

## **Impediments to Masters of Business Administration (MBA) Programs: A study in Selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia**

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### ***Abstract***

*Although postgraduate Education in Master of Business Administration (MBA) has a life of about two decade in Ethiopia, HEIs are aggressively expanding the program in recent times. This in turn may cause oversupply of ill qualified MBA graduates. The main objective of this study is to identify the limitation of the existing MBA programs in terms of Curriculums, Inputs and the overall teaching and learning process. To achieve this objective, five higher Education Institutions (HEIs) running the program were purposely selected and data was collected from graduating class MBA students, academic staffs, department heads and postgraduate coordinators. Further, the currently working MBA curriculums of each universities were reviewed in detail. The finding indicates that, the MBA programs in the HEIs under study have so many limitations in terms of curriculum design, facilities, inputs and overall teaching & learning process. Hence, in order to meet an ongoing demand for quality business academia and professionals, it is advisable for universities exert their efforts in updating their curriculum, recruit high profile professionals, and fulfill required infrastructures before opening the program.*

*Keywords: Curriculum, Ethiopia, Higher Education, Master of Business Administration, Postgraduate*

## **1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Of the many growth initiatives of the EPRDF lead government of Ethiopia in the past 27 years, perhaps one that holds great appreciation is the large-scale expansion of tertiary education in the country (MOE, 2018). Among the many programs opened in each of these HEIs includes business programs. Business programs encompass a number of departments that teach students the fundamentals of business practices. Traditional academic programs in business include departments that teach students general management, marketing, business ethics, accounting, finance and other relevant courses. The main goals of business programs are to teach the processes of decision making; the philosophy, theory, and psychology of management; practical applications; business start-up, financing and operations management.

The beginning of business programs in higher education institutions in Ethiopia is traced to the developments in the 1940s that created the demand for trained manpower in business administration and accounting. However, postgraduate level education in Business administration is a recent development in Ethiopia. The first master of business administration (MBA) program was started in 2000 at Addis Ababa University. After few years, other regional universities started opening masters level education in Business Administration. For instance, Jimma University accepted the first batch of master of business administration in 2008. The main purpose of expansion of masters program at that time was to alleviate the academic staff shortage in the newly opened public and private universities in the country (Mihiret and Bobe, 2014; Ephrem, 2006).

An attempt to understand the future developmental requirements of business professionals necessitates the evaluation of the past and present performance of business education and the demand of the profession. In connection to this, Carnegie and Napier (1996) argued that knowledge of the past and the present education can facilitate an understanding of the future of the requirements. They also argued that business programs are worth of study because they put business today into perspective, and may well allow us to draw on the data bank of the past to provide solutions to the problems of the present and pave the way for the future.

Hence, this research study is aimed to investigate the challenges of masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs in selected HEIs in Ethiopia. To achieve this objective, the remaining part of the paper is organized as follows. Section two describes the extent of the problem and sets the study objectives. Section three reviews literature related to the study briefly. Section four presents the methodology followed in doing the research. Section five presents the results and analysis of the study and finally the last section winds up the paper by presenting the conclusion and recommendation.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of opening MBA program at HEIs in Ethiopia includes; producing business graduates who will be able to assume senior and middle-level managerial positions in both private and public institutions, and contributing to the staff development efforts of HEIs within the country by providing training opportunities for staffs in business related areas. Currently, post-graduate programs face various types of challenges in terms of demand, supply and quality.

One of the problems associated to postgraduate programs in general and that of business fields in particular is the development of curriculums. Providing adequate time for the preparation and review process is required for curricula to be significant and long lasting (Burgess, 2004). Moreover, the process of curriculum development needs much cooperation in order to build the understanding required among the various stakeholders (Walkington, 2002). Understanding the complex nature of curriculum change, providing adequate time and creating opportunities for a wider participation of all stakeholders in the process are very important. The fundamental considerations in developing MBA curriculums at universities should be derived from a detailed need assessment of different interest groups including business organizations, government offices and international agencies. To appropriately accommodate the diverse needs of the different groups, university MBA curricula should provide for a broad knowledge base, the acquisition of business skills and the development of appropriate behavioral attitudes in students. However, Tadesse & Melese (2016) argue that many higher education institutions in Ethiopia tend to have a curriculum that is shallow and repetitive. Further, from our observation in the past few years as academic staffs at University, the main concern at the time of opening a program seems - just establishing committee, drafting a curriculum, conducting national review workshop, and finally senate approval. Adequate need assessment and participation of the different stakeholders was given minimum attention at the time of curriculum development.

Specifically, the problems associated to MBA program are more complicated. By its nature MBA program is designed to accommodate those candidates whose background is non-business and who want to be business leaders. Once candidates have the knowledge and skill in their specific field of study, they need to get training in business in order to help them manage business institutions in their area of experts. But, in our case, the program we are running in majority of the HEIs is general MBA which is almost a duplication of undergraduate management program. Our MBA programs typically concentrate on the skills needed by general managers and are ignorant of those needed by graduates to succeed in their specialization area. The majority of the students joining this program come from business background including management, accounting and finance and other related fields. This is waste of time and effort since they add very little in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

In addition to the limitations in the curriculum described above, higher educational institutions are losing well-qualified instructors because of low pay. Shortage of academic staffs leads to significant strain on resources, very large class sizes and quality challenges. Most of the HEIs in regional states complain that they are losing well-qualified and experienced instructors because of the more competitive pay from the private sector, NGOs, and other countries. The situation is much worse outside Addis Ababa. Most regional universities run the programs using guest professors because of lack of permanent staffs of their own. This kind of brain drain in universities has long-term effect of eroding the quality in the education, training, and research capabilities of the country.

Problems related to teaching and learning process and researches are also critical. Teachers are not using standardized syllabus for the course they are giving. They use lecture method in their class most of the times since permanent staffs or guest professors have very busy schedules. The

continuous and summative assessment process used does not properly distinguish among students.

The problems highlighted above are our observation as academic staffs in the last one decade at University. These problems might be symptoms to the real challenges and detail investigation is required to identify the root cause. To our knowledge, there are no research attempts to understand the real problems in the MBA programs. Studying the current status of master's program in business administration in terms of Curriculum, input and process plays vital role for its future improvement. Therefore, this paper is aimed at

1. Investigating the limitations of MBA Curriculums in Selected HEIs in Ethiopia
2. Identifying input related challenges of MBA programs in selected HEIs in Ethiopia
3. Examining process related challenges of MBA programs in Selected HEIs in Ethiopia

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

MBA stands for Master of Business Administration which is an education program that aims to prepare students for leading positions in administrative and managerial work. It is a postgraduate degree designed to develop holistic, innovative and socially responsible business leaders for high performance organizations in the global market, through the development of knowledge, skills and values required to succeed in complex environments. It is generally a two year, full-time program taught in business schools of major universities and colleges. MBA is a professional degree originated in the United States in the early 20th century when the country was industrialized and companies sought scientific approaches to management (Dutta, 2009).

The core courses in MBA program includes various areas of businesses such as accounting, applied statistics, business communication, business ethics, business law, finance, managerial economics, Marketing management, Human Resource management, entrepreneurship, marketing, supply chain, and operations management in a manner most relevant to management analysis and strategy. Most programs also include elective courses and concentrations for further study in a particular area, for example accounting, finance, and marketing (Dutta, 2009).

Although the first school of business was established in the University of Pennsylvania in 1881, the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration established the first MBA program in 1908 with 15 faculty members, 33 regular students and 47 special students. Its first-year curriculum was based on Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management. The number of MBA students at Harvard increased quickly, from 80 in 1908, over 300 in 1920, and 1,070 in 1930. Starting from that time, the MBA degree has been adopted by universities worldwide in both developed and developing countries (Dutta, 2009).

Concentration or specializations area are focused subject areas where a student conducts research or scholarship. Although, not all business schools require students to select concentrations, the current trend appears to be toward offering concentrations, probably because students believe they will be more competitive as job candidates if given the opportunity to specialize in a specific field. Even at some universities that don't offer formal concentrations, MBA program should allocate some percent of instructional time for electives courses that students can

effectively use to build their own de facto concentrations. There are MBA programs with a special focus and/or possibilities for students to create their own schedule by selecting electives of their choice.

But Dutta (2009) argued that MBA program should not focus on one single subject or one field, instead should introduce the student to all the main concepts that will be part of their future career as managers. Students are not expected to work with all the courses at the same time, but the intention is to enable them see the big picture and conduct their jobs as general managers in a more successful way.

Part-time MBA programs normally hold classes in the evenings after normal working hours, or on weekends. Part-time programs normally last for three years or more. The students in these programs typically consist of working professionals, who take a light course load for a longer period of time until the graduation requirements are met. Evening MBA programs are programs that normally hold classes on weekday evenings, after normal working hours, or on weekends for duration of two to three years. The students in these programs typically consist of working professionals, who cannot leave their work to pursue a full-time regular shift MBA (Temtime & Mmeraki, 2014).

Another variation is an Executive MBA (EMBA) program which is developed to meet the educational needs of managers and executives, allowing students to earn an MBA (or another business-related graduate degree) while working full-time. Participants come from every type and size of organization; profit, nonprofit, government representing a variety of industries. EMBA students typically have a higher level of work experience, often 10 years or more, compared to other MBA students. For Executive MBA programs, the core curriculum is generally similar, but may seek to leverage the strengths associated with the more seasoned and professional profile of the student body, emphasizing leadership, and drawing more from the specific experience of the individual students (Kahalid, 2017).

Many programs base their admission decisions on a combination of undergraduate grade point average, academic transcripts, entrance exam scores, a resume containing significant work experience, essays, letters of recommendation, and personal interviews. Some schools are also interested in extracurricular activities, community service activities or volunteer work and how the student can improve the school's diversity and contribute to the student body as a whole. The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) is the most prominently used entrance exam for admissions into MBA programs. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is also accepted by almost all MBA programs in order to fulfill any entrance exam requirement they may have. Some schools do not weigh entrance exam scores as heavily as other criteria, and some programs do not require entrance exam scores for admission. In order to achieve a diverse class, business schools also consider the target male-female ratio and local-international student ratios (Temtime & Mmeraki, 2014).

In general, MBA programs are structured around core courses and elective courses that (may) allow for a subject specialty or concentration. Thus, in the program's first year (or part), students acquire both a working knowledge of management functions and the analytical skills required for

these, while in the second year (part), students pursue elective courses, which may count towards a specialization. After the first year, many full-time students seek internships. The degree culminates with coursework in business strategy, the program capstone. A dissertation or major project may be a requirement after the completion of coursework (Temtime & Mmeraki, 2014).

The common methods of teachings in MBA program include lectures, case studies, and team projects and the mix though it will differ by school and by format. Theory is covered in the classroom setting and is reinforced through the case method, placing the student in the role of the decision maker. Similar to real world business situations, cases include both constraints and incomplete information. Practical learning often comprises consulting projects with real clients, and is generally undertaken in teams. The practical elements (as well as the case studies) often involve external practitioners sometimes business executives supporting the teaching from academic faculty (Temtime & Mmeraki, 2014).

The business sector, students and organizational stakeholders often complain that MBA programs are not updated with industry trends or needs (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009) in recent times. Other researchers further go saying that MBA program at the moment doesn't prepare work-ready graduates or is too slow to adopt changes in the environment (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005). These types of comments are also common among recent MBA graduate and academic staffs teaching MBA programs including Ethiopian universities.

In the past one decade, the debate about management curriculum in developed economies has increased (Vaara & Fay, 2011). Specifically, the 2008 financial crisis in large corporations have re-invigorated the need to ensure that management programs teach and embed ethics education (Adler, 2002; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005 ; Egri, 2013). The current Global warming issue is also demanding curricula that must address the issues of Sustainability and clean energy (Stead & Stead, 2010). The increasing interdependences of businesses in so many countries also requires graduates to have more global perspective (Doh, 2010). All of these pressures noted above can increase the difficulty academic staff may have in planning a curriculum that meets the needs of so many stakeholders.

#### **4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This study is designed to identify the challenges of MBA program at master's level at selected HEIs in Ethiopia. Thus, the study adopted descriptive research designs. The rationale for the choice of descriptive design for this study is to: collect factual information that would explain existing situations; make comparisons and evaluations; identify special problems or justify existing conditions or practices; and to determine what other people are doing about similar problems and to make suggestions for future courses of action. Descriptive research uses people, documents and other written sources of information to describe, clarify, and interpret aspects of education as they presently exist. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. The main secondary data used were the currently working curriculum in each university. Primary data were collected through survey of current students and in-depth interview with academic staffs and subjected to descriptive analysis for the purpose of knowing their perceptions of the current performance of the programs being evaluated. This enabled the researchers to strengthen and overcome the weaknesses that either of the data sources may pose.

The first step in any sampling method is to identify the study population from where the samples would be drawn. The respondents chosen for this study included: Postgraduate students in their final year in the 2019-2020 academic year, professors teaching in the program, and department heads who have the responsibility for the implementation of the programs. First year postgraduate students were not included in the study because at the time the instruments were administered, they were deemed not to have enough acquaintance with the program to offer a fair perception of their performance.

Based on the collected preliminary data, there are about 51 public universities and 227 private universities & colleges that are training students in various disciplines in the country till December 2019. Of these higher education institutions, about 25 public universities and 52 private higher institutions have mastersø program in business administration (HERQA, 2019). It is very difficult to incorporate the whole universities and colleges in the study since they are very much dispersed throughout the country. Therefore, about five universities were purposely selected among those located in western part of the country for convenience in data collection.

Once the sample universities were selected as discussed above, the respondents for the study were selected as follows. Cochran (1963) formula was used to determine a sample size of 267 respondents from the five universities. After determining the total sample size to be contacted, respondents from each sample universities were selected randomly after getting their list from the registrar and departments of the respective universities. Further, at least one key informant from each HEIs including either an academic staff teaching in the program or program coordinators were contacted for further explanation and triangulation.

Descriptive statistical tools and thematic analysis under qualitative approach was used in the study. The result and discussion was structured in to three themes including limitations associated to the Curriculums, Challenges associated to program inputs and challenges associated to the programø teaching and learning processes.

## **5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Although MBA was first developed in USA 1900s, it took a century to start MBA program in Ethiopia. It was first launched at Addis Ababa University (AAU) in the academic year 2000G.C. The program was established for two specific objectives at that time: producing business graduates who will be able to assume middle-level and senior managerial positions in both private and public institutions, and contributing to the staff development efforts of higher education institutions within the country by providing training opportunities for the teaching staff in business related areas (Ephrem, 2006). Following this, Jimma University launched the program in 2008. Nowadays, many private and public universities are offering the program in full time and part- time (evening, weekend and summer) programs. Before starting the evaluation of MBA programs in the selected universities under the study, we need to examine the characteristics of the respondents. The following table presents the profile of the respondents.

**Table1:** Characteristics of Respondents

a) University	Frequency	Percent	d) Gender	Frequency	Percent
Ambo University	25	16.8	Male	115	77.2
Jimma University	64	43.0	Female	34	22.8
Wolkite University	14	9.4	Total	149	100.00
Wollega University	24	16.1	e) Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Rift Valley University	22	14.8	Single	46	30.9
Total	149	100.0	Married	103	69.1
b) Program of study	Frequency	Percent	Total	149	100.00
Regular	38	25.5	f) Age	Frequency	Percent
Continuing	111	74.5	Below 26	10	6.7
Total	149	100.0	From 26 to 35	78	52.3
c) Cumulative GPA	Frequency	Percent	From 36 to 45	47	31.5
Below 3.25	24	16.1	Above 46	14	9.4
From 3.26 to 3.50	43	28.9	Total	149	100.00
From 3.50 to 3.75	32	21.5			
Above 3.75	50	33.6			
Total	149	100.0			

*Sources: survey data, 2020*

Table 1 above shows that, about 85% of the respondents are from public universities whereas the remaining 15% of the respondents are from private HEIs. About three-fourth of the respondents are attending their education through Continuing education program and the remaining one-fourth of them are regular students. About 55% of the respondents have CGPA of above 3.50 and the remaining 45% have CGPA of less than 3.50. Table 1 further show that the majority of the respondents are males which is an indication of unfair gender balance in the programs. In terms of marital status, the majorities have married. Almost 91% of the respondents are less than 45 years old.

## 5.1 Limitations of the MBA Curriculums

### a. Program Objectives

The objectives of MBA programs in the selected HEIs under study include: producing highly skilled professionals that can assume managerial positions at various levels of organizations or producing middle and top level leadership, producing future consultants, policy makers, analysts, leaders and notable individuals who will be able to manage multinational business firms, Equip graduates with skills such as analytical, conceptual, communication to understand and respond to the fast changing business environment and to prepare competent, flexible, adaptive, and visionary business leaders, producing graduate who will have analytical skills applying business analysis, data management and diagnostic problem-solving skills in order to support management decision-making, producing graduates with transferable lifelong skills who are able to apply to complex issues both systematically and creatively and producing graduates who understand and apply new technologies necessary for solving business problems in both national and international environments.

Looking at their objectives, one can see that most public HEIs are focusing on producing high caliber graduate that successfully manage business firms and able to conduct researches and teach business courses in higher institutions. Whereas, the private university objectives focus on producing professionals that can assume leadership positions and be able to overcome the keen business competitions of the day. Of course, there is only minor differences among them as the universities are copying curriculums including objectives one from the other than setting by their own.

**b. Course Structure**

The MBA courses offered at the sample universities were summarized in the table 2 below

**Table 2: Structure of the course**

No	Course title	JU	WGU	AMBU	WKTU	RVU
1.	Management Theories and Practices	2	2	-	2	2
2.	Quantitative Analysis for Management Decisions/ Statistical Decision Theory & Analysis	3	3	4	3	3
3.	Accounting for Managers	3	3	3	-	2
4.	Financial Institutions and Markets/ Financial institutions and investment management	2	2	-	2	2
5.	Financial Management	2	2	3	2	2
6.	Human Resources Management	2	-	2	2	2
7.	Organizational Behaviour and Development	3	2	3	2	2
8.	Management Information Systems	2	2	2	2	2
9.	Business Research Methodology	3	3	3	2	3
10.	Operations Management	3	3	3	3	2
11.	Marketing Management	2	2	3	2	2
12.	Entrepreneurship and enterprise development	2	-	-	2	2
13.	Project Analysis and management	2	2	3	2	2
14.	MBA Thesis Proposal	P/F	-	-	-	2
15.	Strategic Management	3	2	3	2	2
16.	Development Team Training Program (DTTP)	3	-	-	-	-
17.	Managerial Economics	-	2	-	-	-
18.	International Business	-	2	-	-	-
19.	MBA Thesis	6	4	6	6	4
20.	Econometrics	-	-	-	2	-
	Total	43	36	38	36	36

*Sources: MBA curriculums of the Selected Universities*

*Note: JU stands for Jimma University, WGU stands for Wollega University, AMBU stands for Ambo University, WKTU stands for Wolkite University and RVU stands for Rift vally University*

As it is illustrated on the above table 2, the total load given to MBA programs ranges from 36 by Wollega University to 43 credit hours by Jimma University. Among the list of twenty (20) courses, nine (9) courses were offered commonly by each university except slight differences in allocation of credit hours and course naming. In additions, there are some courses which are specific to some universities. For example, Courses such as: Management theories and practices and financial institutions and investment management are offered by all universities except AMBU. Accounting for managers is offered by all universities except WKTU. Entrepreneurship and enterprise development is offered by JU, WKTU and RVU. Human Resource Management (HRM) is offered by all universities except, WGU. International Business and Managerial Economics are unique to WGU and Econometrics is to WKTU. Finally, it is worth to mention

that Development Team Training Program (DTTP) is unique to JU and known as the philosophy of the university. Hence, it is possible to infer that there is some variability on the offered MBA courses by each university. This does not mean that a graduate of MBA lacks a knowledge that let him/her hold managerial positions and expertise skills in business firms. Because the core functional courses offered in each university are nearly the same so that the graduates acquire the knowledge that let them perform as a marketing , finance, human resource managers etc. in business firms and also able to pursue leadership positions.

The MBA program in most of the HEIs in Ethiopia is general MBA and students can tell the limitations of the program they are attending. MBA students under study were requested to indicate the deficiencies of the currently working curriculum at their own HEIs and the responses are summarized in figure 1 below.

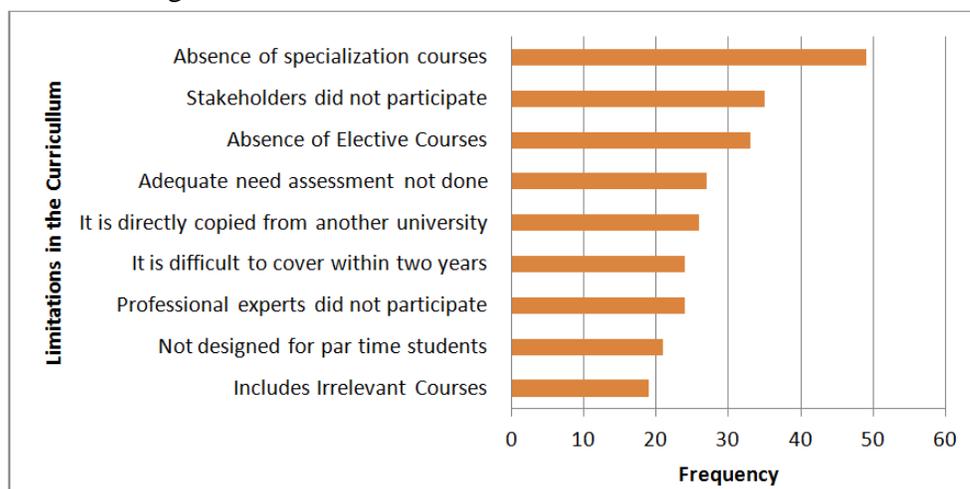


Figure 1: Limitations in the MBA Curriculum

As can be seen from figure 1 above, the first and third limitations of the existing MBA curriculums are associated to lack of specialization or elective courses. Specialized programs offer in-depth preparation and knowledge for someone who is committed to a particular industry or specialty throughout their career. As lack of specialization is the first drawback of the MBA curriculum, respondents were asked to suggest the specialization areas they are interested in MBA program and the result is summarized as follows.

**Table 3:** Proposed Specialization Area

Specialization Area:	Not Important	Important	Very Important	Mean score
MBA in Marketing Management	2.7%	33.5%	63.8%	1.61
MBA in International Business	4.7%	35.6%	59.7%	1.55
MBA in Finance	5.4%	38.9%	55.7%	1.50
MBA in HRM	8.0%	39.6%	54.4%	1.48
MBA in Entrepreneurship	6.7%	43.0%	50.3%	1.44
MBA in Logistic Management	8.1%	58.4%	33.6%	1.25

Source: Survey Result, 2020

As can be seen from the above table 3, the top three specialization areas proposed by the students include: specialization in Marketing Management, International Business and finance. Human Resource management and entrepreneurship are the next in line. About two-third of the respondents argue that specialization has great benefit since the business environment at the moment is getting complex. The academic staffs interviewed also argue that there are some gaps in offering MBA in specialized fields though there is highest demand in the market due to lack of specialized instructors in the respective fields.

The second challenges identified in figure 1 is not involving stakeholders in curriculum design. One way to gain a conceptual understanding of the learning needs in curriculum design is to involve the industry when making assessments of a curriculum. Specifically, Temtime & Mmeraki (2014) advice that faculty should be involved with corporate executives in order to understand their needs and to make necessary changes in curriculum and instructions. But the participation of the stakeholders in curriculum development or involvement of academia in industrial work is very minimal in Ethiopia.

The remaining limitations are also closely related to lack of need assessment while preparing the curriculum, copying the curriculum directly from another HEIs and the time allotted for the curriculum is not sufficient to cover all the courses especially for evening and weekend programs. In short, the emphasis looks simply drafting the curriculum, undertaking validation workshops without involving stakeholders having industry experience.

### **C. Course Syllabus and References**

A thorough investigation of MBA course content and references attached for each university was made and described as follows. Each university have attached the course outline and possible references in their curriculum. Except for some few courses, it is possible to conclude that all curricula attached course outline which includes, course title, course code, credit hours per week, target groups, year/ semester, course objectives, course descriptions, course contents in each chapter, teaching /learning methods or strategy, method of assessment/ evaluation, References and other reading materials. Also, some course outline describes module names, European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and pre- requisite courses. Here, it is possible to infer that the curricula have the majority of the information needed to offer the respective courses.

Despite this, there are disparities in each curriculum with respect to course naming, course code and method of offering courses. In additions, the contents of majority of the course outlines are not framed in such a way that it depicts advanced level of studies. Some of the references that were attached to the course outline were not described in standardized citation style. Some didn't have year of publications, some lack an author of a book/ journal, edition/ volume number etc. Further, old references were cited in the majority of the course outlines as old as the 1960's published books and journals. Such old aged books seem difficult to impart recent knowledge to the students. When it comes to the contents of each syllabus, there are some overlapping chapters that describe similar contents which might make a learner bored with repeated topics. The interviewed Professors also share the argument being revealing out the existence of repeated portions in some courses and needs a sort of revisions.

## 5.2 Limitations related to Program Inputs

In addition to the limitations of the curriculums described above, students were further asked to indicate problems associated to facilities and inputs to the MBA program and the result is summarized in figure 2 below.

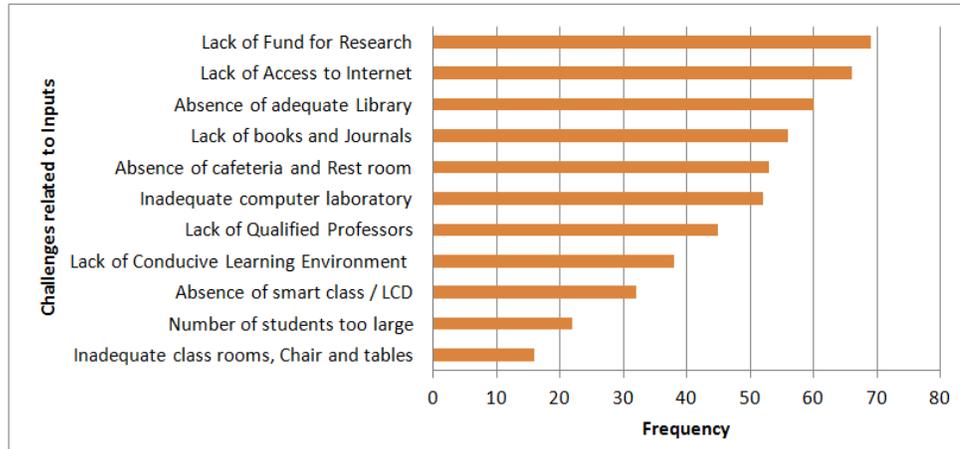


Figure 2: Challenges related to Inputs to the program

As can be seen from figure 2 above, Lack of fund for conducting research is the first challenge identified by the respondents. MBA students are expected to conduct research as a partial fulfillment of their MBA degree. However, except students sponsored by Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MOSHE), other students do not get fund for conducting research till this data is collected. Of course, the government has reconsidered the problem and decided to provide research support for all government sponsored students starting from August 2020.

The next three problems complained by the students are associated to lack of access to internet, computers and Library. Professors interviewed also emphasized absence of Infrastructures like smart classes, internet connections and subscribed journals as a bottle neck to MBA programs in their respective universities. At this age of information technology, it is surprising to see students and professors complaining about lack of access to internet and reference books. This in turn implies our universities need to invest on these kinds of facilities instead of mere construction of buildings and opening programs.

Absence of rest rooms, cafeterias and other facilities are also common in most of our HEIs. The buildings in most universities were not designed to have such facilities. It is common to see students walking long distance for search of rest rooms inside many campuses. Valuable study time can be wasted because of absence of these types of facilities.

## 5.3 Process Evaluation

Process evaluation is the identification of the strength and weakness in the actual teaching and learning process and assessment system of any program. In this connection, availability of highly skilled and knowledgeable professors plays vital role. Per the academic regulation of most universities, it is supposed that instructors who had an academic rank of assistant professor and

above are able to teach MBA courses. The number of academic staffs who are qualified to teach MBA programs in each university is summarized as follows:

**Table 4: Staff Profile of the selected Universities**

No	Item	JU	WGU	AMBU	WKTU	RVU
1	Assistant Prof. without PhD	7	2	2	5	3
2	PhD Holders	7	4	-	1	1
		14	6	2	6	4

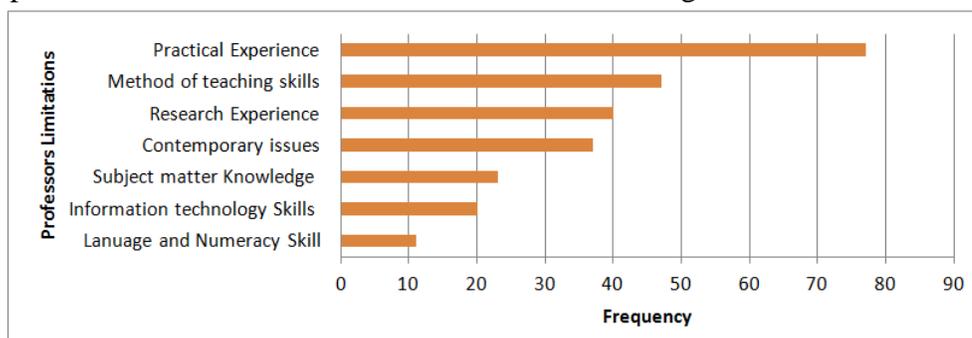
*Sources: Head of departments of HEIs under study, 2020*

*Note: JU stands for Jimma University, WGU stands for Wollega University, AMBU stands for Ambo University, WKTU stands for Wolkite University and RVU stands for Rift Valley University*

As it is illustrated in the above table 4, all universities had staff that would be able to offer MBA courses except AMBU that had only two (2) assistant professors. This doesn't mean that plenty of staffs are available in each university except for JU and WGU that had a handful of senior staff that hold PhD. As per the interview made along with key informants, those institutions that lack such staffs are obliged to run the program through guest professors.

The key informants from some of the HEIs not having sufficient professors also added that though they are using guest professors coming from nearby HEIs, making use of guest professors has its own limitations on the quality of knowledge and skills transferred to students. This is because of time limitations in which most faculty guests are in state of hurry to cover the whole portion. This in turn leads to the limited wind of participating students to the lesson. As a general fact, teacher centered approach doesn't make students to be creative and sharp minded as informants have argued. Hence, it is possible to infer that the shortage of staff will make the process of learning- teaching process somewhat challenging. Besides, they argue that nowadays higher institution instructors are leaving their work in search for better living conditions in industries. This also hampers the smooth sailing of operations in the tertiary level studies.

Students were requested to pinpoint the main limitation of professors teaching MBA program in their respective universities. The result was summarized in figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: Limitations associated to Professors**

As can be seen from the figure 3 above, the top three limitations of professors teaching MBA classes include lack of practical experience, lack of pedagogical skill and lack of research experience.

This is due the problem in academic staff recruitment system at higher education in Ethiopia. Those who have practical work experience are not interested to join the academic arena. Specifically department heads and postgraduate coordinators emphasized that lack of industrial experience of the existing professors. Further existing professors have no culture of inviting professional practitioners and well known entrepreneurs to share their experiences in the class.

In addition, most university teachers were not trained for teaching profession. They did not take pedagogy course both at undergraduate and graduate level of their university education. Hence, the majority lack method of teaching and research skills. To solve this problem, some universities are forcing their academic staffs to attend Higher Diploma Program (HDP) at the moment.

Another aspect of process evaluation is the assessment method adopted. Students were requested to state challenges faced related to assessment for the courses they are taking especially on their final examination part and the result is summarized in figure 4 below.

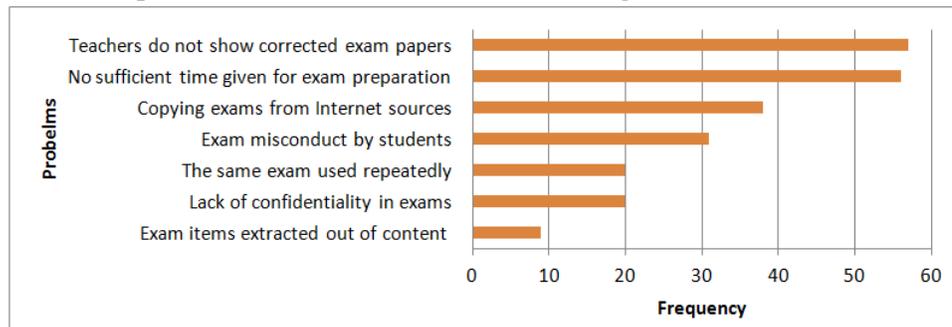


Figure 4: Problems Associated to Assessment

As can be seen from figure 4 above, the two top problems associated to assessment are teachers did not give feedback to students and they did not provide sufficient time for exam preparation. In addition to lack of transparency, not giving feedback to students after exam correction prevents students learning from his/her mistakes. In addition, not giving sufficient time for exam preparation has negative impact on their performance.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The launch of MBA program in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon as it counts nearly two decades. Although significant and successful expansion of MBA program have been made in the last decade, the MBA programs in the HEIs under study have so many limitations in terms of curriculum design, facilities, inputs and overall teaching & learning process. Hence, in order to meet an ongoing demand for quality business academia and professionals, it is advisable for universities exert their efforts in updating their curriculum, recruit high profile professionals, making use of qualified practitioners and fulfill adequate infrastructures. Specifically, more evidence based decisions about curriculum design is needed to ensure programs are meeting the needs of their participants. Our universities should not use one size fit type of MBA program. It is evident that general MBA is meant to offer students a broad base of knowledge in business and management. It provides the basics across all management functions and develops general skills that can be applied in almost any industry. Therefore, general MBA should be designed for

those whose undergraduate degrees are non-business fields. On the other hand, in specialized MBA, students receive an in-depth business education in a single field including finance, marketing, Human Resource, accounting or entrepreneurship, etc. Therefore, specialized MBA should be designed for those candidates whose undergraduate background is in business fields.

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