"How do perceptions of the Importance of Service-Quality Determinants differ across key Stakeholder groups in the Pakistan Higher Education Sector?"

By

Asma Asrar Qureshi

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Dedicated to Allah who has
been with me through thick
and thin

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Abstract

Abstract

Quality is critical to organizations as it strongly influences organizational performance. It can be defined in various ways depending upon the organizational type, but it is generally easier to define the concept in a manufacturing setting. However, the concept of quality is much more difficult and complex to define in service sector, in which it is generally referred to as Service-Quality. In this study Service-Quality has been defined, operationalized and conceptualized as multi-dimensional construct based around the Service-Quality determinants approach derived from a number of existing Service-Quality models.

As well as developing and utilising a novel, multi-dimensional conceptualisation of Service-Quality, incorporating thirteen distinct determinants, which have been explicitly tailored to the higher education context, this study also breaks new ground in a number of other ways. For example, whilst most prior studies are based upon the more common 'disconfirmation paradigm, this study argues that in a higher education the 'perception paradigm' is more appropriate, and consequently the study adopts this less common perspective. This study is also unusual in that it explicitly adopts a multiple stakeholder perspective, which helps to deliver a more holistic picture of the determinants of Service-Quality. Finally, although there have been some prior studies of Service-Quality in an higher education, none have been found which explicitly focus upon the provision of MBA education, and none have focussed on the provision of Service-Quality in HE, from the perspective of the developing country.

The study has used a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, to exploring and evaluating the perceptions of a variety of stakeholder groups. Based upon a thorough analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data-sets, it has been found that the three most important determinants of Service-

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Quality, in a business school context, are: curriculum and programme design, faculty profile and the teaching methods.

Keywords: Service-Quality, Pakistan, Higher Education, Business Schools, Multiple Stakeholders, Perception

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List of Abbreviations

NUST – National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad

NBS – NUST Business School

UMT – University of Management and Technology, Lahore

SBE – UMT School of Business and Economics

LUMS – Lahore University of Management Sciences

IM Sciences – Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar

IBA – Institute of Business Administration, Karachi

HEC – Higher Education Commission

NBEAC – National Business Education Accreditation Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the background of the study and the context in which the study is conducted. The significance of the study is also discussed which serves as the basic foundation to formulate the wider perspective of the study. The overall structure of the thesis will also be discussed in the chapter.

In past few decades there has been a tremendous boost in technology in various sectors of economy. It has created a highly dynamic and competitive global business environment for industry and academia. Thus, advancement of technology all over the world has given people an opportunity to understand the concept of quality in all the sectors. The latest discoveries are being added to the text books in an ever increasing pace. The availability of software tools on one hand has tremendously enhanced the analytical ability of decision making and on the other hand provided the possibilities of managing more complex business situations. Business schools are one of the major sources of providing human resource for global business environment. The business schools are evaluated on the basis of the quality of service being provided to faculty, staff and above all the students which define how successful a business school is, and what contribution its students are expected to make in today's business world and economy of the nation. Thus, this information led the researcher to further explore the concept of service in academia. Therefore the study explores the concept of Service-Quality in Pakistani higher education by looking at various perspectives of stakeholders of the higher education institutions in Pakistan.

The significance of quality as 'competitive advantage' has been emphasized by various researchers (Feigenbaum 1951, Regan 1963, Juran 1974, Crosby 1979, Garvin 1984, Parasuraman et al. 1985, Deming 1986, Cronin and Taylor 1992, Heskett et al. 1997, Gronroos 2000). However, the contribution of Service-Quality towards organizational performance in higher education institutions is still under explored. The perceptions of the customers and stakeholders of the academia still

need to study in much detail which then provides a basis to explore the level of Service - Quality and performance of the institutions. Therefore it is vital to study and determine the factors that make up Service-Quality in higher education. Also, it is significant to study whether and how Service-Quality affects various stakeholders of the higher education institutions.

Services are different from products in various aspects as discussed in chapter 2; it seems that quality frameworks developed for manufacturing cannot be used in the service sector without any modification. It is relatively easy to measure the quality in manufacturing, for example conformance to standards or the durability of the product. However, in the case of service operations or the service organizations much of the quality aspects are evaluated through customers' perceptions. Consequently, the data on Service-Quality needs to be captured through customer or the stakeholders' perceptions. A key aspect of the current research is that in the case of higher education as a service industry, it has multiple stakeholders which have yet differing needs and contributions towards a higher education institution. Thus, it leads to differing perceptions and perspectives of Service-Quality.

This situation leads to heterogeneous perspective of overall Service-Quality within a higher education institution. Each individual stakeholder group has a different meaning to Service-Quality and perception. Nevertheless, the study revealed some common determinants of Service-Quality which were perceived in similar way by all the stakeholder groups. The exploration of the impact of all the determinants on overall perceived quality may still need more research. All the stakeholder groups believed that good Service-Quality can have a positive impact on organizational performance.

1.2. Focus of the Study

The study focuses on the business schools and the Service-Quality aspects of the business schools along with the assessment and exploration of the perceptions of various stakeholder groups in higher education institutions. Moreover, the Pakistani business schools have been selected for the study for following reasons:

- The researcher had a prior experience of working for Pakistani business schools. Thus, this led to access to different business schools in Pakistan for data collection.
- The researcher had conducted a prior research in the business schools which then motivated her to further explore into the same study area.
- Pakistani business school are much under-researched from the Service-Quality aspects. Thus, gave another reason to explore the higher education in Pakistan.

Against this backdrop, Pakistan seems to be a suitable setting for conducting the research as it has a large variety of universities and business schools which are not evaluated as service organizations. This, study can help Pakistani business schools understand the concept of Service-Quality and improve the overall performance of the institutions. Also, the study will enable the readers to understand the aspects of balancing needs of various stakeholders within an organization.

Last but not the least, Pakistan is a developing country, thus, the importance of the perceptions of Service-Quality and the stakeholder groups importance can help the developed nations to compare and contrast the Service-Quality aspects in their higher education institutions as well.

1.3. Broad Research Objectives

Against this backdrop, the following broad research objectives were identified to conduct the research;

- To provide an up-to-date evaluation and definition of a complex concept such as Service-Quality and perceived Service-Quality.
- To explore stakeholders groups perceptions of the Service-Quality aspects and determinants in higher education set-up.
- To explore the stakeholders groups 'importance' versus the 'performance' of the Service-Quality determinants in higher education institutions.
- To critically compare and contrast the perceptions of various stakeholders about Service-Quality in business schools.

1.4. Research Gaps

In the context of Pakistani higher education, the study identifies five main gaps in the literature which are then discussed in greater detail in chapter 2 and chapter 7. These gaps motivated the researcher to further explore the Service-Quality aspects in higher education.

Gap 1: Service-Quality literature has identified various models for operationalization and conceptualization of Service-Quality concept. These models have been used and adapted in literature for further application in services industry (discussed in chapter 2). However, the model SERVPERF which formed the basis of the current research has not been widely explored in the literature as it studies only the 'perception' of the customers. Such a perception-only paradigm is useful when the customers do not have a prior experience of a certain service. Thus, the first research gap is the exploration of SERVPERF model and applying the model to study the perceptions of customers. This gap answers the Research Question (RQ) 1 and Research Question (RQ) 2 discussed in section 3.2.1.

Gap 2: Chapter 2 will discuss in greater detail customers and stakeholders of higher education. However, the current study focuses on the identification and exploration of stakeholders of higher education institutions. Prior research conducted in higher education institutions has not explicitly explored the perceptions of various stakeholders in higher education. Thus, this provides the second gap of the research to explore the perceptions of multiple stakeholders which then answers the research question 1.

Gap 3: The second gap then provides another important aspect of multiple stakeholders, that is, understanding the relative importance of stakeholders in higher education institutions. Thus, the multiple stakeholder aspect leads to third gap to study the relative importance of stakeholders not only from the management of the business perspective but also from other stakeholders' perspectives as well. This gap answers research question 2.

Gap 4: The concept of Service-Quality in higher education in developed countries is a comparatively established concept and research has been conducted to explore the concept in detail.

However, in developing countries, such as, Pakistan the concept of Service-Quality is much under explored. Therefore, this provides the fourth research gap for the researcher to further explore the Pakistani higher education institutions. This gap will answer research question 1 and 2.

Gap 5: Globally the business schools are expected to generate revenues for the institutions and are treated as 'cash-cows' for higher education institutions. Thus, the applicability of Service-Quality aspect is much needed for business schools to understand the needs of various customers or the stakeholders to generate revenues for the institutions. The concept of Service-Quality is applied generically to higher education but has not explored the business schools in a greater detail. This gives the researcher to explore more into Pakistani business schools.

Most of the studies conducted in higher education institutions have been conducted quantitatively; however, the current study is primarily studying the perceptions from a qualitative perspective.

A summary of all the gaps and how they will be addressed later in the research is given in table 1.1

Research Gap	Research Question	Relevant Sections
Gap 1: SERVPERF Model – Perception only Paradigm	Research Question 1 and 2	Framework discussion – Chapter 3; Relative Importance in Chapter 5, 6
Gap 2: Multiple Stakeholders Perceptions	Research Question 1	Identification of Stakeholders in Chapter 2; Perceptions of Stakeholders in Chapter 5, 6
Gap 3: Relative Importance of Stakeholders	Research Question 2	Chapter 6
Gap 4: Developing Country Higher Education	Research Question 1 and 2	Identification of Developing country higher education – Chapter 2 and 3; Discussion chapter 5 and 6
Gap 5: Service-Quality in Business Schools	Research Question 1 and 2	Identification of SQ in Business School – Chapter 2; discussion in chapter 5 and 6

Table 1.1: Research Gaps

1.5. Research Process and structure of the thesis

To conduct the study, initially a review of Service-Quality literature along with the exploration of Service-Quality concepts application into higher education institutions was studied. This helped the researcher to identify the research gaps for Service-Quality assessment in higher education. Thus, the identified research gaps then further helped the researcher to formulate a research framework based around the Service-Quality determinants approach. The Service-Quality determinants were further used to study stakeholders' perceptions of Service-Quality in Pakistani business schools. The Service-Quality perceptions were studied using quantitative and qualitative research methods. A general questionnaire was designed which was used to assess perceptions of all the stakeholders identified from the stakeholders. Both of the data collection strategies were integrated to provide a wider perspective of Service-Quality. Thus, the integration of the strategies led the researcher to use the research objectives and research questions to guide the data analysis of the research from all stakeholders' perspective. The data analysis then provided and identified the research contributions to existing body of knowledge.

The thesis contains seven chapters. An overview of the chapters and the structure is shown in figure 1.1.

1.5.1. Part 1: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework section reviews chapters which contain reviews of the literature and the design of the research.

Chapter 1: This chapter provides an overview of the study which addresses the research context, the research objectives and the structure of the thesis. The remainder of the thesis has been organized into two distinct parts, that is, Theoretical Framework and Empirical Results.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 reviews literature on Service-Quality, Service-Quality models and assessment in general services context and the applicability of all the concepts in higher education context. Also, it discusses the background of Pakistani higher education system.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3 reviews the chapter from the literature perspective and forms a research framework which thus acts as a foundation for the remainder of the research. This chapter also presents the research aim and the research questions.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4 justifies the research design and the research methods which have been used to guide the data collection and analysis process.
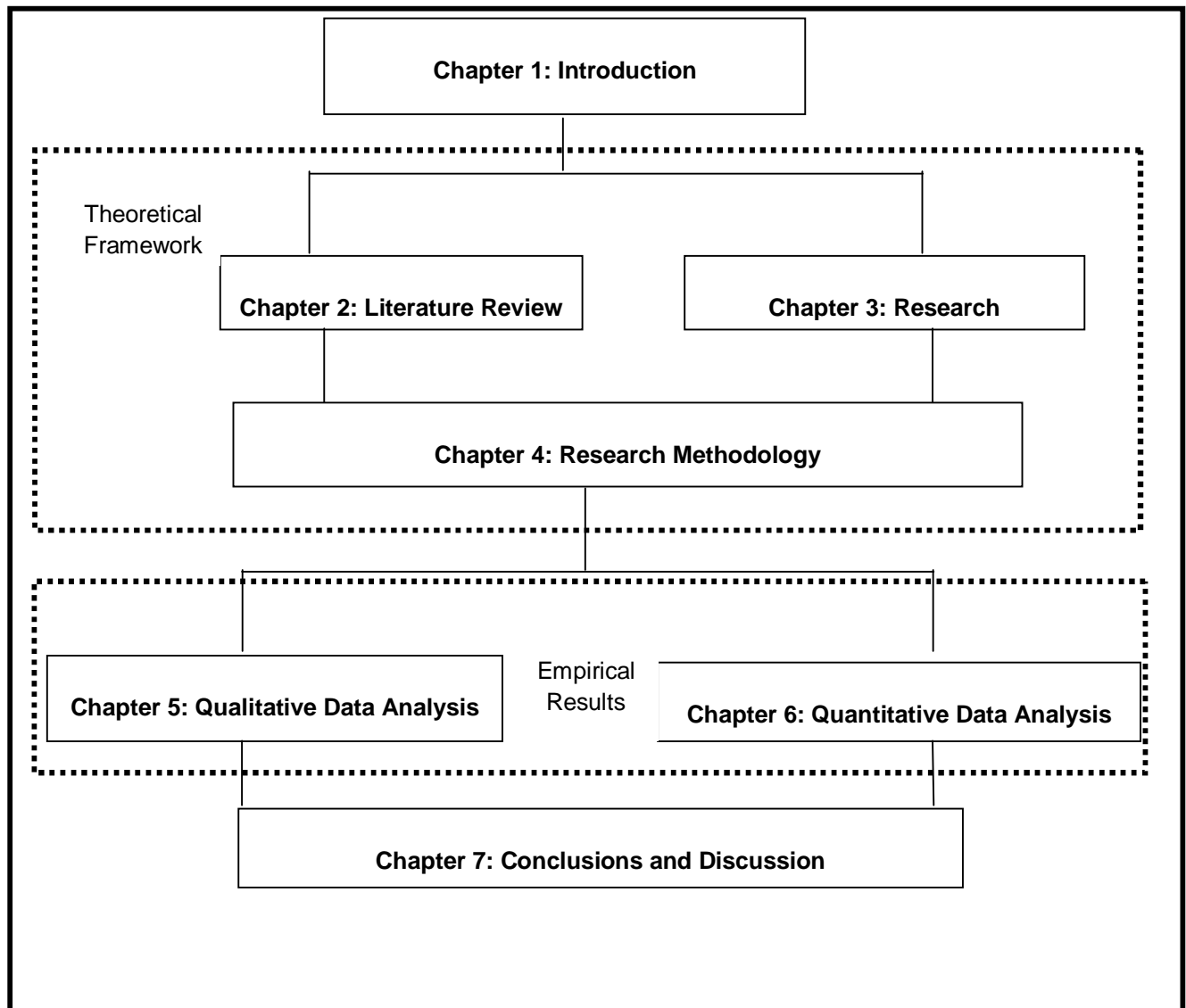
Figure 1.1: Thesis Structure

1.5.2. Part 2: Empirical Results

This section presents the results collected from various stakeholders of the Pakistani business schools.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5 discusses the detailed results collected qualitatively from six stakeholders. Hence, provides a contrast and comparison of perceptions of Service-Quality.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6 provides a descriptive data analysis of the results collected through questionnaires from the student stakeholder perspective. Thus, provides a perception of student stakeholder group about Service-Quality.

Chapter 7: Chapter 7 draws the thesis to a conclusion by summarizing the whole research process. Particularly it highlights the contributions of the study to existing body of knowledge. Also, it discusses the limitation and suggestions for future research.

1.6. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter forms the basis for the thesis by outlining the research background, research context and the research process.

 Most importantly, this introductory chapter highlights the significance of the study, and provides insights into how it might deliver important contributions to existing body of knowledge. However to deliver a clearer picture of this study's potential contributions is it necessary to conduct a full review of the literature. Thus, chapter 2 will discuss the in depth review of the literature for current research contex

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the conceptualization of Service-Quality, models and approaches to Service-Quality and Service-Quality management as they have been presented in the existing literature. Also, the chapter will cover the literature on Service-Quality exploration, as it has been applied in services industries as well as higher education. As this study is focussing on Service-Quality in a developing country, namely Pakistan, it is also necessary to discuss this research context.

2.2. Definition of Quality

Before introducing the concept of Service-Quality, it is important to review what is meant by the term 'Quality', John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) said;

"*Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution*"

The quote not only highlights the thoughtful nature of quality but it is also emphasises that quality is complex: in conceptualization and definition; in production and delivery; as well as in measurement and management. This is further complicated when looking at quality in relation to service operations, as opposed to product manufacturing, as quality can be far less tangible in this context.

Quality is a very common buzz word in the market place, yet there is no mutually agreed definition of the concept. The concept is global but has no widely accepted or consistent definition due its dynamic nature. Quality is also a relative term as it varies from one individual to another. Quality has been defined by different researchers who have generated definitions such as '*value*' (Abbott, 1955; Feigenbaum, 1951); '*conformance to specifications'* (Gilmore, 1974; Levitt, 1972); '*conformance to requirements*' (Crosby, 1979); '*fitness for use'* (Juran, 1974, 1988); '*loss avoidance*' (Taguchi, cited in Ross, 1989); and '*meeting and/or exceeding customers' expectations*' (Gronroos, 1983; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

Researchers and practitioners from philosophy, economics, operations and marketing have offered diverse opinions on what quality is (Forker et al. 1996). Following extensive research by Garvin (1984), these viewpoints can be classified into four dimensions of quality:

- **Philosophy:** innate excellence - although difficult to define, it is absolute and universally recognised (Pirsig1974) through experience (Forker et al. 1996);

- **Economics:** quantity of desired ingredients or attributes (Abbott 1955) or the weighted sum of desired attributes in a product or service (Leffler 1982);

- **Operations:** conformance to requirements (Crosby 1979) - specifications in the case of products (Gilmore 1974) and expectations in the case of services (Lewis and Booms 1983);

- **Marketing:** satisfaction of consumer preferences (Kuehn and Day 1962, Edwards 1968), simplified by Juran (1974) as fitness for use.

The rapid and continuing expansion of the service economy, at the global level, has led to an increased interest in Service-Quality, as reflected in a wide variety of quality gurus whose work has become much cited (e.g. Feigenbaum 1945; Crosby 1967; and Juran 1956). More specifically, the interest in quality, throughout the literature, was concentrated on the manufacturing side, until late 1970s. Since Feigenbaum (1983) addressed the needs of quality in services, researchers have shown a far greater interest in Service-Quality. Indeed, Service-Quality has now become an established concept which is perceived to influence the competitive positioning of the organizations operating in the current era of the services economy. Its importance was underlined by Welch (2005):

"Quality is our best assurance of customer allegiance, our strongest defense against foreign competition, and the only path to sustained growth and earnings."

This conceptualization of quality is applicable both to products and services. However, the management of quality needs a different approach when it comes to services sector. So section 2.3 will discuss the definition of Service-Quality.

2.3.   Definition of Service-Quality

The quality concept which is an established phenomenon in the management literature was first proposed as suggested by Juran (1974) and Deming (1982); however Service-Quality is relatively new concept which was introduced by Gronroos (1983) and Parasuraman *et.al* (1988). In the past 20 years researchers talked much about Service-Quality, and it has become an established concept due to the dynamic requirements of business globally. The private sector has adopted the concept much more quickly than the public sector to help achieve a competitive advantage. However, in an attempt to catch up, the public sector introduced the concept into their work processes, to help realise operational efficiency and effectiveness benefits (Boyne, 2002).

In most of the developed nations, the services sector has dominated the world economy over the past two decades. For example Ghobadian (1993) has presented the figures for the size of the service sector among leading nations, such as service sector in USA accounts for 69 % of the gross domestic product (GDP); 62 % of UK GDP; 60 % of Germany's GDP; 56 % of Japan's GDP; and 67 % of France GDP. These figures do not include the services provided by the manufacturing companies. Moreover, Ghobadian (1993) has identified a diverse list of organizations that are providing direct or indirect services. These include:

- **National and local government:** for example, education, health, social security, police, the military, transport, legal, information, and credit;

- **Non-profit private services:** for example, charities, churches, research foundations, mutual societies, and art foundations; for-profit private services: for example, utilities, hotels, airlines, architects, restaurants, solicitors, retailers, entertainment, banks, insurance companies, advertising agencies, consultancy firms, market research companies, and communications;

- **For-profit private services:** for example, utilities, hotels, airlines, architects, restaurants, solicitors, retailers, entertainment, banks, insurance companies, advertising agencies, consultancy firms, market research companies, and communications.

Silvestro (1997) has made a comparison between manufacturing and service sector TQM-based practises. He has commented that despite the increasing importance of the service sector and of the significance of quality as a competitive factor, Service-Quality concepts are not well developed in services, as compared to the manufacturing sector. Moreover, the service sector lags behind the manufacturing sector in adopting concepts such as 'Continuous Improvement' and 'Total Quality Management'. There are major differences between services and manufacturing sectors as far as quality is concerned. Service-Quality is a multi-dimensional construct as suggested by Bloemer *et. al* (1999). Certain inherent characteristics of the service sector increase the complexity of 'quality control' and 'improvement efforts'.

Quality in service organization can be defined as a measure of the extent to which it delivers the customer's expectation in terms of the service delivered. Service delivery is different from the manufacturing process as in most of the services; the customer is part of the service delivery process. Thus, the perception of quality is not only influenced by the service outcome, but also by the service process. The perceived quality concept suggested by Ghobadian (1994) can be represented as follows:

"Prior Customer Expectation + Actual Process Quality + Actual Outcome Quality = Perceived Quality"

Quality, in general, and Service-Quality in particular, both are accepted as being complex and multidimensional. Service-Quality is often conceptualised as the comparison of service expectations with actual performance perceptions (Zeithaml, 1990). At an operational level, research in Service-Quality has been dominated by the SERVQUAL instrument, based on the gap model. The core idea of this model is that Service-Quality is a function of expectation and perceptions. This means that if the Service-Quality expectations are met, the perception of Service-Quality will be good. However, if the expectations are not met, then the perception of Service-Quality will be bad. Parasuraman (1985) suggested a five dimensional model of Service-Quality, that is: *reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy* and *tangibles. 'Reliability'* is defined as *'the ability to deliver the promised service dependably and accurately'.* It is about keeping promises and promises about

delivery, pricing, complaint handling. '*Responsiveness*' can be described as '*the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service*'. This dimension stresses service personnel's attitude to be attentive to customer requests, questions and complaints. '*Assurance*' is the Service-Quality dimension that focuses on '*the ability to inspire trust and confidence*'. '*Empathy*' is the service aspect that stresses '*the treatment of customers as individuals*'. Finally, '*tangible*' is the service dimension that focuses on the elements that represent the service '*physically*'. Although SERVQUAL instrument has been extensively used, it has also been widely criticised by the researchers. For example, various authors have questioned the validity and reliability of expectations and performance model and have suggested that perception alone offers a better indication of Service-Quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993; Strandvik and Liljander, 1994). Researchers have criticised SERQUAL, as a Service-Quality measurement approach, as it can only be applied to existing services as the experience (prior) and performance both must be considered. Hence, the innovations in Service-Quality can hardly be measured.

Finally, Gronroos (1993) has emphasised the importance of developing an adaptation of the instrument that takes into account the role of expectations from a dynamic perspective. In the Service-Quality literature, several of these critiques have been explicitly addressed (Zeithaml et al., 1996). An important advantage of the SERVQUAL instrument is that it has been proved to be valid and reliable across a large range of service contexts.

Moreover, the organizations may not be obtaining satisfaction and improving Service-Quality levels only by capturing and assessing perceptions of customers or various stakeholders. It is equally important to address the need of assessing perceived value of the services delivered to the customers or various stakeholders. The perceived value of the services delivered will then assess the behaviour of the customer towards the organization (Hu, 2009). Researchers such as Bolton & Drew, 1991; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991;1988;1996 have indicated that Service-Quality and perceived value are few of the factors in gaining competitive advantage for the organizations. The concept of perceived value has been defined in various interpretations such as Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as consumers overall assessment of the utility of a service/ product based upon the perceptions of

what is received and what is given. Bettman (1998) defines the perceived value in a very similar way, that is, customers perceive or experience by using a service. Vendermerwe (2003) argues that value should be dined by the customers when the customers or the stakeholders are completely satisfied with the overall experience. However, a very important aspect to note in perceived value concept is to understand that value appears as a very 'personal' experience which may vary from one individual to another (Holbrook,1994). Consequently the value of the service can only be determined by the customer instead of the provider of the Service. Groth (1999) identified key variables which influence customers' perceived value of service, that is, perceived quality of service delivery, expectations about characteristics of service and perceptions of need or desire for service. Thus, it makes it difficult to assess and evaluate value for the service provider as the need and perceptions vary from one individual to another.

The concept of Service-Quality is not something which can be defined in a standalone environment, but the conceptualization needs to be made within a specific context such as financial services, higher education services, or hospitality services. However the concept of Service-Quality has been defined in different phases where researchers explained the conceptualization and operationalization of the concept using models of Service-Quality, as discussed in the following section.

2.4. Models of Service-Quality

A very wide variety of Service-Quality models have been developed in the past thirty years. For example, Seth and Deshmukh (2005) have identified and critically reviewed 19 distinct Service-Quality models, developed just in the context of IT services. However, the section will concentrate only on the models which are most relevant to the research. In the remainder of this section, these models will be critically reviewed to gain an understanding of how they might be adapted for use in a higher education context. Each of the models will be discussed in chronological order of their development.

2.4.1. Nordic Model (Gronroos, 1984)

This model proposed by Gronroos (1984), argues that perceived Service-Quality can be divided into 'Technical Quality' and 'Functional Quality', which then determine the 'image' of the organization. In order to compete successfully a firm must have an understanding of consumer perception of the quality and the way Service-Quality is influenced. Managing perceived Service-Quality means that the firm has to match the expected service and perceived service to each other so that consumer satisfaction is achieved as demonstrated in Figure 2.1
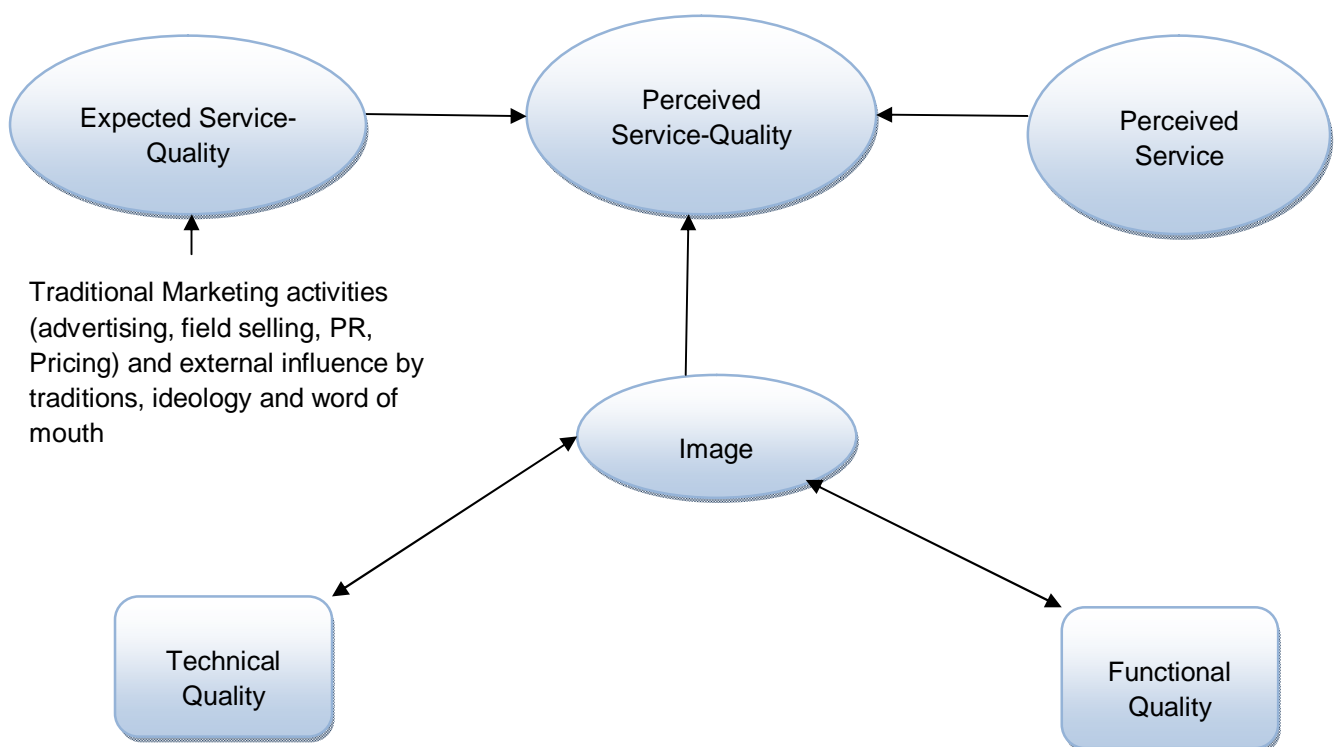
Figure 2.1: Gronroos Model of Service-Quality

The author identified three broad components of Service-Quality, each of which is described below;

1. **Technical Quality:** is the quality of what consumer actually receives as a result of his/her interaction with the service firm and is important to him/her and to his/her evaluation of the quality of service.

2. **Functional Quality:** is how he/she gets the technical outcome. This is important to him and to his/her views of service he/she has received.

3. **Image**: is very important to service firms and this can be expected to build up mainly by technical and functional quality of service including the other factors (tradition, ideology, word of mouth, pricing and public relations).

2.4.2. GAP model – SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988)

The model was introduced as 'Service-Quality' (SERVQUAL) by Parasuraman (1988) and identified 10 different dimensions of Service-Quality namely, tangible, reliability, responsive, communication, creditability, security, competence, courtesy, understanding and knowing the customer, and access. The dimensions were then reduced to five at later stages of research as discussed in section 2.3 Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed that Service-Quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. SERVQUAL basically configures the gap where quality improvement is needed using the Service-Quality dimensions. They developed a Service-Quality model based on gap analysis as shown in figure 2.2.

The various gaps visualized in the model are:

1. **Gap 1:** Difference between consumers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations, i.e. not knowing what consumers expect.

2. **Gap 2:** Difference between management's perceptions of consumer's expectations and Service-Quality specifications, i.e. improper Service-Quality standards.

3. **Gap 3:** Difference between Service-Quality specifications and service actually delivered i.e. the service performance gap.

4. **Gap 4:** Difference between service delivery and the communications to consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises match delivery?

5. **Gap 5:** Difference between consumer's expectation and perceived service. This gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of Service-Quality on the marketer's side.

The methodology adopted by Parasuraman (1988) to develop SERVQUAL involved data collection from two perspectives, that is, the expectations and perceptions of

the consumer. The reliability of the model has been tested, along with psychographics and demographics of the customer, and the results have supported the hypothesis that the SERVQUAL model is applicable in a variety of service industry contexts (Smith,1988; Azmi, 2008; Legcevic and Strossmayer,2008).
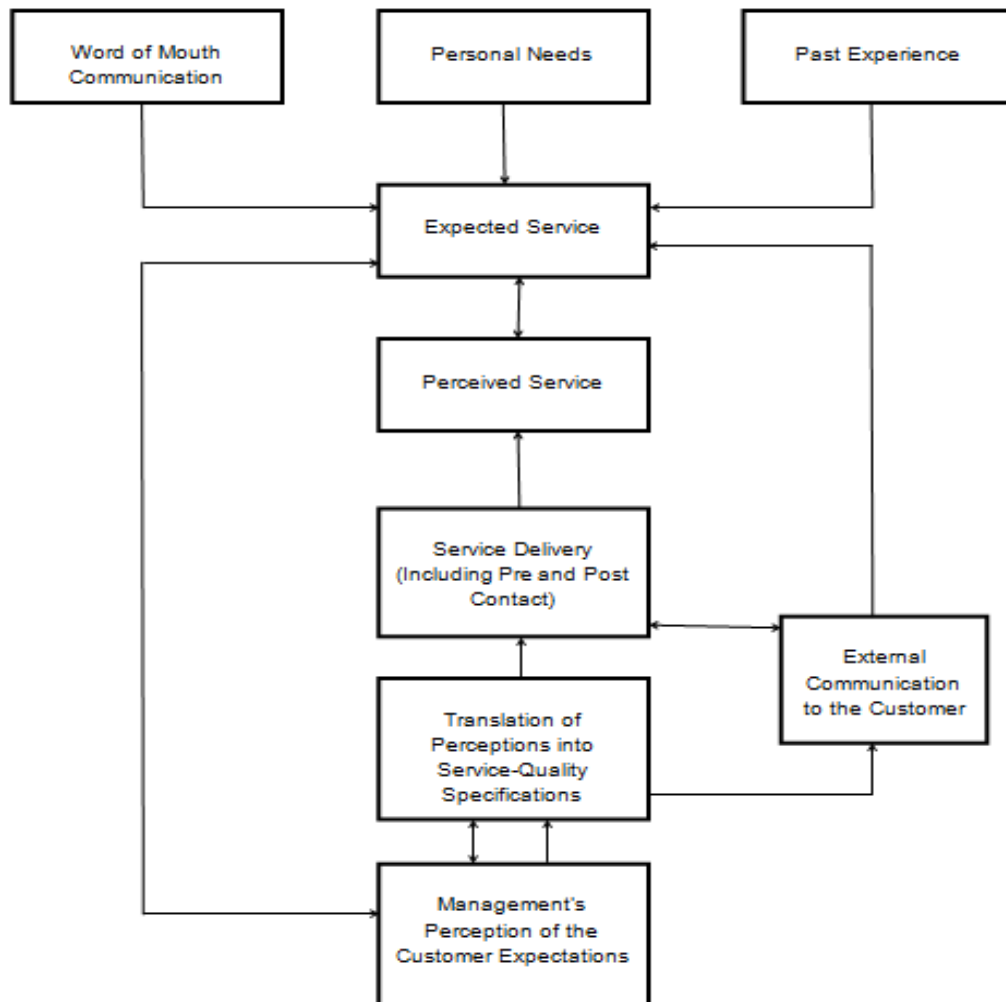
Figure 2.2: Parasuraman Model of Service-Quality

2.4.3. Synthesized Model of Service-Quality (Brogowics et al, 1990)

The synthesised model of Service-Quality (Brogowics et al, 1990) attempts to integrate traditional managerial framework, service design and operations and marketing activities (See figure 2.3). The purpose of this model is to identify the dimensions associated with Service-Quality in a traditional managerial framework of planning, implementation and control. The synthesised model of Service-Quality considers three factors, that is, company image, external influences and traditional

marketing activities as the factors influencing technical and functional quality expectations.
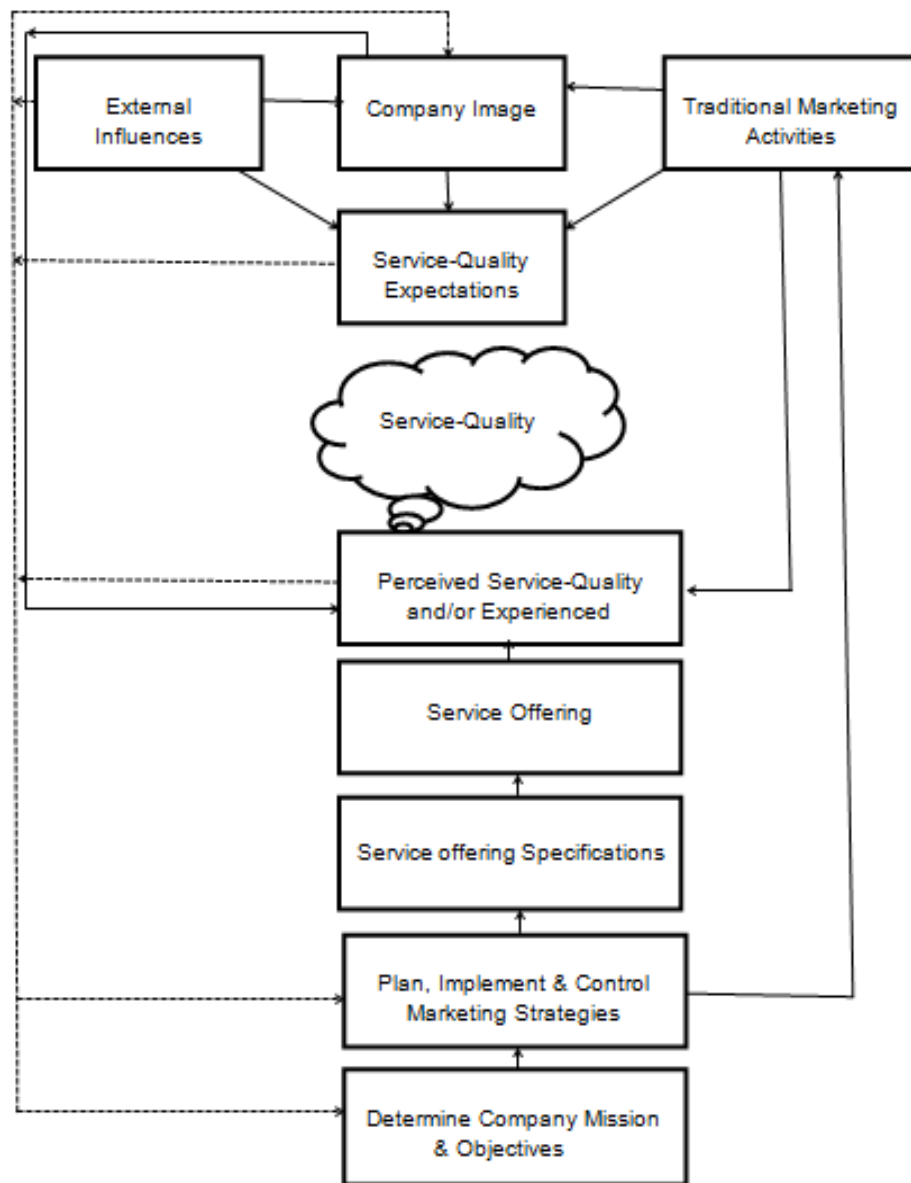
Figure 2.3: Synthesized Model of Service-Quality

2.4.4. Perception Model – SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992)

Cronin and Taylor (1992) introduced another Service-Quality measurement model named as Service Performance (SERVPERF). They emphasized on the performance based evaluation of the organizations. The authors investigated the conceptualization and measurement of Service-Quality and its relationship with consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions (Deshmukh, 2004). They compared

computed difference scores with perception to conclude that perceptions only are better determinants of Service-Quality. They argued on the framework of Parasuraman et al. (1985), with respect to conceptualization and measurement of Service-Quality. They then developed performance only measurement of Service-Quality called SERVPERF by illustrating that Service-Quality is a form of consumer attitude. According to Cronin and Taylor (1992) the performance-only measure of Service-Quality is an enhanced means of measuring Service-Quality. In essence, they maintained 'Performance' instead of 'Performance-Expectation' that determines Service-Quality.

The methodology adopted by Cronin and Taylor (1992) involved comparison of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. The comparison was made on the basis of the concepts behind each model along with the dimensions to measure Service-Quality. Table 2.1 lists down the comparative dimensions used in both the models.

Dimensions of SERVQUAL	Dimensions of SERVPERFV
1. Tangibles	1. Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of Personnel
2. Reliability	2. Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
3. Responsiveness	3. Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
4. Assurance	4. Knowledge and courtesy of employee and their ability to convey trust and confidence
5. Empathy	5. Caring, individualised attention the organization provides to its customers

Table 2.1: Comparison of Dimensions of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF

2.4.5. The EP and NQ Models (Teas, 1993)

Teas (1993) developed two models for measuring Service-Quality. The motivation of his research was once again on the criticisms of the SERVQUAL model. He argued that the expectations associated with an organization can exceed the actual level of performance that an organization can achieve. Thus, an Evaluated Performance (EP) model was suggested to measure the gap between perceived performance and the ideal performance for customer satisfaction. This then led to development of another

model by Teas, in the same year, which measured the excellence norm and idea amount of expectations known as Normed Quality (NQ) model. However, these two models suggested by Teas (1993) have not been used much in the literature.
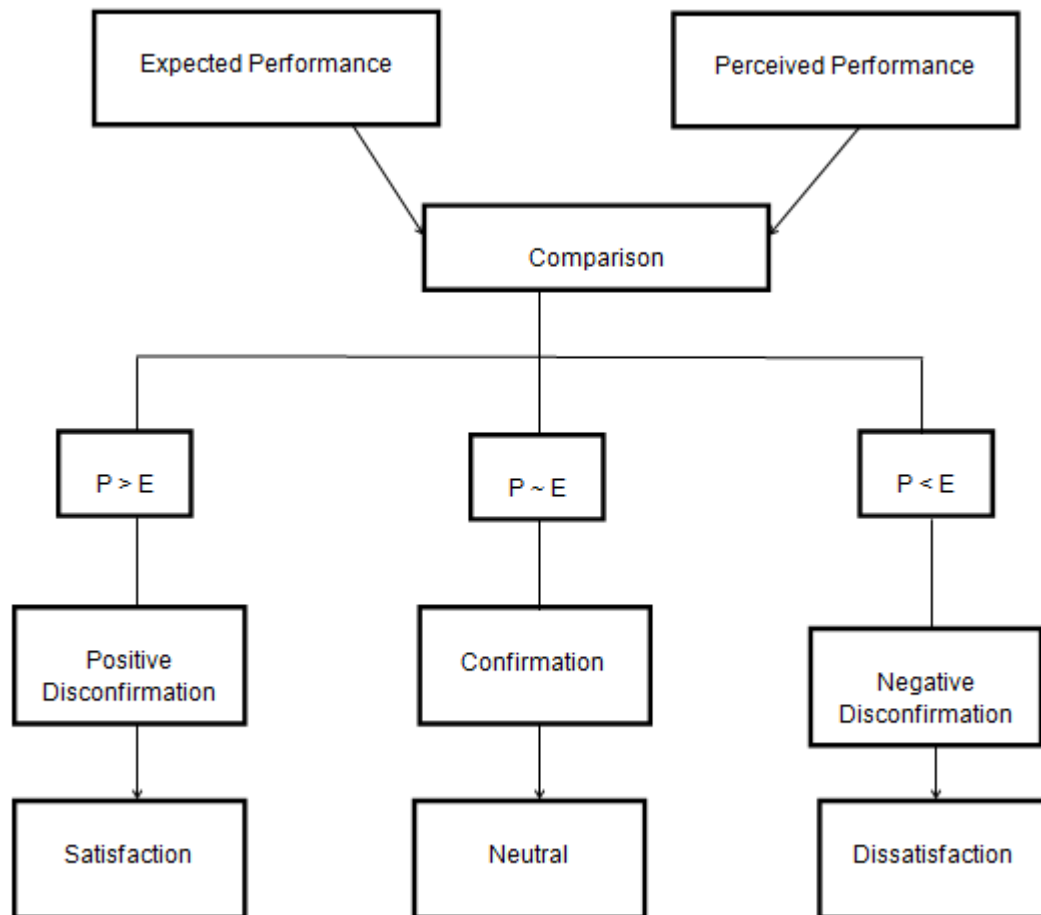
Figure 2.5: Teas (1993) EP & NQ Model

2.4.6. Critique of Service-Quality Models

The models discussed in section 2.4 are those that have been most extensively and effectively applied within the general Service-Quality literature, and therefore, it was felt that these models were likely to provide the most important insights for grounding the current research study. Table 2.3 provides a comparative critique of all the Service-Quality models. The majority of the models discussed above are disconfirmation models, in that they seek to measure the difference between the customers' prior expectations of service quality against their perceptions of the quality of the service that they ultimately experience. The one exception to this

underlying conceptualisation of service quality is found in the model suggested by Cronin and Taylor (1992), which is based on the '*perception*' paradigm.

Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
Nordic model (Gronroos, 1984)	Focuses on the service outcome and process, that is, what the customer receives from the service and how the service is delivered	Does not explicitly consider the impact of the physical environment of the service setting on Service-Quality perceptions. Uses the disconfirmation of expectations model as a basis
Three-component model. (Haywood-Farmer, 1988)	Extends the Gronroos model to include the physical environment. Has received increasing support in the literature	Some three-component models are still based on disconfirmation. Not well tested in the literature.
SERVQUAL/Gaps (Parasuraman, 1988)	Identifies a number of areas important to Service-Quality assessment. Has been widely used in the literature and in practice	Uses gap scores as derived from the disconfirmation of expectations model. Does not have an outcome orientation — does not measure service outcome perceptions
Integrated model (Brogowicz, 1990)	Looks at Service-Quality in a new light. Provides a more sensitive analysis by looking at the different tiers of Service-Quality dimensions	Has not been well tested in the literature. Needs more research to test its usefulness
Perception Model – SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992)	Literature has supported the perception model	May not be applicable to all service industries as it provides only perception and cannot measure the expectations of the customers who have a prior experience of the services.
EP & NQ Models (Teas, 1993)	Takes into consideration expectations as well as actual perceptions	The use of expectations in measuring Service-Quality has currently come under a lot of criticism in the literature as it does not provide a holistic picture of perceptions.

Table 2.2: Summary of Service-Quality Models

The '*perception*' paradigm (Cronin and Taylor, 1992) is based upon the assumption that in many situations, the customer will have limited expectations about the level of service that they will receive, and therefore the most important measure of service quality is the customers' perceptions of quality of the service that they actually receive. Consequently when seeking an underlying conceptualisation of service quality upon which to base a study of MBA programmes, it was decided to apply the perception paradigm, rather than the disconfirmation model, as it is highly unlikely that a student will undertake an MBA programme more than once in their life. The choice of the perception paradigm was also potentially more interesting from an

academic perspective, as the literature on service quality has generally been dominated by the application and testing of disconfirmation models (Neill, 1998).

The models discussed in above section provide a good foundation for understanding the nature of Service-Quality. However, what is becoming increasingly important to researchers is not so much how to conceptualise Service-Quality, but to understand the actionable factors that ultimately influence it (Parasuraman, 1988; Haywood-Farmer, 1988). By gaining an understanding of the determinants of Service-Quality, it is likely more that organisations will be able to more effectively manage it, and deliver higher levels of quality, in the services that they offer to their customers (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Oliver & Rust, 1994). Indeed, Verma (2004) refers to Service-Quality as a '*second order construct*' formed out of various '*first order*' variables and factors. Thus, the research emphasis is gradually shifting from models of Service-Quality to the specific factors that determine Service-Quality, in a particular organizational context.

Cronin et al. (1994) debate the effectiveness of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF for assessing service quality. The authors remained unconvinced of both, that including customer expectations in measures of service quality is a position to be supported, and that SERVPERF scale provides a useful tool for measuring overall Service-Quality. Moreover, Lee et al. (2000) empirically compared SERVQUAL (performance minus expectations) with performance-only model (SERVPERF). The authors also conclude that the results from the latter appeared to be superior to the former.

Methodologically, the SERVPERF scale represents marked improvement over the SERVQUAL scale. Not only is the scale more efficient in reducing the number of items to be measured by 50 per cent, it has also been empirically found superior to the SERVQUAL scale for being able to explain greater variance in the overall Service-Quality measured through the use of single-item scale (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Bolton and Drew, 1991b; Boulding et al., 1993; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Gotlieb, Grewal and Brown, 1994; Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Mazis, Antola and Klippel, 1975; Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins, 1983). Though still lagging behind the SERVQUAL scale in application, researchers have increasingly made use of the performance-only measure of Service-Quality (Andaleeb and Basu, 1994; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Boulding et al., 1993; Brady et al., 2002; Cronin et al., 2000; Cronin

and Taylor, 1992, 1994). Also when applied in conjunction with the SERVQUAL scale, the SERVPERF measure has outperformed the SERVQUAL scale (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Brady, Cronin and Brand, 2002; Cronin and Taylor, 1992. Moreover, SERVPERF is more relevant to the study to explore the perceptions.

For the research application considered in this thesis; some of the stakeholder groups might have a prior experience of education but the dynamics of the business schools are different in Pakistan. Thus, the student stakeholder group in Pakistan do not generally have a prior experience of a studying in a business school. The information was gathered from the demographic information of the student surveys. The surveys showed that only 10 % of the students had a prior experience of a business school. The undergraduate experience for the student stakeholder group is completely different as they studied as BA degree (refer to Section 2.9.1) from colleges or high schools. The parent stakeholder group do not have any experience of the business schools. Thus, all the perceptions about the business schools and Service-Quality are made upon general understanding of higher education. The employers' stakeholder group do not generally sponsor MBA programmes in Pakistan and do not have long term relationships built up with the business schools. Therefore, the employers' stakeholder group does not have expectations in terms of experience. Considering a wide range of stakeholder groups, some will have the prior experience and some of the stakeholder groups will not have a prior experience of the Service-Quality in a business school. Thus, to enable a consistent approach throughout the stakeholder groups SERVPERF model was used as the basis of the current research.

Against this backdrop, the current study will seek to understand the '*determinants*' that affect stakeholders' '*perceptions*' of Service Quality, in the context of MBA programmes, in the Pakistani higher education sector. Whilst the decision to focus on 'determinants' and 'perceptions' will be more fully justified in section 2.12 and chapter 3, of this thesis, the study's context is reviewed in the following sections.

2.5. Service-Quality in Higher Education

Higher education institutions faced tremendous changes since 1990s, according to Oldfield and Baron (2000) institutions need to realize that they are in a market and

need to have the concept of competitive advantage as there is a massive growth in number of students and institutions globally. This change in circumstances forces institutions to adapt Service-Quality based practices which will allow institutions to see themselves as organizations serving multiple stakeholders. Stakeholders include students, their parents and family, the local community, society, the government, the governing body, staff, local authorities, and current and potential employers. All of these stakeholders are concerned with the 'end product' - the graduate. All of the stakeholders have their differing vested interests towards higher education institutions. For example, employers and society in general are concerned primarily with the 'product' of the system, whereas students, and arguably their families, will also be concerned with the process. It is imperative to note that although higher education institutions are corporate like entities, the primary activities of education institutions are teaching and knowledge enhancement of the students and adding value to their professional and intellectual skills. These two activities are not for commercial purposes and thus it makes them very different from the commercial organizations in this perspective (Quinn *et al*, 2009).

With the increasing focus on quality measures in all sectors; it is timely for academia to apply Service-Quality concepts into higher education. Service industries are playing an increasingly important role in the economy of developing and developed nations. It is the most powerful competitive trend shaping businesses of the current era; for example in the UK 75 % of the total economic growth is from services sector (Ghobadian, 1984). Ziethaml (2000) stress on the Service-Quality as it gives profitability in the long-term. He identified a direct relationship between Service-Quality and profitability. According to a report by Grant Thornton International, Service-Quality is the main source of competitive advantage for more than 70 % of privately held businesses.

The core functions of higher education institutes are general administrative services and education service, which serve as the distinct differentiation strategies. As a result of commercial competition imposed by economic forces resulting from the development of global education markets and the reduction of government funds (Abdullah, 2006), higher education institutes are diverted from their core purposes. The reduction of government funding has led higher education institutes to seek

other financial sources. One of the basic sources is the increased tuition fees, followed by a cut in the number and amount of scholarships and tuition fees waiver. The other sources include a reduction in the developmental budgets and attracting national and international students with aggressive promotional strategies. These issues have led higher education institutions to adapt marketing approaches to measure and improve their quality of services.

In higher education context, Rowley (1997) defines Services-Quality as the difference in customers' perceptions between performance and expectation. She believes that the concept of quality varies from one individual to another as satisfaction from Service-Quality comes from the individual experience. Rowley questions whether limiting the Service-Quality concept should be limited to customer satisfaction or be extending it to exciting the customers more than their expectations. Oldfield and Baron (2000) define Service-Quality in three dimensions of processes, interpersonal factors and physical evidence. While Quinn et *al* (2009) describe higher education operations in three broad categories of educational or instructional, administration and auxiliary processes from a Service-Quality point of view.

Quinn (2009) comments that academic institutions are the most difficult areas for implementation of quality based practices. Hence, the term Service-Quality is very difficult to define in higher education institutions. As discussed in section 2.3 perceptions of Service-Quality vary from individual to individual. For example, in educational setting one customer may perceive the curriculum and infrastructure to be good, while the other customer may consider them to be mediocre.

In higher education TQM is one commonly used approach for attempting to improve Service-Quality, whilst also improving productivity and decreasing costs (Johnston, 1993; Green 1994). Owlia (1997) supports the same argument by saying that TQM provides a loop of performance within higher education institutions which then benefits the society. He suggests if a university is producing better quality of students, this would enhance the job performance of the graduates. This in turn will improve the university's reputation and thus the university will be able to attract more potential students. However, Owlia (1997) warned that the lack of quality based practices or inappropriate implementation of TQM may have negative effects as it will be a 'chain reaction'. TQM has been considered as a tool which can fix the

problems of higher education (Venkatraman,2007). He suggests that TQM has very contagious as it started from manufacturing, then moved forward to services and health care and finally into education. However, despite the creditability of TQM the academic institutions are slow to adopt TQM based practices.

One of the barriers to TQM implementation is lack of necessary knowledge about TQM philosophies in higher education. Harvey (1995) suggests another barrier, which is lack of empowerment and engagement of academic staff in implementing quality policies. However, Venkataram (2007) identifies a reason for the lack of engagement of the academic staff, that is, the academic staffs traditionally expect autonomy and teaching freedom and will resist to any change to implement TQM based practises. Kohn (1993) says that poor curriculum design could lead to quality failure. Thus a change in academic systems and procedures due to TQM implementation may lead to a failure.

Sahney et al (2004) discuss the implementation of TQM in HE from a theoretical perspective by conceptualizing it as the era of '*delighting the customer for survival in the long run*'. Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) claim that students and lecturers are part of the process where as employers deal with the final product, that is, the graduates. They compared the product and process quality dimensions in general with higher education context. Whether Service-Quality in higher education is managed through TQM, or through another approach, it is essential that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of its basic nature. Consequently researchers have sought to both model it and to measure it, as discussed in section 2.6.

2.6. Service-Quality Models and Measures in Higher Education

Due to the proliferation of Service-Quality models since 1980s, which have attempted to model service quality in a generic fashion, more recent studies have sought to tailor these models to specific sectorial contexts, including higher education (Rowley, 1997). Consequently, the aim of the remainder of this section is to review the models of Service-Quality, that have been designed for use in higher education sector, to determine what insights, if any, they provide for the design of this study. Moreover, this section also seeks to provide insights into the performance

measures that can be used to complement these models: It is important to note that there are models of Service-Quality, which have rather more tightly defined application area, within the HE sector. However, as models such as SERVCESS (Landrum et al, 2008) which was specifically designed to measure information service quality in the context of university libraries, have such a narrow focus, these have been deliberately excluded from this review.

2.6.1. Higher Education TQM Model of Excellence (HETQMEX)

Ho and Wearn (1996) designed a TQM based model which could serve as an instrument to measure level of quality specifically for higher education. This model was basically applied to UK higher education sector, to explain the factors and organization involved in quality based practises. The HETQMEX model was adapted from Parasuraman's (1988) SERVQUAL, and used the same methodology of identifying and exploring gaps in perceived quality, using the standard perception-expectation formula. Although the worth of the research has not been proven empirically, and the model has not been greatly cited later in the literature, it does explicitly highlight the importance of exploring Service-Quality from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives.

2.6.2. Higher Education Performance Model (HedPERF)

Abdullah (2004) developed the 'Higher Education Performance Model' to measure the perceived Service-Quality. This research attempted to identify some factors through which Service-Quality could be measured, with the students being considered as the customers of the Service. The reliability and validity of the empirical study has been further tested by Abdullah 2005, 2006a,b). Ultimately, six dimensions of the students' perceptions of Service-Quality were identified, based upon the perceptions of 680 students namely: non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access, programme issues and understanding. In his paper Abdullah (2006b) also identified the need to conduct the same research from the perspectives of both the internal and external customers of higher education, thus reinforcing the view that future research should canvass the views of multiple stakeholders.

2.6.3. Service Driven Market Orientation (SERVMO)

Voon (2006) developed the 'Service Market Orientation measurement model', which is based upon the underlying supposition that satisfying the needs of students is the core reason for the existence of any higher education institution. Consequently, the rationale for designing the model was to explore the relationship between the extent to which HE organizations adopted market-oriented behaviours and the perceptions of their students about the Service-Quality that they were receiving.

2.6.4. Use of Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators (PIs) are playing an increasingly important role in many western governments' approach to the management of higher education (HE) institutions, and this includes Australia (Taylor, 2001). For example, Ball and Halwachi (1987) identified three main categories of performance indicators, namely: internal performance indicators, external performance indicators and operating performance indicators. Although studies have highlighted some strengths in the current PI system, many concerns have been raised, and introduction of PIs in the HE sector has been far from smooth (Harman, 1998; Taylor, 2001). Indeed, a more recent study, by Soutar and McNeil (1996) suggests that the primary problem with performance indicators is that, when in an education setting, they tend to become measures of activity rather than measures of service quality.

2.6.5. Use of Models & PIs in Higher Education: Some Conclusions

As it stands the literature on the modelling and measurement of Service-Quality in the HE sector is fairly limited, and there don't appear to be any models which are based upon the 'perception' paradigm, or which explicitly measure the determinants of Service-Quality. However, what has become very clear from this review of existing Service-Quality models and measures in higher education, is the need to take account of all the various stakeholder groups that will have important views, that need to be canvassed. Consequently, the aim of the following section is to review the nature and roles of stakeholders, in the higher education context.

2.7. Stakeholders in Higher Education

The services industry generally focuses on the customer when designing quality based practices. However, Owlia (1997) suggests that due to the complex nature of higher education as a service industry it is very difficult to define the customer of higher education as there are many different stakeholder groups. More specifically, he identified students, parents, employers, faculty members, government & general society as stakeholders having different interests, thus adding more complexity to the system. Quinn (2009) identified the most common stakeholders of higher education as students, parents, research sponsors, state and federal governments, society, and future employers of students, disciplinary academic communities, accreditation bodies and staff. To deal with multiple stakeholders, Ho and Wearn (1995) recommend that higher education institutions should consider the relative importance of stakeholders to balance Service-Quality.

Lagrosen et al (2004) commented that higher education is similar to public sector as it has many stakeholders, such as, students, parents, teaching and support staff, government and funding bodies, employers and accreditation bodies. The public sector is less willing to recognize the stakeholders as customers because this adds the element of commercialization which is not the purpose of public sector. For each of the stakeholders of higher education, the concept of Service-Quality is vital. The difference between general public services and higher education is that the purpose general public services are to facilitate the masses. Whereas the higher education needs maintain quality-based outputs, that is, the high education institutions need to be selective in providing the services.

Rowley (1997) notes that students, as the primary consumer of the educational service, have a very different role to play in assessing Service-Quality, as compared to all the other stakeholder groups. Rowley (1997) defines the relationship between higher education institution and the students as a psychological Service-Quality contract and a framework which is based upon four 'E's, namely, '*experience*', '*exchange*', '*environment*' and '*expectations*'. The customers cannot see a service but they can feel it with certain elements associated with service and the people involved in delivering the Service-Quality (Oldfield and Baron, 2000). The students

are the ones who experience the services provided by the institutions and can provide a direct feedback of their experiences (Hill, 1995a; Cuthbert, 1996).

To summarise, the major problem associated with improving Service-Quality in higher education involves defining the customer who experiences the Service-Quality (Rowley, 1997). This has been a barrier to improving Service-Quality and still needs an in depth research to help improve services of complex education system. As the research is focussed on the Pakistani higher education system, the following section will present a review of this important, yet rarely studied, research context.

Although discussed in section 2.3 that perceived value of the services delivered is a complex and difficult phenomenon as it involves individual circumstances and preferences. However, this gives the researcher to understand the aspects of the perceived Service-Quality from multiple stakeholders' perspective. Various stakeholder groups have differing needs and perceptions and thus have a differing perceived value of the services delivered to them. It is imperative to study the stakeholder groups individually to understand the perceptions of Service-Quality in higher education institutions.

2.8. Higher Education in Pakistan

Pakistan was a colony of Great Britain till 1947 and inherited universities which were run and administered by the British Government. The universities established in colonial countries were different in terms of their operations and systems as compared to the original ones in European countries. A European model of education was imparted in the colonial period. After independence the universities, inherited by Pakistan, were run in the same capacity as Pakistan did not have the resources and the capability to change the existing British - European Higher education model.

Anwar (2007) points out that the higher education in Pakistan has been under the control of government since independence in 1947. The government of Pakistan was not able to sustain and completely support higher education in its totality. The key factors for having a poor system was inheriting a weak physical infrastructure and

limited funds for education. Funds disbursed were not only aimed at the development of education itself but it also included other expenses such as building up of newer universities and induction of teaching and support staff. The same funds were to be used faculty development, other expenses such as salaries and administrative costs of the staff and the institutions. This laid a heavy burden on the national exchequer and dependency.

In the late eighties, the establishment of private universities and the governments' inability to fund a sector growing rapidly resulted in a situation where government became unable to sustain the higher education system. The establishment of private universities encouraged the government to rethink its role as the sole provider of the higher education. As the government funds became insufficient to support a large pool of public universities, the public universities had no other option but to generate funds from themselves (Hussain, 2005). The emergence of private sector education institutions not only that it provided an opportunity for the higher education sector to grow but to focus on quality based practices in education. The private education sector challenged the existing systems and suggested better models of education. (Higher Education Commission, 2012).

2.9.   University Structures in Pakistan

Batool and Qureshi (2010) has given details of universities in Pakistan have come into existence through Acts of the National Assembly or Provincial Assemblies. Universities are incorporated on a more or less uniform basis in accordance with an Act which provides common features of university government and management. Other universities have copied the Punjab University Act, 1884 which was is drawn up on the pattern of the University of London. General universities in Pakistan are teaching and affiliating bodies.

Typically, a Pakistani university is headed by a Chancellor (who is the Governor in the case of a provincial university and the President in the case of a Federal university. It further has a Pro-Chancellor (the Minister for Education for the province), Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor, chosen from the senior professors of the university, is appointed by the Chancellor to assist

the Vice-Chancellor. Other administrative heads are the Registrar, the Treasurer, the Controller of Examinations, the Resident Auditor and the Librarian.

The authorities of the universities are generally the Senate, the Syndicate, the Academic Council, the Board of Faculties and Studies, the Selection Boards, the Advanced Studies and Research Board, the Finance and Planning Committee, the Affiliation Committee and the Discipline Committee. Senate, considered to be the supreme authority of the university, is a large body comprising university officers, professors, and members of syndicate, Deans, Principals of Colleges, eminent persons, elected junior staff and representatives of students in some cases. The syndicate, consisting of 20-25 persons chaired by the Vice-Chancellors, is the chief executive organ of the university and includes representatives of academics. The Academic Council is the academic body of the university and is responsible for laying down proper standards of instruction, research and examination and for regulating and promoting the academic life of the university and the colleges.

The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Chancellor, and the Vice-Chancellor holds office by the choice of the Chancellor who may remove the Vice-Chancellor without any reason. The financial support for universities comes overwhelmingly from the Federal Government, and is channelled to them by the Higher Education Commission, an agency of the Federal Government established for the supervision of higher education. However, Pakistan's universities operate under legislative acts.

2.9.1. Private Sector vs Public Sector

Khan (2002) says that the private sector has created a visible impact on educational development. Privatization is expanded rapidly in developing countries. Higher education in most developing nations is supported by private sources of funds. Private higher education plays a variety of roles in different situations, depending on the educational program that the private university and the political functions that it may serve.

Anwar (2007) states the period of 1990s as opening wider opportunities for the private sector in Pakistan. The private sector in higher education is opening up new avenues of cooperation. The most important change is seen in their national outlook in terms of the appointment of teaching staff, and the intake of students. Public

sector universities have traditionally been confined to their regions for the intake of students and teachers and are supply oriented. Private universities, working on the basis of market forces, are inducting students and recruiting teachers nationally in demand oriented disciplines. There is a constant decline and cut in funds provided by the government to higher education and public sector universities (Higher Education Commission, 2011). It sounds as if the role of the government for the public would be confined to policy perspective only. The need of the hour is to realize that universities should generate funds within the institution or seek the support of external donor agencies to run the operating costs of the institution than to rely solely on the government.

Pakistan is divided into eight (8) administrative Units with 106 districts. The details of administrative units are given in the following table:

No.	Name of the Administrative Unit	Status	Capital City
1	Balochistan	Province	Quetta
2	Khyber Puktunkhawa	Province	Peshawar
3	Punjab	Province	Lahore
4	Sindh	Province	Karachi
5	Islamabad Capital Territory	Federal Capital	Islamabad
6	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)		Peshawar
7	Azad Jammu Kashmir		Muzzafarabad
8	Gilgit Baltistan		Gilgit

Table 2.3: List of Administrative Units in Pakistan

Most of the prestigious higher education institutions are concentrated in Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory and Sindh. Private educational institutions in Pakistan are mainly situated in the urban areas of the country.

Hussain (2005) identifies the segmentation of education system which leads to creating class system in the country. Following is the structure of education followed in the country. The class system and the background are impacting on the quality of higher education institutions and the graduates produced from such institutions.

Cummings (1997) refers to private education as a service for the elite classes. Quality higher education in Pakistan is limited to a privileged minority, with less than 50,000 students enrolled in university or professional programs (Shah, 2005). In

contrast, South Korea with a fraction of the population has an enormous higher education enrolment base of 2.7 million students. Higher education in Pakistan is limited to the elite of the country. For those who can afford more, foreign universities is also an option.

Three top most popular subject areas over past 20 years have been Engineering, Medicines and Business. In Pakistan Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIKI); top engineering university, Agha Khan Medical University (AKU); top Medical College and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS); top Business School are the three universities that are head and shoulders above the rest in terms of quality of education and fee structure. All of them are private universities. LUMS being the top most Business school has current enrolment is about 3000 + students. The graduates from LUMS are on a fast track career in the domestic market with multinational companies, or alternatively get admissions into the well-known universities abroad. LUMS has well designed courses and relatively better qualified and well paid faculty. It has well designed processes and procedures. It has excellent physical infrastructure as well. (Higher Education Commission, 2011)

PRIMARY LEVEL

Madrassah System

Regular   Fundamentalists

Modern School System

English Medium   Urdu Medium

Private   Public   Public

SECONDARY LEVEL

Darul Uloom

O, A levels Cambridge

HSC/Matric → Technical & Vocational

Private Universities, Colleges

Public Universities, Colleges

HIGHER LEVEL

Islamic Studies faculties at the public Universities

Centers of Excellence AKU, LUMS, GIK

Medical Eng.   Arts & Humanities   Sciences

OVERSEAS

Top Universities in the World

Figure 2.5: Various Education Streams in Pakistan- Hussain (2005)

The down side of higher education institutions in the private sector is the expansion of institutions established without proper physical facilities and proper faculty provision for education and meeting minimum academic standards.   These institutions are issuing degrees that have no great worth in the job market. They pose a serious threat to national system of education, legitimate credentials and the integrity of accredited institutions of higher education as well as having serious international consequences for the value of Pakistani degrees. Anwar (2007) expresses the similar concern that unregulated higher education, in the private sector, will lead to further deterioration in quality. It can on the other hand increase competition and enhance the quality of higher education. More specifically, private universities pay generally much higher salaries, and the best ones offer quality

libraries and research facilities. They tend to respond to the public demand for modern, hands-on practical training in business and technology Khan (2002).

2.10. The Concept of Quality in Pakistani Higher Education

Research by Qureshi (2008) shows that quality in higher education is directly related to the quality of the teaching staff. Lack of presence of qualified teachers in the public universities is another problem being faced by the public universities. Qualified manpower is a prerequisite for the advancement of knowledge, research and for the overall socio-economic development of the country as universities remain in the forefront before the students enter their practical life. The teacher becomes the central figure of the whole process. Over the years the system has developed in such a way that public universities provide little incentive for hard work. University teaching staff once employed in public sector universities enjoys long tenures. Seniority and availability of posts govern the principle promotion for teachers as far as the college teachers are concerned, while university teachers have to compete for appointment at each stage for openly advertised posts. To help promote a healthy research program at any university, should it be Pakistan or elsewhere, well-qualified people with research background should be available. Due to lack of adequate training facilities for university teachers, the present position of teachers with Ph.D.degree in the universities is alarmingly low. The faculty strength has not increased significantly in the last five years, and in the year 1999-2000 all the universities combined have a faculty of 7684; out of these only 2212 have Ph.D. degrees. (Higher Education Commission)

The question of quality is very difficult as it could be applied to many areas in higher education. It can be related to curriculum, students, institutions and the teaching staff itself. The measurement of quality in higher education has to be applied in many areas if we take the example of Pakistan. Khan (2008) evaluates quality in higher education in terms of the following areas: staff, curricula, students, infrastructure and finally, the management of the institution. The concept of quality in higher education can be further be understood if higher education is treated as 'service'. This will allow higher education institutions and universities to treat them

as service organization and measure Service-Quality within higher education context.

2.11. Value of Education as a Service Industry in Pakistan

To treat higher education higher as a service, an understanding of service sector in Pakistan is required. Pakistan's service sector accounts for 50 % of the GDP. There has been a decline in Pakistan's service sector during the 1990s and the year 2000. During 1980 – 1990, there was a decline of 6.8 %. There was a further decline of 4.3 % between 1990 and 2000 (World Development Indicators Database, 2005). In contrast to that there has been a constant growth in service sector growth in the lower and middle income states of the world Baig and Khan (2010).

Baig and Khan (2010) state that the importance of education as an industry was recognized within the services sector of Pakistan in the late 1990's. For example, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) estimated and aimed that in 2000 education in the state would involve 1128 institutions, providing employment for an estimated 16,920 individuals. In July 2005, there were 1535 institutions other than the 109 recognized universities in Pakistan. This is a pattern that developed into the mushrooming of institutes in Pakistan, especially of those providing business related degrees (www.hec.gov.pk). This criterion resulted into establishment of institutions that lack creditability of private institutions and thus compromising the Service-Quality in education.

The lack of understanding of the service delivery concept within higher education has led the HEIs to focus on quantifiable elements such as equipment, environment and physical assets. The underlying concept behind the perception is the HECs initiatives to fund universities for such elements and then evaluate them on the same. Pakistani HEIs need to focus on promoting the minds that they employ and they need to spend more on the human resources rather than the infrastructure. Though the importance of physical infrastructure, equipment and environment cannot be ignored but there are other factors such as knowledge based assets and effective learning which are much required.

The concept of service in higher education can be better understood in business schools. The business schools are generally referred to profit-making or money

making departments or divisions within higher education institutions or the universities. Section 2.12.1 will briefly discuss the background of business education and the implications in the business schools.

2.11.1.   Business Schools in Pakistan

Business education is a platform which allows individuals to effectively evaluate the most effective solutions. It provides an effective decision making skills, it provides that planning of one year will ensure success of five forthcoming years. Business education helps to sense any situation and provide confidence to take such risk and initiative to solve the problems. Kolachi (2008) states that business education is a platform which provides uniqueness in developing any human being to be perfect in various domains specially management, communication, psychology, finance, technology and strategic marketing.

There are many business schools but very few offer the quality education. According to National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC), there are 98 Business Schools in Pakistan. They are in various forms such as independent Business School (also called as university or autonomous body), a sub-unit of a large university, usually referred as Faculty as in case of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI). The faculty of management sciences in IIUI is called a Graduate School of Management but it is not autonomous body. The last form is a small department within a university offering MBA or BBA (undergraduate) program.

Business Education in Pakistan started in 1955 with an opening on Institute of Business Administration popularly known as IBA, Karachi. University of Punjab started offering Masters in Business Administration in 1962. Both of the universities started business education programmes with the help of US Aid. It was primarily the public universities which offered graduate programs. Lahore University of Management Sciences – LUMS was the first in private sector started business education in 1986. Business education became challenging in 1992 with emergence of 76 new universities and institutions with degree awarding status (DAI). Students from varied educational backgrounds started pursuing business degree in response

to market requirement. Also, business education becomes the top choice of students due to its inter-disciplinary nature Kaleem (2010).

Kolachi (2008) explains the perception of MBA education in Pakistan which is directly related to getting good jobs. In his research he emphasizes the need of qualitative work in business education so that the graduates are employed locally and internationally. According to NBEAC 62% of the students are enrolled in MBA program nationwide both in private and public sector. However, still the problem of quality in business education is unanswered.

One of the major problems identified in business education in Pakistan is the availability of business faculty. The faculty members who have been teaching to B.A (2 year undergraduate degree) and B.Com (2 year undergraduate - Bachelors of Commerce) students started teaching management and business related courses. They had little or no exposure to business literature or to the real world business issues. Raouf, Kalim and Siddiqui (2010) suggest a revision of current MBA curriculum which should emphasize on the development of skills required by the corporate sector or the industry.

The business education is still developing in Pakistani context where engineering and medicine has always been the preferred choice of individuals. However, with the exception of 4 – 5 business schools such as LUMS, IBA, NUST Business School, Bahria University and SZABIST, none of the business schools are matching up the criteria even within in Pakistani market. The Pakistani business school need to realize the importance of producing business graduates who are accepted in International market. None of the Pakistani Business School is in top 500 business schools of the world with the exception of one or two. This may act as a benchmark for them to improve and to provide quality of service delivery.

2.12. Critique of the Literature and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed various concepts of general Service-Quality and the application of Service-Quality in higher education. The diverse research in the field of Service-Quality led the researcher to explore further into this area, to determine where the existing knowledge can be broadened, and an important new contribution

made to this research domain. The most common way that researchers have attempted to define, operationalize and conceptualize Service-Quality is through the creation and application of Service-Quality models. However, as explained earlier, these models do not fully do justice to the multi-dimensional nature of the Service-Quality (Bloemer *et. al*, 1999). In particular, these models do not capture the complex array of factors that affect Service-Quality, which have variously been conceptualised as: attributes (Haywood- Farmer, 1988), dimensions (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991) or determinants (Johnston & Silvestro, 1990) of Service-Quality.

A further limitation of the models critiqued in section 2.4 is that they tend to be based on the '*disconfirmation paradigm*' (Neill, 1998), which is based upon the assumption that the consumers of a particular service have a clear set of expectations about the Service-Quality they would expect to receive. The key problem with disconfirmation paradigm is that the customer needs to have a prior experience of the 'service' within the organization. Whilst this might be appropriate in many service contexts, it clearly does not apply to the provision of MBA education, as the students prior expectations might at best be rather unclear. Consequently, it will be far more appropriate to base any conceptualization of Service-Quality for use in the MBA context, on the less commonly used '*performance paradigm*' (Cronin and Taylor 1992). Thus, as the consumer of the MBA education does not have a prior experience of MBA Service-Quality, and then they will tend to gauge Service-Quality purely in terms of their perception of the educational service that they receive.

The literature review has also identified a number of specific Service-Quality models that have been specifically designed for use in an HE environment. Unfortunately, none of these models were deemed suitable to adapt for use in this study, as they do not reflect the multi-dimensional nature of Service-Quality. However, what did become apparent from these studies was that when modelling Service-Quality in an HE context, it is really important to canvass the view of multiple stakeholders (Ho and Wearn, 1996; Abdullah, 2005), such as students, staff, parents and employers.

Against this backdrop it is possible to identify a number of important gaps in the literature, which this study could be designed to fill. For example, there have been relatively few prior studies of Service-Quality that have explicitly adopted the '*perception paradigm*', rather than the more common '*disconfirmation paradigm*'.

Secondly, whilst most studies have adopted relatively simple conceptualisations of Service-Quality, there is a growing recognition that there is a need for studies which reflect the multi-dimensional nature of Service-Quality. A third important issue to emerge from this review of the literature is the need to adopt a multiple stakeholder perspective, when seeking to explore Service-Quality, particularly in the context of higher education. Fourthly, although there have been some prior studies of Service-Quality in a higher education, none have been found which explicitly focus upon the provision of MBA education. Finally, most prior studies have focussed on the provision of Service-Quality in HE, from the perspective of developed countries. Consequently, there is an important gap in the literature, with respect of Service-Quality offered by universities in the third world. Consequently, the aim of the research presented, in this dissertation, is to fill these gaps in the literature by exploring the provision of Service-Quality by Pakistani Business Schools, offering MBA programmes, using a research framework that models Service-Quality, using the '*perception paradigm*', and the multi-dimensional and multiple stakeholder perspectives. The following chapter presents the Service-Quality framework around which this study was ultimately designed.

Chapter 3: Research Framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the foundations of the research. Section 3.2 will presents the research aim followed by a discussion of research questions. Section 3.3 will then discuss how the research framework was established, using the existing literature as the foundation for the research. Finally the last sub-section of research framework will discuss how Service-Quality determinants were designed which were then used to collect the empirical data.

3.2. Research Aims and Questions

Service-Quality has generally been conceptualized through the comparison of service expectation with the actual performance measures (Zeithaml, 1990). However, as noted in the previous chapter, it makes sense to base this particular study on the '*perception paradigm*', rather than the more dominant '*disconfirmation paradigm*'. However, this begs the question whose perceptions of Service-Quality should higher education institutions be seeking to canvass?

Higher education institutions have faced tremendous changes since 1990s, according to Oldfield and Baron (2000), and they need to realize that they are in a very competitive market, which has witnessed a massive growth in number of students and institutions globally. This change in circumstances, forces institutions to adopt Service-Quality based practices which will allow institutions to see themselves as organizations serving multiple stakeholders. However, stakeholders have varying 'perceptions' of Service-Quality; one stakeholder might perceive a certain curriculum, or infrastructure as having high quality, while another stakeholder might consider the same experience as 'mediocre'. Consequently, it was clear that this study should be aimed at establishing stakeholders' perceptions of Service-Quality.

It has been suggested that Service-Quality is a multidimensional construct, and therefore any attempt to establish the stakeholders' perceptions of it must address a variety of different aspects of Service-Quality. But how should Service-Quality be

deconstructed? Gronroos (1993) and Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1982) have defined Service-Quality in terms of its dimensions, that is, outcome quality and technical quality.

The basic models of Service-Quality suggested by Parasurman (1985), Ghobadian (1994), Gronroos (1983) and Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1991) have been widely used in services sector. With the increasing focus on quality based practises in all sectors, these models then formed the basis of research in Service-Quality in higher education institutions. Jospeh & Joseph (1997), Hampton (1993), LeBlanc & Nguyen (1994) and many other researchers studied Service-Quality in higher education institutions based on the models discussed earlier in the paragraph.

Although it is accepted that higher education institutions have various stakeholders, it appears that academics have generally under researched how Service-Quality perceptions vary across various stakeholder groups. For example, Clewes (2003) have adopted a student-centred perspective of Service-Quality, while Oldfield & Baron (2000) have also focussed solely on the students' perceptions of quality in business school. By contrast, Pariseau & McDaniel (1997) discussed quality perceptions from the perceptive of two stakeholder groups, that is, students and teaching staff. LeBlanc & Nguyen (1997) explored customer impressions of Service-Quality considering students as the primary customer (stakeholder) of the higher education system. Merican et.al (2009), Yeo (2008), Liang (2008), Joseph & Joseph (1997) have also focussed upon only one stakeholder, that is, student group. However, Rowley (1997) has clearly identified that different institutional stakeholders will have very different needs and expectations. Consequently, it was envisaged that this study would make an important new contribution by canvassing the views of a wide variety of different stakeholder groups.

Therefore, there is a clear gap in the literature of how a wide variety of stakeholders perceive various Service-Quality aspects within a business school context. The literature has not explored and evaluated perceptions of all the stakeholders which have generally various yet conflicting needs and interests from the institutions.

For the current research context, Pakistani business schools have been selected as the focal point for this study, as there has been very little research that explicitly

addresses Pakistani business schools. The regulatory authority of higher education in Pakistan, that is, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has made some effort to create a partial ranking of universities but this does not address the Service-Quality aspects of the institutions and particularly business schools. As there is no research on Service-Quality of business schools, so this concludes no research from multiple stakeholders' perspectives in Pakistani higher education institutions.

Thus, this research aims at studying perspectives of various stakeholders within the Pakistani business schools. Therefore, the main research aim is;

'To study the relative importance of various Service-Quality determinants (SQD)'
from each stakeholder groups' perspectives'

The output from the research will contribute to better understanding of Service-Quality in business schools, the relationship between Service-Quality and perceptions of the stakeholders of the business schools. Not only will it evaluate various Service-Quality determinants in the business schools but it will also seek to highlight the relative importance of different stakeholder groups, from the business school's perspective. The relative importance of stakeholder groups will be discussed in section 3.2.1.

This research will help understanding the discrepancies between the stakeholder groups and will provide a framework for Pakistani business schools which can then be implemented to other institutions within the country. Having established the broad aim of this study, it was possible to formulate the research questions, which would then help focus of the research study. Ultimately, the following two research questions were adopted:

1. What is the relative importance of the Service-Quality Determinants (SQD) from each stakeholder's perspective?

2. How do different stakeholder groups perceive the relative importance of other stakeholder groups, in terms of their perceptions of Service-Quality?

Answering these questions will obviously involve two major steps. First, the perceptions of all the stakeholder groups on various Service-Quality determinants (SQD) will be captured by conducting interviews or questionnaires with each

stakeholder group. Then the views of the stakeholders' would be sought, using a questionnaire, to understand how they viewed the relative importance of other stakeholder groups' perceptions of the Service-Quality Determinants (SQD). For example, a parent might be asked whether the students', the teaching staff', the business school managers', the employers', the government officials', or the accreditation bodies' views about Service-Quality should be taken most seriously.

The perceptions' assessment process is conducted in two phases, that is, phase 1 validates the Service-Quality Determinants. The phase 2, then, assesses the perceptions by conducting one-to-one detailed interviews. An online survey was used to capture perceptions of students to endorse the perceptions of all other stakeholder groups. The details of the evaluation process are discussed in chapter 4.

Section 3.3 will review the background to the design of research framework, which was ultimately developed to help evaluate the perceptions of a variety of stakeholders, with regards to the determinants of Service-Quality, in the context of higher education.

3.3. Background to the Research Framework

The concept of Service-Quality and stakeholder perceptions emerged from the wider literature in the area of Operations Management, this literature provides a 'helicopter perspective' on organizations. Consequently it interlinks other disciplines in performance management and measurement into a coherent whole. It became important to study how stakeholders have different perspectives of Service-Quality within the organization. The current study started to dig deeper into literature related to Service-Quality and perspectives of the stakeholders. The researchers and writers often stated the importance of Service-Quality within organizations, and to some extent the concept has been researched in higher education sector, as well. But existing research has not explicitly to canvass the conflicting and differing perspectives of different stakeholders. The research journey therefore, started by structuring the literature to identify the gaps, as discussed in chapter 2. The purpose of the study and its research questions were thus developed in light of these prior studies, as discussed in section 3.2.

The background to this study was primarily based upon Service-Quality research conducted by authors, such as: Parasurman et.al (1985), Owlia and Aspinal (1996a), Rowley (1997) and Owlia and Aspinal (1996b). This initial research prompted questions with regard to how the concept of Service-Quality is being applied within higher education. This research area of Service-Quality in higher education is still under explored, thus leaving a significant gap in the literature. However, the concept of perceived value which is linked with Service-Quality but it has not been assessed at this stage because it represents the next step in terms of depth of research. However it is acknowledged that a value approach could have provided a richer insight of the Service-Quality aspects, but was judged by the author as too complex at this stage

The background to this study was primarily based upon Service-Quality research conducted by ground-breaking authors, such as: Parasurman et.al (1985), Owlia and Aspinal (1996a), Rowley (1997) and Owlia and Aspinal (1996b). This initial research prompted questions with regard to how the concept of Service-Quality is being applied within higher education. This research area of Service-Quality in higher education is still under explored, thus leaving a significant gap in the literature. This study follows a deductive approach as the research framework and empirical study have their origins in the existing literature.

To help establish a formal framework which could aid the exploration of Service-Quality determinants, the literature review covered a range of important areas, including:

- Defining Service-Quality and Service-Quality Models

- Service-Quality in Higher Education and Business Schools

- Service Quality models in Higher Education

A key theme to emerge from this literature, as noted in chapter 2, was that for the purposes of this study, it would be necessary to conceptualise Service-Quality, in the higher education context, as a multi-dimensional construct. However, prior attempts to deconstruct Service-Quality have resulted in a variety of different terms being used to describe very similar concepts. For example, Service-Quality has been

deconstructed into: '*attributes*' (Haywood- Farmer, 1988), '*dimensions*' (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991) and '*determinants*' (Johnston & Silvestro, 1990) and these are only the most commonly used terms. Indeed, the use of these terms can be seen in table 3.1, which shows that Service-Quality has been conceptualised and deconstructed in a variety of ways, but always using one of the following three key terms;

- Determinants of Service-Quality

- Dimensions of Service-Quality

- Attributes of Service-Quality

To help define the concept of Service-Quality in higher education context and especially Business Schools, the said terms will be reviewed and critiqued in the following section. The definition of each term has been explained along with the context of how it will be used in current research.

3.3.1. Determinants of Service Quality

The Oxford English dictionary (2008) defines 'determinants' as a factor which determines the nature or outcome of something. This means that a determining factor or the causal element may be called as determinant. For example education is an important determinant of individuals' outlook on life. Determinants can be referred to as factors which influence any concept, object, process, or a system. A factor can be population (host) factors, environmental factors, such as disease vectors or transmission agents (for example, food or water); social, economic, educational, healthcare, cultural, or other.

In the context of Service-Quality, the term determinant has been used to conceptualise those factors that influence the perception of stakeholders in areas, such as: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, creditability, security, understanding the customers, tangibles (Parasuraman, 1985; Zisiset al, 2009). In a similar vein, Johnston (1995) uses '*determinant*' to explain the factors that affect the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of customers.

3.3.2 Dimensions of Service Quality

The Oxford English dictionary (2008) defines dimension as "*The measurable extent of a particular kind and an aspect and feature of a situation*" .In the context of Service-Quality, Tan *et. al* (2010) define dimension as the characteristics of a particular service, while Gudluagsson (2009) and Bloemer (1999) both refer to it as the measurable extent, to which Service-Quality has been achieved. In this context, Service-Quality has been conceptualised using dimensions such as intentions, word of mouth communication, and price sensitivity and complaining behaviour.

There is a mutually agreed view of researchers about the concept of Service-Quality that it cannot be measured as a single element but a combination of multiple dimensions, such as, the dimensions referred by researchers in table 3.1. The methodology of designing dimensions of Service-Quality is used to overcome performance and control the intangible aspects of service. Dimensions can also be viewed as conceptualization of understanding of services while Zeithaml considers them as customers' way to judge company service in form of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) define and use dimensions as characteristics of quality required for measuring quality such as performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality. They believe that there are dimensions and those dimensions have characteristics, such as, 'tangibles' include sufficient equipment and facilities, modern equipment, ease of access, visually appealing environment, support services. The dimension of competence has characteristics such as sufficient academic staff, theoretical knowledge, and up-to-date teaching expertise and so on so forth. Widrick (2002) defines Service-Quality using dimensions by referring them as the set of measurement parameters to improve quality in higher education.

3.3.3 Attributes of Service Quality

This term has not been referred in the literature as frequently, and hence there is less ambiguity about how the word attribute has been used in literature. However, Oxford English dictionary defines the term as "*Typical feature or a quality of something*". Hence, in the Service-Quality literature, the term attribute is used to

label something which describes the traits or the characteristics of services or the Service-Quality.

3.4. Designing a Framework of Service-Quality Determinants

By looking at different definitions and uses of the three key terms – determinant, dimension and attribute - in general usage, it is clear that these terms have very distinct connotations. For example, in general usage, the term determinant as explained earlier, is a '*causal*' element while the dimensions are the '*characteristics*' of something. However, in the Service-Quality literature, these terms have been used quite interchangeably, creating much ambiguity for the reader, thus making it difficult to provide a clear and distinctive definition of these terms for future research. This problem is clearly illustrated when considering the work of Parasuraman and colleagues. In the widely cited 10-item scale designed by Parasuraman (et al 1985) the key factors are referred to as '*determinants*' of Service-Quality. However, in a later paper Parasuraman et al (1988) refer to a very similar set of items [see table 3.1] as the '*dimensions*' of Service-Quality. In a similar vein, the terms '*Physical Environment Quality*' (Brady, 2001), '*Physical Quality*' (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991) and '*Features*' (Garvin, 1987) are very similar to the term '*Physical Facilities and Processes*' (Heywood-Farmer (1988). However, whilst the latter is defined as an '*Attribute*' of Service Quality', all the former are classed as '*Dimensions*' of Service-Quality. Thus, in the context of Service-Quality in business schools it is quite difficult to draw a clear distinguishing line between the attributes, dimensions and determinants of Service-Quality. For the purposes of this research, the term '*determinant*' of Service-Quality will be used, as this emphasises the fact that these items will affect the extent to which Service-Quality is achieved.

There is considerable amount of research conducted on Service-Quality in higher education. However, Table 3.2 summarizes the key contributions which have been used to shape the current research context. The terms used in table 3.2 have been derived from the wider Service-Quality literature. For example the term 'Academic Reputation' used by Joseph & Joseph (1997) has been derived from Parasuraman's (1985) 'Creditability', and Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1991) 'Corporate Image'. Moreover,

Parasuraman (1985) referred the term as a 'Determinant of Service-Quality' where as Lehtinen & Lehtinen's (1991) called it as a 'Dimension of Service-Quality'. Another example to quote: the term 'Physical Evidence' used by LeBlanc & Nguyen (1994) has been derived from Parasuraman's (1985) 'Tangibles', Lehtinen & Lehtinen's (1991) 'Physical Quality', and Haywood-Farmer's (1988) 'Physical Facilities and Processes'. However, Parasuraman (1985) referred the term as 'Determinant of Service-Quality, Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1991) referred as 'Dimension of Service-Quality' and Haywood-Farmer (1988) referred the same term as 'Physical facilities and processes'.

Having decided to focus of Service-Quality, in the context of HE, it was possible to review the educational literature, to identify the key themes, upon which a framework of determinants could be established. More specifically, five significant contributions to the literature on Service-Quality in higher education were carefully reviewed and from each it was possible to identify a number of factors that affected the Service-Quality of an HE institution. The results of this exercise has been collated in table 3.2, to show both the full range of factors that emerged, as well as highlighting where factors were common to more than one study. It should be noted that although the determinants of Service-Quality, in the HE context, are rather different to those that are used in a more general service context, some similar themes, such as responsiveness and performance are common to both.

As well as classifying the common factors to emerge from the extant literature, table 3.1, has also been used to highlight the 'determinant' names that were derived from this exercise [see column 1]. Some of the determinants were used in their original form such as, curriculum, physical evidence and responsiveness. However, other determinants were re-named and sub-divided into further items in order to have a richer and a more nuanced view of the Service-Quality concept, based on the prior research of the researcher and the needs of the context. By having in-depth view of Service-Quality means that the Service-Quality determinant had very broad meanings. So, in order to avoid any ambiguity of the meanings, the determinant was sub-divided into items, for example 'Curriculum'; the determinant was sub-divided into items such as programme design and module content. The following section will now discuss each of the determinant with its definition and its (if any) sub-items.

Gronroos (1983)	Parasuraman, A. et al (1985)	Garvin (1987)	Parasuraman et.al (1988)	Haywood-Farmer (1988)	Johnston & Silvestro (1990)	Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1991)	Gummesson (1991)	Brady, and Cronin (2001)
Dimensions for Service-Quality	*Determinants of Service-Quality*	*Dimensions of Service-Quality*	*Dimensions of Service-Quality*	*Attributes of Service-Quality*	*Determinants of Service-Quality*	*Dimensions of Service-Quality [#1]*	*Dimensions of Service-Quality*	*Dimensions of Service-Quality*
Technical Quality of Outcome	Reliability	Performance	Assurance	Professional Judgement	Attentiveness / Helpfulness	Corporate Quality (Image)	Design Quality	Interaction Quality:
Functional Quality (Interaction)	Responsiveness	Features	Empathy	Physical Facilities and Processes	Responsiveness Cleanliness Comfort	Interactive Quality (Process)	Production Quality	Behavior, Expertise,
Corporate Image	Customization	Reliability	Reliability	Behavioral Aspects	Care, Security	Physical Quality (Service Setting)	Delivery Quality	Attitude
	Creditability	Conformance	Responsiveness		Availability Access Flexibility Aesthetics	*Dimensions of Service-Quality [#1]*	Rationale Quality	Physical Environment Quality:
	Competence	Durability	Tangibles		Reliability	Process Quality		Ambient Conditions,
	Access	Serviceability			Integrity	Output Quality		Design Factors,
	Courtesy	Aesthetics			Friendliness			Social Factors
	Security	Perceived Quality			Courtesy			Outcome Quality:
	Communication				Competence			Waiting Time
	Tangibles				Functionality			Tangibles
	Knowing the Customer				Commitment			Valence

Table 3.1: Conceptualization of Service-Quality Terms used in Services Sector

3.4.1. Curriculum and Programme Design

This determinant was used from the literature without any great modification. It means that the business school has specialized programs and courses to offer, which are in-line with industry needs, Moreover, the course contents are updated when required and the curriculum is perceived to enhance individual capabilities of students. Joseph & Joseph (1997), LeBlanc & Nguyen (1994) and Entwistle & Tait (1990) have all used similar determinants such as 'Programme Issues', 'Curriculum' and 'Relevance and Interest of Student to the material' respectively. All these three determinants have been collectively referred to as the '*Curriculum*'.

For the research context, curriculum design means the content of MBA programme, the type of courses offered during the degree. Programme design or the specialization programs means the variation of the course offerings in terms of interest areas, such as, MBA in Human Resource Management, MBA in Marketing or MBA in Finance & Accounting. In Pakistani business schools, the term 'course' refers to modules offered in a particular term or a semester.

3.4.2. Personnel Quality

This determinant was derived from the term 'Administration' used by LeBlanc and Ngyuen (1994). In the current research context, it is concerned particularly in terms of the administration and support staff. This determinant evaluates the follow-up and response time of staff, and evaluates if the staff is aware of the policies and procedures. LeBlanc and Nguyen (1994) used the term 'Personnel Quality' to refer to the quality of teaching staff. However, in the current context, it is specifically used for support staff.

In the research context of Pakistani business schools, personnel quality refers to the academic background of the administrative staff along with their understanding of how a business school operates. Personnel quality may include programme coordinators, programme managers and student services.

3.4.3. Physical Infrastructure

This determinant was derived from the literature without modification as defined by LeBlanc and Nguyen (1994). However, many similar concepts have been used in literature. For example, Joseph and Joseph (1997) has used 'Physical Aspects' and 'Location; Hampton (1993) used 'Campus Facilities'; and Rigotti and Pitt (1992) used 'Tangibles' to describe the same concept. The term physical aspect mentioned in Table 3.3 is also referring to physical infrastructure. Physical infrastructure means that if the institution has proper lighting and backup facility for power failure (important in Pakistan due to power issues) and optimum classroom temperature is maintained according to weather conditions. The class rooms and study rooms are comfortable, premises and guide maps are available for easier navigation. The parking lot spacious enough to accommodate reasonable number of vehicles, lawns and cafeteria are good enough to meet the needs of students. Also aesthetics and cleanliness of institute is maintained.

For the research context physical infrastructure not only includes the building and facilities within the institution but the labs and access to information as well. However, most commonly the term referred physical infrastructure is used in terms of the building of the business school.

Determinant	Entwistle & Tait (1990)	Rigotti & Pitt (1992)	Hampton (1993)	Le Blanc & Nguyen (1994)	Joseph & Joseph (1997)
1. Curriculum & Prog. Design	Relevance and Interest of the student to material			Curriculum	Programme Issues
2. Personnel Quality		Responsiveness, Reliability		Administration, Responsiveness	
3. Physical Infrastructure		Tangibles	Campus Facilities	Physical Evidence, Access to Facilities	Physical Aspects, Location
4. Corporate Image	Standard of Organization			Reputation	Academic Reputation, Word of Mouth Communication
5. Assessment & Grading	Relevance of Assessment to Course Material, Appropriateness of assessment & Quality Feedback		Efforts to Pass course, Student Advising		
6. Faculty Profile	Extent to which tutor is interested in individual student		Teaching	Contact Personnel: Faculty	
7. Teaching Methods	Tutor Enthusiasm and style of delivery		Teaching		
8. Fee Structure					Cost / Time
9. Responsiveness		Responsiveness		Responsiveness	
10. Industry – Academia Liaison					Career Opportunities
11. Outcome of Education			Quality of Education		
12. Research & Development					
13. Student Background					

Table 3.2: Service-Quality Determinants in Higher Education

3.4.4. Brand Name

The existing literature has used the term reputation or the academic reputation for describing the business school as a brand which is recognized mainly by students and employers. For example, Joseph and Joseph (1997) have used the term 'Academic Reputation' and 'Word of Mouth'; LeBlanc (1994) has used 'Reputation'; and Entwistle and Tait (1990) has used 'Standard of Organization' to refer to the same concept, namely, Brand Name. The term reputation has been modified to corporate image as the determinant of Service-Quality. It means that students are satisfied with academic achievement of institution and their institution is affiliated with regulatory authority. The overall degree of the institute has good name in the market, that is, employers.

Branding of an institution provides a promise of consistency and the quality of the services delivered. For the research context it will be referred as something which gives business school recognition in terms of delivering better services and producing quality MBA graduates. Based on the research, having effective international exchange programmes is also referred as better Service-Quality and will be discussed in chapter 5.

3.4.5. Assessment and Grading

This determinant has been derived from prior research of the researcher[1] along with the combination of the terms 'relevance of assessment to course material', 'Efforts to Pass course' and 'Student Advising', referred to in table 3.3 used by Hampton (1993). It means if the students are satisfied with the grading criteria and find it transparent and appropriate.

For the research context assessment and grading means how students are evaluated during the semester on their assignments, projects and exams. It means if the management and the teaching staff has any criteria for assessment and grading

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[1]   In Pakistan the assessment and grading criteria of the student is very varied and thus, creates inconsistency in terms of the evaluation. The researcher has conducted a prior research in Pakistan to evaluate the importance of assessment and grading as a Service-Quality determinant.

the students. In Pakistan two grading criteria are used, that is, the absolute grading system and the relative grading system.

3.4.6. Faculty Profile

This determinant was derived from three terms, that is, 'teaching', 'tutor enthusiasm and style of delivery', and 'extent to which tutor is interested in individual student' as used by Hampton (1993) and Entwistle and Tait (1990) respectively. This means the individual competence, personality, emotional Intelligence and qualifications of the teaching staff. It also assesses friendliness, and lecturers' communication skills. Moreover, it includes if the faculty facilitates innovation, arranges lectures by guest speakers and are actively involved in research work.

For the research context, the term teaching staff is used to refer to all categories of academic, such as lecturer or Assistant Professor, and the term support staff applies to the administrative staff, which supports the operations within the business school.

3.4.7. Teaching Methods

This determinant was used from the researcher's prior research. It means that there are different methods of teaching to MBA students, such as, Case study methods, research based or practitioner's approach.

In the case of Pakistani business schools lecture based teaching methods are used. This determinant focuses on finding the most appropriate teaching method for the school which can enhance Service-Quality.

3.4.8. Fee structure

This determinant was derived from researcher's personal experience of working in Pakistani business schools as the variation of fee structure made a substantial impact of students' decision making of choosing a business school. The determinant was also derived from Jospeh and Joseph (1994) determinant of 'Cost/Time'. Furthermore, the same determinant was used in a prior research by the researcher. Fee structure means that it is at par with kind of facilities provided to the students, and provides merit based and need base scholarships. The students find the fee

submission process as simple and flexible. The fee structure is feasible and affordable for the students.

Fee structure may be defined as the amount of fees charged for the MBA degree programme. For the current research context fee structure evaluates the students' perception of Service-Quality with higher/lower fee structure along with its impact on the students' decision making.

3.4.9. Responsiveness

This determinant is used from the literature without modification. Leblanc and Nguyen (1994) and Rigotti and Pitt (1992) has used 'responsiveness' to determine the responsiveness of academic and administration staff. It determines the availability of instructors and support staff, and their concern towards students learning and growth. The institute gives weight age to student feedback and the students keep on receiving updates on procedural or academic activities.

In current research context, responsiveness refers to responsiveness of teaching and support staff. It also refers to availability of the academic and support staff.

3.4.10.   Industry – Academia Liaison

This determinant is derived from the researcher's prior research. It means strong links of business schools with industry to facilitate student placements. However, Joseph and Joseph (1997) has used the term 'Career Opportunities' to describe the same phenomenon.

Industry-academia liaison is very broad term; however for the current research scope it is limited to building relationship between corporate sector (industry) and the business schools. How the teaching and support staff communicates with the people working in industry to get the MBA graduates employed by the industry. Also, the perspective of potential employers on the effective development of some programs is studied so that the communication and expectations gap between employers and business schools is reduced.

3.4.11. Outcome of Education

This determinant is derived from two terms used in the literature, that is, 'Student Advising' and 'Empathy'. Also, it in refined from the researcher experience of working for various business schools in Pakistan. The outcome of education means mentoring and guidance of graduates, skills set of graduate and how the values such as, ethical and social responsibility are induced into the graduates.

In the current research context, this determinant is evaluating the impact of business schools' environment to a graduates' ethical and moral value system. It is focussing on mentoring and guidance of the student. It is also exploring how these variables determine the Service-Quality of the business school.

3.4.12. Research & Development

This determinant has been derived from the researcher's prior research (Qureshi and Mahmood, 2008). It means that the business school focuses on trainings and development for administrative staff, teaching staff and introducing research for MBAs. This particular determinant will focus on the impact of research outputs by MBA students on the level of Service-Quality provided by the business schools.

In the current research context the determinant 'research and development' is aiming at MBA students only although the R & D is applied to teaching staff as well within a business school.

3.4.13. Student background

This determinant has also been derived from researcher's prior research (Qureshi and Mahmood, 2008). This determinant recognises that the socio-cultural background of the MBA students might ultimately impact upon the overall performance of the business school and the Service-Quality levels within a business schools.

In case of Pakistani business schools, there are two major streams of education system which impact the student performance in the business school as discussed in chapter 2. This determinant evaluates if the socio cultural background of the student

impacts the Service-Quality level of the business school as the variation of education streams have created various social classes in Pakistani society.

3.5. Conclusions

The chapter has presented discussed the study' aims, questions and framework which forms the foundation for this research study. The research framework has been based upon the models of Service-Quality measurement, which were originally designed for use in a general Service-Quality context, as discussed in chapter 2. The researcher has conducted research based on the models identified in general and higher education settings. The measurement models have then provided dimensions, determinants and attributes of Service-Quality as discussed by pioneering researchers of Service-Quality.

Towards the end of the chapter, a list of 13 determinants has been presented which are derived from general Service-Quality and Service-Quality in higher education literatures. All the terms have been explained in their original form and how those terms would be used in the HE research context. These 13 determinants have been designed to evaluate the perceptions of stakeholders about Service-Quality within Pakistani business schools. The perceptions of Service-Quality will be measured from a range of stakeholder' perspectives, namely: MBA students, parents of MBA students, Government & funding bodies, Accreditation Bodies, Employers, Management of the Business School and Teaching and Support Staff. The varying perceptions of the stakeholders should provide a comprehensive understanding of Service-Quality, within business schools. The following chapter presents a discussion of the specific research methodology and the research methods that have been designed to explore the research aims and questions, presented in this section.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1. Research Methodology

So far, this thesis has defined the research aims and the research framework (Chapter 3) for the study and explored the background literature of Service-Quality (Chapter 2). This chapter will describe the research process and the research strategy driving this investigation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the underlying logic of the research approach and to describe how this study was performed.

This chapter is divided into two main sections; first section discusses the methodological issues in social sciences and how this study is related to those issues. The second section critically appraises the various research approaches that could be adopted before reviewing the approach that was ultimately chosen.

4.2. Methodological Discussion

The first part of the research discusses the methodological issues in social sciences and management studies. After that research design will be discussed, that is, qualitative and quantitative research methods and how they are employed in current research context.

In order to understand the core of the methodological discussions, the philosophy of the research needs to be understood first. A research philosophy can be viewed as a set of beliefs including: the nature of reality (ontology), beliefs about how knowledge is acquired (epistemology), and the nature of how methods are to be used (methodology). (Guba, Lincoln; 1994)

The identification of paradigm or epistemological consideration is important because it will not only affect the research design, methodology and analysis, but also the literature review and hence the conceptualization of the model. The core contemporary epistemological issue concerns the extent to which the social world might be studied in an approach consistent with the methods of natural sciences,

and the extent to which epistemological distinctions, which may arise, mark out the study of the social world as both qualitatively and quantitatively different in kind from the study of natural world (Wight, 2006).

The basic lens through which the research addressed is called as research paradigm. The research paradigm is discussed in section.

4.2.1. Research Paradigm

The determination of the research paradigm is an important first step in designing a research strategy because this paradigm is shaped by the discipline area of the researcher, their beliefs and the past research experience (Guba, Lincoln; 1994). The type of belief held by an individual researcher will lead to embracing a research methodology of quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approach (Crewell, 2009). Theoretically research paradigms can be categorized into positivistic, interpretivistic and critical theory. However, the most widely used approaches are the positivist and interpretivistic (New, 2006) paradigms. Each paradigm is associated with different research method and research techniques. Before selecting and deciding with an appropriate philosophical approach, that is, the research paradigm, it is important to critically review each paradigm in comparative features of each approach (see Table 4.1)

	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontology	Realism: Reality is assumed to exist, driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Deterministic and reductionist. Causes and effects derive through deductive logic.	Relativist: Realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructs, socially and experimentally based. Study meaningful social action and gather large quantities of qualitative data to acquire an in-depth understanding of how meaning is created. Theories derive through inductive knowledge.
Epistemology	Dualist or objectivist. Investigator and investigated object are assumed to be independent entities. Not value-laden nor subjective, nor biased, thereby automatically excluded from the influence of the outcomes.	Subjectivist. Inquirer and inquired are fused into single entity. Findings are the creation of the process of the interaction between the two. Subjectivity and works from realized basis and connected ethical concerns.
Research Methods	Focus on empirical test (verification/falsification; proof/refutation) Research techniques: Theorem proof, laboratory experiments, field experiments, surveys, case studies, forecasting, simulation	Hermeneutic, dialectic Research techniques: Subjective/ argumentative, reviews, grounded theory, action research, descriptive/interpretive studies, future research, roles, game playing, simulation, ethnography

Table 4.1: Comparison of Research Paradigms

The primary concern of the research is to generate knowledge by designing the conceptual model and designing a research question which may help the researcher to acquire certain knowledge in the specific domain. As established, this study is first to understand concepts or constructs in the research context. Thus, the researcher has generated a conceptual model to explore the relationship of various variables and their impacts and influence on each other. Based on the information, it is concluded that for the current study an 'Interpretivist' epistemological stance is justified.

Thus, the rationale for having the interpretivist epistemological stance is because there is little data available on Service-Quality concept from the multiple stakeholders' perspective. The Service-Quality concept highly abstract in nature and the relationship of Service-Quality perceptions and the stakeholder perspectives have not been studied in the literature. Consequently, the literature has not been able to provide any strong meaningful insights to any great extent about this. So the concept here will be studied and explored through an interpretivist approach.

4.2.2. Research Design

The research design is defined by Burns and Bush (2000) as 'a set of advanced decisions that make up the master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information'. Churchill (1995) argued that research design is the framework or plan for the study, which is used to guide the collection and analysis of the research data. A research design therefore ensures that the study is well aligned with the research objectives. The research design requires the specification of procedures. These procedures involve decisions on what information to generate, method of collecting data, the method of measurement, the determination of what needs to be measured, and the method of analysing the (Guba, Lincoln; 1994). Also, it facilitates the identification of appropriate data that is conducive to resolving the problems.

The notable strategies for conducting empirical study are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods designs that offer specific direction for procedures in a research design .The quantitative research is a way of testing objective theories by examining the relationship between variables; whereas the qualitative research is a means for

exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social or a human problem (Creswell 2009). Different strategies are approached in different context.

With regards to principle objectives and exploratory research question, the interpretivist epistemological stance and model development of the study suggests, it is apparent that 'qualitative' strategies need to be employed for the current study. Further due to limitations on the quantitative study in terms of evaluating the complex phenomenon, qualitative approach was considered to be the most suitable.

Exploratory Research vs. Conclusive Research

The 'Conclusive Research' or 'Confirmatory Research' is intended to test and verify insights gained from the existing literature and to support researchers to choose a specific course of action. This type of research is most appropriate when researchers have one or more alternatives and are looking for information to critically evaluate them.

In comparison to conclusive research, exploratory research is concerned with general nature of the problem and the variables related to it (Tull and Hawkins, 1993). The emphasis lies on the discovery of ideas and generally an informal and unstructured approach is selected to explore the research problem or the area. Exploratory research is conducted when little is known about the problem and there is a need for additional information or desire for new or more recent information. Burns and Bush (2000) suggest that exploratory research is appropriate when background information is required about a certain research area, when the concepts and terms need a definition or the problem needs clarifying.

Considering the arguments for the exploratory research, it is suggested that, for the current research context, exploratory research is the most appropriate approach as the multiple stakeholder concept from Service-Quality has not been widely explored. Also, the concept of Service-Quality needs more clarity in terms of operationalization and definition in the Pakistani business schools.

Descriptive Research vs. Causal Research

Causal research identifies the relationship of one factor or variable on another. The dependent variable changes with changes in independent variable while the descriptive research answers the questions which caused a situation (Sekeran, 2000).

In the current research context the Service-Quality determinants are used to assess the perception of stakeholders for Service-Quality levels. Thus, the perception of Service-Quality influences the performance and Service-Quality levels of the business schools. Hence, the study is a causal research.

Inductive Research vs. Deductive Research

The deductive approach works from more general to specific. It is also called as a top-down approach of research while the inductive research approach moves from broader generalizations to specific. The inductive approach involves a certain degree of uncertainty.

For the current research the study is deductive as it draws understanding of wider aspects of Service-Quality to application of Service-Quality in higher education and then to business schools.

4.3. Data Collection Methods

There is no single strategy which is considered to be superior; it depends on what we need to find out and the type of question to which we seek an answer. For the current research data collection methods of survey and interviews were used. The following section discusses these methods.

4.3.1. Surveys

Surveys include collecting a large amount of data from a sizeable population by obtaining information directly from the participants. Surveys can be very effective in gathering data about individual preferences, expectations and behaviours. The advantage of surveys is that the data can be generalized to represent the view of a

larger population. However, the surveys need a lot of time and effort in designing and piloting the questionnaire.

Methods of administering the quantitative surveys include face-to-face, telephone; mail (Dillman, 1991) and recently internet via email or World Wide Web.

For current study internet, that is, email and World Wide Web are extensively used. Also, the questionnaires were circulated within the campus and were collected on the same day. The web based surveys saved a lot of time and were circulated to a large group. However, due to the accessibility issues, such as, inappropriate weather and political conditions, it was most appropriate to visit the business school and circulate the hard copy of the questionnaires.

The surveys used in the current research context are to collect view point of one of the stakeholders groups that is students as the student stakeholder groups was very large to conduct the interviews. The details will be discussed in chapter 5. However, the detailed data collection through surveys will be discussed in section 4.4.3

All other stakeholder groups, that is, parents, teaching & support staff, employers, Government & funding bodies, accreditation bodies and the Management of the business schools were interviewed. The details will be discussed in chapter 6. However, the detailed data collection through interviews will be discussed in section 4.4.2.

4.3.2. Interviews

In interviews, data is generally collected through enquiry and recorded upon the consent of the interviewees. Interviews generally help the interviewer to gather the perspective of the respondent on a certain research area. The benefit of conducting in-depth interviews is that it provides a detailed insight of the subject which might not be possible through surveys. Also, interview method enables the researcher to use a semi-structured interviewing technique. This involves the interviewer asking certain questions again the same way each time but having the freedom to alter the sequence and probe for more information.

The two most common ways of administrating the interviews are: face-to-face or via the telephone. Face-to-face interviews bring the advantage of clarification of questions if the questions are not clearly understood. However, it is a time consuming and costly activity.

Telephonic interviews enable a semi-structured approach and are less expensive than face to face interviews as they do not require many resources to conduct the interview.

After considering the two methods of conducting qualitative interviews it was decided that both methods would be adopted. If the respondents were available for a face-to-face interview and it was feasible to travel as well, a face-to-face interview was conducted. Travelling in Pakistan is not feasible all the time due to severe weather conditions or due to the unavailability of a proper transport facility. However, if the respondents were not available locally or could not manage to give an appointment during office hours, then a telephonic interview would be conducted.

4.3.3. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies

Although most researchers either do quantitative or qualitative research work, some researchers have suggested combining one or more research methods in one study. In order to build a wider picture of the phenomenon under investigation (Reichardt and Cook, 1979), increase the validity of findings (Jick, 1979) and to help explain extra diverging results. It is also suggested by Cavaye (1996) to collect both qualitative and quantitative work from the same site.

The study mainly is qualitative; however, due to large number of stakeholder groups, one of the stakeholder groups, that is, students were not interviewed. The student stakeholder group was given the questionnaire which was later evaluated quantitatively. However, the quantitative data was collected to endorse the qualitative data.

4.4.   Strategy for Data Collection

The strategy for data collection was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods using internet and paper based surveys and face to face interviews. A

paper based and internet based survey was initially designed to pilot (refer to figure 4.1) the Service-Quality determinants. The list of Service-Quality determinants in the pilot, were circulated in five (5) business schools based upon convenience of the access to the business schools. The surveys were distributed to students, teaching and support staff and the management of the business schools. A feedback on the surveys helped the researcher to re-design the survey and further itemize the Service-Quality determinants. This helped a better understanding of Service-Quality determinants. More details would be provided in section 4.5.1

In the main study, phase 1, 13 Service-Quality determinants were further divided into 22-items. These items were then used to make another survey which was used to collect data quantitatively mainly from the student stakeholder group. The same survey was used to design interview questions to collect the qualitative data. Moreover, the surveys were floated on internet to be shared within the business school. However, not all the stakeholder groups would have access to internet, thus, paper based surveys were used as well to collect on-site date. Furthermore, the researcher made notes of the informal discussions with student stakeholder groups and the feedback provided by them. These notes helped the researcher to further refine the descriptive analysis (chapter 6) of the results. Thus, the process of collection quantitatively and qualitatively was conducted simultaneously discussed in section 4.5.2 and section 4.5.3 (Figure 4.1)

The questionnaire was slightly redesigned on the researchers' second visit to Pakistan for collecting data. Thus, it was not a major revamp but more questions were added to the questionnaire. Therefore, the respondents who provided data in phase 1 were contacted again to answer the additional questions added in phase 2 as discussed in section 4.5.4. The study was then repeated in same manner as of phase 1 to collect the quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously from different stakeholder groups. (Figure 4.1)

After the data collection process, the data set was analysed descriptively for surveys discussed in chapter 6. Moreover, the qualitative data was analysed by the strategy discussed in section 4.6
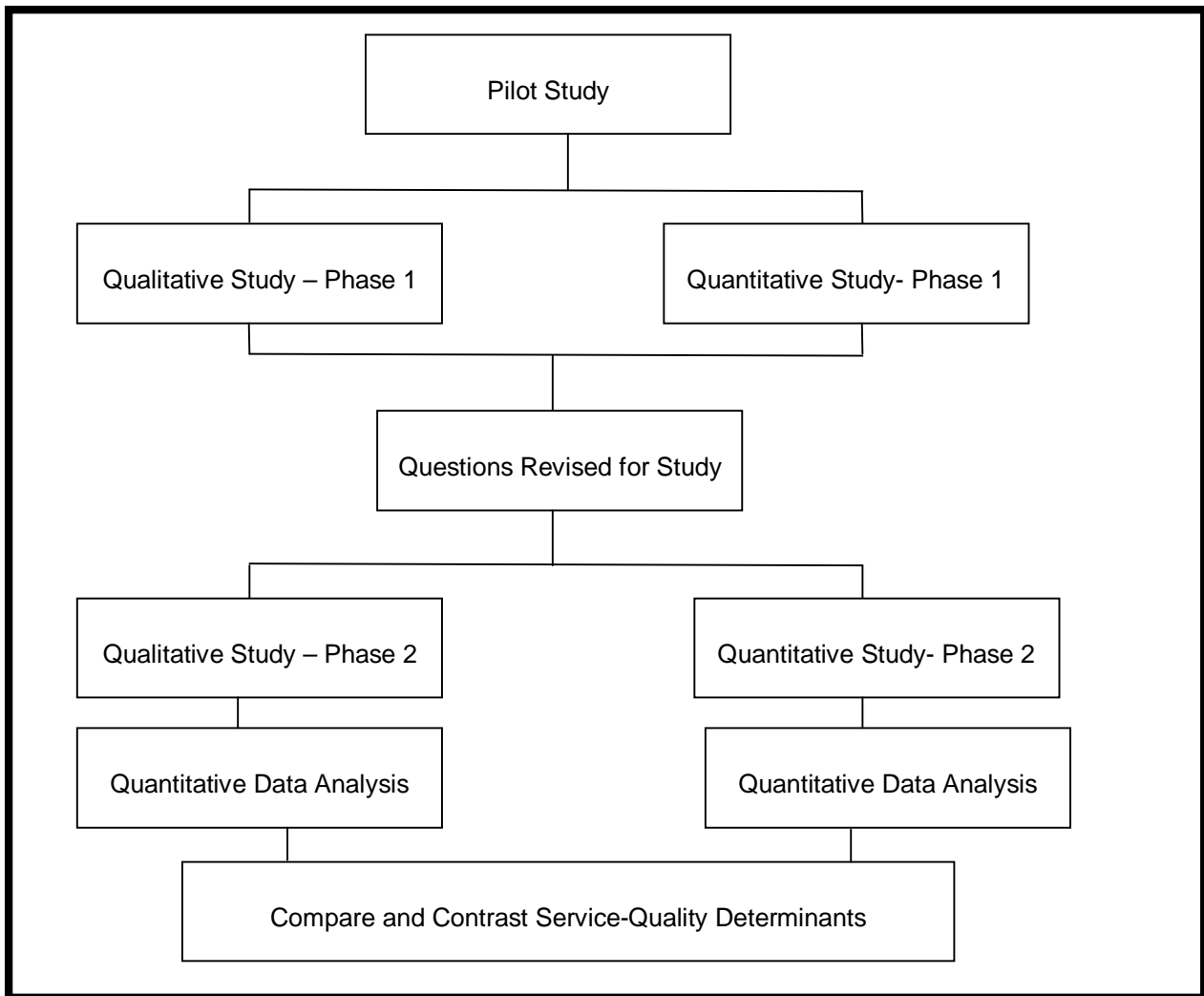
Figure 4.1: Process of Data Collection

Figure 4.1 shows the sequence of conducting quantitative and qualitative study. As a first step development and design of Service-Quality determinants; a quantitative survey was designed for the validation of Service-Quality determinants. Thus, the validation of Service-Quality determinants led to design of formal survey for qualitative and quantitative study. Both the qualitative and quantitative surveys were used simultaneously at all the business schools which were selected for data collection.

The stages of data collection are discussed in Figure 4.1; each stage will be discussed in detail.

4.5. Design of Service-Quality Determinants

The design of Service-Quality determinants (SQD) is derived from literature and discussed in chapter 3 in detail. After the finalization of Service-Quality determinants,

the validation of SQDs was required; this was conducted in a pilot study discussed in 4.4.1

4.5.1. Pilot Study

The main purpose of the pilot study was to validate the Service-Quality Determinants if they apply to the stakeholders within the business schools. For pilot study the business schools were selected on availability and access to the institutions. Following business schools were selected for the validation

- Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), Islamabad

- National University of Sciences & Technology - NUST Business School, Islamabad

- University of Management & Technology (UMT) – School of Business & Economics, Lahore

- Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore

- International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) – Graduate School of Management, Islamabad

A list of 13 Service-Quality determinants was used and all the stakeholders defined for the current research were requested to complete the surveys. Most of the surveys were circulated by visiting the business schools in person as it facilitated the process of collected the data. An online version of the questionnaire was also created to get the validation of the surveys from geographically diverse areas.

This validation helped researcher to partially answer research question 1 discussed in section 3.2.1 as the Service-Quality determinants were validated which were derived from literature (discussed in chapter 3).

4.5.2. Qualitative Study: Interviews

The qualitative study was the major data collection and perception assessment tool. The target group for this study was defined as all the people who have direct or

indirect stakes within Pakistani Business Schools. In the research context the stakeholders were categorized into two sub groups, that is, internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are Management of Business School, Teaching & Support Staff and MBA Students. The external stakeholders are Parents of MBA students, Employers of MBAs, Government & Funding bodies and Accreditation bodies. It was understood that these stakeholders would be most appropriate for providing the required answers as they had most stakes within the business school. These stakeholders have an understanding on Service-Quality process.

In case of Pakistani business schools, there is no formal ranking. However, business schools were selected based upon their popularity among students, employers and general word of mouth communication. This included both public sector and private sector business schools.

The personal and professional ties of the researcher helped gaining access to business schools. It consisted of MBA students, teaching & support staff and Deans of various universities. The researcher has prior experience of working for industry in Pakistan, so this helped gaining access to employers of MBAs as well.

Selecting business schools from a diversified education system and geographic locations, a systematic approach for selecting the appropriate business schools was designed. Pakistan is divided into eight administrative units and the top institution of each administrative unit along with the second best choice of the location was picked up. It is shown in the Table 4.2

No.	Administrative Unit	Geographical Status	Capital City	Status of Business School
1	Baluchistan	Province	Quetta	No good business school / no access available to a business school
2	Khyber Puktunkhawa (KPK)	Province	Peshawar	Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) – University of Peshawar - http://www.imsciences.edu.pk/imweb/index.php No good business school / no access available to business school
3	Punjab	Province	Lahore	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) - http://www.lums.edu.pk/ School of Business & Economics (SBE) – University of Management & Technology - http://sbe.umt.edu.pk/
4	Sindh	Province	Karachi	Institute of Business Administration (IBA) – University of Karachi - http://www.iba.edu.pk/ Institute of Business Management (IoBM) - http://www.iobm.edu.pk/
5	Islamabad Capital Territory	Federal Capital	Islamabad	NUST Business School (NBS) – National University of Science & Technology - http://nbs.nust.edu.pk/ Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science & Technology (SZABIST) - http://www.szabist-isb.edu.pk/
6	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)		Peshawar	No good business school / no access available to a business school
7	Azad Jammu Kashmir		Muzzafarabad	No good business school / no access available to a business school
8	Gilgit Baltistan		Gilgit	No good business school / no access available to a business school

Table 4.2: Administrative Units of Pakistan

A systematic approach of selecting the top business schools of the administrative area along with the next best alternative was finalized. In total data from 5 business schools have been collected. If the business schools were identified in a certain administrative unit and data could not be collected, the possible reasons were either the unit did not have any worth mentioning business school or the data could have not been collected due to external factors, such as natural disasters (epidemic, floods) or the political unrest within the town. The administrative units 6 -8 listed in table 4.2 did not have business schools.

A total of 27 interviews were conducted from six stakeholder groups listed in Table 4.3

Organization / Business School	No. of interviews	Stakeholder Group
NUST Business School, Islamabad	3	Assistant Professor, Dean, Director MBA Programme
IM Sciences, Peshawar	3	Assistant Professor, Dean, Director MBA Programme
LUMS, Lahore	3	Assistant Professor, Dean, Director MBA Programme
UMT – SBE, Lahore	3	Assistant Professor, Dean, Director MBA Programme
IBA, Karachi	2	Assistant Professor, Director MBA Programme
Employer	6	CEO - Ace Consulting, People Excellence Manager – Telenor (Karachi, Lahore), Manager Human Resource – Packages (Private) Limited, Manger Customer Services – Wateen Telecom, Manger Human Resource – Nestle (Private) Limited
Government & Funding Bodies	1	Higher Education Commission (HEC) – DG Quality Assurance Agency
Accreditation Bodies	1	Nation Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC) – Programme Manager
Parents of MBA Students	5	Parents of MBA students from each business school

Table 4.3: Details of Interview Respondents

In-depth interviews were conducted for the remaining six stakeholders. All the interviews usually lasted for 35-40 minutes. However, the length of the interviews varied according the understanding of the stakeholders about the Service-Quality concept within the business schools. Some of the interviewees responded to all the questions within 15 minutes and some of the interviews lasted for as long as 60 minutes. The structure of the interview session would generally start with a formal introduction of both the interviewer and interviewee along with the consent of the interviewees to record the interview. Although most of the interviews were structured according to the determinants of Service-Quality but the order of the questions and strategy of the interview varied according to the interviewee.

The results obtained from qualitative interviews (discussed in chapter 5) help the researcher to answer research question 1, that is, to study the perceptions of stakeholders using the Service-Quality determinants approach.

4.5.3. Quantitative Study: Questionnaires

After validating the determinants of Service-Quality, another questionnaire was designed. When designing the questionnaire, the questions were first rearranged into a more logical sequence, suitable for all the stakeholders on the business schools. Second, the questions were rephrased with help of questionnaire construction literature (Bryman (1989) and Scheaffer *et.al.* (1990), so that the questions were unambiguous, clear, and simple for the stakeholders.

Thirdly, the layout was put into a suitable format, to increase the credibility of the investigation and increase the response rate. The questionnaire was mainly targeted the MBA students of the business schools as it was hard to access and conduct detailed interview with MBA students. An online survey was created using 'Google Docs' as a tool. The survey was shared with teaching staff and the management of the business schools so that it can be floated on the student mailing lists of the business school. Due to the cultural difference as some of the respondents may not be comfortable using online tools and surveys, the researcher made hard copies of the surveys as well. These copies were then distributed among students in the classrooms with the permission of teaching staff and management of the business school.

The survey would take around 10 – 15 minutes to complete the answers depending upon if the students or the respondents in general had the understanding of business schools and the concept of Service-Quality.

The strategy for selecting business schools for quantitative data analysis was similar as of the qualitative data, that is, all the business schools which were selected for qualitative data were used for quantitative data as well. A total of 127 students were surveyed.

The results obtained from quantitative survey (discussed in chapter 6) help researcher to study the perception of the one of the stakeholder group, that is, students. Thus, it addresses research question 1 and research question 2.

The re-design of survey also, allowed studying the relative importance of stakeholders which then helps the researcher to address research question 2.

4.5.4. Redesign of Survey

The survey was redesigned after data collection in the phase 2, where most of the qualitative and quantitative data was collected. However, the questionnaire was not completely revamped but additional information was added. Questions such as, relative importance of stakeholders and relative importance of Service-Quality determinants were added in order to understand the relative importance of the Service-Quality determinants from stakeholders' perspective. The online version of the survey was updated and was circulated to respondents who completed the survey initially. Also, the survey was circulated to respondents who were interviewed in the initial phase.

Table 4.4 provides a summary of research methods or steps and these methods address the research questions.

Research Methods	Research Question	Where it is addressed in Thesis
Validation of Service-Quality Determinants	Partially answers research question 1	in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
Qualitative Data Collection	Answers Research question 1	in chapter 5 and Chapter 7
Quantitative Data Collection	Answers Research question 1	in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7
Re-design of Survey	Answers Research Question 2	in Chapter 6 and 7

Table 4.4: Details of Interview Respondents

4.6.   Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

The large amount of data presented in chapter 5 was evaluated through following steps:

Step 1: Transcribing all the interviews as they were audio recorded

Step 2: Correcting English language mistakes, as some of the respondents responded in English but had some grammatical and linguistic mistakes. Also, correcting English language does not necessarily mean but the respondents would have responded in an inappropriate format of English language. Also, it is important to understand that most of the educated Pakistanis speak in fluid mix of English and

Urdu language. Hence, it was important for the researcher to completely translate and interpret the interviews into English language.

Step 3: Writing down all the important themes of the interviews along with the important remarks made by respondents. The identification of important themes have been suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2000); however they further comment that the themes of the interview should be derived from transcript and the literature as well.

Step 4: All the themes were then further categorized according to six stakeholder groups who participated in the interview sessions.

Step 5: Six different documents which were created out of the broad themes of stakeholder groups were then compared according to the Service-Quality determinants identified in chapter 3. This was repeated 13 times to create a comparison of perceptions six stakeholder groups using the Service-Quality determinants. The activity was conducted 13 times as there are 13 Service-Quality determinants which are studied from 7 stakeholders' perspectives.

All the data collected qualitatively mainly through interviews and partially through notes making has been analysed using 'Narrative Analysis' technique .Narrative analysis is very effective technique where an in-depth personal experience and meaning in a certain organization is required. The current research is focussed on studying an in-depth exploration of perceptions of Service-Quality, thus narrative analysis becomes very useful. However, it may not be very powerful tool where a large set of data is required (Myers, 2009).

4.7. Methodology for Reconciling Qualitative and Quantitative Data

As discussed in section 4.4, the study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative strategies to study the perception of multiple stakeholder groups. The study is aimed at studying the perceptions of the importance of Service-Quality determinants from the stakeholder perspective. Chapter 7 will present the reconciliation of qualitative

and quantitative results by defining criteria for identifying the most important Service-Quality determinants.

4.8. Conclusions

Thus, concluding the chapter the first part of the chapter discusses the philosophical aspects of research design and the research paradigms. Hence, the study followed an interpretivist epistemological stance. The later part of the chapter discusses the strategies for data collection. The strategy for the research is mixed methods; however, it is dominated by the qualitative research method as six stakeholder groups out of seven were interviewed. The research methods discussed in the chapter were designed to address the research questions discussed in chapter 2. Research question 1 discusses the relative importance of Service-Quality determinants from the stakeholders' perceptive. The stakeholders responded using the questionnaire or during the detailed interview sessions. The research question 2 addresses the importance of Service-Quality determinants from the business schools' perspective which was evaluated in qualitative data analysis. Chapter 5 will present the results of qualitative data collection from six stakeholder groups while chapter 6 will discuss the quantitative results in detail collected from the student stakeholder group.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Data Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the analysis of the data collected qualitatively, that is, through interviews with representatives of the six stakeholder groups. The results from the seventh stakeholder group, that is, students are discussed in chapter 6. The interviews and the interpretations from the interviews will provide a richer set of insights into the Service-Quality concept, and its effects into business schools' context.

The interviews were conducted with the respondents who responded to an email in which preliminary information about the interview, along with the online survey (discussed in chapter 6) were presented. In total 27 interviews were conducted which ranged from 30 minutes up to 90 minutes depending upon the respondent interest and understanding about the topic.

For this research, interviews were audio recorded with the prior consent of the respondents for the researcher to focus more on the dynamics of the interview. If interviews are recorded, then the interviews need to be transcribed for meaningful information gathering. Each transcript varied between 6 – 10 hours of work depending upon the length of the interviews.

The following stakeholder groups were targeted for the data collection exercise:

- Management of Business Schools

- Teaching & Support Staff

- Accreditation Bodies

- Government & Funding Bodies

- Employers

- Parents of MBA students

- MBA Students

The business schools included in the data collection exercise were:

- NUST Business School (NBS), Islamabad

- IM Sciences, Peshawar

- Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore

- University of Management & Technology – School of Business & Economics (UMT-SBE), Lahore

- Institution of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi

The data collection exercise was conducted using an interview script structured around the Service-Quality determinants as presented in chapter 3 from the stakeholders' perspective. Thus, the findings follow the determinants structure from section 5.2 to section 5.14.

5.2. Curriculum and Programme Design

For this research context, curriculum design means the content of MBA programme, the type of courses offered during the degree. Programme design or the specialization programmes means the variation of the course offerings in terms of interest areas, such as, MBA in Human Resource Management, MBA in Marketing or MBA in Finance & Accounting.

5.2.1. Role of Curriculum Design and Service-Quality

Curriculum is considered as one of the key determinant of the Service-Quality process in the business school. The stakeholders have commented about curriculum design as being the key focal point for facilitating better Service-Quality. Some of the stakeholders have commented about the general importance of curriculum design for the business school.

An assistant professor from IM Sciences, Peshawar says;

"The curriculum streamlines the whole process of service delivery and education"

However, the general relevance of the curriculum to the Service-Quality process has been commented upon by stakeholders in various ways. It has been observed that within one business school the perception of the stakeholders about a determinant is very similar, such as, in case of NUST Business School, an Assistant Professor, the Director MBA Programme and the Dean of the business school commented in a similar way by saying that;

"The curriculum design has a lot of relevance in determining the Service-Quality"

All of them are referring to the fact that it is important to design the curriculum effectively, as it will reflect the Service-Quality of the business school. The emphasis is to design the curriculum according to industry needs, that is, fulfilling the requirements of the employers, to improve student employment prospects. The Director MBA programme comments that;

"The curriculum should be updated according to the needs and desires and demands of the market, because your students, ultimately they have to go into the market to serve there".

The strategies to design the curriculum of the business schools are formed to get most of the MBAs employed as it is the key determinant of Service-Quality.

"We have in-house curriculum meetings every two months…. which includes industry leaders, CEOs and chairmen."

The Dean of UMT – SBE, Lahore provides another perspective to Service-Quality, that is, curriculum design will provide a competitive advantage over other business school from the Service-Quality view point. The Dean believes that;

"Curriculum is a core service: we got to be distinguished, we got to be competitive, we got to be superior, and we got to be ahead of others in all direction".

The Dean of UMT is arguing that curriculum design is the key to Service-Quality and to have better services; the business schools need to design a curriculum which may act as a unique selling point for the school. The comment is based upon the fact that

there are 28 (as listed on HEC website)[2] universities and business schools in Lahore and apparently the schools are competing with each other for the number of students. To be able to attract the best students, the business schools are trying to provide better academic and administrative services.

Not only have the trends in perceptions varied from one business school to another, but also depending upon the geographical location of the business school. The leading business schools of the country are aiming at international Service-Quality standards, whilst the business schools which are lagging behind the top schools have more local conceptualization for Service-Quality concepts. The concept of Service-Quality is different for business schools where industry is developed and mature, as compared to the cities where industry still needs to develop. For example, the Dean of IM sciences says;

"The curriculum of IBA [a business school based in Karachi] *would be slightly different from the curriculum that we have because Karachi has a corporate culture; Peshawar unfortunately still doesn't have that culture, it's developing."*

The business school IM Sciences, Peshawar has good reputation but the perspective and perceptions vary as the industry still needs to mature in the city. As discussed earlier that the business schools in Pakistan design curriculum from the employers' perspective for better Service-Quality. The Director MBA programme at IM Sciences, Peshawar says that;

"You have to look first at what is being required by the employer here and how should I start the curriculum and how to meet the requirements of the market".

Although business schools in other cities are focussing on developing curriculum from the employers' perspective, the school in Peshawar cannot deviate much from what the regulatory authority (HEC) has suggested as there are hardly any formal employers within the Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa (KPK) [The Northern Western region].

Thus, all six stakeholders groups within the business schools, that is, teaching & support staff, and the management of the business schools have agreed that it is

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[2] http://www.hec.gov.pk/OurInstitutes/Pages/Default.aspx

important to have a curriculum design in line with the industry needs. However, the Director MBA programme at IBA which is in Karachi believes that it is the strategy of the business school which should be linked with Service-Quality. Accordingly if the strategy is linked, then the curriculum will reflect Service-Quality along with all other activities of the business school.

"Curriculum design depends upon the strategy of the business school if they want to produce entrepreneurs, strategists, marketers, financial analysts or journalists. All the activities in the business school are then routed accordingly."

The employers have a slightly different perspective on the curriculum design. From the employers' perspective the curriculum design may not be a very important determinant of Service-Quality. Importance is given to how the content is delivered to an MBA student, is considered as a determinant of Service-Quality. The academics believe that the curriculum should be designed according to employers' needs but the employers' perspective is that academicians cannot design the curriculum according to industry needs. For example the CEO of a company comments;

"*None of them seems to be very happy with what they are getting from the business schools*".

He is referring to the MDs, senior management and Chief Executive officers viewpoint on what the business schools are delivering to industry. The CEO further commented the reason for less efficient curriculum is the lack of exposure of academicians to the industry;

"And the issue is the people who are responsible for developing the curriculum – unfortunately they are coming from the background where they were never exposed to the industry and they are trying to either fulfil the requirements of the regulator , for example HEC – Higher Education Commission is the regulator in Pakistan in terms of higher education".

So, from the employers' perspective the curriculum is less important determinant of Service-Quality but the teaching approach or the lecturer's profile is more important

determinant of Service-Quality. The Manager of Customer Services, at Wateen Telecom comments that;

"I think it's the lack of good quality teacher that does not allow business schools to deliver improved Service-Quality."

There is an agreement amongst the majority of the stakeholders that if the business schools design the curriculum content according to local industry, that is, designing the curriculum of business school according to Pakistani employers. One of the employers rightly pointed out that;

"Replicating the curriculum of west may not guarantee Service-Quality"

Here the employer is referring that most of the Pakistani business schools use case studies designed by UK based or USA based business schools which are most suited according to the commercial needs of the west. Using the same case studies or the curriculum design would not add as much as value for Pakistani students, and thus would not help deliver higher Service-Quality.

Further supporting the argument of the employer, the Dean of UMT-SBE, Lahore states that;

"The localization of the content is very important – Competitive and comparative curriculum is part of the service."

A slightly different perspective on the curriculum design is given by two organizations, that is, HEC and NBEAC. The business school's accreditation organization is called National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC) and Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the parent organization of NBEAC. Both of the organizations work collaboratively to monitor the performance and provide standards of quality to the universities and the business schools. The main job of HEC organizations is not to provide the competitive curriculum but to maintain the equivalency of the curriculum all over Pakistan. HEC designs the basic requirement of the curriculum for all subject areas and for the universities. However, NBEAC works actively with business schools to improve the curriculum content and thus help business schools

deliver better Service-Quality. All the activity is being done under the umbrella of HEC. The Programme Manager of NBEAC states that;

"Business Schools are provided with surveys having open ended questions as part of the self-assessment activities. The summaries and reviews help NBEAC develop curriculum of the business schools."

The Programme Manager is using the term 'Developing Curriculum', he is referring to the improvement of curriculum content along with the input of members of HEC, and industry.

5.2.2. Role of Programme Design and Service-Quality

The stakeholders had a different view point on the programme design. Out of 27 stakeholders, 18 commented on the role of programme design in determining the level of Service-Quality. Apart from one stakeholder all other 17 stakeholders believe that offering multiple specialization programmes does not determine Service-Quality. An Assistant Professor at LUMS, Lahore and the Dean of IM Sciences, Peshawar have the similar opinions that offering multiple specialization programmes, such as, MBA Human Resource Management, MBA Marketing, MBA IT, or MBA finance is only possible if the business school has the capacity to deliver. Here the capacity is evaluated mainly in terms of quality and availability of teaching staff. The business schools should only be adding another specialization if there is clear need in the market, and that can be determined through an analysis. For example, the business School at International Islamic University, Islamabad started an MBA in Information Technology when the industry for IT was very flourishing in late 1990s and early 2000s. Quoting the Dean IM Sciences, Peshawar;

"Offering multiple specialization programmes may not be linked to better Service-Quality but the capacity of the business school…."

Contrary to that, although the stakeholders believe that programme design or offering multiple specialization programmes may not be linked to Service-Quality but having no specializations may be perceived poorly from the students' perspective. Thus, the students may not be able to choose courses or modules from a wide

selection. This argument is supported by the Director MBA programme at NUST Business School, Islamabad and the Dean of LUMS, Lahore argues for the same point, that is;

"… May not be treated as better Service-Quality but it would limit the student choice of picking up from a wide variety of courses."

The Dean of UMT, Lahore is the only stakeholder who makes a strong comment about the multiple specializations as a key determinant of Service-Quality. He states that;

"They [employers] *would be hesitant to offer jobs to those who are just generalists* ".

He further adds that;

"..So, if you look from views of Service-Quality, I feel this is one service, that the business schools should be providing, that is, more choices in specialization in emerging areas…"

If the employers' perspective on the role of specializations are examined, not only do they not find a relationship between the two, but according to their perceptions the business schools are providing a false representation of the Service-Quality by marketing the specialization programmes. The People Excellence Manager from Telenor (Norwegian based Telecom company operating in Pakistan) states that;

"... it looks flashy for the business schools that they have multiple specializations but in reality they are cutting down the options and limiting student skills. No matter what the student specialization is, they need to know all the business process areas".

By commenting on the specializations, the Manager is arguing that students should be generalists and should be offered specializations because the industry requires people who are well aware of all the business areas. Another comment by Manager Customer Services from Wateen Telecom says that;

"By having 2 -3 courses in a degree, the programme does not qualify as delivering Service-Quality."

The manager is referring to the norm in Pakistani business schools, that is, the all the students have similar modules or courses to study but in the last semester they are allowed to choose 2 – 3 different modules from a certain specialization area, such as, Human Resource Management, Finance or marketing. He argues that if the student has selected few courses on a particular business area, this will not make them specialist of that business area.

The two regulatory and accreditation organizations work together collaboratively look at each determinant from the uniformity purpose. According to HEC, they are not formally involved in the design of programmes and their specializations but for effective service delivery, HEC is involved in streamlining the process of MBA degree programme.

"Our job is to decide: what is the length of the MBA programme depending upon the student [previous] *academic background? We are offering 1 year MBA, 2 year MBA and 2.5 year MBA…So we define the road map for institutions and the students."*

The Director General of Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) HEC is referring to three different streams of undergraduate programmes offered in Pakistan, that is, BA/B.Com (2 years), BBA (3 years), and BBA (4 years). So, HEC is helping business schools in collaboration with NBEAC to decide the eligibility criteria for the students who want to pursue an MBA degree. For example, if a student has done BA/B.Com (2 years), they will then do an MBA for 2.5 years. That means they are studying a greater number of credit hours as compared to a student who has previously done BBA for 3 years who will then do a 2 year MBA. According to DG QAA – HEC this uniformity of programmes in the business school is helping the business schools to develop better Service-Quality. So, HEC is bringing a consistency to MBA programmes by keeping a check on the input to the business schools.

The Programme Manager at NBEAC explains the process of programme specializations by saying that the business schools have to go through a rigorous assessment exercise where they provide information about their programme and curriculum content. This assessment activity is still in its preliminary phases but NBAEC plans to accredit individual specialization programme as opposed to the complete degree programme. For example, a business school may have an

accredited MBA in Human Resource Management in future but the MBA in finance may not be accredited with NBEAC. For each programme the business schools have to pay certain fee for accreditation along with the assessment of curriculum and its relevance to the business schools and employers.

So, concluding the curriculum determinant, it is key to the business schools but keeping Pakistan business schools' context, the curriculum needs to be designed according to global standards yet should have a lot of local concepts and case studies. The curriculum is the main concern for academics, and they understand the worth of having effective curriculum design for better Service-Quality. The curriculum should be designed more with the input given by the employers. The specializations are apparently not a big need of Pakistani industry as the market does not have the capacity to absorb so many MBAs with various specializations. Neither the business schools nor the industry is mature enough to take specialists MBAs on board. The specializations can provide variety but not the Service-Quality.

5.3. Personnel Quality

In the current research context, the personnel quality is described in context of administration and support staff. This determinant explores the follow-up and response time of staff, and evaluates if the staff is aware of the policies and procedures.

Most of the stakeholders have not commented about the personnel quality or about their skills and abilities to run a business school. One reason for not being able to comment on the personnel quality is few stakeholders realize the importance of administration and support staff within institutions, and in particular business schools. For example, the employer's stakeholder group has generally not commented on the personnel quality as they focus mainly on the graduating students, the end product of the Service-Quality process. However, other stakeholders within the business school, such as the teaching and support staff and the managers have stated the importance of personnel quality.

An Assistant Professor from NUST Business School, Islamabad commented on the importance of personnel quality from a Service-Quality perspective;

"…It is a package deal which a student should get. If the business school does not have good support staff – perhaps it means that the students will not be satisfied with whatever they are getting as part of the package"

The Assistant Professor refers Service-Quality as a package deal which consists of all elements of the business school. So, he believes that if the business schools do not provide good quality admin and support staff, this means that there are some missing elements from the Service-Quality perspective.

The Dean of IM Sciences, Peshawar argues that the personnel quality strongly influences the performance of business schools. He commented that personnel quality is; *"CRUCIAL! Crucial, very crucial…"*

The comment is reflecting the importance of the personnel quality from the management perspective. The Dean views it as an extremely important determinant of the Service-Quality process. The Director MBA Programme of UMT, Lahore also views the importance and influence of personnel quality as part of value chain. He emphasizes that personnel quality are not given a lot of importance in Pakistan but they add a lot of indirect value to the Service-Quality process;

"This area is never considered primary in any university…the support staff add immense value (indirect) to the value chain of the business school."

Interestingly, the Dean of the same institution, that is, UMT Lahore contradicts the importance of support staff and any involvement in the Service-Quality process, when he stated;

"*I would not include them in the list. Number one is the faculty*"

Summarizing the personnel quality as a determinant of Service-Quality, it is not given as much importance as it may have been given to this determinant of Service-Quality. Consequently, the management and the academics within the business school cannot relate the influence of personnel quality on the Service-Quality of the business school. Also, the other stakeholder groups, that is, employers, the government & funding bodies and the accreditation bodies consider the personnel quality as a private matter of the business schools.

5.4. Physical Infrastructure

For our research context physical infrastructure not only includes the building and facilities within the institution, but also the labs and access to information as well. However, most of the interviewees have referred physical infrastructure mainly in terms of the building of the business school.

Generally the academics have similar thoughts about a certain Service-Quality determinant and particularly the opinion of the different stakeholders within a business school is very overlapping. The main reason behind the similar thoughts is that all the stakeholders share the same vision of the business school. If we look at NUST Business School, the Director MBA Programme, an Assistant Professor and the Dean all referred the business school's physical infrastructure as "*Value for Money*", claim to have the biggest and best infrastructure in town providing them "*Competitive and Comparative Advantage*".

The Dean of IM Sciences, Peshawar supports the importance of physical infrastructure by saying;

"The physical infrastructure is the second most important dimension of Service-Quality in a business school after the teaching staff. It adds to the prestige of the institution".

The Dean has been able to argue on the importance of the business school infrastructure because he spent two years in building the '*most efficient infrastructure*' in the most under developed region of Pakistan where there was no concept of formal business education. Further supporting the argument Dean of LUMS, Lahore states that;

"Infrastructure may not necessarily determine quality but then if an institution starts bringing quality in facilities and services, then quality becomes a norm of the institution".

The Dean of UMT explains a personal experience of being part of a business school where the infrastructure has been updated and redesigned over the time. He emphasizes on having the importance of good infrastructure by saying;

"Lack of good Physical infrastructure represents poor Service-Quality but if good infrastructure is in place, it does not add much of the value. However, the lack of it will significantly distort the perception of Service-Quality".

The Dean of UMT is referring to the fact that if the business school does not have a good physical infrastructure, it distorts the image of the institution but if the business school has a good infrastructure in place, it may not be treated as adding to Service-Quality. The concept may be referred as what Hertzberg (1968) refers as satisfiers and dis-satisfiers. The same concept can be related here, the presence of some Service-Quality determinants such as, the physical infrastructure, it may not be considered as a Service-Quality element but the absence of good infrastructure will definitely reflect poor services for the business schools.

The research context is based on stakeholders' perceptions about Service-Quality and perceptions do change over a period of time. An Assistant Professor from IM Sciences in discussing the same phenomenon noted that when the MBA students join the business schools; they are not sensitive to business school facilities and infrastructure. But as they learn, their perceptions about Service-Quality change and they become aware of Service-Quality standards and start providing the feedback about the business school infrastructure. He went onto comment;

"Students start expecting and complaining about the infrastructure and facilities in the later years of their degree."

The Dean of LUMS, Lahore has given a very useful insight to the importance and relevance of physical infrastructure to Service-Quality;

"I define physical infrastructure in two ways, that is, elements critical to learning process and other supporting elements which can be compromised as well...."

The above comment is identifying the need to have good physical infrastructure which facilitates the learning process such as, information technology, class rooms which can accommodate good number of students. But the compromise able elements are those which are 'good-to-have' but the institution can still deliver Service-Quality without those elements, such as, not having a very flashy building.

Some of the stakeholders have commented on the location of the infrastructure as well. The location of physical infrastructure plays an important in terms of accessibility for the employers. Dean of UMT, Lahore states that;

"The location of the physical infrastructure and building adds to the brand value of the institution. It the premium value! ".

The above comment suggests that some of the institutions are based in such geographical locations which are not easy to access while business schools such LUMS (Lahore) is based in a location where it is very easy for employers and students to gain access. In his perception the physical infrastructure is a determinant of overall Service-Quality.

The Dean of NUST Business School, Islamabad contradicts about the accessibility to the institution for MBA students;

"Students should travel from all parts of the world. It is not the other way round."
"Therefore, for Service-Quality - if you establish a quality institution, students from all part of Pakistan will come there. It is not possible that we establish quality education in each and every city of Pakistan as students travel to Harvard instead of Harvard reaching to all the students".

According to Dean of NUST, the institutions should be able to deliver such Service-Quality which attracts student from all parts of the world instead of providing the access to students in all the regions.

The employers' perspective about the role of physical infrastructure in determining is very different from the academics. Generally the employers have not commented about the physical infrastructure and the ones who have commented about the physical infrastructure are very critical of Pakistani business school and academia in general. The CEO of one of the organization comments on the requirements of HEC from the higher education institutions in general. He used mannerism to emphasize his sarcastic intent. He says;

"They are more interested in looking at the physical side of it but not coming up with other standards"

The CEO argued that the Higher Education Commission is looking at very objective / superficial standards which may not necessarily reflect Service-Quality for the business schools. The public sector institutions are partially funded by the government or HEC, so they have big infrastructures as compared to the private sector institutions. However, one of the employers rightly pointed out that;

"They have also started running after fulfilling the requirements of HEC at the cost of 'real' education."

The employer is referring to private sector institutions which fulfil the requirements of HEC for their survival but are not focussing on real elements of Service-Quality. The Manager Customer Services from Wateen Telecom supports the same argument that business schools do not get recognition just because they have better facilities and infrastructure, but through the quality of services they deliver in form of education;

"I don't think buildings or the technology really are differentiators."

The regulatory organizations, that is, HEC, perceive physical infrastructure as key to the delivery of Service-Quality. The DG QAA – HEC comments that;

"We do not let an institution launch a certain degree programme if they do not have the certain pre-requisites defined by HEC".

So, according to HEC the physical infrastructure is yet fulfilling another criteria and a pre-requisite to Service-Quality.

To conclude the physical infrastructure and its role in determining Service-Quality, it is good to have physical infrastructure but this may not necessarily reflect good services within the business school. The business schools need to prioritize where to invest the money in terms of its infrastructure and facilities especially if it is a private sector institution. The employers generally do not perceive good infrastructure adding any value to the business school but they are more concerned of the 'end product' of the institution, that is, the MBA graduates.

5.5. Corporate Image

Branding of an institution means a promise of consistency of the services delivered. For our research context it will be referred as something which gives business school recognition in terms of delivering better services and producing quality MBA graduates. This Service-Quality determinant will discuss two items, that is, the brand name of the business school and international exchange programmes.

5.5.1. Brand Name and Service-Quality

All the stakeholders from the business schools have unanimously agreed that brand name of the business school determines Service-Quality. It is considered as the perceived value of the product. There was a great deal of support on the importance of brand name amongst academics as reflected in the following quotes;

"*Brands are a major rule of what they have become today*" [Assistant Professor, NUST Business School]

"*Brand name is extremely important for having a mark and presence*" [Assistant Professor at IM Sciences]

"*In Pakistan, people perceive a name and think that quality is associated with the name*" [Director MBA programme IM Sciences]

The Director MBA programme is referring to the Pakistani culture of the brand names and how they associate the quality aspect to the brand name. According to him, if the business school wants to have a good perception of the Service-Quality, the business school needs to create a strong brand name.

Another perspective to brand name is given by the Assistant Professor at NUST Business School. He views brand name as a strong determinant of Service-Quality. The brand name needs consistency else the brand name loses its value so as the perception of quality is lost as well.

"*So keeping the quality up to the mark is actually a key to keeping the brand*"

However, in general the stakeholders have perceived that Service-Quality influence the brand name which is very evident in the comments of stakeholders in the following lines.

The Director Administration, (LUMS) defines the brand in the business schools context. According to him the business schools can create a strong perception of Service-Quality by working on their brand, that is, the students, as reflected in the following quote;

"…but I think brand of the business school is determined by its product and our product is our students"

An Assistant Professor, UMT, Lahore presents a perspective which reflects the dynamics of Pakistani society where parents decide the majority of things for their children including which institution to choose for their higher education. So, according to the Assistant Professor, the real customers for the business schools are the parents where they need to create a strong perception of Service-Quality. The parents generally do not have enough understanding of other determinants of the Service-Quality but the reputation of the business school needs consideration. The reputation of the business school with regards to good Service-Quality is thus understood via the brand name from the parents' perspective because;

"Parents are the decision makers of the students"

The employers have a complete different perspective about brand name, they see brand name as a myth. Apparently all the employers except one who commented about the brand name are indifferent to the brand names of the business schools. To them brand name is a falsification of the Service-Quality concept. Employers are more concerned about the graduating students as opposed to the general brand name of the business schools.

One of the People Excellence Manager from Telenor, Karachi comments in Urdu

"*It does not matter...*" ... کے آپ کے گھر کے اوپر کون سی ڈگری پڑی ہے اور اس کے اوپر کون سا ٹھپہ لگا ہوا ہے"

[3](Closest Meaning: It does not matter which degree you have on top floor of your house and which stamp the degree has). The Manager is arguing about the brand name which according to him is not a determinant of Service-Quality. He further adds that when hiring graduates from different business schools, they do not give any preference to a graduate who is coming from a very well reputed institution;

"*What matters is! What is that what you bring on the table when you are on board?*"

Another argument from the People Excellence Manager, Lahore, he views brand name of the business school as reflecting false perception of Service-Quality. He has quoted the example of top business school in Lahore, that is, LUMS where the students have not been able to fit into the working environment of the organization. The main reason for such behaviour is the amount of prestige of the business, the graduates perceive to carry with them.

"*We banned LUMS graduates in our organization for one year as they could not relate themselves within the work environment of Telenor*"

However, one of the CEOs who were very supportive of the brand names and strongly believes that brand names are reflection of Service-Quality. He quotes the same top business school in Lahore, that is, LUMS as having strong brand name and considers them to be delivering excellent Service-Quality. He gives reason to be saying that is the premium value of the brand which makes a student pay four times of the tuition fee as compared to any other private or public sector business school;

"* So, there is a BIG gap in a university, where a student is paying 50,000 PKR [400GBP] per semester as compared to a student of LUMS who pays 200,000 PKR [1800 GBP] per semester*"

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[3] The interviewee started responding in English and then in the middle of the sentence, started speaking in Urdu

The Programme Manager at NBEAC views branding of the institution as part of the strategy and yet again he treats the graduating students at the brand of the business school. According to him once the business school develops quality based practices, then the brand name should be created. Thus, it can be concluded from his comments that brand name is a determinant of Service-Quality.

5.5.2. International Exchange Programmes and Service-Quality

Only a few of the stakeholders were able to comment on international exchange programmes. International exchange programmes in the current research context means of MBA student from Pakistan go for cultural and academic exchange for a term. Also, the students from other countries' business schools come and join Pakistani business schools. An Assistant Professor from IM Sciences, Peshawar commented;

"I think the differentiation will come in terms of who has been well established"

The interviewee is referring to the fact that international exchange programmes should only be introduced within the business schools only when the business schools are well established in terms of their other process areas. In a similar vein, the Dean of IM Sciences supports the importance of international exchange programmes by saying;

"*International exchange programmes determine the yardstick for measuring the overall Service-Quality of an institution*". *Branding of the business schools is recognized by international exchange programmes when then helps business schools to secure funding".*

Here the comment indicates that the business schools' Service-Quality is reflected through the effectiveness of the international programmes. Also, the branding of the business school, the international exchange programmes and Service-Quality are all interlinked.

Concluding the brand name determinant, the academics see the brand name as a determinant of Service-Quality while the brand name of the institution is not very important from the employers' perspective. The employers cannot see the brand

name of the business school reflecting the overall Service-Quality of the institution. However, one thing needs to be understood that most of the stakeholders assumed that a good brand name adds to better Service-Quality. However the question addressed in the research was if brand name is a measure of Service-Quality.

5.6. Assessment & Grading

For this research context, assessment and grading means how students are evaluated during the semester on their assignments, projects and exams. It means if the management and the teaching staff have any criteria for assessment and grading the students. In Pakistan two grading criteria are used, that is, absolute grading system and relative grading system. There are varying opinions whether assessment & grading influences the Service-Quality process, or not. On contrary to that the stakeholders within the business school question the purpose of assessment & grading in an education environment. The Director MBA Programme at IBA, Karachi says

"The purpose of education is not to assess people in terms of grades or numbers, so there has to be a balance and it does not necessarily reflect Service-Quality".

The above comment means that the Director of MBA programme does not find the relevance of the assessment & grading in a higher education institution as it cannot determine the individual's learning. But if the system is in place then the focus should not be on extensive exams, quizzes and assignments which will be graded later on to check student performance which makes it very tough for the student. So, an implication is made here that the tough assessment & grading criteria are not linked with Service-Quality or it does not influence Service-Quality.

Criticizing the assessment & grading criteria, an Assistant Professor at NUST Business School, Islamabad argues that grades are not a good way of assessing any students but if the students are not assessed on tougher criteria then the students may not work harder for it. He does not support the grading system but says

"How can you judge someone's knowledge in a matter of an hour or 10 minutes quiz or whatever such tools we have!!? But then this is only game in town. So everyone has to play that game".

However, the Assistant Professor presents the student and employer perspective on grading criteria by saying;

"Students in the end respect that.... and employers especially say that to us all the time that your student with a GPA of 2.5/4, we rate him at par with somebody else coming from some other school with a GPA of 3.5/4. That tells you that there is a clear linkage between service and tougher grading system".

The above comment implies that although it is not very appropriate to evaluate and the performance of students on grades but then if they are assessed the criteria of student grading and assessment should be tough. The tougher assessment & grading criteria represents better Service-Quality. An Assistant Professor at LUMS, Lahore relates the tougher assessment & grading criteria with better student quality which is eventually part of the overall Service-Quality of the business school. He says;

"It gives them (motivation) drive and motivation to excel."

While the Dean of the same institution LUMS, Lahore views the assessment & grading as the '*Differentiating criteria*' oh how well they have adopted and the simulated the content being taught to them. He further adds;

"You will not be able to differentiate between mules and donkeys…!"

He is supporting the same argument that a tough grading criterion reflects Service-Quality by having good end product, that is, the graduating students. By contrast the Director of MBA Programme at NUST Business School believes that a business school does not need to have tougher criteria for improved Service-Quality. He adds;

"Instead of having tougher grading & assessment criteria during the degree, put strictest quality checks at the entrance of raw material according to TQM principles will make a stronger impact".

The Director of MBA programme is referring to the business school policy of how they choose the best students from all over Pakistan. The applications for MBA are scrutinized very carefully and out of thousands of applicants, they select only a batch of 40 – 50 students every year. Thus, the Service-Quality in the given context is designing the appropriate criteria for selecting the potential MBAs. The CEO of Ace Consulting supports the same argument that all the top business schools in the country have very tough criteria for inducting potential MBAs.

Interestingly one of the Assistant Professor at IM Sciences, Peshawar provides the student perspective of tougher assessment & grading criteria while the management of the business school interviews potential MBAs. The most common question asked to them is why they want to join IM Sciences, Peshawar. 90 % of the students answer during the interviews in Urdu

مشکل ہے تو میں اسی لئے آنا چاہتا ہوں

(The system of education is tough here, so I want join the institution). This comment implies that student perceive tough grading and assessment criteria as a determinant of Service-Quality. By contrast another Assistant Professor completely denies that tough assessment & grading criteria is a determinant of Service-Quality. He defines quality as 'conformance to standards' and thus, he finds no relationship or influence between tough grading & assessment criteria and Service-Quality. He says;

"No, tougher assessment & grading criteria has nothing to do with the quality"

The employers generally are not very concerned about the assessment & grading criteria, however, two out of five employers commented;

"*There is no standardization in the Universities*"

The employer here is arguing that the universities in general and business schools in particular need to create a uniform assessment & grading criteria which can possibly be done with the help of HEC. Although the grading criteria is not very important for

the employers but the uniformity of the grading criteria will help the employers rank the students accordingly.

The Manager Customer Services at Wateen Telecom comments;

"*Assessment & grading are very subjective topics; it cannot be related to Service-Quality*"

However, the role of regulatory body such as NBEAC in case of Pakistan is to define the minimum standards in collaboration with HEC. The Programme Manager of NBEAC says that;

"*NBEAC may not be able to bring quality of services in the business schools but can introduce in uniformity of the system as in case of grading & assessment criteria*".

So, the Manager NBEAC views consistency of assessments and grading to be more important as opposed to tougher grading criteria of the business school. One of the MBA students' parents commented;

"*I want my son to go to an institution which gives them tough time*"

So, the perception of the parents is that if the business schools challenge the abilities of their children, involve them in rigorous assessments for learning, and keep them busy for the whole day, the business school is good. They believe that their children will learn academically and professionally which in their perception is a determinant of Service-Quality.

Concluding the assessment & grading criteria as a determinant of Service-Quality; the stakeholders within the business school argue not to evaluate students' abilities through assessment & grading. But, they further add since it is only way to express and differentiate with the education set up, the assessment & grading criteria should be tough to represent the overall Service-Quality within the business school. From the employers' perspective it is a matter of uniformity and standardization while the government & funding bodies and the accreditation bodies help business school determine the consistency in the evaluation criteria.

5.7. Faculty Profile

The term faculty profile in the research context means the teaching staff, that is, the lecturers and the Assistant Professors.

5.7.1. Skills, Qualification and Knowledge of Teaching Staff and Service-Quality

In Pakistani business schools teaching staff perceived to determine the overall performance of the business school. All the stakeholder groups have similar opinion regarding the importance of teaching staff and their role in determining the Service-Quality. The Dean of UMT, Lahore describes the importance of teaching staff by making the following comments;

"Service Quality defined in one word is good teaching faculty. You cannot substitute teaching staff for any other stakeholder".

Further supporting the argument, Dean of LUMS says;

"Teaching Faculty determines everything within business school from designing the process to owning the process".

The profile of the teaching staff is viewed as one of the most important determinant of Service-Quality. The Director MBA Programme at UMT-Lahore comments that;

"The competency, qualification and skills of teaching staff are rated 'the most for the perception of good Service-Quality in a business school. The emotional intelligence of the teaching staff plays a very important in students' learning".

However, the Director MBA Programme at IBA, Karachi argues that not only the profile of the teaching staff is the most important determinant but retaining and attracting the most suitable teaching staff is still a challenge in Pakistan due to the unstable economic and political conditions of the country. He commented;

"Faculty is the most important part of any business school, so as the most important challenge for business school to have good quality faculty…. not many people don't want to come back to Pakistan".

The Higher Education Commission has made the requirement for a university teacher to be a PhD and thus should be involved in extensive research as well. An Assistant Professor at IM Sciences, Peshawar identifies a global issue within the business schools which is becoming a barrier for improved teaching services which is contradictory of what the stakeholders said earlier about the academic profile of the teaching staff;

"The business schools have started focusing more of teaching staff research abilities and more and more promotions are given based on their research experience. Thus, the teaching activities are side lined in the business schools".

So, the Assistant Professor as a teacher considers quality teaching as a key determinant of Service-Quality which according to him is missing from all the business schools with in Pakistan due to new requirements of HEC.

The CEO of Ace Consulting, Lahore commented that the teaching staff are the;

"*Brand of the business school*", and there is a "*direct relationship between Service-Quality and teaching staff quality*".

The Government & funding body, that is, the Higher Education Commission links the academic qualification of the teaching staff to Service-Quality. According to HEC, the PhD degree of a teaching staff is a determinant of Service-Quality. The DG QAA – HEC says;

"*We send our faculty abroad to pursue PhD as part of the 'Faculty Development Programme' (FDP) to different parts of the world.*"

5.7.2. Lecturer Experience in Industry and Service-Quality

Reiterating the fact that, all stakeholder groups identify and realize the importance of teaching staff, but all of them are very apprehensive about the academic and professional credentials of the teaching staff. Most of the stakeholders who commented about the teaching staff credentials argue that the teaching staff should have excellent academic credential along with industry experience. The Dean of NUST Business School appropriately comments by saying;

"along with strong academic background, it is very important to have strong background of working in industry to have a sound understanding of the local businesses".

An Assistant Professor from the same institution, that is, NUST Business School, Islamabad supports the same argument by saying;

"We 'judge' a person based on the presentation and his qualification. We would like people from 'Corporate Experience'. We don't want fresh graduates coming in and start to teach".

Not only the Assistant Professor is emphasizing the importance of industry experience for the teaching staff as a key determinant of Service-Quality but also, he is criticising a practise adopted by many higher education institutions in Pakistan. The students graduate from the university or a particular school and without any prior teaching and industry experience, those students are hired as lectures in the institution. He implies this practise result in poor quality of education within the institutions.

The Director MBA Programme at IM Sciences is very apprehensive of the PhD and according to him, the business schools do not need to have a PhD as business education is a 'different' learning experience. He commented that;

"You don't have to be a PhD to teach business students, you should know what sort of business exists in your country and how to exploit business opportunities".

He further adds;

"You don't need academic discussions in business education but the practitioner based approaches, assumptions and ideas for the market challenges".

Also, the CEO of Ace Consulting supports the same argument by criticising the performance of the PhDs within the business schools. He has been involved in teaching for 15 years as a part-time lecturer and from his personal experience he states;

"The best teachers DECLARED from the student perspective have NEVER been a full-time faculty member having a PhD."

However, the employers discard the idea of having PhD teaching staff within the business schools as they believe PhD is counterproductive for a business school.

Summarizing the faculty profile determinant, in Pakistani business schools context, the teaching staff profile is given the most important. It is considered as one of the key determinant of Service-Quality. All the stakeholders find a direct relationship between Service-Quality and the teaching staff profile. However, the stakeholders generally assume that not only the academic credentials but the professional background of the teaching staff creates a stronger impact for the overall Service-Quality of the business school. The regulatory body views the teaching staff profile only in terms of their academic and research capabilities. This leads to ignoring the key area of higher education institutions, that is, quality of teaching which comes with good quality teaching staff.

5.8. Teaching Methods

In the case of Pakistani business schools lecture based teaching methods are used. This determinant focuses on finding the most appropriate teaching method for the school which can enhance Service-Quality. The teaching methods can act as a unique selling point for the business schools. Business schools tend to create a huge variation in terms of the final product produced and delivered, that is, the MBA graduates.

The Dean of IM Sciences commented on the teaching methods and its relationship to the Service-Quality

"Teaching methods makes a strong impact on the final product of services, that is, the graduate but that has to be in line with the current education system of Pakistan. A culture of case study method needs to be created."

He is referring to cultural issues in Pakistani education system, change is not welcomed easily. So, he comments that if the business school wants to adopt a teaching methodology or a method, the business school need to introduce right at

the beginning of the institution. It becomes challenging for the management of the business school to introduce changes in the later phases of the degree programmes.

The Dean of LUMS strongly supported the same argument when he noted that;

"The teaching methodology converts the raw material (the student) to final product (the graduate)"

However, the Director MBA Programme at IBA views the teaching methodology as a reflection of the business schools' strategy. The strategy is then viewed as an indirect determinant of Service-Quality. He comments

"The final graduate is the outcome of teaching methodologies. At IBA functional managers are intended to produce and they are treated like one".

Another stakeholder, that is, an Assistant Professor at UMT emphasized the use of the most appropriate methodologies for teaching but did not believe in the application of a particular teaching method across all the courses or the modules. He views that is the job of the teaching staff to select the most appropriate methods for teaching instead of any standardized method of teaching. He said;

"*Different teaching methods and methodologies make a wide difference between the Service-Quality of the institution but not all the courses may require similar teaching methods".*

The employers have the same argument with respect to the teaching methods. They believe it is teaching methods and approaches that bring competitive edge to the business schools. The CEO of Ace Consulting Commented that;

"The curriculum quality is not the issue of the business schools but the quality of teaching and teaching staff which creates a difference".

The Government & Funding body and the accreditation body do not play a role in determining the teaching methods of the business schools. Also, the parents of MBA student do not have any understanding of various teaching methods used within the business schools.

One of the parents of MBA student commented in Urdu

<div dir="rtl">

"بیٹا مجھے نہیں معلوم یہ *Case study* کیا ہوتی ہے یا *Methodology teaching* کیا ہوتی ہے"

</div>

(My Dear! I do not understand what a case study is or what is a teaching methodology). Apparently the parents of MBA students do not understand the details of academic learning within the business schools.

Summarizing the importance of the teaching methods is evident from the comments of all the stakeholders that it is a key determinant of Service-Quality. A variation in the teaching methodology creates a strong impact on the outcome of the business school, that is, the MBA graduate. However, the job of the stakeholders within the business school is to understand the most appropriate teaching method for a particular course.

5.9. Fee Structure

Fee structure may be defined as the amount of fees charged for the MBA degree programme. For the current research context fee structure evaluates the students' perception of Service-Quality with higher/lower fee structure along with its impact on the students' decision making.

Understanding the relationship between fee structure and Service-Quality is very complex in Pakistani context as people have varied priorities about investing money for higher education. Certain degree programmes such as Engineering and Medicine are valued more than business studies in Pakistan.

The general assumption is that there is a relationship between higher fees structure and improved Service-Quality. However, different stakeholders have varying perceptions and perspectives of looking at fees structures within the business schools and they do not find a relationship between fee structure and Service-Quality.

5.9.1. High Fee Structure and Service-Quality

The stakeholders generally found it difficult to answer this question mainly due to two reasons, one: it was hard for them to find out a relationship between higher fee structure and Service-Quality. Number two, evaluating fee structure as a determinant of Service-Quality.

Only one stakeholder, that is, the Dean of NUST Business School, had a firm view about the relationship between the fee structure and Service-Quality with certainty. He said;

"*There is no relationship between fees structure and Service-Quality of the business school*".

However, many other stakeholder groups could not say with any certainty if there is a relationship between Service-Quality and fee structure. However, some of the stakeholders are convinced that higher fee structure is not a determinant of Service-Quality but yet some of the business schools charge a very large amount of fees from the MBA Students. By contrast, the Dean at UMT argues that;

"*If fee is higher, general perception is that then quality is high, and student who is preparing himself for managerial career, that student will, you know, would like to be known as being graduated from a high fee school*".

So, the high fee structure of the business school may help a student to get a good job as per the perception of the employers. The Dean believes that some of the employers perceive high fee structure business schools to be providing excellent Service-Quality.

The Director MBA Programme at IBA provides a rationale for higher fee structure in the business schools;

"*The business school faculty is paid almost double the salary as compared to any other school within the university*".

However, the Dean of LUMS provided another perspective for charging higher fees from the MBA students;

"*It needs to be understood that the institutions which charge higher fees to the students are the ones who do not get funded by the state, but in general Service-Quality has nothing to do with higher fee structure*".

So it is not the fee structure which directly determines services as most of the institutions in Pakistan are not funded by the government. As argued earlier that even though the business school charges higher fees, it does not necessarily bring Service-Quality into the system. Knowing the private sector business schools do not get funded by the government, it becomes harder for them to maintain the expected level of Service-Quality.

However, the Director MBA Programme IM Sciences denies the rationale for higher fee structure. He says;

"*Higher fee would never mean that you are in a very good place and you are getting the right kind of Service-Quality.*"

An Assistant Professor from IM Sciences provides a unique perspective of fee structure and its relationship to Service-Quality. He relates Service-Quality with the amount of employment opportunities, industrialization and the population of cities. He believes that;

"*Fee structure and Service-Quality are not linked to each other for smaller cities but it may be true for bigger cities*".

The Assistant Professor is arguing that the cities such as Karachi, Faisalabad and Lahore have the main industries and factories, thus have the most employment opportunities as well. This factor thus, allows business schools from these cities to design and charge high fee structure for the MBA students. The students pursuing MBA in bigger cities are then paying the cost of quick employability in bigger cities. The Assistant Professor is employed in a business school from comparatively less developed city. There are hardly any factories or any industry in Peshawar city, so according to him, this is one of reason that business schools may design the fee structure different from another city.

The Programme Manager at NBEAC views a positive linear relationship between Service-Quality and fee structure. According to him;

"High ranking institutions in UK have high fee structure".

So, from the accreditation body's perspective that once the ranking of the business school goes upwards, the business school can charge a higher fee structure as a premium value to the brand.

Thus, most of the stakeholder groups could not strongly argue about the relationship of the higher fee structure with Service-Quality. With the exception of few above stated comments, most of the stakeholder groups were confused about the relationship between fee structure and Service-Quality. However, they still have commented that it is unfortunate that high priced services are perceived to have better Service-Quality mainly from the student perspective. Moreover, the rationale for charging a higher amount of fee structure has been explained by different stakeholder groups which reflect the variation of Pakistani education system.

5.9.2. Fee Structure and Student Decision Making

It is hard to assess how much the fee structure has influenced the student decision making when choosing a business school, but based on the discussions with interviewees, it can be said that fee structure plays a role, due to the complex dynamics of Pakistani society.

"The Fee is a sensitive issue in Pakistani culture". [One of the MBA Programme Director at IM Sciences]. Commenting further on the socio-economic setup within Pakistan, an Assistant Professor at UMT noted that;

"The socio economic structure of Pakistani society is very complex. The reputation of the institution makes a student pay a higher amount of fee even if they cannot afford it. But fees may not be a determinant of SQ. We cannot guarantee better services even with higher fee structure".

The Assistant Professor quotes his own personal research where he found the reputation of the institution as key determinant of Service-Quality. In the same

context he is arguing that if the reputation of the business school is developed, then the students would pay a higher fee structure assuming that the business school will deliver Service-Quality.

Some of the interviewees believe that business schools should charge higher fees as they are responsible for generating funds for the university they are part of. Also, the proponents of quality believe that quality comes with higher price. The Dean of LUMS, Lahore says that;

"*Quality has a price so the fee structure needs to be higher in order to have better quality but then students never get rejected if they cannot afford to pay higher fees*".

The Dean of LUMS is arguing here that the fee structure should not be influencing the student decision making. If they cannot afford to pay a higher fee structure they should be capable enough to win scholarship at the business school.

The People Excellence Manager at Telenor says that;

"The *Fee Structure plays a very important role in student decision making but may not represent Service-Quality*".

However the People Excellence Manager from Telenor Karachi argues that;

"*The perception of Service-Quality and fee structure may vary greatly by the socio-cultural background of the student*".

The parents of MBA students have commented in various ways about the decision of choosing the most appropriate business school. For example one parent commented that;

"*To add value to the child's future, money may not be considered as it is question of life time investment*"

The parent did not consider the fee structure as an important determinant for choosing the business school. They would select the best business school for their child's future. So, having a secure job and future is more important to the parent as opposed to paying a higher fee amount. While another parent supported this view

"Even if education is expensive, I would want my child to study in the most expensive business school so that he lives a comfortable life"

The parent realizes that higher education is expensive but, since they want their child to live a financially secure life, they would pay higher fee amount for education as this will help them secure a high paying job.

The opinion of yet another parent is reflective of a typical Pakistan parent for whom the education of the child or the degree they achieve not important but the prestige of the institution has high value. This will enable the parent to have more social acceptance. So he comments that;

"I wanted my child to have the best education as compared to his relatives and cousins, so that I can take pride in his achievements"

Further a parent viewed the fee structure of the business school from a different perspective, that is;

"Only educated people can survive in Pakistan, so in order to give my child a good living, I don't mind selling personal assets".

The parent is willing to sacrifice his personal assets for the child's good living by realizing the importance of higher education not by the worth of the business school.

Summarizing, the fee structure as a determinant of Service-Quality, most of the stakeholders agree that higher fee structure cannot guarantee better Service-Quality. But the higher education institutions need to design higher fee structure due to lack of support from the government. So, according to stakeholders, fee structure is not a determinant of Service-Quality, but it influences the decision making of Pakistani students while selecting a business school.

5.10. Responsiveness

In the current research context, responsiveness refers to the responsiveness of teaching and support staff. It also refers to availability of the academic and support staff.

Many of the stakeholders touched upon the responsiveness aspect of the academic and support staff when answering questions about 'Personnel Quality' and 'Faculty Profile'. However, other aspects such as skills, abilities and profile of the teaching and support were given more importance by the interviewees as opposed to the responsiveness. Thus the researcher could hardly find an influence of responsiveness on the Service-Quality of the business school from the respondents' comments.

The Director MBA Programme at UMT comments that;

"Pakistani institutions tend to lack the understanding of importance of responsiveness and availability of staff. They add an indirect value to student experience".

So, the Director MBA Programme views a positive influence of responsiveness of both academic and support staff on the Service-Quality of the business school.

Also, the Dean IM Sciences criticises business schools in general by saying that the staff generally lack shared vision and goals for business schools. It may not be possible to deliver responsive services. He further adds;

 "The responsiveness is extremely crucial to a business school; they should be well paid and well qualified."

This thus concludes that the responsiveness as a determinant of Service-Quality is not well understood by the stakeholders as most of them have not been able to comment on the relationship.

5.11. Industry – Academia Liaison

Industry-academia liaison is very broad term; however for the current research scope it is limited to building relationship between corporate sector (industry) and the business schools. How the teaching and support staff communicates with the people working in industry to get the MBA graduates employed by the industry. Also, the perspective of potential employers on the effective development of MBA

programmes is studied so that the communication and expectations gap between employers and business schools is reduced.

5.11.1.   Industry – Academia Liaison and Service-Quality

Almost all the stakeholders realize the importance of industry-academia liaison and its influence on the Service-Quality of the business schools. It is a two way process if the Service-Quality of the business schools is improved, the beneficiary would be the employers. The employers view Service-Quality of the business school from the graduating student. Thus, the effectiveness of industry-academia will in due course benefit the business schools as well as they will be able to attract more MBA students. The industry – academia liaison exists in almost all the business schools of Pakistan in some form but the relationship between two is not very effective. There is a big gap of understanding and expectations of both the groups which creates a blame-game situation for both for not being able to deliver the right kind of services.

The Director MBA Programme from UMT says while blaming the industry that;

"Academia is willing to have liaison but the industry is not bothered to have collaborative programmes"

While an Assistant Professor from UMT comments that the industry does not know what they require from the business schools. He believes that people from industry cannot contribute to the business schools in formal set-ups such as, collaborative meetings between industry and academia in which they are required to provide an input to the curriculum. However, if the people from industry are invited for informal chits chat sessions with students, they do share a lot of expectations of industry.

"They should be given an indirect environment where they can interact with the students".

An Assistant Professor at NUST Business School provides the reason of less effectiveness of industry-academia liaison

"*Due to lack of research culture in Pakistan and particularly in business schools; the industry does not trust academia for solving their problems which creates a barrier between academia and industry*".

Some of the stakeholders who are academics have provided solutions for effective industry-academia liaison. The Programme Director of UMT, Lahore suggests to build up the liaison as it may reflect improved services for the business schools

"*Effective industry – academia liaison can be introduced by using students as consultants for industry who may charge much lesser as compared to a professional consultant. This will help business schools to develop a rapport with industry*".

Another solution suggested by Director MBA programme IBA, Karachi is: "*business school and industry should act a hub of learning new business ideas, for creative thinking and new technologies*".

And finally Director MBA Programme at IM Sciences suggests that;

"*Business schools should have incubation centres*"

He is referring to the fact that incubation centres are independent organizations which helping emerging entrepreneurs to develop a business. He believes this should be done by the business schools which will help build business school an effective relationship with industry and thus representing Service-Quality of the business school.

An Assistant Professor from IM Sciences, provides a different perspective of the relationship of industry to academia based on the dynamics of the city, that is,

"*Industry-Academia liaison is a fantasy word and is non-existent in smaller cities like Peshawar*"

The interviewee is referring to the difference of bigger developed cities in comparison to small and under developed cities. The industry in Peshawar is almost non-existent, so the effectiveness of the relationship between industry and academia becomes a concept of fantasy world.

The employers put the blame back to academia for effective liaison. The HR Manager of Nestle (Pvt) Limited comments that;

"*Employers are all willing to develop relationship with academia if they are willing to; we are very open to that*"

Whereas, the CEO of Ace Consulting is very critical of academia and the liaison between industry and academia. He says;

"*In Pakistani context industry – academia linkage is loudly limited to having guest lecturers from industry and having annual job fairs which is not the requirement*".

The interviewee is referring to the fact that the business schools are not putting much effort to build relationship with the industry. Also, there is an assumption that conducting job fairs and inviting people from industry as guest speakers are the only aspects of industry-academia liaison.

However, the only effort put by NBAEC council to develop industry-academia liaison is to invite people from industry while designing the minimum requirements for MBA curriculum.

5.11.2. Industry Specific Graduates and Service-Quality

Most of the stakeholders have not responded to this question mainly they could not find it related to Service-Quality in any way. However, the general assumption from the students' perspective (discussed in chapter 6) is that business schools should be producing industry specific graduates. This assumption implies that in Pakistan certain sectors grow drastically and then they become a fad. The time a sector is growing, the universities, design their courses and degree programmes accordingly to achieve maximum employment for the graduates. For example, the telecommunication sector in Pakistan grew at very fast pace in early 2000s, thus all the major universities started offering an undergraduate degree in Telecommunication Engineering.

 An Assistant Professor from NUST Business School says that;

"*We don't need industry specific managers…. There is no such text book which teaches how to run a bank, a textile industry or how to run a pharmaceutical company … we all learn at work*".

Thus, the AP implies that there is no influence of producing industry specific graduates on the Service-Quality of the business school.

5.11.3.   Employability of MBAs, Student Alumni and Service-Quality

The employability of MBAs and student alumni are two different items in the questionnaire. However, the interviewees view the employability of the MBAs and the alumni as interdependent factors of Service-Quality. As a general rule the higher rate of employment of the business school represents better Service-Quality and the student alumni play a key role in getting the fresh graduates employed in the industry. It determines the better Service-Quality for a business school.

The Director Administration at LUMS emphasizes on the importance of student alumni by saying;

"*Student alumni are the backbone of a business school that spread the good will, that is, better services of the institution in a business school".*

Pakistani business schools are looking forward to employment of all the graduates within six (6) months of their graduation. However, different cities in Pakistan have different dynamics as stated by Assistant Professor of NUST Business School, Islamabad that;

"*Business Schools in Lahore & Karachi would have different milestones because that's where the industry is. Considering Islamabad, NBS is doing a great job in terms of employment for a student which is a key factor".*

The interviewee is referring that all the big employers in the country are resident in Lahore and Karachi. So, accordingly the business schools define milestones of employability of their graduates. Considering Islamabad as a small city, the Assistant Professor is still happy with the employability rate of NUST Business School's graduates within Islamabad and other parts of the country.

The Employers have a conflicting perspective about the Service-Quality in terms of graduate employability and the relationship building with business schools. The People Excellence Manager from Telenor identifies a problem regarding employability of graduates from top business schools;

"Students are picked up from the institutions based upon the brand name depending on the requirement of Telenor. But then the students from top business schools have behavioural issues, so employers become reluctant to hire from top business schools."

The interviewing is commenting on the situation of the graduates of top business schools. He believes that they are good at work but somehow cannot relate themselves within the work environment, so generally the employers, then, become reluctant to hire students from top brands.

On contrary to that employers are facing an ongoing dilemma of hiring people graduates from top business schools. The People Excellence Manager from Telenor comments that;

 "Business schools have not been able to deliver what corporate sector is looking for. Top business schools have some good graduates who do not need training but then they are expensive to hire within the organization"

In general employers cannot spend money on further training them.

An interesting perspective from the CEO of Ace Consulting is;

"MBAs should be creating job opportunities rather than looking for jobs in existing market".

On the other hand HR Manager of Packages Private Limited emphasizes on the importance of having strong networks. She says

"Universities who have stronger alumni networks are the universities who benefit tremendously from having them as the post of university who are not done any work on that".

While the Manager Customer Services at Wateen Telecom presents another perspective on the employability of MBA graduates;

"Pakistani industry does not need as many business schools as they are existing right now".

The interviewee argues that the Pakistani market is saturated and growing number of MBAs are graduating twice a year which cannot be absorbed by the industry as it does not have the capacity to absorb.

Thus, concluding the industry-academia liaison as a determinant of Service-Quality. It is considered equally important by the employers and the academia. However, academia needs to put more effort to develop effective liaison for better Service-Quality. Business Schools should be producing 'generalists' who are specialized in areas such as HR, Marketing, IT and finance. However, the understanding of a particular sector should be gained while working for them. In Pakistan, the student alumni play a vital role in the employment of graduates and developing the reputation of the institution.

5.12. Outcome of Education

In the current research context, this determinant is evaluating the impact of business schools' environment to a graduates' ethical and moral value system. It is focussing on mentoring and guidance of the student. It is also exploring how these variables determine the Service-Quality of the business school.

5.12.1.   Social and Ethical Values and Service-Quality

The understanding of producing socially and ethically responsible MBA graduates is not very clear in Pakistani Business Schools and they are not linked. The Dean of IM Sciences, Peshawar comments that;

"Courses on ethical and social responsibility do not make individuals ethically and socially responsible".

This is further stated by an Assistant Professor at IM Sciences;

"Pakistan is country where people are always willing to help on humanitarian grounds but the courses on ethical and social responsibility may not be required to make individuals as better humans".

However, the Assistant Professor at NUST Business School, Islamabad looks at it from a different perspective which supports the argument of Dean IM Sciences, Peshawar

"Ethical and socially responsible graduates cannot be produced by teaching a 3 credit hour course on such concepts but it is ingrained in the DNA of the institution".

5.12.2.   Skill set of MBA Graduates

All the stakeholders have given some skill set of MBA graduates. Some of them are quoted here. The Dean LUMS, Lahore says that MBA students should have;

"*Ability to work hard, work under pressure, the students should be innovative using technology"*

The Assistant Professor, LUMS, Lahore thinks that;

 "The MBA students should be able to challenge the norms"

The Assistant Professor is referring that the MBA students should not be accepting all the practices within the organization but should be able to question the knowledge based on their prior knowledge.

The Dean NUST, Islamabad should be learning 'Chinese Language' as he believes that China is next super power of the world and Pakistani students should be able to compete at international standards.

The Director Administration, LUMS says;

Blend of different skills, such as communication skills, analytical skills, team work skills, leadership skills

While the Director MBA Programme, IM Sciences, Peshawar says;

"Cognitive reasoning, negotiation skills"

5.12.3.　Mentoring & Guidance and Service-Quality

Has not been commented by the stakeholders separately in a question

5.13. Research & Development

In the current research context the determinant 'research and development' is aiming at MBA students only

5.13.1.　Research at MBA and Service-Quality

All the stakeholders in Pakistan agree that academic research is not important at MBA and thus does not influence Service-Quality

An Assistant Professor LUMS, Dean IM Sciences says that;

"Industry *based research is enough*"

He implies that the MBA students should be involved in research where they are conducting surveys and collecting data along with information research on internet. However, he is emphasizing that the core job of MBA is not to do hard core academic research.

Also Assistant Professor IM Sciences, Peshawar supports the same argument by saying;

"Not *a priority at MBA level*"

He is referring that at IM Sciences, research is not an important element of the MBA Programme.

However, the Programme Manager at NBEAC has given an ambiguous reply;

" *It is important to have research mind-set at MBA level*"

Although that he has emphasized on research but has not clearly given if the MBAs should be able to do an industry based research or academic research.

However, the CEO of Ace Consulting gives a different perspective of research in Pakistan in general;

"In *Pakistan no one knows what's is Qualitative Research even the PhDs*"

He believes that if MBAs need to do research then they should be learning about qualitative research because qualitative research skills are lacking in Pakistan.

While the Manager HR Nestle contradicts from the research aspect of MBAs;

"Employers *are not concerned for research at MBA*"

5.13.2.   Research based culture and Service-Quality

Since none of the stakeholder considered research as an important element of an MBA degree programme and thus, it is assumed that research based culture does not influence Service-Quality.

5.14. Student Background

In case of Pakistani business schools, there are two major streams of education system which impact the student performance in the business school. This determinant evaluates if the socio cultural background of the student impacts the Service-Quality level of the business school.

The variation in socio-cultural background brings variation in the confidence level of the students too. Dean NUST, AP NUST, Director MBA Programme NUST point out the results of difference in students' socio-cultural background.

"The variation between two different academic streams, that is, British education system versus the standard Pakistani education system has created a big gulf between the two streams. Thus, the student socio-cultural and academic background very strongly influences the business schools' overall performance".

The People Excellence Manager of Telenor says;

background چاہے کوئی بھی ہو، institute کا کام ہے کے کے وہ polish کر کے develop کر کے ان کو آگے لے کر چلیں

(Closest Translation: Whatever the background of the student is, the job of the institution is to develop and polish the skills and take them along with other students).

He is implying the business schools will have students from various socio-cultural backgrounds also with various academic grounds. In his opinion the job of the schools is not to select the best students but to develop students from different backgrounds, so that all of them become competitive in future.

One of the employers says that;

 "*Students from a particular social status go to top business schools*".

This variation is creating a difference for the business schools of what they are delivering. Contradicting the employers' perspective Dean IM Sciences says that;

"*People from under-privileged areas are better at performing and they bring a positive change in the school and so as their community*"

The CEO of Ace Consulting comments;

 "*I am not a supporter of class system but west has created class systems in Pakistan as well. The Aitchison College was created by British… same as the King's College. It was the college for elite whose legacy, we are still facing….that the elite system of education is coming forward*"

While the Director MBA Programme of IBA Karachi believes to have a blend of professionals in MBA class. Currently more than 70 % of MBA students have engineering background. He says;

"*I think what our desire is and what is in other words is reality, what desire is to have people from everywhere. As you see, I'll love to see artist in my MBA class, I love to see a house wife in my MBA class, I want to see a designer in my class, I want to see a civil engineer in my class, a doctor, a lawyer, a woman entrepreneur, a social*

worker, a business unions, I want to see that mix because the richness comes in the class discussion and a learning when you have diversify group in the class".

An Assistant Professor from IM Sciences identifies the potential challenge and barrier to improved Service-Quality and that is

"Pakistan is a country where people are bit less flexible to the values they hold on for years but there is a big transformation of the students who join in the first semester till the time they graduate. But still it is a challenge for the business schools."

Thus, the socio-cultural background of the students impacts the performance of the business schools while there is variation of comments about the student background as well.

5.15. Summarizing Service-Quality Determinants from Stakeholders' Perspective

This section will provide a comparative view of all the Service-Quality determinants from the stakeholders' perspective.

5.15.1.   Teaching and Support Staff

The teaching and support staff consider the design of curriculum as one of the key aspects of Service-Quality. They view curriculum design as 'streamlining the activities of the business school' which can help business schools to get most of their students employed by the industry. All the teaching and support staff who commented about curriculum design support that the curriculum should be designed while keeping the employers in mind. However, according to most of the teaching and support staff, the 'programme design' is not a determinant of Service-Quality. Programme design in the research context is referred as a business school offering multiple specialization programmes as MBA level. The teaching and support staff agree that it allows students to select courses from a wide variety of specializations but does not necessarily reflect Service-Quality for the business schools.

The other two aspects of the where teaching staff are very concerned are; the lecturer profile and the liaison with the industry where it is given most importance in

Pakistan. The lecturers are keen on getting industry experience along with the academic credentials as this is what the business schools require from the teaching staff. The teaching staff along with collaboration with management of the business schools is working towards developing effective relationship with industry. According to the teaching and support staff, effective industry – academia relationship will reflect better services.

Generally the teaching and support staff are indifferent to the fee structure and student background as it is perceived to have little impact on the Service-Quality of the business school.

5.15.2.   Management of the Business School

The management of the business schools view curriculum design providing 'competitive edge' to the business schools. However, all the Deans of the business schools commented to have a curriculum which is very local in its application but has global perspectives of the business. Deans were interviewed from different parts of Pakistan were interviewed which then influenced their view point on the importance of curriculum design. According to the management of the business school, the curriculum needs to be designed according to the maturity of the industry in the specific geographical location. Also, offering multiple specialization programmes is resultant of maturity phase of the business school rather than a determinant of Service-Quality. The management views programme design as a capacity building process for the business schools in Pakistan. Therefore, curriculum design is extremely important from the management's point of view but programme design is less important.

The management of the business schools view curriculum design as the most important determinant and then the second most important determinant for the management is the lecturer profile. Undeniably all the managers of the business schools rated the lecturer's profile and their credentials as the key determinant of Service-Quality. The assessment and grading as a determinant of Service-Quality is viewed as a matter left at the discretion of teaching staff. However, the management is concerned mainly if the assessment and grading is conducted fairly for all the students.

5.15.3. Employers

Employers do not directly get influenced by the way curriculum is being designed but are more concerned of the product of the business schools. However, the employers do realize the importance of the curriculum design yet demanding the business schools to produce graduates who have comprehensive understanding of Pakistani business. The key aspects where employers have a lot of concern are the final graduate of the business school, that is the outcome of education. The employers view business schools from a macro level and thus do not get involved in the design of business school processes. However, the perception of the business school is developed via the quality of graduate produced by the business school. Thus, the employers perceive teaching methods to have a direct influence on the quality of the graduates produced.

The employers are less concerned about the student background, fee structure or the responsiveness of the support staff.

5.15.4. Government and Funding Bodies

The government and funding bodies view curriculum design as an activity to define a uniform curriculum for the business schools. The role of government and funding body is to look at the regulatory aspects of the universities or the business schools. According to the perception of DG QAA of HEC, the quality of the teaching staff in terms of their research abilities and academic credentials are the most important aspects for the business schools. Thus, HEC started many initiatives to send teaching staff abroad for a PhD and designed incentives for developing research abilities for the staff. The second most important determinant for HEC is the physical infrastructure. However, the student background and the fee structure are of no concern to the Higher Education Commission.

5.15.5. Accreditation Bodies

The accreditation bodies work in close collaboration with Government and Funding bodies to conduct surveys for improvement of curriculum and bring uniformity in the curriculum all over the country. The accreditation council that is NBEAC has the

same priorities as the government and funding body. The higher education commission is the parent organization for NBEAC, thus is governed mainly by HEC for its processes. However, the NBEAC monitors only the business schools within Pakistan. Therefore, the accreditation bodies perceive to have importance of curriculum, teaching staff and the physical infrastructure of the business school.

5.15.6.   Parents of MBA Students

The parents of MBA students in general do not have an understanding of Service-Quality determinants. However, the parents perceive the brand name of the business school as a very important determinant of Service-Quality. While the parents do not have any understanding about teaching methodologies or the curriculum design of the business schools.

5.16. Conclusion

Concluding the chapter, the stakeholders have varying perceptions and perspectives about Service-Quality and the role of Service-Quality determinants as a measure of the Service-Quality within a business school.

The curriculum design is given a lot of importance within the business school. However, the business schools have still not been able to design curriculum according to industry standards. Thus, the curriculum design is perceived to be the most important determinant of Service-Quality from the majority of the stakeholder groups.

The determinant of Personnel is still a weaker area where the Pakistani business schools need to invest more resources. The personnel is less understood and perceived to have little importance to reflect the Service-Quality of the business schools.

Physical infrastructure is a dissatisfier is its absence but does not add a lot of value to the business schools in general perception. However the physical infrastructure is perceived to determine better Service-Quality from the Government and funding body and the accreditation body.

The branding is considered important by all the stakeholders. However, the question and the determinant of Branding was misunderstood by most of the stakeholders as it was assumed that good brand name will provide better Service-Quality instead of it as a determinant of Service-Quality. However, the branding of the business school is yet the second most important determinant of Service-Quality from most of the stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders have agreed that there should be an assessment and grading criteria but that should be limited to the business schools. However, the general perception is that tough assessment criteria is a determinant of Service-Quality

Teaching staff has been considered the most important determinant of Service-Quality along with teaching methods. The profile of teaching staff has been given a lot of importance along with their industry experience. Thus, the teaching staff is the third most important determinant of Service-Quality.

The opinions on fee structure are very varied due to the complex dynamics of Pakistani social system. Thus, it is hard to conclude if fee structure is a determinant of Service-Quality. Therefore, fee structure is considered less important determinant from most of the stakeholder groups' perspective.

Pakistani business schools need to develop effective industry-academia liaison as it is considered as an important determinant of Service-Quality. It is given a lot of importance yet effective relationships have not been built between academia and the industry.

Research at MBA level is not given a lot of importance in Pakistan. However, the socio cultural background of the student creates a huge impact on the business school. Thus, research and development at MBA level is not considered as an important determinant of Service-Quality so as the student background.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Data Analysis

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the data collected through one of the stakeholder groups, that is, students. In total five business schools were selected for data collection. Stakeholders (Teaching & Support Staff, Management of the Business School, Employers, Government & Funding Bodies, Accreditation Bodies, and parents of MBA students) from each group were interviewed, as discussed in chapter 5. However, it was difficult to interview large groups of students. In order to compile a good sample from student stakeholder group, students were given a questionnaire. The core reason of conducting the surveys was to gather opinions from a large sample of students as it was not feasible to interview such a large stakeholder group. Section 6.2 will discuss the questionnaire design and section 6.3 will discuss the response rate and information about the business schools. The results of quantitative data analysis will be presented and reviewed in section 6.4.

6.2. Questionnaire Design

The aim of this section is to discuss the questionnaire design which was developed in to two main phases, that is, the pilot study and the final version of the questionnaire. Section 6.2.1 discusses the initial draft of questionnaire and section 6.2.2 discusses the final questionnaire design.

6.2.1. Initial Draft of Questionnaire

An initial draft of questionnaire based upon the research framework presented in chapter 3 was developed to validate the Service-Quality Determinants as they apply to the stakeholders within the business schools. For the pilot study the business schools were selected on the availability and access to the institutions. The following business schools were selected for the validation process;

- Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), Islamabad

- National University of Sciences & Technology - NUST Business School, Islamabad

- University of Management & Technology (UMT) – School of Business & Economics, Lahore

- Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore

- International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) – Graduate School of Management, Islamabad.

Table 6.1 lists all the determinants used for data collection through the questionnaire circulated mainly to student stakeholder group. The detailed definitions and explanations of the determinants have been given in section 3.5 (Chapter 3).

Determinants	Definition
Curriculum	Programme Details and Module Content
Personnel Quality	The Administration and Support Staff
Physical Infrastructure	The physical infrastructure, that is, building and other facilities such as, library and labs etc.
Corporate Image	The Brand name of the business school
Assessment & Grading	Evaluation of the students during the term.
Faculty Profile	Qualification, experience, skills and emotional intelligence of the teaching staff
Teaching Methods	Teaching methods used in the classroom, such as, case studies or lectures.
Fee Structure	Fee charged for the MBA programme
Responsiveness	Availability of the teaching and support staff
Industry – Academia Liaison	Relationship of business schools with the industry
Outcome of Education	Impact of social and ethical values of the business school on an MBA student
Research & Development	Introduction of research in MBA programme.
Student Background	The socio-cultural background of the MBA student.

Table 6.1: List of Determinants used for data collection

MBA students of all the above listed business schools were given the questionnaire in person and through email as well. An online version of the questionnaire was created to get the maximum response of the students for validation of the results. A total of 125 questionnaires were circulated for data collection. Students from each business school completed 25 surveys with a 100 % response rate.

The results of the pilot study validated the determinants derived from the literature. From the feedback and comments provided on the pilot questionnaire, the

determinants were further divided into items discussed in section 6.2.2 and listed in table 6.2

6.2.2. Detailed Questionnaire Design

After validating the determinants of Service-Quality, another questionnaire was designed. Each of the determinants used in the questionnaire was divided into number of sub-questions, which will be referred as 'items' in the research context. The process resulted into a total of 22 items which were used to evaluate the perceived importance of the Service-Quality determinants from the stakeholders' perspective. The statements on perceived importance were included to enhance the investigative value of the SERVPERF methodology. (Details discussed in chapter 2).

An overview of the issues addressed through the questionnaire is presented in Table 6.2.

Curriculum: Programme Details and Module Content 1. The curriculum design reflects the quality of the business school 2. The number of specialized programmes and courses offered by the business school reflects its Service-Quality.
Personnel Quality: The Administration and Support Staff 3. The quality of the support and administration represents the service performance of the business school
Physical Infrastructure: The physical infrastructure, that is, building and other facilities such as, library and labs etc. 4. The physical infrastructure of the business school adds to Service-Quality
Corporate Image: The Brand name of the business school 5. Creating a brand name or corporate image to the business school is important 6. International linkages and exchange programs with other business schools adds to the reputation of business school.
Assessment & Grading: Evaluation of the students during the term. 7. Tougher assessment and grading criteria represent higher levels of Service-Quality within business school.
Faculty Profile: Qualification, experience, skills and emotional intelligence of the teaching staff 8. The skills, qualification and knowledge of teaching staff are directly related to Service-Quality. 9. Lecturers experience in the industry plays an important role in providing education services
Teaching Methods: Teaching methods used in the classroom, such as, case studies or lectures 10. Effective Teaching methods are indicator of Service-Quality

Table 6.2: List of Service-Quality Determinants with specific issues addressed

Fee Structure: Fees charged for the MBA programme 11. Higher Fee Structures or the amount of fees is an indicator of better Service-Quality. 12. The fee structure plays a vital role in students' decision making whether to choose an institution for MBA programme.
Industry – Academia Liaison: Relationship of business schools with the industry 13. Effective industry – academia liaison indicates better Service-Quality of the business school 14. Business Schools need to produce industry specific MBA graduates 15. If most of the students are absorbed by the industry within first 6 months of their graduation, this represent better Service-Quality. 16. Student Alumni plays an important role to represent business schools' better Service-Quality
Outcome of Education: Impact of social and ethical values of the business school on an MBA student 17. It represents better Service-Quality if corporate social responsibility and ethical values are embedded in a graduate's personality. 18. Required Skill set of MBA Graduate are: 19. Constant mentoring and career guidance for students is part of the service provided
Research & Development: Introduction of research in MBA programme. 20. Introducing research at MBA level is important for Service-Quality. 21. Promoting an innovative and research based culture in the business school is indicator of the overall Service-Quality
Student Background: The socio-cultural background of the MBA student. 22. The student academic and socio-cultural background impact business school performance

Table 6.2: List of Service-Quality Determinants with specific issues addressed

When redesigning the questionnaire, the questions were first rearranged into a more logical sequence, suitable for all the stakeholders on the business schools. Second, the questions were rephrased with help of questionnaire construction literature (Baker (1999), Bryman (1989) and Scheaffer *et.al.* (1990), so that the questions were unambiguous, clear, and simple for the stakeholders.

Thirdly, the layout was put into a suitable format, to increase the credibility of the investigation and increase the response rate. For example, the wordings of the questionnaire were made simple and 'jargon free' so that the MBA students can understand the questions more easily. The questionnaire was mainly targeted the MBA students of the business schools as it was hard to access and conduct detailed interview with MBA students. An online survey was created using 'Google Docs' as a tool. The survey was shared with teaching staff and the management of the business

schools so that it can be floated on the student mailing lists of the business school. Due to the cultural differences as some of the respondents may not be comfortable using online tools and surveys, so the researcher made hard copies of the surveys available as well. These copies were then distributed among students in the classrooms with the permission of teaching staff and management of the business school.

The survey would take around 10 – 15 minutes to complete the answers depending whether the students or the respondents in general had the understanding of business schools and the concept of Service-Quality.

The strategy for selecting business schools for quantitative data analysis was similar as of the qualitative data, that is, all the business schools which were selected for qualitative data were used for quantitative data collection as well.

In order to assess the performance, the Service-Quality items were transformed into statements and evaluated against perceived performance on a 5-point likert scale from 'strongly agree' (=1) to 'strongly disagree' (=5). All of the statements were generally positively worded. At the end of this section a question was added on overall ranking of stakeholders between the stakeholder groups. In order to assess the importance of the Service-Quality determinants, respondents were asked to rank the most important Service-Quality determinants according to their perception. The respondents were required to provide the ranking of the stakeholders on an ordinal scale from 1 -7. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix II.

6.3. Response Rate, Respondents & Business School's Profile

As discussed in Table 4.2 (Chapter 4) the business schools were selected in a systematic manner from each administrative unit of Pakistan. All the business schools which were selected for qualitative data were selected for the quantitative data as well. The surveys were conducted by visiting the campuses and by sharing the online version of the questionnaire via 'Google Docs'. A total of 127 questionnaires were collected. Each business school was given a minimum of 20 survey forms. As the surveys were floated online as well, students from other (other than listed in Table 4.2) business schools completed the surveys as well.

The surveys were completed by 33.33 % female students and 66.66 % by male students. The average age of students was 24.

No.	Administrative Unit	City	Status of Business School	No. of Respondents
1	Khyber Puktunkhawa (KPK)	Peshawar	Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) – University of Peshawar - http://www.imsciences.edu.pk/imweb/index.php	35
2	Punjab	Lahore	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) - http://www.lums.edu.pk/	12
			School of Business & Economics (SBE) – University of Management & Technology - http://sbe.umt.edu.pk/	25
4	Sindh	Karachi	Institute of Business Administration (IBA) – University of Karachi - http://www.iba.edu.pk/	25
5	Islamabad Capital Territory	Islamabad	NUST Business School (NBS) – National University of Science & Technology - http://nbs.nust.edu.pk/	30

Table 6.3: List of Business Schools used for Data Collection

6.4. Data Analysis

This will now discuss the results of a descriptive analysis each of the determinant.

6.4.1. Curriculum Design

By looking at figure 6.1, we can say that most of the students agree that the curriculum design affects the students' perception of Service-Quality. However, during the informal feedback sessions, most of the students commented that curriculum designed in line with the industry needs will represent better Service-Quality for the business schools. Some of the students commented in the comment section of the questionnaire as well. For example, one of the students said that

" I am looking for some curriculum which will help me in my future job"

The student here is emphasizing that he should be taught course materials which are most relevant for the employers.

Figure 6.1 shows that curriculum design almost 50 % of the students 'Agree' to the importance of effective curriculum design while almost 38 % of the students 'Strongly Agree' that curriculum design are a key determinant of Service-Quality.

Also, from the students' perspective, if the business school is offering multiple specialists programmes, such as, MBA in Human Resource Management, MBA in Information Technology, MBA in Marketing or MBA in Finance; this will add to the Service-Quality of the business school, as represented in figure 6.2. Thus, over 85 % of the students agree that specializations should be offered to MBA students. One of the MBA students informally commented that;

"*Specializations help us choose subjects according to our aptitude*"

The student here implies that the specialization programmes not only provide them an opportunity to select subjects or modules from a wide range of offered courses but also helps them select courses according to their personal needs and requirements.
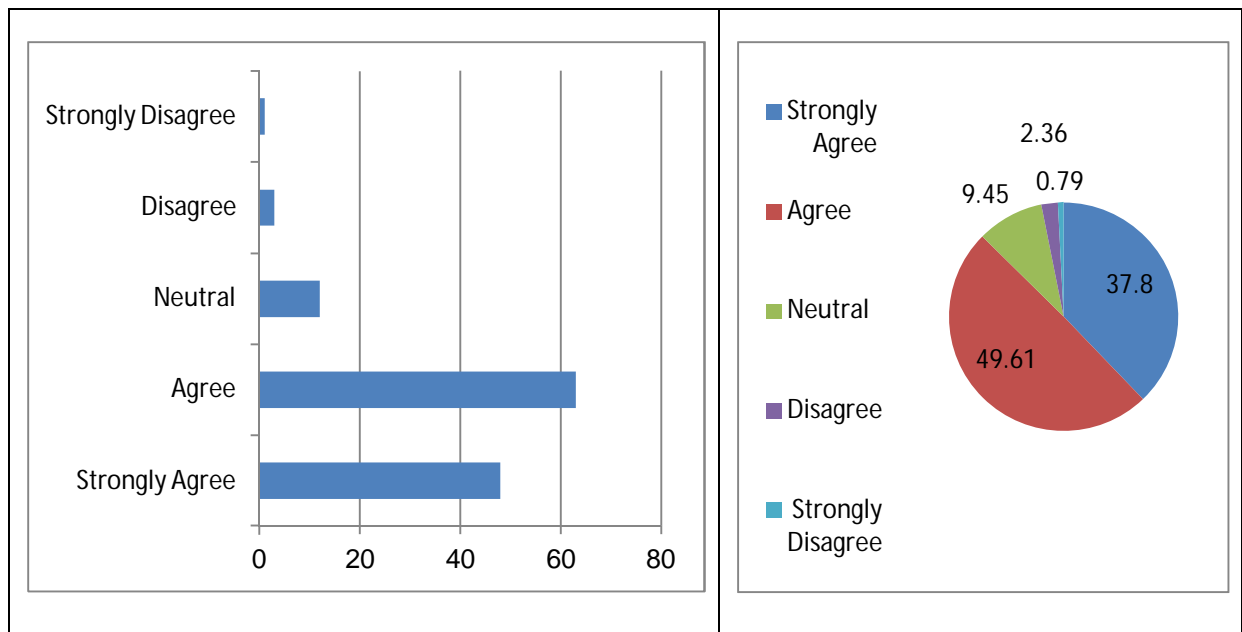
Figure 6.1: Curriculum Design and Service-Quality
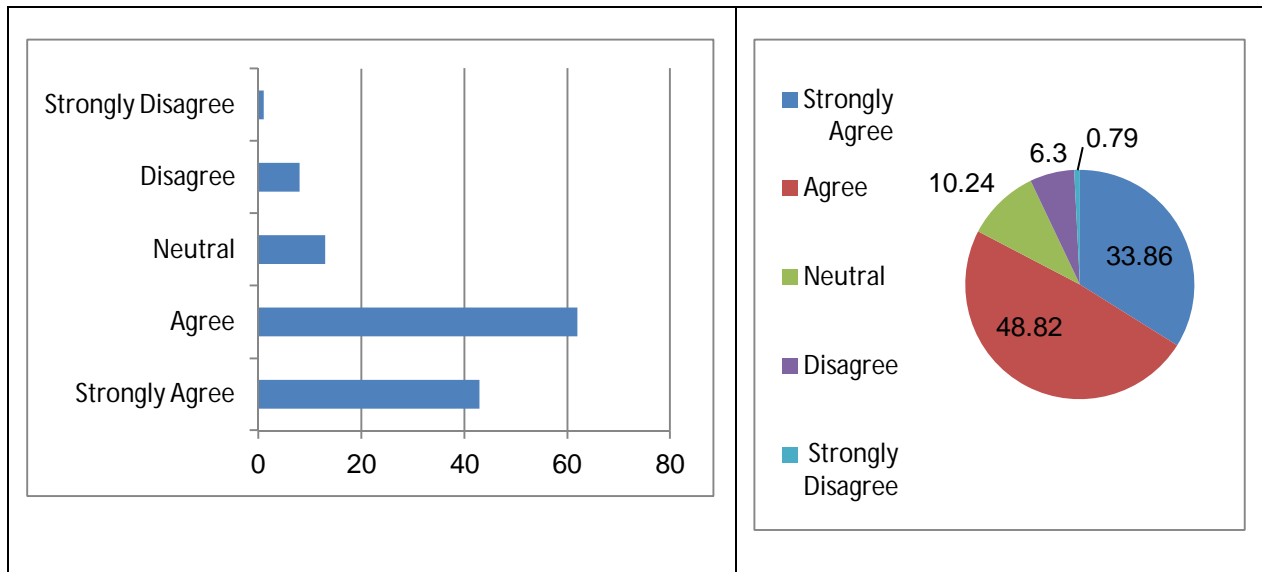
Figure 6.2: Multiple Specialization Programmes

6.4.2. Personnel Quality

By looking at figure 6.3, it can be seen that vast majority of the students agree or strongly agree that the quality of support and administration staff greatly impacts the business school Service-Quality levels. The support and administration staff is the first contact within the business school with the students. So, the management of the business schools need to invest heavily on ensuring the quality support staff.
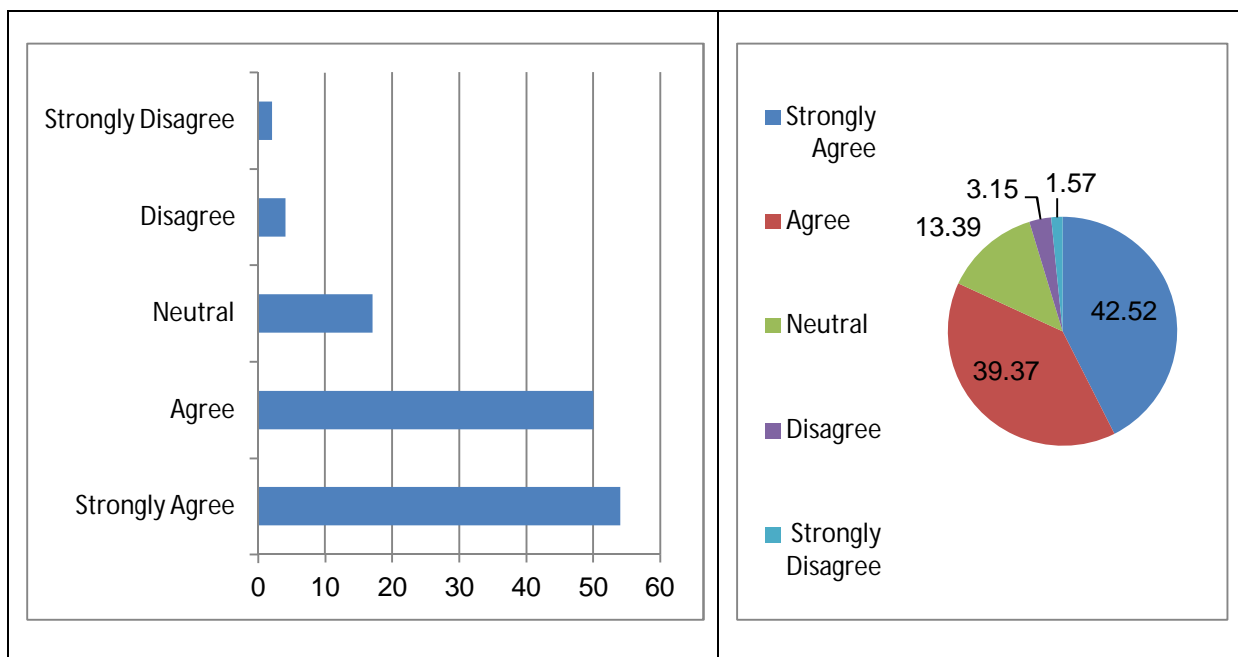
Figure 6.3: Quality of support & admin staff

One of the students criticised another business school's support and administration staff and according to him this was the only reason, he did not join that business school. She said in Urdu

"میں نے صرف Business School NUST بعد کے کرنے سے BBA سے university International Islamic
third اور بکواس ہی بہت administration اور management کی اسلامک کے کیوں ، کیا select وجہ اسی
class ہے"

(Closest Translation: I selected NUST Business School for MBA after doing a BBA from International Islamic University, Islamabad because the management and administration of Islamic University is very poor).[4]

So, the student implies that the quality of the support and administration staff affected her perception of Service-Quality for the specific institution and she selected another business school for her MBA degree programme.

### 6.4.3. Physical Infrastructure

By looking at figure 6.4, it can be seen that the physical infrastructure of the business school has a strong role to play in determining the Service-Quality of the business school. The facilities, such as, labs and library, and the location of the infrastructure, make an impact on the Service-Quality of the business school. A student from UMT, Lahore commented;

"*We have moved to a better building, now we can tell our friends we study in a good University*".

The student is referring that UMT initially had a modest infrastructure and now institution infrastructure is built according to modern standards and better supports student needs. So, the perception of the students along with their friends and family has improved for the business school.

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[4] It is interesting to note that many educated Pakistanis speak using a fluid mixture of Urdu and English language.
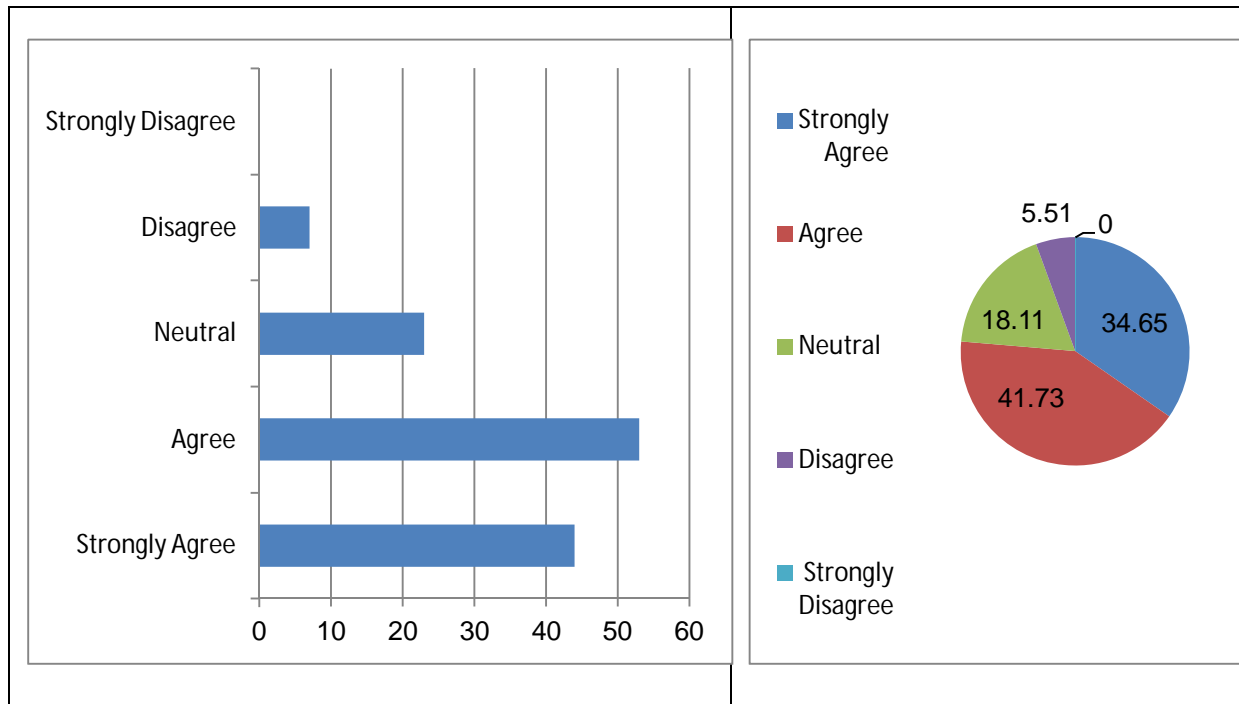
Figure 6.4: Business School Physical infrastructure

6.4.4. Corporate Image

Figure 6.5 shows that most students agree or strongly agree that the brand image or a strong brand name of the business school reflect high level of Service-Quality.

Also, the students strongly agree that there was a relationship between high Service-Quality and the schools' engagement to the international exchange programmes. According to the students if the business school has a strong brand name, only then, will it be able to develop international exchange programmes with other business schools.

A student from LUMS, Lahore commented;

"*Everyone knows what IBA and LUMS are…!!!*"

The student here is implying the importance of having a brand name which in turn determines the Service-Quality. He says that all the employers, potential students and the community around are aware of the business schools, that is, LUMS and IBA.
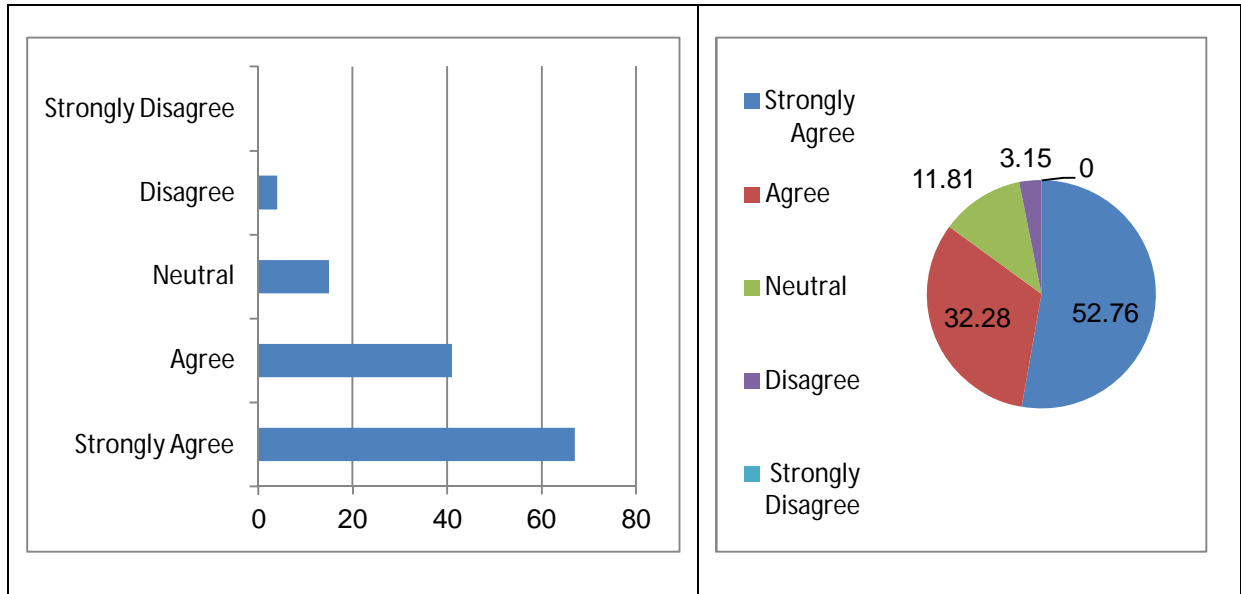
Figure 6.5: Corporate image of business school
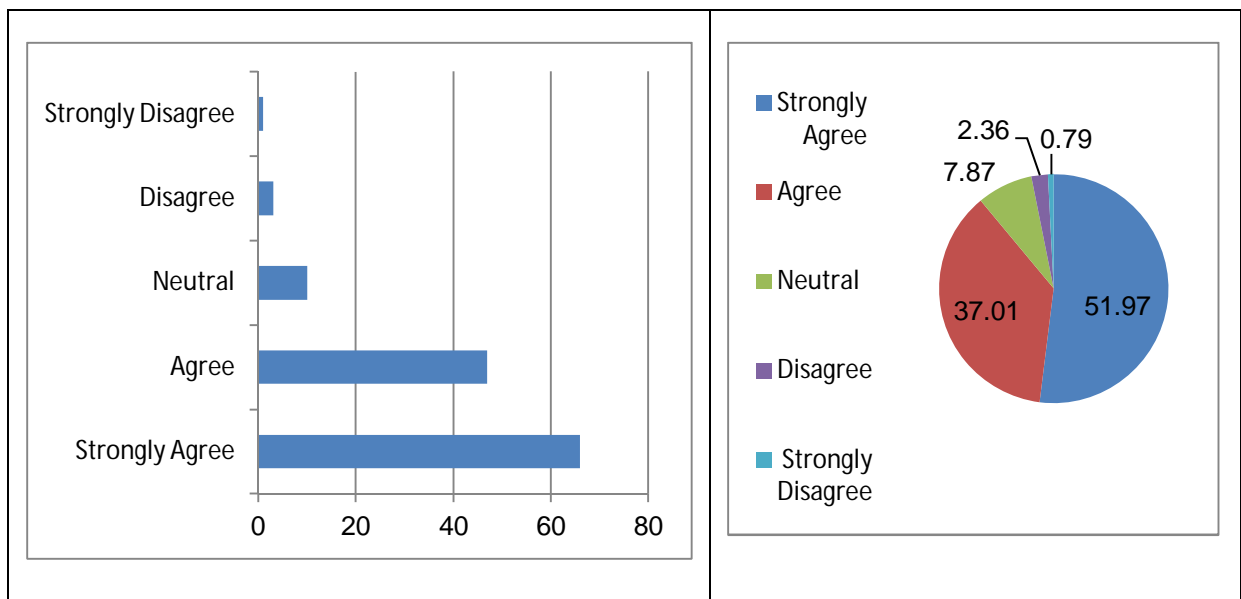
Figure 6.6: International linkages and exchange programs

6.4.5. Assessment & Grading

It was assumed that a tougher grading and assessment criteria may not be considered as Service-Quality criteria from student perspective. However, figure 6.7 suggests that most of the students agree that tougher assessment and grading criteria reflect higher levels of Service-Quality within the business school. In general students could not strongly agree to the toughness of assessment & grading criteria.

Around 10 % of students dis-agreed that toughness of assessment & grading can be a determinant of Service-Quality.
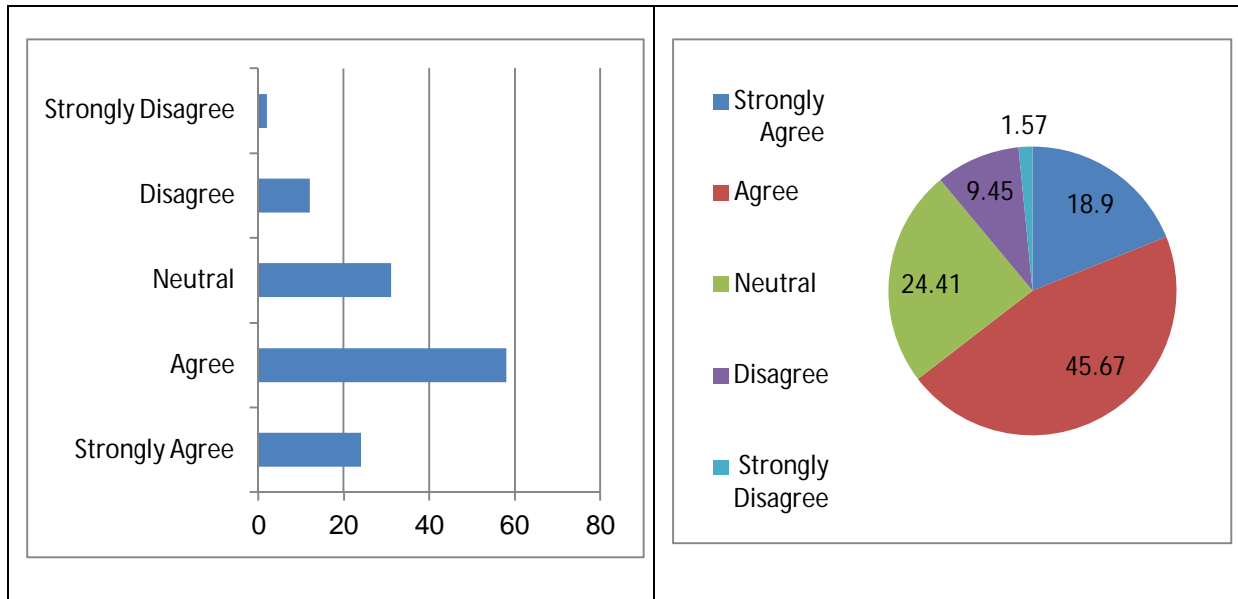
Figure 6.7: Assessment & Grading Criteria

Most of the students agree that a tough grading & assessment criterion influences the perception of the Service-Quality. One of the MBA students states about the top Engineering University in Pakistan;

"*GIKI students can hardly achieve a GPA of 3.0/4 which in reality is a big score*"

The student here is referring to the tough grading and assessment criteria of the engineering university. So, any student who is able to secure a 3.0 GPA is GIKI is considered to be a good student. Thus, the perception of the performance of students and the institution is regarded very high.

6.4.6. Faculty Profile

Apparently the teaching staff profile also referred as faculty profile is a determinant where more than 68.5 % of the students strongly agree that Service-Quality is highly dependent upon the skills, qualification and knowledge of the teaching staff. Thus, it can be concluded that the lecturer profile is given a lot of importance within a business school from the students' perceptive. Moreover, students agree to a very large extent that the teaching staff in the business schools should have a prior work

experience in the industry so that the knowledge from the industry could be transferred to the students, as shown in Figure 6.9
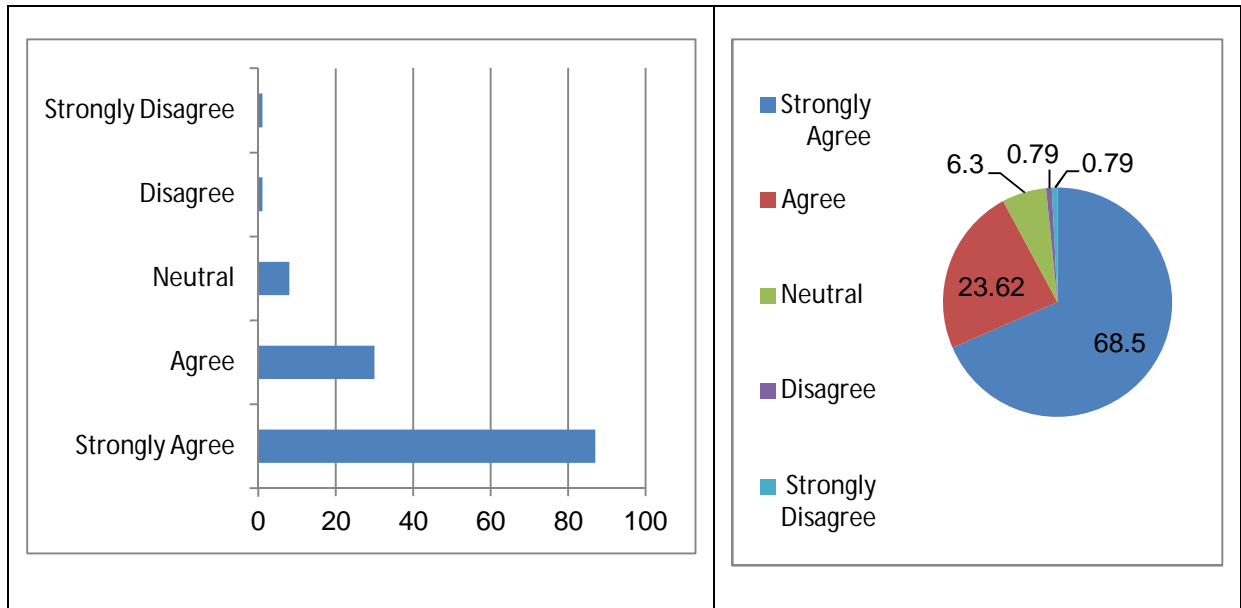
Figure 6.8: Skills, qualification and knowledge of teaching staff
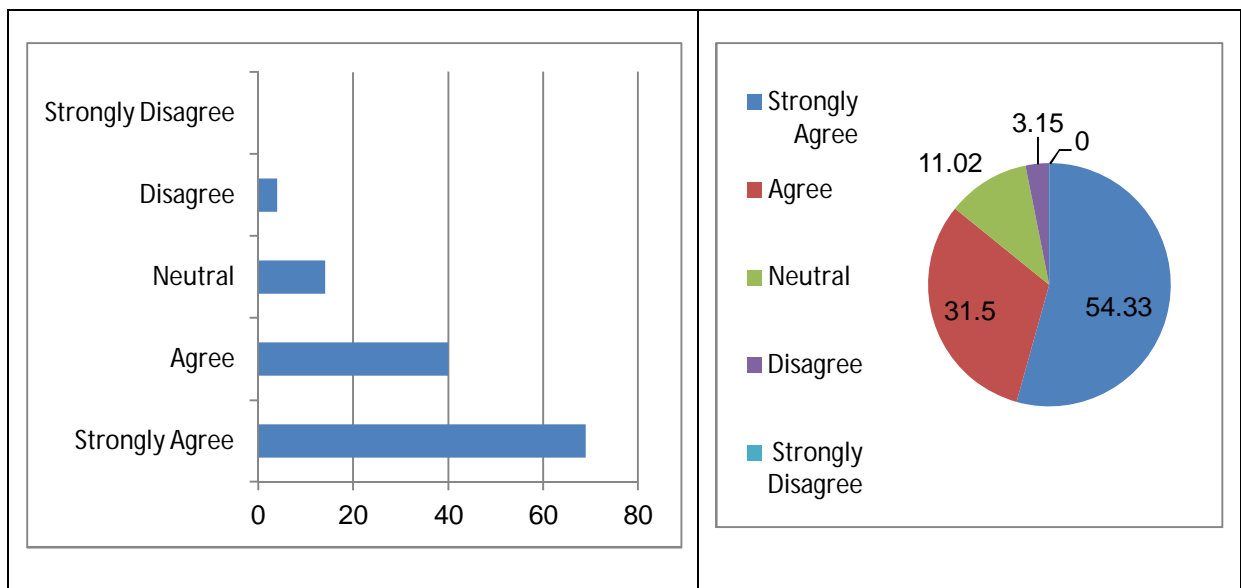
Figure 6.9: Lecturer experience in the industry

The importance of faculty in determining Service-Quality was highlighted by a student from IBA Karachi, who commented;

"*I selected IBA for its top class teaching faculty*".

6.4.7. Teaching Methods

The various number of teaching methods used in the business schools strongly influence the Service-Quality process as suggested by the students in figure 6.10
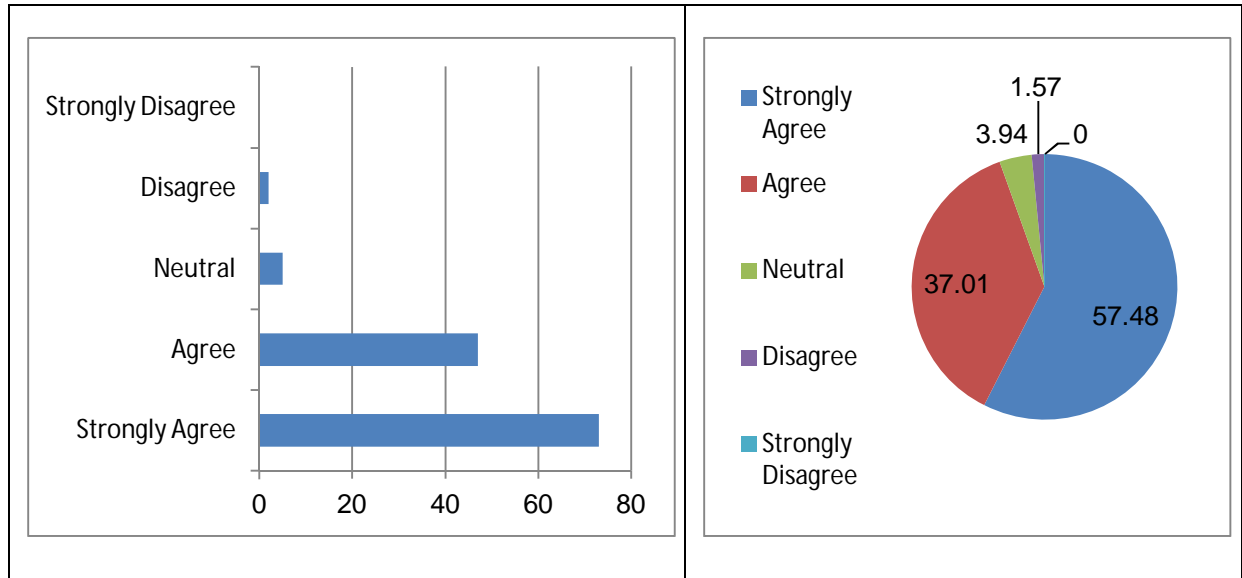
Figure 6.10: Effective Teaching methods

6.4.8. Fee Structure

Fee structure has two elements to consider, that is, role of fee structure in student decision making and role of fee structure in determining Service-Quality. Figure 6.11 show that most of the students agree that higher fee reflects higher Service-Quality.

However, the greater amount of fee structure does not influence student decision making. A large number of students perceive that fee structure may have no or little impact on the Service-Quality of the business school as represented in Figure 6.12.

However, it can be clearly seen in figure 6.11 that higher fee structure is a determinant of Service-Quality from the students' perceptive which is contradictory from the stakeholders view discussed in chapter 5
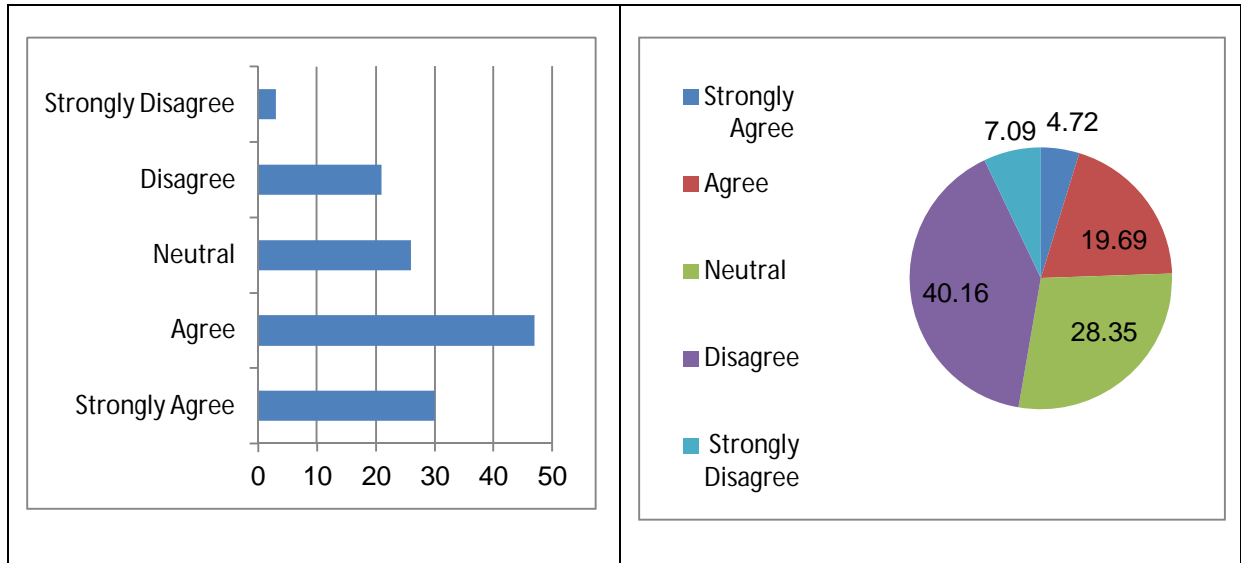
Figure 6.11: Higher Fee Structure represents Quality

A student from International Islamic University, during the pilot study commented in Urdu that;

LUMS اسی لئے اچھی ہے کے ان کی فیس بہت زیادہ ہے

(Closest Meaning: LUMS is good business school because they have high fee structure)

It is very important to note that students perceive high fee structure business schools to be delivering Service-Quality. Also, it does not influence student decision making in a country where in most of the cases students or their parents fund their higher education.
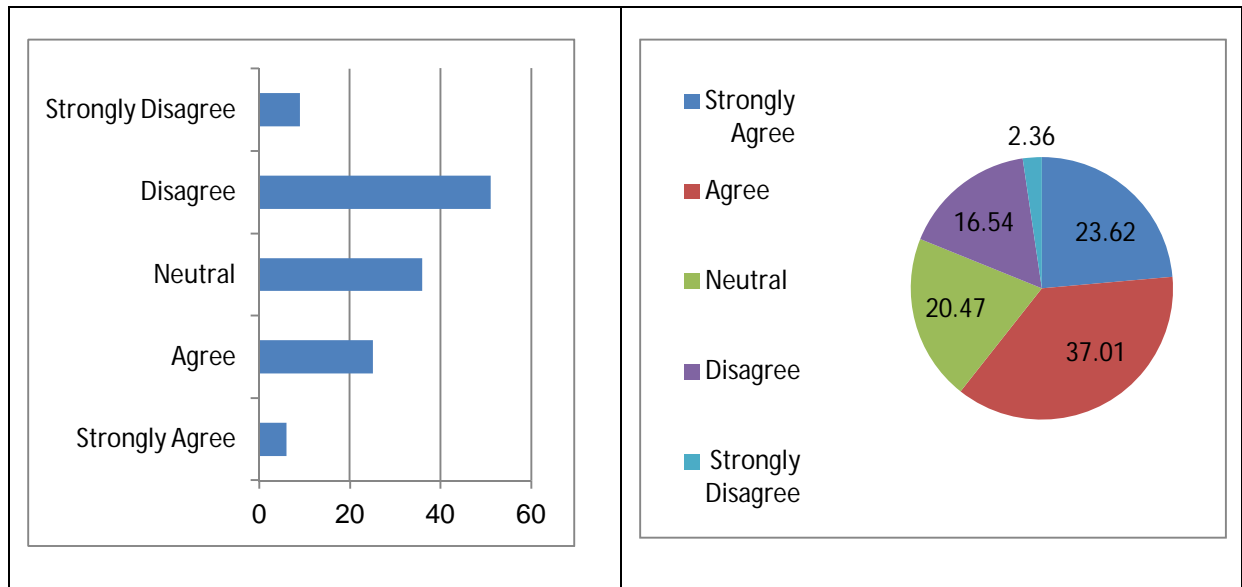
Figure 6.12: Fee Structure plays a vital role in Student Decision Making

6.4.9. Responsiveness

The responsiveness and availability of teaching and support staff is considered to be an important determinant of Service-Quality for about 75 % of the students. A student comments on the public sector business schools in general;

'*We don't join public sector universities just because the teaching staff is never available for guidance"*

The comment implies the availability of teaching and support staff. The responsiveness of the staff affects student perception for the institution. Also, the student in critical of the public sector institutions in general which have not been able to deliver good Service-Quality.
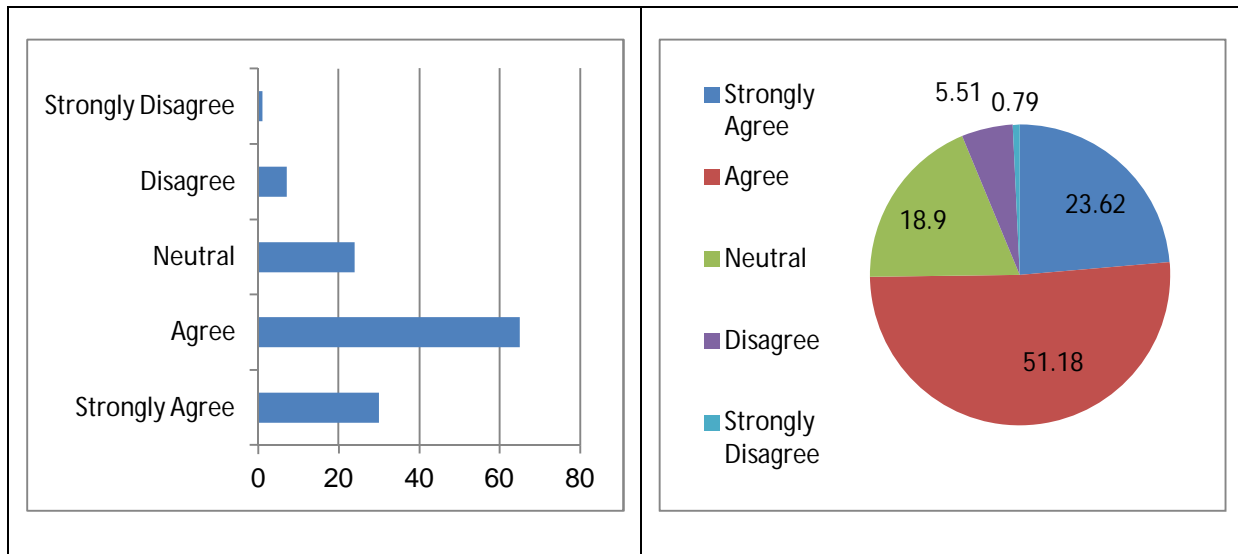
Figure 6.13: Responsiveness of Teaching & Support Staff

6.4.10.   Industry – Academia Liaison

Almost 62 % of the students think that industry – academia liaison is one of the most important determinants of Service-Quality. This perception of strong linkages with industry makes students assume that Pakistani business schools need to produce industry specific MBA graduates. For example, business graduates for financial sector or the telecommunication sector according to Pakistani business market as represented in figure 6.14.

From the student perspective, if most of the students get employed within the industry within first six months of the graduation, then it assumed that the business school is delivering effective Service-Quality. The student alumni play a strong role in determining the industry – academia liaison and the overall Service-Quality as shown in figure 6.17.
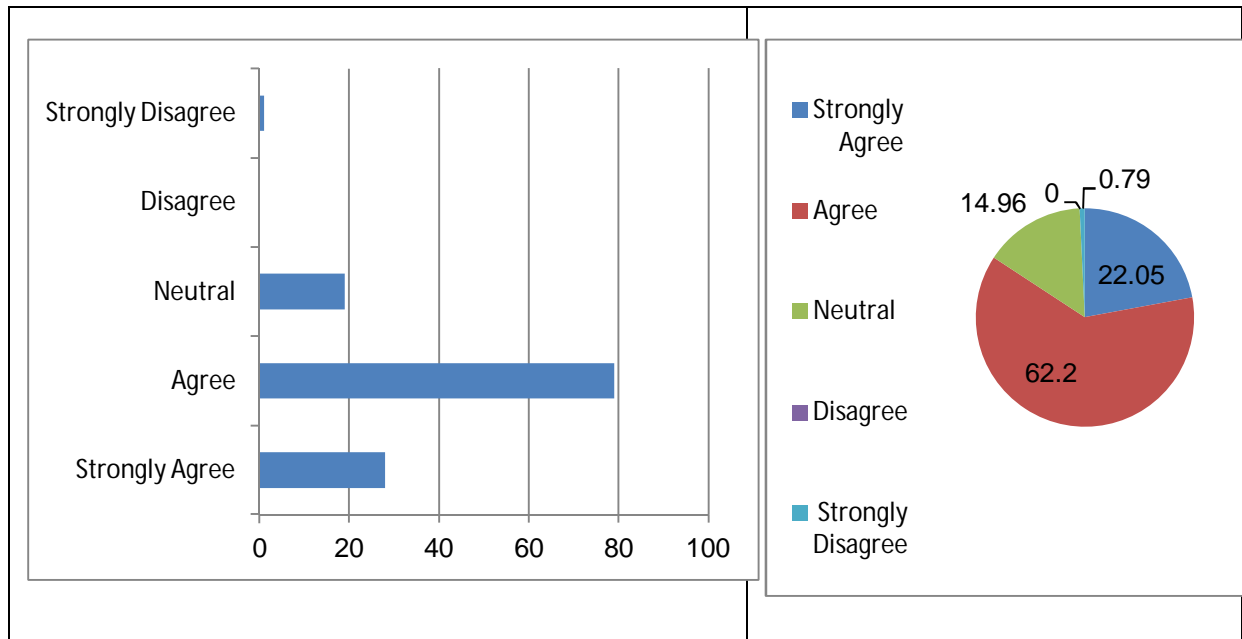
Figure 6.14: Effective industry - academia liaison
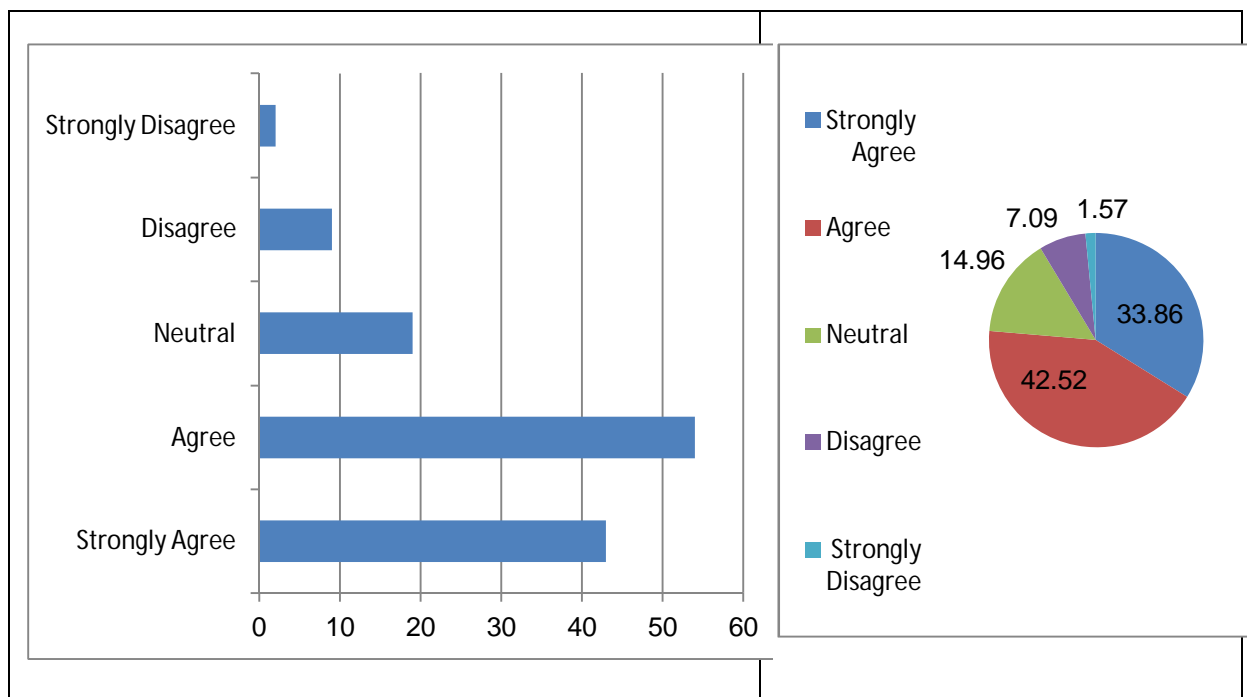
Figure 6.15: Industry specific MBA graduates production
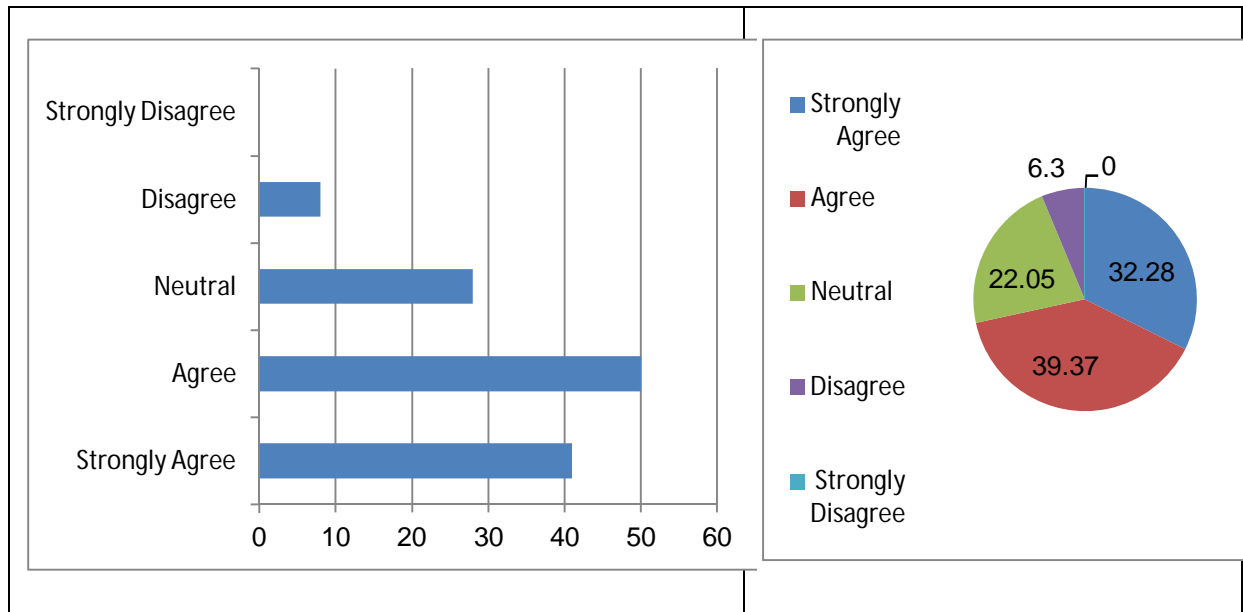
Figure 6.16: Industry absorption after graduation
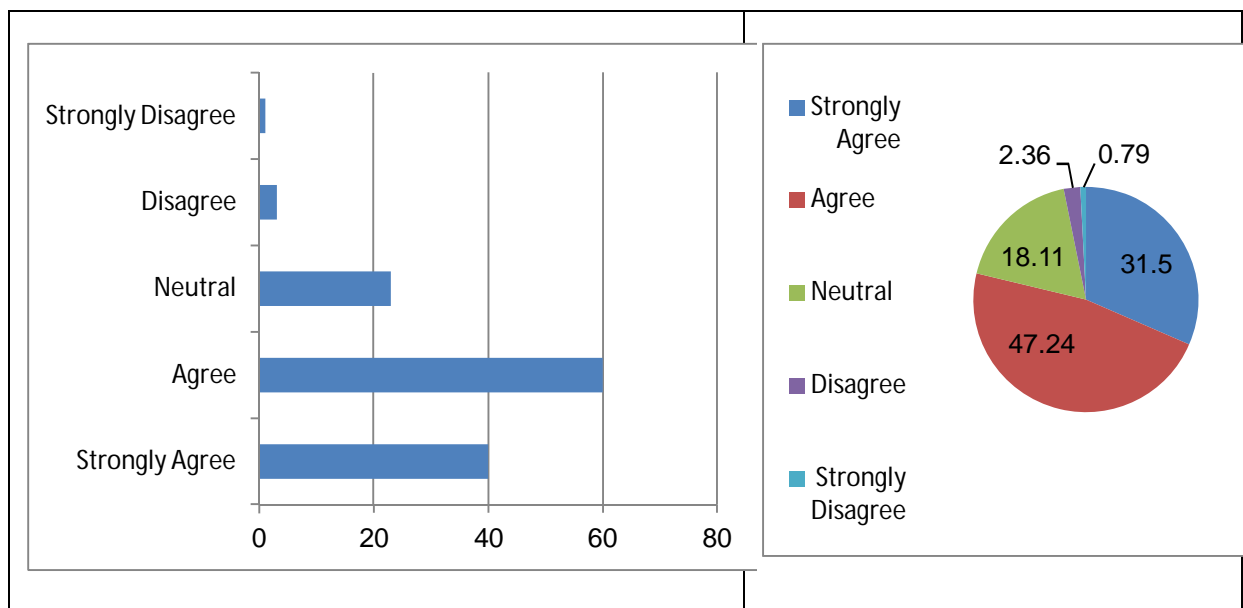
Figure 6.17: Student Alumni

6.4.11.   Outcome of Education

The figure 6.18 shows that most of the students agree that if the business school helps in embedding social and ethical values in the students' profile, this means that the business school is delivering better Service-Quality.

Also, one of the items of out to education is the process of constant mentoring and guidance for the students. Most of the students agree that constant mentoring and guidance represents Service-Quality.
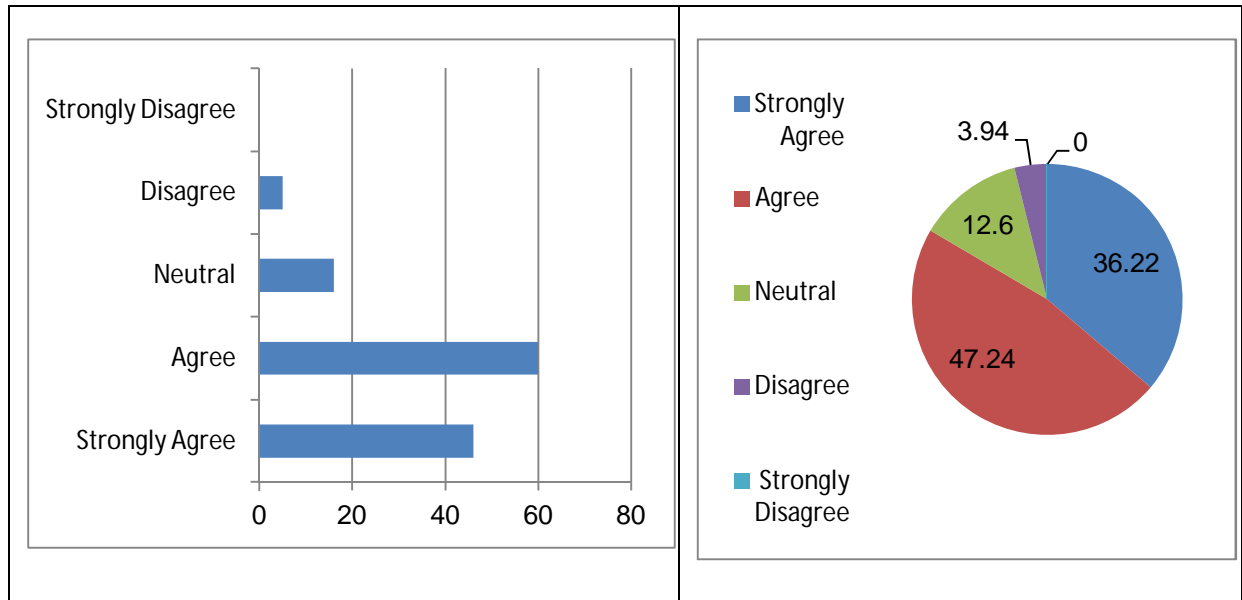
Figure 6.18: Graduates have corporate social responsibility and ethical values
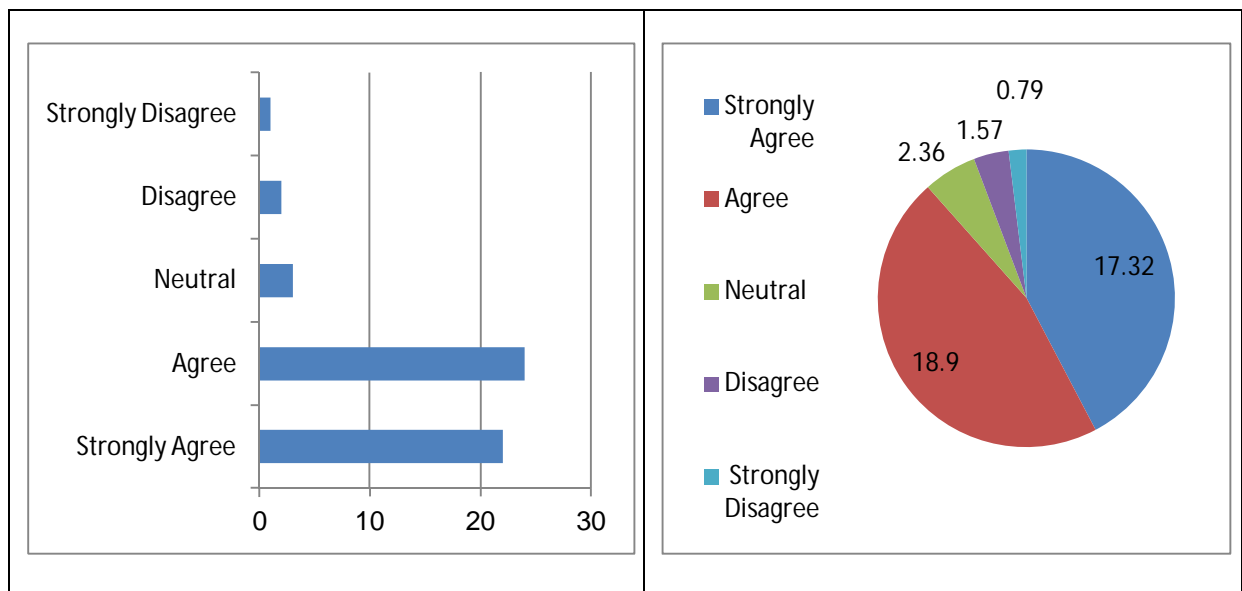
Figure 6.19: Constant Mentoring and career guidance

6.4.12. Research & Development

From the student perspective promoting R & D at MBA level and introducing a research based culture within the business school represents Service-Quality. Students strongly agree that R & D is a determinant of Service-Quality. A student from IM Sciences, Peshawar commented;

"*We also need to learn how to do research, it's not just PhDs job*"

The student here is referring that research is very important at MBA level as well. Thus, if there is research based culture within the business school, it is best suited for the teaching staff and the MBA students as well. Apparently the students have a contradictory view about the research and development compared to other stakeholders' perceptions discussed in chapter 5.
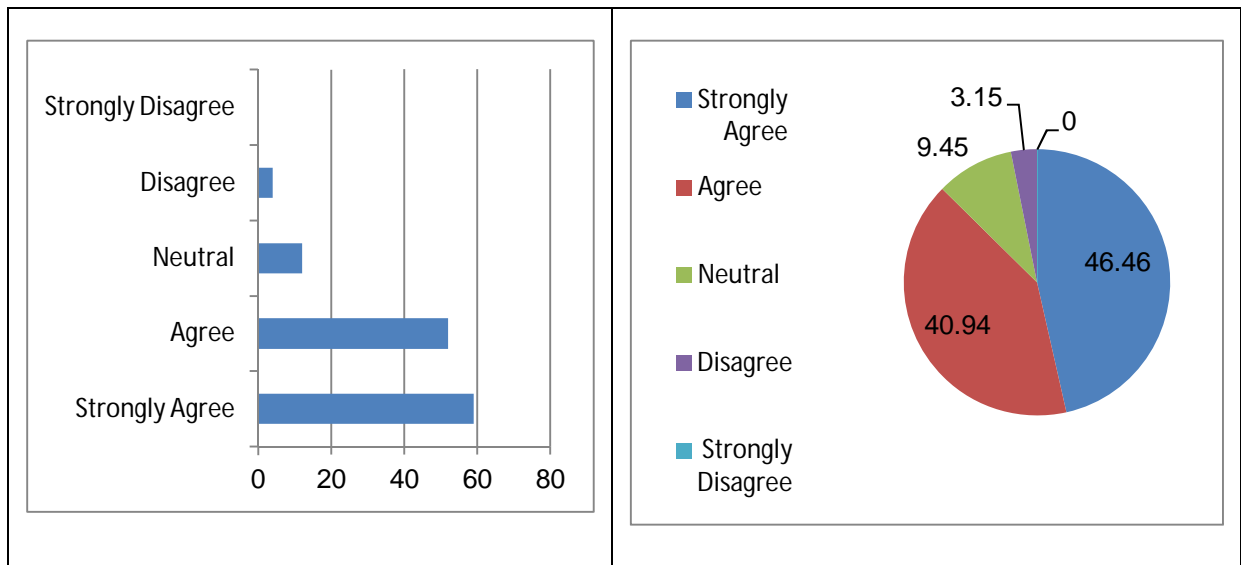
Figure 6.20: Introducing research at MBA level
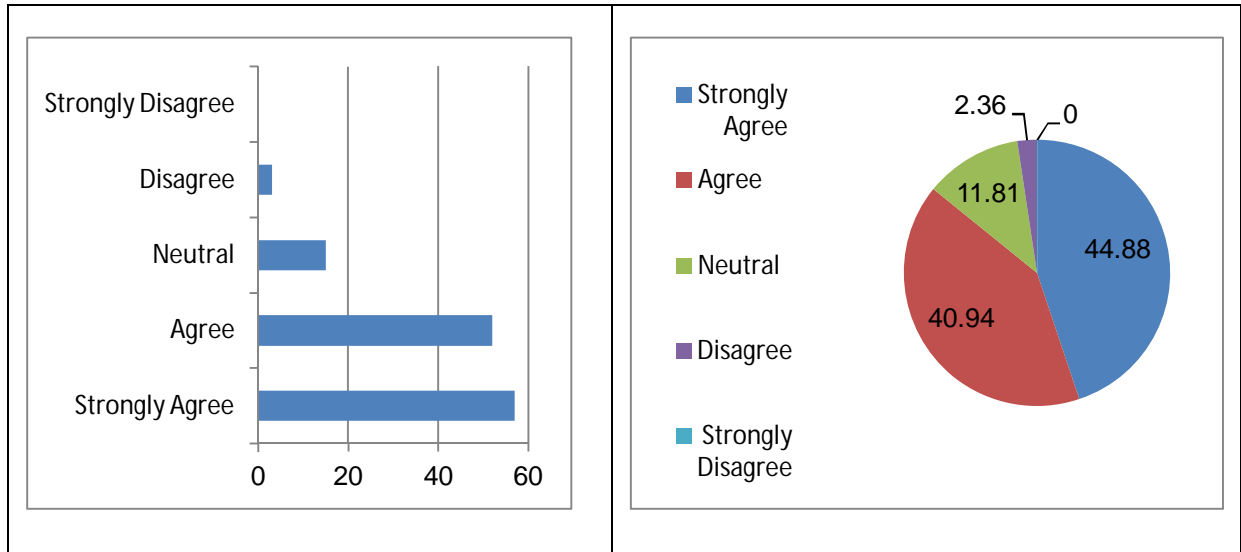
Figure 6.21: Promoting an innovative and research based culture

6.4.13.   Student Background

The student background has a strong role to play in determining the overall performance of the business school.

امیر گھروں کے لوگ LUMS اور IBA جیسی جگہوں پر پڑھ سکتے

(Closest Translation: People from rich family backgrounds can only study in business schools, such as, LUMS and IBA).

The student is discussing his personal aspiration of joining the top business school in his perception, that is, LUMS, Lahore. He could not join because he did not have enough financial resources to join the institution. So, according to his perception you need to have sound financial background to get into a top business school. Also, the student is discussing that a certain elite group joins institutions like LUMS.
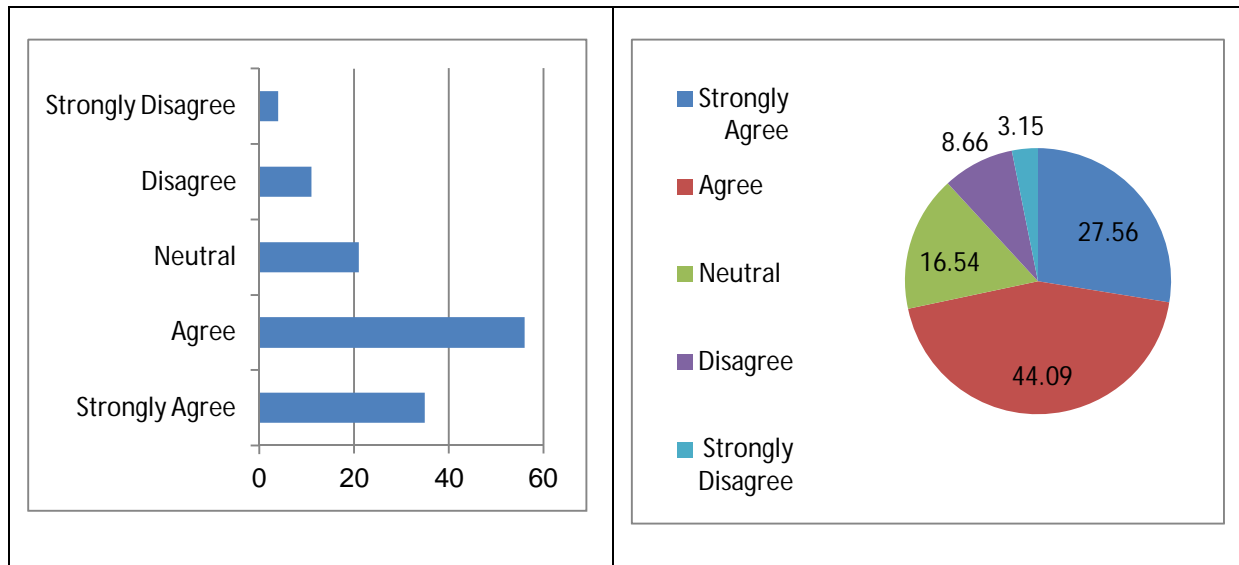
Figure 6.22: The student academic and socio cultural background

6.5. Which Service-Quality Determinants (SQD) are most and least important from the business school's perspective?

The Service-Quality determinants used to evaluate the perceptions of stakeholder groups are represented in figure 6.23 to show the relevant importance of the Service-Quality determinants from the student perspective. This shows that curriculum design, branding of the business school and lecturer profile are given the most importance by the Pakistani students. However, the Pakistani students could not relate the fee structure and their socio cultural background to the level of service provided by the business school.

The determinants have been derived according to perceptions of all the stakeholder groups. All the respondent groups which were interviewed as discussed in chapter have responded to this part of the questionnaire by identifying the most important and least important determinants in their perception.
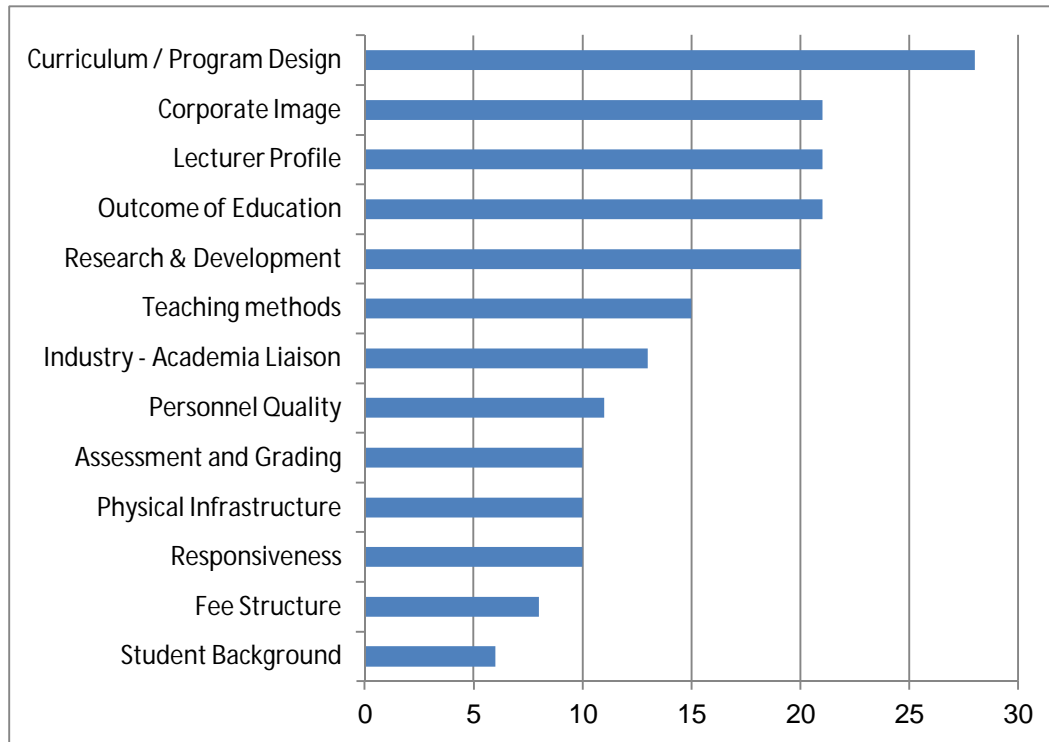
Figure 6.23: Relative Importance of Stakeholders

Figure 6.23 shows that from student perspective curriculum design, outcome of education brand-name, lecturer profile and research and development are considered important determinants of Service-Quality. However, the student background and fee structure are considered the least important determinants.

Figure 6.23 shows that from student perspective curriculum design, outcome of education brand-name, lecturer profile and research and development are considered important determinants of Service-Quality. However, the student background and fee structure are considered the least important determinants. In the questionnaire, access to facilities was added as a separate question for better understanding but in the research framework it is not selected as an individual Service-Quality determinant. The questions related to access are discussed with physical infrastructure.

6.6. Relative importance of various stakeholders amongst each other

The relative importance of the stakeholder groups have been derived from the perceptions of all the stakeholder groups. All the stakeholder groups were required to comment on the importance of the other stakeholder groups according to their perception.

Thus, all the stakeholder groups perceive students as the most important stakeholder group while teaching and support staff as the second most important stakeholder group. However, the accreditation bodies are perceived to have least importance from all stakeholders' perspective.
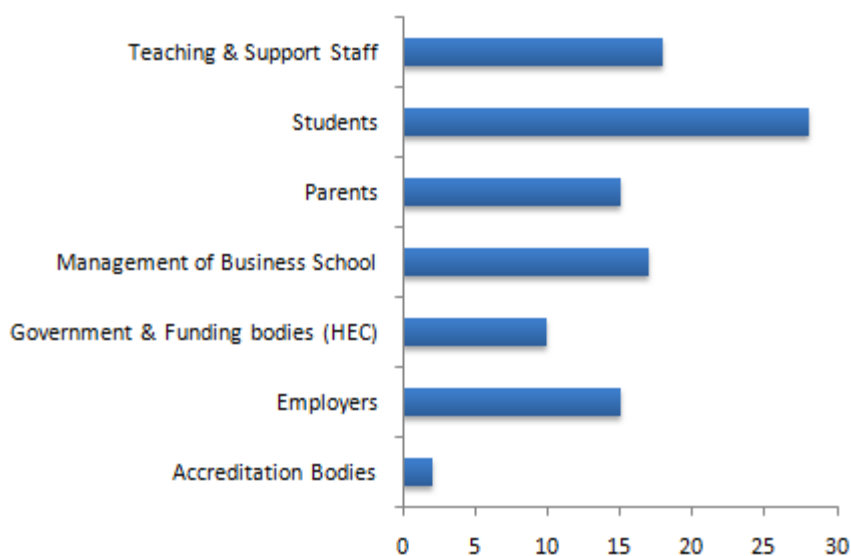
Figure 6.24: Relative Importance of Stakeholders

6.7. Conclusions

The Service-Quality is bit vague for the MBA students; they perceive things on superficial level. However, students perceive if the business school has good teaching faculty, which can deliver the using the most effective teaching methods, then the business school will be delivering better Service-Quality. Fee structure apparently is not a concern for students if they are receiving good quality education services. While the branding and the infrastructure of the institution influence student perception.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

7.1. Introduction

The concept of quality is an established concept in the manufacturing and has been discussed by various researchers (Abbott, 1955; Feigenbaum, 1951; Gilmore, 1974; Levitt, 1972;Crosby, 1979; Juran, 1974, 1988; Taguchi; Ross, 1989).

The rapid and continuing expansion of the service economy at global level has led to an increased interest in Service-Quality as reflected in the outputs of a wide variety of quality gurus such as, Feigenbaum (1945), Crosby (1967) and Juran (1956). More specifically the focus remained on quality in manufacturing until late 70s throughout the literature. In 1983 Feigenbaum started to address the needs of quality in services. Since then authors and researchers have shown a far greater interest in Service-Quality. Indeed, Service-Quality has now become an established concept which is perceived to influence competitive advantage of the organizations in the current era of services economy (Walker, 2006).

Given the need for a deeper understanding of Service-Quality in higher education, it motivated the researcher to initiate a study of the Service-Quality, in the context of business schools. Moreover, the study was innovative in that it focussed upon the perceptions of stakeholders, and addressed thirteen key determinants of Service-Quality, as derived from the literature. In terms of its structure, the outline of the research is thus presented in chapter 1 whilst chapter 2 reviews the important contributions from the literature. This critical review of the literature then helped to establish the research framework. Based on the research framework, the research methodology and data collection methods were discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 then provided an in-depth qualitative analysis and comparison of perceptions of various stakeholder groups. Chapter 6 discusses the quantitative results obtained from student stakeholder group.

After discussing the results in detail in the qualitative chapter 5 along with the descriptive analysis of results in chapter 6, the chapter will now present a critical discussion of the results. Moreover, the chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn

from the entire research process. Finally, this section will summarise the implications of the research along with a review of future research areas, which could be productively studied.

7.2. Discussion of Results

This section discusses the conclusions drawn from the qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The data analysis presented in both the chapters is a reflection of perception of seven stakeholder groups. However, six stakeholder groups' perceptions were studied qualitatively while the student stakeholder group's perceptions were studied quantitatively. Moreover, the student stakeholder group provided informal comments and feedback along with the comments on the questionnaire. This helped the researcher to draw the conclusions from all stakeholder groups and combine them to present an overall perception of Service-Quality within Pakistani business schools context. The study has been conducted to assess and evaluate Service-Quality using the Service-Quality determinants approach, so the following will be discussing the conclusions according to the determinants;

7.2.1. Curriculum and Programme Design

The curriculum design has been given a lot of importance by the academics in Pakistani business schools as it is considered as the key to 'streamlining the business school service delivery processes. All the stakeholder groups, including the student stakeholder group where perceptions were evaluated quantitatively, perceive curriculum design of the business school to be of high importance.

However, the seven stakeholder groups perceive Service-Quality according to their specific needs. For example, the student stakeholder group views curriculum design as a service aspect which helps them find a better job in the market as discussed in section 6.4.1. While the stakeholders within the business school, that is, teaching and support staff, Management of the Business School and the teaching and support staff perceive the importance of curriculum design by making it a central process for the business schools. They perceive it to be in-line with the industry needs. However, the industry does not view the curriculum design as a key determinant but they focus

on the delivery process of the curriculum. The same issue has been addressed in 'Teaching Methodologies' determinant in section 5.8. The employers view curriculum design process within the business schools as a mere activity of replicating the curriculum of the business schools located in the west. While the suggestions have been provided to make the curriculum more global in terms of the Service-Quality aspects but should be more local to understand the needs of Pakistani business market. The Government and funding bodies (HEC) again present a different view on the curriculum design. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) works in close collaboration with the accreditation council for business schools (NBEAC) to make a uniform curriculum for business schools all over Pakistan. So, according to HEC and NBEAC, curriculum design may not be treated as a Service-Quality aspect but a means of creating uniformity of curriculum, so that all the business schools are following similar standards of education.

The programme design is viewed differently by students as compared to other stakeholders. For students, it is an opportunity to select and choose modules and specialties' according to their aptitude. However, the academics within the business school do not perceive specialization programmes are related to Service-Quality. The management of the business schools along with the teaching and support staff perceive specialization programmes as an activity of capacity building of the business schools. This means that if the business schools have enough resources in terms of infrastructure, teaching and support staff and the need from the market, only then the business schools should be offering specialization programmes. The employers view specialization as a marketing tool for the business school instead of a real Service-Quality aspect. In contrast to this approach, the Government and funding body views programme design as a way of bringing uniformity in terms of the length of the MBA programme.

Thus, the curriculum and programme design, in general, are judged to be of most importance by all the stakeholder groups, based on both the qualitative results and quantitative results in figure 6.23.

7.2.2. Personnel Quality

The personnel quality determinant refers to the quality of services provided by the administration staff. The student stakeholder group views personnel quality as an important determinant of Service-Quality as the students have very strong views and perceptions of the business schools based upon the quality of the personnel, that is, the support and administration staff. Moreover, the informal comments provided by the students discussed in section 6.4.2 support the argument that students view personnel quality as an important determinant of Service-Quality. However, if we look closely in the graph, the personnel quality is ranked 7th in the graph. Hence, it can be concluded that although the student stakeholder group perceives strong importance of personnel quality as a determinant of Service-Quality but there are other determinants which are more important for the student stakeholder group. While the stakeholders within the business schools view personnel quality as integral part of the business school and not as a separate discernable element for the students that can be assessed as part of Service-Quality.

However, in general the business school managers have not given a lot of importance to the quality of the personnel. The employers did not comment on the personnel quality of the business schools as they do not interact with the support staff and hence perceive little or no importance of the quality of the personnel to the Service-Quality of the business schools. Also, the government and funding body along with the accreditation council views personnel quality as a 'private' matter of the business schools as these organizations control the regulatory aspects of the business school. Based on the results personnel quality is a mid ranked Service-Quality determinant.

7.2.3. Physical Infrastructure

The student stakeholder group largely perceives good physical infrastructure as a determinant of better Service-Quality and a matter of pride among their family and friends as discussed in 6.4.3. However, the general perception about physical infrastructure is that it should be good and should be fulfilling the needs of the students. The management views the physical infrastructure not as a Service-Quality determinant but the absence of a good physical infrastructure may damage the

perceptions of good Service-Quality for the business schools. The employers are generally indifferent to the needs of a good infrastructure of the business school as they do not perceive building as a differentiator from the business schools perspective. However, this does not ignore the need for having minimum acceptable criteria for the infrastructure which is normally monitored by the regulatory body, that is, the Higher Education Commission. Based on the results the physical infrastructure is important for social acceptance and for the fulfilment of the requirements of the Higher Education Commission but does not necessarily reflect a high level of Service-Quality.

7.2.4. Corporate Image

This determinant has mixed perceptions among different stakeholder groups. The student stakeholder group associates good Service-Quality with the top business schools as the corporate image needs to be built. The informal comments and feedback provided by the students make the researcher believe that most of the students join a business school which has built reputation among employers, their friends and family. Considering the perception of parents' stakeholder group, the parents do not have a general understanding about the Service-Quality aspects about the business schools, but rely broadly on the reputation of the business school to as an indicator sponsor their child for their MBA degree.

The stakeholders within the business schools view branding of the institution as a marketing element and thus a determinant of Service-Quality. However, the employers do appreciate the brand name and the branding of the business school which allows the business school to perceive about the quality of the graduates from the business school. Although, there is an appreciation and understand of branding as a Service-Quality element but in Pakistani business schools context, the employers do not hire graduates from the business school which have perceived brand name. They hire from all tiers of the business schools which allows them to have a good mix of the employees within the organization. Thus, the employers support the idea that corporate image is a determinant of Service-Quality. The NBEAC views branding of the institution as part of effective strategic management process.

The international exchange programmes of the business schools with other business schools around the globe are considered as Service-Quality determinants by the students. However, the management supports the same view by believing that a business school may be able to develop effective exchange programmes by first having a strong brand name in the market. Thus, the branding of the business schools and their international exchange programmes are perceived in a different context by most of the stakeholder groups.

The stakeholder groups have perceived that good Service-Quality leads to better brand name as opposed to a good brand name Service-Quality. In contrast the student stakeholder group has ranked this determinant very high as shown in figure 6.23. This means that the student group may genuinely perceive branding as a determinant of Service Quality or they have misinterpreted this determinant incorrectly.

7.2.5. Assessment and Grading

Different stakeholder groups have mixed views about assessment and grading and its perception as a Service-Quality determinant. The student stakeholder group although do not like being evaluated on very high standards but appreciate the tougher assessment criteria and perceive good Service-Quality standards. However, the stakeholders within the business schools generally do not like to evaluate students' abilities in terms of grades. Also, in their perception it may not be a determinant of Service-Quality but the academics strongly believe that there has to be a differentiating factor between the students' abilities. Thus, the grading criteria is only differentiating factor among the students which can be used by the business schools. Also, the employers appreciate the differences of the assessment and grading criteria between the business schools but do not perceive a relationship between tough assessment and grading criteria to the Service-Quality of the business school. The parents' stakeholder group perceives a strong relationship between tougher assessment and grading criteria to Service-Quality of the business school.

Thus, the tougher assessment and grading criteria as a determinant of Service-Quality is ranked towards the bottom end of the graph representing students'

perceptions. Also, the results from the qualitative data did not provide enough evidence or sufficient consistency of views between stakeholder groups to identify assessment and grading as an important determinant of Service-Quality.

7.2.6. Faculty Profile

In general the quality of the services provided by the business schools is largely perceived upon the quality of the teaching staff, their qualification and their prior experience in industry in Pakistani business schools. The student stakeholder group perceives a strong relationship between faculty profile and the Service-Quality of the business school as shown in figure 6.8 and 6.9. The management of the business schools view the importance of the quality of teaching staff as key to delivering the processes within the business schools. Although all the stakeholder groups have commented about the importance of the quality of teaching staff and its impact on the perception of Service-Quality but differ with the perception of Service-Quality standards set by HEC. The regulatory body, HEC, views that the teaching staff should have a PhD to enable better Service-Quality for the business school while the employers appreciate the teaching staff that has a prior experience in industry so that the teaching staff can bridge the gaps between understanding the needs of industry and academia. The regulatory body is more concerned that teaching staff should be research active which can lead to ignoring an important aspect of higher education institutions and that is the teaching services.

Thus, all the stakeholder groups agree and perceive to have a lot of importance by the quality of teaching staff along with their professional credentials. The lecturer profile is ranked among top three determinants of Service-Quality and will be discussed in section 7.3.

7.2.7. Teaching Methods

The student stakeholder group perceives that the teaching methods have an impact on the Service-Quality of the business school but have not commented on the most appropriate teaching methods. Thus, teaching methods is a mid ranked Service-Quality determinant according to student stakeholder group.

However, the academics within the business school believe that the teaching methods are the differentiating factor for the business schools. A similar perception is followed by the employers that the business schools need to focus more on the teaching methods instead of focusing on the curriculum. Based upon the quality of comments made by few very informed respondents, the teaching method is ranked among most important determinants of Service-Quality in Pakistani business schools.

7.2.8. Fee Structure

The fee structure as a determinant of Service-Quality has varied perceptions that conflict. The student stakeholder group perceives a higher fee structure to be a determinant of Service-Quality. However, the students when asked about whether fee structure formed an important part of their own decision making, they stated they did not consider it to be an important determinant. The academics in general do not see a relationship between higher fee structure and Service-Quality but then believe that in general it is a wider perception to link high fees to Service-Quality. However, the variation in fee structure in Pakistani business schools is rationalized by the management of the business schools who understand that government funded business schools allow lower fees to be charged in comparison to the privately owned business schools.

While the academics perceive fee structure to be a very complex phenomenon which needs to be further explored in Pakistani context. Based upon the reputation of the business school the student stakeholder group and the parents may pay high fees but still there may not be a relationship between high fee structure and Service-Quality. The social dynamics and priorities for spending money are different in Pakistan. Thus, it cannot be easily concluded if fee structure will reflect Service-Quality.

Thus, the student stakeholder group has perceived little or no importance to fee structure as discussed in section 6.4.8 while strong conclusions may not be drawn from the qualitative results. However, a general understanding is that fee structure is comparatively a less important determinant of Service-Quality according to most of the stakeholder groups.

7.2.9. Responsiveness

Responsiveness as a Service-Quality determinant has not been recognized by most of the stakeholders except the student stakeholder group. This group perceives somewhat relationship between the responsiveness and the Service-Quality of the business schools as shown in figure 6.13. In Pakistani higher education context, the stakeholders within the business schools have not commented on the importance on the responsiveness and availability of the teaching and academic staff thus there is a lack of evidence on the determinant. Thus, it can be concluded based upon the qualitative and quantitative results that responsiveness has little or no importance as a determinant of Service-Quality.

7.2.10.   Industry – Academia Liaison

The student stakeholder group perceives the employment of MBA students within six months of their graduation is strongly linked with the Service-Quality of the business schools. Also, the stakeholders within the business schools perceive industry – academia liaison as an important determinant of better Service-Quality. However, there is a general understanding among the academics and the employers that the industry - academia liaison is not effectively exploited to get the maximum results out of the relationship. Moreover, the industry is generally very critical of the services provided by the business schools.

The student stakeholder group views industry-academia liaison as an important determinant of Service-Quality, if effective relationship between industry and academia is taken to mean, helping the students get employed immediately after their graduation. This is a narrower interpretation of this determinant than the other stakeholders. The teaching and support staff views the importance of student alumni in determining the employment rate of the business school which in turn is reflective of the Service-Quality of the business school. Thus, the teaching and support staff perceives industry-academia liaison in terms of student employment while other stakeholder groups have wider agenda and perspectives towards industry-academia liaison.

Based upon the results, the determinant has modest perceived importance.

7.2.11.　　　Outcome of Education

The student stakeholder group perceives that if business schools help embed ethical and social responsibility in an MBA graduate, that is reflective of high Service-Quality. However, the management and teaching staff have a view based on the practicality of embedding social and ethical values into an MBA graduate. The stakeholders within the business schools do not perceive such skills reflecting Service-Quality as according to them, these skills cannot be developed by teaching a three credit hour course.　The stakeholders outside the business school have not been able to comment on this determinant of Service-Quality. Thus, due to lack of strong evidence from the qualitative results, about the importance, the outcome to education has less perceived importance to determine the Service-Quality of the business school.

7.2.12.　　　Research and Development

The student stakeholder group perceived a strong link between research and development and Service Quality, as discussed in section 6.4.12

However, the academics; the teaching and support staff and the business school managers contradict this view by assuming that more industry based research is appropriate for MBA students. However, according to their perception academic research is not a requirement at MBA level and thus is not reflective of the Service-Quality of the business school. The employers support the same argument by not considering academic research as a need for the industry. While the Programme Manager of National Business Accreditation Council contradicts the academics and practitioners and suggests that more academic research should be introduced at MBA level. From the NBEAC perspective it is a determinant of Business school's Service-Quality.

Therefore based upon the quantitative results research and development is an important determinant while the qualitative results are conflicting with the importance of research and development. Thus, based upon the comments of key stakeholder groups and their level of interaction between the industry and academia, it can be

derived that research and development is a less important determinant of Service-Quality.

7.2.13. Student Background

The student stakeholder group has not been able to interpret 'student background' as a determinant of Service-Quality. However, in their perception it is the financial background of the individual student which takes them to top business schools. Thus, the students perceive 'student background' as a determinant of Service-Quality in terms of financial background of the student as discussed in the comments in section 6.4.13

There is a clear contrast of opinions between stakeholder groups within the business school and outside the business schools. The academics; that is, the teaching and support staff and the management view student background in terms of the academic background in the context of education stream, the student has followed, that is, Matriculation system or the British / American education system. Thus, the student background is reflective of better Service-Quality if the business schools have more students from British / American education system. However, the employers contradict the same argument by perceiving student background not as a determinant of Service-Quality. The employers perceive it is the job of business schools to admit students from various education streams prevalent in Pakistan and to groom them according to market standards.

Thus, based on the strong understanding of the employer stakeholder group, it can be concluded that student background has a strong role to play in determining the Service-Quality of the business school.

7.2.14. Reconciliation of Service-Quality Determinants

The importance of the Service-Quality determinants has been derived from systematic criteria where following factors have been considered;

- If all of the stakeholder groups agree to the importance of a certain Service-Quality determinant.

- If most of the stakeholder groups agree to the importance of a certain Service-Quality determinant.
- If the respondents from a certain stakeholder group are well informed about Service-Quality aspects of the business schools

The key stakeholders who have been able to contribute towards the formation of the importance of Service-Quality determinants are the teaching staff, business school managers and the employers who collaboratively define the importance for the business schools and the MBA students. The most important determinants are mutually agreed by all the stakeholder groups who commented about the importance of a particular determinant these were ranked 'Very Important'

Where the stakeholder groups have been able to provide a level of agreement and most of the different stakeholder groups agree yet there are some contrary views or do not have a strong argument were ranked as 'Important'. Moreover, if stakeholder groups did not have an opinion about a particular Service-Quality determinant or the researcher could not find strong evidence, then the determinant was ranked 'Less Important'

Concluding all the Service-Quality determinants, the following table will now present the importance of all the determinants in a tabular form, results derived from qualitative and quantitative results. The importance of Service-Quality determinants has been derived from the opinions provided by different stakeholder groups. However, the validity of the answers has been evaluated through the most important and most informed stakeholder group as discussed in chapter 4. For example the one of the respondent from the employer stakeholder group has worked in academia and industry. Moreover, he has graduated from American universities and has been involved in the Service-Quality design processes of the business schools. Thus, the responses provided by him and other stakeholders who have an understanding of Service-Quality process have been given more weight.

Furthermore, the student stakeholder group provided responses in form of questionnaire. However, the student stakeholder group does not have a strong understanding of the Service-Quality process due to lack of awareness of the

dynamics of the business schools. There if there are strong responses provided by the students but the other stakeholder groups have responded to the questions in a slightly different manner, then the overall importance of the particular Service-Quality determinant has been averaged out.

Determinant	Qualitative Results	Quantitative Results
Curriculum	Very Important	Very Important
Personnel Quality	Less Important	Important
Physical Evidence	Less Important	Less Important
Corporate Image	Important	Important
Assessment & Grading	Less Important	Important
Faculty Profile	Very Important	Very Important
Teaching Methods	Very Important	Important
Fee Structure	Less Important	Less Important
Responsiveness	Less Important	Important
Industry – Academia Liaison	Important	Important
Outcome of Education	Less Important	Less Important
Research & Development	Less Important	Very Important
Student Background	Important	Less Important

Table 7.1: Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

Based upon the criteria discussed above, the researcher draws conclusions about the importance of Service-Quality determinants. The most important determinants are curriculum and programme design, the faculty profile and the teaching methods.

The mid ranked determinants are Industry-Academia liaison and corporate image of the business schools. The least important determinants are the fee structure and the physical infrastructure of the business schools.

Therefore, this leads to the contributions made through the research discussed is section 7.4

7.2.15.   Importance of Stakeholder Groups

Figure 6.24 shows students as the most important stakeholder group; however this is skewed by the fact that this survey group was dominated by students who ranked themselves the most important. The importance of this group is high as it is supported by the opinions of the other stakeholder groups. However the student group tended to be less discerning in their perceptions of the determinants with the determinants ranked relatively low on their quantitative data. For example, the physical evidence or the physical infrastructure in section 6.4.3 were still expressed as important by the students while other stakeholder groups have not commented very strongly on the physical infrastructure.. The students ranked nearly all determinants to be important rather than highlighting the important few.

The second most important stakeholder group has been found to be the teaching and support staff, which are perceived as important and thus rationalize the validity of the Service-Quality determinants as the teaching staff is better informed about the Service-Quality aspects of the business schools.

7.3.   Research Contributions

From the detailed qualitative and quantitative data analysis on the perceptions of stakeholder groups, there are five major contributions to out of this research work. The research contributions are also derived from the research gaps discussed in chapter 2.

7.3.1. Assessing Perceptions of Service-Quality

Very few studies have discussed the 'perceptions only' or 'performance only' model of Service-Quality which has been suggested by Cronin and Taylor (1992). All the remaining models of Service-Quality (discussed in chapter 2), which assess and conceptualize Service-Quality, use the prior experience of customer, for exploring the Service-Quality levels. Therefore, the first contribution made from the research is that it explores Service-Quality perceptions of Service-Quality in higher education sector which is not much researched area. Thus, study has provided the importance of Service-Quality determinants according to perceptions paradigm.

7.3.2. Assessing Perceptions of Service-Quality from Multiple Stakeholders' Perspective

The second contribution made through the research is the assessment of perceptions from multiple stakeholders' perspective. All the existing research in higher education institutions have focused on one or two stakeholder groups. However, the current research has explored perceptions of Service-Quality from seven different stakeholder groups. Thus, the research provides a much wider and richer understanding of the improvement of Service-Quality levels within the higher education institutions. Section 7.3 has provided a conclusion of the importance of Service-Quality determinants from various stakeholder groups' perspective.

7.3.3. Assessing Service-Quality in a developing country's Higher Education Sector

Service-Quality is a phenomenon which is more widely explored in developed nations as discussed by Ghobadian (1984). Although the concept of Service-Quality is now being researched and explored by developing nations as well but the higher education sector is still under explored as compared to the developing nations. This study contributes to the Service-Quality assessment aspects in a developing country higher education sector. Thus, the contribution from the research provides an insight for the developed nations as well.

7.3.4. Assessing the relative importance of Stakeholders in Higher Education

Chapter 6 has discussed the relative importance of stakeholder groups. As discussed in section 7.3.2 much study has not been conducted in higher education sector, thus, there is hardly any research on the relative importance of the stakeholders for higher education institutions. Therefore, this research provides an insight of the relative importance of stakeholders which is thus useful for the management of the higher education institutions.

7.3.5. Studying Business Schools in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country where business education needs to be researched as there is hardly any research conducted for Pakistani business schools. Thus, this research further contributes by providing a meaningful understanding of the Pakistani business schools.

The major contributions derived from the study can further be used to draw some theoretical and managerial implications of the study which will be discussed in section 7.6.

7.4. Implications for Research

The study offers implications both for researchers and managers working in Service-Quality domain which will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

7.4.1. Theoretical Implications

The implications identified for the study are represented below:

- An innovative element of the study is the creation of a framework to study the perceptions of multiple stakeholders in higher education institutions. This, evaluation of Service-Quality levels from multiple stakeholders have not been conducted in past in higher education institutions. Thus, it provides, a basis for researchers to further explore various internal and external stakeholders of the higher education institutions and thus studying their perceptions of Service-Quality. Although, the study has been explicitly designed to study stakeholders of higher education institutions but it can equally be applicable to all other organizations that have multiple stakeholders, such as, public sector organizations.
- There has been prior research into Service-Quality aspects of higher education institutions but does not necessarily evaluate perceptions which are extremely significant in studies similar to that. For example, a student perception of an MBA programme of a business school.

- This research has specifically looked at the developing country's business school. This can intrigue researchers to further investigate into developing country's research by conducting comparative study of developing and developed nations.

7.4.2. Managerial Implications

The managerial implications for the research are discussed in the following lines

- One of the key managerial implications from the management perspective is that the management of the universities or the business schools can conduct a detailed need analysis of the various stakeholders. This need analysis provides the management of the universities to evaluate the contributions of the stakeholders and to prioritize the stakeholders.

- As this study has highlighted the key determinants of Service-Quality, business school management teams can now embark upon initiatives to improve the specific aspects of their overall Service-Quality provision. The three most important determinants of Service-Quality are curriculum and programme design, faculty profile and the teaching methods. LeBlanc and Nguyen (1997) identified the faculty profile and curriculum and programme design as most important factors of excellence in business education. This implies that managers of business schools in Pakistan need to focus on similar issues to those in the West however there are clearly nuances within Pakistan education system that need to be taken into account for instance the sources of funding as discussed in section 2.8.

7.5. Limitations of the Study

In common with all research, it has been possible to highlight several limitations with regard to the design and conduct of this study. In particular, the sophistication of the research design forced certain trade-offs that could limit the study's findings. More specifically, it is important to recognise that the sample size for the main business school was relatively small, that is, five business schools. In total four stakeholder groups from each of the business school were selected for data collection. The

number of business schools investigated was limited because most of the universities did not have formal business schools or the researcher did not have access to the business school either due to political unrest or the severe weather conditions. In strictest sense, the empirical evidence and findings are appropriate for the Pakistani business schools. Any generalizations to other sectors where organizations have multiple stakeholders should be done while taking care of cultural, political and social aspects.

The study has not been conducted from the perceived value of the customers or the stakeholders which could have provided a detailed insight of the perceptions of Service-Quality. The perceived value paradigm could have provided information which could then be used to improve the Service-Quality levels for the individual stakeholder group. The perceived value paradigm is different according to needs of groups, thus the business schools need to design different strategies for each group as discussed in section 2.3.

7.6.   Direction for Future Research

All the research conducted by researchers has certain limitations which provide future avenues of research. Thus, this research has few more aspects to explore such as, conducting the study on a much wider scale. Currently the research has studied five Pakistani business schools which are top ranked institutions of the country in each of the geographic region. The study can further be quantitatively explored to measure the perceptions of the stakeholders in higher education context. The study can also form the basis for other service organizations that have multiple stakeholders. Lastly the study can further be explored from specific stakeholders' perceptions such as studying the perceptions of employers towards the Service-Quality aspects of the business schools in Pakistan or any other developing country.

As discussed in section 7.5, that, the perceived value has not been captured in the current study. Therefore, the study can be enhanced by embedding the perceived value concept into the research which is an interlinked concept of Service-Quality. The study currently has evaluated 13 Service-Quality determinants from seven stakeholder groups. The investigation of SQD can further involve questions related

to value of each determinant and the impact of each determinant in the overall service delivery process.

7.7. Conclusions

The chapter has discussed the qualitative and quantitative results from chapter 5 and chapter 6 along with the summary of the whole research process. Moreover, the chapter has presented a comparison of importance of Service-Quality determinants from the qualitative and quantitative results. Thus, the comparison provided the importance of Service-Quality determinants from the stakeholder groups' perspectives answering Research Question 1:

1. What is the relative importance of the Service-Quality Determinants (SQD) from each stakeholder's perspective?

The research found that the curriculum and programme design, faculty profile and teaching methods are the most important determinants. Moreover, the fee structure and the physical infrastructure are least important determinants of Service-Quality.

Chapter 6 discusses the relative importance of stakeholder groups, thus answering Research Question 2:

2. How do different stakeholder groups perceive the relative importance of other stakeholder groups, in terms of their perceptions of Service-Quality?

The student stakeholder group is considered the most important stakeholder group along with the teaching and support staff. However, the accreditation body is perceived to be the least important stakeholder group. An important point to note here is that the student stakeholder group has commented on the importance of Service-Quality determinants but lack discernment and the student stakeholder group does not provide strong evidence and arguments regarding the importance of Service-Quality determinants.

Thus towards the end of the chapter the criteria for the importance of Service-Quality determinants have been discussed in the chapter. Finally the chapter presents the research contributions and the directions for future research.

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Appendix I

Interview with Dr. HasanSohaibMurad

UMT – Lahore

University of Management, Lahore

Asma: Asslam-u-Alaikum Dr. Hassan. My name is Asma Asrar and I am doing PhD from Loughborough University UK. I am here in Pakistan to conduct research of service quality at business schools from multiple stakeholders' perspective. I would like to interview you in the capacity of Dean of school of business Economics, UMT Lahore. And I would want your perspective of service quality and certain the list of questions. Shall I start with the questions? My first question is regarding the curriculum. How do you see the curriculum design and structure in determining the overall quality of the business school?

Hassan: Certainly, curriculum is the core of academics. It indicates the contents, it indicates the assessment methodology that is been employed, it indicates the outcomes that are being planned. And it also then, I think, clarifies what knowledge we are transferring, we aim at providing and what in addition to knowledge, that is, text book based, how we are going to reinforce that with the real world information. So, curriculum is what students look for when they join a course. It's not only the title that is enough. You know, they look at the course outline and we have to develop all outlines in a manner that they fully understand, what would be in it. So, individually each course act as a building block and at UMT we have taken special care that our course outlines are exhaustive, that they are clearly learning outcome driven, that they point out assessments and they explain assessment and assessment has a variety. It is not just exam based. It has opportunities for self-directed learning, for creative leaning, things like that. And then of course these building blocks within the subject area like marketing, finance, they make a whole, functional whole and then all of these functional areas together, then they make the curriculum of like MBA. Recently we have done am exercise. We have looked into the latest curriculum developments all around the world and then we have developed an MBA curriculum which is I believe, you know, we should be the best in Pakistan. We have gone through extensive research and it is VERY interesting that we have taken people look at curriculum as first as functional silos and within functional silos, we will be taking certain courses and they moved to the last. We, you know, like, MBA program is divided into, like, four steps and each step is a circle. So, they go through the whole process, and then next process and then next process. So, each step they make a whole and that whole then three, four levels. Then it all combines to provide them the curriculum. So, you know it's interesting how in business administration,

you can be flexible, you can be customized and it should be updating. Because it's all about business; it's all about real world. And we have to make sure that we are updated, that we have the latest information available and that we are not missing out on the local contacts as well as they are not detached from global contact. So these are various - very interesting issues how to develop and design curriculum for MBAs; what is their vision, what their mission is and how curriculum should be tailored accordingly. It's not like MBBS or Engineering. In any education curriculum, I feel, gives much greater room for discussion and choice. The service quality - the first thing is service quality.   Sometimes my students come to me and say that they were in group with some other students – with other students in other schools; and they would normally compete each other. They would compare each other on the basis of curriculum - what is being taught there and what is being taught here. So, our students have come to me saying that on the occasions they find that our curriculum have courses which are not otherwise available elsewhere or we are offering more choices or we have more specialization available. So we do make sure that are curriculum is comparative; because, this is the service. It is a core service curriculum and we got to be, you know, distinguished, we got to be comparative, we got to be superior, we got to be ahead of others in all directions. So, when all mine students go and compare with others or get the comparison you know, from the employers so they would say that they know more, they have covered more, they have gone into not just theoretic but also on the applied side. They have taken full functional extensive coverage but also then they have got the cave stone integrated type of courses should be end and methodology was fully comprehensive. So these are all issues that we have addressed and curriculum and you are very right that it is an important need for service that we have to do.

Asma: Second question is regarding the curriculum about and the number of programs' specialization being offered in a business school. They have quite lot of mix, I would say, types of business schools who are not offering any specialization, you know, variation and then they would be institutions like   …quite a lot of specializations in different products. How do you see it from service quality perspective?

Hassan: You know its students require specialization and they ask for it and the corporate sector when they employ they wanna make sure that they prefer hiring those who have got specialization in the area. So they would be hesitant to offer jobs to those who are just generalist (alright?). So, they want to offer jobs to those – for example in marketing, to those who have got the marketing electives. So, again as far as if you look at these from point of views of the service quality, So, I feel that this is one service that business schools should be providing that, you know, more choices in specialization and also in emerging area. And at UMT, I must also …. you, that you know, we have always been keen on offering specializations in rural areas. When there were no specializations, only LUMS who was offering specialization in 4, 5 areas that time, and then we offered specialization in, we were the first to offer

organizational change on areas like, you know organization theory and change and their quality assurance and knowledge management. We were first to offer like, course of marketing research and then add future applications for offering course like Finance….. And service quality.

Asma: Next question is regarding physical infrastructure. I can see that UMT has moved to a new building and infrastructure. How do you see the role of physical structure on overall performance of the business school?

Hasan: Physical infrastructure should be comfortable, convenient and functional. Beyond that if it is not there then this is …than that then you suffer, people are not comfortable. But once it is there, it doesn't add to the perfection of service quality. As soon as you provide whatever is sufficient, whatever is workable and good it also loses its significance. It's not then any more valuable because it's there and people then start looking at, for example, other things like teacher is arriving late, teacher is not giving the assessment or graded on time. So, these are some other things which then begin to matter. So, I think physical infrastructure is important but it has only a negative value, once it is there, but once it is not there it will significantly distort the perception, but once if it is there and it is put on ground then it will not make any more difference in increasing the perception of quality. It could remain marginal, could have been marginal influence but not be in directly proportional to what it would be on negative side if there is no …

Asma: So in relation to this same thing, how important is it for business school to create the brand name?

Hasan: I think if we go worldwide, normally business schools have better buildings and engineering schools, normally what I have seen that business schools are carpeted, business schools have got marble's class and fancy stuff you know, cooperate sector moves in business schools. So that's the normal case. So, which means generally people expect that when they join a business school, they will get business like and a business kind and a brand, that's I think has to be provided. And that … that there is a merit on that because this business administration education is for those who are preparing themselves to take managerial goals and managerial role is about prestigious, it's about some, you know, specific like, we know a sense of leadership and of being able to reach to the top of selective part. So these are generally part of the mix that business school offers and the whole package of service, I think that includes the perception of also the quality and brand and what's the coefficient of this brand in terms of prestige value, in terms of premium value, in terms of its comparative edge. So, that is also perhaps the part of the service because the business school compete on that basis, they draw enrollment on that basis, they charge fees on that basis.

Asma: Is it very directly proportional to brand names as well?

Hasan: yeah! I think brand, because one thing that infrastructure does, if you have an infrastructure which is … and located in a very very hot spot, business destructs, business street, so that gives, I belief, a brand value and that also ... So, business school, you know, cannot operate like if someone right now in Punjab, wants to open a business school, for students, it would be very difficult. In Wazirabad, it will be very difficult, in gujrat or Gujranwala. And you know, so business schools have always taken pride in that where they are located and what is the scenic value of those places, and what's its premium value, how accessible it would be for all job people so things like that matter. And infrastructure has a direct link to the brand perception. There is no doubt about that. We were earlier on rental premises but then we were not as considered as high in terms of our output counted to superiority, as we were, you know,…. and location is very important.

Asma: The next thing, if we move on to the student side of that, again, I would say in Pakistan, I would say, all of the determinants which have been looking on the study, has quite a lot of variations and I cannot…. How do you see at the assessment and grading criteria of the student? Is there any need to have a very tough grading criteria and assessment criteria in order to be a position of a better business school?

Hassan: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. It should be fair, it should be balanced. You don't have to be tough. You don't have to be loose. It should be précised. It should be fair. It should be balanced. I don't think there is any point, what we communicate to our student is that everybody can take an "A". So, there is no restriction in the number of A's, we can allot – allocate. However, over a period of time we have also seen that 99.9% results can be easily divided into a bell curve and it can be like a normal distribution. So, that's also something important. But you are that different business schools have different style of grading and its for numerical … and when we go to convert that into qualitative grading like A,B,C we take care of those factors that are very systematic biased and we also take care of most of the students are falling behind the passing marks. So, we then, you know, provide uniformly, you know, like 5 point, 10 point added to all of the students then they get better grades.

Asma: Pakistan is being a developing country, what is the role of fee structure for the students' decision making overall? And then other question is about that again we have quite a lot of variation in a fee structure amount of fee charged by the business school. So, is there any relationship, if there are higher fee is being charged by a business school, it means there is better performance or higher service quality and lower the fee structure, lower the service quality – anything like that?

Hasan: I think there is a link, but how strong is that link I don't know, mutual research (laugh). How strong is that link I don't know, but there is a link yes, because high tuition fee means high degree of conspiracy high degree of market superiority. The students will come and even if we charge high fee, students would know, would come even then. So that's fee issue and we have seen that happening. If fee is

higher, general perception is that then quality is high, and student who is preparing himself for managerial career, that student will, you know, like to be known as being graduated from a high fee school (LAUGHTER). Gain that prestige value, that brand value, that adds to, you know, sometime false sense of being proud, …….some people don't go …… they would always pay more.

Asma: If we look at the teacher's profile - faculty as one of my research faculty was key determinant and determining overall performance of the business school. But, I would say, how to, generally, the management looks at the teachers' profile, and the second thing, which according to my research is, industry based experience. What is the trade-off between the academic qualification of the teachers and industry based experience? And what is the role of faculty overall?

Hasan: Can have a long list of – come up with a long list of stakeholders and then can go on and develop a sort of balance score cart of things to measure or something like that. You know my idea is that a business school, not only the business school for all schools to just simplify it to one thing and that is faculty. And faculty alone is the indicator. Faculty alone is the input as well as the output of the business school. And business school should consider that customer if faculty, that their stakeholders is faculty. And if faculty is there – and if good faculty is there, a business school will definitely be able to provide service quality. If someone has opened a restaurant, and don't have the appropriate chef to match the menu, how can that restaurant function and how can that restaurant provide service? So, faculty is the one with whom the students can interact. Faculty goes to them and teaches them in classrooms, and they come to the faculty offices. Students, for them, the business school, what is being the faculty, the teachers, they have to study 20, 30 courses. So, they have to at least 20, 30 people who relate to. In addition to other students, who are class fellows, class fellows, badge fellows. So, if I can propose a small amendment to that thought, then I would suggest that we should be very precise in terms of customer. And customer, in my view is faculty. Faculty is customer. Our job is to get the faculty. And if we have the faculty, we will get students; we will get the students only or may be less then as good as the faculty, what we have. So, I mean there profiling is important in terms of:

1). Students teachers ratio

2). In terms of their experience

3). In terms of their foreign collaboration

4). Generally speaking, business schools hire people on vote

If they have a certain way of interaction with students which are very friendly because most of the classes are discussion oriented. So, faculty plays only the role of moderator, as an enabler, as a facilitator, as a discussion emphasizer.

Discussions and debates goes on and then different views come and compete with each other and faculty is there in the middle to melt down everything and to emphasize and then help students determine their choices.

Asma: And how do you see the support staff of the business school?

Hasan: Our support has started with the marginal enrollment. I would not include them in the list. Number one is faculty. Specifically, like program directors and chair persons of the department among faculties; that they are leaders - program leaders; they are program managers.

Asma: And any specific importance or, you know, faculty designed for the teaching lectures or perfect effective learning, I mean, does they play any role somehow?

Hasan: I think, right now, there is a general agreement in business schools that Faculty is most important. Right now, general agreement in business schools is that text books are same everywhere. It is what we do with the text book and how we develop the course outline, what kind of assessments we design formulae and how we conduct those assessments. That's important because learning will take place and learning will be tested only on the basis of assessments. And assessment should ensure that the learning outcomes are being fully measured. And learning outcomes are, you know, mainly objectives. So, I think that assessment is, you are very right and most of the schools have been experimenting with wide variety of assessments. And the objective has always been that how we can make it interesting, more exciting, more learning, more interactive and more real world based. That has always been primary.

Asma: Right! ....business school…industry…   I simply clear the gap and the barrier, I mean, there has to be some break for the communication. One thing, I mean, I would ask two questions; one how important it is to have and then secondly how can business school ensure the effectiveness this ….?

Hasan: For business school, it is as more as important as hospitals for the medical college – for medical student. Just, they are equal in importance. So, I think for a business school, it's not a choice. It's compulsory. And they have to determine the variety of ways to do that. For example, when we design a course, when we design a curriculum, I think corporate sector much join and they must be part of the activity. So that they can ensure that what is being …..and similarly, once you have the course been …….corporate sector. And they should come and they should …, they should… they should get themselves involved in the ….   Interaction, you know, I think its very crucial. It is that critical area which can perhaps gives ….because then you will be just knowing exactly what is demanded..

Asma: And how important it is for business school teachers to create industry specific graduates like Pakistan is a rich dynamic market. There is more room for

specific industry like Telco, IT, Finance etc. Is there any need to create industry specific MBA, graduates?

Hasan: There are to make mana gement….education….China….Japan…. they have to be totally embedded in industry.

Asma: And what role the alumni can play into that?

Hasan: Alumni can play another strategy role ….you call them, they come and they teach, they give lectures.

Asma : Err another thing Ive been to like…

Hasan: If there is one area which can signify, which has significant impact on real world interaction…if there is one area….like I said, don't go for very long metrix in terms of stakeholders like I argue that maybe the only stakeholder's worry about or talk about is faculty..

Asma: Okay

Hasan ; You cannot substitute faculty from any stakeholders, but others can be substituted, or their importance can be discounted to some extent but not faculty; it's not substitutable, it's not replaceable, it's not avoidable, you know, in fact, err faculty would remain where they are.

Asma: Right.

Hasan: There is no one else to take that role or take that position.

Asma: And again my very next question is somehow is partially related to that because I am looking for individuals who are ethically responsible, who are socially responsible. So, I mean, that thing has to be embedded by the culture of the organization or again by the faculty. How do you see this overall outcome of the education process?

Hasan: Repeat that question again.

Asma: urmm like I mean like the outcome of education as individually MBA students , umm too quite a lot of important things should be embedded in the stu.., I personally feel that social err corporate social responsibility or social responsibility, urmm an ethical individual, Where is it coming from, is it coming from the culture of the business school and how is it important in this matter, err,is it really important to have or not?

Hasan:

First of all business schools all over the world are making changes in so like something like business, government and society, in the light of check that business, government and society must act in tandem for its fast growth, rapid pace economy so that's the first.

Second is errr a general tradition now err to you know. Business, government, business government and society, that's err one key chain that has an impact. proper social responsibility and sustainability.

Second is sustainability. Business schools have realized that in the last century their courses did not mention sustainability, their courses did not mentin anything about proper social responsibility and their courses never talked about responsible leadership. Business schools have realized that ethics and moral reasoning and err you know not merely rational thinking but err the thinking which is grounded on values. So business schools have realized that a pure err sort of profit making purposition as the purpose of business doesn't, is not tenable anymore, and the purpose of business needs to be and yes and no, he business of the world is business right,and the purpose of business is profit, err shareholder or maximization of shareholder values right, err so this is, this was the guiding principle throughout the last century as taught in the business schools. But business schools are increasingly realizing that we need to introduce things which are not directly increasing the profit in fact reducing the profit but important for sustainability, because the world, the limitations of the world has heeded to the industrial output. It's being realized and err err and is been errr strange err limiting the choices of err what kind of raw material to be used, what kind of industrial processes to be used , how output should be marketed err things like that. So I think that you are very right that there is a departure now, there is realization now, there is a reversal maybe, that business is being redefined and not just only profit making entities but err social, as a you know err social err having social concern and not just err for err for the charity work and to advertise and promote and get some mileage out of that. But err you know embedded in err in err in society and responsive to the needs and concerns of the society. That is important, businesses have realized that if they produce something and they throw their garbage, and their leftovers into the, you know err lake or something so that would then disturb the eco of the neighborhood. And if that neighborhood is disturbed, it is not good even for the business. They are realizing that and similarly they are realizing about people's choices. You know there was this famous instance that biomedics drugs perhaps made by Merck so they realized that this drug in clinical study, they found that err this in err increases chances of cardiovascular diseases, they withdrew it and they lost like 2million dollars on that portfolio because they cut off, they called back the drug from the market. But as a result of that the trust of customers on other drugs increased so much that their customers began to think that err Merck is really trustworthy because if they choose this one because their other drugs must be ok that they are continuing it, so instead of buying from others like Pyzer or Glaxo, they prefer Merck right. So that is the kind

of decision making which we were not, which we were not seeing last century. It's a new style of running business which actually is indicating that an effort is being done to redefine the purpose of business. So If the purpose of business is changed then purpose of business schools have also need to be changed and this is also their students are thought as you know soldiers of merchandising or capitalistic you know ideals, pursuing capitalistic ideas and just there to make more and more and earn more and not be able to differentiate what's good what's bad, what's sustainable in long term and what's not. So business schools have now a duty to see their parts, their curriculum, that their students when they go out and they occupy different positions and they make the decisions they understand the full implications of their being, they are aware of people's choices, they are aware of moral reasoning, they are aware of long term and short term tradeoffs and they see as human being and not as a labour but as a full human being and they design the policies accordingly. I think decision making is good, analytical thinking is good, critical is good..

Asma: ACC has been emphasizing about the research and development, is it really important to have you know research concept embedded at MBA level? And would it somehow..?

Hasan: I think so, right now even at BBA level research has, research is being promoted and in conferences there are papers on how to promote research at undergraduate level. So because you know critical thinking, analytical thinking, business research, intelligence, err business analytics, err giving the complexities and chaos, you know, there is increasing use of mathematical algorithms you know and there are operational researches, there is err econometrics, statistics, a very high degree of you know umm. So I think right now it is being invested there, research is, no, research is an essential part and a good training in statistics for that is important to truly understand the nature of numbers not just crunch the numbers, get to the number but also understand the number and their contact, what they need now, what they need for tomorrow.

Asma: So, last question is regarding the student academic and socio culture background. How does it impact the performance of the business school?

Hasan: You know, very simply, those students who come from backgrounds with prior exposure to professionalism, with the prior exposure to business and entities, you know, their parents are entrepreneur, their parents are in business, they have corporate experience and their parents are working as professionals, then they are more amenable to sort of what business schools aim at. And they understand; they have got very good prior exposure to different kinds of role models in business. Compare to, if there is cohort coming from rural background having no prior exposure to business; what the business is being and what are the challenges and what professional ship look like. It's very difficult. So, lot of time business schools makes this choice and they try to fill their seats with those who come with the background and indicate that Yes! They are already at home with the business

culture. And they understand it, it's in grain and they are comfortable with it. And it's just a concept and knowledge and life cycle that they need and they wanna pickup those things while   business school.

Asma: I have asked you so many questions. Is anything there, if you would like to ask me or comment onto my research something? This could be beneficial for me.

Hasan: I think it's business school need to be global. They have to be global now because these graduates and when they go out, you don't know where they are heading. Even if they are working in Pakistan, their projects are all global. Their projects are global. Their companies are global. So, globalization and nationalism - that there were times when we use to teach in the market in a separate subject; international marketing, management and things like that. Now business schools are global, and everything is global. Finance is global, Marketing is global, and Management is global. So, that is the challenge that how to switch to different curriculum which is fully embedded in global situation. If you take the not American books then they are American. You don't talk about Asian. If you take Indian books or some of the Asian books then they are closely linked to their own context. And so is the case with the European. So, that's the problem that how to come up with a global text book.

Asma: Okay! Thank-you very much Dr. Hasan; it was VERY VERY informative. I thank a lot for your time. Although a unique experience….

Hasan: I hope that …

Asma: Yeah! InshaAllah.

Stakeholder Service Quality Evaluation Survey Loughborough University

Name of Institute / Organization / Company:	Gender: □Male □Female	Age:
Your Name:	Contact Info/ Email:	

Program Enrolled/ Designation:

I am Evaluating as (Tick your status)

□ Student   □ Employer   □ Parents

□ Government & Fund Bodies   □ Management of Business School   □ Alumni

□ Teaching and Support Staff □ Accreditation Bodies

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Curriculum / Program Design					
Curriculum design represents quality of business school					
Comments:					
Number of specialized programs and courses to offered by business school represent service quality of business school					
Comments:					
Personnel Quality					
The responsiveness of support and admin staff represents better service performance of business school					
Comments:					
Physical Infrastructure					
Physical infrastructure of business school					

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
adds to service quality					
Comments:					
Corporate Image					
Creating a brand name or corporate image of business school is important					
Comments:					
International linkages and exchange programs with other business schools adds to the reputation of business school					
Comments:					
Assessment & Grading					
Tougher assessment and grading criteria represents better service quality of business school					
Comments:					
Lecturer Profile					
The skills, qualification and knowledge of teaching staff are directly related with service quality.					
Comments:					
Lecturer experience in the industry plays an important role in providing education services					
Comments:					
Effective Teaching methods are indicator of quality					
Comments:					
Access					
Easy access to information in business school facilitate the service process					
Comments:					

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Easy Access to facilities in business school indicate service quality					
Comments:					
Access to management and support staff represent service quality					
Comments:					
Fee Structure					
Higher Fee Structure or amount of fees is an indicator of better service quality or vice versa					
Comments:					
Fee structure plays a vital role in students' decision making to chose an institution for MBA program					
Comments:					
Industry – Academia Liaison					
Effective industry – academia liaison indicated better service quality of the business school					
Comments:					
Business Schools need to produce industry specific MBA graduates					
Comments:					
If most of the students are absorbed by the industry within first 6 months of their graduation, this represent better quality services					
Comments:					
Student Alumni plays an important role to represent business schools' better service quality					
Comments:					
Outcome of Education					
It represents better service quality If corporate social responsibility and ethical values are embedded in a graduate's personality.					
Comments:					

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Indentify any skill set which an MBA should possess after graduation					
Comments:					
Process of Education					
Constant mentoring and career guidance for students is part of services provided					
Comments:					
Research & Development					
Introducing research at MBA level is important					
Comments:					
Promoting an innovative and research based culture in the business school is indicator of overall service quality					
Student Background					
The student academic and socio-cultural background impact business school performance					
Comments:					

Additional Comments

Stakeholders' Importance to Business School

Check / Mark the most important stakeholders in your opinion	Rank	Stakeholders
		Students
		Parents
		Employers
		Government & Funding bodies (HEC)
		Accreditation Bodies
		Management of Business School
		Teaching and Support Staff

Service Quality Dimensions' Important

Check the most important dimensions of		**Business Schools**
		Curriculum / Program Design

Service-Quality in your opinion		Personnel Quality
		Physical Infrastructure
		Corporate Image
		Assessment and Grading
		Lecturer Profile
		Access
		Fee Structure
		Industry - Academia Liaison
		Outcome of Education
		Research & Development
		Student Background