



## Employer Support and Market Value of Distance Education Programs: an Exploratory Study

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### Abstract

For a great many people, distance education may not be ideal- it may be all that is available. There is a resistance towards distance degree holders and many employers are skeptical at the time of appointing those who have been qualified through such a system as the mode of training and examination, and quality of outcome are questioned. This cold war has gone to the extent that the teachers trained through distance are sometimes considered as second class in merit at the time of their appointment in public as well as private educational institutions [1]. At the same time, distance education has produced many thousands of graduates to be inducted in new jobs or qualified for promotion in their present jobs. Although long established perceptions may not be easy to change, there has been a steady improvement in public's perception of distance education. In the developed countries, students from such institutions are more likely to be respected than scorned at as it is generally believed that distance education is much more difficult and compels the students to the subject matter longer and more intensely [2]. The scenario in the many developing countries is quite different as the government support is poor and employer support is minimal. In order to overcome the perception that distance education programs are inferior than traditional face-to-face courses, the programs need to be credible and respected, and appropriate incentives and rewards should be introduced by the governments and the employers for those who successfully complete their degrees.

This paper will report on the findings of a research study conducted to investigate the perceptions held by the employers and students, the support extended by employers during the participants study period, and their perceptions about the worth of distance learning programs. Stratified sampling strategy was used to select 78 male and female teachers from private and government institutions who had done masters through distance education. Data gathering tools included group and individual interviews and questionnaire survey. Important findings showed that female teachers were supported more by their employers than male teachers and distance degrees carried market value to a certain extent. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this investigation will have significant implications for future policy planning by the government to strengthen distance programs in South Asia region.

### References

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