I started my Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programme when my daughter was one month old.

With the help of a supportive partner and employer, it was both manageable and essential to my career advancement. Based on my experience as a mother/student professional, here are some tips for women who are looking to upgrade their credentials but may have some reservations:

Management needs you

There is a dearth of research about the positive effect female leaders have on an organization. Firms with more gender-balanced boards have significantly higher returns on shareholder value.

Women are now responsible for 40 per cent of all consumer purchases. And a recent study reports that the impact of women on the global economy over the next decade will be at least as significant as the population of China, if not more.

It is truly a business imperative for organizations to bring in more female leaders. There are a number of ways to get more women into senior management. One way is through an MBA education, which gives the skills, confidence, and network it provides.

Investment that pays

According to the EMBA Council, "a salary increase on completion of an EMBA is nearly guaranteed. In fact, the most recent EMBA Council report shows student-quoting average salary increases of 20 per cent after graduation."

Beyond the financial benefits, graduate reports indicate increased confidence, ability to think and manage strategically, and a deepened understanding of business fundamentals. These benefits are especially needed for women who still statistically earn less than men and are still underrepresented at the highest levels of organizations.

For women, time is especially critical

In my three years recruiting EMBA students in Singapore, the primary concerns of women applicants are typically timing and schedule. As working professionals, mothers tend to apply when their children are relatively independent and able to understand, and even appreciate, that mums have to study too.

An attractive MBA programme for many women would be one that does not require time away from work or international travel, and...