

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

New challenges for Business Education

The 21st century is seeing continuation of processes of rapid social, technological and economic changes. Particularly important from the perspective of this study are technological advances in manufacturing and business, the increasing importance of information and communications technologies, and the impact of globalization particularly on trade. These changes are creating new pressures for more flexible workplace environments and new skills and competence among managers. Business education is thus among one of the most affected areas of this transformational process providing both major challenges and new opportunities. Universities have special responsibilities to prepare future business executives and managers, as well as professionals for a wide range of specialties upon which nations depend.

Newly developed corporate cultures have provided major challenges for business education, such as improving the quality of faculty, developing closer associations with business partners, maintenance of teaching quality, conducting research that is relevant to societal problems, and solving the particular problems of business in various industries (Vinten 2000). Rising competition among business education has urged the management of business schools to reconsider issues such as the mechanisms for delivering management education programs, curriculum renewal, the use of new technology in delivering management education and quality assurance and accreditation arrangements (Elliott and Glaser 1998).

New forms of economic systems and business environments have created new and different demands for business education. Working managers and new MBA graduates involved in business operations are looking for business education to succeed in new ways. As Bosch and Louw (1998) have commented, business schools, "as pivotal role-players in developing managerial competence, cannot escape their responsibility to deliver adequately educated business executives, who, through their intellectual skills and community sensitive values, may lead future transformation processes" (Bosch and Louw 1998). Business education thus needs to prepare managers with both the skills and values to lead communities towards

prosperity and progress. It must produce change agents in the form of managers and executives who should be able to lead into new horizons.

The active role of business education has become increasingly important in the developmental processes of society, particularly in the dynamics of fast and rapidly changing business environments. As the demand for management education and its effects on society are increasing, particular questions are being raised among business educators, students and ultimately employers concerning the appropriateness and relevance of courses provided for both business executives and entrepreneurs alike. Management of business education has to provide a balance between the needs and demands of two major players, namely the business graduates and their ultimate employers. The success of business education depends upon the balance between graduates' expertise and abilities provided by academia and the requirements of corporate employers. This match will ensure the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives that will result in progress and development more generally and particularly within the business community. The study intends to identify possible gaps between student expertise and employer requirements as judged by MBA graduates and employers.

Background of Research

Private sector universities have operated for some 15 years in Lahore. Approximately 2,500 students graduate from around 50 private sector business schools annually, whereas state universities produce approximately 400 graduates each year. Private sector business education is charging five to eight times higher tuition fees than state universities. Both of these forms of business education are teaching almost identical courses with highly similar content. Many of the teachers are teaching at both types of business schools: most of the private business schools are staffed substantially by part-time academics employed as full-time faculty at public universities.

Staff of the University business schools in Pakistan need to provide a new leadership and energy and achieve a balance between customary curricula content in areas such as like finance, strategy and human resources and recommended new business education content including team skills, critical problem solving and innovative thinking. Business education critics have pointed out that business education is not currently meeting the needs generated

by these changes and is relying far too much on traditional strategies and programs. They teach strategic thinking without practicing it, and seem unaware as to what business they are in - management development, research, or the provision of degrees (Crainer and Dearlove 1998). Schools should put more emphasis on teaching soft skills and the provision of lifelong learning.

Laughton and Ottewill (1998) emphasized that business education should employ real life circumstances in business education at four stages: initiation, engagement, completion and review. Programs need to be supported by coherent curricula, integration in course design, rigor in learning outcomes, parental emphasis on the process as well as substance of learning, inclined towards the application of the knowledge acquired, and belief in “learning by doing”. However, business education cannot extensively cater for the needs of all managers. Business educators need to prioritize their mission objectives in the light of those stakeholders for whom they ultimately decide to dedicate most of their energies (Vinten 2000). Mallinger (1998) advocated collaborative learning in US management classrooms, focusing on self-managed learning, aiming to build quality control classroom activities, and employ peer evaluation, group self-assessment and progress reports. Felder and Brent (1999) argued that subject integration, just-in-time instruction, curriculum development, or other nontraditional approaches could significantly improve learning. However, the quality of any teaching program is primarily related to the quality of the in-depth instruction that takes place in individual classrooms. Research in educational psychology indicates that classroom processes directly affect student achievement (Rosenshine and Stevens 1986).

Industry and business education are considered as co-partners with industry purchasing what business education produces. Since both are interdependent, business education needs to move closer to industry and construct their programs accordingly. Education theorists call for greater engagement of business schools with local enterprises together with the possible adoption of consortia-based management program incorporating greater degrees of flexibility for employers to “pick the students directly from the institutions”.

Elliot and Goodwin (1994) have identified a number of criticisms on MBA programs, most of which may legitimately be applied to the whole traditional range of management

qualifications. They concluded that such programs; (a) put great emphasis on quantitative and analytical skills and neglect personal skills which allow managers to function effectively within a business organization, (b) do little to produce managers who are able to meet the challenges of changing global business environment, (c) produce students who are less prepared to cope with an increasingly diverse workforce, (d) recruit unqualified faculty to teach environmental, ethical and international issues that affect business, and (e) are staffed by faculty who lack relevant business experiences and who are under considerable pressure to produce academic publications.

Writing on the implementation of total quality management (TQM) activities in US business education, Dellana, et. al. (1998) concluded that industrialists believe that business education should adeptly teach quality management principles. However, most managers they surveyed commented that quality management literate graduates are not favored in many hiring decisions by industry. They thus suggested that business educators and industry managers should work more closely together in the design and implementation of successful quality management programs.

In the case of Pakistan, such kinds of cooperative industry and education relationships are not yet well established. Academic programs and curricula are not designed with the help of industrialists or employers, while generally the faculty members who are supposed to prepare course outlines are not in touch with real business environment. There are number of issues that need to be addressed through such empirical investigations that include the following: What are the ongoing changes/trends in industry and how these changes affecting employer expectations? What are the demands of employers from business schools? What sorts of capacities/capabilities are expected from business graduates to compete in a rapidly changing global business environment?

Comparatively, admission requirements of students are not widely explored in the context of Pakistani business schools. Consideration needs to be given to such questions as: What are the current needs of the business students in relation to the money and time they invest in their courses? What are the expectations of business students and where are the deficits? How do

business students perceive their courses and the supporting services provided? What are their future needs and how these be catered for?

The above discussion concludes that the educators and employers should educate young people about the career choices available and how their skills and talent can be fully utilized while contributing to the development of the local economy and industry. This adequately covers a broad base of initiatives ranging from the sharing of resources and skills, through visits of industry and commerce for teachers and students, to industrial and management placements for teachers. Such initiatives gradually enable both schools and local industry not only to evaluate their particular strengths but also employers to make valuable contact with the potential prospective employees. Thus the 'win win' situation for both business education and the industry lies solely with the young people.

The scene portrayed in this discussion raises the immediate need for serious research to explore: 1) employer expectations from the business schools and their views towards MBA programs, 2) the expertise of students and their acquired skills needed to meet employer demands, 3) the gap between employers' expectations from MBA programs and the actual skills developed by the business schools, 4) views of employers and business graduates with regard to current MBA programs in order to identify possible gaps, and 5) strategies for reform of business school curricula and teaching methods. These outcomes may enable the business school faculty to produce MBA programs better tailored and more strongly business-oriented that successfully meet employer expectations and cater for the career developments needs of business graduates.

Business Education in Pakistan

The sudden mushrooming of business education in Pakistan, particularly in the Lahore region during 1980s, attracted many individuals to undertake MBA (Master of Business Administration) degrees. At the time when existing institutes were delivering almost the same goods, competition was at its highest. Every such center of learning made various claims about being the best in their field in order to attract students. Quantity and quality were difficult to manage simultaneously and very soon the result was dissatisfied postgraduates and disappointed employers. What had proceeded wrongly? Were the institutes delivering what

they had promised at the start? Why was MBA coursework offered not in line with the current market and job trends? Were the employers expecting too much from fresh MBA degree holders? Was there any congruence between the course load and job demands? Any serious enquiry needs to ask degree holders and their employers directly about their experiences and perceptions. This provided the focus for this study, with a strong desire to bridge the gap between MBA institutes and potential executive/managerial job markets.

The researcher has taught full time for a decade at the oldest and one of the most reputed public sector universities of Pakistan as well as at private sector universities for almost the same time period. Teaching the same courses at both types of universities I have repeatedly observed that graduates from both held similar positions in both the public and private sectors. Most appeared satisfied with the kind of instruction received and the support services their business schools had provided. But at the same time I was aware that some graduates had grievances with their universities; some were interested in playing a role in helping to develop MBA programs according to the requirements of the real world. This raised pertinent questions in my mind about how satisfied MBA graduates are with their training and course experience, why they had originally chosen the particular business school and program, and to what extent the MBA program has proved to be relevant to their professional needs as managers.

After 15 years since the incorporation of these schools, there is a need to thoroughly examine how graduates of these universities experience the workplace while they are on the job. Reviewing MBA curricula confirmed my suspicions that students of the various MBA degree programs tend to study almost the same core courses and the same optional courses. For example, the University of Management Sciences offers core units on management, interpersonal skills, business communication, and organizational behavior. At Leeds College of Business Administration, business management courses such as management, human resource management and business communication are a part of the compulsory core. At Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), human resource management, management of change and strategic management are the management-related courses offered. At Sialkot College of Commerce, the management of organizations, management and human behavior, business strategy and policy, the comparative study of organizations and

management are taught. Optional courses are from the finance and marketing area, while nucleus courses definitely include management, business communication, accounting principles, human resource management and principles of marketing. Further still, many of the graduates who specialized in finance for their degrees are working in the export or dyeing sections of the textile industry. At the same time, many of the graduates who specialized in marketing are working in purchasing, merchandising or cutting departments.

Apart from these taught courses, almost all business schools firmly claim that they produce effective business managers. In their advertisements in newspapers and magazines, and their course prospectuses and other literature, it is asserted that these business schools produce people with managerial skills required for business, trade, commerce and industry. Business schools advertise in newspapers and magazines that their graduates will be the leaders of the future. On the other hand, all these business graduates, who are working in either capacity i.e. managers in cutting, stitching, dying, accounting, merchandising or in purchasing departments, are playing management roles in their organizations. This research inadvertently aims to find out if there is any congruence between overall theory and practice for MBA graduates. If the answer is yes, this raises important questions about how this congruence might be sustained. If the answer is no, strategies need to be developed to assist theory to influence practice.

All this convinced the researcher to undertake a study of graduates and their employers in order to assess what factors influence choice of a particular business school, the relevance of the MBA programs to the personal and professional development of the graduates, the satisfaction of the graduates with MBA programs offered by their schools, and to canvass any suggestions of graduates and their employers regarding possible improvements in degree programs.

Statement of the Problem and Aims of the Study

There appears to a significant mismatch between employer expectations of business graduates with MBA degrees and the acquired skills and expertise of graduates. Business school faculty members who have the responsibility to design MBA program are not aware of the views of students and employers towards MBA programs. Development of MBA curricula is not

supported by empirical investigations, identifying the essential requirements of business school students and employers.

This research study thus has the potential to contribute to filling the gap outlined in problem statement. The purpose of this study is to link training and theory of MBA programs with the skilled demands of the current job market. On the part of the graduate, the study will look at the relevance, appropriateness, versatility and usefulness of current degree program. On the employer side, it will focus on preparedness, potential readiness, creativity and minimal ability to work alone and in-group situations. The expectations of employers and suggestions of the graduates will be used to design action and eventual incorporation in future years into the content of MBA programs.

Key Research Questions

This research will critically analyse MBA programs through the eyes of graduates and their managers and try to determine the extent of any gap between the two. Two key research questions that served as the basis for the study:

- Are the business schools that are producing business managers through MBA degrees primarily meeting the workplace needs of students in ways that address their concerns as professionals?
- Are the views of employers being monitored and prioritised while designing and developing the curriculum of business education?

The following sub-questions were then developed:

- What are the fundamental reasons behind the decisions of students in choosing a particular business school?
- To what extent are current MBA degrees related to the requirements of the jobs of the graduates?
- Are the MBA graduates satisfied with their degree programs?
- What are the perceptions of MBA graduates about their experience in their MBA program?

- What is the synergistic effect of the MBA degree program on the personal and professional life of MBAs?
- What suggestions and recommendations do graduates make for the improvement of MBA programs?
- What are the expectations of the employers of MBA graduates and what recommendations do they offer with regard to possible changes in MBA programs?
- If there a gap between what business schools offer and employer expectations, how can this be best addressed?

Significance of the Study

In Pakistan, enrolment in business-related subjects is growing rapidly with thousands of students graduating each year. Every city has at least one business school with both Karachi and Lahore having about 20 schools each. Private sector business schools have existed for over ten years in the Pakistani market and it is important to assess the relevance of their curriculum to the local job market. Hopefully the current study will be able to provide feedback to both public and private sector schools to assist in review of their curriculum in the light the requirements of major firms.

This research has the potential to benefit many groups of society in a number of ways. In the employment market of Pakistan, MBA degree holders are expected to bring modern methods and updated techniques of management. In addition, it is also expected that they will apply modern business techniques in order to achieve enhanced performance from employees in the organization. The findings of this thesis could be instrumental to assist business educationists in knowing what is expected by the job market from business graduates and consequently to bring MBA programs more closely in line with the expectations of external stakeholders.

Educationists who effectively work in business schools often wish for more information about what happens to their graduates. This knowledge could help them reform their MBA programs and to secure high levels of graduate satisfaction. Identification of major trends can provide educational planners with a wide range of information on areas related to program strengths and weaknesses, which may help them have a fresh look at their programs.

It is always important for educational planners to know how their graduates feel about the degree program. Many educational theories are based on the assumption that follow-up academic study is a reliable source of information for program managers in reviewing their programs. This research may be able to provide useful guidelines not only about graduate perceptions but also about a range of issues about programs. Knowledge of these factors could be of considerable importance in syllabus development.

Business educationists often are responsible for producing teaching textbooks and planning teaching methodologies. Reliable feedback can assist in these tasks. Theories of education hold that teachers and their behavior have a significant impact on student beliefs and behavior.

Prospective students as valued customers have a right to know what various business educationists are producing. From their research, student may understand better the kind of quality of instruction and other support services that different universities are offering. They can then make better choices about institutions.

Governments during the last decade have privatized various manufacturing and service sector units. There are demands in many economic, political and social circles to privatize even the universities. This research has the potential to assist in improving the performance of universities and providing means for the community and Government to make better-informed decisions for or against the overall idea of privatization of universities. The general public is invariably concerned in the affairs of the institutions presently offering business education courses. Parents, writers, policymakers, journalists and other members of the society are keen to know what kind of scenario that business education in Pakistan may follow in the future.

CHAPTER 2

MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

This chapter provides information to help the reader understand the context of MBA courses and management and business education more widely in Pakistan. Before any discussion of MBA courses and students, it is important to comment on the economic and social conditions as well as the structure of both the higher education and vocational education and training systems. While there are many parallels between management and business education in Pakistan and broad international trends in business education, there are some unique features that need discussion.

Pakistan is a country with overall population of 155 million. Agriculture is the main source of income of nearly 60% of her population. About 35% of the population is living below the poverty line. Money is distributed in such a way that prosperous people are getting richer while others are getting poorer. Textile and related products are the major exports (Saeed 1999). People with higher per capita income are choosing in increasing numbers to invest in higher education for their children. To cater to the needs of this class, many new educational institutions have been developed in recent years. During last decade, the education sector, especially management education, under went drastic changes from a conventional style into more advanced education approaches. Entrance of local and international management universities have created a boom in the market, introducing new curricula and upgraded teaching methodologies and approaches to teaching. The Government of Pakistan has given degree-awarding status to many new business management institutes and encouraged them to play more efficient and effective roles. There have been calls for a more market oriented focus in business education (Gill and Lashine 2003) This competitive scenario in management education points to the need for a comprehensive study that may provide insights into: 1) the existing situation in business management education in Pakistan, 2) industrial requirements of key industries, 3) the expectations of employers about the desired qualities in business graduates, and 4) the requirements of graduates in the management education they receive.

University Education in Pakistan

According to the Handbook of the Higher Education Commission (1998), universities in Pakistan generally offer Master's and higher-level degrees in professional and general education. However, enrolments in undergraduate courses are still far greater and many students who graduate with a bachelor's degree do not go on to postgraduate study.

Undergraduates who study for a Bachelor degree in arts or science (i.e. BA or BSc) require two years for completion. An honors degree takes three years. An honors graduate can take a Master's degree in one year. New universities such as the International Islamic University Islamabad have broken the ground in successfully introducing four-year bachelors degree courses in a number of subjects at the undergraduate level.

The BA or BSc degree is a requirement for admission to postgraduate courses such as MA or MSc in the general universities. The second stage degree at the university level known as the master's degree in arts or science takes two years to complete after a bachelor's degree or one-year after a bachelor's honors program of BA or BSc (Hons.). MA and MSc courses are conducted by universities or institutions recognized by them. The universities also conduct MPhil and PhD programs. For admission to MPhil or PhD courses, a student must have an MA or MSc degree. The degree in Master of Philosophy (MPhil) takes two years after the master's degree. The PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) degree is a research award that takes three years after a master's degree. The degrees in Doctor of Literature (DLitt), Doctor of Science (DSc) and Doctor of Law (LLD) are awarded after five to seven years of study following a master's degree.

Vocational and Professional Education

Students make important education choices in middle secondary and higher secondary schools. After the middle stage (eight years of schooling), one stream of students follows the general education course through high school while the other follows a trade or vocational course. After the tenth grade, one stream goes to intermediate colleges for a pre-university courses and the other enters polytechnics for a three-year diploma course in a particular branch of technical study.

Beyond the diploma course, further study of one to two years leads to the BTech (Pass) and BTech (Hons.) degrees. After the intermediate grade (twelfth class), one stream of students enters the general universities while the other proceeds to professional institutions such as agricultural, engineering or medical colleges, or universities. These are two distinguishing features of the secondary curriculum in Pakistan: a re-orientation towards science, and a diversification of programs so as to offer a large number of technical and vocational subjects. Particular emphasis is also laid on Islamic education and on the promotion and development of national patriotism and integration at this stage. A Bachelor of Commerce degree is a scheduled program of two years' duration after an intermediate commerce award followed by two years for the MCom degree. The Master of Business Administration degree is also awarded after a two years' course following the award of a BA or a BBA degree.

The MBA Phenomenon: Rise of a New Breed of Managers

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree has become a sudden buzzword on the Pakistan employment scene. All at once, most of the bachelor degree holders are dreaming to obtain an MBA degree or hoping to marry one. Pakistan has only recently latched on to the American trend of recruiting large numbers of MBA graduates into well-run business organizations. What is the secret behind this impressive success of the MBA degree and its graduates? What mysterious qualities does the degree bestow upon its disciplines that make them so enviable? Where have the blazing paths taken MBAs in Pakistan and how have these affected the demand for business education in Pakistan?

In today's competitive job market in Pakistan, an MBA seems to be the ticket to success. Demand is rapidly increasing and good MBAs are hot property and able to demand extraordinary salaries as well as all kinds of enticements from employers to join their companies. Belbins (1993) argued that management is a combination of science and art or craft. While it may be possible to teach the science of management to smart willing participants, it can be more difficult to teach the arts or crafts related to sound judgment, creative inspiration and entrepreneurial innovation

Most of professional degrees focus on a particular field, whereas the MBA is more general in its orientation. It aims to train students in all key spheres of running a business - management,

marketing, finance, production, information systems, and so on. The training usually also includes speaking skills, group dynamics, analyzing strategies of existing businesses through case studies, reports etc., and theoretical tools. As a result, MBA graduates are expected to be highly skilled in conceptualizing and structuring complex business problems, focusing on critical facts from a large base of information, and taking calculated decisions. This builds in a mode of thinking that is expected to be transferable to every functional area and across any field of business. The aim is to include management training and the development of initiative as well as a sense of confidence in one's abilities.

The expansion of Pakistan's large-scale industrial sector in recent years has led to the entry of large number of local and foreign companies into the market. Pakistan's annual GDP growth rate is 4.6 percentage points, while the commodity producing sector's growth is 4.43 per cent and the growth in mining and quarrying sector is 7.07 per cent, The growth of the manufacturing sector was 4.4 percent in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2006). This growth rate points to the need for professional management in the new highly competitive world market, and has given a boost to the demand for well-trained MBAs versus other specialized or general degree holders (e.g. chartered accountants, engineers).

The privatization policy of recent governments has had an important role in promoting professional education in the fields of trade, commerce and industry. According to a recent Government decision, all 103 government-owned production units in the fields of automobiles, cement, chemical and ceramics, engineering, fertilizer, vegetable ghee, roti plant and rice mills have been offered for sale to the private sector (Akhtar 2001). Privatization of these state owned business units has also raised demand for highly qualified business executives. For private companies, good MBA graduates bring in a sense of structure and competency. For example, when faced with an opportunity to introduce new products or business markets, the training of MBAs should naturally guide managers to seek out related data, research the market thoroughly, analyze financial viability and then take decisions. The prospects for the idea to succeed are thus found to be several times better than the commonly used gut-feeling methods prevalent in Pakistan.

Despite some drawbacks, the MBA degree has become the main ticket to fame and fortune for bright and ambitious young men and women - perhaps even more so for women whose employment opportunities remain limited in Pakistan. In line with the increasing demand for MBAs and fierce competition amongst banks, multinational and industrial firms to hire the cream of the crop, the remuneration levels for MBA graduates are growing. Whereas starting salaries five years ago were in the Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 12,000 per month bracket, they now range between Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 per month. An the MBA graduate is typically assured of a job within weeks of graduating while fresh doctors can only expect to make up half of what a commerce student can draw on after completion of a four to six year course (depending on whether the degree is local or foreign). After five years into their professional lives, MBA graduates in top companies are almost sure of a middle management position with a salary package ranging from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 30,000 per month, plus a company car and numerous other perks.

How Pakistani business schools are gearing up for the challenge has always been an important issue. Recent developments spell both healthy and dangerous trends in business administration education. There are currently around 50 institutions in Lahore that offer a Master's degree in Business Administration, while some others are in the planning stage. MBA courses are conveniently offered in various parts of the city. Of the various schools, the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and the University of Karachi have the oldest and best-established reputations but the upcoming Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) is seriously challenging their reputation. IBA Karachi still attracts the bulk of MBA aspirants in Karachi and the province of Sindh.

Rise of Business Education in Pakistan

In the past, conducting business was a fairly simple exercise in Pakistan. Everyone had something to offer in exchange for his or her own needs. The farmer could exchange his/her surplus wheat with meat, which the butcher had to offer, or with cloth that the weaver had to spare. Likewise, a laborer could work for the farmer and get food grain in return. The barter system continued in this part of the world until the early 20th century. Even when money gained the status of currency, business procedures did not become complex. In most business

cases, the producer was also the seller, leaving little room for the middleman to operate between the producer and the ultimate consumer. However, with the growth of modern industries, there arose intense competition between growth on the one hand, and the worldwide trade on the other. What was once a seller's market became a buyer's market. Thus, if on the one hand there was a growing need for technically qualified hands in the field of production and product development, there was also a greater demand for expertise in various aspects of business operations, including finance, inventory control, personnel management, packaging development and designing, selling, advertising, market research etc. Thus even a business house run by members of a family had to recruit experts to help in different departments. And many industrialists and businessmen sent their children to business schools to learn the intricacies of modern management techniques.

In the 1940s, commerce subjects were introduced both at graduate and undergraduate levels. Those holding bachelor degrees in commerce were in great demand and the graduates in this discipline found it easier to seek jobs in the corporate world. Commerce education thus became one of the most favorite choices of the students.

State University on the Move

Educational institutions of higher studies, particularly universities, can play a pivotal role in the development of a nation. Besides seats of higher learning, they are also nursing grounds for future talent and management expertise. Established in 1882, the University of the Punjab, which holds the distinction of being the oldest institution of higher learning in the country and which, before independence, catered for the whole of present Pakistan and a large part of northern India, seems ill prepared for this task. Its degrees and alumni do not command the same respect and honor as they did about thirty years ago. What has led to its present sharp decline? There are numerous factors responsible for this such as public funding for the educational system, national politics, students' politics, economic factors, corruption, nepotism, booti mafia (cheating gangs), academic idleness and intellectual stagnation.

Teachers are the most prized part of educational institutions. Without them, there can be no concept of any institution big or small, university or primary school. They determine the name and set standards for their institutions. Besides being formal educators, they are also helping

develop the moral and intellectual values of their students. No amount of money or training facilities can be sufficient for the development of their teaching skills. In the University of the Punjab, there are 415 teachers working against 645 posts in the budget (Malik 1997). This number includes only ninety PhDs (20 in Arts, 14 each in Science, Education and Engineering, 20 in Oriental and Islamic Learning, 13 in Pharmacy, 2 in Law and none in the Commerce faculties (Malik 1997). Recently there have been several stories of corruption and maladministration regarding appointments and promotions of university teachers. Some daily newspapers have published articles uncovering the decline in academic standards at the most prestigious university of the country. As standards plummeted in other branches of studies, education in commerce also suffered badly. More and more colleges were opened and nationalization of educational institutions has caused the level of education to decline depressingly in these institutions. Even lower achieving students were able to gain admission to commerce colleges and what is worse was that in most of the nationalized colleges classes were not held regularly. This points to problems about quality in private sector business schools.

Entrance of Private Sector Business Schools

In Lahore, the second largest city of Pakistan, with over 7 million people, the first Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program was established at the University of the Punjab, in 1973. For around a decade this university continued to supply business managers to the business sector of Lahore. However, because of excessive “red tape” in administration and lack of interest by the Government in public sector universities, these universities could not meet the expectations of the business sector. This reduced the cooperation between industry and the universities, especially in the area of applications of knowledge, and research & development. Many industrialists, especially in large firms, complained that they had to train new graduate recruits from the scratch.

This led to major expansion in the business education market in the private sector, and many private universities entered the field. Most of the private sector universities have departments or faculties of business administration offering a variety specializations, while national universities did not adopt this approach. They were mainly focusing on the marketing and

finance areas. However, regardless of the type of university, the big companies and multinational corporations considered graduates in business studies increasingly attractive.

A rapid increase in the demand for trained managers was another factor in the increase of business schools in the private sector. Currently there are around 35 private business schools in Lahore, apart from seven chartered business schools and two state universities. Around 2,500 students graduate every year. In this way, Lahore has become the largest supplier of MBA graduates in Pakistan. Just after the inauguration of the Canadian School of Management, the first private business school in Pakistan and in Lahore, numerous private business schools came into the market. Graduates from around 35 private sector business schools and around 5 public universities are being absorbed by private sector employers in Lahore, which is the largest in number as compared to that in any other city of the country. The following table gives an overview of the business school market in Lahore.

BUSINESS SCHOOLS IN LAHORE

Name of the School	Status	Course Fees/ Rupees	Number of Students in 2006	Year of Start of MBA
University of the Punjab	Public University	55,000	200	1973
Lahore University of Management Sciences	Chartered, Private University	500,000	200	1975
Punjab College of Business Administration	Private	350,000	1,800	1985
Institute of Leadership & Management	Private	250,000	1,800	1988
Alhajveri College of Business Administration	Private	150,000	1,000	1986

The International University	Private	150,000	1,300	1979
College of Business Administration	Private	75,000	600	1990
National College of Business Administration	Private	100,000	200	1990
New Port University	Private	80,000	100	1998
Lawrence Institute of Management Science	Private	80,000	150	1993
National Institute of Business Administration	Private	125,000	85	1994
Global Institute of Management Sciences	Private	100,000	185	1991
American International University	Private	90,000	350	1995
Michigan University	Private	75,000	75	1998
Askari College of Business Administration	Private	120,000	100	1993
Preston University	Private	100,000	200	1992
Professional College of Business Administration	Private	85,000	175	1994
Asian Institute of Management Sciences	Private	80,000	185	1989
City Institute of Management Sciences	Private	75,000	80	1988

Canadian School of Management	Private	100,000	200	1980
PakAIMS	Private	250,000	700	1983

Private sector employers, not being interested simply in the name of the business school, are more concerned with the management behavior and ability of the graduates to achieve the targets of the organization. After over a decade of the operation of private sector schools, many questions regarding the performance of these schools have been raised by the employers, students, parents, educationists, and planners at government sector and at general public level. All of them are concerned with the contribution, curriculum, methodology, and performance of their graduates when they are on the job and, above all, concerning the way they get the things done by others.

Educational Marketing in Pakistan

A popular classification developed in the 1960s suggested that the marketing mix generally consists of the "4-Ps": product, price, place (distribution) and promotion. This framework can be adapted to categorize the relevant features for each marketing variable in the case of educational services (Kotler 1994). A revised marketing mix for MBA degrees could be as follows:

- Product: course subjects, options offered, additional student services.
- Price: fees, scholarships, bursaries, admission requirements.
- Promotion: advertising, personal sales contact, public relations.
- Place: delivery methods, class location, class timetables, teaching methods/styles.

However, many academics believe that the 4-Ps model is inadequate for the marketing of services. Cowell (1982), for example, offers two additional "Ps": "people and process". He includes people because the staff is part of the operation itself, especially in high-contact service operations. The second additional "P", namely process, is concerned with the logistics of the service delivery. While a small number of authors including Hebron (1989) have argued for a marketing approach in higher education, there has been comparatively little

published research on the marketing aspects of educational institutions, including those offering Master of Business Administration degrees.

Educational marketing is dramatically affected by developments in services marketing. Education is the pure form of services where no tangible product is involved; however, educational services are supported by tangibles. The unique characteristics that distinguish services are intangibility, inseparability, and heterogeneity. By their nature, services cannot be touched, tasted or possessed; this leads to consumer difficulty in evaluating an intangible service offering. A service is inseparable from the source of the service; production and consumption take place simultaneously. Services are perishable since they cannot be stored; yesterday's course vacancy cannot be sold. Heterogeneity simply means that services are difficult to standardize; this makes it difficult to control quality. Services differ considerably in the extent to which they are people-based or equipment-based. Educational courses including MBAs (other than those by distance learning) are generally profoundly people-based; the workforce is part of the supporting product for services.

Private sector business schools are no doubt aggressive in marketing their programs. They use innovative concepts and promote them through print and electronic media to attract students. This is less frequently the case with public sector universities. Public sector universities of Pakistan are backward in their approach to educational marketing. Poor educational marketing by the public sector universities and institutes has caused a considerable loss of revenue to Pakistan. Hundreds of students who could get business education and other forms of education in Pakistan every year seek admission in universities in the UK, USA, Australia and other advanced countries. As a result, Pakistan loses huge amounts of foreign exchange, which could otherwise be saved.

Public sector universities in Pakistan are dependent on government grants and do not increase their income through concentrated efforts by broadening their market base. On the other hand, foreign universities have always been promoting their educational programs, using the marketing techniques of stimulation, facilitation and regulation to attract students from abroad. The educational market in Pakistan is very attractive both for local and foreign institutions but locally recognized universities and institutes are unable to fully exploit this

market. Unrecognized by the government, private business and IT institutes have played significant roles in holding back many students from going abroad. But it is unfortunate that these private unrecognized institutes are neither acknowledged by the Government nor supported by recognized universities. (Nicholls et. al. 1995). Viewed in terms of the product life cycle, the launch of MBAs in the UK took place in the 1960s. Growth occurred in the 1970s and particularly in the 1980s, while the 1990s have apparently seen the arrival of the maturity stage. Indeed, it is generally agreed that there has been a 10-15 per cent decline in demand associated with the recession. Most business schools state that they consistently expect moderate growth to resume as the recession ends.

Public sector institutes instead of moving strategically to generate revenues through education involve themselves in unnecessary propaganda against the unrecognized institutes. Instead of providing guidance to unrecognized institutes to be productive, public sector institutes spend their efforts in wiping unrecognized institutes out of existence. It is injurious for the economy but the government is not concerned with this loss. Foreign universities, on the other hand, have always been competing for their share in the educational market of the world, including Pakistan. To target the market, foreign universities use multiple types of marketing weapons. They place attractive advertisements in local dailies in target countries for MBA/PhD and other courses in the UK, USA and Australia. Foreign universities appoint commission agents in the target countries to lure students to study in foreign universities. They participate in educational exhibitions that are held in five star hotels in big cities to earn the maximum foreign exchange through admissions from the target country. They arrange publication of articles in local newspapers describing the state of private and government institutions as deplorable and thus create propaganda against the private institutes calling them fake and fraud.

When this happened in Pakistan, the faith of students in local institutions and the country was damaged. When the Government does not encourage local private institutes, the students studying in them are confused and feel that it may be safer for them to study abroad rather than in Pakistan. They feel that an institute which is called fake and fraud is not worth attending. This psychological move is potentially harmful for the country. Foreign institutions take away hard earned foreign exchange from Pakistan every year. Before coming to Pakistan

to attend educational exhibitions, they prepare the ground for admissions. Articles are published in national dailies on mushrooming of private business institutes. This intensifies when our own government publishes notices in the newspapers warning students to be cautious of studying in unrecognized institutes. Consequently many students opt to leave for abroad. This again serves the objectives of foreign universities.

It is against common sense to destroy the educational base and severely weaken Pakistan's economy. While no one in Pakistan is against the foreign universities, it will be worthwhile sending Pakistani students to study in foreign universities only for those subjects that cannot be taught in local universities. Human resource development is the basic responsibility of any government. A developed human resource is a means to economic progress. Keeping human resources untrained means destroying the productive competency and capability of a country. Since the Government of Pakistan has not been able to allocate a sufficient budget for education, potential investors in education have filled this gap and they should be guided and encouraged by the Government. Similarly, when our recognized universities and business institutes cannot meet essential needs for education of all those who wish to enroll, private unrecognized institutes meet these needs.

Appointed commission agents of foreign universities operate in Pakistan. These commission agents have always been hunting sons and daughters of rich people for admission abroad. On each admission, the agent gets a percentage from the fees for the students. While foreign universities promote their educational programs in Pakistan, local universities and business institutes do not respond to such an activity. They neither counter foreign universities' promotion nor promote their own educational programs locally or abroad.

Foreign universities are making the best use of the political situation in Pakistan to drive out the students towards universities in advanced countries; Pakistani recognized universities and institutes are passive in countering such an unexpected move. Rather they are affected by this propaganda and forget the national interest. The competitive environment in the educational market has affected the financial performance of our universities, reduced their revenues and increased their dependence on Higher Education Commission.

In view of this, Pakistani universities can maximize their resources by providing the following:

- Employment testing services;
- Examining services for the unrecognized business institutes;
- Granting of MBA and other degrees to the students of unrecognized private institutes after payment of fees and relevant tests/ examinations;
- Providing equivalence to the academic qualification of other institutes not recognized;
- Training corporate managers;
- Placement services;
- Renting out unutilized space to evening private institutes and providing them guidance;
- Conducting tests for medical and engineering colleges;
- Providing management and IT consultancy services to the multinational and national companies;
- Developing a Teach, Test and Award Alliance (TT&AA) of public sector universities with private/ unrecognized institutes in which the private/ unrecognized institutes will teach and the universities will test and award degrees.

This will increase income of Pakistani universities and they can utilize this revenue for faculty support and other development work. A university which will be innovative and which can implement new ideas will become the market leader. The University of the Punjab can earn millions of rupees overnight the moment it announces that it will conduct private MBA competitive examinations and award degrees to the successful students of unrecognised institutes. This could make University of the Punjab a market leader and break the monopoly of a few recognised MBA institutes. The day is not far away when the educational testing service of USA might conduct online MBA examinations. What will our recognised institutes in Pakistan do then? Interestingly, in the USA, permission to open a private degree granting university can sometimes be granted only in four days and there are hundreds of one-room universities in USA that earn huge amounts of foreign exchange for their country by providing services to overseas customers. If a superpower can do this, what is preventing Pakistan from doing the same? One-room universities in Pakistan if recognised can compete

with the one room university in other countries and be a significant source of income for Pakistan and can improve its economy. This can stop the crime of forged and fake degrees and certificates. Can this ever happen in Pakistan?

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF RELEVANT SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

This chapter provides a critical and interpretative review of scholarly and professional literature relevant to the thesis topic and more broadly to management education and literature relating to the management as a social and business activity, particularly related to manufacturing in developing countries. Particular attention is given to theories and developments in the management sciences and to evaluations and assessment of management education with reference to research findings, management and training models, perceptions and expectations of stakeholders in management institutions, corporate and social requirements, academic-industry partnerships, and role of MBAs in society.

Management in a Global and Changing Society

The new era of globalization has brought many changes to human life. The corporate sector has been a front-line player in this game, while many academic disciplines are responding to the increased rate of change. Free flow of information and capital has expanded the global marketplace and replaced mass standardized production with flexibility, variety and total customization. A marked change has been from labor and material intensive production to information intensive operations and the use of specialized labor within multidiscipline teams (Suliman 2005). Globalization in the 21st century is bringing new challenges to the management field, including the challenge of managing a workforce with considerable diversity and coping with different cultures and different laws of host countries. Management has to reposition itself regarding traditional approaches managing of businesses with strong coordination of practitioners and academics. The higher education system is responsible to establish linkages between the social and corporate requirements of a society and critically think about what employees and employers demand from management schools. Angeline Tay (2001) has investigated the perception of management graduates in Malaysia, which is quite similar to Pakistan. She reported that:

MBAs with good work ethics, sound management and leadership skills as well as critical thinking and analytical abilities, are more likely to be hired. In

future, employers expect more MBAs with the ability to understand local, Asian and global business practices. Rapid economic growth, global competition, downsizing, privatization, corporate mergers and the liberalization of global education have caused a surge in demand for MBA degrees in Malaysia. They have become the most prestigious managerial qualification for current and potential managers as the MBA prepares them to take on new challenges and multiple management tasks.

Degrees in business administration are viewed as one of the strong sources in career advancement across the world, as is being investigated here by author in the context of Pakistan. The MBA degree is diverse in nature, with an emphasis on personal grooming, knowledge enhancement, and business related capabilities to enhance employability of students. The diversity of meanings given to MBA degrees also expresses the broader spectrum against the single conventional idea of a gateway to fast career advancement (Hay and Hodgkinson 2006). In spite of the expanded meaning of business education, the MBA carries common responsibilities in serving the corporate sector, helping to improve management operations and processes, making companies more productive and innovative and supplying well-trained graduates to provide leadership and specialist expertise.

Albert Stähli (2005) has describes the six characteristic of a successful international institutions in executive management education. Stähli says that lecturers of management schools should; 1) possess academic training, consulting experience, practical experience, and research and scholarly publications, 2) have experience in collaboration with large business organizations and their potential input into educational programs, 3) have some expertise in different languages and a focus on individual personnel grooming, and 4) adopt case based teaching methods. Management education institutions need to have clearly defined admission processes and be registered with recognized accrediting organizations.

The degree of business administration is a general qualification, which includes in its curriculum various disciplines such management, marketing, accounting and finance, Total Quality Management, supply chain management, quantitative methods and statistical decision-making are also often included. The combination of many specialties in one degree

makes the MBA highly relevant to the management needs of organizations. Business organizations by their nature are born to serve the interests of their stakeholders through the competition and use of the best human resources available. As M.L. Emiliani (2006) pointed out, the fundamental capabilities of business managers and companies

cannot serve its key stakeholders if the managers are unable to articulate or act on the corporations' purpose, operate in the absence of business principles, have difficulty recognizing problems, do not know how to determine the root cause of problems and identify and implement countermeasures, are mired in wasteful organizational politics and blame, do not understand business processes, cannot tell the difference between activities that add value and those that are waste, do not understand how to compete on the basis of time, are bound by metrics that are inconsistent with company goals or customer desires, and create waste, do not understand the total cost of outsourcing or other business transactions.

The synthesis of a multidiscipline approach in a business graduate enables him or her to synergize the value-added component in various functional areas and help run their organization efficiently and effectively, resulting in increases in the expectation of employers from a graduate. The academic literature also includes an extensive debate on the value of strong career orientations of graduates versus the value adding expectations of employers. In the initial stages of their career, many students are more interested in fast growth track advancement and so will focus on those skills and knowledge that promise to lead them to achieve rapid career advancement. The employer wishes MBA graduates to have deep understanding of the business environment, secure exposure to environmental uncertainties and complexities, develop problem-solving capabilities and pay attention to organizational growth. Interestingly, look at management universities for realize their expectations and encourage institutions to focus on their requirements. Therefore, management schools hold great responsibility of bridging the gap between the two sets of demands and ensure that value is derived by each stakeholder.

Management universities also have to study the perceptions and expectations of other stakeholders like parents, society, government and faculty in order to align their practices and policies with actual need. Such a significant role has allowed academic researchers to give close attention to the institutional affairs of business schools, offer extensive critiques and highlight possible areas of improvement (Buchanan, Kim & Basham 2007). Higher education in developing countries like Pakistan is just crossing the infancy period in approaching the problems of modern industry and society. The universities in Pakistan are a newly exposed sector toward addressing corporate and social issues and have to strive hard for achieve progress. Sustainable development is one of the 21st century's major challenges across the world, which is also true with higher education institutions. Velazquez, Munguia & Sanchez (2005) have discussed sustainability in higher education institutions and explored factors that influence sustainability in higher education institutions. They have summarized the following aspects from literature that hinder sustainable development of universities:

Lack of awareness, interest and involvement, organizational structure, lack of funding, lack of support from university administrators, lack of time, lack of data access, lack of training, lack of opportune communication and information, resistance to change, profits mentality, lack of more rigorous regulations, lack of interdisciplinary research, lack of performance indicators, lack of policies to promote sustainability on campus, lack of standard definitions of concepts, technical problems, designated workplace, and lack of standard definitions of concepts.

Although the sustainability concept is new in higher education, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan, the idea of becoming a sustainable university is the ultimate solution in the competitive environment of this corporate age. As literature in further parts of this chapter shows, management universities can make a significant impact on the social and corporate sectors by producing competent graduates. The scholarly literature also carries an extensive debate about what competencies, skills and knowledge business graduates require. This thesis will also discuss in detail the agreement and disagreement of various stakeholders about what are the needed graduate skills demanded by both society and employers. Researchers have suggested many areas for future studies of business graduates skills, such as

practicing gained knowledge, creative thinking, solution oriented approaches, ensuring high quality work and developing connectivity between management institutions and the business sector in order to highlight business problems and generate their solutions (Duoc & Metzger 2007).

This study aims to contribute to filling an important gap in the literature by adding a Pakistani perspective regarding graduate skills, competencies and required knowledge levels as described by graduates and employers. To be successful marketing managers, Brendan J. Gray (2007) suggested that “strategic thinking, leadership and management skills, knowledge of strategic planning, product and brand management, communication and promotion, and consumer behavior are essential characteristics in business graduates”. Gray says that developing such capabilities help managers to overcome growth barriers like preliminary training in marketing and branding. It also encourages them to apply good governance best practices. The summary of suggestions presented by D. Jamali & S. Suliman (2005) provides important food for thought for understanding the literary recommendation for management education. Their recommendations include the following:

... non-tradition-bound teaching, coherent integration of learning outcomes into course design, a bias towards the application of knowledge acquired, interdisciplinary involvement and functional integration as well as fruitful partnerships with employers, alumni, corporate leaders and recruiters. A better understanding of value from the perspective of these various stakeholders can aid academics in allocating resources and designing programs that truly cater to the needs of managers in the 21st century.

Business Education - Center of Focus

The purpose of this research study is to assess the basis for student choice of particular business schools for obtaining an MBA degree. This study also assesses whether the various MBA degrees offered by the business schools in Lahore Pakistan were congruent with the essential requirements of the job market. The researcher also wished to identify both satisfying and dissatisfying factors for MBA graduates with regard to their respective MBA degree programs. Recommendations and suggestions of the graduates and their employers

were sought in order to provide guidelines for educational planners, administrators and educationists in the area of business education.

This chapter attempt to establish links between previous research on management education and this study conducted in the context of Pakistan. Of all the academic concepts examined and theories studied with respect to the area of business administration and management, only a few have received more attention and proven a good source of management development than how to select managers who can effectively and efficiently perform management roles and what is expected of them. The literature on both theory and research on this is voluminous.

Stogdill (1974) noted that there were virtually as many conceptions about management as there were persons who attempted to define the generic concept. Management theorists have contributed numerous studies on management, varying in their perspective and focus. Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) reported that almost ten thousand articles and books have been published on the subject of management, which indicates the importance of the topic. Management has been considered as one of the most significant elements that affect organizational performance. It has been examined intensively in many areas like industry, politics, education, the armed forces and government, from a variety of theoretical perspectives, during the past decades. Modern methods of production, organizational complexity, accountability, declining economies, heavier demand on social welfare, and a generally better educated and more socially and politically aware public have all contributed to impose greater responsibilities on new managers and management trainers. This is not only a major problem in the developed industrial nations; it is even a greater problem for the developing nations that are forced to cope with increases in population, reduction in world market share of production, poverty, and demands for improved living standards and better education. Highly competent managers and management trainers in every sphere of endeavor have arguably been in greater demand (Robbins 2002).

What is Management?

Management is one of the most sought after skills in the history of human family, and paradoxically the most controversial as well. Extensive attention has been paid to this concept

and it is widely discussed in the literature from multidisciplinary perspectives (Ottewill 2003; Longenecker and Ariss 2002; Moratis and Van 2002; Kinman and Kinman 2001; Monks and Walsh 2001; Watson and Temkin 2000). It has been defined in terms of individual traits, behavior, styles, manager-subordinate interaction patterns, role relationships, follower perceptions, influence over followers, influence on tasks/goals and influence on organizational culture (Harvey, 1997:280).

The term management has been defined in a variety of ways. Robbins and Coutler (1999:8-9) while discussing management as a coordinating process, comment that: "the term management refers to the process of coordinating and integrating work activities so that they are completed efficiently and effectively through other people". Wehrich, Heinz and Koontz (1993:54) defined management with reference to creation of environment. They saw management as "the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims." The manager in this scheme is the one who is supposed to look after the management process. Schermerhorn (2001:7) explicitly explains the role of a manager, commenting that "a manager is someone in an organization who is responsible for the performance of one or more than one persons, serving in positions with a wide variety of titles (supervisor, team leader, division head, administrator, vice president, and so on), who mobilizes people and resources to accomplish the work of organizations and their subunits." Vecchio R., Greg H., and Greg Soughy (1992:334) put emphasis on getting the things done through others, and defined management as "a procedure through which a person tries to get organizational members to do something which he/ she desires".

In more recent views, management has been approached as a meaningful function or process focusing around interpersonal influence. For Dubin (1968:385) management is "the exercise of official authority and the making of decisions." Robbins (1997:7) explains the administrator's job as "a process of efficiently getting activities completed with and through other people". Tannerbaum and Fred Massarik (1968:413) defined management as "interpersonal influence towards the attainment of specific goals in specific situations". Koontz, O'Donnell & Wehrich (1976:587) called it as "the ability of a manager to induce subordinate subordinates to work with confidence and zeal". A number of scholars have

raised the question about whether or not management is a profession or a discipline. Squires G. (2001) discussed the supervisor's role as "it is deliberately causing people-driven actions in a planned fashion for the purpose of accomplishing the leader's agenda." Ros (1993, 91-110) provides a framework and thinks of the management dynamic residing in a group. He defines the manager's role as "an influence relationship among leader and his collaborators who intend real change that reflects their mutual purposes". Explaining management in educational settings, Mitchell and Trucker (1992:31) write that management "is less a matter of aggressive action than a way of thinking and feeling about ourselves, about our jobs and about the nature of the educational process". Similarly Stoner H. Collins and P. W. Yetton (1985:559) define the management "as the process of directing and influencing the task-related activities of group members".

The concept of management is as old as civilization, and has long been used as the means of getting things done efficiently and effectively. Management styles and philosophies have been changing over time. Consequently, it is an ever-changing process, representing new approaches, new technologies, new market dimensions and new techniques of communication. Many definitions of management have been offered. Perhaps the most widely quoted one, attributed to the famous management philosopher, Mary Parker Follett, is that "management is the art of getting things done through others" (Robbins, 1998:71). Daniel A. Wren (1979:3) defined management as an activity essential to organize endeavors that perform certain functions to obtain effective acquisition, allocation and utilization of human efforts and physical resources for the purpose of accomplishing some goals. Robert Albanese described management as a social and technical process to utilize resources, influences human action, and facilitates changes in order to accomplish an organization's goals. Dehler et. al. (2001) often called for a "new paradigm" of management education that they described as "transformational and emancipatory", encouraging critical reflection rather than being linear and prescriptive.

In synthesizing these views, it is accurate to say that most writers in the field of management see management as a process of influencing people to direct their efforts towards the achievements of particular goals.

Management: A Historical Perspective

As a result of interaction among human beings, many theories and ideas have emerged. To demonstrate the historical interaction (and interdependence) of society and culture with organizations, management and managerial techniques, it is important to look at several of the ideas that have developed from time to time. The concept of management is not a new idea in organizations. It can be found in organizations of pre-civilizations in various forms. Organized accounting processes and recording of information can be found as the starting point of contemporary modern management. Historically, written accounting records have been found in the temple of the Sumerian civilization that date back to about 300 B.C. (Huse 1979). These are one of the earliest sets of written documents in the world, around five-thousand-year-old accounts of the Sumerian priests. These documents were used to fulfill managerial needs. About 2000 B.C., King Hammurabi, ruler of Babylonia after uniting the cities along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, developed the Code of Hammurabi, a set of laws covering trade, business, real estate, personal property, labor, and the family (Ross, 1996). These laws and regulations were established before the rise of capitalism. The Chinese first introduced the idea of job descriptions in personnel management used today around 1100 B.C. (Huse 1979). These ideas are extensively used in today's management practices and were originally introduced even before the Industrial Revolution.

In modern times, the invention of the steam engine had a vital impact on modern management, bringing power for industries and transport. The emphasis was shifted from land and labor to industrialization, modern management systems and performance management. This led to increased production and lowering of production costs. Markets were expanded and new production and marketing ideas emerged out of these economic developments. The Industrial Revolution brought about economic and social changes. Large-scale corporations replaced small-scale factories and cottage industries providing new opportunities for entrepreneurs. Organizations moved more toward scientific management (Bovee et. al. 1993). Large-scale industries had more money to spend on management development and training. The Industrial Revolution left an impact on culture as well. As England shifted from an agricultural economy to an industrial one, there was a shortage of both skilled managers and workers. Many agricultural workers preferred not to become industrial workers thus falling

behind in the standard of living. There was now a sharper distinction between the “capitalist” and the “worker.” The age of management had emerged (Robbins 1998).

Management education entered a new era with the first MBA program being established in 1900 at Dartmouth College's Tuck School of Business. This new program used professors who practiced in the corporate world or retired corporate managers who shared with students their insights learned in the workplace. Corporations and their current and retired employees contributed in setting the MBA agenda (Schlossman, Sedlak, & Wechsler 1998). Since then there has been major expansion in the number of MBA programs and their spread throughout the world. More recently management universities have taken a shift in their strategies to become more research oriented and less vocational and traditionally guided (Schlossman et. al. 1998). An important round of changes in management sciences took place during the 1970s. Many studies reported a significant need for changes in management education and signaled a "critical" situation (Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1998; Wheeler 1998). A number of reports specifically highlighted the lack of relevance in the topics under research, overly quantitative course content, and a deficiency of preparation for entrepreneurial careers (Schlossman et. al. 1998). Management institutions responded by modifying their class offerings to include more organizational behavior and teamwork topics, and new entrepreneurial learning tracks were developed.

Need for Human Resource Development

The grooming trend of management and its technical orientation with human beings has been led by technological, economic and social changes in industrial and human life. This newly developed management style of the present century is creating pressure on organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to redevelop their human resources in order to accomplish complex technological functions.

According to a World Bank report (2001), faster economic growth constantly requires three fundamental factors: human capital, physical capital, and natural capital. Interestingly, human capital accounts for a major share (64 per cent) and is makes very significant contributions to economic growth and development to the extent to which human capital is able to transform non-human capital into commodities. Thus human resources require that they are properly

managed and effectively developed in order to gain a competitive edge and to exploit strategic opportunities (Khan 2004). The electronic revolution has entered the capital market affecting the whole human life and introducing a high level of uncertainty and greater risk in business environments. Mike Doyle (2002) has argued that one way for organizations to offset this risk is to thoroughly review the nature and level of training, and the development and emotional support for their employees.

According to the Pak & Gulf economic report, in case of Pakistan, 95% of clear violation cases of employee's rights are not reported in court. Recruiting is mostly made by informal means, often with a strong political basis. The overall employment condition in Pakistan is also not satisfactory. Over three million are jobless out of total 43.17 million employed people, with a 9.6% increasing rate (Pak & Gulf economist, September 29-October 5, 2003). This rate is quite high at the development stage and causes particular problems for Human Resource (HR) managers and employers. Dishonesty, lack of integrity and misleading behavior are further difficulties creating problems. The unmatched scenario of interests, capabilities and requirements provide many barriers toward increased efficiency, productivity and development possibilities in industry and also adversely affect management performance.

The planners in various sectors in Pakistan have been recognizing the development of human resources as one of the many objectives of long-term economic growth since the early fifties. Human resource management moved to the center stage of development priorities by the early seventies and was increasingly cited not only as one of the primary objectives, which the developing countries must seek to achieve, but the one that required immediate attention and could make a positive and significant contribution towards economic development. This factor prompted a major shift in priorities, but three main factors in particular played a critical role.

The first was general disillusionment with purely growth-oriented development strategies pursued in the fifties and sixties, focusing mainly on the productive sectors and supporting physical infrastructure. There was also increasing evidence that the pursuit of such a strategy had done little to reduce poverty levels. The second factor emerged from the results of economic research confirming that investment in human capital could contribute significantly

and directly to overall growth and development. This was especially true for investment in skill development programs and in technical education, including business and management education. Especially important was the link between the education of females and declining fertility rates. This was seen as a major breakthrough in promoting a solution to the problem of high population growth in Pakistan.

Finally, there was the realization that a strategy which emphasized the provision of increasing productive employment in the labor force, as well as increasing productivity, especially in the so-called informal sectors of economy, would provide the best route to solve the apparent dichotomy between growth and development (Decenzo and Robbins 1999). To ensure this, undoubtedly gain of economic development is required to be equitably distributed amongst the population and different regions of the country.

Human Resource Development (HDR) is a multidimensional issue and requires a multidisciplinary approach to achieve goals and even to set objectives. Policy makers at all levels should conduct research, share experience and enhance collaboration. The typology of HRD takes a broader perspective of strategic human resource management. It defines some boundaries of the concepts and presents a set of prerequisites that needs further holistic and reducing exploration. It suggests exploitation of new avenues of research that could create greater awareness about inter-organization and intra-organization interactions while considering the macroeconomic and macro-social conditions.

Human Resource Management

In this macro environment, the language of HRM is becoming widely spoken. Various writers throughout the twentieth century have sought to ascribe organizational economic success to a particular style and approach to the management of human resources. In this time of rapid growth in economic, technological and social sectors, it is proper to say that competent and sensitive human resources within organizations are now more important than ever. Being emerging economies, in many countries of the world in general, and in Pakistan in particular, there are even stronger reasons for giving importance to human resources. In recognition of the importance of business in the contemporary world, management experts have shown an

increasing interest in managers' education and training as a part of human resource development (Robbins 2002).

The HR problems and their prospective solutions are extensively discussed in literature by many leading researchers (Huber 1996; Rob & Zemsky 2002; Laabs 1993). The important issue is that the policies and procedures that govern HR functions have not kept pace with the realities of today's workplace, causing a "fundamental mismatch" between the employer and employee. Kochan et.al. (2000) have argued that the significance and manifestation of this mismatch is the rise in nonstandard employment arrangements. The concept of nonstandard employment is contingent work, defined as work without the expectation of continuity. Venkat et. al. (2003) have argued persuasively that a striking aspect of today's economy is the number, scope, and growth of nonstandard work arrangements, specifically alternative and contingent employment. They also commented that nonstandard employment is estimated to be as high as 33 percent of all employment. Citing their own and a number of other studies, Michie and Sheehan-Quinn (2001) repeatedly refer to flexible work practices as being negative effects on performance. They argued that improved productivity and competitiveness are based on quality and high value added components, requiring investment in people, rather than the contrary. Cauldron (1994) indicates a psychological reference to the place of employment, which is negatively affected in the contingent category. The HR policies, practices and actions that are on the front line of employment relations will be instrumental in the determination of psychological contracts. Robinson (1996) indicated that, over the time, employees develop psychological contracts or sets of expectations with respect to what their employer expects from them and what they can, in turn, expect from their employer. According to Guest (1998), there is a strong association between HR practices and positive psychological contracts, associated with the company's progress and performance with implications of commitment, training, organizational identification and career development. HRM is viewed as a distinct and innovative approach towards perfectly managing employment relationships. It has moved ever closer to a central stage position in recent years. In the time of rapid growth, and economic, technological and social change, it is safe to say that the competent and sensitive management of an organization's human resource is more important today than what it has been ever before.

In Asia where there is institutional diversity in the type of countries, many emerging economies have essentially understood the importance of HRM. For instance, several nations in this region notably, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea are among the most urbanized countries on earth. Pakistan, Australia and India are among those countries where population is migrating from rural areas to urban areas. The vast majority of the people in these regions come into direct contact constantly with a wide variety of formal organizations. Managers cannot be separated from the organizations in which they work; the skills they use are intimately associated with organization performance and achievement. Whether an organization is made up of two people or thousands, improving management behavior will increase performance.

In this socio-economic environment, professionals in human resources area are important elements in the success of any organization. Their jobs require a new level of sophistication that is unprecedented in human resource management. Not surprisingly, their status in the organization has also been elevated. Even the title has changed. The term human resource management has replaced the term personnel management. Human resource management is working to balance the responsibilities of the management. Clearly it has a significant role in today's organization. Employees do not simply react to what management states; rather they take the lead in assisting management with the people who are a component of the organization.

In this global environment, the HRM management of the future will require different kinds of competencies to cope with changing trends. Cascio (1998) has identified six trends most critical for HRM to address over the subsequent 10 years. These trends are:

- Globalisation involves commerce without borders;
 - Technology is critical because the immediate need for information drives the expectation to perform any time, anywhere;
 - Change drives the need for continuous learning;
 - Knowledge capital i.e., valuing what people know, is of crucial importance;
 - Speed in market change will result in the need to be in constant touch with customers;
- and

- Cost control makes maintaining business costs at the lowest possible level.

The above are clearly demanding the knowledge of global requirements from an HRM in the future, and it is obvious that the HR managers of future cannot survive in isolation. They will have to become part of the global world.

Scientific Management

In the age of mass production, Frederick Taylor, known as the Father of Scientific Management, argued that the scientific approach (experimentation and observation) was essential to management. Taylor's approach insisted on observation and separation of the tasks and jobs to redesign them in the "one best way" for all workers. His approach included developing standard methods, times, and equipment, rest periods and even times for unavoidable delays (Armstrong Michael, 2001). Taylor's wage rate plans gave a foundation for managers to set wages and to motivate workers using various rate plans. Taylor's idea of scientific management became popular as it answered many questions regarding mass production. Many other management scientists followed Taylor's ideas in developing models to increase efficiency. Most famous names that contributed towards management are Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. They refined and advanced the scientific approaches made popular by Taylor. Refining Taylor's work, Gilberth developed the use of motion pictures in studying work patterns. That became the base of decision making for the managers of that time. The use of mechanical devices in work-study enabled managers to determine more precisely the time and motions involved in work and to increase efficiency through accuracy in analysis. Against Taylor, Gilberth involved enthusiastic workers in decision making, which led to participative decision-making.

In the early 1920s, after interviewing the workers at a textile plant near Philadelphia having a serious problem of turnover rate of 250 percent, Elton Mayo from the University of Pennsylvania recommended the establishment of rest periods and other physical improvements. These improvements reduced turnover rate and increased production, which had not been achieved after trying scientific management. As a result of the interviews, the discussions about rest periods and the increased management interest in production processes, workers no longer felt isolated. They expertly formed social groups and the more they felt

part of a group the fewer were their complaints and the lower was the turnover rate (Beach 1999). Shortly thereafter, Mayo along with Fritz Roethlisberger of the Harvard School of Business conducted a series of research studies in the relation's movement "the Hawthorne studies", carried out at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric Company near Chicago (Luthans & Fred, 2002).

The Hawthorne Studies

In all, seven studies took place at the Hawthorne plant between 1924 and 1932. The researchers studied the effect of illumination, complex conditions, wage payments, rest periods, and workers' physical and emotional conditions. It was found that no single factor (least of all the level of lighting) could account for variations in productivity levels. Some of the major findings of the Hawthorn Studies were that workers' individual and social characteristics affected productivity. The quality of both the work and its environment are highly important (Robbins 1999; Luthans & Fred 2002). One of the most widely known "facts" about the studies is the "Hawthorne effect." A research or work situation is said to involve the Hawthorne effect when workers' behavior changes and productivity increases because the employees are aware that persons important in their lives are taking an interest in them. Although there have been a number of criticisms on the Hawthorne studies, even then the studies affected culture, as evidenced by the growing emphasis on motivation, group dynamics, and essential quality of working life. They also profoundly affected administrative practices, thereby demonstrating the interrelationships among the various social and organizational levels (Robbins, 1998).

The Classical Approach

The major impact on the modern organization came from the Roman military model and from the design and structure of the Catholic Church. Modern writing about organizational design and structure started shortly after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and it continues to this day. Adam Smith described one of the chief concerns of organizational structure as the division of labor in his 1776 book *The Wealth of Nations* (Huse & Edger 1979) sensing that work subdivision could increase productivity by many times. Similar ideas about

organizational design were propounded almost simultaneously (and independently) in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States.

Henri Fayol a French writer, distinguished among six different activities of a business. These included technical activities, commercial activities, financial activities, security activities, accounting activities and managerial activities. Fayol put primary emphasis on managerial functions, because he felt that managerial skills had been the most neglected of all business operations. Max Weber, a German sociologist, strongly argued that bureaucracy represented the ideal to which the design of organizations should proceed. He believed that rules and regulations were necessary not only to make the organization function but also to restrict members from favoritism (Desimone et. al. 2002). The past fifty years has seen the development a tremendous body of knowledge about management and organizations, and research in the field is still expanding. A large number of books, journals and articles are being written every year. Interest in this area is growing partly as a result of our shift from a relatively unchanging society to one that is undergoing constant change and becoming more reciprocal (Ross, 1996). Two particular integrative trends are important to our society - the system concept and the contingency approach.

The System and Contingency Approaches

Derived from general system theory, a system can be defined as a series of interrelated and interdependent parts such as the corresponding interaction or interplay of many of the parts that affect the whole (Niehaus and Price 1987). The word system applies to the entire organization, which as a system is composed of a number of interrelated and interdependent components, each of which affects the other. The organization in turn is considered a subsystem of the larger culture.

The contingency approach is contained in the idea that the best way to lead, plan, organize and conduct managerial activities is not fixed but it depends on the situation. Management processes, which were appropriate during the Industrial Revolution, would not be appropriate today. Research indicates that the contingency approach needs to prevail in almost every managerial action. An effective manager must continually ask, "Which method will work best here?" Managing unskilled workers is very different from managing highly trained

professionals. In these situations, managerial skills to manage different situations in an effective manner become more important (Robbins and Coulter 1999).

Business Management in Global Perspective

Despite the dominant trend toward globalization, the concept of globalized firms still reflects only an ideal organizational form, since nearly all multinational firms remain embedded in their respective cultural spheres, particularly those in the United States, Japan and other developed nations. It is, therefore, important to assess specific globalization issues in their distinct comparative framework. Kobrin (1993) examined the well-known fact that over the last two decades the number of American managers working abroad as expatriates has decreased in relation to the size of the international business activities conducted by US based multinationals.

It should be unquestionably clear that past over-reliance on American expatriates was neither effective nor efficient. There are a number of good reasons for this wholesale replacement with local nationals. As managerial and technical competence in many countries (developing as well as industrialized) has increased, an increasing number of proficient managers became available. All things equal, a local national who speaks the local language, understands the culture and the political system, and is often a member of the local elite, should be more effective than an expatriate alien (Kobrin 1993).

Of the 1,000 most highly valued firms in the world in 1989, U.S. firms accounted for 353, while 345 were Japanese and 214 were European (Fombrun 1993). It plainly indicates that most of the increases in market value of U.S and European firms result from international operations. An important factor is that the business environment in various parts of the world is changing. This change in global paradigms brought changes in management styles as well. New participative management philosophies replaced old autocratic one. Globalization is a persuasive force in world markets, which creates the need for a global model for MBA success in management education. Segev et. al. (1999) compared the content of MBA programs from leading North American schools, finding that they cluster into six types. The top five schools are each located in a different cluster, indicating that there is no one "best" structure for a MBA course being offered.

Business schools are progressively more interested in the Asian market, as Asia has recovered from the recession of the 1990s. In the context of China, Southworth (1999) supported the notion of no need for Western-style "managers" in the Chinese planned economy, but that with the market economy there is now a shortage of trained managers in the Western sense. The common language of management is English, and conventional Chinese teaching methods are inappropriate to management education, he states. Mak (1999) provides information on the partnership between Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Zhejiang University relating to enterprise management. Vinten and Cui (1997) are of the view that China's reunification with Hong Kong and amplified co-operation has led to the chances of greater exchange between Western management theories and Chinese practices. They commented as follows: "Chinese scholars need to substantively consolidate and integrate management education programs in China in order to contribute further to the world economy".

In his review of management universities with international mix of students from some 40 countries, Bradshaw (1999) urged for increased awareness that students from different cultures settle in at different rates. Howe and Martin (1998) highlighted a need for UK, USA and Australian management universities to internationalize their postgraduate programs, transferring best practice across the borders.

A number of leading management schools have entered the field of international business education, including developing links and liaison with overseas counterparts. Bradshaw (2001) finds business schools increasingly entering alliances, especially with technology partners towards distance learning via the Internet. There are risks when it comes to the role of star lecturers, and the possibility of diluting the reputation of the best-known schools. Smaller business schools may benefit from alliances with better-known schools.

The business world of today generally follows the lead of business schools from renowned universities. These business schools can play influential roles in institutionalizing business as globally responsible enterprises. Business schools could ultimately prove a center for global business, and could foster research, teach social norms, and become involved in community engagement on economic growth and business management across countries. Based on a

survey of 555 respondents, Lorange (2003) suggested three models of business schools: local business schools to cater the requirements of a local market; regional business schools to serve a number of national markets within the same language area; and global business schools for the entire world community. Lorange also identified five elements of a global curriculum for business schools: “strategic competence, partnership competence, staffing competence, learning competence, and an organizational competence”. Rhinesmith (1993) describes five basic capabilities to cater the globally operated business: competitiveness, complexity, organizational adaptability, multicultural teams, uncertainty and chaos, and personal and organizational learning. Concluding their global experiences and research studies, Black, Morrison, and Gregersen (1999) comment that “every global leader must have this set of core global attributes: inquisitiveness, perspective, character, and savvy”.

The following table indicates changes in management processes as a result from the impact of globalisation.

CHANGING GLOBAL MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Old Way	New Way
No report ahead of time	Written report prepared for everyone
No preparation and no presentation by teams	Reading and preparation ahead of time
Formal presentation a “pitch”	Minimal form presentation a “pitch”
Passive audience	Through discussion/ debate by all
All energy focused on the boss	Total Global leadership commitment and making change happen
No one having ownership	Continuous learning and development

(Pucik et. al. 1993: 47)

Philosophy of Global Management

Today's business has a global impact. Business activities considerably affect the fate and survival of natural ecosystems as well as the life conditions of present and future generations. Applying the imperative of responsibility developed by Hans Jonas, we can state that business has a one way, non-reciprocal duty caring for the beings which are affected by its functioning. To meet its global responsibility, business should become sustainable, pro-social and future enhancing. An extensive transformation of business is needed in order to contribute to the preservation (and not to the destruction) of the ecological and cultural richness of the globe (Laszlo Zsolnai 2003).

One frequently debated current issue among intellectuals is “globalization”. The effects of globalization are necessarily seen in every walk of life. The world is observing increased global competition among global companies for global consumers. The fences of tariffs are falling; the world is shrinking by the advancement of technology and transportation. Electronic communication has made the world faster than ever. Waves of globalization are affecting all aspects of commerce and economics. Trade is growing by leaps and bounds. The volume of intra-countries trade accounts for one half of combined gross domestic products of developed countries. Cultural values are facing death, as new worldwide cultural values are gradually developing. Globalization has entered all the trades of life and can be seen everywhere like the weather. Every innovation brings tremendous opportunities and threats for humankind. Studying the forces of globalization, analyzing the aspects which can be harmful for mankind and searching how to derive the maximum opportunities and convert them into benefit for humankind is the need of hour. Businesses are the hub of society where all the stakeholders of society meet each other. Businesses have responsibilities to become institutions where the whole society is supposed to serve the common man. Global actors today are developing in a still over-regulated national and under-regulated global environment; hence there is a need to focus attention on education towards global governance and globally responsible leaders and decision-makers (efmd 2002). The business world of today largely takes the lead from business schools of renowned universities. The business schools can play very prominent role in institutionalizing the business as globally responsible enterprises

Each culture has developed through its own history - some precisely with unique insights into the management of organizations and their human resources. At the same time, any single cultural model may become pathological when pushed to its extreme. An illustration of this fact is that every culture has also developed specific and unique foundations in the modern art of managing and organizing. Here lies still largely undiscovered opportunities and threats of international management. During the past few decades, Western societies have witnessed the fragmentation of the nuclear family and a gradual decline in the moral authority of religious institutions. This has placed greater pressure on schools to maintain the cultural cohesion of Western societies. Global change forces are creating a similar trend in Southeast Asia as well (Hallinger 1998). The essential continuity between generations, on which every society necessarily depends for its integrity and survival, has begun to fray. Management universities as a primary social institution are responsible for cultural transmission. Today's business schools must reassert their role as vehicles for helping societies adapt to social and cultural change from a truly global perspective. In today's business environment, the traditional sources of competitive advantage cannot provide a sustainable edge. Low production costs, new technology, or access to capital have become necessary, but these are not sufficient conditions for success. Instead, contemporary approaches to global business strategies point to the importance of core competencies, invisible assets, and organizational capabilities as crucial factors influencing a long-term success in the global market (Pucik 1993).

Multinationals are particularly facing the change in managerial activities. With some simplification, these challenges can be aggregated along four principal dimensions linked to key facets of global organizations.

1. Strategic control (the challenge of reconciling the need for global centralization with local decentralization).
2. Integration (the stimulating challenge of leveraging diversified business strategies on a global scale).
3. Adaptation (the challenge of linking the global organizational forms to local environments).

4. Organizational boundaries (the challenge of accommodating organizational networks, alliances, and partnerships) (Pucik 1993: 61-62).

All these challenges constantly require that management activities adjust to seemingly contradictory perspectives.

Business Management education in 21st century

The 21st century is witnessing major workplace changes such as geographical integration, technological changes, operation styles of business that are affecting local corporations and multinationals. Business management universities are among the greatest growth areas and they will have long lasting economic and social effects as they are supposed to provide future business managers, economists and professionals.

Management universities are dramatically affected by the developments accruing in the corporate world. Increased usage of the Internet provides challenges to management universities such as nurturing appropriate faculty, developing and maintaining associations with business partners, maintaining quality, conducting extensive research, and solving the problems of management education in a dynamic global arena (Vinten 2000). Even rising competition among management universities, forces them to rethink such issues as mechanisms for delivering management education, effective collaboration with industry, focusing on curriculum renewal, the use of technology in delivering management education, and accreditation (Elliott and Glaser 1998).

Christensen and Anakwe (2001) acknowledged the Internet revolution in management education and research, and in particular the opportunities it offers for non-traditional suppliers of non-degree executive programs. Advancement in technology has further allowed advances in distance education enhancing the magnetism of good reputation programs for those who may choose this mode for reasons such as the following: advantages in cost, flexibility, reduced travel time, security and confident safety (Vinten 2000). The waves of globalization are arbitrated through the Internet, contributing even greater challenges of the 21st century in the areas of management such as: corporate and virtual institutions, sensitive competition among business schools, finding and promoting appropriate staff, achieving

critical crowd and serving the entire economy, working with relevant partners inside and outside the university surroundings, regularly maintaining quality, and undertaking research.

Brent Davies and Brian Caldwell are two of the most original thinkers and contributors to the field of education management over the last 20 years with their well-known books such as *The Self-managing School* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988), *Leading the Self-managing School* (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992) and *Beyond the Self-managing School*. These chart developments and reforms in management universities to meet the coming global challenges in three stages: Track 1: Building systems of self-managing schools, Track 2: Unrelenting focus on learning outcomes, and Track 3: Creating schools for the knowledge society (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998).

The application of information and communications technology (ICT) has been the most powerful change agent in the management educational world over the last 20 years (West-Burnham 2002). It is fascinating to reflect whether we have moved from a one-dimensional (an information source) to a deeper understanding or indeed whether there have been any insightful learning involved. Another approach would be to practice knowledge investigation through research or knowledge exploitation through instruction, as it is difficult to excel at both simultaneously (Trieschmann et. al. 2000).

Basic Management Skills

Management universities need to consider each and every intricate aspect of their business graduates in delivering quality services and academic programs, and paying attention to improving students' affiliation with their institutes. Gerald (2000) outlined a cluster of characteristics that have been traditionally associated with higher education, such as “pursuit of truth and objective knowledge, research, academic freedom, a neutral and open forum for debate, and the development of both the students' critical abilities and autonomy”. Gold, E. (2001) advocated that all academic and non-academic staff should follow the principles of quality customer services, whether in frontline contact with students, teaching, or serving in management and administrative roles. Deming (2000) suggested that management education requires application of the same principles that must be used for the improvement of any other process, whether it be manufacturing or service.

Freedom to think critically is crucial for graduates to skillfully achieve intellectual independence. However, a neutral and open forum for debate may be harder to achieve when frank and rigorous discussion might be perceived as breaching organizational loyalty. Beard (1994) concluded that there are two types of business students, namely: 1) "The Octopus - individuals who want to be in control and are looking for concepts they can help them to maintain control within their organization, and 2) "The Star Fleet Captain - individuals who are looking for self-fulfillment and expressly wish to become effective leaders". Both types of students normally attain skills that enable them to boldly go where no one has gone before.

Elliot and Goodwin (1994) identified number of criticisms on MBA programs, most of which may legitimately be applied to the whole traditional range of management qualifications. They concluded that such programs (a) place great emphasis on quantitative and analytical skills and neglect personal skills which allow managers to function effectively within a business organization, (b) do little to produce managers who are able to meet the challenges of changing global business environment, (c) produce students who are ill prepared to cope with an increasingly diverse workforce, (d) recruit unqualified faculty to teach environmental, ethical and international issues affecting business, and (e) are staffed by faculty who lack appropriate business experiences and who are under pressure to produce academic publications.

The necessity of dealing with changing environments re-emphasizes on the training aspect of people holding managerial positions. Moreover, numerous books and articles have been written discussing the skills and behavior expected from managers. Many of the management universities have been established in various parts of the world to offer a mix of skills to develop effective managers. Due to the rise in the need of effective business managers, educational institutions have started claiming that they are equipping business managers of today with effective and innovative management skills and abilities. Regardless of the type of university, in every business school, there is renewed emphasis regarding the importance of curriculum on management development. No one in an organization is involved only in management activities. Each individual has a technical specialty, such as accounting, finance, or production management. He/she is supposed to become competent in application of the tools and techniques of these specialties. Similarly, there are skills that are basically

recognized as characteristics of management and that apply to virtually all phases of the manager's job (Bass 1990). Some successful managers, such as Liz Adams, Lee Iacocca, and Bill Gates, have practiced these skills every day. They were far more successful than those who did not practice these skills. It has been said that the coming business decade will be one of diversity with the evolution of management moving into the phase of the leader. The likely challenges will include worldly issues relating to employment equity and employee advancement, productivity and issues relate to skills shortages. The implication for management educators is clear. They have to ensure to develop the skills necessary for future leaders and managers to ensure organizational success.

Since the 1990s, business has been undergoing fundamental changes internationally and locally, and management education has to adapt and respond accordingly. In terms of the business environment, the time has come, particularly in developing countries, for a new age band of entrepreneurial, innovative and visionary managers. An important skill is the ability to carry out some phase of management jobs. Skills are learned and urbanized with experience, training, and practice. Historically, management writers have been paying attention to skills used by highly successful executives, and a number of these have been acknowledged. Defining skills required and for devising education, training, and other policies to satisfactorily respond to the concerns, creates many problems. A basic predicament centers on the concept of skill requirements and related definition of work skills. The concept of skill requirements is generally used to analyze both the characteristics of jobs (e.g., tasks, roles) and of the individuals who perform them (e.g., aptitudes, abilities, characteristics) (Stasz 1996). To establish individual needs, a work job analysis is performed. The job requirement on the other hand becomes prescriptions for education or training designed to prepare particular individuals for the job. Filling the "skills gap" is an exercise in matching people to jobs. Skill may be perceptual, motor, manual, intellectual and social. The nature of tasks usually involves the application of a combination of these. Skill can also be either, cumulative, that is, it is built up gradually through repeated practice, or sequential, meaning that each part is dependent on the previous part and influences the next. Robbins (1998) defines competency as the ability to perform the activities within an occupation functioning to the standard expected in employment. Competency is the product of training and experience.

As a conventional understanding of the concept of skill, the skilled worker is the one who possesses a body of knowledge, which has been enhanced by practical experience, and acquired over a lengthy training period. Skilled jobs are those where managers and workers constantly require this sort of profound knowledge and practical ability.

The Essential skills for Managers

Henri Fayol observed that all employees in an organization must have the following sets of skills or abilities: technical, commercial and societal, accounting and managerial. Katz (1974) classified the essential skills of managers into three categories of technical, human and conceptual. Technical skills become less important, when compared to other skills, as one moves up in the organizational hierarchy. Human relation skills are concerned with how the manager relates to peers, superiors, and subordinates. They are valuable at every level in organizations. Conceptual skills are defined as the ability to coordinate and integrate organizational diverse activities. These skills are most important at the top of the organizational hierarchy where strategic or long-term decisions are made. Stasz and colleagues (1996) focused on problem solving, communications, teamwork, and work-related dispositions. Cascio (1998) identified the essential needs of the following competencies by the Human Resource Manager of the future: (1) credibility, interpersonal skills, and understanding the business of business, (2) consultative approaches, (3) comfort with change, (4) visioning. He insists that the future managers need to be strong in all the above areas in order to manage the requirements of the future.

Today the situation of the Pakistani manager is complex too. The ability of Pakistan's economic structure to be internationally competitive is seriously dependent on its capacity to be responsive to the new challenges and viable opportunities unexpectedly appearing from changes in markets, technologies and competitors' performance. Thus managers of Pakistani industries need wide-ranging individual skills. Keeping in view the industries' current and foreseeable future needs, individual skills can be grouped into three broad categories: technical skills: interpersonal and communal skills; and conceptual, problem solving and decision making skills.

Subsequent classifications have expanded the number of skills crucial to management success. The most extensive development was based on observations of chief executive officers and is more about what specific managers do (Mintzberg 1983). Henry Mintzberg not only studied a variety of managerial jobs but also comprehensively synthesized the empirical studies of managerial roles. He suggested that ten clusters, or roles, could be used to describe the basic ways managers go about accomplishing the job (Mintzberg 1973). Much of the following discussion of managerial roles is based on his synthesis of the literature. A role is a set of systematically interrelated and observable behaviors that belong to an identifiable job or position. Each job, then, is a subsystem. The level of the job affects the emphasis placed on different roles and the manager's style affects how a role is performed (but not if it needs to be performed). From a systems point of view, there are ten distinctive but highly interrelated roles. They can be separated into three different groupings: (1) those primarily concerned with interpersonal relationships (the Interpersonal roles), (2) those primarily concerned with the transfer of information (the Informational roles), and (3) those essentially involving decision making (the Decision roles).

The Roles of Managers

What a manager does in the organization has been a concern of management theorists of all times. In the late 1960s, Henry Mintzberg after a comprehensive study concluded that managers perform ten different but highly interrelated roles (Robbins and Coulter 1999). These roles are highlighted below:

- ***The Manager as Figurehead***

As head of the organization or one of its units, the manager represents the organization in formal matters, *including ceremonial and symbolic activities*.

- ***The Manager as Leader***

The leadership role involves responsibility for directing and coordinating the activities of subordinates to accomplish organizational goals. Leadership is not just about business managers; it is also about the followers because these people determine whether or not someone has the qualities required of a leader. Under these circumstances, there is a need to understand the personal and professional skills required to perform a job.

Kouzes and Posner (1990) surveyed 2500 managers in America to discover the personal traits or characteristics that workers looked for and admired in supervisors. From the findings it appeared that there are several essential checks a person must satisfy before people are willing to grant the title of 'leader'. The following table lists the attributes people want to see in a leader.

Desired Characteristics of Leaders

Characteristic	Ranking	Percentage of Managers
Honest	1	83
Competent	2	67
Forward looking	3	62
Inspiring	4	58
Intelligent	5	43
Fair-minded	6	40
Broadminded	7	37
Straightforward	8	34
Imaginative	9	34
Dependable	10	33
Supportive	11	32
Courageous	12	27
Caring	13	26

Cooperative	14	25
Mature	15	23
Ambitious	16	21
Determined	17	20
Self controlled	18	13
Loyal	19	11
Independent	20	10

It is important to observe that the respondents placed honesty as the top-level attribute in a leader. Competency and forward looking followed as the second and third most desired attributes in the leaders. These desired features of the leaders keep changing. A list of the desired attributes prepared ten years ago may be different from the list prepared today. Managers need to know those new realities and then to develop skills those work in this era and continually try to find ways to improve the performance. It is a hard experience and can cause the managers self-doubt, confusion, frustration, agony and defensiveness. That is why understanding of the managerial process in a changing world is so important.

- ***The Manager as the Liaison Person***

The liaison role desires the manager to be in contact with the outside vertical chain of command, in an effort to bring information into the organization and to gain favors from others to the benefit of the organization.

- ***The Manager as Information Source***

In interpersonal roles, the competent manager builds a network of sources of information. By the nature of these contacts, the manager becomes the nerve center of the unit, the central focus for receiving and sending of non-routine information. Three roles characterize the manager as a nerve center: monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson. In this set of roles, information is received, transmitted, or recombined.

- ***The Manager as Monitor***

In much the same way as a radar set operates, the manager in the monitor role continually scans the environment to receive and collect information. The manager must not only check periodically to see that the unit is operating properly, but also check continually the inside and the outside of the unit to ensure that possible changes are identified, and problems and opportunities are detected. He/she must also determine when information has to be given to others and decisions have to be made.

- ***The Manager as Disseminator***

The disseminator role involves passing special or privileged information that subordinates will not otherwise be able to obtain. When subordinates do not have quick and easy contact with one another, the manager then passes information to them.

- ***The Manager as Spokesperson***

In the spokesperson role, the manager speaks for the unit and represents it to others. The nature of the role is highly varied. The strategic managers may, for example, be asked to appear before a committee conducting a hearing.

While commenting on the communication skills of workers, Stasz and others (1996) have described communication as a broad term that could be ambiguous. Unfortunately, this ambiguity is seldom taken into account while discussing communication skills on the job. Few would disagree, for example, that individuals who deal with the public (e.g., marketing personnel, salespersons) might need different communication skills from those who work with finance or production department.

- ***The Decision Roles of the Manager***

A very important part of a manager's job is decision taking. Developing interpersonal relationships and gathering information are not ends in themselves. They are the basic inputs to decision making. The third and perhaps most important of the managers' roles are the decisional role, entrepreneurial role, problem handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. Some of the decisions have a vital impact on the organization. An organization can lose or gain millions in terms of money just because of a right or wrong decision of the manager.

- ***The Manager as Entrepreneur***

In the entrepreneur role, the manager works to improve the organization to bring about plans, both voluntary and controlled changes. The effective manager always looks for new ideas to help in doing a better job. After a new idea is identified, the manager considers whether it will be helpful to the organization or not. If it is both helpful and applicable, an efficient manager will put it into practice promptly.

- ***The Manager as Disturbance Handler***

In the disturbance handler role, the manager takes corrective actions to respond to pressures and changes that are beyond the control of ordinary people. At the strategy level, the disturbance may be the new policy of the government. At the administrative level, it may be a strike of the workers or a response to a new effort of competitors. At the technical level, it may be a machine breakdown or the illness of some key employees. In all these circumstances, a manager is expected to handle these disturbances.

- ***The Manager as Resource Allocator***

Every organization has a limited quantity of resources. A manager is expected to allocate resources according to the strategy of the organization. In the resource allocator role, the manager decides who should get what, in the organization. Resources can include human beings, finances, materials, methods, machines and equipment. Resource allocation is one of the most vital roles of a manager. The decision to allocate resources to one designated area inevitably means that they cannot be allocated to another.

- ***The Manager as Negotiator***

In this character the manager discusses and bargains with other organizations to obtain advantages for his or her own organization. The first-line supervisor may negotiate with the maintenance department to get machines repaired faster. The purchasing manager may negotiate with vendors for lower cost or faster delivery. The sales manager may negotiate price with a big customer. With the rapid introduction of TQM, managers are expected to negotiate so as to develop reliable network of the suppliers.

Need for Management Training

It is said that companies are either growing or dying. For the top business managers of Pakistan, a country burdened with hundreds of closed and sick units, extinction is a real and immediate danger. Competition is increasing day by day. Many multinational companies are working to establish their marketing and production network in Pakistan. How does one compete in this business environment? What can be a competitive edge for a business? What can be the profits of capital availability that no other competitor has? What is the mechanical edge of a business or hardware that no one else can acquire? What about markets? Do we have exclusive and protected rights to a market? Karpin (1995) responded by emphasizing soft skills, creating the sense of internationalization and cross-functional integration, developing diversity, and links to industry. He pointed out "if the nation is to build world class enterprises through improving the enviable skills of its managers, then management universities need world class providers of management education who trained to achieve these goals". He states;

In the global economy, when virtually every company has similar access to capital, can acquire same machinery and level of technology, and with WTO in the offering, has easy access to the same markets. One of the very few tools to build a competitive advantage will be quality of the people working in an organization. Training facilities help in attracting the best, the brightest, and to build upon their potential. Management skills and competencies via the factor matrix are of crucial importance.

Drawing from the work of Bosch and Low (1998) a factor matrix shows the management skills and competencies that need to be developed for twenty-first century managers and leaders alike. In this way, management educators can link the content they teach with the most important competencies and skills needed by current and future leaders, dedicated professionals and entrepreneurs.

Not only should the nutrient content of business management course selection be critically assessed and changed, but also it is time to review teaching and learning strategies. The more effective the learning the better will be the results. One of the most important outcomes of management education is the development of independent thinkers who can critically analyze

situations. Active learning will enable the development of skills and content based on the personal experience and learning of the student, not just on academic content. Contribution, not participation, is needed in management education. The contribution of students within the class context should revolve around thinking through concepts, issues and practices both for the benefit of self and others. Business graduates have to contribute in such a way so as to enhance class process and peer understanding of the concept under discussion. Business schools therefore need staff that will make sure that what they say is relevant, practical and focused on what students must be able to do when they return to their jobs. They must be concerned to facilitate development of interpersonal skills. Will Rogers in Carnall (1992) states that, even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there. In this way, the academic must provide counsel and support, technical input and guidance, becoming less of a cognate specialist and more of the problem solver and consultant. Experiential learning, including simulations and games, can teach the learner about the development of values, healthy attitudes and organizational concepts that would be enabling the student in becoming a future leader. With the increase in new technologies such as computer aided training and e-learning, business schools of the future will have to integrate these methods into their teaching practices.

The most important issue within management education is the fact that learning and education must be based on developing skills for the new economy. In other words, the challenge is to think in the future tense. Management skills most in demand right now that need to be taught in business education include:

- An ability to contribute to the strategic development of the organization;
- An ability to take a broad holistic view of management issues, including the capacity to see issues in the context of an evolving internal and a changing external environment;
- The capacity for imagination and creativity as well as analytical skills;
- Interpersonal skills, group work, team projects, negotiation, networking and other critical social skills;
- Personal intelligently learning skills, especially the ability to learn from, and help others learn from experience;

- An ability to analyze critically management problems at a strategic level

Whether you look at nations or companies, there is strong competition for the best brains. People have become principal assets in the struggle for economic superiority. For some, the caliber of the human factor is a game of chance. Winners will be the ones who approach this issue scientifically, hire carefully and trim generously. Many large and successful organizations have corporate universities and invest heavily on training. That is what today's successful companies are doing. A company's performance is the product of the qualifications of its people and continuous training serves the purpose of improving intellectual capital inline with contemporary trends. This provides a leading edge to both the individual and the organization. Effective training sessions can help individuals improve their current job skills to perform their jobs better, learn new skills which provide them with growth opportunities, align them with their career objectives and eventually provide an edge to the organization in the form of increased output. Training significantly improves the employee moral. Salary is looked upon as a right but training is an added advantage and is considered as a perk by many employees. Companies that give a high priority to training have high employee morale and loyalty, providing power to hire and retain the best. When designing training programs, it is of vital importance to ensure that training is strategically aligned with organizational vision.

Training is a very powerful communication tool showing managerial commitment to a particular area of employee effectiveness. For example, if a company wishes to inculcate customer service into corporate culture, no amount of lecturing can impart effective customer service-training program into the organization. Training has a positive impact on employee attitudes, which are immediately measurable through increased productivity, low absenteeism, low late-comings and so on. Enhancing intellectual capital of a company is one of the very critical tools for corporate survival and growth. It helps increasing productivity, sends right signals to the employees about corporate priorities, and can serve as an effective marketing tool in communicating to the customers that the company wants to provide them a great service experience.

A lesson from Japan

A comprehensive study has been conducted of MBA programs in Japan's management universities by L.I. Okazaki-Ward (2001). Before 1980, postgraduate business management education in higher education institutions in Japan was poorly developed but throughout the 1990s management education in Japan was transformed in dynamic and modern ways. In his research, Okazaki-Ward provided the following insights and thoughtful observations:

- (1) "The professional graduate school is expected to cover the specialist fields, have its own teaching organization, the curriculum, the program, and dedicated buildings and facilities adequate for achieving the outcome to meet the aims of the specialist professional graduate school. New subjects should be added where this is necessary, and the curriculum should be organized systematically to aid the development of professional capability".
- (2) "Its teaching program should establish more practical elements where this is deemed appropriate to develop the highly professional capability of the students who are involved in the professions where a very high specialization and professionalism is expected. These may be achieved by the employment of such methods as the case study, debate, fieldwork and others".
- (3) "For the purpose of providing a high quality education to develop high caliber specialist professionals that would be recognized and attract respect internationally, the ratio of qualified teaching staff to students should be twice as large as that required in the academic master's program. A substantial proportion of the faculty should have practical working experience as professionals at a high level in their specialist fields".
- (4) "The students are to be examined for the completion of the program by the outcome of a research project for the specific subject rather than a thesis".
- (5) "The evaluation/ accreditation of the program must be undertaken by a body of professionals from outside, composed of those whose expertise is appropriate to the content they are called upon to evaluate".

What is an MBA?

The MBA or Masters in Business Administration is the most popular postgraduate qualification in the modern world and is designed to prepare managers with the academic knowledge and the vocational skills to lead business into the 21st century. Candidates with this degree strongly believe that the qualification will substantially aid them on their journey to the upper realms of senior management, a high salary and success in the corporate world (Bickerstaffe 1998). They know, however, that in the modern competitive world the degree is not an instant passport to success that it once was. As an MBA degree is a prerequisite for many senior positions, there has been a major expansion on enrolments. There is generally an increased awareness of what MBA graduates can do and employers are looking at the degree in a wider context of experience and skills.

During the precious time spent on study for an MBA, students study a number of core courses in key business skills, including accountancy, human resource management and quantitative methods, drawn together by cross-disciplinary subjects such as Total Quality Management and change management in global markets. Students are considered to be able to complement their core studies with choices made from a range of electives (depending on availability) and to gain opportunities to develop their “soft skills”, or interpersonal relations and teamwork practices. Finally, a project or thesis forms an integral part of the degree offering a chance to study business problems in detail, often in a particular business organization. The time spent on study for an MBA is considerable but it is worthwhile and good students sometimes study for 70 hours a week. Few students, however, regret their decision to study for the qualification and clearly speak of a new found confidence stemming from studying management issues from an academic perspective in a risk-free environment which has formed a solid platform for their future career.

The MBA Curriculum

Curriculum is a road map for learning and is a most effective tool to successfully achieve designed goals and set the learning agenda for any educational institution. Leading business schools revise their curricula at regular intervals basis and tailor curricula offerings according to employer demands. Shipper (1999) investigated whether middle managers that hold MBA

degrees have superior managerial skills than middle managers with degrees from other disciplines. He surveyed 1,035 respondents and recommended that business schools should redesign their curriculum and teach managerial skills to their students if they wish to achieve competitive advantage. Sadler-Smith et. al. (2000) surveyed 226 undergraduate students enrolled in business and management degree programs in UK. They deduced that learning performance vastly improves when learning preferences matched with learning style. They concluded that learners should expose themselves to other methods of learning than their preferred methods to gain a “meta-cognitive advantage”. To improve efficiency and effectiveness in management and business education, it is worth profiling students according to their commencing learning preferences. Success in the classroom and at workplace depends on balancing right side of the brain with creative and intuitive thinking with the left side with its analytic thinking in order to produce a holistic approach.

In the context of Pakistan, business schools emphasize more delivering misjudged theory than self-development of students. Therefore, it is little wonder that many students, especially those already in jobs, leave management programs feeling that their academic needs are not addressed. Ideally speaking, students should be challenged to develop their leadership potential, and teamwork and problem solving skills. This scenario demands research that may provide guidelines for curriculum design and development of common standards that can be employed to monitor the effectiveness of business school programs. The curriculum of MBA programs offered by most of private and public sector schools are almost the same. The syllabus of these schools is not significantly different from that found at many North American universities. The primary reason for this similarity is that there is no set standards defined by the government or any other body. Most business schools simply follow the example of universities in advanced countries.

Generally business schools in Lahore include in their MBA curriculum such core courses as: financial accounting, business communication, marketing theory and practice, economics, quantitative techniques in business, organizational behavior, Total Quality Management and human resource management. These core courses are considered the main functional areas of business activity. Apart from core courses, students opt for areas of specialization in their second year. Most of business schools offer marketing and finance as their main areas of

specialization. However, some business schools have commenced offering textile management, human resource management and information technology as their areas of specialization. The MBA curriculum generally requires a minimum of 36 semester hours for core and specialization courses.

Why people want an MBA?

Interviews with students reveal that MBA students have a common desire for career advancement. Most MBA students are at a business school because they believe that an MBA degree can open career opportunities into management. Most career advisers still advise that an MBA can add qualities to, but cannot change, an individual, and that mainly the degree reinforces existing strengths and experience. This view is still backed by many recruiters. To most of them, an MBA degree means nothing by itself except a sign of intellectual prowess (Bickerstaffe 1998). The degree assumes relevance only in the context of an individual's past experience and future potential.

An MBA degree is no longer the exclusive degree it once was. It is no longer possible simply being a holder of a MBA to enter into senior management positions. On the positive side, employers are no longer afraid of the arrogant graduate “job hoppers” of the 1990s. There is a greater awareness that an MBA graduates can be expected to have well-rounded, global views of management and that they will be equipped with strategic skills that benefit companies in re-aligning themselves after emerging from recession. Many MBA students also have traditionally gone into management consulting and the financial services sector. The increase in the destinations of MBA graduates has significantly broadened and graduates are now entering manufacturing industry, small entrepreneurial business, the public sector and even voluntary organizations. Many MBA students already hold first degrees in either technical fields or the liberal arts. Others hold other professional qualifications and wish to move into general management. Many MBA students frequently are sponsored by their employers with the motivation to advance their position within the company for which they are already working. Some students see the MBA degree as a springboard to gain a higher position within another organization. Some of these students have already a future direction in mind when

applying for admission to the MBA program; others will consider options and explore various avenues before making a final decision.

Employers tend to see an MBA degree as an eligible sign of academic prowess and ambition that can contribute to an individual's previous experience rather than changing this experience altogether. MBA graduates are not necessarily joining large corporations with an increasing trend towards, smaller entrepreneurial firms, although their qualifications provide skills in broad management rather than practical day-to day skills in running a business. Finally, there is a group of students who see the degree in terms of personal development and talk of satisfaction gained from academic study. Whatever be the motivation for studying for the MBA, candidates perceive the time spent in studying for the degree as a final opportunity to be a student's before settling down into their career.

What does an MBA aim at?

All MBA courses have the same purpose: "to build up managers who will run efficient, money-making enterprises in a cutthroat world for the making of wealth in society". But at the same time many would question whether or not the detailed objectives are the same for all courses, while some would question the profit features of some MBA courses and argue that the methods of delivery now differ at a great deal. There are one-year and two-year degrees, full-time and part-time degrees, campus-based versus distance learning MBAs, "consortium MBAs" with groundwork companies, single company programs and others, including action learning approaches.

The traditional MBA program is intended to introduce students to general management. That is why it covers all the basic management disciplines such as accounting, marketing and operations management. The academic concept is to introduce the students to all the areas of specialization so that, as general managers, they may be able to understand and control functional specialists.

In recent years, this has changed with the advent of specialist MBAs, but in most schools the traditional model is still in operation. This is why changing career through an MBA degree can still be difficult. There may not be many general management jobs available for MBA

graduates at the typical age of, say, 23 to 25 years. This may also explain why management consultancy firms are such active recruiters and popular destinations for graduates. Management consulting requires an overarching or general manager-style approach. Beard (1992) shows that there is a clear awareness of the primary modes of study, issues of academic content, and the reputation of the MBA providers' among those entering MBA degrees. Ashton (1993) concluded that universities of business management and other educational establishments become more and more involved in the development of management itself. Competition is ferocious, operating margins are expected to be reduced and some institutes are likely to be forced to drop out of the market, or at least to drop some of their courses.

One of the aims of an MBA is to enable students to respond swiftly and almost automatically to changes in the environment (Bickerstaffe 1998). To this end, teaching faculty discuss a broad range of management functions in which they drill students. The case method of teaching, a system first developed in US law schools which analyses real-life corporate problems, is a classic way of doing this.

Employers' Expectations from MBA Programs

Many employers appear to weigh up a university by the seeming quality of its placement service. The relationships between placement services and employers are similar to those between professional recruitment consultancies and their organizational clients. University selection and assessment criteria used by client organizations are largely functional (i.e. based on how the service was delivered) and/or relationship based, and expressed in the importance of essentials reflecting a high degree of understanding between the university and employer. "Graduate quality", as defined by the employer in terms of personal chemistry and appropriate job skills, often dominate as selection criteria, but a number of process-related elements of service delivery are also important (Ellis and Moon, 1998). The "quality" of business graduates, as viewed by employers, could be improved by better homework by universities, both in terms of developing job-hunting skills and in nurturing realistic expectations of their placement experience. Andrew Miller (1998) identified four components in the interview research with employers:

- 1) Activities and programs should be premeditated to effectively produce reimbursement to all partners.
- 2) They should be something that the company is uniquely or particularly well placed to do.
- 3) They must be clearly coupled to the company's business focus and development needs or they are unlikely to be sustainable.
- 4) They should be strongly related to the recognized needs of the educational institution(s) concerned.

Since most people undertake an MBA course in order to advance their careers, either within their own organization or by changing jobs, the perception of employers of MBA is crucial. The perception of the employers about MBA program has become much more positive. Several factors have contributed to this.

The environment of tumultuous change in which organizations of all kinds now operate – deregulation, mergers and acquisitions, searches for core competencies, the impact of IT, to name just a few factors – calls for a need to stand back and take a more strategic view of the future (Bovee et. al. 1993). The MBA is a qualification with strong strategy content. Global competition has sharpened the need for professionalism in management, in contrast to the cult of a talented amateur, which in Pakistan at least prevails in many organizations even today. As the number of MBA graduates has increased, companies have moved to placing increasing numbers into senior jobs in organizations where they are in a position to influence hiring decisions. As a result, many companies now give preference to MBAs for new appointments.

The debate about the MBA itself, although not always conducted in favorable terms, has heightened general awareness of the qualification and often stimulated interest in what it has to offer. In Pakistan, many small organizations have impressively started hiring MBAs. There has been a growing increase in demand by managers for meaningful training and development, and preferably of a kind that conferred portable qualifications. Over the past few years, it has become noticeable in many job advertisements that possession of an MBA has become a desirable attribute. The realization, by organizations as well as individuals, that narrow professional qualifications or functional skills are ultimately not enough in a business

environment where there is a need to take an integrated and increasingly global view of how a decision will be implemented in a given situation. That is precisely what an MBA teaches. Attitudes of business schools have changed as well as a result of competitive markets where they have operated to provide programs that reflect the needs and realities of business and industry. An example is in emphasizing team and group work and in rooting the dissertation or project in the real world, rather than basing it on case studies or academic research only.

Graduates Requirements from an MBA degree

Business schools need to consider each and every vibrant aspect of their students and deliver distinguishing quality services and academic programs, and pay attention to improving student affiliation with their institutes. Gerald (2000) outlined a cluster of characteristics, which have been traditionally associated with higher education, like the “pursuit of truth and objective knowledge, continuous research, academic freedom, a neutral and open forum for debate, and the development of both the students' critical abilities and autonomy”. Low (2000) and Gold (2001) advocated that all academic and non-academic staff should follow the principles of quality customer service, whether in front line contact with students, or as teachers or serving in management and administrative roles. Deming (2000) suggested that management education requires application of the same principles that must be used for the improvement of any other process - manufacturing or service.

Freedom to think critically is crucial for students to achieve intellectual independence. However, a neutral and open forum for debate may be harder to achieve when frank and rigorous discussion might be perceived as breaching organizational loyalty. Beard (1994) concluded that there are two types of business students, namely: 1) “The Octopus - individuals who want to be in control and are looking for concepts they can help them to maintain control within their organization” and 2) “The Star Fleet Captain - individuals who are looking for self-fulfillment and wish to become effective leaders”. These types of students normally attain skills that will enable them to boldly go where no one has gone before. In the context of Pakistani Business Schools, the requirements of students are not widely explored. The situation raises the immediate need of a detailed research, which may fulfill the actual requirements of the students and the corporate sector.

Linkage between Business Schools and Industry

In a wide-ranging investigation, Hillage et. al. (1995) emphasize the importance of employers recognizing business needs in the development of links with management universities. They argued that large organizations are more likely to be involved with education institutions than SMEs, especially at university level. They also observed that the management of links most often falls within the remit of personnel departments in large companies and senior management within SMEs. Rawlinson and Connor (1996) illustrate several forms of college/industry interaction, including work-related activities with students. Like the current study, they show that it is important to maintain personal forms of communications with employers, and to provide adequate college support systems if institutions are to manage successfully their relations with companies. K. M. Melton (1989) in a study among a broad range of employers examined organizations' expectations of both students and the placement process.

Melton (1989, p.12) concludes that,

... the link between the business school and employing organizations originating in a work placement is increasingly capable of being enhanced over a whole range of issues. The proximity of a university to a company appears to be important to some companies. It enables the organization to have easy access and face-to-face contact with university representatives and students.

Stokes (1993) mentioned that for some companies dealing with local colleges could be viewed as a public demonstration of greater integration with the local community.

The value of linkages between business schools and industry is realized in most countries but often comparatively little is done in forging effective linkage systems. Most countries, particularly in the underdeveloped world, pay lip service to the idea. Most business schools link up with industry and close the gap between classroom instruction and actual practice through industrial visits and field trips. This is a way of exposing students to the actual work environment and providing an opportunity for students to observe new trends and technology, which are difficult to impart for the lack of appropriate equipment or instructional resources. However, it should be noted that mere visits to industrial establishments are not sufficient.

The linkage between business schools and industry is can be best enhanced through the two-way use of expertise from both sectors. Technical experts and specialists in industry can be involved in business schools as part-time instructors. On the other hand, teachers in these business schools can be hired by industries as consultants or be involved in training in areas of specific technical expertise. There is a growing realization that the linkages between business schools and the industry or other sub sectors of society depend largely upon clear policies and guidelines set by the training authorities. There is also a realization that business school cannot operate in isolation.

Lloyd, James and Ruth (1963) have emphasized the significance of obtaining feedback from industries and listed the benefits of cooperation between business schools and industry to the business school in three ways:

1. It brings together the business community and the school community.
2. The business school learns the problems of the business community, and becomes better equipped to teach students how to cope with them.
3. Cooperative education has immense public relations value since the business world meets and tests the products of the school. Many of the projects carried out in the program result in favorable publicity.

In various countries of the world, both business schools and enterprises benefit from their collaborative endeavors. Educational and training institutions benefit from access to physical facilities, machinery and equipment, 'on-the-job' training at industry premises, as well as assistance with expertise of their specialists for technical advice on curriculum content, the design of training programs, and the development of software and other instructional materials (Waddington 1997). In Pakistan, the dialogue between business schools and business organizations is not well established, although the essential need has been recognized in Government education policies. The two are virtually operating in watertight compartments with little interface worth mentioning; at least the need for linkages has not been formally institutionalized across the business education sector. But the need is recognized for industry to be at the forefront of technological developments and hence having an edge in the market. Industries need to be responsive to technological change and be able to

put in place adopted literally instantly systems of training and retraining, and also introduce greater flexibility in the workforce.

Business schools, however, operate with considerable inertia. In fact, rigidity in their provisions has made them followers of trends originating in the industrial sector. This has resulted in courses as well as faculty being redundant and, by the time their graduates enter the job market, they are already steps behind the pace of developments taken by industry. This is resulting in the ever-decreasing flow of personnel from industry joining as faculty in business schools, and an ever widening gap in the skills and competencies of the faculty compared to the latest developments in industry. An immediate need arises from the breaking of barriers of the industry safeguarding their so-called trade secrets, and the business schools sacrificing their sacred boundaries by the introduction of insights from industry. Recently, the University of the Punjab has realized the importance of having a closer link with industry and has established a career-counseling center for university graduates. One of the main objectives of this center is to develop an active link with the industry. Other institutions in the market should follow this practice.

Institutions should recognize that, for companies large or small, dealing with local universities could be viewed as a public demonstration of greater integration with the local community. The need for careful relationship management with organizations in close proximity is accentuated since these employers seem to be considerably more demanding in what they see as important in business links for those organizations using placement services from across the UK. Relationship-oriented selection criteria are of particular importance to these buyers. Local business also showed greater loyalty to their nearby institution, frequently using a single supplier only.

Conclusions

This chapter of literature review has synthesized the views of academic researchers about management, management education, and concerns of stakeholders towards management institutions. These discussions have provided a basis for this study to determine student choice of a particular business school for obtaining a MBA degree. This research will also try to determine whether the MBA programs offered by business schools in Lahore, Pakistan are

congruent with the demands of employers. The researcher also wishes to identify both satisfying and dissatisfying factors for MBA graduates in their respective MBA degree programs. This chapter has analyzed various concepts and theories of management, business education and curriculum of business management education. Management is a widely discussed concept in the current literature from multidisciplinary perspectives (Ottewill 2003; Longenecker and Ariss 2002; Moratis and Van 2002; Kinman and Kinman 2001; Monks and Walsh 2001; Watson and Temkin 2000). In this chapter, a link has been established between previous research on management education and this study conducted in the context of Pakistan.

Of all the academic concepts studied in respect to the area of business education and management, only a few have proven as good sources to contribute to effective management development. Management scholars are continuously raising questions such as how to select managers who can effectively and efficiently perform management roles and what is expected from these managers. The literature shows that the concept of management is as old as civilization. Changes in management styles and philosophies have always been led by the technological, economic and social changes in industrial and human life. Therefore, business organizations are adopting newly developed management styles of the new century and are putting pressure on management institutions, both public and private, to develop more effectively human resources to help accomplish complex business tasks. These corporate demands have led to rapid growth rates in enrolments in management schools all over the world. By providing future business managers, economists and other professionals, management schools can make a lasting impact on economic and social growth of a country. The change in business needs has produced significant challenges for management universities including assessing business requirements, developing appropriate curriculum content, hiring business oriented faculty and producing competent graduates who can face the corporate challenges. The findings of Brendan J. Gray (2007) presented a set of skills to assist universities in developing in business graduates

... an ability and willingness to learn about product-markets, to solve marketing problems, to communicate with internal and external stakeholders, and to work in teams, plus the knowledge of a wide range of marketing subject areas needed to set

these skills in context. To progress from junior to senior posts, marketing graduates need to develop strategic thinking, leadership and management skills, and must demonstrate knowledge of strategic planning, product and brand management, communication and promotion, and consumer behavior.

Similarly, Duoc & Metzger (2007) have surveyed graduates, faculty and employers in Vietnam and found “critical analysis, problem solving skills, overall quality of work and showing significant difference in enthusiasm and self-motivation” as indicators of good quality business graduates. The perception of graduates about required skills may vary according to family backgrounds, academic qualifications, personality types and career approach. While graduates in many fields are primarily interested in gaining knowledge and developing their careers, many business graduates tend to look for quick professional advancement (Buchanan, Kim & Basham, 2007).

The curriculum offered by universities also plays significant roles in shaping graduates, thus enabling universities to attempt to meet the expectations of stakeholders. The integrated and stakeholders-centered curriculum model, presented by M.L. Emiliani (2006), sets out such strategies as dealing with “deficiencies cited previously, simplifying the curriculum, adding needed focus, improving relevancy, making courses more interesting, improving thematic consistency, improving connectivity to the real-world and offering greater lifetime utility to students”.

The curriculum of management universities should equip students with creativity, flexibility, innovative mind-sets, the ability to manage contingencies, self-motivation and self-direction, the ability to lead sub-ordinates and other capabilities. Developing such challenging skills demands that management schools integrate functional knowledge with academic curricula and develop long-term partnerships with industry, making them open to industry exposure and ensuring continuous learning (Jamali and Suliman 2005). Employers in the corporate sector strive for maximum value to their investment, and therefore expect that employees will add value even on the first day of job. They expect universities to equip graduates with most of the highly required skills, such as leadership, strategic thinking, problem solving and managing independent operations. Bruce & Schoenfeld (2006) have explored 19 skills of

business graduates and factorized into five characteristics, required in business management as:

1) Decision-making under uncertainty; ability to adapt/change to new situations; ability to make decisions with imperfect information; ability to integrate information from a wide variety of sources. 2) Communication skills; oral and written communications skills. 3) Cultural and ethical awareness; cultural sensitivity and awareness; skills in corporate ethical conduct. 4) Data collection and analysis; information-gathering skills; quantitative skills. 5) Strategic/analytical thinking; ability to think strategically; ability to think analytically.

The literature presented clearly shows that understanding corporate requirements, employer expectations, and students' perceptions towards career and university, not only enhances institutional performance but also bridges industry-academia gaps and draws all partners closer together. This thesis along with other academic outputs draws on the views of graduates and employers in the context of Pakistan and synthesizes them to contribute new policy guidelines for universities. An important literature gap of Pakistani perspective about business education is addressed by discussion of findings from other countries is also presented. The researcher will conclude this chapter with the recommendation presented by Angeline Tay (2001) who wrote as follows:

In future, to prevent institutions of higher learning from remaining years behind the practices of leading businesses, more practitioners and academics must roll up their sleeves to help them respond to the changing environment effectively. Continuous improvement in their curriculum, delivery and learning processes would be necessary. Improvement in the behavioral and work-related attributes of executives must remain the main focus of all MBA degree providers. In return, employers should employ MBAs and take advantage of the skills that they have acquired by getting the best out of them.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Management universities can undoubtedly gain competitive advantages and ensure continuous improvement in offering education by having programs to follow-up on the education experiences of graduates and their experiences in the workforce. Follow-up studies can help bridge the gap between industry and academia, highlight industrial needs and demands, communicate details of ongoing changes in the corporate environment and help management universities to upgrade and improve their offerings. Stevenson et. al. (1985:81) noted that “student follow-up results provide one form of outcomes measurement that can be used to address issues of accountability, program review, community relations and marketing”.

This research addresses issues related to the success and impact of MBA programs in Pakistan. Various methodologies are used for analysis and review including: electronic-surveys, questionnaire surveys, group discussions, focus groups, observational techniques, semi-structured and structured interviews, telephonic-surveys and postal surveys. A comprehensive review of modern literature on research methodology together with consultations with researchers within universities and industry suggested use of the planned observational approach and structured and semi-structured interviews. Planned observation can provide useful assessment of the learning process, together with its relevance and effectiveness. Structured interviews ensure that detailed and relevant views of respondents are taken into account, and so are able to provide insights into the situations in which respondents work and study. In Pakistan, where a research culture is not well developed in universities and academia, potential respondents are less familiar with the significance of participation in research processes and hesitate to share their views with researchers. In order to ensure the maximum quality of data and to reach the inner side of story, which can possibly make a research contribution, I decided to confine my study to planned observations and structured

interviews focusing on one reasonably developed industry. Limited time and resources, a less matured research culture in Pakistan, and less cooperative behavior of respondents are the biggest hurdles for this kind of research that requires high quality data.

This study consists of two distinct but related empirical investigations and an argument that links the data to practical solutions. On one end, the study investigates the impact of the MBA programs on the graduates as feedback to the process in the light of corporate experience through the perceptions of the graduates. Secondly, the research tries to investigate the perceptions and expectations of ultimate employers towards business graduates and the satisfaction levels of employed graduates. In order to meet the need for high quality data and to minimize the likelihood of sampling error combined with the cultural situation of Pakistan, the author personally conducted the interviews and undertook the planned observations. The hosiery/ knitwear industry was selected since it is considerably systemized and is a well managed operation, involving leading industrial players and the use of sophisticated technology. Thirty-six graduates working in the hosiery/knitwear industry were approached and invited to participate in the study. Fifteen employers of same industry were approached, having regard to the status of the firms and evidence of good work practices.

Research Design

An extensive effort was made to identify MBA graduates working in the knitwear/ hosiery industry in Lahore. A list of firms was obtained from the offices of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA). With the help of telephone calls and personal contacts, eleven (11) firms were selected as employing MBA graduates from different institutes. A list of fifty-seven graduates in eleven companies was thus developed. Thirty-six graduates out of fifty-seven were selected for study using a stratified random sampling technique. Employers of fifteen firms were requested to participate in the study. Employers were selected from the available list of eighty-seven (87) companies using stratified random sampling. Sampling distribution for employers and graduates was based on geographical location to ensure generalizability of research and its ability of being representative. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed to guide the interview process and ensure involvement of all dimensions in research. The views of respondents were recorded along with their comments

on issues and particularly their emphasis on specific issues negatively and positively using a soft version of the questionnaire provided by Laptop. Related interview records and notes were also taken. The instrument developed for the interviews consisted of four main variables: (1) reasons behind the choice of business schools, (2) perceptions of the MBA graduates about relevance of the degree program to the job requirements in terms of knowledge and skills, (3) satisfaction of MBA graduates with their degree program, and (4) contribution of the MBA program to the personal and professional development of the graduates. In the instrument for employers, five variables were included: (1) knowledge of MBA graduates (2) general perception of employers about MBA graduates, (3) changes in recent MBA graduates in comparison to MBA graduates of the past as noted by employers, (4) difference between MBA graduates from public universities and those from private sector universities, and (5) deficiencies in MBA graduates.

The design used in the study was ex post facto design. Christensen (1985:32) defined ex post facto research as a study that “compares the effects of two or more variables where the variables being manipulated are not under the experimenter's control.” The essence of this study is the relevance of MBA programs to the job market and satisfaction of the MBA graduates and their employers in similar industrial settings with MBA degree programs. In selecting a research design to gather information for the feedback from MBA graduates and their employers, various approaches were considered investigated. Graduates of different business schools were asked questions during interviews in the following areas:

- Reasons of choosing a particular business school;
- Relevance of the MBA program to requirements of the employers in textile/ knitwear industry;
- Satisfaction of the graduates from their MBA degree program;
- Effects of MBA programs on graduates’ personal and professional development; and
- Suggestions and recommendations of the graduates for the improvement of the program.

Fifteen employers of MBAs were interviewed to understand the requirements of the industry. Questions in the following areas were asked from the employers during interviews:

- Expectations of the industry from MBA graduates;
- Observations of the employers about the working of the MBA graduates;
- Changes noted by the employers in more recently appointed MBA graduates;
- Personal and professional characteristics of MBA graduates;
- Any specific shortcomings; and
- Recommendations of the employers for the improvement of MBA programs.

It is presumed that every MBA manager, irrespective of the institutional setting within which he/she operates, applies to a large extent theories and skills learnt in the universities. Consequently, after interviewing the graduates, the researcher expected some degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction to be expressed by graduates with regard to their learning of skills and content in the degree programs. But in the area where the educational background and organizational settings of the MBAs differ markedly, as in the case of business graduates working in hosiery/knitwear Industry, the researcher expected to discover relatively more diversity in comments and suggestions. It was, therefore, important to explore this diversity in comments in terms of satisfaction with the curriculum and the process of learning at different business schools.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and procedures used in the study. This section is followed by discussions of research methodology, research design, choice of data collection technique, pilot study, data collection, research questions, population & sampling technique, instrumentation and analysis of data.

Profile of Respondents

The ages of MBA graduates interviewed ranged from 25 to 35 years. Their qualification was an MBA degree from a public or a private sector university. The majority had one to five years of experience before this study was conducted. All of the MBAs interviewed had obtained their initial training from their organizations at the time of their induction. These MBAs were trained by their organizations inside the organization and by professional trainers outside the organization. In the hosiery/knitwear industry, standardized modern management

systems are being used for most industrial processes. Nearly all of the industries are ISO 9000 certified and have their own standard working procedures. Every new MBA graduate has to follow existing work practices and there is not much room for them to make independent judgments. The employers ranged from 40 to 60 years in age and all were university graduates. Their experience ranges from 8 to 11 years in total and from 3 to 5 years in the same industry. The interviewed employers included CEOs, human resource managers, directors and administrators of organizations.

Choice of Data Collection Techniques

Interviews using a semi-structured research instrument were used for this study. In many ways the items in the interview schedule and the questionnaire were similar. Both attempted to elicit information about perceptions, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and activities undertaken by respondents.

Use of survey research with only a questionnaire has its advantages over other methods of data collection, especially as there are fewer requirements in time, cost and organization. An important advantage is that, for the same cost, more responses can be obtained in a given time than responses through interviews. However, the questionnaire method was rejected because of the following serious disadvantages:

- Respondents' motivation and involvement are difficult to probe and assess; and
- Questionnaires cannot be used if there is an apprehension that respondents might not be able to perceive real essence of the question; and
- Possible unwillingness of potential respondents to be involved in the study.

In considering the interview method of data collection, it was observed that the interview method has a number of distinct advantages over alternative methods of collecting similar information. The interview method involves collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. This direct interaction is the source of both advantages and disadvantages as a research technique.

The advantages, outlined by Zikmund (1997:232), Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Van Dalen (1979) include the ease with which rapport can be established between the interviewer and

interviewee, and the freedom and spontaneity with which information can be given to the interviewer. Much greater opportunity is available to explore various aspects of the topic that most deeply concern interviewees, and there are opportunities for follow-up questions. The main advantages of structured interviews are that they are in the control of the interviewer. As Van Dalen (1979) stated that structured interviews introduce control that is required to permit the formulation of scientific generalizations. Zikmund (1997) suggested that structured interviews give the added advantage of clarifying questions from the interviewee. Structured interviews are recommended as appropriate to investigate the perception of employers at follow-up stage.

It is generally agreed that interviews can provide more accurate information if all respondents can be interviewed. The strengths of the interview method are seen to be in its objectivity, intensity and comprehension of observation, as advantages outlined by Van Dalen (1979). In the case of this study, the size of the sample, its administration and the range and number of the questions were the main reasons why the interview was adopted as the means of gathering data for this project.

Pilot Survey

A pilot study was first conducted on three graduates. These graduates were selected randomly. The random selection was easy as this industry hires many graduates. A list of companies was obtained from the office of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association. Telephone calls were made to compile a list of MBA graduates working within each industry and randomly three names of graduates were selected. The pilot study was conducted so that information concerning the following could be ascertained:

- The time it takes to conduct an interview;
- Whether respondents could understand the meaning of the terms used; and
- Whether the questions were easily comprehended.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of the business graduates from 28 public and private business schools, working in 87 hosiery/ knitwear industries in Pakistan. Most of the hosiery/

knitwear industry in Pakistan employs large numbers of business graduates in their production, cutting, export, merchandising, and finance and marketing sections. The graduates serving the hosiery industry have maximum access to the latest technology, management disciplines, operational techniques and Human resource management affairs. The employers in the same industry also have exposure to best practices, competitive advantages and winning strategies, as the industry is operating in a highly competitive export oriented environment.

Data Collection

Data were collected in following steps:

1. A list of companies in the hosiery/knitwear industry was obtained from the Association of Hosiery/ Knitwear Industry and APTMA.
2. Telephone calls were made to organizations requesting them to provide a list of business graduates working with them.
3. Telephone calls to these organizations were made to follow-up my request.
4. Personal contact was made in terms of students and other faculty colleagues.
5. A list of all business graduates working with these organizations was compiled.
6. By applying a stratified random sampling technique, 57 graduates (42 male and 15 female) were selected.
7. A pilot study was conducted using three graduates and two employers other than those who were studied in this research.
8. Letters were sent to MBA graduates and employers of MBA graduates to obtain their consent and availability.
9. Ultimately 30 managers comprising 25 male and 5 female responded as per the researcher's expectations.
10. A tentative schedule of interviews was prepared.

11. Telephone calls were made to seek appointments from the MBA graduates and their employers for interviews in their offices.

12. A semi-constructed questionnaire was prepared to assist the interview process.

13. Offices were visited and interviews were conducted with all these MBA graduates and their employers.

14. Responses were recorded on a laptop computer during the interviews.

15. Notes were reviewed to ensure the accuracy of data and validity of results.

08. Data Analysis and interpretation

Interviews of the respondents were conducted in their offices where there was no one else present except the researcher and the respondent. Notes of the interviews were taken on my laptop computer. After collection of the data, the responses of the graduates were put together question wise. Significant excerpts from the responses were reproduced. As the respondents responded in diversified manner, significant points of the responses were summarized at the end. The respondents' views were recorded along with author's observations as supporting documentation. All minutes were classified into various grouped themes and ranked with the help of observational notes. The developed thematic scheme was further divided into various categories and explanations are abstracted for interpretations and conclusions. The same procedures were adopted for the interviews with employers of the graduates.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA: RESPONSES OF MBA GRADUATES

01. Introduction

The study presents a comprehensive and qualitative understanding of the perceptions of MBA graduates. Views collected through interviews with graduates are used to develop meaningful conclusions. The results of interviews provide important insights and help the researcher unearth issues and the views of different respondents on these. After collection the data were analyzed in order to determine how the graduates of various MBA programs and their respective employers perceived the effects of their business education, insights on the role that business education should play in training and career development, what skill sets are required for junior executives in the industry, and the expertise that management universities need to develop in their graduates. This chapter focuses on the responses of the graduates.

Weiss (1994) points out that the interviews in research studies are essential in situations where one wants to find out how well a system works or fails to work. He emphasizes that “the dense information obtained in qualitative interviewing permits descriptions of the many sectors of a complex entity and how they go together”. Beyond the system itself, a further interest in this research was how students interpret their experiences as they negotiate the system. As Weiss (1994) explains, “it is important to know how they thought about what happened, what sorts of causes they identified, and what sorts of consequences they worried about. Qualitative interviewing enables to learn about perceptions and reactions known only to those to whom they occurred”.

As described by Weiss and others, the data that is possible to generate through interviews is very different from that obtained through a questionnaire survey. Lin and Erickson (1990) expressed concern about the choice of questions in interview research as “significant issues of human choice and meaning, and in that sense they concern issues of improvement in educational practice”. The interview method takes the researcher to another level of learning about the perspectives of the particular actors in particular events and the identification of

specific casual linkage that were not identified by experimental methods, and the development of new theories about causes and other influences on the patterns that are not identified in survey data or experiments. Specifically, in this research, the researcher is interested in going beyond the survey questions with well-defined answers. The researcher intends to understand how, after completion of their courses, the graduates perceive the MBA program and its role in their lives and career development and advancement.

All data in this research are drawn from the perceptions of graduates and their employers derived from their academic and corporate experience. Evidence clearly indicates that university students are conscientious and generally accurate reporters about their activities, that they express their opinions and satisfaction forthrightly, and that their judgments of what they have gained are consistent with external evidence (Pace, 1985). In fact, Pace (1985) comments, “what students perceive to be true is a reality in its own right, a condition that has its own inherent validity”. Weiss (1994) has explained that “there are no observers of internal events or thoughts and feelings except those to whom they occur”. His claim supports the validity of the interview and survey responses of those who entered and completed MBA degrees. The method of qualitative interviewing is further supported by Weiss who says that “we gain in the coherence, depth and density of the material each respondent provides. We permit ourselves to be informed, as we cannot by brief answers to survey items. The investigative report we ultimately write can provide readers with a fuller understanding of the experiences of our respondents”.

The questions used in this research were:

- Why did you choose a particular institution for MBA degree program?
- How is the MBA program related to your job requirements in terms of business knowledge and skills?
- What is your level of satisfaction with your business school's MBA?
- What would you definitely like to say about your experiences in the MBA program?
- How did the MBA degree program affect you personally and professionally?
- What recommendations do you have for your business school with regard to the MBA program?

MBA Interview Respondents

Thirty-six graduates of the MBA program gave their consent to be interviewed concerning their experiences at different business schools and on the job. All of these graduates were working on lower to upper management positions in various areas of the hosiery/knitwear industry in Pakistan. Together they represented various constituencies in the MBA program. Most of the respondents did not object to use their real names in this research, but some of them asked not to use the name of their business schools. The descriptions of the respondents are as accurate as possible. However, it is important to note that the researcher did not use the respondents real names, not he names of their organizations and business schools from which they graduated in order to maintain confidentiality of the data.

Naeem, a 27-year-old man from Faisalabad, came to the government sector university in 1998. He took 2.5 years to complete the MBA, and graduated with a 74% overall average. He served in an organization as an assistant after his first degree and was advised by his manager to do MBA. At undergraduate level Naeem had never studied business related courses before enrolling for his MBA. He found it hard to study all the core courses. He finished his degree within the due time. Naeem was also elected as class representative during his first year of studies. He is now employed as a Deputy General Manager in a leading knitwear industry in Pakistan.

Poonam, 29 years old female commenced her MBA in 1998, after completing a commerce undergraduate program. After her first year in the MBA program, she chose marketing as her area of specialization. Poonam graduated from the MBA program in March 1995, with an overall average of 77% marks. She is now employed in Lahore within a firm with an international reputation.

Tahir is employed with a local knitwear industry as a Cutting Manager. He graduated from a private sector university with 'A' Grade securing 88% marks. Like most of the graduates of this university, it took Tahir about 2.5 years to complete the MBA. He previously completed a simple undergraduate degree in arts from a college in Lahore.

Zinnorain now working at the largest hosiery and knitwear industry as dyeing manager and is 38 years old. He was the most senior of all the respondents in this study. He started his MBA in 1990 and graduated in 1992. Earning a 69% overall average, it took only 2 years for Zinnorain to complete the MBA from a small size local business school. The rapidity of this progress can be attributed to his business school, which had a very rigid academic calendar. Zinnorain is married and is the father of two children. He worked for many years in his own newspaper distribution business before undertaking his MBA course.

Javaid, a 34-year-old man, is employed by one of the medium size knitwear industry in Lahore. He entered the MBA program in 1995 and graduated in 1997, taking a little over two years to complete the MBA degree. His area of specialization was finance.

Zahid, a 27-year-old man, is now employed as assistant manager in quality control section of a reputed local company. He graduated from a government university. He entered the MBA program in the 1994 session. He graduated with a 72% overall score in May 2000.

Tanveer, a 36-year-old ex-bank employee, came into the afternoon MBA program at a private sector university. Students in the afternoon program study the same curriculum as studied in the morning. After the MBA program, Tanveer decided to switch his career from bank employee to a textile industry executive. The main motive behind this change was considerably higher pay in the textile and knitwear industry.

Basharat, a 32-year-old man, entered the MBA in the afternoon class in 1998. Like Tanveer, Basharat changed his organization just after finishing his MBA degree. He graduated from the MBA program in May 2000. He finished his degree earning a 69% overall percentage in the MBA program. Basharat completed his degree with finance as his area of specialization. Instead of finance, he is working in production department.

Ali, a 32-year-old man, entered the MBA Program in May 1997. Obtaining an overall average of 73% marks, he completed the degree in February 2000. He is a Merchandiser in a small size knitwear firm.

Amjad entered the business school of the state university in September 2002. He is 29 years old. While studying for his MBA, Amjad worked with his father in a rice export business.

Amjad earned an overall average of 77% marks, and graduated in February 1998. He is now employed as a Cutting Manger.

Zaheer is a 37 years old man and comes from a small city. He did his MBA from a low price small size business school in afternoon classes. Zaheer had three years' experience before starting his MBA. Currently he is working in middle management capacity.

Anosh joined her organization just after finishing her MBA degree program. Anosh belongs to upper middle class. She had been an outstanding student and secured an overall average of 86% marks in her MBA. Her father is working with a private limited company.

Rehman, a 33-year-old man, was born in a small town. He did his schooling from a government school in his town. He got his Bachelor degree from the city closer to the town and came to Lahore for his MBA degree.

Samee entered a state university in 1997. He is 33 years old. He worked with the finance department of a hospital for a year. He switched his organization just after one year. Now he has 7 years' experience with his current organization. Samee's father is an Army officer.

Abir, the son of a rich businessman, was born in Lahore. He finished his MBA in 1995 from a private sector university. He is working as Production Manager with a large size knitwear company.

Majid was born in a small town near Lahore. After finishing his study at high school, he moved to Lahore for university education. He had completed a B.Com degree before doing his MBA. He is working as an Assistant Manager.

Idrees was born abroad when his father was working with a multinational company in Dubai. Idrees finished his study at a high school in Dubai. His parents decided to send him to Lahore for MBA studies. He secured an overall average of 73% marks in his MBA with a specialization in Marketing.

Qayyum, another respondent, joined his present position as Assistant Manager just after completing his MBA. He came to the University of the Punjab, just after undertaking a BA

degree in his home town. He is the first person in his family, who had completed an MBA degree.

Shamus was born in a very poor family in a city near Lahore. After graduation from his city he came to Lahore to do MBA from a public university.

Nadia, a female graduate from a very expensive private sector business university, joined a small textile industry in the start of her career. After spending three years there, she joined a reputed organization and now holds a senior position.

Qasir is working in the middle management with a reputed industry. He decided to join knitwear industry because it was the rapidly growing industry of the country. He did his MBA 4 years ago and got his first promotion just after first year. He graduated from a public university.

Asghar is the son of a feudal lord. His father wanted him to get the finest education possible. He studied in one of the most expensive business schools of the country. He enjoys his job as a merchandising manager.

After completing his BCom degree, Wadood entered a private sector business school. He did his MBA course with a specialization in finance. Instead of finding a position in a financial institution, he decided to work with a textile unit. He is in general management.

Mujtaba belongs to a political family. He enrolled at a state university to do his MBA and graduated with overall marks of 67%. After even five years, he is still struggling to get his first promotion.

Mudassar is working with a knitting unit. A graduate from a public university, Mubashar belongs to a poor family and entered the public university after competing for an MBA place on merit.

Jahangir is 32. He completed his MBA 8 years ago. He is working as dyeing manager. In a very short time he moved very quickly to this position. Jahangir did some professional development courses organized by his company. He had a very mature opinion about the business schools in Lahore.

Saima graduated from a state university. She decided to join textile industry when she did her internship at a textile firm. She is just a new employee of the company.

Muzaffar completed his MBA from a private sector business school. He decided to do MBA on recommendation of one of his relatives. He is working in middle management in a medium size textile company.

Hussain came to Lahore from another province. He moved to Lahore because some of his relatives were living there. He got admission in a private sector business school. He did his MBA with finance as his area of specialization. He scored an overall average of 77% marks and is now working in middle management of a medium size industry.

Ghafoor was born in heart of the city of Lahore. His father was a businessman and he guided him to do his MBA. His father wanted him to help him develop the family business. He preferred to work with a private sector organization instead of working with small size family organization.

Kamran is the son of a government employee. He did his MBA with a specialization in Finance. He preferred textile sector for job over financial institutions. He graduated from a public university.

Farida was born in an upper middle class family. Her aim was to go to engineering but she could not manage to score the required marks for entry. She joined middle management of a medium size textile industry. She is a graduate of a private sector business school.

Azeem, son of a leading journalist of the country, was born in Lahore. After doing his schooling, he entered in a public sector university for his MBA program. He is in the middle management in a well established knitwear company.

Siraj has a rural background. He completed all of his education in a small town. He came to Lahore for MBA, and lived a hostel life during education. Currently he is working as an assistant manager.

Naosheen completed her MBA from a private sector university. Her father was a senior government officer. She chose Finance as her area of specialization. She is working in a cutting section.

Manzoor holds a managerial position in a major company in Lahore. Manzoor came to Lahore from a small city to do his MBA. He received admission in a state university and did his MBA with marketing as his area of specialization. His father is a landlord in his city. Manzoor is the first person in his family to enter a university.

Analysis of Interviews

The method used to analyze the interview data is similar to that described by Weiss (1994). The basic process was to describe what has been learned from all respondents about their feelings as MBA students at various business schools. Notes on every interview were made on a laptop computer and in notebooks during the interview process.

Responses of the respondents were organized question-wise. Within the responses of each question, similar responses were grouped together. In the end, an overall summary of the responses was made.

Reasons for Choosing a Particular Business School

As there are a large number and variety of business schools in Lahore from all over Pakistan, students make their choice for postgraduate education on the bases of their own criteria. For a comprehensive understanding of students' considerations and their preferences, more specific information is required. To discover the specific reasons that graduates had for choosing a particular business school, and to explore the factors of satisfaction in their preferred business school and degree program, graduates were asked to explain how they made their choices and what factors influenced such choices.

A large number of those interviewed expressed the idea of convenience when they talked about choosing their business school for their postgraduate study. Convenience, of course, meant different things to different people. Tahir expressed his choice in the following statement: "I did not have enough marks in my BA to get admission to a Public Sector

University. I did not have to compete for admission in the school I chose for my MBA.” Tahir’s idea of convenience was easy and guaranteed admission, but some other ideas also appeared in the interviews with other respondents.

Qayyum, who lived in a hostel, considered the hostel as an important matter of geographic convenience and explained as follows: “Hostel facility at this university was excellent and cheap. I am sure that this accommodation was cheapest in the town. Hostel was one of the main attractions for me.”

Siraj, a graduate from a public university explained his choice as follows: “I came to Lahore from a small village. I did not have any relative here in Lahore. The only way I could live was to stay in a hostel. I chose a public university simply because I had accommodation problem.”

Naeem also considered hostel facility as an attraction to join the University of the Punjab. He explained the reasons for his choice of university as follows: “You know that the public university has dozens of hostels. Hostels over here are cheap. You meet with many students from other faculties. I enjoyed swimming in the swimming pool located near hostels”.

Shamus commented on his stay in the university in the following words.

After living in university hostel, it verified the assumption that you can't help but benefit from the hostel life. You absorb so much just by being there. Living in the hostel for even one year teaches you that you can, indeed, live anywhere. Residing in the hostel, I met so many people. It was fantastic. Living and studying amidst so many different cultures is a learning experience that can only be got in the university hostel.

He further added, “In life, we have to be flexible. In adjusting to a new lifestyle, a new environment and a new method of learning, living in the hostel automatically exercises this skill. Luckily, you’ll be having so much fun, it comes naturally”.

Since many students come to Lahore from neighboring cities, hostel facilities are therefore an important attraction for them. Convenience for some MBA graduates meant that the business school was close to their workplace or home, or easily accessible through public transport. As

Basharat said, “Actually, I decided to go to a private sector business school because I could attend it after my job time, while I was working in a pharmaceutical company. This university was close to the area of my marketing job.”

Ghafoor had similar reason in choosing his business school. He said, “I never had any idea about enrolling in an MBA course. My father asked me to do MBA. I helped my father in his business while I was doing my MBA. The key reason of selecting my business school was being closer to my home. I used to take a bus to reach my university.”

Farida was another respondent who had similar reasons. She said, “I am from Lahore. I chose this business school because it was close to my home. Being female, it was very hard for me to travel to distant places. My parents decided to put me at this school.”

Muzaffar explained his reason by as follows: “I found the idea of studying in a small private university located in one of the most easily accessible areas of the city. This was one of the greatest opportunities, hard to miss”.

Zinnorain also had similar considerations. He said, “My business school was close to my office. It used to take only 15 minutes to reach my class after my office hours. It was nearly impossible for me to reach to any other business school. Javaid explained that “... a very important factor was that my university offered evening classes. I had to work while I was attending a graduate school. That was very convenient to me.”

Many evening MBA students worked with different organizations and wished to enroll at a business school that could offer a degree program with convenient class times. Classes also were offered on different days of week and different times of the day in some private business schools. The timing schedule of classes of schools meant convenience to them.

Degree recognition and prestige of the institution was another consideration for choosing a particular school. Abir, who is a graduate from one of the most expensive business schools, had the following reasons in choosing his business school: “This chartered university had the most reputed name in Lahore. This school had produced many successful business executives. I visited all leading business schools before getting admission. It really impressed me. Its physical facilities were not less than any university of advanced countries.”

Nosheen's reason for choosing her business school was same as Abir. She said, "I wanted good education. My university had the best reputation in the city, although it was very expensive. I thought that those two years were the most important years of my life. That was the reason I decided to join this business school." Qayyum was impressed by the name of the business school. He explained as follows: "The word leadership in the name of my business school was very inspiring for me. I always had the feelings that this institute would be very strong in management-related areas."

When Zahid talked about his choice of the public sector university, he pointed out as follows:

Once I decided to pursue an MBA degree, my choice to attend the public sector university was easy. I wanted to stay in a hostel, and it was most affordable at the new campus. This university also offered a recognized program. I knew that graduates from both the public sector university and a chartered university earn high prestige when the student enters the job market. Many of the private sector business schools were not even recognized by the government. When I learned that many of the public university's professors had foreign experience, that factor also inspired me to join this university.

Ali expressed the view that respondents who attended the public sector university were significantly different to those of private sector business schools. He went on to describe this perceived difference in the following way:

Public sector universities, in my opinion, have a rural mindset. The majority of the students at the state university come from small towns and cities. If you look at the public sector university type of MBAs, those MBAs and their mindset are less enterprising and less liberal. Looking at private sector schools, I found them more practical, and these provided a culture very similar to the actual business.

Ali was convinced that both types of graduates bring their business school's culture to their work organizations. The comments made by Zahid and Ali represent the dominant theme with regard to choice of private or public university MBA program.

Kamran joined a government university for his MBA. He commented his reasons for choosing his university were as follows: "My father was a government servant. He did all of

his studies in government sector educational institutions. He actually did not have any awareness of private sector business schools. This was my father's reason for getting me to enroll at the public university."

Azeem who obtained all of his education from the University of Punjab in Lahore commented as follows: "My choice was obvious. I scored very high marks in my BCom. I could afford to compete for admission in the public university. Most of my friends also joined the same university."

Recognition of the degree is an important part of respondents' comments in making comparisons of public universities with private sector business schools. Many MBAs talked about this comparison. Many graduates had a strong perception that employers are more impressed by the names of some business schools over others. Some private sector schools, which are not offering degrees recognized by the Higher Education Commission, earned a low ranking in the job market.

However, some other themes also emerged from the interviews. Some graduates talked about the culture of their university as a base for their decision in choosing a particular business school. Nadia said as follows:

I was fortunate enough to travel extensively throughout the country for pleasure trips with friends at my university. I have never lived away from my family before and hostel life gave me a wonderful, family-like community. This business school had a very warm atmosphere, with something for everyone. There are many clubs and societies to belong, including everything from the cricket club to a film society. There is always something going on, especially within the hostels.

Asghar had similar feelings. He said, "I choose this university because the environment at the university is conducive for learning. This is created by both students and faculty. It helps both at social and academic level". Like Asghar, Saima had the similar comments. She said,

Selecting a college or university could be one of the most important decisions one can ever make in one's lifetime. I am very proud of selecting my university. At this university they encouraged me to ignore traditional barriers and work towards

achieving goals. They helped students of exceptionally diverse backgrounds like me and never made them feel that I was different from others was especially good.

Mujtaba's comments were somewhat similar when she explained as follows: "The reason why I was there was my keenness in studying business management and it was great living in a metropolitan city like Lahore. I was hoping to get into some foreign university in order to fulfill my life and ambitions".

While Manzoor did not face problems in admission, his choice was influenced by his perceptions of quality of different business schools. He explained: "I did not face any problem while getting admission in a private sector business school. But the state university had the highest reputation of any university in my city. Everyone in the country knew it. I thought that after graduating from this university it would be easier to get a job because it was a well-known business school."

Some graduates preferred a particular business school because of the strength of the school in a particular area. Mujtaba was attracted to a particular university because it was strong in international marketing, economics and finance and was keen to increase his skills in these areas.

Expense was another factor in deciding for the choice of a business school. In answer to the question about reasons for choice of their business school, Zaheer explained that cost of tuition and other expenses was a major consideration in her case. She came from a relatively poor family and could not afford the high fees charged by private universities. Commenting on the level of tuition fees, Qaiser said,

I think that the fees {at the public university} were more reasonable and affordable in comparison to universities in private sector. Here there were other students with similar background to me. After some time, you forget that you are in a big city university. It was easy to make friendship with everyone and you always used to feel like you were part of a big family.

Rehman was another whose choice of institution was constrained by financial factors. He explained as follows: "Before moving to Lahore, I did not have much idea of business schools

in Lahore. On the other hand, my parents were not able to pay tuition fees of a private university. So I decided for the public sector university for financial reasons.” In a country like Pakistan, many people are more price-conscious than in other countries. Students from lower to middle income class families cannot afford to pay the high tuition fees charged by some of the highly reputed private sector business schools.

Recommendations of friends and relatives were one of the strongest reasons for choosing a particular business school. Idress chose his business school on the recommendation of one of his relatives. He explained: “I spent most of my life out of Pakistan. I had no idea of business schools in Lahore. One of my relatives had done an MBA from the same business school. He recommended this school to me.”

Hussain, who moved to Lahore from another province explained how he came to choose his university:

I had no idea of business schools in Lahore. In my city there was only one university that offered an MBA. My uncle who was living in Lahore guided me to come to Lahore to do my MBA. I lived with my relatives for initial years before I moved out with some friends. Initially, I was a little upset by my uncle's decision. Then I started enjoying my stay and studies.

Anosh, a female graduate, who actually wanted to do Master's degree in geography, decided to undertake an MBA on her father's recommendation. She explained her experiences in choosing a university for MBA studies as follows:

I was enrolled in an MBA because my father guided me to this stream. I had done BA with a major in geography and wanted to be a geographer. My father convinced me to do MBA from this school. He told me that this school was well recognized and provided more opportunities for getting job.

Anosh's father is a business executive and his influence over her career decision can be clearly felt. Wadood's reason of choosing his university was similar to many others. He said, “This university was recommended to me by a friend and I was very impressed by it. I enjoyed many of the classes here in finance and economics. The lecturers were good.”

Samee's main reason for enrolling in a public sector university was the influence of his peer group. He explained,

The Government university in Lahore was a very well known institution of the country. I knew before joining the university that this university did not have very high standards. Even then, I decided for this university because I knew that students of very high merit came to this department of the university. Those who enrolled in this department were the top B.Com, B.A, and B.Sc. graduates from the province. That made an excellent classroom environment.

One graduate, however, expressed his comparison-shopping a little differently. He explained that he felt many of his peers pursued the same trend. Ali explained that he did not look at many business schools when he was trying to find a good fit with MBA programs. He said,

I appreciated how this private business school had managed its graduate studies. It had the best system in the school. Their physical facilities, like computer laboratory, library, furniture, and cafeteria were excellent. Students were provided with free Internet connections. Their curriculum was rightly focused. Most of our teachers were foreign PhDs. I didn't feel that Public Sector University had that.

Some MBA graduates chose a particular business school because they had obtained their first degree from the same business school. Poonam's following comments illustrate this point: "My undergraduate degree was in commerce from the lower section of this College of Commerce, so, the next obvious choice appeared to be an MBA or masters degree in commerce. I came to this business school because I was fully aware of its culture."

Some chose a particular business school because they had friends who had been in the same program and were very much satisfied with it. Naeem talked about this reason for his choice: "My friends were in this program. They obtained their first degree from my college. They knew I was interested in this program. So they recommended me this university."

Others chose a business school's MBA program because the university had the biggest library in the town. Zahid talked about his reasons for the choice of a university in the following words: "The state university has the largest library in the city. Apart from the main library,

the Department of Business Administration had its own library as well. I even consulted the library of the Psychology Department while writing my Consumer Behavior assignment.”

Several MBAs expressed their reasons for coming to a particular private sector business school as an interest in a specific field. Zinnorain explained it this way: “I was very impressed with the Information Systems Department. Their furniture and hardware were great. I am confident that this school was the best in the city in information technology area. Our IT teacher was foreign qualified and was fully equipped with latest concepts in IT.”

Samee was particularly interested in the area of finance and this influenced his choice to a major degree. He explained as follows: “My business school had the best Finance teachers. I was sure if I wanted to specialize in finance this school would be the best one for me. One of the finance teachers worked with a leading group of companies. He knew the actual application of financial concepts.”

From these comments and explanations, it is apparent that the MBA programs at most of the private sector business schools attract particular kinds of students who wish to achieve a good fit between their own needs and their ability to shop from among a large number of private sector business schools. A good fit for the graduates with different schools in some cases meant that business schools offered a recognized MBA program, while in other cases it meant that students were attracted because of a convenient location or by the quality of physical facilities.

Other dimensions of a good fit between student preference and institutional characteristics includes affordability and offering classes in the evening or afternoon compared to other competitors, thus allowing students to retain their jobs and at the same continue with their education. In other cases, students were attracted by the strength of the area of specialization they desired. Lastly, it is apparent that some students choose their business school because others recommended it to them.

Factors identified by the business graduates in the selection of their particular business school were thus in summary as follows:

- a. Easy and guaranteed admission.

- b. Hostel facility.
- c. Distance from workplace or residence.
- d. Ease in accessibility through public transport.
- e. Convenient time.
- f. Recognition of degree prestige of the institution.
- g. Cost of the program.
- h. Recommendations of friends and relatives.
- i. Familiarity with the business school because of obtaining previous degree from the same school.
- j. Peers' influence.
- k. Physical infrastructure of the institution.

Relevance of the Program to the Job Market

One of the goals of this study was to discover if the various MBA programs provided the same skills and knowledge as required by the job market. Interviews provided an opportunity to explore the relevance of programs to real life situations. Almost every graduate had a perception that the MBA degree undertaken promoted an extension to their basic skills and broadened their professional abilities. Said in different ways they felt that an MBA degree enhanced skills and expanded business knowledge.

Zinnorain expressed these ideas in the following way. He said,

The MBA degree, with its area of specializations, allowed me to expand what I had learnt previously from my newspaper business. I am 38 years old, I have experience of owning my own business for ten years, and it helped me in doing the things more professionally and skillfully. It made me aware of the errors of my ways in the past as well. It enabled me to improve myself in the future. It also gave me self-confidence.

Tanveer had similar feelings with regard to his MBA course and his acquisition of business knowledge and skills. He said, “I feel that a major part of the content of the MBA course helped me out. I could take major decisions using planning tools and decision-making techniques I had studied in my management courses.”

Tahir added similar comments in his interview. He said, “As a banker, I had a routine job. There was not much challenge in it. My studies at the MBA program gave me a lot of enterprising skills. I wanted to have some challenge in my job. So, I decided to switch my organization.”

Azeem had similar comments, explaining as follows: “The MBA program offered by my university had a very strong curriculum. The courses we studied were very rich and related to the requirements of the field. However, I did not study any course related to textile or knitwear industry.”

Hussain who had no idea about business education before starting his work with his company commented in the following words:

When I started my studies, I had no idea what I was going to do. I was not able to judge whether or not my studies were relevant to the job market or not. I used to like some subjects and some of them used to be very hard for me. For some of the courses I really could not determine what the objective of studying these courses was. Now working on my current job I feel that most of the subjects and activities we did during my MBA were relevant to the requirements of the market. However, I still cannot relate some parts of the studied courses to my job.

Talking about relevance of his degree program to the job market, Wadood commented as follows: “My studies in my university helped me in finding a good job. The main thing I learnt from my studies at my business school was time management. In today’s competitive market environment one should be good in time management”. In a similar fashion another student, Siraj, commented that her degree program at her university was related to job market, thus assisting her to find a relevant job after completing her degree.

Ghafoor made very different comments, explaining as follows:

My father wanted me to do MBA because he wanted me to help him in the business. After doing my MBA I found it more useful to join a large size company. I felt that my studies would not be very useful for my family business. I think the content of MBA program was more related to the working of large size organizations.

Farida's comments were different too. She said,

I had never thought of doing MBA. I was a science student and wanted to make my career in that area. Unfortunately, I could not secure good marks. My parents decided to put me in MBA program. When I was a student, I could not understand if the degree program is related to the requirements of job market. Now when I am an employee, I realize that most of the content we discussed in the classes is related to my job.

Asghar was very impressed with interpersonal skill and knowledge that he gained during his MBA course, explaining that the knowledge acquired had been highly important: "The quality and the high level of knowledge acquired through my MBA course, and the fact that my business school had a variety of students, was a major opportunity that provided great results in my new professional activity".

Mujtaba who works with a progressive company commented on the value and content of his MBA course as follows:

I am managing five divisions and more than 20 sub-ordinates who work as a team towards the same goal. During my MBA I had learnt how to adapt well in a multicultural atmosphere and how to cope with different characteristics of multicultural circles of friends. The costing techniques I learnt during my financial management course is helping me in cost planning.

Amjad likewise, addressed the issue of course content and specific skill development, commenting as follows:

As a merchandiser, I need problem-solving, critical thinking and analytical and communicative abilities. The MBA program at the university helped me enhance these skills. Additionally, the wide variety of course offerings expanded my business

knowledge. This gave me business knowledge that helped me communicate with colleagues of other disciplines in banking and other industries.

Nosheen expressed her views in the following words: “The curriculum of my business school was very strong. That gave me the appropriate skills and knowledge to work in a dynamic organization.”

For graduates who had no previous experience with business courses, not surprisingly the MBA had a significant impact on their ideas and assumptions. Abir spoke to this situation and commented as follows: “I think it truly strengthened my ability to communicate, especially with the international buyers using the communication techniques, studied in the classroom. That was a primary concern of mine...dealing with other subordinates and other managers working in my organization.” Abir also commented about other attractions of the MBA course. He holds a senior management position where a large number of executives work under him. While obviously increasing his knowledge of business, the MBA has also given him a sense of high self-esteem.

Nadia commented, “It was last semester of my MBA and I was looking for a change and a challenge. My MBA presented itself as the perfect means to survive in a big city and an incredible opportunity to develop into the fascinating world of comparative studies.

Saima, a female graduate, made interesting comments on gender issues. She reported as follows: “As a female, I found the inclusion of gender quite interesting that one did not have to take a specialized course on gender in business. In fact, a woman in business, as a discipline, is quite a new topic in all the developing countries. I gained a lot of confidence after studying these kinds of topics.”

Zahir was more impressed by computer-related knowledge, which he had obtained from his MBA program. He said: “I had no previous knowledge of information technology. The concepts I learnt in IT-related courses enhanced my efficiency on the job. Now I can plan, communicate and control better.”

Samee was another satisfied graduate. He was happy with the skills he learnt in the finance area of specialization, commenting as follows:

The knitwear Industry is my second job. I worked in a hospital. My finance related knowledge and skills helped me a lot. I did not take much time in catching up the work routine. My management-related knowledge helped me in finding new opportunities. Communication is another area which I found myself strong in.

Samee also said that the MBA is not only an indicator of knowledge and skills but also a symbol of quality in the knitwear and hosiery industry. He explained as follows: “In the knitwear and hosiery industry, the MBA degree is a symbol of skills and management competence. Employers have a mindset that MBAs can run modern organizations more successfully than others. This helped me in finding a better job.”

Qaiser stressed the value of team work and independent projects in his MBA course, commenting as follows: “In classes, students were given exceptional opportunities to work with students from different backgrounds. To create independent projects and to develop real world experience gave me an edge when I graduated and started working at my full time job.”

Shamus emphasized the importance of applied theory and gaining insights into the personal motivations of different fellow students. He commented: “Everyday occurrences became opportunities for learning. In retrospect, I perceived my time at my business school as an example of applied theory. My courses gave me an insight into the character of a variety of people and the history and experiences which shaped them.”

Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the knowledge and skills they learnt at the university particularly with regard to relevance of course content for the demands of the workplace. Rehman was one graduate who was highly critical of some aspects of his course:

There were certain parts of my degree program, which had no relevance to my professional life. However, most of the business knowledge we gained is related to my profession. I still have no idea what the use of ideology-related courses at postgraduate degree level is. Many of the statistics topics I have never used in my professional life. Human resource management course was very rich. I use management techniques that I learnt in this course nearly every day. Communication skills we learnt have helped me write and speak well. I am one of the most active participants in meetings.

Manzoor expressed similar critical comments: He said, "... to tell you the truth, some parts of my study had no relevance to the job market. Most of the study is theoretical and not practical."

Idrees is another graduate who had complaints with his degree program. He commented as follows:

My wish list for program included, management abilities, more global perspective, interpersonal skills and greater emphasis on communicational skills. But major parts of the MBA curriculum did not come up to the expectations of the current global business environment, and was of no good value for the money. We were not encouraged for class presentations. Many of my classmates were not good at public speaking, in the area of verbal communication.

Kamran had similar comments: "Truly speaking, my university was more into theoretical knowledge. I think most of the stuff that I studied at my university is not applicable to practical life. Whatever I am doing today, I have learnt from my job."

While the interview data demonstrates a significant difference in the perceived level of business knowledge after completing the MBA degree, they support the idea that graduates consider that the degree is likely to be the key factor in the enhancement of their knowledge and skills.

Expected outcomes of any degree program may be divided into three categories i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes. When the employers were asked to identify their expectations in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes from MBAs, they expressed their respective expectations under the following categories:

Knowledge

- a. Awareness of market trends (factual knowledge) as well as the effect of the current global situations of the market.
- b. Knowledge of use of modern technology in business.
- c. Knowledge of theories, laws, principles and their application to practical situations.

- d. Ability to keep themselves in touch with the work of business leaders in the world.

Skills

- a. Interpersonal skills.
- b. Decision-making ability.
- c. Team building.
- d. Strategic thinking.
- e. Ability to manage effectively in changing work environment.
- f. Effective Communication skills.
- g. Presentation skills.
- h. Problem solving ability.

Attitudes

- a. Ability to practice theories.
- b. Confidence.
- c. Enterprising/Innovative.
- d. Consistent.
- e. Patience.
- f. Commitment to organization.
- g. Genuine Behavior.

Quest for learning

From the interviews with graduates and their employers, particular aspects of MBA degree programs were found to be closely related to requirements of the job in industry. MBA programs were found to be relevant and useful for preparing graduates in knowledge and skill areas at large. However, MBA graduates were found to be deficient in the application of theoretical knowledge to practical situations and in the use of modern technology. Some MBA graduates also were found to be weak in presentation and decision-making skills.

While comparing MBAs with non-MBAs working in the organizations, MBAs were found to be superior by their employers in terms of required attitudes. However, in absolute terms, MBAs working in the knitwear/hosiery industry did not come up to the required levels of

expectation in this respect. Areas of dissatisfaction by the employers from MBAs were the following.

- They are not confident enough to take independent assignments. They rather seek advice from the experienced employees.
- They are reluctant to introduce modern marketing techniques. They rather prefer to follow stereotype formulas in almost every field of business.
- They are inconsistent in their attitudes and are not regular while working on projects.
- They are impatient and want to attain higher positions as quickly as possible.
- They lack commitment to the organization. They can change the organization whenever they find any better opportunity.
- They often use impressive management techniques. They try to create false impressions about their performance and academic excellence.
- They do not keep themselves aware of the latest developments in their field.
- Attitudes were the area where the employers had maximum dissatisfactions. They found MBA program unable to develop the required attitude in the graduates.

Satisfaction with Degree Programs

After working for many years in different organizations, on the whole MBA graduates had clear ideas about the value of theoretical knowledge and its application to workplace situations. The graduates spoke freely about their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their MBA experiences. One thing worth noting was that graduates from the state university and private sector had different views about different aspects of satisfaction.

This section presents their views about class size, the quality of teaching, some of the courses they specifically valued, and their perceptions of university student services. It also examines the perceptions of the graduates about their personal growth through the MBA program. Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the MBA program are numerous, but a few factors are more conspicuous than others.

While expressing their satisfaction with MBA program, different respondents identified different variables that they identified as leading to satisfaction. Quality of teaching was one area of importance. The majority of the respondents were satisfied with the formal qualifications of teachers and with the quality of the instruction. Most commented that their teachers were of high caliber, and were highly qualified and experienced. But there were a number of respondents who were not satisfied with their teachers' abilities. One of them even said that particular teachers should not do any more teaching.

Some graduates were dissatisfied with aspects of the curriculum. Some said that particular subjects studied were irrelevant and boring, while other said that courses did not attract them.

Student services were another area where students had mixed feelings. Some students were happy with their business school's arrangements for helping students in the development of computing skills and skills in assignment preparation. Career and placement offices were other area of satisfaction. However, many graduates from small size business schools had numerous complaints with their business schools. They were not happy with physical infrastructure, the placement center, and the library.

The MBAs pointed out the following areas as important factors of the program leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

- Qualifications of teachers.
- Teachers' experience.
- Cooperation between teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Teaching skills of the faculty.
- Library facilities.
- Sports facilities (swimming pool, playgrounds etc.).
- Computing facilities.
- Transport Services.
- Hostel facilities.
- Placement services.
- Courses offered.
- Discipline.

MBA graduates were generally satisfied with the qualifications, experience and attitudes of their teachers. However, they had mixed feelings about the teaching skills of the teachers. Many MBA graduates were not satisfied with the class assignments set by teachers, the methods of teaching, the excessive use of case studies, conceptual clarity in the material presented, and the ability of the teacher to relate theoretical knowledge to practical situations in business.

Graduates from public and private sector institutions had different opinions about physical facilities available at their business schools. The MBA graduates from public sector institutions tended to be more satisfied than others with sports facilities, transport, hostels, the library and computing facilities but tended to be dissatisfied with student discipline and placement services. MBAs from private sector institutions tended to be satisfied with computing facilities, discipline and placement services but were dissatisfied with sports facilities, transport, hostel and library facilities.

Quality of Instruction

The quality of teaching is an area where most of the respondents provided detailed comments. Most students were satisfied with the quality of teaching, although a significant proportion was dissatisfied. Many of the problems with teaching were related to teaching style.

Anosh was satisfied with quality of teaching. She commented as follows: “I was satisfied with the qualifications and experience of teachers. Physical facilities at my business school were excellent. We had the latest computers installed with all necessary software.”

Qayyum commented positively about teaching quality: “The caliber of the teachers was very high. Our teachers ran our class as a classy organization. I felt like the teachers were genuinely concerned about my future and willing to do things to help me.”

Azeem was another satisfied respondent, commenting as follows: “I was totally satisfied with my institution and my degree program. I can even recommend this university to anyone who wants quality education.”

Naeem was one of the respondents who commented on problems with teaching, explaining as follows: “There were some professors who were outstanding in all areas, and other professors were lacking in their knowledge of subject-matter, their teaching skills and command over language. In the light of my experience, I can say that there were a number of professors who should not be in the teaching profession.”

Jahangir provided useful comments about class size and its impact on learning. He said, “I believe that one of the main advantages of my business school was the small number of students in each class. In my area of specialization, there were only 23 students. It means that we got to know the teacher and the students really well.”

Tahir expressed his concerns about lack of challenge in his courses. He commented as follows:

Overall my professors were outstanding. Their teaching skills and knowledge was very high. Students who came to my university paid very high fees. They took study seriously. I had a few instructors who were very poor and interested in their foreign trips and family life stories that had no relationship with the subject. They should have realized that students have paid a great amount of money. They really come here only to learn something.

Tahir elaborated on his point about the need for quality instruction when he said, “I think that the instructors should have realized that their students have paid a lot to learn. They want challenging assignments. From my perspective, some of the assignments were of low value.”

Rahman, a graduate from the public university, had the following perceptions:

I was satisfied with courses. I was not totally satisfied with the system at the university. Strikes and political activities wasted a lot of our time. Our teachers were not very regular. Sometimes we had only 20 lectures in the whole semester. We waited for results of tests for many months. Discipline at the university level should be very strict.

Shamus said, “Teachers there gave students a lot of individual attention, more than many other business schools. They also made the subject interesting and used a lot of practical examples.”

Muzaffar expressed his feelings in the following words.

My university had a good learning environment. The teachers were good and the classes were small. This means that there was a lot of contact with professors. It also means that a lot of attention was focused on you in the class. This personal attention of the teachers became very demanding but helped us to succeed.

When speaking about teaching, Poonam had this to say, “There were a few professors that I was very much dissatisfied with. It appeared as coming to class was just a job for them and that they just wanted to get through the class. They didn’t teach anything. They were much unorganized. But the majority of the teachers were of high standard.”

Qaiser said, “I joined this business school to do my MBA and, believe me, I made the right choice. The faculty and staff were so nice and helpful that we felt 90% at home”.

Courses

A few graduates made comments about some specific courses. Several graduates commented on the economics and the accounting classes. Speaking about the accounting course, Zinnorain commented: “Our teacher of economics was very boring. I could not learn anything in this class. Accounting was another problem for me. I was not good at numbers and my teachers did not try to make the subject interesting.”

Some students had problem with marketing related courses. Naeem made the following critical comments:

There was international marketing...I had a professor to teach that...he had even no idea of the geography of the world. He was a mediocre teacher. Two case-studies were presented every week. I don't really understand what that technique was. Everyone was working so unwillingly to present well in case presentations. It just became a contest.

With regard to finance-related courses, Naeem was impressed with his managerial accounting course commenting that the content was ‘very strong’ and that the concepts taught proved to be directly related to his job.

Two other graduates commented on their economics course. Javaid said,

There was one course that I was totally dissatisfied with and that was economics. It was hard to understand the teacher’s English. I did not catch most of the macro economics concepts. I even do not know how to use them now. It was hard to understand what he wanted...and I don’t know how to apply it, even now.

Zinnorain also had a few things to say about classes in the area of organizational behavior. He said, “There was an organizational behavior course, which I found myself lost in. Most of the time teacher told us about his personal stories. I don’t really like psychology.”

Another course that was specially cited in this study was E-commerce. Ali made glowing comments about this one commenting that “There was one course I always loved, E-commerce. This was most interesting in the list. I did both of my assignments with interest. I had the feelings that most of the students enjoyed this course. Getting information about multinational companies on net broadened my vision.”

Tanveer identified one course that was particularly satisfying for him. He spoke about the project management course for the MBA program, commenting as follows:

... This course was very interesting. There was some boring and technical stuff but most of the content was very interesting. I learnt project management techniques. I really had no idea how project management is different from ordinary management. I still remember the planning tools we learnt in the classroom, and I am using them at my job. The case studies we did were very technical and that enhanced my decision making power. The teacher was interesting and he used to bring interesting examples to clarify the concepts.

Hussain was very excited about his decision to enroll in the MBA course. He expressed his feelings in the following words, “I was satisfied with most of the content we covered during

our MBA program. However there is always room for improvement.” Kamran who graduated from a public university expressed critical reflections on his courses: “The courses I did in my MBA were too theoretical. I think most of the courses had no relation with my job.”

Manzoor, a graduate from the state university expressed similar feelings. He said, “There were certain courses where they needed some changes. My course in economics was too theoretical. Many parts of my statistics and business math courses have no relevance with my job.”

The responses indicate that the graduates have mixed feelings. In some cases, one group of students considered a particular course to be very challenging while others considered it boring. Almost in every school, graduates had a teacher they did not like. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers were considered to be outstanding.

Student Services

Satisfaction of graduates also related to non-academic aspects of business schools. Graduates commented on a wide variety of services offered by their business schools, and by and large, they were relatively satisfied with what they received.

Tanveer, for example, commented on one important aspect of support he received from his business school. “I always had a problem with assignment writing. My business school had an expert to guide us in assignment writing. He was a very competent person. I still realize that without him it was nearly impossible for me to write so many assignments during MBA program.”

Mudassar talked about the general atmosphere of his school. He said, “... the atmosphere at my business school was great. Class size was small and everyone knew each other. It was easy to make friends and there were numerous events like the welcome party. I was on the magazine committee too”.

Zinnorain noted a similar satisfaction with the services he obtained in his university’s academic resource center. Putting his remarks within the context of the need for computer literacy and the support service the college had, he said, “Many of the students in my class

were older than me. They did not have any computer background. For most of the assignment writing we needed to effectively use computer applications effectively. Our business school organized a special class for teaching computing skills that helped us a lot”

Siraj commented as follows: “... my university had a variety of student services available. We had a large swimming pool, sports fields and excellent library.”

Wadood commented about his business school in the following words,

I liked the environment at my business school. It was pleasant and everyone socialized with each other. We all knew each other, the faculty, staff and students, so there were no strangers there. I don't know about other universities, but I wonder if other universities had that close relationship and community feelings.

Amjad, a graduate from the state university, had a long list of complaints about student services. He started his list of complaints with transport. He explained:

... just imagine how it is possible for a student to reach the university in time at 8:00 am when he does not have his own transport? The University bus was a blessing, especially the University's pick-and-drop facility that helped a large number of students especially girls, to make it possible to complete two years course without their own transport.

He further added, “My university had the largest sports field in the town. Many of my classmates used to play soccer and cricket in the university grounds. None of the private business schools had such kind of facilities.”

Asghar made interesting comments on a number of positive features of his university:

... the best thing about studying at this university was the comprehensive and insightful lectures with frequent fieldtrips to many wonderful places around Lahore. Initially, I found it difficult to adapt to the new environment. However, the facilities of this university served a wonderful entertainment and students at the university residence helped each other in settling in.

Farida said confidently, “I am 100% satisfied with my degree program and the institution.”

Abir, a graduate from a reputed private sector business school, was happy with his career and placement centre, commenting as follows:

My business school started a career and placement centre a couple of years ago. They had a direct link with the job market. They referred the graduates to various organizations for employment. I think this was a useful service for students. This centre also helped us in writing the C/V and job applications.

Basharat, a student from a small size business school, complained about the student services section of the college. He explained as follows: “Our college had a students’ service office. Unfortunately they had nothing to offer to the students. The college could not develop its own placement center. There were not many sports facilities as well.”

Generally, students were satisfied with the services provided by the universities. Ghafoor commented as follows: “I am satisfied with my MBA but my father was not. My father wanted me to work for family business but I chose to work with a company as employee. I am happy here but my father was not happy when I decided not to join my family business.”

A number of graduates made criticisms about computing facilities. As Javaid said, “The computer center at my institution was well-equipped. But the attendant was just an average minded recent graduate. Most of the times, he did not have the answers to our questions. We used to ask for help from the person sitting next to us.” Nosheen had similar feelings. She explained as follows: “I was impressed with computer facilities at my university. We had most modern computers in the labs. Internet access was definitely available and was fully advantageous.

Class size was another topic of complaint. Saima said, “I graduated from a public university. In my university we had the best faculty in the field but I was not satisfied with the class size. How can one learn in a class of seventy-seven students? Most of the teachers avoided class participation and presentations.”

Graduates' Experiences at their Business School

MBA graduates from various business schools had different experiences. Some of them had unforgettable experiences and some of them had regrets on their stay at the university. Majid, for example was highly satisfied with the program, commenting as follows: "I am able to apply knowledge and experience I gained from my university to my professional life. The friendship network was a big asset. I was not expecting all this. After doing my MBA, I saw the things differently, I now think differently."

Mujtaba was another satisfied student. He expressed his feelings in the following words: "The information systems and computer classes at my business school were great because of the teaching staff, and the material that we learnt was current".

Rahman was very happy with his degree program. He was particularly happy with his network of friend expressing his satisfaction as follows: "I had excellent experience during my degree program. I enjoyed my best years of life in hostels. We had a wonderful time. I made a lot of friends from various departments. We still see one another."

Saima provided comments about her areas of satisfaction:

The classroom hours were intended to inform the students about what they need to know but to know the details were the students' responsibility. The professors tended to be approachable, highly competent and very progressive. A unique quality of the finance and management classes was the multiple professors who lectured on the subject of their specialty.

Anosh was another satisfied graduate. She said,

I had a very good experience. The faculty was supportive and cooperative and they guided us in every area of life. At college level, we were not encouraged for creative ideas. I felt a total change in working style at the university. We were provided with a chance to express ourselves and to enrich our talent. Overall the environment was conducive to professional development and character building.

Ghafoor commented on his rich and meaningful experience at his university: “We had a lot of fun during our student life. I had a very good group of friends.” Manzoor had similar views: “It was fun to be in the university. I was a hockey player. I used to play hockey in university grounds in the afternoon. I enjoyed my stay in the hostel too.”

Kamran, who had complaints with courses, nonetheless commented favorably about his overall experience in his stay at the public university in the following words: “Staying at such a large university is an unforgettable experience. In my university, there were students from all over the country. One thing I experienced for the first time was dealing with women. I never had any interaction with women before. This was a unique experience for me.”

Siraj, who is a graduate from a public university, said, “My experience at university is unforgettable. I still miss those memorable days I spent in the university.” Muzaffar, a student of a private business school, had a positive experience. He said, “I had a wonderful experience at my business school. The teaching philosophy at my university was completely different. Many students found it unusual. They also preferred this system”.

Naosheen was satisfied with her experience at her business school. She said, “My experience was very good. I was not a very social student. I spent most of the time in library and computer labs. I really gained a lot from my university.”

As a student of the public university, Samee was satisfied with some parts of the program and had complaints with others. He expressed his feelings as follows:

I have mixed feelings. I liked the teachers. Most of them were foreign trained and experienced. Our curriculum was nearly the same as that of most of the North American universities. I was not satisfied with the attitude of the administration. The University had very bureaucratic management system. There is red-tapism everywhere. Staff generally did not encourage students to be involved in social activities. I remember it took a lot of our energy to organize a one-day trip. Overall, the university culture was not in line with the type of studies.

Nadia, a student from another city near Lahore, said, “I decided to pursue graduate studies because my aim was to return to my city and run my own business, perhaps in the software

development. This was a great place to study Marketing and Management”. Shamus was more impressed with the diversity in his business school. He expressed his positive feelings in following words, “Diversity is probably the best word to describe why I liked my university. This university had students from all over the country. You could find students from every part of the country. I enjoyed my time with my friends”. Azeem commented: “I was satisfied with every part of my university and my MBA program.”

Idrees, who had complaints with the program, commented as follows:

Corporations are satisfied with general skills that their employees bring from the MBA program. They want them to be able to think more strategically and rely less on blueprints they learned at the university. We were not given any practical exercises at university. Actually, many of our teachers did not have any experience of business, trade and industry. Most of the young lecturers taught ‘books’ and not the application of the subject.

Qasir was also dissatisfied, commenting as follows:

I came to this university after my BCom degree from a private sector business school. My expectations from the university were too high. Unfortunately, this university did not come up to my expectations. There was no system at all. Students were treated as slaves. Many of the teachers discouraged the students from asking questions. Overall, the environment was not very encouraging for learning.

Farida had some different comments. She said, “Initially, I was not satisfied with the kind of subjects I had. In second semester, I started enjoying my studies and my life at my business school. I liked the subject matter when I started liking my degree program.” Jahangir, another graduate from a public university, gave similar comments. He said, “My university was a true example of a colonial university. Systems over there were not inline with the requirements of the degree program. You feel red tape everywhere”.

Personal and Professional Development

Satisfaction was also noted in both the personal and the professional lives of the MBA graduates. They talked about their satisfaction with their MBA experience and what it had done for their careers. Overall the graduates considered that their MBA degree was responsible for giving a new or a renewed sense of self-confidence and made important contributions to career success. Amjad talked about his personal development growth when he said: “Personally, I gained a lot of confidence. Beyond this sense of being confident, the MBA degree was seen as helping the students to make valuable contacts.” Zinnorain described this part of his program at business school in the following words,

In my class there were students from many companies and from different government departments. I made a lot of friends. I am still in contact with some of them. This really helped me to make a social network. When we see one another we share our experiences and learn from them. That is important.

Muddasar had a similar perspective. He said,

My business school prepares students for a successful career by creating a physical and intellectual environment in which they have freedom to grow and are challenged to realize their full potential. From my studies, I learnt to plan my life. I was a disorganized person before my studies in MBA program.

Asghar gave very brief but comprehensive comments. He said: “I can find everything I learnt from my business school in my character”. Nadia said, “In my university, I was provided with an academic and vocational education where I could gain the confidence and skills that I needed to help myself in my future career, whichever part of the world that might be”. Poonam also mentioned the importance of the relationships she formed during her tenure at her business school. She said, “When you are studying in the university you meet many people. I made a lot of contacts. I am still in touch with most of my professors. It is good to discuss professional problems with our professors.” Naosheen said, “Whatever am I, it is because of my educational institutions. My university gave me the professional knowledge and built my personality. Now I am a successful business manager.”

Of more importance to the graduates on the personal level was the respect they received from their families, peers and professional associates after they had earned the MBA degree. Ali told his story in this way: “My MBA degree was rewarding for me in many ways. My teachers supported me while I was studying. My parents were proud of me when I had finished my degree. I received a lot of respect from my family and friends.”

Azeem made similar comments: “I earned a lot of respect from my family, friends and society. I am considered a more important person after doing my MBA.” Ghafoor learnt more from friends than from the business school. He said, “I found a lot of improvements in my personality. Most of it is because of my social group. My business school did not have any organized plan for the personal development. However I gained a lot from my friends.” Azeem said, “I learnt presentation skills from my father who was a journalist. My business school told me how to use these skills in practical business environment.” Kamran said, “Honestly, my institution did not help me in my professional development. However, I learnt a lot from my friends and students in my class.”

Wadood, was another graduate who spoke very highly of his school. His comments were as follows:

The academic workload of weekly assignments and essays seemed demanding at times but this was what really stretched me. Although it was hard work, it greatly helped me to extend my horizons, to learn to adjust in various situations and to improve my speaking and writing skills.

Siraj said, “I have mixed feelings. I think I learnt a lot from my institution but we would have done much more if the university had better systems”. Farida, who learnt all about business and management from her MBA program, commented as follows:

I am performing very well at my current job. I learnt all about business management, marketing, production and human resource management from my MBA degree program. I will give all the credit to my MBA. My degree program developed me personally and professionally to fit in a business environment.

Hussain who came from a small province said, “My MBA studies improved my personality. I used to be very shy and introvert. I could not face people. From my stay at my business school, I gained a lot. My personality is improved and I am improved professionally as well.”

Abir said that he enjoyed his stay at the university. He explained: “The program was better at our time than it is now. I believe the program was stronger, the admission standards were higher, and the rigor of the program was better than it used to be before.” He added the school was also demanding that people should be more team-oriented and somewhat less theoretical than they used to be. He continued: “The use of the team approach among students was a large part of my business school life. Team building helped me a lot in my professional life.” Saima was very happy with her experience at business school. She said: “I am firmly convinced that the doors of opportunity were opened to me by my MBA degree program”.

Mujtaba was another graduate who commented on the role of the business school in his personal development. He said,

I was a shy person. During my MBA I did a lot of presentations on various topics. I had to participate in class discussions and case studies. We visited many organizations while preparing our assignments on finance, marketing and human resource management. I gained a lot of exposure and confidence through my MBA program.

Muzaffar’s comments were similar to Mujtaba. He expressed his feeling in the following words. “My time at university was probably the most fruitful period of my life. My thoughts about life, religion and education were expanded beyond my expectations”.

MBA students perceived that their MBA program influenced the graduates personally and professionally in various ways. According to them, the MBA program had an impact on their personal life in the following areas:

- Self-confidence.
- Sense of accomplishment.
- Social network.
- Opportunity to share experience with others.
- Respect from family and friends.

- Ability to adjust in various circumstances.

The perception of MBA graduates about the impact of MBA program on their professional life was in the following areas:

- Team building and teamwork.
- Self-confidence.
- Change in approach.
- Character building.
- Team building.
- Enhanced sociability.
- Built business personality.

Professional Growth

Graduates also talked about their satisfaction with the MBA in the context of professional growth. Several of interviewees commented on changes in this particular aspect after completing the MBA. Poonam made a point while discussing about professional growth, commenting as follows:

Professionally, I got a better idea of what the real world was going to expect from me. When you're in school just taking courses, you're just getting book knowledge. You don't know what the world is going to expect. I learned a little more about that. The professors were good at expressing that.

Professional growth also meant career advancement for some MBA graduates. Javaid talked about his moves at his company when he discussed the satisfaction he gained after earning the MBA. He said, "I am a manager in my company. We work here as a team. You have to be highly professional at the work place when you have to get things done by the team members. My MBA degree gave me team building and teamwork abilities. My boss is very happy with my performance." Azeem was confident about the contribution of MBA program toward his professional growth. He said, "I am sure I could never be professionally as competent as I am today. This all is because of my education at the university."

Amjad also talked about how the MBA helped him professionally.

Management skills I learnt at university helped me professionally. Personally I learnt a lot from my teachers and friends. I used to be a shy boy before coming to the university. My university education gave me self-confidence. This all helped me on my job. My time at university was wonderful. I enjoyed every bit of my time there. I am still in touch with my university friends.

Hussain had similar feelings. He said, “I could never take decisions confidently before doing my MBA. My MBA program developed critical thinking in me and I can take very vital decisions in my professional life.”

Some students had positive feelings about their total MBA experience. For example, Abir commented as follows:

The MBA program at my school builds a business personality. Our curriculum was strong enough to prepare us to fit in various fields of life. Apart from my business knowledge and skills, I feel that my personality had been developed in a way that I could adjust to all types of circumstances. Our teachers gave us very hard time. I remember I used to hate my teachers when I had to work for the whole night. But now I realize that they had a clear goal for us. My social circle at my university helped me in my professional life in many ways. Overall, my experience was very productive.

Manzoor was satisfied with some parts of his course and dissatisfied with some others. He said, “Our teachers were wonderful, but I was not very happy with the content of the course. I think more practical work is required to make personally and professionally sound graduates.” Shamus had some level of dissatisfaction with his MBA program. He said, “Honestly speaking, the MBA program at my university was not able to provide practical knowledge to the students. Many of the concepts we studied were too theoretical and we were never told how we could apply them”.

Ghafoor wished that his MBA program had a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship commenting as follows:

In the MBA program most of the emphasis is given to become a good manager in an organization. This degree program does not produce entrepreneurs. I think the orientation of the degree program should be changed and more training should be given to become a business person than to become an employee.

Jahangir was not happy with the accounting and finance areas of his study. He said, "... The content we discussed in accounting and finance related courses was not applicable in practical situations. In my company, all accounting related work is done on computers. I had never done computerized accounting. This certainly is a barrier in professional communication."

It is apparent from most of these comments that MBA graduates are generally satisfied with their experiences at their business schools. The satisfaction they gained from their business schools relates to both academic and non-academic areas and to both the professional and personal lives of the graduates. While the graduates spoke about the need for some improvements, the picture for the school was generally positive. The MBAs were also ready to offer their business school some suggestions for change and reform.

From the above responses, it is apparent that majority of the graduates were satisfied with most of the aspects of their degree programs. They found their business programs related to their personal and professional lives.

However, some of the graduates had dissatisfaction with curriculum, teaching methods and physical facilities. They gave suggestions and recommendations for the changes and improvements in the program.

Graduates' Suggestions and Recommendations

One purpose of this study was to invite suggestions and recommendations from the graduates. MBA graduates, who have work experience in management capacity after the MBA degree program, can provide first hand feedback about the relevance of the content, methodology and physical facilities at their business schools.

During the interviews, most of the MBAs gave some practical and positive suggestions. They made a large number of recommendations. Many of them wished to see a change in the

curriculum. They wanted to have more practical work than theory in the classrooms. Some of them suggested that research-based assignments should be encouraged. Many of the students suggested that better recreational and sporting facilities should be provided. Graduates who were on the job while doing their MBA course suggested that experienced students should have separate classes from fresh graduates and that teachers should deal with both categories of students differently.

Zaheer was not happy with the use of American textbooks. He suggested that textbooks should be developed according to the Pakistani socio-economic environment:

American authors wrote most of the books we studied. These books discussed about Chicago, New York and Michigan. How can a student relate the situational factors of a society of above \$25,000 per capita with a society of below \$800 per capita? I believe the concepts in these colorful books have no relevance to a country where 60% of population is illiterate and is living in rural areas. I don't understand, why Pakistani authors do not write books for Pakistan.

Ali had similar feelings that the case studies from the textbooks by foreign authors do not have much relevance for the Pakistani environment. He explained as follows: “The case studies we did were from textbooks by foreign authors. These cases were presented from the American perspective. Our teachers should develop case studies considering Pakistan’s social and economic conditions. This will help students to relate theories with real life situation.”

Irrelevant courses were a common complaint. For example, Idrees suggested that many courses in his MBA program were not related to the real world of Pakistan business and industry. He said, “Programs need updating. The theory needs to be applied to the real world application resulting from it”. His message to his business school was “get real”.

Siraj had more concern about the administrative systems used at his university: “My university should concentrate on discipline and administrative issues. Many of the teachers and students did not follow discipline while they were at work. I think this can be wonderful university if it brings the procedures into a system.”

Hussain who comes from a small and isolated province had the following suggestion: “I think people in my city do not have those opportunities which a resident of Lahore has. I feel there should be frequent exposure to the people from my city to the industry in Lahore. I suggest that there should be at least 3 seats for the residents of small provinces in each class.”

Anosh had a feeling that the teaching methods used at her business school were not updated. She suggested as follows:

Modern teaching methods and technology should have been used. We watched just one educational movie during the whole degree program. Some subjects needed to be changed. Computers in management or computer-based management and related courses should be added to the scheme of studies. Students should have been encouraged for co-curricular activities. This could have brought change and versatility in behavior.

Samee had similar complaints with curriculum:

The curriculum should be changed. Students should be trained in computerized accounting. Old fashioned computers should be replaced. Some of the subjects have no relevance with practical life. I personally did not like statistics... I know my economics class was too boring. Nearly half of the class used to sleep during lecture hours. However, the younger teachers were good.

Qayyum had similar suggestions. He said, “The curriculum needs to be changed. Some of the courses ... I don’t understand. What were these for? The ethics course was a joke. We did not need to be told that there were hard questions there. This course was not related to business. It was more like Islamic Studies.”

Azeem wanted the addition of new courses: “I suggest that there should be an area of specialization of textile and knitwear management. This will open opportunities for graduates of this degree program.”

Kamran had an interesting suggestion. He said, “Teachers at my business school had very strong understanding of theoretical concepts. However they did not have industrial

experience. I will suggest that the teachers should spend time in real business environment from time to time to get feelings of real business environment.”

Basharat suggested that the content should be more of practical nature than theoretical. He said,

The MBA was too theoretical. I remember we read too many theories of motivation. I am still not sure how these theories can be applied in a real life situation. Business law was another course. I don't see any relevance of this course with my job. A course on production management will enhance the graduate's opportunities to find a good job.

Farida, who deals with international operations in her job, commented as follows: “I deal with many overseas customers. I think an addition of any foreign language in the scheme of studies will be beneficial to the students.” Naosheen had similar recommendations. She said, “The students should learn at least one European language during their study. This will enhance their opportunities to find a good job.” Basharat who completed an MBA with specialization in the area of finance also suggested that “computer-based accounting should have been taught in the MBA program”.

Jahangir was another graduate who had complaints with accounting and finance related courses, suggesting that accounting should be taught on computers. He went on: “Most of the companies are using computer software. Universities should stop that old manual accounting and move to computerized accounting system.”

Rehman said he had problems in establishing relationships with busy executives from various major companies. He suggested: “Faculty should have developed relationships with the corporate world. I remember sometimes that it was hard to find an organization to use in order to write an assignment or project. We had some difficulty in finding a suitable organization for internship.”

Majid was not happy with the physical facilities. He made the following suggestions:

There are many schools which did not have enough physical facilities. My college had a tiny library. The latest books in this library must be more than five years old. This

college does not have latest computers. The college should have concentrated on providing physical facilities required for postgraduate studies.

Graduates from public universities were not happy with the administrative processes at their universities. Rehan, a graduate from public university, said, “The University was a very loose organization. University administration should have strictly tightened control systems. Political elements should have been discouraged. Computer related courses needed to be updated. Many of the computers at labs were outdated or broken”.

MBA graduates also made recommendations about improving physical and academic facilities. Several of these comments related to the computer field. Naeem talked about this issue as follows:

I think that the school should have increased computer access for the students. The computer labs were never sufficient. We should also have been introduced the software being used in the real world companies, at least to the standard software now being used. EXCEL and WORD are not enough.

Along the same line of thought, Tanveer elaborated on the importance of computers and computer related courses as follows:

Information systems, that's what it's all about. I have to keep a contact with international buyers on a daily basis. That is the way we communicate. I think that an information system is almost a compulsory requirement of today's business, because it is the connection not only within our own organization, but also looking at the international market. Our business school should have realized it and should have introduced specialization in information technology area.

The MBA graduates also commented on a range of other issues. Tahir added several suggestions and emphasized the importance of field trips. He said, “Field trips are important. Students gain first hand knowledge through field trips. Business school should organize field trips in every semester. Visits of industry enhance students’ general knowledge of business environments around them.”

Tahir also made some comments for the business schools to help differentiate better students from the average ones. He suggested,

My biggest complaint was the inability to differentiate myself as a student among a group of students from different backgrounds. In my class there were many students who had experience in the business field before joining the MBA program. Their knowledge of business related issues was higher than that of an average student of the class. That divided the class intellectually.

Mujtaba was more concerned with personal development issues. He said, “In my university there were too many students in the class. It was nearly impossible for the teachers to concentrate individually on all students. The University should introduce tutorial system to give more attention to individual students.”

Poonam had something to say about her business school’s curriculum. She said,

The assignments that I had during my MBA program were never really so difficult. Some of them weren’t challenging at all. Some of them weren’t helpful. I think that more complex, challenging projects where the students actually could apply what they were learning and what they needed to work on from the beginning of the course to the end.

Mansoor wanted more practical work. He said: “... practical, practical, practical.” Nadia wanted more disciplined classrooms. She said, “I had a feeling that some students take advantage of the lenient attitude of the management. The University should keep the discipline strict to provide better learning environment.”

While suggesting improvements in the MBA programs offered by various public and private business schools, the MBA graduates and their employers had identified certain common areas of concern, whereas they had certain differentiated areas.

The common areas identified by both the respondents were as follows:

- Redesigning of curriculum according to international standards.
- Offering more areas of specialization.
- Emphasis on the application of theoretical knowledge to practical situations.

MBA graduates after working in business organizations had different considerations from their employers while suggesting improvements in MBA programs. They suggested the following:

- Development of local text books written in local perspective containing indigenous studies.
- Introduction of modern instructional technology.
- Encouragement of co-curricular activities.
- Introduction of computer-based accounting.
- Linkage of business schools with corporate world.
- Enhancement of physical facilities.
- Enrichment of libraries.
- Strict control at the university.
- More field trips.
- More challenging assignment work.

Relevance of Degree Program and Experience in Business School

Business graduates were asked how the knowledge acquired as part of the MBA related to the requirements of the job. Graduates had a long list of comments. Some of the graduates said that MBA helped them in developing their personality and careers. They learnt self-confidence, decision-making skills, problem solving and analytical abilities during their course. Some graduates were confident in saying that personal and professional development helped them in finding a better job.

The majority of the graduates felt that the MBA related well to the requirements of the job. However, there were a number of respondents who said that the subjects they studied were not related to the requirements of real business life. They said that MBA curriculum was irrelevant to the job market and did not prepare graduates to keep pace with the challenges of business environment.

MBA graduates' responses to the question about their experience at the university were very informative. Some were highly satisfied with the knowledge they had gained at the

university, while others collected large groups of friends who often became the core of their future social and professional networks. A couple of respondents had memories of supportive faculty at their business schools. Some graduates had complaints with the institution's culture complaining of a misfit between the culture and type of studies being undertaken.

Graduates had mixed feelings about their stay at the business schools during the MBA degree program. They had diversified feelings about the program, ranging from complaints about the administrative systems at the business schools to having a good time with friends. The views of graduates have been grouped into professional, personal and emotional areas as follows:

- Teachers taught books not subjects.
- Curriculum was strong enough to prepare to fit in various fields of life.
- Helped to expand business.
- Ability to apply knowledge and experience gained during MBA.
- Enhancement of decision-making ability.
- Enhancement of enterprising skills.
- Improvement of efficiency on the job.
- Learnt project management.
- Overall environment was conducive for professional development.
- Helped in doing things professionally.

The views of graduates regarding contribution of MBA program towards personal development were as follows:

- Gained self-confidence.
- Change in my thinking.
- Character building.
- Team building.
- Enhanced sociability.
- Built business personality.

The views of the graduates regarding contribution of MBA program towards emotional satisfaction were as follows:

- Enjoyed course.
- Cooperation of staff.
- Enjoyed pick and drop facility.
- Enjoyed our best years of life in hostels.
- Had a wonderful time.
- Made a lot of friends.
- Had a very good experience.
- Provided opportunity to express ourselves.
- Network of friends was a big asset.
- Beyond expectation.
- University had a bureaucratic management.
- Staff did not encourage social activities.
- Overall culture was not in line with the type of study.
- Social network of friends working with other companies.
- Received a lot of respect from my family and friends' circles
- Professors were good.
- Our teachers gave a lot of work to be done.
- Experience was productive.

Overall Summary of Responses

Although students wished for in-depth relevant learning during their studies, they liked teachers who were more flexible and friendly in their attitudes. A large number of students did not give a rate the availability of sports and other recreational facilities as being important but others did. Graduates from public universities were, however, proud of large sports grounds, swimming pools and hostels at their university.

Graduates from private sector universities were more concerned with classroom facilities and the quality instruction. Hostels were big attraction for the students who came from other cities and particularly from more remote locations.

References from friends and relatives were one of the main reasons in getting admission to a particular business school. Most of the graduates who belonged to upper income classes preferred to study at private business schools. Another factor in deciding for the business schools was geographic and transport convenience. The convenience of being closer to their homes and offices was an important reason in selecting a business school.

In most of the cases, graduates were satisfied with their business schools. However, students from public universities had complaints about class size.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA: EMPLOYERS' RESPONSES

Introduction

The analysis of employer data is based on semi-structured interviews with employers in firms in the hosiery/knitwear industry. Data is interpreted within the sampling limit of the respondents belonging to one segment. However, the highly developed nature of industry, having a big export and local market share, and having ISO-certified competitiveness in national and international market, give to the significance of results and the ability to generalize from the results more widely. The analysis covers considerations of employers and graduates' competencies, and organizational skills that could be expected from MBA courses in terms of their knowledge, skills and behavior.

Interviews were conducted with fifteen employers of MBAs. The original intent of this study was to speak personally with twenty employers. However, the busy schedules of senior executives, and the desire of some of MBA graduates themselves that the researcher should refrain from speaking to some of their supervisors limited the number of employers who could be included in the study.

Profile of Employers

The employers interviewed were drawn from a variety of businesses. Moqet is a Senior Manager in a well-reputed industry. He is an old man and did his MBA 15 years ago. He has a vast experience of working with people in the organizations. Moqet had been worked with many MBA graduates from all kinds of business schools.

Zafar is a General Manager of the largest knitwear and hosiery unit in Pakistan. He himself holds a Master in Public Administration degree. Most of the managers in this organization are MBAs and come from all types of business schools. His company uses modern

techniques and approaches in their management. There is a system of continuous training of the employees in the organization.

Ilyas is the chief executive of a medium-sized company. He started his own knitwear unit just after obtaining his bachelors degree in economics. He takes all decisions related to recruitment and selection of executive management staff. As Ilyas stays in the factory for most of the time, he is the best person to be interviewed regarding the performance of MBA graduates working in his firm.

Razaq is an owner of a small-sized industry. Razaq started working in this organization when he was just a student. His father had started this business ten years earlier and had encouraged him to involve himself in the family business. Razaq has another business as well, where a senior employee who is a textile engineer primarily manages the knitwear business, and makes most selection decisions after consulting Razaq.

Ahmad, is a university graduate. He worked with a leading textile firm as an Assistant Manager Production. After gaining some experience, he started his own textile unit in Lahore. Ahmad has seven MBA graduates working in his industry. Three out of seven are graduates from public universities. 100% of their production is exported to Europe or the USA. An international buying house checks whatever they produce. They have to meet high standards of quality. Ahmad was very happy with the performance of the MBA graduates in his industry. He is convinced that holders of the MBA degree are the right choice for key positions in his firm.

Yousaf, a Human Resource Manager in a highly reputed company, is a foreign graduate. He worked with the hotel industry before joining this organization and so brought foreign experience with him to this job. Yousaf has 13 MBAs working under him. Most of them are graduates from private sector universities. These MBAs are working in different fields within this organization.

Waqar is working as a Human Resource Manager with a medium sized company that he has been with for the last seven years. There are seven MBA graduates working in Waqar's department.

Mariya has had five years experience as General Manager with a local company. During this time, she worked with many MBAs from public and private sector universities. She is the one who has the final power in selecting MBAs. She herself is a graduate from a public university.

Farooq is the owner of a medium sized business. He is a Chartered Accountant who worked with a Chartered Accounting firm for seven years before starting this knitwear business. Farooq is the key decision maker in his organization. He has a strong belief that professionally qualified young men and women produce more and show better results than non-professionals.

Salman is a young man from a highly educated family. He is a university graduate in engineering. He bought this business some years ago. He is the key man in decision-making in this business.

Naila is a graduate from a public university. After her degree program, she worked with a couple of medium to large size national organizations. She joined this organization as an export manager and currently is in charge of the Human Resource Department. She plays an active role in the recruitment, selection and performance appraisal decisions of the organization.

Dilshad completed an engineering degree from a public university before joining her family business in which she is working as a Manager Corporate Affairs. Apart from this job, she looks after the Human Resource Department of her medium size company.

Sharjeel holds an MBA degree. Before joining this textile company, he worked with a local four-star hotel as human resource manager. Sharjeel is responsible for recruitment, training, salaries and wages administration and employees' appraisal in a large size textile company.

Jahanzeb started working with his family business nine years ago. He worked with the production and Human Resource Management departments of the industry. Jahanzeb is a technical person who helps production people in solving mechanical and technical problems. In his company, he has the responsibility for Human Resource related affairs.

Ayyaz did his degree in Textile Engineering from abroad before starting work with a large size knitwear industry. Ayyaz strongly believes in development through enhancing human resource. He brought with him modern techniques of planning, work scheduling and human resource development.

Employers' Observations of MBA Graduates

Employers of MBA graduates offered mature and thoughtful comments about MBAs. They identified a long list of satisfying and dissatisfying factors among the MBAs. The most common and repeated comments about MBAs are related to their work habits and characteristics. The comments of the employers are presented and summarized below based on the various interview questions.

What should MBAs know?

The respondents made perceptive comments about the qualities sought in MBA graduates. Zafar explained as follows: "We look for interpersonal skills, ability to take non-programmed decisions in various situations, team building and an ability to work in teams." Ilyas explained his priorities: "We are looking for the people who can think strategically. We actually look for leaders who can develop teams."

Razaq commented as follows:

We want highly educated people, who can manage effectively in a changing work environment. In particular, they should have good communication skills, and the ability to convince others. They must be aware of market trends as well as the effect of the current global situations on the market. They must be familiar with e-commerce and e-business.

Janazeb made somewhat similar comments but used different words: "In past we used to have more technically skilled people in management but about five years ago we have decided to appoint educated people in the organization. We expect that MBA graduates should bring problem solving and planning skills with them."

Ayyaz, a manager with a leading knitwear company, made his high expectations clear commenting as follows: “I really expect a lot from MBAs. I think they should know the solution of today’s problems. They should know about planning techniques. They should know how efficiency of the workers could be brought to optimum level.” Salman had similar shopping list. He said, “Business graduates must have business sense, they should be able to understand micro and macro environment, changing trends and economy around the world.” Moqheet, a senior manager, said, “I think the first thing every worker including MBAs should know is respect for other members of the organization. They should be technically sound and be able to communicate effectively. They should also know the techniques to deal with challenges of the market.”

Sharjeel voiced similar views:

Today's business has become very competitive. We need people who can develop strategic partnership between various parts of the organizational system. I believe that strategic management is the key component of today's management. Young MBAs should learn to develop synergism.

Another respondent emphasized the importance of factors to facilitate exports: “Our company is an export company. We are exporting to many countries. We need people who have multicultural background, who can understand what is expected from them by an international buyer.” Waqar gave similar comments. He said, “They must know the modern business strategies, techniques and new approaches toward the businesses. Above all, they must keep themselves in touch with the work of business leaders in the world.” Yousaf said, “We expect an MBA to bring new ideas in marketing to compete in a very competitive market.” Dilshad had similar expectations: “We expect that an MBA should have a creative mind. He/she should introduce new ideas in marketing, production, human resource and all other areas of business. In today’s business world, creativity is important.” Farooq said, “Business graduates must be aware of things happening around them. They should be aware of business trends in the markets and the ways to take decisions in ever changing market conditions.”

Employers' Perceptions about Personal and Professional Abilities of MBAs

Respondents saw the personal and professional abilities of MBA graduates of being of high importance. According to Razaq, "MBAs are very versatile. They are good at interpersonal skills. Graduates from public universities are stronger on content." Ilyas said, "Too theoretical. We have recently recruited two MBAs for the Export Department. These boys were outstanding in their business schools. They have impressive personalities. But when it comes to practical work, they have to learn most of procedures from their assistants." Waqar had commented on the fit of graduates with firm needs commenting as follows: "In our country, business graduates are more concerned about 'Profit Maximization' and less about the 'Market Share'. Even knowing the modern business approach, unfortunately, after a very little time, they are driven by the old and obsolete techniques and strategies."

Jahanzeb's perceptions of MBAs were as follows:

I have noticed that MBAs are very good in management. They have the necessary initiation. They understand instructions very quickly. One area where they have problem is production. We cannot work with people without knowledge of the technical side. We have to send all MBAs them on training after their induction.

Yousaf said,

As you know, we have a large number of MBAs from nearly all types of business schools. The reason we appoint them is their ability to deal with people. I have a strong belief that the person who is good at human relations can very quickly learn systems and procedures from others. There are many experienced MBAs working here.

Moqee said, "I have worked with MBAs for many years. I always feel that most of the MBAs have an attitude problem. They don't really know how to work as a member of a team." Ayyaz compared Pakistani MBAs with foreign MBAs. He said,

I remember when I was abroad the students in MBA degree programs used to work on real plans. Many of them were employed by multinationals and were keen to apply the theories they learnt in their classrooms. The MBA degree over there was very rigorous

and students really gained a lot. Unfortunately, I did not see that kind of potential in Pakistani MBAs.

Salman gave a quick comment. He said: “They are too theoretical. They don’t understand how to apply the theories to real life situations.” Sharjeel had mixed feelings. He said, “The MBAs have strong and weak areas. I think they are strong in conceptual areas. They have creative ideas in Marketing. However, they are not good in finance-related areas. Many of them are not strong in practical areas.” Ahmad said: “They think smart. They are smart.” Dilshad had mix feelings too. She expressed her feelings in the following words, “Many of young MBAs are very enterprising. They are good in identifying opportunities. One thing they need is, practical models to avail of those opportunities.”

Changes Noticed by Employers in MBA Graduates

Respondents were asked about possible changes in the key expertise and characteristics of MBA graduates that might have been observed in recent years. Zafar responded with the following comments:

MBAs working in my organization brought new ideas to the workplace. Our internal and external communication has improved during the last two years. One complaint I have with MBAs is regarding carelessness. They just don't go into details. Besides the work habits that are apparently noticeable in MBAs, they appear to be very much team players and possess excellent interpersonal skills.

Another respondent Lyas commented as follows:

Both MBAs working in our organization are good team players. They work in teams and understand the value of working in teams. They have an effective style of communication. They are very professional while dealing with clients and customers. Their dealing with people on the telephone and face-to-face is very impressive.

Zafar said, “They are better than they used to be five years ago. New MBAs are very dynamic. They like challenge in their jobs. They are full of innovative ideas.” Jahanzeb did not have very positive view of MBAs when he replied, “Actually we started recruiting MBAs

very late. In last five years we did not notice much change in them.” Waqar’s response to the question was as follows: “They are more confident than before and now they see the things in a very advanced perspective. They have a much better understanding of the business issues now. And they face new marketing challenges very sensibly and courageously.” Mariya said: “There is an enormous change in their professional behavior as well as skills involved in day-to-day business.”

Moqet who had experience of dealing with many MBAs and commented thoughtfully as follows: “I have worked with many MBAs. I think MBAs in the past were more hard working and focused. Most of the recent MBAs are not very clear about their goals. They think one thing in the morning and another at night.” Salman said, “Yes there is a positive change in the knowledge and skills. There are a number of new courses that are being offered by the institutions, these have resulted in diversified knowledge.”

Sharjeel gave mixed comments. He said, “Young MBAs are more creative. They have much stronger academic background. But many of them are too bookish and shy. They don’t accept challenges.” Ayyaz gave similar comments. He said, “There are certain areas where MBAs are much better than before. However they still lack confidence, analytical skills and knowledge of international operations.” Dilshad commented on the changes noticed in the following words, “I feel that young MBAs are very daring and intelligent. They are confident in dealing with variety of people. I even have noticed that young MBA girls are very confident now. It is good.”

Personal and Professional Characteristics of MBAs from Public and Private Universities

In our discussions we were keen to explore possible differences in the personal and professional characteristics between MBA graduates from public and private universities. Ilyas reported as follows:

There are two MBAs working in our organization. One of them is from a private sector university and other graduated from a public university. Both of them are intelligent and can fully understand the instructions. But one problem found in both of them is the lack of concentration. They ignore minor details. They take the work very easy. Some steps

of their work are always incomplete. I don't actually see any difference in them when they are in the organization.

The next comment addresses another aspect of the employers' observations. Speaking about the graduates, Farooq had this to say,

I have a feeling that most of the MBAs are too general in their knowledge. They know the theories but they don't know how to apply them to practical situations. However, those who did executive MBAs are better as they had previous work experience before doing MBA. I suggest they must be given practical experience in various business activities.

Razaq has one MBA working under him at this time who is a graduate from the public university in Lahore. He commented about this graduate in the following words: "I think he is a highly-skilled communicator and professional. His interpersonal communication is excellent. Most of his peers are very happy with him as a team-mate. He is acutely aware of the person he is dealing with." Waqar's response to MBAs personal and professional development of public and private sector universities was as follows: "Students from private sector universities are more confident than students from public universities, and they also have broader vision of their professions." Mariya had similar feelings. She said, "Students from private sector universities have diversified knowledge than the graduates from the public university."

Explaining the difference between personal and professional characteristics of the business graduates, Farooq said, "In Pakistan there are government institutes and private institutes. The quality of graduates from some of the private schools is higher as compared to those from government sector." Sharjeel said, "MBAs from public universities are good in theories. They know more about the professional background of the business, trade and commerce. Personally they lack confidence and interpersonal relationships." Salman was also not satisfied with public universities for the following reasons: "Public universities are still with old courses but in private sector universities the courses are more up to date. That makes private sector university graduates better than those who are from public universities."

Moqet said, “I had very good experience of working with MBAs from public universities. I think most of the private sector business schools are just business houses.”

Naila had a totally different experience. She was more satisfied with public university graduates, commenting as follows:

It has been observed that graduates who graduate from a public university are more efficient than private sector university graduates. The reason is that public universities give admission on a merit basis while in private universities you simply need to have money to get admission and even to get the degree.

Zafar had similar feelings about public universities. He made comments as follows:

The public universities have many competent and top class teachers. Most of them are foreign qualified and are recognized throughout the country and even abroad. But the political environment of the public university is not conducive to modern education. Many of the teachers cannot implement their plans because of political pressure.

Jananzeb did not notice any difference in the graduates from the public university and those from private sector universities. He said, “In our industry there are around 12 MBAs. Half of them are from the public university and the other half from private universities. We actually have not seen any significant difference in their abilities.” Ayyaz’s comments were not different from those of Jahanzeb who said: “To tell you the truth, I did not see any difference between the graduates from the public university and those from private universities. They are almost similar in most of the significant areas.” Ahmad commented as follows: “The business graduates from private sector schools have a stronger socio-economic background. They are more confident; they have more exposure, are more practical and are more willing to take risk.” Salman had similar observations about graduates from private sector business schools. He said, “MBAs from private sector organizations are more confident, more capable of handling the challenges, an understanding of local market situation and they can also take the risk.”

Dilshad had the following observations,

MBAs from public universities are more intelligent. They have a very clear understanding of management concepts. They are good in written communication. Some graduates from private business schools are sometimes very poor. Actually some business schools are just awarding degrees and not preparing the graduates according to the requirements of the market.

Shortcomings

Moqheet, a senior manager, gave a detailed picture of shortcomings of MBA programs and their graduates. He commented as follows: “Most of the MBAs are not up to the mark. They lack knowledge of modern concepts of management. They don’t have practical exposure. They lack communication skills and interpersonal skills.” Zia noticed mixed characteristics in the only female MBA with who he was in contact. He said, “I think she has a very clear idea of organizational behavior and human resource management. But when it comes to practice with these theories she is not that confident. She always seeks opinion of another employee.” Waqar’s opinion was as follows: “Overall, the business graduates of our country are more theoretical than practical. They are a bit reluctant to introduce modern marketing techniques, but rather prefer to follow stereotype formulae in almost every field of business.”

Mariya thinks that MBA graduates are somewhat inconsistent in their behavior. She explained her ideas as follows: “Although they have good knowledge of the new techniques related to the business as well as to the management, it is noticeable that these graduates are inconsistent or sometimes feel shy to apply these techniques.” Farooq said, “The shortcoming of the graduates is the lack of presentation skills. They are usually unable to analyze the problems properly.” Naila said, “... yes, firstly they are impatient; secondly they lack commitment and, thirdly, they often use impressive management techniques.” Ayyaz had the same complaint. He said, “In my opinion, MBAs always look for a new opportunity. They don’t really want to stay with one organization. They actually expect too many things immediately.”

Sharjeel said the same thing in a different way. He said, “MBAs have personality problems. They need an appropriate personality to accept the challenges of today’s business environment.” Jananzeb had complaints with technical skills of MBAs. He said, “To work

with a textile company everyone should have reasonable amount of technical skills. MBAs who come from the university are good in deskwork but they have no idea of production systems.” Salman said, “They are not loyal to the organizations. They want to move to top positions as quickly as possible. We find it very hard to design training programs for young MBAs because we are always unsure about them. They can leave the organization whenever they find any opportunity”.

Dilshad identified the following shortcomings in MBAs, “I think MBAs need to know more about practical aspects of the business. They lack the ability to apply the concepts. Some of them are weak in spoken communication. Many of them don’t know the use of computer in Accounting and Management.”

Recommendations

Respondents were asked whether or not they could offer recommendations for the improvement MBA programs in Pakistan. Waqar recommended: “They should design their syllabi according to the international standards. Instead of giving heavy budgets for their campuses, they should concentrate on improving their faculty”.

Mariya recommended the following:

They should involve their students as internees in different organizations to acquire practical knowledge. Stress should be given on presentation skills. Time periods for internships should be increased. Updated knowledge about global issues must be provided to the graduates. Orientation on processes and designs used in industries should be given. Enhance information on ISO.

Moqheet had numerous suggestions including the following:

I really want to give many suggestions to business schools. They need to revise their courses. I think the overall scheme of studies at many business schools is not up-to-date. They should include modern courses in their degree program. They need to add a

course to develop a particular attitude in their graduates. MBAs should do a lot of practical work at their business schools.

Ayyaz wanted big changes in MBA programs suggesting as follows: “I think educational institutions should develop a link with the job market and ask from the employers what they expect from the MBAs. I think they need to make major change in the program. Its orientation should be more to practice than theory.” Farooq said nearly the same thing though in a different way. He said, “The business schools should be given the case studies in the classroom, and the application of the textbook concepts should be encouraged.” Dilshad recommended similar things. She said, “Students should learn the application of concepts through case studies. Universities should also train their graduates in spoken communication.” Salman also felt that internships could be a solution to the problem. He suggested that the “internship period for the MBAs should be longer.” He went on: “ They should work in real environment before coming to the job market. That will make them more practical graduates.”

Naila considered that experience with industry should be compulsory for the teachers. She said,

Every business teacher must have a few years of experience in a business organization before starting teaching. Many of the teachers in the business schools have actually never worked in a real business organization. It is hard for them to understand and clarify the concepts. Work experience of the teachers will make them more practical teachers.

Zafar commented: “More areas of specializations should be introduced. Marks in the exams should be divided into quizzes, cases, class participations, presentations and projects. This will improve the personal and professional quality of the students.” Jahanzeb wanted some more specializations too. He said, “I suggest that the business school should introduce an area of specialization within textiles. In this area they should be taught textile marketing, knitting and merchandizing to the MBAs. This will help them find more opportunities in textile sector.”

Sharjeel was more concerned about the personality of the graduates. He said, “In business schools, there should be at least one course in personality development. This course will teach them how to face the tough circumstance in practical life.”

Summary of Employers’ Observations

It is apparent from their contributions that employers wish MBA graduates to possess a number of qualities that are consistent with the literature on what MBA graduates need to know. Work ethics is one of the major topics mentioned by employers of MBAs. Work ethics include a sense of dedication to their work, a high level of motivation to get the job done and an ability to achieve high levels of performance. A couple of employers obviously noticed that graduates are careless and inconsistent. At the same time, some employers think that MBA graduates possess high-level organizational skills and the ability to properly analyze situations and to make strategic decisions.

In answer to the question what business graduates need to know in today's business world, many employers insisted on the importance of enhanced communication skills. They had a strong belief that those communication skills automatically make successful executives. Communication skills were further divided into categories. Some of them emphasized verbal communication skills, while others insisted on the importance of competencies in the area of interpersonal communications.

Knowledge of current trends was another item on the shopping list of the employers. Within the context of current trends, employers want business graduates who have awareness of global market trends, e-commerce and multiculturalism. Employers feel their organizations of today are changing rapidly and young business executives need to keep themselves up to the mark.

Another essential feature is that employers look for in business graduates is leadership abilities. Leadership is a word that is extensively used in business organizations in Pakistan. The word manager is being replaced with leader. Leadership abilities in MBAs are required in order to help build teams and to work effectively within team contexts.

During formal interviews, the researcher noted that employers do not have a standardized list of requirements and their views differ significantly. However, fluent communication, interpersonal ability and inspirational leadership are the common characteristics employers want to see in MBA graduates.

In response to a question regarding their perceptions about personal and professional abilities of MBAs, employers had some common observations about business graduates. Most of the respondents promptly replied that they were observing changes in MBAs. Some of them felt that MBAs liked challenges in their jobs. They felt that they could afford to take risks and consider profit as an important indicator of the success of the organization. Many of the respondents said that MBAs were good in public relations outside the firm. They appreciated interpersonal abilities of the MBAs.

When employers were asked to comment on what changes they would like to see regarding the business knowledge of the business graduates, many were not happy with the knowledge levels of graduates in the past and judged that more recent graduates were superior. However, others had complaints with current MBAs but overall they were more satisfied than in the past with the knowledge and skills of current MBAs. They said that young MBAs were careless, did not go into detail and lacked concentration. However, a large number of respondents found recent MBA graduates to be confident, smart thinkers, and having new ideas about their profession.

In response to a question about what changes in MBAs had been noticed by employers, many respondents genuinely think that the type of business school has a positive correlation with graduate behavior. They tend to believe that graduates from private-sector-universities are more confident and enterprising, whereas graduates from the public university have stronger professional knowledge. However, most of the respondents while commenting on the difference between graduates from public universities and private sectors said they did not find any difference in MBAs from both kinds of business schools.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS: RESPONSES OF MBA GRADUATES

In summary, it may be said that a student before entering in a specific public sector university or a private business school considers a large number of factors. These can range from the economic factors to physical facilities and to the quality of the faculty. In this study, various factors considered and identified by the business graduates in selection of a particular business school are as follows:

- Easy and guaranteed admission.
- Hostel facility.
- Ease in accessibility through public transport.
- Convenient time.
- Recognition of degree and prestige of institution.
- Cost of program.
- Recommendations of friends and relatives.
- Familiarity with the business school because of obtaining first degree from the same school.
- Physical infrastructure of the institution.
- Core focus.
- The quality of faculty.
- Ongoing research.
- Business links.
- Career support.

Some of these factors are in agreement with the factors identified by the literature and others are unique in nature.

Easy and Guaranteed Admission

In Pakistan, admission in public universities is purely based on academic merit. At the University of the Punjab, there are around 200 student places available for admission in MBA classes in both morning and evening sessions. Students with outstanding scores in their BA, BSc. and BCom degrees can easily secure admission to the public university whereas hundreds of other graduates who seek to enroll in MBA programs are unable secure admission to the public university.

Most of the private business schools offer admission to nearly everyone. If students can pay the tuition fees, the admission office has no objection in offering admission. This is a convenience for many students who otherwise cannot get admission to a university. In the literature, this factor is not found in the list of factors affecting choices of the prospective students, as in most of the developed countries students can get admission in one of the public universities. Easy admission is therefore not among their preferences for choice of institution.

Hostel Facilities

Large numbers of students in business schools of Lahore come from other cities of the Punjab. They need adequate and cheap places to live in Lahore. Public universities have a large number of hostels for both young men and women. These hostels are designed for students and are equipped with all necessary facilities required by university students. They provide academic support services, which enhances student learning performance. Through these hostels, students can make connections with various social groups. Above all, these hostels are much cheaper than normal rental accommodation in the city.

In contrast, private business schools do not have quality hostel facilities for their students. Hostel facilities are not among the considerations enlisted in the factors of consideration recommended by the literature (Bickerstaffe 1998). Most universities in advanced countries have well equipped in terms of student residences. Most of the research on this topic has been conducted in advanced countries. This is the reason that hostel facilities, as a consideration, were not found among the shopping list for prospective students of these countries.

Ease in Accessibility through Public Transport

Distance from residence and accessibility of transport is another important consideration, that influences the choice of institution by students especially females. Students in business schools of Lahore travel from various parts of the city. Public transport is not very well-organized. The disposable income of students and their parents is not high and thus students seek cheap and reliable modes of transport. In Lahore, the public university has its own fleet of buses that pick up and drop off students to the various parts of Lahore, charging a nominal transport fare. This has facilitated enrolment by many students in the public universities. Other than public universities, only a small number of private business schools have buses. This is a key consideration in student selection of a business school.

Factors of this character are not to be found among the list of factors that influence the choice of business school by students of developed countries. Public transport is reliable and convenient there. Apart from that, large numbers of students travel to university using their own transport.

Convenience of Time

Large numbers of MBA students in Lahore work in the morning and study in evening programs. They generally finish their jobs at 5:00 pm and so business schools start their classes at 6:00 pm. Some business schools offer weekend MBA classes as well. In fact, some programs allow students in the workforce to study on weekends only. Timing of the classes is thus an important consideration for such kinds of students. In most universities in advanced countries, students study either full-time, part-time or by distance learning.

Recognition of Prestige of Institution

The school's reputation is one of the key factors in making the choice of business school. It determines how marketable students will be after graduation. In this respect, the rankings and reviews of business schools published in newspapers and magazines are normally the starting point for prospective students.

Which MBA program will be judged best by different prospective students is an important issue. Different people use different means of assessing the relative benefits of business schools. Magazines and newspapers rank schools in order of their perceived status among students and employers. Published guides provide more conventional consumer reviews based on the personal assessment of teams of experts that give professional opinions about the relative strengths of different business schools. Rankings in local newspapers and magazines are largely confined to business schools in Lahore, although they are beginning to spread their coverage to other cities of the Punjab.

This study has found that, apart from other factors, MBA graduates working with knitwear industry give considerable weight to recognition of the degree and the prestige of institutions while deciding on a business school. This is in line with the literature (Bickerstaffe, 1998). Students often feel that the reputation of the institution and the recognition given to its degree are of crucial importance. Institutions with high status and well recognized degrees offer qualifications that can open more doors for them than degrees from institutions of low reputation.

Assessing a school's reputation is a useful starting point but it is only a starting point. Many people choose schools purely on the basis of their reputation but are often disappointed. There are a number of reasons for it.

Changes in the faculty of business schools can be rapid and so particular faculty members that may attract the attention of potential students may have moved to other institutions by the time that students enroll. While the rankings provided by newspapers and magazines are useful indicators of business schools, as they are currently perceived, such rankings are not comprehensive in their coverage. Further, they do not include public universities that provide high-grade business education for prospective students wishing to pursue a career in government jobs. In addition, the methodology used by the ranking in some cases is highly suspect. The information and opinions provided in the media do not generally have any empirical evidence in support of the opinions offered.

Feedback from employers is often poorly informed; feedback from existing students is likely to be favorable because, understandably, graduates usually tend to "talk up" the reputation of

the school in order to improve their own standing in the job market. Hence, any published assessment of a school, or any informal feedback that prospective students personally illicit are bound to be subjective. Finding out the key strengths from a brochure is difficult as often brochures and other literature published by business schools can be misleading.

Wherever possible, students visit the business schools and question the admissions office to collect key information. Most schools arrange seminars followed by personal visits – and, indeed, the students are normally deeply suspicious of any business schools that do not offer this kind of services. These attitudes and behavior of prospective students and graduates of Lahore's business schools are consistent with what is set out in the literature.

Costs of the Program

Students' ability to acquire information on costs and to make the right judgment about the school will depend partially on visible and hidden costs. MBA programs are unique in the higher education sector. As users of education, students behave as traditional customers and try to buy the best possible education at the cheapest prices. Students who pay high tuition fees for the degree program wish to secure additional benefits. As seen from this perspective, students make one of the most expensive and significant purchases of their life. Only a house, a pension plan or, possibly, a luxury car will cost them more, and none of these will have more impact on their life than education. In these circumstances, they consider costs very seriously.

In a country like Pakistan, where a large proportion of population is living below the poverty line, cost becomes the most important factor. This becomes further significant where the students have to pay tuition fees out of their personal earnings. Yet, until very recently, this was not the case. Prior to the mid-1990s, parents generally funded prospective students, particularly in well-reputed schools. People from upper classes in society generally do not give much importance to the cost of program, provided they get what they want from the school. This factor does not exist in the list of considerations provided by Bickerstaffe (1998). The reason is that in many cases the variation in tuition fees for business schools in developed countries is less than in Pakistan. In the business schools of Lahore, tuition fees vary from

50,000 to 350,000 per degree program. Obviously, Pakistani students will compare the price of programs more seriously.

Recommendations of Friends and Relatives

This study has found that the recommendations of friends and relatives work as important forces in deciding on a business school. In Pakistan, the literacy rate has been very low and relatively few in the total population have obtained university degrees. Many young people do not have a clear idea of areas of education available at the postgraduate level. They could not get professional guidance from any counseling services but frequently they are not aware of this option. Thus, for many prospective students, the only method available is the recommendations of friends and relatives who already have graduated and are in business.

Social networks in Pakistan follow traditional Asian styles, where members of the society are closely attached with extended family and friendship groups. They depend on each other for assistance and advice to a major extent. This phenomenon works here as well. Thus MBA graduates who have had a good experience tend to recommend a particular university to others. Such factors might not operate in countries where the social structure is more individualistic.

Familiarity with the Business School

Many business schools in Pakistan offered bachelor degrees before they introduced their MBA degree. Students who have successfully completed a first degree from one institution often prefer to stay in the same institution for their MBA course. During their first degree course, such students become well acquainted with the various administrative systems at the business school and key faculty members and become used to using various services and facilities. Many of these business schools offer discounts in tuition fees to students who have done their first degree from that institution.

Physical Infrastructure of the Institution

If the school is based on a larger campus, particularly one with a strong commitment to degree programs, it is important that prospective MBA students have dedicated study areas,

and social and sports facilities. Of particular importance is the library, especially whether or not it is computerized. Good libraries now have computerized databases for various subjects available for student use. There is also the attraction of good canteens, cafeterias and access to sports facilities.

Respondents for this study have reported that library facilities were a source of satisfaction for most graduates. They did not put the quality of the library in their preference list while selecting a business school since Pakistan does not have a strong research and library culture. One of the most virulent complaints of MBA graduates concerning smaller private business schools was that such schools had inadequate physical facilities, despite the fact that students had to pay much higher fees, often out of their own pockets. IT facilities are also important. No school can ignore this area. Top schools like LUMS and PCBA pioneered better provision of IT in business education in the early 1990s. In most schools, students are provided with their own PCs; in the better ones, classrooms are equipped with in-built PCs and faculty are being tutored in methods of presenting expert knowledge and case examples more effectively on screen. The students considered this area to be of considerable importance while making their lists of satisfying factors.

- ***Sports Facilities***

Physical and sports facilities are other important areas of consideration by business graduates. Pakistan is a sports-loving country. In Lahore, sport is a common pastime among young people who often wish to spend their evenings on the sports fields. In Lahore, there are not many public parks, sports fields and swimming pools available. Sports fields and swimming pools provided by universities thus are an obvious consideration by students and prospective students.

Unfortunately, most private business schools are located in densely populated areas of the city, often operating in rental buildings. They thus are unable to organize sports events on those premises. Except for the public university, business schools do not have adequate sports facilities. One business school provides rowing and badminton facilities to its students while LUMS also reasonable sports arrangements. The remaining business schools have inadequate sports facilities leading to criticism by students.

There are some exceptions to this general trend and sizeable populations of business students are studying in small sized business schools without sports facilities. Often students do not even complain if these institutions are cheaper in cost. Among considerations in selecting a business school mentioned in the literature there is little mention of availability of sports facilities. It should be noted that in advanced countries most universities provide reasonable sports facilities.

The literature on choice of business students in selecting a business school describes various factors as being important. Syrett Michel (1998), Golzen Godfrey (1999), Bickerstaffe (1998) recommend that, when examining a school, prospective students need to take into account a number of important factors:

- The reputation of the school among employers.
- The school's focus and areas of expertise.
- The capacity of the faculty to teach the program.
- The research undertaken at the school is likely to be fed into the program.
- The school's 'access' to business.

Reputation of the business school, the school's focus and areas of expertise are key factors commonly found in lists of concern to students and prospective students in the research literature. The following paragraphs provide explanation of the above considerations in detail.

Core focus

Syrett (1998), Golzen (1999) and Bickerstaffe (1998) recommend that a student while seeking admission to a business school should consider the core focus of the school. In this study, the graduates did not include this factor in their list of choices for a business school. However, the graduates did include this consideration in factors that satisfy graduates while they were in the schools. The following paragraphs analyze core focus and will explain why prospective students in Lahore, Pakistan, do not include it in their list of preferences.

A comparative analysis of schemes of studies indicates that normally the business schools in Lahore offer the following mixture of subjects during the MBA degree program.

- *Essential core subjects*

The MBA is a general management program. The early stages of the curriculum, therefore, give the students an overview of all the major business functions, including accountancy, business finance, marketing, human resource management, organizational behavior, economics, quantitative methods and information technology. These subjects are always included in the core program taken by all students.

- ***Elective Area of Specialization***

The elective courses (non-compulsory courses) are those that relate the MBA program to business practice and life, enabling students to tailor their program to meet special needs. The range and diversity of elective programs vary from one school to another. Common areas of specialization are marketing or finance. Subjects within marketing specialization include: the following: marketing management, sales management and advertising, international marketing, agricultural marketing and marketing research. Subjects within the finance specialization generally include corporate financing, managerial accounting, financial analysis, auditing, and public accounting. These are increasingly being transferred to the core program in many schools. Other topics that are individual to specific schools include strategy and communication, management in the hospitality industry, textile management and banking in Islamic economics.

Examining the specialization areas provides students with a good idea of the school's particular focus and specific areas of expertise. It also illustrates how committed the school is in broadening the perspective of its students in a world where an organization's stakeholders are more diverse and complex than in the past. One school, for example, is considering running an elective in the areas of pharmaceutical marketing.

- ***Cross-disciplinary Courses***

A sound grasp of the strategic aspects of business functions, such as marketing and finance, is generally not sufficient training for most graduates. At a time when companies are restructuring themselves around cross-disciplinary project and service teams, with managers from different specialties working closely together to meet common corporate goals, it is important that MBA programs should have a number of courses in core programs that

demonstrate how a more integrated approach to how management processes might work in practice.

The kinds of issues that are covered in the curriculum can include how to manage quality, global marketing, management of brand equity, or handling complex change management situations. The presence of these cross-disciplinary subjects gives students a good indication of whether the school's faculty works together as a team, while some students ask for some specific evidence that teamwork is actually taking place in practice. For example, are there areas of cross-disciplinary research (the whole field of brand accounting and brand equity originated from joint work undertaken by accountancy, finance and marketing departments), and in case discussion managed from one course to another to allow students to re-evaluate the company from a variety of different perspectives?

- ***Skill-based Courses***

Until recently, skill-based courses were frequently deemed to be beneath the remit of an MBA program. Now all of that has changed and it is becoming clear that managers, in order to be effective in their jobs, regardless of the sector or specialization in which they work, need to possess a small number of common core skills, such as teamwork, project management skills, and communications and computing skills. A good program thus builds these into the curriculum in some form or fashion. In private sector schools, the ability of the new universities to do so has been made easier because they are no longer bound by Higher Education Commission's regulations.

- ***Action-learning Exercises***

The best schools realize that the most effective way of teaching this aspect of management is by practice. A good MBA program, therefore, includes some imaginative simulation and team-based exercises. Examples include: a simulation exercise, where students 'shadow' a sales management team from a leading corporation and act out their roles on campus; an orientation exercise conducted by a leading business school based on an approach pioneered in the Army; and a series of self-managed, team-based projects at another university that form an integral part of the overall program.

- ***Consultancy Projects***

In the early 1990s, LUMS pioneered in-company projects to replace the requirement to submit a thesis. This is now standard practice in Lahore business schools and provides an effective means for linking what the manager does in his or her day-to-day work with the concepts learned on campus.

The efforts that schools make to distinguish themselves from their competitors make it more important for prospective students to check out where business schools see their main focus and chosen areas of expertise. In the US, universities such as Stanford regularly achieve higher rankings in *Business Week* rankings than Berkeley, for example. However, Stanford is a “big company” school, which has built up a strong reputation among North America’s top 500 businesses. Prospective students attracted to smaller, high-growth companies might be better off studying at Berkeley, where there is more emphasis on entrepreneurialism and innovation.

Equally, anyone seeking to pursue a career in finance in the UK would probably be better off studying at the London Business School (LBS), which is commonly acknowledged by employers to have one of the finest finance faculty departments in the country, whereas someone interested in a marketing-orientated career would probably be better off studying at Cranfield School of Management that many employers feel has a better marketing faculty than LBS. Similarly, some business schools in Lahore have strong reputations in particular areas. The University of the Punjab is considered as stronger in the finance whereas LUMS has a strong reputation in the general management area. The Punjab College of Business Administration, on the other hand, is better known as a nursery for young marketing export producers. Most of the small business schools have concentrated on the marketing and information technology areas.

This study has found that business graduates were satisfied with courses offered by particular business schools. However, the graduates have not given much emphasis to the importance of the strength of the institution in particular subject areas. This tendency does not support the literature. The reasons can be the following.

Pakistani organizations are not yet organized on professional grounds. Resultantly, business schools are not strictly following the specialization concept. Traditionally most of the business schools offer just two areas of specializations: finance and marketing.

Employers do not give much consideration to the areas of specialization of graduates when they are recruiting MBAs in the areas of management and marketing. There are many graduates who completed their MBA degree with specialization in the area of finance and are now working in marketing area of their organization. At the same time, there are dozens of MBA graduates who chose marketing as their area of specialization and are now working in finance-related positions. For general management positions, employers appear to place little emphasis on the area of specialization, as most business schools do not offer management as an area of specialization. Many MBA graduates with specializations are working within various capacities in different organizations regardless of their area of specialization. It is therefore not a consideration by the prospective students when selecting a business school.

The Quality of the Faculty

The capacity of the faculty to teach the program is another factor, which is included in the lists compiled by scholars such as Syrett (1998), Golzen (1999) and Bickerstaffe (1998). The quality of a school's faculty is the key to its real value – and this is always placed under a powerful microscope during the selection of a business school. Some of the questions asked are as follows. How many of the business school's faculty members are devoting themselves exclusively to teaching? Do they all have foreign qualifications related to the subjects they profess expertise in? How long is the teaching experience of the faculty members? Are faculty members supportive and helpful to the students inside and outside the classroom? In addition, and certainly alternatively, have they had direct working experience in the industries or sectors in which they profess expertise, either as managers or as consultants working for the school? Do they regularly conduct research into issues related to their chosen subjects? Where, and how often, is this work published? Are they the authors of any major books on the subject?

This study has found that the quality and expertise of faculty was among the top factors that influenced satisfaction of graduates. Most of the graduates were satisfied with the quality and

expertise of the faculty members. While making the list of satisfying factors, they put faculty on the top of the list. However, it is observed that MBA graduates did not consider much about faculty at the time of admission. The reasons for this trend can be as follows:

- Prospective students are not that mature to evaluate the qualifications and expertise of the teachers before admission.
- Every business school has a large number of experienced and foreign qualified teachers in their list of faculty members printed in the prospectus of the business schools.
- It is hard to see any differential advantage of a business school while comparing faculty lists printed in the prospects.
- In many cases, the same teachers can be found in the list of faculty members of various business schools, as most of the private sector and public university teachers also work as part-time teachers.

Ongoing Research Programs

Syrett (1998) and Golzen (1999) have included the research undertaken at the business school that is likely to be fed into the programs, as a consideration before applying for admission to a business school. Management is a fast-moving subject and a school will only be as good as the research its faculty undertake. The respondents did not include this consideration in their list of preferences in selecting a business school. This factor was even absent among the factors identifying as contributing to the satisfaction of graduates when they were in the business school. Possible explanations for this trend are explained below.

Questions that may arise here include: how many of the faculty members are actively engaged in applied management research and, equally important, how quickly is this research fed into the classroom?

In this study, it was observed that prospective students consider the quality of research facilities such as computers and library facilities as being of major importance while choosing a particular business school. However, students do not consider the research done by the

teachers at the business school as being equally important while seeking admission to MBA programs. The reason is simply that a Pakistani student after completing a BA/BSc/BCom is not capable of judging the quality of research completed at a particular business school.

Another main reason is that at undergraduate level students merely read and memorize one textbook per subject in order to pass their examinations. The type of education provided is not research-based. It is quite obvious that a student who has spent many years in a culture that is not research-based will not give much importance to the library. On the other hand, most business students aim at being professional practitioners in their area and not researchers.

Another reason for this behavior is the general absence of a research culture in Pakistan. The general atmosphere of the educational institutions and organizations is not conducive to research. Infrastructure for conducting research, such as research journals, hardware and software for research, is not available. Professors in the universities and managers in the organizations have only limited opportunity to get their work published.

Business Links

Whether the school has an international linkage or a link with good local provider, it should have regular access to the businesses within its chosen remit. So, at the top end of the scale, schools like LUMS, PCBA and the University of the Punjab make considerable use of the fact that their graduates are working in city's top organizations and that, as consequence, they regularly attract the CEOs of major corporations headquartered locally as guest lecturers. Equally, ILM and AIU have established high ratings for the attention they pay to the needs of local business. Sometimes this can lead to the school establishing unexpected areas of expertise; the business school at the University of the Punjab, for example, has strong links with local businesses. Establishing an understanding of their needs has led to the school developing a PhD program.

This study has observed that the students did not consider this factor while seeking admission to the universities but they considered the placement services as a source of their satisfaction. The business school, which has strong connection with industry, will be in better position to get placements for their graduates. LUMS is considered an institution that has strong links

with leading business organizations in the country. Its degree holders get an advantage in job seeking because of the links between the higher education institution and business.

Besides placements, students during their course of study have to produce large numbers of written assignments, term papers and project reports. They have to find an organization where they can work as an internee towards the end of their degree programme. Strong links that educational institutions might have with the corporate world is always an advantage here for students to complete such assignments successfully.

No doubt business links of the schools will be of great help for the students in pursuing their educational objectives. Even then, this factor was absent from the list of factors considered by the graduates. The reasons again relate primarily to the educational and social backgrounds of students. Normally, a student who finishes an undergraduate degree from a college and enters a university does not have much idea about the requirements of business schools. They choose business schools on some other basis. However, business links of business schools are a satisfying factor while students are in educational process.

Career Support

There has been a revolution in the way in which business schools are considering career services. Career centers help students to find jobs after graduation. Most of the business schools in Lahore unfortunately do not have their own placement centers. Only the University of the Punjab has very recently approved the idea of starting a placement centre. The factor of career centers is not found in the list of preferences of the students while selecting a business school in Lahore. However, presence of this facility became a source of satisfaction to the graduates.

Prospective business students did not include placement centers in their consideration for the selection of a business school. Apparently, the reason is that the students are not familiar with such kinds of facilities. They do not have idea of importance of placement centers in a business school, as it does not exist anywhere. This factor is included in the list of

considerations of a student in advanced countries, because prospective students are fully aware of the idea and its importance.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS: RESPONSES OF EMPLOYERS

Overview

Universities have long been central to the success of national higher education objectives and the pursuit of distinctive missions while adeptly responding to changing social and economic expectations. In recent years, however, a number of federal and provincial decision-makers and opinion-shapers, educational administrators, the general public and others have generated increased external pressures on institutions of higher education. All these forces demand reductions in cost, increased financial accountability, enhanced quality in education and greater emphasis on relevance of the university degrees to practical life. In response to these circumstances, universities are aiming to pay enhanced attention to postgraduate education and give tougher scrutiny to faculty productivity. The cumulative pressure on universities has increased the need to search for new revenue sources and redesign course delivery systems. Within this political and economic climate, it is important to consider how the challenges facing universities today may fundamentally affect the lives of participants in the educational process.

In Pakistan, the institutions offering business degrees compete with one another in attracting students and public attention. This induces them to introduce formal and effective quality assurance systems that are visible and verifiable by their stakeholders. The key users of education are the students and the employers. This has always been a question for the educational managers, whether the students should be treated as customers or not. The treatment of students as customers does have advantages.

If an emphasis on quality is geared to improve cooperation among all stakeholders in education, from trustees to faculty and to students, its objectives are certainly worthwhile. Marchese (1992) stressed that faculty, staff, and administrators should recognize their obligation to serve students and the society. While discussing the goals of education, Fisher

(1993) emphasized that the prime goals of quality education should appear laudable, rather than incontestable. Considering the employers as the prime users of the graduates, it is important to understand the expectations of the employers from MBA graduates.

Employers' Expectations from MBA Graduates

Many employers wish MBA graduates to be strong in inter-personal skills and the ability to apply academic theories to real life situations. Such kinds of thinking have impacted on many small and large size organizations with the result of leading to increased-hiring of more MBAs for their organizations. Global competition has sharpened the need for professionalism in management, in contrast to the cult of the talented amateurs, which, in Pakistan at least, prevailed in many organizations until mid-1990s. Reluctantly, more MBAs were placed in higher-level positions in organizations.

In Pakistan, no study has been conducted to ascertain the number of MBA graduates working in various positions nation-wide. But wherever in the world such a kind of study is conducted, it has been observed that a number of MBAs in management positions is growing quickly, especially in management positions where they have the capacity to influence staff selection decisions. According to the 1997 Board of Directors Study carried out by Korn/Ferry in conjunction with London Business School, 41% of UK company directors out of a sample of 410 now have an MBA – a huge increase on the percentage of five years earlier. In this study, the employers of MBAs were asked to identify their expectations of MBAs. Expectations of the employers were categorized in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes of MBAs. They expressed their respective expectations as follows:

- Knowledge.
- Awareness of market trends (factual knowledge) as well as the effect of the current global situations of the market.
- Knowledge of the use of modern technology in business.
- Knowledge of theories, laws, principles and their application to practical situations.
- Ability to keep themselves in touch with the work of business leaders in the world.
- Skills.
- Interpersonal skills.

- Decision making ability.
- Team building.
- Strategic thinking.
- Ability to manage effectively in a changing work environment.
- Effective Communication skills.
- Presentation skills.
- Problem solving ability.
- Attitudes.
- Ability to practice the theories.
- Confidence.
- Enterprising/Innovative.
- Consistency.
- Patience.
- Commitment to organization.
- Genuine behavior.

From the above list of expectations of employers at the hosiery/knitwear industry in Pakistan, it can be easily figured out that employers wish to see enhanced interpersonal skills and professional grooming in MBA programs. Despite the fact that the socio-cultural factors of Pakistan are significantly different from those of the advanced countries, surprisingly there is no difference in the expectations of Pakistani employers and those in developed countries. Historically, most of the demand for MBA graduates in the world came from two sources initially – management consultants and investment banks. At the height of the 1980s, these two types of employers recruited 70% of the graduates from top North American and European schools. With the arrival of the economic downturn that shook the west in the early 1990s, demand from these sources temporarily collapsed. Business schools were forced to turn to industry as an alternative source of recruitment – and they found that industry was not exactly impressed by what they had to offer.

The key problems appeared to relate particularly to the content of programs and the approaches to teaching employed. Consultancy firms and investment banks sought graduates with well-developed analytical skills who could assess companies and situations with rigorous

and objective eyes. Industrial companies, by contrast, look for new executive staff members who are used to face day-to-day realities of the front line where situations are generally non-programmed and not easy to analyze. A considerable amount of research provided better understanding of employer expectations of MBA graduates. These surveys provide a foundation for business educationists to plan accordingly.

In a 1994 article, Dowd and Liedtka (1994:14) examined the issue of rapidly changing needs in business organizations today. They pointed out that business schools have an obligation to address the needs of employers by keeping the curricula attuned to what the graduates will have to know to be competitive in the marketplace. Specifically, they seek to “identify the factors used by hiring organizations in selecting MBAs, to obtain common definitions of those factors, and to understand the content areas being assessed by corporate interviewers”. The key traits that Dowd and Liedtka identified as being essential to MBA graduates were: communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-motivation/initiative, professional presence/initial impact, demonstrated leadership/leadership potential, analytic/problem-solving skills, and academic achievements. From those traits, the three traits were considered as the most important: communication skills, interpersonal skills, and self-motivation/initiative. The authors further explained about these traits.

By communication, they included written and verbal skills in listening, clarifying, obtaining and providing feedback and being sensitive to diverse perspectives. By interpersonal skills, the definition included the ability to deal with pressure and adapt to the needs of others as circumstances change; and also the ability to perform well, particularly in different situations. Collaboration and teamwork were also included in these traits. Self-Motivation included the need for students to become actively engaged in activities independent of the prescribed curriculum.

The realization by organizations as well as individuals was that narrow professional qualifications or functional skills are ultimately not enough in a business environment. Graduates need to be able to take an integrated and increasingly global view of how a decision in one sphere impacts on others – precisely what an MBA learns. In a large number of required features, flexibility and adaptability may indeed be among the leading factors that

generally explain the success of the liberally educated persons. Critical thinking and decision-making skills are surely important as well, along with intelligence and personal skills. Above all, asserts Judd Alexander, Executive Vice-President of James River Corporation, “business needs people who are smart, who know how to use their brain and how to work with others” (Alexander 1981:16). Alexander’s clear indication is towards mind power and team building or interpersonal skills.

The business schools are aware of the circumstances where interpersonal skills now form an important part of the employers’ expectations. But what is it that more forward-looking employers expect to gain from hiring MBAs? And, by the same token, what qualities should an MBA expect to come away with, having taken the course?

Bampfylde (1990) conducted a survey among major employers of MBA graduates and came up with the following interesting requirements:

- A breadth of business understanding of management principles across the key concerns of organizations.
- Specific tools for analyzing strategic issues and options.
- The ability to identify priorities in courses of action.
- Presentation and communication skills.
- These factors can be grouped as business knowledge, skills required to apply the knowledge and communication skills.

A 1982 survey of 113 officers of large American companies illustrated the rankings of managerial traits commonly found in such studies. Drawing on a list of thirty traits, the officers were asked to identify the five that “become more important to success as a college graduate employee progresses to middle or top positions in your company” (Warren 1983:11). The eight traits most frequently singled out were the following (with the percentage of the officers who included each trait among the top five): verbal communication skills (51 percent); ability to identify and formulate problems (45 percent); willingness to assume responsibility (43 percent); interpersonal skills (42 percent); reasoning ability (38 percent); creativity (27 percent); writing skills (24 percent); and ability to function independently (24 percent). Communication, decision-making and interpersonal abilities, rather than technical

knowledge, have led the list. Most of the employers in the corporations think that specific content of college learning typically plays a small role in the manager's performance or advancement (Warren, 1983).

Specialized knowledge, however, plays a larger role in helping new managers to obtain an entry-level position. This emphasis was shown in the 1984 placement survey of 648 firms that revealed that an applicant's college major (that is, the content area) was the single most important criterion in company recruitment of new graduates. Moreover, when employers were asked what courses would "make graduates more employable" in their organizations, business-related courses were among the top recommendations. The courses that employers asserted would always or almost always help the liberal arts graduate find the first job, with percentages of employers listing them, are as follows (Shingleton and Scheets, 1984; writing and communication and finance (55 percent); data processing (44 percent); and public speaking (35 percent). The courses that employers found more valuable were again the same—those giving business knowledge and communication skills.

It can be easily concluded that in almost all of the studies employers wanted graduates with a strong hold of content, higher levels of skills and more powerful personalities. This expectation is in agreement with the findings of this study that coincide this with other findings listed in literature. Employers in the hosiery/knitwear industry in Lahore require that young MBA graduates should have sufficient knowledge of the area of work and reasonable command over skills required for the performance of the job and the right attitudes to work in an organization of today.

Suggestions and Recommendations of the Employers

The employers of MBA graduates wish for the following for the improvements in educational programs:

- Emphasis on improvement of the faculty rather than ornamental things.
- Emphasis on development of presentation skills of the graduates.
- Longer duration of the internship.
- Greater awareness of global issues.

- Knowledge of process & design in industry.
- More information on ISO.
- More case studies work in teaching.
- Practical business experience for teachers before starting teaching.
- Certification based on multiple criteria such as, quizzes, written tests, class participation, presentations & projects.

CHAPTER 9

CRITICISMS OF MBA PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYER ATTITUDES

Challenge Ahead

Dynamic changes in every area of life have become the order of the day. How do individuals meet this challenge and develop approaches to operate successfully in this new environment? This is a big question for all stakeholders of business schools. To face the increasing complexities of the modern world, educators need to understand some key perspectives. Each of these perspectives is operating at different levels in the wider global environment around the organization and the individual.

History bears testimony to the fact that the rise and fall of nations hinges largely on the foundation stone of education. Administrators, teachers and owners of educational institutes are facing the challenge of operating in a rapidly changing world. Globalization of economic systems, technological advancements and increased expectations that society has from its educational system have replaced past uncertainties with new and certain frameworks. Universities have long been central to the success of national higher education objectives. These are supposed to pursue distinctive missions while responding to changing social expectations to expand and diversify their functions. Universities achieve their goals by providing education in various fields. The MBA degree is one of these areas, which has been gaining popularity during the last decade. A considerable amount of literature has been produced on various aspects of business education.

The management literature reports that the MBA degree has gained considerable popularity since its inception and has been widely regarded as the preparation of senior managers in business and the public sector (Bruke 1993, p. 35; Bain, 1993 p. 5). In the 10 years preceding this study, the management education literature has been dominated by critical comments about MBA programs and attitudes of major stakeholders. Major criticisms are directed at the “currency” and “relevance” of the degree, in view of massive changes that have taken place in the external environmental factors during the decades since the inception of the MBA degree.

Frequently management commentators show their dissatisfaction with the quality and standards of managers that MBA education produces.

When asked, MBA graduates and their employers in the hosiery/knitwear industry showed considerable dissatisfaction in particular areas:

- They are not confident enough to take independent assignments. They seek advice from the experienced employees.
- They are very reluctant to introduce modern marketing techniques. Instead they prefer to follow stereotype formulas in almost every field.
- They are inconsistent in their attitudes and are not regular while working on projects.
- They are impatient and want to reach to higher positions as quickly as possible.
- They lack commitment to the organization. They change the organization whenever they find a better opportunity.
- They often use impressive management technique but often create false impressions of their performance and academic excellence.
- They do not keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in their field.
-

From the above comments, it is apparent that employers were particularly dissatisfied with the behavioral aspect of graduates. They did not have many complaints with subject content and skills factors. This dissatisfaction of employers is very much in line with the findings of research conducted in other parts of the world. The literature has blamed two areas for the problems in the behavior of the MBA graduates i.e. the MBA degree itself and the way the programs are organized. Some experts have challenged the appropriateness of MBA degrees. Many observers question the appropriateness of the MBA degree as relevant education for business and management, and have called for the redesigning of management education and increased emphasis on the importance of rethinking the purposes of the degree in the light of future demand for graduate management education (Gleeson et. al. 1993; Foggin 1992). Some experts even take the view that whether or not senior managers have a masters degree is largely immaterial, provided that government confers the degree. This conclusion emerged from a study of 2,700 senior managers in more than two hundred major corporations (Useem & Karabel 1985). The study focused on the chief executives and ranking officers of the

USA's leading manufacturing, financial, and services firms in the late 1970s. It found that, out of those senior managers who received no university education, only 27 per cent had reached the chief executive posts. The degree holders did somewhat better, but not uniformly so. Of those with only BA degrees, 36 per cent had become chief executives. Out of those who earned MBA degrees from one of the nation's top eleven programs, 45 per cent had reached the pinnacle of corporate achievement. This would appear to indicate that non-MBAs could reach senior positions and work satisfactorily. However, MBA recipients fared better than those with only BAs. Yet a closer analysis of the data revealed that a subgroup of the B.A degree holders were actually more likely to have reached the top of the corporate pyramid than the MBA recipients.

Many studies suggest that an MBA degree definitely helps graduates to reach higher levels in their organizations. In examining the educational background of the managers, the Illinois Bell study reveals that the higher the level of management the greater were the proportions of managers holding liberal arts degrees. Out of the first-level managers, 18 per cent were liberal arts graduates. Of the top managers, 60 per cent were recipients of baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts (Wade 1984). Nearly all of the employers in the Pakistan hosiery/knitwear industry felt that MBA graduates were more appropriate for their kind of job. They always preferred MBAs to any other type of postgraduate degree holders. Culturally the MBA is considered as a symbol of success in this industry.

The Rising Need

There has been an increased demand by managers for meaningful training and development, and preferably of a kind that conferred portable qualifications. Over the past few years, it has become noticeable in many job advertisements that possession of an MBA has become a desirable attribute. In this study, the employers of MBA graduates responded that the MBAs were performing better than non-MBAs. They commented that MBAs were better in interpersonal skills and team building. They also felt that MBAs were better in communication skills in the organization. This finding is endorsed by the findings of the scholarly literature more generally.

Mintzberg (1989:80) was concerned with education in management. He argued that:

It is wrong – socially as well economically – to train relatively inexperienced people in management. Management training should be directed at people who have substantial organizational experience coupled with proven leadership ability as well as the requisite intelligence ... so that the knowledge foundation is deep, or 'thick', as anthropologists might put it.

The research on the relationship between specific cognitive information and managerial performance focuses the perceptions of college graduates some years after entering their business careers. The proportion of the graduates attributing high importance to course content is typically very low. One representative study (Bisconti and Kessler 1980) asked graduates mostly working in business to rate the value of course content for their work a decade after leaving the campus. Only 29 per cent stated that facts and information of their primary study areas were the most important elements in their ability to perform even their first job, and only 8 per cent found them to be of singular value for their work a decade later.

These kinds of research indicate that the course content does not matter much when it comes to the practical life of MBAs in their organizations. In this study, it was found that personal traits were valued more by employers than academic content. Employers have serious complaints about the attitudes of graduates and responded that MBAs tend to be less loyal to the organization and wish to move from the bottom level to the top level quickly. They also use impressive management techniques in the organizations. Employers feel that, apart from rich academic content, the graduates should be prepared in these behavioral areas as well.

A similar conclusion emerges from a mid-1970s study (Solomon 1981) of college graduates who had been in the labor force for three to nine years. A relatively high proportion (53 per cent) of the recent graduates asserted that their college education gave them knowledge and skills used in their current job, but this factor ranked fifth in importance, behind “increased general knowledge,” “increased ability to think clearly,” and other factors not related to specific course work. Moreover, the specific content further diminished in value over time; after nine years on the job, the proportion of the graduates still finding college “knowledge and skills” relevant had diminished by a third.

After comparison of the expectations of the employers with the requirements defined by literature, it can be seen that these are nearly the same. However, the employers in the hosiery/knitwear industry in Pakistan had some additional requirements from MBAs. They wanted consistent and patient graduates who could work with the organizations for a longer period of time. The reason of this requirement was that it took a long time and a considerable financial investment for employers to train an MBA. If the turnover rate is high, there is a heavy loss in terms of quality and money for the employers.

The complaint about the attitude of the MBA graduates can be due to another reason that most of the employers themselves do not have high moral fiber. Syed (2002), an ex-employee who served a private sector organizations as a senior manager, wrote as follows: "I have come across various owners of businesses, but have to sadly say that I found almost all of the employers to be rude, hot-headed and hard-hearted persons".

Although considerable emphasis today is paid to how to prove oneself as a good leader, and how cautiously human resources should be handled, yet local employers have demonstrated that they have done away with these qualities long ago. According to them, the above qualities are merely of an academic nature. Accordingly, these qualities sound good in books only, but have no value in practical life. Since these employers happen to be the owners of businesses, they deem it their right to never acclaim the hardship experienced and contributions of their staff. They have no word of praise for them.

At the time of recruitment, they hire staff after thorough verification and they demand from them vast experience for their respective jobs. Still, they pay meager salaries to employees who are finally selected after a lot of grilling. The selection criterion is tough, but the scale of payment is disappointing. It is further saddening to note that these meager salaries are even not paid in time.

The employers also can be harsh at the time of approving routine benefits, like annual increments, bonuses, loans, medical reimbursements, leave and salaries etc., which are the legal rights of the staff. They fabricate lame excuses on such occasions, such as there being no funds available, periods of lower business activity, heavy liabilities and so on. There are occasions and circumstances when an employee faces a situation where there is no way out

but to file a leave application. But this is considered a great sin in the private sector, and the employee is put to the proverbial sword, and made to answer an endless stream of questions. There have been occasions when the bosses did not even think twice before dismissing subordinates just because he/she was unable to attend office for a day, or for some other equally minor reason. This is why high staff turnover is recorded in private-sector enterprise, especially in the smaller ones, in Pakistan.

These employers are always unhappy to see their staff leaving the offices at 5 pm. They expect their presence in the office at exactly 9 a.m. in the morning and feel uneasy watching them heading for their homes at 5 p.m. They are particular in observing the punctuality of their employees in the morning, but are never particular in observing similar punctuality of their staff in the evening. At the time of annual increments, the tone of the employers gets bitter, and they refuse without any hesitation to award any increment to them. Similarly, bonuses are not paid at the end of the year regardless of the volume of profit they may have earned during that particular year. All the profit earned is considered to be the result of the sole effort of the owners, and not those of the staff.

While a number of labor laws exist in the country and labor inspectors keep visiting factories and offices from time to time, none of this activity benefits the employees, as they are never registered with various labor departments. Besides, labor inspectors are well fed and entertained by the owners of private establishments, and any matter raised, if at all, gets easily dumped in official files. Trade union activity in private establishments is considered a severe crime, and every effort is made to discourage the formation of such unions. Warnings, punishments and even dismissals are the routine practices adopted by employers in this regard. If a union is still brought into existence, the owners either bribe the union leaders or erect a parallel pocket union to create rift among the workers.

Syed (2002) blames economic conditions for most of these problems. He thinks that the basic reason behind the prevailing chaos is the rising level of unemployment which allows industrialists and business owners to take their employees for granted, knowing well that they cannot even think of leaving the job, and, thus, have to silently put up with whatever comes

their way. Added to this problem is the fact that no proper government vigilance exists for safeguarding the legal rights of the employees.

Interviews with ex-employees of a private sector organization clearly indicated the ethical practices being followed by the employers. This can lead to a clash of values between old-fashioned employers and a modern MBA graduates. These comments are true in some cases but in majority of the situations the employers are sincerely concerned with the relevance and efficiency of MBAs when they are on the job.

Second, players in the educational process are the graduates themselves. In this study, the graduates criticized many elements of the educational process.

The MBAs were dissatisfied with the following in their MBA programs:

- Qualifications of the teachers.
- Teachers' experience.
- Cooperation of non-teaching staff.
- Teaching skills of the faculty.
- Library facility.
- Sports facility.
- Transport services.
- Hostel facilities.
- Courses offered.
- Discipline.

To fully understand the nature of complaints of the graduates, it is better to understand the background of change in business education. The first perspective to understand is the changing nature of the wider society in which educational institutions are set. This involves understanding the globalization of economic, societal and technological trends and how they manifest themselves today and also assessing how they are likely to impact on schools in the future. An interesting combination of forces, the reengineering movement from the business world and the reform and restructuring movement in education, are providing a useful framework to rethink radically the context in which we work.

MBA graduates had serious complaints about the curriculum not being related to real life. The respondents criticized the current curriculum at business schools. They wanted it to be redesigned according to international standards. They had a feeling that the current curriculum is not in line with the changing environment and is not able to make graduates ready to fit in the changing organizational challenges. Traditionally, the public universities and private business schools offer post-graduate education in the form of the MBA degree to fresh graduates from universities. The entrants in these business schools are the BA, BSc, BCom or BBA degree-holders. Nearly half of the MBA students of the business schools do not have undergraduate degrees in business-related subjects. An assumption in MBA programs is that students can be trained in two years' time to be business managers.

The respondents of this study felt that the current course offerings are not sufficient to prepare graduates according to the requirements of the field. While designing the courses, educational administrators at business schools considered that the graduates have a background in business and they do not need some basic level courses. But actually there were a large number of graduates who were not holding a business degree at under graduate level. They found it hard to understand even the basic concepts. At the same time, all those who were holding an undergraduate degree in business or economics find themselves dissatisfied with the difficulty of courses. They feel that studying basic level courses such as basic accounting, basic economics and business communication is repetition of the courses they had studied at the undergraduate level.

Role of Faculty

In the responses in this study, a large number of MBAs and their employers showed their concern about teachers and the teaching process. They perhaps understood that the change in teachers and teaching could make the degree program more practical and relevant.

The role of faculty has always been a concern of management education researchers. Contemporary discourse on the problems plaguing higher education reaffirms the concerns as academic organizations are criticized for their academic inefficiency. Faculty members are increasingly being considered as unproductive and self-interested. The degree to which such

unfavorable conceptions of faculty have become widespread is striking, as is the extent to which a new style of academic management has simultaneously become more legitimate.

The locus of control for decision-making is shifting away from departments and their faculties towards various non-academicians, but educational managers who continually assert the need for even greater managerial flexibility to make a wide range of difficult strategic decisions, including those with educational implications. This trend is challenging the traditional expectations that faculty bring to their workplaces. Faculty has not always been an active participant in steering the macro-level changes in the mission, finance, and governance of universities.

Some of the MBA graduates had complaints about the ability and competence of faculty members. They disliked some faculty members. About some of the teachers they commented that they taught books, not subjects. They even criticized some of the teachers and said that they should not even teach at university level. At the same time, employers suggested that more emphasis should be laid on faculty development. They said that measures should be taken to improve the performance of the faculty.

Against this background, it seems inevitable that today's business schools will disappoint and that tomorrow's will ultimately disillusion both the faculty and those who hold in view society's long-range investment in our universities. MBAs and their employers shared these concerns on possible future directions. These reflections are offered in the spirit of considering how the business schools may be sustained economically, organizationally, and intellectually as viable and attractive places for academic work.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of MBA programs in Lahore Pakistan in terms of the satisfaction of MBA graduates and their perceptions about various activities involved in the process of program implementation. The study also investigated the effects of MBA programs on the personal and professional development of the graduates and the perceptions of the employers of MBAs about the relevance of MBA programs to the requirements of the workplace. Thus the study was based on two distinct but related empirical investigations and various assumptions that under-pinned them. At the one end of the spectrum, the impact of the MBA program on the graduates was studied in terms of feedback to the education process in the light of the perceptions of the graduates. At the other end, the perceptions of employers were studied in terms of their satisfactions with MBAs on the job.

MBA graduates were interviewed to obtain feedback about their perceptions of the structure and effectiveness of the program. Questions were asked covering the following areas:

- Reasons for choosing a particular business school.
- Relevance of the MBA program to business knowledge and skills.
- Satisfaction of the graduates from their MBA degree program.
- Effect of MBA programs on graduates' personal and professional development.
- Suggestions and recommendations of the graduates for the improvement of programs.

The employers of the MBAs were interviewed asking questions in the following areas:

- Expectations of the industry from MBA graduates.
- Observations of the employers related to MBA graduates.
- Changes noted by the employers in recent MBA graduates.
- Personal and professional characteristics of MBA graduates.
- Any specific shortcomings of MBA graduates.
- Recommendations of the employers for the improvement in the program.

The MBAs had a variety of reasons for selecting a particular business school for their study. Significant factors in selecting a business school were found to be:

- Cost.
- Availability of physical facilities.
- Repute of a business school.
- Recommendations of friends and relatives.
- Quality of teaching.
- Proximity to office or home.

While commenting about the relevance of the knowledge gained during their studies at business school, MBA graduates felt that they had developed significantly in the following areas:

- Self-confidence.
- Decision-making ability.
- Problem solving ability.
- Analytical skills.

MBAs were confident in saying that their personal and professional development had helped them in their professional lives. A majority felt that the content of the MBA degrees was closely related to the requirements of their job. However, there were a number of respondents who said that the subjects they studied were not related to the requirements of real business life. Thus they favored major changes in MBA curricula.

The MBA graduates were found to be highly satisfied with their degree program, in general. However, they were dissatisfied in the following areas:

- Curriculum.
- Students' services.
- Physical infrastructure.
- Placement centers.

The majority of MBA graduates had pleasant experiences when they were in their business schools. Some of them, however, had unpleasant experiences with faculty members and were unimpressed the institution's culture. MBA graduates were confident that their MBA program

had helped them in developing their personality and careers. Some of them gained increased self-confidence and others learnt important goal-setting skills. Some of the MBA graduates were more satisfied with the communication abilities and interpersonal skills they learnt from the business school.

Business graduates suggested that the curriculum should be more relevant to current business requirements. It should help business graduates apply theoretical concepts in practical situations. They suggested that student assignments should be research-based and they demanded enhanced physical facilities at business schools. They also wanted more active relationships between the business schools and corporate world.

In response to the questions asked during the interviews, it was noted that the employers wanted MBA graduates to possess a number of desired work-related qualities. Some employers wanted the graduates to be strong in work ethics. Many employers commented that the MBA graduates are good in developing organizational skills, analyzing situations and making strategic decisions. Employers also believed that MBA graduates needed to know about communication skills, current trends, and awareness of global issues, e-commerce and multiculturalism. Another feature employers desired were leadership abilities.

The employers noted that the current MBA graduates are superior to MBA graduates of a decade or more ago. They had complaints with current MBA graduates as well, commenting that some of them tended to be careless and often failed to grasp and attend to detail, and also lacked concentration. The majority of the employers found MBA graduates to be confident and smart thinkers, with new ideas about their profession.

The employers noted that the type of business school has a relationship with the performance of the business graduates. They felt that MBA graduates from the private sector universities tended to be more confident and enterprising, whereas graduates from the public university tended to have stronger backgrounds in professional knowledge. Most employers, however, felt that there is no significant difference between graduates from private and public sector universities.

During the process of this study, the researcher reached the conclusions that overall MBA degrees being offered at various business schools in Lahore are not meeting the full expectations of employers who wish for changes in the content of degrees and in teaching methods. In the light of the comments of the MBA graduates and their employers, the researcher offers the following recommendations.

The employers of MBAs and the MBA graduates themselves forcefully suggest that graduates should be strong in communication skills. This point is found repeatedly in the literature as well. It is, therefore, of prime importance to develop effective communication skills, especially the verbal skills in the graduates. Unfortunately, communication teachers in Pakistan put much greater emphasis on written and reading skills. Graduates are taught spelling, grammar and other topics in order to provide writing skills. Unfortunately, many students are found to be weak in verbal communication areas. In addition many university students in Pakistan are shy and lack self-confidence. Business communication teachers should provide enhanced opportunities to business students to practice verbal communication in classes. Class presentations and group discussions can improve the verbal communication of students.

Teamwork and team building were other skills employers looked for in all MBA graduates. To provide these skills, students should be trained in team building and also in working in team situations for various academic activities. Team building and teamwork can be a part of business management and marketing management courses. Students should be taught the philosophy of teamwork and team building. They should be made to realize that team-building abilities are among the requirements of the employers in the field. To develop practical skills, students should be given both short-term and long-term team tasks. These tasks should be evaluated periodically. They can also be trained in all other subjects to build teams and work in teams. Group tasks, group discussions and combined assignments of various subjects are useful in developing teamwork skills.

Robinson et. al. (1995) reported on a program at Sheffield Hallam University which encourages students to evaluate their transferable and core skills, and develop personal action plans to address their learning needs. Students participate in intensive, residential team-

building exercises, of varying duration; they are given seminars on the theoretical aspects of team building, management and leadership that support the practical exercise. Feedback from students and staff has indicated that the core is an extremely valuable diagnostic exercise, from which the students are able to develop a profile of their strengths and development needs.

Many MBA students are found to have serious attitudinal problems. In the interviews, employers perceived that MBA graduates tended not to concentrate sufficiently on minor details; they tended to take a short-term focus, lacking concentration, and they employed impressive management techniques mainly to impress their employers. Similar problems were discovered by Friedrich (1981) who reported that many new MBAs are arrogant, overly aggressive, and disloyal. During MBA programs, institutions should train their graduates for such kind of behavioral issues. A strong business ethics course can help in developing such behaviors.

During their study, business students should have an advising system available to them that may help them plan their postgraduate education and their behavior on the job. Business students would be well served then by the provision of advising systems that can help them prepare for their life in organizations.

The findings of this research show that the personalities of the managers play a vital role in the achievement of the goals and this is supported in the literature (Bisconti and Kessler 1980). A course on personal development, which should cover time management, stress management, change management, personal planning, decision-making, mannerism, creative thinking and interpersonal skills, will definitely be of major benefit to business students to help them develop their personalities according to the requirements of the job market. This course will help students become good citizens as well.

The analytical skills of MBA graduates received relatively strong ratings from their employers. But all is not well. In what would seem to be a strong confirmation of the widely expressed dissatisfaction with the MBAs is their ability to handle the complexities of day-to-day operations particularly in manufacturing businesses.

Clearly, these are the aspects of the manager's job that many current "masters of business administration" have not mastered. The classroom cannot produce mature managers, able competently to take complex decisions in their organizations. Business education should do more than it does now to help business students profit from experience of successful managers. However, one possible solution is for MBA students to be apprenticed to have on-job experience for relatively longer periods than routine internships of three months.

In most of the business schools, the internship is offered at the end of degree program. It is suggested that the students should be offered internships in the middle of the course, so that students may have an opportunity to obtain experience in the problems they will face when they are working in their organizations.

Extensive use of case methods as teaching devices is another suggestion to train MBA students to assist them in taking managerial decisions. Case studies attempt to recreate business situations that call for managerial involvement. Students examine the facts and are then asked what action, if any, managers should take. Students are required to offer their judgments of cases in class discussions, as members of small working groups who will prepare group reports, or act as the authors of individual papers. Case studies range widely in scope and complexity. But most cover only a single company or conglomerate within a limited time frame that often extends to only a few weeks or months, and rarely for more than a few years.

A broad strategic management case might ask students to determine a competitive strategy for a small computer-manufacturing company struggling for survival amid an invasion of giants. A finance case might demand the selection of one of several options available in buying machine tools. A case in personnel or human resource management might require that students decide how to deal with any accusations of sexual harassment.

Apart from case studies, project work or activity-based learning can help in developing required skills among graduates. There is evidence in the literature that, although activity-based learning tends to reduce the breadth of learning, knowledge retention is higher (Farnsworth, 1994). Among the factors cited as contributing to retention is the context of the learning task (Bridges and Hallinger 1991; Mandin et. al. 1995). The relatively low score for

skill acquired through this method is of concern, but the hope is that with better retention students can consolidate learning during study and classroom sessions.

Benchmarking is another recommendation for business schools. The increasing importance of the customer is evident in markets where there is increasing competition. The private sector has brought competitive forces into play within the education sector. What is happening in the global business education market in terms of competition? Currently, competitive pressures are producing situations where good performers drive out the inferior, because of lowest prices, higher quality, and superior services available. This tends to lift standards for all competitors. Adequate is no longer good enough. If a company can't stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the world's best in a competitive category, it soon has no place to stand at all.

This is applicable to education as well. Education is not somehow different from the business world. While it may be different, education is not isolated from the pressures and trends that are making themselves increasingly evident. Education does not play in vacuum; it encounters local, national and global issues. Global competition has a profound impact on the future of our children. Unless they develop high quality thinking, problem-solving and technological skills to compete with the best in the world, they will be competing for the low wage/low skill jobs. The business schools will have to keep a constant eye on leading business schools of the world too.

For admission to MBA degree programs, business schools do not strictly require specific subject area studies at bachelor degree level. Generally, candidates who have not graduated with any business subject areas are admitted to MBA programs. This produces heterogeneous groups of students in the classroom, creating learning problems for some students. To overcome this problem, admission requirements regarding the subject areas studied during previous education may be specified as pre-requisites. This problem might also be overcome by offering prerequisite courses to the students who have not studied courses related to business in their previous education.

While discussing the physical facilities, many graduates commented about the availability of student placement centers. Those graduates who had placement centers at their business schools considered these to be positive points for their school. Where such kinds of facilities

are not available, graduates see their value. To cater to this need of students and to help students in their placements, placement/information centers should be established at every business school with electronic media/internet resource information for students. Business schools should also outreach to industry for the placement of their graduates.

Institutional training provides skills, knowledge and attitudes that should match the needs of the end user industries. Training institutions and industries should have close cooperation in order to make training more realistic and relevant to industrial needs. Both partners can benefit from helping each other in accomplishing the joint objectives of creating relevance between the training programs and the requirements of the job market so that technical inadequacies of the business programs can be overcome.

Industry and business schools should be in closer collaboration in updating curricula, equipment, and facilities so that human resource are developed more effectively trained to meet needs. The forms of linkage between business schools and industry should include:

- Students' industrial tours.
- Affiliation with industry.
- Lectures of experts from industry.
- Follow up of business graduates' performance at industry.

Government polices should make it obligatory for business school to have representatives from industry on their board of governors before granting charter to these schools. Each Chambers of Commerce & Industry should have human resource committees. One representative of business schools should be a member of these committees.

The MBA graduates and their employers in the hosiery and knitwear industry demanded major changes in curriculum. It is suggested that in order to obtain the opinion of employers from other types of organizations a broad-based study should be conducted and thereafter curricula should be revised in the light of the perceived expectations of employers.

It is recommended that similar studies should be conducted to obtain a more comprehensive view of business studies in Pakistan in relation to other industries and locations. For example, studies could be attempted of other manufacturing industries, particularly ones producing

mainly for the domestic market. Valuable insights could also be derived from studies focusing on trading and financial services industries, or of MBA education and its success in such cities as Faisalabad, Karachi, Multan and Haiderabad.

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