

**Demographical Analysis of Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA Students in  
Pakistan -  
A Case Study of AIOU**

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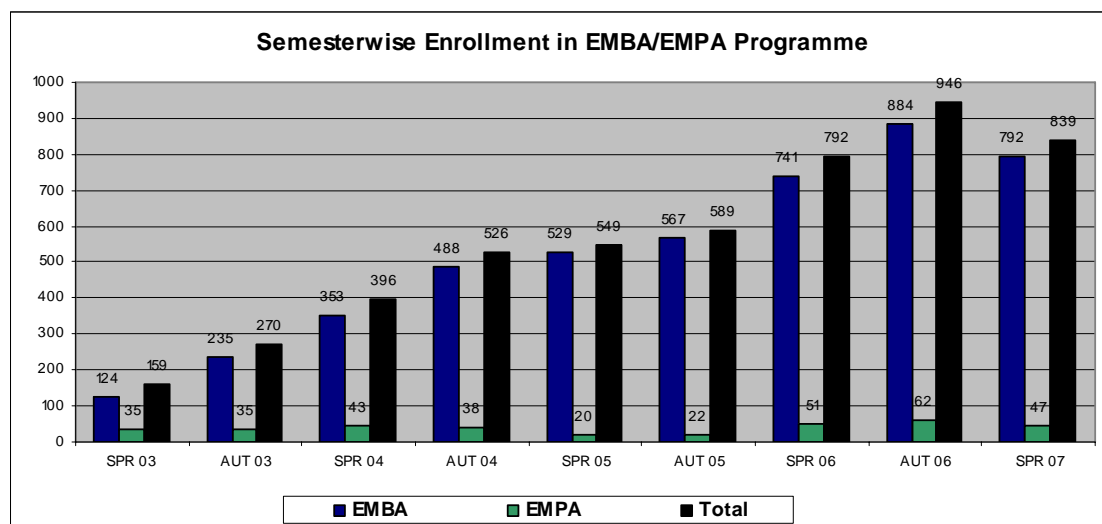
## **ABSTRACT**

*The Department of Business Administration, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has been running Commonwealth of Learning MBA/MPA for Executives Programme from the year 2003. This programme has international recognition as established and launched in collaboration with other open universities under the umbrella of Common Wealth of Learning. Although AIOU has been experiencing a continuous increase in the enrollment at semester basis but the department planned to collect data to identify the areas, need special attention. A questionnaire was constructed for the purpose and two years demographical data was collected from the applicant which was analyzed with the help of SPSS. Results show that enrollment in EMBA is increasing while the enrollment in EMPA is on constant decline. Majority of the applicants are male, working at either lower or upper level of management. But a balanced enrollment is received from both public and private sector. Individuals working in defense and manufacturing sector are identified as least interested candidates in this programme. The analysis further shed light on promotional tools, as advertisement and website are the two effective methods to and provide awareness about this programme. Implications and conclusions are presented based upon these results.*

## INTRODUCTION

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is a distance education institution, which imparts multi-disciplinary education from basic to doctoral level programmes. AIOU provides education through distance mode of learning to those segments that cannot continue their educational journey through formal system due to one or other reason. The focus groups of AIOU are the working class, females who can not attend school/colleges due to cultural or traditional bondages and people residing in far flung areas. It was established in 1974, and became the first Open University in Asia. From its inception, the university has achieved different milestones and now an active member of 17 member mega university club<sup>3</sup>.

In the start of current decade, the department planned to launch MBA programme for executives, for those having adequate experience in public and private sector but willing to enhance knowledge and skills by studying courses at advanced level. COL provided platform to AIOU in order to launch MBA / MPA programme for Executives in collaboration with other open universities of the region. In this way, Commonwealth of Learning and SAARC Countries Open Universities under an international agreement prepared Commonwealth International Executive MBA/MPA Programme. As an outcome of the collaboration between COL and four open Universities in South Asia, the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration and Public Administration Programme was introduced in the year 2002. However, it was first offered by Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan in the year 2003. Presently the department is going to enroll the tenth intake of this comprehensive program that has been running all over Pakistan successfully.



**Figure "1"**

In the first semester (Spring, 2003), after a complete process of screening the department enrolled only 159 students in both EMBA/EMPA Programmes. To ensure the quality, the department enrolled those candidates achieving prescribed level of qualification. Only those candidates were eligible to apply having at least 2 years of post graduation working

<sup>3</sup> Mega University means where the number of admissions exceed one hundred thousands annually.

experience at executive cadre and then had to pass through a test and an interview. In the second semester, total enrollment became 270 students. Later the enrollment kept increasing at increasing rate. In the current semester the department of Business Administration enrolled 839 students. Right from the inception, the average calculated rate of semester wise increase in enrollment is 26%, with annual rate of change is 64%. This high temptation is due to the sustained quality and updated business curricula of Business Administration Department for the executives.

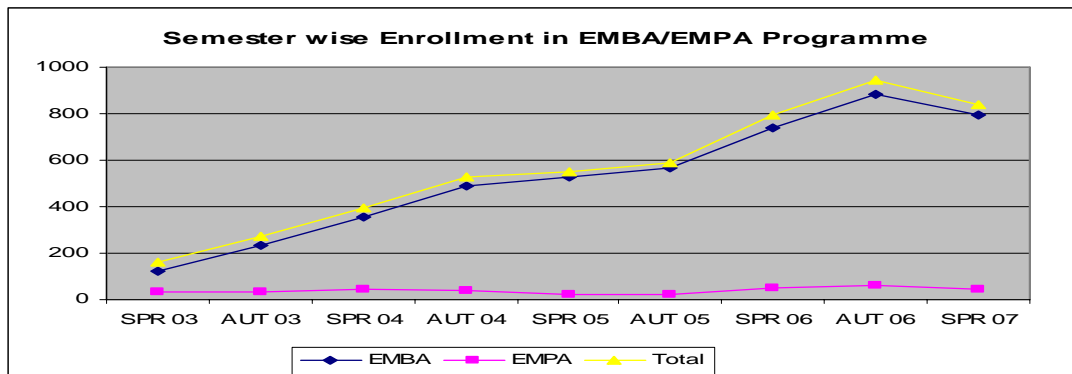


Figure "2"

The admission statistic shows slight variations in the total admissions of EMBA/EMPA Programme. For the first two years the total enrollment increased significantly. But in the year 2005 the total enrollment increases but not as much significantly as it increased in the previous two years. From the year 2006 to onward, the total enrollment is increasing at increasing rate.

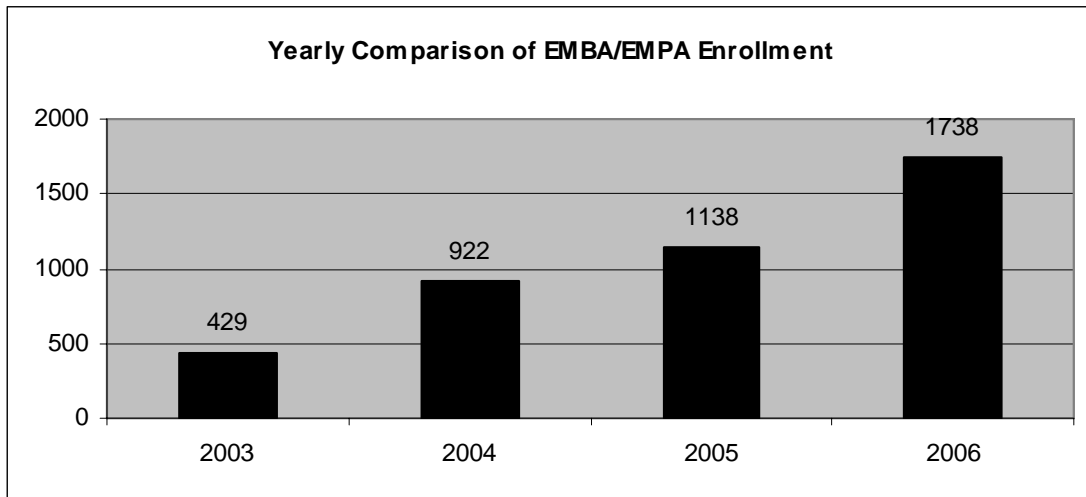
Semester-wise enrollment in EMBA/EMPA Programme			
	EMBA	EMPA	Total
SPR 03	124	35	159
AUT 03	235	35	270
SPR 04	353	43	396
AUT 04	488	38	526
SPR 05	529	20	549
AUT 05	567	22	589
SPR 06	741	51	792
AUT 06	884	62	946
SPR 07	792	47	839

Yearly Comparison of EMBA/EMPA Enrollment			
2003	2004	2005	2006
429	922	1138	1738

Table "1"

The admission data for EMPA Programme shows that total enrollment remained constant for initial two semesters then increased and later on decreased significantly. However the department has experienced constant but insignificant increase in the enrollment of said programme from the semester Autumn 05. The aggregate rate of

increase for EMPA Programme is 13% only. At contrast, the figures for EMBA Programme is quite encouraging, it has been experiencing an average increase of 29% in enrollment from the inception. The total enrollment for EMBA programme has been increasing from the time of first offer, however it has also witnessed proportionate decrease in the admission in the year 2005. Then after like EMPA, enrollment in EMBA programme is increasing at increasing rate.



*Figure "3"*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

Two years back, the Department of Business Administration decided to know the demographic characteristics of applicants applying for EMBA or EMPA Programme. The purpose of study was to know the age group, gender division, marital status, sector of employment, educational background and work experience of the candidates intending to take admission in COL EMBA/EMPA. It was further attempted to determine the impact of different promotional media in providing awareness for these programmes.

### **Objectives / Aims of the research study**

The main objectives of study were;

1. To know the demographic characteristics of individuals applying for EMBA/EMPA Programme.
2. To investigate the impact of various promotional tools that has been used to provide awareness about the offering of EMBA/EMPA.
3. To determine the trend towards Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA) or Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CEMPA) Programme.

### **Population/Sample**

It was an attempt to understand various demographical characteristics of applicants, so that department could focus those age groups, employment sectors, gender etc from where no or less individuals are applying for. Furthermore, the most influential media could be utilized to attract more and more students. Lastly, to take appropriate measures for balanced enrollment in both EMBA and EMPA programmes.

From the semester Autumn 05 all the applicants willing to get admission were required to fill in the questionnaire. Almost 700 to 800 candidates applied for the admission from all over Pakistan, which was specified as the population of the study and the whole population was decided to collect responses. Therefore, all interested candidates were required to fill in questionnaire. So far the data for the last two years (four semesters) has been collected. But on average 100 to 150 questionnaires were rejected in each semester on different grounds. Therefore approximately 400 questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS to achieve research objectives.

### **Research Instrument**

A comprehensive questionnaire was developed for the purpose. The questionnaire had two sections. Section-I was designed to know the personal information of the respondents and section-II to know the demographical information of the candidates. The responses for questions made use of two methods like tick-boxes and inserting their own comments and suggestions. Demographic section was based on tick-boxes.

Initially for pilot testing, in the semester Autumn 05, total 30 questionnaires were floated to evaluate the reliability and validity. Then it was filled in by the target group of respondents on semester bases for two years.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### EMBA/ EMPA Enrollment

The analysis of data shows varying results of candidate's responses. Most of the students 79% in Aut 05 were interested in EMBA, while only 21% were willing to be enrolled for EMPA. The figure for EMBA in the Spr 06 increased to 81%, in Aut 06 it was 89% and for the current semester of Spr 07, 94% of students were interested in EMBA. At contrast, the figures for EMPA were calculated as 21%, 19%, 11% and 7% for the semester, Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively. For the last two years, the total average tendency for EMBA remained 86% comparing mere 14% for EMPA.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Programme	Commonwealth EMBA	79%	81%	89%	94%	86%
	Commonwealth EMPA	21%	19%	11%	7%	14%

Table "2"

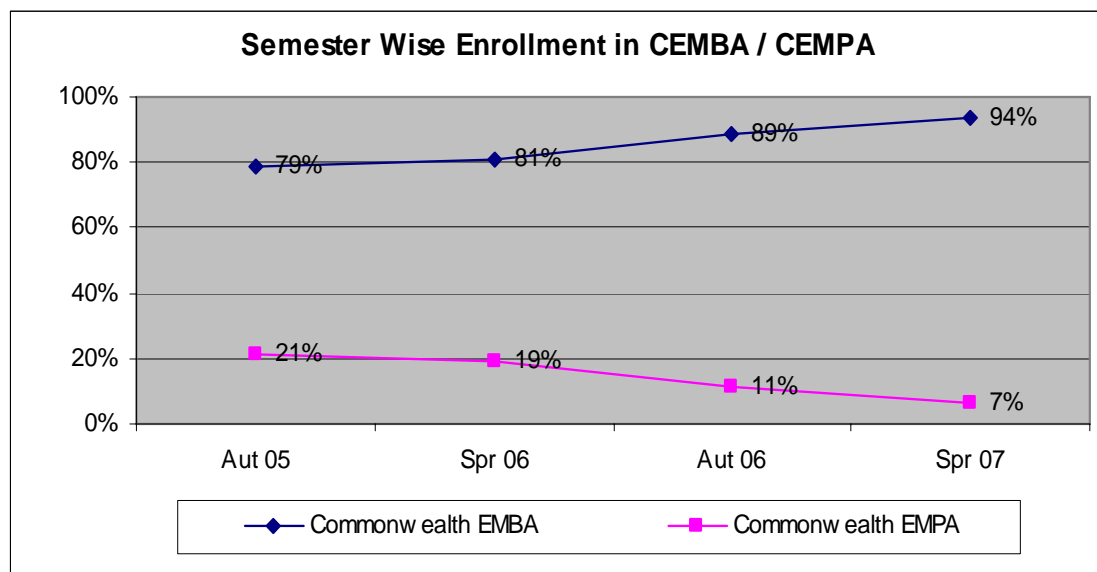


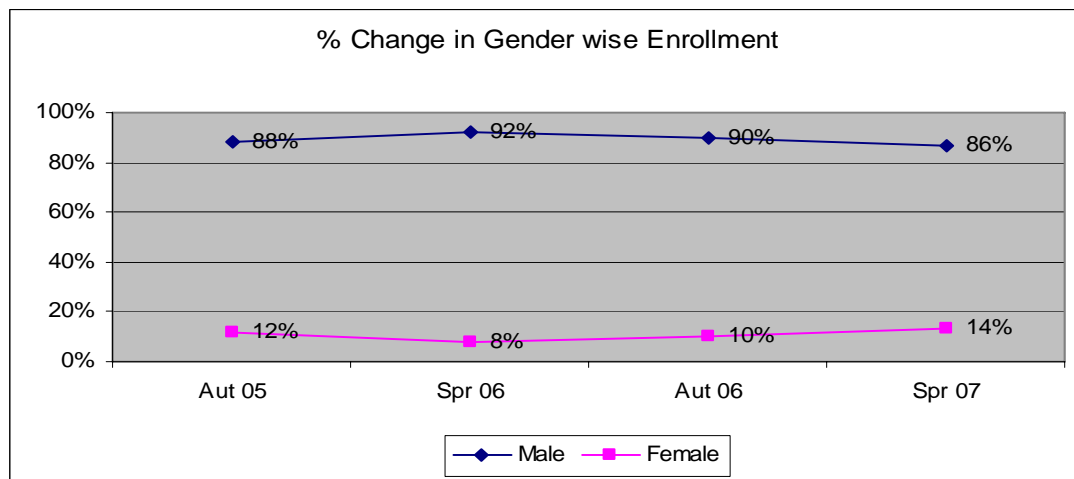
Figure "5"

## Gender Division

Varying results were obtained for gender division. 88% were male in the semester Aut 05, the figure further rise in Spr 06 and became 92%, then 90% and in the present semester 86 % of male candidates applied for admissions were male. The figure for EMPA were 12%, 8%, 10% and 14 % for the semester, Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively. If we look at the average male/female ratio from the start of this survey, it shows that 89% of male candidates apply for this programme comparing only 11% female.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Gender Division	Male	88%	92%	90%	86%	89%
	Female	12%	8%	10%	14%	11%

*Table "3"*



*Figure "8"*



## Marital Status

The survey data shows that a good combination of single and married individuals strived to get admission. As we can see on average 56% of candidates were single, while 44% were from married class. The figures for unmarried candidates remained, 58%, 56%, 55% and 55% for Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively. At contrast, the figures for married candidates were calculated as 42%, 44%, 45% and 45% for Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Marital Status	Single	58%	56%	55%	55%	56%
	Married	42%	44%	45%	45%	44%

Table "4"

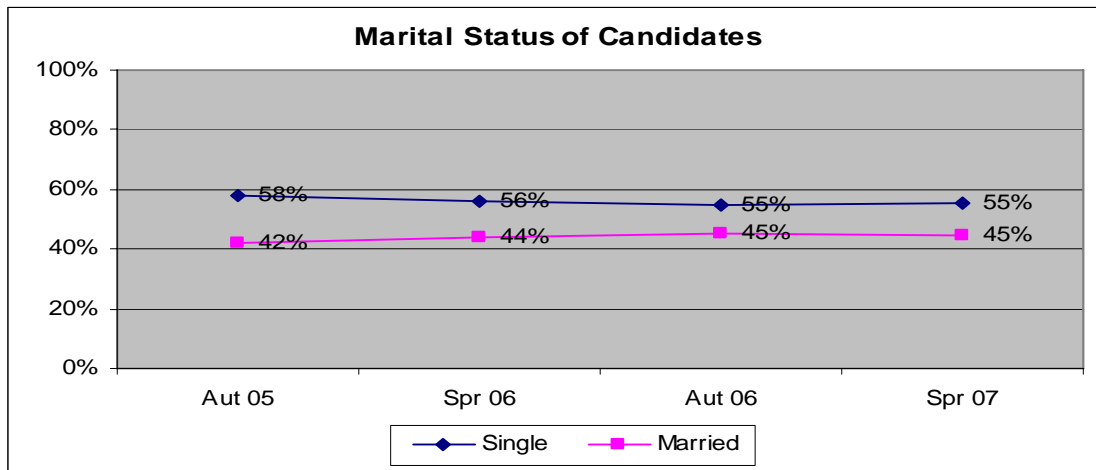


Figure "11"

## The Impact of different Promotional Tools

The department of business administration, promoted EMBA/EMPA programme with the help of different media, such as advertisements through newspaper, letters to executives, brochures, website etc. When the candidates were asked to specify the media provided awareness about of the offering of Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA, most of responses were in favor of advertisement 44%. This shows substantial impact of print media advertisement. The second highest average figure is of friends and family 34% and the third highest calculated score was 11% of website, the department has maintained a separate website ([www.aiou.edu.pk/col](http://www.aiou.edu.pk/col)) to guide students about pre-requisites and other procedural requirements.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Awareness to CEMBA/CEMPA	Advertisement	52%	46%	41%	37%	44%
	Press Release	5%	6%	8%	7%	7%
	Friends and Relatives	27%	32%	37%	40%	34%
	Website	12%	11%	9%	12%	11%
	Others	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%

Table "5"

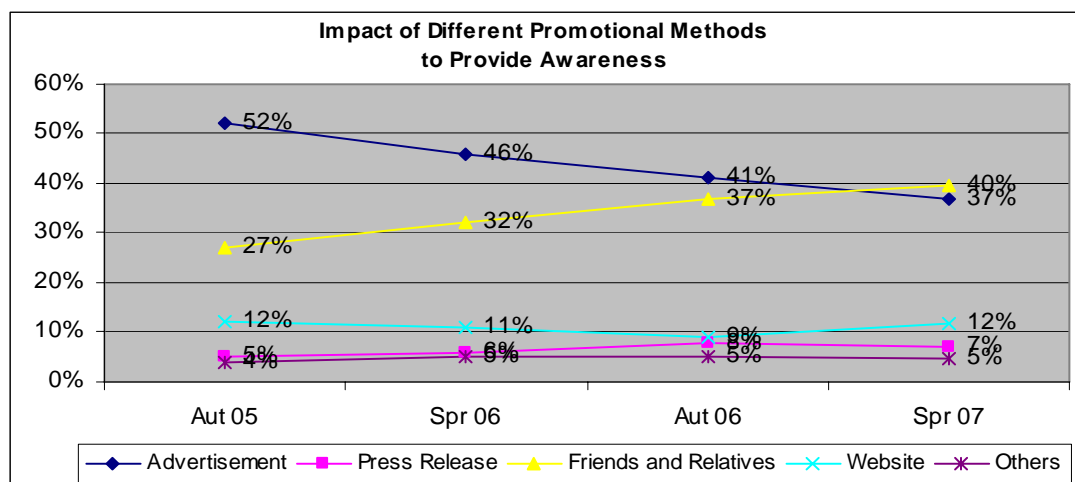


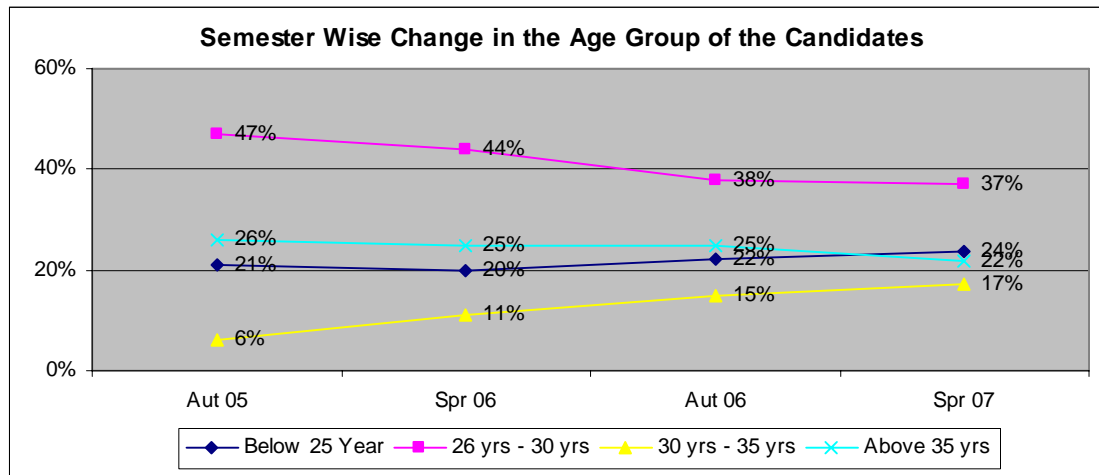
Figure "13"

## AGE GROUP

The two years collected data shows that most of the candidates 42% were in between the age of 26 to 30 years. From the start of the survey, this age group was highest from all as 47%, 44%, 38% and 42% averages were calculated for the semesters Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively. This high percentage is due to the condition that applicants should be at least graduate with minimum of 2 years experience at executive level.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Age Group	Below 25 Year	21%	20%	22%	24%	22%
	26 yrs - 30 yrs	47%	44%	38%	37%	42%
	30 yrs - 35 yrs	6%	11%	15%	17%	12%
	Above 35 yrs	26%	25%	25%	22%	24%

*Table "6"*



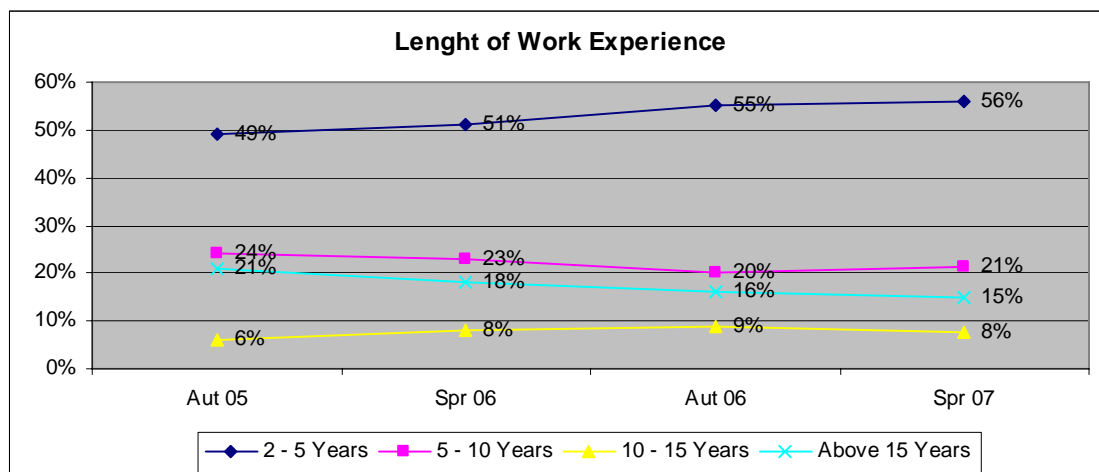
*Figure "16"*

## Work Experience

The highest representation 53% was found of candidates with working experience of 2-5 years. The longitudinal data shows that initially their contribution in overall admissions were 49 % in Aut 05, and then 51 %, 55%, 53% for Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07 semesters, respectively. In the same way the second highest total was calculated of age group between 10 to 15 years. The third highest total average figure of 17% shows candidates working at upper level of management and willing to study updated courses to acquire knowledge of current scenario.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Work Experience	2 - 5 Years	49%	51%	55%	56%	53%
	5 - 10 Years	24%	23%	20%	21%	22%
	10 - 15 Years	6%	8%	9%	8%	8%
	Above 15 Years	21%	18%	16%	15%	17%

*Table "7"*



*Figure "19"*

### Educational Background.

The consolidated data reveals that most of the candidates 65% getting enrollment had educational background of graduation. This is right according to the theme and mission of Executive MBA/MPA, as it was launched to cater the need of those executive segment working at managerial level and willing to study advanced subjects other than basic courses that are being taught in formal MBA. That is the reason, candidates with graduation were 56%, 61% 67% and 75% in the semester Aut 05, Spr 06, Aut 06 and Spr 07, respectively. The total average score of candidates with post graduation qualification were 35%.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Educational Background	Graduate	56%	61%	67%	75%	65%
	Post Graduate	44%	39%	33%	25%	35%

Table "8"

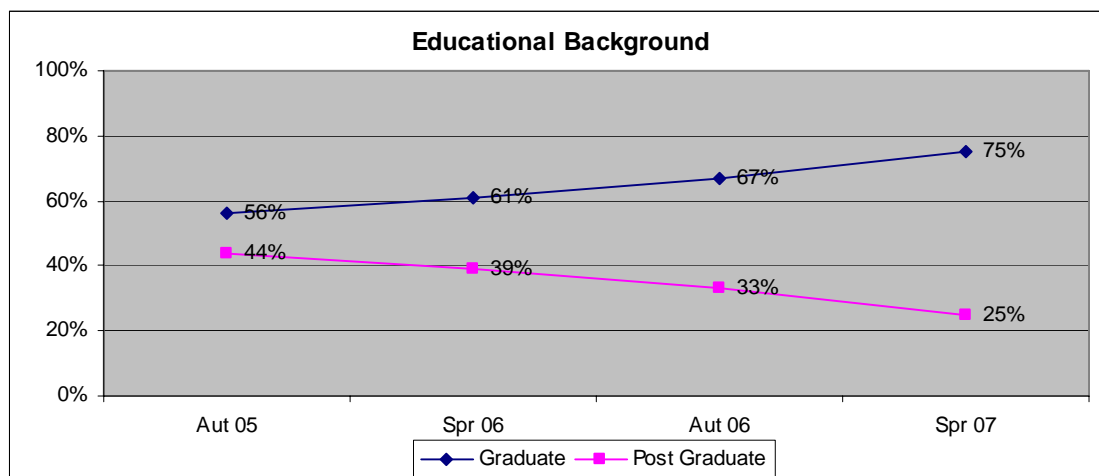


Figure "22"

## EDUCATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Since the candidates were further required to show the discipline of their educational background, therefore majority of candidates (32%) were simple graduate. The second highest average of 18% was from B.Com, the reason may be individual with commerce and business background tends to continue education in the same discipline. The other representation of different discipline remained 5%, 4%, 2% and 2% for B.Sc., B.Eng, BBA and MBBS, respectively.

As mentioned above, on average 35% of candidates were already having master degree. Further investigation revealed that 17 % on average are simple MA degree holder. Average total contribution for M.Sc, M.Eng and M.Com were 9%, 3%, and 3%, respectively.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average	
Field	Graduation	BA	31%	36%	32%	29%	32%
		B.Sc.	9%	4%	3%	5%	5%
		B.Eng.	2%	3%	6%	5%	4%
		B.Com	21%	19%	17%	16%	18%
		BBA	4%	2%	2%	1%	2%
		MBBS	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%
		Others	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%
	Post Graduation	MA	11%	16%	18%	21%	17%
		M.Sc.	5%	8%	9%	12%	9%
		M.Eng.	3%	3%	1%	4%	3%
		M.Com	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%
		M.Phil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	0%
		Others	7%	3%	4%	2%	4%

Table "9"

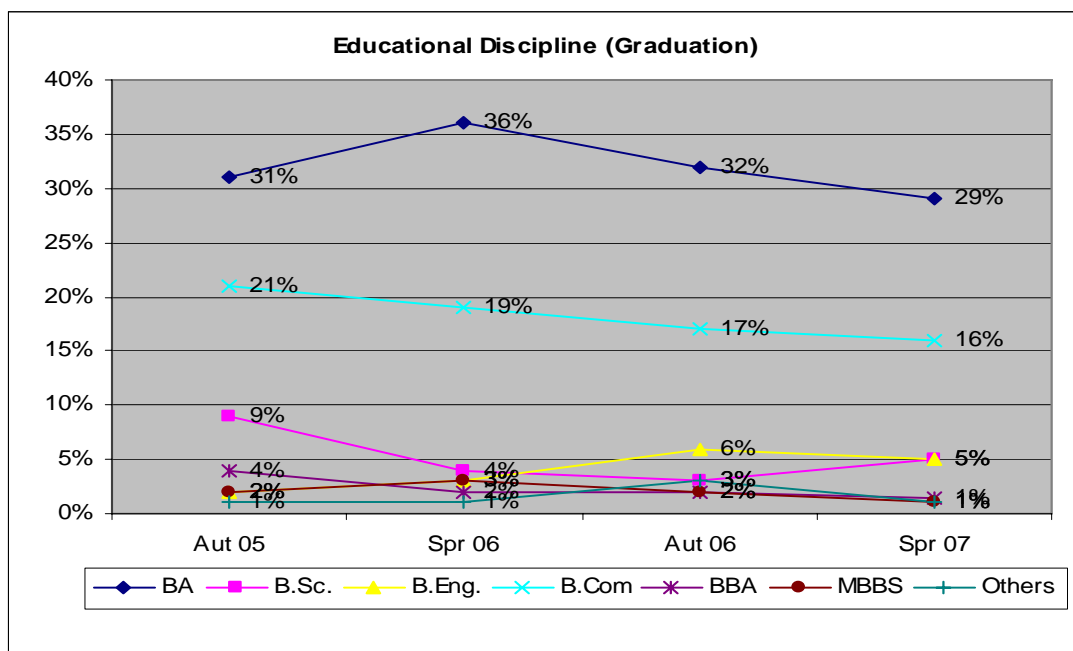


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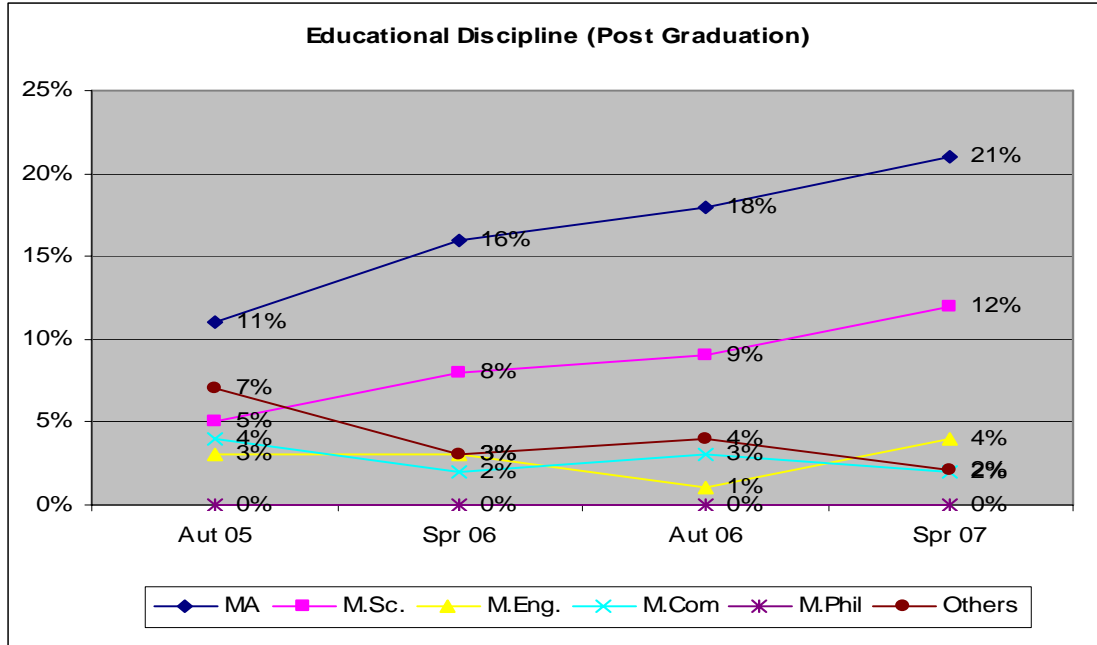


Figure "27"

## Professional Qualification

Most of the candidates 48% were not having any professional qualification. If they do, they had other kind of qualification not specified in the questionnaire. Other qualification stands for specific courses and training programme designed according to the need of respective organization. During constructing the questionnaire, it was anticipated that majority of applicants would be having CA, ACMA and Banking qualification. But individuals with such qualification were negligible.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Professional Qualification	CA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	CA (Inter)	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
	ACMA	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
	Diploma in Banking	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%
	Others	52%	61%	46%	38%	49%
	Nil	46%	36%	50%	59%	48%

Table "10"

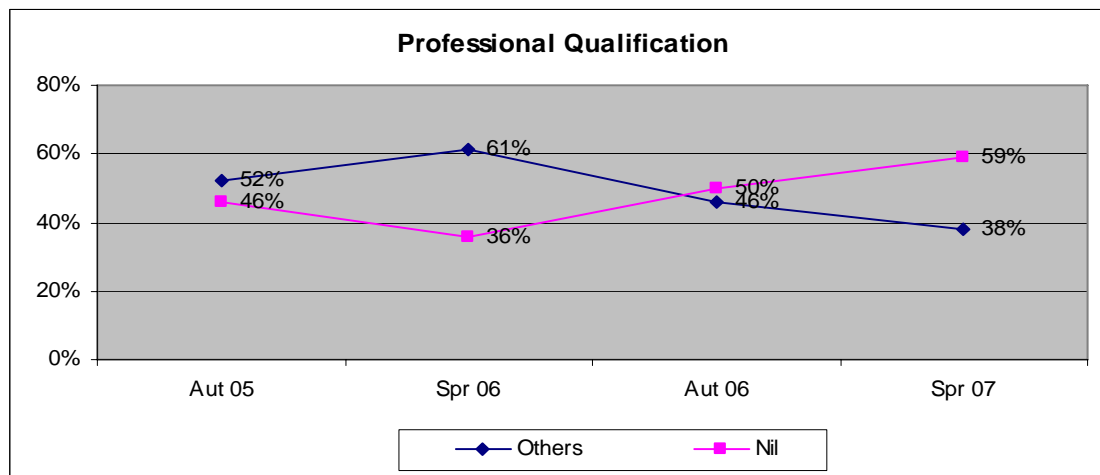


Figure "31"



**Sector of Employment**

A good combination of both public and private sector were getting enrollment. The total consolidated averages between public and private sector from last two years data was calculated as 49% and 51%, respectively. Even in the semester Aut 06, 50 : 50 were enrolled from both sector.

Semester		Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Sector of Employment	Public	47%	46%	50%	53%	49%
	Private	53%	54%	50%	47%	51%

Table "11"

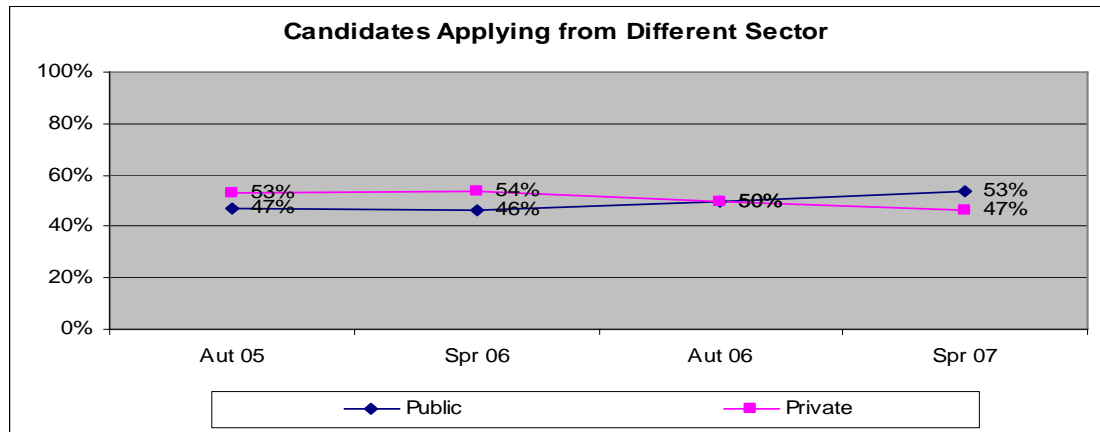


Figure "36"

Semester			Aut 05	Spr 06	Aut 06	Spr 07	Average
Sector of Employment	Public	Civil	28%	20%	22%	18%	22%
		Army	7%	9%	8%	12%	9%
		Autonomous	12%	17%	20%	23%	18%
	Private	Manufacturing	8%	7%	12%	6%	8%
		Service	17%	23%	26%	26%	23%
		Others	28%	24%	12%	15%	20%

Table "12"

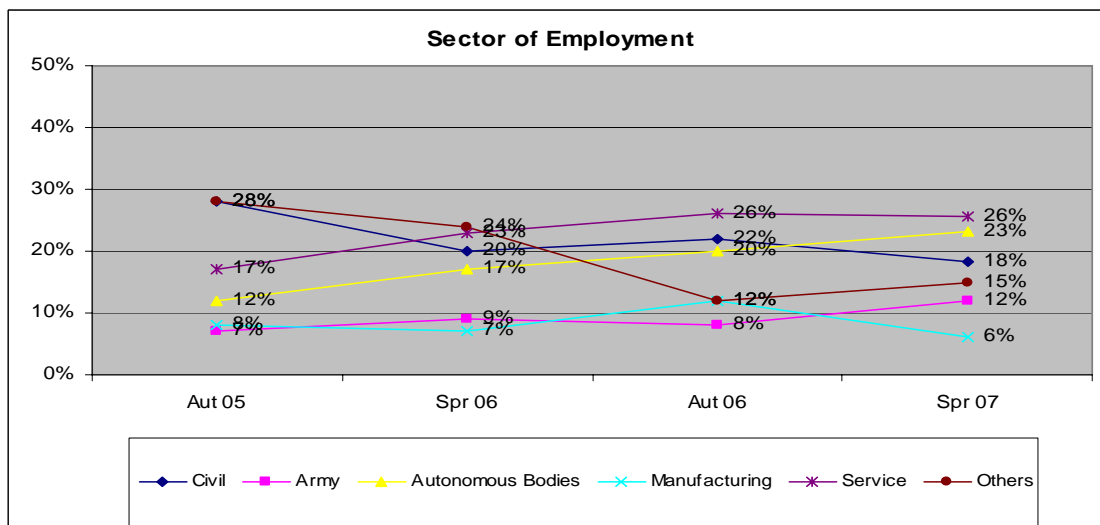


Figure "39"

## **CONCLUSION**

The statistical analysis of enrollment data and survey results bring following findings;

1. The admission statistics show that the aggregate enrollment in both EMBA/EMPA programme is increasing. The major contribution is provided from EMBA. It has also been observed, that the enrollment in EMPA programme was quite low but also kept decreasing in each semester.
2. Most of the candidates willing to take admission in EMBA/EMPA programme are male and a very small number of female students are interested.
3. Applicants are of the view that they were informed about offering through advertisement, While the other significant source is friends and family.
4. Executives between the age group 26-30 years were the most interested candidates in this programme.
5. Most of the interested candidates were with educational background of graduation or bachelor degree holder. Secondly, a good representation was also noted of post graduation degree holders
6. The indepth analysis of educational background shows that the graduate candidates were either simple bachelor degree holder or with commerce background.
7. Candidates holding simple master degree already are the third highest participants in EMBA/EMPA..
8. Majority of candidates claim that they have professional qualification of tailor-made training sessions designed by companies according to their need.
9. Most of candidates had working experience of 2 to 5 years.
10. The analysis of public and private sectors shows that we were getting a balanced representation from both sides, regardless of high enrollment in EMBA than EMPA. Nearly 50:50 admission requests were being received from both public and private sector.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The responses of candidates bring us at the following implications;

1. The aggregate admissions in EMBA/EMPA are increasing. But a substantial contribution is from EMBA while the enrollment in EMPA is on continuously decline. A specific research is required to know the causes of this decline.
2. Most of the candidates applying for admissions are male, female representation are very low. Therefore, females may be encouraged to apply for admission. The Department of Business Administration is planning to launch EMBA/EMPA using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It would help to attract more females by enabling them to continue study sitting in their home.
3. Since advertisement and website are the effective source to provide awareness and guide to students about COL EMBA/EMPA programme. Therefore, massive advertisements may be used as a tool to promote programme, especially electronic media may also be used for the purpose, as has not been used extensively in the

- past. The department is also in process to revise and edit the courses; it would also help as word of mouth communication is also among the effective source for awareness.
4. The analysis of age groups and working experience of candidates reflect that most of the executives are either working at upper or lower level of management. The representation from middle level is quite low. A promotional campaign may be launched to specifically approach and convince executives working at middle level to get enrolled in a programme with international recognition.
  5. The research concludes that a balanced enrollment is received from both public and private sector. In public sector mostly incumbents are from either civil services or autonomous bodies. Defense sector has very small contribution in overall two years enrollment. Therefore, more focused must be made towards defense sector.
  6. While considering private sector, service sector is on top and a very small proportion is from manufacturing sector. As manufacturing sector is already facing a drift, therefore, the management of manufacturing sector may be approached using official letter, to provide finances and special incentives to encourage their employees towards COL EMBA/EMPA programme. It would help to address the decline of this sector, as skilled manpower leads to enhance overall organizational productivity.
  7. The analysis shed light on the continuous enrollment with educational background of simple graduation or commerce. A very small portion of interested candidates were having business administration degree. The matter requires further investigation regarding the reason of low interest group from business administration background.
  8. It has also been analyzed that significant enrollment is made by the executives already having master degree in arts and science. The economy of Pakistan is in transition and more investment is allocated in business sector. That is the reason, majority of executives are switching into business field. This shift has brought heavy contribution of executives with post graduation of qualification in other disciplines. This segment may further be encouraged to sustain and develop their interest.
  9. Nearly negligible number of candidates had professional qualification like ACMA, Diploma in Banking, ACCA etc. If they do, it is the customized training that is provided by the organization as per their need. Therefore, courses may be further enriched with updated professional knowledge, keeping in view small percentage of professional qualification.