at creative writing?
10. How good you are at memorising things?
11. Do you day dream?
12. Are you considered to be a consistent person or unpredictable by nature?
13. Do you ask for help implementing new tasks or find out how to go about it at your own?
14. When faced with a situation do you analyse it before coming to a decision or do what you feel is best at the moment?
15. I keep a to do list for my daily jobs
16. Do you follow what others follow or make an attempt to find out simpler solutions?
17. Do you prefer to work groups or alone?
18. Do you have general idea of time without looking at the watch?
19. Did you prefer algebra or geometry at school?
20. Do you remember the music of a song than the lyrics?

Such 50 statements are the part of the brain dominance test. Each statement has different sequence of selecting option so that left and right gets shuffled. At the end of 50 statements, a guidelines for scoring are provided in a table for each option chosen.

6.2. AST 2: Statements for Specialization Test

Following are the 36 statements. Since this is a copyrighted test by the Author, statements are given in a random order so that test cannot be copied and used, though it cannot be used as it is a combination of AST 1 and AST 2. Hence only AST 2 cannot be administered.

1. Vijay Mallya's UB's full form is United colors of Benetton
2. I am able to convince people what I want to say
3. I take initiative to communicate the new concept/ idea/ event to be organized at my Institute/ Society
4. Tata is coming up with the car in 3 years that can run 100 km in one liter fuel
5. I can get along well with persons of any background
6. My friends say that I am very talkative
7. When I am not finding solution to anything, I just don't bother
8. I have plans to migrate to some country or to work with an MNC abroad
9. Often I have many mails pending to read in my inbox
10. Mathematics? I use to dislike
11. I have been always fascinated by the practices at IT companies
12. I won't mind spending money to send messages on mobiles on festivals and special occasions
13. In general, I am aware about the functioning of EXIM bank
14. I love travelling
15. My friends have the opinion that I am very '*kanjush*'
16. I like to do any of work very neatly and meticulously
17. I am always ready to participate in events organized by the Institute/ Society
18. I have more friends on 'fb' compared to my other friends
19. I can remember the birthdates of my friends
20. Many of friends trust me to express themselves. They treat me as their stress busters

21. I like to investigate the problem in my vehicle when it breaks down than going to the fitter immediately
22. I am proud to be a mechanical engineer
23. If asked to select amongst two, I would select to be the in-charge of shop floor than the in-charge of design team
24. My friends say that I am very balanced, calm and contented
25. As a child I used to get fascinated by pictures/ models of cars
26. My friends say that I am very techno-savvy
27. I think automation can be at times worse than manually operated machines
28. I avoid paperwork and keep most of records on my PC/ laptop
29. I enjoy playing games on computers than watching TV
30. I can retrieve any document on my PC/ Laptop in 30 secs
31. I have plan to have my own blog
32. I prefer watching CNN than local news channel on TV
33. I have the habit of keeping the proper record of my personal income and expenditure
34. Economics Times attracts me than Maharashtra Times
35. Whenever I think of business, I think from global perspective
36. Currency of Malaysia is Yen

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