

Commentary

A critical commentary on the business education debate in South Africa: The Master of Business Administration Degree (MBA) versus the Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy (MA)

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This opinion is written in narrative style and does not follow the classical research approach. The opinion attempts to comment on the Philosophy of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree, with special reference to MBA degrees offered by universities and business schools in Africa and South Africa and, similar management institutions on the continent, and makes certain salient comments on the MBA versus a classical M.A. degree in Philosophy because, of the criticisms advanced by some quarters and philosophy academics against the MBA degree. This debate is also essential from the aspects of understanding that, this debate emanates in South Africa from a completely Eurocentric viewpoint in terms of maintaining the historic exclusion of Black students from pursuing studies towards an MBA qualification and is steeped in the historic divide of apartheid education in South Africa, and nearly twenty years after democracy, this state of affairs is still pursued by a number of South Africa's leading historically White advantaged universities offering MBA programmes. This exclusion is exemplified in many cases by unreasonably high entry requirements and exorbitant fees charged to enter their MBA programmes.

Many of these historically advantaged universities have formed a historic compact with the predominantly White corporate world of South Africa, and some of them are funded by the corporate world, and send their employees to pursue management studies at these institutions and do not provide support to emerging Black institutions and universities. The status quo is thus maintained and, this has resulted in the all embracing fact that, the corporate sector and private enterprises in South Africa are primarily manned and staffed at the levels of management by nearly seventy five percent of White managers

twenty years after freedom and democracy. Thus the transformation of management after, almost twenty years of freedom and democracy is a very slow process and hinders the transformation agenda of the government.

By the same token, we find that the traditional White universities that offer MBA programmes, have virtually privatized their MBA programmes to a group of private individuals and are run independently, yet using facilities at these universities that are funded by the taxpayer of South Africa and also have the luxury of using the branding of these universities to advertize their programmes. On the other hand the South African Association of Business Schools (SAABSA) is predominantly White controlled and its main members are drawn from these traditional White universities. They have not addressed the transformation agenda of South Africa and are apt to exclude Black academics and have formed an "old boy club" in order to maintain the status quo and have also become leading players within the African Association of Business Schools (AABS). There is very little consultation by the SAABSA with emerging MBA institutions in South Africa and their committees are packed with selected individuals and therefore access is stymied and access denied to Black academics and professionals in the main. On the other hand, these issues have not been dealt with decisively by the Ministry of Higher Education and the Council of Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa. Such a situation has led to the marginalization of Black academics and has contributed to the maintenance of the status quo. This is therefore, a clarion call to government to intervene decisively and to set the agenda for management transformation and management programmes in South Africa. This transformation must be engineered across the board and in

the interests of Black academics, emerging business management schools, but above all in the interests of emerging Black business and for South Africa and Africa, as a whole.

MBA programmes were created in the 1920s because large corporations felt that new employees lacked general management skills, and as a result, many talented recruits had to be taught on the job, the basics of business such as accounting, finance, market research and so on. It is an investment for life. Well designed MBA programmes respect the experience that senior leaders bring to the programme. Application is the greatest value of an MBA and exposes students to tools and techniques in respect to implementation within the work environment. It has been recorded, researched and stated that, alumni see the benefits of improving their ability to work with and lead people as they progress and move into more senior roles. This reality must be appreciated by those involved in management education and training in South Africa, which has hitherto not been understood nor has it been appreciated, in terms of the necessary skills to the Black management echelons and managers in South Africa and more importantly across the continent of Africa. It cannot be business as usual.

The arguments in this opinion are not all encompassing, because, the debates concerning this issue are exhaustive and the comparisons are emotive in nature, depending on which side of the divide one stands. But importantly, it is a topic that raises much controversy and heated debate. It argues that both post-graduate degrees are important and that, both these degrees must retain their own identities and character because of various reasons. By the same token, developing countries do not have the money nor the luxury to debate these issues, or plough large amounts of money into research efforts in this direction. This is exemplified and underscored on the basis of the importance of development to the economy of South Africa and the developing world as a whole, from the perspective of consolidating business opportunities by dealing with education decay and morass within higher education, created by apartheid and colonial legacy, and to an extent by the current government and its Higher Education Ministry, in respect of the education marginalization of South Africa's predominantly black majority. This debate historically and essentially in South Africa, permeates a Eurocentric approach and thought processes through academics in Western oriented universities in South Africa, Africa, and the general developing world. In the West, based on territorial strategies in order to criticize management theory, the MBA is considered as inane and less superior to philosophy as a discipline, and it is argued that, the MBA does not prepare the student to be a critical thinker. This is far from the truth and, in this regard the debate is further exemplified and justified by the protagonists of philosophy as a discipline, by those theorists and philosophy academics by pronouncing on

the so – called management myth, by comparing the MBA with an M.A. in philosophy.

Their primary argument in the literature is that universities throughout the world are opening up Business and Management Schools at the expense of the Humanities and Philosophy programmes. This opinion therefore, attempts to portray the importance of the MBA programme. It possesses its own identity and thus does not have to apologize to philosophy academics that follow and advance their parochial agendas, in order to enhance their viewpoints against the MBA programmes offered by an array of universities and business schools worldwide. They refuse to acknowledge that the MBA, is one of the most sought out and prestigious qualifications, in respect to management discourse, and is one of the most popular post – graduate degrees, to obtain by any student and, particularly, in South Africa and Africa, because of its colonial and apartheid history, that excluded Black students in the main to pursue higher academic studies. This has contributed overtly to a shortage of skills, and particularly in respect of financial management and business skills within the country. In fact, this has contributed to Black students, in the past and even today, not to access these sought after skills that were the preserve of the White minority. It therefore, becomes vitally important to articulate this opinion, in order to set the record straight.

Brecher (2011) states that “Universities are not interested to teach the knowledge required to develop man for some special mode of gaining their livelihood. Their object is not to make skilful lawyers, or physicians, astute businessmen, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings _ _ . What professionals should carry away with them is not professional knowledge, but which should direct the use of the professional knowledge. Education makes one a more intelligent shoemaker, if that is his occupation, but not to be teaching him how to make shoes; it does so by the mental exercise it gives, and the habits it impresses” (Inaugural address to the University of St. Andrews, 1867).

Whatever your interpretation of the above quotation, one thing is certain education is a vital and essential commodity, in developing countries of the world in particular, irrespective of how and why one acquires this education. Higher education matters are essential because it transforms the lives of individuals, because in graduating, graduates are more likely to enjoy higher wages and better job satisfaction, and more likely to find it easier to move from one job to another (Browne Report, 2010).

It is obvious that all education is cardinal for the purposes of general and human development within society. Its purpose is for redressing past imbalances and to keep pace with technological advancement, human development and economic growth, in order to improve the lives of all South Africans and the people of the

continent, and to consolidate historically disadvantaged and deprived societies. Universities, Business Schools included need to instantiate the classical class problems and historic divide, which permeates developing nations, across which a few may safely be allowed to cross. This is precisely the duty of Business Schools, and other business institutions and, it has classically achieved this substantially through the processes of higher education and, in a quest to redress past higher education imbalances and, through their MBA degree programmes, are making a significant contribution to the management, financial, human resources potential and, other areas that encompass accessible MBA programmes, throughout the continent of Africa. Thus MBA Schools play pertinent and decisive roles because, many African countries, including South Africa are historically, been left out of the Higher Education trajectory and loop. Business Schools continually track their MBA graduates, project on their contributions to business management and their contributions to development and society. In so doing, Business Schools must also have the ability and presence of mind in respect of necessary academic change, in tweaking their MBA programmes, to meet the imperatives and advancements being made in the business and management environment globally, in order to keep pace with the requirements of changing management imperatives the world over and, particularly the requirements on the continent of Africa.

Given the scenario described and discussed above, the philosophical debate and the innovation of sound and applicable research on the issue of pursuing philosophy as a minor academic discipline within the MBA degree programme, should be explored and debated in – house within the management echelons of all Business Schools in South Africa. This becomes all the more important in the context of the development of critical thinking and consolidating the analytical perspectives of students within all MBA programmes. This will accommodate the philosophical debate and imperatives and deflect considerably the issue of philosophy and MBA degree criticisms. On the other hand when considering developing nations and their contexts of development, it is essential to understand that the philosophical debate becomes irrelevant, on the basis that the majority of those pursuing higher education, do not have the opportunities provided by developed countries within their universities, and therefore, the state in South Africa and generally in developing societies do not have the luxury and money to consolidate every subtle education nuance, that presents itself and, is apt to cause controversy, thereby deflecting its educational agenda and efforts of developing nations to reconstruct and train business entrepreneurs, management specialists and provide opportunities to its citizens to enter the world of business and contribute to economic growth and development in general. This is the nub of the issue. This becomes all the more important in order to deal with the business

development and management agenda, for purposes of inculcating business techniques, in African societies that have been destroyed by apartheid and colonial imperatives of the past.

It is obvious that South Africa and the African developing world cannot spend the time and resources on an academic debate of discussing philosophy versus the MBA programme. This does not mean that the discourse on its merits and demerits must not continue or be pursued. This debate is also steeped in much emotion and the defense of academic territories and jurisdictions, nuanced against the MBA programme with great emotion; and such critics are apt to state that management theory is inane and the debate is further distorted by those theorists and academics who pronounce on the so – called management myth, by comparing the MBA degree with an M.A. in Philosophy. Their primary argument is that universities throughout the world are opening up Business and Management Schools, at the expense of the humanities and philosophy programmes. However, it is a question of market demand, and opportunities in respect of business and management techniques required in both the private and public sectors, and therefore, the market must be allowed to dictate. All development issues cannot be dealt with by single qualifications and therefore philosophy is not the panacea to the development agenda of nations, in a complex and demanding world of business. A plethora of academic qualifications is required in order to meet the imperatives of development, business management and economic growth. To this end, it cannot be denied that the MBA degree is but one essential qualification amidst a host of others that can contribute significantly to the development imperatives of governments within the so – called “Third World” nations, be it in the private or public sectors, on the basis that, it adds value to the onward march to reconstruction of the Republic of South Africa and indeed African economies.

DISCUSSION

Generally, a Master’s Degree Programme in Philosophy has two main goals: (1). It affords students the opportunity to learn more about Philosophy, and (2). Enabling students to apply to top – ranked doctoral programmes in Philosophy or in other fields. The programme offers students a basic grounding in the major areas of Philosophy. Although the programme generally does not offer separate tracks, students can specialize in the particular strengths of any master’s philosophy degree: metaphysics and epistemology; ethics; social and political philosophy; philosophy and language; logic; philosophy of mind and cognitive science; history of modern philosophy; aesthetics; philosophy and gender; and the philosophy of law, amidst a host of other offerings and learning areas.

From the discussion thus far, it is obvious that philosophy as a study area is distinct and caters for a particular area of specialization, deals with complex phenomena specific to the field of philosophy, and enhances critical thinking, and therefore comparisons with an MBA programme are not relevant in its entirety, in respect of the aims and objectives of the MBA programme, its syllabus or learning areas, and in terms of its emphasis in respect of management techniques as a whole. In fact, its applicability is an area of contestation, although some areas of philosophy, such as ethics, social and political philosophy, logic and the philosophy of law are important variables, and topics that can be included in greater depth within the MBA degree programme, this might not be necessary because these issues and topics are covered in varying degrees throughout the MBA programme. However, these learning areas should not be taught separately within the MBA degree, but are already interspersed within the MBA syllabus, which is the current state of play. Of more relevance to the MBA programme offered by Business Schools, in South Africa, would be electives or separate courses within the MBA programme. It must consider seriously, the subject offerings, in terms of the changing global management situation, by considering introducing environmental philosophy, because the subject matter can stand on its own or can be used as preparation for work in fields such as environmental law and environmental business, policy issues in contemporary business dynamics, or community activism. To this end the underpinnings of environmental philosophy can be given very serious consideration for inclusion within the MBA degree programme offered by various Business Schools, in South Africa, and the continent.

On the other hand, it has to be clearly understood that the Master of Arts Degree (M.A.) in Philosophy incorporates the five traditional areas of philosophy, as well as offering the student selected and concentrated areas of learning specific to philosophy as an academic discipline. The primary aim and objectives of a Philosophy Master's Degree concentrates on and rightfully so on, the moral implications of human actions on society, the status of being and the examination of words, dialogues and idioms. This might be important in the current state of play in South Africa and other African countries in terms of the moral decay being experienced in respect of all forms of corruption. However, this is not a sufficient motivational driver to consolidate the philosophy degree as a means of stating that it therefore, does not require the pursuance of an MBA degree. It is like an MBA degree, on the basis of specialization and components of philosophy could be incorporated into the core offerings of the MBA degree. The concentration of the MBA degree programme is tailored for a particular audience and the course offerings have in the main catered for the aspects of philosophy relevant to the programme, in terms of the implications of human actions on business and life in

general and upon societies, through a host of specific offerings within the programme, in the form of ethics, international business and so on.

There has to be a clear understanding in respect of distance learning, in respect to how difficult it can be for busy professionals to find time to earn that important MBA degree, and to this end the MBA has a practical application to its mission, vision and MBA programme philosophy. It contextualizes by deriving its mandate from professional experiences of each student, the lecturing staff, other universities, both local and international, and the public, in order to develop and supplement management theory and its application, case studies based on contemporary management, moral, political, social and economic issues, problems in general and emerging challenges, all geared in advancing new skills and solving techniques, grounded in the fundamentals of business and management theory, that is essential to their MBA programmes.

The issue arises – What can one do with a philosophy degree? In this regard and to this vital and necessary question there are three things to consider:

1. What professional and career skills will be gained from majoring in philosophy?
2. Why /how are the skills valuable?
3. What types of employment will be open to one?

In considering the above questions, it will be wise and possibly necessary, for the MBA programme to perhaps underpin its programme with a major or elective, in the form of a course module in philosophy that must provide the finest course offerings in a liberal arts and business management education, because this will assist the MBA student and graduate to gain the basic skills in critical thinking, argumentation, communication, information management, design and planning, research and investigation and management and administration, which are all currently combined and scattered throughout the MBA course offerings. (The philosophical aspects could be included in one comprehensive module or an elective module, in order to cover and teach the salient aspects of philosophy). These skills are essential in virtually every career path, and it underscores the importance of philosophy to all education, especially in today's information age. Career related skills such as:

1. **Critical thinking skills:** The ability to identify the key issues in decision – making or problem solving, to identify a general principle that links together related problems, points, data, to define the parameters of a problem.
2. **Argument skills:** The ability to use argumentation techniques to persuade others; to reason from premises to conclusions; to assess the implications of a position which has been taken.
3. **Communication skills:** The ability to summarize the content of messages clearly and objectively; to

differentiate fact from value; to express one's point of view without violating others rights; and to explain ideas and principles to others.

4. Information management: The ability to sort data; to complete and rank information; to complete and evaluate information; and to use information to solve problems.

5. Design and planning skills: The ability to look at a problem from different angles and identify alternative courses of action.

6. Research and investigation skills: The ability to seek out information, to identify problems and needs; to systematically define a problem; to formulate questions relevant to clarifying a particular problem, topic or issue.

7. Management and administration: The ability to analyze tasks and set priorities; to identify resource methods useful in the solution of a problem.

A purposeful reading and analysis of the above as defined and explained by philosophy clearly indicates that it is the use of words and mere semantics in respect of its value and in terms of its value propositions, on the basis that all of the above is contained, included and covered in great depth within the composite MBA Degree programmes offered by all Business Schools. These skills are valuable because they are basic skills of reasoning, researching, planning and communication tools. Second, according to Lawrence R. Mainig and Anita Mainig in their book, "What Can I do with a Major in ___? Business leaders most frequently cite the ability to learn in new situations and the capacity to analyze, evaluate, and interpret data, information management, as two of the most important qualities that successful executives must possess (Mainig, 147). All large companies find that "students" of the humanities, including philosophy, tend to learn fast and advance quality (Careers for Philosophers, American Philosophical Association Publication).

It must be clearly and objectively understood that all of the skills discussed above are referred to as transferable skills. They are not job specific because they can be taken from one setting to another. These skills prepare one to be a life – long learner both professionally and personally. However, it must not be confused with the thrust, business orientation, management techniques and the entire orientation of the MBA programmes.

They encompass all the issues and areas of learning that permeate basic philosophy as a distinct area and that without it, the MBA degree programme is reduced in respect of its relevance and application to management and business, and that, philosophy is therefore a solution to the imagined woes of the MBA Degree programme. By the same token, it has to be appreciated by the MBA faculty that, in terms of reality currently and, perhaps for the next decade or more, within the realities and contexts of African countries the MBA degree has universal applicability, like most MBA programmes taught at different world universities and through the modalities of distance and traditional learning also. The MBA is the most sought out business and management qualification

by students internationally and also by corporate institutions and companies at large. This fact cannot be denied by both developing and developed nations of the world.

Any overt tinkering with the core of the MBA degree or consideration in respect of its delivery modes have to be very cautiously approached. This is premised on the basis that the MBA degree is an established brand, is known in the market for its standards, appeals to students, its delivery modes are tried and tested, that it attracts students continually on a rising trajectory, produces quality modules, that the modules can compare with the best, that the MBA programme of some emerging predominantly Black institutions in South Africa are accepted and taught in foreign countries and destinations, and have met the stringent requirements of the regulatory authorities in South Africa and other foreign accreditation authorities as regulators. In short Business Schools have a winning formula. On the other hand the South African MBA student might not be ready for rapid change in respect of more sophisticated use of technology currently given historic exclusion and recent access after democracy and, is comfortable with the current mode of delivery, by distance and traditional modes of the MBA degree programme. It also has to be realized that the type of student that MBA institutions attract will change with time, and as students become more sophisticated and expect more from the institution, it will be necessary to prepare for this eventuality. Therefore, sound research will have to be undertaken, papers commissioned, outside experts consulted, staff discussions undertaken at all levels, because change brings with it staff retrenchments, if technology will be used and creates stress and anxiety and, lowers staff morale and it can also have a negative impact on the student populations of South African Business School's. If these and other issues not raised in this paper are not considered and dealt with it has the potential of:

1. Harming Business Schools overtly;
2. Lowering standards;
3. The loss of market share, by all Business Schools;
4. Reducing drastically student intake;
5. Lowering morale;
6. Losing the competitive edge;
7. Lowering branding and compromising institutions;
8. The loss of revenue;
9. Creating an environment of losing jobs and retrenchments;
10. Styming expansion of these institutions;
11. Negatively impacting upon its foreign partners in various directions;
12. Host of other issues beyond the scope of this commentary.

REEVALUATION OF MBA PROGRAMMES

There is no doubt that some of the parameters within

Business School's MBA programmes, need reevaluation and serious debate in house and, with other experts conversant with the MBA, as a discipline. This should not be a scoring points' exercise, but there needs to be a finite understanding that the best must be done for the institutions' in respect of positioning African Business Schools as quality business institutions in South Africa and Africa as a whole with the idea that they become leaders throughout, the world They will all have to change, a number of aspects over time. There cannot be a situation that winner takes all. It must be a collegial approach, understanding the modalities of improved delivery and quality. All of this must be based on the following:

1. Very importantly, the rationale for the MBA must be explained in great detail.
2. It is equally important that a research project be commissioned by government and South African Business Schools, and a paper emanating from this research project be developed in a coherent manner with specific headings talking to all variables, in order to engineer acceptable transformation.
3. It needs to derive from Business Schools improvement plans which have been agreed to and taken as a starting point
4. MBA benchmarking and comparisons with local and international institutions and universities, particularly looking at distance learning modalities must also be taken into consideration.
5. The Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) processes locally and in other African countries were applicable and practical must be used for this purpose as a driving force and where applicable benchmarked with international practices.
6. Staff and lecturer inputs are cardinal to this exercise.
7. The programme must for all intents and purposes be one that contributes to the value chain in terms of its relevance and quality and, must incorporate some issues discussed in this opinion, in terms of relevance to Africa, and in terms of quality issues.
8. The change must be grounded in an historical perspective, taking into consideration the education demand of the continent of Africa and particularly South Africa, and its past apartheid history that has impacted negatively upon all education.
9. The time might now be opportune to work afresh the mission, vision and philosophy of the different MBA institutions, and the MBA programme offered by all Business Schools in greater detail and, within the context of learnt experiences, mistakes made, strengths and weaknesses.
10. Look at the mode of delivery of the MBA and, not to alter too much of the MBA curriculum, but add issues pertinent to improvement of quality.
11. Look at all electives, scrap those that do not add value and after careful and, in depth discussion, agree on

some new electives in terms of Africa, environmental issues and so on. Also for in depth knowledge, it is essential to concentrate on concepts that are important to Africa and must be developed on the basis of some theoretical grounding.

12. Curriculum issues and development of the programme and module preparation must be under constant revision and supervision.
13. Learning methods must be explained and defined.
14. Teaching and learning must increasingly use technology.
15. Must address social change, economic variables and the education thrusts of the MBA programme.
16. Emerging markets and new development trends in management.
17. It becomes essential to redefine and change the academic structure, getting much more from lecturers only teaching and writing modules and, their duties must be clearly defined and must also undertake administrative tasks, but more importantly undertake research.
18. The institutions must have visiting lecturers and international faculty and seminars, including student exchange programmes nationally and internationally.
19. Research imperatives must be heightened.
20. The issue of students' support is vital.
21. Target markets have to be redefined and strengths consolidated
22. The process in respect of philosophical changes must be discussed in depth with all academics and other staff, in order to sing the hymn from the same page, and in order to elicit buy in. This is crucial
23. Other issues may be included as the situation demands.

In continuing the discussion, it must be stated that the MBA should not be confused with the thrust of philosophy as a an academic discipline because, the learning within the MBA programme addresses these issues, and has universal applicability to all MBA programmes in terms of structure and content.

THE AFRICAN MBA

This is a misnomer and South African Business Schools, must stay clear from this debate because it can have devastating consequences and, will be to their own peril. There are many reasons for this, which will not be expounded upon save to say that, if this route is taken then the MBA will be downgraded to a point of no return. Some of the modules or an elective should incorporate African management issues... There is no concept as the Asian, African or European MBA. What is required is are some contemporary issues on African management, problems and challenges and experiences within African institutions and its private and public sectors that must and should be incorporated, in an elective module.

PHILOSOPHY

The debate in respect of pursuing an MBA or M.A. in Philosophy is a debate that permeates territory as discussed previously, but we need to answer the question – Why Philosophy of Education is said to be a liberal branch of knowledge? This is because liberals are considered to be a moderate form of radicals. They want things to change and are basically free thinkers who change methods of the past, in order to accommodate the present. As they say conservatives are yesterday's radicals. What they don't seem to teach one in business schools, is that the five forces and other generic frameworks for problem solving are heuristics. They can lead one to solutions but they cannot alone make you think. It is in this light that philosophy should be inculcated into an MBA programme to dispel the myth that business management cannot stand on its own, and has no philosophical basis to complement management science as expounded by Taylor, the founder of the discipline.

It is therefore, obvious that, the philosophy of an MBA must include and be characterized by factors such as, decisiveness, competence, integrity, vision, mission and persistence. These all contribute to leadership philosophy which are inherently taught in all Master of Business Administration programmes. The philosophy of an MBA Degree, therefore, underscores and underpins through its modalities of teaching, the philosophy about reasons and theories as to why leaders in business organizations must not fail by dealing with strict hierarchies, avoiding poor decision – making, deal with huge pay differentials, enforce impossible standards for leaders as business managers and, must therefore, understand the philosophy and psychology of follower - ship. These may all sound straightforward characteristics, but without an MBA degree, few have what it takes and many surveys have been carried out asking people what they think of their bosses. On average these found that about half are seen as incompetent because they do not possess an MBA. Therefore the management criticism must be dispelled that the MBA degree does not incorporate in applicable degree philosophy, but philosophy is not the thrust of the MBA must be acknowledged. However, it must be stated that philosophy is an important variable for purposes of a rounded MBA education. It is therefore, important to appreciate and understand that the philosophical basis of education in general is no doubt a matter that has changed over the decades, and even today not all are in agreement on the subject. However, one thing is certain, philosophy is the foundation of educational styles and, it therefore impacts upon all education including the MBA degree. Today, four basic educational philosophies exist, including idealism, pragmatism, realism and existentialism. All four philosophies are very different, but they all strive for the same goal, to better our education system, and all four are incorporated

within the courses and the realm of an MBA programme. No amount of denial can alter this fact, and although every MBA lecturer and the different MBA schools have different styles of delivery and teaching practices, that can be considered their own they, all adhere to one of the four basic philosophies.

Functional, fundamental and cardinal to all of the above is the concept of the philosophy of education, because it affects the ability and effectiveness of teaching methods. The MBA personal philosophy does not exemplify a group of classes or cases containing only a series of facts but, is underpinned by using the facts on a test or assignment and then to be forgotten. The philosophy of the MBA underpins a series of tools that students and MBA graduates use every day in real life and, within the business management environment. Education is therefore, wholly claimed in the business world from own experiences and is further derived from the philosophical approaches within the MBA programme and, can be applied to a host of complex variables, that make up the world of knowledge and of business, be it capitalism, socialism, Marxist theory, economics, marketing, human resources and so on, including a host of real life situations.

It is therefore obvious that, the field of teaching and learning within the MBA programme is one of undoubted complexity that has questioned the very philosophical bases of students in the form of knowledge and education, coupled with applicability and relevance to the world of work, and to this end, due to the dynamic and controversial quality of this area of education, it must generally derive and speak to one's personal philosophy of the meaning of education and possibly must derive from the five basic philosophies with essentialism marginally coming on top and existentialism representing the least of one's teaching and learning attitudes. In other words, if you do not make a difference, then what have you made? This question must guide the pursuit of life and simply the pursuit of a learner.

Webster defines philosophy as a critical study of fundamental beliefs and the grounds for them. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are philosophers that represent the birthplace of Western philosophy, but by the same token, education can learn from the philosophies of other cultures. Socrates, which is synonymous with wisdom and the philosophical life, was a teacher without a school. His goal was to help others find the truths that lie within their minds. He helped his students reach deeper, display clearer ideas by questioning, disproving and testing the thoughts of his pupils. This is precisely the philosophical basis and underpinnings of an MBA programme, which assists in investigating issues that are not understood within the private and public sectors of South Africa and exacerbated by past history and policies, that have stymied the evolution of the majority of the population to understand and operate within a business environment, surmount and consolidate, the means of production in an

effort to obtain economic freedom by exploiting the opportunities, present in the South African economy, in a quest to control the very means of production, that were denied to the marginalized population.. This is the fundamental philosophy of the MBA and, to this end all energies must be directed, in order to plan, develop and implement quality MBA programmes across the board. Without business and management training at a formal level, there can be no evolution of the majority population of the democratic, Republic of South Africa and African populations, at large, in challenging the historic status quo. This is the reality. Where shall we begin?

CONCLUSION

The aim of Business School and many of its counterparts must not only be to enhance the experience of students,

but also to improve management pedagogy. The commitment of the faculty of MBA Business Schools, and their management echelons should be to learn how their experiences should be structured and, what role the faculty should play, and what support is required, in order to develop a method that other institutions can embrace. In other words knowledge and experience must be harnessed and relentlessly pursued. The MBA as a business qualification has stood the test of time, and is here to stay, in spite of the criticisms advanced by prophets of doom.