The role of ranking in building reputation and shaping business education field - The case studies of UK and Pakistan

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Abstract

Analysing the role of rankings in the business education field, this study aims to understand how and why rankings build reputation in business schools and how they shape the business education field and field boundaries in the developed and developing countries. Taking a field perspective, the researcher argues that categorisation systems, such as rankings, are used for constructing boundaries of the developed and developing business education fields. Adopting a purposive sampling method, ten highly-rated business schools per country are selected for the United Kingdom (UK) and Pakistan case-studies. Empirical evidence is gathered from 43 interviews with academic experts, business school marketing managers and industry experts, supplemented by internal student surveys and other relevant secondary sources of data for the qualitative analysis adopted in this study.

Through categorisation systems, the current study showed boundary-work at different levels such as boundary-work for reputation, international and domestic fields, and new categories. The researcher argues that rankings become a contest that redefine, evaluate, and change the perception of reputation in the field. Categorisation systems also play an active role in field and field boundary formation, and become a contest for authority. Rankings construct the international business education field and set boundaries for new categories, which include defining and determining the authority in the field. Rankings in developing countries are shown to be a contest for authority, which challenges the existing authorities to counter the Western model of rankings and to construct the perception of the domestic field and positions within it. The current study may be useful for policy-makers in developing countries seeking to upgrade their ranking systems by providing them with an understanding of the significance of different transparency instruments.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my original work and it has not been submitted, either in part or full, for a degree award at any University. I have fully identified and properly referenced other sources of information and material as required by the University guidelines.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Higher education (HE) has proved to be an important contributor to the economies of many countries (Toffler, 1990; Hazelkorn, 2011). Several countries have focused on this sector and devised plans for improvement. These policies have given birth to competition that is witnessed globally; however, the level of competition varies from country to country (Askehave, 2007).

> *"The most important economic development of our lifetime has been the rise of a new system for creating wealth, based no longer on muscle but on mind" (Toffler, 1990, p. 9).*

It is quite interesting to examine how HE has evolved globally. Today we can easily classify the high quality of HE in Europe and the United States of America (USA) compared with the relatively low quality of HE in developing countries. Over the centuries, HE has expanded and helped produce new knowledge, innovating new methods of production, and better utilisation of limited resources. This increase in efficiency with the available resources results in the development of the countries (Robinson, 1979).

According to Toffler (1990), HE plays a key role in the growth of the national economies of developed and developing countries. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report defined a nation with a knowledge-based economy as one where research, innovation, technology, and information are utilised in production and considered important to economic growth (OECD, 1999). Previous research emphasised the HE environment by debating the significance of the international market place for HE (Kelsey, 1998). The shift towards a globalised HE market can be beneficial for developed countries but may cause under

developed nations to lag behind. It is now time to focus on the knowledge-based economy of these developing countries (George, 2006).

The competition within the HE industry has introduced new ways of gaining competitive advantage. The term 'marketisation of HE' has been introduced by researchers to account for recent changes in the HE such as cutbacks in government funding force the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to pursue other sources of financial support in order to survive in the industry (Askehave, 2007). Askehave (2007) further argued that the HEIs can create additional financial support by attracting higher fee-paying students (international students), competing for research grants, developing attractive and marketable products, and conducting research that could attract corporate sponsors. Due to the growing competition, HEIs seek innovative definitions of what they are in order to attract high-quality students and staff (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). The HEIs operate in a marketised environment where the HE market is a combination of different markets such as a market for students, a market for staff, a market for research, and so on (Jongbloed, 2003). This impact of marketisation may differ in developed and developing HE markets due to the variation in their market conditions (Sandıkcı and Ekici, 2009). The marketisation of HE has led HEIs to devise strategies for improving their market competitiveness. The HEIs need to communicate their distinctiveness to their stakeholders (Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009); for instance, institutions frequently communicate their reputation, research quality, student satisfaction, rankings, and so on (Belanger, Mount and Wilson, 2002).

HE is becoming highly competitive and the struggle for resources has intensified, which makes a good reputation more significant for HEIs than ever before (Theus, 1993). The reputation of any organisation determines the reaction of the customers. A good reputation can lead to a better response for their product (Gray and Balmer, 1998). HEIs act as 'business' and 'church' where they have to focus on both aspects by protecting HE values but also operating as business entities (Wæraas and

Solbakk, 2009). When we debate the business role of these institutions, the HEIs are transformed from social institutions into business entities, and their reputation becomes highly significant due to its impact on customer perceptions (Gumport, 2000).

Previous studies have debated reputation from several perspectives in various fields. Economists have debated reputation and its related issues from the perspective of product quality and price (Shapiro, 1982). Similarly, academics have also discussed reputation from society and social identity perspectives. It is termed an intangible resource that can contribute to the company's overall performance (Hall, 1993). Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) presented a marketing perspective that debates the significance of communication for creating reputation. These studies in different fields may have used various terms for defining reputation but they tend to agree on the basic concept of reputation, which states that reputation "*is a result of the past actions of an organisation*" (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001, p. 304). A firm may have not just one reputation but several; for instance, a firm's reputation for quality may be different from its reputation for research and development (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001). HEIs adopt strategies with a motive to enhance the reputation of their institution (Bunzel, 2007). Belanger et al., (2002) argued that differentiation became important to HEIs due to budget cuts by the government. Building the corporate reputation of a firm demands the effective communication of key ingredients such as visibility, distinctiveness, transparency, authenticity, and consistency with its stakeholders (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004; Herbig and Milewicz, 1993). The global competition and the need for a knowledge-based economy make reputation a key success factor for the HEIs. A good reputation differentiates HEIs and attracts high-quality students and employees (Martensen and Grønholdt, 2005). A recent study indicates: *"Business schools are clearly in the reputation business, with a strong focus on brand, journal citations, league tables, and the professional careers of staff and students"* (Davies and Hilton, 2014, p. 53).

Ranking lists of HEIs, such as business schools, are popping up in magazines, newspapers and internet around the world. News media companies, national and international media, business magazines, and governments are all involved producing rankings of business education and schools. The study by Usher and Savino (2006) argued that rankings although reviled by critics but remained popular among students and their parents. This demand for ranking information triggered the development of rankings or league tables and copy-cat ranking systems began popping up in several countries. The rankings have made the HE market more competitive. They also act as a benchmarking system for HEIs to analyse their performance and make the necessary strategic decisions to ensure that they remain efficient (Turner, 2005). Rankings are essential for measuring the quality of HEIs and for creating healthy competition within the HE sector (Sadlak, Merisotis and Liu, 2008). The introduction of rankings has intensified competition within the HE sector. Rankings reflect the overall performance of HEIs, which may include academic quality, student quality, research quality, and reputation for which different indicators are used (Hazelkorn, 2011).

Research suggests that rankings are tools for projecting institutional image (Bunzel, 2007). Hazelkorn (2007) argued that there is a high level of interconnectedness between reputation and rankings. Rankings compare and evaluate the performance of the HEIs, which directly affects their status (Hazelkorn, 2007). The rise in competition, the striving for high-quality research and programmes, and the need to improve overall institutional quality became key areas of discussion among researchers. The university rankings are becoming more popular as they offer comparisons that provide information to students; however, their usage goes beyond the institution selection process and other stakeholders such as governments, HE regulatory bodies, other industries, and HEIs frequently refer to them (Hazelkorn, 2011). The HE industry is growing globally, thereby triggering the development of several ranking systems such as international rankings, national

rankings, student surveys, and research-based rankings, alongside other mechanisms of assessment such as accreditations (Usher and Savino, 2006).

The current study looks into the relationship between rankings and reputation and the development of business education through the lens of institutional work and boundary-work. Institutional theory focuses on the procedures and processes by which rules, norms, structures, routines, and schemes are constructed as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour (Scott, 2004). Institutional theory reflects on the legitimacy of processes and procedures within the organisational field (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Organisational fields are frequently used in this theory, and they "*depict an area of social life or a group of organizations that compete for the same resources and legitimacy*" (Wedlin, 2006, p. 4). Organisations require legitimacy, which can be acquired through common norms, values, and assumptions prevailing in the organisations (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Actors, particularly those with some form of power, have the ability to influence the development and transformation of institutions and fields (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The concept of boundary-work argues about determining the epistemic and cultural authority in the field and focuses on actors, individuals, institutions and their role in forming and reforming of field boundaries (Gieryn, 1999). Categories are social constructs of knowledge structures that shape the behaviour of actors and define rules and standards for the field (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010). Categorisation mechanisms classifies groups and groups characteristics, sets boundaries for the categories, and construct distinctions for the group members (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). The current study conceptualises rankings as categorisation systems, which construct the field and field boundaries. In this sense, the current study attempts to analyse the role of categorisation systems by capturing the processes and analysing its interrelatedness with reputation and field formation.

Drawing largely on the concepts of struggle for reputation and field formation, the current study focuses on the role of rankings in building reputation and field

boundaries for business education in developed and developing countries. *The aim of the current study is to explain how and why rankings build business schools' reputation and how it shapes the business education field in developed and developing countries.* To achieve this aim, the current study builds on findings from the business schools of the UK and Pakistan.

1.2 Research problem

As this study highlighted the significance of rankings and reputation in HE, it also identifies a paucity of research in these areas. Several studies have debated the significance of reputation within the HE sector (Brewer and Zhao, 2010; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Martensen and Grønholdt, 2005; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001). These studies discussed reputation in the context of marketing, institutional image and globalisation, but the role of rankings in building reputation is still under-researched and lacks empirical evidence from different markets. Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) have discussed reputation by identifying the key ingredients for building reputation but their work lacks clarity on the interconnectedness between rankings and the reputation-building process in the HE industry. It is difficult to understand exactly how rankings and reputation are interrelated; thus, a few questions are raised. What makes reputation highly significant in the business education field? Why are rankings so important for building business school reputation and to what extent? The current study attempts to answer these questions and to clarify the relationship between rankings and reputation by investigating how and why rankings influence the reputation of business schools.

Rankings have been debated by academics and their significance for HE has been expressed from different perspectives. The rankings literature falls into two broad perspectives: methodological perspective and theoretical perspective. Hazelkorn (2011) argued that the majority of the rankings literature falls into the methodological perspective and limited research is available on the theoretical perspective. From methodological perspective, several studies (Billal, 2012;

Hazelkorn, 2007; Liu and Cheng, 2005; Sadlak et al., 2008; Turner, 2005; Usher and Savino, 2006) have discussed rankings by examining the method implied in rankings, such as the indicators used for evaluation, authentication of data, and the use of proxies. A common theme among these studies highlights the volatility of the ranking systems and the problems in measurement criteria, which causes uncertainty and insecurity among business schools about how they should respond (Hazelkorn, 2011). A limited number of studies (Espeland and Sauder, 2007; Labi, 2008; Wedlin, 2006) have taken a theoretical stance and argued the significance, power, and influence of rankings on HEIs. However, even with the insecurity and uncertainty about ranking information, there is paucity of research to understand why rankings are so important and how they affect reputation of the business schools in the developed and developing countries. We therefore need to focus on the processes to understand how rankings affect business education and reputation of the business schools.

With the expansion of business schools, several types of transparency instruments such as research-based rankings, media-based rankings, student surveys, and accreditations have been introduced into the HE system (Hazelkorn, 2011). It is still not clear how and why these different types of transparency instruments became so important in the HE field. Previous research studies largely investigated the global rankings (Hazelkorn, 2011; Wedlin, 2006) and did not consider the domestic rankings and their implications for the domestic HE market. Hazelkorn (2011) has appropriately classified the different ranking systems but her study lacks an in-depth analysis of the implications of these rankings in developed and developing countries. National rankings have gained in significance in developing countries where the global rankings have not made inroads into their HE systems (Hazelkorn, 2011). We may ask why and how these rankings are formed and with what consequences. In the current study, the researcher attempts to answer the above stated questions by critically examining the role of rankings in building business

school reputation and its impact on the developed and developing business education field.

1.3 Research Questions

The researcher attempts to achieve the aim of the current study by answering two research questions, which are stated below:

Question 1: How and why are rankings used for constructing reputation in the business education field?

Question 2: How do rankings shape the business education field in the developed and developing HE settings?

1.4 Methodology

The research questions set for this study are qualitative in nature, thus implying the use of a phenomenological/qualitative approach. The current study adopts a case-study approach by selecting ten business schools per country from the UK and Pakistan. The rationale for selecting business schools is based on a purposive sampling method that is explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

After clarifying the theoretical stance in chapter two, the researcher presents empirical review of the context of HE, reputation, and rankings, which establish the basis for the research analysis. A research study requires clarification of the methods applied in it (Creswell, 2007); therefore, the researcher explains the research methodology of the current study in chapter three. Chapter three thus explains the methods adopted for this study with regard to case-study selection, and data collection procedure. The methodology chapter also discusses the reliability, validity and generalisability of the current study and concludes by presenting the ethical concerns of the study. Using a qualitative approach, empirical evidence was then gathered for two case-studies by conducting 43 interviews with

academic experts, business school marketing managers and industry experts, supplemented by internal student surveys and other relevant secondary sources of data.

1.5 Significance of the study

The current study aims to contribute in many ways by addressing the research gaps identified earlier in this chapter. The current study attempts to make theoretical contributions, largely relating to the formation of field and field boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. The current study will help the reader to understand the influence of rankings in constructing international and domestic business education fields and field boundaries. The current study argues that rankings are categorisation systems that are used to construct reputation and boundaries for business education field in the developed and developing field-settings. This study critically examines the role of categorisation systems in defining and changing the perception of reputation, and analyses how and why field and field members take part in such contestations.

Inspired by the concept of boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999), this study critically analyses boundary-work at different levels such as boundary-work for reputation, boundary-work for international and domestic fields, and boundary-work for new categorisations through the active role of ranking systems. The field and field boundaries of business education are formed through boundary-work depending on who does the boundary-work, for whom and against whom. This study shows that rankings play an active role in field and field boundary formation as they construct different types of contests, such as a contest for symbolic value, a contest for authority and a contest for autonomy.

In line with Suddaby and Viale's (2011) study of institutional work, the current study also attempts to analyse the construction of uncontested space through rankings in the business education field. This study shows how actors define and

populate the uncontested space of domestic competition and category, where field members compete for supremacy and positions within that group, thus legitimising and setting new boundaries for the field.

The current study also aims to make contribution for the HE sector. This study may be significant for academic researchers seeking to understand the underlying dynamics of HE rankings and their impact on the business education field from the context of developed- and developing-field settings. Practitioners (business school management) and people working in rankings and accreditation bodies, may find this study useful by understanding the interconnectedness between rankings and reputation, and its impact on business education field. The current study is the first of its kind to discuss the Pakistani ranking system, which may help the Pakistani students to make informed decisions. This study will help them to understand what Pakistani ranking systems are, what they measure and how they measure for developing ranking lists. Attempting to critically analyse the development of ranking systems in developing countries, the current study may prove useful for the producers of ranking lists in these countries seeking to understand the significance of different types of transparency instruments that will help to develop or upgrade their ranking systems.

1.6 Overall structure of the thesis

The current thesis consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two discusses the literature review of this study. Chapter two discusses the theoretical concepts and framework, context of HE from the developed and developing higher perspectives by presenting its historic perspective, reforms and transitions, and summarising the HE system in the UK and Pakistan. This chapter then theorise the reputation literature and introduces the key concepts of reputation and discusses the significance and construction of reputation and its implications for universities and business schools. Finally, the literature review concludes by presenting a historical perspective of rankings and debates their significance for the

HE sector. The third chapter discusses and explains the methods adopted for achieving the research objectives of the current study. It also

Chapter four illustrates the data analysis procedure and presents research findings from two case-studies. In this chapter, the researcher reviewed and presented a plethora of evidence related to the impact of rankings on business schools and their status.

The heart of this thesis is located in chapters five and six. Building on the findings from the two case-studies, the researcher discusses the analytical themes in chapter five and presents key findings of the study. In chapter five, the researcher links theoretical concepts with the findings from the two case-studies. The final chapter (Chapter 6) concludes this study by reflecting on the research objectives and highlighting the contribution and limitations of the current study and avenues for further research.

Figure 1: Structure of Thesis
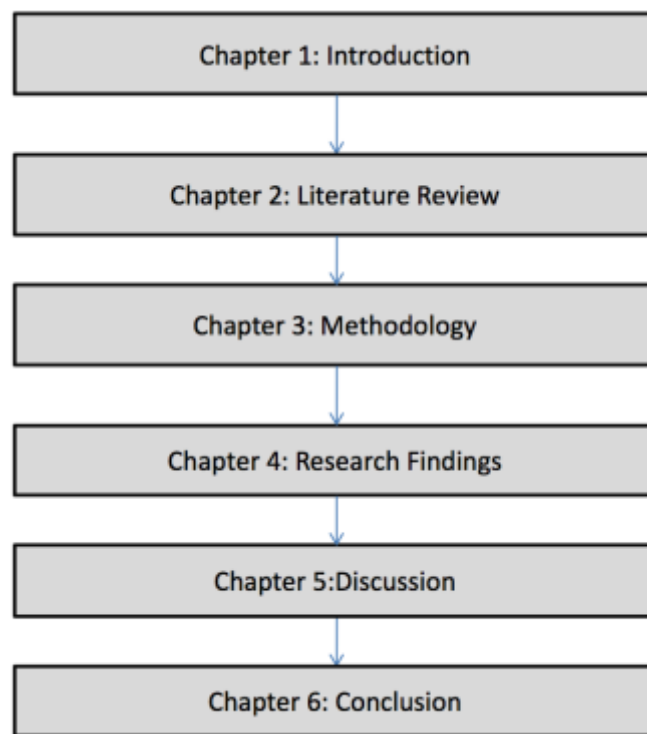
1.7 Summary

The current study proposes that categorisation systems, such as rankings, are used for constructing reputation in the field and shaping the business education field. It is still not clear why rankings are so important in the business education field, how they construct status and positions in the field, and how they shape the field in the developed and developing HE settings. Taking a field perspective, the current study attempts to answer these questions and developed two specific research questions. How and why are rankings used to construct reputation in the business education field? And how do rankings shape the business education field in the developed and developing HE settings?

This study adopts a qualitative case-study approach to gather empirical evidence from case-study business schools through interviews, supplemented by secondary sources of data. The case-study institutions are selected from the UK and Pakistan that represent the standpoint of developed and developing HE markets respectively. The current study aims to contribute to the concept fields and field boundary formation by arguing that rankings are categorisation tools, which construct and redefines reputation and shapes field boundaries of international and domestic business education field.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The literature suggests that research should be backed up with a solid theoretical framework and studies should investigate research questions by utilising existing theories and then clarifying the data analysis using the suggested framework (Yin, 2003). The current study takes a field perspective; therefore, it is important to introduce the key theoretical concepts and variables.

The current study attempts to answer the two research questions by conceptualising rankings as a part of the developing business education field. The concept of organisational fields reflects on the structure, behaviour and legitimate activities of the organisations within the field. The field in institutional theory is a group of organisations, which are isomorphic and struggling for something common (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). The field approach defines legitimate activities and frameworks in terms of rules, beliefs, regulations and laws (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). The use of fields takes the perspective of organisations within the field rather than focusing on separate actors, and it provides opportunities for a wider explanation (Martin, 2003). A field perspective requires an understanding of the process by considering characteristics and institutional conditions of the field. It also demands an understanding of the interaction and relations between institutional members in the field, the struggle to define the characteristics, and the reactions of the field members to the change introduced in the field (Martin, 2003). Therefore, a field perspective helps us to understand and conceptualise not only the reactions of individual members to the change but also their mutual efforts to respond and contribute to the development of the field.

As noted earlier, institutional theory reflects on the legitimacy of processes and procedures within the field (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Building on the institutional theory, Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) discussed the emergence of

new organisational forms and termed Legitimacy a key element of institutional change. "*Legitimacy is defined as a generalized notion of what is 'desirable, proper and appropriate' for organizations within a social system and can be measured as acceptance or acceptability, taken-for-grantedness, and adherence to the expectations, values, rules and meanings of that system. Legitimacy thus involves cognitive processes through which an entity becomes embedded in taken-for-granted assumptions*" (Wedlin, 2010, p. 202). Previous studies have linked institutional change to institutional logics and argued that institutional change occurs due to shifts in the logic by which legitimacy is assessed (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Logics are defined as "the underlying assumptions, deeply held, often unexamined, which form a framework within which reasoning takes place" (Horn, 1983, p. 1). When there is a shift in logics, it changes the criteria used for assessing the legitimacy of organisational forms; however, there is little information about the means by which institutional logics are contested and changed.

The above argument leads us to further explore the key role of categorisation systems through which logics are contested within the business education field. The current study argues that rankings are important categorisation systems that shape the business education field and construct reputation in the developed and developing business education fields. With the proliferation of ranking systems, a pursuit of international business schools, and the introduction of new forms of regulations and quality control measures, it is possible to claim that the boundaries of business education are becoming fuzzy. Universities and business schools around the world are educating students in business studies but there is an element of uncertainty as to what constitutes a good business school, a good practice, and by whom and how it should be measured. The field and its boundaries are hence unclear. Building on this interpretation, one might ask how business education fields are formed; who or what counts as being in the field, and who and what procedures have the legitimacy to draw the line between insiders and outsiders.

Organisational fields can be seen as places where there is a persistent struggle for something common among institutional members. For example, there is a struggle for good art in the field of art. In broader terms, there is a struggle for authority. While defining a group of organisations, a field also draws boundaries for the field members (Gieryn, 1999). In this sense, boundaries define the 'insiders and outsiders' of the field. A field has boundaries and is often defined by geographical area or by distinct industry but it can also be constructed through symbolic boundaries. The symbolic value in the field constructs symbolic boundaries, which build on people's perceptions of appropriate and desirable practices in the field (Lamont, 1992; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). When there is a struggle, the boundaries change constantly, thus allowing actors to define and establish the boundaries of the field (Gieryn, 1999). Gieryn (1999) termed this 'boundary-work' where the struggle determines the criteria, insiders and outsiders, and authorities for judging and setting the field boundaries. Building on the boundary-work concept, the current study further develops the connection between rankings, reputation and fields by arguing that building reputation through categorisation systems and the struggle for authority and autonomy is a vital part of field and boundary formation. This will help us to examine field construction in more detail, as well as to understand field struggle from developed and developing HE perspectives.

Having determined the persistent struggle for something common that go on to structure field boundaries, the current study will go a step further by conceptualising rankings as place where field struggles are being played out. This way, the researcher will conceptualise categorisation systems as a tool for boundary-work of fields that sets a contest for reputation, authority and autonomy in the field.

Taking a field perspective, the earlier discussion in this chapter has introduced the idea of rankings as tools for the construction of organisational fields and boundaries. The current study argues that rankings are categorisation systems that

shape the field of business education and field boundaries. In this sense, the current study attempts to examine the role of categories in field and field boundary formations by looking into the developed and developing HE field settings. Thus, the current study will develop a framework for examining rankings as part of a process, which constructs symbolic value and shapes the business education field in developed and developing countries.

To discuss the role of categorisation systems in organisational fields, the current study integrates and draws on several theoretical concepts. First, the current chapter attempts to establish the concept of an organisational field by discussing field dynamics, field boundaries, and boundary-work. This will aid an understanding of the process of field formation and the construction of field boundaries. Second, the current chapter draws the reader's attention to the role of categorisation systems in constructing social order. The researcher will specify how categorisation systems contribute to the construction of fields and their boundaries. This section will end with a discussion of analytical themes to be used for analysing the two research objectives.

2.1.1 Field and field dynamics

The debate in the current study revolves around the business education field; therefore, understanding the concepts and definition of fields becomes highly important. Fields are frequently used in institutional theory as they represent shared meaning among a group of organisations and reflect on the regulatory process that defines a set of organisations (Scott, 1994). Fields can be seen as places where there is a persistent struggle for something common among institutional members (Bourdieu, 1988). Bourdieu (1998) discussed the construction of fields with examples from the field of the arts, explaining the struggle over the authority to judge what is a good practice and right. Gallery owners and critics, who define 'good art', define and create symbolic value in the field of the arts (Bourdieu, 1988). Rao (1994) argued that if a company wins a certificate in a contest, this provides

symbolic value to the field members, and these types of victories will improve the company's access to resources (Rao, 1994).

A struggle in the field shapes logic in the field (Oakes et al., 1998). Previous research studies suggest that logics, as shared rule systems, change over time and influence the organisational practices within a field (Lounsbury, 2002). For instance, Lounsbury (2002) explained a shift from regulatory logic to market logic in the field of finance and how it shaped the professionalisation of finance occupations. The focus on defining good and legitimate practices relates to Hoffman's (1999) concept of the issue-based field. In the study of field formation around environmental protection issues, Hoffman (1999) argued that issue-based fields involve specific issues of society. His work separates the formation of the organisational field from the development of specific institutions, markets or technology, where at the same time the institutions and the field can co-evolve (Hoffman, 1999). Considering the struggle for authority as a process of field formation is thus highly significant as it incorporates the development of logic with the construction of fields. Previous research studies suggest that norms and values are incorporated in the struggle that defines fields, fields' participating members and the consequences of these struggles (Hoffman, 1999; Oakes et al., 1998). This enables us to understand the process of field formation by examining the struggle for authority and legitimacy, and the construction of norms and values among institutions.

With the understanding of fields and field struggles discussed above, the researcher now focuses on the field formation through contestation and struggles between field members. Oakes et al. (1998) argued that fields are in a constant state of change and are continuously being constructed and redefined. It thus becomes important to focus on change for an understanding of fields and field formation. Several research studies have used the concept of field structuration to discuss the processes of field change and institutionalisation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Giddens, 1984; Greenwood, Suddaby and Hinings, 2002), reflecting on the gradual maturity,

behaviours and interactions within the field. The structuration concept refers to the construction of social structures over time where the actions and interactions produce and reproduce the structures (Giddens, 1984). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argued that field structuration creates isomorphic pressures, such as coercive, mimetic and normative pressures, which force field members to be more alike. These isomorphic pressures force organisations to incorporate norms, standards and practices that are diffused within the organisational field, thus leading them to change. Greenwood et al. (2002) identified a paucity of research on institutional theory and proposed that it is time to address not only the effects of structuration processes and field dynamics but also the processes that lead to isomorphism in the field. While the institutional theory perspective helps one to understand and discuss isomorphism and stability within the field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), the field perspective makes it possible to describe field change as well as the disagreement and resistance within the field (Bourdieu, 1988). In this sense, the concept of field highlights the on-going process of change to define the field and the struggle to define authority in the field. This struggle over authority can also be seen as the struggle to produce and sustain the relations and existing structures within the field. It is not only the structure itself that is important but also the procedures that construct relations and positions within the field (Bourdieu, 1988). Thus, it is important to discuss the hierarchies of power and criteria that are used to judge and define a legitimate hierarchy of properties. Bourdieu (1988) argued that a field might have several independent but competing hierarchies, which suggests that a field can be described as a place of struggle over hierarchies. The hierarchies of power and criteria are often unclear, the field boundaries become debatable, and the definition of insiders and outsiders within the field also become unclear. In this sense, while the decisions for setting criteria for membership are a matter of concern, the struggle for authority and how these criteria are determined also becomes a key concern. Therefore, a field is not only a place of struggle over legitimate actions and characteristics of members of the field but also a struggle

over the procedure and process that determines what is right and legitimate for the field and field members (Bourdieu, 1988). Suddaby and Viale (2011) further elucidated institutional work by explaining how professionals reconfigure institutions and institutional fields. They argued that professionals challenge the current order by defining uncontested space and setting up new standards and rules for the field, thereby recreating the field boundaries (Suddaby and Viale, 2011).

Greenwood et al. (2002) argued that the boundaries of the field are flexible and change with the claims and counterclaims made by the actors in the field. Therefore, it important to further theorise how the contesting claims and struggles shape the field boundaries. Taking a field perspective by explicitly focusing on the processes of structuration and field formation, it becomes possible to explain the process of field change and the creation and recreation of field boundaries of the field.

2.1.2 Field boundaries and boundary-work

The role of boundaries and the issues related to boundaries remained a key topic in several research fields such as sociology, history, political science, anthropology and social psychology; however, the integration among different lines of research is limited (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). The concept of field boundaries has dealt with culture (DiMaggio, 1987), science (Gieryn, 1999), professions (Abbott, 1995) and class (Lamont, 1992), and a common argument among these research studies relates to the understanding and explanation of symbolic resources in social systems and societies (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). While symbolic resources remained a core element in research studies, there is limited research about the role of boundaries in field development and field formation (Dacin, Goodstein and Scott, 2002).

To conceptualise the development of field and field boundaries, the current study reflects on the research of Gieryn (1999), which used a boundary-work approach for determining the epistemic and cultural authority in the field of science. He argued

that the field of science could be seen as a place for a 'credibility contest' where actors struggle to define science and scientist and to differentiate these from 'others' such as faith, ideology, and pseudoscience. He further argued that boundary-work takes place when scientific claims are presented to different audiences in boardrooms, media and courtrooms. The audience decides whether the claims are to be considered scientific or not by assigning or removing credibility to or from the claims (Gieryn, 1999). One key element of this concept is the significance of actors, individuals, institutions and their role in forming and reforming field boundaries. Actors play an important role by debating the process and content of science and spreading the ideas and scientific claims. The boundaries of science are constantly defined and redefined depending on who is doing the boundary-work, for whom, and against whom (Gieryn, 1999). In this sense, his reasoning relates to Bourdieu's (1988) work as both raise concerns about who has the authority to judge in the field. With this interpretation, the role of actors can be seen from two perspectives during the field formation of business education. First, actors attempt to define what, or who counts in the field, and who are considered 'insiders' of the business education field. Second, several actors and authorities evaluate business education field, the question arises as to what procedures, or who has the authority and legitimacy to determine who are inside and outside of the field. This debate is clearly about the field formation, and about the tools and authorities that define fields and field boundaries.

Gieryn (1999) identified three types of credibility contests that require a different kind of boundary-work. The first type of credibility contest is termed 'expulsion', where competing authorities attempt to define authority within the field of science. In other words, it is a contest about who is inside and outside the authoritative cultural space. While constructing the boundaries of the field, the boundary-work becomes a means of social control that defines legitimate actions and norms of conduct for the insiders. This type of contest can be compared to the impact of

isomorphism, which leads to the construction of social structures and social control (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). The second is 'expansion', where authorities attempt to expand the frontiers of the field. In this sense, rival authorities classify science from less relevant sources. This type of contest can be compared to the mapping of jurisdiction and the contest for professional authority (Greenwood et al., 2002; Suddaby and Viale, 2011). The third type of boundary-work is termed 'protection of autonomy'; this comes from the efforts of outside powers, which shape the symbolic resources in the field. For instance, mass media and legislators use science as a tool in market and political struggles.

The field boundaries are often established on industry, geographical area, or a shared normative framework where organisations produce the same things that distinguish them from others. In defining the field and field boundaries, it is not the struggle to define a group of institutions per se that is important but, rather, the ideas and perceptions of individuals about what is suitable and good practice within the field (Wedlin, 2010). These perceptions of individuals construct the symbolic boundaries of the field. The boundaries in this sense are not real, because they do not provide a description of social order or structure; rather, they are a conceptual classification of practices that are drawn by the individuals within the field (Lamont, 1992).

2.1.3 Categorisation and field boundaries

The current study will use the concept of categories and categorisation systems to capture both actors and processes that construct the symbolic boundaries and fields by analysing the interrelatedness of symbolic construction and field formation. Several studies have investigated the formation of fields and field boundaries, stressing the role of states, professional groups or global institutions in defining fields (see, for example, DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Greenwood et al., 2002) and highlighting the formulation of laws, rules and norms that reflect the changes in standards, regulations and logics (Dacin et al., 2002). This conceptualisation of field

formation involves a number of processes and mechanisms, which may require further investigation. Focusing directly on categorisation systems and mechanisms, the current study attempts to explain how categorisation systems influence field development and change. The procedures of measuring, evaluating and categorising objects and practices influence the perception and behaviour of actors. Several studies (see, for example, Oakes et al., 1998; Miller, 2001) have investigated evaluating procedures and measurement techniques, which are used to define actors and activities within a field. These measurement and evaluation systems act as an external control system and as a tool for incorporating new norms in the field (Shore and Wright, 2000).

The current study focuses on the role of categorisation systems in forming field, field boundaries and reputation within the business education field; hence, it is important to discuss what these systems do and how they do it. Categories are social constructs of knowledge structures that shape the behaviour of actors and define rules and standards for the field (Douglas, 1986; Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010). Khaire and Wadhwani (2010) further argued that categories "*allow audiences to interpret cognitively complex information about products and services more easily*" (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010, p. 1282). Researchers have examined the concept of categories and categorisation in different product and service markets. The concept of categories has dealt with fair trade (Doherty and Haugh, 2015), modern art (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010), wine (Zhao, 2005), automobiles (Rosa et al., 1999), and the definition of symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). A common argument among these research studies suggests that categorisation systems classify groups and groups' characteristics, set boundaries for the categories, and construct distinctions that allow audiences to interpret them more easily (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). In this sense, categorisation not only constructs knowledge about the individuals and objects of a category but also makes them visible in the field (Bowker and Star, 1999). Categorisation systems are thus procedures for diffusing,

making visible, and building knowledge about the members being categorised (Bowker and Star, 1999). These systems group individuals and institutions, make comparisons, and create belongingness and distinctions. By creating visibility, these measuring systems also create and diffuse standards and role models, and determine value in the field. The current study argues that categorisation systems can potentially influence the construction of the field and field change. Previous research studies investigating accounting and audit practices suggest that evaluation systems can have regulatory and governing effects even though they are not officially declared as regulations and laws (Shore and Wright, 2000). These evaluating, measuring, and categorising practices have been shown to influence the perception and behaviour of actors (Wedlin, 2006).

Bowker and Star (1999) argued about two types of classification systems, i.e. Aristotelian and prototypical classification, which are used to define category and assign places to objects and individuals within categories. Aristotelian classification focuses on the characteristics and features that an object does or does not possess. In other words, the set criteria place objects into one group but classification is often more complex and fuzzier than this, hence demanding the use of prototypical classification. In prototypical classification, objects are assessed based on their appearance to determine whether they belong to a certain category. This type of classification refers to the prototype of a category and assesses whether another object is similar to the prototype or not (Bowker and Star, 1999). Empirically, the distinction between two types of classification may not be very useful as they often conflate but it can be useful when we see this from a theoretical perspective. From theoretical perspective, the Aristotelian classification focuses on the standards, procedures and norms for assigning categories and classifying objects, while prototypical classification makes prototypes (actors, groups and organisations) visible and becomes a role model for a category or group.

2.1.4 Rankings as categorisation systems

The role of categorisation becomes highly relevant in field formation as objects are divided into groups, positions and hierarchies (Shore and Wright, 2000). The hierarchies and positions become very useful for making comparisons. In this sense, categorisation can have different roles; it defines who is inside a category and how they are positioned in relation to other members of the group, thus acting as a punish-and-reward system (Wedlin, 2010) for the field members. Rankings in this sense can be termed categorisation systems as they classify and assign hierarchal positions to institutions (Hazelkorn, 2011). Rankings not only construct a contest of material rewards and resources (Rao, 1994) but also affect the status hierarchy and symbolic resources, which become a part of the structuration process (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Lamont and Molnár, 2002). The argument here is that the struggle for authority sets the boundaries of the field, classifies members of the field and shapes the field where rankings facilitate such contestations. As rankings are the key element of the current research study, there is a clear need to review the rankings literature to understand what they are and how they work. The current study provides in-depth review of rankings later in this chapter (Section 2.4).

2.1.5 The framework

Building on the above-mentioned research studies, the current study emphasises the role of rankings by considering them as categorisation systems, which shape symbolic value, such as reputation, and construct field and field boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. Therefore, it is important to clarify the theoretical standpoints of the current study and discuss the theoretical concepts and their key elements on which the current study builds.

Yin (2003) suggested that the theoretical framework demands the identification of key variables and themes and the relationships among them. The current study argues that categorisation mechanisms, such as rankings, construct symbolic value

and field boundaries, thus taking part in the continuous formation of the field. Building upon this view, the researcher explores two roles of rankings in the business education field: first, to build reputation within the field and, second, to construct the business education field and field boundaries by focusing on the developed- and developing-field settings.

From theoretical perspective, the main argument of current thesis is to explicate key role of categorisation systems in constructing business education field and field boundaries in developed- and developing HE markets. Categorisation systems triggers struggle for authority and autonomy, and set contest for the field and field members. Through categorisation systems, the current study attempts to critically analyse these contestations, which require boundary-work at different levels such as boundary-work for reputation, international and domestic fields, and new categories. The theoretical excursion has helped the researcher to formulate two broader analytical themes that guide the structure of the research analysis. The researcher will discuss these themes by utilising the research findings from two field settings (UK and Pakistan). The analytical themes are stated below.

Theme 1: The role of rankings in building reputation in the field

The first theme refers to the boundary-work for reputation that attempts to analyse the formation and reformation of symbolic value in the business education field (Gieryn, 1999). Rankings become a contest that redefine, evaluate, and change the perception of reputation in the field. Categorisation systems play an active role in field and field boundary formation, and become a contest for authority. In other words, it is the struggle to determine which qualities can be considered relevant and valuable in the field and who is part of the field (Gieryn, 1999). Ranking systems, in this sense, are assumed to play an active role in the struggle to define and evaluate symbolic value for the field and its members.

Revitalising the concept of field formation, this study conceptualises the boundary-work of reputation in business education field where categorisation systems construct a contest of symbolic value. In order to understand the role of rankings in building reputation, it is imperative that we first examine the significance of rankings and reputation, and their interconnectedness in the business education field. In this analytical theme, the researcher will focus on the processes and several questions have been raised. To critically analyse the role of categorisation systems in the construction of reputation and fields, we need to examine; first, how and why rankings become significant in the field, second, why symbolic value is significant for business schools and how categorisation systems transform academic and material value to symbolic value, and vice-versa. Finally, how and why field members use rankings during the struggle for the symbolic value. Interrogating these questions would allow us to understand the critical role of categorisation systems in building, redefining, and changing perception of reputation, which contributes to the formation of business education field. In broader terms, this study attempts to explain the struggle for authority, which is contested through symbolic value among the field members of business education field.

Theme 2: Shaping the business education field and field boundaries

The second theme debates the role of ranking in shaping the business education field of developed and developing countries. The researcher argues that categorisation tools, such as rankings, are used to legitimise the practices and procedures within the field for constructing field and field boundaries. This theme thus critically examines the boundary-work for international and domestic fields and new categories in the business education field.

Gieryn (1999) argued that the boundaries of field are constantly defined and redefined that depends on who does the boundary-work, for whom, and against whom. The current study thus examines the boundary-work from developed and developing HE market perspectives for understanding the struggle for authority

and field formation of business education field. The ranking environment varies in developed and developing HE markets; therefore, the current study discusses the second theme from the perspective of UK and Pakistan field settings in order to understand the field formation process in developed and developing HE settings. The second theme builds on two sub-analytical themes:

- Shaping the field and field boundaries in developed HE settings
- Shaping the field and field boundaries in developing HE settings

First, focusing on the developed-field settings, the current study attempts to explain how rankings constructs the international field of business education, justify the means of comparison, and construct the institutional field and field boundaries. Second, building on the findings from the developing-field setting, the researcher discusses the role of categorisation systems for countering the Western model of rankings and shaping competition within the developing business education field.

The struggle for reputation creates unique logics (Oakes et al., 1998), and the shift in logics changes the criteria that are used for assessing the legitimacy of organisational forms (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). The researcher draws readers' attention to the active role of the field and field members and the use of rankings in promoting and institutionalising different forms of comparisons and contestations. Building on the concepts of boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999), the current theme focuses on the role of different types of categorisation mechanisms, which determines the criteria, insiders and outsiders, and authorities for judging and setting the field boundaries. In other words, the researcher discusses how field and field members use different types of ranking systems for shaping the meaning of reputation in the field and constructing boundaries of the field. This study also attempts to provide empirical evidence to the institutional work (Suddaby and Viale, 2011) by arguing that actors challenge existing contestations (ranking systems), define and populate the uncontested space, and set new standards for the business education field. The current study provides empirical evidence to show

how field members struggle for legitimising different types of rankings in the developed and developing business education field settings and how they attempt to change the perceptions of field characteristics and boundaries of the field.

2.2 Context of Higher Education

2.2.1 Marketisation of Higher Education

Since the 1990s, HEIs have expanded globally in volume, scope and complexity (Altbach and Knight, 2007). The market of HE is not just one market but a combination of several markets, such as a market for different segments of students, a market for research, a market for academic staff and lecturers, a market for bursaries, grants and scholarships, a market for donations, and a market for training (Jongbloed, 2003). In recent years, we have seen governments around the globe intervene to introduce market-type mechanisms for their respective HE sectors (Dill, 1997).

The term 'marketisation of HE' arose due to recent changes made in HE, such as cutbacks in government funding that led HEIs (worldwide) to pursue alternative sources of finance in order to survive in the industry (Askehave, 2007). The intervention of the government has led several HEIs to adapt new business strategies. "*Marketization in education refers to the adoption of free market practices in running schools. These include the business practices of cutting production cost, abandoning goods not in demand, producing only popular products, and advertising products to increase sales and the profit margin*" (Kwong, 2000, p. 89). Due to the marketisation of the HE sector, today HEIs are more concerned with attracting international students who pay higher fees, competing for government grants, and undertaking research projects that are attractive to corporate sponsors. Core HE concepts such as teaching and contributing to the establishment of knowledge remained neglected (Askehave, 2007; Kwong, 2000). HEIs have focused on entrepreneurship to attract the corporate sector, and a new term, 'educational entrepreneurship', has emerged (Mautner, 2005). The HE industry is changing and some common terminologies that were once associated with the corporate world such as market, customers, strategic plans, and corporate identity have become common in the HE sector (Connell and Galasinski, 1998). Today, HEIs do not simply teach courses: they see themselves as selling

courses to clients (students); and, to make these courses attractive, advertising seems to be a dominant tool (Askehave, 2007). The advertisements taken out by business schools further validate this argument; for instance, one UK business school relates its high fees to better job prospects and considers its courses a 'better investment' plan.

The aim of marketisation is to offer more choices to the students and HEIs. For HEIs, it offers choices to innovate and improve quality in order to attract high-quality students (Dill and Teixeira, 2000). Marketisation policies have led HEIs to become more cost-effective and have improved the overall efficiency of these HEIs (Jongbloed, 2003).

Jongbloed (2003) examined the impact of marketisation on the supply and demand sides of HE. On the supply side, marketisation offers a group of markets where HEIs can compete with one another. HEIs have the freedom to choose from among different alternatives that are offered in specific markets. For example, they have the freedom to devise taught courses/programmes by analysing for whom they are offered, what they offer, and how they target different student segments (Connell and Galasinski, 1998). HEIs have the freedom to decide and innovate ways of differentiating their courses from competing HEIs. HEIs also have the freedom to utilise the available resources in efficient ways. The available resources can take the form of human or financial resources and students (Jongbloed, 2003). HEIs that have high-quality students will enjoy higher reputations, thus making them highly attractive to prospective students. The neo-liberalism era has raised the level of competition, as is evident from the employee recruitment process. For instance, the HEIs in Netherlands had to follow the national regulated salary format but the Dutch government decentralised the decision-making power implying that employers and employees have the flexibility to negotiate salaries and recruiting high-quality staff (Jongbloed, 2003). With the cutbacks in institutional funding and deregulation, HEIs can now take independent financial decisions. Previously, HEIs

had to rely on the set government budget for conducting research and running day-to-day activities but marketisation and limited funds have led these HEIs to explore new avenues of funding. Today, HEIs establish links with private sector organisations to pool resources in order to conduct research of mutual interest. In most cases, the HEIs contribute with human or intellectual resources while the industries contribute financially.

On the demand side (students), the market offers several choices. These choices may take different forms such as HEI selection, course selection, mode selection (full-time/part-time), location (main branch or offshore campus), and distance learning. Just like any other commodity/service, it is not possible to meet every consumer's needs; hence, popular courses are made available by the HEIs to accommodate the majority of students (Kwong, 2000). The major challenge for the HE sector is quite similar to that of any other sector, and it relates to the pricing (fee). Students seek value for their money whereas the HEIs wish to receive higher prices for the quality of service that they offer. Students seek adequate information about the prices and the value they receive for that price (Jongbloed, 2003).

2.2.2 Higher Education in the UK

Stevens (2004) argues that the UK, being a strong economic and social hub, has seen a rise in education in the last four decades. Problems for the government continued to mount up, such as shrinking government revenues and increased life expectancy; thus, it became difficult to run a welfare state. The pressure on the state demanded harsh measures to control the governmental cash flows. The government introduced budget-cuts in different sectors and the HE sector was no exception. The first cut to university budgets was approved in 1973, followed by others over many years (Stevens, 2004). This changed the dynamics of HE and universities had to find an alternative funding option to meet the deficit. This can be seen as the start of the marketisation of HE in the UK, where universities were reshaped in this neo-liberal era.

The UGC set a common fee for all commonwealth states in 1919; however, due to financial pressures, in 1976 the UGC excluded commonwealth states from the domestic fees policy. A new government came into power in 1979 and their stance was coherent with neo-liberal policies of deregulation, privatisation and free trade, which allowed them to reduce government's spending. The political debate about HE mostly revolved around the quality improvement, university management, and accessibility for the lower-income class. In 1986 the UGC introduced a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) that aimed to prioritise funds' disbursement on the basis of university research activities (Stevens, 2004). "*The next big shift in Higher Education took place in 1992. The Further and Higher Education Act removed the distinction between Universities on the one hand, and polytechnics and colleges of higher education on the other*" (HE-History, 2013). In 1997, the UGC established the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to monitor quality standards in HEIs.

The Department for Education and Skills (DES) issued a policy in 2004 that analysed the UK's HE and explained the government's future plans (DES, 2004). UK HE policies emphasised a knowledge-based economy by arguing that developed nations have lost competitive advantage as developing nations offer cheap labour markets thus forcing manufacturing companies to shift their production units to these markets (China, Taiwan, India and so on). The developed nations can achieve sustainability only if they are ahead in the technology race; hence, the emphasis was on research and development. The document further highlighted the importance of overseas students. The Tony Blair-led government initiated programs to encourage expatriate students (DES, 2004). The following Table-1 reflects the enrolment of different student segments in the UK.

Table 1: UK HEIs Statistics

Description		UK total in 2012/13
Number of UK institutions		176
UK students	337,575	
Other EU students	45,835	
Non EU students	153,025	
Total Post graduate students		536,435
UK students	1,577,440	
Other EU students	79,455	
Non EU students	146,945	
Under graduate students		1,803,840
Total Students		2,340,280
Academic staff	185,535	
Non-academic Staff	196,845	
Total Staff		382,380

Source: (HESA, 2013)

As shown in the above Table-1, in year 2013 there were one hundred and seventy-six HEIs in the UK and over two million students. The number of postgraduate students is relatively lower than the number of undergraduate students, suggesting that most undergraduate students do not opt for postgraduate studies in the UK. It is also evident from the above table that the majority of international students opt for postgraduate courses.

Quality Assurance Practices in the UK

The HE funding and quality assurance practices in the UK have been transformed in the last two decades. Before 1992, the HEIs received funding from different bodies based on the type and location of institution. For example, in England, the universities received funding from the University Funding Council, while the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council funded the polytechnics. A few HEIs obtained funding directly from the department of Education and Employment (HEFCE, 2014). The major change occurred in the year 1992 when the HE Act 1992 was introduced, bringing about HE reforms in the UK. This Act focused on the

unification of HE in terms of funding, and the divisions among different HEIs were eliminated. Under this Act, four different funding councils were established for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and these were responsible for the provision of funding for all HEIs in the UK. Following this Act, the HE councils such as Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) also had the powers of quality assurance, for which a separate division was formed. Later, in the year 1997, the responsibility for quality assurance was handed over to the newly established Quality Assurance Agency (HEFCE, 2014). The QAA monitors and advises on standards and quality in all universities, colleges and polytechnics across the UK. The QAA "*safeguard[s] standards and support[s] the improvement of quality for students - whether they study at a university or college in the UK or in any other location worldwide where courses lead to UK higher education qualifications*" (QAA-UK, 2014).

QAA UK's core function is to provide a high-quality education experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students, which they expect to receive. The responsibilities of the QAA can broadly be categorised into two main functions: assessment and advisory. The assessment task relates to the quality of HE provided at HEIs and conduct assessments for bringing best international practices into the HE system. The advisory function involves government and HEIs. Based on their research and assessment, they play an advisory role for the government on setting standards for universities and providing suggestions to HEIs for improvements.

The QAA UK has set a target for the year 2017 and it is categorised into three main objectives. The first objective is to build public confidence internationally regarding the UK's HE. QAA UK aims to achieve this target by promoting the reputation of HE via external review. This involves enhancing the engagement of HEIs in external quality assurance (QAA-UK, 2014). If this is a success, we should expect a greater role for external accreditation bodies in the UK. Second, it aims to improve the current quality assurance practices in HE. Third, it aims to extend the reach of

QAA's services in order that it might become a leading international QAA capable of generating more funds for operations (QAA-UK, 2014).

2.2.3 Higher Education in Pakistan

This study emphasises on the role of ranking in developed and developing HE sector. The current study takes Pakistan HE as a standpoint for developing countries not only because it offers a great deal to a comparative study of this type, but also for its newly established ranking system.

One of the major development in Pakistani HE sector was the establishment of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in the year 2002, which then became the governing body of all universities/Degree Awarding Institutions (DAI's) and affiliated colleges. HEC is an autonomous body responsible for allocating federal funds to the public universities. Private sector universities also benefit from these funds, however; these funds are limited to the areas of research and some specific projects (HEC, 2012).

According to the HEC report, there are one hundred and thirty-eight HEIs in Pakistan, of which seventy-five are public HEIs and sixty-three are private (see Appendix 1). There are some eye-catching statistics in the following Table-2 suggesting the growth pattern of HEC in Pakistan. We note that more than fifty per cent of Pakistan's current universities have been formed since the inception of HEC in 2002.

HEC not only helped accelerate the growth of universities but also encouraged competition by introducing several private universities. The above Table-2 confirms that thirty-six new private universities have been established since 2002, raising the tally of private universities to sixty-three. This triggered competition in universities to the next level. Universities not only had to compete with fellow public universities but also had to face the emerging private universities and affiliates.

Table 2: Universities in Pakistan

					Universities added in the period		
S. No	Period (Year)	Total universities	Public	Private	Public	Private	Total
1	1947	2	2	0		0	0
2	1948-1952	4	4	0	2	0	2
3	1953-1959	5	5	0	1	0	1
4	1960-1966	10	10	0	5	0	5
5	1967-1973	11	11	0	1	0	1
6	1974-1980	21	21	0	10	0	10
7	1981-1987	26	24	2	3	2	5
8	1988-1994	35	29	6	5	4	9
9	1995-2001	68	41	27	12	21	33
10	2002-2008	124	67	57	26	30	56
11	2008-2010	132	73	59	6	2	8
12	2010-2011	138	75	63	2	4	6

(Source: www.hec.gov.pk/statistics)

Public universities dominated the HE sector in Pakistan but we can see the phenomenal surge in the growth of private HEIs over the last decade. In terms of academic programs, Public HEIs offer a wide range of academic programs whereas the approach of private sector HEIs is highly market-driven as it focuses on professional programs such as business studies, information technology (IT), engineering and medicine (Isani and Virk, 2005).

The growth rate of HEI is commendable; however, enrolment (see Table-3) is not very encouraging. HE in Pakistan has attracted just three per cent of the 17+ to 23+ years age cohort (Isani and Virk, 2005). This is mainly due to the overall low literacy rate in the country.

Table 3: Enrolment in HEIs of Pakistan

Enrolment at Universities/DAI + Constituent Colleges Classified by Sector				
Year	Distance Learning	Public	Private	Total
2001-02	89749	142652	43873	276274
2002-03	108709	167775	55261	331745
2003-04	159257	202871	61108	423236
2004-05	187559	204708	65375	457642
2005-06	199660	242879	78934	521473
2006-07	272272	276226	91563	640061
2007-08	305962	331664	103466	741092
2008-09	339704	348434	115369	803507

(Source: www.hec.gov.pk/statistics)

As shown in the above Table-3, the enrolment is low but there is evidence of substantial growth in the last decade. Figures suggest that there has been a net increase in annual enrolment. In the year 2009, the annual enrolment was more than 0.8 million students, increasing to one million in the year 2011 (HEC, 2012).

Quality Assurance Practices in Pakistan

The HE of Pakistan remained a neglected sector until the start of the twenty-first century. Throughout the country's history, this sector received little attention from policy-makers and remained underfunded. The first appreciation came in the year 2002 when the Government of Pakistan (GOP) finally decided to establish HEC, bring about the demise of the ineffective University Grant Commission. Since its inception, the HEC has made its presence felt by reshaping and reviving the HE structure through new, effective measures (HEC, 2009).

The QAA in Pakistan was established in the year 2005 with the aim of improving educational quality, which was significant for a pursuit of knowledge-based economy. "*Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is involved in systematic implementation of quality enhancement procedures/criteria to attain improved levels of international compatibility and competitiveness at institutional and program level*" (QAA, 2014). One of

the main decisions made by the QAA was to establish Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) at HEIs. The aim was to improve the quality and standards of HE, encourage internal quality assurance process, liaison with QAA, and bridge the gap between actual versus desired status of quality education (HEC, 2009). The goal was to establish QECs in every public and private HEI. The implementation was achieved in phases, and in the first phase during 2006-07 ten HEIs established their QECs. In the second phase (2007-08) another twenty institutions were added followed by another fifteen institutions in the third phase (2009-10). The fourth phase (2010-11) had twenty-four QECs. Fifteen private institutions also established QEC during the period 2009- 2011. Eleven institutions established their QEC without the assistance of HEC. To sum up, ninety-five QECs have been established in public and private institutions of Pakistan (QEC, 2014).

The purpose of establishing QECs was to encourage the internal quality assurance process and to minimise the gap between the existing level of high-quality education and the desired level. As shown in the following Figure-2, the QAA has several functions for which separate committees and councils have been formed.

Figure 2: Quality Assurance Structure

Source: (QAA, 2014)

The function of the Accreditation Council is to ensure the quality of education (programs) offered by each HEI in Pakistan. As per Pakistani law, HEC has the power to establish and assign bodies and councils at national and regional level to carry out accreditation for different institutional categories (QAA-b, 2014).

The HEC termed PhDs an important component of the HE sector, as they play a significant role in the development of HE. It is therefore important to cater for the quality in PhD research. A separate committee consisting of eminent educationalists has been formed to assess the programs at PhD level and to lay down criteria for PhD degrees. The HEC committee members frequently visit HEIs and collect data for the review process (QAA-c, 2014).

In line with the aim set by the National Education Plan (NEP) and Five Year Plan (FYP) for developing a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan, a framework commonly known as 'Institutional Performance Evaluation' was introduced. The aim of this framework was to bring in reforms at different levels of HE. Eleven evaluation standards, such as standards for faculties, students, institutional performance etc., have been set to evaluate the effectiveness and development of the institutions (QAA-d, 2014).

In the year 2003, HEC restructured the bachelor's programs by adopting international standards for four-year programs, replacing them with two-year bachelor's programs and one-year master's programs (HEC, 2009). This move by HEC allows students to gain equivalency for their bachelor's degrees when they apply for master's programs in several developed countries.

2.2.4 History of Business Schools

Turning from nineteenth to twentieth century was a period of economic development, which led to the construction of big companies. For instance, transcontinental railways constructed in this period, connected states from California to New York and promoted industrial production. Such big companies

stimulated financial markets, which demanded an effective and more precise method of information and accounting. These companies also had a large number of workers that led to the new managerial problems thus required more sophisticated forms of management. To solve these new organisational problems, several business and management schools were established (Engwall and Zamagni, 1998).

The proliferation of business schools implied a number of problems. One particular problem was to determine the curriculum for business education. Also, it was equally difficult to hire competent professionals as business courses were taught by professors from other disciplines. In early 1950s, a common understanding about the curriculum started to emerge that included accounting, finance, business law, marketing, economics, production methods, management and business mathematics (Engwall and Zamagni, 1998). As a result, a specialisation of business education emerged for which new departments and schools were created.

In the year 1819, the first business school was founded in Paris under the name Ecole Supérieure de Commerce. Today, it is commonly known as ESCP Europe (Blanchard, 2009). Founded by a group of economics scholars, it has since expanded with branches in London, Berlin, Madrid and Turin. It was a private institution until the year 1869, when the Paris Chamber of Commerce acquired it (Kaplan, 2014). The second business school, founded in the year 1852, was the Belgium Higher Institute of Commerce in Antwerp. Many similar institutes were then established in other parts of Europe following the French and Belgian business school model (Kaplan, 2014).

The first business school in the United States of America was established in the year 1881 and was called the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce (Kaplan, 2014). Later, in the year 1908, Harvard Business School was established. Harvard Business School moved away from the traditional teaching approach and introduced the case-study approach. A new degree, the MBA (Master of Business Administration), was introduced by Harvard Business School, giving it a niche in the market

(Kaplan, 2014). Birmingham Business School became the first business school in England, founded in the year 1902 under the umbrella of the University of Birmingham (Independent, 2010).

The European business schools initially focused on internationalisation whereas the US business schools did not actively pursue the international perspective (Sass, 1982). The Second World War badly affected the European economy and a major shift in management style occurred. The US style of training managers became very popular in Western Europe and many companies such as the Ford Foundation incorporated the US management style, although countries such as France and Germany resisted this Americanisation (Engwall and Zamagni, 1998).

Besides the trend of Americanisation, the business schools have seen two global trends that in a way facilitated standardisation. Kaplan (2014) suggests that the first trend was the result of a survey conducted by the US Ford Foundation that highlighted the importance of research-based business education. He argued that: "*Extensive financial resources have been invested towards reforming US business schools and promoting the 'scientization' of management education*"(Kaplan, 2014, p. 3). The second trend that led to the standardisation of business schools occurred due to the introduction of global rankings in year 2003 (Hazelkorn, 2011). Today, many business schools all over the world use rankings to attract students (Wedlin, 2007). The trend of ranking is not restricted to the US and Europe; developing nations such as India and China have also started to focus on international rankings (Kaplan, 2014).

A study conducted by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has examined the history of business schools from another perspective and has classified schools' history into three waves of development (AACSB, 2011). The first wave reflects several centuries where HEIs were striving to attain the body of knowledge. This was the era of entrepreneurship innovation as many institutions experimented with the structure and content of business education. The second

wave reflected the post-World War II period where the emphasis was on research capabilities. The development of educators in doctoral programs and bodies of accreditation that looked into the standards of institutional quality took place in this wave of development. The current and third wave is termed the period of globalisation. The current globalisation phase encourages business school engagement across borders, providing wider access to HE, globally accepted programs and courses, and new educational formats using new technologies. Expectations of business schools have increased because external forces such as global rankings and accreditations are evaluating the performance of these institutions (AACSB, 2011).

In Pakistan, the first business school (Institute of Business Administration, Karachi) was established in the year 1955 with the technical support of Wharton School of Finance and Commerce. The school was funded by USAID (IBA, 2013). Research suggests that established business schools can contribute to the overall development of business education by helping business schools that are seeking to improve. The superior business schools can offer support in the form of capacity building in developing business schools, which also highlights the importance of academic collaborations between business schools (AACSB, 2011). In this sense, the first business school of the US sponsored the first business school of Pakistan, which also reflects the trend of Americanisation in Pakistan that we have discussed earlier in this section.

2.3 Corporate Reputation

The marketised HE environment facilitates healthy competition among universities and business schools. In the competitive world, HEIs adopt new strategies for adding uniqueness to their offerings where reputation is a key driver of differentiation (Davies and Hilton, 2014) and is therefore highly significnt for HEIs. The current study takes reputation as a standpoint of symbolic value thus it becomes important to discuss the significance of reputation in the HE sector.

Every day we receive information from different sources that affects our perceptions of companies and their offerings. Whether it is news about an oil company burning poisonous chemicals or our friends giving us their views about their new TV or mobile, our perceptions are influenced by this information. Negative events such as scandals, crises, deaths and accidents can damage companies' reputations. A company's good reputation can attract and motivate employees, improve market share and sales, attract investment, and generate favourable press coverage (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004).

Several researchers have discussed corporate reputation from different perspectives. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) argued that a firm's reputation could be positive or negative, thus resulting in a benefit or loss for the firm. If the corporate reputation of a company is positive, it reinforces the company's position and easily overcomes any negative publicity (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). A good corporate reputation protects against negative publicity and increases the chances of purchases being made by potential customers (Yoon, Guffey and Kijewski, 1993). Saxton (1998) argued that a firm's good reputation leads to higher customer loyalty.

The corporate reputation of a company not only influences customer purchase intentions but is also important to the employees associated with it. A good reputation builds the trust and confidence of employees; hence, the reputation of the firm they work for or wish to work for becomes highly influential (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). A positive corporate reputation can also help sales representatives during their sales meetings, as they are able to present their

product/ company with full confidence (Brown, 1996). Fomburn and Shanley (1990) relate positive reputation to higher investments, thus providing a competitive edge over the firm's rivals. The studies presented by the above-mentioned scholars suggest that a good corporate reputation contributes to the overall financial gains of an organisation.

Customers today are bombarded with copious information about products, adding to the complexity and sometimes confusion in the customer's mind. In this sense, the customer uses his/her own perceptions of different companies and relates the reputation to the information available (Bennett and Gabriel, 2001). The reputation reminds customers about the company's products, benefits and the attributes of their products, and allows a comparison with competing companies and their products (Bennett and Gabriel, 2001).

2.3.1 Significance of corporate reputation

The notion of corporate reputation has been discussed by several academics from various fields of study. Authors in the fields of public relations (Hutton et al., 2001) and marketing (Gray and Balmer, 1998) have indicated the role of corporate reputation. Reputation has also been defined in the context of economics (Shapiro, 1982), strategic management (Fombrun, 1996), finance (Rose and Thomsen, 2004), and so on. Researchers have presented numerous definitions and some of those concepts and definitions are tabulated in the below Table-4.

Table 4: Concepts and definitions of corporate reputation

Field of study	Definition and concept	Source
Sociology	Corporate reputation is closely related to individuals and can be influential on individual's decision-making process.	(Walton, 1966)
	It is a social construct that reflects on the relationship between firm and its stakeholders	(Shrum and Wuthnow, 1988)
Economics	Corporate reputation refers to the signal that is passed from a firm to consumers and tells about their offerings	(Shapiro, 1989)
Finance	It influences the perception of shareholders	(Rose and Thomsen, 2004)
Management/ Strategic Management	Corporate reputation is considered as a strategic resource - difficult for customers to switch to other rival products, and that it cannot be easily copied or replaced.	(Barney, 1986; Rao, 1994)
	It can refer to the consistent performance of companies over a period of time for developing positive corporate reputation	(Herbig, Milewicz and Golden, 1994)
	Perpetual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals	(Fombrun, 1996)
Marketing	Corporate reputation refers to the credibility where the credibility of a firm will enhance if they are able to consistently perform better in the market	(Herbig et al., 1994)
	Negative impressions will bring negative results	(LaBarbera, 1982)

Source: Developed by Researcher

Corporate reputation is defined in different ways but some definitions have gained more acceptances as they have been regularly cited in different publications. Weigelt and Camerer (1988) presented one of these popular definitions. They posit that corporate reputation comprises the attributes (or set of attributes) related to the company's past actions. Roberts and Dowling (2002) provided another popular definition and linked the concept of corporate reputation to the public's overall verdict on the company over a certain period. Research also suggests that corporate

reputation is related to people's perceptions and beliefs about the company's identity (Rao, 1994).

One of the earliest discussions of reputation relates to the field of sociology where reputation was linked to individuals. The influence of reputation was discussed from several perspectives, such as the individual's decision-making process (Walton, 1966). Economists argue that corporate reputation acts as a signal that a firm pass to its consumers indicating the quality of its offerings (Shapiro, 1989). In the context of strategic management, corporate reputation becomes an asset for companies. As it is a strategic resource, it is difficult for customers to switch to rival products (Rao, 1994), and it cannot be easily copied or replaced (Barney, 1986). New entrants are less likely to threaten highly reputable companies as it takes time for new companies to develop their reputations (Hall, 1993). Previous studies emphasised the importance of companies performing consistently over a period of time for developing a positive corporate reputation (Herbig et al., 1994). These studies suggest that building a corporate reputation is by no means simple, especially for new companies, and they face difficulty in attracting customers who may have doubts about the company and its offerings.

Corporate reputation in finance literature differs from the strategic management definition as it focuses on the significance for shareholders. Research suggests that corporate reputation helps companies to generate goodwill and thus have an impact on the perceptions of shareholders (Rose and Thomsen, 2004). Shareholders' investment decisions correspond to the level of trust they have in companies and shareholders' trust can be built up by using the positive corporate reputation of the company (Rose and Thomsen, 2004). Sociologists, unlike strategic management scholars, do not consider corporate reputation as an asset that is in the possession of a company; rather, they debate it as a social construct that reflects on the relationship between the firm and its stakeholders (Shrum and Wuthnow, 1988). The reputation of a firm is an indicator of social acceptance, for instance. Rao (1994)

examined reputation within the automobile industry and suggested that a company that wins a certificate in a contest will become more acceptable to the stakeholders. He further posits that winning competitions and certificates becomes highly significant for new companies seeking to build and justify their reputations over time (Rao, 1994). The marketing literature considers corporate reputation as a signal about the company's performance to its stakeholders (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). Marketing experts and academics analyse the markets to understand the customers' attitudes, intentions and preferences (Herbig and Milewicz, 1993). The firm's capability and its position among the available choices in the market influence the customer's decision-making process (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The credibility of a firm will be enhanced if it consistently performs better in the market (Herbig et al., 1994).

Academics thus defined corporate reputation in various fields but a common thread is the fact that effective corporate reputations will add to the overall gains of organisations. A good reputation affects customer purchase behaviour. A company that has a good reputation "*will increasingly influence purchase decisions when there is little difference in price, quality, design, and product. There is even more competition, lack of differentiation, and pricing concerns in the service sector. Thus, building a highly regarded corporate reputation or corporate brand had become even more important*" (Burke, 2011, p. 5). Burke (2011) further posits that, with the increasing level of competition where most companies pay great attention to their corporate reputations, it is no longer an option but an imperative for organisations. An organisation's actions such as creating dissatisfied customers, employees' bad behaviour, frequent terminations, and so on, can affect corporate reputation (Burke, 2011). As discussed above, academics have highlighted the significance of corporate reputation for organisations from the perspective of different fields of study. The current study emphasises marketing and the management perspective, which are highly relevant to the current study.

In marketing literature, the significance of corporate reputation mainly relates to consumer behaviour. The intensified competitive market has challenged the purchase decisions of customers, and decision-making has become a difficult task. The reputation of a firm suggests the beliefs, values, attributes, product quality and prospects that a customer might compare within the market when deciding about the product (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). Fombrun and Shanley (1990) further argued that reputation becomes more important to the customers in situations where there is limited information about the product/service or when the information lacks clarity. Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) examined reputation in marketing from the service sector perspective and argued that factors such as physical environment and contact staff members can affect consumer purchase decisions.

Firms adept at communicating their reputation to the customers are also able to occupy a distinctive position in the minds of customers (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). Saxton (1998) explains the significance of reputation in the context of customer loyalty and retention. He argues that a better reputation makes it easy for a firm to retain loyal customers, and customers can easily choose from among the competition. Companies use reputation to their advantage and as a tool for differentiating themselves from the competition (Day, 1994). A firm's reputation is sometimes termed a form of goodwill. This goodwill is often used to position the firm and create a positive perception in the mind of the customer (Fombrun, 1996). Corporate reputation also sends a signal about the future of the firm. These signals can be the linked to the ability to generate profits or achieve the company's goals.

Academics have extensively debated corporate reputation from a management perspective. Management scholars identified corporate reputation as a strategic resource for gaining competitive advantage (Caves and Porter, 1977). Managing reputation is considered a way of ensuring that a firm attracts new customers and retains existing ones. Customers will rely on the history of firms/products at times

when there is limited information about product quality (Shkolnikov, Leachman and Sullivan, 2004). These studies emphasised the importance of reputation by relating it to higher customer loyalty and reduced risk of business/product failure.

Managers consider reputation a key success factor due to its impact on the company's financial performance. Roberts and Dowling (2002) elaborate this concept by suggesting that corporate reputation is a source of value creation that protects a firm's product from replication. Several studies discussed the relationship between management concepts and corporate reputation. For instance, Fryxell and Wang (1994) analysed multiple dimensions of corporate reputation and found that it has a strong influence on stakeholders. A similar study indicates that corporate reputation creates value for stakeholders and enhances the goodwill of the company (Clardy, 2005).

After reviewing the definitions and concepts provided by different scholars, it becomes evident that the concept and definition of corporate reputation sometimes overlaps between the above-mentioned fields of study. Although the fields of study vary, they present very similar concepts of corporate reputation. For instance, scholars from marketing and management present similar views by considering reputation as a source of value creation, a mean of communication, and a tool for gaining competitive advantage (Caves and Porter, 1977; Dolphin, 2004; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Roberts and Dowling, 2002). The definitions may overlap between different fields of study but it is evident that a strong reputation remains highly desirable for companies due to its long-lasting and enduring effects.

It is evident that reputation is highly significant for companies, which lead to yet another important question; how reputation is built and why the reputations of some companies are higher than those of their rivals. Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) presented a star reputation concept and listed key ingredients for building a winning reputation. The key factors for building a star-quality reputation are visibility, transparency, distinctiveness, consistency and authenticity (Fombrun and

Van Riel, 2004). Several other authorities (Bennett and Gabriel, 2001; Brown, 1996; Campbell, 1999; Dolphin, 2004; Herbig and Milewicz, 1993; Roberts and Dowling, 2002) also highlighted the role of the above-mentioned factors in building reputation. The reputation of a company is dependent on its visibility. When the public is familiar with a company, this has a positive effect on its reputation (Herbig and Milewicz, 1993). Top-rated companies are highly visible across all media. It is evident that top-rated companies more readily communicate information than do lesser companies (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). A distinctive position in the minds of stakeholders builds reputation. Some companies excel even there is little difference between their offerings and those of others. For example, AMD and Intel are leading microprocessor companies and have relatively similar structures. Intel dominates the minds of consumers due to their quality of products but more importantly, due to their effective marketing campaign of "Intel Inside". The corporate reputation sends a signal of superior-quality products, high-class service quality, and a good working environment, which in turn differentiate them from their rivals and create value for their stakeholders (Dolphin, 2004). Customers also seek credibility in a firm/product, which can come from a good reputation, and once acquired it influences the purchase decision. The reputation of a company is built when it is seen as credible, trustworthy and reliable (Campbell, 1999). Companies have to be honest with their stakeholders because without authenticity there is no reputation. Strong reputations are built when companies are transparent. Consumers perceive companies as reputable when they frequently communicate information about their business. Conversely, firms that seldom communicate, are reluctant to share facts, and hold back information on what, how, and why they are doing, will develop negative reputations (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). A strong reputation also requires consistent performance, actions and communication (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). Companies communicate financial information for investors, business/product information for customers, and human resource information for employees (Fombrun, 1996).

2.3.2 Practical implications of corporate reputation

Previous studies have analysed the best practices used in different firms and sectors for creating or enhancing their reputations. Kotha, Rajgopal and Rindova (2001) examined the performance of firms in the service sector (internet firms) and debated different types of reputation-building measures. They argued that firms should invest in the marketing of reputation due to its long-lasting impact on the firm.

Shamma and Hassan (2009) conducted another study in the wireless telecommunication industry of the USA. They categorised reputation in terms of product, services, finance, emotional appeal, and so on. Their study sought to understand the different aspects of reputation that may help managers in the telecommunication industry. The reputation of business-to-business firms was critically analysed by Ewing, Windisch and Newton (2010). The findings of their study reveal that many of these firms were not considering long-term strategies that might enhance their reputations; rather, they were focusing on short-term plans that were perceived as essential for their survival. A previous study examined reputation among event-planning firms (Campiranon, 2005). This study argues that the key to building reputation in event-planning firms relates to their image and credibility. A firm can attract more customers by establishing a corporate reputation, which is dependent on how these firms manage their image, credibility and trust.

Walsh et al. (2009), in their research on the service sector, linked the success of a strong reputation with customer loyalty and word of mouth (WOM). They concluded that a good reputation is essential for delivering customer satisfaction. They identified multiple facets of reputation such as attraction for employees, possessing good financial resources, and playing an active role in society but their study emphasised the behaviour of companies to their customers to achieve a higher customer satisfaction level. When dealing with service companies, customers have direct communication and interaction with the employees, which influences

customer perception, thus making it highly significant for service firms. These firms might empower and train their employees to increase the customer satisfaction level. Firms can make use of WOM campaigns as part of their promotional programs to develop or enhance customer loyalty. Service firms, such as energy suppliers, need to act quickly and establish their corporate reputation as it can offer an advantage to these firms in deregulated structures (Walsh et al., 2009). Studies have also attempted to examine reputation in not-for-profit organisations. Dickinson-Delaporte, Beverland and Lindgreen (2010) conducted a case-study (Trappist Breweries) of a hybrid organisation that acts commercially in order to achieve its social agenda. This study explained the role of stakeholder interaction, communication, and positioning for developing or sustaining a good corporate reputation.

The above noted empirical studies highlight the significance of reputation in product and service sector where reputation holds symbolic value with these fields. These studies have focused on the variables for building reputation but there is limited research on how reputation is contested and the tools used during such contestations. The current study will discuss the role of categorisation systems in building reputation by collecting empirical evidences within the business education field. The researcher attempts to explain how reputation builds through ranking systems in business schools and with what consequences.

2.3.3 Reputation, Rankings and Higher Education

Pakir (2014) argued that institutional academic partnerships have become more desirable due to the ever-rising global competition. The HEIs seek international partnerships to maximise their international visibility using minimum financial resources. In these partnerships, reputation is used as a proxy for judging institutional quality. Pakir's (2014) research suggested that, besides reputation, the partnering institutions should also focus on academic complementarities that might construct distinctiveness for the partnering institutions. The older universities tend

to have higher reputations than the new universities and they receive more applications than new universities (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). In the HE sector, reputations are hard to build, and it takes time and effort to become one of the highly reputed institutions in the world. Institutions such as Oxford University or Cambridge University took several centuries to establish their supremacy. HE is becoming more global and several universities and business schools have enhanced their reputations to challenge the traditional elites (Pakir, 2014). A previous study suggested that a student's career is highly significant for motivating students and affects the reputation of business schools. The authors further argued that schools should offer courses that are acceptable in modern business, which makes industry relations highly significant (Crisp et al., 2012). The report presented by the Association of Business Schools (ABS) in the year 2014 also suggested that business schools should focus on innovation and adopt an integrated approach by hiring faculty members with practical experience in the business community (ABS, 2014). The findings of the ABS report further revealed that UK employers believe that fresh graduates take one to three years before they become efficient in their work. They prefer students that have both knowledge and skills such as communication, people management and problem-solving abilities (ABS, 2014).

It is evident that the HE sector is highly competitive where the HEIs compete for their sustainability, and the role of rankings has become highly significant. Reputation is a key point of differentiation. A school's management should focus on its reputation drivers such as career success, rankings, accreditations, high-quality teaching staff, and value for money (Crisp et al., 2012). Due to the significance of reputation, several ranking systems have also incorporated reputation into ranking indicators. The indicators are used to evaluate the performance of a system where the performance inquiry can be qualitative or quantitative in nature (Federkeil, 2009). The indicators of reputation used in rankings cannot be termed performance indicators because this refers to the perception of different people about an

organisation's performance and attributes (Gray and Balmer, 1998). This implies that different stakeholders of HE may have different opinions about the institutions; therefore, measuring reputation of HEIs may produce biased results. Employers in Germany were asked to rate institutions for their business study courses. The result suggested a positive attitude to Heidleberg University as it has an overall impression of being a highly reputable institution and was thus placed among the top six institutions. In fact, however, this institute does not offer courses in business studies (Federkeil, 2009). The latter study further suggests that several ranking systems rate institutions' reputations and publish university reputations as a whole. When we think of highly reputed HEIs, in most cases institutions such as Harvard and Oxford come to mind but the reputation of various programs may vary within these institutions. Federkeil (2009) explained this through the example of a survey conducted by CHE (Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung). The CHE rankings incorporated data from professors in different fields who rated institutions in their respective fields. The results upheld his argument that reputation among different programs shows variances in what HEIs have on offer. Research suggests that several media-based rankings such as those of the *Financial Times* (FT), *Business Week* and *The Economist* are highly acceptable in the business school environment (Crisp et al., 2012). This implies that schools that are not covered by these rankings will face difficulties in building their reputations. As an alternative, these schools might capitalise on their overall university rankings that they have achieved in the Times Higher Education or Shanghai Jiao Tong rankings (Crisp et al., 2012).

2.4 Rankings and Higher Education

2.4.1 The emergence of rankings in HE

The growing marketisation of HE in the neo-liberal era has not only introduced competition but has also provided choices for the HEIs and students within the field of HE. The market saturation has created several choices for consumers; therefore, selecting an institution for HE studies has also become a key concern for students. Students felt a keen need to compare HEIs in order to assess the quality, status, reputation and value of education (Hazelkorn, 2011). Today, we can witness different types of league tables and accreditation systems that draw comparisons among HEIs. Rankings can be defined as "*the lists of certain groupings of institutions (usually, but not always, within a single national jurisdiction), comparatively ranked according to a common set of indicators in descending order. University rankings are presented in the format of a 'league-table', much as sports teams in a single league are listed from best to worst according to the number of wins and losses they achieved*" (Usher and Savino, 2006, p. 5). Rankings once started as an academic exercise at the start of the twentieth century have now become a strategic tool in HE sector (Hazelkorn, 2011). Rankings provide information about the HEIs to students and their parents but they also supply valuable information to other stakeholders of HE. Globalisation has made HE highly competitive and the HEIs strive for superior quality and reputation. In order to remain competitive in the HE market the HEIs consider or are forced to consider rankings in their policy-making (Hazelkorn, 2009). However, the dependence on and usage of rankings differ across geographic locations. The visibility of business schools in developed countries is higher than those in developing countries in the international rankings. Billal (2012) suggested that the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has shown great concern over the poor performance of Islamic countries in global university rankings. As a result, OIC provided financial assistance to several universities from the Islamic World in order to help them become among the top five hundred universities of the world. This

implies that rankings are becoming a powerful tool for universities as significantly impact HE and its members.

As shown in the below Table-5, university rankings can be traced back to the start of twentieth century; however, rankings proliferated in the last three decades though the active role of media houses.

Table 5: Evolution of Rankings

Year	Evolution of Rankings
1906	Rankings of Academic Excellence by rating leading scholars
1910	Inception of university ranking based on eminent men
Early 1980s	Production of university ranking in mass media
Late 1980s	Production of specialised business school ranking
1990s	Inception of global business school ranking
2000 and onwards	Proliferation of National and Global rankings

Source: Developed by researcher

The national league tables seem to have originated over a hundred years ago in the United States with the work of James McKeen Cattel (Myers and Robe, 2009). Cattel devised the '*Biographical Directory of American Men of Science*' in year 1906. As part of this project Cattel utilised the technique of asking a number of leading scholars in each field of study to rank their colleagues in order of merit so as to identify a population of excellence. Later in year 1910 edition of the directory used this to provide a table of colleges and rank order of the ratio of eminent men to the total number of faculty members for each university (Myers and Robe, 2009). This appears to have been the first published ranking of universities in terms of defined concept of academic quality anywhere in the world. These techniques were extremely influential as a means of assessing relative value of America colleges up through to the early 1960s. What revolutionised the university rankings is the

appearance of rankings in mass media. Initially the most important of these was the US News and World Report '*America's best colleges*' first issued in year 1983. These rankings were introduced "*in order to meet perceived market need for more transparent, comparative data about the educational institutions*" (Usher and Savino, 2006, p. 3). Since then, several copycat ranking systems have been developed and introduced into the HE market.

Hazelkorn (2011) argued that rankings started as an academic exercise and later became a commercial exercise. As the HE market became more competitive, new specialised programs were introduced. The information about specialised schools and programs such business schools and MBA programs became highly desirable. In year 1999, *Financial Times* (FT) produced an international ranking list of business schools and MBA programs. Since then several other rankers such as *Business Week, The Economist, Forbes* and the *Wall Street Journal* have picked up this international profile (Wedlin, 2006). The discipline-based rankings provided much needed information and gained popularity in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The information from these rankings, once used largely by students and their parents, has now become important for HE policy-makers and other stakeholders. The significance of measuring the quality of HEIs has led governments, news agencies and accreditation agencies to publish rankings and accreditations. Several countries have also devised plans to improve their global rankings, such as Malaysia 'Vision 2020', Abu Dhabi 'Economic Vision 2030' and so on, emphasising the importance of global rankings (Hazelkorn, 2011).

Both national and international rankings were introduced with slightly different purposes. The national rankings provide comparisons within a specific country with defined geographic boundaries. In most cases, media houses, such as the *Sunday Times, Guardian* etc., produce the national rankings but in rare cases the national rankings are also produced by their respective governments; examples include Nigeria, Kazakhstan and Pakistan (Hazelkorn, 2011). The aim of global

rankings was to evaluate and standardise HE globally. The global rankings provide international comparisons and are frequently used by international students but there are strings attached to these rankings that challenges their transparency and authenticity. For example, their access to data is a major concern where data have to be gathered from thousands of institutions around the world and it becomes very difficult to extract data from less-developed HE markets. On the other hand, national rankings lack generalisability due to its inability to compare national HEIs with other HEIs around the world.

2.4.2 Ranking methodology

Rankings are conducted in several ways; for instance, there are national, international, institutional, and specialised schools ranking, research-based rankings, student surveys, and so on (Usher and Savino, 2006). Rankings measure the performance of the HEIs using different indicators and vary in data collection methods and reporting. The variation in ranking measurement is embedded with certain issues. The aim of rankings is to measure academic quality but these ranking systems lack consistency in their data in terms of their definition, collection methods, and the way of presenting/reporting them (Liu and Cheng, 2005). Ranking systems follow a set format using different indicators to measure the quality of institutions (Webster, 2001). The rankings are formed in a descending order, with the institution scoring highest (aggregate score) on the set criteria being awarded the top rank (number one). Webster (2001) posits that the total score is the sum of the individual indicators; each one is independent of the others, but in reality the indicators may have a strong correlation. He argued that rankings are highly influential for the HEI's reputation. The HEI's reputation influences the number of admissions, alumni contributions etc., and in turn affects its financial resources (Webster, 2001).

Different scales or indicators are set to judge the quality of university/ school/faculty, and are commonly termed 'scores' (Usher and Savino, 2006).

Ranking systems use different sets of indicators to rate HEIs. Previous studies have attempted to categorise the scattered and different indicators into specific themes or segments. Finnie and Usher (2005) proposed a conceptual framework in which they identified four broad categories of indicators that measure the quality of HEIs. These are beginning characteristics, learning inputs, learning outputs, and outcomes. Later, Usher and Savino (2006) proposed seven categories (see Table-6) of indicators such as beginning characteristics, learning inputs (staff and resources), learning outputs, research, reputation, and final outcomes.

Table 6: Usher and Savino - Elements and indicators

Field/ Category	Indicators
Beginning characteristics	- Performance or national standardised test (e.g. GATS) - Secondary School grades - Scholarships percentage for incoming students - Measuring institutional selectivity - Number of international or out of district students - Students ethnic diversity - Students percentage receiving need based government grants - Students Study status (students who are graduates) - Likelihood of performing community service
Learning Inputs – Faculty	- Number of faculty - Faculty / Student ratio - Courses per teacher - Hours spend in class per student - Staff qualifications - Proportion of classes taught by tenure-track staff - Number of foreign faculty

	- Age structure of the faculty - Pay rates for tenured staff
Learning Input – Resources	- Public finding of institutional budgets - Private funding of institutional budgets - Total institutional Expenditures - Institutional expenditure on student services - Institutional expenditure on scholarships and bursaries - Number of lecture spaces available at institution - Building assets - Available internet bandwidth - Library resources: in terms of acquisitions per year, total volumes, average number of volumes per student and annual library expenditure outside of acquisitions
Learning Outputs	- Graduation and retention rates
Final Outcomes	- Employment outcomes - Percentage of graduates returning for additional education
Research	- Research staff - Bibliometrics - Bibliometrics citations - Citations in engineering publications, science oriented indices, social science oriented indices - Highly cited publications - Publications in science oriented indices, social science oriented indices, science and nature, other indices - Research awards (national and international) - Financial indicators of research (amount spent on

	research, research budgets, number of research based grants and projects, public source grants
	- Number of patents issued
	- Number of doctoral and masters programs offered
Reputation	- Reputation and peer appraisal
	- Third party reputation surveys

Source: (Usher and Savino, 2006)

Usher and Savino (2006) have differentiated the seven elements presented above by clearly identifying different indicators used by eighteen ranking systems. They argue that different ranking systems use various proxies for evaluating the seven broad fields mentioned in the above table. The beginning characteristics correspond to the performance of students or prospective students. Several proxies are used to quantify the quality of students enrolled in institutions, such as the average score of students in General Aptitude Test (GAT), their percentage marks or grades in previous exams or studies, and so on. Finnie and Usher (2005) defined the input category that Usher and Savino (2006) later split into two categories, i.e. staff and resources. The first input category refers to a set of proxies used for evaluating the quality of staff within an institution. The most common way of measuring staff quality is to consider the number of staff members (lecturers, professors, administration staff, etc.) that institutions have hired and maintained over time. There are several proxies cited in different rankings for measuring staff quality, such as faculty-to-student ratio, foreign faculty, salaries of staff members and so on. The second input category is resources, which reflect the financial condition or financial strength of an HEI. The proxies used for measuring the financial resources of an HEI are budget size, income generation from private sources, expenditures, assets, Internet connection, library volumes, and so on. The fourth category is learning outputs, which are linked to the educational accomplishment achieved or knowledge gained by the students during their study. The learning outputs use

'graduation and retention rates' as indicators that reflect the quality of students. Final outcomes refer to the outcomes for students once they complete their degrees. The dominant proxy used for evaluating 'student outcomes' is student employability. Employability can be measured in many ways, such as, the average time taken to find a job, type of employment, salary, and so on.

Usher and Savino (2006) also added two new categories: research and reputation. Today, several ranking systems use a proxy for measuring the quality of research in the HEIs. There are several proxies cited that measure the quality of research. A common proxy used for measuring quality research is bibliometrics, which refers to the sum of publications and citations made by the institutions/staff in a set timeframe. Ranking systems may also use various proxies for publication and citations in specific disciplines such as social sciences, engineering, and so on. Some ranking systems also used research awards achieved by institutions as a proxy of quality research. The research indicators are not limited to publications and citations. Research budgets, research expenditures, and number of PhD students are examples of ranking proxies that evaluate the quality of research. Finally, the ranking system also evaluates the reputation by using reputation surveys and peer appraisals. These surveys measure HEIs' reputation by seeking the opinions of employers and HEIs' staff. The above-mentioned indicators are open to debate as people may or may not agree with the criteria/indicators and the methods of data collection or reporting (Usher and Savino, 2006).

Hazelkorn (2011) further categorised the rankings literature into two broad segments: methodological perspectives and theoretical perspectives. Several authorities have conducted studies on the methodological scale; for instance, Finnie and Usher (2005) presented four broad categories of rankings indicators, which were later, refined into seven categories by Usher and Savino (2006). Hazelkorn (2011) added another dimension to rankings by classifying them into third-party and government-based ranking systems. Taking a theoretical stance, the focus of

this study is to undertake a critical examination of the role of rankings in the construction of reputation and its impact on the business education field in developed and developing field settings. Therefore, it is important to examine rankings environment prevailing in the UK and Pakistan, which represents developed and developing HE fields.

2.4.2.1 Rankings in the UK

The UK ranking environment is a combination of different transparency instruments, such as media-based rankings, government-based rankings, national rankings, global rankings, student surveys, and international accreditations, which use different scales to measure the performance of the UK HEIs in national and international contexts. Several media-based rankings such as *Financial Times*, *Business Week*, *Forbes*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist* rate HEIs, and several UK HEIs are rated in the top hundred institutions in the world. These media-based rankings rate HEIs on national, regional, and international levels. Several specialised rankings have been introduced into the UK HE system. For instance, REF is a research-based rankings system that evaluates UK HEIs' research performance. Based on their performance, the HEIs receive research funding (REF, 2014). Similarly, student surveys such as the Student Experience Survey and National Student Survey (NSS) differ from the above-mentioned rankings systems as they focus on students' satisfaction and experiences (NSS, 2014).

The current study discusses the *Times Higher Education* (THE) rankings in order to help the reader understand how rankings scores are developed and how they are weighted. The illustration of THE rankings may not hold true for all rankings systems as they use different combinations of indicators but it is helpful to explain how a typical ranking system works and evaluates the performance of the HEIs. There are several rankings systems in the UK market but this study has chosen THE rankings for illustration purposes as academics have frequently cited THE rankings in their research studies (for instance, Jobbins, 2005; Usher and Savino, 2006). THE

ranking has developed criteria based on several factors such as teaching, research, citations, international outlook, and industry income (see Table-7).

Table 7: THE rankings methodology 2015-2016

Criteria	Indicator	Brief description	Weight
Teaching	Reputation survey	Score drawn from academic reputation survey (academic opinion (15%)	30%
	Staff to student ratio	Score draw from staff-to-student ratio (4.5%)	
	Doctorate to bachelor ratio	Score drawn from doctorate-to-bachelor ratio (2.25%)	
	Doctorate awarded to academic staff ratio	Score drawn from doctorate awarded-to-academic staff ratio (6%)	
	Institutional Income	Score drawn from income scaled against staff numbers (2.25%)	
Research	Reputation survey	Score drawn from academic opinion survey (18%)	30%
	Research Income	Score drawn research income scaled against number of staff (6%)	
	Research productivity	Score drawn from number of papers published (6%)	
Citations	Citations per faculty	Score based on number of citations of university published work	30%
International Outlook	International to domestic student ratio	Score based on International-to-domestic student ratio (2.5%)	7.5%
	International to domestic staff ratio	Score based on International-to-domestic staff ratio (2.5%)	
	International collaborations	Score drawn from number of research journals with at least one international co-author (2.5%)	
Industry	Knowledge transfer	Score based on research income from	2.5%

Income		industry scaled against number of staff	

Source: (THE, 2015)

The HEIs' performance evaluation criteria are categorised into different indicators. HEIs are evaluated after being awarded scores on their research, citations, industry income, international outlook and teaching. For instance, thirty per cent of the total score is allocated to the research component. The research quality of HEI is measured through research income, volume (productivity), and reputation. The HEIs are rated in the descending order based on their accumulated scores on all indicators (THE, 2015). The indicators and their weightings may differ from other ranking systems. This leads to the question of reliability and acceptability (Sadlak et al., 2008). It is evident from the literature that there is no agreement on indicators for judging the quality of HEIs (Marginson, 2007; Usher and Savino, 2006). *"The world's main ranking systems bear little if any relationship to one another, using very different indicators and weightings to arrive at a measure of quality" (Usher and Savino, 2006, p. 3).*

These studies clearly challenge the credibility of rankings and the rankers. There are several instances where business schools were rated in top ten schools of the world but also received lower rank in another ranking system for the same year. This raise questions of what to measure, how to measure, and who should have the authority to measure the quality of business schools. Rankings not only trigger competition among the HEIs but it is also an arena for competition among the rankers. For instance, Wedlin (2010) argued that one of the main reasons for establishing FT rankings was to counter US mode of management education by promoting European view of management education.

2.4.2.2 Ranking in Pakistan

The HEC rankings is the only ranking system available in Pakistani HE market. The first set of rankings by HEC was published in the year 2006 and the second in the year 2011. HEC follows the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking system, which aims

to bring national institutions up to the international level and achieve international visibility (HEC, 2012).

As shown in the Table-8, the HEC rankings use five broad categories, which are then subcategorised (see Appendix 2). A percentage of the total score is assigned to each category and subcategory (HEC, 2009). For instance, the total score assigned to the student category is twenty per cent. The universities are awarded scores in each category. Each category has its own set of indicators and criteria for ranking institutions. The criteria include the total number of students enrolled, number of postgraduate, undergraduate and research students, average percentage marks of students during admission, number of PhDs produced, and so on. HEC collects data by requesting information from HEIs in a prescribed format. The ranking categories are as mentioned in Table-8.

Table 8: HEC Ranking Scores

Category	Score
Students	20%
Facilities	15%
Finance	15%
Faculty	25%
Research	25%

Source: (HEC, 2009)

The HEIs are ranked in different fields of study such as Engineering, General and Health Sciences, Art/ Design, Agriculture/Veterinary and Business/ IT (HEC, 2009).

HEC published its third set of rankings in the year 2013, which is relatively different from its predecessors from a methodological perspective (see Table-9).

Table 9: HEC Ranking Scores 2013

S. No	Components	Assigned scores during 2011-12
1	Implementation status of QA criteria's	24
2	Teaching Quality	40
3	Research	36
	Total	100

Source: (HEC, 2013)

HEC amended the ranking criteria to better represent the ground realities in the HE sector of Pakistan (HEC, 2013). The current ranking criteria are classified into three broad categories of teaching quality, research, and a new category of 'implementation status of QA criteria'. These new criteria are judged by the QA standards, which HEC has set for the HEIs in Pakistan. These are appointment criteria for faculty members, criteria for M.S/MPhil/PhD, Plagiarism Standing Committee, QEC categorisation, and Peer Perception Survey. Three new parameters have been added to the evaluation of teaching quality indicator: ratio of full-time faculty to part-time, teacher evaluation, and training of faculty. The proxies for research indicator remained unchanged (HEC, 2013). With the developments in the HEC ranking system, the aim of Pakistani ranking system can be seen from two perspectives: first, to introduce a ranking system by adopting indicators of international ranking system, second, to facilitate the agenda of the HEC by establishing QA as an indicator for ranking HEIs.

2.4.3 Transforming higher education

Rankings started as a student information system; however, with the emphasis on marketing and publicity, the rankings have been transformed into a commercial product that extended its relevance to different stakeholders in the HE sector.

Sadlak and Liu (2007) suggested three main trends in HE. First, a ranking system constructed accountability and transparency with the HE field. Governments have encouraged rankings and focused on those indicators that measure and evaluate the performance of HE. For example, in Pakistan, the quality assurance agency took the initiative of establishing QECs at institutional level and published rankings to create a sense of competition to improve the quality of HE (HEC, 2009). Second, the desire to achieve knowledge-based economy is rising among the developing countries. For instance, several countries are investing heavily to create their own 'world-class' institutions. Third, countries are aiming to establish 'world-class' institutions but this may require an annual budget of 1.5 to 2 billion US dollars (Sadlak and Liu, 2007), which is beyond the reach of many HEIs in developing nations. Several countries have merged HEIs and provided competitive-based funding to fewer institutions (Aarrevaara et al., 2009). A 'world-class' status thus requires a substantial budget, which affects not only developing nations but also those operating in developed countries (Cookson, 2010).

The mission statements of HEIs reflect the influence of rankings on their institutional strategy. Hezelkorn (2011) has identified four types of responses. **First,** rankings act as an explicit goal. This suggests that the HEIs use rankings to devise their strategic plans. For instance, a business school may have a strategic plan to become the top school or to be among the top schools such as the top ten, twenty, fifty, hundred, etc., in national or global rankings. Hazelkorn presented an example of an Australian institution that aims to improve its rankings within Australia (Hazelkorn 2011). **Second**, rankings act as an implicit goal. This refers to the HEIs that may not make specific reference to the rankings in their strategic plans but may wish to be considered among 'world's best' institutions. These types of HEIs frequently use the words 'leading' and 'world-class', which is an alternative way of suggesting that they are among the top institutions. **Third,** rankings are also used for target-setting. The HEIs evaluate their performance with respect to the

indicators of rankings and identify their strengths and weaknesses; this helps them set their goals and implement plans to achieve their targets. **Fourth**, rankings are a measure of success. The strategic plans implemented require validation to determine whether their strategic targets have been achieved. The HEIs often prefer to measure their success by highlighting their performance in the rankings, such as moving five or ten places up in the rankings in the past one, three or five years.

With the proliferation of rankings at national and global levels, several HEIs have restructured and made changes to their operations. The HEIs have made several changes at different levels, such as employment policies, facilities, student quality and retention, and research, in order to stay in line with the parameters set by the rankings (Webster, 2001). When institutions are ranked, they react in different ways. They try to improve efficiency by incorporating professional attitudes and better administrative and support services (Georghiou, 2009). The HEIs' references to their excellent facilities, higher number of PhDs in academia and higher employability of their students also reflect the indicators of ranking systems. Espeland and Sauder (2007) further suggest that HEIs' policy-makers assess rankings and their indicators for the purposes of goal-setting, progress evaluation, faculty recruitment, scholarship allocation, the incorporation of new programs and courses, and other financial and budgetary decisions. The institutions have limited budgets, and to improve their performance and rankings they sometimes trade-off between indicators. For example, an institution may reallocate the development budget to research in order to improve its ratings on research indicators. A survey conducted in the US suggested a similar trend of moving from teaching towards research and, evidently, rankings influenced their strategies (Espeland and Sauder, 2007).

The rankings have also influenced the way in which knowledge is created. Rankings measure the quality of knowledge (research) in terms of publications and citations (bibliometrics), which forces institutions and academics to publish high-quality work in internationally recognised journals (REF 2014). With the aim of

improving rankings, academics are encouraged to participate in research (Hazelkorn, 2009). The rankings system also encourages a competitive HE environment, which affects the allocation of financial resources. For example, in the UK, government research grants are linked to universities' positions in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) rankings (REF, 2014). Several countries and their HEIs are establishing research centres aiming to improve the quality of research and their research rankings (HEC, 2009).

Rankings have also transformed students' perception and their decision-making process during their purchase decisions. The customers (students) desire prior knowledge about the service (education) offered by different organisations (HEIs), and the information they seek should be transparent and accountable (Usher and Savino, 2006). Media have helped an important role in publicising and encouraging participation. Rankings that were limited to printed versions attracted fewer users; however, thanks to the Internet, the monthly viewership is now in the millions (Hazelkorn, 2011). Turner (2005) argues that although majority of these rankings are not official, they still have the ability to influence the behaviour of consumers. Hazelkorn (2011) argued that undergraduate students who complete their higher secondary level of education prefer to study in home cities or regions. Their decisions are highly influenced by their parents and their level of income. Other factors that influence their decisions are the availability of reputable institutions and their grades. A study conducted in the US supports this argument, where eighty per cent of domestic undergraduate students gained admission in their hometowns, attending either the best HEIs or sub-campuses of these HEIs (Drewes and Michael, 2006). Besides the factor of close proximity, entry test scores and grades obtained in higher secondary level also affect student choices. The minimum criteria set for students at HEIs are directly proportional to the level of quality and reputation of the HEIs (Drewes and Michael, 2006). In most cases, the postgraduate degree is the last step before one enters the professional world to seek employment. For domestic

postgraduate students, factors such as close proximity of the institution and parents' decisions are less influential than reputation, prestige, future employment ratio, value for money and rankings of HEIs and their courses (Wiers-Jenssen, 2011). As opposed to domestic postgraduate students, international students place greater emphasis on the associated costs of education in a foreign country.) With less or no information about the foreign markets, international students heavily rely on international ranking information to analyse the quality of an HEI and value for money (Varghese, 2008).

2.5 Summary of the chapter

The current chapter explained the key theoretical concepts that helped in developing the theoretical framework for the current study. Taking a field perspective, the current study critically examines the role of categorisation systems, such as rankings, that shape symbolic value and construct field and field boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. Fields are frequently used in institutional theory as they represent shared meaning among a group of organisations and reflect the regulatory process that defines a set of organisations. Within fields, participating members persistently struggle over value, such as material and symbolic value. This struggle becomes a part of field formation and is highly significant for the field members. Through contestations, fields are constantly morphed and are continuously constructed and redefined. The structuration process reflects the actions, behaviours and interactions within the field. The field structuration creates isomorphic pressures, which force organisations to incorporate norms, standards and practices that are diffused within the organisational field, thus leading them to change. In the struggle over symbolic value, the perceptions of individuals construct the symbolic boundaries; hence, the boundaries of the field are constantly defined and redefined. Categories are social constructs of knowledge structures that shape the behaviour of actors and define rules and standards for the field. Rankings in this sense can be termed

categorisation systems as they classify and create status hierarchies. Building on these theoretical concepts, the current study attempts to analyse the role of categorisation systems (rankings), which shape symbolic value, such as reputation, and construct field and field boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. The current chapter concludes by explaining the analytical themes of the current study.

This chapter also sets the context of the current study by presenting a historical review of the HE from both developed and developing HE perspectives (UK and Pakistan). The external environment has changed the vision and direction of HE. The dominant forces, such as the changing political environment, float new ideas that have affected HE globally. The neo-liberal era is a classic example of political and social change that led to the marketisation of the HE sector. The commodification of HE has changed the perception of HE as one market to several HE markets, such as a market for students, staff, courses, grants, and so on. In economic terms, the marketisation has led HE to free market practices and encouraged practices based on market demands.

HE in the UK and Pakistan has evolved and many reforms have been introduced, resulting in the upgrading of the HE sector. The QAA in the UK is a step up from Pakistan's QAA system. The QAA in the UK is an independent organisation whereas in Pakistan it is a government department, as used to be the case in the UK in the early nineties. HE in Pakistan has always been an under-invested sector throughout its history, with the exception of the last decade. The formation of HEC has brought significant changes and ensured that high-quality education systems are in place. The QAA in Pakistan is responsible for liaising with the established QECs at many HEIs, which can be termed a positive step for making Pakistani HEIs globally competitive.

Business schools were first established in the early nineteenth century and have since expanded globally. The global expansion of business schools and the

expansion of rankings have constructed new standards for business education. The early form of business schools focused on entrepreneurship innovation by experimenting with the structure and content of business education. After World War II, business schools shifted towards enhancing research capabilities by initiating doctoral programs and establishing external accreditation bodies. Today, business schools are competing for global business school status by engaging across borders, providing wider access to HE, offering globally accepted programs and courses, and introducing new educational formats using new technologies.

The surfeit of information makes purchase decisions more complex, and customers rely on their perceptions of companies and their products. The reputation of a firm facilitates the customer's purchase decision. The corporate reputation not only influences the customer's purchase intentions but is also important to the employees associated with it. The definition of reputation varies among different fields of study but they all converge on the fact that reputation builds trust and confidence among stakeholders, who are able to compare rival companies with similar products. To build a star reputation, firms need to focus on key elements such as visibility, transparency, distinctiveness, consistency and authenticity.

In the highly competitive service sector, differentiation is the key to success, which makes reputation management even more significant. Just like any other service sector, the HE environment has become more competitive and the HEIs' marketing strategies are skewed in favour of rankings to gain a competitive advantage. Today several specialised reputation-based rankings systems are being developed to provide comparable market information about HEIs by measuring their reputation.

The current chapter also reviewed the rankings literature and its significance for universities and business schools. Rankings, once merely an academic exercise, have become highly significant for policy-makers and are a strategic tool for HEIs. Several transparency tools are available for evaluating HEIs' education quality such as national and global rankings, college guides, third-party accreditations, and so

on. HEIs use these tools to highlight their achievements. The ranking systems allow these HEIs to overcome their weaknesses and climb up the ranking charts.

The rankings phenomenon is categorised into two main groups: methodological and theoretical perspectives; most studies fall under the methodological perspective and only a few studies have examined the theoretical aspect of rankings. The rankings influence the HE sector and its stakeholders. They can also influence the strategic decisions made by the government and institutions, thus forcing HEIs to restructure their institutions and their marketing strategies. Rankings affect the allocation of funds/grants, academics, student's' choices, and so on. The impact of rankings on HE and its stakeholders are reshaping the HE system.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

The current chapter discusses the research design and the methodology of the study. An academic study should have a philosophy that backs the research work (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section discusses the research design and presents the philosophical positions taken in this study. The second section debates the research strategy, explaining the methods employed to collect the data. The third section relates to research planning, explaining the case-studies and interview selection process adopted in this study. The current chapter also reflects on the reliability, generalisability and validity of the study's findings.

3.1 Research design

With the passage of time and advances in the literature, different schools of thoughts have emerged and redefined the research process. Back in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, research focused on causality (belief in reasons) and scientific thinking. Knowledge was constructed through facts that human senses recognised (Deshpande, 1983). The seventeenth century gave rise to empiricism, when research work was verified through observation rather than theory and pure logic.

The modern form of empiricism is termed logical positivism, which emerged in the nineteenth century (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968). Deshpande (1983) suggested an alternative to positivism, calling it the phenomenological approach. In broader terms, it refers to the study of experience. Hussey and Hussey (1997) suggest that positivism may be termed qualitative, scientific, and experimentalist whereas the phenomenological approach refers to the qualitative studies.

3.1.1 Interpretivism and positivism

A research philosophy can be termed a contribution made to the development of knowledge (Deshpande, 1983). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) classify research philosophies into interpretivist and positivist categories. Interpretivist research seeks answers to research questions without using statistical procedures or any other kind of quantification measure (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This type of research focuses on words and their interpretation and the understanding may vary, depending upon the people and situations. The weakness of this approach is the variation in social context, which may change, and the statements that are true today may not apply in future. In other words, interpretivism lacks generalisability of the findings. The researcher will return to the generalisability issue later in this chapter (see Section 3.4.3).

Hughes and Sharrock (1997) posit that, in the positivist (quantitative) approach, data are analysed and conclusions are drawn on general principles. The purpose of this approach is to develop frameworks and test theories. Being quantifiable, it deals with numbers where the research involves intervals or ratio scales for measurement. A qualitative research study is social and subjective, interpreting specific instances before drawing conclusions (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). Their study also indicates that positivists emphasise the measuring of observations and the use of standardised methods for seeking knowledge whereas interpretivists take humans' perceptions and thoughts into account before reaching conclusions.

Research is categorised into two methods, namely qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methods *"concentrate on words and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations. In contrast the quantitative approach grows out of a strong academic tradition that places considerable trust in numbers that represent opinions or concepts"* (Amaratunga et al., 2002, p. 19). Researchers might adopt qualitative or quantitative methods depending upon the requirements of their studies (Creswell, 2009). Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages.

When a study involves a large sample, the positivist approach seems more appropriate. Creswell (2009) further argues that this approach lacks flexibility and relies on standardised questions. It can quantify factors but is not very helpful for generating theories. The qualitative or phenomenological approach is more flexible and has the ability to contribute to the development of theories. This approach generally involves small samples but the interpretation of data is comparatively complex (Creswell, 2009).

After considering the above research philosophies, this study adopted the interpretivist approach for several reasons. The researcher intends to gain insights into rankings, their relationship with reputations and their impact on the business education field by conducting interviews and interpreting the subjective knowledge of the participants. This research aims to extend the concept of field and field boundaries formation by considering ranking as tool that is used to redefine and construct the perception of reputation, and shape the business education field in developed and developing HE settings. After examining the two approaches, the researcher concluded that interpretivism is appropriate for the current study.

3.1.2 Research ontology, epistemology and research approach

Ontology refers to the nature of being or the nature of reality that remains independent of one's knowledge (Marsh and Stoker, 2002). Bryman and Bell (2003) explained two types of approaches that may be considered on the ontological scale. These are objectivism and constructivism. They related objectivism to the external facts that exist beyond the influence of the researcher. The positivist paradigm has a strong coherence with this type of ontological approach. Constructivism refers to the production of categories and it is revised constantly. This production of social phenomena and categories does not seek objective reality but debates its construction. There may not be one reality as it depends on people's perception and experiences and can vary from person to person, resulting in more than one reality. In constructivism, the researcher studies the meanings and interpretations of social

actors. The phenomenological paradigm has strong coherence with the constructivism scale (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The word 'episteme' means 'knowledge' while 'logy' refers to 'the study of'; thus, epistemology means 'the study of knowledge'. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that deals with the scope of knowledge (Marsh and Stoker, 2002). It may refer to the definition of knowledge and the ways of gaining this knowledge. To gain knowledge or a theory of knowledge, the researcher may choose from the positivist and phenomenological approaches for theory-testing and theory-building respectively (Marsh and Stoker, 2002). Howe (1988) suggests that the design and analysis of qualitative research seeks answers to the provisional questions that the researcher has raised in his/her study. The quantitative design and analysis also investigate questions but they are more precise and have a clearly stated research design and analysis procedure. In qualitative research, the difference between analysis and interpretation is termed artificial mainly due to the fact that the analysis phase is an on-going process, whereas quantitative research investigates new relationships and finds ways to aggregate the data (Howe, 1988).

A research study can adopt an inductive or deductive approach (Manna, Ness and Vuillemin, 1973). The inductive method involves interpretation of data where data are gathered and analysed and a theory/conclusion is presented. The deductive method refers to the formation of hypotheses from theory, the testing of theory, and the acceptance or rejection of the stated theory in a given situation (Manna et al., 1973). Findings from the deductive approach are more generalisable. The inductive approach is inclined towards the interpretivist approach whereas the deductive approach has strong coherence with the positivist paradigm (Manna et al., 1973). The drawback of the deductive approach is that it can only test a theory, provide further validation, and generalise the outcomes of research. The drawback of the inductive approach is that it lacks generalisability, as cases may not represent the total population.

After reviewing the literature on research design, we can say that the current study falls into the qualitative paradigm for several reasons. This thesis investigates questions involving a limited number of participants in order to extend the concept field formation by exploring the role of rankings in building reputation and constructing the business education field. In this case, a qualitative approach seems highly appropriate. In an ontological sense, the current research examines the use of ranking for shaping meanings, and the interpretations of social actors in the business education field. On the epistemological scale, the theory of knowledge is interpretive, which demands inductive approach. The interpretive epistemological approach has strong coherence with the interpretive philosophical approach and thus became the reason for adopting this approach in the current study.

As earlier discussed, the current study aims to extend the concept of field formation and fits well with the inductive approach. The generalisability issue regarding the inductive approach becomes less significant as this study intends to contribute to knowledge by extending theory rather than testing existing theories. The outcomes of this research can be termed the starting point for the positivist paradigm, using a deductive approach to achieve greater generalisability.

3.2 Research Strategy

Every research study should have a strategy that explains how the research objectives will be achieved and in what manner. The research strategy should have a clear understanding of the objectives/questions and data collection methods and their sources, and it should explain the ethical issues involved in the data collection process (Eisenhardt, 1989). As explained earlier, this research adopted the interpretivist philosophy and adopts a qualitative research approach. The current study adopts the following research strategy:

3.2.1 Theoretical framework

The literature suggests that the research should be backed up with a solid theoretical or descriptive framework in which the study investigates the research questions by utilising the existing theories and then clarifying the data analysis using the suggested framework (Yin, 2003). In chapter two, the researcher introduced key theoretical concepts and elements. In the current chapter, the researcher aims to clarify the research analysis procedure. Yin (2003) further suggests that the theoretical framework should identify key variables and themes and the relationships among them. The current study has linked the concept of boundary-work with the research questions and presented key themes that require further investigation. The theoretical framework corresponds to the two research questions set for this study. The empirical chapter about HE, reputation, and rankings further explain the key variables of the current study.

3.2.2 Case-study

A previous study states that: "*The case study is a research strategy, which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings*" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). Case-studies involve descriptions of specific events that have relevance to various data sources (Yin, 2003). The case-study emphasises the specific context in which the research study is taking place (Creswell, 2007). A study can adopt a simple case-study or multiple case-studies for conducting research. A simple case-study refers to a study where the identified problems are solved by making cases in a bordered system (Creswell, 2007).

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest that research should have a strong theory where the researcher identifies the research problem and develops research questions. As discussed earlier, research can be classified into theory-testing and theory-building studies. Theory-building research seems more appropriate in the case-study approach. This type of research aims at addressing 'how' and 'why' questions that have not previously been explored (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

The case-study differs from large-scale hypothesis-testing research and does not select a sample that represents a population. As suggested by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), the current study aims to contribute to knowledge by extending existing theories, thus making the purposive sample (see Section 3.3.1) highly significant compared to random or stratified sampling.

The case-study selection process is relatively simple when it involves a single case-study. A single case-study provides a detailed description of the phenomenon (Siggelkow, 2007) but choosing the multiple case-studies approach further facilitates theory-building by enabling the researcher to draw comparisons and suggest whether the findings are replicated in multiple cases (Eisenhardt, 1991). In the case-study approach, the research focuses more on the strategic phenomenon, thus making interviews an appropriate tool for collecting primary data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Eisenhardt (1989) further argued that after the data have been collected, the next step is to analyse them. Initial theory develops by analysing within-case analysis and multiple case-studies; the researcher further conducts a cross-case analysis. The data from multiple cases when compared may present similarities or differences within cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). The current study adopts the multiple case-study approach, which is discussed later in this chapter (see Section 3.3.1).

3.2.3 Triangulation

The word 'triangulation' comes from navigation and refers to determining a location using several coordinates. The concept remains the same in social sciences where researchers explain the phenomenon from different standpoints (Cohen and Manion, 1992). This is a form of strategy and it is frequently adopted in social sciences to make the outcomes of research more valid and reliable (Cohen and Manion, 1992). Patton (2002) also supported this view and suggested that the argument within the study becomes more powerful by combining methods.

The current study aims to triangulate the data from different sources. The researcher collected primary data by conducting, recording and transcribing interviews within case-study institutions. This study incorporated the views of academic experts to present a broader understanding of the research questions. This study then conducted interviews with marketers working in business schools in order to benefit from their practical knowledge of the research variables and their impact on their school strategies. Interviews were also conducted with industry experts to elicit external opinions on the matter (see Appendix 3).

Finally, the researcher collected secondary data or documentary evidence from different sources such as industry reports, books, journals, institutions' annual reports, and websites of business schools. The marketers of the case-study institutions also shared their internal student surveys, which provided some illumination of students' views. By triangulating all these sources, the researcher was able to analyse a detailed picture of the findings in order to derive meaningful ideas and improve the validity and reliability of this study.

3.3 Research Planning

After devising the research strategy, the current study moved to the next stage of research planning. This section explains the business schools' selection and interviewees' selection process.

3.3.1 Case-study selection

A purposive sampling is commonly used for building or extending a theory where the researcher collects and analyses data, having decided what data to collect and where to collect them in order that they might contribute to the theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling technique that differs from other probability sampling techniques such as simple and stratified random sampling (Laerd, 2015). Unlike probability sampling techniques that aims for higher generalizability, "*the main goal of purposive sampling*

is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest" (Leard, 2015, p. 1), which allows researcher to answer their research questions. The units that are investigated are based on the judgement of the researcher.

To achieve the overall objective of this study, the researcher adopts purposive sampling technique for selecting cases for the current study. The criteria used for case selection was industry/sector, location, number of sites, and rankings. At industry level, the research chose business schools. Business schools were selected from two locations i.e. Pakistan and the UK. The selection of these locations enabled the researcher to investigate the research questions from a developed and developing HE market perspectives. Ten business schools each were selected from the UK and Pakistan. Finally, business schools were selected from the UK and Pakistan with good rankings. For the UK location, the researcher selected business schools that were highly ranked at *Financial Times*, *The complete university guide*, and *The Guardian* rankings in year 2013. The school rankings were determined by using the average of these three ranking systems. The current study also selected ten business schools from Pakistan that were highly rated at HEC rankings in year 2013.

Case-studies Profile - UK

1. Institute-A was established in late 40s. Institute-A offers graduate courses in business studies, economics, law, and so on. Apart from MBA, Institute-A offers a wide range of specialised courses at postgraduate level such as law, accounting, finance, human resources, marketing, supply chain management, and organisational behaviour (Source: UK Institute-A annual report, 2013). Institute-A is an average-sized institution with a substantial number of faculty and students (HESA, 2013).

2. Institute-B was established in year 1963 that offers courses in management, accounting, finance, business administration, human resources, and marketing at both graduate and postgraduate levels. Institute-B is a medium-sized

institution with a good number of enrolments and faculty members (Source: UK Institute-B annual report, 2013).

3. Institute-C was established in the mid 60s. Institute-C offers courses in accounting, finance, banking, and business studies at graduate level. Apart from MBA, it has a variety of courses such as finance, insurance & risk management, management, marketing and human resources. Institute-C is a medium-sized university located in a metropolitan city (Source: UK Institute-C annual report, 2013).

4. Institute-D was also established in the mid 60s and become one of the leading business schools in the UK. The school offers specialised courses such as business studies, management, marketing, finance, human resources, and marketing at postgraduate level (Source: UK Institute-D annual report, 2013). In terms of student strength, Institute-D is a small institution with a small number of academic staff and students (HESA, 2013).

5. Institute-E was established in mid 60's that offer specialised courses in business studies, management, accounting, and finance at graduate level. Apart from MBA, the school also offers a variety of business-related courses at postgraduate level. Institute-E is one of the largest educational institutions in the UK. Its student enrolment is almost double that of an average-sized university (Source: UK Institute-E annual report, 2013). It also has a very high number of academic staff. In terms of numbers, it is the largest of the selected case-study universities (HESA, 2013).

6. Institute-F was established in the mid 60s that offers courses in management, accounting, finance, business administration, and marketing. It is a medium-sized HEI with a decent number of students and academic staff (Source: UK Institute-F annual report, 2013).

7. Institute-G was established in early twentieth century and one of the oldest schools in the UK. The school offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in management, finance, marketing, human resources, and banking. The school MBA program is among the best in the UK. It is a medium-sized institution with good number of student and staff (Source: UK Institute-G annual report, 2013).

8. Institute-H was established in the mid 80s. The business school offers a wide range of courses to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The courses mostly fall in the domain of finance, management, marketing, human resources, and psychology. Institute-H is an average-sized institution with a good number of students enrolled on different programs (Source: UK Institute-H annual report, 2013).

9. Institute-I is a decade old business school. The school is located in one of the big cities of the UK and is known for the high quality of its education, especially in business management. This business school is also rated very highly on various international ranking systems. The business school offers graduate, postgraduate and research courses in finance, business strategy, innovation, management, marketing and MBA (Source: UK Institute-I annual report, 2013). Institute-I is a small institution in terms of student enrolment (HESA, 2013).

10. Institute-J was established in the late 90s. The school has shown good progress over the last few years and has recently achieved the Triple Crown status. Institute-J offers courses in accounting, finance, management, marketing, supply chain, banking, and human resources. Institute-J is an average-sized institution in terms of student enrolment (Source: U Institute-J annual report, 2013).

Case-studies Profile - Pakistan

1. Institute-A established in mid 50s is one of the finest public business schools in Pakistan. Institute-A offers business studies, economics, mathematics, and degrees in accounting and finance. Institute-A has more than two thousand students enrolled on its postgraduate and undergraduate programs and has a very high number of faculty members (Source: PK Institute-A annual report, 2013).

2. Institute-B is a private business school that was established in mid 80s. At present, Institute-B offers degrees in many disciplines such as business studies, management science, economics, computer science, biology, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, physics, and law. Institute-B has high-quality academic staff and the size of its PhD faculty and student enrolment is relatively high (Source: PK Institute-B annual report, 2013).

3. Institute-C was established in the mid 90s as a public degree-awarding institution and has consistently remained among the top business schools in Pakistan. It offers business studies, engineering, education, and computer science at graduate level. At postgraduate level, in addition to the above courses, it also offers specialised courses such as multimedia, e-business and so on. It is a medium-sized school with a student enrolment of more than two thousand and a good number of faculty members (Source: PK Institute-C annual report, 2012).

4. Institute-D was established in the early 90s as a private business school. Institute-D offers courses in business studies, engineering, economics, management sciences, computer sciences, arts & design, and architecture. In terms of student enrolment, this institution is relatively small but it still has a

high number of faculty members (Source: PK Institute-D annual report, 2013).

5. Institute-E was established in the mid 90s as a public business school and later became an autonomous business school. Institute-E is one of the finest institutions in its province and is consistently rated among the top business schools of Pakistan. This institution has a relatively limited number of programs including business studies, economics, social science, development studies, and computer science. Having a limited number of programs, Institute-E is still a medium-sized institution with a total enrolment of more than two thousand students and a high student-to-faculty ratio (Source: PK Institute-E annual report, 2013).

6. Institute-F also established in the mid 90s, is a private management school and has delivered an average performance in HEC rankings. It is located in one of the cosmopolitan cities and is facing very stiff competition from highly rated business schools. This institution offers various courses at graduate and postgraduate levels from a vast range of disciplines. The prominent disciplines are business administration, economics, computer science, statistics, mathematics, and fine arts. In terms of size, Institute-F is a small institution with a relatively low student enrolment (Source: PK Institute-F annual report, 2012).

7. Institute-G was established in the late 80s as a private business school. Just like Institute-F, this institution is also located in a city that has a high number of business institutions. Institute-G offers specialised courses in business studies and computer sciences. The student enrolment is that of an average-sized institution with a good number of faculty members (Source: PK Institute-G annual report, 2013).

8. Institute-H was established in the mid 90s as a private university. Institute-H offers business studies, computer science, media science, social science, and biosciences. It also offers specialised postgraduate degrees such as project management and advertising. Institute-H is one of the biggest institutions in Pakistan with a very high number of students and a high student-to-faculty ratio (Source: PK Institute-H annual report, 2012).

9. Institute-I was established in late 90s as a private university. The school has delivered a good performance over the last decade. Institute-I offers courses in management sciences, engineering, and computer science. Institute-I also has a very large number of students. The total number of faculty members is also very high; hence, it can comfortably be termed one of the largest business schools in Pakistan (Source: PK Institute-I annual report, 2013).

10. Institute-J was established in the early nineties and has consistently been rated very highly in HEC rankings. The school offers programs in business studies, economics, finance, social sciences, mathematics, statistics, and environmental sciences. Institute-J is a large-scale business institution with a high student enrolment and a large number of faculty members (Source: PK Institute-J annual report, 2012).

3.3.2 Interviews' underlying principles

Interviews can be classified into three types: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Hussey and Hussey (1997) further argued that a structured interview or researcher-administered survey is a type of survey where the interview questions are predefined. The aim is to present the same questions in the same manner in order to make comparisons with confidence. It is quite straightforward but its disadvantage is that it involves a rigorous set of questions that will not allow the interviewee to enlarge on his/her answers. Unstructured interviews are more spontaneous and the questions are not predefined. The questions develop spontaneously as the interview progresses. The major downfall is that it may lose reliability, which is important in order to debate the themes set for the research. The final type of interview is semi-structured. This type adds balance to the research. Like structured interviews, it requires interviewees to focus on the themes but, at the same time, it is sufficiently unstructured to enable interviewees to offer some insights into the topic (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). There are many advantages of conducting semi-structured interviews. The researcher is free to modify and adjust the questions as and when the situation demands (Creswell, 2007). Hussey and Hussey (1997) argue the researcher is not only able to line up questions according to the situation but can also 'probe' if necessary. The response rate remains high, leading to better cooperation between the two (Saunders et al., 2009).

As discussed earlier, while interviews have several advantages they also have a few shortcomings. Sometimes the information may become biased due to the presence of the interviewer and due to the personal views of the informants (Creswell, 1994). This type of research generally involves a higher cost and is more time-consuming (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Another form of bias can occur when the data are interpreted by the researcher, as qualitative research requires a judgement which itself is prone to bias (Creswell, 2007). Despite these shortcomings, the current study

adopts semi-structured interviews as they not only offer a great deal to a qualitative inquiry but are also relevant to the research strategy adopted in this study.

Interviews can be conducted by using different techniques such as personal interviews (face-to-face), telephone interviews, and video calls (Creswell, 2007). The literature recommends the use of face-to-face interviews where possible (Creswell, 1994). In the current study, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews; however, in situations where this was not possible, video calls were used to conduct semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2.1 Interview schedules

The researcher conducted forty-three interviews for this study (see Appendix 3). Twenty interviews from both case-studies were conducted with the marketers responsible for their schools' marketing activities. Twenty interviews from both case-studies were targeted at the schools' subject specialists (academic experts) in the field of reputation and marketing. Apart from these forty interviews, three further interviews were conducted with industry experts to provide an external view on the research topic.

The informants were sent a letter and information sheet via email requesting them to attend the interviews. The information sheet (see Appendix 6) described the purpose of the current research and mentioned the supervision received from the University of York. It was stated that face-to-face interviews were preferred, and to arrange these interviews the researcher used different correspondence alternatives such as letters, phone calls, personal visits and emails. In some cases, where face-to-face interviews were not possible, the researcher opted for video calls using Skype.

The interviewees were invited via the following procedure. First, an official, signed document (scanned in the case of email) was sent along with the information sheet to interviewees, seeking their participation in the research study. Prior to the interviews, two consent letters (see Appendix 7) were provided to the participants

and a copy of the signed consent letter was collected from the participants in person or via email. The interviews were conducted on the agreed dates and at the arranged times. On average, the interviews lasted for sixty to seventy minutes during which the researcher asked a number of questions relevant to the study.

The researcher requested the appointments well in advance to provide sufficient time to the informants as most of them had busy schedules. The researcher preferred to conduct interviews in their offices (where possible) for the convenience of the interviewees. The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder with the interviewees' consent. The interviewees were assured that their data would be confidential and their names and institutions would be anonymised. In some cases, interviews conducted via video calls were also digitally recorded.

3.3.2.2 Interview design

The current study followed qualitative research methodology and collected data by conducting semi-structured interviews. As discussed earlier, the objective of the current study focuses on ranking and reputation relationship within business education field. Therefore, the researcher adopted open-ended questions for interviews relating to the rankings and reputation literature. A recent study debated the HE globalisation process in the Taiwan HE sector from the standpoint of rankings (Lo, 2014). The current study adopted the interview protocol presented by Lo (2014) for structuring the interview questions. In addition, the current study considered a synthesis of the literature and research objectives of the current study for structuring the interview guidelines (see Appendix 4). The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that several questions emerged as the interview progressed. The purpose of interview guidelines is to ensure that the researcher does not drift away from the key topics/concepts that are important for the study and that the interviews are conducted in a timely manner (Creswell, 2007).

The interview has three sections (see Appendix 4). The first section has a set of questions designed to achieve familiarisation with the institution and personal context of the informants. The second section of the interview relates to the understanding, issues and responses to the ranking system(s). The interview questions reflect on the literature review presented in chapter two (Crisp et al., 2012; Espeland and Sauder, 2007; Hazelkorn, 2009; Hazelkorn, 2011; Jobbins, 2005; Wedlin, 2010; Usher and Savino, 2006). The final section relates to business school's reputation strategy and rankings' influence on these strategies. Similar to section two, the researcher asked a series of questions guided by the literature review, which was discussed in chapter two (Crisp et al., 2012; Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Jobbins, 2005; Pakir, 2014).

The interview questions also varied depending on the type of respondents, such as academic experts, industry experts, and marketers, and the researcher adjusted his interview questions to render them applicable to the respondents. For example, the external experts (industry experts) were not asked about school's research strategy but they were asked to reflect on a wider (global) influence of rankings on HEIs. For the two locations (UK and Pakistan) of the case studies, the questions about rankings were asked by considering their respective ranking systems that we earlier discussed in chapter two.

3.3.3 Reflections on Problems during Data Collection

Of course, many problems arose during the data-gathering stage. The informants were very busy and some interviews had to be rescheduled. For example, the interview with the marketing manager at Institute-B (Pakistan) was rescheduled several times before it could take place. Several informants from Pakistan did not replied to the letters and email reminders and the data collection schedule was well off target. The researcher then decided to visit these informants in person and discuss their possible participation in this study. Indeed, it was a tiring process as

some of these informants were quite distant from the researcher's location and day-return journeys were not possible.

The data collection became very time-consuming as the researcher had to make several visits to conduct a single interview. Several business schools in Pakistan do not have marketing departments, and in some cases the marketing responsibilities were shared between two or three staff/faculty members. Therefore, the selection of marketing informants from these schools was not a straightforward decision. The researcher took guidance from the respective schools' administrative heads to identify the marketing informants in their schools. The researcher recognised that each interview was crucial to his study, and sometimes the informants digressed from the research questions; the researcher used interview protocol to steer the interviews back in the direction required for this study.

In some cases, in Pakistan, two or three faculty/staff members shared the office space. The researcher had to stop the interviews due to interruptions occurring in the background, such as other staff members talking on the phone. However, the majority of the interview informants were very helpful and shared secondary-sources of data especially their internal student surveys, which later became quite significant for this study. The researcher is genuinely grateful for the time or information offered by the interview informants. The data collection from both case-studies encountered several difficulties but these are balanced by the kindness and generosity shown to the researcher.

3.4 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability

Both research paradigms (positivist and phenomenological) concern the reliability, validity and generalisability of research. These terms are discussed below:

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which the research will produce similar findings should it be repeated (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, it means that similar

findings will be obtained by repeating the process of data collection and analysis. The meaning of reliability differs with regard to qualitative and quantitative research. Reliability in quantitative research can be achieved by obtaining similar results after conducting repeated tests, whereas reliability in qualitative research refers to the quality of the work. In the phenomenological approach, research quality is termed reliability (Patton, 2002). Eisner (1991) suggested that conducting high-quality research enhances the reliability of qualitative research. A high-quality research study investigates and explains a research problem, which might otherwise be confusing and difficult to understand.

The above discussion leads to a question: How will a researcher know whether his/her study is of sufficient quality to convince the readers? The literature suggests that the quality of phenomenological research can be interpreted in terms of credibility, consistency and applicability or transferability (Healy and Perry, 2000, p. 121). The researcher took certain measures to improve the quality of the current research study. First, this study aimed to improve the credibility of the research by conducting forty detailed interviews with two different sets of respondents (academic experts and marketers). The researcher also conducted interviews with industry experts to present the external perspective on the research inquiry in order that the research objectives might be assessed from multiple dimensions. The data from the forty interviews conducted in twenty business schools are intended to improve the consistency of the current research. The researcher also collected documentary evidence such as annual reports, internal student surveys, industry reports and newsletters to ensure that findings are more reliable. Finally, this study might be considered of good quality if it successfully fills the identified research gap (Healy and Perry, 2000). This study triangulated the available data from the above-mentioned sources in order to fill the identified gap in the literature.

3.4.2 Validity

The research has to be valid in the sense that the investigation carried out by the researcher is properly recorded and it is possible to determine what was intended (Saunders et al., 2009). This implies that the researcher is able to conduct and interpret data in such a way that it has coherence with the intention of the study. The validity of phenomenological research emphasises the 'trustworthiness' of the research (Seale, 1999). This statement reinforces the significance of transcribing interviews. The current study recorded interviews using a digital recorder. The interviews were then transcribed into Word documents. The transcribed data were then analysed using NVivo-10 software, which helped reduce the human errors. The analysis procedure was discussed with experts and research supervisors to ensure that a logical analysis procedure was adopted. The researcher also presented his research in two conferences to gain feedback. The positive feedback received also acted as a source of validation.

3.4.3 Generalisability

Maxwell (1992) argues that the term 'generalisability' refers to the degree to which the research can be generalised. The level of generalisability varies depending upon the research approach selected for the study. The generalisability produced by a positivist approach tends to be higher as it involves robust procedures for testing the validity (Maxwell, 1992). If a positivist approach fails to attain the required level of reliability, it also fails to achieve validity and generalisability (Wainer and Braun, 1988). With a phenomenological approach, the reliability and validity may not be directly linked to the generalisability as the focus is on interpretation rather than generalisability (Winter, 2000). The generalisability of the current study is low in comparison to quantitative research studies. The aim of this research is to interpret and contribute to the theory development that can be generalised later by conducting further quantitative research studies.

3.5 Research Ethics

Bryman and Bell (2003) suggest that when a study concerns a human subject, it is important to discuss the ethical issues that may arise while conducting the research. Ethical problems mainly arise from the difficulty in maintaining confidentiality and protecting the privacy of the participants. Research posits that the researcher should make the necessary arrangements for informing the participants about the research work before they decide to participate in the study (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix 6) and consent form (see Appendix 7) before they decided whether to participate in this study. The following steps were taken during interviews to address ethical issues:

1. Participants were informed about the nature of the research, the time required for their involvement, the methods to be used, and the use that would be made of any findings.

2. Participants were given clear information about how the data will be stored and destroyed after use, and who will have access to the transcripts arising from their participation.

3. Furthermore, participants were made aware that the data to be collected in this research will be protected, and the researcher will explain the implications of this in clear and accessible language.

4. Participants were provided with contact details for both supervisors and they were invited to contact them (if required) for clarity on any matter.

The researcher has anonymised the names of all participants and their institutions. Concealing the identities of respondents was to ensure that data couldn't be traced back to the respondents. This helped in building freedom of expression and access to sensitive data such as their internal student surveys. The current study presents extracts from their statements without compromising their anonymity. The

researcher recorded interviews with a digital recorder. Digital recordings of interviews were transferred immediately after each interview to a secure, password-protected, university Google drive (associated with the researcher's university email account) and then subsequently deleted from the digital recorder during the field visit. The researcher transcribed the data himself. The researcher will hold data on the university server for the period of this study. With the consent of the research supervisors and the department, the electronic data will be deleted from the university servers but it will be kept with the researcher for further research.

The University of York ethics committee has established a standardised procedure for granting approval for research work. This approval is mandatory and takes place prior to the data collection. The ethics form provides details about the research objective, research questions, methodology, ethical issues, perceived risks (for participants, researcher, and university), anonymity, data collection, and data storage. The researcher obtained ethical approval before the data collection. Finally, the researcher received signed consent forms from interviewees after providing the above-mentioned information.

3.6 Summary of the Chapter

The current chapter reviewed the literature on methodological approaches and adopted a case-study approach in which the data are analysed using a thematic analysis procedure. The research questions set for this study are qualitative in nature, thus implying the use of a phenomenological approach. This chapter first explained the qualitative methodology and the two case-studies comprising UK and Pakistani business schools. It then described the interviewee profiles and interview design. The current research study explained the triangulation concept by gathering data from different sources, including interviews in the selected case-study institutions, interviews with industry experts, secondary data from institutions and external sources, and internal student surveys. This chapter also discussed the

reliability, validity and generalisability of the case-studies and concluded by presenting the ethical aspects of the current study.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS

The current chapter presents research findings from the two case-studies by arguing the contextual perspective of ranking and reputation, and the impact of rankings on organisational change within the business education field. The objective of this study is twofold. First, the researcher attempts to understand the role of rankings in building reputation of business schools. This would require an understanding of field members' perception of ranking, reputation, and their interconnectedness. In this sense, it requires an interrogation of the context of rankings and reputation in the business education field. Second, this study also attempts to understand how rankings construct business education field in the developed and developing HE settings. This demands an interrogation of organisational change by understanding the reaction of the field members to their ranking systems in the two case-studies.

The previous chapters of this study established the basis for the two analysis chapters (Chapter 4-5). The current chapter discusses the case-studies of UK and Pakistan by presenting empirical evidences for the emerging codes, which derived from the interviews conducted in UK and Pakistan. Before this study attempts to explore the research findings, it is important to review the data analysis process employed herein.

4.1 Data analysis process

The qualitative data analysis can be conducted in many ways and the procedure does not follow a standardised approach (Creswell, 1994). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested a thematic analysis procedure for analysing qualitative data. Based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006), and Creswell (2007), the current study incorporated their analysis techniques and designed a case-study analysis procedure. The following Figure-3 summarises the design for case-study analysis adopted in the current study.

Figure 3: Multiple-case design
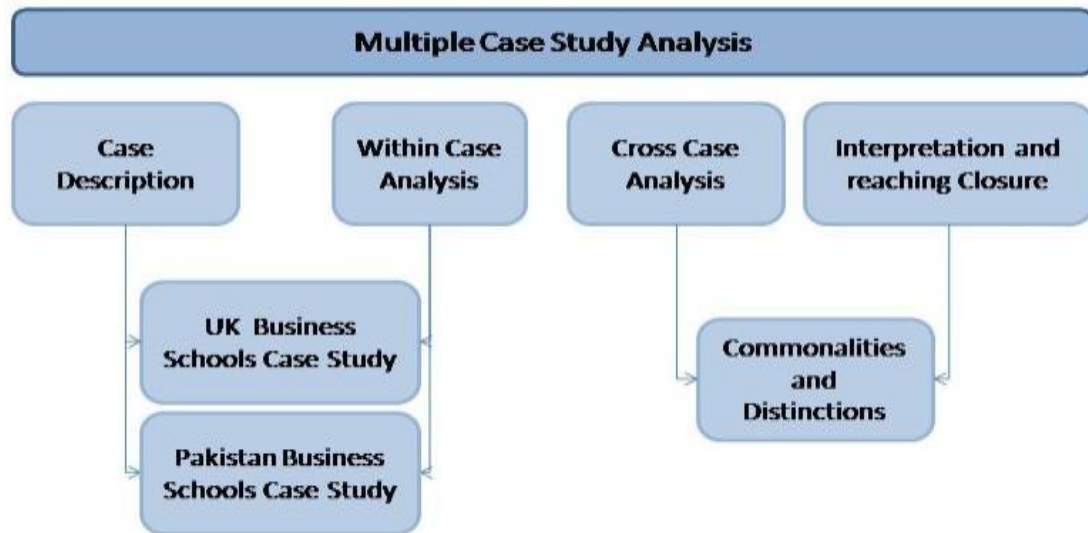
Source: Developed by researcher

As shown in the above figure, the analysis procedure is classified into four segments: case description, within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and interpretation and closure. First, the current study provided a descriptive account of the two cases. Research suggests that "*when multiple cases are chosen, a typical format is to first provide a detailed description of each case and themes within the case, called a within-case analysis, followed by a thematic analysis across the cases, called a cross-case analysis*" (Creswell, 2007, p. 75). The literature review of HE and business schools, reputation and rankings in the UK and Pakistan attempts to describe the two case-studies. In the previous chapter, the researcher also discussed the description and selection of business schools for the two case-studies. This is recommended by Creswell (2007), who argues that research analysis should start by describing the cases.

The second step of data analysis is to conduct within case analysis. The current chapter provide within case analysis of the UK and Pakistan. The current study adopted the thematic analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2006) for generating emerging codes from interview data. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued: *"Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data.*

It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, *p. 79)*. The data analysis in the current study debates two types of coding process, i.e. first- and second-order codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) posit that thematic analysis should start with the researcher familiarising him/herself with the research data. The researcher conducted forty-three interviews and transcribed them to analyse the data. The data was transcribed and uploaded to NVivo-10 software. NVivo is a software, designed for qualitative and mixed methods research that helps in organising, analysing and finding insights in qualitative data such as, interviews, surveys, web content, articles, and social media (NVivo, 2015). Researchers frequently use qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, as an organising tool (Welsh, 2002). NVivo software "*is designed to carry out administrative tasks of organising the data more efficiently and should therefore be exploited to the full on this basis. For example, it is easier and quicker to code text on screen than it would be to manually cut and paste different pieces of text relevant to a single code onto pieces of paper and then store these in a file. Clearly, in this situation it makes more sense to use dedicated software*" (Welsh, 2002). With the help of NVivo, the researcher organised the large amount of qualitative data gathered from the interviews.

In line with the coding process suggested in a previous research study (Boyatzis, 1998), the researcher generated first-order codes by consulting a coding vocabulary (see Appendix 5) of keywords generated from extracts of the interviews. The use of software add rigour to qualitative research and helps to achieve higher accuracy. Using NVivo could also facilitate interrogation of the data by using its search facility (Welsh, 2002). The NVivo-10 software helped to generate keywords by searching for high-frequency words. Based on the analysis of two case-studies, the first-order codes emerged from the data; these are grouped together and correspond to the second-order codes. This study adopted a reporting method suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), who state that selected extracts may be presented for the reporting of codes/themes. They further argued that the emerging themes should be

related to the research question(s) and literature when presenting a report of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher used extracts of interview data to support the emerging codes in the current chapter.

The third step of data analysis process requires cross-case analysis of UK and Pakistan case-studies. The chapter five of the current study corresponds to the cross-case analysis between two case-studies. Building on the emerging codes, the researcher discusses the two broad analytical themes (see Section 2.1.5) that reflects on the two research questions set for this study. In the next chapter, the researcher argues about the commonalities and distinctions of rankings' role in building reputation and its consequences for the field in the two case-studies.

The fourth step relates to chapter 6, which reflects on the two research objectives and presents the interpretation of the research findings and closure of this study. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), the current study's analysis concludes with the interpretation of the cases and produces a report that discusses analytical themes in the light of the research objectives, theory and literature review.

The case-study of the UK

Twenty-two interviews were conducted for the UK case study where the majority of the respondents were located in the UK with the exception of one industry expert (DIR-B). These interviews conducted in UK business schools are divided into two main groups (see Appendix 3). The first set of respondents from each school comprised academic experts in the field of marketing. The second set of respondents was composed of the managers and directors of marketing who were responsible for their schools' marketing activities. These interviews were conducted between November 2014 and January 2015. Fourteen interviews were conducted face-to-face during visits to their schools and the remaining six interviews were conducted through video calls using Skype (see Appendix 3). Apart from the above-mentioned interviews, two interviews were conducted with international industry experts. These interviews were also conducted through video calls. On average, the interviews lasted for sixty minutes. Figure-4 presents the first- and second-order codes that were used to analyse the UK data.

Figure 4: The coding process of UK business schools

First-Order Codes	Second-Order Codes	Aggregate Dimensions
Love Hate relationship		
Competition		
Proxy of Reputation	A Context of Ranking	
Rankings as a marketing content		
Rankings & Accreditation Relationship		Contextual Perspective
Multi Rankings Environment		
Significance & Power of media houses		
Series of reputation		
University and B-school reputation	A Context of Reputation	
Easy to understand		
Significance for students		
Differentiation		
Institutional policy	Policy, Operational & Financial change	
Operational change		
Rankings and financial resources		
Academic life and rankings	Academic life & Research	
Impact on research		Organisational Change
Impact on student's choice	Student Recruitment	
Impact on international students		
Impact on student's recruitment		
Impact on Academic partnerships	Partnerships of business schools	
Power of negotiation and rankings		
Partnering HEIs with similar attributes		
Industry partnerships and rankings		

Source: Developed by researcher

Following the analysis of UK data, the first-order codes emerged from the UK data set and corresponded to the second-order codes. For instance, when respondents were asked about the significance of rankings (context of rankings), several referred to the ranking's ability to influence the level of competition. These first-order codes are further elaborated in their respective 'research findings' sections.

The contexts of rankings and reputation reflect the wider contextual perspective within the UK case-study institutions (see Figure-4). The remaining four second-order codes reflect the influence of rankings on business school and their status. The straight lines in Figure-4 represent the links between second-order codes and first-order codes. During the analysis, it was also found that some first-order codes corresponded to more than one code. This multiple correspondence has been presented though the dotted lines. For instance, the UK data suggested that rankings as a 'proxy of reputation' correspond to the context of rankings and reputation.

This chapter discusses the research finding from the UK case-study. Section 4.2 debates the context of rankings and the context of reputation in UK business schools. Section 4.3 examines the impact of rankings on reputation that has led to organisational change within these business schools. At the end of each section; a section summary concludes the discussion within the respective sections.

4.2 Research findings: A wider contextual perspective

4.2.1 A context of rankings

Love and hate relationship

The impact of rankings on the UK business schools and its stakeholders can be seen from love and hate relationship. The love for rankings reflects on the positivity of rankings that is felt at schools. The hate refers to the negative impact and resistance that is seen in UK business schools.

Love

The rankings have become a global phenomenon where it has a strong impact on student choice both for national and international students. The global market offers several ranking and accreditation choices for the business schools and their

students. Rankings help students to overcome the barrier of institution selection and assisting them in their decision-making process. One marketing director explains:

"I think rankings have influence on the student recruitment process without a doubt. As I understand this is a worldwide or global market place that we operate in and I think it is a way to help students. When you have so many options around the world and it sometimes becomes difficult for the students to find the right one. Accreditations and rankings is one way of doing that and I think it helps them in their decision process to find quality and better university often quicker. So that's in the mind of actual consumer (student). As a business school we are aware of that so we have to reflect in the ways that market works and target our customers using rankings" (UKB2).

Several respondents were of a view that rankings have been helpful to HE stakeholders as it transforms qualitative data into quantitative measure, which makes more sense to students and are easy to understand. The professor at Institute-C has comprehensively explained this concept:

"When you think what rankings do, they turn very complex qualitative information into one quantitative measure; they are incredibly reductionist when it comes to it. They (rankings) are meant to distil incredibly large information in way that is much easier to assess for the consumer or in this case the student. Rankings are very helpful to students because if you are coming from I don't know which country, you start looking into institutions but how are you going to compare? Rankings are supposedly objective and in that sense it would help institutions also to focus on areas of importance where they should get better at" (UKC1).

Hate

The respondents on one side appreciated the role rankings in HE but they also acted as a critique of ranking system. The conversion of qualitative data into qualitative measure also has a dark side to it. Several UK respondents have raised their concerns about the methodology of rankings:

"In football league tables a team cannot rise 50 places in one year so why do universities move like 40, 50 places? So there is a big concern on the methodology of rankings. Last year (institute name) was ranked about 35 in the world and 38 or 39 in the UK; now how does that make sense? It is just

because of the use of different methodologies so this brings us back to my original argument that rankings are not very credible" (UKF1).

"The rankings are sometimes very cruel in a sense that they judge you in absolute numbers. You are either better than others or you are not. This brings back to my original point of adding pressure on business schools. You might improve on some aspects and you would hope for a better standing but others may do a little extra and would be better placed than you. Does this mean that we didn't improve at all? So rankings do come with some biases" (UKC2).

The professor in Institute-B also expressed his reservations on the ranking system. He explained with an example:

The _____ [university name] which used to be _____ [university name], and that was one of the best Polytechnic we had in the country, may be among the top five. It was famous for practical studies and if you compare it in the overall university table then it dropped down to middle or middle-lower table, and you can't possibly compare it to the researched based institutions. These types of rankings didn't do any good to the students either who thought it was one the best Polytechnic now dropped down at the tables. For the staff that thought it was top institution and now they are compared less favourably than everybody else. So if you are not at top of table then it has a damaging effect on your moral (UKB1).

He further explained the biases that could happen due to the disproportionate effect of ranking. These concerns strongly relate to the methodological issues of various ranking systems.

"In the world of ranking, it is more research based, citation based so on. If you employ noble prizewinners for example, your university will shoot up those league tables, so one thing can have disproportionate effect on the rankings and that is why I don't like these league tables very much. If you can rise so quickly, you can fall quickly and that questions the credibility of the rankings" (UKB1).

The rankings are highly influential on the business schools but institutions could adopt unethical practices to gain advantage, which is not rightfully theirs. The academic expert at Institute-C explained:

"There are a lot of areas where we can basically say that we are not going to play the game. We are not going to participate in that in order to improve rankings because we believe in the overall offering. We do not go into these things, you know, coaching students on how to do the questionnaires (national student surveys). We have a lot of discussion, which means that rankings are important to us but we play healthy which I am really very happy about. We will not engage in these sorts of strategies you know even if we know we would go down couple of places but that is more acceptable to us rather than encouraging our students to be very generous about us in the surveys like the salary they indicate and so on. There is some evidence that shows that female get less salary than male students so if male students are asked to participate then your score gets higher compared to female students" (UKC1).

Similar views echoed by several academic experts as one respondent puts it:

"I also think that some institutions have reported salaries which look a bit high so if it is manipulated then it would lead to ethical concerns. So when you look on starting salaries you do wonder how genuine they are" (UKE1).

Competition

The associate professor at Institute-I and marketing manager at Institute-F suggested that rankings become highly significant for business schools when they compete at the international level:

"As of now, US and UK institutions are well placed in international market but some other countries are catching up and when the reputation difference among countries is minimized, it would become difficult for UK institutions to compete internationally in next 10 - 15 years or so. (UKI1).

"There are certainly many choices for students and they decide on their personal preferences... we compete for different segments of students so we have competition at national level and also at international level" (UKF2)

The head of marketing at Institute-H echoed similar views and suggested that rankings are important for business schools due to the ever-rising competition.

"The impact of rankings is very much there and today business schools compete in these league tables and they are forced into these positional wars. I think when you have high ratings you obviously would be perceived

as a good school. So for business school, it is not an option but it's a pressure from the market to compete in the rankings" (UKH2).

Several respondents argued that rankings act as benchmarking mechanism for business schools as one marketing director commented:

"Business schools especially in the west are competing globally. The rankings and accreditations have become global and some of accreditations bodies and ranking systems are more concerned about the internationalization aspect within institutions. We know for sure that some schools are the best in the business for example Harvard business school or London Business School. They are what we call a benchmark for other business schools. As a business school, we have to make sure that we do the right things as they do. I think to become one of the world class business school we have to have world class facilities, world class staff and research centers, world class rankings that would guarantee that we are ahead in the global race of recruiting international students" (UKC2).

The HEIs undoubtedly became more competitive but it does not provide level playing field for all institutions. One interviewee explains:

"It almost reemphasizes the gap in the playing field. If you take rankings in this country for example, _____ [university name] and _____ [university name] is always up there in different rankings and they are either one or two or three something like that, and so they should be, I mean they got more money than all the rest of universities put together. They are on the top; they always were on the top so how would anybody ever would be able to overtake them. They have to desperately do something wrong to drop places in rankings so I believe that it isn't a level playing field so I think it has more advantages for those universities that are on top than those at the bottom" (UKB1).

These elite schools are above the competition where they may not necessarily require rankings to justify of what they are. One industry expert said:

"I think institutions like _____ [US business school], their reputation stands independently. I really think that these types of schools are not even in the competition. They are so far ahead of the game they probably may not necessarily need accreditations or rankings" (DIR-B).

Proxy of Reputation

Eighteen interviewees suggested that rankings gained significance in HE system and acts as a proxy of reputation:

> "We have good reputation and we have consistent performance over the years. Our graduates are considered as premium products in the job market and students are well aware of this fact. Again, we have good rankings for our business education, we get more applications, we select the best, and our students get good jobs when they graduate from (institute D). I think ranking advocates your reputation, your brand to stakeholders "(UKD1).

> "Rankings are produced in many forms such as rankings for universities, schools, courses, student satisfaction, and research, which help universities to manage their corporate reputation as well as their reputation for individual schools, courses, university learning environment, and research reputations. I think rankings are tools, which stakeholders would use to judge these reputations" (UKI1).

> "We conduct survey on time to time with our students and when they were asked that why they joined [institute I] majority of answers we got would relate to rankings. The power of rankings has increased in last few years and most of UK institutions have been forced to play this ranking game. We know that rankings are fundamentally important to our students and they take it as a proxy for our quality and our reputation" (UKI1).

The professor at Institute-C had similar views and she mentioned rankings as a synonym of reputation in the HE field:

> "The role of reputation is absolutely crucial now days. It depends whom you ask but if you ask students, the first thing that they may make their decision on, which HEI they will go into is based on rankings. So the reputation of HEIs is becoming synonymous with the position of your rankings. I think it is sad from my perspective but I always ask my students that how did you make your decisions to come here and their first criteria is rankings and the second criteria is the course structure or anything else but the very first thing is mostly the rankings" (UKC1).

Ranking as a marketing content

The marketing director at Institute-F reflected on two types of communication. The communication can be targeted to generate sales or to remind and getting

stakeholders attention. The rankings play a significant role in reminding stakeholders about the HEI reputation:

"There is difference between communications for generating sales and communications for getting attention. The classic communication would be to inform, to persuade and to remind. You may share your rankings with your alumni to tell them like, hey guys you have graduated and we are still here and we are still number 1 or 2 so your investment in your education is still valuable. You would also like to remind to your staff that like despite what you see but we still are really good. I think for undergraduate program we need to make better use of our open days and try to persuade them for getting admission" (UKF2).

"For a communication strategy, you need to have a strong but a short message. People will not read your stories they want everything in bullet points and precise. For communication offices in business schools, it is a blessing to have good ranking and accreditations. It would make marketers job a lot easier because they know it is a powerful message that is simple and important for the prospective students" (UKG2).

The professor at Institute-I, linked rankings to its impact to sales:

"You know we are chasing students in other parts of the world and it is only finite number of students. We have to make sure we get our students so that we can carry on our expansion plans or building programs or whatever it is but certainly these rankings add to the pressure on universities that piles on there. So good rankings are fundamentally important as it further justifies the institution's message" (UKI2).

Several respondents argued that ranking is a widely used term within marketing campaigns. The ranking information is an important marketing content that most business schools would use for building their reputation:

"We have a lot of postgraduate students that are overseas students and the modern way of advertising and communicating with them is through the use of rankings. If you have three messages to say, tell the best one first because probably they won't be listening by the time they get to the third. The HEIs marketing are probably working on this principle. If you got good rankings to talk about it probably is your first message because it is easily understood. If I tell you that we are 10th then straight away, you make some calculations and you have already started to position these institutions based on this only piece of information that I am giving you. The institution

selection is just like supermarket shopping, when I go to the supermarket so what is going to attract me on the shelve? I think the first information about the product has a big impact on consumer choice" (UKJ1).

"Our aim is to be one of the leading business schools in the world. We have excellent facilities, faculty, and administrative teams, and we produce highly employable students. And these are not just our claims, and our international rankings and our triple accreditation verifies what we claim" (UKE2).

The rankings are highly significant for communication strategy. Being an external piece of information, it becomes highly acceptable both to internal and external stakeholders. The professor at Institute-E commented:

"This morning I got a pamphlet from our faculty of humanity and they were posting about rankings on the front page. It is a clear indication that it is important both internally and externally. Everyone would like to be a leader and not to be the follower. And that's why you use rankings and other accreditations for differentiating yourselves from those with poor rankings and you would like to communicate these rankings to the students. Of course we use them to consolidate our statements and tell them 'look this is what others have to say about us' and it is a piece of external information that tells you how we have performed and how good we are from most the business schools in the UK. So that is more appealing to students as people tend to believe the judgments rather than our personally floated information" (UKE1)

Rankings dominate business school advertising campaign. One professor explains:

"The rankings are becoming so dominant that you won't find any good business school in UK without mentioning or hinting about their rankings, their market standings, or accreditations. I think it is easier for the marketer and I think there is little but of laziness going on in marketing communications. Rankings are headlines and it is assumed that students read headlines and therefore they want to give them the best headline" (UKH1).

"Reputation requires a good communication strategy so you need to have a strong but a short message. People will not read your stories; they want everything in bullet points and precise. For communication offices in business schools, it is a blessing to have good rankings. It makes marketers' jobs a lot easier because they know it is a powerful message that is simple

and important to our students, their parents, our staff, and our partners" (UKG2).

The UK business schools frequently referred to ranking when they discussed their positions and their positioning strategy. One marketing director explains:

"Our positioning would be, to be one of the leading European business schools and within that positioning comes with the triple accreditation and rankings. So within every communication that we set out, and within our material, that positioning will always be there in any material that we produce. We recently had gone through the process of rebranding and restyling and making very clear within the styling, what we call messaging boxes where we always put these positioning statements whether its banners, fairs, exhibitions or on our website statement such as 'in top 15 European business schools' or triple accredited" (UKG2).

Eleven respondents have reflected on the relationship of rankings with the location based positioning. UK is considered one of desired study location for international students. A marketing director from Institute-J stated:

"Now rankings are ways that are expressing both to the student and their parents, about the relative standing of different business schools having different courses which they may consider. It is often quite cheaper to stay at home but if they decide to go abroad then which country? It is country reputation problem and then beneath that, the reputation of individual university and business schools can further have separate reputations and then the reputation of the course itself. The rankings have relevance to all three but in global competition context, I would rate country reputation as highly important. The role of rankings in my opinion is more interesting because the student would not research all options for their location or courses but may choose 5 to 10 and then rigorously assess these options" (UKJ2).

The professor at Institute-A went a step further by signifying the role of rankings and its impact on market segment and positioning to these segments.

"If you want a bit of sanity and you rank hundreds of universities on single table which is probably going to be disappointing for most. So you got to say that this is the market we are in. Students are going to decide whether to go to _____ [UK Business School X] or _____ [UK Business School Y], you know they are two different markets. I think you are better off when you know your competition within your own market because you can't possibly

compete with the people that are in top five or so unless you are in top five (UKA2).

The rankings become highly significant when institutions decide to compete and position their schools internationally:

> "Our positioning strategy definitely involves rankings and accreditations you know; it is what makes us different from many other business schools. In some parts of the world, UK is a one of a favourite destination so again that is also part of our positioning strategy especially for our international students. The rankings not only rank schools but also present the trends of educational quality within different countries. In many global rankings you would find the dominance of US schools and a good number of UK business schools. Ranking in this case is a justification of perceived high quality education in these countries" (UKH2).

Not very different from the above views, the professor at Institute-I termed rankings as a 'verification mechanism' that is adapted by business schools to glorify their achievements and position their school:

> "Within the marketing strategies, the retention of these rankings and triple accreditation we see as vital for, whether it is the recruitment of students or retention, positioning is a central part of our marketing strategy. It's a unique proposition and our rankings comes very high within that and with the triple accreditation, they kind of one and two, when you look at the fact that we have researched what our audiences look for, rankings and accreditations are always on top of the list. So that is why they are on the top of our list of strategy too" (UKB2).

> "It is a verification mechanism, which schools do use for positioning themselves like for example, they would say our students are highly employable and so on. As a matter of fact is we actually have very highly employable rate and we always communicate that. Of course we would pick particular rankings or part of rankings where we say we are best for employability so again we claim something and then we give evidence and yes rankings is most of the times is part of the evidence that support our claims" (UKI1).

The rankings and accreditation relationship

There is a strong connection between rankings and accreditations. The accreditations have helped business schools to improve their rankings and their institutional quality. The industry experts explain:

> "I think they are mutually supportive; I think the business schools takes accreditation very seriously. It is considered very important for their reputation. Our members particularly the Vice Chancellors, they want accreditations whether it is EPAS, AMBA, triple accreditation, so I think they all are reputation measures for the business schools and once business schools acquire these accreditations, it could also help them to improve their market standings" (DIR-A).

> "There is a difference between accreditation and ranking. The accreditation is 0, 1 kind of thing, you get or you don't, whereas the rankings they put institutes in order. An accreditation checks quality on all levels and that is input, process, and output. The rankings have more of an output focus. I think international accreditations are equally important for business schools and they would use it for differentiation " (DIR-B).

Similar views echoed from the UK case study institutions as one marketing director puts it:

> "We know accreditations are very important for business schools, so quite recently we have achieved our accreditation goal and we are now a triple accredited business school. So the impact of triple accreditation was very positive we got a huge number of applications, we have now recruited more students than what we had before these accreditations, we have raised our postgraduate fees, we hired more staff and as a result our rankings improved. So I think the accreditations and rankings are very much interconnected" (UKC2).

Similar views echoed within the UK business schools, suggesting the interconnectedness between rankings and accreditations. One marketing director explains:

> "Ranking systems such as FT rankings have made certain accreditations a prerequisite for their evaluation system, so these accreditations become important for us. I think accreditations like AMBA, EQUIS, and AACSB are equally important for business schools to improve their education quality" (UKD2).

> "When we speak of international competition then these accreditations come along with it so they are important for us. At [Institute D], we have an excellent MBA program and we would need international accreditations if we want to show our presence at global rankings. I think it is an 'entry pass' for international competition" (UKD1).

The views within the UK schools went a step further by highlighting the importance of triple accreditation for business schools:

> "Another thing, which is completely different than rankings would be the accreditations like triple accreditation in business schools. They are quality accreditation and it is something that equally adds to your reputation. It is a pronunciation of quality, and of teaching and services that you provide. Rankings are third party views based on number of factors that are important to business schools but accreditation is very much a picture of your quality or your service. That is why triple accreditation and rankings are so important to business schools because it puts you above the rest and in marketing we are always looking for the positioning of what makes you unique and triple accreditation is definitely one of those. I think it's only 58 or 59 business schools in the world and if you have it, it certainly puts you above the rest. And that is what our target customer is looking for, they want to be reassured that they are coming to one of the best business schools in the world and that is what triple accreditation gives you" (UKB1).

> "Since we got our triple accreditations, we have improved our rankings, our prices went up, and applications went up. And in fact although we are asking for IELTS score of 7 but we are actually getting too many people" (UKH1).

Multi-rankings

There are several national and international ranking systems operating in the UK HE sector. There are different ranking systems, which are meant for different segment of students as one marketing director explains:

> "There are many ranking systems that could possibly influence the purchase decision. Students would look at different league tables when they are going to join at undergraduate and postgraduate level. I think different rankings are meant for different segments of students. Then there are other instruments like REF rankings, accreditations, and NSS. That is why we frequently conduct student surveys so that we know which type of instrument is important and to whom. One has to be very careful with

rankings and accreditations. It can be a bit tricky to select the right kind of instruments for different segments of students" (Source: Interview, UKG2).

The respondent's views about these systems can be classified into two perspectives. First, the respondents reflected on the brighter side by highlighting the benefits of multi-rankings prevailing in the HE system.

"In global market, the customers are from different parts of the world and one particular ranking may be more significant to one set of customers let's say in Europe than students in Asia. So it is important to know the level of acceptance of rankings in different markets especially in those where you are targeting your prospective international students. The business schools take rankings seriously, and here in UK we have many ranking options that we can use to our advantage. Marketing is all about promoting your business so yes of course business schools will select the key selling points within the different ranking systems and I don't see anything wrong in it as far we consider this in marketing context" (UKB2).

"I don't think that the customer (student) wants the confusion. They want nice simple picture. The basic idea of rankings is to rate institutions based on the quality and performance. It is very rare to find that you are high on one ranking and then you find yourself at the very bottom of another ranking, your place could move a bit in the rankings but not that much. So there is some sort of consistency. The students would use rankings or average of rankings, they would also look into their scores like GMAT score, their performance at previous degrees, and they [students] would position themselves against those institutions that accept their overall performance. So the point is, it would be very difficult for us to fall at the very bottom of any rankings and also at the very best, among the most prestigious schools in UK" (UKE1).

Several respondents had also reservations about multiple rankings. The current study categorised these views to the dark side of multiple ranking systems. Twelve respondents have raised concerns over the selective use of rankings, which may have their own biases.

"I think multiple rankings add to the confusion for the students. The institutions respond to the variety of ranking by cherry picking the best ones. You would see them saying, this one is the best in student experience, this one has best accommodation, this one has the best teachers, they just do

the cherry picking, they are doing what every marketing person would do and its classic example of the use of rankings going wrong" (UKH1).

"I believe the prospective students should be better educated and be savvy about what they are looking for but they are probably not because I work in this industry and I know that it adds to the confusion for the students" (UKB1).

The Significance and power of media houses

Several respondents argued about the significance of big media houses and their reach to the audience in different parts of the world. However, several respondents also discussed their reservations on the power of media houses, which relates to the autonomy of the field. They argue that most rankings that are produced by media houses are gaining more control over the HE sector:

"It is very difficult to speculate but the trends in the current market would suggest that these rankings would become more dominant. The big media houses have a global reach and if you are listed at their rankings then you become highly visible at international level. The media companies who are actually developing the criteria for these rankings from their perspectives, so you have to ask yourself whether the media companies should be driving the development of this sector. It is good debate that we can have. So whether that will actually happen that depends on many other factors, so either it is a consensus within the industry to come up with the different quality metric and that will impact the overall rankings, so who knows I don't know" (UKE1).

One industry expert also presented similar views as he explains:

"I think the power has shifted from HE to media houses and same goes for research, the publishers are in charge, the editors not the academics. I think the main reason for media houses to produce rankings was that of late newspaper reading has gone down and they have to consider other options for income generation. The point is we are not self-determined but we are influenced by publishers and media houses so in a way they are indirectly running the business schools" (DIR-B).

4.2.2 A context of reputation

The informants from UK business schools suggested that their institutions consider reputation as one of the key factors of their success. The respondents have argued

about the significance of institutional reputation in different terms, which is summarised in this section. The UK respondents unanimously considered reputation as very important that could have long-term enduring effect for business schools.

> "Corporate reputation is very important because its benefit would last for a longer period of time and keeps you in the competition. The effective marketing within business schools demand attention to key concepts such as brand image and reputation" (UKG1).

> "Reputation is absolutely fundamental because it is about long term enduring brand identity so it has fundamental importance. And I think good university management practice is about taking decisions in the light of that fundamentally important issues and not because they have short-term needs and it's not a quick fix" (UKH1).

> "We are well aware of the fact that reputation is very important for our school and we take this very seriously. It has a long term impact and it would be helpful to us even when some of our strategic decisions doesn't pay off" (UKG2).

A series of reputation

The reputation of business school is a series of reputations where the relevance of these reputations may vary within the stakeholders' groups. The professor at institute-A has explained the series of reputation within HEIs:

> "The reputation of an institution is not one but a series of reputations. A university can have many reputations like reputation for research, reputation for student future job and employability, reputation for graduate and postgraduate courses and so on. The stakeholders look at university from different perspectives. The students might be interested in reputation of job employability after their degrees but university management will also be interested in their research reputation" (UKA1).

The reputation of HEI is a subset of a country's reputation that affects the school's reputation. A respondent from Institute-J puts it:

> "We are quite lucky in a way because we kind of enjoy good reputation mainly because of our location. UK is quite known for quality education, I mean we can argue if that would hold true in next few years but generally

speaking your country association and its reputation also matters in institution selection process" (UKJ1).

The marketing director at Institute-E also shared similar views and linked the institutional reputation to the reputation of business school's location:

"Students are not restricted to one reputation but their decision will depend on the reputation of country, reputation of schools within those countries, and then the reputation of their programs" (UKE2).

The university and business school reputation

In UK, the business school reputation varies in the level of market acceptance among the students. This implies that the reputation of university and their school can be different. It was evident that strong university may have weak business school and vice and versa. One academic expert explained:

"The reputation of university and business school may not be the same because I can think of one case where there is very strong business and management school but relatively weak university so you have slightly different tension there. When you have a strong university and strong business school then interest in both corporate brand and corporate reputation are very harmonious. And I think that is the best combination to have" (UKH1).

"Sometimes the reputation of business school is higher than their university reputation but I can also give you example of several reputed universities that has a weaker business school" (UKA1).

Easy to understand and interpret

The reputation gains significance as it is easy to understand and easy to associate with products/ service and their producers. The professor at Institute-B explains:

"The main university campuses have several disciplines like for example engineering and pharmacy, which are non-business related subjects, a lot of my colleagues over there would say that institutes are not brands. They don't prefer the commercial language when they associate it with university, but when you ask them about reputation then they would say, 'yeah of course we have reputation', so they are more comfortable with the idea of

reputation. Everybody appreciates that there is reputational factor within HE institutions" (UKB1).

The assistant professor of Institute-F echoed similar views about reputation in HE sector and explained:

"Reputation is not a new word or a new concept, but it has a long history. It is a simple word that is easily understood among people, especially those, that are directly related to HE. These words like reputation, prestige are sometimes used as a synonym of institutional quality. So anything that relates to quality will always be important for the institutions" (UKF1).

Significance for students

Just like several other developed countries, UK also receives a good number of international students. Being higher fee-paying students, the recruitment of international students becomes highly desirable. Eighteen of the UK informants suggested that school's reputation is highly significant for these international students.

"It seems to me that probably there are two or three segments in market place particularly for international students. And if an international student is making decision for studying MBA or MSc program outside their own country which is fairly a common decision and then they would make a decision whether to stay at home or go abroad for that degree. If they decide to go abroad then, which country to select? Once they decide the country, they will look at individual offerings within that country. They decide mutually with the parents as they are paying so parents are also interested in what they are getting for their money and that is where the reputation becomes very crucial in these type of situations" (UKE1).

"Reputation would definitely has an impact on student recruitment. It would affect the quality of staff and students that you can attract. Other stakeholders like industries and a potential employee would consider reputation of institution before they decide to work there" (UKD2).

Similarly, the reputation of HEIs is also important to all stakeholders. The director of marketing at Institute-B argues that:

"The business school reputation is very important, whether you are talking about recruitment of students or from research perspective and collaborative

working with other universities. And one thing that everybody looks forward in business school is its reputation. So it is very important" (UKB2).

Differentiation

The UK respondents have debated the significance of reputation in HE due to its ability to differentiate schools from the competition. A marketing director at Institution-F suggested:

> "Reputation is equally important in HE as it is in any service industry. Every institution has a reputation either good or bad, people will rate you if you want it or not. It is up to the management of the school to identify what a school stands for how it is different and what are the core values and then the important part is to communicate it to their stakeholders. I see this as the way forward for us in the years ahead" (UKF2).

The accreditations are also a good source of differentiation and many schools were gearing towards it. One industry expert explains:

> "I think the pursuit of accreditation in business schools in clearly related to reputation and it gives you certain recognition in the market. Accreditation is so important as it has also been recognized in certain ranking systems. You will have a situation where top business schools are very reluctant to work with you in the context of student exchange if you are not an accredited business school. So certainly it's a function of de facto segmenting the marketing" (DIR-B).

The UK respondents unanimously suggested that HEIs positioning is primarily based on differentiation where rankings are one of the common used tool for differentiating their schools. One academic expert explains:

> "As a business school, you would expect that your product is different so that it appeals to the student. The common use of word like leading business school or one of the leading business schools is very common these days. If I would get a dollar or a pound for every time I have seen that in any corporate organisation or university or business school, I would be very rich guy. It is the most misused word in the marketing world and I think it does not mean anything. When they (student) are making the decision of selecting university will they consider this at first place, I very much doubt it. So I think you got to have something very distinctive and ranking is one of the distinctive features that you can use" (UKD1).

4.2.3 Concluding comments

To conclude this section, the current study has presented two wider contexts (rankings and reputation) that prevail in the HE system. This section starts with the context of rankings where the UK respondents have argued the benefits of ranking and critiques of this system. This study recoded their views and categorised them under the 'love and hate of rankings' code. With regard to the benefits of rankings, the respondents suggest that rankings are helpful to students as they help them in their institution selection process. The downside of rankings was also revealed during the interviews as respondents voiced their concerns mostly on the construct of rankings.

The pressure of international competition is growing and business schools are compelled to focus their strategy on rankings and accreditations in order to remain competitive both nationally and internationally. The respondents' views have shown a strong connection between rankings and reputation, as they believed that rankings are sometimes considered as a 'proxy of reputation'.

Rankings affect schools' positions, and their positioning primarily focuses on differentiation, which builds with a superior ranking in the market. The rankings act like a verification mechanism that helps business schools with their positioning strategies. Another factor for positioning in the UK is through the place of association. Certain developed countries such as the UK and the US dominate the majority of international rankings that reflect the superior reputation for HE in these countries. Today, the marketers in the HE industry are obsessed with rankings, and rankings information is frequently used to project the educational quality of their institutions. Rankings, being external sources of information, become highly acceptable in the business education field and among different groups of stakeholders. Similarly, the respondents' views show a strong interconnectivity between rankings and accreditations in that some ranking systems are dependent on accreditation systems. UK business schools operate in multiple-

ranking environment that offers more choices for the marketers, who are able to communicate favourable ranking information. This selective use of rankings or the 'cherry-picking' of rankings may lead to more biases and confusion for the school's stakeholders. Several global rankings produced by the large media houses help business schools to gain global visibility. However, the dominance of media-based rankings and their significance has shifted the power from HE to these media houses, which challenges the autonomy of the field.

The second context relates to the significance of reputation in the HE system. Several UK respondents explained the significance of reputation in different ways. The reputation of business school is not just one reputation but, rather, a combination of many reputations, such as the reputation of staff, reputation for student employability and so on. Reputation gains more significance, as it is easy to understand by different types of stakeholders. The UK business schools considered reputation an integral part of their overall strategy due to its direct impact on their customers (students). It became evident that school's reputation is highly significant due to its ability to differentiate business schools from competing institutions.

4.3 Research findings: A practice within institutions - Organisational change

4.3.1 Policy, Operational and financial change in institutions

Institutional Policy

The proliferation of rankings has made a global contribution to the HE sector; as a result, the business schools have reacted to different ranking systems. It is quite evident from the UK data set that ranking rankings has a strong connection with the changes made to the institutional policy. Seventeen respondents argued about the use of rankings analysis for developing their school's strategy.

> "Whenever people start being measured, they start reacting to that. We just know this from our research, whenever people know that they being

evaluated, they will adapt their behaviour accordingly. And I suppose in an ideal world, institutions would probably adapt their behaviour in such a way that it is beneficial because rankings are well meant" (UKC1).

"We consider rankings as one of our goal. We had an executive meeting here at [institute J] and the first thing that was decided was to bring our school in the top 50 schools of the world in the next five years. Personally I think that would not be easy but let's see how it goes" (UKJ1).

The rankings have become the strong reason for reshaping the business school strategy. The professor at Institute-H explains:

"The rankings are considered very important at the strategic level in my department. I am sitting on the senior executive board in the department, we have got more than 100 academics and a very high number of students. We need to keep a close eye on these rankings and there are certain factors, which are within our control both at the institutional level and the departmental level, and there are certain things, which we can't do anything about but you can be sure that we are looking very carefully at these. That would also include things like the so-called ABS (Association of Business Schools) list or whatever its replacement is, the NSS scores and any other kind of matrix that becomes important and obviously the REF which start to bring forward now for 2020. We have to be careful with that" (UKH1).

The impact of rankings on institutional policy can also be seen from 'means and ends' relationship. Rankings act as means for enhancing reputation of business schools that performed well in those ranking charts.

"Everyone wants to improve their rankings which could help them in building their reputation. Rankings are very important piece of information that our students consider. We want to improve our rankings and that has remained one of our top priorities in the last few years or so. We analyzed them to understand the most important impact factors and then we would try to develop a strategy that could address these factors" UKJ2).

"We are starting to come up with the incentive structure that will be specifically there to get people think about the impact, more people being hired for writing up impact case studies, funds are made available for research project that might result in research impact, so from that perspective, rankings have strong influence on the school research strategies. It is definitely shaping what we do but this could also mean that if we do this right, then our reputation would obviously improve (UKC1).

The rankings are also being used to set goals for the business schools. This strategy for 'goal-setting' can be termed as 'ends' approach. Some UK institutions strategy may fall into 'ends' approach.

> "[Business] Schools want to rise up the ranking table. I have worked for _____ [University name] and practically; the number one objective was to be among the 25 universities of the world. They haven't got there yet and actually that is the idea, I don't see how it possibly can. The American institutions are so much wealthy than ours even the ____ [University name] is a big powerful institution in UK but could not get into the top 25. Nobody wants to be at the bottom of the ranking table. It is not realistic that everybody gets into top 25 but it is becoming a goal for many institutions. (UKB1).

> "For the past few years, we constantly discussed ranking at our executive meetings, we use them for setting goals, and in fact it is one of our goal to become of the top 50 business schools by 2020. These rankings have added a new perspective to the strategic management, you know, everything is now discussed in numbers for example to be number one, in top ten, best research institutes, top MBA program. I think this change of business language has been directly related to the rankings" (UKG2).

> I don't know if you have researched the UK institutes websites but if you visit them, practically most of them, has main objective, vision or mission statement that would suggest the use of rankings. It will say 'we are the best', 'one of the top', 'highly ranked in the world', and so on. This proves my point that if it is part of your vision then it suggests your number one strategy and that could be to become number one or be in top 10, 20 or something like that" (UKF1).

Operational Change

As discussed above, rankings had a direct impact on the school's policy. With an aim of improving school rankings, several schools have brought certain operational changes at their schools. For instance, business schools have hired staff for managing school's accreditations and rankings:

> "We have now an accreditation manager and she looks into acquisition and renewal of our accreditations. With the help of these accreditations, our school became more attractive to students and we got more applications. These accreditations are symbols of quality and they

(accreditation bodies) set very high standards, so having these accreditations would suggest that you are one of those institutions that offer quality education. Another advantage of these accreditations is that it gives access to well-known ranking systems" (UKA2).

"We have people who are managing our accreditation and quality, and when they do it, so the rankings come with it. These new positions or roles are definitely influenced by the supremacy of rankings and accreditations that we see in the business school environment. We work for improving our quality which is then reflected in the rankings" (UKB2).

A professor at Institute-C argued about the relationship between their academic staff recruitment and research funding:

"When it comes to research grants, as I said if you perform better at the REF you would have more money available for research. It is very interesting for us because _____ [Institute-C] has hired 55 new academic staff at our school and around 300 overall at the university level just before the REF. It is partly because of REF and partly because of the general change in the strategy but huge investment has been made and if this investment does not pay off then we are in lot of trouble" (UKC1).

The business schools have become very obsessed about rankings and accreditations. The race towards the top has brought many operational changes. One professor puts it:

"We went through an accreditation audit from a third party and they said you know, you don't have a strategy you need a strategy and we still got the accreditation but they said that first thing you must do is to make this right. We have people coming in corporate communications. We have people coming in career service, and the development of new external relations team try to acknowledge exchange and impact so that we can improve the network with local industry. We then also got accreditation officers who made massive change at the top of school where we had a new associate dean structure and our staff member got promoted right to associated dean. We also got a new board structure and also, changes happened at the advisory board level. The whole senior management has been completely restructured and then we have more staff coming in. Most of these changes are related to the feedback we got from our accreditation bodies and also from the analysis of our rankings" (UKH1).

Rankings and financial resources

The respondents from UK business schools have suggested a strong relationship between ranking and financial resources of their schools. The school reputation could be one of the reasons for institutional funds generation:

> "Student perception is strongly influenced by reputation, which comes through rankings and accreditations. It gives them confidence during their purchase. Our postgraduate students have a good percentage of international students who are also the full-fee-paying students. Our internal surveys suggest that rankings were among the top three factors for choosing us. So we do advertise in a way that highlights the information that students would be interested in" (UKJ2).

> "I think good reputation also translates into financial benefits. Since we got our triple accreditations, we have improved our rankings, our prices went up, and applications went up. And in fact, although we are asking for IELTS score of 7, we are actually getting too many people. I think there is very interesting correlation among the fee level and the rankings " (UKH1).

> "Our fee is a bit on the higher side in comparison to the market and still we get many applications for every place we have. I think people would pay even high fees if they know what they would get for their investment. The assurance of our quality mainly comes from these rankings and accreditations" (UKD1).

Another common understanding that emerged from the UK interviews emphasises the rankings relationship with the international student fee, which remains crucial for UK business schools:

> "Our financial resources are directly influence by the student perception. International students probably would measure the quality of business school either by their ranking in the international market and their fees structures, especially when they have little information about other factors within these new countries. I think rankings and price are key factors among international students to judge the quality of business school" (UKE2).

> "In the absence of other information, international students accept rankings verdict and perceive schools as number 1, 2 3 and so on. This does not mean that students will totally rely on this piece of information in fact, they would consider the price, course structure, the place, and then they (students) would compare institutions as a package. I think you would find most

highly ranked schools with higher fee and average business school with relatively lower fees than the premium ones. These rankings have always been this way you know, the higher your rankings are, more students you would get, especially the international students, so obviously you generate more money" (UKA2).

The UK respondents have mostly related the research funding with the ranking produced by the REF. Seventeen respondents argued the significance of REF on HEIs research funding:

"Well the REF will be out next month, so the higher up the table you finish, the more funds will be allocated for the next session which goes all the way to 2020. There would be for sure a financial reward for finishing higher up the table. It will also act as a punishment for institutions that are not high enough on these tables and they (REF) will say that your research score is not high enough so all the money goes to the ones higher up" (UKB1).

"REF evaluates the research output of institutions and also allocates funding to the institutions. If you score higher on that list, then you get more funds. We have discussed REF a lot and we made certain changes to our existing research setup so that we meet the REF criteria. So of course rankings would force institutions to change their strategies but it also means that now our academic staff would be under pressure more than ever" (UKF1).

4.3.2 Academic life and research culture

Academic Life and Rankings

Seventeen respondents referred to REF rankings when asked about rankings effect on their HEIs research. The REF rankings are highly significant for building research reputation in UK. UK HEIs have introduced new policies and procedures to improve their REF score. The implementation of these strategies aims for improving REF ratings but it is also evident that it would exert more pressure on academia:

"When you talk about REF, it is sort of a ranking isn't it. That is one of the problem that we see with different types of rankings, which are meant for different audiences. I suppose it is a general pressure for example at (Institute-C) there is definitely pressure on academia to research according to the REF, officially not, officially nobody would say that but in reality of

course you know that you have to have certain number of research papers with at least one has to be a four-star ideally two four-star papers. I think to some extent, it is correct because it is a profession where there should be few checks and balances so that you continue to be productive and I have no problem with that. Where I have problem with however is the fact that in our case, the ABS list, that will determine which paper is considered a good publication and which one is second good publication and I find it ridiculous that it is like little changes in ABS list that can make or break a career" (UKC1).

"We have some new policies in place, for example, we ask our staff to write research papers so that we could improve our research rankings. I think the point is quite clear where we introduced these sorts of policies and then we would hope that in next rankings, it has paid off well. I am sure most business schools would tell you the same thing" (UKI1).

Rankings can act as a punish and reward system for academic staff as one respondent commented:

"I started my academic career in mid 90's and I have written some books and published my work in some good journals. Then we had more freedom, more choice to contribute the way we want to, but rankings have made the research more complex. Now the schools would probably encourage you to publish in those journals that would give higher scores in rankings (REF). The academic staffs are now gearing up for this new race of publishing in four-star journals that is triggered by the school research ratings. I assume these ratings would decide the type of research that we need to focus on and if I don't do that then I would be in trouble" (UKD1).

The UK data reveals that employee selection and reputation are closely connected. The association with highly ranked/reputed institution could be an advantage and at the same time a disadvantage for the prospective employees:

"There is another interesting point about rankings is that it is understood as a proxy of reputation so as an employee you carry reputation of your institution you are associated with. When we advertise people might think that if I get into this university my status would go up. However, it also adds a barrier for example; I talked to a very dynamic academic in my time. He had some good publications and got a PhD degree, good teaching experience, so I encourage him to apply here but he didn't because he thought why they would hire people like me. I think he was not confident about the brand he was carrying (institution he worked for). He thought that

our institute is way above his league. I think it is a classic example that would suggest that reputation of your employer do matters" (UKE1).

"It is a pretty crude method of employing people from the institutions point of view and using certain proxies would minimize the number of application that you can get and I don't think it is a good way of judging people by using proxies. I can see more and more of this happening; we are living in the league-tables world" (UKB1).

Impact on research

The institutions follow REF and wish to improve their rankings to gain funding for research activities but REF would also decide the type of research. REF rankings are highly significant for HEIs research output but some form of research is highly appreciated than others:

> "We have a workload model so basically; the amount of teaching is directly dependent on our research output. The research output is assessed in a way that it is equivalent to the REF. Basically, nobody will object me writing a book it just means that it's not going to feature in my research rating which also means that I will get hell lot of more teaching. So there is very strong inbuilt evaluation system that is completely geared towards REF. If I decide not to focus my intention on publishing papers in four-star journals, then my research ratings would drop and I have to do more administrative work and more teaching. I think that is a pretty brutal example of how closely this can be connected (UKI1).

4.3.3 Student recruitment at institutions

Impact on student choice

The students are the customers of business schools and majority of policies revolve around them. It is evident from the interviews of UK respondents that rankings have become a dominant signifier of reputation. Rankings directly influence the reputation of business school, which then affect the student choice.

> "When our students complete their courses, we claim that they would get into good firms around the world with attractive salaries. The ranking system, for example FT rankings, tell you about the student salary and salary increase, the number of job offers they get and so on. The FT rankings justify our claim of student employability. Students are like customers; they

like to compare what we are, what we do and how well we do. I believe they get their answers by looking into these rankings and that is why we always share ranking information" (UKD2).

The professor at Institute-E suggests that rankings have improved students' awareness level during institution selection process and they target best-fit options. One academic expert explains:

"I think students are not stupid, they only target those where they think have at least a chance of getting admission, you know it involves a long process of selection. So there are different segments of students. The institutions that are selected by a student would probably be direct competitors as they have same target segment. The rankings within them would matter a lot as compared to their ranking with the best institute because the students that goes to the best university would be from another market segment" (UKE1).

The findings from UK case-study clearly indicates that students rely on rankings in choosing future institutions for education. The students would consider HE as an investment opportunity and seek value for their money:

"When students are selecting future school for their education, they know that this decision would probably decide the future of their entire life, the quality of life they would get and other things that associates with future earnings. Then it involves cost, which varies within institutions and also fee difference between local and overseas education. So they evaluate different options and they consider rankings for this purpose. It is very likely that they differentiate schools based on their position in the market" (UKH2).

Student perception is strongly influenced by rankings and accreditations. It gives them confidence during their purchase. UK business schools have a good percentage of international students. Institute-J internal surveys suggest that rankings were one of the key factors of student's institution selection process (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-J).

Our survey suggests that students consider our ranking information for choosing us. So we do advertise in a way that highlights the information that students would be interested in" (UKJ2).

The significance of ranking systems varies among different student segments (Source: Internal student survey 2013, Institute-A) and business schools target different ranking systems to attract these segments of students. One marketing director commented:

> "There are many student segments that we would consider. We have a very high number of undergraduate students and we also have postgraduate students. We often interact with our students through internal surveys and we found that our undergraduate students frequently use student survey rankings like NSS. We receive high number of international students on our postgraduate courses and we found that international students use FT, The Economist, and Times Higher Education rankings more than others. I think students at different levels perceive ranking information differently and they prefer one to the other, which depends on their study level and geographic location" (UKC2).

> "There are different types of rankings, which are meant for different type of users. For example, the user of REF rankings can be different from NSS users. The NSS focuses on undergraduate students while the postgraduate students interested in MBA or other master's programs would focus on MBA rankings or global rankings. So our strategy would vary within these different segments of students. For our undergraduate students, we are rated very high on NSS rankings, which would suggest that our students are happy with our services, facilities and the quality of our education" (UKJ2).

Greater impact on international students

Reputation is highly significant for international students that are coming into UK (Source: Internal student survey 2013, Institute-H). In the absence of information about other markets, rankings information becomes more important:

> "Rankings are taken seriously by the management of the institutions. They want to be higher up on the ranking lists. We get a lot of overseas students so the further you are from the source the more you need the external communication to allow you to know who the best is. If I want know about institutions let's say India, Pakistan where I don't know much about the individual institutions, then I might look around some rankings to get an idea and that is what a lot of overseas student do when they look at UK institutions. So in the absence of other information, rankings fill the gap in information about the institutes so it becomes very important. Many Vice

Chancellors and the senior management would wish to maintain their ranking or move higher up in the rankings" (UKB1).

The marketing director of Institute-B signified the importance of students from postgraduate perspective that also attracts more international students than undergraduate level:

"I think global rankings have much stronger influence on the postgraduate students. At undergraduates we find that university rankings are important but at business school, it becomes increasingly important at postgraduate when they are looking for a more specialist business school rather than undergraduate in UK. Our student surveys suggest that international rankings that are produced by FT and The Economist were among top three ranking systems that our international students used" (UKB2).

Impact on student recruitment process

The rankings affect the number of student applications that business schools could get (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-H), and this in return has a direct impact on the institution recruitment and financial resources:

"We always were a premium business school and that is why our fee is bit higher than others. It also means that we receive quite a high number of applications. Sometimes people might think that the prestige would be high because the higher fee we charge. In terms of our individual courses that we have, we have now MSc in management, which we started quite recently compared to our other programs like MBA. We charge around 30 to 40 percent more for our MBA programs and to be very frank, I really don't know the difference, I teach to both of them so it is difficult to say "(UKE2).

Several respondents reflected on the pricing effect on reputation. The pricing effect is more visible in the absence of other credible information. The rankings tend to fill this gap:

"I have been into discussions where we discussed pricing of our courses for example, let's say we are same as _____ [UK Business School] and they charge 40,000 (Pounds) and we charge 30,000, then customers would say _____ [UK Business School X] is 40,000 and they (institute B) are 30,000 so I guess _____ [UK Business School X] is better than us. Customers are very unsophisticated and in the absence of any other information you use price as

a mark of quality but if students have other sources of information such as rankings and accreditations then they probably would not rely entirely on the fee factor. I think rankings have become an important factor for judging the reputation, which could provide much needed information" (UKB1).

The reputation reflects institution's overall education quality. The quality of output could improve if the input is of high quality. Good rankings have helped UK schools to get more applications and for upgrading their student selection criteria:

"Ranking has a direct impact on the student selection process. For the past three years or so, we have constantly been getting good rankings on the FT, and this year we have seen about fifteen percent more applications compared to the last year and that is encouraging. We know we are going in the right direction and with the higher number of applications, we could also improve our selection criteria" (UKG1).

"Initially we kept on accepting applications you know keep getting students in, keep money getting in, so now we are a triple accredited institution so we can consolidate, let's say, if we were accepting student application from top two hundred institutions in China but now we say, we will take students from top one hundred. There is greater selectivity coming in. It's strange, its paradoxical, the more you charge, the more exclusive you are, and more people want to come in (UKH1).

4.3.4 Partnerships of institutions

The data from UK suggest that the academic (between HEIs) and non-academic collaborations (between HEIs and other industries) are highly significant for HEIs. The data also reveals that UK business schools consider industry partnerships as a key strategic decision. The reputation and rankings are highly significant for these partnerships.

Collaborations with other academic institutions

The impact of reputation on partnerships has been argued in different ways that reflects on the impact of reputation while forming partnerships with other academic institutions. Fifteen UK Informants highlighted the role of rankings when they discussed collaborations between HEIs. The reputation is very crucial for these

types of partnerships. The rankings in this case become a proxy of quality and reputation of participating institutions:

> "_____ [Accreditation body] is also pushing us now for internationalization across all aspects of business schools. We also frequently discuss these things in our meetings and this issue comes up in almost in every executive board meeting. For example, like we have this relationship (partnership) here, would we continue it, why might we discontinue it, is this right country to be in, is this the right institution to be working with, what does they say about us? You know they say that you know people by the company they keep so it is important for us to analyze these kinds of issues so obviously we would try to understand the dynamics of their market for which we have to use the rankings of that market" (UKH1).

> "If we talk about academic partnerships with other schools, then yes I do believe that reputation is important not only for us but also for our partners as you are considering international partners that are located in places not well known to us. In this case, the rankings of our potential partners become a starting point and a good source of analysing the academic quality of their schools" (UKI2).

The power of negotiations

The reputation of collaborating business schools would decide the bargaining power during collaborations and rankings in this context acts as a measure of reputation. One marketing director explains:

> "I can tell this from our own experience that when institutions have good reputation and good rankings, then the bargaining power would probably be with institution that has superior reputation among the two partners. The bigger the difference is between the reputations of the two partners, more power they have during these sorts of partnerships" (UKA2).

Partnering institution with similar attributes

It is evident from the UK case study that collaborating partners search for best-fit option and may share similar attributes:

> "When you are planning to do international partnerships, there are probably many factors that we would consider. We would look for a good fit university, that has similar profile of programs, profile of students, research

interest, and accreditation and rankings will come into that when we are looking for partners" (UKB2).

"The first thing even before starting to think about collaborations would be the perception about institutions like for example if someone says we need to have international collaboration with some good business schools. So the use of words 'good business schools' even before going into option suggest that reputation and rankings are key drivers you know. The first thing about reputation would probably be the awareness others have about you. People would talk to you if you have published good journals or working in good institution. Similarly, a good institution would not prefer to work with an institution from other country that has poor rankings in its own country (UKF2).

Industry Partnerships and rankings

Besides the rankings impact on academic partnership, the impact is also visible on the other industry relations:

> "If we speak of relation with other industries and if I go by the theory then yes there should be some relevance to decision making of other industries but I think it work both ways. The commercial firms know their brands and they would probably go for someone who they are comfortable with. We have done strategy workshops with small medium and large companies so in this case we are the service providers and I assume the customers in this case are the industries that would act the same way as our students. I think they probably would do research about couple of institutions they are interested in and then decide which one they want to go with" (UKA1).

The UK respondents emphasised on the aspect of their executive programs. These programs are targeted towards the professionals from other industries. Rankings play a key role in marketing business schools to this market segment:

> "When we talk about our relations with other industries let's say for executive programs then first of all alumni plays an important role in securing these kind of relations. Secondly through our sales people, our external relations team, we do research and we target people. I suppose we try to sell ourselves so one of our strong selling points for our business school would be our accreditations and our rankings. You know few days back, we had to present to one of a senior manager at _____ [International retail chain], he would not waste his time and listen to our long success stories, and I think it's about the shorthand. The triple accreditation and

good rankings is very quick shorthand to say. I think it definitely helps"
(UKH1).

"There are different factors that would impact on the collaborations with other industries. We have to sell our services to them (industries) so we have to prepare a strong message and good rankings and accreditations comes to rescue in this case"(UKG1).

4.3.5 Concluding comments

In this section, we discussed five analytical codes that correspond to the influence of rankings on organisational change in UK business schools. In a way, this reflects the impact of rankings, which have brought changes to institutional practices in UK field settings.

The first analytical code refers to the strategic level of institutions and the policy shift observed within UK business schools. The institutions have reacted to rankings by redefining their policies with the aim of building their reputations. The business schools consider rankings as a tool to achieve their strategic goals; sometimes, rankings act as a goal for these schools. This relationship has been categorised as a 'means and ends' relationship. Their funding and operational changes are highly influenced by their rankings. The impact of REF is an example of rankings' influence on funding and operations. Rankings not only affect the above-mentioned factors but also have a direct impact on academic life and research output. Research policies are implemented to improve REF ratings, which put more pressure on academics. The research choices for academic staff are limited due to these research rankings. The academics concentrate on specific forms of research that might help improve their REF score.

Rankings also affect the student recruitment process in the UK. The change in a school's strategy is linked to the student's level of understanding and demand for information, which might be obtained from national and international rankings. There are different student segments, and the significance of ranking system varies among these student groups. For example, student survey rankings such as NSS are

highly significant for undergraduate students while international students frequently use media-based rankings such as the *FT* and *The Economist*. The UK schools consider international students the key to their sustainability, and in the absence of market information they tend to rely more on the information provided by different ranking systems. There is strong evidence of the rankings' impact on business schools' recruitment process, which could influence their reputation.

The reputation of business schools is a key factor that influences their academic and non-academic collaborations. The business schools to judge the reputations of prospective partners use rankings information. During these collaborations, the power of negotiation remains with the schools with higher rankings and reputations. The UK institutions would prefer partners with similar reputations and attributes.

The case-study of Pakistan

4.4 Introduction

Following up on the previous section, this section discusses the research findings and provide empirical evidences from the context of Pakistan. The current section also relates to the second step of within case analysis and presents first-order codes that have emerged from the Pakistani data-set (see Figure-5).

Twenty interviews were conducted at case-study institutions and one was conducted with an industry expert on the Pakistani HE system. Two interviews per school were conducted at ten selected business schools. The current study categorised the twenty interviews from Pakistani schools into two main groups (see Appendix 3). The first set of respondents from each school are categorised as academic experts in the field of marketing. The second set of respondents comprises managers/directors of marketing who are responsible for their schools' marketing activities. The interviews were conducted between January 2014 and March 2014. Thirteen interviews were conducted face-to-face during visits to the schools and six interviews were conducted through video calls using Skype (Appendix 3). The interview with the industry expert was also conducted via video call. On average, the interviews lasted for seventy minutes. Following the analysis of the interviews, the first-order codes emerged from the Pakistani dataset, corresponding to the second-order codes. The emerging first- and second-order codes are presented in the Figure-5.

Figure 5: The coding process - Pakistan

| First-Order Codes | Second-Order Codes |

First Group (Contextual Perspective):

First-Order Codes:
- Love Hate relationship
- HEC rankings and Government Policy
- Proxy of Reputation
- Competition
- HEC ranking as marketing content

→ A Context of Ranking

- Easy to understand & interpret
- Significance for students
- Impact on small & large HE institutions
- Differentiation

→ A Context of Reputation

→ **Contextual Perspective**

Second Group (Organisational Change):

First-Order Codes:
- Institutional policy
- Operational change
- Rankings and financial resources

→ Policy, Operational & Financial change

- Academic life and rankings
- Impact on research

→ Academic life & Research

- Impact on student's choice
- Impact on student's recruitment

→ Student Recruitment

- Impact on academic partnerships
- Industry partnership and rankings

→ Partnerships of business schools

→ **Organisational Change**

Source: Developed by researcher

The first-order codes that emerged from the Pakistan case-study are discussed in their respective 'research findings' sections. Section 4.5 reflects on the context of rankings and reputation in Pakistani business schools. Section 4.6 discusses the impact of rankings on Pakistani business schools.

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4.5 Research findings: A wider contextual perspective

4.5.1 A context of rankings

The Love and Hate relationship

We explained the love and hate relationship in previous section, the current section discusses this relationship from Pakistani perspective. The response from the Pakistani interviewees had a mixed reaction. Several interviewees highlighted the positive impact of HEC rankings but there was also a strong evidence for the resistance shown towards their ranking system.

Love

In the absence of ranking system, the HEC Pakistan has initiated their own rankings and so far, they have published three rankings. Being a developing nation, majority of the Pakistani business schools could not be listed on the international rankings, therefore; the need for local rankings was badly felt. In year 2006, rankings were introduced into the Pakistani HE system (HEC, 2011), which provided an external view of business schools performance in Pakistani HE market.

> "I think rankings are fundamentally important for us. Before the HEC rankings, it was difficult to judge the performance of universities in Pakistan. Yes, there were other forms of data such as annual reports, but they had their own biases. You know, you would present your facts in way that they look very attractive but it was difficult to compare the performance of one university against the others. With HEC rankings, universities now know that they are audited and compared against other universities. I think, with the introduction of rankings, it is now difficult to hide behind your published reports. You have to perform well to be considered a good business school" (PKB1).

Similar views echoed by the industry expert on Pakistani HE as he explains:

> "We would like to see our business schools prosper and compete at international level but unfortunately it is not possible at this time. It is difficult for Pakistani schools to meet the minimum criteria of international rankings. So there are many reasons for it as there are many deficiencies at different levels. The HEC started rankings of business

schools. I know, a lot of people here are not happy with its criteria but I think no ranking system is perfect. So it is a good addition to our HE and at least we have now some sort of comparability for our schools and universities" (DIR-C).

Several Pakistani respondents have termed HEC rankings as highly significant for HE in Pakistan and for overall academic quality improvement in Pakistani business schools. A professor of marketing at Institute-A commented:

"Today our academia wishes to publish quality papers that are accepted at HEC. We used to publish our papers even before these standards (rankings) were in place but most of our papers that were published, were not of good quality. Today, our research quality has improved, so the improvement in quality papers that we can see today is because of two reasons. First, our institute pushes us (academia) for publishing quality papers so that the school can improve their score at rankings. And second, the academia also wants to get timely promotions which requires a certain number of published papers in HEC accepted journals" (PKA1).

The quality improvement within Pakistan HE system is closely connected to the rising level of competition. As suggest by assistant professor of Institute-B, the HEC rankings have intensified the local competition within business schools and promotes a quality-focused culture in Pakistani HE:

"HEC has established quality assurance standards, and its ranking system promotes HE by creating an environment of healthy competition among private and public HEIs of Pakistan. Before HEC rankings, the size (scale) and type of institution was a key measure of the quality of institutions, for example _____ [university name] and _____ [university name]; they were bigger in size and were a first choice for many students. Today, it is more about performance than size of institutions. Today, students look into many other things than just the size of institution" (PKB1).

The respondents also considered HEC rankings as a good source of information that business schools use for domestic market analysis:

"We also use ranking to evaluate our quality of education for which we have established different standards. Some of these standards are similar to HEC rankings criteria but it is always handy to utilize the available data about the market and about your competitors" (PKB2).

"Rankings help us to enhance our reputation. If we are improving on our rankings whenever they are published then it is good but even if you are not performing well on those rankings, it could still help us as we can look at the shortfalls and analyse our weak links. We try to strengthen our weak links and that could lead to maximum optimization of our resources. It is important to do this as it would help us to go further and further up at rankings" (PKF1).

Hate

The respondents from case study institutions have generally appreciated the HEC ranking system but it also came under the criticism, however, the percentage of this criticism was low compared to the love for ranking system. One of the common criticisms of the HEC rankings refers to the methodological issues or the construct of rankings:

"It is (HEC rankings) still in development phase and there are many question marks on the criteria and weighting so it would not be wise to rely too much on HEC rankings" (PKJ1).

The administrative manager at Institute-G echoed similar views:

"This is not the proper way to judge the institute because of the weightings they give to different elements. There are many other things which they have to consider, they need to review their indicators and also the weightings assigned to them, for example student satisfaction and employability are not a part of current rankings system" (PKG2).

The findings from Pakistani informants suggest that the latest HEC rankings criteria are highly focused on the HEC objectives compared to the HEIs stakeholder benefits. Respondents reflected on the lack of institutional input and the use of non-standardised proxies:

"When HEC started rankings, they were following the pattern of QS ranking system, but now HEC have changed the criteria. In the new criteria, HEIs are ranked on the basis of the QAA standards that they (HEC) wish to implement. One reason I could think of is that our business schools are not accredited by EQUIS and AACSB and you need these accreditations for international rankings. So HEC followed the footsteps of international rankings and included QA criteria in their rankings. For business schools it

means that now we have to be very careful with that and we have to establish QECs and include other quality measures if we want to improve our rankings. I think the current (HEC) ranking system focuses on the implementation of QAA standards rather than providing institutional comparative statement, which actually should have been the purpose of this ranking. I think rankings and quality assurance standards should be dealt with separately and they have to adopt a customer-oriented approach" (PKB2).

"HEC set some indicators that are not used internationally for example they use QEC as one of their indicator. I guess it represents HEC ambitions more than a ranking indicator. The indicators need to be broken-down into different proxies rather than making broad categories. I think it would be better that they take HEIs input for setting indicators" (PKA2).

The HEC ranking is sometimes not reflective of the actual market and have biases that could lead to false impressions. One marketing manager explains:

"I feel rankings don't do justice with some institutions, for example number one and two ranked business institutes in Pakistan has just a fraction of difference between their scores, and then there is a big difference in the scores of second and third business schools. One and two are almost equal in quality but third university is a bit behind than these two. There is also big difference between the reputation of second and third institution and they target different segments of the market, but this is not reflected in the HEC rankings. Our student surveys suggest that they are just interested in the ranking and perceive them as they are presented, so for them, one is better than two, and two is better than three, but in reality, third ranked institute is not in the same league as one and two. I think sometimes judging institutions in absolute numbers is not well justified" (PKA2).

HEC rankings and government policy

The Pakistani government aims to include some of their institutions into top 100 of the world. An academic expert at Institute-I explains:

"It seems that HEC phased out their strategy for achieving international recognition. First, HEC introduced national rankings for HEIs in Pakistan. The second phase I assume would be to target regional rankings where some potential institutions could compete at regional level. At final phase, the target would be to get international recognition preferably to have institution listed in top hundred universities of the world" (PKI1).

The industry expert shared similar views as he explains:

"We never had rankings in Pakistan before so the HEC took the initiative of producing ranking in Pakistan. The ideal scenario would be that our universities are competing at international rankings but we still have much more work to do in terms of HE quality before we could think of competing internationally. It is also about the resources and the data you know, HEC has a good access to data that one would need to rate universities so that is why rankings are initiated by HEC itself. In future HEC plans to hire third party institutions for conducting rankings and it would be entirely an external source and acceptable to all stakeholders" (DIR-C).

Sixteen interviewees suggested that the HEC rankings are highly significant for business schools in Pakistan as it is associated with the governing body:

"New rules and regulations like quality assurance and ranking system were introduced for the HEIs and we had no other option but to respond to these systems. HEC is the governing body and if you don't follow the criteria, then it becomes difficult to operate in Pakistan, so whatever comes from them is taken seriously by everyone in Pakistan" (PKD1).

"We have a good reputation and we are highly perceived by all stakeholders. When HEC rankings came in, they measured our success using a standardised procedure and ranked us number ___ [hidden] in Pakistan. This external piece of information, which comes straight from the highly authentic source, has enhanced stakeholders' confidence. We feel more confident that we are a highly-ranked business school in Pakistan. The international business schools' responses have improved as well because they get an extra sense of assurance when they consider partnerships with Pakistani business schools. Obviously, it would be a concern, when there is limited information about other markets" (PKB1).

The HEC ranking has brought much awaited reforms in the HE of Pakistan where rankings are a part of these reforms. The business schools in Pakistan consider HEC rankings as a step forward towards international recognition:

"We have good rankings, we are a good business school but the gap between [institute H] and others have been reduced. The quality of competing schools has improved so it forced us to do something different. I guess the next big thing for us is to get into global rankings and we can do it because

we have almost everything that is needed for international rankings" (PKH1).

"I think HEC has taken good initiative but they should not take it as an end but consider it as a stepping stone for pushing the level of competition up within Pakistan and raise its level to international standards so that institutions can compete on global scale as well" (PKI1)

"I see it (HEC rankings) as a launching pad for us, now that we have achieved good standings at national level. I think what we did in the past few years has worked for us and we can now use the same strategy for global rankings" (PKA2)

Several specialised business schools in Pakistan were established in last decade. Among several factors, one reason for the promotion of specialized institution can be linked to the category-based rankings. The market that traditionally supported umbrella competition (university) has moved towards the category-based competition, resulting in the increasing number of specialized institutions. One marketing manager commented:

"I believe we should focus on encouraging specialized schools like business schools, law schools, or medicine schools and then rank them separately. This would not only assure quality but also requires less invest than running a full-scale university, which has multi disciplines. The category-based rankings offer a fair chance to all HEIs whether they are public or private, or they have one or multi disciplines. I think it is not a fair comparison to put specialised business schools and large-scale universities on same scale. Luckily HEC has a separate business school ranking as well and we are number ___ [hidden] on this list, which suggests that we are one of the best business schools in Pakistan" (PKB2).

A marketing expert at Institute-H shared similar views as he explains:

"Many institutions for example business and IT [Information Technology] schools rapidly came into Pakistan HE system and the essence of advertising category-based ranking became important not only for them but for large-scale universities. This acted as a wakeup call for large universities and for the first time they felt the pressure of competition from the small specialised schools" (PKH2).

The industry expert suggested that the HEC ranking was termed as a huge success and promptly accepted by its stakeholders:

> "HEC started rankings in year 2006-7. The main idea was to promote the competitive culture within Pakistan. The idea was to raise our education quality level so that we could be able to compete within our region and internationally. There was a positive response from many universities in Pakistan and most importantly, the students have now started taking interested in these rankings" (DIR-C).

Similar views echoed from the Pakistani business schools. The data from Pakistani informants revealed that the HEC ranking is highly credible and accepted by all stakeholders:

> "When new systems are introduced, it could be skeptical to criticism and may lack stakeholder's confidence. For instance, we have two telecom brands _____ [Company name] and _____ [Company name]. _____ [Company name] is associated with the western brand so it was a hit from the first day when it was launched. Then came _____ [Company name] which is associated with _____ [Asian country] and could not get a big chunk of market share as they would have hoped for, and this applies to rankings too. Considering our market dynamics, I don't think rankings would have survived if it was not conducted by the HEC itself" (PKB2).

> "The ranking we have is from HEC so it is more reliable source of information for the students and they are not confused among rankings" (PKI1)

Several informants criticised Pakistani ranking system due to its inability to incorporate specialised (programs) rankings that is operating in several developed countries. A professor at Institute-C commented:

> UK, US, and other European business schools have properly branded their MBA courses and they are able to charge more for MBA than other master courses. I think specialized rankings like FT and accreditation bodies like AMBA have also helped them in promoting their MBA courses. I believe that HEC should introduce specialized rankings, for example MBA rankings, so that the courses can become internationally compatible" (PKC1).

Proxy of Reputation

After analysing the interviews, it was observed that HEC rankings have a strong impact on business school reputation in Pakistan. The impact of rankings over reputation has become very dominant and rankings have become synonymous to reputation. The HEC rankings have been broadly categorised as a 'proxy of reputation':

> "We sometimes use the word ranking as an alternative word of reputation. As an employee, I feel proud to be associated with [Institute H] and it makes me more confident that we are ___ [school ranking] ranked business school in Pakistan when we discuss this within our institution, with other companies, and even within our families. If I wish to switch job in future, my first priority would be to join top universities in addition to other factors like salary, personal growth and work environment. For me, in that case a higher ranking means good reputation" (PKH2).

> "Anything that adds to the value, to institution reputation, is a good thing. HEC started publishing rankings, which is a good step; we get free publicity and more people get to know about the quality of institution. Institutions can use this ranking for projecting their reputation" (PKH2).

> "We always enjoyed a good reputation since the start of this university and now we were labeled as number [hidden] in Pakistan that further reinforced our claims and helped us in enhancing our reputation" (PKB2).

The influence of HEC rankings may also vary within business institutions. The professor in Institute-B suggested that HEC ranking is highly beneficial for new business schools compared to old (well reputed) business schools that have been considered highly reputed institutions even before rankings were introduced:

> "The impact of rankings on reputation is not the same for all institutions in Pakistan. We already knew that we are highly reputed business school in Pakistan even before the rankings were introduced so to be very honest, it (ranking) is just another heading that is added to our brochure and reinforced our reputation but some business schools were not well known, and good rankings made them stand out. I think it helped those HEIs more than the historically well reputed business school like ours" (PKB1).

The professor at Institute-E presented the counter argument to this belief. He suggested that rankings were more helpful to old institutions with good reputation than new institutes:

> "It's not easy for new institutions to capitalize on HEC rankings. Old institutions already had those things in their system, which were required for securing good ranking. They had higher number of academic staff, higher number of publications and students, and good facilities. For the new ones like us, we had to start from scratch. For example, we recently started QEC (quality enhancement cell), we are developing our faculty by hiring more staff but others had them for decades. These old institutions have a kind of advantage in the rankings" (PKE1).

Apart from old and new institutions, the impact of rankings on reputation is also categorized from public and private institution perspective. One academic expert explains:

> "In past, public institutions had higher reputation than private institutes. Several private institutes were shut down due to corruption and fraud. When we started as private HEI, we were not the first choice of students, our student survey suggest that they preferred more secure public institution in our city. The reputation today is not associated with public institutions by default but those who have shown better performance over the years and this performance is measured through HEC rankings" (PKG1).

Competition

Several respondents argued that the introduction of HEC ranking has led to the intense competition within the Pakistani HE market:

> "The HEC is pushing us for quality improvement by introducing new policies. They also started rankings which further triggered competition to the next level and forced many HEIs to restructure their courses, staff recruitment criteria and so on" (PKH2).

> "Despite its shortcomings I guess everyone in the Pakistani HE sector would agree that the HEC rankings have triggered a healthy competition. I think it is a common practice these days to promote universities through rankings because they are important to students and their parents" (PKD1).

Due to the limited access international student segment, the HEC ranking becomes highly influential for domestic student segment as one respondent explains:

"If you ask our students then you would notice that they would discuss our education quality by comparing us with other business schools of Pakistan. I believe they choose institutions by looking at their performance in the Pakistani context. At the moment, we are competing for domestic students, and even top business schools in Pakistan have so far not achieved these accreditations or international rankings, so we are on a par with our competitors. And that is why I believe that the HEC rankings are very important because they measure the performance in Pakistani market" (PKF2).

Different stakeholders use HEC rankings as comparison tool that puts HEIs under pressure:

"There was a lot of pressure from the demand side. The students were anticipating some sort of comparison of institutions that can help them with their institution selection process. I guess that became the reason for the government to introduce rankings" (PKB2).

HEC ranking as marketing content

The HEC ranking has been a welcome introduction into the Pakistani HE system as most of the top business schools in Pakistan found it helpful when they communicate with their stakeholders.

Several interviewees suggested that HEC ranking is perceived as a strong communication tool and frequently used in Pakistan:

"We use rankings as a communication tool when we try to reach students. Our communication with them frequently reflects on our rankings. Previously, we use to promote as "one of the best institution" in our brochures, on our website, but today we tell people about our rank that we are number ___ [hidden] in Pakistan I guess it makes more sense to people and it helps in building our image" (PKI1).

"We don't have a big budget for marketing and advertisements so we restrict our advertisement to specific time of our admission cycle for example, we would send an advert about couple of months earlier than admissions about [Institute A] mission and vision and also about programs. We may highlight our ranking and other achievements. When it is less than a month to admissions, we advertise about our programs, its eligibility, and important dates during admission process and things like that. The influence of

rankings is more relevant in adverts that are meant for creating awareness among stakeholders" (PKA2).

The use of rankings in business school communication is a common practice in most of the top business schools in Pakistan. Rankings are used in communication because it is short, precise, but powerful message that can attract and persuade student purchase decision:

> "In our paper based advertisements, we communicate different type of programs that is on offer. We would wish to communicate all of our good qualities because some students might be getting familiar with our institution for the first time, but actually it is not possible. There is limited space in the newspaper and we can only put few bullet points in our advert. Rankings are very important because it quantify your quality and people start to perceive your quality just by your place in the rankings" (PKD1).

> "It is one of the external recognition that we have and we use it as a tool for building our image so it is an important part our message" (PKB1).

The highly ranked business schools promote their rankings but it minimises the marketing options for low-ranked schools:

> "Our school use advertisements for sending information to attract quality students. The rankings are also used as a part of advertisement campaigns and also visible on our website that emphasizes on the quality through the promotion of our rankings. It is a definite edge for us but low-ranked schools may not be able to use it for their school's promotion" (PKI2).

The Pakistani informants suggest that the HEC rankings are highly influential on their positioning strategies:

> "We want to position our institute in a way that it is appealing to stakeholders. Before HEC rankings, the institutions were mostly highlighting their reputation, their alumni who were in good positions, their number of PhDs and also mentioning their staff profiles on their website, the number of scholarships they are offering, market competitive fee and so on, but after HEC started rankings it has changed our positioning strategies enormously. The first thing now that institutions would use to differentiate themselves is probably their rankings. It summarizes overall quality and address all those things that I just mentioned to you" (PKD1).

"We position ourselves as the 'market leaders' and that we produce future leaders under the banner or theme of "leaders for tomorrow", and to support our statements we tell students about our performance, about our quality and we justify our claims through our superior rankings" (PKA2).

"Our students are highly employable so that is one of our strong points and makes us different from other institutions. We position ourselves as one of the leading business schools in Pakistan, which provides superior education and produces highly employable students. We are also ____ [hidden] ranked university in Pakistan, which suggests our education quality, and people rely more on this information because it is coming from a highly credible source" (PKC1).

The positioning of several business schools also relates to their location, where rankings take part in location-based positioning:

"If you categorise HEC rankings into provinces then we are number one in ____ [province name] but if you look at it at national level then it is not that attractive. Most of our students are from _____ [province name] so when we communicate our rankings we also tell them that we are top ranked school in ____ [province name]" (PKE2).

The HEC ranking also acts as a WOM that is highly significant for persuading student choices:

"We also have strong relationship with our alumni which are also our good source for WOM and we keep them posted about our achievements, our partnerships, our rankings and so on. We have an office for alumni relationship and they organize alumni evenings, dinners, we give awards to alumni who performed well in their career, we also request them as guest speakers and also judge some of our student competitions, so we value them. They would share their success stories with our current and prospective students which I believe is a good source of WOM and very influential on student choices" (PKB1).

4.5.2 A context of reputation

Easy to understand and interpret

The reputation management is highly significant for case study institutions, as reputation is easy to understand and interpret. One interviewee commented:

"People treat you differently and listen to you carefully just because you are a part of well reputed and highly ranked institution. It also helps students in their future employment and having association with prestigious institutions would mean better chances of employment. People know what reputation stands for and what it means and this makes reputation highly significant for us. Reputation is a common term and easy to understand and students here are different from other parts of the world. They are not very technical when it comes to selecting their future place of study and they would reply on reputation and WOM more often. I think reputation makes more sense to our students so that is why it becomes important for us" (PKA2).

Several respondents argued that reputation has long lasting benefits not only for the institutions but also for the people associated with it. A professor of marketing at institute B explains:

"I feel lucky to be working at [Institute B]. It is one of the best schools in Pakistan. You get respect within society when you tell them that you work at [Institute B]. I think sometimes these things matter more than the financial benefits. For an employee, a good reputation will give them more chances of success; for example, they will be easily accepted in many universities in Pakistan due to their association with a well-reputed university" (PKB1).

Significance for students

The students are most important type of stakeholders as they are customers of business schools. Business school's reputation is an important factor for Pakistani students and they consider reputation during institution selection process:

"Reputation is very crucial for the students because their decisions are partly based on reputation and partly on some other factors like price, location, and so on. This also then impact on our school strategy as we strive for becoming one of the best schools in Pakistan and we cannot neglect our customer satisfaction" (PKE2).

The small- and large-scale institutions reputation

In Pakistan HE system, the small- and large-scale institutions may not necessarily share same level of market acceptance among its stakeholders. Historically, the

reputation of full-scale universities remained superior to small-scale institutions and in last decade or so; the difference has diminished considerably. One marketing manager explains:

> "If we talk about our HE in early 70's or 80's, then there were not many business schools that I can recall and those that were present were absolutely no match for the large-scale universities. These universities were bigger in size with big budgets and I assume the scale of institution was a dominant factor for establishing a perception about the reputation of university. I think in the last fifteen years; many changes have taken place in our HE environment that has also change the way we thought about reputation of institutions. If we talk about business schools then some of them are preferred more than large universities but I still believe that for most of the HE students, the size of institution is still a key barometer for judging the reputation of institution" (PKC2).

Differentiation

Pakistani top business schools consider HEC ranking as a tool for differentiation within Pakistani HE environment. One interviewee commented:

> "As you may know, some universities were involved in fraudulent activities and they were closed down. In some cases, degrees were awarded to students just for money where students never came to university or passed any exams. This negative reputation of small independent schools in Pakistan can also affect those that are actually of good quality. We are also a newly established private school, so for us, the most important task is to differentiate ourselves from these types of schools and good rankings could help us to distinguish our school" (PKD2).

The professor in Institute-C highlighted some unique features that could become one of their differentiating factors:

> "Students choose us because we also offer scholarships so it is kind of unique and a bit different from other institution's scholarships. We not only cover tuition fee but also offer stipend for living allowance. This type of scholarship is not very common in Pakistan" (PKC1).

The professor at Institute-B also highlighted the significance of differentiation as she explains:

> "When you say 'I am a graduate of [Institute-B]', people start perceiving you accordingly. So [Institute-B] stands for some attributes. If a student represents [Institute-B] then that student must be the best of the best in Pakistan. When we talk about student career then it does matter where you study, if you study from a second tier business school or from first tier school you will be perceived accordingly. When a business school has a strong reputation it helps them in getting more applications" (PKB1).

Some of the top tier business schools have started their pursuit for international accreditations that would differentiate their schools and help in enhancing their reputation. An academic expert puts it:

> "We have to consider our international associations and accreditations. About two years ago, we received international accreditation from international quality assurance agency and for us that is a success. We are now targeting accreditation from _____ [accreditation body], and by doing this; we will be the only business school in Pakistan to get that accreditation. We consider all of these aspects as part of our reputation building measurements because when we say that we are accredited from certain international councils that shows the quality of our institution" (PKA1).

A strong reputation helps business schools to communicate and negotiate with other sectors:

> "Top universities mostly collaborate with top companies. The top companies proudly announce that they are in collaboration with ____ [institute name], or ____ [institute name] because they know these institutes have high good reputation. I believe that collaborations are sometimes based on reputation than the merit or competency" (PKJ2).

Several informants suggested that the institutional reputation is highly influenced by their location and several references were made to the city of association. A marketing manager at Institute-C states:

> "Our institutional reputation is badly affected by the city we are in. We are not in a metropolitan city and many people from other parts of Pakistan hardly know about this place. When you ask them about this city, there

impression about this city is bad, so even we are a good institution we still cannot overcome our location barrier and we hardly get students from other provinces" (PKC2).

Similar views echoed by marketing professor at Institute-G as he explains:

"Historically our province is not well known for quality education, and even students from our province preferred to study in _____ or ____ [business schools in other provinces]. When rankings were introduced, we became the first business school of our province to be listed among the top business schools of Pakistan. I think student perception has been influenced by it and our school is now the first choice for students in our province" (PKG1).

A marketing manager at Institute-H commented on the 'spill-over effect' of reputed courses and disciplines as he explains:

"We are a business and management institute so ideally our business and management degrees should attract more student applications than other courses but interestingly, we also receive a high number of applications for computer science and economics courses. We have established a good reputation and people trust us for that. We are famous for our business study courses but it has positive effect on our other courses as well" (PKH2).

The respondents highlighted their respective marketing strategies where several of them relate it to their HEC ranking. Their differentiation focuses on education quality where the quality was expressed in terms of staff quality, research quality, student employability, selection process and additional value for students:

"We position our institution on the student career and some additional benefits for students like they can get international exposure and make their CV more attractive under the foreign universities exchange programs. We got some excellent results in terms of our student careers, our alumni got some very high profile jobs like CSS officers (central superior services), presidents of bank, and so on. Most of our graduates start at a level where other university graduates may reach in ten years" (PKB2).

The assistant professor of Institute-E suggests that their school promote their superior research and faculty through HEC ranking:

> "Our unique selling proposition is our faculty and they are appreciated both at national and international level. We also have high scores in faculty and publications and we use our rankings and other selling points together to differentiate ourselves in the national HE market" (PKE1).

4.5.3 Concluding comments

The Pakistani informants, views were recorded in their respective interviews. The interviews were analysed, and segmented into second-tier codes that corresponded to the analytical codes presented earlier in this chapter.

This section started with the context of rankings where the respondents have argued the advantages of ranking systems and analysed the critiques of the HEC ranking system. This study recorded their positive and negative views about HEC rankings and categorised them under the 'love and hate of rankings' code. With regard to the benefits of rankings, the respondents suggested that the introduction of HEC rankings is a welcome step that will encourage competition and a higher quality of HE in Pakistan. The information also becomes highly acceptable due to its association with the government. The HEC rankings system, being a new system, has undergone many reforms to render it tailor-made for the Pakistani HE market as well as to keep up with the global HE quality. A downside of HEC rankings was also revealed during the interviews as the respondents expressed their concerns about the selection of ranking indicators. Some respondents also expressed their concerns about the single source of ranking within the HE system. The current HEC ranking system raised many concerns among Pakistani informants as they believe that HEC rankings are more inclined towards the HEC objectives rather than helping HE stakeholders, especially the students.

Besides the 'love and hate' of the HEC ranking system, the respondents appreciated the role of HEC in introducing the ranking system, which was considered highly

significant for the growth of the overall Pakistani HE sector. In the absence of ranking systems (national and international), the HEC ranking system has gained in significance due to its association with the governing body and it has become crucial for business schools. As citizens of a developing nation, students had limited information about the performance of Pakistani business schools; however, with the introduction of HEC rankings, students have gained access to valuable information about business schools, which they can use in their institution selection process.

The respondents' views have shown the interconnectedness between HEC rankings and business school reputation, as they believe that rankings are sometimes synonymous with reputation. The rankings have made the Pakistani HE environment more competitive and their ranking system has become an important factor for the sustainability of Pakistani business schools. The second context presented in this section relates to the significance of reputation in the Pakistani HE system. Several interviewees commented on the significance of reputation in different ways. Reputation was considered highly significant for Pakistani business schools. The students and other stakeholders can easily understand and interpret HEI's reputations. Historically, the reputation of large universities remained superior but recently several reforms, such as the introduction of rankings, have been implemented in the Pakistani HE environment where the difference between small- and large-scale HEIs has been significantly marginalised.

Several Pakistani respondents have highlighted the role of reputation in HE for its ability to differentiate business schools from competing institutions within Pakistan. The positioning of business schools focuses on the differentiating factor that could come with a superior ranking in their national HE market. The Pakistani business schools suggested that the HEC ranking is a strong positioning tool that favours the established schools compared to new institutions. The low-rated institutions with limited differentiation options are forced to adopt price-based positioning strategies. The Pakistani business schools frequently communicate HEC ranking

when their ranking information is favourable. The HEC ranking act as marketing content for business schools and they communicate rankings to enhance their reputation in Pakistan. The HEC ranking information becomes highly acceptable for domestic students as it comes from an external body. The use of digital media is becoming highly visible in Pakistani business schools where ranking information becomes a very strong impact factor in their advertisements. With limited ranking options, the marketing strategies of lowly-ranked schools come under pressure; as a result, other sources of information such as alumni careers and WOM becomes highly significant for building reputation. The respondents suggest that communicating their rankings has become crucial for business schools due to their association with government. It became evident that the HEC ranking is highly acceptable among Pakistani students and other stakeholders.

4.6 Research findings: A practice within institutions - Organisational change

4.6.1 Policy, Operational and financial change in institutions

Institutional Policy

The Pakistani business schools consider HEC rankings as strategic tool that helps them in their decision-making. There is a general agreement among the Pakistani informants that HEC rankings have influenced business school's strategies. Majority of the interview respondents believed that rankings play a significant role in building reputation, for which business schools have restructured their policies and strategies:

> "We even mention ranking in our mission statement. We want to be a leading business school and it is our long-term goal. One of short term plan is to monitor the HEC rankings regularly so that we can progress towards our long-term goal" (PKB2).

> "It is a part of our strategy because we are concerned about our performance, our quality, which is important for attracting quality

students, so the HEC rankings are quite significant for our school's strategy" (PKD1).

Several interviewees suggested that HEC ranking act as a mechanism for benchmarking and goal setting:

"I have been working here in Pakistan for quite some time and I think that every university compares their performance with their previous performance or with fellow institutions and they would do this by looking into the HEC rankings" (PKG2).

"Last month we had a meeting that was chaired by our VC and now one of our targets is be in the top five business schools of Pakistan by year 2020. I think rankings have also become a part of our marketing mix as we know that good rankings will help us in projecting our school status" (PKD1).

"Any plan or step that you take with an aim to build your reputation would be termed as your growth strategies and ranking could definitely help you with this sort of strategy. When we hire new staff to improve our research output, it can be interpreted in many ways. For example, it can be a step forward to become a quality research institute or an institute with high quality staff, and when it is evaluated in rankings, we could get higher rankings for that. This superior ranking will positively translate in our reputation" (PKE1).

Several respondents suggested that the ranking of business school is closely linked to the quality of education and students. The HEC ranking act as a measure of quality and success:

"The strategy of [Institute-H] is to improve the student quality by enrolling best students and then give them quality education. We also want to have best academic staff and excellent learning environment and for this, we hire quality staff. Our quality improvement strategy is also reflected from our rankings that we have improved in the recent rankings. I think rankings convey our quality to different stakeholders. Rankings leaves a strong impression and has the capacity to persuade student decisions and their perception about business schools" (PKH1).

"We use ranking to evaluate our quality of education for which we have established different standards. Some of these standards are similar to HEC rankings, so it becomes useful to utilize the available data about the market. We also have to ensure that we meet the quality assurance standards that again are somewhat similar to HEC ranking indicators" (PKB2).

The HEC ranking has an impact on institutional strategy. Pakistani business schools have adopted strategies that can be classified into two broad groups namely 'means and ends'. Rankings are means for enhancing reputation of business schools:

> "The HEC ranking has strong connection with our reputation. First, we changed the policy so that we can improve our rankings. We hired faculty that meets the criteria set by HEC. I guess the aim is that it will give us better score at faculty indicator of the HEC rankings. We made several other changes so that we can improve our education quality. We also know that our good rankings would indicate that we are good in research, we have good staff, we have quality students, so these sorts of messages will ultimately improve our reputation" (PKF2).

> "We use rankings in our marketing strategies. We evaluate our current standing in the rankings and compare our performance with our previous scores that we got in HEC rankings. The idea is to improve our overall educational quality and ranking. Once we have achieved good rankings, we promote it the students as we know that students would prefer to have authentication of our quality from external source and HEC is very credible source in our market" (PKA2).

The HEC ranking is an important part of business school's strategy and become goals (Ends) for the business schools in Pakistan:

> "I think HEC rankings is one of the target that we have set for ourselves. We made decisions to improve the quality of education, our student experiences, provide comfortable place to work in, and some of these factors are measured at HEC rankings, which gives us a better chance of improving our rankings (PKI2).

> "One of our goals is that we perform better on HEC rankings and also on international rankings in future" (PKC1).

> "We are one of the top business institutes in Pakistan and we had planned to take rankings in phases. First we aim to be in top three and then to become number one in Pakistan. I think this would clearly suggest that how serious we are about HEC rankings" (PKF1).

Operational change

The revised HEC ranking criteria has linked ranking indicators to the quality assurance (QA) standards set by the HEC. Several HEIs in Pakistan have established

QECs. The HEC has directed HEIs to establish QECs that could also lead to better score in the HEC ranking. There are several other instances where the business schools have observed similar type of operational change that relates to the HEC ranking:

> "Well we have now QEC, which is a classic example of rankings influence on the way we operate. HEC have advised all HEIs to establish QEC offices. At that time, we wanted to establish it but we had other priorities due to limited funds. Now, it is part of rankings so if you don't have QEC, your ratings go down. Due to this fear of losing our place at HEC rankings it became our top priority and now we have QEC and our rating went up as well" (PKC2).

> "We do experience structural change at [Institute I]. The books and other reading material that we had in library where a bit outdated, mostly because it was neglected for past few years and we had other priorities. We had limited funds to play with at that time. This year, it is agreed to provide special funds for library, so technically the direct benefit will go to students and academia but it will also improve our education quality standard that would also help us in performing better in HEC rankings" (PKI2).

The impact of operational change in Pakistan has been more visible on new institutions. The professor at Institution-E puts it:

> "Rankings got different level of attention at different HEIs. Those who are already established and had good reputation they got good rankings and institutes like us who are newly established had struggled when first HEC ranking was published. We had to bring a lot of improvement, which we did, and that is why we have improved our rankings. I think low performers have seen more changes in their operations, in their way of doing things compared to highly reputed institutions, and they just had to do what they were doing before and lesser changes have occurred at those institutes due to HEC rankings" (PKE1).

Rankings and financial resources

HEC ranking is highly influential on the financial resources of business schools. The students will pay higher fee if they believe that the degree they would get, is of high value.

"Our finances are mostly generated from the student fee. If you have good rankings then you have good quality students but even if you are not good at rankings, still you can get students but the quality of students will be low. These students will be more price-sensitive and also the institutions will not be able to raise their fee because of competition. The only way to generate more funds from fees is to improve your rankings so that quality students are attracted. Good ranking gives access to new student segments where they could also charge premium fee" (PKJ2).

"Large public universities have two major sources of funding. They get money from fee and they can also request government for funding, if they have any plans for upgrading their facilities or something like that. We are an independent business school so for us good rankings mean better chances of survival in financial terms. We can attract more students, which means we get more money that we could use for upgrading our facilities and this makes me believe that the performance at the HEC ranking is vital for attracting students" (PKJ1).

4.6.2 Academic life and research culture

HEC ranking is highly influential on research output and academic life. Business schools in Pakistan have reacted to the HEC ranking and made several changes for improving their rankings. Several schools have hired faculty with an aim to improve their research output and student-staff ratio.

Impact on research

HEC ranking has forced the academia towards higher number of publications. The number of publications is on the rise, which would help Pakistan in building knowledge economy but also help the academic staff in their promotions. The rankings have gained a lot of significance in past few years, which has influenced the research strategy of business schools:

"The schools encourage staff to write more papers for improving their research score and the academics are under pressure to produce papers more frequently than ever before. If you look at the statistics, you will find the number for publications has increased since rankings came into the Pakistani higher education system. For us, the research policy is more complex these days than it was before the HEC rankings. The institutions

wish to improve research output but it may affect their teaching aspect, which again is also important for HEC rankings. With limited resources the trade-off between research output and teaching quality is one of the important decisions that institutions have to make" (PKA1).

"Our faculty development program is open to our staff where they can get PhD from abroad, which is mostly likely from the UK and US. The criteria are that they have served the institution for certain number of years and when they apply, they need to have admission in internationally ranked universities. Our university has provided a list of universities to select from and these are mostly top UK and US universities. Our institute will promote this fact that our faculty members have degrees from highly reputed universities of the world, which would add to our academic reputation. The universities that made it to our list were considered just because of their reputation, which in our case, was partly evaluated though their rankings" (PKE2).

One of Pakistani academic expert considers HEC ranking as a motivational factor for academia as he explains:

"The lecturers can apply to different institutions as well. While applying to other positions, most of our academic staff would prefer non-academic positions for various reasons. There is general perception that teaching is good for PhD doctors who are in their early career or by non-PhD staff members. They feel pride in administrative duties and jobs and that would normally be offered to senior staff. This would bring us to a conclusion that academic staff would wish to publish papers more frequently to get early promotions and become eligible for lucrative administrative positions" (PKJ1).

The academia within business school also had reservations about HEC ranking. The academic papers, citations vary from discipline to discipline. There are more citations in science subjects like biology, chemistry than business studies. The category-based ranking seems more appropriate for specialized institutions like business schools as one assistant professor explains:

"If we just consider category-based rankings, then every institute gets equal chance but if we talk about university rankings which includes all disciplines, then the judgment of research output will not show the true picture. For example, if you compare us with _____ [university name] then it will not be a fair comparison because we are just a business institute and

others are large scale universities with multi disciplines, so naturally our citing and research would be limited to the business studies and of course lesser in number. That is why I think category rankings are more important for institutions like us" (PKI1).

Academic life and rankings

The pressure on research is quite visible from the emphasis given to research by HEC. The new ranking has assigned a lot of weighting to research component. It was a clear message to the business schools that they need to adopt a robust approach to improve their research output. This in return, adds pressure on staff to publish more papers in HEC acceptable journals:

> "A new recruitment process was introduced by HEC know as TTS (tenure track system). This system is now adopted in many institutions. This system ensures that good employees are rewarded and those under performed will be penalized. It is contract-based jobs so performance is evaluated at the end of each contract. I think it is a good step and staff now knows that their performance will be evaluated. The performance is also measured in terms of their publications. It also ensures that everyone in the institution contributes to research and when they do so, the overall ranking of institution will improve" (PKE1).

> "Today there is more pressure on academia than ever. The public universities were in business for many years and their academics were reluctant to change, so once you got a job in public university, then everything was a routine with no research pressure. The new quality standards, which are also now part of HEC rankings, have changed the perception of employees. There is sense of assessment and audit at all levels, which has brought positive change in the attitudes of employees. I think this positive change would help institutions to improve their rankings and most importantly it would contribute to their research output" (PKG1).

Several respondents have argued about the significance of institutional ranking for employees:

> "It is always satisfying that where we work is one of the best institute and in future if we decide to switch institution then we will be sure that we are accepted in some of the best institutions of Pakistan" (PKI2).

"There was a job opening in Dubai in my field and I was considering applying for it but I found that only PhD from US, UK, and from business schools that are accredited by AACSB, were eligible to apply. I realized that location of your degree is more important than anything else. I think some places in the world are perceived to produce better students and better scholars than other places, and in future, the rankings and accreditation would become even more important" (PKG2).

4.6.3 Student recruitment at institutions

Impact on student choice

The HEC ranking in Pakistan gains significance as it is directly related to the student purchase decision. Pakistani students are the main beneficiaries of HEC ranking system and their purchase decision is influenced by the rankings of business schools (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-B). Several interviewees argued about the relationship of rankings and student choice. The marketing manager at Institute-D has discussed this relationship suggesting that HEC ranking contribute to the confidence building of students. He explains:

"Students tend to prefer one institute over the other, reflecting on the acceptance level of institutions, and their reputation. HEC ranking is one of the key factor in Pakistan for students and gives them confidence in their decision. It has been observed that highly reputed institutions enroll high quality students and average universities will get those students which may not be their first choice but because they could not get admission in their first choice of institution, they opt for their second choices" (PKD2).

Historically, the Pakistani students used several sources of information for selecting institutions. With the introduction of HEC rankings, it has become an important part of student selection within Pakistani market (Source: Internal student survey 2013, Institute-A). Similar views echoed from Pakistani interviewees:

"When I was a student, my decision for selecting university in Pakistan was mostly influenced by the grades I got in my bachelor degree and the information from friends and family. After few years, I decided to do masters from UK. I researched different courses, rankings, fees, and location, as I wanted to study near to my cousin who was in London. I think students used rankings for foreign education but not in Pakistan, as it was not

available. Now we have rankings here and our student survey suggest that our students do similar assessment before selecting institutions in Pakistan" (PKC2).

"Students consider several other factors in their institution selection process but the HEC ranking has simplified their selection process and they trust this piece of information because students know where this ranking information is coming from" (PKF2).

Pakistani students have become highly conscious about education quality and employability after the introduction of rankings. The students would now consider fee as an investment and not as expense:

"Although we are a non-for-profit organisation, we still need finances to fulfill the expectations of students. From student perspective, they know that only higher achievers would make it to [Institute-H] and in most cases students pay full fee, which is quite higher than average fee in Pakistan. I think it is a big investment decision that they have to make. The assurance of quality comes from ranking and from our past history that can be seen from our student employability and some other similar factors" (PKH1).

HEC rankings are crucial for the Pakistani students and their parents when they are considering an important decision of their life (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-G). Pakistani respondents presented similar views as they explain:

"The investment on HE education particularly when it involves investment for four years could impact on future jobs, future living standard, personal life, so it becomes one of the most important decision of their life. When we talk to our students, they would suggest that HE is a big investment decision. They and their parents will analyze different options using certain factors and ranking is one of them" (PKF1).

"Our society and our culture is collectivist in nature and differ from individualist approach that you may have seen in West. Pakistan is a high context culture and the student does not make decisions independently. This decision is the combination of perceptions of our brothers and sisters, our cousins, family friends, our parents and even cousins of our parents. So naturally, if one student has an experience of one particular university it becomes common information within their extended families. This family decision would also consider other forms of information to judge the quality of institutions and HEC rankings is definitely one of those factors" (PKE2).

Impact on student recruitment process

HEC ranking is significant to case study institutions as it has direct impact on student purchase decision. Students wish to get into highly-rated business schools to secure their future (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-B). It is quite clear that highly-ranked business schools will get more applications and get students with higher grades:

> "Some schools are more attractive to students than others. I think it is because they are perceived as best schools, they have the best people working over there or it may be because their students often get good jobs. This not only becomes a differentiating factor for the schools but it also ensures that these schools keep on getting a good number of applications from the students with higher grades. Naturally, those students will have an edge over the average students and it is highly likely that they will join good companies once they complete their courses. So reputation is important to students and also for the service providers like us" (PKG2).

> "If you have good rankings then you will have good students but even if you are not good at rankings still you can get students but the quality of students will be low. So low quality students will be more price-sensitive and it would be difficult for those universities to raise their fee because of competition. The only way to generate more funds from student-fee is to improve the quality of institution so that more students are attracted and then they could charge higher fee" (PKJ2).

The professor at Institute-H suggested that HEC ranking help in building student's trust. He explains:

> "Students get attracted towards those courses and institutions that are able to create confidence and trust among students. The students seek assurance that their money is not wasted" (PKH1).

HEC ranking is a dominant tool for depicting business school quality. Being an external source of information, it becomes more reliable and acceptable to the students (Source: Internal student survey 2012, Institute-F). One interviewee commented:

"I think HEC rankings do influence our recruitment process. The information that comes from HEC ranking becomes highly reliable. It is an external piece of information that is coming from the government, so naturally it highly accepted by our students. We do student assessments from time to time and we know that if we have good rankings then students with good grades will also be interested in our institution and that is what schools would wish for" (PKF2).

4.6.4 Partnerships of institutions

Partnerships with academic institutions

The findings from Pakistan also suggest that the national and international academic collaborations are highly significant for business schools, for which they have signed several memorandum of understanding (MOU) with national and international HEIs. It has become a strategic goal for several HEIs.

The research findings from Pakistan suggest that ranking is an important factor for national and international partnerships. International academic collaborations with the UK and USA HEIs are highly significant for Pakistani business schools and they prefer to be associated with highly-rated international business schools:

"As far as foreign universities are concerned, we have linkages with so many universities in UK. Our faculty members go for PhD in UK universities. We also conducted an international conference with our partner institute from UK just this month in Dubai. So we are working actively in collaborations and our decision for selecting partners is based on their reputation and rankings and some other factors, and similarly these collaborating institutions may also decide in the same way as we do" (PKE2).

"Some institutions are collaborating with the South Asian HEIs while others aim for western countries. Some Pakistani business schools target top hundred institutions of the world for partnerships and others would go for top ten institutions of South East Asia. The association with globally recognised institutions will enhance their reputation. We have several collaborations with some good universities in UK, US, Singapore, Turkey and Dubai which we do promote on our website and newsletters" (PKH2)

The Pakistani business schools analyse their strengths and weaknesses and then approach to international business schools for collaborations. The Pakistani HE

market is still new and in developing phase with no major rankings achieved at the international level. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult for Pakistani institutions to collaborate with top institutions of the world:

> "For academic collaboration we will not approach business schools like Harvard because we know we stand little chance of getting collaboration with them. So we target international institutions that are average ranked but still their quality is superior compared to some of the best business schools that we have in Pakistan. So it is highly likely that we can get into partnerships with these types of institutions" (PKF1).

> "For our foreign universities collaborations, I think these are greatly influenced by the rankings we have. It is simple, nobody wants to associates with weaker universities, provided they have an opportunity to collaborate with top institutions. So our local rankings could help in persuading foreign universities" (PKA1).

The Pakistani business schools use rankings information for measuring the education quality of collaborating partners as they provide information about the new markets:

> "I consider rankings very important for collaborations. We would need information about our future partner and their performance before we decide to approach them. So this is where the role of these league tables comes into play. It tells you about their ranking and where they stand in their market"(PKI2).

Pakistani students prefer business schools that offer international student exchange programmes. One interviewee explains:

> "We have student exchange programmes and one out of three, of our MBA students goes for a semester abroad and it is also available for our undergraduate students. We are constantly working on our international linkages and trying to get in touch with some of the best institutes in with the world. So when we say best universities we mean that we have to consider the ranking of those institutes" (PKB2).

The impact on local collaboration was evident from the fact that several HEIs approach top business schools in Pakistan while the top business schools would choose among the available partners:

"In terms of local collaborations, we are little bit different than some other business schools that we have in Pakistan. We don't need to pursue local collaborations in fact many new schools approach us for affiliations because they know we are well reputed and highly placed at the rankings" (PKD2).

The HEC ranking is a good source of information for potential international partners as it suggests about the quality of Pakistani business schools and their local market standings. This information about Pakistani market is unique and HEC ranking is the only source that provided this important piece of information. One marketing manager puts it:

"We have introduced plagiarism criteria, digital libraries, and many other things but people in Pakistan know what we did but may not be known to international audiences. The beauty of HEC rankings is that it takes these small things into account club them together, analyze and assess them and tells your overall standing in the market. When your future partners look into these rankings they would perceive you as of high quality, if you have good rankings" (PKA2).

Industry partnerships and rankings

Pakistani business schools offer executive programs to target professionals from other sectors. Industries prefer collaborations with top business schools because of the confidence and trust. The association with top schools will mutually help industry and business schools in developing their image. One interviewee commented:

"A delegation from _____ [international FMCG Company] approached us and presented a proposal for a joint project. He said that 'we take this project very seriously and that is why we assigned a good budget to it. We wanted to have best people from Pakistan working on this project so we chose your institution'. So the point is that rankings are also important to our partners from other sectors" (PKB2).

4.6.5 Concluding comments

In this section, we have discussed four analytical codes corresponding to the change in Pakistani business schools that occurred due to HEC ranking. In a way, this

reflects on the impact of rankings in bringing changes to institutional practice in Pakistan.

The business schools have reacted to the HEC ranking by redefining their policies for constructing their reputation. Several business schools consider rankings as a tool for achieving their strategic goals while other schools set rankings as a target. This relationship has been categorised as a 'means and ends' relationship in the previous section. The financial resources and operations of business schools are influenced by the HEC ranking.

The HEC ranking not only affect the above-mentioned factors but also have a direct impact on academic life and research output. The HEC ranking has assigned weighting to their research indicator, which sends a clear message to the business schools that they now need a robust approach to improve their research output. This in return adds to the pressure on academics, who have to publish their research papers more frequently.

The HEC ranking also influence the student recruitment process in Pakistan. The significance of HEC ranking can be linked to the student's level of understanding and demand for information. The respondents argued that highly-ranked schools receive a relatively higher number of student applications and offer more choices during student enrolment. Students consider their fees and time as an investment and they would prefer business schools that produce highly employable students. From a business school perspective, they can improve their reputations for 'student employability and their careers' by recruiting high-quality students. It became evident from the findings that the HEC ranking is highly influential in the student recruitment process. The HEC ranking information becomes highly significant during the institution selection process as the ranking information is seen as a proxy of the school's status.

The ranking of business schools is one of the key factors that affect collaborations with other academic institutions and with other industries. The HEC ranking information becomes highly significant for judging the reputation of prospective partners. The Pakistani business schools prefer partnerships with Western business schools, which can help build their reputation. In partnerships, the power to dictate terms lies with business schools that have superior rankings.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Central Contribution of the thesis

From theoretical perspective, the overall argument of this thesis revolves around the field structuration process by focusing on field and field boundaries formation. The concept of boundary-work refers to the struggle for authority where the field becomes a place for several types of contestations (Gieryn, 1999). The central contribution of this study, summarised in Figure-6 and Figure-7, is to extend our understanding of the boundary-work by looking into the business education field from the perspectives of developed- and developing-field settings. The main argument of thesis is that rankings create different types of contestations, which require boundary-work at different levels, such as boundary-work for reputation, boundary-work for international and domestic fields, and boundary-work for new categorisations.

It is important to remind the reader at this point that the main objective of this study is to report an exploratory study by arguing that the categorisation systems, such as rankings, construct reputation in the field and shapes the developed and developing business education field. The objective is thus twofold, i.e. to understand how and why are rankings used for defining and building reputation in the business education field and how it shapes the business education field in the developed and developing HE settings.

The first research questions demands interrogation about the role of rankings in constructing reputation. This has been identified as boundary-work for reputation, which suggest that rankings are highly significant as they set criteria for evaluating business education and define and redefine positions in the field thus became an important tool for field members during the struggle for reputation.

The second objective of this study clearly demands an investigation about the struggle for authority within the developed and developing HE fields. The current study attempts to explicate field formation by arguing that field and field boundaries of business education are formed through boundary-work depending on who does the boundary-work, for whom, and against whom. In developed-field settings, rankings can be seen as an internationalisation tool for constructing international business education field and to legitimise different means of comparisons. In developing-field settings, rankings act as countering mechanism to counter the Western model of rankings and to construct the perception of the domestic field and positions within it.

We discussed second-order codes that emerged from the case-studies of the UK and Pakistan. In this sense, it enabled us to understand the impact of categorisation systems on business schools in developed and developing HE markets. The current chapter links the key empirical findings of the two case-studies to the analytical themes (see Section 2.1.5) to achieve the objective of this study.

5.1.1 The role of rankings in building reputation

Building upon the empirical evidences from two field settings, the researcher argues that ranking defines, builds and changes the perception of reputation in the business education field. In theoretical terms, this refers to the boundary-work of reputation in business education field where categorisation systems construct a contest of symbolic value. In order to understand the role of rankings in building reputation, it is imperative that we first examine the significance of rankings and reputation and their interconnectedness in the business education field. In this section, the researcher attempts to explain commonalities among the field members of developing and developed business education field during their justification of symbolic value.

The current study noted six second-order codes that emerged from the field settings of UK and Pakistan (Chapter 4). This section links the findings of two case studies (second-order codes) with the first analytical theme to explain how ranking is used in the field for justifying, defining and building the reputation (see Figure-6).

Figure 6: The role of rankings for building reputation

Second-Order Codes		Justifying symbolic value through ranking	Justifying ranking functions	Analytical Theme
A context of Rankings A context of reputation Policy, Operational & Financial Impact Impact on Research & Academic Life Impact on student recruitment Impact on institutional Partnerships	Transforming academic and economic value into symbolic value and vice versa	Differentiation Visibility Consistency Authenticity Transparency	Market information function Audit and Control function	The role of ranking for building symbolic capital

Source: Developed by researcher

The second-order codes reflect the significance of rankings and their impact on the business education field. As rankings are highly significant in the field, the researcher attempts to explain the transformation of value from one form to another through rankings. The transformation of value shapes the meanings and logics of the field. With the proliferation of rankings, the field members have become active promoters of rankings as they affect their positions and status (reputation). Therefore, the field members use rankings for differentiation, visibility, consistency,

authenticity and transparency to justify the symbolic value of reputation in the field. In this process of justification, the field members further institutionalise rankings by legitimising the two main roles of rankings: market information function and audit function. Building on the concept of boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999), the current theme attempts to explain how categorization systems are used to define, evaluate and build the perception of symbolic value, such as reputation in the field of business education.

5.1.1.1 Rankings proliferation and functions

Rankings have proliferated both nationally and globally in the last two decades. Rankings are flourishing in newspapers and business magazines but governments also play a key role, as they are involved in producing rankings and league tables. The proliferation of rankings has forced HEIs to react and adapt accordingly (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan). This proliferation of rankings has presented field members with the dilemma of whether to accept or reject rankings. With the development of rankings, their methodology has been heavily criticised. Dichev (1999) argued that rankings are not a comprehensive and effective measure of 'university quality' because they incorporate 'noisy information'. He further argues that the HEIs can move up and down in the rankings even if there is no significant change in performance. A very common criticism that arose from both field settings also relates to the inconsistent ranking information. The inconsistency in judgement criteria has led to credibility issues and raised questions regarding the methodology of ranking systems (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

Despite rankings' limitations, it is evident from the business schools' published material, websites, student surveys, and interviews that field members felt the need to participate in rankings and frequently communicate their ranking information to persuade prospective students. To support the significance of rankings in the business education field, the researcher provided several pieces of empirical evidence in the previous chapter. We may ask, however, why rankings have

proliferated and become institutionalised and what makes ranking systems so important and influential. In the last three decades, rankings have been incorporated into several HE systems, suggesting that rankings are important for the HE field and its members (Gioia and Corley, 2002). Rankings have a significant impact on practices and strategic decisions, thus resulting in a significant change in the processes undertaken in business schools and universities (Hazelkorn, 2011; Martin, 2005). With the increasing number of business schools, a system capable of evaluating and defining 'good business education' became highly desirable. The increased level of competition demanded a system that would provide transparency and comparability and set the standards for business schools (Wedlin, 2006). In this sense, the introduction of rankings relates to the demand for audit and credible information. Power (1997) suggested that we have entered an 'audit society' where the external pressures demand monitoring and inspection of activities in general. The audit function thus became a major purpose of rankings (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan) that contributed towards the proliferation of ranking systems. From the control perspective, rankings are also embedded with other auditing tools, such as accreditations, to meet the increasing demand for transparency and accountability (Source: Interviews, UK).

Another reason for the proliferation of rankings lies in the development of the business and management education field. Moon (2002) argued that the number of business and management periodicals and articles has increased dramatically in the last three decades. Following the increasing interest in business and management studies, several business school- and business education-specific rankings began to spread. In the year 1987, *US News & World Report* initiated business school rankings, followed by *Businessweek*, which started MBA rankings in the year 1988 (Wedlin, 2006). The production of specialised business school rankings then spread to other parts of the word. In the year 1998, the London-based FT started producing and publishing rankings of European business schools, followed by international

rankings the following year. Several other rankers, such as *Forbes, The Economist*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, have started producing international rankings of business schools and their courses. These ranking lists have become popular among a wide audience, including students, employers, parents and business schools (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). The above arguments suggest that the development of the business education field relates to the expansion of business education and the increasing level of media coverage of business education. In this sense, the media participation can be linked to a response to the market pressures (consumer pressure), which demand transparent and comparable market information about business schools and their courses. Rao (1998) argued that rankings should meet consumer demand by providing information to students, which they can use during their institution selection process. Rankings in this sense, reacts to consumer pressure and the pressure for control by providing comparable market information (Rao, 1998) and performing audits in the business education field (Power, 1997).

The institution theory suggests that markets are logics, which are constructed due to the institutionalisation of processes. With the development in the field, these institutional logics change over time (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). As noted earlier, rankings proliferated due to the demand of comparable market information and the demand for audit in the field, which drew the attention of field members. In this process, we can see a change in institutional logics as the performance, positions, and status of business schools are seen through rankings. The empirical findings from the case-studies uphold the concept of institutional change as the field and its members have played an active role in legitimising rankings and accreditations (Source: Interviews, UK). Similar views were encountered in the Pakistan case-study. HEC ranking is an important piece of information that Pakistani students use in selecting institution for their further study (Source: Internal student survey 2012, PK Institute-J). Therefore, it becomes highly significant for Pakistani business

schools to review and improve their standings at the HEC ranking (Source: Interviews, Pakistan).

As noted in previous chapter, ranking transform qualitative data into quantitative measure, which makes more sense to students and are easy to understand. In this sense, rankings align with the Aristotelian classification concept as it defines the characteristics and features of a group, sets criteria for the group, and decides who are inside and outside of that group (Bowker and Star, 1999). On the other hand, rankings can be seen as prototypical classification system where business school use a prototype (benchmark) of a category to assess and compare their performance, and attempt to establish belongingness to an elite group (Bowker and Star, 1999). The desire for becoming a member of elite schools aligns with the creation of mimetic isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) that forces non-elite business schools to mimic the prototypes thus making business schools to become more alike (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

The transparency instruments largely proliferated due to consumer and control pressure but this does not diminish the role of rankings in creating status within the field of business schools. An important attribute of rankings is their creation of meaning through the quantification of large amounts of qualitative data; thus, they simplify information, which allows users to grasp and compare schools' performance (Espeland and Stevens, 1998). A rank ordering thus influences the status hierarchies within the field (Rao, 1994) by providing an external assessment of institutional status and worth to the audience (Martins, 2005). The respondents within both field settings considered rankings as a proxy of status and a currency for enhancing institutional reputation (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan). In this struggle for status and reputation, the field members take part in the promotion of ranking lists.

Summarising the discussion, the researcher argues that rankings are highly significant for the field members, who use rankings to inform and persuade their

stakeholders. The proliferation and institutionalisation of rankings occurred for two main reasons. First, the global expansion in the business education field triggered the demand for audits within the field where rankings provided transparency and comparability and set the standards for business schools. Second, rankings further facilitated the consumer pressure (students) by providing information to students and helping them to make informed choices about their future place of study. Although, rankings have proliferated due to consumer and control pressure but the struggle for symbolic value among the field members has further contributed towards the expansion of ranking systems. Rankings are institutionalised within the field because they affect the reputation and position of field members. This demands further investigation in order to understand why institutional reputation is important in the field and how field members use rankings to build their reputations.

5.1.1.2 Transformation of value through rankings

It became evident from the findings of this study that ranking systems are incredibly reductionist that transforms large qualitative date to produce quantitative measures and hierarchies. In this process, it transforms academic and economic value into symbolic value, which becomes a point of struggle among field members. There is a high level of interconnectedness among different forms of value thus affecting the relative positions and strategies within a field (Wedlin, 2006). The current study focuses on the significance of symbolic value, which secures material and symbolic profits within the business education field.

The researcher argues that rankings influence reputation and creates symbolic value within the field. The corporate reputation influences the decisions of customers and employees, improves market share and sales, attracts investment, and generates favourable press coverage (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004; Gray and Balmer, 1998). Reputation within the HE sector is built over time and is considered a key factor that differentiates the best institutes from the competition (Fombrun and Shanley,

1990). It became evident from the interviews of both case-studies that reputation has a long-term, enduring effect for business schools and is easily understood among all stakeholders. Every year UK business schools receive a good number of international students from India, China, Pakistan, and other parts of the world and in most cases reputation is one of the dominant factors that this segment of students rely upon (Source: Internal student survey 2013, UK Institute-A). Reputation is a key driver of differentiation (Davies and Hilton, 2014) and has thus become crucial for business schools due to its ability to differentiate schools from the competition (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

It is evident from our discussion that reputation creates value; for instance, it differentiates business schools, which stakeholders perceive as value. However, reputation secures both symbolic and material value within the business education field. Therefore, the current study examines the interconnectedness of reputation with academic value and economic/ material value.

Academic value within the business education field can be created through high-quality research and high-quality academic staff members. We are living in the world of rankings and league tables where the reputations of business schools are seen through rankings. The ranking lists, on the other hand, measure the academic efficiency of business schools by using research indicators (Hazelkorn, 2011). Therefore, a business school with more research publications, more faculty members, and so on, will produce better rankings (Liu and Cheng, 2005), consequently creating symbolic value for itself. In this sense, the academic value is transformed into symbolic value through rankings. It became evident from the interviews in both field settings that business schools have made certain adjustments to their policies in order to improve their research output. The shift in policy encourages academic staff to produce high-quality academic papers. As a result, the number of publications has increased. Reputation which is seen through rankings becomes highly significant for the staff members' careers and status

(Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan). Reputation is also crucial for academic collaborations with other national/international business schools, and they frequently use rankings to evaluate the reputation of collaborating institutions in new markets (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

The above discussion suggests that the symbolic value is closely connected with the academic value within the field. The symbolic value also interconnects with the material/ economic value. Reputation influences the students' decision-making process and their purchase decision (Source: Internal student survey 2013, UK Institute-J). With good reputations, the business schools are able to charge premium fees, thus suggesting that reputation creates economic value (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan). The economic profit, which comes through partnerships with other industries, also relates to the symbolic value of business schools. Business schools offer executive programs and provide training courses to members of other industries. The reputation of business schools becomes highly significant for attracting this market segment (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

Reputation possess symbolic value, which secures distinctiveness in the field. The researcher further argues that there is interplay between symbolic, academic, and economic value. During the struggle for reputation, rankings transform one form of value into another, which defines and redefines value and affects strategies in the field.

5.1.1.3 Justifying symbolic value of reputation through categorisation systems

The researcher has noted above why rankings have proliferated, how academic and economic value is transformed into symbolic value, and why field members struggle for symbolic value, such as reputation, in the field of business schools. In this section, the researcher attempts to explain how and why field members use rankings during the struggle for reputation. In other words, the researcher discusses

the use of rankings for justifying the symbolic value and rankings functions (market information and audit) in the business education field.

Previous studies argued that rankings are highly influential in the HEI's reputation (Webster, 2001) as they measure the academic quality of HEIs (Liu and Cheng, 2005). Be it *Businessweek*'s list of the top global brands or the FT's league table of business schools, when companies and institutions are rated, their reputations are affected. As a consequence, the business schools rely on ranking information to justify their reputations. Business schools' use of ranking information to justify their status contributes to the institutionalisation of rankings as an assessment mechanism for the field. Earlier in this study (see Section 2.3.1), we noted that reputations are built when institutions are visible, distinctive, authentic, transparent and consistent. The current study discusses the role of rankings in the reputation-building process by examining the rankings' relationship with these key factors of reputation.

Ranking for differentiation

It became evident from both case-studies that the main purpose of creating symbolic value is to remain distinctive (Dolphin, 2004). Business schools' success, performance and student satisfaction are highly significant for differentiating schools from the competition, a point that reaffirms the conclusions of previous studies on the significance of reputation (Crisp et al., 2012; Gray and Balmer, 1998; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Pakir, 2014). It also became evident from the current study's findings that the reputation of a business school is significant for its stakeholders, especially its students, who decide on their future place of study by considering reputation as a key driver of their choice. Based on their reputation, some schools become more attractive to students than others for various reasons such as their overall education quality, learning environment, best faculty, student careers, and so on. In a way, reputation sends a signal of superior quality and

working environment, which differentiates business schools and creates value for the stakeholders (Dolphin, 2004).

It is important to create a distinctive position in the minds of stakeholders in order to build a reputation. Companies use distinctive reputational platforms and slogans to build their reputations (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). Just as product firms such as Nokia use the platform of 'connections' with a tagline of "connecting people", business schools also use reputational platforms and slogans for creating a distinctive position. One reputed UK business school uses a platform of 'innovation' using a tagline of 'original thinking applied'. HEIs have expressed themselves by focusing on their core reputation platforms that are aligned with their strategic positioning. Rankings have become highly significant for justifying these strategic positions. To explain this, we take an example of two competing UK business schools with relatively similar reputations and rankings. One school had a vision of becoming a 'world-renowned business school' while the other aimed to become 'a leading business school in Europe'. The performance on global rankings became vital for the first business school, while the strategic position of the second business school was compared against its performance in the European rankings. Therefore, business schools deliberately use the ranking language to justify their strategic positions (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

The key purpose of positioning business school is to create a distinctive position in the customer's mind in respect of the competition by emphasising its uniqueness (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). Rankings are the means of creating distinctive positions in the business education field. It is evident from the interviews that business schools justify their positions through rankings (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

From interviews in the business schools of the UK and Pakistan, and from their web pages, it is evident that business schools with superior rankings use their rankings to distinguish themselves from other field members. However, those at the bottom

of the ranking lists also use rankings to justify their position of 'being part of an elite group'. For instance, one marketing manager at a UK business school, which is rated in the bottom part of FT's global rankings, commented:

> "We know that we are in a competitive business and rankings are vital. Our business school has always been a part of the leading business schools in the world. In the recent FT rankings, we are now in the top hundred business schools of the world. We are pleased that they [FT] have confirmed our position among the best business schools in the world" (Source: Interview, UKD2).

Ranking for visibility

The reputation of a firm is interconnected with its visibility. Top-rated companies are highly visible across all media. Companies such as Coca Cola, Nokia, IBM and so on are highly reputable firms and are frequently listed in *Businessweek*'s 'top global brands'. Similarly, business schools listed in the global ranking system experience a positive effect on their reputation. International students have limited information about other markets, and during their institution selection process, they will rely on different sources of information such as WOM, rankings, accreditations, and so on to familiarise themselves with the new markets (Source: Internal student survey 2013, UK Institute-B). The business schools that are frequently listed in global rankings become highly visible.

Companies become highly visible when they frequently communicate information to their stakeholders, and their positive media presence improves their reputation (Herbig and Milewicz, 1993). The positive media presence can also be linked with rankings in two ways. Several business schools make media appearances due to their corporate social responsibility, academic excellence, research capabilities, and so on. For instance, students of a reputed Pakistani university were invited to appear on a renowned TV show due to their positive role in helping flood-affected people. A vice-chancellor of a Pakistani university who is also an expert on bio-fuels was invited to the debate on energy crises in Pakistan. However, not all business

school personnel appear on talk shows or become subjects of stories in news articles. As an alternative means of improving visibility, business schools can achieve a positive media presence by scoring highly on global and national rankings depending upon their level of competition. These rankings are key information for building credibility among their stakeholders who, in return, support and recommend these business schools.

We saw in chapter two that visibility can be categorised into global, national, and negative visibility (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). As noted earlier, the business schools promote their global and national rankings to improve their visibility at global and national levels. The findings from the Pakistan field setting suggest that business schools frequently communicate ranking information to counter negative visibility (Bennett and Gabriel, 2001), for instance, one Pakistani respondent explains:

> "Several private institutes were shut down due to corruption and fraud. When we started as a private HEI, we were not the first choice of students; our student survey suggested that they preferred more secure public institutions in our city. When rankings were introduced, we got into the top rankings and our institute is now the first choice for students in our province. The reputation today is not associated with public institutions by default but with those who have shown better performance over the years, and this performance is measured through HEC rankings" (Source: Interview, PKG1).

Ranking for authenticity

Reputations are built when companies are seen as credible, trustworthy, reliable, genuine and real (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). Companies have to be honest with their stakeholders and share authentic information, because without authenticity there is no reputation. As noted earlier, with the growing number of business schools, the pressure from society has created the demand for audits (Power (1997). The introduction of rankings facilitated audits within the field. It is evident from the interviews that business schools frequently use their rankings to justify their

authenticity and to build stakeholders' trust (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan), which further legitimise the ranking mechanism (Wedlin, 2010).

Ranking for transparency

Transparency is a key ingredient for building a strong reputation. Reputations are built when companies frequently communicate information about their firms. Limited communication with stakeholders and the withholding of information on what they are doing and how and why they are doing it will have a negative impact on a company's reputation. When companies communicate their achievements and past performances, they build customers' confidence about their products and services (Herbig and Milewicz, 1993). Rankings are transparency instruments for the business education field, providing information to stakeholders by using different indicators of HE (Hazelkorn, 2011). It became evident from the interviews that the field members frequently disclose their ranking information to justify their claims and provide clear information (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

Rankings, as transparency instruments, affect not only the external stakeholders but also the internal stakeholders of business schools, such as faculty members. A good reputation results in a strong identity for a firm, helping it attract high-quality staff and keeping them motivated (Brown, 1996). The ranking lists measure the research output of business schools and act as a 'punish and reward' system for faculty members (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan).

Ranking for consistency

Consumers are bombarded with numerous messages though different communication channels. It is impossible to pay attention to every message; therefore, we (the consumers) select those that are relevant to us. As noted earlier in this study, the stakeholders of an institution can be classified into three broad groups: customers, employees and investors (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). Just like other industries, business schools also emphasise one-liners to keep key information

short and precise and to ensure that the information is perceived as credible among all groups of stakeholders. Whether it is their website information, a discussion with firms/individuals to seek donations (such as the upgrading of facilities), an open-day session with students, an email to alumni, or an internal email to employees, the business schools frequently communicate their rankings and accreditations to all stakeholder groups (Source: Interviews, UK and Pakistan). A consistent perception among all stakeholder groups leads to a positive WOM and reputation (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). When stakeholders recommend a business school, they create a consistent perception in the field and enhance the reputation of field members.

The school's communication strategy, when implemented, requires constant monitoring to analyse its impact (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). It is evident from the current findings that business schools look into different measurement instruments for evaluating and developing effective communication strategies. They analyse several ranking systems and their impact on different segments of students and other shareholders (Source: Internal student survey 2012, PK Institute-J). They also conduct internal student surveys to understand the significance of different ranking systems among different student segments. Similarly, rankings and accreditations are discussed with employees to improve the overall educational quality; for instance, they discuss research rankings with academic staff and set goals for improving their research ratings and research funding. The current study will discuss the consequences of different forms of rankings in the second theme of this chapter.

Summarising the ranking functions, the researcher argues that field members use ranking information to remain distinctive, visible, consistent, authentic and transparent. In this sense, categorisation systems construct a perception of reputation by defining and evaluating symbolic value for the field and its members. We noted earlier that rankings proliferated for two main reasons: the demand for comparable market information (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996); and the demand for

audits (Power, 1997) in the field of business schools. In this sense, the struggle for reputation justifies the two functions of ranking instruments. The struggle for distinctiveness, visibility and consistency relates to the comparable market information and student perceptions. The authenticity and transparency focus on the audit function of ranking systems. The struggle for symbolic value further legitimises rankings in the business education field, and the members of the field use ranking information in this struggle for reputation.

To conclude the discussion of the current theme, the researcher argues that categorisation systems plays an active role in defining and constructing reputation in the business education field. We earlier noted that the development of the business education field relates to the expansion of business education and the increasing level of media coverage of business education. Rankings also become highly influential due to two main reasons. First, it has the ability to transform other forms of value, such as academic and economic value, into symbolic value and vice versa. Second, rankings satisfy the consumer and control pressures. Due to the above-mentioned significance of ranking systems, the field members use and further promote their ranking information thus rankings become a key point of struggle in the field. Field members use rankings information for differentiation, visibility, transparency, consistency, and authenticity; in other words, they use rankings for building their reputation. In this sense, what ranking measures becomes important for building school's reputation thus it attempts to redefine symbolic value and to alter the perception of reputation in the business education field.

5.1.2 Shaping the business education field and field boundaries

The second theme debates the role of ranking in shaping the business education field of developed and developing countries. The current study provides empirical evidence to show how field members struggle for legitimising different types of rankings in the developed and developing business education field settings and

how they attempt to change the perceptions of field characteristics and boundaries of the field. When we look into the emerging codes from two the two case-studies, it clearly suggests that the field members responded differently to their ranking system(s). The following Table-10 summarises the main differences in the responses and reactions of field members to their ranking environments.

Table 10: Findings from two case-studies

Emerging codes	Developed HE market with multiple ranking environment	Developing HE market with single (domestic) ranking environment
The context of Rankings The context of reputation Impact on Operations and policy	Rankings contribute to business school status and the significance of ranking systems varies Multi rankings produce inconsistent results B-schools have concerns for ranking indicators B-schools' policy change due to different ranking systems The role of media houses highly influential on HE Favourable ranking information is displayed for differentiating their schools The B-schools positioning and communication strategy is flexible due to multi ranking and accreditation options Selective use of ranking information (cherry picking) is possible	Significance of rankings only relates to single source of ranking information (HEC rankings) B-schools concerns for methodology adopted by single source of rankings B-schools change in policy due to HEC rankings The role of media houses less influential due to limited access to international students Limited ranking options for differentiating business school Choosing among quality measurement instruments is not an option Selective use is less evident due to single ranking system
Rankings and student recruitment & student choice	Significance of multi rankings for national and international level competition	Significance of ranking only for national level competition

	The level of acceptance of multi rankings varies in different markets (international student markets)	The single source (Government based) is highly accepted by B-schools and its students at national level
	International rankings are crucial for business schools	International rankings are less significant due to limited number of international students
	International accreditations are highly significant for business schools	The impact of international accreditation is less visible
	Students refer to multi rankings during their purchase decision	Students rely on single source of ranking information
Rankings and Research	Rankings (REF) directly affects research funding	Research funding is not affected by ranking
	Research pressure on academia from quality and quantity of research output	Research pressure on academia only from quality perspective
Rankings and partnerships	Multi ranking information available about business school quality and performance	Schools performance is seen from single source of information during partnerships
	Rankings decided dominant and less dominant partner during discussions for academic partnerships	

Source: developed by researcher

Building on the findings (second-order codes) from the two case studies, the researcher highlights the reaction of business schools in the two ranking environments. Reflecting on these findings, the researcher discusses the current theme from the perspective of the two field settings. The current study discusses how categorisation systems shape the institutional field in developed and developing HE settings. The following Figure-7 summarises different ranking functions, which shapes the developed and developing business education field.

Figure 7: Ranking functions for shaping business education field

Ranking environments	Ranking functions	Sub analytical themes	Analytical Theme
Multi rankings environment of UK	Constructing comparison and contestations through categorisation systems	Shaping the developed business education field and field boundaries	Ranking shapes business education field and field boundaries
	Constructing international field and field boundaries		
Single (domestic) ranking environment of Pakistan	Countering the Western Model	Shaping the developing business education field and field boundaries	
	Constructing domestic contestation, field and field boundaries		

Source: Developed by researcher

While analysing the ranking environments in the two field settings, the researcher argues that the field and its members use rankings in different ways, which shape the business education field in developed- and developing-field settings. In developed-field settings, the researcher argues that different ranking systems constructs contestations and legitimise different means of comparisons, which becomes a basis of field formation. Actors also use rankings as an internationalisation tool to construct the international business education field. The actors in developing-field settings use local rankings to counter the Western model of rankings. They further use rankings to construct the perception of the domestic field and positions within it. Building on the above argument, the researcher attempts to explain the use of rankings in different field settings and the construction of the business education field in these distinct markets.

5.1.2.1 Shaping the field and field boundaries in the developed HE settings

Constructing comparisons and contestations through categorisation systems

In the second chapter, the researcher discussed the characteristics of a field where a set of institutions produce similar products or services. A field has boundaries that define not only the set of organisations but also the set of ideas about good and appropriate practices within the field (Gieryn, 1999). The symbolic boundaries build on people's perceptions of good and legitimate practices in the field (Lamont, 1992). The researcher argues that rankings are used to stratify competition within the field and create symbolic boundaries for the field (Lamont and Molnár, 2002). The field members use different types of rankings to redraw the boundaries of good research, student satisfaction and international status. Therefore, categorisation systems, such as rankings, symbolically differentiate a group of field members and define the leading business schools in research, student satisfaction, and status.

Business schools, which were introduced into the HE system in the early nineteenth century (Blanchard, 2009), have expanded globally. Since then, business schools have proliferated mainly due to the interest shown in them by old universities as they began to incorporate business schools into their university structures (Engwall and Zamagni, 1998). We noted earlier that, with the increasing number of business schools, a demand was created for a system that would provide transparency and comparability and set the standards for business schools. Several rankers such as FT, *Forbes*, *The Economist*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, have attempted to meet this demand by producing international rankings of business schools and their courses (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). In this sense, the rankings' proliferation can be termed as vertical expansion where several rankers provide relatively similar hierarchal lists of global business schools. Today, we also see different forms of transparency instruments, such as the student experience surveys, research-based rankings, accreditations, national rankings, and global rankings. The researcher argues that

field members in the business education field further institutionalise this horizontal expansion of rankings.

We noted earlier that global rankings are embedded with international accreditations. Therefore, international accreditations such as AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA not only function as a screening mechanism for international rankings (Wedlin, 2010) but also maintain transparency, control and accountability within the field. Therefore, the pursuit of international accreditations becomes equally significant in the business education field (Source: Interviews, UK).

Several developed countries have shifted their focus to research, innovation and technology to create knowledge-based economies (OECD, 1999). Research, which is highly significant for countries' development, has been heavily emphasised by governments. Governments have taken several measures to improve their research output. For example, in the year 2007, the HEFCE revised its research quality framework and REF became the successor to RAE (REF, 2014). As noted earlier, the REF is a specialised research-based ranking system that evaluates HEIs' research performance, basing the research funding on the research performance (REF, 2014). The government policy of linking research funding with the research rankings puts business schools and universities under pressure (Source: Interviews, UK).

Rankings have influenced the research culture and the academic life within the HE sector as ranking systems use research or scholarly productivity to measure research quality (Adams and Baker, 2010). As noted earlier the UK business schools and universities have introduced new policies and procedures to improve their REF scores. The business schools expect that their academic staff produce high quality research papers, which in turn could improve their research ratings. In this sense, REF sets the boundaries for research and researchers in the field.

Focusing on the demand for information, several rankings systems have been introduced, rating business schools and universities on student experience and

satisfaction. Student surveys such as the Student Experience Survey and NSS are student-oriented rankings as they focus on student satisfaction (NSS, 2014). The findings from UK field settings suggest that student surveys have become highly significant within the field as field members frequently advertise student surveys on their websites and in their published material (Source: Interviews, UK). Not all business schools ascend to the league tables. These marginalised field members use other forms of transparency instruments to justify their positions. For instance, one academic expert explains:

> "We already know what Harvard Business School stands for and how good they are, so to be honest you tell me, does Harvard business school really need AACSB or EQUIS approval, probably not. I think that accreditations and other types of evaluation systems are good for average and low-rated schools and they for sure use them to tell people that they are as good as any other school" (Source: Interview, UKF1).

Different forms of rankings are intended for different audiences with the aim of constructing the view of national, international and research markets in the field with different levels of contests and comparisons in the business education field. With the introduction of these transparency instruments, the field members have become active promoters of these instruments. As noted earlier, field members use different forms of rankings to justify their positions and the unique symbolic value offered by different types of rankings. In a way, these justifications provide a stratified view of competition in the field, in which the different forms of transparency instruments provide evidence of unique symbolic value in the field. For example, the research-based rankings create a distinctive position for leading research institutes, student surveys create a distinctive position for universities and business schools with highly satisfied students, and the global rankings provide evidence of leading positions and high status in the international field of business education (Source: Internal student survey 2013, UK Institute-C). Therefore, the way in which field members argue for their positions in different types of rankings supports the view of national and international competition, domestic and

international student-based competition, and research-based competition (Source: Interviews, UK).

We noted earlier how field members use different types of rankings to enhance and justify their position in different layers of competition. Markets are logics, and when processes are institutionalised, this changes institutional logic (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). The researcher argues that during the justification of different types of rankings, the field members attempt to alter the symbolic value and logics within the field. In this sense, the field members institutionalise different types of rankings as evaluation mechanisms for the field and attempt to alter the meaning and symbolic value associated with these ranking systems.

Constructing international field and field boundaries

In the above discussion, the researcher discussed the horizontal and vertical expansion of ranking systems and argued that rankings are used to justify and legitimise different means of comparisons. Building on the above discussion, the researcher argues that field members actively promote different forms of rankings. In this process, it legitimises these rankings, which shapes competition and reconstructs the symbolic value in the field.

We noted earlier that the expansion of business schools and their programs has attracted the attention of media and caused a general increase in the coverage of business studies (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). The field members use international rankings to alter public opinion about international business education, which has also influenced the position of business schools in the global arena (Wedlin, 2010). Actors such as media houses, the HEIs and governments are actively engaged in strengthening the international field of HE in general and business schools in particular. The aim is to standardise the evaluation mechanism across countries and to compare business schools internationally (Corbett, 2005). The key purpose for business schools to participate in rankings is related to the strong student pressures

where rankings become effective marketing tool. While investigating these assumptions, the researcher asked participants for their motives for participation in ranking systems. As discussed in chapter four, one reason that emerged from the findings relates to ranking ability for building international recognition. Majority of the case-study institutions in the UK target international student-segment where international rankings become important as they define an international and elite group of international business school. This aligns with the boundary-work concept where international rankings become a contest of who is inside and outside of international field of business education (Gieryn, 1999). The contest for belongingness to this group becomes continuous struggle among the field members. In this sense, the international rankings set the boundaries for international field and define the members of field.

As discussed earlier, the rankings are used by field members to internationalise the field by bridging differences in comparisons and assessments of the field. In the process of internationalisation, several other elements such as international accreditations have been introduced in the field (Hedmo, 2004). Several leading international business schools have played an active role in developing and promoting international accreditations by creating accreditation management desks on their campuses (Source: Interviews, UK). In a way, the field members at UK business schools justify international accreditations as a means of providing better assessments of international business schools.

5.1.2.2 Shaping the field and field boundaries in the developing HE settings

<u>Countering the Western model</u>

Earlier, we discussed how rankings shape the field in the developed HE settings. In this section the research argument builds on the findings from Pakistan to discuss the field change in the developing HE settings.

The global list is highly populated by business schools from the US and Europe, which shows the dominance of Western business schools in the global arena. The Pakistani business schools, just like those in several other developing countries, have not achieved any major rankings in the global ranking lists. The significance of HE in Pakistan has been consistently debated in several forums such as parliament, HEC conferences and media reports, but the country has endured political turmoil throughout its history, as a result of which education has not been able to prosper as had been imagined (Nayyar and Salim, 2005). However, with the establishment of the HEC in the year 2002, there has been eye-catching development and growth in the HE sector. The HEC faced two major challenges. The first was to expand HE by establishing new HEIs and improving student enrolment. In less than ten years, the HEC justified its existence as the number of HEIs increased by a hundred per cent and student enrolment increased by four hundred per cent (HEC, 2012). The private HEIs have also flourished in the last decade as several specialised institutions such as information technology, engineering, medicine, and business schools have been established (Isani and Virk, 2005). The second challenge was to improve the quality of HE in Pakistan. The HEC took several measures to improve the education quality for; example, HEC established QAA, encouraged QECs at HEIs, and initiated rankings for universities and disciplines (QAA, 2014; QEC, 2014).

Western business schools dominate the international rankings and one reason for their dominance can be linked to their selection criteria. As highlighted earlier, several global ranking systems such as FT and *Businessweek* use international

accreditations as a screening mechanism to shortlist business schools for their surveys and assessments (Hedmo, 2004). In this sense, these ranking systems favour business schools that have already established their status of 'good school' by achieving international accreditations. The business schools in developing countries, which have relatively small financial capital, are denied entry to the global rankings due to their inability to meet the minimum requirements for inclusion. For example, the FT and *Businessweek* rankings for executive education define the population using minimum criteria of size, international accreditations and turnover. Business schools with over two million dollars' turnover and accreditations from AASCSB, EQUIS and AMBA become eligible for FT and *Businessweek* rankings (Wedlin, 2006). Therefore, global rankings are beyond the reach of many business schools in developing countries such as Pakistan.

Gieryn (1999) used boundary-work approach to explain how actors involve in contests and struggle over authority for defining field and field boundaries and to differentiate members of a group from outsiders. Suddaby and Viale (2011) argued that professionals challenge the incumbent order to define the uncontested space, which creates new rules, boundaries and a new social order in the field. In this section, the researcher builds on these concepts to explain the construction of domestic rankings systems (uncontested space) and the recreation of symbolic boundaries and a new social order. Today, several developing countries have established their own ranking systems. For example, in Pakistan the HEC produces ranking lists for Pakistani business schools, and ranking systems such as *Zee News* rankings, *Hindustan Times* rankings, *Business India* rankings, and *Business Today* rank business schools in India. Similarly, in several other developing countries such as Nigeria and Kazakhstan, governments have started producing national HE rankings (Hazelkorn, 2011). The aim of these ranking systems is to counter the Western ranking systems, as developing countries have limited access to

international transparency instruments. In this sense, governments and local media houses have used their authority to define the uncontested space.

The business schools in Pakistan have set domestic competition as their priority. The main reason for intense domestic competition lies in their limited access to international student segments (Source: Interviews, Pakistan). For instance, in Pakistan, international students account for less than half of one per cent of the total number of students (HEC, 2012), which is very low when compared to developed countries such as the UK, which maintains a good proportion (thirteen per cent) of international students (HESA, 2013).

As noted in chapter four, the methodology adopted by the HEC rankings differs significantly from some other international ranking systems; however, it reconfirms rather than challenges the core features of ranking systems. First, it constructs an 'audit society' in the business education field by focusing on the domestic field settings of Pakistan that were not audited before (Power, 1997); second, it satisfies the domestic consumer pressure and demand for information (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996) about Pakistani business schools. In this sense, the HEC rankings legitimise the symbolic value of business studies and business schools in the field settings of Pakistan.

Constructing domestic contestations, field and field boundaries

In our earlier discussion, we noted why actors such as the government and media houses have introduced rankings in local field settings. The researcher argues that, with the introduction of this type of rankings, they are further legitimised in their local field settings, thus shaping competition and the symbolic value in domestic field settings. The field members, in this case the business schools of Pakistan, use the HEC rankings to justify domestic competition and symbolic value within the domestic field of business education.

It has become evident that the HEC rankings are significantly influenced by the on-going efforts in Pakistan to construct the public view of business education and positions of Pakistani business schools. These on-going efforts by the state actors aim to construct comparability and strengthen the Pakistani field of HE. One particular movement was the establishing of HEC, which later introduced reforms such as QAA, QECs, and rankings at national level (HEC, 2012), thus standardising the comparisons across the country. As noted earlier, the international ranking systems have set the international accreditations as minimum criteria for assessment. The HEC rankings also confirm the core features of international ranking systems and are attempting to influence this view by linking the HEC rankings with their QA standards (Source: Interviews, Pakistan).

Prior to the HEC rankings, the leading business schools in Pakistan enjoyed high status in their domestic market; however, this symbolic value did not justify claims such as the 'leading' or 'one of the best' business schools in Pakistan. For business schools in Pakistan, the introduction of HEC rankings provided further opportunities to promote the national view on business education and to promote their own standing in the local field. Therefore, with the introduction of HEC rankings, they became the active promoters of HEC rankings and of the view of the domestic business education field, thus legitimising a new status hierarchy or social order (Suddaby and Viale, 2011). From the statements made by Pakistani respondents during the interviews and from the institutions' websites, it is evident how field members in Pakistan argue the significance of HEC rankings and their position within them. Such justification of positional status legitimises HEC rankings as a means of creating distinctive positions within their local field settings. In a broader context, the justification of domestic rankings (HEC rankings) further legitimises the practice of rankings in the business education field and increases the proliferation of rankings in developing countries (Green et al., 2009).

As noted earlier, field members in developed countries use different types of rankings such as global rankings, national rankings, research-based rankings and student surveys to justify their positions and the unique symbolic value offered by these rankings. In the context of a developing country, the rankings system in Pakistan has not expanded horizontally and the field lacks different types of transparency instruments, which we mentioned earlier in this chapter. Therefore, the business schools in Pakistan have made their claims to national status by drawing on slightly different aspects of the HEC rankings. The highly rated (elite) business schools in Pakistan use HEC rankings to construct their position in the domestic field by focusing on the recognition of their national profiles. These elite schools are independent universities/institutions with a strong focus on business education. The main problem for a small-scale institution is to construct visibility in relation to some of the large public universities that offer various programs in different department such as arts, social sciences, applied sciences, and so on. For these types of business schools, the inclusion of category-based rankings by HEC is considered key for building a national status (Source: Interviews, Pakistan).

Rankings provide a hierarchical ordering of business schools in the field (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996) and they may not be favourable to all competing business schools. It becomes evident that the average-ranked business schools in Pakistan justify their position by discussing their position within a specific region of Pakistan or on specific elements/criteria of HEC rankings. For instance, one marketing manager commented:

> "We have improved our rankings over the years. Yes, our overall ranking is not as good as some of the leading business schools in Pakistan, for example _____ [business school name], but we are one of the leading business schools in the research component. Our research score is higher than most of the leading business schools" (Source: Interview, PKG2).

Although field members draw on different aspects of the HEC rankings, it is evident from the case-study findings that HEC rankings provide a means for field

members in Pakistan to promote their views on business education and their positions in the domestic field of business education. In this sense, the field members focus on the geographic boundaries of the field to define the set of organisations in the business education field. The field members then use the HEC rankings to justify domestic competition within the geographic boundaries of the field. Therefore, in the process, the local rankings redraw the symbolic boundaries of status (Lamont, 1992) within the geographic boundaries of the field.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

The central contention of the current study is that rankings construct reputation, and shape the developed and developing business education field and field boundaries. The current study attempts to look beyond the view of rankings as a transparency instrument or evaluation mechanism by conceptualising rankings as part of field and field boundaries formation. Inspired by the work of Gieryn (1999), the current study attempts to extend our understanding of boundary-work by looking into the business education field from the perspectives of developed- and developing-field settings. The current study noted boundary-work at different levels such as boundary-work for reputation, boundary-work for international and domestic fields, and boundary-work for new categorisations. The field and field boundaries of business education are formed through boundary-work depending on who does the boundary-work and against whom. Categorisation systems play an active role in field and field boundary formation as they construct different types of contests, such as a contest for symbolic value, a contest for authority and a contest for autonomy. The current study posits the role of rankings in constructing reputation in the business education field. Conceptualising rankings as categorisation systems, the researcher argues that these systems play an active role in the formation of developed and developing business education fields. In developed-field settings, actors used rankings as an internationalisation tool to construct the international business education field, and they used different categorisation systems to legitimise different means of comparisons. In developing-field settings, actors use categorisation systems to counter the Western model of rankings and to construct the perception of the domestic field and positions within it. The current study uses the field settings of the UK (developed country) and Pakistan (developing country) to examine the field and boundary formation of business education.

In the introduction chapter, the researcher highlighted the research gap in the rankings literature. The current study argues that rankings construct symbolic value; therefore, there is a need for clarity on why field members struggle for reputation, in the field and how rankings construct symbolic value for the field. The researcher also noted different ranking environments prevailing in developed and developing countries, which further demanded an exploration of how actors react to their ranking systems. Therefore, it becomes the aim of the current research study to address the above-mentioned research gap.

The researcher aims to contribute to the existing literature on fields and boundary formation by critically examining the two objectives that were set out at the start of this study. A reiteration of these research questions will be useful here:

Question 1: How and why are rankings used to construct reputation in the business education field?

Question 2: How do rankings shape the business education field in the developed and developing HE settings?

The current study adopted a case-study approach to the analysis of the above-stated research questions. To investigate the research questions, the researcher clarified the research variables and provided a solid theoretical framework (Yin, 2003). The current study presented the theoretical framework in the second chapter and also presented review the context of HE, reputation and rankings. Business schools were established to construct the body of knowledge, and they shifted their focus to research after World War II. With expansion in the business education field, the business schools entered the period of globalisation when they engaged across borders, providing wider access to HE and globally accepted programs and courses (AACSB, 2011). The researcher also noted the cutbacks in the government funding that led HEIs to adopt a market-driven approach (Askehave, 2007). The business schools and universities strive for alternative financial sources in order to remain

sustainable in the market. Therefore, the marketised HE sector and the intensified level of competition have made symbolic value, such as reputation, more significant for the HEIs than ever before (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007).

The researcher also discussed the significance of reputation for the HEIs, as it helps them in their pursuit of excellence. A good reputation provides distinction and constructs value in the field (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). In chapter two (Section 2.4), the researcher reviewed the rankings literature to understand how rankings are constructed and how they affect national policies and students' choices. The researcher also discussed ranking environments, which prevail in the UK and Pakistan. The HEC ranking system in Pakistan is the only ranking system available in the Pakistani HE environment whereas the UK ranking environment accounts for the different ranking systems and transparency instruments such as research rankings, media-based rankings, student surveys, and accreditations.

The theoretical clarification and the review of key concepts formed the basis for developing the methodology of the current research study. In chapter three, the researcher explained the research methods applied in the current study and developed case-studies from the UK and Pakistan HEIs. The researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique to select cases for the current study. The criteria used for case selection were industry sector, location, number of sites, and rankings. At industry level, the researcher chose business schools, with ten selected from the UK and ten from Pakistan. The selected locations represent developed and developing countries, which was a prerequisite for a research study of this kind. Finally, business schools with good rankings were selected from the UK and Pakistan. For the UK location, the researcher selected business schools that were highly ranked in the *Financial Times*, *The complete university guide*, and *The Guardian* rankings in the year 2013. Business schools selected from Pakistan were highly rated in the HEC rankings in the year 2013. The researcher took a qualitative thematic approach to

analyse forty-three interviews and develop second-order codes from the two case-studies. The data were analysed with the help NVivo-10 software (see Section 4.1).

The discussion in chapter four has elaborated the role played by rankings in developed and developing HE markets. The emerging codes from the two case-studies formed the basis of the research analysis. Building on the emerging codes, the researcher discussed the analytical themes (Chapter 5), which were introduced in the theoretical framework of this study.

The current study is guided by the concept of boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999) to analyse the development of rankings, the construction of reputation, and the formation of field and field boundaries. This study will conclude by recapturing the main findings from the two analysis chapters (Chapter 4 and 5) to examine the motivation for the development of rankings in developed and developing HE markets and their implications for the perception of symbolic value and boundaries in the business education field.

6.1 The role of rankings in building reputation

The starting point of the current study is the notion that there is continuous struggle to define what is proper and good practice in the field and which members are considered to be leading and inside a specific field. This has been defined as a struggle to establish field boundaries and to construct reputation. Categorisation systems, such as rankings, play an active role in this struggle to evaluate organisations and practices. Rankings become important for business schools as they set criteria for evaluating business education and define and redefine positions in the field, which builds the reputations of the business schools.

To critically examine the role of ranking in building reputation, it is imperative to understand the significance of ranking systems. While attempting to explain what rankings are and why they have proliferated, the current study provides several answers to these questions by focusing on the context and the role of rankings for

constructing developed and developing business education fields. The current study takes a field perspective and argues that reputation, which possess symbolic value, is constructed in close interaction with the field members. The researcher noted that, with the proliferation of rankings, the field members frequently use rankings to justify taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs, thus further legitimising the processes and practices (Green et al., 2009). The current study showed how and why rankings have proliferated and been legitimised, and what makes them so influential in the field. To explain this, the researcher noted two main reasons for rankings' significance in the business education field. First, the expansion of business schools has led to the demand for control and audits in the field. In any society, external pressures create a demand for monitoring and inspection (Power, 1997), where rankings are tools for conducting external audits in the field. There are other auditing instruments such as accreditations, which are equally significant in the business education field. Building on the significance of these instruments, several rankings systems are now embedded with international accreditations to meet the increasing demand for accountability. For example, *FT* and *Businessweek* rankings use AACSB and EQUIS as a screening mechanism to short-list business schools for assessment (Hedmo, 2004). Second, consumers demanded comparable market information in order to make informed decisions (Rao, 1998). Ranking systems bridge the gap between consumers and control pressures by providing comparable information for the users and acting as an external auditor for the field. The two functions of rankings become highly significant in the field, with the field members becoming active promoters of rankings and accreditations. With the deliberate use of rankings language to persuade stakeholders, the field members play an active role in legitimising rankings, thus changing the logics in the field.

Apart from consumer and control pressures, ranking systems further proliferated due to their ability to construct status for the field members. Rankings put

institutions in descending order (Hazelkorn, 2011) and create status hierarchies (Rao, 1994); hence, they become a proxy of status in the field. This opens a new debate on institutional status and its significance in the field. The researcher noted that there is a persistent struggle for reputation in the field, where reputation holds material and abstract value. Reputation is seen through rankings, which creates symbolic value and secures material and symbolic profits. The current study showed that reputation becomes highly significant in the business education field where symbolic value is transformed into academic and economic value and vice versa. The academic value is built through research output, contribution to research, and renowned academic staff members, whereas the reputation of a business school is seen through rankings. Rankings measure academic efficiency through research indicators (Liu and Cheng, 2005); therefore, business schools with superior reputation obtain better rankings and consequently create symbolic value for the field members. In other words, the academic value transforms into symbolic value and creates symbolic profit. The economic/ material value also interconnects with the symbolic value. The symbolic value of reputation influences students' purchase decisions, makes business schools more attractive, and creates demand for their courses, thus allowing business schools to charge premium fees. In this sense, the symbolic value is transformed into economic (material) benefit. The categorisation systems, such as rankings, take part in the struggle for reputation among field members. Ranking systems become a tool to transform one form of value into another, and define and redefine value in the field.

The field members persistently struggle for reputation in the field and they use rankings during this struggle. Reputation is built when institutions are perceived as visible, distinctive, authentic, transparent and consistent (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2004). The reseracher argued that actors use categorsation systems to justify the above-mentioned elements of reputation. The main purpose of constructing reputation is to remain distinctive (Dolphin, 2004), where rankings become highly

significant for justifying their distinctive positions. Rankings construct positional hierarchies, and when big media houses such as *FT* and *Businessweek* publish business schools' rankings, they create visibility for the business schools. When business schools are frequently listed on ranking charts, this reflects their consistent performance, which further establishes their reputation among all stakeholders (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). Field members use external authentication of rankings and accreditations to justify their credibility and trustworthiness to their audiences. It became evident from the findings that categorisation systems, such as rankings, compare institutions using different sets of indicators (Hazelkorn, 2011) and set the standards for the field (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010). In the struggle of constructing reputation in the field, the two roles (Consumer information and control) of rankings are legitimised. The struggle for distinctiveness, visibility and consistency justifies the role of producing comparable market information (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996) for the users (Consumer pressure), while the struggle for authenticity and transparency legitimises the audit (Control) function (Power, 1997) in the business education field. Therefore, the field members take part in the struggle for reputation and further promote and legitimise rankings in the field. In this sense, rankings change the perception of reputation in the field, and what rankings measure becomes a point of struggle for building reputation.

While the demand for information and audits has paved the way for rankings proliferation, the field-specific processes have further triggered the development of rankings systems. Rankings construct the perceptions of a market and market demand (Hazelkorn, 2011). From this perspective, the development of rankings demands a clarification of what rankings actually are. Considering the theoretical perspective on rankings, the current study shows that rankings are not just performance indicators (Usher and Savino, 2006); they are also a contest for defining and building reputation. The current study shows that the development of rankings is driven by the reputation of business schools as they strive to develop distinctions

and positions relative to other business schools in the field. In this sense, building reputation through rankings concerns the aspects of distinctiveness and belongingness, triggered by the need to define and belong to a group and to differentiate one's own school from similar business schools both inside and outside of that group (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010). Rankings provide positions and group 'good schools' to distinguish them from others (less well-known), which affects business schools' reputation and status. In other words, rankings change the perception of who has the authority to evaluate and how one evaluates the reputation of field members in the business education field.

6.2 The role of rankings in forming field and field boundaries

Through different categorisation systems, the field members attempt to legitimise different means of comparisons and contestations. The actors use categorisation systems to construct an international field of business education and shape competition within the field. In addition, the introduction of different forms of rankings shapes the meaning of symbolic value in the field. Actors use categorisation systems to form field and field boundaries by challenging the existing contestations and authorities. Focusing on the context of developing countries, the current study argues that actors use local rankings to counter the Western (international) model of rankings. These ranking systems legitimise domestic contestations and attempt to construct a perception of domestic competition within the geographic boundaries of the field, redrawing the boundaries for the field.

Focusing on the characteristics and construction of categorisation systems, the current study argues that these systems, such as rankings, are categorisation tools, which classify a group and group members with similar attributes (Bowker and Star, 1999). These categorisation systems are not just a mechanism for grouping elements with similarities; they also separate that group from other elements and groups, thus constructing distinctions for the group. Focusing on these two aspects of categorisation, the current study looks into the processes of boundary-work to

analyse how rankings create belongingness and distinctions between groups. Rankings construct criteria for evaluating the performance of participating members and determine what group members are and what they do. In this sense, rankings align with the Aristotelian classification system (Bowker and Star, 1999), which uses predefined measurements and criteria for classifying groups. Rankings can also be termed a prototypical classification system (Bowker and Star, 1999) that uses prototypes to define who is inside and outside of the group. Rankings create status hierarchies (Hazelkorn, 2011) that determine the leading (prototypes) business schools of the field. These leading business schools become role models for less well-known business schools, which creates mimetic isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) in the field. These isomorphic pressures force field members to mimic the role models by incorporating their norms, standards and practices, thus lead them to change and making the field members more alike.

Building on the two classification principles, Aristotelian and prototypical, the current study attempts to explain how they contribute to the boundary-work to determine the field and its symbolic boundaries. As noted earlier, rankings determine reputation in the field; in other words, they define the characteristics that become a key point of struggle in the field (Bourdieu, 1988). The identification of such characteristics aligns with Gieryn's (1999) work, which explores the contest between authorities for defining the characteristics of science. In this sense, rankings can be conceptualised as a contest for defining legitimate activities and for setting boundaries by establishing criteria for symbolic value. Another key principle of boundary-work relates to the definition of the membership. Boundary-work can be seen as a credibility contest of expulsion, where boundaries are drawn to identify members of the field and exclude others (Gieryn, 1999). Rankings, in this sense, set boundaries for the good business schools by creating status hierarchies and excluding less well-known schools. Rankings become active promoters of prototypes and set boundaries for elite business schools.

Gieryn (1999) argued about the authority that is used for setting criteria for the field. His study suggests that there is a persistent struggle over the authority to judge the members of the field and that the increase in the number of authorities puts the autonomy of the field under pressure (Gieryn, 1999). Different ranking systems claim the authority for judging business schools. Large media houses produce the majority of these rankings, which shifts the power from the business education field to external organisations, thus threatening the autonomy of the field. The emergence of different types of ranking systems may threaten the autonomy of the field but it also increases the autonomy of the field members. As noted earlier in this study, the increasing number of ranking systems creates more choices for the field members, in that they are able to use favourable ranking information to build their reputations.

The researcher argues that categorisation systems, such as rankings, helped to construct the international and domestic fields of business education, which are then used by field members to position themselves as international schools or elite members of a domestic group. The governments and media houses produce rankings with the aim of assessing and comparing business schools. Several international ranking lists are produced and have become active promoters of the international field of business education and contestations. The institutionalisation of rankings changes institutional logic, and the shift in logic changes the criteria for assessing the legitimacy of organisational forms (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). The field members use rankings and their measurement criteria to change perceptions in the field, thus creating a demand for new measures and systems. With the expansion of business schools, we noted the vertical proliferation of rankings where rankings systems such as *FT*, *Forbes*, *The Economist* and the *Wall Street Journal* have started producing relatively similar international rankings (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996) of business schools and their courses. In the vertical proliferation sense, the aim of developing international rankings was to standardise

the evaluation mechanism across countries, compare business schools internationally (Corbett, 2005), and alter public opinion about international business education (Wedlin, 2010). The field members in developed countries used international rankings to construct the field of international business schools, which also influence their positions in international competition.

With the changing perceptions in the field, different forms of categorisation systems, such as student-experience surveys, research-based rankings, accreditations, national rankings and global rankings, were introduced in the business education field. Actors such as governments and media houses played an active role in the horizontal proliferation of rankings and introduced new forms of categorisation such as research-based rankings and student surveys. Field members in the business education field then became active promoters of these systems and further legitimised this horizontal proliferation of rankings. The emergence of different forms of rankings set new contestations and reconstructed the symbolic value for the field by defining who and what is good and appropriate in the field (Lamont, 1992). Field members use rankings as a tool to stratify competition, create symbolic boundaries, and justify their positions and unique symbolic value along with them.

The international contest became a key point of struggle for the field members, especially for the Western schools. Relating to the expansion of business education in Pakistan, the current study shows how boundary-work takes place through HEC rankings in Pakistan, which facilitates the need for domestic comparisons, the need for information for students, and the need for audits by holding domestic business schools and universities accountable for their performance. The expansion of business education has led schools to compete for students where rankings play a role in attracting students and resources in domestic and international markets. Rankings lists thus guide business schools on how to compete in relative fields. In

this sense, the proliferation of rankings satisfies the demand for information (Hazelkorn, 2011) and the demand for audits (Power, 1997).

The development of rankings is partly driven by their role as categorisation system, which sets boundaries for the international and domestic business education fields. The current study conceptualised boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999) and institutional work (Suddaby and Viale, 2011) to capture the creation and recreation of boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. Boundary-work takes place through different ranking systems and accreditation procedures that create distinctions and belongingness (Gieryn, 1999) for the field members. The current study shows that categorisation systems, such as rankings, set standards, evaluate and form the perception of international and domestic business education fields (Khaire and Wadhwani, 2010); they also determine who has the authority to contribute to the boundary-work.

The boundary between business education in developed and developing countries, such as the UK and Pakistan, is frequently referred to as a geographical boundary but it can also be a symbolic boundary for domestic and international fields of business education. These boundaries determine who is included and who counts in the domestic and international fields of business education. International rankings largely proliferated due to the attention given by the large media houses (Roberts and Dowling, 2002) that helped in developing an international perspective on business education. Similarly, several other categorisation systems, such as accreditations systems, take part in the formation of the international field. The majority of these international categorisation systems belong to Western countries, which may be perceived as a threat to developing countries as Western business schools predominate in these lists. The HEC rankings in Pakistan were driven by a desire among Pakistani HEIs to redraw the boundaries of business education, largely in response to international rankings as they are perceived to draw boundaries for the business education field that exclude Pakistani business schools.

To explain this, the researcher revitalised the institutional work theory by looking at the construction and legitimisation of uncontested space (Suddaby and Viale, 2011) through rankings in the business education field. As noted earlier, actors such as governments and local media houses challenge the current order (international rankings) to define the uncontested space, which is to create new rules, boundaries and a new social order (Suddaby and Viale, 2011) in the domestic field settings. Although we have seen some business schools from developing countries acceding to the top hundred schools in the world, it is the business schools of developed countries that dominate the global rankings. In the process of constructing the international field of business schools, the new screening mechanism of short-listing business schools for assessment for international rankings restricts the participation of business schools from developing countries. For instance, it is beyond the ability of business schools in developing countries to produce two million dollars' worth of turnover, which is set as a minimum criterion for *FT* and *Businessweek* rankings (Wedlin, 2006). As a consequence, uncontested space is created for comparing business schools in developing HE settings. Actors such as governments and media houses in the developing countries defined and populated the uncontested space by introducing domestic rankings in the domestic field. The introduction of domestic rankings changes the equation for business schools in the domestic market. With the limited number of international students, they have set domestic competition as their priority. The field members use domestic rankings to construct the public view of business education and their positions in the local field settings. In this sense, the field members legitimise local rankings and their standards and reconstruct the symbolic value in the domestic field. The current study took a case-study of Pakistan to explain how local actors (government) in developing countries counter the Western model of rankings and shape local competition. In several other developing countries such as Nigeria and Kazakhstan, governments have also started producing local rankings (Hazelkorn, 2011) while there are instances of local media houses challenging the uncontested space. For example, local media houses

such as *Zee News* rankings, *Hindustan Times* rankings, *Business India* rankings, and *Business Today* rank business schools in India. This emerging tendency to counter categorisation systems aligns with the credibility contest for expansion (Gieryn, 1999) where authorities attempt to expand the frontiers of the field.

The HEC rankings enable Pakistani business schools to be categorised as a different group and redraw the boundaries of the business education field, which allows them to be included in the 'good schools' category. In this sense, the HEC rankings make it possible to reconstruct positions in the field and to determine new prototypes (benchmark) for the business education field (Bowker and Star, 1999). With the Western model of rankings (international) in focus, several business schools such as Harvard, Stanford and the London Business School are often referred to as inspirations for the business education field. The new categorisation systems, such as HEC rankings in Pakistan, add to the existing inspirations by promoting new prototypes for the field. It became evident that Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) are frequently referred to as benchmarks of Pakistani business schools. In this sense, rankings redefine boundaries and prototypes for the field by constructing new categories. An examination of the UK business schools and their ranking systems illustrates more clearly the struggle to set boundaries through new categorisation systems. For example, the REF system determines new prototypes for research and NSS determines quality institutions according to student satisfaction. On the other hand, the development of HEC rankings in Pakistan is clearly a struggle to set boundaries between Pakistan and Western countries. The development of HEC rankings is drawn by the desire for a specific Pakistani contestation, a contest where Pakistani business schools can exert influence, and a contest where a Pakistani perspective and criteria are taken into consideration. This allows us to understand the significance of the HEC ranking system and the authority (Bourdieu, 1988, Gieryn, 1999) that HEC enjoys among the Pakistani business schools. As noted

earlier in this study, the criteria used by the HEC rankings are different from international ranking systems; for instance, establishing QEC is one of the criteria for the HEC ranking system. Considering the criteria used by Pakistani and international rankings, the boundary between Pakistani and Western business education becomes visible. There is an on-going debate about the criteria of the HEC ranking system and there is a struggle to determine criteria that balance Pakistani demands and perceived international standards. The boundary-work in Pakistan, which includes the development of the HEC rankings and the encouragement of Pakistani criteria, can be deemed successful as it brought Pakistani schools onto the list and defined new prototypes for the business education field.

The discussion so far clearly suggests that ranking systems construct reputation and set boundaries for the business education field, its field members, and for different geographical locations. Rankings construct hierarchies and differentiate a group of institutions from others, thus constructing a boundary of elite business schools. The boundaries are set for international and domestic elites depending on the international and domestic ranking systems respectively. The criteria and the construction of ranking systems not only determine the elite group but also confirm the supremacy of already prominent business schools of the field. When constructing rankings, rankers consult business schools that are perceived to be the leaders of the field (Wedlin, 2010), thus influencing the criteria for the rankings. In this sense, rankings are partly constructed on the characteristics of leading business schools, and when they are in place the rankings further promote and confirm the position of already perceived leading business schools. It becomes extremely difficult for other, lesser-known schools, especially from developing countries, to compete for the central positions in the field. The anxiety among field members and the struggle for authority and supremacy lead to the defining and construction of uncontested space (Suddaby and Viale, 2011) such as alternative categorisation

systems. The emerging categorisation systems set new contests, creating an opportunity for the previously marginalised business schools to distinguish themselves and struggle for supremacy in that category.

The development of international and domestic rankings contributes to the understanding of business education as domestic and international fields. The researcher also argued that rankings in developed and developing countries is clearly a contest for symbolic value, authority, and autonomy, and shape the international and domestic fields by defining the appropriate and desirable practices within their respective field settings. As noted in the developed-field settings, the growing interest in different types of ranking is likely to encourage this need in developing-field settings. The construction of international business schools and the development of multiple rankings may answer some of the ranking critiques and are likely to reduce negative impacts and the search for other reliable and valid ranking systems (Adler and Harzing, 2009). However, the widening gap between developed and developing business education fields in international rankings may spur the need to construct and develop a parallel international ranking system(s), which might provide access and encourage the participation of business schools in the developing countries.

6.3 Contribution of the study

It was a privilege to be engaged in this study. The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to our understanding of different ranking systems and their impact on reputation, and the construction of field and field boundaries of business education. Considering rankings as categorisation systems, the current study showed that these systems play an active role in the formation of developed and developing business education fields.

Conceptualising rankings as categorisation systems, the current study has made several theoretical contributions by providing empirical validation of existing

research studies, largely relating to the concepts of boundary-work and the struggle for reputation in the field. The current study explained how rankings are contested to construct reputation, authority, and boundaries for the business education field. Therefore, it becomes the first study to explore this process by using two distinct field settings.

The current study showed that rankings might be conceptualised as categorisation systems that take part in the construction of international and domestic fields of business education. Building on the study by Bowker and Star (1999), the current study showed that rankings align with the Aristotelian classification system by using predefined measurements and criteria to classify business schools and to separate them from less well-known schools. In addition, rankings can also be conceptualised as prototypical classification systems that use prototypes (leading schools) to define who is inside and outside of the group (Bowker and Star, 1999). Through new categorisation systems, such as the HEC rankings in Pakistan, actors attempt to introduce new prototypes for the field.

The current study provided empirical evidences in support of Bourdieu's (1988) work and argues that rankings construct symbolic value in the business education field. Focusing on the symbolic aspect of rankings, the current study showed how it relates to other forms of value such as academic and economic value, and how value is transformed from one form to another. One of the key contributions of the current thesis lies in the examination of rankings' influence on business schools' reputations. Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) presented a reputation model emphasising the key factors of visibility, transparency, distinctiveness, consistency and authenticity, which build the reputation of a firm. Providing empirical evidence in support of their work from the business education field, the current study showed how rankings influence these key factors of reputation. The researcher thus argues that rankings redefine, evaluate and change the perception of reputation in the field and that what they measure becomes a contest for building symbolic value.

The researcher noted two main reasons for rankings' proliferation: to provide comparable information, and to perform a control function through audits. In this sense, the current study validates the work of Hazelkorn (2011), who argued that rankings act as a highly significant source of market information, and it adds to Power's (1997) theory of 'audit society' by arguing that rankings monitor and inspect the activities of the business education field. The current study thus contributes to our knowledge by linking the two ranking functions with the symbolic construction of the field.

Building on the concepts of boundary-work (Gieryn, 1999), the current study showed the formation of field and field boundaries in developed and developing business education fields. The current study contributes to our understanding of the influence of rankings in constructing international and domestic business education fields and field boundaries. Therefore, it is the first study to discuss different functions of categorisation systems in developed- and developing-field settings, which shape the field in terms of who and what is legitimate, good and desirable in their field settings. Building on the study of Gieryn (1999), the current study provided empirical evidence of the boundary-work at different levels such as boundary-work for reputation, boundary-work for international and domestic fields, and boundary-work for new categorisations. In line with Suddaby and Viale's (2011) study of institutional work, the current study becomes the first study to explain the construction of uncontested space through rankings in the business education field. Focusing on the developing-field settings, the current study showed that actors defined and populated the uncontested space of domestic competition and category, where field members compete for supremacy and positions within that group, thus legitimising and setting new boundaries for the field. Inspired by the boundary-work and institutional work, the current study showed that categorisation systems are tools for justifying and legitimising different types of comparisons and for reconstructing symbolic value though them. Rankings thus

play an active role in boundary formation by constructing different credibility contests, such as a contest for symbolic value, a contest for authority, and a contest for autonomy.

When we consider the empirical perspective of ranking systems, the current study extends our understanding about the development of government-based ranking systems in developing countries. Hazelkorn's (2011) work has been frequently cited in this study. Her study argued about transformation of HE through ranking systems and the reactions of the field members to these systems. Her study identified developing countries with government-based ranking systems but majority of her empirical evidences were limited to the ranking systems in developed countries. The current study pushes the boundaries of knowledge by acknowledging the development of rankings and reactions to ranking systems both in developed and developing countries. It is now possible to think of rankings' impact on business schools in different ways depending on the available ranking systems in different markets. The researcher does not claim that the impact of rankings is entirely different in the two case-studies; rather, this study has explained how this impact converges and diverges in the two field settings.

In many ways, this study contributes to the developing HE sector in general and the Pakistani HE sector in particular. The current study is the first of its kind to discuss the Pakistani ranking system. The ranking system in Pakistan was introduced in the year 2006; since its inception, no other study appears to have debated the reaction of field members in Pakistan. This study will have considerable significance for the producers of ranking lists in developing countries seeking to understand the significance of different types of transparency instruments that will help to develop or upgrade their ranking systems and provide more options for their field members to create distinctiveness and symbolic value. The current study may help the Pakistani students to make informed decisions by providing them with an understanding of the HEC ranking system and their evaluation mechanism.

6.4 Limitations of the study

Before concluding this study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, given its small scale but its rather ambitious aim of trying to analyse the significance of rankings in developed- and developing-field settings. Being a qualitative study, the generalisability of the current study is low in comparison to quantitative research studies. The aim of this research is to interpret and contribute to the theory development that might be generalised later by conducting further quantitative research studies and by providing empirical evidence from other countries. The data were drawn from case-study institutions in the UK and Pakistan; a wider dataset involving more countries would undoubtedly have produced results that are more valid. This study adopted a case-study approach which allowed the researcher to familiarise himself with their HE systems, rankings, reputation, and some illumination of these processes, but a wider study on a larger scale would be able to claim more generalisable and holistic results. The twenty business schools selected for the two cases present a particular problem when we consider the scale of developed and developing HEIs selected for this study; therefore, using data from single locations in developed and developing countries as a basis for commentary on developed and developing markets is clearly questionable.

This study also has some issues with the sample of informants, reflecting the issue of pragmatism. There are issues surrounding the selection of a sample without incorporating the views of students, who are the main beneficiaries of the HE system. This study took a school perspective, and the informants shared students' views by reflecting on their student surveys, but capturing the views of students would have added to the triangulation of information. Despite these limitations, the reader may have some sympathy with the opinion that this research study has shed some light on inadequately researched areas; therefore, it may become a basis for more useful research enquiries.

6.5 Further research

It is important to discuss how future research might build on the findings of the current study. As highlighted in this study, the media attention and field expansion have led to the rankings' proliferation; therefore, further research is needed to understand the role of the media in the field development. One option may be to undertake a critical examination of the role and power of media houses in the HE field. Hazelkorn (2011) discussed the contribution made by media houses to rankings and the competitive environment, emphasising their global reach to the readers. A similar finding emerged from the current study; however, this argument may not be entirely convincing when we debate the role of media houses from 'autonomy of the field' perspective. This suggests an interesting enquiry that might be attempted in the future to examine the role of these media houses in improving the quality and standard of education and the power of media houses in reshaping the HE system. Considering the control of big media houses over the HE sector, one might ask whether HE relies too much on these media houses' rankings. Can HE somehow bring control back into the system? Is it possible to follow an alternative global ranking system that is governed within the HE system? The answers to these questions may require further investigation and might be attempted in future studies.

There were many obstacles in the fascinating journey of this research and it would not have been possible to complete this work without the support and assistance of many along the road. The researcher believes that this research is not an endpoint; rather, it provides several tracks ahead, and it may be difficult to choose which one to follow.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Universities in Pakistan

	PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES/DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTES	
	Universities/DAI's chartered by the Government of Pakistan	
S. No	University/DAI Name	Main Campus Location
1	Air University, Islamabad	Islamabad
2	Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad (AIOU)	Islamabad
3	Bahria University, Islamabad	Islamabad
4	COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad	Islamabad
5	Dawood College of Engineering & Technology, Karachi	Karachi
6	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Islamabad	Islamabad
7	Institute of Space Technology, Islamabad (IST)	Islamabad
8	International Islamic University, Islamabad	Islamabad
9	Karakurum International University, Gilgit, Gilgit Baltistan	Gilgit
10	National College of Arts, Lahore (NCA)	Lahore
11	National Defense University, Islamabad (NDU)	Islamabad
12	National Textile University, Faisalabad	Faisalabad
13	National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad (NUML)	Islamabad
14	National University of Sciences & Technology, Rawalpindi (NUST)	Islamabad
15	NFC Institute of Engineering & Technology, Multan	Multan
16	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad	Islamabad
17	Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences, Islamabad (PIEAS)	Islamabad
18	Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Lahore	Lahore
19	Pakistan Military Academy, Abbottabad (PMA)	Abbottabad
20	Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi	Karachi
21	Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad	Islamabad
22	University of FATA, Kohat	Kohat
23	Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore	Lahore
24	Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan	Multan

25	Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi	Rawalpindi
26	Government College University, Faisalabad	Faisalabad
27	Government College University, Lahore	Lahore
28	Government College for Women University, Faisalabad	Faisalabad
29	Islamia University, Bahawalpur	Bahawalpur
30	King Edward Medical University, Lahore	Lahore
31	Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore	Lahore
32	Lahore College for Women University, Lahore	Lahore
33	Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture, University Rawalpindi	Rawalpindi
34	University of Agriculture, Faisalabad	Faisalabad
35	University of Education, Lahore	Lahore
36	University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore	Lahore
37	University of Engineering & Technology, Taxila	Taxila
38	University of Gujrat, Gujrat	Gujrat
39	University of Health Sciences, Lahore	Lahore
40	University of Sargodha, Sargodha	Sargodha
41	University of the Punjab, Lahore	Lahore
42	University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences, Lahore	Lahore
43	Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University Lyari, Karachi	Karachi
44	DOW University of Health Sciences, Karachi	Karachi
45	Institute of Business Administration, Karachi	Karachi
46	Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences, Jamshoro Sindh.	Jamshoro
47	Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro	Jamshoro
48	NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi	Karachi
49	Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah (Shaheed Benazirabad)	Nawabshah
50	Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Sciences & Technology, Nawabshah	Nawabshah
51	Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur	Khairpur
52	Shahaeed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University, Larkana	Larkana
53	Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam	Tandojam
54	Sukkur Institute of Business Administration, Sukkur	Sukkur
55	Sindh Madresatul Islam University, Karachi	Karachi
56	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazirabad	Nawabshah
57	University of Karachi, Karachi	Karachi

58	University of Sindh, Jamshoro	Jamshoro
59	Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan	Mardan
60	Bacha Khan University, Charsadda	Charsadda
61	Frontier Women University, Peshawar	Peshawar
62	Gomal University, D.I. Khan	D.I.Khan
63	Hazara University, Dodhial, Mansehra	Manshera
64	Institute of Management Science, Peshawar (IMS)	Peshawar
65	Islamia College University, Peshawar	Peshawar
66	Khyber Medical University, Peshawar	Peshawar
67	Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat	Kohat
68	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agricultural University, Peshawar	Peshawar
69	NWFP University of Engineering. & Technology, Peshawar	Peshawar
70	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal, Dir	Dir
71	University of Malakand, Chakdara, Dir, Malakand	Malakand
72	University of Peshawar, Peshawar	Peshawar
73	University of Science & Technology, Bannu	Bannu
74	University of Swat, Swat	Swat
75	University of Haripur, Haripur	Haripur
76	Balochistan University of Engineering & Technology, Khuzdar	Khuzdar
77	Balochistan University of Information Technology & Management Sciences, Quetta	Quetta
78	Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences	Lasbela
79	Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Quetta	Quetta
80	University of Balochistan, Quetta	Quetta
81	Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), AJ&K	Mirpur
82	University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir, Muzaffarabad	Muzaffarabad
83	University of Poonch, Rawalakot	Rawalakot
84	Women University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bagh	Bagh

PRIVATE SECTOR UNIVERSITIES/DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTES

S. No	University/DAI Name	Main Campus Location
1	Aga Khan University, Karachi	Karachi
2	Foundation University, Islamabad	Islamabad

3	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore	Lahore
4	National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad	Islamabad
5	Riphah International University, Islamabad	Islamabad
6	Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad	Islamabad
7	Ali Institute of Education	Lahore
8	Beaconhouse National University, Lahore	Lahore
9	Forman Christian College, Lahore (university status)	Lahore
10	Global Institute, Lahore	Lahore
11	Hajvery University, Lahore	Lahore
12	HITEC University, Taxila	Taxila
13	Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore	Lahore
14	Institute of Management Sciences, Lahore	Lahore
15	Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan	Multan
16	Lahore Leads University, Lahore	Lahore
17	Lahore School of Economics, Lahore	Lahore
18	Minhaj University, Lahore	Lahore
19	National College of Business Administration & Economics, Lahore	Lahore
20	Qarshi University	Lahore
21	The GIFT University, Gujranwala	Gujranwala
22	The Superior College, Lahore	Lahore
23	The University of Faisalabad, Faisalabad	Faisalabad
24	University of Central Punjab, Lahore	Lahore
25	University of Lahore, Lahore	Lahore
26	University of Management & Technology, Lahore	Lahore
27	University of South Asia, Lahore	Lahore
28	University of Wah, Wah	Wah
29	Baqai Medical University, Karachi	Karachi
30	Commeces Institute of Business & Emerging Sciences, Karachi	Karachi
31	Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education, Karachi	Karachi
32	DHA Suffa University, Karachi	Karachi
33	Greenwich University, Karachi	Karachi
34	Hamdard University, Karachi	Karachi
35	Indus University, Karachi	Karachi
36	Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi	Karachi
37	Institute of Business Management, Karachi	Karachi
38	Institute of Business and Technology, Karachi	Karachi
39	Iqra University, Karachi	Karachi

40	Isra University, Hyderabad	Hyderabad
41	Jinnah University for Women, Karachi	Karachi
42	Karachi Institute of Economics & Technology, Karachi	Karachi
43	KASB Institute of Technology, Karachi	Karachi
44	Karachi School for Business & Leadership	Karachi
45	Muhammad Ali Jinnah University, Karachi	Karachi
46	Newport Institute of Communications & Economics, Karachi	Karachi
47	Preston Institute of Management, Science and Technology, Karachi	Karachi
48	Preston University, Karachi	Karachi
49	Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Sc. & Technology (SZABIST), Karachi	Karachi
50	Sir Syed University of Engg. & Technology, Karachi	Karachi
51	Sindh Institute of Medical Sciences, Karachi	Karachi
52	Textile Institute of Pakistan, Karachi	Karachi
53	Zia-ud-Din University, Karachi	Karachi
54	Abasyn University, Peshawar	Peshawar
55	CECOS University of Information Technology and Emerging Sciences, Peshawar	Peshawar
56	City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar	Peshawar
57	Gandhara University, Peshawar	Peshawar
58	Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences & Technology, Topi	Topi
59	Iqra National University, Peshawar	Peshawar
60	Northern University, Nowshera	Nowshera
61	Preston University, Kohat	Kohat
62	Qurtaba University of Science and Information Technology, D.I. Khan	D.I.Khan
63	Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar	Peshawar
64	Al-Hamd Islamic University, Quetta	Quetta
65	Al-Khair University, AJ&K	Bhimber
66	Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, AJK	Nerain Sharif

Note: Some of Universities are added in 2012 and 2013

Source: http://www.hec.gov.pk/OurInstitutes/Pages/Default.aspx

Appendix 2: Scoring System of University Rankings in Pakistan

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Scoring System of University Ranking</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Name of field</td><td>Score</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Students</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.1</td><td>Students produced having 16 years of education</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2</td><td>Students produced having MPhil / 16+ years of education</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.3</td><td>Number of PhDs produced</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.4</td><td>Student selectivity</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.5</td><td>% of students getting admission having 60% and above marks</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Facilities</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.1</td><td>Number of books in main library</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.2</td><td>Number of journals subscribed in main library</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.3</td><td>Number of computers for students per student</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.4</td><td>Number of computers for faculty per faculty</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.5</td><td>Bandwidth per student</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.6</td><td>Laboratories for practicals</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.7</td><td>Number of teams participating in inter-university games</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.8</td><td>Ranking of university in Inter-university games</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.9</td><td>Equipment costing more than Rs. 2 million</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Finances</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.1</td><td>Amount generated through own resources</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.2</td><td>Amount spent library + research as %age of total budget</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.3</td><td>Recurring expenditure per student</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.4</td><td>Non-Recurring expenditure per student</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Faculty</td><td>25</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.1</td><td>Full-Time PhD faculty</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.2</td><td>Ratio of PhD faculty to total faculty</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.3</td><td>Full-Time faculty having Mphil/16+ years of education</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.4</td><td>National and international awards won by faculty</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.5</td><td>Student-Teacher ratio</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.6</td><td>Trainings received by faculty</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.7</td><td>Amount of funds obtained through competitive grants for research project/faculty</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Research</td><td>25</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.1</td><td>Research papers published by faculty members and students during the past 3 years</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.2</td><td>Number of journals published by the university</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.3</td><td>Number of books published by faculty members</td><td>1</td></tr>
</table>

5.4	Papers presented and published at refereed international conferences by faculty members and students	1
5.5	Papers presented and published at refereed national conference by faculty members and students	1
5.6	Gross Score Point of all faculty members as determined by PCST	2
5.7	Gross Score Point per faculty member	2
5.8	University organized conferences/symposia/ seminars/workshops at national level members and students sponsored by other agencies	1
5.9	University organized conferences/symposia/seminars/workshops at international level sponsored by other agencies	2
5.1O	Number of patent designs/formulae/improved varieties/breeds etc	2
5.11	Number of international collaborative research projects	4
5.12	MPhils produced per faculty	1
5.13	PhDs produced per faculty	2
	Total Marks	100

Source: (HEC, 2009)

Appendix 3: Respondents at the case-study institutions and industry experts

INSTITUTE	CODE	TITLE	INTERVIEW DATE	INTERVIEW METHOD
UK Respondents				
Institute A	UKA1	Senior Lecturer Marketing	22-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute A	UKA2	Director of Marketing and Recruitment	28-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute B	UKB1	Professor of Marketing	18-Nov-14	Face to Face
Institute B	UKB2	Interim Marketing Director	02-Dec-14	Face to Face
Institute C	UKC1	Reader in Marketing	24-Nov-14	Skype
Institute C	UKC2	Marketing Director	06-Nov-14	Skype
Institute D	UKD1	Professor of Marketing	30-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute D	UKD2	Associate Director of Communications & Events	19-Nov-14	Face to Face
Institute E	UKE1	Professor of Corporate Reputation	25-Nov-14	Skype
Institute E	UKE2	Director of Communications and Marketing	03-Dec-14	Skype
Institute F	UKF1	Assistant Professor	09-Dec-14	Face to Face
Institute F	FUK2	Marketing Director	04-Nov-14	Face to Face
Institute G	UKG1	Senior Lecturer in Marketing	27-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute G	UKG2	Director of Communications and Marketing	31-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute H	UKH1	Lecturer in Creative and Cultural Industries	28-Nov-14	Skype
Institute H	UKH2	Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment	12-Dec-14	Skype
Institute I	UKI1	Associate professor Marketing	06-Jan-15	Face to Face
Institute I	UKI2	Head of Marketing	12-Nov-14	Face to Face
Institute J	UKJ1	Lecturer Marketing	21-Oct-14	Face to Face
Institute J	UKJ2	Director Marketing	20-Nov-14	Face to Face
Pakistan Respondents				
Institute A	PKA1	Assistant Professor Marketing	17-Mar-14	Skype
Institute A	PKA2	Manager Communications	14-Feb-14	Skype
Institute B	PKB1	Assistant Professor Marketing	17-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute B	PKB2	Deputy manager marketing	18-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute	PKC1	Assistant Professor Management	19-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute C	PKC2	Director Marketing	14-Mar-14	Skype
Institute D	PKD1	Treasurer and Administration Manager	04-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute D	PKD2	Lecturer Marketing	17-Mar-14	Face to Face
Institute E	PKE1	Director administration	28-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute E	PKE2	Assistant professor Marketing	27-Feb-14	Face to Face
Institute F	PKF1	Lecturer Marketing	23-Jan-14	Face to Face
Institute F	PKF2	Director administration	13-Mar-14	Face to Face
Institute G	PKG1	Assistant professor Marketing	10-Mar-14	Face to Face

Institute G	PKG2	Administration -Registrar	28-Mar-14	Face to Face
Institute H	PKH1	Senior lecturer Marketing	24-Jan-14	Skype
Institute H	PKH2	Administration - Manager	21-Mar-14	Skype
Institute I	PKI1	Assistant Professor Marketing	29-Jan-14	Skype
Institute I	PKI2	Administration Director	30-Jan-14	Skype
Institute J	PKJ1	Assistant Professor Marketing	25-Mar-14	Face to Face
Institute J	PKJ2	Manager Administration	25-Mar-14	Face to Face
External and Industry Experts				
External expert	DIR-A	Director	23-Dec-14	Skype
External Expert	DIR-B	Director	10-Dec-14	Skype
External Expert	DIR-C	Director	07-Jan-14	Skype

Section 1: General questions about institution and personal context

- Can you please introduce yourself?

- Can you please introduce about your institutions?

- What motivates and de-motivate you while working in this institute?

Section 2: Understanding issues and reactions to rankings

- How important are rankings?

- What motivates business schools to participate in rankings?

- Do rankings brought any changes to your institution structure?

- Have you observed any changes that may have happened due to rankings at your institution?

- Is there any relation between rankings and your institutional policy? If yes then how?

- Does your institution evaluate rankings for developing plans and strategies?

- How do you see the rankings and research relationship at your institution?

- How do you see ranking role in your institutional relationship with stakeholders other than your students?

- How do you see ranking role in your institutional relationship with your students?

- As an institution, are you happy with the way rankings are conducted?

Section 3: Rankings and reputation

- How important is reputation in HEIs?

- What are your thoughts on your institution reputation?

- What makes a strong HEI reputation?

- How do you see the impact of rankings on your institutional reputation?

- Do you think rankings are helpful to your institution?

- How important is Positioning to business schools in Pakistan/UK?

- How does your institution position yourself in the market?

- How important is communication to business schools in Pakistan/UK?

- How do rankings relate to your communication strategies?

Appendix 5: Exemplar of first- and second-order codes, key words, and empirical extracts

First orders codes	Key words	Empirical extracts exemplars
A context of Rankings (Second order codes)		
Love hate relationship	Options, quality, reductionist, well meant, compare, absolute numbers, biases, methodological concerns, methodology	'what rankings do, they turn very complex qualitative information into one quantitative measure, they are incredibly reductionist when it comes to it.' (UKC1) 'The rankings are sometimes very cruel in a sense that they judge you in absolute numbers. You are either better than others or you are not.' (UKB1)
Competition	Compete internationally, level playing field, reputation, competition, accreditations, positional wars	'The impact of rankings is very much there and today business schools compete in these league tables and they are forced into the these positional wars.' (UKH2). 'Some other countries are catching up and when the reputation difference among countries is minimized, it would become difficult for UK institutions to compete internationally in next 10 - 15 years or so.' (UKI1)
Proxy of reputation	Advocates reputation, reputation, Power of rankings, ranking game, synonymous with rankings	'Ranking advocates your reputation, your brand to stakeholders. So I think ranking has direct impact on the institutional reputation.' (UKD1) 'The power of rankings has increased in last few years and most of UK institutions have been forced to play this ranking game.'(UKI1)

Rankings and Accreditation relationship	Input, output, process, mutually supportive, reputation, accreditation goal, triple accredited, positive, quality, unique, triple accreditation	'An accreditation checks quality on all levels and that is input, process, and output. The rankings have more of a output focus.' (DIR-B) 'I think they are mutually supportive, I think the business schools takes accreditation very seriously. It is considered very important for their reputation.' (DIR-A)
Multi-Rankings environment	Ranking options, advantage, significant, confusion, consistency, lack consistency, cherry picking, different methodologies	'I think multiple rankings add to the confusion for the students. The institutions respond to the variety of ranking by cherry picking the best ones.' (UKH1). 'The business schools take rankings seriously, and here in UK we have many ranking options that we can use to our advantage.' (UKB2).
Significance and Power of media houses	Media companies, media houses, visibility, developing criteria, driving the development, quality metric, income generation, dominant, power shift	'The trends in the current market would suggest that these rankings would become more dominant. The media companies who are actually developing the criteria for these rankings from their perspectives so you have to ask yourself whether the media companies actually should be driving the development of this sector.' (DIR-B) 'I think the power has shifted from HE to Media houses and some goes for research, the publishers are in charge, the editors not the academics.' (DIR-A)
A context of Reputation		
Series of Reputation	Series of reputations, many reputations, not	'The reputation of an institution is not one but a series of reputations. A university can

	one reputation, stakeholders, different perspectives, students, proxy of reputation	have many reputations like reputation for research, reputation for students future job employability, reputation for graduate and post graduate courses and so on.' (UKA1).
University and Business School reputation	Not same, weak b-school, strong b-school, harmonious, strong university, weak university	'The reputation of university and business school may not be the same because I can think of one case where there is very strong business and management school but relatively weak university so you have slightly different tension there.' (UKH1)
Easy to understand	Not brands, commercial language, more comfortable, reputational factor, long history, synonym of quality, important, easily understood	'Reputation is not a new word or a new concept, but it has a long history. It is a simple word that is easily understood among people, especially those, that are directly related to higher education.' (UKF1) 'a lot of my colleagues (in other disciplines) over there would say that institutes are not brands, they don't prefer the commercial language when they associate it with university.' (UKB1)
Significance for students	Market segments, international students, individual offering, country, reputation, dominant factor, parents, student recruitment, quality,	'Every year we receive a good number of international students from Pakistan, India, China and other parts of the world and our surveys suggest that in most cases reputation is one of the dominant factor that this segment of students rely upon.' (UKA2) 'Reputation would definitely impact on your student recruitment. It would impact on the quality of staff and students that you can attract.' (UKD2)
Differentiation	Different, core values,	'I think there is more of standardized

	rebrand, standardised approach, differentiate, student preferences, recognition, market	approach in UK than US. The UK schools needs to differentiate more clearly.' (DIR-A) 'So it is up to the management of the school to identify what a school stands for how it is different and what are the core values and the important part is to communicate it to their stakeholders.' (UKF2)
Policy, Operational and financial change		
Institutional policy	Goal, policies, rankings, competing globally, internationalisation, benchmark, global race, strategic level, brand image, priority, main objective, strategy, information	'The rankings are considered very important at the strategic level in my department.' (UKH1). 'Business schools especially in the west are competing globally. The rankings and accreditations have become global and some of accreditations bodies and ranking systems are more concerned about the internationalization aspect within institutions.' (UKC2) 'everyone want to improve their rankings which could help them in building their reputation and brand image.' (UKJ2)
Operational change	Research grants, new staff, strategic change, hiring, network, new structure, rankings, accreditation, new roles, quality	'These new positions or roles are definitely influenced by the supremacy of rankings and accreditations that we see in business school environment.' (UB2) ' It is very interesting for us because (institute C) has hired 55 new academic staff at our school and around 300 overall at the university level just before the REF so partly because of REF and partly because of the general change in the strategy .' (UKC1)

Rankings and financial resources	Rankings, rhetoric, fee, high fee, investment, quality assurance, international students, information, more students, REF, changes	'I think you would find most highly ranked schools with higher fee and average business school with relatively lower fees than the premium ones.' (UKA2) 'We have discussed REF a lot and we made certain changes to our existing research setup so that we meet the REF criteria.' (UKF1)
Academic life and Research Culture		
Academic life and rankings	Pressure, REF, productive, determine, barrier, employers, employing, judging, reputation	'I suppose it is a general pressure for example at (institute C) there is definitely pressure on academia to research according to the REF, officially not, officially nobody would say that but in reality of course you know that you have to have four papers with at least one has to be a four star ideally two four star.' (UKC1)
Impact on research	REF, teaching, research output, evaluation system, research ratings, freedom, choices, rankings,	'I started my academic career in mid 90's and I have written some books and published my work in some good journals. Then we had more freedom, more choice to contribute the way we want to, but rankings have made the research more complex.' (UKD1)
Student Recruitment		
Impact on student choice	Target, student segments, target segment, international students, choosing, fee, rankings, options, differentiate, confidence	'Our postgraduate students have a good percentage of international students and our internal surveys suggest that rankings were among the top three factors for choosing us.' (UKJ2) 'they evaluate different options and they consider rankings for this purpose. It is very likely that they differentiate schools based on

		their position in the market.' (UKH2)
Greater impact on international students	Segments, international students, rankings, overseas students, external communication, absence of information, postgraduate students	'in the absence of information rankings provide the external information about the institutes so it becomes very important.' (UKB1) 'At undergraduates we find that university ranking are important but at business school, it becomes increasingly important at postgraduate when they are looking for a more specialist business school rather than undergraduate in UK.' UKB2)
Impact on student recruitment process	Fee, applications, higher fee, pricing, unsophisticated, rankings, judging, selection process, accreditations, prices, selectivity, paradoxical	'Ranking has a direct impact on the student selection process. For the past 3 years or so, we have constantly been getting good rankings on the FT, and this year we have seen about 15 percent more applications compared to the last year and that is encouraging.' (UKG1) 'since we got our triple accreditations, we have improved our rankings, our prices went up and applications went up.' (UKH1)
Partnerships of Institutions		
Collaborations with academic institutions	Internationalisation, relationships, analyse, rankings, dominate, important, international partners, quality, country association	'If we talk about partnerships with other schools, then yes I do believe that rankings are very important not only for us but also for our partners as you are considering international partners, that are located in places not well known to us. The rankings that are highly credible either at national or international level, becomes a good source of understanding the quality of schools.' (UKI2)

The power of negotiations	Rankings, reputation, dominant, less dominant, power, superior recognition, partnerships	'When you have good reputation and good rankings, the bargaining power would probably be with institution that has superior reputation and recognition among the two partners. The bigger the difference is between the reputations of the two partners, more power you have during these sort of partnerships.' (UKA2)
Partnering institutions with similar attributes	International partnerships, factors, good fit, drivers, awareness, rankings	'We would look for a good fit university, that has similar profile of programs, profile of students, and research interest, and accreditation and rankings will come into that when we are looking for partners.' (UKB2)
Collaborations with industry	Brands, comfortable, alumni, selling point, accreditations, rankings, shorthand information, sell	'We have done strategy workshops with small medium and large companies so in this case we are the service providers and I assume the customers in this case are the industries, that would act the same way as our students. I think they probably would do research about couple of institutions they are interested in and then decide which one they want to go with.' (UKA1)
Positioning, communications and Rankings		
Rankings as a differentiation mechanism	Awareness, distinctive, rankings, positioning, marketing strategy, accreditation, unique, student	'It's a unique proposition and our rankings comes very high within that and with the triple accreditation, they kind of one and two, when you look at the fact that we have researched what our audiences look for, rankings and accreditations are always on top of the list. So that is why they are on the

		top of our list of strategy too.' (UKB2)
A verification mechanism	Verification, positioning, rankings, particular, evidence	'we would pick particular rankings or part of rankings where we say we are best for employability so again we claim something and then we give evidence and yes rankings is most of the times is part of the evidence that support your claims. So yes we actually use rankings for positioning ourselves.' (UKI1)
Location based positioning and rankings	Rankings, standing, branding, global competition, students, markets, competition, compete, positioning strategy, dominance, justification, quality	'The rankings not only rank schools but also present the trends of educational quality within different countries. In many global countries you would find the dominance of US schools and also good number of UK business schools. Ranking in this case is a justification of perceived high quality education in these countries.' (UKH2)
Rankings as a marketing content	Students, overseas students, communicating, rankings, message, big impact, strategy, short message, precise,	'For a communication strategy, you need to have a strong but a short message. People won't read your stories they want everything in bullet points and precise. For communication offices in business schools, it is a blessing to have good rankings and triple accreditation. It would make marketers job a lot easier because they know it is a powerful message that is simple and important for the prospective students.' (UKG2)
External recognition	Rankings, important, internally, externally, communicate, information,	'And you would like to communicate these rankings to the students so of course we use them to consolidate our statements and tell them look this is what others have to say

	judgements	about us and it is not just a piece of external information it tells you how we have performed and how good we are from most the business schools in UK.' (UKE1)
Impact on advertising	Rankings, dominant, market standings, communications, headlines	'The rankings and accreditations are headlines and it is assumed that students read headlines and therefore they want to give them the best headline.' (UKH1)

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INFORMATION SHEET

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION SHEET AND A SIGNED COPY OF THE CONSENT FORM (WILL BE SENT BEFORE INTERVIEW) FOR YOUR RECORDS

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

What is the research about?

The aim of this study is to examine the role of rankings in building reputation and shaping business education field in developed and developing markets.

Why is the research being carried out?

This research is carried to understand the impact of ranking system on business education in developed and developing higher education markets. The study debates the research argument from institutional perspective and its impact on its stakeholders (students, employers, staff and academia, and other industries. This research is expected to fill the gap in the higher education literature in terms of rankings and its significance in the business education field. In a way, this research will draw a comparative study between the business schools of developed and developing higher education markets.

Who is carrying out the research?

I am the one who will be carrying out the research. I am a PhD student at the University of York in York Management School as I am conducting this research for my PhD thesis.

Who can participate?

Marketing specialists (faculty having specialization in marketing), Professors, lecturers, and people directly involved in quality assurance, marketing and communications of case study institutions can participate in the interviews.

What does the study involve?

If you agree to participate, I will conduct an interview lasting no longer than 1 hour to ask you a number of questions.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign two copies of the consent form (one copy is for you to keep). Your participation will be highly appreciated as your views can make a significant difference to the outcome of this study.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There will be no risk, according to my expectations, in taking part in this study.

Are there any benefits to participating?

There is no direct benefit to the participants. But you can consider this interview as a knowledge sharing exercise.

What kind of information do I have to give?

You can share your thoughts freely as your identity remains completely anonymous.

What will happen to the data I provide?

Your data will be transcribed in word document and analysed.

What about confidentiality?

Digital recordings of interviews will be transferred immediately after each interview to a secure password protected university server and then subsequently deleted from the digital recorder. The researcher himself will do transcription of these files and these files will be also stored on a protected laptop with a password.

The data will be transcribed. Your name and all your references regarding specific people and institutions will be anonymised.

Will I know the results?

If you wish, I can send you a summary of the study results by e-mail once the study has completed.

The Ethics Committee of The University of York has approved the current research study. If you have further questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me.

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The role of rankings in building reputation of business schools and its impact on the developed and developing business education field.

Lead researcher: Syed Haider Khalil

Consent Form

This form is for you to state whether or not you agree to take part in the study. Please read and answer every question. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

Have you read and understood the information leaflet about the study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have these been answered satisfactorily?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the information will be held by the researcher, and your identity will be kept anonymous in any publication?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the information you provide may be kept after the duration of the current project, to be used in future research?	Yes	No
Do you agree to take part in the study?	Yes	No
If yes, do you agree to being recorded on digital recorder?	Yes	No

Your name (in BLOCK letters):

_____

Your institute and position:

_____

E-mail address (if you wish to request for the summary of the results):

_____

Your signature: _____

List of Abbreviations

ABS	Association of Business Schools
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AMBA	Association of MBAs
DAIs	Degree Awarding Institutions
EFMD	European Foundation for Management Development
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
FT	Financial Times
GOP	Government of Pakistan
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HESA	Higher Education Statistical Agency
NEP	National Education Policy
NSS	National Student Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QEC	Quality Enhancement cell
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
REF	Research Excellence Framework
THE	Times Higher Education
UGC	University Grant Committee
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VC	Vice Chancellor
WOM	word-of-mouth

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