Chapter - 3

Scope and Methodology

This chapter 'Scope and Methodology' contains research framework, clarification of relevant concepts, objectives of the study, hypotheses, sampling and tools for the data collection and analysis.

3.1. The Research framework

Career advancement of MBAs is the focus of this research. This study tries to identify the personal, professional, organisational, and environmental factors that facilitate career advancement of MBAs.

Organisational researchers have tested relatively comprehensive models of career success. Some specific findings are that human capital variables (education, years in the workforce, experience in multiple organisations, and career interruptions), demographic variables (gender, marital status, and spouse employment status), and organisational characteristics (organisation size, metropolitan location, and industry sector), have effects on salary, promotions, and/or career satisfaction (Judge and Bretz, 1994; Judge et al., 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Seibert et al., 1999; Wayne et al., 1999).

Theoretical framework and empirical evidences reveal that the career advancement is influenced by personal, professional, organisational and environmental variables. In this study, the dependent variable is “the career advancement of MBAs” (explained in detail in chapter no.4).

Independent variables that may have possible relationship with the dependent variable are as follows:

**Personal Factors**
- Gender,
- Under-graduation degree,
- MBA specialisation,
- MBA academic performance,
- Parents’ economic status,
- Parents’ educational level,
- Parents’ occupational level,
- Spouse’s employment,
- Work-life-satisfaction,
- Non-Work-life-satisfaction.
Professional Factors

Organisational Factors
Office bureaucracy, Promotion process, Hierarchical level, Organisational recognition, Career development programmes, and internal competition.

Environmental Factors
Ethnic/Regional considerations, Economic conditions, and Labour market

3.2. The conceptual framework on career advancement of MBAs

Figure 3.1 shows the conceptual framework adopted in this study on career advancement of MBAs.

The conceptual framework on career advancement of MBAs (Adopted in this study)
3.3. Clarification of relevant concepts

**Career advancement**
A vertical movement or upward mobility of a person in his work responsibility within an organisation or acceptance of higher responsibilities by moving out of the organisation through one's life span. This is the dependent variable in this study.

**Gender**
Here, gender denotes the sex difference (Male Vs. Female) of the respondents being studied.

**Under-graduate degree**
The formal under-graduate degree from the college, which is the minimum qualification stipulated for admission to the MBA programme. It may be art, science, engineering & technology, medicine, law, agriculture, etc.

**MBA specialisation**
It is the area from which the MBA students take most of the electives. The six areas of specialisation are Marketing, Finance, Production, HRM, Systems, or Specialised Sectoral Management.

**MBA academic performance**
It is the relative standing of a student in comparison with all other students of the class or the percentage of marks obtained in the university examination or the subjective rating of self in comparison with other students in the class.

**Parents' economic status**
It is the parents' annual income at the time of respondent's MBA study.

**Parents' educational status**
It is the parents' educational level at the time of respondent's MBA study.

**Parents' occupational status**
It is the parents' occupations at the time of respondent's MBA study.

**Spouse's employment status**
It is the job of the respondent's wife or husband.

**Work-life satisfaction**
Respondents' perception of how well his/her job on the whole is satisfying his/her various needs. Satisfaction with regard to job related aspects. More opportunities, less bureaucracy, more influence, more autonomy, etc. are likely to enhance work-life-satisfaction.
Non-work-life satisfaction
Non-work-life satisfaction is the respondents’ personal experience of the feeling of well being in life outside the work. It includes the respondent’s personal, social, family and spiritual life outside the work.

All the above ten independent variables are related to individual demographic and psychological aspects, and hence they are grouped together under the label personal variables or personal factor.

Personal growth
The subjective feeling of advancement in career by a person is the central theme under ‘personal growth’.

Professional ambition
Professional ambition is the motivation to acquire the required professional qualification and to develop necessary skills by training for practice of such profession and to climb the ladder of success in that profession.

Autonomy
Autonomy is defined as the freedom with a sense of responsibility as experienced by the respondents in taking decisions and actions as a part of one’s job.

Professional recognition
Professional recognition is a sense of acceptance by colleagues/superiors/fellow professionals based on work-achievement.

Power
Power is the desire to influence and control other people by one’s positional authority, expertise, and other means.

Prestige
Prestige is the name and fame associated with position and career achievements.

Current income
Current income is the monetary compensation received for the current job/current career position.

Future income
Future income is the desired monetary compensation for the job/career position in a future time frame.

Security
Security is the subjective feeling of economic well being offered by one’s employment.
All the above nine independent variables are related to job/employment aspects, and hence they are grouped together under the label professional variables or professional factor.

Office bureaucracy
Office bureaucracy is the system of office administration based on rules and regulations, sometimes disregarding the basic goals and purpose.

Promotion process
Promotion is the policy and methods of identifying employees for promotion/career advancement.

Organisational hierarchy
Organisational hierarchy is the number of positions in the vertical level in the organisational structure following a ‘peck-order’ system in role relationship between the superior and subordinates.

Organisational recognition
Acceptance and appreciation of the work done by the position incumbent by immediate superior and top management.

Career development programmes
Career development programmes are the training and development strategies for better professional performance and career advancement.

Internal competition
Internal competition refers to competition among position incumbents of comparable levels for getting higher positions in the same organizations.

All the above six independent variables are related to organisational aspects, and hence they are grouped together under the label organisational variables or organisational factor.

Ethnic/Regional consideration
Special favour/disfavour in giving promotion/career advancement based on extraneous considerations such as religion, caste, race, region, language, affinity with one’s alumni, etc. is at the focus under ethnic/regional consideration. The disfavouring aspect of such considerations is called as discrimination, and the favouring aspect may be called as favouritism. Stereotype, bias, and prejudice are part of such ethnic/regional discrimination.
Economic condition
It refers to the fluctuations in the general economic conditions of a state/nation

Labour market
The demand and supply position in managerial employment market both for the initial entry and positions at higher levels

*All the above three independent variables are related to environmental/external aspects, and hence they are grouped together under the label *environmental variables* or *environmental factor*.*

3.4. Objectives of the study

Major objectives of the study are the following:

1. To develop a formula for the measurement of rate of career advancement on a model proposed by Bernard M. Bass(*Chapter-4 of the thesis*), and

2. To find out the relationship between career advancement of MBAs and selected personal, professional, organisational and environmental variables(*Chapter-5 of the thesis*)

Secondary objectives which may lend support the major objectives are:

1. To measure the rate of career advancement of MBAs and to categorise them into i) Superior, ii) Above average, iii) Average, iv) Below average, and v) Poor, in terms of the score distribution of the dependent variable, i.e. the Rate of Advancement(ROA), and to present case studies under each category(*Chapter-6 of the thesis*), and

2. To list the opinions and viewpoints of former MBA students(respondents) of School of Management Studies(SMS), Cochin University of Science & Technology(CUSAT), on MBA programme/management education in general (*Chapter-7 of the thesis*).
### 3.5. Hypotheses for Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis No.</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Personal variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.1</td>
<td>There is significant difference between male and female MBAs in their career advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.2</td>
<td>There is significant difference between arts and science degree holders(Undergraduates) of MBAs in their career advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.3</td>
<td>There is significant difference between marketing and non-marketing MBAs(specialisation) in their career advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.4</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between academic performance at MBA level and career advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.5</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between parent’s economic status and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.6</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between parent’s educational level and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.7</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between parent’s occupational level and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.8</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between spouse’s employment status and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.9</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between work-life satisfaction and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.10</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between non-work-life satisfaction and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Professional variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.11</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for personal growth and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.12</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between professional ambition and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.13</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for autonomy and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.14</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for professional recognition and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.15</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for power and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>H1.16</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for prestige and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.17</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for current income and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.18</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for future income and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.19</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between need for security and career advancement of MBAs</td>
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3. Organisational variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H1.20</th>
<th>There is significant relationship between perception of office bureaucracy and career advancement of MBAs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1.21</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between promotion process and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.22</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between organisational hierarchy and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.23</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between organisational recognition and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.24</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between perception of career development programmes and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.25</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between perception of internal competition and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
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</table>

4. Environmental variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H1.26</th>
<th>There is significant relationship between Ethnic/Regional considerations and career advancement of MBAs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1.27</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between economic conditions and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1.28</td>
<td>There is significant relationship between labour market and career advancement of MBAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6. Sampling procedure

The study is on MBA managers passed out from School of Management Studies (SMS), Cochin University of Science and Technology from 1975 to 1984.

For this study, the School of Management Studies (SMS), Cochin University of Science and Technology is the selected institution. SMS is the oldest Business School in Kerala and one of the Pioneer University Management Departments (UMDs) in India. SMS was started in 1964. The two-year MBA (Full-time) programme was started in 1973, and the first batch was out in 1975. For this study, the researcher has included the first ten batches of the two-year MBA (full-time) programme, i.e., 1973-1975 batch to 1982-1984 batch.

The total number of students in these batches was 306. As the researcher planned to consider only the managers for this study, the other categories like entrepreneurs/self-employed/consultants, teachers, freelancers and housewives were excluded from this 306.

Those people who are no more also were dropped. Finally, the total number of managers from all these ten batches came to 226 which is to be considered as the population of this study.

The universe of the MBA degree holders from all the universities in Kerala during the period 1975 to 1984 was 321, out of which only 15 were from the university of Calicut who passed out as the first batch in 1984 and the remaining 306 MBAs were from School of Management Studies, CUSAT.

This study is confined to career advancement in managerial positions. Excluding MBAs working in non-managerial positions such as teaching, consultancy, self-employment, house-wife, and those who were no more, the total number of MBAs comes out to 226. This study was confined to the MBAs of School of Management Studies, CUSAT as
the number of MBAs passed out from Calicut University in 1984 and working managerial position is insignificant and also to maintain the homogeneity (i.e. to exclude the effect of institutional variable). It may also be noted that the study is a hypothesis-testing type research for generalization and not a survey type to understand the what about and where about the MBAs from Kerala. Again, it may also be noted that the institutional variable, i.e. the characteristics of the institutions which produce MBAs is not a part of this study.

Using random sampling technique, data were collected from 50 persons out of these 226, which is a 22% sample size. As the population is a homogeneous one, random sampling with adequate representation from each batch (list of students in alphabetical order) was adopted. Every fifth person in the sampling frame was contacted with a questionnaire (see Appendix-I). In case the fifth person failed to respond even after repeated reminders, then the next person (i.e. the 6th person) was contacted and so on. The first round selection of sample was 45 by selecting every fifth person in the sampling frame. In order to make it a round figure of 50, an additional 5 samples were selected by another round of random selection by selecting every 45th person from the list. Distribution of ROA scores (Dependent variable) from this sample of 50 revealed an approximate normal distribution with variability ranging from -2 to +2 'Z' values. This sample was used to find out the association between the dependent variable (career advancement of MBAs) and the independent variables. As the hypotheses tested are basically on the process (relationship between two variables) rather than the nature of the content (i.e. what kind of career advancement, percentage of MBAs in different sectors, etc.), a sample of 50 MBAs selected in an unbiased manner is sufficient for the scientific generalisation.
3.7. Data Collection

The data were collected during the period of January 2005 to November 2005. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire (Appendix-I). The questionnaires were sent by post to the respondents who were in India and by email to those who were working abroad. Table 3.1 shows the details of sampling.

Table No. 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch</th>
<th>Batch Strength</th>
<th>No. of employed MBAs</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(After excluding entrepreneurs/self-employed/consultants, teachers, freelancers, housewives, etc.)*

**An enquiry was done by the researcher by contacting some of the alumni from each batch to ascertain the present status of their classmates. Each batch was very strong in its internal network.
3.8. Components of the questionnaire

The questionnaire has four parts,

1) Part one consists of questions about the background information of the respondents
2) Part two consists of career profile of the respondents
3) Part three consists of selected independent variables, and
4) Part four consisting of MBA managers' views and opinions on management education.

3.9. Data analysis

The data collected from the respondents have been analysed by appropriate statistical techniques. Tables, diagrams and statistical results have been derived with the help of the computer software called SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The statistical techniques used for analysis were Percentile, Correlation, “t” test, and Anova (Including Post-Hoc comparison of means test). Using the score distribution of ROA (modified formula) the respondents were categorised into superior, above average, average, below average, and poor in their career advancement. One case was selected from each category for presenting five case studies in chapter-6.

3.10. Limitation of the Study

The variables taken for this study are not exhaustive. The dispositional (personality) factors were excluded.

3.11. Chapterisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised in eight chapters. Chapter one ‘Introduction’ introduces the background of the study detailing the popularity of the MBA programme, history and the current scenario of management education, and various approaches to and theories on career advancement. It also discusses the research on career advancement and the focus of the present study.
Chapter two is exclusively for 'Review of Literature'. It discusses the various research findings available from the existing researches on the influence of different variables on career advancement of managers in general as well as of MBAs.

Chapter three 'Scope and Methodology' contains research framework, clarification of relevant concepts, objectives of the study, hypotheses, sampling and tools for the data collection.

Chapter four deals with the measurement of rate of advancement (ROA) as proposed by Bernard M. Bass. The formula suggested by Bass was modified to suit the Indian context. The validity of the modified formula was checked by its correlation with the data based on the Bass formula. This chapter also discusses the method/technique used to categorise the respondents into superior, above average, average, below average, and poor in terms of ROA score.

Chapter five is the central theme of this thesis. Data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion relating to each hypothesis listed under 3.4 in chapter three are given in this chapter.

Chapter six 'Case studies on career advancement' briefly describes one case from each ROA category of superior, above average, average, below average, and poor. Each case illustrates a representative model from the category.

Chapter seven 'MBA managers' views and opinions on management education' discusses the feedback on MBA study experiences of the respondents. It also discusses the feedback on management education in general as given by the respondents.

Chapter eight 'Summary and major conclusions' contains the summary of the study, findings, and important conclusions, impact and implications of the findings and scope for further research in the field.