

**Aligning Quality of Business Education with the International Business
Models: An Innovative Approach of NBEAC****Ahtesham Ali Raja, Umer Iftikhar***National Defence University, Islamabad***Marryam Shams***Air University, Islamabad***Abstract**

In order to get the quality seal now a day's institutions are striving hard in order to get the accreditation. Same is the situation with Pakistan, as NBEAC is allowing accreditation to the business schools. Drawing upon the ramifications of the institutional hypothesis we have investigated the relationship and effect of NBEAC success, its standards, and the re-accreditation of business schools upon the quality of business education in Pakistan. While investigating this idea, Deans of NBEAC accredited business schools of Pakistan have been reached to get the genuine bits of knowledge of the schools. Thematic technique has been utilized to extricate the valuable data from the information gathered, and the aftereffects of the investigation uncovered that accreditation has been considered as the most significant factor to improve the quality of business education in Pakistan.

Keywords: NBEAC, accreditation, quality, business schools, business education

With the passage of time, as the higher education is now being globalized and expanded worldwide, institutional and program accreditation has been considered as an important asset and resource of the institutions in the competition over fascinating students, and building up repute (Prasad, A., Segarra, P., & Villanueva, C, E., 2018). The mushrooming of business schools around the globe has escalated the requirement for a competitive edge (Romero, E. J., 2008). Accreditation is generally reflected as presenting a substantial road by which to juxtapose – to important outside partners (for example imminent understudies and staff, future managers, financing bodies) – the nature of certifies establishments against unaccredited institutes (Blanco, 2015). The worldwide development of business schools and the triumphal walk of their certifying organizations are indivisible (Durand, R., & McGuire, J., 2005). Put basically, globalization has brought down both obvious and undetectable obstructions between broadly managed educations systems. Upon the progressive vanishing of the "old framework," understudies, personnel, and spotters are progressively confronting the test of arranging the quality goods from the debris of the business schools field. Another request to the variety of establishments that exists at the worldwide dimension is being made by those equipped for imparting genuinely necessary straightforwardness and assurance in the assessment procedure. This open door has been most effectively seized by two consistently extending authorizing organizations, AACSB (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and EQUIS (EFMD Quality Improvement System, granted by the European Foundation for Management Development) (Alajoutsijärvi, K., Kettunen, K., & Sohlo, S., 2018).

All things considered, there is an 'incentive' for business schools to achieve and hold accreditation. Talking about the business schools, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business is broadly viewed as the organization giving the supreme renowned of authorizations (Hodgson, S., & T. Clausen, 2012). Current business schools exist in an intricate universe of rankings, evaluations, and accreditations. Some contend that in progressively aggressive worldwide advanced education markets, flagging status and quality has really turned out to could easily

compare to having them. For some, contemporary business schools, universal accreditations have turned out to be key methods and initial phases in seeking after authenticity and worldwide status (Trank, C. Q., & Rynes, S. L., 2003).

In the most recent span of time, Pakistan's Higher education sector has witnessed a wonderful development. With the phenomenal ascent of Higher Education Institutions from 71 out of 2003 to 258 out of 2012 selecting very nearly one million understudies, there is presently a unique spotlight on institutionalizing the nature of Higher Education Institutions (Javed, 2014). Concerning about the business studies, Pakistan HEC's in 2007 framed a council named as a National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC), as a team with EFMD that is European Organization, ACSB that is American Organization and Association of MBAs (AMBA, UK), as an accreditation body so as to institutionalize the quality criteria, arrangements, and methodology in business schools of Pakistan (Sardar, 2015). At this point NBEAC has allowed accreditation to 23 schools out of 180 business schools (NBEAC, 2019). NBEAC quality measures are comprehensively founded on the improved dimensions of educating/learning practices and research just as a supporting and holding competency. Incomprehensibly, the NBEAC viewpoint on refining the excellence is defaced with a bureaucratic methodology of dehumanizing the ever-famous quality confirmation forms pointed in the direction of operative competences and scale economies where the needs and perspectives on the most significant partner i.e., the understudy opposite quality is distanced. For any instructive organization, understudy is the essential client. Different clients incorporate workers, the industry, the open division and network everywhere. Fuelled by melting away financing from Higher Education Commission and different other sources, business schools in Pakistan have change to past the social prerequisite of value affirmation. Without a doubt, as the varsities' plans of action have turned out to be increasingly more 'understudy expense' arranged, the business schools when all is said is done and their business schools specifically are in a business rivalry of pulling in and holding more understudies tooting their administration quality more than any time in recent memory so as to support themselves (Janjua & Aftab, 2016).

In this study, the foremost objectives behind doing this exploration are firstly to explore that how the success of NBEAC is playing its part in improving the quality of business education in Pakistan? Secondly to explore that whether the NBEAC standards are align with the standards of the international bodies, and how these standards are contributing towards the quality of business education in Pakistan. And lastly the objective of the study is to explore that how the re-accreditation process of NBEAC affects the quality of business education in Pakistan. The present exploratory research will be the first of its own kind that is being conducted in Pakistan which will head the Heads of Business schools to understand importance of accreditation, as there is a strong need in Pakistan to know the impact of accreditation on Quality of business education. We have likewise included in the theoretic part of institutional hypothesis which recommends that the key authoritative choices are as often as possible made without much forethought, convention, comfort or social commitment (Oliver, 1991).

Literature Review

Quality of Business Education

The significance of business schools can't be disregarded in the socio social improvement of any nation. They assume a noticeable job in building up an understudy equipped for basic leadership, the data about commercial center and the procedure to work organizations. To satisfy the point of business schools it is important to screen and assess the nature of instruction they giving in the understudies. The nearby checking and accreditation empower an establishment to keep up the nature of program (Ilusanya, 2008). Business schools accreditation is a quality affirmation procedure in which the nature of the business training program is assessed by the outer agencies to decide whether the required guidelines are conforming or not. On the off chance that the set benchmarks achieved, the licensed status is allowed by the assessing organization. It upshots in the enhancement of interior procedure. It is viewed as profitable particular imprint for accomplishing superb gauges. Enables establishment to enroll and choose very qualified staff just as offer existing workforce a chance to increase their abilities by investigation. Accreditation offers

perceivability to the establishments in term of enabling understudies to settle on decisions while picking confirmation in foundations hence creating it authentic in the eye of partners (Urgel, 2007), and motion about the nature of program in the market (Cret, B., 2011). To demonstrate their pledge to guarantee quality and advancement of their projects effective business schools select global accreditation (Cornuel, 2007). Moreover idea, procedure of accreditation is deliberated as a driver to prompt institutional revolution as its give an appraisal about the quality and shortcomings of an organization and empower it to improve it (Istileulova, Y., & Peljhan, D., 2011). Be that as it may, before deciding on global accreditation there is constantly requirement of accreditation from national accreditation gathering. Business schools accreditation is assumed as one of the apparatus to address nature of program advanced education organizations bestowing. Pakistan's HEC has showed a drive by setting up a national excellence affirmation system for business instruction to address the difficulties of the nature of advanced education in Pakistan. NBEAC has acquainted nationwide dimension accreditation benchmarks with guarantee excellence business training workshops, and programs (Nadeem, Abbas, & Javed, 2014).

Success of NBEAC

Accreditations are significant in light of the fact that they grant business schools authenticity, status, and repute that are at any rate incompletely transferable to the understudies, graduated class, personnel, and different partners associated with an authorize establishment (Alajoutsijärvi, K., Kettunen, K., & Sohlo, S, 2018). In this view Higher Education Commission Pakistan has established the council for business schools accreditation on March, 2007. The Council is sorting out a complete program of all the control under its extension. There is an exhaustive methodology and qualification criteria of accreditation, For that reason the panels assesses the applicable scholarly projects for accreditation and take choices on the appropriate criteria, arrangements, and techniques as affirmed by NBEAC. The motivation behind NBEAC is to guarantee quality in Business and Management Sciences certificate programs as per the proposed accreditation in instructive foundations. It requires a program to fulfill certain characterized guidelines or criteria. The accreditation is for explicit degree programs and not for the establishments. Also, accreditation isn't to be mistaken for confirmation. By and large, foundations and projects are authorize, and people are affirmed (NBEAC Annual Report 2016 - 2017, 2017).

NBEAC effectively had gotten Institutional participation with EFMD to improve Business instruction in Pakistan and to build presentation to the worldwide world about accreditation. NBEAC is on the dynamic mailing rundown of EFMD to get all administrations and offices including quarterly journals and updates about the preparation of Peer commentators and evaluators by specialists of EFMD and AACSB. Relationship of MBAs (UK), GBSN (USA) and AACSB (USA) have additionally stretched out their help to NBEAC in creating and improving our Accreditation methods (NBEAC, 2017). In Pakistan NBEAC filled the need to be national quality guidelines for business instruction program. Built up in 2007 NBEAC has now situated itself as the sole quality models in Pakistan for business instruction (Nadeem, M, S., Abbass, Q., & Javed, U., 2017). As of now out of 180 business schools in Pakistan, council has awarded accreditation to 23 schools (NBEAC, 2019). Past examines do uncovered that NBEAC benchmarks are perfect with global quality guidelines and can be a wellspring of internationalization; nonetheless, there is deficiency of research about the powers interplaying their job in choice towards appropriation of national quality gauges (Nadeem, M, S., Abbass, Q., & Javed, U., 2017).

NBEAC Standards

The gauges and the related criteria are gathered into nine areas covering the various regions. The reason for these benchmarks is twofold: from one perspective, to give a far reaching depiction of the measures and criteria and on the other to offer direction to schools in setting up their Self-Assessment Report. It is critical to hold up under at the top of the priority list that NBEAC is a national accreditation body, and comprehends the various difficulties looked by little versus extensive and country versus urban business schools. As an outcome, the utilization of models considers the assorted variety of settings in which the business schools work. Likewise, the vision,

mission and key arrangement of the school assume a basic job in assessment of different guidelines. This does not imply that NBEAC will bring down its assumptions about fundamental models as a result of nearby imperatives, yet it means that the evaluation will acknowledge wide contrasts in the association and conveyance of the executive's instruction (NBEAC, 2017).

Re-accreditation of Business Schools

According to the models of NBEAC, a business college with a "Full Accreditation Status" or "Temporary Accreditation Status" for a business degree program granted by NBEAC may apply for reaccreditation somewhere around six (6) months before the expiry of the accreditation time frame. When the enrollment procedure is effectively finished, the ESC prescribes the business college to present a SAR. Comparative procedure for the arrangement of SAR will be pursued and a program applying for reaccreditation is liable to same expense as a program experiencing accreditation out of the blue. Moreover, a business college may not meet all requirements for an augmentation or may confront a downsize of the accreditation status if the program neglects to keep up the required principles or neglects to attractively address proposals of past PRT (NBEAC, 2018).

Our study is based on the findings of an institutional theory that is in line with previous studies in which, Durand and McGuire (2005) – that once the organization picked up power in the authoritative field, the challenge over authenticity among business schools render it to be a crucial signifier to pass on that very authenticity. Inside the domain of authenticity looking for conduct, for a business school not to have accreditation from the organization is to put the establishment at an important disservice with respect to its companions

Research Methodology

The approach of this exploratory study was qualitative in nature. In order to collect the data, interviews have been directed with the Deans of the ten business alleged institutions of Pakistan. Each interview pursued by a similar essential set of inquiries. They were recorded utilizing a Digital Voice Recorder and after that worked out. So as to investigate these interviews technique of hematic analysis has been used. It is the way toward distinguishing patterns or subjects inside subjective information. Braun and Clarke (2006), recommend that it is the principal subjective strategy that ought to be learned as '...It gives core aptitudes that will be helpful for directing numerous different sorts of analysis. By using such analysis we had identified certain themes by the help of certain codes which were then compiled and compared using the Meta-matrix (as indicated by Table-01) by Huberman, A. M., and Miles, M. B, (2002). The reason behind embracing such strategies is to discover whether NBEAC accreditation achievement, its re-accreditation procedure, and its standards are improving nature of business education or not.

Findings and Analysis

Table 1. Themes of Quality of Business Education in Pakistan

Themes	Examples from the Interviews conducted					
Awareness	NBEAC	has	The awareness	NBEAC	has	Playing
	created		of recognition	conducted		important
	awareness	and	and	various		role,
	about the	the	accreditation in	awareness		improving and
	accreditation		Pakistan has	seminars	and	making people
	process and its		helped students	workshops	so	aware of
	need.		in finding the	that	the	standards.
			quality	beneficiaries can		
			institutions	get aware.		

Mentoring/Facilitation	Mentoring the Business schools within Pakistan to improve their Programs/ degrees to the international level.	NBEAC is an accreditation body with facilitation role.	NBEAC can be seen as a monitoring body to keep check on the business schools in achieving their vision and mission of the department and programs	Facilitating students to opt better institutions for business education.
Strategic Planning	Business education has been getting improved as Strategic planning started in nearly all institutions.	Through SPRC (Strategic planning review committee) the top management remained updated about their progress and keep on improving in right direction as per well-defined road map.	Constantly working on standards sole purpose is to focus on the strategic plan.	Process of NBEAC does facilitate in terms of Governance and in terms of getting into strategic direction we are getting there.
Industry-Academia Linkage	Global Business schools have support from Govt for common ground to link Industry and academic.	People from Industry have a negative view about academic, Industry and academia both need to improve in Pakistan.	Right mix of Industry and Academia is missing in Pakistan.	
NBEAC Standards	NBEAC standards are quite compatible to those of EFMD's or AACSB.	NBEAC standards are at par with International standards.	NBEAC standards are holistic and comparable with EFMD and AACSB. They strategically cover all areas.	NBEAC standards helped us to work towards meeting the standards established by the international bodies.
Screening	Eligibility screening is good and important.	Eligibility screening is very important.	Eligibility screening needs to be contextualized rather than uniform criteria.	Eligibility screening necessary, otherwise waste of time, energy and money.

Table-01 plots the themes distinguished through the interviews that has been directed. It has been seen from the analysis of the interviews that since 2007 NBEAC is playing its key role by creating awareness among the stakeholders. As NBEAC progresses, business schools are getting more aware regarding the importance of the accreditation. The council is providing the certain mentoring to the schools so that they easily get in touch with the standards as well as they move towards the adoption of such standards and principles. NBEAC filled the need to be national quality guidelines for business instruction program. Built up in 2007 NBEAC has now situated itself as the sole quality models in Pakistan for business instruction (Nadeem, M, S., Abbass, Q., & Javed, U., 2017). As of now out of 180 business schools in Pakistan, council has given accreditation to 20 business schools only (NBEAC, 2019).

NBEAC plays its role in augmenting the quality of business education in Pakistan by providing the strategic direction to the institutions. Those institutes who got the accreditation are now strategically more powerful and more focused and determined in order to achieve their goals and objectives. To make institutes strategically more strong, this is one of the inspirations behind establishing NBEAC so as to guarantee quality in Business Administration/Public Administration, Management Sciences certificate programs as per the proposed accreditation in instructive foundations. (NBEAC, 2017).

Well there are certain standards and principles upon which every organization is formulated. Same is the case with the NBEAC, council is based on certain set of standards, and no doubt these standards are in line with the international council's standards, and are contributing towards the enrichment of the business education in Pakistan, as indicated by our respondents. But the difference lies in between the academic-industry linkages. As in Pakistan both academia and industry are not aligned with each other. This is the point of difference where are graduates are lacking behind in competing with international business grads. As literature also suggests that the NBEAC benchmarks are perfect with global quality guidelines and can be a wellspring of internationalization; nonetheless, there is deficiency of research about the powers interplaying their job in choice towards appropriation of national quality gauges (Nadeem, M, S., Abbass, Q., & Javed, U., 2017). In order to retain the accreditation status, institutions might go for a process of re-accreditation so that they can maintain and upgrade their accreditation status with respect to new policies and processes. In this regard initial screening has been conducted in order to check the eligibility of an institute. It is considered as one of the most important step by our respondents as it saves time as well as money of the institutions seeking for the re-accreditation from the council.

Discussion

The analysis of the data helps us in identifying certain themes through which we can infer that NBEAC had tried to keep playing its role in order to improve the quality of business education since its inception. With the foundation of NBEAC in Pakistan, the streamlining of the processes had been started and NBEAC tried to take the business schools in Pakistan to somewhat match the standards of the international business schools. It created the awareness among those who have their stakes in the business education in Pakistan. They are now much more aware about the accreditation's importance in the field of business studies also its processes so that they can get accredited as soon as possible in order to get the competitive edge in the sector. This competitive edge has not only gained through by getting accreditation from NBEAC but also through the strategic guidance and the direction that council provides to its members. It provides guidance to the schools so that they can easily adopt NBEAC's standards. Accreditation council also keep assuring that these standards should be align with those of international standards. So that the link between academia and industry should be maintained in equilibrium, and the graduates of the business schools act as a best resource for the industry.

Conclusion

The objective of this study is not only to explore the importance of NBEAC and its accreditation rather in knowing their impact on the quality of business education in Pakistan. We

have analyzed from the findings that the success and the growth of NBEAC has positively impacted the augmenting quality of schools. As stakeholders are now more aware regarding the accredited and non-accredited business schools. Although NBEAC has been founded almost a decade ago but its standards are aligned with the international bodies that helps the local institutes to get the foreign accreditation easily. But here the major concern that arises in comparison with international standards is the difference in the industry-academic linkage. As Pakistan is still lacking behind in this aspect. Despite the findings of the study there are certain limitations of the study. The major limitation is the time constraint as we have to collect the data from the Deans of the business school, so we are able to collect the data from ten business schools only. This limitation can be removed in future by collecting data from more schools. In future, we can consider other standards like curriculum, industry academic linkages and social responsibility instead of quality of business education in Pakistan. From the conceptual framework of the current study, quantitative study can be conducted in prospect. In future, NBEAC should work closely with industry and academic institutions in order to resolve this issue so that our students should also possess industry specific skills and can compete with the international students. Lastly, as institutions are operating in dynamic environment so sometimes they focus after achieving success. That is why continuous improvement is necessary for which institutes have to go through re-accreditation process persistently.

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