

# Post Experience Education as an enabler of personal transformation – lessons from women alumni.

Isabelle Fulford-Perez; Dr Liz Houldsworth

## The MBA

Although the MBA has been traditionally male dominated, recent evidence points towards more gender balanced intakes reinforcing the importance of how the program can positively impact women’s lives and careers.

## Research Approach

Since 2013, Henley has run a WiL scholarship. 15 out of 17 winners agreed to be interviewed for this Henley alumni funded project. The women were also invited to pilot a questionnaire. Four broad themes emerged from interviews, which are summarized below.



### Research question 1

- Why the MBA and the impact of the scholarship?
  - MBA outcomes

### Research question 2

- Being female
  - Teaching learning experience / recommendations

## Transformation

Transformative learning theory involves recognizing and evaluating our own and others' assumptions and expectations. Perspective transformation refers to the **significant shift in our worldview** and re-evaluation of deeply held beliefs through reflection and critical awareness.

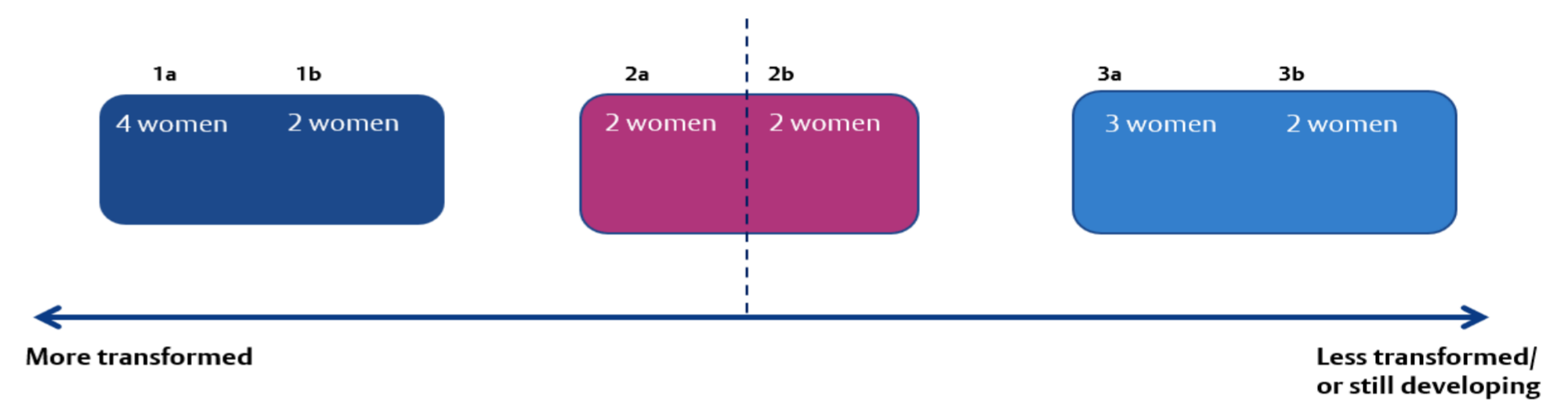
## Interviews

The qualitative data was obtained through a 40 to 60 minute semi-structured Teams interview (15 participants from 17). Mind maps were constructed during each interview in order to build familiarization with the content as well as identify themes.

## Rating evidence of transformation based on interviews

Interviewees were ranked from 1-10 based on evidence of transformation as a shift in worldview. Eight respondents appeared to match this description, two had slightly less evidence and five others little or no evidence of transformation in their interviews.

Overall, across both qualitative and quantitative measures the figure of just **over half** appears to represent the population experiencing transformation.



RQ 1 Indicative quotes	Outcomes – confidence	“With MBA and long hours..., <b>I’ve beaten all the odds stacked against me</b> ”
	Outcomes - content	“All round understanding of business not just from experience, but like from theory ..MBA has a seal of approval of itself gives you more <b>credibility</b> ”
	Outcomes – identity	“I had never expected from MBA... my goal was to learn about strategy... what came about was totally different... <b>life changing experiences</b> ”
RQ 2 Indicative quotes	Being female – motherhood	“I returned from maternity leave, two grades lower than when I had left. And I was basically, look, I’m not going to take that. I had been given the boost of confidence of winning a scholarship to do an executive MBA and I was coming back two grades lower which really devalued me”
RQ 2 Indicative quotes	Study visit	“ <b>I realised the privileged job that I had</b> , like shocked to see what we saw there, the poverty and what have you. But at the same time kind of the speed at which you have to help to help people get to a resolution.”
		“Sounds a bit corny, <b>but changed my life so profoundly</b> that I never, ever anticipated. Never thought that it would”

## Findings and next steps

The interview study reported several findings which are useful for management educators in terms of their teaching and learning provision.

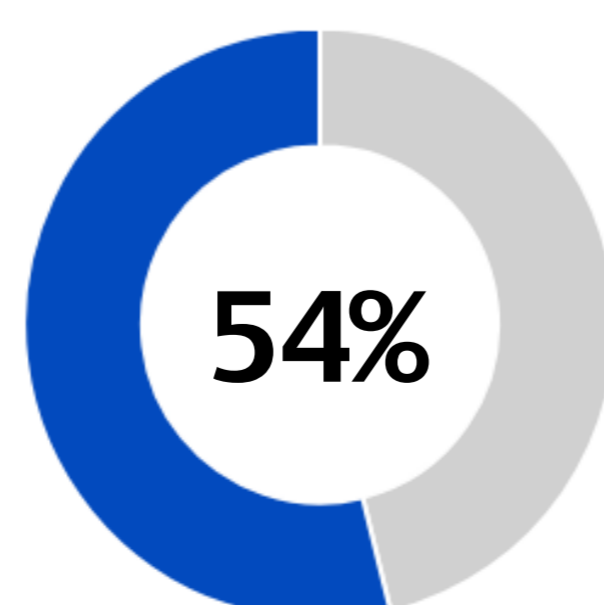
There were several reasons why women pursued the MBA. They sought broader business knowledge to enhance their credibility, recognizing its importance for advancing their career plans. In several cases, there were other intrinsic motivations, such as a desire to keep learning and a passion for the essay topic posed in the scholarship competition.

There were also many references to **increased confidence**, with the MBA providing validation of the ability and confidence to change career or work for oneself. In addition to the opportunity for an accelerated career path, there was widespread recognition of the power of the MBA network and the benefit of working with and through others.

## Questionnaire

13 women responded to Jisc questionnaire, which included career capital, career satisfaction, biographical and transformational learning outcomes from TROPOS’s (Cox, 2017). In terms of transformation, a 1-5 Likert scale was used across the 3 process and the transformational outcome.

Then an average was calculated with the aim of trialling if the questionnaire produced a similar result for respondents as that inferred from the qualitative analysis.



Transformative outcomes

The use of immersive learning experiences, which were described as having a profound impact, along with the opportunity for study visits working alongside NGOs, were described as transformative in several cases confirming that **The MBA Really Can Change Your Life**.

In terms of gender, the interviews also highlight the ongoing gender challenges women face in juggling careers and motherhood, with the message being that organisations still need to do much more to ensure **a level playing field**.

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