Challenges and Benefits of Managing MBA Student Project Teams

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ABSTRACT
In this study we surveyed MBA students about their experiences working in teams and what could be done to improve their satisfaction levels. Students prefer to assign themselves to teams rather than be-assigned, like smaller teams (4 members), and prefer the same mark to be awarded to all team members. Students believed that training in project management skills, team skills and how to manage diversity were important for improving their learning experiences and satisfaction with team projects. Greater support from the lecturer was also considered important. The results suggest that while students consider team projects to be beneficial they also present significant challenges. Implications for the design and management of MBA student project teams are discussed.

Keywords: graduate management education/training, master of business administration (MBA), skills development/training, teambuilding

The MBA program would be technically easier without group work but a whole lot less challenging and rewarding. (Student comment)

A growing number of universities have responded to calls for a greater emphasis on equipping students with the skills to work in teams (Cox & Bobrowski 2000, 2004; Cudd & King 1995; Ettington & Camp 2002; St Clair & Tschirhart 2002; Tonn & Milledge 2002). In a survey of AACSBAccredited graduate schools of business in the United States Cudd and King (1995) reported that 32.3% of respondents had already increased the emphasis in their MBA programs on soft courses, while a further 40.4% reported that they planned to do so in the future. This shift in emphasis is consistent with increasing demands from employers for business graduates who possess generic or so-called soft skills such as the ability to work in teams. The increasing demand for teamwork skills among MBA graduates is being driven by the extensive use of various types of teams in contemporary organisations (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford & Melner 1999).
TEAMWORK SKILLS

The Case for…

Kane (1993) investigated recruiters’ perceptions of the skills MBAs should possess by sending questionnaires to 464 recruiters in each of the Fortune 500 companies named in the 1991 issue. Recruiters were asked to indicate the importance of various criteria for three categories of positions for which MBA students might be hired: general management positions, functional areas, and commissioned sales positions. Strong interpersonal, communication and team-oriented skills were the most important skills for all three categories of positions. Eberhardt and Moser (1997) sent surveys to the head of Human Resources in 460 domestic companies in the 1993 Hoover’s Handbook of American Business. Thirteen qualifications were identified based on Porter and McKibben’s (1988) list as well as additional items typically mentioned by job applicants as being important in obtaining job offers. Teamwork skills were ranked seventh by the HR managers on the list of desirable skills for graduates. Sinclair (1997) surveyed Australian university lecturers and business managers and asked them to rank the emphasis given to twelve graduate characteristics. Both the business managers and the university lecturers ranked the capacity for cooperation and teamwork as third most important for graduates. O’Neill, Allerd and Baker (1997) reviewed five major US studies into workforce readiness to identify and categorise the workforce skills identified in the studies. O’Neill et al. concluded that there were three major categories of job-readiness skills and one category of personal characteristics and attitudes that were common to all five studies: (1) basic academic skills such as the three R’s as well as speaking and listening skills; (2) higher order thinking skills including problem-solving, decision making, creativity, and learning how to learn skills; (3) interpersonal and teamwork skills including negotiation and conflict resolution skills, leadership skills, and the ability to work with others from diverse backgrounds; and (4) personal characteristics and attitudes including self-esteem, motivation, and responsibility for actions. In a more recent study, Bikson, Treverton, Moini and Lindstrom (2003) from the RAND Corporation conducted structured interviews with 135 HR managers and senior managers from 75 organisations and found that skills are also important for leaders operating in an international business environment. There is a considerable degree of
convergence among these studies which have consistently ranked the ability to work in a team as a critical skill for MBA graduates.

The Criticisms...

Team-based learning is considered to be common practice in the majority of MBA programs (Bolton 1999; Fairfield & London 2003). However, most management programs do not systematically design their courses to develop the teamwork skills of their students (Boyatzis et al. 2002; Chen et al. 2004; Holmer 2001; Tonn & Milledge 2002). Teaching surveys and anecdotal accounts also suggest a significant number of students dislike team projects because their experiences frequently fail to live up to their expectations (Cordery 2004). One potential reason for students’ dislike of team projects is that groups often develop faulty team processes such as social loafing (Latané, Williams & Harkins 1979; Williams, Harkins & Latané 1981). Social loafing occurs when a team member or members exert less effort when working in a team than they would if they were working alone. Not surprisingly, students often feel aggrieved when one person has contributed significantly less to the project’s completion, and yet they receive the same grade as other students. However, conflict can also arise when one student perceives they have done significantly more than their fellow members, an effect which is known as social compensation (Williams & Karau 1991). Social compensation can occur when a team member believes that the contribution of other team members will be inadequate either because they lack motivation and/or ability. In either of these situations, the resulting conflict can leave students frustrated with both the outcome and the process, and with the perception that they have few avenues to redress the injustice.

A second possible explanation for students’ unfavourable view of team projects is that they lack the ability and self-efficacy to perform well in teams and hence, on student team projects (Kiffin-Petersen 2006). Following an extensive review of the team’s literature Stevens and Campion (1994) developed a comprehensive set of teamwork skills they argued were necessary for effective teams. These included: (1) interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving and communication; and (2) self-management skills including goal setting and performance management, and planning and task coordination. Holmer (1991) observed that students often feel least confident about their ability to solve conflicts and be assertive in groups. There is therefore a need for lecturers
to be more active in equipping students with the skills and self-confidence they need to maximise their learning experiences. All too often lecturers fall back on the old adage that there is much to be learned from team failures and yet Bacon, Stewart and Silver (1999) have found that students actually learn more from their best team experiences.

The inappropriate use of teams for tasks that are better done by an individual is also a frequently cited reason for why teams fail (Hackman 1990). Anecdotal evidence from students suggests that this may also apply to the use of teams for student projects. Wageman (1997) has observed that one of the critical factors for the effectiveness of teams is that they require work that is a ‘real team task’. In other words the basic elements of the work must require team members to work together if they are to complete the task. When the task does not require the collective input of all team members students will learn little from each other about teamwork as they have little need to interact. Students often respond by dividing the project into smaller tasks and then allocating individual members to work on each aspect so that team meetings are infrequent, if at all. Hence, team projects that involve a real team task are more likely to be beneficial to student learning.

**The Present Study**

Input-process-output models of team effectiveness suggest that students’ satisfaction with their team project\(^1\) can be influenced by various factors including team composition, size, team processes and reward systems (Cohen & Bailey 1997). Hackman (1987) has identified three important criteria to assess team effectiveness including the extent to which the team achieves its task, whether students are more satisfied with their team experience than frustrated, and whether the experience enhanced the ability of members to work together in the future. With respect to student project teams this study therefore explored four research questions:

1. How satisfied are students’ with their experiences working on team projects? Why were students’ team projects satisfying or dissatisfying?

2. What are the learning outcomes of team projects and are they important to students?

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\(^{1}\) While it is recognised that students working on a team project may be more correctly described as a work group, rather than a team (Katzenbach & Smith 1993), the terms work group, group and team are used interchangeably in this paper (Cohen & Bailey 1997).
3. What are students’ preferences for how student project teams are structured?

4. What factors could improve students’ learning experiences and satisfaction with team projects?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample**

The sample consisted of 241 full and part-time MBA students studying on campus, representing approximately 75% of the total enrolled students. The majority of the sample was male (66.5%). 86.9% of the students were local and 13.1% were international students. The average number of units that the students had completed that involved a team project was 5.52 units (SD = 3.49). Students had been enrolled in the MBA program an average of 3.32 years (SD = 1.84). On average, students’ rated themselves as somewhat experienced to experienced with working in teams in organisations (M = 3.84/5, SD = .93).

**Procedure**

A task force was initially formed composed of five MBA students and two members of faculty. Members of the task force met weekly to design a questionnaire that would ascertain the students’ level of satisfaction with both the MBA program and their group experiences. The task force was also interested in students’ preferences for how team projects were structured and assessed, and how their experiences could be improved. The options for the formation of teams and the assessment of the team project were derived from Caspersz, Skene and Wu (2006). The overall list of potential questions were reviewed and considered for inclusion by qualitative and quantitative researchers. The questionnaire was then pilot tested in an MBA class of 17 students. Final revisions were made to the survey based on student feedback and a review by the task force. The resulting questionnaire included a mix of closed and open ended questions as shown in Appendix A.

Students were invited to participate in the study initially via an email invitation that included a link to the web-based survey located on the internet. Two follow up email reminders were also sent to students at weekly intervals as this can improve the response rates of web-based surveys. The advantages of using a web-based survey included its convenience for students, ease of completion outside class time, and the data could easily be converted to data files for later analysis (Couper 2000;
Dillman 2000). The questionnaire was available to students on the web for three weeks. Students were also reminded of the importance of completing the questionnaire by lecturing staff. Copies of the questionnaire were also available within classes and at the school reception for students who were unable to access the internet. Students were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and that their anonymity would be protected.

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative information was analysed using SPSS 16.0. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were computed for the quantitative questions. The qualitative data was analysed using NVivo 7 Software by a research assistant who was unaware of the research questions. Student responses to the open ended questions were converted to a Word file and loaded into the software program. Thematic analyses techniques (Kassarjian 1977) were used to explore student responses. Nodes collated the major themes in relation to student experiences with teamwork. Over 45 pages of student comments were coded and assigned to 17 nodes. Throughout the coding the researcher worked to ensure the objectivity, systemisation and quantification of the analysis (Kassarjian 1977; Kolbe & Burnett 1991).

**RESULTS**

This study aimed to answer four research questions about students’ perceptions of their experiences working on team projects in an MBA program. This results section addresses each of the four research questions in turn before discussing the practical implications of the findings for the design of student project teams in MBA programs.

**Satisfaction with Team Experience**

The first research questions were “How satisfied are students’ with their experiences working on team projects?” and “Why were students’ team projects satisfying or dissatisfying?” The findings were somewhat mixed. Results from the quantitative data show that only 53.6% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their team project experiences (M = 3.37, SD = .92). Almost one fifth of the students (19.6%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In comparison, 83.1% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the MBA program itself (M = 4.00, SD = .56) and none were dissatisfied. Despite these differences in satisfaction levels, students made favourable comments about
the value of team projects particularly as a means to expose students to different viewpoints and opinions. A common theme around the benefits of teams was the value of being able to learn from other students. Students were generally happy to be working with people from different backgrounds, and appreciated the diverse cohort they were amongst. Students also expressed that it was satisfying for students to experience overcoming team differences and moving forward through the project successfully. A further reason students were satisfied with team work was that they saw it as means to network and develop friendships with other students.

Group worked well together and each member contributed a different viewpoint and background.

It enhanced the learning process by creating a discussion forum where students could develop ideas and get a greater understanding of the topic and related areas.

An understanding that leadership is a group activity. Learning to work with different personality types and value-sets. Testing individual ideas within a group setting to improve learning and outcomes.

We have actually developed a good friendship out of it and are supporting each other as we go through the course.

Qualitative results suggest that the factors that contributed to a dissatisfying experience for students were relatively consistent with prior research in the team’s literature. The key themes which emerged included the difficulties of time management, insufficient contribution of team members, lack of team member ability, and worsening grades and learning due to a poor team experience. Time management was considered to be quite a difficult issue, although very satisfying when successfully accomplished.

Everyone committed to doing their work on time and delivered what they said they would when they said they would.

Efficient allocation of work, and group meeting durations were minimal.

Trying to co-ordinate team members, people are trying to juggle uni, home and work commitments. Additionally a lot of my team members had to travel placing further strains on team meetings.

Gersick (1988) has highlighted that project teams often experience two distinct phases rather than the stages of team development (i.e. forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning) identified by Tuckman (1965). The first phase, which is characterised by inactivity, lasts for approximately half the project’s life. The team transitions into activity at this mid-point as members realise that half the available time as passed. Student project teams often mirror Gersick’s phases and that may be one of
the reasons students have difficulty with managing their time effectively. It was a common bitter response that some team members failed to contribute sufficiently. People also expressed annoyance that not much could be done about ‘lazy’ group members. Social loafing in student teams appeared as a consistent source of dissatisfaction, and social compensation was also mentioned by some students.

It’s frustrating when members of the group don’t pull their weight and the rest of the group is too scared to bring it to the attention of the lecturer.

Social loafing is probably the most dissatisfying aspect of group projects. In 6 out of 9 of my units, there has been a person who effectively contributed nothing to the group.

One team member spoke limited English and participated very little. Made other people work harder to compensate.

Some students acknowledged the inabilities of some fellow students and the way in which this hampered their group success. Some students also felt that their grades were not as high as they potentially could have been because they were held back by other group members.

The group was composed of predominantly international students who had varying degrees of work ethic, dedication and language competence. Group meetings were tense as a number of members struggled to understand what was being discussed and members seemed reluctant to form friendships due to this tension.

On a couple of occasions the group assignment mark has dragged down my final unit mark, I don’t want to be judged on the work of others.

Some students felt that working in groups was dissatisfying and made their course less rewarding. They also questioned the educational value of team projects given the amount of time that was required to complete them.

Very enjoyable if you get the right group otherwise can be a nightmare!!

Core unit group projects are very large and take up to much time needed in order to complete class assignments and readings. Some group projects are worthless in time versus education return.

Learning Outcomes of Team Projects

The second research question was, “What are the learning outcomes of group projects and are they important to students?” Most of the students believed that learning how to work as a team, and reaping all the benefits associated with it was a positive and valuable experience. A few however did not see the application to real life situations/scenarios. A number of students also thought that team
work was beneficial as it allowed them to realize their strengths and weaknesses and use this as a way to better their work in future assignments and situations requiring team skills.

To gain experience working with a number of different people with a range of abilities and specialisations.

Getting a sense of how other people approach a task. It’s about negotiation, project development, research, teamwork, presentation, delivering on time and leadership. The learning outcomes are everything that the MBA Program is about.

Learn about yourself and how you interact with others/react to situations.

Group work is painful and excruciating but because of this, there are many learning opportunities because I need to learn how to work with people that I would normally avoid.

Many believed the teams were helpful in assisting with the expansion of knowledge amongst students, and that more can be achieved when more than one mind is thinking about something. Students believed that key learning goals could more easily be met in teams as the capacity to learn more was enhanced through the diverse experience and opinions within the group.

Engage with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and expand perceptions and modes of thinking.

The people in the group were all highly ambitious, which meant that we could guarantee that everyone will be doing above and beyond what was fair or equal to share the work, and everyone was striving toward the best report possible.

Upfront agreement on aim (mark) and effort required/expected; upfront discussion on code of conduct and resolution of issues; everyone pitched in and worked together; no criticism, all constructive feedback.

Most students were dedicated toward achieving the team’s goal and successful in achieving it. Some felt their achievement of goals however, was hampered by another team member or members who were not as enthused with the course/unit. This was reflected in the results for the quantitative data with 44.7% of students believing that the goals of team work had been achieved and 30.8% that they had been only somewhat achieved. Only 2.1% of student however, felt that the goals of team work had not been at all achieved. Students felt overwhelmingly that the goals of team work were important to them in relation to their work but also with respect to their future career aspirations. 75.5% of students considered that team work was important or very important for their immediate work. With respect to their future career aspirations 82.3% of students felt that the goals of team work were important or very important. These results are consistent with studies reviewed earlier that have ranked teamwork skills among the most important of the interpersonal skills needed in organisations.
Student Preferences for Design of Teams

The third research question explored students’ preferences for how student project teams are formed, how the team project was assessed, and what they thought the optimal size was for a student project team. The results from the quantitative analyses show that 50.2% of students wanted to self-select their fellow group members. The next most popular selection method was to vary the method of allocation depending on the goals of the unit (20.3%). Random allocation of students by the lecturer was the least favoured method of allocation with only 10.1% of students ranking that as number one. Comments from the qualitative analysis also indicated students’ preferences for selecting their own team members, rather than being assigned to a team.

When groups are chosen by the lecturer, there is very little chance that it will be a harmonious group and also if the group members don't know each other beforehand, then there needs to be time devoted to forming the group, how the group will work together etc.

A satisfying group project is where I can choose my team.

Selecting your own groups lets you practice recruitment skills (if you are quick). It motivates you to try to meet everyone in the first few lessons (if you hadn’t already) to try to assemble a ‘dream’ team for the group assignment.

There were some students that believed that the formation of successful teams might be better enabled if the lecturer was involved early in the process.

It would be helpful if lecturers could ‘guide’ the group forming and allow students to ‘get to know’ each other through discussions of goals before deciding on a group.

Opinion on mark allocation was inconclusive, with some believing all members of a team should receive the same mark, while others disagreed. Results from the quantitative data shows that 57.8% of students had a stronger preference for allocating the group mark to all team members regardless of perceived inequities in input. The next preferred way of assessing a team project was to allocate a percentage of the team project mark based on a peer assessment (21.1%). However, comments from students show that there was some disagreement about the best way to allocate marks to project team members, with some believing it should be comparable with input and others that it was up to the team itself to ensure that everyone contributed equally.

I believe if you are a group, you are a group and thus should be marked as a group and all receive the same score. I believe you should address work imbalance during the project if it is a problem for you; similarly you may decide that you are happy to put more in, in which case you should accept your decision and not expect higher marks.
The fact that everyone got the same mark created ill-feeling among the people.

I believe that a student’s grade in a group assignment should reflect their input, not that of the group as a whole. This would mimic real world employ. When working in a competitive and dynamic work environment, you can not sit back and enjoy the ride at the expense of others and expect to reap the same rewards and benefits.

The ideal group size for student projects based on student responses was four members (61.2%). The next most popular size was five (19%) while the maximum number of students was considered to be six. The optimal team size of four members is slightly less than research into problem solving groups which suggests that the ideal size may be 5-7 members (Cohen & Bailey 1997).

**Suggestions for Improvement**

The fourth research question was, “What factors could improve students’ learning experiences and satisfaction with group projects?” Results from the quantitative data summarised in Table 1 over the page shows that the areas students considered most important for improving their learning experiences were training in group skills (75.1%), project management skills (67.1%) and managing diversity in groups (61.6%). Students also identified assistance in dealing with difficult group members and peer feedback on their effectiveness as a team member facilitated by the lecturer as factors that were also important to their learning and satisfaction. Group codes of conduct, compulsory peer evaluation of team members and dispute resolution procedure were seen as less important. These findings are generally supportive of the literature on teams which has identified lack of team member ability and motivation as key determinants of team effectiveness. A theme which also emerged from the qualitative data was that students believed that lecturers had a responsibility to maximise student experiences when working in teams.

*Maybe the school should have provided additional help in coordinating group work.*

*The responsibility of managing poor group contributors should be with the lecturers, not the students. We are required to study together for years to come and need to maintain some form of cordial relationship with all students if the [xxx] is to be a nice place to visit and learn. If we are forced to work in groups for a significant portion of our marks then the school must accept responsibility for administering delinquent students out of the program, or group them together. The [xxx] can not and must not turn a blind eye. This issue is big enough to stop me completing this MBA if it is encountered again!*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>Not at all important %</th>
<th>Not really important %</th>
<th>A little important %</th>
<th>Important %</th>
<th>Very important %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Training in project management skills</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Training in group work skills</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Training in how to manage diversity in groups</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Formal group codes of conduct</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A formal dispute resolution procedure</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Assistance from the lecturer with allocation of responsibilities and roles</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Compulsory peer evaluation of group members’ contribution to the project</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Peer feedback on your effectiveness as a group member facilitated by the lecturer.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Assistance in dealing with difficult group members</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Time allocated in-class for group meetings</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

This study explored the perceptions of MBA students concerning their satisfaction with an MBA program, satisfaction with MBA team project experiences and the extent to which goals were achieved in team projects. Perceptions relative to the importance of team skills, team formation preferences, preference for how team work grades should be allocated and potential areas of training for students were also investigated. While the majority of the students were satisfied with the MBA program, their team project satisfaction was significantly lower suggesting that there is considerable room for improvement if learning outcomes are to be realised. Similarly, only half of the students perceived that their team project goals were ‘achieved’ or ‘completely achieved’. The qualitative data further reinforced these observations.

The initial findings also included a clear indication that students believed that team skills were extremely important to their work with 75% of the students confirming that team skills are either ‘important’ or ‘very important’. Given the perceived importance of team skills, the study also considered two areas for improvement in how team projects could be managed effectively in the future. On the one hand, these included enhanced involvement by the lecturer in managing the team project experience through the careful consideration of team formation and mark allocation processes. On the other hand the study included an exploration of potential training opportunities for students in team projects. Students appeared to favour the self selection of teams and an equal allocation of grades across all members. With respect to the latter a theme which emerged in the comments that students wanted effort/input to be rewarded and hence, if all team members had contributed equally all should be rewarded. There was particularly strong interest on the part of students towards training in project management skills, team work skills and managing diversity in groups. Students also appeared to want more assistance in dealing with difficult team members.

The study supports the notion that while integrating team work projects is a useful and relevant undertaking relative to student perceptions, there is some room for improvement when considering team project satisfaction. Certainly there is support for further involvement by lecturers in team project management; a clearer definition of specific team project learning outcomes (goals) and additional student team project related training either on a program or unit basis. Further investigation
of the qualitative data from this study is required given the volume of comments made by students. Additional research is necessary to confirm if the findings of this study are also generalisable to the wider population. Future studies should focus on MBA units which target more systematic management of team projects by lecturers; and/or augmented MBA student training in team projects to determine if this leads to enhanced student team project satisfaction. Students clearly saw the benefits of student team projects in the MBA program but there is much work still to be done to overcome the challenges that such teams can present for students and their learning.
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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

1. What is your overall satisfaction with the MBA programme (1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied)?

2. How would you rate your previous experience of working in teams in organisations (1 = no experience to 5 = significant experience)?

3. How many units have you enrolled in that have involved a group project?

4. What is your overall satisfaction with your experience in group projects (1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied)?

5. a) Consider your most satisfying group project experience.
   What were your observations of that experience (Why was it a satisfying experience):
   b) Consider your most dissatisfying group project experience.
   What were your observations of that experience (What made it a dissatisfying experience?)

6. a) What do you believe are the key goals (learning outcomes) in using group projects within MBA units (open ended)?
   b) To what extent have these goals been achieved in your group projects (1 = not at all achieved to 5 = completely achieved)?
   c) In relation to your work are these goals important to you (1 = not at all to 5 = completely achieved)?
   d) In relation to your future career aspirations are these goals important to you (1 = not at all to 5 = completely achieved)?
   e) Any additional comments concerning learning outcomes for group projects?

7. Rank the following items from 1 to 5 in order of your preference for how groups are formed within MBA units (1 = most preferred, 5 = least preferred). Use the numbers from 1 to 5 once only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Method of allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Allocation of group members by the lecturer based on specific criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Random allocation of students by the lecturer to a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Students self select their fellow group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Method of allocation varies depending on the goals of the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Other selection method (please describe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Rank the following items from 1 to 4 in order of your preference for how a group project is assessed within MBA units (1 = most preferred, 4 = least preferred). Use the numbers from 1 to 4 once only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Method of assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The group project mark is allocated to all group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A percentage of the group project mark is allocated to peer assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The group project mark is differentially allocated to individual group members based on a peer assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Other method (please describe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What do you think is an optimal group size (or appropriate range) for student projects?

10. Which, if any, of the following components do you believe would improve your learning experience and satisfaction with MBA group projects (1 = not important to 5 = very important, 6 for don’t know):
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Training in project management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Training in group work skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Training in how to manage diversity in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Formal group codes of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>A formal dispute resolution procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Assistance from the lecturer with allocation of responsibilities and roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Compulsory peer evaluation of group members’ contribution to the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Peer feedback on your effectiveness as a group member facilitated by the lecturer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Assistance in dealing with difficult group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Time allocated in-class for group meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Start date for MBA

12. Male/Female

13. Do you have other comments on group work? Please use this space.