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DBA PHD

VS

SAME MOUNTAIN, DIFFERENT TRAILS

Marha Abdol Ghapar*, Azlina Shamsudin, Nazlin Emieza Ngah, Nur Dalila Adenan
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Malaysia
*Corresponding author: marha@uitm.edu.my



When you hear someone say, "I'm doing my PhD," it usually triggers images of thick books, late nights, and someone lost in the world of theories. But when you hear "I'm doing my DBA," the picture might not be so clear. Some people even wonder, "Eh, isn't it the same thing?". Are they different? And more importantly, which one makes sense for you? The truth is, both are doctorates, both come with the coveted 'Dr.' title at the end, but the journey and the flavour are a little different.

The PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is the more traditional path; it is often called the 'classic' doctorate. It is about pushing the boundaries of knowledge, asking the big 'why' questions, and spending years exploring theory. PhD candidates often aim to contribute to academic discussions, publish in journals, and shape the way we understand the world. It is the kind of doctorate that prepares you for a career as a full-time researcher or academic, although of course, some do bring their expertise into policy-making or consulting.

The DBA (Doctor of Business Administration), on the other hand, is more like PhD's younger cousin who is practical and a bit street-smart. It is not that it ignores theory, but its focus is on solving real-world problems. Instead of asking 'why', DBA students often ask 'how'. How can this business model work better? How do we address this management challenge in the industry? Many who take the DBA are already professionals; managers, entrepreneurs, and yes, even lecturers in our public universities. They juggle study with office deadlines, teaching commitments, family responsibilities, and maybe the occasional teh tarik session to keep sane.

For educators, the DBA can be a valuable way to bridge classroom knowledge with industry practices, giving them that extra edge in guiding students who themselves are future practitioners. It is meant for people who want to stay grounded in practice while still adding the 'Dr.' title in front of their name.

At the end of the day, it is not about which one is better, but which one fits your purpose. If you love living in the world of theory and want to contribute to the academic community, then PhD is for you. If you would rather take research and use it directly to improve the workplace, the classroom, or the industry, then DBA may make more sense.

Both are tough. Both come with sleepless nights, moments of self-doubt, and the occasional "Why did I sign up for this ah?" Whether it is a PhD or a DBA, you are climbing the same mountain, just on different trails.

So, the next time you meet someone who is on either path, do not ask which is harder. Just smile, maybe belanja them kopi, and say, "All the best, Dr.-to-be. You can do it!"



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Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu Kampus Dungun
Sura Hujung, 23000 Dungun, Terengganu, MALAYSIA
Tel: +609 8400 400
Fax: +609 8403777
Email: biznewzuitm@gmail.com