

## CURRICULUM OF BUSINESS STUDY AND IT'S USEFULNESS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MONGOLIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This descriptive research aims at studying the current situation of teaching of business study in the secondary schools in Mongolia. The convenient sampling was adopted and 100 students in Grades 10-12 were selected from the selected secondary school in the ger district of Ulaanbaatar. The SCAT method was used for analysis of an open ended question with complex responses. This research suggests that the content and the usefulness of business study goes hand in hand, and in order to improve its usefulness it is important to have a professional teacher of business study, instead of a teacher of social science. More importantly, it suggests that, for students, it is essential to study personal development subject before studying the subject of business study.*

**Keywords:** content of business study, classification of personnel development skills, teacher of business study, secondary school, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

### INTRODUCTION

Before 1921, Mongolia was a backward country, with the livestock rearing as a major economic sector. During the 70 years of socialism (1920-1990), two major economic sectors were developed, namely light and food industry (mainly livestock based manufacturing) and crop agriculture. With the political changes in 1989, Mongolia moved from a centrally planned economy (i.e. socialism) to a market economy. In 1990, election was held and the first multi-party government was formed in Mongolia. In October 1991, the privatization began and it was at the center of the IMF and WB assisted reform measures (Griffin 1995:11).

After privatization, redundant labour was dismissed (*ibid*). Social phenomenon like unemployment and poverty emerged in Mongolia. People who lost the secure government job, though with low wages, started to search for survival in the informal sector. Furthermore, labour market was evolved, and the potential and informal workers emerged as a class in Mongolia (Dashtseren 2012). In terms of economic sector, during the transition away from socialism, there was a stepwise movement to retail trade in Mongolia. It was the first exposure to business for Mongolians. In other words, Mongolia has not a long period but merely about 30 years of experience engaging in business, since 1990.

Mongolia has been in the market economy for about 30 years, and during this time, private business started to flourish in almost all economic sectors. In order to meet this demand, since 1990s the universities of Mongolia started to open bachelor and master degree program of business management and administration. Unlike this, only in 2016, it was decided to teach business study in the secondary schools in Mongolia. This study aims at studying the current situation of teaching of business study in the secondary schools in Mongolia. Also it compares the content of the business study in the secondary schools in Mongolia to that in other countries. More importantly, the usefulness of business study stated by the students of

the selected secondary school in Ulaanbaatar is analysed in comparison with the classification of the personnel development skills, which can be obtained via learning business education.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD**

For this study, a small scale sample survey “Usefulness of the subject of business study in the secondary school” was conducted. Data collection was held with the help of Mr. Batbold and Mr. Binder, bachelor students in the second grade of Life-long learning program, during the academic year 2018-19, at the School of Educational Studies of Mongolian National University of Education<sup>i</sup>. In the class of research methodology, as part of training, students were asked to formulate questionnaire to collect information from students of secondary schools in UB. Later, the author edited the questionnaire, and the questions were designed mainly with ‘yes/no’ answers. Following the ‘yes/no’ answer, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions were formulated to obtain in-depth understanding of the issue under question. The convenient sampling was adopted as the selected secondary school was the school where one of the two bachelor students was graduated from. Both students visited to the selected secondary school, in the suburb of UB which is characterized by the ger district, the traditional housing with no centralised sewage system. As a total, 100 questionnaires were filled in by the students in Grades 10-12 of the secondary school. Bachelor students worked separately from the author to finalize their assignment of the course of research methodology.

At the same time, the author obtained the MS Excel file from the students. At first, all open ended questions were analyzed by the author only. The SCAT (Steps for Coding and Theorization) method<sup>ii</sup>, the method for analysing qualitative data, was employed to study complex responses to an open ended question on the usefulness of the subject of business study in the secondary school.

## **THE CONTENT AND THE USEFULNESS OF THE BUSINESS STUDY**

After the World War II, with the business expansion, the demand for business graduates and business managers is increased. It was suggested that the business curriculum to be more intellectual and relevant to management (see Khurana, 2007). Further it was suggested to expand the business curriculum, including non-business subjects such as statistics, psychology, economics and sociology, and the broad functional disciplines such as finance, marketing, accounting and production (Pierson, 1959). The subjects can also be grouped as quantitative courses (statistics and accounting), management courses and human interaction courses (see Muhammad et al., 2013). The subject of economics should be at the center of business education (Marshall, 1917). The curriculum of business education need to be continuously upgraded (Ishida, 1997), especially in line with the technological changes. The curriculum of business study in the secondary schools in many countries has a rich content, including diverse subjects, like economics, marketing, management, human resource management, accounting, financing, production, distribution, leadership and decision making, business statistics and research, entrepreneurship and business strategy (Department of Education of Papua New Guinea, 2007, 2008; Ministry of Education of Canada, 2006; Aron et. al., 2013).

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<sup>ii</sup> The SCAT method is developed by Prof. Takashi Otani, Nagoya Universtiy, Japan. The SCAT form can be obtained from: <http://www.educa.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~otani/scat/scatform-eng.xls>

**Table 1. Classification and interrelationship of personnel skills**

	Personal development skills	Social skills	Analytical skills	Skills for modern organization	Problem solving skills	Entrepreneurial skills	Leadership skills
<b>Leadership skills</b>							
Decision making	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Planning skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Supervising skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Organizing skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Motivating skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ability to delegate	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Entrepreneurial skills</b>							
Sensitivity to business environment	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Market research skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Strategy skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Financial skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Marketing skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Risk bearing skill							
Business plan writing skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>Problem solving skills</b>							
Problem posing and identification	+	+	+	+	+		
Problem solving	+	+	+	+	+		
Coping with uncertainty	+	+	+	+	+		
Pro-activity	+	+	+	+	+		
<b>Skills for modern organization</b>							
Ability to cooperate	+	+	+	+			
Working in team	+	+	+	+			
Business ethics and integrity	+	+	+	+			
Ability to work in modern organizations	+	+	+	+			
<b>Analytical skills</b>							
Intellectual ability	+	+	+				
Creative thinking	+	+	+				
Initiative thinking	+	+	+				
Analytic thinking	+	+	+				
Holistic thinking	+	+	+				
Exploring and creating opportunities	+	+	+				
Numerical skills	+	+	+				
Accountability	+	+	+				
<b>Social skills</b>							
Interpersonal skill	+	+					
Oral communication skill	+	+					
Written communication skill	+	+					
Networking	+	+					
Negotiating skills	+	+					
Transfer skills	+	+					
Facilitating skills	+	+					
Ability to interpret	+	+					
Presentation skills	+	+					
<b>Personal development skills</b>							
Emotional stability	+						
Self awareness	+						
Self promotion	+						
Self confidence	+						
Patience	+						
Time management	+						
Ability to accept responsibility	+						
Ability to accept diverse work	+						
Ability to accept various environment	+						
Ability to work hard	+						
Ability to overcome work pressure							
Communication skill and behavior	+						
Strong sensitivity of vision	+						
Writing skills	+						
Information technology skills	+						
Foreign language	+						

Source: Author's construction

Unlike this, the core curriculum of business study of secondary schools in Mongolia is limited, and covers few topics, namely money and income, expenditure and saving, personal and household budget, risk and insurance, financial organizations and their activities, and ethics<sup>iii</sup>. Giving this limited content, the usefulness of studying business study in the secondary schools in Mongolia is likely to be limited, and students are unlikely to obtain all necessary skills for business.

Business education allows individuals, apart from obtaining theoretical knowledge, to obtain diverse competencies or skills, and these skills are grouped differently in different studies. For example, soft skills include ‘emotional stability’, ‘interpersonal skills’ and ‘negotiating skills’ (see Muhammad et al., 2013). ‘Emotional stability’ is also can be regarded as personal development skill while ‘interpersonal skills’ and ‘negotiating skills’ can be regarded as social skills. It suggests that diverse personnel skills are interrelated. All personnel skills which can be obtained as a result of learning business study can be classified as personal development skills, social skills, analytical skills, skills to work in modern organizations, problem solving skills, entrepreneurial skills and leadership skills (Table 5). More importantly, the analysis of interrelationship of diverse personnel skills suggests a ‘spiral shape’. The lowest level of classification, the ‘personal development skill’ is the base skill, and the next group (social skills) is based on the previous group of skills, the personal development skills. In other words, one can not obtain social skills without obtaining personal development skills. Furthermore, the spiral type of development of personnel skills suggests a spiral type of development of human capital, and lifelong spiral type of development of personnel skills. It is essential to study personal development skills and social skills, the base skills which one would need to go out of home, before learning business study. Also it warns that, for example, one should not jump to learn the leadership skills before obtaining proper personal development skills. The personal development subject was implemented in the core curriculum of the Romanian education system, and it has been useful in many aspect (Herman, 2015). Unlike this, there is no subject on personal development skills and social skills in the secondary schools in Mongolia.

### TEACHING OF BUSINESS STUDY IN MONGOLIA

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia<sup>iii</sup>, secondary school students in Grades 10-12 can choose to study the subject of business study. In our survey, only 8 percent of students learned business study in the selected secondary school (Figure 2). The highest percentage was found for the Grade 10, as 12.5 percent of students studied the subject of business study. On the other hand, no one in Grade 12 chose to study the subject of business study.

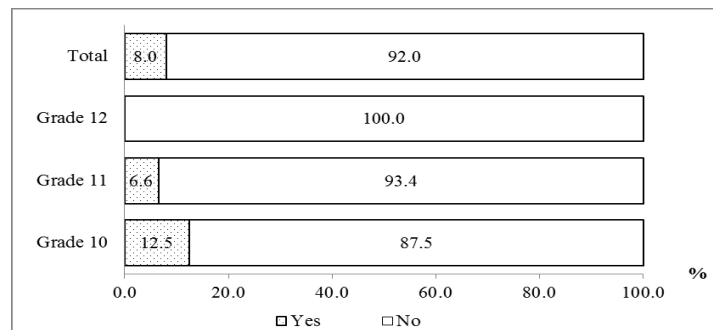


Figure 2. Students who studied the subject of business study by grade

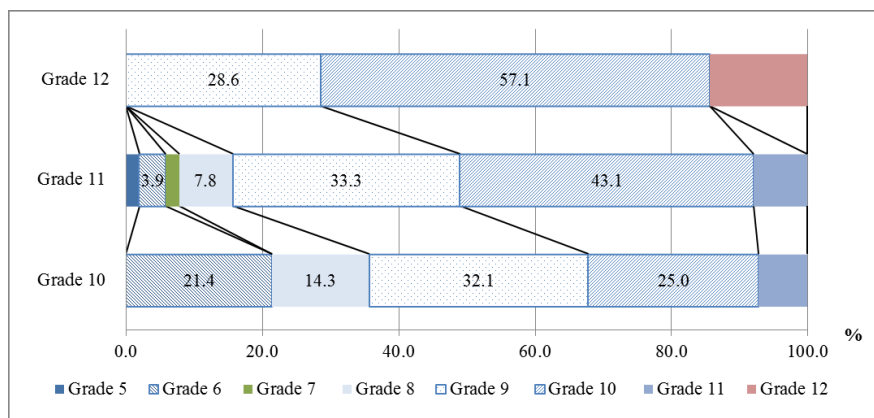
<sup>iii</sup> This is approved by the order A/275 of Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia, dated 27 June 2016. [www.legalinfor.mn](http://www.legalinfor.mn)

The major reason for not choosing to study the subject of business study was that students were not aware of the opportunity to study business study in the school, about 2/3 (Table 2). Students said that there is no subject of business study in our school (61.2%) and no information about this subject (5.9%). It implies that the majority of students in Grades 10-12 did not choose to learn business study because of no sufficient information, but not because they did not want to learn. There was a student who did not choose this subject because he/she was aware of having no professional teacher of this subject. For students in Grade 12, the major reason was that there was no time to choose to study the business study as they have to prepare for graduation exams.

**Table 2. Reasons for not choosing to study the subject of business study**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
No subject of business study in our school	52	61.2
No information about the subject of business study	5	5.9
No time to choose to study the subject of business study	4	4.7
No teacher of business study	1	1.2
Do not know	23	27.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Apart from preparing for graduation exams, students in Grade 12 are more likely to concentrate on preparing for future profession, and therefore, the Grade 12 is unlikely to be the convenient grade to learn business study. In our survey, it was asked that “At what grade it is the most convenient to learn business study?”. In general, students suggest the lower grade than their current grade (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Students' opinion on grade level to study the business study**

The majority of students view that it is better to learn business study in Grades 9-10. Students in Grades 10-11 view that students can learn business study as early as possible, say from Grade 5.

It might be because they feel useful to learn business study. As discussed earlier, the usefulness of learning business study lies on accumulating personnel development skills, and therefore, human capital. In our survey, the question on the usefulness of learning business study was asked from students who studied this subject, 14 students. The majority of them found it useful, mainly for the future life or for life-long learning. Students view that it is useful to earn money, create own wealth, and to have success in life (Table 3).

**Table 3. Usefulness of business study**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Obtained knowledge to earn money	1	7.1
Learned to control over spending of money	1	7.1
Useful for future life, and success	3	21.4
Useful to make use of what one can do, earn own money and create own wealth	3	21.4
Did not understand some part	1	7.1
Do not know	4	28.6
Not useful	1	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On the other hand, less than ½ of students did not find useful to learn business study. One student said that ‘it is not useful’, and another student said that he/she did not understand some part.

Among others, the usefulness of business study is associated with the profession of the teacher. Currently, according to Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia<sup>iii</sup>, a teacher of social science is suppose to teach the subject of business study. In our survey, half of students did not know about the profession of the teacher of business study. Some teachers were recruited from outside, and it was a teacher who teaches business elsewhere and a bank officer. Only two students say that it was a teacher of social science of the school. It implies that a teacher of social science is less likely to have time to teach a different subject, like business study. Therefore, economists or people with different profession, who do not have teaching skills, are likely to teach business study.

**Table 4. Teacher of business study**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Teacher of social science	2	25.0
Teacher who teaches business elsewhere	1	12.5
Bank officer	1	12.5
Do not know	4	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Thus, our survey suggests that there is a need to have a professional teacher of business study in secondary schools in Mongolia.

### USEFULNESS OF HAVING A PROFESSIONAL TEACHER OF BUSINESS STUDY

As mentioned earlier, one student did not choose to learn business study as he/she was aware of having no professional teacher of business study. According to our survey, 95.8 percent of students view that a professional teacher should conduct the class of business study. Also in order to improve the usefulness of business study, it is better to have a professional teacher. In our survey, it was asked that “What benefit do you think would you get if the business study class will be conducted by a professional teacher? ”, and 91 students gave response to this question (Table 5).

Students believe that their learning will improve if they will have a teacher of profession (18.7%). Currently, the learning of business study is likely to be limited to the introductory information while students want to learn more things than the introductory information about business. Students believe that everything would be clear, and they would understand



business study in real terms if they will have a teacher of profession of business study. Students believe that they will get more detailed knowledge, obtain in-depth learning, and therefore, the outcome of learning will improve.

**Table 5. Usefulness of having a professional teacher of business study, Mongolia, 2019**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<b>Do not know</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8.8</b>
<b>Learning will improve</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18.7</b>
Better understanding	9	9.9
In-depth learning	7	7.7
Better learning outcome	1	1.1
<b>Learn more things</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15.4</b>
Learn business methods, theories and concepts	3	3.3
Learn practice and experience of life and business	5	5.5
Learn to plan and organize	1	1.1
Learn to engage in business and earn money	4	4.4
Learn to obtain capital	1	1.1
<b>Learn to use money</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.7</b>
Learn to spend and save money	3	3.3
Learn to value money	4	4.4
<b>Useful in many aspect</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31.9</b>
Useful to study business	1	1.1
Useful to involve in family business	1	1.1
Useful to engage in business	3	3.3
Useful to choose profession	3	3.3
Useful to search for work place	1	1.1
Useful for future independent life	6	6.6
Useful to ensure life security	1	1.1
Useful to fulfill a dream of having a lot of money	4	4.4
Useful in many aspect	9	9.9
<b>Professional teacher is better</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17.6</b>
Better professional knowledge	6	6.6
Better experience and capability	4	4.4
Better communication skill	3	3.3
Better know what to teach and how to teach	3	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>

Having a teacher of profession, students will be able to learn more things (15.4%). Apart from knowledge on business theory, concepts and methods of business, students will learn business practices and experiences. More importantly, students will learn how to engage in business, methods of doing business, planning and organizing business. In the future, students will be able to earn money engaging in business, and will have security to maintain independent life. One student said that he/she will learn how to obtain capital, and to become a rich person. Another student said that “Everybody wants to have a lot of money”. Further students believe that they will learn to obtain capital via proper spending and saving the earned money.

Also one student said that “everybody uses money”, and therefore, it is important to learn to value money. If students will learn to value money and will have positive attitude towards money then they will learn to spend, save, increase and use money as a financial capital (7.7%).

Students believe that studying business study is useful in many aspect (31.9%). It is especially useful for those who are interested to become a business man/woman. Also it is useful to help for family business. In the future, it is useful to choose profession, to search for work place, to engage in business, to maintain an independent life, and to improve life security.

Students believe that the teacher of profession is better in terms of knowledge, experience and capability (17.6%). They believe that a professional teacher will know what to teach and how to teach. The teacher of profession will have better communication skills and will be able to give more professional advise on business.

## **CONCLUSION**

Initially, this study was conducted with the practical purpose to investigate the demand side, if a program of bachelor in teacher of business study will be opened up at the School of Educational Studies, MNUE. Our survey found that a teacher of social science, who is suppose to teach business study, is unlikely to have time to teach different subject, and therefore, the school recruits someone who has no profession of teaching from outside. There are students who learned business study but found it not useful, and did not understand some part. Among others, students believe that their learning will improve if they will have a teacher of profession. Also they state that a teacher of profession will know what to teach and how to teach. Thus our study suggests that there is a need to prepare a professional teacher of business study for secondary schools in Mongolia, but not to rely on teacher of social science.

Also reasons for not studying business study suggests that there is a need to inform students about the opportunity of learning business study in the secondary school, as 2/3 of students were not informed about this opportunity.

Students aware of usefulness of business study as majority of them suggested that it is better to learn this subject as earlier as possible. It is because at the later stage of secondary schooling, students need to concentrate on preparing graduation exams. Thus our survey suggests that it is better to teach business study in Grades 9-10 of secondary school.

In our survey, almost all students (96%) students view that the subject of business study is useful in many aspect, to have secure life in the future. One student stated that “Everybody wants to have a lot of money”. The overall view of students of learning business study is that it is useful to become ‘a rich person’.

The usefulness of the business study depends on the content of the curriculum. The content of business study in secondary schools in Mongolia is mainly limited to personal and household budget. One student who learned business study stated that “Learned to control over money”. The current content is about spending and saving money, but not about earning money. In some aspect, it is likely to be harmful for children, as it might convey a message that money is always available for them. Therefore, our survey suggests that it is essential to improve curriculum of business study in secondary schools in Mongolia to meet international standard.

Furthermore, students’ perspectives of usefulness of learning business study is different from the real outcome of learning business study. The usefulness of studying business education



lies on obtaining diverse life-long skills, and to accumulating human capital. Thus our survey suggests that the learning outcome of business study need to be clearly delivered for students.

In addition to theoretical knowledge about economics and business, business education allows individuals to obtain diverse skills, like entrepreneurial skills and leadership skills. These skills have been studied extensively, as the learning outcome of business education, and grouped differently in different studies. Based on the literature study, 'Classification and interrelationship of personnel skills' has been developed in this study, and this classification suggests that the development of personnel skills takes a 'shape of spiral'. The spiral type implies that the higher level skills, like leadership skills and entrepreneurial skills, are unlikely to be obtained unless one has not yet obtained the lower level skills, like personal development skills and social skills. Therefore, in order to improve usefulness of business study in secondary schools in any country, it is essential for students in secondary schools to learn a comprehensive course on personal development skills and social skills, before learning the subject of business study.

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