

MS Thesis

on

**Faculty Expectations and Employers
Perceptions in Business Education.**

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Chapter No 1: Introduction

This chapter is an introduction of the study with problem statement and objective of research. The major focus in this chapter is to elaborate the importance and effectiveness of business education and discuss some problems regarding its compatibility with the industry. The researcher discusses the aspirations, objectives and hypothesis of research after introducing the business education and its usefulness. This chapter provides a baseline for researcher to reach from broad problem area to the actual problem of business education. At the end of the chapter theoretical frame work of study is discussed for identifying and defining variables of the study.

1.1 Introduction of The Study:

Education plays a key role in progress of the nations. It is the base of economic and social development. The role and importance of education is not debatable. The education is a strategic service that is provided by the institutions and has a great influence on each and every field of life. The significance and importance of education demands the quality in the processes and its delivery. As Dervitsiotis (1995) highlighted the strategic role of education by clarifying that “in order to improve standards of living, the performance of organizations in public and private sector will depend increasingly on quality of education provided to the citizens, in the form of values, knowledge, and learning skills. These elements determine how effective people will function in a complex and uncertain environment and the satisfaction that will be derived from their work and other activities” (Raouf, 2004). The greatest evidence of the need to transform education is the state of the world. Higher education institutions bear a profound, moral responsibility to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values needed to create a just and sustainable future (Anthony 2003). In the specific context of educational institutions, they are facing high pressures from funding authorities, and criticism by the external and internal stakeholders to improve quality. In the practical sense, rapid and drastic changes in economic growth nowadays on the other hand are also creating higher demands for employability skills in the workforce. Labor market is becoming more competitive and depends more on quality of knowledge and skills as the globalization come across in all industry. Employers have high expectations on fresh graduates to perform in their organizations as soon as they are hired.

Management employability skills are therefore necessary for industry to remain competitive in global market. The study highlights the issues concerned with higher education and specially business education. As management education has become one of the most important discipline due to its interdisciplinary nature and wide role in economic and social affairs (Raouf et al, 2010).

1.2 Business Education - An Introduction:

The education is the process of educating, instructing and teaching activities that impart knowledge, ways to improve on something and required skills. Education helps us in identifying the right and wrong concept, may it be personal, professional or organizational. It provides basic concept of the desired future projects. Education can equip the people with the tools that require to do things of own choice in much organized way. There are many disciplines in education but business education is such a guideline which helps in developing professional and personal behavior. This provides the way how to live with scarce resources, how to communicate to people and how to earn money, help people & companies in identifying great opportunities for business. Business Education is the process of updating towards doing right things and helping in identifying to do things right. It helps to do things sequentially. Business education is considered as the faster process of personnel and professional growth. Business education is the guideline for saving companies from any possible danger and apprise managers to lead their companies towards a big success. Business education is crucial reason of managing companies' success in today's competitive era.

Business education is a very broad term which includes the teaching of fundamental theories, basics of various business processes and much more. Business education involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories, and processes of [business](#). This type of education comes at several levels, including [secondary education](#) and [higher education](#) or [university](#) education. Number of students enrolls in one or more business courses during their education tenure. A majority of student at the university level used to select a business-related major. These majors prepare students for an occupation in business or a business-related field, or a teaching career in academia.

Business education usually does not begin until high school but it is only in college and university that the students truly get the chance to study the subject in depth. A degree in business education or any of the related fields can do wonders for the learners as in the time of recession a little knowledge or basic business can help any individual achieve a sound career either in some industry, office or in teaching as well. Business education is offered in the form of various courses which may vary from school to school at an undergraduate level. There are colleges and universities which offer more specific education degrees like the Bachelor of Business. It is a three to four year degree program. Even though it is a separate degree in itself but it is not much unlike more commonly known degree programs like Bachelor of Business Studies, Bachelor of Business Science, Bachelor of Business Administration and Master in business education known as MBA. Business education programs are designed to [instill](#) in students the basic theories of management and production. The main goals of business education programs are to teach the processes of decision making; the philosophy, theory, and psychology of management; practical applications; and business start-up and operational procedures.

The business schools are a major source of preparing business managers for the corporate world. The business world of today is mostly taking the input from management education of leading universities. Due to globalization and other environmental, social and technological concerns, the business world is experiencing new challenges that have increased the expectations of the employers from corporate managers (Raouf et al, 2010). The major issue is the compatibility of business education with the corporate sector and possible employer (Donaldson, 2002; Mangan, 2002; Ferraro, et al, 2005; Tsurumi, 2005). The entrance of new disciplines, technologies, and increased usage of electronic resources in business are also providing challenges to the business education (Gerald, 2000). So, in the perspective of all challenges, the ultimate responsibility lies on the business institutions to produce managers those have ability to cope with all the challenges. In the industry, employers prefer to hire graduates who possess high technical and interpersonal skills, so that institutions of business education have to emphasis on the development of skills necessary for the future leaders and managers to ensure organizational success (Raouf et al, 2010).

1.3 An Overview of Business Schools:

There are number of business schools which are working in all over the world. Some business schools are most popular due to their methods and approach. HBS (Harvard University) and GSB (Stanford University) are popular because of the case based methods and interactive teaching which makes them very different than many other business schools. This case based model is followed by many American universities and other global academic institutions including some of our Business Schools specially LUMS, UMT, and SZABIST. While MIT and City University of New York (CUNY) have unique strategic learning environment and many of the graduates are at strategic level in corporations and this particular model has been well followed by IBA Karachi, Bahria University, IAS Punjab University and NUST. This approach may be case study or instructional but always with reference to strategic focus. The Yale model is very unique where people are on top positions not only at corporations but also in country's political positions. The Yale model is similar with IBA-Karachi and IAS and has strong support from its alumnae since many decades. Most of the American universities focus on faculty development considering their qualification, experience and research background. This development results into the best support to impart quality teaching and training. Such approach made many American universities very successful through the years. While many European universities focus on the quality of students with reference to the academic and research inspiration. This makes them open room for faculty when they are later hired as faculty in the university. As far as Pakistani Universities are concerned, they do consider qualification but can compromise on need based times of students' induction. The LUMS and SZABIST always focus on highly qualified faculty while IBA-Karachi, Bahria University and NUST have more focus on the quality of students. Numbers of other business schools are working in Pakistan like LSC, Pak-Aims, Lahore Business School, Superior University, GCU, NCBA &E are some of them. The most popular program at business schools is MBA (Master of Business Administration). It is perceived as a total package for the management. Thousands of students enrolled every year in MBA due to its familiarity and need in the industry.

Today MBA programs face intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, to prepare leaders, to instill the norms of ethical behavior and even fail to lead graduates to good corporate jobs (Warren and Toole, 2005). The nature of work has changed, but the nature of education has not

(Sohaib, 2008). Frazar (1994) discussed that universities must be accountable to society, to employers, to students, and to each other. Quality of business education has been measured in different ways; those were focused on to measure quality in higher education from perception of the current students, from employees, and from faculty that were also management driven. Raouf (2004) clarifies that the elements of academic self assessment contain relationship to the university's aim, self reflection and analysis, faculty involvement, external and internal peer evaluation; and feedback from students and the stakeholders, including employers, parents, and alumni. Here he depicts the logical sense of assessing the quality of higher education from whom those are concerned with the processes and results (e.g. faculty, employers, and alumni). As the customer's expectations and perceptions are changing fast and are required to be multifaceted as well as aligned to multiple stakeholders in the business education sector. It will be extremely difficult for large institutions that "act big" to be market oriented in serving the mass market e.g. employers in the industry or alumni. Institutions of higher learning can be very large (chain) but they need to act small for its customers, employees, and other stakeholders. Berry (2001) said that acting small includes creative, flexible, spontaneous service, unhurried service, trusting, caring, respecting, and efforts to build long-term relationships. Moreover, high tech and high touch are both needed in business education.

1.4 Aspirations of the Research:

The aspiration of this research comes from my previous experience when I was coordinator internship program in the department of management sciences at NUML (National University of Modern Languages). Where I observed that the students those had completed their degrees and were working in different organizations feeling unrest from their jobs. They shared their experiences with me in a way that they were feeling a gap between what they learnt during MBA program and what they are performing in their jobs. They told me that their employers demand different kinds of skills and knowledge from them that they have not studied during their MBA's. Most of them told me that there were different job responsibilities and tasks in their jobs which were never been discussed in the class. So, to confirm the unrest of them, I conducted few informal interviews sessions with the employers in the industry. Their opinion about business graduates and business education were that the business schools are not producing required business graduates with appropriate skills. Therefore business graduates were not able to perform

their jobs as they demanded. Through this exercise, the number of questions appeared in my mind e.g. are business graduates as not as much able to serve the businesses? Why employers were not satisfied with business graduates and the performance of business schools? Was business education compatible with industry requirements? To answer the above questions, I decided to conduct a research study on the compatibility of business education with industry needs. With all questions and confusions, I went to my thesis supervisor and discussed the whole story. He gave me the directions and guided me. Under his guidelines I designed my research to assess the compatibility of business education with industry requirements. Where I took the faculty members of School of Business and Economics at university of Management and Technology (UMT) Lahore as the producers of business education and considered them as responsible to the preparation of business graduates, and employers from industry as the actual users of business education and their graduates.

The reason for selecting UMT as a producer of business education is that I was studying at school of Business and Economics at UMT as a student of MS leading to PhD in Management where I learnt so many things and observed this phenomenon as I discussed above. As far as University of Management and Technology is concerned, it is a private sector university in Pakistan. In 1990, a group of eminent educationists, philanthropists, professionals and industrialists established the ILM Trust. Committed to the high ideals of imparting innovative, market-oriented quality education, training and consulting in line with the universally accepted principles, national objectives, social values, and market needs, ILM Trust is a constellation of educational ventures, covering all stages of learning cycle from playgroup to PhD. The projects undertaken by the ILM Trust offer a range of services in the areas of education, research, consulting, media and publishing. UMT received its degree-granting charter first as the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) in 2002 through an Act of the Assembly of the Punjab. Later, on 16 June 2004, IMT became University of Management and Technology through the passing of a similar Act by the Punjab Assembly. It touched many milestones since then successfully. As in March 2010, UMT has become one of the few universities in Lahore that organizes job fair for students. This year 70 companies including MNCs participated in the Job Fair 2010 at UMT. Since 1992, it set up an advisory service for businessmen at the LCCI, for regular interaction with the industry. The industry is benefitting from the expertise of UMT

faculty that, besides teaching, is providing training, consulting and solutions to the corporate world.

Therefore this study is focused on business education and believes that current approaches to assess the compatibility of business education with industry are illogical because they have been largely management-driven and thus they have been significantly dependent on a range of management systems. The study analyses the issues concerned with the business education and explores a new dimension of thinking in business education. This research also realizes the role and importance of actual customers of business education e.g. employers. It has been reviewed that there is a gap to develop need-oriented curriculum in business education. The need to make contents more customize and flexible and improve them continuously according to the requirements of the industry is recommended. Because of employers in the industry that require different types of skills from business graduates, the contents should be tailored with industry supports to develop the required skills. It is an outside-in approach towards business education. The gap is also been identified between business schools and corporate world. To lessen the gap, it is recommended that business schools must develop the links with industry and develop their graduates with current business knowledge that help them to solve the business problems at work.

1.5 Statement of the Problem:

Several constructs have been used to assess service quality and have also been used in number of service quality studies in higher education (Cuthbert, 1996; Engelland et al., 2000; Galloway, 1998; oldfield & Barow, 2000; O’Niel &plamer, 2001; Pareau & Mc Daniel, 1997; Soutar & Mc Niel, 1996). Business education has been studied by several researchers but all were focused on to measure quality in business education from perception of the current students, from employees, through faculty and others. Raouf (2004) clarifies that to assess the academic program the feedback should be gathered from students and stakeholders of the program, including employers, parents, and alumni. Here he depicts the logical sense of assessing the quality of higher education from whom those who are concerned with the processes and results (e.g. faculty, employers, and alumni). This study stems from a realization that the current approaches to assess the business education, that have been largely management-driven and thus

they have been significantly reliant on a range of management systems. There is a need to bring more human-centered measures into business education. This study analyzes the business education of institutions and measure the market oriented dimension of business education in the course of collecting response from those who are providers of business education and those who are the actual users of business education. It is an outside-in approach towards business education. A more comprehensive and contextual market orientated construct with the appropriate dimensions is empirically identified and developed to benefit the business educational institutions. In addition, the relevant theoretical framework and propositions have been developed and formulated accordingly for further testing and analyses.

1.6 Research Objective:

A new approach for business education is believed to be central in this study. Because previous studies were focused on quality in higher education and some of them examined the phenomenon of business education (Cuthbert, 1996; Engelland et al., 2000; Galloway, 1998; Oldfield & Barow, 2000; O’Niel & Plamer, 2001; Pareau & Mc Daniel, 1997; Soutar & Mc Niel, 1996). These studies considered students as the customers of business education. This study takes students as the outcome of business education and takes employers as actual customers and users of it. By this difference, this study utilizes new approach to study business education and addresses its implications. The main objective of this study is as follow:

- **To identify and measure the Expectation-Perception gap in business education.**

It has been discussed that business education plays a significant role in the industry and economy as well. So this study looks business education and its programs from industry perspective, and considers employers as the customers of business education. The study measures the expectations in business education from faculty’s perspective while considering them as suppliers of business education and perception about business education from employer’s and alumni perspective as the actual users. This study aims to identify the expectations from business education and its programs from faculty’s point of view, and considers them as the suppliers and the perceptions of employers from industry and considers them as the customers of it. The study also aims to measure the gap between expectation-perception in business education.

1.7 Research Questions:

- 1. Is provision of business education perceived by alumni and employers, the same as believed by faculty/ institution?**

The study determines the expectations and perceptions in business education and evaluate that are similar from both sides and identify the gaps between them if any.

- 2. How do the employers from industry perceive the business education?**

The research will be examined factors and dimensions that are believed to be important from alumni and employer's perspective in order to determine if they are the same as considered by the faculty.

1.8 Theoretical Framework:

Several studies that have been conducted on higher education and business education which showed that the phenomenon of assessing quality in higher education include assessment mainly through faculty, students, parents, alumni, and employers. This study also examines the issues in business education. A new approach for business education is believed to be central in this study. Therefore, this study intends to examine the expectations and perceptions in business education from those who are involved in the processes e.g. faculty and those who are concerned with results e.g. employer and alumni. The major objective of the research is to identify and measure the Expectation-Perception gap in business education. The study taped the expectations in business education from organization's perspective (e.g. faculty) and perception in business education from employer's and alumni perspective. The study also aimed at identifying the gaps between expectation-perception if exists. The study examined the faculty expectations towards their programs in terms of knowledge, communication skills, work skills, and interpersonal skills guided from Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) is a well known detailed and structure framework that can be used for identifying and writing program objectives. The taxonomy identifies the three domains of educational outcomes: cognitive, skills and affective. A team of educational psychologists headed by Benjamin Bloom formulated a classification of educational activities in 1956, which is widely known as Bloom's Taxonomy. They went on to develop the classification system for the cognitive and affective domains but not

complete the domain of skills. Other researchers have since developed a classification of skills domain (Bloom et al 1956; Gronuld 2000; Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, Harrow 1972; and Simpson 1972). A brief discussion on the components included in Bloom's Taxonomy is been presented below:

1.8.1 Cognitive:

The cognitive domain involves knowledge recall and intellectual skills (such as comprehending, organizing ideas and analyzing data). The classification system divides the cognitive skills into six levels ranging from simple outcomes (behaviors) to the most complex outcomes (behaviors). Bloom's six cognitive domain levels ranging from basic to most complex are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. A brief description of each is provided below.

1.8.1.1 Knowledge

Ability to observe and remember previously learned information; knowledge of specific facts, terms, concepts, principles, ideas, events, places, etc.; mastery of subject material. It represents lowest level of learning.

1.8.1.2 Comprehension

Ability to understand information and grasp material; translating knowledge from one form to another; interpreting, comparing and contrasting material; predicting consequences and future trends. Also represents lowest level of understanding.

1.8.1.3 Application

Ability to use information, learned material, methods, concepts, theories, principles, laws and theories in new situations; problem solving using required knowledge or skills. It also represents lowest level of understanding.

1.8.1.4 Analysis

It represents a higher intellectual level. It elaborates the ability to break down material and recognition of organization structure, identification of components and relationships between components, and recognition of patterns and hidden meanings.

1.8.1.5 Synthesis

It symbolizes a higher intellectual level and represents the ability to combine parts or apply prior skills and knowledge to produce a new whole; integrate ideas into a solution; generalize from given facts; propose a plan of action; formulate new classification methods.

1.8.1.6 Evaluation

Represents highest cognitive level and focuses on the ability to judge and assess the value of theories and presentations, based on their value, logic or adequacy, for a given purpose; compare and make choices based on reasoned argument; verify the value of evidence; recognize subjectivity.

1.8.2 Affective:

Affective learning is concerned with attitudes, values, interests, appreciation and feelings toward people, ideas, places and objects. Values refer to views and ideas that an individual believes in. Affective outcomes range from receiving (or willingness to participate in an activity) to adopting a value system that directs behavior.

Affective Description Keywords

1.8.2.1 Accepting Willingness to participate in an activity or to attend to a stimulus; getting and holding the attention of students.

1.8.2.2 Responding

Actively participates; demonstrates interest in an object, activity or phenomena; seeks or pursues this object, activity or phenomena

1.8.2.3 Valuing

Value or worth attached to an object, activity or phenomena; varies from simple acceptance to commitment.

1.8.2.4 Organization

Compare and contrast and resolve conflict to build a consistent value system; emphasis on comparing and synthesizing values.

1.8.2.5 Characterization by Value

Adopt a value system for a length of time that contributes to a particular “lifestyle” (i.e. directs behavior).

1.8.3 Skills:

Benjamin did not develop a classification method for the skills domain. Other researchers, including Harrow (1972) and Simpson (1972), provided two classification methods.

1.8.3.1 Perception

Uses sense organs to obtain cues to guide action; ranges from awareness of stimulus to translating cue perception into action.

1.8.3.2 Set

Readiness to take action; includes mental, physical and emotional set (or readiness to act).

1.8.3.3 Guided Response

Knowledge of the steps required to perform a task; includes imitation and trial and error.

1.8.3.4 Mechanism

Perform tasks in a habitual manner, with a degree of confidence and proficiency.

1.8.3.5 Complex Overt Response

Skillful performance of motor acts as involvement in complex patterns of movement.

1.8.3.6 Adaptation

Skillful performance of motor acts involving complex patterns of movement; modifies movement patterns to account for problematic or new situations.

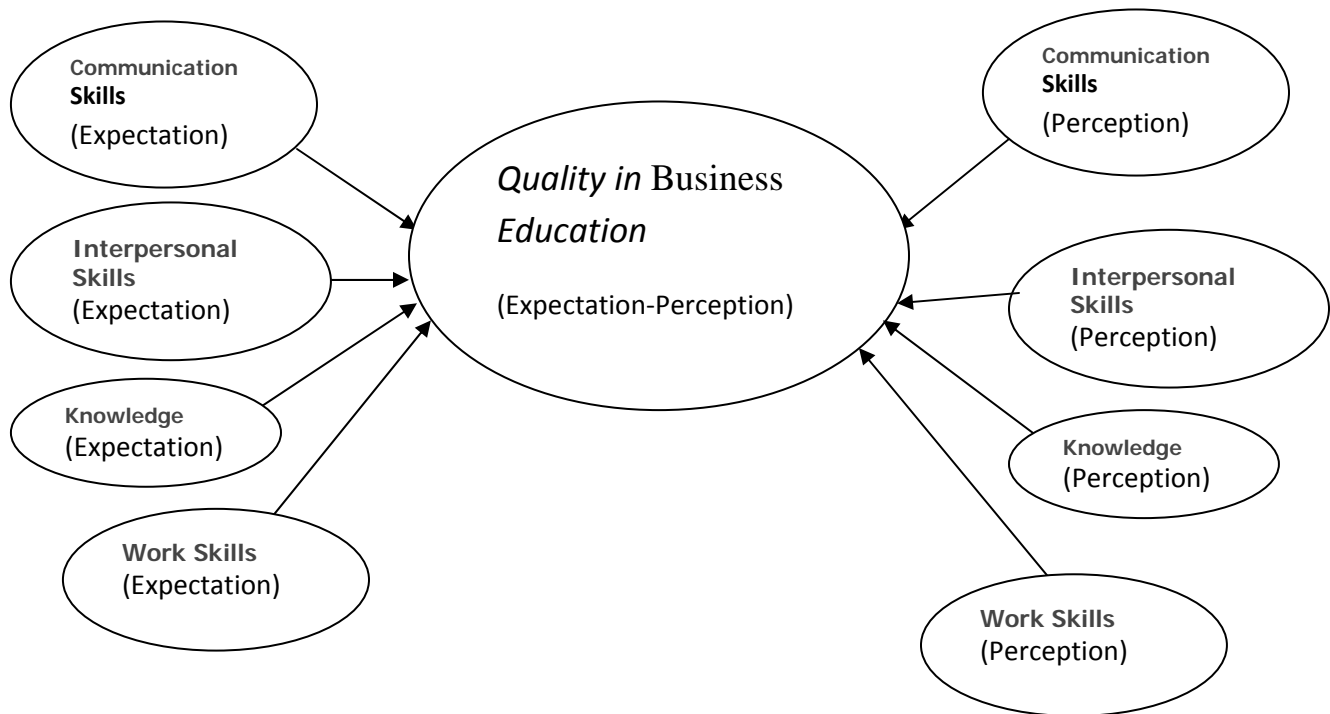
1.8.3.7 Origination

Creating new movement patterns to account for problematic or new situations; creates new tasks that incorporate learned ones

So the following theoretical framework has been developed in the light of Bloom’s taxonomy.

Theoretical Frame work:

Figure 1



1.9 Hypothesis of the study:

The hypotheses of the study are based on measuring the gap between the two perspectives of business education from those who are involved in processes and those who are concerned with results. The expectations of faculty and perceptions of employers in the industry are to be studied. The following hypotheses are the testable statements of propositions that are believed to be measured.

H1= Faculty expectations and employers perceptions towards knowledge of business graduates are same.

H2= Faculty expectations and employers perceptions about communication skills of business graduates are same.

H3= Employer's perceived interpersonal skills of business graduates are same as faculty expect from them.

H4= There is no difference between expectations and perceptions about work skills of graduates in business education.

1.10 Significance of the Study:

The study “Faculty expectations and employers perceptions in business education” will provide a base line for new dimension of business education i.e. evaluating business education from the eyes of ultimate customers e.g. employers in the industry. The gap between expectations and perceptions will enables business schools to evaluate the compatibility of contents of business education with industry requirements. The higher education policy-makers need to adopt more formal methodological approaches to provide a guarantee of quality products and services. There has also been increased internationalization of the labor-market, international mobility of teachers or lecturers, researchers, students and competitive education programs. Quality in business education is important for institutions of higher learning for a number of reasons, including competitive advantages, satisfying employer’s requirements, and meeting the ever-increasing public expectations (Galloway, 1998).

- The data and statistical analysis will be a source for competitive benchmarking by other universities. By observing external processing, other institutions can develop baselines and benchmark activities for future development.
- The expectations- perception gap will give the idea for business schools about perceptions of employers in the industry and enables them to identify the gaps between industry and university.
- This study stems from a realization that the current approaches to higher education quality that have been largely management-driven and thus they have been significantly dependent on a range of management systems. It will give a clear description of the scenario of higher education from the eyes of producers and users of higher education.
- The study will be useful for the business schools in Pakistan, because it is the case of a business school in the specific context. This study will help them to identify the gaps in their contexts, which have been highlighted in this study.

- Moreover, this research provides guidelines for teachers and administration of business schools to develop content according to the requirements of industry which satisfy the needs of ultimate customers of business education.

1.11 Limitations and Delimitations of the study:

- This study focuses on the higher education sector only. Nevertheless, the units of analysis are alumni, employers, and faculty who are claimed to be the major customers and service providers and the variables of interests are measured based on their perceptions and expectation of the institutions or people. Therefore, it limits the generalize ability of the findings to other industry contexts.
- One of the limitations of this study is that is based on the cross-sectional data, with cross-sectional data, the researcher will not identify any interval which may occur between developing a perception and experiencing the quality improvement which may flow from this.
- There is a possibility of a cultural bias playing a role in the outcome of the study as the respondent's expectations of the developing economies may be different from those of the developed economies (Sureshchandar et al., 2002).
- The research is proposed to be completed in four months. The time limit may be a problem to collect data. Therefore the sampling technique e.g. convenience sampling will be used to collect the data. Further research may be conducted on the issue using the more systematic sampling method with more time allocated to collect information.
- In this study the response will be collected from the faculty of the business school and from the alumni and the employers too. The problems that are concerned with memory, labeling of the concepts, and biasness may be some of the limitations of the study.
- In addition, this study provides new insights in business education. This is critical because some institutions of business education know what the customers want but they

may not know what they really need. They are used to deliver "tailor made" education services which fail to create the customer value for employers, and therefore suffer from undesirable customer employers' dissatisfaction.

This chapter was an introduction of the. The main objective of this chapter was to accept the importance of education in general and business education specially. Problem statement and aspirations of the study was discussed after introduction of the study. This chapter provided a baseline for researcher to reach from broad problem area to the actual problem of business education. Theoretical frame work of the study was discussed for identifying and measuring variables of the study. The significance of the study for identifying scope and limitations of the research was discussed at the end of this chapter. So, this chapter gives the reasons for conducting the study on business education and provides guidelines for proceedings.