Online Learning in the Open University Systems of India and China: A Comparison of Responses to Globalization

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

Since the turn of the millennium the national Open Universities in China and India have been integrating online learning as an additional means of course delivery. Over this period both countries have witnessed exponential growth in Internet access and a commensurate need, mandated by government, to increase enrolments in higher education with one focus placed on using networked technologies.

Prevailing arguments suggest there is a growing convergence towards a universal model of higher education based on a western world culture. The question of whether online learning may support, or accelerate, such a convergence by hastening the displacement of national ideas and values is the central question addressed in this investigation. Aspects of online learning in the Open University of China (OUC) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) are compared: policy, curriculum and students’ experiences and perceptions.

A comparative case study methodology has been used, incorporating a mixed methods design. Data collection techniques include document analysis, interviews and surveys.

The analysis of policy documents, covering the period from 1997 to 2011, and data from interviews with institutional policymakers point to differences in the experience of developing online learning in the two national institutions. The OUC has taken a top down linear approach backed by government oversight, whereas IGNOU has tended to devise policy based on the emerging experiences of instructors and students learning online.

A consideration of the content of four courses in each institution, combined with data from interviews with course developers, offers a glimpse of curriculum design for online learning within the larger Open Universities. A rubric is used to quantify the extent of national
and foreign content in some of the courses. The findings point to varying degrees of a national representation of knowledge in the presentation of content.

The third data set presents findings of a student survey. Results point to general satisfaction with online learning at each Open University, including a positive outlook for future employment as an outcome of learning online. Additional findings indicate that students believe the representation of national knowledge in content may be compromised as the use of online learning grows.

Tying these results together, this investigation aims to bring a deeper awareness of the impact of online learning within each Open University. As each institution enrolls approximately three million students, with growth expected, it is valuable for policymakers and curriculum designers to reflect on how national knowledge may be balanced with global learning content in this new and widely used medium.

Finally, the fact that the two institutions are similar in infrastructure, enrolments and openness to online learning, results in insights into how each system may learn from the other as it goes forward.
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Chapter 1: The Setting

Background

In 2001 I accepted a one year contract for the position of research associate at the Open University of Hong Kong. The name and purpose of the University had little meaning for me, though I understood that there were other Open Universities in the world, including Canada. I was drawn to the diversity of East Asia and was simply ecstatic at the opportunity to work overseas and have an entirely new life experience. Little did I know that this would be the beginning of a ten year journey (to date) into understanding the complexities of Asia, its unparalleled diversity, and the characteristics of higher education in the region.

As a young researcher I was quickly immersed in the demanding role of running two studies, the larger of which involved taking inventory of online learning among Open Universities in Asia. I was given a list of names of individuals to contact who were in Open Universities as far west as Israel and as far east as Taiwan. Eventually, 11 Open Universities were secured to participate in the study, including the Indira Gandhi National Open University and the China Central Radio and Television University.¹

Grasping the concept of Open Universities and the practice of open and distance education was not easy for me. Having graduated from McGill University and the University of Toronto, merit seemed central for admissions into higher learning and the notion of open admissions seemed counter to the ethos, and privilege of entry into the ivory tower, as I had tended to see the University. A steep learning curve lay ahead for me with the particular demand of understanding the historical and political contexts of the various countries to which the participating Open Universities belonged.

¹ The China Central Radio and Television University is now known in English as the Open University of China since 2009.
The Open University Concept

Open universities generally adhere to the concept of open and distance learning which, as will be shown later in the investigation, has varying interpretations. If we start with distance education, it is generally defined as the physical separation of student from institution and independence from the instructor and other learners. This is not absolute as distance education may include access to remote classrooms and enhanced interactivity through networked technologies, and thus may be seen more as a blended form of learning (Yoon & Lim, 2007).

Like distance education, there is no universally agreed definition of open access. Bates (1995) describes this as learning in a flexible manner that is independent of time or place. Distance education is “one means to that end (p. 27)”. Yet, open access also refers to admissions policies which vary by institution, but are labeled as “flexible” or “minimal” and are generally lower than those of conventional institutions.

The Research Sites

Both India and China have a national Open University, modeled on the Open University of the United Kingdom (est. in 1969), and each has adopted varying forms of the principles of open and distance learning noted above. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Open University of China (OUC) serve student populations that amount to nearly three million each, marking them as the largest universities in the world in terms of enrolment. Spread through an intricate network of Provincial Open Universities, Regional Centres and other administrative and teaching outlets, they are able to extend access to higher education to all corners of each country.

The mission of these Open Universities is generally articulated as the provision of sustainable learning environments of good quality, equitable access, particularly to those hitherto un-reached, and lifelong learning (Ding, 2006; IGNOU, 2010).

Since the turn of the millennium, each system has experimented using online learning. The OUC has encountered steady growth while IGNOU has had early failures and more recent successes, after re-starting its online programs in 2008. In 2005 the OUC invested
approximately $400 million\(^2\) into its own online learning initiatives (Ding, Gu, & Zhu, 2005, p. 67). In the 11\(^{th}\) Five year plan, the Indian government proposed $1.3 billion to expand online learning, and IGNOU has been the focal point for this (Government of India, 2006, p. 110).

These initiatives are occurring in concert with an explosion in Internet penetration. It was only in 1995 that China launched its first commercial links to the Internet, initially having about 50,000 users (“The flies swarm in”, 2000, July 22). In 1998 user numbers in China and India were reported to be 2.1 million and 1.4 million, respectively (Press, Burkhart, Foster, & Goodman, 1999). These figures in 2010 had swelled to 485 million in China and 100 million in India (Internet World Stats, 2011), ranking first and fourth in global comparisons.

Undoubtedly growth in online learning will follow these trends. Economic and social demand for higher education will continue, bringing a more eclectic demographic of learners that will have increasingly diverse learning needs, including access to technological skills and opportunities for participation in the global knowledge economy. This is particularly relevant to China, where the mass higher education threshold, defined as enrolling 15 percent of the age cohort (Trow, 2006), was achieved in 2002 (Li, 2005, p. 114). In its post-massification context, China is seeking to move towards the creation of a lifelong learning society. By 2020 China is forecasting 350 million people enrolled in continuing education, more than double the figures in 2009. In infrastructure alone it will be unable to meet such a demand and the likelihood that online learning will move *the classroom to the computer* is strong. India, by contrast, is plagued by an underfunded higher education sector that has only marginally increased participation rates in recent years, and these currently stand at 13 percent of the age cohort (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010, p. 168). With objectives in the 11\(^{th}\) five year plan to move enrolments towards the massification threshold, IGNOU has been commissioned to make up for the shortfalls of the conventional system. The trend in underfunding will likely continue, creating a greater space for Open Universities, distance education and online learning.

\(^2\) All dollar amounts are in US currency equivalence.
What remains unclear is how online learning is being organized, in terms of policymaking, purpose and intended outcomes. The widespread integration of the Internet into higher education is symptomatic of larger social forces that have been described by world institutionalists as the iso-morphism of higher education, based on an affinity towards a western world culture (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2006). Their arguments point to a global convergence in the structure, purpose and ethos of the University.

Might the Open Universities of India and China, by moving more and more towards online learning, accelerate this perceived trend of homogenization? Considering that as much as 15 percent of each country’s higher education populations belong to these Open Universities, and with further growth anticipated, this issue has considerable importance. Universities mirror the national interests of a particular country, train its elites – and increasingly its middle class – and provide the unique space where histories, cultures, and technologies are preserved, modified and advanced. It is thus worthwhile to ponder how these Open Universities might embrace online learning as a means to assert national ideas and values while resisting what might be described as the homogenizing forces of globalization.

Globalization, Higher Education and Online Learning

Globalization has led to the increased speed, magnitude and complexity of interactions among individuals, corporations, and other types and levels of social organization (Held & McGrew, 2000, p. 4). This heightened level of interactivity has been facilitated through the advent of networked technologies which are becoming increasingly pervasive in the developing world, as illustrated by India and China. This has intensified the relationship between higher education and the technologically-dependent knowledge economy. Today the ability to create, access and disseminate knowledge is achieved at a rapid pace and bestows a new found sense of agency on individuals and institutions the world over.
Digital Divide No More?

When this investigation first began, it seemed that the digital divide was quite pronounced, yet in a span of only four years monumental changes have occurred. Consider the following statistics.

In 2006 it was reported that there were 855 million computer units globally, of which the US had 267 million, or 31 percent of the global stockpile (Computer Industry Almanac, 2006). This amounted to approximately a 1:1 ratio of PC to person in the US and a 1:10 ratio in the rest of the world. Two years later there were approximately 1.2 billion units globally. The US figures remained unchanged dropping the percentage of global share to 22 percent. The PC to person ratio in the rest of the world increased to a 1:7 ratio. Internet statistics are even more telling.

In 2007 it was reported that there were nearly one billion Internet users in the world, of which 60 percent resided in Europe, North America and Australia (though representing only 17 of the global population). The most recent statistics from March 2011 show that the global Internet population has more than doubled to 2.1 billion. The share of users in Europe, North America and Australia has fallen to 37 percent. Making up this difference is Asia. There the share of Internet users globally is approximately 44 percent and measuring at 922 million users (Internet World Stats, 2011).

Indeed penetration rates as a percentage of the population remain higher in industrialized countries, yet recent developments point to the tremendous growth potential for the rest of the world.

In sync with physical access to networked technologies is content and technological development. Though it is difficult to ascertain the language of dominance on the Internet, it has been found that there are 537 million native English users, amounting to approximately 25 percent of all users globally. Taking into account that English is widely spoken as a second (or third) language by millions more, it can be safely assumed that English has a stronger presence on the Internet than any other language. Further, Moore’s Law (Moore, 1965) of computer
engineering remains pertinent today. It asserts that computer performance will double every 18 months based on advancements in microchip technology. Though this suggests that the cost of increasingly powerful computer technology will decrease, this makes upgrading expensive and access to newer technologies problematic as the majority of computers are distributed through the industrialized world.

In the context of higher education and online learning this suggests that the Internet, despite having democratic potential, is controlled by a minority of the global population. In a wider picture, Wade (2002) has argued that developing countries are,

“disadvantaged in their access to the global economy not just by their lack of income, skills, infrastructure, and the like, but also by the very standards and rules that are built into the international systems. These standards and rules ensure that as developing countries become more integrated into the international ICT system, Western suppliers benefit disproportionately.” (p. 462)

If we look to developments in higher education around the world, we see that enrolments in higher education stand at nearly 159 million, of which 72 percent of enrolments are occurring in institutions in the developing world (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010, p. 170).

As Internet penetration rates increase globally, diversified ways of using the Internet will naturally follow. The same argument may be applied to higher education. As the majority of the world’s higher education population is located outside of the west it is plausible that there should be more non-western influences on the University than ever before. Furthermore, we may assume that online learning is becoming a part of University learning systems the world over. At the same time, due to the infancy of online learning in higher education, it is so far understudied, particularly in the developing world. The notion of online learning as a monolith of western design raises numerous questions that touch upon the sovereignty of higher education and the potential impact of western values on learners, particularly if online learning grows as predicted. Few stand-alone institutions offer the reach to potential online learners that the Open University systems of India and China do. They are therefore ideal candidates for
a comparative study, which will enable us to gain some understanding of the impact of some of these growing trends.

The Research Problem

This investigation seeks to deepen understanding of the socio-cultural impact of online learning through a comparative analysis of the Open University systems in India and China. Critical to this understanding is the reality that there is a greater global interconnectivity among multiple levels of social organization, and that the University is a significant actor in this regard. The potential of this interconnectivity, given the capacity of online learning to facilitate the expansion of access to higher education, raises a number of issues relating to potential global influences on the socio-cultural contexts in both countries, particularly as expansion continues in these Open Universities.

The main research question posed in this investigation is thus as follows:

*How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?*

The three areas of policy, curriculum and student experience aim to break down the main research question into the following sub-questions:

For policy:

1.1 *What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?*
For curriculum:

2.1 *How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?*

2.2 *How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?*

2.3 *To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?*

For students:

3.1 *What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?*

3.2 *What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?*

In addressing these research questions, this investigation employs a case study methodology and a mixed methods design. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques are used to mitigate the shortcomings that are commonly seen as problematic in each paradigm (Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The main sources of data collection will be interviews with policymakers and curriculum designers, and an online survey of current students (at the time) enrolled in selected online programs.
Theoretical Considerations: Johan Galtung and Arjun Appadurai

In informing this investigation is the work of two scholars: Johan Galtung, a sociologist who specializes in peace and conflict studies and Arjun Appadurai, an anthropologist with a focus on media and globalization.

Galtung’s theory of imperialism (1971) provides a context to understand the uneven relationship between core and periphery nations. The distinguishing features between these groupings are of both hard (e.g., military, economic, political) and soft power (e.g., communications, culture). With particular attention drawn to the imperialisms of communications and culture, a deeper understanding of the underlying forces of networked technologies is provided. Where Galtung’s work is unique is that his critique of the inequitable social, political and economic structures is balanced with proposed solutions. His suggestions for mobilizing the periphery and transforming periphery-core relationships are utilized in the context of higher education among emerging nations and aid in drawing conclusions to the investigation.

The work of Appadurai (1994) acts to complement and counter the work of Galtung. Appadurai’s contention that the core-periphery debate needs to be revised carries some relevance in a time of globalization. His contentions are that the de-territorialization of the nation-state has dramatically altered the core-periphery dichotomy and that the economic narrative dominating globalization debates is oversimplified and insufficient. He points to varying flows of ethnicity, technology, ideology, finance and media and argues that they are multidirectional and impactful, challenging the patterns of imperialism. At the heart of his thesis is the importance of culture and the power to indigenize external forces that create new disjunctures, challenging the so-called homogenizing narratives of globalization.
**Significance**

The significance of this study can be seen in three areas.

First, understanding how these Open Universities are expanding higher education provision through online learning will have implications for future development as each country establishes or grows their mass systems. Will online learning become a fixture in higher education provision, and if so, to what degree? How this is being shaped by policy and curriculum design in the present study will provide guidance for future development, particularly when considering the partnerships between IGNOU and the OUC within their conventional higher education sectors in the two countries.

Second, the use of the Internet in higher education introduces new modes of learning and facilitates wider access to information, much of which has been overwhelmingly western in origin. To what extent global compared to national knowledge is represented in online learning curricula is an issue of significance for the shaping of cultural values and individual knowledge, particularly as educational provision through this mode of learning becomes more widespread. The study may thus be useful for curriculum designers and policymakers in the institutions under investigation, as they consider issues of curricular approach and content.

The third area of significance might be seen as a comparative one. What can each Open University system, as microcosms of their larger national contexts, learn from the other? Each country has emerged from ancient civilizations that are still influential today in the form of Confucian traditions in China and India’s rich linguistic and religious patterns. How deeply embedded are these value traditions and how are they being articulated through Internet technologies? The extent to which cultural values are embedded in higher education curricula reflect the degree to which institutions are asserting national (and local) interests under conditions of greater global interconnectivity. Since these two institutions show extraordinary similarities in infrastructure, geographical reach and student populations, it should be valuable to identify distinctive features of each and reflect on what they might learn from each other.
Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the context of the two Open Universities under investigation and situated the problem in relation to varying theoretical debates. The research questions were posed and the significance of the study was explained.

Chapter 2 expands on Chapter 1 with a literature review, starting with an overview of modernization from the time of the Industrial Revolution. This aims to situate the context of the study in the globalization literature and place the core theoretical considerations of Galtung and Appadurai in a wider related literature. Chapter 2 then situates the University in the global system, and explores the ways in which higher education has become differentiated with examples of the Open University model, online learning and the global expansion of universities. A literature review of policy and curriculum issues is also provided.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used in designing this study. The mixed methods approach will be described alongside of a review of literature on the purposes of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. This review is placed in the context of comparative education and draws on the debates among scholars over the merits and shortcomings of each paradigm in the field. The research design, data collection, analysis, and courses and participants in the investigation are then described. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations in the methodology.

Chapter 4 is a country comparison between India and China. The themes that are used to frame the comparison are as follows: Land and People, History, Economy, Government and Politics, Formal Education and Higher Education, including an introduction to each Open University.

Chapter 5 continues from Chapter 4 to describe each Open University system in detail. The Chapter begins with an overview of the Open University of the United Kingdom which provides a segue to discuss the histories of IGNOU and the OUC. Like the country comparison, there are a series of parallel themes covered for each Open University. They include History,
Organization, Financial Support and an elaborate review of the developments in online learning within each system. Comparisons and conclusions follow.

Chapter 6 is the first results chapter and focuses on the policy question. The Chapter applies concepts presented in the policy literature review in Chapter 2 to interpret policy development at the OUC and IGNOU. This is complemented by the analysis of policymakers’ perceptions on the developments within each University. Perceptions are organized along the major themes of Current Policy, Knowledge Representation and Globalization, and Future Policy. A comparative analysis follows, with conclusions relating to the sub-research questions ending the Chapter.

Chapter 7 describes the research results relating to curriculum. An analysis of courses from each Open University, including the perceptions of curriculum designers, is presented. The Chapter melds quantitative analyses of course content with qualitative analyses of the interview data. The sub-research questions are addressed and conclusions drawn.

Chapter 8 presents the results from the student questionnaire. The Chapter begins with a summary of the description of the sample from Chapter 2. The quantitative results are divided along the lines of students’ experiences and students’ perceptions. The sub-research questions aligned to each grouping are addressed, followed by conclusions for the Chapter.

Chapter 9 serves to wrap up the investigation. The results from Chapter 6, 7 and 8 are re-visited and answers are offered for each of the sub-research questions aligned to each Chapter. The theoretical considerations are then applied to the findings of the three results chapters and the major research question is finally addressed. The Chapter concludes with a review of the comparative method and suggestions for further research and collaboration between the OUC and IGNOU.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The national Open University systems in India and China are unique Asian adaptations to the Open University of the United Kingdom that was established in 1969. Their shared mission, to provide access to all, or reach the unreached using distance education and communication technologies, has proven largely successful, as measured by enrolments that amount to approximately three million each, placing them among the largest universities in the world. Their successes have sprouted a desire to venture into online learning, largely to enhance interaction in the learning environment and widen the scope of resources and opportunities for learners. This has occurred in unison with the maturation of their Internet populations fueled by strong economic growth that has advanced these populations tremendously.

The cases of online learning in India’s and China’s national Open Universities are an interesting study into understanding the complexities of education and globalization. The notion that globalization is a cultural force that naturally creates, through education, a western world culture (Ramirez & Boli, 1987), forms the basis of one interpretation to understand the impact of online learning in these Asian Open University systems. Do the online learning initiatives in question operate to homogenize the ethos of these universities and by association, their learning culture? The aim in this Chapter is to present an alternative viewpoint arguing that globalization fosters a dialectical relationship where the alleged homogenizing forces embedded in the Internet and online learning may actually pose opportunities for the Indian and Chinese national Open Universities to strengthen their own cultural capital and create spaces for national development that will augment their standing domestically and in a global milieu. In this Chapter, this viewpoint on globalization – as a potential agent of change and cultural revitalization, rather than the more critical stance of reproduction – is developed as a foundation to support the main research question re-stated here as follows:

*How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?*
In providing a basis to answer this question, it is argued that the Open University systems represent microcosms of the larger national context where they are situated. For this reason, the Chapter will begin with a broad overview of the process of modernization with an emphasis on how societies have continued to re-interpret its tenets in the post-War context. The neo-Marxist interpretations of dependency theory, world-systems theory and the World Order Models Project, and finally, neo-institutionalism, will be used to illuminate a variety of interpretations to the overarching neo-liberal model that has significantly influenced the development of societal and economic policies since the 1990s. The Chapter then focuses on the trajectory which has carried modernization forward: globalization. An understanding of the variants of globalization will provide a space to situate the University in this global framework: how it has evolved as an institution, with emphasis placed on the developing world. Here the Asian adaptation of the Open University model will be described with a focus on the implications of engaging in online learning initiatives as a means to augment the learning experience and widen access to underserved and increasingly differentiated populations. Integral to this discussion is an understanding of policy implications and how considerations of curriculum for online learning are guided by such policy. Under this description we will re-visit the sub-research questions, and conclude with the theoretical framework guiding the main research question that will drive this investigation forward.

**Modernization**

The process of modernization can be referred to as the transition from agrarian to industrial modes of production where subsistence farming is supplanted by manufacturing, trade and technological advancement. The early beginnings of modernization can be traced to the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century. As populations migrated to cities, workers became increasingly specialized, wage labour proliferated and individualism displaced communitarianism (Lewellen, 2002, p. 20). The institutionalism of law, government, academia and the press brought on by the wellspring of the Enlightenment (Hutton, 2005, p. x) and the
establishment of nation-states in the 19th century, laid the foundation on which modern society is based.

These periods were marked initially by economic development and later political organization and the legitimization of governments in democratically organized systems (Keyman, 1997, p. 34). The progress in the 19th and 20th centuries in Western Europe and the United States institutionalized these characteristics of modernity. The victory of the Allies in World War II, in particular, supplanted any disputes over the position of the United States as the world’s most formidable nation. In the post-colonial world, this position assumed authority to disseminate a model of development articulated through the multilateral framework of the United Nations organizations. The model, based initially on the Keynesian welfare state and multilateral redistribution, had by the mid 1970s begun to alter considerably (Mundy, 1998, p. 453). With the end of the Cold War, the transformation in world order seemed unequivocally decided. This apparent triumph of western liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 2006, p. xv) was to be enacted globally through the Washington Consensus, a term coined in 1989 by economist John Williamson (2004). The Washington Consensus espoused liberalization, privatization and the curtailing of big government as universal principles in this new model of development. This was gradually implemented through the Bretton Woods institutions which ensured adherence by third world countries to its policies through a conditionality framework (Mundy, 1998). Around the same time one major assumption underlying modernization - that the essential conditions to bring about development were put in place by the domestic policy decisions of nation states - was criticized as grossly inaccurate.

Dependency theory.

Through the 1970s a group of Latin American economists, led by Argentinean Raul Prebisch, provided a trenchant critique of the current world order. Articulated as dependency theory, they argued that the conditions for development or underdevelopment were based on relations between nations, rather than solely matters within the nation state (Holsti, 1985, p. 66). The countries of the third world were positioned in a core-periphery cycle of dependence where industrialized core nations exploited the raw materials and cheap labour of the
peripheral nations located in the developing world. Prebisch suggested the most viable solution was for peripheral nations to de-couple from this imbalanced system and move to import substitution as a means of self-reliance. The economic growth experienced in East Asia within the same world order, however, drew attention away from dependency theory, while simultaneously challenging the directives of the Washington Consensus. During Japan’s Allied Occupation from 1945 to 1953, social reform was subject to ‘hyper-democratization’ which was initially met with resistance. In the 1950s, the pre-War tenets of nationalism, conformity and control were re-institutionalized (Horio, 1986, p. 32), with little deleterious effects to its rapidly expanding economy. By the late 1970s the four Asian tigers of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan had emerged as stable industrialized economies. This gave rise to an Asian Model of development where the role of government was integral to the operations of the market, as has remained in the cases of Hong Kong and Singapore today, through predominantly authoritarian systems (Stiglitz, 1999, p. 10). The larger and more current paradoxes in the modernization debate are India and China, a topic that will be expanded in Chapter 4.

**World systems theory.**

World systems theory provided another frame, somewhat different from that of dependency theory, which seemed to gain more currency as a basis for understanding the global system from a historical perspective. Branching from Marx, it is concerned with the movement and accumulation of capital and suggests that states are subsidiary actors in the world system (Clayton, 1998, p. 481). Its true operators are individuals as they control multinational corporations, and the financial and industry sectors, which collectively compete to accumulate global capital. Developed chiefly by Immanuel Wallerstein, the world system is viewed as having been established in the 16th century with the discovery of the Americas and the sophistication of trade networks within Asia and Africa (Wallerstein, 1974). This approach had some congruence with the core-periphery model observed in dependency theory. Wallerstein later realized the place of semi-periphery nations, which offered an explanation for the industrialization of less developed countries. These semi-peripheral states are positioned to
be exploited by the core, and in turn, act to exploit the periphery. The positions on this continuum are not fixed as the historical record would indicate. Consistent with others, Wallerstein has predicted that the US, as the world’s hegemon, is in decline, and that the next period of world affairs will be defined by chaos as the core-periphery model is re-aligned (2003). This may provide the basis for the socialist-world government that Wallerstein has hypothesized as the successor to the current world capitalist system (1984, p. 157); not a utopia he insists, but an “egalitarian collectivity” defined by the “the reunification of the boundaries of economic and political activity”.

Moving beyond a focus on the economic realm in understanding global affairs we now turn to two other positions that are more socially deliberative in their analyses: the World Order Models Project and neo-institutionalism.

**World order models project.**

A group of scholars organized themselves from the early 1970s to develop a substantial literature dedicated to imagining a new world order encompassing other areas of social organization. They became known as the World Order Models Project (WOMP). Richard Falk one of its primary advocates, puts it simply: “the present system doesn’t work; it cannot be incrementally repaired” (1978, p. 536). The alarming conditions that plague most of the world, he suggested, call for significant adjustment free of state interference. What this group called for was a transnational social movement that would strive for peace, well-being, social and political justice, and ecological sustainability.

**Galtung’s structural theory of imperialism.**

Galtung’s structural theory of imperialism provides another lens in WOMP academic circles. His belief, under current conditions in human relationships that, “rationality is unevenly distributed, that some may dominate the minds of others, and that this may lead to ‘false consciousness’” (1971, p. 82), acted as a starting point to understand imperialism outside of prevailing narratives based entirely on economic conditions. He included five types of imperialism: Political, economic, military, communication, cultural. The first three appear more
closely linked to coercion, or hard power, whereas the last two are linked to attraction, or soft power.

In relation to coercion in the core-periphery continuum, a core nation’s political decision making is imposed on a peripheral nation to exploit its raw materials. Refinement of such materials produces arms, for example, in the core nation, which can be subsequently used for greater coercive purposes including the provision of protection to peripheral nations (p. 92).

On the other hand, communication and cultural imperialism can be more associated with Nye’s conception of soft power (2004), where a stronger nation creates conditions (e.g., events, products, lifestyle) that are coveted by a weaker nation. In using news media as an example, Galtung states that core nations always hold superior access to technology enabling more sophisticated and attractive forms of transmission. Further, what is newsworthy in the periphery is disproportionately focused on events occurring in the core, and that news emanating from peripheral nations is not shared among other peripheral nations, further strengthening the core’s standing. Indeed, we can draw relationships between communication and cultural imperialism based on this example. Cultural imperialism can also be imposed through the work of missionaries or aid workers, and through products such as books and blue jeans, which may fail to respect the culture of the peripheral nation.

Of course, these five components do not exist in a vacuum, but share elements of convertibility that would cross-over the coercion-attraction dichotomy that has been identified. The point is that imperialism is organized in multiple forms. Drawing attention only to economic factors is reductionist and assumes homogeneity across cultures.

In moving towards a re-ordering of global relationships, as WOMP proponents advocate, Galtung offers two frameworks that will be highlighted: One to articulate structural changes in the world system in general, and the other to articulate the empowerment of academia in peripheral nations. Although utilizing both these frameworks may appear redundant, this is countered by a consideration of the larger assumption that underlies this investigation: That the Open University systems act as microcosms of their larger national contexts. At the end of this investigation we will extrapolate from the conclusions drawn on the Open University
systems to the place of India and China in the global system, and therefore keep in mind the theoretical considerations that best speak to these conditions.

That said, we first look to the larger picture of structural relationships in the world. Galtung posits there are five elements that may enable the periphery to develop and provide the conditions for a more egalitarian world order: Horizontalization; defeudalization; reduced harmony within the core; reduced disharmony within the periphery, and changes within the core (1971, p. 107-109). Horizontalization would reduce the division of labour between countries by creating conditions for more trade balance between core and periphery nations, or less likely, for peripheral nations to revert to import substitution in order to reduce foreign influence. Defeudalization would restructure the core-periphery relationship by the creation of viable organizations to adjudicate conflict and empower peripheral nations to effect change, particularly if/when core nations fail to meet conditions based on equality and fairness. Although the WTO, in theory, aims to create this type of re-balancing, core nations still benefit disproportionately, particularly since contact among peripheral nations is comparatively infrequent. Reduced harmony within the core would operate to diffuse power among core nations and enable a more egalitarian system. Reduced disharmony in the periphery could occur through class revolt (in the case of the periphery nation using force to displace the periphery’s centre), through isolation of the periphery’s centre by the periphery’s periphery or through enhanced channels to connect the peripheries of peripheral nations among themselves. Lastly, changes within the core would occur if these nations recognize the need for change for altruistic reasons such as national solidarity, participation, global harmony, peace or environmental sustainability.

We may connect these five strategies for structural change in the international dominance system (Galtung, 1971) with a model more situated in academia that Galtung refers to as nonviolent social science (1975, p. 273-276).

The premise of this model is to counter the apparent imbalance in knowledge production that perpetuates the core-periphery dichotomy in academic circles. The existing imbalance is divided along the components of Exploitation, Penetration, Fragmentation and
Marginalization. Galtung elaborates on four counterpoints identified as Equity, Autonomy, Solidarity and Participation. Equity establishes a more horizontal, rather than vertical, organization of knowledge sharing and dialogue between core and peripheral constituents. Autonomy would aim to empower peripheral participants and encourage the contributions of national knowledge. Solidarity would see an enlargement in networks among scholars in peripheral nations. Lastly, participation displaces hierarchical structures and aims to connect participants from core and periphery in ways that are mutually beneficial and will enrich the research process.

Neo-institutionalism.

Outside of the neo-Marxist literature, another branch of social theory is systems theory or neo-institutionalism, which, like the writings of Galtung, has particular relevance to education. Neo-institutionalism is defined as the increasing “similarity (iso-morphism) and stability of organizational arrangements in a given population or field of organizations” (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1023). Its proponents postulate that in terms of education there is a global convergence of national systems where supranational forces continue to naturally shape educational policymaking and course content (Boli & Ramirez, 1992). This includes the University, which they suggest has become “highly expanded, and essentially global” (Ramirez & Boli 1987, p. 918) and its scholars are ever more interconnected through the necessity of having a common discourse (e.g., language, international conferences, research, publications), and that over the years curriculum has tended to develop resounding similarities (Altbach, 1992). The subtleties of the neo-institutionalism position point to a global borrowing of western models of education that have proven successful in a structural-functionalist modality (Durkheim, 1956). Though the neo-institutionalist position identifies a convergence in education models around the world, it refrains from addressing how this apparent homogenizing force affects or interacts with global stability. Nor does it provide a framework to ameliorate imbalances (Finnemore, 1996).
The purpose of this section has been to provide a cursory overview of the initial processes of modernization, to acknowledge divergent paths from the established blueprint, and provide differing interpretations to modernization.

The position taken in this investigation gravitates towards the need for a more balanced and equitable world order and thus finds the ideas of WOMP scholars especially apposite. Particular to this investigation are the Open University systems of India and China, which operate as microcosms of the countries to which they belong. The Open Universities respond to some of the most pressing social concerns endemic in each country; that is addressing the underdevelopment of education in semi-urban and rural areas, where the majority of citizens in each country reside. Taken from the WOMP literature and Galtung’s social science model in particular, are social tools that can empower the academic periphery to participate more actively in both domestic and international higher education contexts. The implications of further advancing these aims through technology are at the heart of this investigation. The channels of online learning accelerate connections to the core at unprecedented speeds. Critics would argue that, historically, such connections have tended to exacerbate the distance between the core-periphery and periphery-periphery relationships, yet this will be repeatedly contested in this investigation. Using a critical lens to better understand online learning, and its use within the Open University systems of India and China, will provide clearer insights and raise new challenges to the widely held belief that technology has a homogenizing affect on learning. It will be countered with evidence that online learning has and will continue to create new spaces to advance national knowledge and augment the quality of higher education in both the Indian and Chinese contexts.

The next section will move to a discussion on the varying globalizations which Keyman articulates as having acted to “diffuse and develop” the varied processes of modernization (1997, p. 16).

Globalization

The term globalization is used by politicians, academics and the media to explain the intensity of global connectivity in relation to economics, politics, culture and society. It may be
referred to as the increased speed, magnitude and complexity of interactions between
individuals, corporations, and other types and levels of these and other forms of social
organization (Held & McGrew, 2000, p. 4). This heightened level of connectivity has been
facilitated by government de-regulation and deferral to the marketplace, and accelerated by
the widespread growth and advancement in information and communications technology. As
will be outlined below, there are multiple forms of globalization and like modernization, it is a
phenomenon subject to ongoing debate.

A useful starting point to discuss globalization is offered by Lewellen (2002, p. 9). The
two main camps in the globalization debate can be designated as the hyperglobalists and
skeptics.

Hyperglobalists.

As the name implies, hyperglobalists are avid proponents of globalization and recognize
it as a new and inevitable phenomenon. From an ideological standpoint, globalization has
rapidly advanced with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War. No longer
do geographical or political barriers prevent the free flow of people, goods or information. This
has resulted in the de-territorialization of the nation-state, the emergence of global markets
and a universal consumer culture. Hyperglobalists argue that participation in a globalized world
is the only path to modernization. Limiting participation will render a nation isolated and
relegated to the periphery. North Korea is the most salient example of this peripheral isolation.

Skeptics.

At the other end of the spectrum lie the skeptics who argue that the position of the
hyperglobalists is largely exaggerated. In proportional terms the flows of people and capital is
significantly lower today in comparison to the 19th century. What is at present occurring
resembles something more attuned to regionalism where organizations such as the EU and
ASEAN hold tighter economic and cultural alliances than any perceived global institution
(Lewellen, 2002, p. 9). The ubiquity of ethnic representation, and the rise of religious
fundamentalism further undermines the view that globalization is an inevitable homogenizing force. Skeptics argue that the nation-state remains the central actor in trade, protectionism, geopolitics and the governance of society. This position holds that divergence best describes the process of modernization with new forms yet to emerge.

**Critics.**

Outside of this continuum lies the critic. The critic recognizes the reality of living in a globalized world, yet argues the global rise in wealth as being largely uneven and widening the gap between the developed and developing world, the skilled and the unskilled labourer. Indeed there has been a rise in global foreign direct investment and a proliferation of manufacturing worldwide. The problem that has persisted is that the materials assembled in the developing world, particularly of advanced technological equipment, are sold to the western consumer, yet remain unaffordable to the citizens where the product’s components are derived. There are also the contradictions of protectionism; condemned in one breath and enforced in another by western powers. One of the most poignant examples is agriculture, among the developing world’s greatest assets. A quote from Aids activist Stephen Lewis illustrates this point:

> At present the European Union and the United States together subsidize their farmers to the tune of $350 billion (US dollars) a year; it equals five times the amount that is ploughed into foreign aid. Every cow in the EU is subsidized to the tune of two dollars a day, while between 400 and 500 million Africans live on less than a dollar a day. (2005, p. 18)

The dissent from the periphery has strengthened and a call for a re-balancing of power has gained much traction in comparison to the past (Bhagwati, 1977). In the last round of the Doha trade talks, no major agreements were made, particularly because the agriculture issue between the US, India and China could not achieve the concessions needed by all sides (Beattie & William, 2008). Within the last several years there has been a call for a reformed international financial system in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 and the G20 is gaining
steam as a more relevant alternative to the G8 as the world’s international economic council. Such calls are strong indicators that the tides are turning. The assumption here should not be that all critics of contemporary globalization are situated in the proverbial south. Many countries, most notably India and China, have been among the greatest beneficiaries of globalization, having lifted hundreds of millions of citizens out of poverty as a result of their successful economic policies. These examples have actually given rise to growing criticism from one-time proponents of globalism. With the losses of manufacturing jobs overseas and outsourcing becoming commonplace, economic globalization is no longer favouring its original guardians. The “Buy American” slogan President Obama preached in 2009, and again in September, 2011, is a weak attempt to curb the western appetite for cheap Chinese goods and efficient Indian services, particularly under still dismal economic circumstances at home.

The focus so far has been on the economic dimension of globalization. The position of the hyperglobalist remains the predominant position though this is increasingly being contested by critics of globalization (which to a lesser extent includes the skeptics). Problematizing globalization touches on deeper issues with the consideration of the social and cultural, to which we now turn.

**Globalization: The cultural component.**

Beyond the economic aspects of the globalization debate, it is clear that the associating discourse leans to being all-encompassing: Global, homogenizing, westernized, hegemonic and interconnected. Keyman refers to this as a “reality in itself, insofar as it functions as constitutive of every and each relation that takes place within it... and gives expression to the emergence and reproduction of an organic constituting totality” (Keyman, 1997, p. 18-19). As illustrated above this has not been entirely true. One of the more cited works in the post-Cold War context has been Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations (1997). He maintains that despite the triumph of capitalism over communism, the largest obstacle facing the world in the new millennium is the understanding by the west in regards to its co-existence and increasing connectivity with other civilizations. This position was perceived by many as largely validated on
September 11th, 2001 when terrorists attacked the World Trade Centre and other points in the US.

**Appadurai and disjunctures.**

A more positive aspect to the notion of cultural interaction in globalization is offered by Appadurai (1994). He provides a perspective of the other in speaking about the de-territorialization of the nation-state. As state borders have become increasingly porous, flows between people, finance, materials and images have risen, but not to the point that culture has (or will) become a universalized entity. Rather, Appadurai suggests that these flows present and enable the increasing awareness of other cultures and the effects this may have in one’s own lived reality. In many cases what is adopted externally is soon indigenized to suit the cultural context. This reconfigures perceptions of reality making the individual transnational in character, though it does not necessitate a global unanimity in behaviour or a heightened understanding of foreign influences. The increase in various flows therefore, is by no means always a harmonizing phenomenon, but may be a means of asserting one’s identity in a global forum. Barber presents a more critical view of indigenization from one culture to another. While modifying the “dominant cultural face” (Barber 2007, p. 262) of various foreign influences, these external flows may also stunt the development of indigenous ideas, traditions, etc. He cites an example in India where the Barista coffee chain, though locally owned and operated, emulates the Starbucks concept of providing a haven for the young and trendy as an alternative to the **dreary home environment**. To suggest these influences will lead to the degradation of India’s tea drinking culture is overstated, yet it certainly does not support such traditions. If we look to history there is no shortage of events that have dramatically disrupted the functioning of one society as a result of direct influence from another. The tumultuous modern history of China is a case in point. The Opium Wars, products of direct contact and corresponding trade imbalances with the British, and the catastrophic Cultural Revolution, a movement to exterminate the perceived infiltration of Soviet imperialist dogma, are among several examples where the incongruence among cultures has led to wide scale disruptions in a given society (Hayhoe, 2000).
Cultures are evermore interconnected, occupying a space that has become smaller in both figurative and literal terms. The processes of economic and cultural globalization have intensified these connections and the societal implications remain scrutinized, and resisted, despite ongoing adoption of foreign processes. Looking more closely at the institution of the University provides a focus for reflecting on how modernization is being articulated in current globalization processes. The University holds a crucially valuable position in modern societies. It is a place where the intellect is cultivated, history is interpreted and the future is anticipated. As the central component to this investigation, the University provides a social laboratory to interpret how modernization may further unfold and how this will be aided, or shaped, by the processes of globalization.

The University and Massification

Though earlier variants such as Bologna and Oxford were established in the 12th century, the University that appears today is often seen as the Paris Model that emerged a century later. It positioned the professor as the embodiment of the institution and from its early beginnings, adopted as its main tenet the notion of autonomy (Altbach, 1992, p. 41). The University spread throughout Europe, functioning to train elites to work in the civil service, and in the professions of law and medicine. From the industrial revolution onwards the University expanded to include the training of new professionals in areas such as accounting and anthropology, with more and more focus given to science and research (Bereday, 1973, p. 14).

The colonial empires emanating from Europe gave global prominence to the European University and western models were implanted into non-European contexts largely to serve the colonial project. Deemed of greatest importance was the training of local elites in the behaviours and attitudes of Europeans in preparation for work as intermediaries between the colonial master and the native masses. The seminal work by Eric Ashby (1966) provides elaborate accounts of the role and development of higher education by the British in India and Africa. Though never colonized, the diffusion of western higher education models also had tremendous influence in China (Hayhoe, 1996) and Japan (Nakayama, 1989) and spread more
globally in the post-War context through the development work of the World Bank and UNESCO.

Though the 21st century University shows little resemblance to its 13th century originator, particularly with the popularization of the multiversity, the development of the global research University and other new models of higher education, it has over time proven integral to the process of modernization (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962; Bereday, 1973; World Bank, 2000). New variants have surfaced to widen access and respond to and facilitate the increasing specialization of skills in the knowledge-based global economy. Few would dispute the view that the most sophisticated and influential higher education system has been developed in the United States, an outcome that may be attributed to its constitution, where the notions of equality and liberty laid the foundations for the country as it exists today. From an early period the US has supported a high degree of institutional differentiation at both vertical and horizontal levels (World Bank, 2000). Vertical differentiation refers to the hierarchical expansion of higher education institutions with research universities at the top, followed by smaller scale local universities and liberal arts colleges, polytechnics and other forms of vocational and technical provision. Horizontal differentiation entails the presence or creation of vocational, technical, private, for-profit and other non-conventional institutions to complement or compete with the established system. Martin Trow recognized the application of differentiation as integral to the creation of a mass system of higher education, which he defined as enrolling at least 15% of the age-relevant population in some form of post-secondary education (2006). Trow referred to the massification of higher education as progressing in three phases: Elite, reserved for the privileged and measured at below 15 percent of the age cohort; mass, which accommodates 15-50 percent of the age cohort; and universal, where enrolments exceed 50 percent, an achievement that today remains limited to approximately half of the OECD countries and Russia. Though the conception of massification was relatively novel at the time of his writings in 1973, Bereday theorized the recognition of three principles in creating such a system (p. 143). First, open admission need not impair quality and over time any deficiencies will be ameliorated. Second, the relationship between enrolments and an economy’s capacity to absorb knowledge workers need not be closely aligned. The product of
massification is a highly skilled workforce that will provide stimulus to the system. Third, individuals are inherently educable; any obstructions are environmental and can thus be minimized, if not overcome, within or between generations.

Although debatable depending on the extent of industrialization, Bereday's conception of massification has shown a degree of resiliency, particularly with reference to open admission (through the promotion of distance education, for example) and the recognition that all are educable, as espoused by the world's larger intergovernmental associations (World Bank, 2000). What has changed from Bereday's *Universities for All* has been dramatic shifts in the relationship between government, enterprise and the University, advancements in information and communications technology and as Appadurai reminds us, intensified and ubiquitous flows of people, finance, materials and images that combine to alter and re-shape the University and by association massification. In the following section the University is explored in these contexts.

**The University and Globalization**

In economic terms Dale (2000) explains that it is “the changing nature of the world capitalist economy as a driving force of globalization that seeks to establish its effects on educational systems, even as they are locally mediated” (p. 430). For higher education this has been evident in a continued spread of western University models deemed invaluable to serve the economic demands of globalization. Higher education has become increasingly tied to the needs of the knowledge economy and at the same time pushed towards measures of de-regulation, privatization and commodification (Patrinos, 2000), with one of the major trends being a decrease in government resources.

Under conditions of shrinking budgets, a form of “new managerialism” (Van Damme, 2002: p. 6) has emerged, where “accountability”, “economic rationalism”, “doing more with less” and “focusing on outcomes and results” have become central to the maintenance of higher education institutions; these conditions are pervasive in the West (Miller, 1995) and in Asia (Mok, 2000, p. 149).
Underlying these changes is the notion that governments have been inefficient in the provision of higher education, particularly in countries where primary and secondary education has had relatively low enrolment ratios (World Bank, 1995, p. 56). The conclusion is that budget misallocation has given a disproportionate amount of funding to higher levels of education, perceived to mainly benefit society’s middle and upper classes, while sustaining high levels of illiteracy and providing few opportunities out of the circle of poverty. Left excluded from basic levels of education has been significant populations in rural areas, females, and ethnic minorities (Lockheed & Bloch, 1990; Patrinos, 2000; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). Though more widely evident in Africa, multilateral organizations such as the World Bank have made aid contingent on re-directing funds to lower levels of education. With regard to higher education, the World Bank stipulates that recipient countries, “adopt a higher education policy framework that stresses a differentiated institutional structure and a diversified resource base, with greater emphasis on private providers and private funding” (World Bank, 1995, p. 136), though they tempered these assertions in a widely cited publication in 2000 (World Bank, 2000).

With the tightening of the public purse, public universities have implemented cost-recovery strategies. Alternative sources of income have come through consultancies (Daniel, 1996), the inclusion of distance education and continuing studies programs (Van Damme, 2002: p. 6), and the widespread introduction of, or increase in, tuition fees. Among the more lucrative initiatives has been the export of higher education from the West to overseas. The literature describes this phenomenon as internationalization. One of the more prominent scholars in this field, Jane Knight, identifies two forms to internationalization: At home, referring to the development of “international understanding and awareness without ever leaving the campus”; and abroad, which she defines as, “cross-border education (often referred to as transnational education) which involves students, teachers, scholars, programs, courses, curriculum, projects moving between countries and cultures (2003, p. 3).” Undoubtedly, internationalization abroad has been a contributor to this new mode of diffusion of higher education to the non-Western world. Australia, for example, boasts the export of higher education as the country’s third largest export (after coal and iron), contributing approximately
17 billion dollars to its economy annually and more than 15 percent of revenue to University budgets (Trounson, 2010).

Globalization has also facilitated the expansion of domestic higher education systems in the developing world, with Asia leading the way. Since 1980, universities have expanded in Asia faster than anywhere in the world (Altbach, 2004), a result of rapid economic development, investment in higher education and increased accessibility by the new middle class. Expansion has been a product of differentiation, enabling new transborder actors to participate in provision, as stated above, and altering existing models and allowing new forms of higher education to emerge, such as those facilitated by technology. A concern central to this investigation is the relationship between these newer forms of higher education, in particular those influenced by technology, and the more culturally and historically embedded non-western models of higher education.

To this point we may look to the idea of self-determination in higher education. It posits the non-western University as retaining, if not spreading, its national character and resisting the imposition of foreign influences on the structure, content and research agenda of the institution (Postiglione, 2005). Taken another way, the preservation and development of the national character of higher education is a de-coupling from the economic connotations associated with contemporary higher learning. Indeed increased revenues raise the clout and standing of universities and their offshoots, yet it also provides the space to pursue and preserve those aspects of learning that are not imposed, rather are internally developed or embraced by choice.

Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics indicates there are 159 million individuals enrolled in higher education globally, of which nearly 73 percent are located in industrializing countries (see Table 2.1 below). In this case, if the majority of the world’s higher education population is located outside the west, it is plausible that there are more non-western influences on the University than ever before.
Table 2.1

*Global Enrolments, Higher Education, 2004-2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collected</th>
<th>Globe</th>
<th>Industrialized*</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>% in Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 (2010)</td>
<td>158.7</td>
<td>43.23</td>
<td>115.5</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2009)</td>
<td>150.7</td>
<td>42.92</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 (2006)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Industrialized nations include those belonging to the regions of North America, Western Europe (including Israel), the Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan), and Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.*

Consider China and India. They now rank as the largest and third largest higher education systems in the world. China’s 21/1 and 98/5 projects to support its universities in attaining world-class status are underway (Hayhoe & Zha, 2006) and India continues to be recognized as having top schools in technology and management (Jayaram, 2006). This is being accomplished with Mandarin (Pǔtōnghuà, 普通话) remaining the language of instruction in the case of China, and the national developments of the IT sector in India forming much of the curriculum in the country’s renowned Institutes of Technology. Though gradually, evidence is also mounting in the increasingly important spheres of University rankings. The representation of Indian and Chinese universities in the QS World University Rankings has steadily climbed from 2006 to 2011. From 2006, there were six institutions from China and none from India found in the top 300 listings. In the recently released findings China was represented eight times and India three times (QS Top Universities, 2011). Other universities in Asia such as Malaysia and Thailand, and Brazil from Latin America, appeared in these most recent rankings for the first time. What should be noted is that these institutions are displacing institutions from industrialized countries.

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3 The literal translation of Pǔtōnghuà (普通话) is “the common language”, and is otherwise known as Mandarin, spoken by over 90 percent of the population.
The University and Distance Education

As discussed above, the move from elite to a mass system was defined by widening participation rates in higher education. Differentiation was key, as occurred in the development of the mass system in the United States. The success and modernization of the US was felt across the Atlantic and gradually, the UK followed suit, though it diverged in certain aspects as it created a mass system. One example that has gained a footing is the Open University, a unique University model based on open access, emphasis on technology, and delivery of quality distance education that is aimed to be cost-effective.

In the UK in the early 1960s it was found that only six to seven percent of secondary school students pursued further studies after graduation (Rumble & Harry, 1982, p. 170). Commissioned by the British government, Lord Robbins chaired a two-year committee which in 1963 produced its findings in the Robbins Report. Its call for the expansion of universities included the recommendation of a broadcast University tailored to the adult learner. In September 1963, Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced the creation of the Open University, with the official opening in 1969 (Wei, 2008, p. 149). Its mission as articulated on its website states,

The Open University is open to people, places, methods and ideas. It promotes educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality University education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfill their potential. Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership it seeks to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open and distance learning. (OUUK, 2009)

The objective of being a world leader in distance learning was soon realized. The model of the Open University spread quickly with institutions established in Thailand and other countries in the early 1970s (Perraton, 2000). Today, the Open University concept has a presence around the globe and expansion continues most notably in Asia and Africa.

The organization of learning in Open Universities is based on open and distance learning, two distinct, yet overlapping concepts. The first is the idea of ‘open learning’. Bates
(1995) describes this as learning in a flexible manner that is independent of time or place. Distance learning is “one means to that end” (p. 27). Distance learning allows individuals to study in an environment separate from a physical institution and independently from an instructor or other learners. Another dimension to the Open University concept is admissions. Students generally are those who are school leavers, returning to upgrade knowledge and skills, postponers, or those who were unable to attend higher education due to social, political or financial constraints. Open University admission is less restrictive and thus establishes some semblance of equality for those who aspire to higher learning, yet have not necessarily excelled or progressed through formal school settings.

Equality may be attributed to geography and cost. As will be outlined in Chapter 5, the Open University systems in China and India respond directly to the problem of physical inaccessibility through an intricate network of study centres, affiliated institutions as well as the postal system to deliver tutelage and materials. Providing tertiary education opportunities beyond urban boundaries is an equitable means to overcome geographical constraints. Costs are controlled in a variety of means, and connected to what Daniel describes as the values and traditions of Open Universities (2000). Values are connected to the previous paragraph in terms of openness. Reducing barriers to access and offering a flexible learning environment have proven exceptionally effective in Open Universities, if measured by enrolments. The tradition of utilizing distance education with a reliance of varying technologies has allowed programs to be delivered at scale. Better understood as achieving economies of scale (Daniel, 1996; Datt, 1988), Open Universities have proven to operate most efficiently through large enrolments. Datt notes, “as the number of students increases, the average cost declines since the fixed costs get distributed over a larger number of units,” (p. 143). In the case of India, it has been reported that the unit cost of distance education courses varies between one-third and one-sixth the cost of conventional higher education, enabled by its large student population, though this does not include online learning (Panda, 2005, p. 216).

Access and cost only tell part of the story. The third important aspect of Open Universities is quality. The unique approach to course development shared by Open Universities is to devise curriculum through course teams, rather than individual academics.
Daniel describes this as “one of the highest expressions of scholars being scholarly” (Daniel, 2001, p. 22). Course materials are an outcome of multiple perspectives, debate and consensus. This process acts to augment the standing of the materials and creates an atmosphere of collegiality that seems to occur infrequently in academic circles, and reserved more for research than teaching.

Perraton (2000) comments that the Open University model of access, cost and quality has most widely benefited Asia, largely due to political and economic circumstances. In China for example, the Open University system prospered at the end of the Cultural Revolution due to a dearth of existing universities in comparison to secondary school graduates, while in a post-Raj India, a proliferation of secondary schools led to an unmet demand for higher learning and the emergence of correspondence courses, and later, national and regional Open Universities. In East and South Asia, Open Universities were established as a result of the expanding economies and subsequent demand for higher learning through the 1970s and 1980s.

The Open University system has received tremendous attention and investment in developing countries for reasons of social equity and access, cost effectiveness, the need to overcome geographical constraints, economic development and maximizing learning through the medium of technology (Bates, 1995).

Although print-based materials remain the prominent method of course delivery, Open Universities have shown themselves to be adept at integrating technologies to maximize learning while controlling costs. Like the early beginnings of the Open University in the UK, the Open University of China used TV and radio media for instruction in classroom environments4, though this has changed dramatically in the past ten years. The more conventional form of delivery is via print-based materials for self-study, and computer and Internet technologies are now the focal point of modification and expansion.

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4 A point of distinction should be made between the use of television in the OUUK compared to IGNOU and the OUC. The OUUK mainly used TV for instruction in a documentary style format. The OUC and IGNOU, on the other hand, have generally used lectures that are recorded in a studio.
The University and Online learning

By nature, the Internet is a democratic and social medium. It empowers individual voices, is a medium that is non-refereed, largely uncensored and often provocative; it facilitates a heightened ability to participate at multiple levels of social interaction at anytime and anywhere. Proponents suggest that for individuals, organizations and enterprises alike, networked technologies have “flattened the playing field” (Friedman, 2005, p. 10) while making the globe highly integrated and increasingly interdependent.

The infusion of networked technologies into the higher education environment expands opportunities to widen provision, and enable access to a seemingly infinite source of information. Curriculum can be readily obtained, expanded and updated and there are untold ways to enable interaction, evaluation, simulation, etc. The varied sites of YouTube, Wikipedia and open courseware all continue to contribute to the development of and access to knowledge and universities are finding increasingly innovative ways to exploit these tools.

Despite these untold possibilities, the Internet has yet to emerge as a genuine instrument for democratizing knowledge. Both the World Wide Web and online learning are products of western institutions (Harasim, 2000; Scigliano, 2000). Today the majority of information on the Internet remains in English and it employs the very same inventions mentioned above that are promptly hybridized by non-western countries for local consumption. Here we may re-consider Appadurai, who would claim that such external phenomena enhance transnational attitudes whereas Galtung would be more cautious suggesting externalities may have a more deleterious effect stifling creativity or conflicting with the particular culture.

At another level is the hardware itself. Bandwidth is tied to cost, as are the increasingly fast machines required to handle the greater volumes of information, images, etc. Moore’s Law (Moore, 1965), which asserts that computer performance will double every 18 months based on advancements in microchip technology, remains relevant today. Although Moore’s Law points to costs decreasing for more sophisticated computer technology, it also makes upgrading
expensive and a recurring issue. Further still, access to the hardware of newer technologies remains a limitation to those living outside of the industrialized world.

This provides a more comprehensive understanding to the notion of the digital divide by presenting issues that go beyond the mere physical access to networked technologies. Wade argues that the digital divide is an agent of neocolonialism whereby developing countries are, disadvantaged in their access to the global economy not just by their lack of income, skills, infrastructure, and the like, but also by the very standards and rules that are built into the international systems. These standards and rules ensure that as developing countries become more integrated into the international ICT system, Western suppliers benefit disproportionately. (p. 462)

In the case of online learning it can be inferred that, while information access and interaction may be improved, online learning may also support a form of westernization as language, knowledge and standards, are dominated by foreign voices. For developing countries aiming to modernize their higher education systems, this may be part of the appeal. That is, the institutional rationale for engaging in online learning may be, in part, for cosmetic value. Online learning initiatives project the image of being modern, innovative and perhaps western by design. Those aspiring to study abroad are presented with a more realistic alternative in online learning that, in some cases, enables a foreign degree to be earned domestically. The growth of online learning worldwide, including the presence of foreign providers using online learning in Asia, also pushes local institutions to follow suit. The added pressure may mean that it seems more profitable and timely to implant or modify an existing western model of online learning than to start anew into a field where in-country expertise may be comparatively limited. Here we find an example of convertibility with elements of communication and cultural imperialism.

A report by the Commonwealth of Learning titled the Changing Faces of Virtual Education highlighted the uneven developments in online learning between the developed and developing world. It cautioned about the potential “content imperialism” (Commonwealth of Learning 2001, p. 151) that may emerge as online learning initiatives grow. Murphy, Zhang, and Perris (2003) countered these assertions in a published report containing the catch phrase,
“Resisting Content Imperialism”. The authors argue that the imposition of foreign higher education in Asia has not been a solution to unmet demands for higher learning. Rather, their own Open University systems have been able to serve millions of students “that the emerging global providers can only dream about” (Murphy et al. 2003, p. 33). In regards to online learning, the report shares findings from a survey of online learning at 11 Asian Open Universities. It was found that courses predominantly utilized the national language for instruction and many Open Universities used online platforms of their own design, rather than purchasing a foreign commercial product. Though a small example, this illustrates the assertion of local or national knowledge in light of the perceived dominating voices present in connection to networked technologies. Where this study ends, the current study begins. Taking a more in depth empirical approach that combines the objectives of widening understanding on the nature of online learning in the eclectic Asian context and how distance education institutions, through this medium are interacting with, rather than responding to globalization, is at the heart of the current investigation. The most tangible elements to explore these facets have been determined to be policy and curriculum in terms of process and implementation.

**Framework to Understand Policy in Higher Education**

This section begins with an understanding of how policy in higher education is theorized. There is a voluminous literature devoted to policy; for example, there exist at least 20 English language journals taking ‘education’ and ‘policy’ in their title. The journal *Higher Education Policy*, identifies its aim ambiguously as, “advancing scholarly understanding of the policy process applied to higher education...” Considering policy for higher education some pressing questions include: what approaches are used, who is involved, what are the outcomes, why is this needed, when will outcomes be attained/measured? The point to be made is that policy is undoubtedly complex involving a myriad of approaches, stakeholders, constraints and outcomes. What should be clear is that policy aimed to serve the public realm should ensure the public’s interest is at the forefront of any decision making that takes place, an objective even more acute in the context of the two Open University systems. Both IGNOU and the OUC share as their mission to reach the unreached and counter the otherwise limited opportunities
that have been widespread in the Chinese and Indian higher education systems. Some approaches to policy are offered below.

**Approaches to policy.**

Approaches may be organized in a top-down manner, carefully crafted, and based on empirical evidence, or derived from normative patterns of behaviour that develop over time, are grassroots and are naturally adopted or transferred across governments, ministries, institutions, departments, courses, etc. The literature points to differing frameworks that fall along this continuum. In their book, *Policy and Performance in American Higher Education: An Examination of Cases across State Systems* (2009), authors Richard Richardson and Mario Martinez (2009, p. 7) review various frameworks that have been used to delineate policy in higher education. The most common are rooted in rationality and/or efficiency (Lane, 1998, p. 51). One is the *linear model* (also identified as the stages model), where policy decisions are generalized into incremental or reflective stages (here six are identified) from the initiation to continuation or elimination of a particular policy (see Figure 2.1).

![Figure 2.1. Linear/Stages Model of Policy Development.](image)

The linear model provides a high level of structure and control and would be common to bureaucrats, or institutional administrators, who are in positions where sweeping reforms are deemed necessary and measurable according to pre-determined time constraints or objectives. A linear approach may be found in a top-down system where sweeping changes are implemented by an authoritative body that exerts a considerable degree of control over process and decision making. Another way of looking at a rational model for policy development is through Max Weber’s *Model of Bureaucracy*, which aims to identify how
organizations may be best administered based on efficiency and productivity. His ideal type of bureaucracy focuses less on inputs and includes the following properties: Impersonal authority structure, hierarchy based on competence, pay based on product, control and discipline (Lane, 1998, p. 51). Although not as compartmentalized as the linear model above, Weber’s model of bureaucracy pinpoints the involvement of stakeholders, a point to be further elaborated below.

At the other end of the spectrum higher education policymaking may be defined by frameworks that are more deliberative (i.e., based on consensus building) or even disorganized (i.e., unclear goals). These may be characterized by consistent feedback loops, environmental demands, multiple perspectives, trial and error and other inputs. In this context we can identify policymaking as simply non-linear. Models such as the garbage can model of organizational choice (Cohen, James, & Johan, 1972, p. 3), or multiple streams framework (Richardson & Martinez, 2009, p. 8) point to the reality that policymaking in higher education is rarely a linear process (Figure 2.2 is a fusion of the multiple streams and garbage can frameworks). Such models resemble a process defined by ambiguity, chaos, or organized anarchy; often an outcome of unclear goals (i.e., outcomes), unclear technology (i.e., process) and fluid participation (i.e., transience of participants) (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 11). Admittedly, the manner by which such models arise is not always purposeful, but perhaps borne out of failed attempts to follow a more linear process.

One reason may point to the nature of higher learning. Many institutions remain steeped in tradition and have long been recognized as loath to change within the societies they are embedded. Benefiting from the public purse, having limited accountability and espousing the tenets of academic freedom have enabled the public institution to retain its identity as being time-honoured, a public good insulated from the scrutiny of government and fiercely inflexible. Critics, or advocates for change would argue that institutions of higher learning can be more aptly characterized as archaic, out of touch and largely inefficient. The expansion, differentiation and de-regulation of higher education in recent years has limited the flexibility and autonomy of many institutions, yet the point being made is that change occurs at a sluggish rate in institutions of higher learning in comparison to other organizations and the development of policy may reflect such stagnation.
Major policy decisions affecting large groups of individuals and/or large financial resources (e.g., building a new institution, setting enrolment quotas) would be best served by thorough planning and careful implementation, yet it is important to note that the presence of competing bodies involved in policymaking (e.g., state vs. institution) may fit the framework of non-linearity, particularly when considering the components of uncertain goals and fluid participation. It may also be the case that this policy framework serves grassroots initiatives well, where an ad hoc approach is preferred before major decisions are implemented. Educational institutions trialing a new program or delivery method, for example, may find such an approach to policy development suitable, as the non-linear approach “discovers preferences through action more than it acts on the basis of preferences” (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 1). In considering the multiple streams or organized anarchy models, these may be inherent in a bottom-up system where regulation is limited and policy development is less bound by time or financial constraints.
A third type of policymaking may simply be that which is borrowed or lent. The work of Steiner-Khamsi (2004) has delved into this area of policymaking in the area of education and development. Her work identifies late adopters of western educational policies, though this is not necessarily related to higher education (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Nonetheless, there are ample examples in less industrialized countries where policies for higher education have been adopted from international bodies (e.g., accreditation, credit transfer, etc.).

Among the three considerations of policy approaches, the first two, linear and non-linear, were described mainly in procedural terms and as value neutral. In practice this would be categorically different, as will be outlined in the following section. The third approach was identified as more value-laden as the outcome of borrowing or lending can be imposed through the channels of conditionality or in less coercive terms that Galtung would describe as the uneven distribution of rationality. Attraction is derived from seeing what works well in another context and seeking the same outcome. This may also simply be resource dependent – adopting a policy for example, for purposes of expediency, or aesthetic value (i.e., looking trendy). Whether this is a subtle form of imperialism, as might be argued by Galtung, or ideas that would be used and gradually tailored to the cultural context, from Appadurai’s point of view, can be better understood through praxis. This will be addressed in the later sections of this Chapter.

**Stakeholders in Policy for Higher Education**

In addition to considering types of policy frameworks that we may apply to higher education, there is a need to identify the varying stakeholders to better understand the conditions under which policy is framed and implemented – and who benefits.

Policy may govern a particular institution, or a conglomerate of institutions, within varying geographical\(^5\), or non-geographical, boundaries\(^6\). In some cases policy is aligned to a

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\(^5\) A geographical example is in Ontario, where universities are independently governed. They are recipients of provincial and federal grants and respond to the provincial Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for various concerns, such as new undergraduate programs that need government approval before being included in the provincial funding formula (Jones, 1994, p. 224). Universities also impose quotas on applicants reserving the largest seats to those who reside in the home province. A supranational example is the
genre of institution, as will be later discussed in the unique contexts of distance education institutions in India and Internet colleges in China. Burton Clark’s Triangle of Coordination (1983, p. 143) is useful to examine the various stakeholders involved in policy development. Clark’s Triangle has been widely cited in western contexts (Jongbloed, 2003; Burke, 2005), and in more global terms (Enders, 2004; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), as a functional lens to interpret who is involved in policy development in higher education. It is conceptualized as having three ideal types: The state authority, the academic oligarchy and the market (See Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Clark’s Triangle of Co-ordination.

State authority.

Clark divides the state authority into bureaucratic and political factions. The bureaucratic arm steers the vertical and horizontal expansion of higher education institutions, staffing enlargement and specialization, and rule expansion. As stated earlier in this Chapter, vertical expansion supports a differentiated system. More sophisticated higher education systems place the research University and/or multiversity atop this hierarchy, followed by the

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6 A non-geographical example is Universitas 21, a network of 23 research universities representing 15 countries. The organization lists six underlying principles to the partnership, a 5 year strategic plan and shared standards of scope (all are deemed research-led, comprehensive research universities), and possessing strong quality assurance frameworks. See http://www.universitas21.com/about.html
liberal arts or teaching University, community college and trades school. Horizontal expansion involves non-conventional institutional forms that may include private, for-profit and others that co-exist with the predominant public entity. If we look to national systems of higher education we find in Asia for example, that there have been varying forms of expansion (see Hayhoe, 1996, for an account of western models adopted to Asian contexts). Where the state is involved in expansion, the chain of command will be lengthened from the ministerial level to departments and so on as a higher level of policy development and coordination becomes necessary. Staffing enlargement would naturally occur, particularly with the creation of new departments or institutes, along with the need for differentiated expertise. The final component of the bureaucratic arm, according to Clark, is rule expansion, aligned to budgetary matters, compliance of policy implementation or institutional evaluation.

The political branch is divided into political priority and deepening political involvement. In terms of priority it would make for good politics if the state authority adopted higher education policies that responded to popular support for access, innovative capacity or sector needs. Increasing enrolments in nursing or teacher education, when there is an acute shortage of such professionals, would be a few examples. Deepening of political involvement may include differing government departments or ministries participating in higher education policymaking to serve broader national interests, utilizing higher education to support nation-building or to mobilize economic competitiveness, among other forms that aim to legitimize the relationship between state and society.

**Academic oligarchy.**

The academic oligarchy is a group comprised predominantly of professors or administrators (many of whom are former academics) who may belong to an institutional body such as a governing council or an intermediary body that represents a conglomerate of institutions. A salient example is the University Grants Commission (UGC), a vestige of British colonialism that many countries of the Commonwealth have adopted or retained that operates as an intermediary body between the state and the institution. As stated by Clark, the organization of an academic oligarchy like the UGC has been “manned largely by prominent
“has long modeled to the world an effective way of taking the government’s money without taking orders from the government’s officials.” (p. 141). Other examples of academic oligarchs are those that have professional relevance, or are subject specific, such as psychological or medical associations common in the US, teacher organizations common to various provinces in Canada, among others (see Neave, 1997, for example, for a detailed outline of the vast number of national and sub-national intermediary bodies in higher education). In addition to budgetary matters, these intermediary bodies function to provide accreditation, institutional review, entrepreneurial activities or other interests to preserve the place of the academy in the wake of bureaucratic expansion or the encroachment of the market.

The market.

As the third vertex of Clark’s Triangle of Coordination, the market operates through individuals and enterprise. Unlike the state authority and the academic oligarch, no formal body exists and the market’s influence on policy is indirect. In a system that favours user choice, characterized by affordability and mobility between institutions or programs, the consumer who votes with his or her feet creates a natural accountability measure, particularly if state subsidies are tied to enrolment. An institution that suffers a decline in enrolment will inevitably be required to make changes. Similar circumstances may be applied to academics and administrators, where policies that support occupational mobility may enable individuals to fulfill varying personal or professional aspirations at competing institutions. These two examples can otherwise be categorized as consumer and labour markets. A third branch is the institutional market. If government policies enable a space for private and/or for-profit institutions to exist there is an additional accountability measure factored into the wider higher education system. The entrepreneurial institution may fill a void where public institutions perform inadequately, lag in the development of new programs, or lack the infrastructure to accommodate the growing demand for higher learning opportunities; an occurrence that is particularly acute in the developing world. Together these market forces may utilize, or alter, policies established by the more formal state and academic bodies.
Clark utilizes his triangle to provide broad summations of the domestic organization of a particular higher education system. In today’s higher education settings we may find closest to the state vertice China, followed by France or Sweden, where governments play a leading role in the decision making for policy development of public institutions. The academic oligarchy may have a more dominating presence in Italy or Canada where the role of the academy remains central to policy decisions of institutions and in turn, holds sway in influencing policy decisions at the state level. We may find strong indicators of the market vertice in contexts where the financial relationship between the state and the higher education sector has gradually eroded, or there has been a long-standing differentiated system that includes the coexistence of public and private institutions. Such conditions would provide circumstances that favour the consumer, labour and institutional markets, as previously mentioned. National systems that are increasingly market-oriented are the UK and Australia, particularly in consideration of the international context, where foreign students comprise 15 percent in the UK (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2009) and 20 percent in Australia (International Development Program Education Australia, 2010) of their entire student populations; outcomes of aggressive internationalization strategies. Another is the US, having maintained a long tradition of private institutions.

To summarize, this section presented an overview of the role of policy in higher education. The intent is to draw attention to the layered and idiosyncratic processes involved in development, implementation and evaluation of policy for higher education. Differing approaches to organizing policy may fall along a continuum between linear/rational and non-linear frameworks. Environmental conditions such as political involvement, population demographics and economic circumstances are determinants between what could otherwise be interpreted as top-down or bottom-up approaches. Richardson and Martinez (2009) collate these as varying rules that, “include both formal policies – such as statutes and agency regulations – and informal norms and values that determine how actors make operational decisions in such action situations as planning, program review, and resource allocation” (p. 20). Also discussed was that policy in higher education is inclusive of a variety of stakeholders identified as those who represent the state, academic body or the market. In combination, this
overview will be utilized to better understand how policy is articulated in the Open University systems of India and China in Chapter 6.

**Curriculum and Online Learning**

Taking online learning as a form of socialization in learning, we may look to the study of curriculum to enable a better understanding of how to interpret online learning in relation to the larger context of the University and globalization that is integral to this investigation.

The root meaning of curriculum can be interpreted as “a course of study” indicating a prescription of material to be learned. Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman broadly describe curriculum as “something experienced in situations” (1995, p. 6). A deeper analysis of curriculum, based on the works of Zais (1981) and Miller and Sellers (1990) provides two main points: 1) course content represents only a portion of what is included in any educational context and is only partial to the organization of curriculum, 2) the process of organization is complex and historical in the sense that the evolution of society has been influential to the organization of curriculum, and that curriculum is laden with norms, values and knowledge that are representative of the dominant voices represented in society. In this thesis curriculum organization is used to describe the processes of deciding what is included as content in curriculum, how it is designed, developed (refinements, for example), implemented and evaluated.

Although curriculum here is looked at in the context of formal schooling, there are elements applicable to higher education and online learning. As indicated in the previous section, the course content of online learning alters the learning environment from closed sources such as textbooks or CD-ROMS to seemingly infinite sources on the Internet that are non-refereed and may offer alternative interpretations to the material being studied. Indeed a learner may access the Internet whether a course is online or not; the institutional decision to use online learning warrants the use of alternative information sources and pushes students to *think outside the box*. Like the effects of campus life on a student’s mindset, these facets of online learning are undoubtedly numerous, difficult to ascertain and understudied. The process of organization offers another useful point to understanding online learning. It has already been
discussed that the Internet is a western invention and is dominated by the language of English, yet it should not be assumed that other forces are absent from the design and delivery of online learning. How curriculum for online learning considers these factors and considerations for the representation of national knowledge designed in the curriculum raise a series of new questions that are later addressed in this thesis.

Theoretical Considerations: The Intersection of Galtung and Appadurai

This thesis aims to understand the relationship between higher education and globalization in the context of online learning in India’s and China’s national Open University systems. As the largest universities by enrolment in their respective countries, the comparison of online initiatives provides a unique lens to ascertain how the Internet and online learning is influencing the higher education context in each country and impacting immense pools of current and potential learners. In broader terms, this investigation also aims to advance theoretical understanding about the processes of modernization and the mechanisms of globalization among emerging nations.

Of the positions presented to interpret the processes of modernization that of WOMP, and in particular the work of Galtung, are decidedly most relevant to this investigation and the research questions that have been posed. Having a framework to understand the varying imperialisms, in particular those of communication and culture, and proposed solutions through the tenets of Equity, Autonomy, Solidarity, and Participation, provide a clear pathway to problematize the online learning conditions of India’s and China’s Open Universities.

The most visible mechanism by which modernization has been carried forward is globalization. The position taken here, in relation to the economic form of globalization presented in this Chapter, is most aligned to the critical. Although globalization appears to be an inevitable force as the hyperglobalist would advocate, the inherent assumption about determinism may be oversimplified. There are other forces to consider, such as nuclear war, environmental degradation or human catastrophe that are demanding increasing attention and have the potential to dramatically alter the current state of affairs globally. Another force is culture. Huntington’s position on the clash of civilizations carries overtones of warnings and
threats, and little about understanding, knowledge and dialogue. Appadurai’s contention that culture is potentially enriched, rather than diluted, through the enhanced interconnectivity of globalization is intriguing, and brings us back to the beginning of this Chapter, where it was stated that the Chapter’s aim,

is to present an alternative viewpoint [to globalization as a homogenizing force] arguing that globalization fosters a dialectical relationship where the alleged homogenizing forces embedded in the Internet and online learning may actually pose opportunities for the Indian and Chinese national Open Universities to strengthen cultural capital and create spaces for development that will augment their standing domestically and in a global milieu.

In the context of the research questions, the ideas of Galtung and Appadurai will aid in interpreting the findings of this investigation. The research questions are re-stated here as follows:

**How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?**

And the sub-questions that serve to break down the main question:

For policy:

1.1 **What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?**
For curriculum:

2.1 *How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?*

2.2 *How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?*

2.3 *To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?*

For students:

3.1 *What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?*

3.2 *What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?*

**Summary**

This Chapter commenced with an overview of the process of modernization and its divergent paths, with examples drawn from Latin America and East Asia. It was argued that modernization has been accelerated by the processes of economic and cultural globalization. Located at the intersection of the market and society is the University, a place where the intellect is nurtured and the tenets of liberty, knowledge and equality are preserved and advanced. As an integral component to the development of modern society, an overview of the University and the widening of its processes, defined as massification, were outlined. The worldwide spread of the University was placed in the context of globalization with the suggestion that by diffusion, the model of the European University may act as a hegemon,
propagating a western world culture through its ideals, structure and curriculum. Among its variants, the model of the Open University based on the UK Open University has spread widely through Asia. The Asian adaptations in India and China are increasingly embracing online learning to augment the experience of learning at a distance, raising the question of whether this may marginalize, or empower the non-European University, and by association, its educated populations. A review of policy and curriculum relevant to higher education was then offered to provide lenses that will later be used to interpret the research questions. The Chapter concluded with an overview of the theoretical applications of Galtung in relation to re-imagining a more participatory and autonomous academia in the peripheral context and using Appadurai’s notion of cultural globalization to interpret the preservation of national knowledge and identity.
Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

This Chapter provides details of the methodologies employed in this thesis. First, an overview of case study methodology and mixed methods design is presented. This is followed by an overview of the positivist and post-positivist paradigms used in comparative education. The Chapter then goes on to outline the specific methodologies employed to achieve the results that are presented in Chapters 5-8. A brief overview of the purpose of the research and the rationale for selecting the two Open University systems is then presented. This includes the research questions and the procedures followed to acquire ethical and institutional approval. A description of the participants is then given, including a discussion on participant sampling in both the qualitative and quantitative pieces of the investigation. The design of the instruments and data collection is then discussed, followed by analysis procedures for the qualitative and quantitative data.

Case Study Methodology and Mixed Methods Design

The study employs a case study methodology using a mixed-methods development design (Yin, 1993; Corcoran, Walker, & Wals, 2004). Yin describes case studies as open-ended and exploratory, permitting the researcher to, “reveal the multiplicity of factors [which] have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of study” (Yin, 1989, p. 82). This requires contextual analysis and a thorough description of the phenomena in question.

The purpose for using a case study methodology is two-fold. In organizational terms, it allows a clear map to address each of the major themes of country context, Open University, policy, curriculum, and students, along national and institutional lines. The other purpose is to explore the breadth and depth of each phenomenon. Each Open University is complex and part of a national character that carries deep connections to an ancient civilization. Through the 20th century each country has undergone dramatic changes, shedding a colonial identity in the case of India and forming a unified nation in the case of China. The more recent economic growth
and geopolitical might of each country adds to the distinct features that may be observed as part of the character of each Open University. Along with the unique cultural attributes of each country, these features may be best represented in the case study methodology allowing for a clear distinction to be made between the two cases. The reader can then be guided to some comparative reflection in the sections which bring together the unique attributes and findings of each results chapter.

The application of a mixed methods design is used to garner a heightened understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, while minimizing the consequences of limitations inherent in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Proponents of mixed methods design suggest that the shortcomings of the post-positivist and positivist paradigms are reconciled (or reduced) when quantitative and qualitative methods are combined, leading to findings that are more deeply problematized and richer (Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). An understanding of each paradigm is provided, and framed in relation to comparative education, to provide a rationale for selecting elements of each paradigm.

The Positivist Paradigm

The positivist paradigm is rooted in the desire to understand the natural world through the processes of observation and experimentation. Through the 18th and 19th centuries the successful application of Newton’s Laws of Motion raised the profile among scientists to make generalizations that enhanced understanding of the environment (Holmes, 1981, p. 59). In the 20th century the search for generalizations found its way into the area of structural-functionalism in the social sciences, including education.

In the comparative education literature there are well-regarded volumes that argue for the application of science to the field. Bereday’s *Comparative Method in Education* (1964a) and Noah and Eckstein’s *Towards a Science of Comparative Education* (1969) are two seminal works that advocated the use of statistics and factual descriptions in comparative education. There have been ensuing debates on methodology with critical reflection on these and other works to
advance debates over how methods are used in the field (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). Proponents of positivism in comparative and international education call for the need to make generalizations in primary education, for example (Lockheed & Bloch, 1990; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004), and adopt the policies of multilateral organizations in a conditionality framework to implement effective change (World Bank, 1995, p. 136). A poignant example is an article written by George Psacharopoulos (1990) in *Comparative Education Review*. Challenging a neglect to report quantitative findings in some of the field’s stronger periodicals, he concludes there is little opportunity for decision makers in educational planning to garner any comparative lessons worth implementing. The article proceeds to outline 13 comparative lessons that have been taken as universal strategies applicable to all levels of education for development purposes. Psacharopoulos cites examples of spaces for qualitative research, but claims that the field of comparative education has digressed into a debate over semantics rather than substance. The basis for substance is to extend the list of existing comparative lessons; a task he concludes is achievable only through, “conceptualization, methodological design, statistical sampling, rigorous data analysis, and hypothesis testing (p. 380)”.

**The Post-positivist Paradigm**

In contrast to the positivist paradigm in the formation of generalizations, the post-positivist paradigm of the social sciences is much more multi-faceted. In many ways the qualitative methodologies defy description, leading some to conclude that there is a state of “crisis” as postmodernism challenges the notion of interpretation as something that is contested, political and idiosyncratic (Denzin, 2004, p. 448). As such there are numerous approaches to doing qualitative research, the most common being ethnographic research, grounded theory and phenomenology. Where a qualitative approach is applied in this investigation, the phenomenological approach is used.

The phenomenological approach can be traced to Hegel whose seminal work in the field, *Phenomenology of Right*, articulated that an individual’s self-consciousness is the product of their perceptions; that is, meaning is derived from experience. To that end phenomenologists support less the meta-narratives of rationalism and empiricism for reasons
that they are removed from experience and therefore faulty in interpreting reality (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 405). At the root of phenomenology is interpretation. What is construed by one individual as reality may be incongruent with the conceptions of others. In qualitative research Denzin (2004) describes two types of interpreters; those who have experienced, or lived, the particular phenomenon under investigation and the investigator, who is removed from the phenomenon and could be described as the scientific expert. The former, or local, he suggests, seeks emic understandings, with the use of contextual language to describe the phenomenon. The latter, as the scientific interpreter, uses etic, or non-contextualized interpretations, to understand or explain the phenomenon. Because of the absence of context, what is implied is that the scientific interpreter is seeking generalizations, or one size fits all explanations. Of course, that is one interpretation. The dichotomy between emic and etic does not have to be diametrically opposed, and the literature seems to assume no middle ground. In relation to this particular investigation, the investigator, being removed spatially and culturally from the phenomena, would certainly fall closer to the etic end of the continuum, yet efforts have been made to enhance understanding in the pursuit of a context that is accurate to each Open University. As a researcher, the realization of otherness, and the limitations on providing context, act as aids to be deliberative in describing occurrences and be cognizant of the potential bias in interpreting the phenomena being investigated.

For comparative education, there has been a growing sense of the need to provide context to the phenomenon being researched, with understanding acquired through experience, interaction and immersion. In doing comparative education, the importance of giving attention to context in the study of educational phenomenon has been debated since the days of Sir Michael Sadler, who famously stated,
We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant ... (Bereday, 1964b, p. 310).

His cautionary analogy speaks to the importance of understanding the intricacies of education systems as they are representative of a particular culture, rather than systems that espouse universal principles that can be transplanted indiscriminately. Brian Holmes, critiquing the positivist leanings of his contemporaries, made context an integral component to his problem-approach. In doing comparative education he stressed the inclusion of a society’s normative patterns such as laws and statements (to include beliefs and values), as they were built into its institutions, including those of an educational nature (Holmes, 1981). Context has also been stressed in other methodological approaches including the Bray and Thomas Cube (Bray & Thomas, 1995). Their cube is a comprehensive framework for doing comparative education that includes three major components in a research method: levels (e.g., World, province/state, individuals), demographic groups (e.g., religious, ethnic, gender) and aspects of education and society (e.g., finance, politics, labour).

The trajectory of development in research in comparative education has moved from a positivist emphasis on universal principles through various paradigm wars to heterogeneous approaches, that include Neo-Marxist and humanist frames. Many in the post-positivist camp employ feminist, ethnographic, neo-Marxist and other approaches to offer a more critical understanding of the subjects under investigation (Paulston, 1994). For the phenomenologist, a purely positivist approach to the measurement and representation of facts could lead to distortion and therefore it is important to offer a lens for understanding the context of phenomena and create a space to further awareness, interpretation, and understanding.

The purpose of using a mixed methods approach is not to reconcile the differences between the two paradigms, a task that is far beyond the confines of this investigation. Rather, the purpose is to provide a layered analysis and presentation of the primary data sources used so the reader may be furnished with a picture that offers a deeper understanding of the two
cases under investigation. The use of the comparative method, with its careful attention to context, will also aim to find comparative lessons for the broader field.

**Purpose and Rationale**

This investigation seeks to compare the Open University systems of India and China in their engagement with online learning. The comparison will be at the levels of policy formulation, curriculum organization and students’ experiences and perceptions of using online learning. Central to this investigation is the following research question:

*How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert local or national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?*

Guiding this research is the question of how globalization, through the lens of policymakers and those involved in the processes of curriculum organization, is impacting these Open University systems. This is balanced by an effort to uncover students’ experiences and perceptions of learning online in regards to the quality and origin of the content of their courses and how it relates to prospects for further employment. The assumption is that online learning, as a by-product of the Internet, is likely to be a manifestation of globalization.

Three sub-questions serve to break down the main question:

For policy:

1.1 *What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?*
For curriculum:

2.1 *How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?*

2.2 *How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?*

2.3 *To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?*

For students:

3.1 *What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?*

3.2 *What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?*

The purpose of this research is to discern what is present in policy documents, how decisions have been formed and implemented and what considerations are evident in the design of curriculum in relation to the balance between global and national knowledge. It is hoped that the findings may be helpful to policymakers and those involved in the organization of curriculum as they consider issues of shaping the online curriculum to accommodate the needs of students. If online learning grows in each context, as is widely predicted, this mode of learning will have a significant impact on future social, cultural and economic conditions in each country.
The rationale for selecting the two Open University systems was threefold: First, there is a unique basis for comparison. Each Open University enrolls nearly three million students, and services learning through geographically dispersed systems. As such they are also similar in infrastructure and are centrally organized in terms of decision making, including online learning. There is a shared interest in growing online learning, yet each approach has been distinct. IGNOU has had both early failures and more recent successes with online learning, only in 2008 launching a second generation of online programs after a dormancy of five years. The OUC, on the other hand, has gradually built a repository of over 500 online courses while creating a reputable research base on learner support. How each system may inform the other, as well as other institutions in varying stages of delivering online learning, is a major objective of the research. Second, scant attention has been given to social outcomes of online learning that may affect learner behaviour and attitudes in either context. Adding to this second point is to understand how decision making at the policy and curriculum levels maps to knowledge acquisition and to what extent online learning is influenced globally or nationally in the representation of knowledge. The third, and final rationale, is the investigator’s familiarity with each institution and the ability to carry out this research. Having previously worked for four years at the Open University of Hong Kong, the investigator had conducted research into online learning in Asia, paying particular attention to early developments at the OUC and IGNOU. Having previously established contacts with each institution paid dividends in being able to carry out this research to completion.

**Ethical and Institutional Approval**

To conduct this study, an ethical protocol was submitted to the Ethical Review Board of the University of Toronto, and subsequently approved (see Appendix A). Approval from each of the two Open Universities was also required. On an exploratory trip to Beijing in December, 2007, paperwork was submitted to contacts at the OUC and formal approval was sought from the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China. In February, 2008, a letter was received in Toronto from the Chinese government granting a research visa for a period of six
months, commencing in May, 2008. At IGNOU permission was sought and granted by a Pro Vice-Chancellor via email. This was repeated in 2009, upon the return visit.

All participants who were interviewed were given a consent form indicating that they would remain anonymous by name and gender in the publication of the thesis, or any publications emanating from the thesis. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. The consent form also informed them that there was a risk they that they might be identifiable based on the content of their answers, if quotations were used or paraphrased. The consent form also included a box to tick if it was agreeable to record the interview with a digital device. All participants agreed.

Participants

Participants for the investigation included policymakers, curriculum designers and students. Policymakers and curriculum designers were involved in individual face-to-face interviews and students participated in the online questionnaire.

Policymakers were defined as those who were involved in devising, implementing, evaluating or enforcing policy. These individuals were identified as senior faculty members (e.g., deans, deputy directors), and senior administrators belonging to each institution. Once identified as a policymaker, selection was based primarily on availability. Curriculum designers were those who had a direct role in organizing the curriculum of a particular course. At the research sites these individuals were identified as professors or lecturers. The original objective was to select curriculum designers who were involved with courses (and by association, programs) that had the highest student enrolments. The rationale was based on choosing the courses that would have the largest reach, and therefore make possible a greater ability to generalize in terms of the impact of content in relation to the main research question. This was adhered to in the case of the OUC, but because of the limited availability of online programs at IGNOU, curriculum designers were selected from these particular online courses only. The courses that were selected for curriculum analysis and to which the course designers belonged are identified in Table 3.7. Student participants, described in the next section, were enrolled in
programs that included these courses and others. The breakdown of student participants by program is outlined in Table 3.8.

The following table, Table 3.1, outlines the pseudonyms of policymakers (PM) and curriculum designers (CD) that were interviewed. Several interviewees were given the dual labels of PM and CD where pertinent. The table also includes the number of times participants were interviewed, and which participants required a translator for the interview.

Table 3.1

Description of Curriculum Designer and Policymaker Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IGNOU</th>
<th>OUC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pseudonym</strong></td>
<td><strong>Designation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>CD/PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>CD/PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>CD/PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I10</td>
<td>CD/PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I11</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I12</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I13</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I14</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I15</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I16</td>
<td>PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I17</td>
<td>CD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CD refers to curriculum designer; PM refers to policymaker.*

In total there were 17 participants interviewed from each institution, totaling 43 interviews. Four participants from IGNOU and four participants from the OUC were interviewed at least twice. From the OUC 12 participants required a translator, totaling 16 interviews. All participants were given a letter of information and consent form requiring a signature (see Appendix B and Appendix C). At IGNOU it can be seen that four participants were designated as
both policymakers and curriculum designers. As will be elaborated in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, there were instances where those involved directly with online course development were also involved with making policy decisions, particularly since the online programs were new and deemed experimental.

The third set of participants was students. Students from both IGNOU and the OUC were sent an email invitation to access the online questionnaire. At the OUC this was hosted on a website as part of the online programs. Students were directed to a link to access the online survey. For the IGNOU sample, participants were also sent an email invitation and directed to a website hosted on SurveyMonkey™. The OUC survey was translated into simplified Chinese and the IGNOU survey was in English only (see Appendix D and Appendix E). Minor modifications were made between surveys based on contextual factors (e.g., address designation, province and state names).

There were a total of 238 valid surveys returned (OUC, \( n = 121 \); IGNOU, \( n = 117 \)). The OUC sample had a relative balance among genders with 58 males and 62 females whereas the IGNOU sample included more males (\( n = 80 \)) than females (\( n = 37 \)). The breakdown of age is provided in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Student Participants by Age</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
<th>OUC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>22-64</td>
<td>16-55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean age of the participants was approximately 36 in IGNOU and nearly 29 in the OUC sample. The age range was comparable between each sample. The discrepancy in age between the two samples was likely attributed to the nature of the programs. At IGNOU all student participants were enrolled in post-graduate programs, whereas at the OUC, all participants were enrolled in bachelor degree programs (displayed in Table 3.5 below). As IGNOU students had more exposure to higher education based on the credentials acquired, the discrepancy in age reported in Table 3.2 is not surprising.

The geographical and living density distribution of the two samples is indicated in the following tables, 3.3 and 3.4.

Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Student Participants by Geographic Region</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provinces/States</td>
<td>19/22</td>
<td>18/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Regions/Union Territories</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

China is administered by 22 provinces, five administrative regions and four municipalities; India is administered by 28 states, and seven union territories. In the OUC sample, only four of 31 administrative areas were not represented in the survey. The excluded areas were: Hainan Province, Yunnan Province, Jiangxi Province and Ningxia Autonomous Region; all among the lowest third of China’s administrative areas by GDP per capita. The India sample was not as distributed, with 22 of 35 administrative areas being represented. Among

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7 China and India use differing nomenclature when describing the governance along geographical lines in their respective countries: Mainland China is organized by Provinces, Administrative Regions, and Municipalities. India is organized by States and Union Territories. To consolidate these terms they are referred to collectively as administrative areas.
the 13 unrepresented areas seven are from the North East Council, which consists of eight states recognized as being ethnically and linguistically distinct from the rest of continental India. All 13 areas are among the lower half in the country as measured by GDP per capita. The area with the most representation in India was the National Capital Territory of Delhi \( n = 25 \) and in China, Hunan Province \( n = 28 \).

Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Student Participants by Living Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents from both samples indicated living in urban settings (determining urban, semi-urban and rural were arbitrary). In terms of education, the highest attainment of academic qualifications is outlined in Table 3.5. The majority of participants from the OUC had completed a college diploma \( n = 75 \), followed by high school \( n = 24 \) and bachelor degree \( n = 21 \). At IGNOU the distribution was academically more advanced with roughly half of the sample having earned a bachelor degree and half having earned a graduate degree.
Table 3.5

Description of Student Participants by Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the topic of work experience and employment, participants from the OUC had an average work experience of 8.4 years, whereas the IGNOU sample indicated 9.9 years. In terms of employment, a clear majority of participants in both samples indicated being employed, as depicted in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6

Description of Student Participants by Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the OUC, 76 percent of the sample had started their degree either in 2007 or 2008 and 89 percent intended to graduate in 2009 or 2010 ($n = 108$). At IGNOU 84 percent of the sample ($n = 98$) had started their program in 2009 and 81 percent intended to graduate in 2010 ($n = 95$).
Summary of participants.

In summary, 238 student participants are included in the study. There are 121 participants from the OUC and 117 participants from IGNOU. There is a near balance between genders in the OUC sample, whereas the male to female ratio in the IGNOU sample is nearly three to one. The average age of participants from the OUC was 28.5 and 36.3 from IGNOU. The geographic distribution was rather extensive with participants originating from 27 of 31 administrative areas in China and 22 of 35 administrative areas in India. The majority of participants in both samples identified their living area as being urban. Among the participants residing in China, there was a more balanced distribution of residents in semi-urban and rural areas, a finding that supports the comparatively widespread reach of Internet access in the country. The majority of participants enrolled in the OUC held a college diploma, whereas the participants from IGNOU were evenly split between having a bachelor or master degree. A large majority of participants were employed from both samples.

Design and Data Collection

Within the mixed methods framework a development design was used (Caracelli & Greene, 1993: p. 196) whereby the results of one method inform subsequent methods. For this study, analyses of textual sources informed the design of the research instruments.

Three main sources of data were used for analysis and interpretation, identified as follows:

1) Policy, curriculum and institutional documents (qualitative/quantitative analyses)
2) Interviews with policymakers and curriculum designers (qualitative analyses)
3) Student online questionnaire (quantitative analyses)

Sources 1) and 2) were qualitative data types (text-based) and qualitative analyses were employed, with the exception of curriculum documents from source 1), where some
quantitative analyses were carried out (See Figure 3.2 below). Source 3) was a quantitative data type and quantitative analyses were used.

In the development design the data from source 1) provided information to refine and modify questions for the interviews and questionnaire from sources 2) and 3), respectively. Both interview guides and student questionnaire were first designed with a priori categories and then supplemented with emergent themes based on information retrieved from source 1).

Policy, curriculum and institutional documents were sourced from literature searches online, Google searches, institutional websites and on location, at the research sites in Delhi and Beijing.

The particular curriculum attached to courses was selected based on enrolment data where available. As noted above, only the OUC offered this opportunity as the online courses were more established. At the time of the site visit to IGNOU in 2008, there were only two programs that were available online and therefore a convenience sample was sought. For the OUC, only bachelor degree courses were sought, and those having the largest enrolments. As noted above, the original objective was to seek the same types of courses from each institution (courses from bachelor degree programs were arbitrarily selected at the proposal stage), and ideally from comparable disciplines for later analyses (for example, a law course from the OUC and a law course from IGNOU). This proved to be unattainable as the selection of courses from IGNOU was comparatively limited. In Chapter 7 some comparisons are drawn between the law courses from each institution.

Below in Table 3.7 are the courses that are analyzed in Chapter 7 to inquire about curriculum, including analysis of curriculum documents and interviews of curriculum designers. These courses are connected to the programs listed in Table 3.8.
Table 3.7

*Courses Selected for Curriculum Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Legal Education and Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Property Law</td>
<td></td>
<td>Information, Communication and Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business English</td>
<td></td>
<td>Management of Library and Information Centres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview guides for policymakers and curriculum designers were first designed using a priori categories based on the past professional experience of the investigator, a literature review and the research questions. Both interview guides started with background questions in relation to title, time working at the University and academic background. In addition to the background questions, there were seven major a priori categories addressed in the policymaker interview guide and four major a priori categories addressed in the curriculum designer interview guide. In both guides, the questions were aligned to the particular sub-research questions on policy and curriculum (See Appendix F and Appendix G).

For policymakers, these categories were later consolidated under three headings: Present policy, Knowledge Representation & Globalization, and Future Policy & Importance of Policy. For curriculum designers, the four major categories were also consolidated under three major headings: Perceptions of Curriculum and Globalization, Program Development and Curriculum Organization, and Perceptions of Course Content. From these a priori categories, emergent themes were identified for the policymaker interviews only. This is elaborated in the following section on Data Analysis.

Interview guides were semi-structured and prodding points were prepared in advance, or asked ad hoc. In some cases questions were added or altered in relation to the background or role of the particular participant.
Like the interview guides, the student online questionnaire was comprised of a priori categories, and modifications were made based on information gathered at the research sites. The questions were predominantly Likert and measured on a five point scale. Both populations were selected through stratified sampling, such that each sample was selected from other populations belonging to the same group, or University in this case. The questionnaire instrument was divided into three parts:

A. Background information: General
B. Experience: Rationale and use of online course/Internet
C. Perceptions: Online learning, online course, content

At both the OUC and IGNOU the questionnaire was scrutinized for content by one professor from each University familiar with online learning programs. At the OUC, an English to Chinese translation was first required. The Chinese translation was compared to the English version by a professor of Linguistics in Hong Kong. Some minor modifications were made.

A pilot study was conducted at each site. In the OUC case, students were selected from one program in Economics. Because of time constraints students were given the questionnaire in paper format, upon a visit to a classroom in Beijing. The number of valid questionnaires returned was 49, a 100 percent return rate. Answers were checked for consistency and comments. Based on the results, no modifications were made.

The pilot study at IGNOU was given online and directed towards students enrolled in the Appreciation Program on Sustainability Science, offered through the School of Agriculture. Of the 26 students invited to participate in the pilot study and in spite of reminders being sent to encourage participation, only five returned valid questionnaire (19 percent return rate). Because of the low response rate, and consistency in responses, no modifications were made. The actual survey was launched in November, 2008, for OUC students and was hosted on an OUC website. The launch for the IGNOU students was postponed until the summer of 2009 as there were insufficient numbers of students enrolled in the first cohorts of the online programs. For both surveys participants were informed that by clicking on the submit button this gave
consent to the investigator to use their responses, though anonymity would be preserved. The
survey for IGNOU student participants was hosted using the online questionnaire service,
SurveyMonkey™. An initial low response rate resulted in two rounds of reminders to students.
The final tally from the IGNOU sample was 117 returned valid questionnaires, which was
calculated as a 25 percent return rate (117/471 total students). Although the total OUC sample
amounted to 121 returned valid questionnaires, the return rate was unknown. An overview of
the samples broken down by program is presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Programs Selected for Quantitative Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in Linguistics ($n = 42$)</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Process Outsourcing ($n = 68$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in Advanced Accounting ($n = 33$)</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate in Cyber Law ($n = 12$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in Law ($n = 15$)</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Acupuncture ($n = 6$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in Marketing ($n = 18$)</td>
<td>Master in Library and Information Science ($n = 4$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in Business English ($n = 13$)</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Food Safety and Quality Management ($n = 27$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also field notes that were kept by the investigator. Naturally ad hoc
conversations that occurred outside of formal interviews were a part of the daily activities of
the researcher. There were also general observations that aided in understanding University or
office protocol and operations.

The interview portion of data collection commenced at the IGNOU campus in New Delhi
on May, 2008, for a four week period. From June to November data collection occurred in
Beijing at the OUC. A longer stay at the OUC campus was arranged to budget more time to get
help with translation. There were also opportunities to enhance language acquisition.
Data Analysis

As noted above, the study is comprised of the following three data sets: Document analysis, policymaker and curriculum designer interviews, and student questionnaires.

Document analysis was an ongoing activity. The most intensive portion of the document analysis was at the particular research sites, as there was incrementally more information made available to the investigator. Document analysis was an intuitive exercise whereby any information relative to online learning, curriculum or course design and international outreach was closely scrutinized and became part of ad hoc conversations. Outcomes of such activities were documented and in some cases fused into the interview guides or parts of the analyses presented in the subsequent chapters. As previously stated, the design was developmental and therefore the integration of information retrieved from documents was a necessary step to augment the contextual value and sensitivity of the interviews.

During interviews the investigator made notes relevant for further discussion and/or as prodding points for follow-up with a particular question. After interview tapes were reviewed and in cases where participants were interviewed more than once, clarifications were sought, or verified by asking about certain responses from one participant to another in a subsequent interview. At this point it is worth noting that the technique of triangulation (Caracelli & Greene, 1997) was used throughout the investigation. This added to the validity of the evaluation and interpretation of the data. Some examples that the reader will encounter in later chapters include the five unifying principles of the OUC, or the policy of 60/40, whereby Provincial Open Universities are required to utilize at least 60 percent of content designed by the headquarters of the OUC in Beijing. In the case of IGNOU, the technique of triangulation was employed to ascertain the facts regarding the circumstances surrounding the launch and discontinuation of the first online program, Bachelor of Information Technology. In these instances questions to further substantiate or acquire more information were posed to other colleagues. In some instances, a return to the literature was necessary.
A note about translation is also important. At the OUC, 16 of 21 interviews were conducted in Mandarin. The services of an interpreter were required and provided by the OUC. The interpreter was prepped on how to prod based on particular responses and role playing was conducted between the investigator and the interpreter to heighten the quality of the interviews. Interview guides were always reviewed shortly before a scheduled interview. During the interviews the interpreter would occasionally translate key points from the participant and then the investigator might ask a follow-up question. After interviews some notes were taken to summarize some points made by the participant. This was an example of having access incrementally to information about online learning and the OUC, more broadly.

Translation and transcription of the materials were conducted back in Canada. A Chinese student who was in Canada on a work-study visa was employed to do translation work. This individual was sought based on having high proficiency in written and spoken English. Having earned a Masters degree in English literature at a University in Ontario added to this individual’s credentials. Where clarifications were sought, the investigator readily contacted the translator. All other transcriptions were carried out by the investigator.

In terms of research analysis, the data was first cleaned for distortions such as incomplete transcripts, flow to the dialogue and an effort was made to ensure that all tapes had been transcribed (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). The length of an interview ranged from 25 to 90 minutes. All interview data was imported into NVivo, a qualitative software program. Four categories of data were organized according to institution and then designation as a policymaker or curriculum designer (see Table 3.1). Where a participant was designated as having both titles, copies of the transcripts were placed under both policymaker and curriculum designer headings.

The analysis was carried out with the construction of emergent themes from the a priori categories. At the forefront of the analysis were the policy and curriculum research questions. The a priori categories and emergent themes from the policy data are presented in Figure 3.1 below.
These emergent themes emerged based on the content of participant interviews. The role of leader, for example, was added for two reasons. First, early interviews at IGNOU made consistent reference to the Vice Chancellor (head) of the University. A cold call to the Vice Chancellor’s office led to an interview with this individual. Naturally, questions were then posed to participants on the role of the institutional leader at the OUC. Subsequently an interview was sought and granted with the President at the OUC. Another example is language. Though not identified in the interview guides, the use of language in course content was a regular topic in interviews with participants from IGNOU and the OUC. The last example is outreach. Again at IGNOU, it was found that there were institutional partnerships with over 30 countries (elaborated in Chapter 4). The prospect of widening access to such international learners through online learning seemed as a likely progression for future developments at IGNOU. Therefore, questions of this nature were posed. The same questions were posed to participants at the OUC, with some unexpected findings (see Chapters 6 and 7). In terms of balance, as the
results will show in Chapters 6 and 7, the categories and themes were generally represented equally among both research sites; therefore making cross-case analyses rather rich.

To amplify the relevance of participants’ comments, quotes or paraphrased quotes were used accompanied by the pseudonym assigned to each participant as listed in Table 3.1. Among both groups of participants there were points relevant to curriculum and policy and therefore there is some cross-pollination where a quote from a curriculum designer finds space in the Chapter 6 and vice versa. This should not be surprising as the relationship between curriculum and policy is intertwined, as is the general work of faculty and administrators.

The analysis of curriculum designer interviews was more focused on perceptions of the curriculum as it related to a particular course, though there were general comments used to define the oft-used terms curriculum and globalization, and the nature of course development for online learning within each Open University. Coding was therefore organized along these three categories and like the policymaker results, salient quotes from curriculum designers were embedded directly or paraphrased in the text. No emergent themes were identified for curriculum designer interviews (see Figure 3.2 below).
A priori Categories

Figure 3.2. Curriculum Designer Categories.

Complementary to the curriculum designer interviews was an analysis of curriculum documents of the courses identified in Table 3.7. This analysis was to offer insight into the representation of national knowledge in a particular course, as connected to the main research question in general, and a sub research question on curriculum, in particular. The sub research question is stated here as follows:

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

The investigator first looked to the literature on content discourse analysis. With references found on semantics, discourse markers and other elements of language (Fairclough, 1992), in the end a more simplistic analytical approach was chosen, for two reasons. First was the reasoning that analyzing the content of a course could be extremely time consuming. For this portion of the analysis a method that would illustrate some patterns was sought. Second was that a proposed analytical approach needed to be digestible and could be built upon with
some stronger reliability and validity testing. For these reasons the investigator designed a simple rubric to ascertain the extent of representation of national knowledge in a particular course based on curriculum documents that were available. Because three of eight courses were written in Chinese, these courses were excluded from this particular textual analysis. After reading through several curriculum documents six categories were devised as follows: Cultural, company/organization, historical, geographical, theoretical/academic and citations. For text to be categorized as cultural there are references that are sought in relation to terms specific to the cultural context such as currency, clothing or language. In the Indian context some examples would be the use of rupees to describe currency or saris to describe indigenous dress. Companies or organizations were categorized based on a brand connected to a particular culture, inclusive of government. Historical terms would be based on past events or prominent figures. Theoretical and academic markers were counted as particular name references to scholars, theories, models or other ideas relevant to the particular discipline. The names of Smith, McDonald, or Park are clearly distinguishable from Chowdury, Patel, Zhang or Wong, for example. The fifth category devised was geographical. The sixth and final category was citations. Although there is some overlap with citations and theoretical/academic markers, where a proponent of a theory was identified in the text and again in the citations, the name was counted twice, though placed in differing categories. In some cases only a theory, or a case, in a law course was mentioned and this was counted as well as a theoretical/academic marker. Identifying where a publication originates is cross-referenced, or if an Indian or Chinese term is used, this also adds to the credibility of identifying the source as belonging to one of the two countries being investigated. Lastly a degree of neutrality was exercised. Terms such as the Second World War or Total Quality Management were deemed neutral, as they are indistinguishable to place if there is no other information given.

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8 The caveat in using indigenously grounded names is that this may distort the results. A fellow by the name of “Chen” may have a Chinese name, but is born in the UK and knows little about China. For such reasons the references were checked to ascertain the origin of the literature. First and foremost was the context of the reference. A second check was to determine the origin of the publication. There are other contested interpretations as well, but the purpose of using this rubric is illustrative, rather than conclusive.
The actual method of quantitizing the text (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) is illustrated using the following example.

Early example of development and use of management principles is recorded in Egypt as early as 2900 BC, while using over one lakh men for 20 years to build pyramids. Other works such as Middle Eastern Ziggurats, the Chinese Great Wall, Middle American pyramids, and Persian roads and buildings are often cited for early use of management. Similarly, the Bible has a reference to the fact that Moses had hired his father-in-law as the first management consultant to help design the organisation through which Moses lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and governed the Hebrews.

Figure 3.3. Snapshot of Course Rubric.
Adapted from “Management of Library and Information Centres”, IGNOU, 2011a, p. 11, Block 1, unit 1.

In this particular example, taken from a course in the Library program at IGNOU, each circle represents a marker that is counted. If we categorize this particular sample as an India text, only one count under culture is noted (lakh). Each time a term is identified under a particular category, it is counted, so Egypt, for example is counted twice. Another example is “Middle Eastern Ziggurats”. The term contains a geographical location, but because it is referring to a particular structure as a noun phrase, it is counted only once under Culture. The rationale for this textual analysis is to provide another level of support to indicate how much consideration has been made to localize content. It should be emphasized that this is for illustrative purposes and that conclusions on the content of any course are made only with the support of interview data. To interpret the data, percentages were used and compared between what was identified as content originating in India and China and content that originated elsewhere.

The remaining analysis to be discussed is the quantitative methods used for the online questionnaire. The methods employed were descriptive and inferential statistics. For Part A: Background information: General, descriptive statistics using distribution, central tendency
(e.g., mean score, mode) and dispersion (e.g., standard deviation) were used. For Part B: Experience and Part C: Perceptions, univariate analysis and inferential statistics were used.

Within each Part there were a series of questions referred to herein as domains. Each domain contained several items. In all domains of Parts B and C total scores were tallied and the reliability of each item in relation to the particular domain was measured using Cronbach’s alpha. Each domain was analyzed by the OUC and IGNOU samples, separately. If Cronbach’s alpha in both samples for a particular domain was .70 or greater the total scores were used in the inferential statistics to compare differences between samples. If Cronbach’s alpha was below .70 for a particular domain in one or both samples, individual items were subsequently analyzed using inferential statistics and compared between samples.

The appropriate inferential test is used as defined by the properties of the variables (or items). If a domain from each sample had strong reliability (see above), and were normally distributed, a parametric t-test was used. To assess differences in a domain with low reliability in one or both samples, individual items of the particular domain were analyzed using non parametric chi-square or Mann-Whitney U tests. To assess differences between dependent items in a particular domain belonging to the same sample the non parametric Wilcoxon’s matched pairs test or one-way ANOVA tests were used. In summary, multiple tests were used based on the properties of the data. The over arching objective is to infer if and to what extent there is a degree of difference, as defined by a probability of .05 or greater, between and within the samples from the OUC and IGNOU. To address family-wise error rates where multiple comparisons are made, the Bonferroni correction is employed. This is identified, where relevant, in Chapter 8.

Excel was used to clean the data and all calculations were performed in SPSS (version 18).

In concluding this section, it is of use to address the issue of actual mixing of the methods. With the exception of quantitizing some of the curriculum documents, there was actually little mixing of methods within the primary data sources of policymaker and curriculum
interviews and student questionnaire. The application of mixed methods occurred within the cases and aimed to augment the richness of the understanding of each Open University and the comparisons between them.

Summary

This Chapter began with an overview of theoretical and practical concerns in relation to the implementation of varying methodologies in educational research. A case study methodology was selected as the preferred approach and that a mixed methods design facilitates the development of a rich data set for each case. Recognizing the varied research traditions in the paradigms of positivism and post-positivism, views from both sides of the alleged paradigmatic wars were offered. Using case methods was seen as appropriate to the complexity of the two research sites and the need to deal with them separately and then compare the findings. The use of a mixed methods design further enriched understanding of the context of each case, or Open University, and led in turn to insights where comparative lessons can be drawn.

A description of the samples from the OUC and IGNOU was made and details about the research design, data collection and analysis were provided. In moving towards the context and results chapters (Chapters 4-8), the issue of limitations will be discussed, where pertinent.
Chapter 4: India and China: Context and Comparison

Introduction

In doing comparative education, the importance of placing context into the study of educational phenomena has been debated since the days of Sir Michael Sadler, who famously stated,

We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant ... (Bereday, 1964b, p. 310).

His cautionary analogy speaks to the importance of understanding the intricacies of education systems as they are representative of a particular culture, rather than systems that espouse universal principles that can be transplanted indiscriminately. Brian Holmes, critiquing the positivist leanings of his contemporaries, made context an integral component to his problem-approach. In doing comparative education he stressed the inclusion of a society’s normative patterns such as laws and policy statements, including beliefs and values expressed in them, as they shaped its educational institutions (Holmes, 1981). Context has also been stressed in other methodological approaches including the Bray and Thomas Cube (Bray & Thomas, 1995). Their cube is a comprehensive framework for doing comparative education that includes three major components in a research method: levels (e.g., World, province/state, individuals), demographic groups (e.g., religious, ethnic, gender) and aspects of education and society (e.g., finance, politics, labour).

In this Chapter, a broad context of each country is provided which will be drawn upon in subsequent chapters to aid in illuminating the findings about each national Open University. The Chapter begins with an overview of India including aspects of the land, people, history, economic order, governance and politics, social conditions and education system (formal and higher). A similar overview of China follows. The Chapter concludes with a comparative analysis
on points of convergence and divergence in relation to the above aspects between the two countries.

India

Land and people.

If defined by language, culture, cuisine or religion, the Republic of India is among the most diverse countries in the world. Conventionally known simply as India (Bharat, भारत), it is part of the land mass that makes up the Subcontinent or South Asia, and historically included the nations of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. India is the world’s seventh largest country by land area and shares a border with Myanmar and Bangladesh in the east, China, Bhutan and Nepal in the north, and Pakistan in the west. Sri Lanka is an island just off the coast in the southern part of the country. Just over 50 percent of its terrestrial borders (including islands) meet the sea with the Bay of Bengal in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south, and the Arabian Sea in the east. The climate is predominantly tropical, yet becomes subtropical and temperate in the northern parts of the country along the Himalayan mountain range.
India is unique in its political organization as its 28 states and seven union territories are predominantly organized along linguistic lines with each identifying an official language or languages (there are 22 recognized regional languages in the country). There is no national language in India, although Hindi is inscribed as the country’s official language, spoken by over 40 percent of the population, and English is recognized as a subsidiary official language (“Hindi not a national language,” 2010, January 25); English operates as the official language of the Lok Sabha, India’s parliament, and predominates in the business and higher education sectors. The 2001 census lists 122 languages having at least 10,000 speakers and Ethnologue, an online database of languages, lists 439 living languages, and an additional 1200 dialects have been documented. Written scripts are equally varied with Hindi and similar languages written with Devnaagari script, others with variants of Perso-Arabic script, yet most use a script unique to a particular language. One will find on a typical Indian rupee note the particular denomination
written in 17 different scripts. The capital is New Delhi, as part of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

The flag of India is divided into three horizontal bands. At the top is saffron, followed by white and green. In the middle of the flag is a 24-spoked wheel representing the circle of life, an iconic symbol in the country’s predominant religion, Hinduism.

India is home to a population of 1.2 billion, 72 percent of whom are indentified as Indo-Aryan and 25 percent Dravidian. A small minority is East Asian in ethnicity and resides in the northeast areas of the country. According to the 2001 census, 80 percent of the population belongs to the Hindu faith, followed by 13.4 percent classified as Muslim (Government of India, 2001). The latter figure amounts to over 160 million, positioning India behind only Indonesia and Pakistan as home to the third largest Muslim population in the world. India’s second largest religious minority are Christians numbering just over 24 million according to the 2001 census, and located mainly in the south and northeast areas of the country. In addition to Hinduism, India is the birthplace to Buddhism, Sikhism and Jain.

![Figure 4.2](image)

*Figure 4.2. India, China and OECD Country Comparison by Age.*
Source. OECD (2010).

One of India’s potential strengths is its relatively young population. The median age is 25 and only five percent of its population is over 65, in comparison to 15.4 percent among OECD
countries\textsuperscript{9} as identified in Figure 4.3 above. Though the growth rate of India’s population remains comparatively high at 1.44 (positioned at 93\textsuperscript{rd} in the world, Central Intelligence Agency, 2011), this has dropped by 20 percent in only 10 years and OECD projections predict a further drop of 22 percent to 1.12 by 2020 (OECD, 2010). These figures point to two encouraging outcomes for India: 1) The infancy of the population will lead to a growing number of people entering the workforce who will contribute to economic growth through production, consumption and other measures, and also add to governmental income through a stable tax system, 2) A sizeable young population will have the resources to care for the comparatively diminutive number of elderly, limiting the responsibility of the government. This is an advantage over the majority of OECD countries with aging populations (OECD, 2011a).

The assumption about economic growth is based on the ability to support a workforce – currently estimated at 467 million – that will be supported by strong institutions, government legitimacy, infrastructure, place of ethnic minorities and women, environmental conservation, domestic and regional stability, etc. Although India is heralded as one of the world’s hubs for IT and outsourcing, it has yet to shed its identity as a country mired in poverty. Estimates indicate that 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and urban migration is moving quickly at a rate of 2.4 percent per year adding pressures in terms of space, resources and sanitation. Currently the population living in urban areas stands at 29 percent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). The UNDP’s measure of poverty, the Human Development Index, has gained currency in recent years as an adequate benchmark for making comparisons across countries based on human progress. It looks beyond mere GDP measures, often criticized as inadequate in making varying claims or categorizing countries\textsuperscript{10}, and examines the following three aspects: a healthy life (infant mortality, life expectancy), education (adult literacy and gross enrolment ratios) and standard of living (purchasing power parity and income) (UNDP, 2010). India’s measure in 2007 was 0.612 placing it 134 out of 182 countries with available

\textsuperscript{9} It should be noted that India’s average life expectancy is 66 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011) compared to the OECD average of 79 (OECD, 2011b).

\textsuperscript{10} Although India’s GDP per capita is eight percent higher than Vietnam’s, Vietnam’s HDI measures at .725; 16 percent higher than India’s.
data. Though comparatively low, there has been remarkable progress with a 50 percent increase since 1980 (or 1.33 percent per year). The 2007 OECD average is approximately 0.92.\(^\text{11}\)

India is perhaps best defined by its pluralism, and it boasts a stable democracy, which is an important asset. Being the world’s largest democracy may also serve as its unifying element. For example, voter turnout in the May 2009 election surpassed 400 million, or 58 percent of the electorate (“Good news: Don’t waste it”, 2009, May 23).

**History.**

India’s history is characterized by 5,000 years of cultural preservation, religious reverence, maritime trade and vast riches. Over all these years it has withstood invasion, war, and famine among other natural and human calamities.

To trace India’s history is to trace its religious trajectory, rooted in the origins of Hinduism and later Buddhism. The civilization of the subcontinent took root around 2500 BCE in the Indus valley, which eventually became part of the ancient Silk Road. Named after the city Harappa, located in modern day Punjab State in Pakistan, the Harappan period was ruled by priests and had been found to have had connections through trade with the Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia (current day Iraq). Unlike other early civilizations, archaeological findings are inconclusive as to what led to the demise of the Harappan civilization and subsequent transition to the Vedic period commencing around 1700 BCE. Through to around 300 BCE the Vedic period is when ancient India established its roots (Keay, 2001, p. 19). Invaded by the Aryans emanating from Afghanistan, the Dravidian populations, thought to be the original inhabitants of Harappa and surrounding areas, migrated south to where their descendants largely reside today. This period is also marked by the creation of the Vedas (meaning knowledge), Hinduism’s sacred scriptures. The advancement of the societies in the region led to the creation of the caste system. Brahmins (the priestly caste), were perched atop

\(^{11}\)A perfect score is one. Liechtenstein having the highest purchasing power parity in the world earns a score of one in this category. Japan, similarly, earns a score of one in the category of life expectancy, having the world’s longest at 82.7 years.
this extremely complex social hierarchy, as they are to this day\textsuperscript{12}. Positioned at the end of the spectrum were the lowly dalits, or untouchables, a significant minority whose integration into mainstream society has been attempted since the days of Gandhi through affirmative action measures\textsuperscript{13}.

\textit{The Mauryans and Mughals.}

A growing dissent against the exclusivity of caste and disillusionment with the teachings of the Vedas enabled Buddhism to gain a foothold in northern India around the third century, BCE. Led by Emperor Ashoka the Great, the Mauryan Empire had stretched across pre-Muslim India with its epicentre located in Patna, Uttar Pradesh. At the behest of the Emperor, Buddhism emerged as the state religion (Thapar, 1997, p. 140). From the next millennium forward a succession of kingdoms claimed sovereignty over various parts of India, though none was as widespread as the Mauryans. India remained divided between the Hindu south and the Buddhist north. By the thirteenth century successive Muslim invasions displaced the pre-eminence of Buddhism and fortified Islam as the binding religion of the north. The most successful of the Muslim Empires was that of the Mughals. Their accomplishments in architecture (e.g., the Taj Mahal, which was completed in 1648), arts and literature remain well known today. The linguistic integration with the larger Hindi speaking population through Urdu, a fusion of Hindi grammar and Persian vocabulary, was a noted triumph that facilitated a rule that had a degree of harmony with the native people. These inroads, however, proved fruitless in converting the Hindu faithful to Islam (Thomas et al., 1999, p. 20).

\textit{Beginnings of colonialism.}

From the 16\textsuperscript{th} to the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century, the maritime sojourns of the Dutch, Danish, French, English and Portuguese had all made inroads into India. The first were the Portuguese who,
under the leadership of Vasco de Gama, first created an establishment in Cochin on the south western coast of India and later captured Goa in 1510, creating Lisbon’s *Estado da India* (state of India). A few smaller enclaves further up the western coast strengthened Portuguese control over the lucrative shipping lanes to Europe and the Mediterranean (Keay, 2001, p. 306). The Catholic religion, to which the Portuguese adhered fervently, took a backseat to commerce, though the seeds of conversion planted by the Portuguese sprouted a Catholic-dominated Christian population that remains India’s second largest religious minority, as previously mentioned.

At the outset of the 17th Century the Portuguese monopoly on trade was met with competition from newly established East India companies belonging to the Dutch and British. Soon the French entered and tensions, particularly with the British, ensued. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 was a pivotal moment in the modern history of India. The British East India Company defeated the French-backed Nawab (provincial governor) of West Bengal and gradually consolidated power over the next 50 years in several other conflicts in the southern and western regions of the country.

*The British Raj to independence.*

British control over India was fortified with the defeat of the Indian Rebellion in 1857, and in the subsequent year, the passing of the Government of India Act. This relinquished authority from the British East India Company to its government, ending the Company’s three century reign over much of India (Keay, 2001, p. 446). Political organizations belonging to educated Indians soon took form and were commissioned by the Raj to act as conduits between the government and the masses. The most influential was the Indian National Congress (INC) which came into being in 1885, promoting the objectives of unity, equality and eventual independence through peaceful means (Nehru, 1960, p. 364). Various events in 1919, such as the Amritsar Massacre, galvanized the will of Mohandes Gandhi, an INC supporter, to further the cause of the Indian Independence Movement. Commencing in 1919, he made waves through inspiring millions to engage in acts of Satyagraha (civil disobedience) that included actions such as boycotting British goods or making salt from sea water, in effect
undermining imports from Britain and greatly reducing the tax income to the Raj. By the 1940s the Quit India Movement had been orchestrated and led to the India Independence Act of 1947 contingent on leaders from the INC, Muslim League and Sikh communities agreeing to its provisions. On August 15th the sovereign state of India was born. On its western and eastern borders resided the newly formed country of Pakistan (designated East Pakistan in the former state of Bengal). The tumultuous aftermath of partition resulted in four wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1966 and 1999, over the disputed territory of Jammu & Kashmir, and in 1971, over the independence of East Pakistan into the sovereign state of Bangladesh (Chopra, 2000, p. 1). War also broke out briefly between India and China in 1962 over border disputes on the western and eastern sides of Nepal.

The fact that India is a nuclear power, like Pakistan and China, means that relations in the region will retain an atmosphere of distrust, and diplomacy will play increasing roles as these countries jockey for geo-political advantages.

Economy.

At the dawn of independence India had won its freedom at the loss of not one single British occupier. It inherited a country of 350 million inhabitants that included an independent judiciary, a free press, and a prosperous transportation system, including a railroad, canals and shipping ports. The British colonial legacy, however, had been mainly self-serving. Only the native elites were educated, and poverty had actually been exacerbated under the Raj. Jawaharlal Nehru, the country’s first prime minister, guided by the mantra of his Indian National Congress party, embraced socialism to hoist India out of poverty. Inspired by the successes of the Soviet Union and the perceptions of inequality bred by capitalism, Nehru’s India adopted a national policy of self-sufficiency (Nehru, 1960). Some of Nehru’s accomplishments that have been maintained today are the five year plans and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Management (IIMs). The socialist ideology however, mired the country in a downward spiral over a 40 year period. Critically describing Nehru’s socialism as statism, Das (2002, p. x) identified six faults that, in effect, actually had worsened conditions for the country’s masses: 1) Import substitution gave no place for comparative advantage and
limited the manufacturing base; 2) An expanded public sector was largely inefficient and corrupt; 3) Over-regulation of the private sector limited competition; 4) The absence of foreign direct investment, and by association inadequate use of technology, hampered the import of outside expertise and innovation; 5) Over-reliance on organized labour limited productivity; 6) Access to and quality of education were poor and exacerbated illiteracy further, marginalizing the impoverished and the female half of the population.

By 1991, Prime Minister Narasimham Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh of the INC took steps to liberalize India’s economy, enhance exports and embrace privatization. The results are evident today. India’s economy is now predominantly service-based, accounting for 55 percent of GDP, and employing 34 percent of the labour force. Although the majority of Indians remain in the agricultural sector (52 percent), it produces only 19 percent of GDP. Manufacturing contributes 26 percent to GDP and accounts for 14 percent of the workforce.\(^\text{14}\) The service economy is driven by the ubiquity of English, particularly in the areas of information technology and business outsourcing. While North America sleeps, programmers, software engineers and accountants develop code, fix bugs and file income tax returns in preparation for the work day in the west. Call centres operate around the clock to field customer queries from overseas concerning phone bills, credit card statements and airline reward programs. Eight Indian companies are included in the list of Fortune 500 companies and the likes of Tata, Infosys and WiPro have made a handful of Indians multi-billionaires.

The 2010 GDP per capita is 3,500 USD (PPP), although income disparities are quite large between the urban and rural populations. Roughly 25 percent live below the poverty line and unemployment stands at almost 11 percent. The country’s natural resources have been touted as labour and land, based on the reality that, with the exception of large coal deposits, there is a dearth of minerals, oil and other raw biomaterials. India has one of the world’s largest migratory populations, employed particularly as labourers and domestic workers in the Middle East and other parts of Asia. India’s exports go primarily to the UAE (12.5 percent), followed by the U.S. (11.1 percent) and China (6.1 percent). Its major import partners are China (11.2

\(^{14}\) Note all figures are derived from the Central Intelligence Agency (2011).
percent), the U.S. (6.5 percent), UAE (6%), and Saudi Arabia (5.7 percent) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011).

At the time of reforms in 1991 India’s foreign currency reserves were roughly one billion dollars. Today this total stands at approximately 287 billion, sixth in the world, yet roughly a tenth of the amount in the coffers of its Chinese counterparts.

**Government and politics.**

The government of India is a parliamentary democracy based on the English system of governance. It is organized into three branches, the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. The legislative branch is organized into upper and lower houses. The more powerful lower house, known as the Lok Sabha (House of the People), is directly elected and is headed by the prime minister. Elections may be called before the expiration of the five year term. Re-election is permissible and there are no limits on the number of terms for a prime minister (Malik & Kapur, 1998). The incumbent, currently serving his second term, is Monahman Singh, leader of the Indian National Congress Party that currently comprises a coalition government. The opposition is the Bharatia Janata Party, recognized as India’s right-wing party. It holds socially conservative views and advocates for Hindu nationalism. In the 63 years of the Republic of India, the Indian National Congress has been in power for 50 years and has provided seven of the country’s 14 prime ministers. India boasts of being the world’s largest secular democracy, a moniker advertised by the government for investment, tourism and even higher education.

Despite ongoing territorial disputes in Kashmir and the recent terrorist attack in Mumbai in 2008, India has maintained relatively civil ties to its historical and nuclear rival, Pakistan. A lukewarm relationship exists with China, though there are unresolved border disputes, and an ongoing irritant of Beijing is India’s support for Tibetan exiles (Abdi, 2010, May 10, p. A7). India is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). SAARC is comprised of eight countries and aims to strengthen economic and political ties in the region. It was inaugurated in 1985. India is also a member of the G20 and the WTO, joining the organization at its inception in 1995.
Society and culture.

Indian society is in a state of flux. In roughly two decades 200 million inhabitants have been lifted out of poverty creating a stable educated middle class. Although a large bureaucracy tends to stifle progress, business is booming and a consumer society has emerged. Indian institutions have created affordable amenities, such as the one lakh automobile (equivalent to $2,000 USD) and a ubiquitous cell phone culture. The country’s domestic tourism industry injects billions of rupees into the economy annually and international travelers arrive at an average of 18 million per year, creating a wealth of networks. India, however, remains a country that is largely rural in identity and the conveniences of modernity remain beyond the reach of some 800 million people.

Among the world’s emerging nations India holds soft power like no other. Whether it is the name recognition of its Bollywood stars, cricket players or the stereotyping of all Indians as IT gurus, there are multiple brands now recognized as India’s own. Guru itself is an exemplar of Indian words that also include karma, nirvana and Zen as having been integrated into mainstream English. Yoga has become the alternative to aerobic exercise in North America and few major urban centres on the international circuit lack a decent curry house.

At home Indian society is best defined by its pluralism. Its democratic institutions, linguistic diversity and religious tolerance are among its many multiplicities. As the population grows the OECD (2010) predicts that India will surpass China as the world’s largest population by 2025. The caste system acts to segregate and continues to relegate those belonging to its lower rungs to the margins of society, despite the Indian Constitution outlawing such discrimination. There are other groups identified as scheduled tribes, and to a lesser extent those belonging to religious minorities, who are also subjected to prejudice. The low status afforded to women has remained a significant blemish on the country’s development record, a point made clear in the Economist magazine citing the unnatural discrepancy in the birth ratio between males and females (touched on in more detail in the China section). A Maoist insurgency reached new levels of concern for India’s internal security when an unprecedented attack killed 76 policemen in Chattisgarh State (“Politics with bloodshed”, 2010, April 8). More
commonly known as the Naxalites, their cause has been 40 years in the making, and still operates to mobilize India’s most disenfranchised; those who live in the rural tribal areas where roughly eight percent of the country resides. How India reconciles its domestic inequalities, civil unrest and rampant corruption will remain among the most pressing concerns for the government in the years ahead.

Education.

With a constitutional amendment in 1976 the jurisdiction of education was brought under the Union government of India. Although the responsibilities remained largely the affairs of the particular state (or union territory), the central government has aimed to integrate a national character into the system. This was articulated through its National Policy on Education from 1986, which will be referenced periodically in the later chapters (Government of India, 2011a, p. 227).

The Indian education system at the primary and secondary levels has been adopted and modified from the British system. Children typically enter schooling at the age of six and start at grade one.\textsuperscript{15} Elementary schools accommodate grades one through eight (Planning Commission of India, 2007). Secondary school is a four year cycle with grades nine and ten categorized as lower secondary, and grades 11 and 12 as upper secondary. This is otherwise referred to as the 10+2 system. Entry into higher education is contingent on ability and cost. Many students are weeded out at an early stage of schooling, primarily because families value labour over learning and tuition is largely unaffordable.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Development oversees the system of education in the country. Most recent data available showed the operating budget being 3.2 percent of GDP and 10.7 percent of government spending (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2007). Other data from the Government of India on budget allocation is broken down in Table 4.1 below.

\footnote{Indian nomenclature to describe levels in education uses standard rather than grade.}
Table 4.1

*Budget Allocation for Education, India*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Expenditure (in millions $US 16)</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>6162.9</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>927.1</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>267.9</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>895.3</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Education</td>
<td>1007.5</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>133.7</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>9394.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from “Ministry of human resource development, annual report 2010-2011” Government of India, 2011b, p. 242.*

The Ministry operates as two factions: The Department of School Education and Literacy (primary/secondary education and literacy) and the Department of Higher Education (secondary and tertiary education, which includes technical, adult and higher education). From Table 4.1, it can be seen that the objective of the government is clear. With 65.6% of the education budget devoted to elementary education, the Department of School Education and Literacy carries the chief mandate to universalize primary education. This was outlined in the Constitution as a fundamental right, yet only made law in 2010 (Government of India, 2011c). Named Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All), the program aims to provide free and compulsory education to Indian children ages 6-14; a population identified by the MHRD as being approximately 192 million (Government of India, 2011c). According to the 11th five year plan (Government of India, 2007, p. 2) there was an increase in enrolments from 159 to 182 million from 2001 to 2005. The GER for this period grew from 90.7 to 96.9 for males and 73.6 to

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16 US dollars are converted based on the exchange rate as of September 9, 2011. The rate was 46.65 rupees to 1 dollar.
89.9 for females. The enrolment gap between genders is narrowing with 54 percent enrolment being male and 46 percent enrolment being female\textsuperscript{17}.

The literacy figures have also been rising. From 1991 to 2007 adult literacy (defined as 15 and older) increased from 48 percent to 62 percent (females, 51 percent). Literacy figures for youth (defined as 15-24) rose from 62 percent to 79 percent during the same time period (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2007). The Ministry objectives are to reach 80 percent literacy for all by 2012 and reduce the gender gap to 10 percent.

For secondary education there will be an estimated 121 million individuals of the age-relevant cohort (14-18) in 2011, yet as of 2005 there were only 37 million enrolled (Government of India, 2007, p. 14). At the end of the 10\textsuperscript{th} five year plan (2001-2006), the GER for secondary schools was 39.9 percent. The dropout rate was as high as 62 percent. Roughly 60 percent of secondary schools are aided and unaided private schools, of which the latter is showing the largest growth. The challenges facing both primary and secondary levels of education are retention, quality resources, teaching, and affordability. A rising tide of private schools does not bode well for equality and particular attention needs to be given to underserved rural areas and the marginalized including scheduled tribes, castes and other backward classes\textsuperscript{18}. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, IGNOU has an established pathway program catered to those who have not completed secondary education. Upon successful completion of the program, students are admitted into one of IGNOU’s bachelor degree programs.

\textsuperscript{17} These figures are corroborated by the UNESCO 2010 Global Monitoring Report. The GMR also indicates that in 1999 the percentage of male to female enrolment in primary education was 57:43 (UNESCO, 2010, p. 344).

\textsuperscript{18} These three terms are generally used by government to describe the disenfranchised. Scheduled tribes are deemed those who belong to the lowest rungs of the conventional caste system in India and are referred to as Dalits (meaning depressed), or untouchables. Scheduled tribes can be considered to be the aboriginal populations in India and reside in the more remote areas of rural society. Lastly, the other backward classes have been identified as those who belong to religions other than Hinduism and are deemed marginalized according to varying criteria including education, and other social and economic factors. All are eligible for varying affirmative action measures.
Higher education.

India’s higher education system is unique in that it operates thousands of colleges under the jurisdiction of a comparatively small number of universities. At the end of 2010 there were 544 University level institutions, of which 73 were private, and 31,324 colleges (Government of India, 2011b, p. 86). As noted from Table 4.1, the budget allocation for higher education from the 10th five year plan (2002-2007) is approximately 900 million USD over a five year period.

Overall, however, the higher education system is largely underdeveloped. The most glaring statistic is that only 13 percent of the age cohort is enrolled in some form of higher education. Further, retention rates are low, quality is suspect and funding is largely inadequate. Indeed the famous Indian Institute’s of Technology (IITs) and Management (IIMs) have produced top level talent in the fields of information technology and business. The reality however, is that combined enrolment in the handful of these institutes is only measurable in the tens of thousands. English has remained the dominant language of India’s higher education system, yet only 11 percent of India’s population is considered fluent. The greatest challenges facing India’s higher education system are accommodating the unmet demand, the rise in for-profit providers, quality and funding.

Colonial history of Indian higher education (and correspondence).

To provide a contemporary understanding of India’s higher education system, it is pertinent to commence with the educational influences of the British Raj, whose transplantation of the University of London model into Indian higher education remains evident today (Altbach, 1993, p. 23). The shortcomings of this transplantation will provide a framework for understanding the emergence of distance education that has been integral to the pursuit of mass higher education in the country.

As previously stated British control over India was fortified with the defeat of the Indian Rebellion in 1857, and in the subsequent year, the passing of the Government of India Act. This removed authority from the East India Company, whose reign over much of India had spanned three Centuries (Keay, 2001, p. 446). Leading up to the formation of the British Raj, the
Company had established various institutions in government, trade and education. As the capacity of the Company grew, it became prudent to invest in a model of higher education that would eventually serve the needs of the colonial administration. The objective was to, “form a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect: a class who would serve as interpreters between the government and the masses” (Ashby, 1968, p. 51).

Towards this end, Hindu College was founded in Calcutta in 1817, spurring widespread growth in the college system as is still evident today. Wider administration was required leading to the formation in 1857 of three formal Universities in Madras, Bombay and the administrative capital of Calcutta. These institutions, modeled on the University of London, were strictly administrative, secular, and non-residential, acting to co-ordinate the growing college system, particularly through the organization of curriculum and the administration of examinations.

The early 20th Century marked both expansion and reform to higher education in India, indirectly reflecting “a new respect for political liberty” in the aftermath of World War I (Ashby, 1966, p. 113). Madrasa and Hindu models of higher education re-emerged, spurring interest in the nationalist movement (Basu, 1991, p. 29) in conjunction with the realization that the transplanted secular model based on the University of London had been largely inadequate. This was summarized in the 1919 Calcutta University Commission, chaired by Sir Michael Sadler, who was quoted at the beginning of the Chapter in support of the contextualization of education systems. Widespread recommendations were put forth including greater institutional autonomy, de-centralization of authority to the state level and the development of a balanced curriculum that was culturally-sensitive, yet economically relevant (Ashby, 1966, p. 132). The result however, was a system that remained largely untouched. The Raj was reluctant to grant any degree of autonomy to an institution that would strengthen the nationalist movement or endow academics, particularly natives, with the same freedoms prevalent in the Universities in England.

In 1947 India inherited a higher education system that was a transplantation of a foreign model de-contextualized from the historical, linguistic and cultural settings of its inhabitants.
Upwards of 80 percent of students were studying in general arts programs with little development of post-graduate programs or opportunity for entry into professional institutions (Basu, 1991, p. 30), resulting in a population of intellectuals largely disconnected from the material interests of the country (Ashby, 1966, p. 139). Further, existing institutions were concentrated in the metropolitan ports of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, contributing to the gross underdevelopment of semi-urban and rural areas. Parallel to the low quality of the system was poor quantitative growth. At Independence, enrolments amounted to only 250,000 in a population of 350 million (Basu, 1991, p. 30), the equivalent of 70 students for every 100,000 inhabitants.

Post-colonial history of Indian higher education.

As India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru continued Gandhi’s desire for self-reliance, and used this as an impetus to expand the country’s education system. Higher education was prioritized among educational planners as a means to stimulate economic growth and research capacity, also to reduce the systemic inequalities across regions and groups (Raza & Aggarwal, 1991, p. 39). Widening access continued predominantly at the college level, with some variation. Growth of publicly managed and aided private colleges continued and a commensurate increase in universities ensued. As well, the elite Indian Institute of Technology was formed in 1951 as a means to build research capacity and develop scientists and technologists of the highest calibre (Idiresan & Nigam, 1993, p. 334). Through the 1950s to the early 1960s however, enrolment growth in higher education only reached 500,000.

In 1961, the Central Advisory Board of Education (India’s lead independent educational organization created from recommendations in the Sadler report), deliberated on further expansion. It was evident that financial and geographical constraints remained and that higher education was serving a narrow demographic. Recognizing the success of correspondence education in Japan, the Soviet Union and the US, the Board commissioned the University of Delhi to commence correspondence courses in 1962. The objectives were to widen access

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19 It is important to keep in mind that widening the college system retains the top of the pyramid intact, or rather, widens the reach of established universities. Conversely the creation of new universities offers new administrative structures, procedures, specializations and an overall ethos for the higher education system.
through cost-effective provision, open access policies and flexible study that would enable individuals to balance work and family commitments. Soon other universities started to offer degree and diploma programs through this mode of learning, predominantly through Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) (Swamy, 1991, p. 385). This laid the foundation for institutions devoted exclusively to correspondence education.

The establishment of the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

The success of the UK Open University, established in 1969, prompted further growth and recognition of distance education as a viable means of cost-effective, quality education. Though the Ministry of Education held a seminar in 1970 with UNESCO and others to discuss the prospects of an Open University, it was not until 1982 that the first State Open University (SOU) was established in Andhra Pradesh (Swamy, 1991, p. 370). Then in 1985, by an act of parliament, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was inaugurated and commenced operations in New Delhi. Despite its beginning, with modest enrolments of about 20,000 students (Swamy, 1991, p. 115), IGNOU’s network widened rapidly and by 2011 enrolled approximately three million students (IGNOU, 2011b). This has been enabled by a democratic admissions policy (Sharma, 2001) and an effective network of regional centres and study centres distributed throughout the country.

Through distance education and open access policies (Bates, 1995; Swamy, 1991, p. 381), IGNOU, like its affiliated State Open Universities, has a mandate of providing sustainable learning environments of good quality, and promoting lifelong learning, and equitable access, particularly to those hitherto un-reached or under-represented (IGNOU, 2011b). The Open University systems have enrolled a higher proportion of females than conventional institutions and have also made strides in enrolling students from Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Swamy, 1991; Panda, 2005).

In the second section of this Chapter we offer a similar outline of China covering the themes of land and people, history, government and politics, economy, society and culture, education and finally higher education.
China

Land and people.

China (Zhōng Guó, 中国) is another of the world’s great civilizations with a history reaching back 5,000 years. More commonly referred to as the People’s Republic of China, or Mainland China\textsuperscript{20}, the nation conjures up images of the philosopher Confucius whose teachings remain ingrained in contemporary Chinese society, the Great Wall, among the most impressive human made structures in the world and a superpower on the rise, uncertain of what will unfold in Deng’s “Asian Century”\textsuperscript{21}. Since the reforms of 1978 China has emerged as an economic anomaly, having lifted some 300 million people out of poverty through aggressive reforms under its new principle of a social-market economy.

The landmass of China is vast, and is only behind Russia and Canada in sheer size. China’s longest border is shared with Mongolia in the north and meets Russia and North Korea in the northeast. China’s coastline is divided into the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and South China Sea, collectively part of the Pacific Ocean. China’s southern neighbours include Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Moving westward, China again meets India, Pakistan, a sliver of Afghanistan, then Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Russia. Mainland China also shares two small southern borders with its Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of Macau and Hong Kong, which are broadly under the jurisdiction of the capital Beijing\textsuperscript{22}. Although Taiwan is considered part of China, the island remains separate politically, economically and militarily due

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} The People’s Republic of China includes Mainland China, and the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions. In more politically correct terms, China includes the aforementioned and the island of Taiwan. Mainland China includes continental China and the Province of Hainan located in the South China Sea. In this investigation China will refer to Mainland China.
\item \textsuperscript{21} In 1988 Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, during a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, famously made the claim that the 21st Century would be the “Asian Century”, an assertion to contrast the idea of the 19th Century as being the British Century and the 20th Century being the American Century.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Both Hong Kong and Macau are part of China, though each SAR operates under the policy of “one country, two systems,” an idea originally proposed by Deng Xiaoping. Hong Kong reverted back to Chinese rule in 1997, whereas Macau was reunified with China in 1999. Each SAR is permitted to continue operating as a capitalist society, as practised during colonial times, for a period of 50 years from reunification.
\end{itemize}
to historical circumstances, as will be elaborated in the section on history below. China’s climate varies from tropical in the south and southeast to temperate in the west and subarctic in the north. Lying in the west, the Tibetan plateau and Himalayan mountain range separate the country from the Indian Subcontinent. The Gobi desert stretches from the Tibetan plateau to the northwest areas of the country. In the south and east the country is a combination of plateaus, plains and river basins, mainly fed by the great Yellow and Yangtze rivers.

Figure 4.3. Map of China.

China is organized politically into 22 provinces, five autonomous regions and four municipalities. The country’s capital is the Beijing municipality. The official language of the country is Mandarin, or Pǔtōnghuà (普通话), meaning the common language, spoken or understood by nearly the entire population. Many other minority languages and dialects exist across the country.

The flag of China is a vibrant red colour, symbolizing revolution and there are five yellow stars positioned in the top left corner. The larger star represents the Chinese Communist Party with the other stars emanating from it representing the people of China.
The Chinese population is the largest in the world. Currently at 1.35 billion, 92 percent identify as Han Chinese with the remaining eight percent being Zhuang, Hui, Miao, Uyghur, Tibetan, and a host of other minority groups. At the 60th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the PRC in Beijing, 56 red pillars were erected in Tiananmen Square, each symbolizing one of the country’s officially recognized minority populations.

The median age of China’s population is 35 years and in 2010 8.2 percent will be over the age of 65. India will not reach this rate until 2030, at which point 16.2 percent of the Chinese population will be over 65 (See Figure 4.2). The one-child policy, implemented in 1979, has since shrunk the annual growth rate by nearly one-third to .56, placing it in the lower third globally. In urban centres where the policy is predominantly implemented, the demographic has started to resemble an inverted pyramid, or a 4-2-1 family structure where a typical family includes four grandparents, two parents, and one child. Concerns have been raised about the potential financial burden this will place on younger generations, particularly if the state is unable to provide adequate or supplementary support. This is compounded by urban migration, elaborated below. Recognizing these societal shifts the government amended the one-child policy in 2009 permitting couples, who were the only child in their families, to have two children. Another more pressing concern is the gender imbalance. In the March 6, 2010 publication of the *Economist* newspaper the leader read, “The War on Baby Girls: Gendercide”. The most alarming figures came from China, where the male to female ratio in the early 2000s was an extremely unnatural 124:100 (in India, the figure was about 108, though in the northern parts of the country the ratio mirrored China’s). Chairman Mao’s proclamation that “women hold up half the sky”, has held little influence in the eyes of rural families where females are perceived as temporary members with the likelihood of leaving to live with the family of their future spouse. The accompanying dowry expected by the receiving family is a concern, and there may also be a need for manual labour on which a family’s livelihood is dependent. The article reported that the imbalance, oddly, is greatest in the more prosperous coastal areas of the country. It turns out that abortions are readily available at a cost of approximately $12 dollars, which is deemed significantly more humane, and legal, than the alternative of infanticide more commonly practised in the countryside.
The standard of living in China is indeed rising. Its GDP per capita is $7,600 (USD at PPP), an increase of 33 percent in three years and only 2.8 percent are indicated as living below the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). The UNDP’s Human Development Index from 2007 gives China a score of .772, positioning it at 92 out of 182 countries in the world with available data23. In 1980, the HDI score was .533 and has increased by 1.37 percent annually to 2007 (UNDP, 2010).

In the past two decades the world’s largest migratory shift has occurred in China with 150 million rural inhabitants having moved to urban areas. In the next 20-30 years this migration is expected to double to an additional 300 million (“Invisible and heavy shackles”, 2010, May 8). The current population divide is 53 percent rural, 47 percent urban (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). This shift continues to pose tremendous challenges for municipalities in terms of providing social benefits, housing, and adequate transportation links. The social, education and health benefits afforded to a Beijing resident for example, are unattainable without a coveted resident permit (or hukou24). Coupled with the high cost of living, many migrant workers cram together in dilapidated dwellings in China’s prosperous urban centres. For these reasons most migrant workers leave their children behind in their hometown or village, placing other relatives in the role of caregiver and disrupting the traditional family dynamic. A return home usually only happens during the Lunar New Year, celebrated early in the calendar year. This wreaks havoc across China as transportation networks are flooded with approximately 200 million passengers attempting to travel home for the month long holiday.

23 Although China has an equal GDP to Egypt, its HDI measure is nine percent higher (China = .772; Egypt = .703).

24 To control urban overpopulation the government enforces the hukou system (户口, hù kǒu), a form of registration and control that has been implemented in one form or another since ancient times. The hukou operates as a residency permit that identifies an individual according to where they were born and lists their immediate family members. If one lives outside of their residency, such as a migrant worker, they, or their family members may not be entitled to the services provided in their non-residency place of abode. There are exceptions, including a student of the age cohort enrolling in a higher education institution outside of their residency area, though they are usually required to return after the completion of their studies.
History.

China is among the world’s great civilizations, boasting a rich ancient history that has been carried through the centuries and woven into the social and intellectual fabric of its modern day society. Its preservation is reflected through art, literature, cuisine and social norms. Here an overview of the major dynastic periods is outlined including societal change and major achievements that have been maintained in contemporary Chinese society.

**Pre-Imperial China (2000 BCE – 221 BCE).**

Though there are many uncertainties about the details of pre-historic China, the Xia Dynasty is documented as the first that established a form of rule, primarily over the eastern regions around 2000 BCE to 1600 BCE. For the next 500+ years, the Shang Dynasty claimed dominion over this area and later expanded as far as present day Beijing in the north. The successive dynasty belonged to the Zhou, recognized for having the longest reign over the region from 1122 BCE to 256 BCE. The Zhou initiated the construction of the Grand Canal, today the world’s longest man-made waterway, and the Great Wall, which acted as a protective barrier from the northern frontiers. It was also during this period that some of China’s most revered philosophers lived. None is better known than Confucius, who lived from 551-479 BCE. He commanded a devout following based on his teachings of harmony, ethics and morality in relation to government’s role; and filial piety, education and self-cultivation in relation to self and kin (Roberts, 2000, p. 15). Near the time of his death the Warring States period began. Emerging from the northwest was the Qin State which ultimately unified China in 221 BCE marking the beginning of Imperial China.

**Early Imperial China (221 BCE – 589 CE).**

Although lasting only 16 years, the Qin Dynasty, embarked on several ambitious projects, dramatically expanding the Great Wall and assembling the infamous terra cotta army. Only discovered in 1974, these warriors were a tribute to the Emperor Qin Shi Huang (Hardy & Behnke-Kinney, 2005, p. 12). After his death in-fighting amongst his advisors culminated in a peasant revolt, led by an individual who came to be known as Emperor Gaozu, and thus
commencing the period of the great Han Dynasty, by which the major ethnic group is now identified in China. It should also be noted that during this period the writing system that is evident today was largely established (Huang, p. 125). The 400 year reign of the Han Dynasty is recognized as the zenith of Imperial China. The Empire conquered territories from modern day Vietnam, to the Korean peninsula and parts of Central Asia fortifying a trade network that became part of the legendary Silk Road (Hardy & Behnke-Kinney, 2005, p. 97). The Pan-Asia connection contributed to the vast economic expansion and increasingly sophisticated forms of government and military. The demise of the Han Dynasty was succeeded by a division of the Empire that was not restored until the arrival of the Sui Dynasty in 589 (Roberts, 2006, p. 38).

Mid-Imperial China (589 CE – 1279 CE).

The duration of the Sui Dynasty was brief, lasting until 618. The Sui Dynasty is recognized for significant engineering feats, namely extending the Great Wall and Grand Canal, and for unifying the people under the tenets of Buddhism. This was also the period when the Imperial examinations were institutionalized, with the objective of creating a bureaucracy based on skill rather than social standing, although nepotism remained the norm. Military ambitions exhausted financial resources and in a weakened state, the Empire fell with the subsequent emergence of the Tang Dynasty. The Tang is venerated as among China’s great dynasties, having retained power for all but 15 years over a period of three centuries (618-904) (Huang, 1997, p. 98). Advancements in printing created a sound literary culture and festivals such as Chinese New Year became universally celebrated. The capital Chang’an (today known as Xi’an) became a cosmopolitan centre resulting from the vibrant trade route along the Silk Road. Commencing in the eighth century, the Tang Dynasty gradually unraveled. Revolt split the Empire. China underwent a succession of rulers, finally being reunified under the Song Dynasty. The longevity of the Song Dynasty, lasting until 1279, was in part attributed to military advancements including the invention of gunpowder and a well-organized navy (Huang, 1997, p. 121). Like its predecessors however, its tenure was wrought with conflict, primarily from forces in the north including the Jin Dynasty, which seized the northern territory of the Song, and of the Mongols, who eventually vanquished both.
Late Imperial China (1368 – 1911).

The conquest of the Mongols once again reunified China. Otherwise known as the Yuan, this was a non-Han dynasty. Kublai Khan, naming himself the Great Emperor, established rule from 1279 to 1368. The capital of the Empire was re-located to the city of DaDu (great capital), in what came to be known as Beijing. It has been suggested that this period was a blemish on dynastic rule as discrimination against ethnic Hans was rampant (Tanner, 2010, p. 246). The Mongols did little to build on the achievements of their Song predecessors and their rule was largely despotic (Roberts, 2006, p. 102). Later in their reign Chinese elements resurfaced including the imperial examinations and translations of many Chinese books into the Mongolian language.

Around 1360 an uprising swept across southern and eastern China eventually taking Dadu and securing the place of the Ming as the next ruling Dynasty of China (Hucker, 1978, p. 26). The Ming maintained its capital in Nanjing before returning to Beijing in 1421. During the lengthy rule of the Ming Dynasty, the Imperial examinations continued and a quota system was implemented to enable opportunity for those outside of the landowner class to gain entry into the powerful bureaucracy. China’s riches in porcelain, silks and tea brought greater ties with Europeans who were arriving in greater numbers along the shores of the Pearl River Delta, in which the island of Macau was positioned to the west, and Hong Kong, to the east. This greater contact with foreigners however, was also cause for greater conflict. Fighting with the Portuguese resulted in China ceding the small island of Macau, and a costly war with Japan at the end of the 16th Century, exhausted the treasury. At this time, a rising tide was also occurring with the Manchurians in the north. The Mongols and other smaller factions joined their cause and the Manchurians continued to march towards Beijing, which was finally captured in 1644.

Like the Yuan Dynasty, The Qing Dynasty was of an ethnicity other than Han. Their rule, lasting from 1644 to 1911, was the last in China’s great Dynastic history. At the pinnacle of its rule in the mid 18th Century the Qing Dynasty spanned over 13 million square kilometres, roughly 1.5 times the current size of China (Wakeman, 1975, p. 102). Its population complemented its territory and European traders were keen to exploit China’s consumer
potential. The Chinese however, showed little interest and the trade imbalance was exhausting stores of silver in Europe, as the European appetite for porcelain, tea and silk remained strong. This led to an objectionable, yet extremely lucrative trade in opium. A subsequent ban by the Qing led to the Opium Wars in 1842, and later from 1856-1860, in which the British emerged victorious. The humiliation of defeat was intensified with a series of treaties that opened up ports and waterways, and most notably, ceded the territory of Hong Kong to the British. The Qing Dynasty was weakened, rebellions ensued and the year-long Sino-Japanese War ending in 1895, further diminished the resolve of the Qing. In 1912 the Republic of China was formed, introducing a western form of democracy and bringing a formal end to Imperial rule in China.

The Republic of China.

The Kuomintang party (Nationalist Party) established its rule in 1912, though internal strife and the continuing power of warlords in the north limited its nationalist agenda. The May 4th movement of 1919, stirred by a disastrous outcome for China in the Treaty of Versailles, where China ceded the Shandong peninsula to the Japanese, fractured any recourse between the Japanese backed north and the nationalist south. Though the Shandong problem was eventually rectified in 1922, it did not quell popular disillusionment with the west (MacMillan, 2003). The Communist Party of China, inspired by the advancements in the Soviet Union, had already amassed a significant following and shared competing aspirations with the Kuomintang to reunify China. With Soviet backing, the Nationalists took Shanghai and then Beijing, though a purging of Communists in the Shanghai struggle of 1927 caused a backlash against Nationalists in the southern areas. Led by Chiang Kai Shek the Nationalists moved the capital to Nanjing and the Communists regrouped in the south. Other problems were brewing with the Japanese in the north, which by 1937, had escalated to the second Sino-Japanese war. The eight year war that culminated in 1945 is remembered largely by the Chinese for the massacre of Nanjing in 1938, leaving an indelible imprint on relations between the two countries (Chang, 1997). In the post-War period, failed attempts to forge an alliance between the Nationalist north and the Communist south led to civil war. Defeated, Chiang Kai Shek fled to Taiwan, where the Republic
of China was re-established. On the Mainland, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949.

*People’s Republic of China.*

Maoist China was a tumultuous social experiment guided first by Marxist-Leninist ideology and later by radical policies enforced by its eccentric leader. Chairman Mao’s policies were articulated through widespread propaganda mechanisms along with banning all forms of organization incongruent with party principles; religion and all associations with Confucianism, which were seen as part of China’s conservative past, were banned. To mobilize the masses, Mao instituted the Great Leap Forward, as part of the second five year plan in 1958. The objective was to transform China from an agrarian to an industrial society. Like India’s import substitution, Mao looked inward believing China could become a formidable producer of steel and simultaneously maintain high production in agriculture. An over-reporting of grain quotas led to severe shortages. Widespread famine ensued. By 1961 up to 27 million had perished resulting in one of the world’s great humanitarian disasters (Roberts, 1999, p. 271). In spite of this Mao was again resurgent by 1966 and launched the Cultural Revolution to continue his radical policies. The Red Guard movement mobilized youth who carried out class struggle. Those arbitrarily identified as capitalists, or members of the bourgeois were persecuted. Many were sent to the countryside to be re-educated through manual labour. With the death of Mao in 1976, the Cultural Revolution ended, paving the way for the reform-driven China that exists today. For many however, the turbulence of the Cultural Revolution has acted as a reminder of the shortcomings of a one-party system. These sentiments were revived in 1989 when student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square were swiftly crushed by the government. Perhaps as a way to deal with the errors of its recent past, the CCP devised a formula stating Mao had been 70 percent correct and 30 percent wrong in his policies and actions since he took power in 1949. His successes in fighting the Japanese, founding the PRC and developing the principles of the CCP, remain revered by the Chinese (Aiyar, 2008).
Economy.

The aftermath of the Cultural Revolution rendered China largely incapacitated as a country. The decade long closures of its higher education institutions coupled with a population having only low-level skills and a dearth of entrepreneurial expertise left a bleak situation for the country’s future. At the third plenum of the 11th Central Committee in December 1978, Premier Zhou Enlai’s four modernizations were put into effect by Deng Xiaoping, creating the platform to open China as a socialist market economy to the world. Advancements in the fields of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology were to be the blueprint to re-create China as a global superpower by the 21st Century. Importing machinery from Japan and the west, China quickly became an export-driven economy. Deng Xiaoping, remaining skeptical of the potential perils of western capitalism, trudged ahead cautiously. He gradually created five special economic zones which would be governed by more liberal laws for trade and commerce. Four, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Shantou and Xiamen, were strategically positioned along the south eastern shores, and the fifth, was the southern island province of Hainan. The first and most successful has been Shenzhen, sharing a border with its prosperous neighbour, Hong Kong. Once a small fishing village, Shenzhen is now home to approximately 14 million inhabitants and is a focal point for China’s manufacturing.

Foreign direct investment has poured into the country, attracted by China’s extensive infrastructure, abundance of natural resources, improving quality controls, and above all, cheap labour. Unlike any other country in the world, China’s greatest resource is arguably the size and current age of its population. Having an unemployment rate of only 4.3 percent and a workforce of 815 million (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011), the country’s tremendous productivity has enabled it to have a perennial trade surplus. This has resulted in China having the world’s largest financial reserves, calculated at $2.2 trillion (USD). The economy is driven mainly by industry, contributing almost 47 percent of GDP. This is followed closely by services at 43 percent, whereas agriculture contributes only 10 percent to GDP. The composition of China’s workforce is 38 percent working in agriculture, 28 percent working in industry and 34 percent working in services (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). China’s largest exporting
nations are the US, Hong Kong and Japan. Its imports mainly originate from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and include electronics, machinery and petroleum.

**Government and politics.**

China operates under a one party system controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), though other parties and independents are involved in lower levels of government. The CCP was inaugurated on July 1, 1921 in Shanghai at its first National Party Congress. The CCP’s authoritative body is the Central Committee. It is headed by the General Secretary, who is the highest ranking official in the CCP. The position is currently held by Hu Jintao. The Central Committee appoints the Politburo Standing Committee, comprised of five to nine members (currently nine) who make up the CCP’s inner cabinet, or authoritative leaders. The Politburo Standing Committee generally makes decisions based on consensus, including the recommendation of president. The position of Chairman was abolished in 1982 by an amendment to the Constitution, and replaced with the titles of president and general secretary. Hu Jintao also holds the title of president, thereby giving him authority as the head of state and leader of the Chinese Communist Party. President Hu also holds the position of Chairman of the Central Military Commission (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2010). Presumably for the purposes of clarity, the individual who leads these three positions is bestowed the name of Paramount Leader, a title given only to three predecessors in the PRC’s history: Jiang Zemin, Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong. In terms of nomenclature, one can draw parallels with the US system. President Barack Obama holds the titles of head of state, leader of the Democratic Party and commander in chief of the armed forces.

The organization of the government is headed by the National People’s Congress (NPC) which is comprised of nearly 3,000 members, making it the largest legislative assembly in the world. The NPC is responsible for passing state laws as directed by the CCP and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), comprised of individuals from a range of organizations, including independents.
China is a nuclear state and one of five permanent members on the UN Security Council. Its foreign policy is generally non-interventionist, though it acts as a mediator between the west and some of its adversaries, in particular North Korea and Iran. Generally speaking, China’s foreign policy is mainly concerned with energy to feed its burgeoning economy and its national defence program. This translates into concerns over its waterways, where Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines, all close US allies, have the potential to act as guardians over the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Another maritime concern is the Strait of Malacca, East and Southeast Asia’s most important shipping lane, where a temporary block to the over 15 million barrels of oil that pass daily (US Energy Information Administration, 2011), could dramatically disrupt the operations in a country of China’s magnitude. In terms of bilateral relations, China has sought to ally with some countries of dubious records by western opinion. This has included the aforementioned Iran and other oil rich nations such as Sudan, the Republic of Congo and Angola. Other countries in Africa have benefited from China’s patronage where major infrastructure projects directed by Chinese engineers are sowing the seeds for future economic or political cooperation. There has also been a long-standing tradition of academic diplomacy between China and varying African nations. Since 1949 Africans have been the recipients of scholarships to study in China (Gillespie, 2001, p. 112). Today one will find a wave of Africans studying in China, particularly in the major urban centres such as Guangzhou and Beijing.

In the multilateral sphere China holds one of five permanent seats on the UN Security Council and also holds membership in the G20 and the WTO. In regional terms, China is an observer in SAARC and a dialogue partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

**Society and culture.**

Integral to interpreting contemporary Chinese society is to look to both its Confucian heritage and the phases of modernization guided by the Chinese Communist Party since 1978.

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25 The most recent figures from 2008 indicate that China imports 4.4 million barrels/day (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011), although the US Energy Information Association predicts this will grow to 13.1 million barrels/day by 2030 (US Energy Information Administration, 2007).
Since Deng Xiaoping implemented the four modernizations to reform China for the 21st century, subsequent strategies have tremendously influenced the societal structure of the country. Deng’s three steps, followed by Jiang Zemin’s three responses in 2000, were largely centred on economic development (OECD, 2005, p. 13) and have proven to be largely successful. Indeed, China’s rapid economic development has created a formidable middle class measured at roughly 300 million, yet the by-products have been a growing divide between urban and rural living standards, environmental degradation and a society largely fixated on fulfilling Deng Xiaoping’s dictum, “to get rich is glorious”. In 2004 President Hu Jintao, in an attempt to differentiate himself from his predecessors and re-map China’s future development outlook, put forward two concepts: Scientific Development and the Harmonious Society.

In terms of interpreting Chinese culture, the concept of collectivism or placing the group’s needs and views above those of the individual has been viewed as a fixture in Chinese society (Hofstede, 2001). Taken at another level, Triandis (1995) suggests that the idea of collectivism can be further differentiated to horizontal and vertical levels. Horizontal collectivism is focused on sameness, where hierarchy has a place, but is not highly valued. In contrast vertical collectivism is associated with status, and inequality is accepted as part of the social structure. In Chinese society, respect for elders, or those of authority, is well-established. From the subtlety of altering personal pronouns (e.g., both “nǐ” and “nín” are translated as “you”, though the latter is used to show respect), to the seating organization at a meeting, or banquet, there are social rules to be followed. The use of a person’s given name is usually reserved only for friends or close acquaintances and addressing an unrelated elder, using the term, “lǎo shī”, meaning teacher, is common. The hierarchy however, is understated, with work colleagues of all positions for example, socializing with a degree of liberty. Towards this end, China is generally perceived as a country oriented towards horizontal collectivism (Cooper, Calloway-Thomas, & Simonds, 2007, p. 27).

Some observers suggest the social hierarchy actually favours children. A product of China’s one-child policy is the pejorative connotation of “little emperors”, children who grow up as “the only child” and suffer from excessive spoiling and self-centred attitudes. There are also increasing tensions between generations as current technology and materialism stand in stark
contrast with the hardships endured by many parents (or now grandparents) during the Cultural Revolution. The Internet is sometimes seen as intensifying access to materials objectionable to the authorities. Despite tight controls where Facebook, YouTube and CNN are often blocked, the Internet savvy are often one step ahead of government censors, believed to be 10,000 strong in Beijing (Harper, 2007). The ubiquity of programs such as Firefox’s “great ladder” or other censor-climbing software will continue to pose problems for Beijing as long as outside influences pose a threat to the Party.

Other concerns with society are an increase in protests, particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas where corruption has been rampant. Another is addressing the issue of China’s unmarried men. Mentioned above, a blemish on China’s development has been the gross decline in female births, attributed to the persistence of traditional attitudes. This has led to a host of unmarried men, or “bare branches”. This is particularly acute for the generation born in the 1980s. In many parts of the country, the ratio of 5 men to 4 women has increased competition to find a spouse.

Though having an aversion to religion in the past, the CCP has demonstrated a growing tolerance for the major faiths of Islam, Buddhism and Christianity, of which each holds a significant following in the country. In general the CCP is suspicious of any organization that may swell to sizeable numbers and potentially question, or even challenge its authority. It has taken up the practice of selecting figureheads who are more closely aligned to the policies and objectives of the CCP. It has appointed, for example, a spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism to counter the Dalai Lama, perceived as a dissident and separatist. There have also been recent grumbles from the Vatican over Beijing’s selections for the Chinese Catholic hierarchy (“Your billion or ours”, 2011, August 20). Of course, the most salient example of the clash between a spiritual organization and politics in China is the Falun Gong. Uneasy about its unorthodox practices and mass following that soon rivaled the Communist Party (measured at 70 million), the government captured many Falun Gong leaders and banned any practice in the country outright in 2000.
Abroad, China’s soft power remains relatively obscure. Although the tremendous success of the Beijing Olympics and the popularity of the Confucius Institutes worldwide, there remains a residual distrust of China’s Communist Party and an inherent bias in western media. With dissidents embraced abroad as champions of democracy and human rights, the domestic persecution of the Falun Gong, the reported cultural destruction of Tibet, and widespread media censorship, Hu’s government policy of a “harmonious world” has not gained much attention or appreciation.

**Education.**

The education system in China is divided into three main streams. Basic education includes pre-school, primary and secondary education, while higher education includes vocational education through to graduate level education. Finally, adult education is a combination of the above two streams and aims to offer a range of classes/credentials from basic literacy to advanced University degrees (CERNET, 2004).

**Basic education.**

The CCP policy on basic education has been a long-standing mechanism to facilitate social harmony in China. In particular, the compulsory teaching of Mandarin in grades one through nine has been met with a high degree of success in terms of uniting its immense population and many minority groups. As stated by China’s past Vice-Premier Li Lanqing, its purpose is quite explicit: “A nation has to have a universal language, written and spoken, this being essential to national unity and development” (Li, 2005, p. 358).

The Compulsory Education Law of 1986 stipulates that all school-aged children (defined as ages 6-14) have the equal right and obligation to receive schooling from grades one to nine, and that no tuition may be charged (Ministry of Education, 2006). Formal schooling extends to grade 12, and 10-12 is considered upper secondary, or high school (Ministry of Education, 2006). Gaining entrance to upper secondary is conditional on passing an entrance examination. Those who do not proceed into upper secondary schools may choose to enter vocational school where an apprenticeship in farming, mechanics or other technical vocations...
are offered (CERNET, 2004). In terms of outcomes, the available data from the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2010) divides populations by primary (7-11) and secondary (12-17) cohorts. From 2007 there were 107.4 million students enrolled in primary education (47 percent female) from a pool of 95.6 million. The gross enrolment ratio in primary education was therefore 112 percent\(^{26}\).

Total enrolment for secondary education was 101.8 million of 131.7 million individuals belonging to the age cohort. Therefore the gross enrolment rate was 77 percent, up from 62 percent in 1999. 78 percent of all females were enrolled in secondary education.

The literacy rate in China among adults grew from 77.8 percent in 1990 to 93.7 in 2007 (female 91 percent). The Youth age group (15-24) had a literacy rate of 94 percent in 1990 and 98 percent in 2007 (female 98 percent).

The challenges facing China’s education system are a combination of accommodating the indigenous heritage of minority groups and widening access to higher education through adult education and continuing education, discussed in the following section.

The most current figure indicated educational expenditures by the Chinese government to be 2.5 percent of GDP (Reuters, 2008, December 12).

**Higher education.**

China embarked on a modernization project that was markedly different from India. Having never been colonized, China openly experimented with European and Japanese models of modernization in the late 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) Centuries. From its early beginnings Chinese higher education was reflective of this experimentation (Hayhoe, 1996) and in addition to borrowing elements of foreign models, non-conventional modes of higher education emerged, such as spare-time and correspondence education. The aftermath of the Cultural Revolution left a gaping hole in China’s higher education system. Over the next 15 years enrolments grew

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\(^{26}\) Gross Enrolment Ratio indicates the ratio of students enrolled in a particular level of education compared to the total number of students for that age cohort. In the event that the ratio, or percentage, exceeds one (or 100 percent), this is due to students outside of the age cohort, usually those who are older, who are also enrolled in the particular level of education.
steadily, but it was not until 1999 that dramatic changes took shape. The objective was established to achieve a mass system of higher education, defined in Chapter 2 as enrolling 15 percent of the age cohort (Trow, 2006). In 1998 enrolments in higher education stood at 6.4 million or 9.8 percent of the age cohort. Ten years later, enrolments stood at 33.8 million and accommodated 23.3 percent of the age cohort (Liu & Wang, 2010, p. 7). Surpassing the massification threshold was attributed to the processes of decentralization, differentiation and some privatization. The topic of massification is a focus of this investigation and will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 5 in relation to adult education, distance education and online learning.

As stated above adult education is the third category in China’s education system. There are myriad divisions in this category with specialized schools for literacy, secondary school equivalency and correspondence, or distance education (CERNET, 2004). In this context we look specifically at distance education. Distance education is being positioned to accommodate the demand for higher education and is increasingly being carried out through educational technology and online learning, to equip learners with the requisite skills for employment and to advance the country’s burgeoning economy.

**History of distance education in China.**

China’s roots in distance education can be traced to 1914 when China’s Commercial Press offered courses through correspondence as print-based materials (Keegan, 1994, p. 8). In the late 1950s and early 1960s different models of higher education emerged to accommodate an increasingly eclectic demographic of learners. The spare-time universities, for example, served workers who had the requisite secondary qualifications and wanted to study when time permitted (Abe, 1961, p. 152). The 1960s were significant for distance education as the spread of radio and television opened new doors for the transmission of lectures and learning materials. Beijing Television College, established in 1960, was an early pioneer of distance education graduating approximately 8,000 students and serving another 50,000 through course enrolments over six years (McCormick, 1982, p. 57). Other television Universities followed, located in Shanghai, Shenyang, Guangzhou, Changchun and Harbin (Ding, 2006, p. 28).
The Cultural Revolution caused considerable damage to China’s higher education system. The majority of institutions were shut down and enrolments were suspended for undergraduates until the end of the 60s and not until 1978 were formal four-year programs resumed (Zha, 2006, p. 142). The Reform period, commencing in 1978, inherited a higher education system that was faced with two formidable tasks; revival after ten years of neglect and the expectation to build China into a powerful economy through Deng Xiaoping’s four modernizations: agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology.

The establishment of the China Radio & Television University.

This placed an urgent need for vocationally educated college-level graduates. It was soon recognized that a national television University system would support this objective. In 1979, after only a year of deliberation, the Central Radio and Television University and 28 Provincial Radio and Television Universities (PRTVU) began operations. In 2008 the name was changed to the Open University of China, with the provincial branches also taking the Open University moniker (Provincial Open University of Guangzhou, for example). For purposes of recognition in China, the original Chinese name, Zhōng Yān Guǎng Bō Dìàn Shi Dà Xué (中央广播电视大学), has been kept. A derivative of the name is Diàndà which is what the University is colloquially known as in China. The OUC is mandated to organize curriculum, set examinations and provide administrative support to its subordinate institutions at the provincial and local level. It engages in some teaching, though this is primarily the function of the provincial Open Universities. As a public University, the OUC is under direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. This includes program planning, expansion and innovation. In fact many MoE employees are assigned work placements in the OUC and often return to the MoE after a period of time working at the University.

Having secured a World Bank loan in 1983 worth $85 million (Hawkridge, 1990) the system subsequently expanded. Today the OUC system is geographically dispersed, operating through 44 provincial OUs, 1,103 branch schools at the prefecture and city level (administered by the provincial OUs) and 1,853 county/rural sites that are administered by the branch schools.

27 If translated verbatim Diàndà means “Electric Big”.
In 2010 there were 2.8 million students enrolled, amounting to roughly ten percent of the country’s higher education population. Enrolment growth has been enabled through relatively open admission policies (Ding, 2006, p. 29), and as noted above, widespread geographical distribution. It should also be noted that the expansion of lower levels of education have likely had an effect on this growth.

Comparisons between India and China

The aim of this Chapter has been to sketch out a broad context of India and China, where the two national Open Universities are situated. The aim is to also examine points of convergence and divergence between the two countries that will contribute to a more salient understanding of the findings in the subsequent chapters.

When looking at the great histories of these two civilizations there are many parallels to be found. In geographical terms India and China share two common borders with Nepal in between. A brief war was fought in 1962 over territory on the eastern border; a dispute that remains unresolved. Although China has three times the land mass of India, each is characterized by varied topographies and climates. Across this landscape there are sizeable ethnic groups and in many rural areas life has altered little over centuries. We see an interesting divergence in the demographics of each country. India has a demographic momentum with a sizeable young population. The resemblance shows a likeness to a pear. At the stem is the oldest generation and tapering out to the lower bulge lies the largest young population in the world. China on the other hand resembles an inverted pyramid, with a younger generation that is much smaller than the middle aged and older generation. This makes for different planning requirements in the two countries in the decades to come. For higher education unique strategies to accommodate varied demands are needed, though both countries will share the two largest student populations in the world.

In 1986 the Chinese government passed the 9-year compulsory education law, stipulating that all children would be entitled to five years of primary and four years of secondary education. In the 1990 this would have an effect on higher education enrolments as a wider pool of prospective students sought admissions.
The historical context has shown tremendous achievements in terms of architecture, cultural developments and technical and agricultural innovations. The magnificent achievements of the Great Wall and Taj Mahal maintain a steady tourism industry today. China’s imperial examination system was maintained for nearly 2000 years and over 3,000 years of religious devotion have made India a haven for the spiritual.

Despite the Himalayan mountain range, connections between the civilizations were fostered first along the Silk Road. The widespread following of Buddhism in China is an example of this shared history. Early in the first Millennium CE commercial contact between the two civilizations led to the movement of Buddhism into China (Roberts, 1999, p. 45), creating greater links in the ensuing centuries.

Both countries have been fractured along linguistic and ethnic lines, though in the Chinese context, the language and written scripts have been largely unchanged for two millennia. India on the other hand has had two major ethnic divisions that are still evident today between the Hindu (or Indo-Aryan) north and Dravidian south. From these divisions a multitude of languages and dialects have emerged.

Contact with foreigners, especially Europeans, has been turbulent. With the development of sea exploration, regular European contact was occurring in the early 16th century. Eventually conflict arose and in both instances it was first the Portuguese, by colonizing Goa in India and Macau in China, who displayed superior skill militarily over the native peoples. The English followed and by the mid-19th century China had ceded the island of Hong Kong, and India had become fully colonized. An English embassy was established in Beijing, and the administrative capital in India was Calcutta. The struggle for independence from colonialism for India, and a series of wars for China, left both countries independent by the mid 20th century, seeking self-sufficiency and a decoupling from the western capitalist world. India’s and China’s charismatic leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mao Zedong, showed great admiration of the socialism espoused by the Soviet Union. Both adopted its economic model of the five year plans and state planning, largely seeking autonomous paths to development. Today India and China lie somewhere in the middle of the state planning – free
market continuum. China’s economic reforms of 1978, followed by India’s in 1991, have undoubtedly reshaped their respective countries, yet both remain very large bureaucracies. Whether decisions are swift, as in communist China, or deliberative, as in democratic India, the state tends to oversee a large proportion of their economic initiatives.

The demographics of each country also offer some interesting comparisons. The young median age of India’s population indicate that its workforce will supplant China’s as the largest in the world in the coming decades. India’s other demographic dividend is that its population of 65+ will remain relatively small. China, by comparison, is facing serious challenges with a 4-2-1 system whereby the single child will face enormous pressures as parents and grandparents age.

The education systems of India and China are generally aligned, most likely due to adherence to international norms. China’s compulsory school law however was implemented in 1986, predating India’s by 24 years. The compulsory school age range is 6-14, or grades one through nine. Where they differ is in enrolment trends. China has near universal primary education and levels comparable to western nations for secondary school enrolments. India lags tremendously, though some strides have been made in recent years. The Education for All campaign has been widely embraced and the compulsory school law should continue to improve conditions. Similar patterns are observed in the higher education sector. With enrolments of approximately 35 million (Ministry of Education, 2010), China is home to the largest higher education population in the world. India is still years behind, and some of the biggest challenges ahead are how to accommodate the unmet demand for higher education and augment the quality of institutions, particularly under increasing global scrutiny with quality assurance measures, international rankings, and so on.

Comparing the Open University systems of the two countries will be the objective of the next Chapter, though a few points can be made here. The nature of each Open University system caters to the unique contours of each country. Having regional centres in the case of IGNOU, and provincial Open Universities as part of the OUC, points to the social outreach of each institution. The huge enrolments are also testament to the social function played by these institutions. How each University responds to the social needs of their respective populations is
a challenge that is shared by few other universities in the world. Having an understanding of local issues, linguistic diversity, accessibility to varying technologies and the associated labour market trends are all essential for the operations of each Open University. That said, the effort to widen access through the channels of networked technologies seems extremely ambitious. At this point we may reflect again on the quote posed at the beginning of this Chapter. Sir Michael Sadler’s cautionary analogy of a living plant seems all the more relevant under these circumstances, where there is a heightened exchange of knowledge across and within cultures. How the Open Universities in India and China are responding to these challenges brings us back to the main research question which asks how far national elements are embedded in the design of online learning. Chapter 5 will continue this discussion with a more pointed comparison between the Open Universities in India and China.
Chapter 5: Comparison of Open University Systems

Introduction

In Chapter 4 a broad contextual comparison was provided of India and China. Ancient histories point to formidable civilizations that have emerged in the 21st century as distinct titans on the world stage. Several points from Chapter 4 will be referred to again in this Chapter to illuminate the unique attributes of each Open University and the purposes they serve in both national and international contexts.

In this Chapter China’s and India’s higher education systems will be elaborated in more detail in relation to the developments of each country’s national Open University systems. The Chapter will begin with some context of the Open University model that originated in the UK in the 1960s. This will provide background to understand the beginnings of the two Open Universities under investigation. The major themes to be covered will be divided into two main sections for each case. The first deals with history, organization and governance, programs, admissions and some information on institutional finances. The second section will cover the developments of online learning in the higher education settings of India and China and the positions of IGNOU and the OUC within these contexts. This will include an overview of national and institutional policy developments, program refinements, enrolment projections and Internet access. Interview data from members of each Open University will be used to expand on the varying aspects of these complex systems. The Chapter will conclude with comparisons between the two institutions and draw on some of the theoretical literature on policy presented in Chapter 2.

The Open University of the United Kingdom

In beginning this Chapter it is prudent to provide a brief review of the Open University of the United Kingdom (OUUK), which was the model of development shared by both the Open University of China and the Indira Gandhi National Open University.
As stated in Chapter 2, the OUUK was founded in 1969 carrying the main objective of increasing participation rates in higher education on a national scale. According to the first Vice Chancellor, Walter Perry, there were three post-War trends that made the establishment of the OUUK feasible. First, there was a dearth of learning opportunities at the degree and diploma levels for adult learners. Extramural departments attached to universities existed, among some other variants, but this catered mainly to adults already having some form of higher learning and programs were generally non-vocational in nature. The second trend was the growth in educational broadcasting, a functional use of TV that had its roots in the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), which had started offering programming for adult education as far back as the 1920s (Wei, 2008, p. 47). The third trend was the growing realization of the need to shift participation in higher education from an elite to a mass system (i.e., to enrol 15 percent of the age cohort). According to the Robbins Report, cited in Chapter 2, only 7 percent of school leavers were entering higher education and there was also a large pool of adult learners, who, due to varying social circumstances, had not participated in higher education. After considerable deliberation the government, under the Labour party, announced that a new University would be established.

In 1969 the Open University was launched as an autonomous institution carrying several unique mandates. These included the provision of access to all, meaning no formal admission requirements, flexible study options and a range of degree and diploma programs offered through broadcasting, distance learning and face-to-face teaching. Another unique role for the University, at the behest of its first Vice-Chancellor, Walter Perry, was to engage in research that was devoted to teaching and learning in the distance mode (Daniel, 2004). This paid dividends, as the recognition of the University for quality teaching was lauded both domestically and abroad. Today research remains strong and is maintained as central to the mission of the University. Through a network of 13 regional and national centres, 250,000 students have varying access points to the University. There is also a presence of the OUUK in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (OUUK, 2011). It provides training to colleagues from other Open Universities, most notably from Asia, and engages in faculty exchanges regularly. The OUUK has been nothing short of innovative in the evolution of higher education globally. It
remains at the forefront of teaching and the provision of modern distance education as an institution devoted to access in myriad ways.

Its impact will be made clearer in the following sections where we will draw on the relationship between the OUUK and the Open University of China and the Indira Gandhi National Open University as part of the larger description of each Open University.

The Open University of China

This section on the Open University of China will begin with a historical overview of the institution drawing on its early ties to the OUUK. This overview will begin with the major developments of the University in the first 20 years of operation, up to 1999. The organizational structure of the OUC will follow from its position within the Chinese government to the village level programs offered. A short description of the financial aspect of the University will also be included. The second section on the OUC will draw on developments of online learning in the national context starting from 1999, with a particular focus on the government’s Modern Distance Education Project and expected enrolment trends to 2020.

History.

As stated in Chapter 4, the Open University of China took its new name in 2009, though in China it is still recognized as the China Central Radio and Television University, or its abbreviated Chinese form, Dìandà. One may surmise that as an ‘Open University’, the OUC will be better recognized outside of its own borders and placed in better stead with the fraternity of Open Universities in the region. As will be outlined in this section, the OUC is becoming more of a global player in the international spheres of higher education, yet as a recognized Open University, there are important principles followed by most Open Universities that the OUC has yet to fully adopt.

The establishment of the OUC was seeded in a visit by Edward Heath (then former Prime Minister of the UK), during a visit to China in 1977 with China’s paramount leader Deng Xiaoping (Ding, 1994, p. 334). The meeting touched on varying issues including higher
education. At the time a mere five percent of secondary school graduates were finding placements in universities in China (Perraton, 2000) and in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution there were those outside of the age cohort who had been denied any form of higher education. Though there were existing adult education opportunities, an alternative form was sought, and with the expansion of television and radio networks in the mid to late 1970s the opportunity was ripe for a broadcast-based University. Upon learning about the successes of the OUUK from Mr. Heath, Deng’s interest in using broadcasting to widen access for learning purposes was brought to the Ministry of Education and other factions of the government. The fall meeting in 1977 resulted in the approval by the State Council to open a correspondence-based University by late winter 1978. Academics, policymakers and others from China visited the OUUK to absorb as much information as possible about the operations of the UK’s Open University (Wei, 2008, p. 46).

In February, 1979, the China Radio and Television University system was launched, with the headquarters located in central Beijing. As part of the system, 28 Provincial Radio and Television Universities (PRTVUs) were constructed and located predominantly in the provincial capitals (Wei, 2008, p. 46). The University would be under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education with the PRTVUs receiving funding and administrative support at the provincial level (Wei, 2008, p. 51). In conjunction with China Central Television (CCTV), broadcasting began on February 8th, 1979 (OUC, 2008). The core values of the University have been articulated as: A ladder for ordinary people to upgrade skills; A means to demonstrate educational equity; and a depot for students to gain self-enrichment and motivation (OUC, 2008).

The programs were classified as ‘foundation degrees’ and being of two or three years in duration; arts based programs were two years, science based programs were three years (Wei, 2008, p. 170). The credential was classified as sub-degree or diploma programs. No degree programs were offered. Targeted learners were those working in factories, teachers and secondary school graduates, including army personnel, who had not entered the conventional stream of higher education. Programs were generally in-service and aimed to enhance knowledge and skill related to a particular profession, as well as being tied more broadly to the
economic interests of the country. Admissions were uniquely open, with the University administering its own entrance examination, credential and enrolment quotas (Wei, 2008, p. 51). Tuition was generally covered by students’ employers and programs were focused on general education. Secondary school graduates who failed to score well in the National College Entrance Examination were offered space in the OUC system as a means of alleviating pressure on the labour market while also providing opportunities for both social development and the acquisition of a particular skill (Wei, 2008, p. 170).

Between 1986 and 1993 a series of changes were implemented for adult education institutions. A unified National College Entrance Examination for Adult Learners was put in place and enrolment quotas were set. Programs were also introduced for junior secondary school leavers who were then able to earn a senior secondary qualification based on meeting the varying criteria. By the early 1990s those who did not perform well on the conventional National College Entrance Examination were also permitted to apply to the OUC system (Wei, 2008, p. 53).

The provision of bachelor degree programs was instituted through a pilot project in 1996. Law, Computer Science and English were the first programs offered. Students were required to have already earned a foundation degree and pass the adult examination. Enrolment was part-time and program duration was three to six years (Wei, 2008, p. 172). The unique conditions were that the OUC would issue the certificate, but only a partnering conventional University, along with the MoE, were permitted to confer the degree, a practice that remains in place today.

In 1999 the OUC reverted back to its initial policies offering a foundation degree bound by no entrance exam or enrolment quotas. As well, the OUC fully implemented bachelor degree programs adding Finance to the existing disciplines (Wei, 2008, p. 174). Though this open policy granted more autonomy to the OUC, conferring degrees remained the role of conventional institutions. It was also in 1999 that the Modern Distance Education Project was implemented. Since this period the OUC has coined this new phase as Open Education.
Organizational structure.

The OUC system is organized in a hierarchical structure that resembles the general administrative organization of the country. At the helm is the Ministry of Education. Under the OUC there are now 44 provincial Open Universities, an expansion that was supported in part by a World Bank loan in 1983 worth $85 million (Hawkridge, 1990). Each Provincial Open University maintains a website that is accessible through the OUC homepage (http://en.crtvu.edu.cn/about/structure). Figure 5.1 outlines the overall structure.

As can be gleaned from Figure 5.1, the structure of the OUC is extremely intricate and governed at multiple levels by both government and the institutions themselves. Some add a fifth level to the system, which includes the teaching venues (Ding, 1994, p. 335). These are run at various layers of the system and number around 47,000 (Li, Guo, Chen, & Chen, 2007, p. 48). The hierarchical structure enables the system to run relatively efficiently and follow the five
guiding principles of unified teaching plan, teaching materials, syllabus, examination and marking criteria.

At the central level the duties of the University are mainly to design curriculum (including TV and radio content) of the courses deemed nationally important (and thus compulsory), train and evaluate teachers and prepare and evaluate examinations. Provincial OUs engage in curriculum design for locally relevant topics, set examinations for these courses, administer enrolments, mentor students and evaluate teaching at the branch schools. At the branch level the expectations are to provide timetabling, organize the TV classes and carry out similar duties at the provincial level to accommodate students. Lastly, at the work stations tutors are recruited for face-to-face instruction, and provide individual guidance to learners (Ding, 1994, p. 337-338).

Within the OUC itself, there are five major divisions; Administrative, Academic, Research, Service & Support for Teaching, and International\(^29\). The President’s Office oversees the general operations of the University and is headed by the President and three Vice Presidents (Academic, Research and Administration). Administrative offices also include Human Resources, Finance, Planning and Development Office and International Exchange and Cooperation Division. We will devote some attention to the latter two divisions as there are parallels with IGNOU that will be described below. Some of the main responsibilities of the Planning and Development Office are to monitor trends in distance education domestically and abroad as well as degree and non-degree fields. This is mapped to the larger objectives of the University and therefore the design of annual plans, assets investment and overall policy development fall under this office. As the name indicates, the International Exchange and Cooperation Division organizes all things of an international nature for the University including the signing of cooperation agreements, organizing and accompanying OUC delegates abroad, and expanding the international reach of the University. On the website, there are projects that detail collaborations with Canada, the UK, Singapore, Japan and the US. The US partnership is

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\(^29\) Information on the description of these five branches of the OUC was retrieved from the English website of the OUC: http://en.crtvu.edu.cn/.
with Michigan State University where, with the support from the OUC, an online Confucius Institute is hosted.

At the academic level there are six faculties. They are listed as: Art & Law; Economics & Management; Teacher Education; Agroforestry & Medicine; Foreign Languages; Engineering. Under these six faculties there are 45 discipline programs (OUC, 2008). In the wider system, there are 57,100 full-time and 37,000 part-time teaching staff that provide instruction to the 2.95 million students studying in degree and sub-degree programs (OUC, 2011). There are also institutes or programs that target particular populations including the military, the disabled, the Tibetan region and villages. Among this specialized group, it is the last that is the largest, being the “One College Student per Village” program. This was a project borne out of the successes reported from Hebei Agricultural University. Individuals residing in villages were selected to participate in varied programs. Upon study completion they returned to their villages to train other villages on varying practices ranging from agricultural practices to village governance. According to C14, the involvement of the OUC enabled similar programs to be implemented throughout the country, an outcome that would have otherwise been too “time consuming and too slow” if run through conventional universities. C14 pointed to the success of the program, describing how 60-70 percent of village cadres in the country had participated in the program. In 2008 there were 117,000 students enrolled in the program.

The research division main branch is the Research Institute of Open and Distance Learning, established in 1985. It is responsible for carrying out research within the OUC headquarters and the larger OUC system on the topics of educational technology, teaching, as well as training of junior researchers. The Institute publishes an internal circular called *Currents in Research*. The research division also includes the editorial staff of the *Journal of Distance Education in China*. 
Financial support for the OUC.

The financial circumstances of the OUC system mirror the relationship to the particular government to which it is aligned. As depicted in Figure 5.1 there are four levels within the system and at each level the corresponding government is expected to provide financing for the particular institution (Wei, 2008, p. 90). Other sources of funding are derived from student fees, the corporate sector and as previously noted, the particular work unit to which a student belongs.

Online learning.

**Historical context of online learning in China.**

As outlined above, the Open University of China has been in operation since 1979. Over its 32 year history policy has been closely aligned to the objectives outlined by the Ministry of Education, and by extension, to the Chinese Communist Party. A closer look at government oversight provides a window into viewing the development of policy for online learning since 1997 and how this has been mapped to China’s higher education system in general, and the OUC, in particular.

**1997 - Action Scheme for Invigorating Education towards the 21st Century**

The early developments of online learning in China can be traced to the larger national mandate to create a mass system of higher education, defined in Chapter 2 as enrolling 15 percent of the age cohort in full-time studies (Trow, 2006). In September 1997, at the 15th National Party Congress, the government outlined a series of initiatives that would advance this aim and prepare China for the new millennium in pursuit of Deng’s *Socialist Modernization*.

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31 The Higher Education Law of the People’s Republic of China, Chapter one, article four stipulates, “Higher education shall be conducted in adherence to the educational principles of the State, in the service of the socialist modernization drive and in combination with productive labor, in order that the educatees shall become builders and successors for the socialist cause, who are developed in an all-round way - morally, intellectually and physically.” (CERNET, 2005)
With approval by the State Council, the Ministry of Education devised the *Action Scheme for Invigorating Education Towards the 21st Century* (herein referred to as the Action Scheme); it was to be implemented over a four-year period from 1998 to 2002. The Action Scheme’s major projects were to reorganize the sector with a series of financial reforms and institutional mergers (Wan, 2006, p. 25), enrol 11 percent of the age cohort by 2000, create a mass system by 2010 (CERNET, 1998; Pretorius & Xue, 2003, p. 90) and use modern distance education as one viable pathway to achieve both the objective of massification and the creation of a lifelong learning system (CERNET, 1998).

Modern distance education would create a new pathway for higher education expansion, predominantly through the form of online learning. As stated by the government, “The extensive use of modern information technology in education will engender profound changes in the educational sector, and lifelong education will be a requisite condition for both educational development and social progress” (CERNET, 1998). In addition to an alternative form of earning a degree or diploma, online learning would serve to augment technological skills, enrol a significantly larger populace into the higher education sector and ultimately support the inclusion of learners to participate in the global information society.

At this point some data on Internet growth is useful.

**Internet Growth: China (millions)**

![Graph of Internet Growth: China](image_url)

*Figure 5.2. Internet Penetration Rates in China.*

Source. World Bank (2010); *Central Intelligence Agency (2011); ** Internet World Stats (2011).
Figure 5.2 shows the exponential growth in Internet user rates over a twelve year period. The fastest rate of growth is observed between 1999 and 2000 when figures nearly tripled from 8.9 million to 22.5 million. The largest increase in absolute numbers was between 2008 and 2009 from 298 million to 389 million. Data on IT infrastructure for education spending between 2003 and 2006 also shows significant spending patterns by the Chinese government during part of this rapid growth in Internet usership.

Figure 5.3. 2003-2006 Investment in IT in Education.
Source. Li et al. (2007, p. 41). Figures are in billions, USD.

One can infer from this data that the government was involved in more than policy development. The strategy of building a significant online population for higher education was conceived in unison with plans to increase funding for infrastructure.

The concept of lifelong learning, differentiated from massification by targeting adult learners who no longer belong to the age cohort, falls predominantly under the category of adult higher education, and to a lesser extent, on other forms of learning that may involve training or other short term programs. Collectively, these forms of education for adults may be referred to as continuing education. Therefore adult higher education is both a subset of continuing education and higher education. Continuing education serves to enable the concept of a lifelong learning society where the continuous upgrading of skills is widely encouraged and organized through a variety of educational institutions, including adult higher education institutions, or adult higher education departments. Adult higher education includes all
individuals who have completed secondary education and are enrolled to earn a degree, diploma or postgraduate credential. In China, a popular form of adult higher education is delivered through distance education, having been used successfully in growing this subsector of higher education. Returning to the Modern Distance Education Project\(^\text{32}\), it was initially organized to serve both students within the defined age cohort (who may enrol in distance education rather than conventional education) and adult learners, though by 2006, there had been a move away from full-time programs similar to those offered in conventional institutions, to programs more tailored to adult learning (Zhao, Zhang, & Li, 2006). An attempt to unpack the divisions is offered in Figure 5.4 below.

![Diagram of China's Higher Education and Continuing Education Systems](image)

*Figure 5.4. China’s Higher Education and Continuing Education Systems.*

The particulars of the Modern Distance Education Project were the inclusion of four institutions to pilot the initiative, having been granted licenses by the Ministry of Education in September, 1998 (Ding, et al., 2005, p. 66). They included two of China’s premier institutions:

\(^{32}\) Modern Distance Education Project has also been referred to as the E-learning project (Ding, et al., 2005, p. 584), though in government documents, including the most recent Education Plan 2010-2020, it is mainly referred to as modern distance education (Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 22)
Tsinghua University and Zhejiang University, and two other leading institutions belonging to the elite Project 211[^33], Beijing Post and Telecommunications University and Hunan University. Each institution was commissioned to establish an Internet College[^34] (网络学院, wǎng luò xué yuàn), with the objective of becoming centres of excellence in online learning through teaching and course development. By August 1999, Peking University and the Open University of China joined this educational experiment with further expansion in the pipeline (CERNET, 1998). In terms of the online environment, learning occurs synchronously or asynchronously over the mediums of the Internet, satellite TV and video conferencing to support an interactive distance learning environment. This may be augmented by offline support which can occur in face-to-face settings, creating a blended learning environment (Ding, Niu, & Han, 2010, p. 588). Figure 5.5 presents the growth in higher education enrolments since 1997.

[^33]: Project 211 was initiated in 1995 and includes roughly 100 selected Chinese universities. The “21” refers to the 21[^33] Century and the subsequent “1” refers to 100 institutions. These institutions are recipients of government monies to advance research and graduate studies and raise the standing of China’s universities globally.

[^34]: It should be noted that Internet Colleges are not the sole providers of online-based learning. Most conventional institutions in China provide some form of online support. What is argued here is that Internet Colleges are mainly supporting adult learners for higher learning opportunities.

[^35]: The Internet College has also been referenced in English as online education college (Ding, et al., 2005, p. 64), online institute (Wang & Crook, 2006) and school of online education (Håklev, 2010, p. 39).
Figure 5.5. Higher Education Enrolment Figures for China.
Source. National Bureau of Statistics (2010); For Internet Colleges, 1999-2003 see Ding et al. (2005, p. 66). For 2009 figures see Ministry of Education (2010). Note that for *New Enrolments per year* where there are gaps, data was unavailable.

The creation in 1999 of this new pathway for higher education reflects the character of China’s higher education strategy and more broadly, the vision, organization and capability of
China’s one party system (recall Deng Xiaoping’s determination to create the OUC in a span of 12 months). Through the Ministry of Education, the CCP effectively dictates the direction of higher education policymaking. In late 1997, when the Action Scheme was devised, there were only 600,000 Internet users in the entire country (CNNIC, 1997) and higher education enrolments stood at approximately 6.1 million. Two years later, in 1999, when the Modern Distance Education Project was underway, total higher education enrolments had jumped by 23% to nearly 7.5 million (See Figure 5.5) and infrastructure projects had rapidly expanded, enabling the number of domestic Internet users to more than triple to approximately two million. The objective of enrolling 11% of the age cohort was also achieved in 1999, a year earlier than planned (Pretorius & Xue, 2003, p. 90) and the expanding infrastructure for networked technologies suggested that demand for online learning would continue.

2000 - Several Comments on Supporting Some Universities and Colleges to setup Institutes of Online Education to Pioneer Distance Learning.

By 2000 there were 31 institutions operating an Internet College; a product of the policy document released by the MoE entitled, *Several Comments on Supporting Some Universities and Colleges to Set up Institutes of Online Education to Pioneer distance learning* (herein referred to as *Several Comments*). The document included specific guidelines for establishing online programs and authorized online education as an accredited pathway to earning MoE-approved post-secondary qualifications (Zhao et al., 2006). The guidelines granted participating institutions autonomy to set their own enrolment criteria and student quotas. The document also stipulated that additional institutions would be permitted to join the project and that all online programs would be subject to review every four to five years.

By the end of 2003, the number of Internet Colleges had swelled more than tenfold from the original six in 1999 to 68 four years later. Enrolments stood at nearly one million, a 30-fold increase, and accounted for over seven percent of the total higher education population (See Figure 5.5).

This modern development of China’s higher education system is described by Zhao et al. (2006) as having four major implications. First, it opened opportunities for institutions to enter
the growing distance education market and to co-exist with its main provider, the Open University of China. Second, it raised the profile of online learning and by association, distance education, as integral to the development of a lifelong learning society. Third, it provided an alternative source of revenue for universities through the collection of tuition fees. Lastly, this new policy granted an unprecedented degree of autonomy to the institutions to set admissions standards for these online programs, a trend for decentralization that first came out in 1993 (Huang, 2005, p. 18). This meant prospective students could enter an online program having only secondary school qualifications, though most institutions continued to use one of two national entrance examinations for admittance (one is set for conventional institutional programs, another for adult higher education institutional programs). Although institutions adhered to the examinations-based admissions process, applicants to Internet Colleges had comparatively lower scores to those admitted to on-campus programs (Ding et al., 2005, p. 67).

Amidst quantitative success however, surfaced qualitative concerns. The MoE decided to shut down several suspect Internet Colleges and altered policies on admission and credential standards (Ding et al., 2010, p. 586). The fact that students of an Internet College could obtain the same diploma or degree as campus-based students drew the ire of the latter group as they were required to take (and pass) the highly competitive National College Entrance Exam. Five outcomes ensued; two of which are described as administrative and three of which are described as pedagogical. Of the administrative outcomes, first, passing the national entrance examination for adult higher education institutions became a universal requirement to gain admission into an Internet College (Ding et al., 2010, p. 588; Zhao et al., 2006). Second, the diploma or degree earned from an Internet College would include the designation of “online education” or “distance education”. These two outcomes were inherently contradictory. The first augmented the academic requirement for entering such a program, whereas the second watered down the standing of the credential compared to that obtained in a conventional institution. The three pedagogically-grounded outcomes seemed more consistently aimed at adding value to online learning and serving the larger mandate of establishing a formidable lifelong learning society. Building on the National Top Level Courses Project (NTLCP) in 2003, which aimed to create an elite repository of courses showcasing exceptional pedagogical
techniques developed from a variety of institutions, the MoE included online courses into the annual competition in 2007. According to the MoE, the main aim of the NTLCP was to improve the quality of courses and to advance teaching standards in higher education nationally (Håklev, 2010, p. 29). For Internet Colleges, this was an opportunity to validate the quality of online learning for higher education and further, to share in-house expertise on educational technology with other departments for their own submissions to the NTLCP (Håklev, 2010, p. 40). Through the homepage of the Open University of China for example, users will find links to courses that have received the designation of the NTLCP. The third and final outcome from the policy changes to the original Several Comments document was for all Internet Colleges to undergo assessments annually as opposed to the original stipulation of every four to five years (Ding, et al., 2010, p. 588).

*The National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020).*

With these new policy measures in place online enrolments continued upwards. To the end of 2009, there were 4.2 million students enrolled in Internet Colleges, representing an astonishing 11.6 percent of the overall higher education population. Projections suggest growth will continue. In July of 2010, the government released the National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020 (herein referred to as the National Outline) detailing its objectives for enrolment figures in higher education and adult education over the next 11 years (See Table 5.1 below). Although no direct numerical reference is made for prospective enrolments for online learning, the National Outline points to the importance of modern distance education to accelerating the development for lifelong learning opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22).

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36 Calculation is based on the quotient of student enrolments in Internet Colleges and the overall higher education enrolments.
### Table 5.1

*Enrolment objectives in Chinese higher education, 2009-2020*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular Higher Education Institutions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>29.8 million&lt;sup&gt;37&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>33.5 million</td>
<td>35.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24% GER)</td>
<td>36% GER</td>
<td>40% GER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute/% increase</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3.7 million/12.4% ↑</td>
<td>2 million/6% ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuing Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education&lt;sup&gt;38&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>166 million</td>
<td>290 million</td>
<td>350 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute/% increase</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>124 million/74.7% ↑</td>
<td>60 million/20.7% ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. people with HE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. people with HE</td>
<td>98.3 million</td>
<td>145 million</td>
<td>195 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute/% increase</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>46.7 million/47.5% ↑</td>
<td>50 million/34.5% ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% received higher education (20-59 y.o.)</strong></td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total new entrants</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>174.4 million</td>
<td>112 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from “China’s national plan for medium and long-term education reform and development” Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 11, 12.*

At the top of the table one can see the percentage decrease over time for regular higher education. From 2009 to 2015 there is an increase of roughly 12 percent, and an even smaller increase of only 6 percent in the subsequent five years to 2020. This is more astounding when it is realized that the six year period from 2003 to 2009 marked an increase of 131 percent in regular higher education enrolments<sup>39</sup>. One may conclude that the government’s prior fixation

<sup>37</sup> Note that the sum for regular higher education enrolments of 29.8 million is different from the sum reported in Table 5.2 for total higher education enrolments. As is stated in this section, adult higher education is subsumed under continuing education. In Table I, when accounting for the difference between the total for higher education enrolments in 2009 of 35,844,203 and the total for adult higher education enrolments 5,413,513, the sum is 30,043,690, an amount quite similar to 29.8 million identified in Table 5.3 above.

<sup>38</sup> The table subsumes adult higher education under the heading of continuing education and therefore particular insights on adult higher education are limited.

<sup>39</sup> This percentage is only an estimate and calculated based on data from Table 5.3 where the difference of the total sums (subtracting the sums for adult education) from 2009 and 2003 is divided by the total sum of 2003.
on expanding enrolments through the first decade of the 2000s has created a plateau effect, or enrolment saturation. This point of enrolment saturation in higher education is a condition currently occurring in OECD countries (OECD, 2008). OECD data is used in Figure 5.6 below to draw comparisons on future enrolment data for the larger higher education system in China. The demographic data for China will also be used to infer the role online learning will play in the coming decades in relation to adult learning and modern distance education.

Figure 5.6 is divided into two charts showing the general synopsis that between 2010 and 2040, China’s population will age (the India data will be referenced later in this Chapter). In Chart I, the demographic data indicates that like China, OECD member countries are seeing lower fertility rates, as the under 15 population is declining as a percentage of the overall population. In Chart II, by contrast, it can be seen that the share of the population 65 and over will rapidly increase as life expectancies approach that of OECD countries (note in particular the slope in the Chinese population from 2030 to 2040). Numerically, this translates into a decline from 271 million to 223 million in the under 15 category and an astounding increase of 111 million to 317 million in the 65 and over category when accounting for population changes (in 2040, the population of China is expected to reach 1.46 billion). This will also cause an upward shift in the current median age of 35.5 in China (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011).

The reference of OECD data, representing 34 member countries is aggregated data. In the case of age demographics, while the majority of OECD countries are aging, this changes over time. For example, the 18-24 age group, which represents the majority of higher education enrolments across the OECD, has inconsistent growth patterns across member countries. Although there will be an average decline of 9% across the member countries from 2005 to 2025, 16 OECD countries will actually see an increase in this cohort to 2015 and 7 will see an increase to 2025 (OECD, 2008, p. 43).

From 2008, when the report was published, there were 30 OECD countries. In 2010, four new members were added: Chile, Estonia, Israel and Slovenia, the only expansion since 2000 when the Slovak Republic joined the organization.

Note that Figure 5.6 is reproduced from Chapter 4 as Figure 4.2.

It should be noted that these figures are for illustrative purposes only. No models of population growth are completely sound, as Chapter one of the OECD report provides in detail (OECD, 2008).
This raises three points in relation to higher education. First, the 15 under group can be used as a sound indicator of future enrolments by the 18-23 age cohort. The figures in Table 5.1 show that the slowing rate of enrolments over the next 10 years in regular higher education institutions will actually enable wider participation rates for this age cohort (assuming current conditions of exam entry, affordability, etc. persist). To continue with these assumptions, it can be inferred that, despite a gradual decline in the representative population a greater percentage will be accessing higher education, as the anticipated GER indicates. From an infrastructural standpoint, the dual priorities of access and excellence that have co-existed over the past decade for regular higher education may now shift to the latter of these priorities. Fewer new regular higher education institutions will be required, classroom sizes and student to teacher ratios will not likely be compromised and greater focus can be directed toward the 211 and 985 projects as stated in the National Outline (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21). The second point leads to where higher education enrolment growth will be directed over the next ten year period.

In returning to Table 5.1, the rows listed as "Continuing Education and “No. People with HE (higher education)”, show target enrolments that roughly double 2009 figures; 166 million to 350 million and 98.3 to 195 million, respectively. Although the links drawn between the enrolment data (Table 5.1) and the demographic data of 65 and older (Figure 5.6, chart 2) are
not as well-correlated as the first point made above, some inferences can be made. The working age population in China, cited in the National Outline as 20-59 (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 9), will take a greater share of the overall population in the coming decades, as can be seen from both charts in Figure 5.6. As China’s economy becomes more specialized there will be a need for both remedial and increasingly advanced skills from its workforce, placing more and more importance on continuing and adult higher education. Though many skills will be learned in-service, the tradition of work units encouraging continued study will likely carry on and individual aspirations to enhance upward mobility through furthering education will only increase. Those who belonged to the higher education expansion of the past decade, for example, may need further education in areas that the second tier institutions – where the majority of students have been enrolled – may not have adequately prepared them for the job market. There is also a significant pool of potential learners (those born around 1980 who would have been part of the 18-23 age cohort in the late 1990s and early 2000s) that did not benefit from the onset of enrolment expansion in 1999 (See Figure 5.5) and the after effects of massification achieved in 2002 (Li, 2005, p. 114). The largest potential group of adult learners would be those born in the 1970s and earlier as they would be situated near the apex of the median age of the population, stated here again as being 35.5 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). Collectively, these circumstances will lead to greater enrolments in adult higher education and continuing education. Looming questions remain: Are the targets of 350 million in continuing education and 195 million in higher education attainable? And if attainable, how will enrolments expand to meet these expectations? The short answer to the first question is ‘yes’. If we consider the enrolment achievements of 15 percent of the age cohort in some form of higher learning in 2002 (projected in the Action Scheme as attainable in 2010), among other remarkable achievements (e.g., the target of 7.5% annual growth in the 11th five year plan was actually 11%/annum (“Take Five: China’s Economic Blueprint”, 2011), it can be safely assumed that the targets the government chooses to set and make part of the public record will be met, if not exceeded. In regards to ‘how’ these targets will be met, this brings us to the third point. Table 5.1 indicates increases of 174.4 million and 112 million in 2015 and 2020, respectively. To put this in perspective, there are only 6 countries in the world that have populations larger than
174.4 million (and only 11 greater than 112 million). To accommodate demand there will be a rise of for-profit and other institutional types, particularly as the government increasingly decentralizes authority over higher education and re-directs funding to areas where the country’s socialist objectives define more acute needs. Because of reputation, expertise and infrastructure, existing institutions will remain as the chief providers for adult higher education and continuing education. The main driver will be the opportunities to seek alternative sources of revenue. Yet whatever competitive advantages various institutions possess, a campus-based solution will be grossly insufficient to accommodate the expected surge in numbers. The innovative requirements to widen access will inevitably rely on technology, as Internet penetration rates expand facilitating the gradual ubiquity of online learning. The number of new institutions and Internet Colleges that may arise will not be commensurate with the expected enrolments. The outcome will be existing programs and courses being spread over larger and larger populations of learners, achieving economies of scale that will make access to these forms of learning more and more affordable to the average Chinese citizen. Few institutions will be better equipped to respond to these demands than China’s formidable Open University system, identified in the National Outline as being integral to the fulfillment of the strategic goal for continuing education (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 23).

To this point the developments of policy with online learning in China’s higher education system have been rather impressive. Since 1997, when the concept of modern distance education was put forth, there have been unparalleled developments in the growth of online learning. Few other institutions could create a new pathway to access higher education in such a short time span (1999-2009), to the point of enrolling 11% of the entire higher education population or to be more concise, in excess of four million students. Training, administration, curriculum development, network infrastructure, hardware accessibility and affordability, are among some of the tremendous accomplishments that can be largely attributed to government oversight. Much of this can be connected to the varying policies. The implementation and interpretation of the Action Scheme (1997), Several Comments (2000) and the National Outline (2010), have been systematic, multilayered and authoritative in their ability to control development nationally. Accountability measures have been both direct (policy documents,
Internet College regulation) and indirect (National Top Level Courses Project). Once described as an experiment, the Modern Distance Education Project appears to be an essential part of a national strategy to universalize access to higher and continuing education.

At the same time, what remains uncertain is what policies will next emerge to grapple with the untold challenges of enrolling an additional 100 million learners in higher education and nearly 200 million learners in continuing education, as previously discussed in relation to Table 5.1.

**The Indira Gandhi National Open University**

**History.**

As stated in Chapter 4, the place of distance education in India commenced with a comparative look at models of correspondence education in other countries. Starting with the University of Delhi, correspondence courses began in 1961. Thereafter the University Grants Commission, the independent body for higher education in the country, supported the establishment of the Correspondence Course Institutes to be operated as branch divisions in conventional universities (Sharma, 1999, p. 148). The genesis of creating an Open University in India can be traced to 1970. With knowledge of the early successes of the OUUK, a conference was convened in India involving various government ministries and experts from the OUUK. The results were mixed, with some favouring an institution that would include adult literacy, the provision of higher education as well as other forms of continuing education. Over the next thirteen years much of this momentum had stalled. In 1983, however, momentum was revived when the State of Andhra Pradesh upstaged the Union government by opening Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU). It is believed that this was one impetus to re-engage with this project on a national level. In March 1985 a committee, headed by the Vice Chancellor of BRAOU, was appointed by the then Department of Education to look at the specifics of

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44 The Ministry of Human Resource Development oversees education in the country. It is comprised of two factions: The Department of Higher Education and The Department of School Education and Literacy. The Department of Education was originally under the MHRD, but was disbanded when the Ministry was reorganized.
establishing a national Open University. By late 1985 the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act was passed in the parliament of the Union government.

The preparations to start a new University were extensive. Issues of course development, languages, curriculum focus and access were debated. The objectives were to direct programs to the labour market, rural areas and what was defined as an ‘unorganized’ sector, presumably courses tailored for personal interest. According to one policymaker, I13, there was the suggestion to implant the British model of the Open University in India. One deviation was a faculty rather limited in comparison to the OUUK. Because of the enormity of the task of raising levels of literacy and providing access to continuing and adult education at the national level, another proposed deviation was to decentralize the administrative and academic responsibilities through a network of State Open Universities. The Central Advisory Board on Education subsequently made a recommendation for all states to establish a state-level Open University. Today there are only 13 State Open Universities, which operate independently of IGNOU, an outcome likely attributed to the creation of the Regional Centres under the jurisdiction of IGNOU. This mimics the OUUK model where there are 13 regional centres for each region in the UK. The IGNOU regional centres provide administrative support and carry out some teaching duties. Regional centres also oversee the study centres that primarily serve teaching and mentoring functions for students.

When IGNOU first launched its programs in 1987, it began with a promising enrolment of approximately 20,000 students (Swamy, 1991, p. 115). IGNOU having celebrated its 25th Jubilee in 2010 re-branded itself with the accompanying tagline of The People’s University, fitting if considered by its enrolments in 2011 which measured at nearly 3 million (IGNOU, 2011b).

Admissions at IGNOU have carried a certain tradition that has been strongly centred on the concept of openness, mainly interpreted as accessibility and flexibility. Over the years, it has added to its ability to provide a more open system to widen access and contribute to advancing the participation rates in the country.
Going back to its beginnings in the 1980s, I15, who was among the first faculty to join IGNOU in 1987, recounted that among the major tasks handed to the University by the government was to make entry into IGNOU programs more accessible and flexible than allowed by the current system. The pioneering staff at IGNOU sought to prioritize this task and minimize the existing barriers to accessing higher education, which were primarily centred on those who did not have the 10+2 qualification. Once this task was better addressed, then programs could be delivered, ideally, to whoever had earned admission. The end result was a creation similar to the OUUK, which IGNOU faculty named the Bachelor Preparatory Program. It aimed at providing those who had not completed secondary education, for whatever reason, the opportunity to enter higher education. Today, upon successful completion of several courses in social studies and commerce, applicants are cleared to enter a bachelor degree program in commerce, arts or social work (IGNOU, 2010, p. 37). The program can be completed within two years and costs 850 rupees/year (approximately $18 USD). There is also a minimum age requirement of 18. There are newer initiatives including the Diploma Preparatory Program, the associate degree program organized through the IGNOU Community Colleges, and the Assessment and Certification of Prior Learning option. The latter of these entrance pathway options, which is more commonly referred to as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), is being utilized by many Open Universities around the world, including the OUC.

The actual IGNOU headquarters are located in a suburb of south Delhi adjacent to an ecological reserve. There are two main complexes, one at the entrance to the campus where administrative units are located. The academic complex is located approximately one kilometre from the entrance. In this area there is also a faculty housing complex accommodating roughly 25 percent of IGNOU staff.

**Organizational structure.**

The geographical organization of IGNOU is mirrored on a three tier system, similar to the OUUK. There are the headquarters located in New Delhi and 62 regional centres, including 11 that cater to the army and navy (accessible through the IGNOU website: http://www.ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/regional/website). The physical reach of the
institution is furthered by the approximately 2,600 study centres that further permeate out from the regional centres. In order to facilitate a more decentralized model, IGNOU has made efforts to further the responsibilities of the regional centres to include the appointment of staff, evaluation of student work, providing access to teleconferencing and supporting the study centres (IGNOU, 2011c).

Study centres are the basic unit of organization of the University. At study centres students interact with other students and counsellors and use centre facilities, such as varying media to engage with a particular course. Study centres are generally located in educational institutions or other facilities where technological access is available (IGNOU, 2011c).

Unlike the Provincial Open Universities in the OUC system, the regional centres do not carry out curriculum design, organization or development. The responsibilities of the regional centres are essentially to carry out responsibilities given them by IGNOU headquarters, including the aspects of teaching, evaluation and administration.

The IGNOU headquarters is organized hierarchically. At the head of the University is the Visitor, who is the President of India, and acts more as a figurehead for the University. Internally, IGNOU is organized rather intricately containing comparatively more divisions and schools of study than the OUC. Figure 5.7 outlines the internal structure of IGNOU.
The decision making bodies at IGNOU are organized under six levels that are generally vertical in alignment. They are: Board of Management, Academic Council, Planning Board, Schools of Study, Finance Committee and the Distance Education Council. With the exception of the Schools of Study, the Vice Chancellor is the head of all of these bodies.

Figure 5.7. IGNOU Organizational Structure.
Source. IGNOU (2010, p. 9).
The Board of Management is the authoritative body of the University. It includes the Vice Chancellor and 14 other members, of which four are from IGNOU and ten are recruited from varying sectors such as academia, government and the private sector. Decisions taken by the board include those relating to infrastructure, programmatic concerns, and external collaborations (IGNOU, 2011c).

The next most important body is the Academic Council (AC). In addition to looking after the academic policies the AC is responsible for the direction and maintenance of standards in instruction and evaluation. This broadens to encompass areas in media production, educational technology, and learner support (IGNOU, 2011c). The AC is comprised primarily of IGNOU faculty. Other responsibilities include overseeing research initiatives of the University (IGNOU, 2010).

In terms of authority a parallel appendage to the AC is the Planning Board. According to one professor, I4, the Planning Board is charged with making recommendations in regards to vision and how IGNOU should respond to the five year plans laid out by the Union government. According to the Statutes of the University, the Planning Board advises the Board of Management and the Academic Council and also carries out the powers of the Academic Council (p. 12, 24, IGNOU ACT). If a disagreement arises between the Planning Board and Academic Council, the Board of Management makes the final decision.

The Schools of Study are the foundations of the University and carry out the major tasks of teaching and curriculum organization. Each school is operated by a board. The School Board’s functions are generally to oversee the research activities of the school, approve courses as recommended by Expert Committees and follow the directions of the Academic Council (IGNOU, 2011c). Other functions of the School Board include ensuring the proper organization of courses through orientations for students and counsellors, course revisions and so on (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2011, pp. 25-26)
The Finance Committee meets three times per year and is concerned with all matters relating to the annual budget and expenditures of the institution (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2011, pp. 27).

The most unique distinction from the OUC is the Distance Education Council, located on the IGNOU campus. It is the apex body for distance learning in the country and is responsible for accreditation and maintenance of standards among all distance education programs and institutes in the country. This will be elaborated in the next section in relation to online learning.

Two other organizations worth mentioning are the Staff Training and Research Institute in Distance (STRIDE) Education and the International Division.

The Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) was established in 1993 to advance training and research in the field of open and distance learning. This was borne out of the Division of Distance Education that was established in 1986 with the purpose of continuously train staff in educational technology, a function that continues today. STRIDE was formed out of a collaborative effort between the Commonwealth of Learning, the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. There have been over 500 training programs within India and another 40+ in other countries through these efforts (IGNOU, 2011b). The staff at STRIDE also oversee the running of the Indian Journal of Open Learning, which is free to download from the IGNOU website.

The International Division also plays a unique and vital role in IGNOU. Its main objectives are to promote the academic programs of IGNOU outside of India, license the materials of IGNOU to foreign institutions, and to co-ordinate training programs of personnel at Open University institutes outside of India. Through the division, IGNOU has collaborations with 57 international institutes of higher learning, located mainly in Africa, the Middle East and as far as the Caribbean. The advantage of the Division, as articulated by a senior member, I16, is that India, and by association, IGNOU is part of the Commonwealth, which constitutes 52 other
nations. These are deemed to be the priority areas, followed by nations where there is a significant Indian Diaspora, such as the Persian Gulf, and then SAARC and ASEAN countries.

**Financial support for IGNOU.**

IGNOU receives funding from the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India. The amount of funding equates to 15 percent of operating costs (IGNOU, 2011d). The difference is generated internally, and presumably through tuition fees, sales of IGNOU course materials and other institutional partnerships.

**Online learning.**

**Historical context of online learning in India.**

Although the Indian government played a significant role in the organization, funding and launching of IGNOU in the mid 1980s, there has been little guidance otherwise, particularly in comparison to the proximity of the Chinese government to the OUC. As will be shown, India has a strong academic oligarchy, with reference to Clark’s Triangle that was discussed in Chapter 2. This exists at both the level of conventional universities and distance education universities and/or institutes located within conventional universities. This regulatory body is known as the Distance Education Council (DEC), housed on the IGNOU campus with the Vice Chancellor of the University as its chairperson. As will be noted below the DEC’s role in online learning is to stay abreast of and promote innovative practices and technological advancements for distance education across the country. We will start with a description of the DEC to understand the larger framework of distance education and online learning in India.

**The Distance Education Council, IGNOU: Operations and mandate.**

The DEC is one of 15 professional councils that operate under the UGC. It presides over IGNOU, 13 state Open Universities, and over 200 distance education institutes located in conventional and private institutions across India (IGNOU, 2010). It has been recognized by the Government of India as the apex body for open and distance learning and acts as a conduit between the government and the universities for providing recommendations to India’s States
for the creation of distance education institutions, including funding and accreditation (Panda, 2005, p. 209). This positions the DEC as the governing body over institutions that have been offering distance education programs long before IGNOU was established (as noted in Chapter 4) (Daniel, 2000). The importance of the DEC can be gleaned from a government notice, as follows:

On the recommendation of the Board of Assessment for Educational Qualifications, the Government of India has decided that all the qualifications awarded through Distance Education by the Universities [deemed fit by the Union or its States] stand automatically recognized for the purpose of employment to posts and services under the Central Government, provided it has been approved by Distance Education Council, Indira Gandhi National Open University... and wherever necessary by All India Council for Technical Education (Government of India, 1995).

Therefore a credential earned by an institution approved by the DEC is aimed to provide a high level of validity. The endorsement of the State also aims to influence prospective employers to hire graduates of distance education programs.

According to Statute 28 of the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act 1985, the DEC is also responsible for outreach through the “promotion of the Open University and distance education systems in the educational pattern of the country” and is granted the power of a statutory body (Government of India, 2011, p. 40). The Statute details this mandate through four subsections consisting of 40 clauses. Some that are noteworthy for this study include the following:
• Sanction and recommend sanctioning grants (through IGNOU’s Board of Management) to universities authorized under the UGC Act\(^45\) (4. a) vii)

• Coordinate across all distance education institutes in the sharing of instructional materials (4. a) ix)

• Advise State governments and other institutions on the creation of distance education institutes/Open Universities ((4. a) xiii)

• Evaluate programs and institutions (4 a) xiv)

• Promote innovation, flexibility, and openness in programs, to enhance participation in higher education (4 a) xviii)

More recent references on the role of IGNOU were outlined in the government working paper on higher education as part of the 11\(^{th}\) five year plan. Chapter 13 of the document, devoted to India’s open and distance learning system, boasts of a bright future outlook stating there has been, “a transformation in the light of advancement in Information and Communication Technology.” For the DEC, it should focus its priorities on “promoting the use of technology in distance mode of education and certification... in the new circumstances,” with this last reference taking aim at ICTs. As well, the document points to overseas to further the outreach of affordable distance education (Government of India, 2006, p. 113). In consideration of the new demands of widening access through ICTs, the main suggestion was to augment the standing of the DEC in terms of its authoritative power (Government of India, 2006, p. 113).

To better understand the importance of the DEC in terms of accreditation and role in expanding India’s higher education sector, we will look at the projected enrolment figures

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\(^{45}\) The IGNOU Act outlines three separate clauses that reference two sections of the UGC Act to determine which institutions qualify to receive funding for distance education initiatives. Essentially, any institution “declared fit” or “recognized by the Commission” is suitable for funding. The complexities of the UGC Act are rooted in absolving the Union from powers to incorporate a University. Where there is a matter of national importance the Union has the power to create “deemed universities” such as the renowned Institutes of Technology, which do not have University status, yet are eligible to confer degrees. In the case of IGNOU, which was created by the Union, this was only possible as making a separate law calling for the establishment of the University, under an Act of Parliament.
(Table 5.2) and funding allocation (Table 5.3) outlined in the 11th five year plan from 2007 to 2012.

Table 5.2

Higher Education Enrolment Figures for India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Pop 18-23</th>
<th>Total HE Enrol.</th>
<th>Total GER</th>
<th>Add’l Total Enrol.</th>
<th>Share of Tech in Total (%)</th>
<th>Total Tech &amp; Prof Ed</th>
<th>Tot Gen</th>
<th>Add’l General Enrol.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>132243</td>
<td>13934</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>3535</td>
<td>10399</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11th Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>135440</td>
<td>15034</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>3909</td>
<td>11125</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>138318</td>
<td>16460</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>4444</td>
<td>12016</td>
<td>891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>141257</td>
<td>18222</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>1762</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>5102</td>
<td>13120</td>
<td>1104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>144259</td>
<td>20341</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>2118</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>5899</td>
<td>14442</td>
<td>1322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>144287</td>
<td>22365</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>6709</td>
<td>15655</td>
<td>1213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from “Planning commission: Working group on higher education, 11th five year plan draft” Government of India, 2006, p. 40.

In Table 5.2, there are two headings relevant to the DEC, and IGNOU more generally: Total higher education enrolment (column 4) and Total GER\(^{46}\) (column 5). From 2006 to 2011 (2011/2012 academic year), enrolments were expected to grow by a staggering 8.4 million amounting to a total of 22.4 million learners. The commensurate rise in GER over this time period was expected to rise from 10.5 percent to 15.5 percent, thus anticipating reaching the massification threshold in the 2011/2012 academic year\(^{47}\). Of the 22.4 million learners, it was projected that 30 percent, or 6.7 million, would be enrolled in higher education through the

\(^{46}\) The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is an indicator used by UNESCO and other organizations to measure growth in enrolments in primary, secondary and tertiary education according to specific age cohorts. The defined age cohort for tertiary education is the 18-23 age group (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006)

\(^{47}\) There is also mention in the Plan that by 2015 the GER is expected to reach 20 percent (Government of India, 2006, p. 34).
country’s open and distance learning system, up from 25 percent, or 3.48 million, at the end of the 10th five year plan (Government of India, 2006, p. 96). To put this in perspective, the number of learners studying in distance programs would increase by almost 93 percent from 2006 to 2011, compared to an increase of roughly 50 percent studying in the conventional subsector over the same time period.

For the DEC therefore, there are colossal expectations. These projections for distance learning institutions will place mounting pressures on the Council to allocate funds effectively, and provide timely accreditation to new distance education programs and institutions. The added commitment to “promoting the use of technology” and issue of how to provide accreditation and appropriate funding adds layers to the complexities of the Council. This will be discussed in the next section.

On the matter of budget allocation in the 11th five year plan, Table 5.3 provides a synopsis of the distribution of resources for varying higher education bodies.

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Amount (USD) in millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>9,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and Distance learning subsector</td>
<td>1,8101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>155.9</td>
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Note. Adapted from “Planning commission: Working group on higher education, 11th five year plan draft” Government of India, 2006, p. 93.

The DEC will be allotted nearly 156 million USD over the course of five years, although for the larger ODL subsector the amount will be 1.8 billion USD, which will primarily fall to varying States for redistribution. The University Grants Commission, in comparison to the DEC, oversees the conventional higher education system and is allotted approximately five times the amount of the ODL system, though it is projected to be only 2.5 times the size by enrolment. It

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48 This calculation is based on the quotient of 2.55 billion rupees outlined in the 11th five year plan (Government of India, 2006, p. 93), and the current exchange rate of 44.91 rupees to the US Dollar.
should be noted that this speaks more to the efficiencies gained than to neglect from the government. It is true that infrastructure costs are much less for ODL institutions, as few operate a physical campus and the per student cost is significantly lower, having been calculated at about 42 percent to per student cost in the conventional stream (Government of India, 2006, p. 95).

In the following section we will return to the role of the DEC in promoting ICTs in the ODL system.

*The UGC-AICTE-DEC committee.*

By 2007, expansion in distance education had raised concerns of the quality of the credentials students had earned from the numerous distance education programs that had emerged in recent years. In response, three apex bodies, the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)\(^{49}\) and the DEC signed a memorandum of understanding to form a joint committee for a three year term (expiring in May, 2010) to assess, or re-assess, all distance education programs (Srivastava, Lele, & Bhushan, 2010, p. 231). This joint committee, referred to as the UGC-AICTE-DEC, aimed to streamline the independent activities of these three bodies and evaluate all distance education institutions with particular focus placed on technical and professional programs (IGNOU, 2007). The purpose of streamlining was to avoid the duplication of the responsibilities of each organization. Programs of a technical nature, for example, are deemed of high standing if accredited by the AICTE, which provides a list of approved (and unapproved) institutions on its website (http://www.aicte-india.org/). If offered in the distance mode, then such a program should be at the discretion of the DEC for accreditation. Involving the AICTE however, was perceived as providing more rigorous scrutiny of the accreditation process. A joint committee offering a joint recommendation to all distance learning programs in the country would best serve the credibility of a particular program, and meet the needs of tuition-paying learners and prospective employers.

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\(^{49}\) The All India Council for Technology Education aims to maintain standards in the areas of technical education throughout the country.
Therefore it was decided that all private, and some public, distance education institutions were required to meet the new standards outlined by the joint committee. This initially caused confusion among learners in distance education programs as the quality of such programs was suddenly called into question, despite having been previously granted accreditation by the DEC. This was exacerbated by the uncertainties around when and if a particular institution offering distance education programs would receive this new recognition by the joint committee. In most cases institutions submitting an application received notice from the joint committee in a prompt manner (details of the application are elaborated below). Another matter of importance was the issue of territorial jurisdiction for higher education institutions offering programs through online learning. As indicated in the statutes of the UGC, no institution is permitted to operate outside of a particular geographical boundary, usually demarcated as the state in which the institution resides – this includes both State and Central universities. For distance education institutions this means their off-campus study centres, where students are given physical access points for learning and accessing resources, are confined to a particular State. There are two exceptions. First, the Deemed Universities are permitted to offer off-campus centres outside of a particular State, inclusive of offering distance education programs, with the approval of the UGC and DEC. Second, IGNOU operates independently as an institution since it was created by an Act of Parliament in 1985. In the case of online learning, it was determined by the joint committee that this mode of learning is unbound by territorial jurisdiction as no study centres are required to be established outside of the State boundaries (IGNOU, 2009). Though the impact of the decision has yet to be well-documented, it will certainly re-surface in future for learners in India’s higher education system. Henceforth, a learner residing anywhere in the country should be able to enrol in a reputable institution offering online learning without having to leave the home (or State) context, through the channels of online learning.

There are 130 deemed universities in India. They are generally recognized as being of good quality. They are differentiated from universities in that they are bestowed a higher degree of autonomy being allowed to devise their own courses and programs (presumably without UGC approval), give preference to research rather than teaching, and as noted, are not bound geographically like universities.
**The DEC: Accreditation and guidance for distance and online learning.**

The details of the application process for accreditation are available in a downloadable handbook from the DEC link on the IGNOU website. A three-step process is required for institutions aspiring status to offer programs through open and distance learning. The first step is the process of recognition which determines an institute’s preparedness to offer ODL programs. This is followed by an accreditation process that confirms a minimum set of competencies having been met to provide such programs. The process of accreditation includes the completion of a detailed report based on guidelines found in the online handbook. Once peer reviewed, the last step is a site visit and assessments of quality assurance, innovative practice and areas for improvement are given (IGNOU, 2010, p. 4). Some examples of the types of questions posed in the application, and having relevance to this study, are as follows:

1. **Section 3.2, part b), item 13:** Does the curriculum reflect the spirit of “think globally and act locally?” (IGNOU, 2010, p. 25)

2. **Section 3.3, part b), item 12:** Does the institution have a clearly documented policy regarding technology-based learning? (IGNOU, 2009, p. 32)

Admittedly, the DEC lists their objectives of this new process as to provide clarity on individual and comparative institutional performance, foster an atmosphere of collegial competitiveness and an understanding that growth is expected through the advancements of development and delivery (IGNOU, 2010, p. 5). With reference to point 2) above, the DEC also offers a shorter policy handbook for online learning. Little reference is made to expectations for online learning with the exception of calling for enhanced resources to accommodate learner support. The handbook, however, is a promising start to what will certainly be newer policy advancements in this area.

With this section on the DEC as a backdrop, including how some decisions on governance and policy have been made in the context of online learning, we will follow with a more pointed historical overview of the developments of online learning since its beginnings in India, marked by IGNOU’s early experiments with online learning in 1997 and the release of the Indian government’s Information Technology Action Plan in 1998.

The historical context for online learning in higher education is proximal to India's larger IT initiative that was launched by the National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development in 1998. Titled the Information Technology Action Plan (herein referred to as the IT Plan), it aimed to guide one of the five top priorities of then Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee; to promote and utilize IT with the promise to, “compress the time it would otherwise take for India to advance rapidly in the march of development and occupy a position of honor and pride in the comity of nations” (Government of India, 1998a). The Plan aimed to focus on three main areas: Part 1) Software, Part 2) Hardware and Part 3) Long-term National IT Policy. Lofty expectations were set as articulated in 240 recommendations with aims focused on boosting infrastructure, intellectual capacity, and a 21st Century vision for India51. Several recommendations pertaining to online learning and distance education were as follows:

Part 1) Software, Recommendation 60: All universities, engineering colleges, medical colleges and other institutions of higher learning in the country as well as Research and Development Organisations shall be networked for a supplementary program of distance education for improving the quality of education before year 2000. (Government of India, 1998b)

Part 3) Long-term National IT Policy, Recommendation 45, item iv): Institutes of national importance such as Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of IT will be encouraged to establish Virtual Institutes, particularly in the area of advanced Post Graduate and Continuing Education programs in IT, to support IT education and Research at other institutions in the country. (Government of India, 1998c)

51Part I, Recommendation 43, items ix and x, illustrate this point on ‘lofty expectations’ as follows: Item ix: “Government in association with IT Human Resource Development companies will aim to achieve 100% IT literacy at senior secondary level (10 + 2) in 5 years and at secondary level in 10 years. (Government of India, 1998b). Item x: “All institutes offering engineering education, including Polytechnics and IT Institutes, will ensure that within 3 years all engineering students in the country will acquire IT knowledge to be able to serve in IT enabled Services sector besides serving in IT industry directly.” (Government of India, 1998c)
Leading up to this state plan only two institutions were documented as having been engaged in some form of online learning. In 1996, NetVarsity, a virtual institution connected to the National Institute of Information Technology had offered short courses for varying certifications, including certification courses accredited by Microsoft (Mitra, 1999, p. 132). The other, and only University, was the Indira Gandhi National Open University. IGNOU first started online initiatives in 1997. It was realized by the School of Computer and Information Sciences that since many cities in India had provided Internet access points the natural progression for the school was to embark on several online learning initiatives. IGNOU took its popular computer applications programs for certificate, bachelor degree (BCA) and master degree (MCA), and converted course materials to downloadable files as a means of circumventing the costly and cumbersome processes of printing and delivering materials across the country. Since IGNOU study centres lacked Internet connectivity IGNOU contracted out placements for students at roughly 100 Empanelled Internet Access Points (EIAPs) where Internet access was readily available (Sharma, 2001, p. 7). Some successes were evidenced by a report that 2,200 students had enrolled in these programs from 1997 to 1999 (Mitra, 1999, p. 132), all the more noteworthy when one considers that in 1997 there were only 700,000 Internet users in the entire country (See Figure 5.9 below). Also in 1997 IGNOU headquarters in New Delhi had completed a network that enabled Internet connectivity with its regional centres laying the foundation for future online developments.


In September, 1999, IGNOU responded to the government’s IT Action Plan (see Recommendation 45 above, where there is a push to establish Virtual Institutes) with the establishment of the Virtual Campus Initiative (VCI) (Gaba, 2004). The premise was to initially build a multilayered interactive learning environment (e.g., satellite video, online learning and tutoring, computer-based training, CD-ROMs, practical labs) commencing with several programs to be gradually expanded into a sustainable IT system within the University (Sharma, 2001, p. 8). The School of Computer and Information Sciences, building on the previous successes with the computer applications programs, introduced new programs aimed to exist solely online. This included the Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT) and Advanced
Diploma in Information Technology (ADIT). Each program involved an external partner. The BIT program, connected to a UK charitable organization called EdExcel Foundation (then a registered charity in the United Kingdom; today a subsidiary of Pearson, a media conglomerate), which made an agreement to initially offer the program for a five year period. The ADIT program was funded in part by the Ministry of Information Technology. To accommodate the infrastructural backbone and reliable access required for IGNOU’s Virtual Campus, a network of telelearning centres (TLCs) was established, of which some were run by commercial providers (Panda, 2001, p. 153), and others were run by and existed in IGNOU regional centres (Sharma, 2001, p. 9). At the peak of enrolments in these programs, when there were roughly 1800 students over a two year period and there were 28 TLCs in operation nationally (See Figure 5.8 below).

![Figure 5.8. Student Enrolment of BIT Program from 1999 to 2003. Source. Gaba (2004).](image)

In 1999, IGNOU’s School of Management Studies also entered into online delivery with the design of courses for diploma and MBA programs. Entitled under Management Education through Interactive Delivery Systems (MEIDS), these were small scale initiatives that never exceeded 150 students. In place of utilizing the TLCs, the MEIDS program utilized computer facilities in 17 management institutes, titled Partners in Advanced Learning System Institutes. The low enrolment figures were attributed to minimal advertising and barriers to Internet access, despite a disproportionate number of students being located in New Delhi (Sharma,
Two years later the School of Social Sciences, with financial support from the World Bank, launched a six-month online program titled the Postgraduate Certificate Program in Participatory Management of Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (PCPPMDRR). This too, also reported low enrolments of only 113 students in total over three years, or six cycles (Mishra, 2005, p. 570). The program was upgraded and re-emerged online as a diploma program in 2009 as part of IGNOU’s second generation initiative into online learning, which will be elaborated in the following section. Finally, in 2004, there was a small-scale project designed in collaboration with the School of Social Sciences and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (Ministry of Science and Technology of India). No enrolment data was available.

Figure 5.9. Internet Penetration Rates in India.
Source. World Bank (2010); *Central Intelligence Agency (2011); ** Internet World Stats (2011).

In consideration of the timeline of these initiatives, from 1999 to 2003, Internet access remained extremely limited in the country, suggesting that the online learning programs were more preliminary than permanent initiatives (See Figure 5.9). In 1999 domestic Internet statistics indicated only 2.8 million users in the country with only several years removed from access points existing solely in the metropolises of Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (Sharma, 1999, p. 150). Although by 2003 there were a reported 18.5 million Internet users, this still represented only 1.7 percent of the population at the time in comparison to 6.1 percent in
China (or 79 million). In connecting domestic Internet access to the enrolment data reported above, the constant across these programs was low enrolments, particularly when one considers that technology (BIT) and management (MBA) programs are among the most popular in the country. The flagship BIT program, which did have respectable growth in its first few years declined dramatically to only 355 by 2003 (see Figure 5.8). This did not bode well for the end of the five year agreement with EdExcel, resulting in nonrenewal of the program. At this point the online programs of the Virtual Campus and other small-scale initiatives ended and were deemed a failure (Mishra, 2009, p. 554) starting a dormant period in online learning at IGNOU until 2008.

Despite the absence of comparative data to other institutions during this timeframe, it can be gleaned that the experiences of the small scale initiatives at IGNOU were likely emblematic of the experiences among other institutions in the country. Reported in The Economic Times (2003), The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), a not-for-profit think tank, published a report indicating that India’s e-learning market in 2002 remained underdeveloped according to low revenues of approximately US$5 million to date, an outcome largely attributed to poor demand. When we look at the Internet statistics as referenced above, the lack of growth is not surprising. Indeed the issues of infrastructure and access (e.g., rural and semi-urban access, affordability, and skill level) were acute, but other factors also contributed to India’s lacklustre attempt with online learning. Government policy, public readiness, institutional administration, and pedagogy all appeared to have been overlooked or understudied. At the government level, the IT policy released in 1998, pointed to grand expectations with IT in education, yet it was almost nine years before any government sponsored follow-up occurred, with the formation of the joint committee of the UGC-AICTE-DEC. In addition to the issues surrounding access, the public readiness for utilizing online learning in an effective and sustainable manner seemed overestimated. Would the skills acquired be relevant and worthwhile in comparison to the nature of the job market and the

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52 These calculations are based on the quotient of 1.062 billion (population in 2003) and 18.5 million (Internet users) in India and 1.2949 billion and 79.5 million in China. Population statistics were retrieved from the OECD World Factbook (2010).
added pressures of learning in an unfamiliar setting for both students and teachers? In terms of institutional co-ordination, IGNOU developed repetitive, or disconnected, supports for their early online initiatives. For one, there were different physical access points for programs. The telelearning centres, used for the IT programs, eventually became the standard for access at IGNOU regional and study centres, but at the initial start-up in 1999 the MEIDS contracted out services elsewhere for Internet access. Had access points been streamlined administrative workloads could have been lessened and cost for delivery and development reduced. There were multiple funders as well with the Virtual Campus Initiative having support from EdExcel and the Indian government in the IT programs, whereas the School of Social Sciences received funding from the World Bank for its rehabilitation program. In terms of critiquing pedagogy, course materials and lectures were uploaded to the Internet, essentially replicating the conventional distance education program, rather than looking at deeper issues of connectivity and interaction (Mishra, 2009, p. 557).

The second generation of online learning at IGNOU: IGNOU Online, 2008.

In 2008 online programs re-emerged at IGNOU with much anticipation and new backers. The School of Computer and Information Sciences did not participate in this second generation of online learning at IGNOU; in place were professors from the School of Social Sciences and the School of Law who participated. The two new programs launched on June 9th, 2008 were the Masters Degree in Library and Information Science (MLIS) and Postgraduate Certificate in Cyber Law (CL). The programs were offered on the design of an in-house platform and the intent was for these programs to be online from ‘registration to certification’. The launch also coincided with the opening of a new centre, eGyanKosh (meaning knowledge), which was comprised of a team of IT professionals that had created a public digital repository containing over 95% of IGNOU courses in pdf format (www.egyankosh.ac.in). The team at eGyanKosh also developed in-house a platform called Virtual Class and the creation of a YouTube channel populated with thousands of hours of IGNOU course lectures, press releases, etc. As of September 2011 IGNOU maintains 17 online programs spread across nine schools or institutes. The access point is through the website called IGNOU Online.
Comparisons and Conclusions

In starting this Chapter with an overview of the OUUK and mapping it to the beginnings of the OUC and IGNOU it can be concluded that both were products of comparative education in practice. Policy borrowing, organizational and structural considerations and governance are only a few aspects where there was some overlap with the model institution in the UK. Not surprisingly for historical reasons, IGNOU had a closer resemblance to the OUUK in relation to the aforementioned points of comparison. The OUC, on the other hand, took a more insulated approach starting with the name of the institution through to the restrictions on awarding degrees and seesawing on admissions policies. In comparing the two Asian Open Universities, we see stark differences in areas of efficiency, autonomy and governance. On the topic of efficiency, it took 12 months from the time Deng Xiaoping showed a liking to the idea of an Open University to having it passed by the government. One year after that, the OUC launched operations. In India, 13 years passed before an idea came to fruition. In what can only be interpreted as an embarrassment to the Union government, Andhra Pradesh marched ahead and inaugurated the country’s first Open University. Granted, the head of state had changed on three occasions inevitably slowing decision making. Also there is a bigger picture to be discussed. The political organization of each country clearly has a huge impact on the workings of higher education and, particular to this investigation, the two Open Universities under investigation. The structure of IGNOU, having its own academic oligarchy in the Distance Education Council, speaks to the tremendous autonomy bestowed on the institution. The OUC is connected by a short leash to the Ministry of Education, and within the OUC headquarters there is a Party Cell that ensures the institution is aligned to the broader objectives of the CCP. As an example of State authority, there are few that better illustrate the state vertice of Clark’s Triangle. The contrast with the dominance of the academic oligarchy in India is striking.

Before addressing the area of online learning, there is another interesting finding that comes from this comparison of Open Universities. The programmatic structure of the OUC showed examples of tying learning to work units, the needs of the economy, writing exams and generally following the rules. The faculties are all rather predictable and online learning was
implemented based on the acquisition of skill, and access to information. No programs are offered for postgraduate diplomas, or other short courses that may be of interest to a particular learner. Conversely, IGNOU offers a breadth of programs organized through 21 schools, has a bridging program to enter postsecondary education and, as will be shown in Chapter 6, is experimenting widely with evaluation and admissions policies for its online programs. What can be deduced from this analysis is a division between collectivist and individualist tendencies. The difference in political organization is the most visible indicator of such structures, but we may also draw connections to cultural elements. China’s Han population is tied together by ethnicity, language, history and so on, whereas the same cannot be said in India. As noted in Chapter 4, the fractures in Indian society are endemic to the point that States are divided along linguistic lines. What will be interesting to ponder, in this investigation and beyond, is how the Internet, and online learning by association, may alter, or perpetuate, these cultural and political characteristics of the two societies. Chapter 7 on the evaluation of curriculum for online learning will address some of these issues.

On more pointed terms with reference to online learning, we see similar trends in relation to organization emerge in the arena of policymaking. Policy for online learning in China was very stringent, with a focus on limiting the number of institutions allowed to partake in online learning initiatives and placing caps on enrolments. The government penalized institutions which failed to provide quality education and the government itself altered policy to control entry requirements into Internet Colleges. Although Internet penetration rates were barely measured in the millions, the government was well aware of the imminent expansion and therefore ensured viable access for prospective learners to engage online.

Unlike China, India’s IT policy was articulated as an action plan with broad aims to advance the country as a formidable IT hub, although Internet growth was also lacking and funding seemed small and relegated to non-government organizations or the private sector. At the outset of the IT policy, only two institutions took up the tasks laid out by the government; this was indicative of the low level Internet penetration rates, and lack of guidance and/or readiness as was elaborated above.
Despite China also having relatively low Internet penetration rates, this climbed quickly. In 1998 rates were similar, with 1.4 million users in India and 2.1 million users in China (See Tables 5.1 and 5.6). The following year, however, marked the beginning of China’s Internet boom. Indeed by 2003 India’s Internet population had multiplied 13 times to 18.5 million, yet this paled in comparison to the 38 fold increase, or 79.5 million users, in China.

Not surprisingly over the same five year time period to 2003, growth was comparatively weaker for online learning in India. By this time China boasted 68 institutions hosting an Internet College that collectively catered to nearly one million students.

In some ways it seems that India was providing the answer before asking the question. The initial attempts at online learning seemed premature, particularly with an inadequate infrastructure on multiple levels as already pointed out. We may find congruency with the multiple streams framework utilized in Chapter 2, where organization is best defined by ambiguity, uncertain goals, etc. China, on the other hand, seemed to have taken a linear approach to policy development. Remarkable growth in the developments of online learning occurred, a tribute to investments in IT infrastructure. Where there were faulty or poor programs, the government made modifications and moved forward. True, the joint committee of the UGC-AICTE-DEC imparted regulations on new and existing institutions embarking on online learning initiatives, but this came only within the last few years. Perhaps IGNOU’s early attempts at online learning, though ineffective in one sense, laid a foundation for future development that to date appears to have become a fixture within the institution.

How policy will unfold for online learning, and how well this responds to the changing demographics of each country will be important to policymakers in the years ahead. Undoubtedly the OUC and IGNOU will play significant roles under each country’s changing circumstances.

Through this comparison we have seen similar populations, yet differing degrees of maturity with using online learning. The OUC existing in a State authority model operates online learning in a linear fashion with proper planning and rapid modifications as needs change.
IGNOU generally operates under conditions of autonomy and as such has demonstrated a trial and error approach with online learning. What has been learned from past attempts with online learning seems to have worked in favour of the institution. Having more mature Internet populations certainly helps.

In Chapter 6 we will look specifically at policymakers’ perceptions of online learning with some references to the points discussed in this Chapter. We will also move towards looking at the research questions posed at the beginning of this investigation.
Chapter 6: Policy Issues for Online Learning

Introduction

The topic of policy detailed in the historical context presented in Chapter 5 is carried forward in Chapter 6 with the results and analyses of perceptions from policymakers belonging to the OUC and IGNOU. The theoretical considerations of Clark’s Triangle outlined in Chapter 2 will be referenced at various points in the Chapter. As well, the historical overview of each institution on policy for online learning and demographic data from Chapter 5 will be drawn upon.

Guiding Chapter 6 is the following sub-research question:

1.1 What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?

To examine this question, perceptions have been elicited from those within the institutions who have been responsible for devising, enacting, or informing policies and have experienced some of the peaks and valleys of online learning that have occurred over a ten year period. This includes data on questions aligned to the role national and institutional policy has played in the historical, contemporary, and future developments of each institution’s online learning initiatives. The major themes that emerge from this data are categorized as perceptions of present policy, knowledge representation/globalization, and the future place/importance of policy for each institution. Within each of these three major themes emerge several subthemes. Under present policy, data is organized under government, institution and the role of University leader. Knowledge representation/globalization is broken down by perceptions on language, national and global knowledge, and subject area preference for online learning. The future place of policy for online learning is broken down into domestic and global outreach. A visual organization of these themes is presented in Figure 6.1.
These categories are broad, and there are branches within each that overlap at times with the other themes, yet the investigator judged that the analysis was best served by broad themes mainly categorized by timeframes.

The tone of respondents’ answers and insights ranged from optimistic to critical, and passive to cynical. When describing the institutional responsibility of using online learning, for example, OUC participants frequently made reference to the role and responsibility of the government for providing oversight, in contrast to IGNOU participants where references were made predominantly to the role and responsibility of a particular school or the institution itself. Interestingly, criticism of government or institutional involvement in overseeing online learning development was expressed by participants in both cases. Inferences are drawn at the point of analysis with participants’ quotes.

The results and analysis will first commence with perceptions on present policy for online learning.
Section I: The Current Place of Policy for Online Learning

The first theme, categorized as the current place of policy for online learning within each institution, was divided into the three subthemes of government, institution and the institutional leader. Questions were generally broad and then, based on the unique aspects of each institution, probing was more contextually pointed. In the case of China, prodding points were focused on the nature of consultation between the University and the government in the formation of policies. In the case of IGNOU, questions were pointed towards the need for an expansion of institutional policy for online learning, as at the time, deferral to using policies for existing courses was the norm, though this was deemed misguided by several participants. As for the institutional leader, being the President at the OUC and the Vice Chancellor at IGNOU, participant insights on these individuals (including the particular comments of these individuals themselves) were useful to understand to what extent institutional policy was (and continues to be) shaped by their tenure, which is between four and five years, at each institution.

Institutional and government influence.

Not surprisingly, the institutional differences in perception of policy for online learning were stark, in part because of the very different experience with online learning between the two institutions. As was indicated in Chapter 5, the OUC had started offering online programs in 1999 with no interruptions, unlike IGNOU, which had experienced early failures with online learning, leading to the second generation launch in 2008. The other noted difference was the place of government. The OUC is under direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and the relationship between the MoE and the OUC is closely intertwined. This connection is strengthened by the fact that many officials working at the OUC are former or seconded employees from the MoE, including the University president who had previously worked as the Ministry’s Deputy Director General before joining the OUC in 2006. Though a public institution, IGNOU operates much more independently, having its own governing body, the

53 It should be noted that the President at the time, Professor Ge Dao Ke, returned to the MoE in 2010.
Distance Education Council, as an integral component to the regulation of the University and of the country’s larger distance education system.

When we look at participants’ responses to policy related questions these differences are made more acute, and other insights emerge as well from the discourse. We may begin the interview analyses with participant C4 from the OUC, who, when asked about the connection between the OUC and the MoE in making policies, offered this synopsis:

... we have strong support from [the] MoE. Also [the] MoE, you have [a] kind of evaluation. Every three or five years, [the MoE will] check our use of online learning. You see China is a very centralized country so any kind of actions that the universities [take], needs the support from the government. So if one policy is from the government then the policy will be easily implemented, it will be carried out, so that's the Chinese political system.

Similar responses were heard from participants at the OUC in regards to government oversight and guidance for policy with online learning and the Modern Distance Education Project, as we were reminded, was part of the Action Plan released in 1997. The point of evaluation seems to have been taken quite seriously by the government, based on the outcomes from the evaluation done in 2003, when numerous Internet Colleges were reprimanded for offering low quality programs. In terms of requiring support from the government, as C4 stated, it would appear that any changes that take place are driven from the top-down and the expectation is not only that such policies will be ‘easily implemented’, but that they will be properly construed. It should be noted that such policies are generally related to administration, rather than content, though courses as well, also generally need the approval of the MoE to be formally launched. This point is addressed in Chapter 7 on Curriculum.

At IGNOU participant responses revealed a greater distinction between the institution and the government. Only one participant (I9) made reference to India’s IT policy, and merely indicated that it was to be adapted to the capacity of a particular educational institution. Responses to the question about the existence and role of policy for online learning included,
“There needs to be a policy on online learning. We need to have benchmarks on content that we offer online. [19]”, and more candidly, “There is no policy on anything; it’s an ad hoc practice that goes on [12]”. This ad hoc practice, to which I2 referred, became increasingly apparent from observations and interviews with upper level policymakers. On June 9, 2008, the day IGNOU launched its first two online initiatives (Postgraduate Certificate in Cyber Law and Master in Library Information Science), the Vice Chancellor announced that all courses suitable for online learning should embrace this technology as an additional medium by which learners could access content and earn credit. He solicited requests from other IGNOU Schools to bring forth proposals to the Academic Council to develop programs for online learning. At this initial point however, uncertainties remained regarding the existing online programs with respect to examination (online or face-to-face), forms and frequency of student support, learner expectations, enrolment type (session-based vs. cohort-based) and size, and alterations to the online content. The assumption was that these details would be addressed gradually, as the first cohorts engaged with the programs. When asked about the need for a policy for online learning at IGNOU, another policymaker responded affirmatively, remarking,

We have already introduced the online learning programs and [the policy] is going to be in place. What do you see as the major components to the policy? See, what you have to understand is that it is an ongoing thing. One has to understand what we mean by policy and how policies are supposed to be policies. Of course we do have policies this is why we have this ah, you know, this uh, these developments. As you delve deeper, naturally there are things that should be taken up. This should be done, so... it's not that we don't have a policy.

The comments made by I8 bring forth two interesting points. One is the perception of policy. If we refer to Chapter 2, providing a definition of policy was avoided in favour of understanding what is generally involved in its formation. This review provided multiple factors including types of processes (linear and non-linear) and the involvement of varying stakeholders. In this quote, we can see that I8’s perception of policy is rather murky, yet driven within the institution. Here we see elements of the non-linear, or multiple streams approach,
and the authority of the academy as central to decision making, mapping to the academic vertice of Clark’s Triangle. Though perhaps an oversimplification in analysis, the comment points to the fact that as a new initiative it will take time for the institution, the instructors and the learners to gather a better understanding of what is required to inform policy development and refinement. This was captured by another participant, I7, who stated,

> Once we are matured then gradually learning proceeds. It cannot be as fast as the technology. So my feeling is that once we are a bit in this online learning process, my feeling is that we’ll take care of other components that are allowed by the technology in becoming online...

This perception that policy needs to evolve with experience was rather similar to what occurred in the Chinese context; that is, experience proved to be an ideal determinant to gauge future direction, and ultimately progress. If we go back to the initial, rapid growth of online learning in China described in Chapter 5, it was observed that, at a national level, once qualitative concerns arose, the government made swift changes to labeling online programs (indicating on a degree that it was completed online) and rescinding approval to programs of low quality. Online learning programs in India were also closely scrutinized by IGNOU’s Distance Education Council. As the reader may recall, the joint UGC-AICTE-DEC committee re-vamped the accreditation process, which is now operated solely by the DEC.

From this first part, it can be gleaned that policy for online learning in India and in China is rather different.

**Role of leader of the institution in informing policy for online learning.**

The mandate and vision of the leader of each institution became a topic of interest when it was realized that in both institutions, a leader’s term was limited to approximately four or five years. With a relatively short timeframe, this individual would be expected to lead one of the largest universities in the world while understanding its intricacies and, as the figurehead, achieving a mandate that melds with the mission of the institution and the particular vision
held by the individual. In the case of IGNOU, the Vice Chancellor commenced his position at IGNOU in August, 2006 and at the OUC, the President began his term in June, 2006. The Vice Chancellor’s (VC) tenure is likely to end in 2012 and the OUC president’s term ended in the summer of 2010. On the question about the mandate at IGNOU, the VC responded as follows:

[IGNOU] is for providing opportunities for those who cannot come to the conventional stream and then to create education for the underprivileged and capacity building for those who are working and then for enhancing the GER. That is the priority. In 1985 GER was below 5% (18-23 cohort). Now IGNOU and the other Open Universities its supports cater to 22% of the total higher education enrolment in the country. Today GER is 11%. National priority is to widen access to 15% within the next 5 years. That is our national priority. That is the mandate for me.

The VC’s mandate, as stated, was to aid in achieving the national priority to achieve 15% GER by 2012 (see Table 5.2). IGNOU’s contributions, under the direction of the VC, were several including some of the following: The convergence scheme, which aims to open under-utilized spaces in conventional institutions across the country for open and distance learning purposes; the Research and Teaching Assistants scheme (RTA scheme), which will augment research and teaching opportunities for doctoral students studying at IGNOU; increasing the number of schools of study from 10 to 21 (achieved in 2009). In the words of the VC, these projects collectively channeled increasing enrolments in higher education and in more broad terms enhanced the level of teaching in the country. In relation to ICTs, the VC mentioned opportunities in both the convergence scheme, in terms of streaming live lectures to distance learners around the country, and in the RTA scheme, where fresh graduates having comparatively strong technology skills will implement their ICT know-how in research and teaching. In relation to online learning it was also the VC who proclaimed at the re-launch of online programs at IGNOU that the institution plans to “offer online programs for all possible courses...” On this note the VC was also adamant that a policy for online learning had been in place stating,

... we have developed a policy for that regarding the fees, operation aspects, even
minimum period of completion of the course. That has to be flexible here. You cannot just have the same type of conditions that you have in a face-to-face or print-based course for an online program, so we have to think of other options and we are considering it.

The VC is indeed recognized as a visionary figure at IGNOU, bringing about change with a strong promotion of the use of ICTs. As one policymaker noted, “Whatever the constraints, once he has a bee in his bonnet he is going to have it done.” In addition to launching the online programs in June, 2008, the VC authorized giving all faculty a laptop for personal and professional use. Although the VC was deemed a visionary and a leader who provides great support to the faculty of IGNOU, there were concerns, as was already noted above, about the details of policy. Participant I13 noted the challenges of the position of Vice Chancellor as follows:

... this VC is completely new to the system and he has learned. And he has come with a lot of new ideas. It works both ways. But new ideas, to what extent they are viable shouldn't just be laid down on the faculty, or there should be a dialogue with the faculty. They are not policy issues. It's a question of what works well where. Sometimes you say that this is to be done and you find people say, yes okay we'll do it. Sometimes it doesn't get done. Sometimes you say you tell me what you want, okay why can't we put it in, so different strategies, for online also. Facilities have to be there. One can't just say that one thing is doing well over there, so it will do well over here.

The comments made by I13 plainly look at ideas. The statement, “They are not policy issues,” is less important than the points on needing dialogue among faculty, organization, and relevance to the institution if online learning is to garner the support needed to make it a viable option for learning at IGNOU. I13’s comments followed the proclamation of the VC that online learning would be incorporated into all suitable programs. It should be noted that among the IGNOU interviewees, participant I13 was among the most critical of the online learning initiatives, stating later in the interview, “IGNOU was created for India,” meaning that
accessibility needs to be at the core of the processes of the University and that online learning is “built for technologically savvy and reasonable well-off people.” The implications were that widening access and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the country through more conventional means is better aligned to IGNOU’s mandate. There is ample literature that refers to the process of educational change (Fullan, 2007) and the notion that all stakeholders are accepting of change and that it is a smooth going process is widely misleading. This policymaker has a point however, in that the needs analysis for using online learning and how this is aligned to the mission of the University are important elements that would be of value to the institution for engaging in online learning.

The juxtaposition of the president of the OUC to the VC of IGNOU reveals both similarities and differences between the two individuals. In terms of credentials, each has earned a doctorate in a field of science and both were formerly employed at a governing body for higher education; in the case of the VC, this was as Chairman of the University Grants Commission and for the President, this was in the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education. The terms of their mandates are similar, though their objectives are different. When asked about duties of the position, the President offered the following:

Before I came to the OUC\textsuperscript{54} I wanted to bring it to a new development phase. Why? Because with the improvement of the Chinese economy, our education system is quickly moving into a new development phase; which is continuing education.

The President goes on to state that the mission of the University is not to compete with Beida or Tsinghua (China’s top national universities) but to become a leader in the field of continuing education and to raise the recognition of this field in adult learning. When prodded about online learning, the President deferred to the role of the government stating,

to bring out the best sides of online education technology the government certainly will support the development of online technology, and at the same time, the

\textsuperscript{54} Note that in the original interview the participant referred to the conventional name of the University, as Diàndà, as it is known colloquially in China (first referenced in Chapter 4)
government will not discriminate against the use of TV, video or the postal technology. As the organization that runs the University, it will choose the most suitable technology that meets the requirements... the reason that the government pays much attention to the online technology is because the online technology is not yet well developed... and the use of online technology in the field of education needs to be fully promoted by the government.

Differences are clear between the leaders in terms of their particular mandate. For one, the VC is compelled to raise the higher education participation rates at IGNOU, and by association, in the country, and thereby having a focus on attracting learners who belong to both the age cohort (school leaver population) and adult populations. The response of the President at the OUC reflects the larger demographic patterns of the country. In China’s post-massification context the higher education enrolments in conventional institutions are approaching a saturation point, thereby placing more focus on expanding continuing education enrolments (see Table 5.1). The other telling difference is the impact the figurehead has on the institution. It has been noted earlier that the government plays a strong role in guiding the policies of the OUC. When asked about the impact of the president in relation to online learning, one participant, C4, noted, “I can't see any difference because all the presidents, the past one, the current one, they all attach importance to the use of online so I can't see any difference.” The sentiment about the focus of the current president with online learning was shared by other participants (such as C7), with one adding, “Our leader is quite wise... he grasps the chance and encourages teachers to develop on-line courses, which have become the best on-line learning courses in China... So the policy is important and the president is very important”.

The influence of the government is certainly more prominent at the OUC, in comparison to IGNOU. In turn, it can be ascertained that the VC has a comparatively more authoritative position in implementing direct change within the University. The different roles of the two institutional figureheads provide an interesting comparison that can be interpreted in relation to the larger contours of each country’s higher education system. Where IGNOU holds a
comparatively esteemed place in India’s higher education sector, the OUC is subject to tighter government regulations. To refer back to Chapter 5, IGNOU is granted the status of conferring diplomas and degrees (undergraduate, masters, doctorate) whereas the OUC is limited to offering a degree only through the particular University to which it is partnered (it was noted that the OUC is permitted to award diplomas for its sub-degree programs). This has been an ongoing concern in China as it fails to give full recognition to the OUC as an institution of higher learning. Further, considering the impressive numbers boasted by the OUC, it widens the base of an already highly stratified system of higher education. Indeed, IGNOU is not immune to murmurings about the ability of its students, yet it repeatedly gains recognition by the government and media for the quality of its programs and the service it provides to learners throughout the country. Pinpointing the degree of authority bestowed on each institution’s leader is secondary to the larger mandate of the institution. As was noted in Figure 5.6, because of the differences in demographics and status of massification, IGNOU and the OUC have largely differing mandates with respect to online learning. First and foremost IGNOU’s mandate is to participate in the massification objectives of the country, whereas the OUC, situated in a post-massification context, is charged with widening participation rates in continuing education. The construction of a formidable online learning system has been generally accomplished by the institution.

Section II: Knowledge Representation and Globalization: Language, Courses, and the Globalization of Higher Education

In moving towards more pointed aspects of policy for online learning that are aligned to the sub-research question, participants were asked about policy considerations in course/discipline selection for online learning, language accommodations, and the globalization of higher education. This particular section of Chapter 6 addresses more specifically the main research question, but also addresses the policy issue as well.
Considerations for online courses and language.

On the topic of course disciplines, interview questions focused on how varied disciplines, namely those in social sciences and humanities, are being developed and promoted in the online medium. The assumption is that a disproportionate number of online courses may be designed for business and IT related disciplines. The premise is that as market forces increasingly infiltrate the higher education sector, there is a tendency for institutions to place more emphasis on designing online courses that drive enrolment, and hence revenue, to the detriment of other disciplines that carry weight in studying social, cultural and political phenomena. High level policymakers seemed aware of these imminent challenges with online learning, and countered the question with somewhat positive insights from each institution.

First at IGNOU, participant I14 suggested ICTs have a place in a multitude of areas as follows:

Even in cultural studies, humanities, languages, social sciences; ICTs, we have to deliberately have this. For example, in Indian language translations, that is a good area where ICTs can enrol in. Each language is very big, Indian language translation. And then preserving various traditions of Indian culture, so the ICTs, we can also develop cultural studies, study of aboriginal systems, Indian languages, Indian art forms. [IGNOU has] this separate school for this, the School of Performing and Visual Arts. If you just look at the famous artists in India, they make use of the technology very effectively. They started e-novels, e-books, blogs, all these things; writers, poets, but because of the large numbers involved, the common people are not aware of these things. So there is a great potential for ICTs in areas other than the business or corporate sector. When such people make use of ICTs that will also make a global impact because such things will be internationalized. For example, we have a large number of writers in regional languages, very famous writers and poets. But their [work is] not getting internationalized or coming into global attention because they are not using ICTs. So we are trying to promote ICTs for creative writers, artists...

On the topic of language, it appears on the surface that India has a comparative advantage to China in retaining English as one of the country’s two official languages (the other
being Hindi), and the most prominent language in higher education, yet as a comparative point to China, this same policymaker interestingly drew on India’s comparative disadvantage. I14 added,

I’m also looking at China. For example they are definitely jumping. India and China, there are a lot of differences. They are jumping just from one language to English. We are not jumping from just one language to English. We have between 25 and 30 developed languages in this country and each is strong. So when we look at things we have to look at our other regional languages also. Of course the English speaking population is very high, but in China they have Chinese language and then going to the English language, but in our case it’s not the case. Our activities have to be much more focused when it comes to internationalization.

This response is interesting and a perceived problem that is unique to IGNOU. As stated in Chapter 5, IGNOU is a Central University and among only a handful that are not bound by territorial jurisdiction. Even notable institutions such as University of Mumbai and Delhi University are required to operate only within the municipalities where the campuses are housed. Of course there are some exceptions as institutions widen access through distance education, but there is no comparison to the geographical reach of IGNOU. There is also the institution’s social mandate to reach the unreached, which adds additional challenges to make higher learning culturally and linguistically relevant across the country. Therefore the linguistic possibilities first mentioned by I14, with the prospect of ICTs, present as many opportunities as challenges to IGNOU. Although China grants official recognition to 56 minority groups, their populations are comparatively smaller and do not receive official language status by state, as in India. The harmonious society promulgated by the CCP is organized through Mandarin, or Pǔtōnghuà (普通话). With the exception of English and the few other language programs offered through the OUC’s School of Foreign Languages, all courses are offered in Chinese only. The same concerns of ‘course compromise’ laid out to OUC policymakers were met with

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55 The distinction between Chinese and Mandarin is between written (Chinese) and spoken (Mandarin) forms of the language.
little sense of challenges ahead. One respondent from the OUC, C2, offered a more practical focus for using online learning: market demand and relevance to the economy. The participant’s comments in response to the same question were as follows:

In this market economy, courses like social science, economy, law, and finance have very important functions to the development of the Chinese economy. Over these years, the development of humanities and social science, to some degree matches, or even exceeds, the development of science and engineering. ... Actually the OUC starts from science and engineering; the first [conventional] program at the OUC was in science, and right now Humanities and Social Science are the main courses at the OUC. From the number of enrolled students, the courses opened, or the majors set up, humanities exceed science and engineering. I believe the reasons lie on two aspects; one is that people have extensive demands for the humanities. The humanities have a good market in education; the second reason is that the method or technique of distance education are more adaptable to humanities, while in the science and engineering fields, it might be comparatively weaker and might need more research and exploration to make good use of these methods or techniques.

The interesting comparison between these two comments from I14 and C2 on online courses, is what IGNOU aspires to offer and what the OUC currently offers. In the IGNOU context, I14 sees the potential for the growth in online learning among disciplines outside of what may be deemed traditional courses, such as those belonging to business and technology disciplines. Indeed there are already examples of eclectic, if not eccentric offerings, where technology is being used to exploit the learning opportunities of particular disciplines. Some examples of the current listing of online programs include certificate programs in Acupuncture, Spanish language (sponsored by the Spanish embassy) and Legal Process Outsourcing, which caters to legal professionals working in India’s lucrative call-centre industries.

As for the OUC, they have had a consistent online learning presence in their courses since 1999. The first programs were Law, Finance, Computers and English (as confirmed separately by C8 and C3). According to interviewee C8, the rationale for initially selecting
certain courses for online learning was due to high enrolments, societal demands and adequate infrastructure and expertise to run these programs in the central OUC and its Provincial affiliates. The consistent online learning presence in OUC courses, since 1999, has been met with a commensurate growth in domestic Internet usership (see Figure 5.2). A strong record of performance has enabled expansion into all discipline areas to the point that one OUC policy is to provide an online learning component to nearly all courses. In fact, OUC policy requires the provision of three access points for all OUC compulsory courses, usually occurring in the form of print, television and Internet offerings (it has been reported that 93 percent of OUC compulsory courses support this policy) (OUC, 2008). This suggests that with the stepwise maturation of programs, it was deemed most suitable to widen the method of delivery while maintaining conventional methods of access. The most current data indicates there are over 500 courses having an online component at the OUC. On the point of C2, regarding the presence of the humanities and social sciences in the online medium, indeed there are courses that have gained a good reputation for quality. One course designer, who will be mentioned in more detail in Chapter 7, boasted of having a course on Modern Chinese that had received the most hits on the OUC website. Other courses in the social sciences and humanities have been recipients of the top level courses award, mentioned in Chapter 5.

Although IGNOU is not at the stage of the OUC, the vision and desire to have a technologically-centric system is clear. The first steps of putting the technology in place may be simplistic, but necessary to achieving more sophisticated forms of online offerings and exploiting the technology to best cater to the idiosyncrasies of a particular course. That said, the experiences of the OUC several years back seem aligned to the opportunities currently present at IGNOU. Realizing the potential is half the battle. This is best captured by another IGNOU participant who realized that early difficulties are inevitable and that proper planning cannot be understated in moving forward with online learning. I7 suggested that once the technology is in place, learning, and acceptance will gradually follow. As he stated,

> Whenever a new technology comes, the very first applications are the most straightforward. So I don't find anything much wrong. The uploading of materials into
electronic version, I don't find much wrong; of course I do agree. But whenever a new technology is done, the safer applications are used first... Once we are matured then gradually learning processes, it cannot be as fast as the technology.... The main thing is that IGNOU material should form a foundation that it gives that this is the scope of the topics which need to be covered in depth. And once that is given, then it should allow or increase the students to access the material from all over the world and develop a knowledge of the discipline or solving problems. So the policy discussion is a very complicated issue.

The comments made by participant I7 are both optimistic and pragmatic. The realization that the online learning initiatives at IGNOU are immature is clear, and should not cause much concern as students and faculty get better acquainted with learning in this medium. As the system becomes more sophisticated, it is expected that accessing uploaded materials will become only one feature among many that will gradually include blogging, paired/group interactions, linking to new sites/ideas, etc. The notion of using “safer applications”, while pertinent to the aforesaid point, may also be extrapolated to include safest, or most practical, courses. At the OUC, it was stated that the first online courses, as part of the Modern Distance Education Project, included Computers, English, Law and Finance. One could predict these disciplines as being suitable for online learning considering the global nature, and associated access to information, for these disciplines. The actual rationale was reported as having a large target group based on existing and potential enrolment, infrastructure and faculty interest and ability. For IGNOU, the rationale for marching ahead with the second generation of online learning in 2008 has largely been based on faculty interest and technological ability. If we refer back to IGNOU’s first generation courses with online learning, the rationale seemed more aligned to the suitability of the subject matter for online learning (IT and business). Although rationale at IGNOU is addressed more closely in Chapter 7, the point is that courses that have the most potential for enrolment growth may be the most aptly suited for initiating online access. As part of the next section on the future of online learning within each institution, there is a summary from the input of several IGNOU participants about other rationales deemed necessary to move forward with the institution’s interests in online learning.
Considerations of globalization.

On the topic of globalization influencing their particular institutions’ pursuits into online learning, and education more generally, policymakers from both institutions looked at globalization as overwhelmingly positive. As we delve deeper, however, there are stark contrasts regarding how perceptions of globalization affect each institution (and vice versa). The opening up of both countries over the last several decades has had a direct effect on rising incomes which in turn has made higher learning more affordable. As a result, enrolments have soared in both institutions with the rising demand for higher learning and distance education emerging as a viable option to earn a higher education credential.

Both institutions have also been relatively global in their outlook since their respective inceptions over 25 years ago. Long before the popularization of the borderless University, the earlier established Open Universities had forged a unique global consortium. The OUUK was at the helm, having lent its successful model of media supported distance learning abroad while forging a process of higher education diplomacy. As was stated in Chapter 5, the OUC was established under the direction of Deng Xiaoping, after consultation with dignitaries from the OUUK, whereas IGNOU was created by an Act of Parliament in 1985 and received then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to lay the foundation stone on the campus of the institution that bears his mother’s name. With the OUUK creating partnerships through the transfer of curriculum and faculty exchanges with partner institutions, growth naturally occurred, spawning the establishment of other organizations. The International Council for Open and Distance Learning 56, the Asian Association of Open Universities and the Commonwealth of Learning, all of which were established in the 1980s, continue to deepen linkages among partners in regional and global contexts. Both IGNOU and the OUC regularly participate in the conferences hosted by these organizations. As well, faculty exchanges sponsored by the OUUK continue, where IGNOU and the OUC staff receive training in the United Kingdom, usually carried out over several weeks at a time.

56 The International Council for Correspondence Education was renamed as The International Council for Open and Distance Learning in 1982. The ICCE was established in 1938.
Outside of the Open University context, IGNOU and the OUC also benefit from having their locations in Delhi and Beijing, respectively. It seemed not too uncommon for IGNOU and OUC faculty to schedule meetings, or have other chance opportunities to encounter members of government, local and overseas academics, foreign diplomats or other businesspeople, in either of their unique cosmopolitan settings. And the potential for benefit is certainly mutual with these outside groups with which each institution is connected. Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with either University, for example, can have remarkable economic or political outcomes for varying stakeholders with the realization that each institution has student populations of a size that can be boasted by no other institutions in the world.

That said, the perception from OUC and IGNOU policymakers was that globalization, in terms of creating opportunities (e.g., domestic enrolments), interconnectivity (e.g., access to markets, new forms of communicating) added awareness and new understandings (e.g., access to greater knowledge), had paid untold dividends for each University. There was also a general perception that there was much opportunity for importing models of learning and forms of knowledge from the industrialized world. This notion was captured by policymaker I14 as follows,

We have to ensure global standards in our educational systems. And what I mean by global standards, if we just lower the standards and say that our society is not geared up to face this globalization and all that, if we stick to this, we will go back again.

This reference to global standards points to the continued underdevelopment of both formal and higher education in India. There are upwards of 30 million children out of school, millions are, or have been, denied higher education opportunities and adult illiteracy rates, particularly among women, remain a major developmental impediment to the country. Indeed such figures are not news to those in the government or education sectors. The lingering threat that the country may “go back again,” suggests that India is at a pivotal point in its development. It is committed to raising the quality of education universally in order to alleviate poverty and to facilitate a further integration into the global economy. For formal schooling, the departure from the past rhetoric on education is evident. There has been a gradual rise in
the percentage of GDP directed to formal education, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan movement has outlined attainable targets for primary education, and successful models of non-formal secondary schooling have increased enrolments by millions (e.g., the National Institute for Open Schooling). In a way, globalization has also incorporated an accountability framework into how governments and other institutions operate in the education sector. The global adherence to the Millennium Development Goals, the ubiquity of country-by-country statistical data (e.g., UNESCO, OECD, World Bank) and a free and critical media in India have together undoubtedly influenced government work on formal education. India’s legislation of the Right to Information Act, which aims to provide “transparency and accountability” (Government of India, 2005), has only added to demands for government to provide better standards in education. On this note, we may return to higher education and how it has been framed in the globalization debate in India.

I14 also made an interesting point that is relevant particularly to the internationalization of higher education in the country:

Not very big institutions are coming into the country. The institutions that are coming into the country are also providing some programs that are not high quality in India – that is my point. So institutions that are coming into India they have to offer the same kind and quality of programs. That is clearly not happening. They are also doing some programs for the Indian population. I’m not for that. What we want is the same type of programs and the same quality. But what is happening in the name of globalization or internationalization is only some sort of third rate offerings that is coming to India.

This quote connects to I14’s previous point as well. From there it was inferred that, through varying channels, globalization has accelerated the widespread adoption of global standards in formal education. The position of I14 is that the same prospect of standardization may come for higher learning, with the expectation that foreign institutions will make comparative improvements to existing programs and institutions. As quoted in Panikkar (2011),

\[57\] India’s version of Education for All.
India’s Foreign Universities Bill which is expected to pass this year echoes strikingly similar sentiments to I14 in the current draft:

... a foreign education provider shall ensure that a course or program of study offered and imparted by it in India is in conformity with the standards laid down by the statutory authority and is of quality comparable, as to the curriculum [and] methods of imparting education, to those offered by it to students enrolled in its main campus in the country in which such institution is established or incorporated.

The first point to address is the subtle contradiction in the above statement. Although a foreign provided program must conform “with the standards laid down by the statutory authority,” the program must also be “of quality comparable, as to the curriculum and methods of imparting education,” offered in the home campus of the foreign provider. The standards to which the statutory authority subscribes are undoubtedly expected to be Indian in nature, yet both what is taught and how it is taught is expected to occur in India as it is in its place of origin! True, subsequent readings of the bill are to come and the implication of an imminent higher education invasion is perhaps overstated. What remains a fact is that there is an excessively large unmet demand for higher learning in India and the state and the affiliated regulatory bodies realize that there are insufficient resources to provide quality higher education opportunities.

When asked about the implications of globalization with the advent of online learning at IGNOU, another policymaker, I7, said pointedly that technology is largely “impartial” and needs “appropriate direction” for advancement. On the point of technology’s impartiality, we may look at this using the metaphors of hardware and software. Returning to the quote of Wade in Chapter 2, where she stated that international, “… standards and rules ensure that as developing countries become more integrated into the international ICT system, Western suppliers benefit disproportionately” (p. 462). Such rules are implicit, yet dictate that more is always essential for using networked technologies. More bandwidth is best utilized by more powerful machines which can handle more information and enable people to be more knowledgeable, mobile, and so on. This is a question of hardware and it will almost certainly be
controlled in the near future by technological innovation that predominantly emerges from the industrialized world. The software question remains at the heart of this investigation. Although this particular policymaker did not mention these terms, the point of “appropriate direction,” connotes a degree of choice over how technology may present content – this is the software question. I8 also recognized the imminent challenges of globalization on the education system in India. With reference to globalization I8 stated,

The only thing is that how to assimilate this and make it a strength instead of allowing it to erode the traditional strengths. So it is a question of the marriage of the fruitful and positive attributes of globalization and how to harmonize them into the traditional strengths that the system has and to have a better balance and a wholesome educational system.

The “appropriate direction” stated by this individual is harmonization, with the recognition of the strong traditions inherent in India balanced with what I8 refers to as the “positive attributes of globalization”. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to look at the concept of harmonization in less abstract terms with analyses of curricular content to see how well-represented is Indian and Chinese knowledge as compared to knowledge originating external to these countries. The point of harmonization provides a good segue to look at the perceptions on globalization and education in the Chinese context.

The policymaker response from China was both positive and indifferent. When the question on the topic of globalization and its influence on education was posed some policymakers commented on opportunities for enhanced “harmony”, “peace” and “learning from the other” whereas others were admittedly ill-equipped or uncertain to provide meaningful insights. On the topic of harmonization, policymaker C2 noted that although the current trends of globalization suggest that China is benefiting from learning about foreign concepts and resources for education, the biggest challenges are to “adapting imported education systems to the local culture”. When prodded on the prospect of China acting more as an exporter of education, C2 was both optimistic and humble, stating that the ongoing development in China’s education system would “contribute to other countries’ educational
systems,” and adding that, “China should pay attention to the influence of her education on other countries”. The prospect of exporting (or supporting) education has been realized somewhat by way of the Confucius Institutes and China’s financial support of the Millennium Development Goals. Li (forthcoming) argues that this is aligned to its domestic objectives of creating (or furthering) a harmonious society. Beyond its borders China is striving to find a more significant place in the evolving global world order through a unique approach that subscribes to established global norms (e.g., accession into the WTO) while also promoting some of its own global governance ideals (e.g., non-intervention). The OUC’s role in contributing to the harmonious ideals of the CCP is well-established domestically, and with the prospective growth of online learning – and growing interest in China, an interesting prospect is to ponder how an outward looking policy of higher education diplomacy may unfold.

The prospect of exporting education abroad was shared by another policymaker who made reference to China’s rich culture. As C5 noted, China possesses, “… ancient wisdom, a long history of civilization,” adding, “With the development of the economy and the national strength, China will export educational resources abroad in future and realize interactive cooperation with other countries on the aspect of education”.

On the point of “interactive cooperation” there is an interesting comparison to be made with India. As noted above, policymaker I8 from IGNOU spoke of the desire to “harmonize” with external influences the “traditional strengths” of Indian culture, and I14 spoke of the desire to have in India “the same type of programs and the same quality” that foreign providers offer in their country of origin. In a way, the referenced portion of the Foreign Universities Bill melded the two comments together; the curriculum of foreign providers will be in “conformity with the standards laid down by the statutory authority”, while also maintaining the same quality “offered by it to students enrolled in its main campus”. From the OUC, several participants made reference to harmony and C5 made a note of “ancient wisdom” and a “long history of civilization”. Yet there was also C5’s comment on exporting curriculum overseas and need for greater interaction. This point was contextualized by C9, who stated,
I predict we will expand internationally together with the spread of the Confucius institutes, not only in Chinese but other subject areas. We can transform the current courses into English. In that way people in Asia and Africa can learn by online learning.

On this point of exportation, there is an interesting comparison to be made with IGNOU. The spread of programs and courses to Asia and Africa, as well as to the Middle East and the Caribbean, has already been achieved by IGNOU. There are currently branch campuses in approximately 35 countries, offering a range of programs in business, IT and other disciplines. In this context, IGNOU is already more global in its operations than the OUC. True, the OUC has been involved with the proliferation of the Confucius Institutes, having close ties in particular to the CI at Michigan State University. There are also partnerships with the BBC and universities in Canada, Germany and the UK. With the exception of the Confucius Institutes, however, all partnerships with the OUC are based on importing rather than exporting expertise. In contrast, IGNOU overseas ventures are primarily focused on export, delivering its own curriculum globally. Granted, the majority of their overseas ventures target the Indian Diaspora, yet undoubtedly there are also non-Indians accessing the content being offered. Delving deeper into IGNOU’s exporting ventures is beyond the confines of this investigation, yet it begs the question in relation to this section, *In light of its own concerns to maintain the traditional strengths of the country, to what extent are there considerations to tailor content to the particular overseas context?* More relevant to this investigation is, *Why has the OUC not endeavoured to widen its reach overseas?*

The first response is naturally language. Where India benefits from having a lingua franca that is widely shared with most areas of the world, Chinese is generally limited to East and Southeast Asia. In terms of the sizeable Diasporas of each country, their historical circumstances are categorically different. India, as a former British colony, benefits from a natural kinship with other former colonies that is fortified through their memberships in the

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58 India has a classification system that identifies members of the Indian Diaspora under two headings: Indians of National Origin (INOs) and Non-resident Indians (NRIs). The former are those who have been born overseas whereas the latter are those who were born in India and have emigrated from India to other countries.
Commonwealth, or other regional groupings such as SAARC. This has translated into a large number of Indian expatriates working abroad in trade, commerce, manual labour or domestic help. The last point is that IGNOU’s cross border delivery also speaks highly of the quality of its curriculum, though the extent that it is localized, as mentioned above, is uncertain.

In the second half of the 20th century the majority of Chinese who have moved around the globe have emigrated from Hong Kong. The mother tongue of Hong Kong Chinese is the dialect of Cantonese which is quite distinct in both spoken and written forms from Mandarin. As for the more recent dispersion of Mainland Chinese, this is more less a phenomenon of the past 20 years, and those who have moved abroad are likely to be seeking to learn knowledge and skills in the language of their adopted homes. Together, these populations are less of a target for the OUC because of linguistic and literacy barriers in the case of Hong Kong, and for both populations, because of the likely incompatibility of the OUC curriculum with the foreign context. If we look at globalization in this respect, with the prospect of IGNOU and OUC emerging as exporters of higher education, each institution still faces a high learning curve. As of now, IGNOU clearly has the comparative advantage with links to Diasporas located predominantly in emerging countries and using English as the medium of instruction. The possible advantage of the OUC is its more sophisticated course development geared towards online learning. As noted above, each institution has varying target groups, and it should also be noted that cross-border growth for each institution holds promise for recipient countries, for example, when considering factors of rising tuition fees, stronger and stronger translation software and extensive knowledge and experience catering to adult and distance learners.

Section III: Future Policy

The last major topic of discussion is the future outlook for each institution and the relevance of policy on online learning for the continued development of adult and distance learners.

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59 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, founded in 1985. The organization’s headquarters are located in Kathmandu, Nepal and include as members: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
higher education. Responses covered several areas including governments’ role, and the need for greater infrastructure and were interwoven with other discussions during the interviews.

To begin, we will examine two opposing comments made by policymaker C2. First was the acknowledgement that the OUC will in future remain reliant on guidance from the MoE, as the Ministry is responsible to “choose the most suitable technology,” whether that is television, post, or online for distance learners at the OUC. The recognition that the online technology is “not yet well developed” was indicated as requiring more promotion from the government. At the same time C2 also hinted at having more autonomy from the directions of government policy. This was a longer discussion that included differentiating the meaning of the word ‘independent’ in English and Chinese. When asked about the vision for the institution, this policymaker noted that change to develop in the area of continuing education was a priority, and for the institution to “depend on itself more... rather than relying too much on the push of the policy.” This was clarified with the suggestion for, “changing from the sole dependence on the policy to combining the OUC’s own capability and the policy together to bring out the best advantage of the OUC itself is very essential in the future development.” When prodded by the interviewer on the topic of more independence for the institution, this policymaker stated,

Well, maybe it is a little misunderstanding here. When we say the word independent in Chinese, it doesn’t really mean getting more political rights, the right of autonomy or something like that, which is the difference between Chinese and English. No doubt [the OUC] needs policy to develop itself either at the present time or in the future, and [the OUC] serves the government; in Chinese serving the government has another level of meaning, which is serving the public, serving the civilian. When I said being independent I meant that [the OUC] should quit accepting the assignments from the government passively, instead, [the OUC] should voluntarily do a lot of services for the government, for the civilian, and even do something the government never thought of, or do much better than the government expected.

As stated in Chapter 5 on the comparison between the two institutions, there are a number of policy requirements that the OUC abides by such as relying on partner institutions to
confer degrees and the requirement that all provincial Open Universities must use, at minimum, 60 percent of courses designed from the OUC. In the earlier portions of this Chapter the analysis of policy developments for online learning in China were also characterized as highly prescriptive. If we return to Table 5.1 on the long-term plan for the Chinese education system, it was clear that continuing education is one of the next great foci in China’s education sector. As a reminder, the figures that were mentioned were growth of 184 million new learners to be enrolled in continuing education from 2009 to 2020 and for an additional 100 million individuals to have been enrolled in higher education by 2020. These will double the current figures under each heading. The added levels of bureaucracy to accommodate the projected populations will likely require more than the government can handle, or rather, best be de-centralized to the higher education institutions. Few are better equipped to accommodate the widening enrolments than the OUC.

The responses from IGNOU policymakers on the future outlook of online learning and the institution were more pointed, with several interesting ideas put forth. One policymaker, I3, suggested the “huge potential,” for online learning for those outside of India, with particular reference to the large migrant populations. As previously stated, there are many labourers and domestic helpers who travel abroad, who ultimately return to India after a period of time. As well are those migrant workers who move around the country itself. Catering to the learning needs of these individuals is another mandate that IGNOU has embraced, with one experiment being the establishment of learning centres in India’s innumerable railway stations (Gairola, 2009). I3 asserted that online learning would be an essential tool for these learners and that catering to their needs “has to go to the mainstream of our policy, otherwise we'll be left behind.” The realization in this statement is that there are many institutions that are entering the online learning market. Competition will increase and a credible local provider may be better positioned to offer courses than the vast IGNOU system.

To shed more light on the topic of policy, deeper insights may be drawn from examining how each institution operates within the confines of two distinct political systems. The quote from C2 above centred on the desire for more institutional freedom from the MoE. Under the
communist system the government does provide for extensive oversight regarding the operations of its higher education system, with the regulation of online learning licenses being a salient example. The OUC is also an exceptional institution as it provides a service to the government by catering to the needs of adult learners, minority populations and those who have been otherwise limited in entering conventional higher education institutions. For these ‘social services’ the OUC, since its inception, has been closely linked to the Ministry of Education. On the contrary, IGNOU has operated independently, though it is recognized as one of only 20 central universities in India. With IGNOU’s Distance Education Council as the apex body for open and distance learning in the country, its autonomy has been fortified – to an extent. When asked about the differences between the two countries on the topic of higher education, I14 made reference to the distinct political systems and respect for diversity:

We have much more, as our politicians used to say, the cost of democracy. We have a large number of diverse systems in this country ... and we have to respect these diversities and then only we can jump into all these activities. And in the case of China because they have the decision making, the implementation, all these things are happening in a quicker way than in India.

Though this begs the question, Which system is best? No one country has ever modernized with a population of one billion people, and thus this oversimplified question regarding which country will best benefit according to a particular political system, and how this accommodates sustained economic growth, demographic changes, social solidarity, cultural preservation and national security will endure as one of the more topical debates of the 21st century. In the particular context of the Open University system of each country, the autonomy over policy has played out in very interesting ways, about which concluding remarks will now be made.
Comparisons and Conclusions

This Chapter was guided by the following research question:

1.1 What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?

To address this question the Chapter was organized according to the three major themes of Present Policy, Knowledge Representation and Globalization, and Future Policy.

In starting with the current place of policy in online learning the three sub-themes were Government, Institution and the Role of the University Leader.

The institutional differences in how policy has been formulated for online learning are stark. In the case of the OUC, the steady direction of the government, as asserted by policymakers, had facilitated continuity in programs and seemed to blur the lines between the institution and the MoE. IGNOU, by contrast, had to start anew in 2008, after having unsuccessfully launched varying programs over a four-year period that ended in 2003. The infancy of its programs was reflected in participants’ views on policy which were largely inconsistent and reflective of the experimentation (e.g., in evaluation and enrolments) occurring in the online programs. It seemed as though policy development would occur organically with feedback driven by faculty and students. Faculty seem to be the centrepiece of these online initiatives as the selection of programs for online learning was driven by the schools, ahead of any other factors, such as needs assessment or labour market relevance. Little was said of government, substantiating claims of the stronger role of the academy, as identified in Clark’s Triangle, in formulating policies at IGNOU.

The developments presented at IGNOU can in part be accredited to the dynamism of its Vice Chancellor. As stated in Chapter 5, the VC has brought to IGNOU, from his former post as Chairman of the UGC, a plethora of ideas that have turned into viable projects. It was his announcement that IGNOU should embark on an institution-wide expansion of online learning
to all courses deemed suitable. At the heart of the VC’s mandate however, was a commitment to raise the participation rates in higher education in the country. In comparison, the position of the President of the OUC seemed less about innovation and more about ensuring that the plans from the MoE are put into place and followed accordingly. As one participant noted, there was no difference in the Presidents that have come to the OUC. The President’s role at the OUC seemed to advance the institution in becoming more and more focused on continuing education which parallels the government plans from The National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) as was identified in Table 5.1.

In comparative context, there is a convergence between the two figureheads in terms of widening access, yet divergence when considering the target learner populations and channels of delivery. In the post-massification context the OUC is appealing to a broader adult education base as part of the larger drive to create a lifelong learning society in the country. Through the channels of continuing education this is being addressed. What will likely occur is an alteration of the makeup of the University, moving towards more diploma and postgraduate based programs than degree programs for reasons that are more attractive to adult learners such as shorter study duration, lower intensity and less financial burden. As stated by the VC, the mandate for him is to enhance the participation rates in higher education towards enrolling 15% of the age cohort by 2012. There are also the added pressures of enhancing participation rates primarily through distance education.

Moving to Knowledge Representation and Globalization, we start with IGNOU. From the interview data it was found that the OUC selected courses in Computers, Law, Finance and Accounting to first start offerings online. This was pursued because of high enrolments, societal demand and faculty readiness, according to one interviewee. In the case of IGNOU’s first generation of online learning, two of the three aforementioned requirements were identified: high enrolments in the particular courses (computers and business), and faculty readiness. An assessment of student needs was absent. This also seems to be the case with the second generation of online learning at IGNOU, based more on the interest emerging from the schools of study. In regards to knowledge representation and language, policymakers from each
institution suggested there was little threat for courses that were more localized such as those in the social sciences and humanities to be displaced online. At the OUC, the remarks were that courses in the humanities and social science disciplines were as popular as those in science and engineering, and would remain as such based on the ease of offering such programs as they were not laboratory dependent. One policymaker from IGNOU asserted that the opportunities to exploit disciplines unique to India through the online medium were vast, including the potential to raise the presence of India’s many regional languages. This was actually cited as an opportunity and a challenge. IGNOU is officially charged with raising participation rates in the country through two forms; one is by the direct increase in enrolment, the other is through leadership, as it acts at the flagship institution for distance learning in the country by sharing its curriculum and accreditation status through the Distance Education Council. For these reasons the institution has an obligation to provide educational opportunities to its linguistically diverse population. As stated in Chapter 4, there are 22 recognized languages in the country that are geographically distributed along state lines. In a country that is boastful of its democratic traditions, there is an obligation to support the pluralism of the population. As The People’s University, the moniker taken to mark its 25th anniversary in 2010, few other institutions are more suited than IGNOU to accommodate access along linguistic lines. The sentiment was identified as both opportunity and challenge in the interviews. One policymaker noted the potential for using ICTs to accommodate the linguistic patterns in the country whereas another questioned the use of ICTs in the curriculum in light on the institution’s linguistic preferences primarily for English.

The same arguments may be assumed for China, and the OUC, by association, with its linguistic diversity. The reality, however, is that these minority populations are comparatively smaller to those in India and the use of Mandarin Chinese across the education sector has been lauded as a unifying force in the country. This point was noted as a distinct advantage by a policymaker from IGNOU. Though English is widely spoken in India, it is not an indigenous language and the expectation to accommodate the many other regional languages, as already mentioned, should become more of a priority. For China, this IGNOU senior policymaker suggested, adding English as a second language is comparatively easier, even though India is
years ahead in terms of the number of Indians who are English speakers. Despite the comments
from the policymaker above, the topic of language was of little concern to OUC policymakers as
all courses, with the exception of those in English, are taught in Chinese.

Included in the title of this thesis is the term globalization, which was defined in Chapter 2.
Definitions of the term, of course, vary and it was asked of participants in general terms what
the effect of globalization was on the institution, in general, and for online learning, in
particular. It was found that interviewees generally held positive perceptions of globalization.
In terms of technology, the implementation of online learning had widened access to knowledge
for learners and institutions. At the same time one policymaker, I7, aptly stated that technology
is largely “impartial” and needs “appropriate direction”, suggesting that using the technology is
only one step towards the deeper processes of understanding its use and impact. Although
such understanding comes with exposure, this point is also cause for reflection, particularly on
the rationale, purpose and expected outcomes of using online learning. The prevailing theme of
globalization being a panacea to improve educational outcomes, access, knowledge acquisition,
etc. should be considered in relation to some of the results presented in this section with
respect to relevance, impact on learning behaviours, cost and so on.

Although elements about future outlook have been touched on in this summary, there
were additional points made that pertain more broadly to the distinct political systems of each
country and the relationship between government and the particular Open Universities. The
role of government has had a stronger place than in IGNOU in influencing the development of
online learning at the OUC, and other universities in China more generally. One policymaker
from the OUC advocated for more independence from the government to pursue activities that
may be more beneficial to both the institution and to the government itself. It is difficult to
argue however, against the effective role of the Chinese government in mapping out a
formidable expansion in the higher education system of the country over the last ten to twelve
years. In the case of online learning, government oversight also ensured quality of instruction
among Internet Colleges and implemented controls over admissions and degrees. Over this
time the OUC has also had unprecedented growth in enrolments. Perhaps with such success of
the OUC and the presence of a highly experienced faculty (most faculty interviewed had spent 20 years or more at the OUC), there is an accumulation of knowledge and ideas that may be better utilized within the institution under conditions of reduced government oversight. An authority figure on open and distance learning, Sir John Daniel, has long advocated for the Chinese government to loosen the reins on the OUC, having made statements calling for the University to be permitted to administer its own degrees.

IGNOU, as the counterpart to the OUC, provides the only real snapshot from the other side. It has been argued in this investigation that the similarities between the two institutions outweigh the differences. They are comparable in mission, enrolment, geographical dispersion and good stature in their respective higher education sectors. Apart from linguistic differences, perhaps the most distinguishable feature between the two institutions is the nature of government involvement. With the exception of funding there is minimal intervention by the state in the operations of IGNOU. As indicated earlier in this Chapter and in Chapter 5, IGNOU has operated under the oversight of an academic oligarchy, through the Distance Education Council and occasionally, the University Grants Commission. Where online learning is concerned, these initiatives have been generally self-financed and created as grassroots projects by IGNOU faculty. Vague suggestions have been articulated in the IT Plan of 1999, and subsequent five year plans, regarding government direction for the development of online learning. IGNOU is otherwise venturing ahead with its initiatives on a trial and error basis. Although the Department of Human Resource Development is charged with overseeing the higher education sector in the country, decision making is largely deferred to the States, the UGC, and in the context of distance education, the Distance Education Council. In some cases the organization is a vestige of the system left by the British, but the existing breakdown of the higher education sector also speaks to the continued decentralization efforts of the government and the nature of Indian pluralism and democracy. It is on this point that the future of IGNOU can be addressed. One IGNOU policymaker implied in a remark that China’s decision making and implementation enable the advancements in higher education to happen “in a quicker way than India”. The policymaker from the OUC, holding the same position as this IGNOU policymaker, suggested that more independence for the OUC would enable it to
advance better than under the watchful eye of the government. It would be a fascinating proposition to, at the very least, arrange for an exchange between these high level policymakers so that each could garner a better understanding of how their counterpart operates and use this knowledge to better their home institutions.

In this Chapter it was found that government policy will likely continue to play a significant role in the developments for online learning at the OUC. At IGNOU, all indicators point to the same developments as remaining more a matter of internal decision making. The government oversight within the OUC may be a source of limitation on the faculty and policymakers within the OUC, yet it is also difficult to deny that the State Authority, according to Clark’s Triangle, has served the developments of online learning at the OUC, and the higher education sector, admirably. IGNOU, on the other hand carries more responsibility than the institution itself. As the pre-eminent institution in India for distance education, it will likely expand its reputation successfully as a provider of online learning. For these reasons, the implications of its policies may have a greater reach than the institution itself, as disseminated through its Distance Education Council.

In the next Chapter this discussion will be taken further to look more specifically at the organization of curriculum in relation to specific courses within each Open University.
Chapter 7: Curriculum Issues in Online Learning

*The curricula and processes of education will be enriched by cultural content in as many manifestations as possible.*

National Policy on Education: 1986 (1992 amendment) under Open University and Distance Learning, section 8.2 (Government of India, 1992)

**Introduction**

Chapter six provided an analysis of several aspects of policymaking in relation to the two cases of the OUC and IGNOU. A historical overview of policymaking for online learning was provided and the roles of the main stakeholders, the government and academia, were identified in terms of duties and influence in policymaking for the two Open Universities under investigation.

It was shown that the OUC clearly has more practical experience with implementing online learning and links can be drawn to a strong disposition by the government to monitor developments among its institutions of higher learning. IGNOU is engaging in a second generation launch of its online learning initiatives having first experimented with several programs in the late 1990s. It was shown that policy for online learning in IGNOU is arbitrary, fluid and still experimental, having only scant direction from the government. This suggests that the academic oligarchy, as described from using Clark’s Triangle, plays a more pivotal role in policy development. The future outlook from each institution seems particularly optimistic yet the progression of each institution is moving along two distinct paths. The OUC’s proximity to government suggests that the function of the institution will remain tied to labour market trends and pursuing the socio-political objectives of the CCP. Like the OUC, IGNOU operates in a unique setting, though under completely different terms. The University serves the dual purposes of operating as an institution of higher learning and as a regulatory body for distance education in the country. This autonomy is exemplified in its effort to create a viable online learning component to its operations. The grassroots initiatives have shown early successes,
but IGNOU’s past difficulties using online learning suggest a cautionary approach is the best policy in moving forward.

In this Chapter the aim is to present analyses of course content with regards to policy directives, structure and the representation of national knowledge, guided by three sub-research questions as follows:

2.1 *How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?*

2.2 *How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?*

2.3 *To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?*

These questions support the main research question which draws in the larger picture of the operations of the Open Universities themselves. It is re-stated here as follows:

*How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?*

To address the three sub research questions, the analysis in the Chapter follows three main sections. First is an attempt to analyze and compare the perceptions of the terms curriculum and globalization from the curriculum designers of the courses to be studied. Second is an overview of how curriculum is designed within each institution. This will re-connect the reader to the literature review where theory on curriculum and distance education was discussed. Third is an analysis of the origin of course content, done in two complementary parts. For five of the eight selected courses a rubric is utilized that offers a comparative synopsis on the origin of content, categorized as Indian or Chinese or non-Indian or non-
Chinese. The results of the rubric are measured against the perceptions of the curriculum designers of each course. The overall perceptions of curriculum designers on course development for online learning are also analyzed in this section.

Like the differences identified in national and institutional policy, there is a stark difference between IGNOU and the OUC in terms of the perceptions of running online courses and the design of the curriculum at each institution. As can be drawn from Chapter six, this can be traced to the degree of maturity of using online learning. At the policy level there were fewer concerns comparatively at the OUC than IGNOU. Arrangements such as teaching expectations, participation and examination have clearly been addressed at the OUC, as it has engaged steadily with online learning over a ten-year period.

At IGNOU, the investigator had the benefit of being able to conduct interviews in 2008, and 12 months later in 2009, to compare the perceptions of curriculum designers before and after launching the online programs.

The analyses are centred on four courses from each institution. From the OUC there are four undergraduate degree program courses and from IGNOU there are two post-graduate courses, and two Master’s level courses. With an analysis of each course there will be included perceptions of the curriculum designers based on the above research questions and a subsequent analysis. Concluding remarks will end the Chapter.

Section I: Perceptions of Curriculum and Globalization from Course Designers

As the main topics covered in interviews were curriculum and globalization it was deemed necessary to have each interviewee provide a definition for these terms. As identified in Chapter 2 each term connotes varying interpretations and therefore to make better sense of the analysis, some context was required.

On the term globalization there was no consistency or distinguishable markers between the Indian and Chinese participants, though a pattern developed whereby participants seemed to frame their particular discipline within the globalization discussion.
The questions asked to provide a definition for the terms curriculum and globalization. Participants were assured that there were no incorrect answers and that these were opinion-based questions.

**Globalization and curriculum: OUC participants.**

From the Chinese participants, the view of globalization was mixed. One participant, C8, stated globalization was the “chance to learn about the requirements of education and cultural aspects in other countries,” though later expressed concern over the passivity of Chinese youth who tend to mimic the behaviour of their counterparts in the west. C9 stated, “Globalization is the merger of different cultures and languages, or philosophies and values.” A colleague from the same department, C10, similarly pointed to the increasing similarities between cultures but then added the notion of invasion. When prodded on this point, C10 noted that the language of English was something “we have to learn” and that “this language is not what we accept willingly.” In a similar vein, comments offered by C3 could be summarized as the imbalance of soft power as being at the heart of globalization. Lamenting on the number of foreigners coming to China, C3 noted they come to learn about the Chinese culture and language but not about techniques or skills; in contrast to thousands of Chinese going abroad for higher education purposes. The innovations, business practices, and other advancements in China have yet to have a comparable global impact to that in the industrialized world. The fact that no Chinese national has won the Nobel Laureate in the natural sciences, which has become a point of disgruntlement among government and media in China, is an example of this issue. Adding to this discontent is that the Nobel Prize has been awarded to dissidents of China. In bridging the concepts of globalization and curriculum, C11 offered a different perspective, recalling a partnership with an American institution. Foreign materials had been borrowed including those for a marketing course. Realizing the strength of these resources C11 remarked that acquiring quality resources should be prioritized over localization.

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60 The Nobel Prize is awarded in the categories of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology/Medicine, Literature and Peace. In 2010 Chinese citizen Liu Xiao Bo, currently incarcerated in China and deemed a dissident by the Chinese government, was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace. There have been other winners who were born in China, yet had become naturalized citizens of their adopted countries when the Prize was awarded.
On the topic of curriculum the views held by the Chinese participants were tied to the concept of open and distance learning and relevance to society. On this latter point, both C3 and C8 were adamant that curriculum, as representing the knowledge of the particular major, is locally situated and therefore represents “society’s demands” and maintained that curriculum cannot “become globalized”.

**Globalization and curriculum: IGNOU participants.**

Among the participants from India, the discussion on globalization was generally positive. Comments from I4 such as globalization “opens up the window to the world,” in relation to the internationalization of higher education were a common thread. I11 was adamant that the removal of physical and geographical barriers had democratized access to education and information. When prompted about any negative associations to globalization, I11 reverted to the opportunities presented to IGNOU and said confidently, “I don’t think right now I can see the negatives. I can only see positives.” Such optimism was also shared by I5 who noted that the outcomes from globalization supported by networked technologies was “beyond imagination”, though focus on the Indian context in relation to program development was key.

Definitions on curriculum were both detailed and general and focused on the more conventional notions of curriculum (syllabus, design, evaluation, etc). I4 and I11 shared similar perceptions of curriculum referring to it as “all encompassing”, and ranging from “registration to certification,” or earlier starting from the planning phase and the basic objectives of the course to the final examination. I10 referred to curriculum simply as the syllabus and I5 gave a more elaborate explanation of how IGNOU designs its courses, which will be touched on in Section II.

Comparing the perceptions of globalization and curriculum among the participants provides an additional lens to interpret the questions posed in this Chapter. As stated above, participants were asked to give their own definitions of these terms. If we look to the Chinese participants, multiple points emerge with one consistent theme. That is the entrenched sense of culture connected to globalization. The comments were mixed with each participant
generally sharing positive and negative outcomes of globalization that ranged from greater interconnectivity or interdependence, to a more skewed perception that could be perceived as coercion if we consider the persistence of soft power and the English language. On the other hand, the Indian participants shared only a positive outlook on the opportunities and outcomes of globalization. Comments were generally directed to education and how networked technologies would improve access and the reach of the IGNOU programs. Among the Chinese participants, there were some interesting comments on curriculum with emphasis on the importance of responding to societal needs and similarly that curriculum cannot be globalized, or rather, that it is culturally embedded. From IGNOU, participants generally shared similar views on the organization of curriculum and that it is much more than content. Right from the beginning phases of planning, for example, to the end product of certification, curriculum, and therefore decision making, was included in the process.

In the ensuing section we will look at the stages of curriculum organization within each Open University in terms of policy and procedures. Included in this description will be the larger considerations for program development, pertinent in particular to IGNOU with its new programs in online learning.

Section II: Program Development and Curriculum Organization

In this section we will see how program development and curriculum organization from the OUC and IGNOU proceed. As part of this description, we will draw on how each Open University utilizes expertise in terms of subject matter experts, faculty and tutors, technology/media, and course accreditation. We will then draw together areas of similarity and difference in curriculum organization between the two cases.

IGNOU program development and curriculum organization.

IGNOU methods of program development and curriculum organization are a multi-stage process that contains feedback loops and involves numerous stakeholders. Consequently the process to launch a program can take months from the phase of initiation to being launched and offered to a first cohort of students.
The description of course development was drawn from several sources including the IGNOU constitution and two participants; I9, a senior policymaker, and I10, a curriculum designer/faculty member from the School of Law. The presentation of Figure 7.1 draws on some of the descriptions of responsibilities of the bodies of IGNOU in Chapter 5. Some additional information is provided that is relevant to the phases of course development.

**Figure 7.1. Program and course development at IGNOU.**

Interviewee I10 described the process of programmatic and curriculum development as having four phases, as identified in Figure 7.1. In the School of Law, to which I10 belonged, the school board is comprised of five external experts in law, the school’s six faculty members and then some senior faculty from other schools within IGNOU. The first phase entails a discussion about the details of the proposed program. In Phase two an expert committee is formed,
including course writers, and a draft curriculum is prepared. Details of how the program will be carried out and delivered is also part of Phase two. If we return to the theoretical considerations on curriculum organization outlined in Chapter two we may identify the processes of curriculum foundations, design, construction and development existing within these two phases. In Phase 3 the draft program (and draft curriculum) will go to the Academic Council for approval. In Phase 4, feedback is given and the school board makes modifications. At this phase as well, the varying media will be incorporated into the curriculum (e.g., radio, video, Internet). Phase 4, I10 remarked, is also where the program is given accreditation and then officially launched to the first cohort of students. Full accreditation would occur at the level of the Board of Management. In describing the process of program development and curriculum organization, I10 also remarked that this was a “very flexible method” and therefore the processes described that are specific to the School of Law can similarly be found in the procedures in other Schools of Study.

The course materials themselves are referred to as Self Learning Materials (SLMs). Textbooks are generally not used. Instead, courses are printed in booklets, in the case of conventional programs, and in the case of online learning, uploaded as pdf documents, with the exception of the Legal Process Outsourcing program, which will be referred to in the next section. A typical course package is organized under the following headings:
As briefly mentioned, the design of curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of experts from outside the University. For many of the courses, however, the faculty are co-authors in the materials and are usually the individuals who provide the pre-recorded lecture. With the exception of the School Council, each body includes subject-matter experts, or other experts from various organizations to scrutinize the content of the materials, or the utility of the program. Some examples would be the feasibility of the program in various areas, and the capacity of regional or local study centres to provide the facilities needed by learners enrolled in particular programs. Administrative concerns are there as well. Tutors, or academic counsellors, need to be hired in the particular study centres spread across the country. These individuals are those who have face to face contact with students and are therefore responsible for answering students’ queries, providing guidance, and so on. The professors at IGNOU interact with these counsellors, and in some cases, directly with the students, an occurrence that has become more common with the new online programs.

All programs at IGNOU include counsellors and mentors (e-counsellors and e-mentors for the online programs). As stated above, counsellors are generally located at the study centres and provide pedagogical support to students in tutor-like settings. There are also mentors that provide guidance to students in terms of progress, decision making and other supports. In some cases, the same person serves in these two roles. In the online setting for example, the infancy of the program has resulted in professors at the IGNOU headquarters
acting as both e-counsellors and e-mentors. As will be observed in the interview analyses, the expectation is that these roles will be gradually moved to the study centres as is the case with the conventional programs.

The infusion of technology occurs at the Electronic Media Production Centre, located on the IGNOU campus. Here lectures are delivered and recorded in both video and audio format. With the emergence of the online programs, video lectures have been taking place at the eGyanKosh centre. At eGyanKosh there are developers who have created the website IGNOU Online. Here students will access Virtual Class, the online learning platform that was built in-house by the designers in eGyanKosh. To access Virtual Class students require a login id. Figure 7.2 offers a snapshot of IGNOU Online.

![Figure 7.2. Snapshot of Website “IGNOU Online”.
Source: www.ignouonline.ac.in](image)

The IGNOU Online site offers multiple access points to IGNOU and other materials. Approximately 90 percent of IGNOU courses are available in pdf files through the eGyanKosh link. Through Virtual Class students may select their particular online program and use a login id to access the course website.
OUF program development and curriculum organization.

The formation of materials at the OUC is organized according to The Rules and Regulations on the Development of Instructional Materials, published in 1991 by the OUC as a result of a merger of two previous documents. The process is outlined in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3. Course Development at the OUC.
From Figure 7.3 it can be concluded that there is clearly more detail in comparison to IGNOU, though parallels can be drawn between the two operations. First, multiple stages are involved. It can be said that Stages 1 to 3 will likely occur at the School level, similar to what is discussed at the level of the School Council at IGNOU. In Stage 4, course teams are organized. They are comprised of OUC faculty, multimedia staff, software designers and academics from conventional universities. Interviewees consistently referenced experts external to the University as being intricately involved in course development. Wei (2008 p. 145) described course development teams as involving such individuals, usually belonging to conventional universities, along with educational technologists and academics from the OUC system. The term “Teams”, however, was perhaps misguided as Wei also asserted that the external experts took on the bulk of duties to design a course leading to some complications in the development process. We will return to this point in the following section comparing the two systems. According to Wei (2008, p. 123), the responsibility by course teams to design courses occurs under the guidance of an advisory committee comprised of OUC and Provincial OUC faculty as well as subject experts from conventional universities. This committee is also involved in the use of media and its involvement would likely occur in Stages 5 and 6. Here we can draw parallels to the Academic Council of IGNOU, where the responsibilities of approving programs based on academic merit occur. Though not identified in Figure 7.3, programs require approval from the Ministry of Education and would presumably occur in Stages 7 through 9. It takes between three to five years for a program to be fully developed and launched (Wei, 2008, p. 124).

As will be shown in the next section, both the OUC and IGNOU commence with print as the foundation for any course offered. In the development of content and organization, experts are recruited to aid in the design of good materials. As well, these individuals, who are often designated as some of the most famous in the field, are also commissioned to provide video lectures. At the local levels in the OUC, there are also tutors who meet with students in face to face settings.
OUCH faculty are otherwise referred to as co-ordinators and are responsible to maintain contact between the OUC headquarters and the intricate network of tutors located at provincial and local Open Universities. As well, some OUC instructors take on the role of teaching, or counselling, in study locations around Beijing.

Part of the information summarized in course development is from Chapter 4 of *China’s Radio and TV Universities and the British Open University: A Comparative Study* by Wei Runfang (2008). Added to this summary are excerpts from interview data and observations made by the investigator.

Another interesting policy followed at the OUC is the concept of 60/40. Multiple interviewees made reference to the increasing autonomy granted to the provincial and branch Open Universities in the OUC system. As such, the local Open Universities are permitted to develop up to 40% of the courses to better serve local needs. The policy points to the OUC in Beijing as being responsible to create at least 60 percent of the courses for use by the entire system. C13, a policymaker, suggested that most Open Universities in the Chinese system adopt approximately 70 percent of courses from the OUC in Beijing and some with fewer facilities or resources may adopt as much as 90 percent from the central OUC.

On the topic of multimedia design, course teams were to follow a set of guidelines on development and evaluation, first devised in 2002. The development guidelines included six categories listed as course design, course content, technical content, information delivery, usability and resources, and 76 indicators. Aspects that were identified for evaluation were teachers, students, learning activities, learning resources, learning strategies, learner support and the web-based platform. The first offerings of courses in 2001 were described as simply transplanting video lectures onto the course website. By 2002 more interactive facilities were integrated in the system, such as a bulletin board system and online chat (Wei, 2008, p. 127).

Course materials are usually organized in a course or text book. The textbook usually contains the content, a study guide and a workbook (p. 133). A course is generally organized as follows:
Introduction
Overview
Weekly study planner
Subject Units
Multimedia supplementary materials
Exercises/Answers

The online system used by the OUC was referred to as CRTVU Online, based on the Chinese name of the University. CRTVU Online is where students login to their particular course. The interface is shown in Figure 7.4 below.

Figure 7.4: Snapshot of CRTVU Online.
Source: www.open.edu.cn

The CRTVU Online website provides a direct access point to a particular course based on a user id and password. There are also links to nationally recognized courses, announcements, FAQs and television program scheduling. There are hundreds of courses available through this website with one estimate indicating 549 courses in 2007 (Chen & Li, 2008).
From this section we have a clearer idea about two of the sub-research questions, stated as:

2.1 How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?

2.2 How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?

In comparing the two systems in terms of policies on design there seem to be more points of convergence, and where there are differences, they are generally small. First off, policy dictates a hierarchical configuration to program development. Understandably the process of curriculum development commences within the school and once a backbone is in place a course team is devised and the generation of course content begins. Once a draft is prepared there are differing stages where an advisory committee in the case of the OUC, and the Academic Council, or Planning Board in the case of IGNOU, make amendments and the draft programs are revised. Final approval is given by the Ministry of Education at the OUC and by the Board of Management at IGNOU. This would be the main difference in terms of process of development between the two institutions. As was identified in Chapter Five, the OUC is under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Conversely, IGNOU is bestowed a rare degree of autonomy in the Indian higher education sphere, to the extent that it also serves as a regulatory body for distance education in India.

In terms of the specifics with online learning, there is a detailed system in place at the OUC characterized by varying categories of development and evaluation. The setup of the online portal, CRTVU Online, is an example of the amount of information provided to students to support their learning. Bearing a near identical name, the IGNOU Online site has taken a more minimalist approach. This should not be surprising considering the infancy of the online initiatives in comparison to the OUC. The IGNOU main website however, does provide ample information for students.
The last comparison to be made is on the topic of using external experts. There has been a long-standing policy among both institutions of recruiting subject matter experts. For one reason this is because both institutions are primarily engaged in teaching. Academics engaged in research are therefore deemed to have more knowledge and exposure to cutting edge findings in the particular field. For varying reasons, distance education is perceived as a second-class citizen in the society of higher education institutions. Attaching a reputed scholar to a particular course heightens the credibility of the materials which carries all the more significance considering the prevalence of institutions of dubious quality that have plagued both countries in recent years.

The issue of recruiting external experts however, raises the question of the quality of the faculty within the OUC and IGNOU. In looking at the course materials, the investigator found that in the case of the OUC, the extent of faculty involvement was course-dependent. In the cases of Modern Chinese and Accounting, two of the courses analyzed in the next section, the OUC faculty were co-authors of the respective textbooks. The Business English course, on the other hand, was transplanted from the Open University in the UK, without any modifications to the Chinese context. As one curriculum designer teaching English noted, if they were expected to write the textbooks, “there would be a lot of mistakes.” This should be taken as a relative example based on the issue of language, though it raises questions about the place of faculty within the institution. One senior policymaker at the OUC, C2, showed no indication of this policy changing, noting,

... who knows the development of courses the best? Teachers working at conventional schools, because they have very rich research experiences. Teachers at [the OUC] of course have experiences, but theirs are not as rich as teachers at conventional universities. What is the advantage of teachers at [the OUC]? Well, their advantage is teaching practices, connecting well with [distance learning] techniques.

At IGNOU, curriculum designers praised the quality of the materials, but made few references to the importance of top-level academics. It was recognized that the need was there to have those from the conventional institutions involved in the generation of content, though
IGNOU faculty also seemed intricately involved in the development processes. The perception of one senior policymaker however, was far from flattering:

In IGNOU I can say that if IGNOU is working it is largely due to the academics, the faculty. Even within the faculty it is maybe 20-30 percent who is working, who is committed, who cares for quality, 20 percent I would say. About another 20 percent just kind of go along and the rest are frankly bad. If you get a good resource person from outside, you'll get good materials.

The flip side to these arguments is that the professional development experienced by IGNOU and OUC faculty engaging with those in the conventional streams likely enhances knowledge and builds inter-institutional collegiality. For the external experts, this also is a professional development exercise. Learning about the formidable distance education systems within each country brings knowledge and skills back to the home University and when considering the sizeable audiences using OUC and IGNOU materials, also raises the profile of the particular academic.

Based on this comparative analysis we may return to the two questions posed above. Clearly, there are policies in place that determine how courses should be developed online, particularly in the case of the OUC. IGNOU reverts to the policies of course development assigned to the conventional print-based courses. In both cases a general format is followed that includes self-check exercises for learners to self-regulate progress in learning the materials. On a larger scale, the OUC employs a policy of 60/40, requiring that all regional or local Open Universities in the OUC system develop no more than 40 percent of the courses for programs. In terms of how flexible the design process is, in both cases, the process seems rather rigid. The standard use of external subject matter experts at both institutions strengthens this finding.

In the next section we will address the third sub-research question that looks at the extent of Indian or Chinese content present in particular online courses within each Open University. There will be added elements to the two previous research questions. In the conclusion to this Chapter the added layers to the two research questions will be re-visited.
Section III: Perceptions of Curriculum Designers and Analyses of Course Content

From the previous two sections we have a clearer idea about two of the sub research questions in relation to policies affecting design of the course curricula and the flexibility in the curriculum organization process.

This section will address these questions and also look at the third sub research question:

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

To address the third question we will analyze the content of several courses to offer insights into the representation of content that is Indian or Chinese in origin which will then be complimented by the perceptions of curriculum designers who are involved with the particular courses. There are four undergraduate degree program courses from the OUC and the four courses from IGNOU include two post-graduate courses, and two Masters level courses (see Table 7.1 below).

Table 7.1

Courses and Course Designers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUC Courses</th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>IGNOU Courses</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Post graduate diploma in Cyber Law</td>
<td>I10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Legal Process Outsourcing</td>
<td>I5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Language</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>I11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business English</td>
<td>C9/C10</td>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>I4/I12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As stated in Chapter Three, four courses from the OUC were selected based on enrolment figures. In the case of IGNOU, course selection was based on availability only, as IGNOU had only re-engaged with its online learning initiatives in 2008, after a dormant period of approximately six years. In 2008, the programs that had been launched were Cyber Law and MLIS, of which courses from both programs were selected and the corresponding course designers were interviewed. In 2009, several new programs were offered, including the postgraduate diploma in Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO), Acupuncture and Health programs. Based on a limited accessibility to course designers, only the LPO was used in the return visit.

IGNOU: School of Law.

In returning to a similar protocol followed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there will be a brief section on context for each school and interviewee.

Although the School of Law is among the younger schools at IGNOU having started operations in 2005, the first report to suggest setting up a law school for the University dates back to 1994. Like the larger University mandate, the School of Law operates to widen participation rates with focus in varying law professions such as paralegals, law administration and newer forms of law that deal with online security and outsourcing. The school currently offers distance education programs in online and offline modes, a policy also followed by the School of Social Sciences with its online program in Library and Information Science. The School of Law offers three online programs and 13 offline, or traditional distance-based programs. The three online programs are postgraduate certificate in Cyber Law (CL), postgraduate diploma in Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO) and master degree in Intellectual Property Law (IPL). The faculty is comprised of six professors with rank ranging from assistant to full professor. Two faculty members were interviewed on two separate occasions; in 2008 and in 2009 (four interviews in total). The first program designed, CL, was to be launched in the summer of 2008 and the LPO was launched in early 2009.

The two faculty members, I5 and I10, were both professors in the school. I5 joined IGNOU in 2005 when the School of Law was first inaugurated. The responsibilities of I5 were
mainly to co-ordinate the Cyber Law program. Some administrative duties had also been assigned for the LPO. I10 was a newer faculty member to IGNOU having joined the School of Law in 2007 and was only involved in the latter developments of the Cyber Law program with main duties assigned to co-ordinating the PGDLPO.

**Post-graduate certificate in cyber law.**

The post graduate certificate in Cyber Law is a four course program that generally targets those who have a career directly or indirectly related to law. Admissions requirements are any holder of an undergraduate degree or those in the fourth or fifth year of an LLB program. The fee structure is 6,100 rupees for the duration of the program and students may complete the program in a minimum of six months and maximum two years. The medium of instruction is in English.

The Cyber law program was initiated by two junior faculty members within the School of Law and a senior professor from the School of Social Sciences. The rationale for creating the Cyber law program was an outcome of widening access to networked technologies and demand from professionals in the police and law professions who were increasingly dealing with cyber crime in India. I10 responded that the creation of the program was a product of market demand. According to several websites, there were approximately one million lawyers in India in 2007 (Lawyers Club India, 2007; The Lawyers Weekly, 2007) and with 80,000 graduates per year from Indian universities there were many opportunities to diversify expertise. Creating small programs such as Cyber Law seemed to be financially astute. I10 also mentioned the prospect of creating a legal process outsourcing program, which at the time was in the discussion phase, and master’s programs as well. This is an interesting example of the University responding directly to the changing contours of the labour market and recognizing the potential to grow enrolments within the school. It is also a good example of grassroots initiatives that are started within the school and come to fruition.
As will be shown in Figure 7.5 below, the four courses that make up the Cyber Law program are divided into blocks and units contained within each block. In total, there are 767 pages amounting to the size of a large textbook.

Program → Post-graduate Certificate in Cyber Law

Courses: →
- Cyberspace
  - Intro (5 units) 67
  - Cyberspace (4 units) 67
  - Social Issue, Regulation (3 units) 48
  - Emerging (3 units) 36

- Commerce
  - E-Commerce (Units 1-4) 46 pages
  - Online Contracts (Units 5-7) 37 pages
  - Intellectual Property (Units 8-12) 57 pages
  - Management (Units 13-15) 46 pages

- Privacy
  - Right (4 units) 52
  - Data Security (4 units) 54
  - Data Protection (4 units) 49

- Regulation
  - Laws (5 units) 65
  - Cyber (4 units) 63
  - Dispute (3 units) 43

Figure 7.5. Post-graduate Certificate in Cyber Law, Program Structure.

The ensuing analysis mainly takes data from participant I5, with some insights offered from I10. A distinction is made between the interviews with each participant in 2008 and 2009.
In 2005 when I5 joined IGNOU, the professor admittedly possessed little knowledge of the distance education setting in India. In hindsight, the opportunity to use multimedia to interact with students was favoured by this individual, having previously taught at a conventional University in Delhi. I5 described the work of an academic at the IGNOU headquarters as being involved with teaching, research and designing curriculum.

I5 described the online environment for the particular courses as being organized in the online platform, Virtual Class. Here students could access the Self Learning Materials of the course (in pdf format) to view or download, access a question bank to gauge learning, engage in e-counselling sessions (and archived sessions), and submit assignments. One mistake in the design of the CL program, noted by I10, was little integration with the multimedia environment. Citing that most course writers were advocates, creating learning materials for an online medium was not within their domain of expertise. In hindsight, it seemed, course materials should have been designed in conjunction with multimedia integration. It was envisioned that the course would proceed in an ad hoc fashion. I10 noted,

Once we get these 30 students to begin with, our interaction on a plan of sequence, each course, unit, block will go and at the time also we will get some opportunities to provide the links through the e-counselling, e-mentoring and also the student themselves will come forward with questions. Then also is a time where we can give them the suggested readings in addition, ‘you go to this, you go to this’. At the website is the reading materials, there are the cases. I think that automatically we'll be developing along with the process of this cohort, once they begin.

As the program had yet to launch at the time of the 2008 interviews, it was anticipated that approximately 25 to 30 students would comprise the first cohort (based on walk-in admissions\(^\text{61}\) and that I5 would be the e-counsellor for the courses. There would also be an offline option that would include the Self Learning Materials in print-format, audio/video

\(^{61}\) Walk-in enrolments was a new policy that allowed programs to begin once enough students (an arbitrary amount) had signed up and paid fees. This was implemented to provide more opportunities for learners to enrol, rather than be bound by semester based admissions which commenced in January and July.
programs, teleconferencing and interactive radio counselling and access to study centres. Because of the technical language used and the lack of quality translators, I10 indicated that, like the other programs in the School of Law, the Cyber Law program would be offered in English only.

The organization of content revolved around the use of case methods, a common form of learning in law programs. On the topic of course content, the case methods originated mainly from the US and UK. I10 indicated that the designers took “considerable analysis of the cases that have been decided at the international level to get an idea of where to move, how to move in the cyber law areas.” At the same time, the course is “grounded in the Indian materials” yet the materials give “a global viewpoint on the trends and developments in the contemporary areas of [Cyber Law], but more focused on [the needs of] Indian students.” Resources for the content were retrieved from Indian and foreign textbooks and online libraries, domestic and international experts and the Internet. Because of the infancy of the discipline in cyber law, it was anticipated that updates and refinements to course materials would be required every six months; I5, for example, cited an amendment to the Information and Technology Act of 2000 that would need to be updated in the materials. In general, IGNOU policy stipulates that a program review should occur every four or five years. On a more regular basis changes are made with supplements in the case of print-based programs and online postings would be used for the online programs.

On the topic of external influence based on the courses utilizing foreign case studies, I5 responded that most laws in India are based on the UK legal system, but also acknowledged that not all conditions will be suited to Indian society. I10 took a different viewpoint indicating the material was directed at Indian students, yet saw the potential to tailor the program to an international clientele as soon as the following year.

In regards to the need for a policy to direct the online programs at IGNOU, I5 was most concerned with how to organize the e-counselling sessions. In particular the professor noted sessions should not be “restrictive” as e-counselling can be done from anywhere. As well, a
small faculty with other administrative and academic duties will inevitably require hiring others to take on the duties of e-counselling including conditions of payment per session.

As for future outlook, I5 believed, at this early stage, that all programs at IGNOU should be online to widen access. Keep in mind that this first part was based on interview data from June 2008, before any online programs had been launched at IGNOU. Below are data and analyses from the interviews with I5 and I10 in 2009, after the program had started with its first cohort of students.

By July 2008 the first cohort of students had started the CL program. By June 2009 some had completed the program and a second cohort had started in January 2009. The minimum duration of the program was set at six months and the maximum at two years. It was also noted that the first cohort took 15 students, though 25 to 30 was originally planned. The second cohort took only nine students. Low enrolments were attributed to a lack of advertising.

When asked about the first offering, the response from I5 was that there were many unforeseen issues that had arisen. E-counsellors had yet to be hired. These duties had therefore been taken on by the School of Law faculty, adding to their workload. Because of the small size of the first cohort, professors were also assigned the tasks of verifying student credentials for admittance into the program, duties normally assigned to the Registrar’s office. Unfamiliarity with the technology in both pedagogical and practical terms was another issue. Students did not know where to access the uploaded study materials on the website and in weekly e-counselling sessions, student attendance was low and peer to peer interaction was non-existent. Students favoured contacting the professor directly, either via personal email or even telephone, displacing the interactive facilities of the online system.

Students did eventually get the hang of working online. The actual Virtual Class platform contained a section for instructors and students to post their details, announcements, etc. Students submitted assignments through the platform. Each course required a terminal
research paper. To earn the full credential of the certificate students had to pass a viva voce through a webcam, rather than a traditional terminal examination.

Despite some barriers or reluctance to fully engage online, no student in the online program had switched to the offline mode.

*Cyber law program: Commerce course.*

The Commerce course was selected to be analyzed and probed in the second interview with I5. The rationale was that this course was the second to be acquired and looked specifically at the laws governing cyber law in India and globally. The course content amounted to 186 pages.

On this return visit in 2009 the curriculum for the program was available as open access on the IGNOU website. After analyzing the curriculum the topic of origin of content asked in 2008 was re-visited. There were many references to US, UK and international law (WTO, and TRIPS, for example). The professor affirmed that the content carried less India-specific material because of the infancy of the discipline in the country. Closer analysis however, revealed a strong localization to the content. The Commerce course begins with the E-commerce block. Some objectives of the E-Commerce course include defining the term E-commerce, familiarity with the history and understanding of E-Commerce in North America, Europe and the WTO, and finally exposure to varying models of E-commerce.

As the course proceeds there are increasing references to Indian laws, companies and websites to better understand the importance and necessity of Cyber law in India. Laws enacted as far back as the 19th century are used to illuminate how contemporary laws related to E-commerce may be crafted and applied to novel cases of business practice, taxation, consumer protection and so on. The extent of Indian knowledge being represented in the course is further substantiated with reference to Indian businesses, currency, and case

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62 Viva voce is a Latin term that is used to describe the oral defence in an academic program.

63 India uses unique terms to describe large sums, usually of its currency, the rupee. Very rarely will one come across terms such as one hundred thousand, one million, one billion and so on. In place is the use of the terms lakh
studies and citations that are of Indian origin. There are also international contours to the curriculum. Although most references of this nature are of US origin, there are many references to the OECD (p. 43, unit 1), UN (p. 6, unit 5, p. 23, unit 6; unit 7, p. 30) and WTO (p. 9, unit 1, p. 6 unit 8). Table 7.2 provides a breakdown of content identifiers in the curriculum of the Commerce course in the Cyber Law program (see also Appendices for the names of laws, etc.).

Table 7.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Non-Indian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 43)</td>
<td>(n = 77)</td>
<td>(n = 120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Organization</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 87)</td>
<td>(n = 325)</td>
<td>(n = 412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical/Academic (including 13 of 27 Cases)</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 235)</td>
<td>(n = 242)</td>
<td>(n = 477)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 41)</td>
<td>(n = 48)</td>
<td>(n = 89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 14)</td>
<td>(n = 35)</td>
<td>(n = 49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the amount of content categorized under each qualifier is skewed towards being non-Indian in origin, there is a near balance between theoretical/academic references and geography. Further, the “Cultural” qualifier also points to a fair amount of references that are Indian in origin. The lowest figure under Company/Organization at 21 percent, should not be that surprising considering the comparatively small scale prevalence of E-Commerce in India.

and crore. One lakh may be understood as a synonym for one hundred thousand and is written as 1,00,000. One crore is a synonym for ten million and is written as 1,00,00,000, and may also be referred to as 100 lakhs. The use of the terms rupees and lakhs is prevalent in the curriculum of the Commerce course.
as previously noted by I5 and I10. What was unusual was the number of cases used that were Indian in origin – 13 of 27. Although some of these cases were only indirectly related to E-Commerce, the point was that significant considerations had been made to cater to the Indian context.

On the topic of content, the tone of I5 changed later in the interview. After affirming that efforts had been made to make the course as Indian as possible, I5 was prodded on this rationale, particularly when considering the infancy of the discipline. I5 indicated that with the increasing fusion of technology and business it is essential to have this type of information accessible to professionals in law/policing, business, and finance in India. Cases of this nature had been coming up and therefore the offering of the program could not have been timelier.

I5 also noted that in both the Cyber Law program and the MLIS program that each followed a similar design that has been discussed in collaboration with other departments embarking on online learning initiatives such as the Spanish language and Business Process Outsourcing programs.

*Post-graduate diploma in legal process outsourcing.*

The Legal Process Outsourcing post-graduate diploma program was launched in January 2009 with a cohort of 340 students and coordinated by a professor in the School of Law previously identified as I10. The program is offered through a joint collaboration with a Mumbai-based company called Rainmaker, which had independently offered the program since 2006. Admissions requirements are an LLB or a student enrolled in the final year of an LLB program. The program fees are 18,000 rupees. The aim of the program is to train law graduates and law professionals in the growing field of knowledge process outsourcing⁶⁴. The program is a minimum one year in duration (maximum two years) and divided into two semesters. Unlike the Cyber Law program, the LPO program has fixed start periods in the summer (July) and winter (January) terms. A departure from conventional IGNOU programs was that most

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⁶⁴ Knowledge process outsourcing is an umbrella term that includes areas of business process and legal process outsourcing. Business process outsourcing may include the use of call centres or IT services, whereas legal process outsourcing may include issues related to tax, and cyber law.
activities, with the exception of registration, evaluation and some teleconferencing sessions, were taken on by the Rainmaker institution. An online platform different from IGNOU’s Virtual Classroom and belonging to Rainmaker, called E-Mentor, was used. Some course alterations had been made to better serve distance students.

The partnering was deemed to be mutually beneficial. For IGNOU, the course materials were already developed and a separate online platform would also lower administrative duties. For Rainmaker this offered greater legitimacy by using the IGNOU brand, which also opened the program to a potentially larger pool of learners. One last unique feature was a comparatively extensive marketing campaign to attract students.

Although the investigator was granted access to the E-Mentor online platform, approximately half of the course materials were not accessible (presumably because it was proprietary). Students were given these course materials in print format with the remaining materials available online. On the E-Mentor platform students accessed course announcements, posted queries and accessed a databank of FAQs, took online tests and located these course supplements.

The program is organized over two semesters and is comprised of eight courses divided into two semesters. The courses are Legal Education and Proficiency (Part I and II), Skills, Personal Effectiveness and Enterprise Development (Part I and II), Professional English Proficiency (Part I and II), and Virtual Intelligence Methods (Part I and II). A breakdown of the courses and blocks offered over two semesters is outlined in Figure 7.6 below.
Figure 7.6. Post-graduate Certificate in Legal Process Outsourcing, Program Structure.
The online supplementary materials, amounting to hundreds of pages of pdf files, PowerPoints and videos, provide ample detail about the content of the course, identified by IGNOU as containing half of the course material. The majority of this particular content is American and UK-based. There is also a clear effort to ensure the material is localized – as India does have one of the world’s most sophisticated knowledge process outsourcing systems. A snapshot of the course is offered in Figure 7.7 below.

Legal Process Outsourcing: India

Dear Student,

Please go to the websites listed below to get an understanding of the Legal Process Outsourcing industry and how it relates to India. It is more than likely that you will be questioned about this information in the upcoming weeks.

What is legal process outsourcing? Please go to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_Process_Outsourcing

For the opportunities of the Legal Process Outsourcing industry in India today, read the article at: http://www.livemint.com/2009/01/30002134/India-holds-a-huge-opportunity.html

To understand the history of the legal process outsourcing industry, please view articles at: http://www.rediff.com/money/2006/aug/01bpo.htm and http://www.theshindubusinessline.com/2005/10/03/stories/2005100300850900.htm

Finally, although legal process outsourcing to India has many benefits, there are some challenges faced by the industry as well as ethical requirements to be imposed. For further information, please continue reading at: http://www.abanet.org/abanet/media/release/news_release.cfm?releaseid=435 http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202424085117 and http://www.abanet.org/litigation/litigationnews/2007/july/0707_article_outsourcing.html

Figure 7.7. Supplementary Material from the Legal Education and Proficiency Course
Source: E-Mentor platform, www.rainmaker.co.in
Legal process outsourcing program: Legal, education and proficiency course.

This course selected for analysis was Legal, Education and Proficiency course (Semester 1). Selection was based on the course being directly involved with legal content (compared to Professional English Proficiency, for example), and it was the first course offered setting the tone for the program. The glimpse of online materials in Figure 7.7 is from LEAP course, Semester I, and it can be seen there are multiple references to India and three of the six website references send the learner to Indian-focused content. In Table 7.3 there is a more elaborate breakdown of the extent that Indian and non-Indian references are made in this particular course.

Table 7.3

Analysis of Content for LEAP Course for LPO Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Non-Indian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=65)</td>
<td>(n=65)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=104)</td>
<td>(n=104)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical/Academic/Cases</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=9)</td>
<td>(n=57)</td>
<td>(n=66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=7)</td>
<td>(n=81)</td>
<td>(n=88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be gleaned from the above table that references are overwhelmingly skewed towards being more non-Indian than Indian in origin. With the exception of a few references to India in regards to country name, web links and several legal cases, it is clear that this course intends to present a more global picture to legal process outsourcing. The disproportionate
amount of non-Indian content is not overly surprising as knowledge process outsourcing is an international industry as businesses outsource services to countries where wages are comparatively lower. As such understanding the scope of the outsourcing industry naturally entails having a good grasp of laws outside of India. There is other evidence to suggest that this is a common theme in the program. Returning to Figure 7.6 it can be seen that in semester two, the LEAP course contains entire blocks on US law, and the Professional English Proficiency course also contains content that is devoted entirely to knowledge emanating from the US and UK.

When asked if there was sufficient Indian content represented in the curriculum for both the Cyber Law and LPO programs I10 offered some unexpected insights, as follows:

I don't know if that is a strength or a weakness. IGNOU when it develops a program, they cater, they keep in view the Indian students but we have a presence in 40 countries. That is the question, when we discuss with partner institutions in various countries. They ask us, 'don't be Indian specific', but we say, 'we are Indian specific'. I don't know whether we should move towards an international offering of international programs. Maybe in time because the partner institutes are asking. When you design a curriculum, don't just look to India. Look at all over the world, but this is a weakness to design curriculum.

When the interviewer suggested that making the content more attractive to a global milieu would be a large undertaking (i.e., recruiting foreign experts), I10 then countered that the law training in the national law schools of India take this approach. The comparative nature of law using cases in the UK, US, Canada and Australia have indicated “where the Indian courts are going”. I10 indicated that the international division of the University does not provide programs that would be considered indigenous, or contextual, to its overseas partners. A comparison was made with the Open University in the United Kingdom noting that it caters programs to its overseas recipients and that taking such an approach of making the curriculum more global may better benefit IGNOU as an international University.
What is unusual about these comments is the feeling that the curriculum is already too focused on Indian content! As a global institution operating overseas there is the suggestion that the University should take greater care to account for localization to those areas outside of India. As has been observed in the materials analyzed, local content is clearly present, even if there is more non-Indian content. A growing assumption is the need to ensure ample localization to content, yet then the question emerges as to what is too much non-Indian content, when is there enough, etc. This will be addressed at the conclusion of the Chapter.

I10 raised other issues that shifted more towards the relationship between the University and external partners. Partnering with a private company in terms of marketing, technological competency, and academic servicing had stirred some new ideas. On this topic, the first point made was regarding enrolments. The original projection of enrolments for the first cohort of the LPO program was 250, yet it ended up being significantly larger at 340. I10 drew a comparison to the Cyber Law program admitting that not enough marketing had been done. Drawing larger comparisons, I10 noted, “…IGNOU as a central government institution lacks that rigorous strategy of marketing. That is the reason for less number of enrolments in some of the programs.” I10 elaborated indicating that the comparative advantage of the Rainmaker Company was its connection to all of the law colleges in India having provided training to many law graduates for the national entry examination. Also, the company employs law professionals who possess good technical and subject matter competency making the materials of good quality. Overall, the experience of working with Rainmaker was quite eye-opening. Stated repeatedly during the interview, I10 remarked that IGNOU could learn much from Rainmaker in terms of “the whole mindset” and “professionalism” of marketing, technical proficiency and academic servicing.

In regards to the level of technological proficiency and academic servicing, I10 drew from experience working in both the Cyber Law and LPO programs that the added workload for the law professors was not anticipated. Cited was the IGNOU model of decentralization, which gives added autonomy to coordinators of programs. This had brought unforeseen challenges to those working in the online initiatives. Developing these programs, I10 noted, had required
more expertise than conventional distance learning programs. In addition to the technological competencies, I10 found that there was a need to have more subject matter expertise. Students having regular access to instructors (through email/chat, for example) and information through the online medium brought more questions and consequently the expectation of the e-counsellor to be online with more frequency and possessing more knowledge. The infancy of the programs and the rapid developments in these new law disciplines proved challenging to this professor. One suggestion was to recruit e-counsellors with more subject matter expertise external to the institution to enable the IGNOU professors to handle other administrative and programmatic duties.

Despite these challenges, the School of Law had further plans to expand with a new Masters program in Intellectual Property Law commencing later in the summer of 2009. This was another partnership that had been forged; in this case with Queensland University of Technology in Australia. Having gone through some growing pains, the School of Law had also been called on to provide expertise to the School of Vocational Education and Training which had launched a diploma program in business process outsourcing.

**IGNOU: School of Social Sciences.**

*Master of library and information science.*

The School of Social Sciences, among the largest at IGNOU, contains eight divisions including the Library and Information Science division. The division also offers a Doctorate, Bachelor and postgraduate diploma in Library and Information Science. There are six professors who are assigned to the Library and Information Science division. The Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) is one of the University’s older graduate programs, having been first offered in 1994. The popularity of the program resulted in offerings overseas to countries such as Mauritius, Dubai and Kuwait. There is a Bachelor of Library and Information Science offered as well. It has enrolments that are numbered in the thousands compared to the Masters program that carries cohorts between 600 and 800 students. This smaller enrolment was, in part, provided as rationale for first offering the MLIS program online in 2008. Program duration
was a minimum of one year and a maximum of four years depending on the pace at which students progressed. Those with a Bachelor of Library and Information Science, or equivalent, were eligible for admissions. Like the Cyber Law program, admissions were based on walk-in enrolment. Instruction and materials are in English only. Total fees amount to 8,000 IR which is the same fee charged to those enrolling in the traditional print-based, or offline, mode. A breakdown of the program by courses is offered in Figure 7.8 below.
Figure 7.8. Master of Library and Information Science, Program Structure.
Students are required to take six compulsory courses, two of six electives and complete a project on a chosen topic by the student. Those participants who were interviewed each taught one to two compulsory courses and one elective course. The two participants, I11 and I4, were interviewed in two intervals, once in 2008 and again in 2009. I11 was responsible to co-ordinate two compulsory courses: Information, Processing and Retrieval, and Information and Communication in Society, and one elective course, Research Methodology. The colleague, I4, invited I11 to help in teaching Fundamentals of Information and Communication Technologies, another compulsory course. Overall, I11 seemed to show both optimism and indifference about the online MLIS program. On the one hand, the online medium would equalize the opportunities for access, provide more flexibility for learners and promote the institution as being modern and technologically astute. With the exception of only one other institution, IGNOU was the only provider in the country of such a program. The growing link between ICTs and the discipline of library science was also cited as being a natural progression in the development for such a program. Like I10 from the School of Law above, I11 noted about the program, “it’s not new what we’ve done, it’s not born online, it has been made to shift there. Maybe in due course we’ll change.” Although there were no changes to the content from the print-based program, I11 stated that the material was up to date, having been last revised in 2005.

The online platform offered new features including the addition of a 6,000 question database, PowerPoint slides, and facilities to interact through email, discussion boards and synchronous chat. Overall for course co-ordinators (who were also the de facto e-counsellors) no training to teach and interact online had been provided. I11 acknowledged that there were no policies in relation to online learning or development of course content.

Like the Cyber Law program, the MLIS was expecting upwards of 30 students in the first cohort, though low enrolments resulted in beginning with only nine students. I11 preferred to start with a small group and believed that this undersized cohort was attributed to students being reluctant “to take the risk of joining” the online medium, as the offline mode had previously received good enrolments. For this professor having previously taught in the offline
program meant being able to anticipate what problems students would face and planning accordingly. The first course offered was Information, Communication and Society, taught by I11. Another course, Management of Library and Information Centres, was taught simultaneously by professor I4. E-counselling initially occurred on Sundays for a period of two to three hours with both I11 and I4 teaching their respective courses. Most students patched into the e-counselling sessions at cybercafés, not having facilities at home. At IGNOU a webcam was set-up where the counsellor was visible, but generally, students not having access to webcams, were interacting over audio only. I11 recounted that issues regarding communication and technology were not well-understood by either the teacher or the learner, a point also shared by I10 from the School of Law. Having a better grasp of expectations and the facilities that are required should be mandatory before an online course should be taken on by both the learner and the e-counsellor. When students enrol at IGNOU, they are given a guidebook on learning in the distance mode, though a guidebook for online learning does not exist. Produced by STRIDE, the only resource for online learning was a training manual for academic counsellors, a 24 page document that provided wide ranging descriptions about learner support and only scant attention offered to details about online learning.

Library and information science: Information, communication and society course.

In regards to the particular curriculum, the course I11 had first taught was Information, Communication and Society. When asked about the balance between Indian and non-Indian references, the professor noted that this particular course forms the bedrock of the program and therefore must have ample content relevant to the Indian learner. For these reasons top professors in India were recruited to aid in revising the programs, and preserving the balance between Indian and non-Indian content. To make more pointed interpretations, a breakdown of the content is presented in Table 7.4.

65 Note that STRIDE, Staff, Training and Research Institute of Distance Education was described in Chapter Five.
Table 7.4

*Analysis of Content for Information, Communication and Society Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Non-Indian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 514)</td>
<td>(n = 241)</td>
<td>(n = 755)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Organization/Governing bodies</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 58)</td>
<td>(n = 100)</td>
<td>(n = 158)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 10)</td>
<td>(n = 2)</td>
<td>(n = 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical/Academic/Cases</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 69)</td>
<td>(n = 280)</td>
<td>(n = 349)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 191)</td>
<td>(n = 120)</td>
<td>(n = 311)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 76)</td>
<td>(n = 255)</td>
<td>(n = 331)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be gleaned from the above table that terms of Indian origin situated as cultural and geographic were most abundant at 68 percent and 61 percent. References to companies and organizations were marginally lower at 37 percent and the lowest percentages of Indian origin were references located under the headings of theoretical/academic and citations.

Conversely, the references to foreign companies/governing bodies or theoretical/academic terms and citations were found to be predominantly non-Indian in origin. Such companies are often centred on processing networked information such as Google or Yahoo or national/international bodies that regulate laws or enact declarations on information access. The greater prevalence of theoretical and academic terms is likely a product of more research, dissemination and funding by the English speaking world. At the same time the curriculum returns to the relevance of the information presented to the Indian context and how national (or sub-national) laws and cultural idiosyncrasies impact how information is retrieved.
and processed in India. Two contemporary Indian scholars in information and communications, Dr. Sarada Ranganathan and Arashanipalai Neelameghan, play major roles throughout the course.

Like I10 from the School of Law, I11 felt that the course was “globalized” and believed that it was suitable for an international offering. In fact, citing that a former student had had problems with the recognition of her degree by a US employer, I11 felt that more international input to the particular MLIS program would bode well for the courses and programs offered by IGNOU. It was asserted by I11 that the particular MLIS program “is what is expected and required of a library information science professional. I don’t believe that [the program] is too Canadian or American or Indian in library science.”

The topic of policy was re-visited in the second interview in 2009. I11 pointed to the importance of policy as needing to address all areas specifically mentioning admissions, delivery, counselling sessions and evaluation. The viewpoint taken by I11 was that policies provide the fallback when issues arise, and with a degree of standardization, quality will be strengthened. The salient point was that policies should be “based on the experiences of people”. In many ways, this captures how the institution has proceeded with the development of online learning. There seems to be an acceptance that there will be some growing pains with the online initiatives. With experience the programs will gradually become more sophisticated. One particular point made by I11 suggested that having adequate training for faculty needs to be there. In India communicating online is novel to most and it was felt by this professor that more time is needed to be devoted to supporting students and also for the e-counsellors to be able to multi-task when delivering a lecture and using the online platform.

*Library and information science: Management of library and information centres course.*

The other course that was examined was Management of Library and Information Centres. This course ran simultaneously with the Information, Communication and Society course, both of which were the first two courses in the MLIS program. The other professor, I4,
was charged with running this course and an elective course, Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials. I4 was also the co-ordinator of the MLIS program and the eGyanKosh centre.

Prior to beginning the first offering of the MLIS program, I4 recognized that this first batch of students would be a pilot group where some experimentation would take place. There would be uncertainties on how best to use the technology, how to orchestrate the course project and generally provide good teaching over the Internet. Instructors, I4 envisioned, would need to be involved in “collaborative content generation,” that would require a change in mindset to adapt to the ICT medium. In fact, I4 anticipated some challenges with faculty noting that,

... there was a lot of resistance when videoconferencing and teleconference facilities came, but gradually it has become part of our lives so similarly, so even the online teaching will become part of our lives. Maybe two to three years onwards people will change.

On the topic of relevance to the Indian context, I4 offered the view that “the question of local and global doesn’t arise”, adding that in relation to the MLIS program,

We are not talking about distinctions in knowledge. It is something that has been designed for international use. Some examples here and there are maybe from the Indian culture. As I mentioned we also have international examples as well.

This provides a good segue to look at the content of the Management of Library and Information Centres course taught by I4, outlined in Table 7.5 below.
Like the previous tables, Table 7.5 offers a breakdown of terms and phrases that were identified as being of Indian or non-Indian origin. Despite comparatively lower figures to Table 7.4 for the Information, Communication and Society Course, we can see a good representation of terms particular to India under the headings of Cultural (47 percent), Company/Organization (56 percent) and most of all, Geographical (93 percent). There was a stark contrast however, in the number of terms of Indian origin under the Theoretical/Academic heading, and by association, the Citation heading.

In 2009 I4 was invited for another interview. The first point of conversation was on the topic of evaluation. Referencing the Cyber law program, I4 noted that a formal examination was replaced with term papers that were then presented by web conference and evaluated by the law faculty at IGNOU. The MLIS program had yet to have any graduates, but plans had been put to varying statutory bodies including an expert committee on evaluation methodology, the
particular School Board in the School of Social Sciences and then to the Academic Council. I4 anticipated that four or five of the current eight students in the first cohort may complete the program by August, 2009. I4 displayed optimism about the progress made in the program.

As a teacher I found that if I go to regular counselling sessions students are not so active, whereas in this case students are very active, they are asking questions, it's not passive learning, it's becoming more active learning in fact. So that is helping a lot.

Admittedly, this may have also been due to having only eight students, compared to conventional counselling sessions where there would be roughly 20 students gathering at a particular study centre. Despite the good level of interaction, I4 noted some challenges with the online medium. Of course there were the usual technical issues students had, but there was also the expectation that these students need to be constantly supported, “We have only eight students but we are taking particular care of those students and it's a learning experience for us.” I4 found that having to teach the e-counselling sessions while also fielding questions that were coming in via online chat required differing skills to manage these new duties. Further as students progressed more courses had to be offered. From Figure 7.5 it was shown that there are six compulsory courses and up to six electives. Having a limited sized faculty however, had required some re-shuffling within the program. I4 had passed on the duties to teach the Management course to I12 who was a junior faculty member, enabling I4 to start two new courses, ICT Applications (compulsory) and Preservation (elective). With the expectation that enrolments would grow, e-counsellors from outside the faculty would need to be hired, as had been the case in the Cyber Law and LPO programs, and the newly launched Acupuncture online program. Already I4 had received inquiries about the program from prospective students in the U.S. and Sri Lanka hinting at the prospects of expansion.

On the topic of enrolments, I4 noted that there was an expectation that enrolments would have been higher and admitted that starting the online initiative with the Bachelor in Library Information Science would have naturally generated more interest for an online version of the MLIS. At the same time, I4 and I11 had cited the benefit of having smaller numbers at first to pilot the program. When asked about the extent of advertising in comparison to the LPO
program, I4 suggested that there was also marketing for the MLIS program, but pointed out that law professionals are a “good market” themselves, referring to the high number of lawyers in India (measured at roughly one million) and the accompanying income of law professionals to readily afford continued learning.

The topic of policy was re-visited in particular with the question asked the previous year on the absence of any policy for online learning at IGNOU. I4 pointed to the statutory bodies of the University indicating that if something is passed at this level then this can be affirmed as part of a larger policy framework. The examples identified were on evaluation in the Cyber Law program as being a “complete deviation” from what is currently in place. Another was the use of cohort based, rather than session-based registration. Because of the nature of the online medium, there is less regulation required, such as scheduling television or radio times to access a program and concerns that are administrative or theoretical in nature can be addressed through an email or found through extensive question data banks located on the course websites. Further, students in the conventional print-based mode are assigned to regional study centres, requiring administrative responsibilities absent from the online context. In future I4 recognized the need to create policies on topics ranging from open educational resources to using social media to deepen interactions online.

The claim in Chapter 6 that policy development, and online learning in general, were exemplars of grassroots, or bottom-up processes supported at IGNOU was brought to light again when I4 spoke about deepening the use and impact of online learning at IGNOU. Having been occupied with the regulation of the programs, I4 wanted to focus on changing the mindset of the faculty involved with the online processes. Social networking, including twitter and blogging and scenario based e-learning were all mentioned as tools to create a more “learner-centred” environment. In more immediate terms, the other faculty member interviewed, I12, drew reference to a particular elective course, Academic Library Systems, that drew some debate on the current policy of providing elective courses. There were some concerns on the topic of offering an array of electives (students were to select two electives from six options) when there were only eight students enrolled in the program. Minimal
interest in the Research Methodology to be taught by I11 resulted in it being temporarily shelved as there was not enough interest to offer the course. What I12 meant by policy was that in its first iteration, the arrangement with the MLIS program had been to teach the compulsory courses during the e-counselling sessions and field questions at the same time. As students were inquiring about the elective options the constraints of time had prompted some discussion on moving towards a more hands-off model, where only questions would be fielded, presumably in the asynchronous channels provided through the online medium.

Before moving to the OUC course analyses, it is useful at this point to recap some of the major findings from the IGNOU data in Section III.

From the point of content, there appears to be considerable attention drawn to creating content that is localized and relevant to the Indian learner. Even where this is low, as was found in the LEAP course of the Legal Process Outsourcing program, this seemed justified on the grounds that the program was international in scope. After all, the program had already been offered through the Rainmaker Company. Only after having partnered with IGNOU, had some modifications been made to the content. It is interesting to ponder what the course would look like had it been designed from the beginning at IGNOU.

The responses to the questions of origin of content were mixed, with some indicating there was adequate knowledge of an Indian origin, another that this was not overly relevant and most unexpected that there may be too much content geared towards India. It should also be noted that because of the infancy of these programs, priority is placed on getting the programs up and running. Concerns were focused more on students becoming more familiarized with the online processes and enhancing the interactivity on the system. One may assume that the greater interaction online among the Indian students would also further preserve (or extend) the learning environment as being Indian in character. The questions raised about opening the courses to learners overseas, will undoubtedly present added contours to the programs as well.
The Faculty of Foreign Languages.

The Faculty of Foreign Languages (Wài Yǔ Xué Yuàn, 外语学院) had been previously titled the Foreign Language Department, or Section, depending on translation (Wài Yǔ Bù, 外语部), and is among the most well-known institutes in the OUC. All students enrolled at the OUC in degree of diploma programs are required to take English courses and therefore the Institute caters to students enrolled in both English and other majors.

In 2008 enrolments for majors reached 29,176 in its undergraduate programs and 28,158 in its diploma programs. The Institute is divided into two departments: Business English and English Education. The Institute employs eight faculty members split between the two departments. Three participants were interviewed from the Institute, of which one lecturer, C10, and one professor, C4, provided general information on the school and a second lecturer, C9, provided information on the particular course, Business English part 2, which was used for analysis.

At the time of the interviews, all programs were being revised as part of a larger initiative to augment the standing of the Institute. Plans were in place to re-vamp current programs and to introduce new course options in Japanese, Russian and Korean.

The topic of administrative volume to manage a course that reached approximately 20,000 students was received rather modestly. C9 stated that the responsibilities of a faculty member involved designing the syllabus, the course books and teaching media (the examinations are set by the teachers at the co-operating University). The Provincial Open Universities carry out the teaching duties. Though some faculty members of the institutes in the OUC took on teaching duties in Beijing, due to restructuring, no faculty members in the Foreign Languages Institute had engaged in such activities. In some cases OUC professors are recorded giving lectures and participate in the online platform. Having tens of thousands of students, however, makes administration quite complex. Another colleague in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, C10, remarked that at the beginning of the semester (twice per year) national
discussions or seminars are carried out with all instructors in a face to face setting. C10 described the first national gathering as follows:

A wild experience, so many people to get to know. The former Dean gave us a lot of introductions to the teachers. They are familiar with each other; the whole system is like a team. So the assignments or tasks you have to know 10 or 20 teachers this time, in the future you will have contact with them so in the future it will be easier.

Having instructors located across the country also placed some reliance on maintaining contact through online discussion and teleconference.

The importance of the English programs at the OUC seemed to be emblematic of the esteemed place of English in the larger higher education landscape in China. Most universities require that a student passes the College English Test, which is otherwise known as CET-4, before he or she may graduate from any undergraduate program. The CET-4 is therefore an important requirement for any University student and often needed for employment purposes. This also places added pressures on the particular language departments or schools of universities to ensure that students are receiving adequate English language instruction. In contrast with the Indian higher education system, there is a unique comparison. India’s linguistic plurality is much more pronounced than China’s and is reflected in the policies of the higher education system, which notes that all students in higher education should have proficiency in three languages; the two official languages of English and Hindi, and a regional language from where the student originates. In China the expectation is to speak Mandarin Chinese and then, as noted above, a degree of proficiency in English is required as measured by the CET-4. Despite having nearly 60 ethnic minorities, a third language is not prioritized, which C9 identified in general terms as being problematic in the country.

66 The 4 refers to having in one’s vocabulary the understanding and ability to use 4,000 words. There is also the CET-6 where competency using 6,000 words is required. There is also the Test for English Majors (TEM) that has categorizations of TEM-4 (6,000 words) and TEM-8 (13,000) words.
Bachelor program in English.

Business English course.

Turning to the particular course, Business English 2, the investigator looked through the textbook with C9 to examine the relevance of content. Judging by the cover, the textbook was clearly directed at Chinese learners depicting an image of the South China Sea, and names in Chinese of the course and the Chinese name of the OUC at the bottom. The book had been printed by the OUC and had included some phrases in Chinese in the inset of the book. The course however, had been written by members of the Open University in the UK where it was originally published.

Figure 7.9. Business English Textbook.

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For reasons identified in Chapter 5, the Open University of China has retained its original name in Chinese: Zhōng Yāng Guǎngbō Diànsī Dàxué – China Central Radio and Television University.
With a snapshot of the course content offered in Figure 7.9, a close examination of the text shows content that has not been modified to accommodate the Chinese learner. Images of westerners and the use of English names and companies were pervasive throughout the textbook, as were geographic terms that would certainly be unfamiliar to non-residents of the UK (see text in Figure 7.9). When this was pointed out C9 remarked, “I agree with you such as the pounds as currency, or the use of the pictures should involve more local elements.” An analysis of the content further substantiated the claim of the content being de-contextualized. Table 7.6 provides a breakdown of content as analyzed by signifiers.

Table 7.6

*Analysis of Content for Business English Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Non-Chinese</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>.01%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 1)</td>
<td>(n = 737)</td>
<td>(n = 738)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company/Organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 334)</td>
<td>(n = 344)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical/Academic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 20)</td>
<td>(n = 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 5)</td>
<td>(n = 263)</td>
<td>(n = 268)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 29)</td>
<td>(n = 29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the course was simply transplanted into the Chinese context, it should not be surprising that little information was of Chinese origin. The figures relating to ‘Cultural’ and ‘Geography’ were scant references to Beijing or China. Explaining about the absence of local contours to the curriculum, C9 also added,
...with an imported book we have established a course team to re-edit or make some modifications on content. That has been our rule to use any imported courses and maybe later on in our re-establishment of the new curriculum and new programs we'll import some books from the west. It's not designed for Chinese learners. We have noticed the problem...

These sentiments were shared by another colleague in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, C10. This lecturer added that policy requires course design to look at the curriculum of other schools and that once a curriculum has been designed discussion with colleagues to revise and discuss matters ensues before seeking input from experts and approval from the MoE. At the same time, making changes to the content of an English textbook, written by native speakers of English was something foreign to the Institute. C10 confessed there would be “a lot of mistakes” if the book were written by a Chinese academic and that, “The first source language is the best so that students can learn what idiomatic English is like”. Where there are edits or additions, this occurs in the lectures or tutorials.

Course materials are rarely used from the conventional universities as C10 described, “This isn’t good for our students.” The textbooks need to be written in “task and feedback form” to continuously assess learning for the particular student studying at a distance. As such, if and when course materials are borrowed they originate only from the OUUK. The additions of tapes, VCDs, and online materials add to the quality and relevance of the material for the distance learner. An additional layer to the quality of the materials and credibility of the program is recognized through the partnering institution. For Business English the degree granting University is among China’s top institutions, the University of International Business and Economics (Duìwài Jīngjì Máoyì Dàxué, 对外经济贸易大学). The other department in the Institute, English Education, has as its degree granting body, the prestigious Beijing Language and Culture University (Běijīng Yǔyán Dàxué, 北京语言大学).

For the online component to the course there were ample resources that were part of the joint BBC and OUC website called In2English. The website carries plenty of information on
the topic of learning British English including links such as “Welcome to the UK” and “Authentic Real English” that is decidedly British based. C9 noted this was not an occurrence unique to the Faculty of Foreign Languages. “[The OUC] has been keeping very close ties with the British Council and OUUK. That's why, as you noticed, the courses, some are directly imported from the OUUK and also Longman and other publications.” There were also faculty exchanges between the two institutions. On several occasions the investigator attended workshops with visiting faculty from the OUUK, generally on training tutors in varying forms of online tutorial support. In turn, OUC faculty attended three month sojourns to Milton Keynes to acquire training at the OUUK.

Despite the exceptionally large enrolments C10 even responded to some students’ queries online via the bulletin board system. Students, in fact, were expected to use online messaging programs such as MSN or QQ, with C10 going so far as to say, “For our students they have to have access to the Internet, otherwise they have no way to learn...”. Even in the more remote areas, students were expected to go to local learning centres to access the information. The policy about having access to three different media for a particular course turned out to be not applicable to the courses and programs of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. Only courses deemed to be “well made” were given space to be broadcast on TV, for example.

In the broader picture of using online learning, C9 held strong views about its use with particular reference to the movement of creating a lifelong learning society. The position taken was that without the Internet technology such a goal would be unattainable. The OUC, along with the other Internet Colleges, play a pivotal role in meeting these needs. At the same time C9 asserted that the Internet acts as a portal for the spread of culture and reduces financial demands on learning, referring to achieving economies of scale through mass production. At the same time, C9 was frank on the potentially negative aspects of online learning. Without citing specific examples, C9 chose to paraphrase an oft-cited quote by Deng Xiaoping:

The free access to resources or culture or knowledge online means, just like we open the window, it is easy for you to breathe some fresh air. At the same time the flies and the negative things, come with the fresh air.
The teaching of English, and the Business English course in particular, have the objectives of teaching Chinese learners about concepts that are undoubtedly unfamiliar. The concerns cited by C9 above make the topic of learning English more pronounced, as the discipline is incongruent with Chinese culture by nature. Localizing the content however, would offer a proximity to the topic that could better engage learners. There is a voluminous literature on language acquisition for non-native speakers that points to the importance of contextualizing the learning environment and therefore to base learning on students’ pre-existing knowledge (see “constructivism” and Vygotsky, for example). The assumption is that the particular course is not functioning optimally to acquire better language skills in English. Chapter 8 analyzing students’ perceptions with the particular online courses will look more closely at such effects. In the next course, we look at Marketing, which also offers materials that carry a western-influence in the curriculum. The stark difference in the following courses to be analyzed is that they are taught exclusively in Chinese.

The OUC: Faculty of Economics and Management.

The Faculty of Economics and Management offers programs in accounting, administrative management, marketing, business management, finance, financial management, and economics. In 2008 total enrolments in the undergraduate programs measured at 318,498 and 780,796 in the diploma programs. The particular courses that were selected from the Faculty of Economics and Management were Marketing and Accounting. The Marketing course was available to students in both the degree and diploma programs. This is one unique area of the OUC system where many students commence studies in the diploma program and matriculate into the degree program of the same discipline. The professor for the course, C11, had been working at the OUC for 24 years and had earned a bachelor degree from a University in Beijing. When asked about why the OUC was the chosen place for employment, C11 responded, “I did not choose to come here. In my time the planned economy, I was assigned by the government. Right now, in the market economy an assignment like that doesn’t exist anymore.” C11 described the duties of the job as having to design, organize, develop and refine various programs as well as create a teaching model and set the examinations. The breadth of
the OUC requires an intricate network of teachers stationed throughout the system. There were 10 professional teachers in the Business Management area and 300 teachers situated in the Provincial Open Universities. Including those instructors located at the branch levels of the OUC (Provincial, County, and Prefecture), there were a total of 6,000 teachers working in the particular Institute. C11 estimated there were about 160,000 degree and 140,000 diploma students enrolled in the Marketing program.

**Bachelor program in business administration.**

**Marketing course.**

Moving to the particulars about the Marketing course, C11 described the discipline of Marketing as something that originated in the US and that it first reached China in the 1930s. With the transition from a planned economy to a more open, market-based economy, it was not until the 1990s that marketing really had an impact on business and society as a whole. Even now, C11 remarked, the market economy with Chinese features still very much resembles the American market economy with slight modifications that are localized in nature. The book that was used for the course was co-authored by C11. The strategy to teach marketing concepts was to use case methods, as was also adopted in the law disciplines from IGNOU. In the particular textbook there was a clear focus on western companies and strategies with numerous references to Philips, the electronics company. C11 responded by stating the field of marketing in China is still in its infancy so using “foreign classical cases” such as those involving Philips, offered more examples to teach the varying marketing concepts. C11 said that the company is a leading authority in marketing strategies and that such a model is something companies in China should try to emulate.

Where the conditions permit, some Chinese cases were used such as the Sanlu Milk Company to highlight the dangers of poor safety controls and the subsequent negative press.

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68 Sanlu Milk Company was at the centre of a scandal that broke in China in July, 2008. After it had been reported that many infants fell ill after consuming powdered milk it was found that the milk had been contaminated with melamine, which is an inexpensive plastic additive that is toxic when ingested by humans. It was found to have been added to the milk so that it appears to have a higher level of protein. Up to 300,000 people were infected and several infants died.
that can de-rail successful companies. Also infused in the text were the use of Chinese proverbs by Sun Tzu and Chairman Mao. The point in using a combination of cases of Chinese and foreign origin was perceived as an inevitable necessity. As C11 claimed, “Here is a kind of merging. With excellent features of western cultures, we learn from other cultures and try hard to make ours better”. We may return to Deng Xiaoping’s famous edict drawing a comparison in liberalizing China’s economy to opening a window to let in some fresh air. When asked how students perceived Chinese and foreign cases in learning content, C11 responded,

... if you teach western culture in western style they have a hard time to understand. Normally for western cases we use Chinese style to localize it to make it plain and simple for students to absorb. For example, if I use the names Jen and John, students don’t like to listen; but if I use Xiao Qiang and Xiao Ming, then students love to listen.

Again we refer to the scope of literature on constructivism to support the idea of building on students’ pre-existing knowledge to enhance learning. The inclusion of local terms can ease the acquisition of concepts and context, rather than having to decode a proper noun unfamiliar to the learner. Let us consider the above quote, which was translated to English. A learner, unfamiliar with Mandarin Chinese, who is reading the translated passage, may be sidetracked with the de-contextualized nature of the proper nouns ‘Xiao Qiang’ and ‘Xiao Ming’. Are they gender specific? How are such names pronounced? Do the names carry any cultural significance? The actual names are gender specific (the former is a female name; the latter a male name), the pronunciations of “Xiao” are distinct and carry two different meanings⁶⁹, and the cultural significance is that each name belongs to a particular film star in Chinese cinema (note the reference “then students love to listen”). The larger point is dealing with familiarity. The context in this investigation is the matter of the global ubiquity of higher education. Increasingly, higher education is guided by global rankings, quality assurance mechanisms, degree transfer, internationalisation, greater transborder collaborations and

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⁶⁹ Consider the word ‘produce’. As a noun the stress is on the first syllable; as a verb the stress is placed on the second syllable. Comparably, in Mandarin Chinese words that sound similar are distinguishable by the use of tones.
information transfer through networked technologies. Together these factors are dramatically influencing higher education, bringing us back to the research question guiding this Chapter,

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

And more broadly as the main research question,

How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the inclusion of national knowledge is of paramount importance to the design of courses, and taken quite seriously by both the OUC and IGNOU. Returning to C11, the professor also added the preference of students for utilizing Chinese cases for learning as it is “closer to their daily lives.” Named the “National Competition for students in Business Administration,” instructors throughout the Chinese Open University system organized students enrolled in the Business Administration program to submit cases of a business nature to be compiled in a volume that would be later utilized in OUC courses. Approximately 200 cases were selected and the OUC in Beijing invited experts to further scrutinize the selections. A book was organized and included 92 cases that C11 described as cases “about corporations students are familiar with... they feel more realistic about the cases close to them. They feel these cases merit being studied”. The book was available only in print copy, but the online system was used to pose questions on the varying cases. The actual use of the course in the online format was not mandatory. C11 stated that instructors do encourage students to visit the website regularly. The use of online learning was described as complementary to the course textbook as it expands on certain topics and provides exercises, questions and interactive functions with instructors and other learners. The reality, remarked C11, was that the online system was not being utilized as anticipated. Attributed to this were two issues. First was the technological skill set of the learners was not adequate and that there was a need for greater promotion. C11 pointed to the ‘counter’, indicating the number of visits
to the website for the marketing course. There were 176,000 hits, which C11 described as low when considering there were 500,000 students using the courses (300,000 for the compulsory marketing course; 200,000 for the other course). The prospects were, however, bright. Better promotion, increasingly technological exposure and the fact that younger students seemed to be enrolling in OUC programs suggested that better utilization of the online medium would occur in future.

The next course to be analyzed is Modern Chinese. This is another unique course as it deals solely with the study of the language of Mandarin Chinese. In this case, foreign influence is surely minimized in comparison to the other courses.

**The OUC: Faculty of Art & Law.**

The programs in Art and Law were among the first offered with the establishment of the Open University of China in 1979. In 2007 the programs were re-organized under the heading of the Faculty of Art and Law. Under the Institute there are five departments including Law, Administration and Public Management, Communications, Chinese Language and the Department of Marxism-Leninism. Enrolments in the undergraduate programs were 295,037 and enrolments in the diploma programs were 250,901.

In this section we will examine courses belonging to the departments of law and Chinese language. The professor who belonged to the Department of Chinese Language, C3, had been with the OUC for 25 years.

**Bachelor program in Chinese literature.**

**Modern Chinese course.**

The first majors to engage in the online learning project initiated by the Chinese government were courses in Finance, English, Computers and Law. In 2001, Chinese language courses commenced operations online. Now with two semesters per year, C3 noted that the online courses in Chinese language had been offered over 14 semesters.
C3 described the duties of a professor at the OUC as being to teach, design textbooks, prepare print and video materials, interact with learners online and prepare examinations. The courses taught by C3, Teaching Modern Chinese and Basic Concepts of Linguistics, were directed at both degree and diploma students. C3 described the OUC headquarters in Beijing as monitoring the progress of the course including teaching quality and assessment. The main responsibility of teaching was imparted to the local Open Universities at the provincial, prefecture, and county levels. On the note of the pervasiveness of the OUC system in China, C3 remarked that the strong social function served by the institution “changes students’ fate, and we know individuals’ fate connects tightly with the fate of society.”

Moving to the topic of online learning C3 noted the importance of utilizing the system to enhance student-teacher interactions and for updating information. Without the former, the purpose of online learning is lost. The OUC employs a policy that instructors are to respond to a student’s query within three days, though C3 had insisted on responding to students’ queries daily. As the leader of the particular online courses it was important to exemplify a standard of consistency and integrity in operating online. The alternative, this professor suggested, would result in the decay of the system. This did not end with interaction. C3 also pointed to the success of some online courses having been recognized nationally for quality, but this had been a mixed blessing. The fact that these courses were regarded as prestigious, this had also resulted in these courses becoming static. Few modifications had been done to some courses that had been awarded recognition five to ten years back. The feeling of this professor was to eventually move courses into a completely online format, with the availability of textbooks placed online.

The course examined was Modern Chinese. When asked about how this particular course operated online, in comparison to courses that were more professionally oriented such as Law or Business, C3 pointed to the versatility of the medium to exploit the use of language. Directing students to post novels, poems and audio and video recordings on the website had been a few strategies met with great success. The popularity of the course was substantiated, in one sense, having over 100,000 hits on the website. The number of enrolments in the
Chinese Literature department amounted to almost 108,726 in the undergraduate stream (40,674 in the Diploma program).

C3 stated that having the Modern Chinese course online was a necessity to serve society. “Language conforms to the needs of society ... including English,” was one remark and that the rapid changes occurring in Chinese society were reflected through language, including the unique utterances that cater to online users. Mandarin Chinese had been further promulgated through the waves of the Internet, to the detriment of many other languages and dialects in China. C8 equated the extinction of a particular language to the extinction of a particular species adding, “the whole society will become dull, monotonous...” In regards to foreign influence C3 noted a familiar tone to other professors, “A nation’s language should keep its purity. We may borrow language from different cultures, but we shouldn’t take the whole package without changes. We should only absorb the useful and suitable elements that fit into our own culture.” Again, a professor paraphrases the famous quote of Deng Xiaoping in drawing an analogy to China’s economy and opening a window. C3 drew examples to foreign films and shows, citing the invasion of “borrowed language” that has no corresponding Chinese translation. “Most of those borrowed terms flood into the Chinese market, they become popular overnight, and the public just accepts those new concepts as the way they are ...”

It can be said that C3 held three rather unique views on the use of online learning. Overall, it appeared that the Internet had had positive outcomes for the Modern Chinese course. For example, the interactive capabilities had enabled students to explore uses of Mandarin Chinese that had been specific to the Internet. At the same time, C3 suggested that the expansion and ubiquity of Mandarin Chinese through the Internet may be a threat to the innumerable languages and dialects held by China’s minority populations. Similar sentiments were expressed by C9 from the Business English department when speaking about the apathy towards languages other than Mandarin Chinese or English in higher education. Finally, on the topic of English C3 also expressed concern over the passivity of absorbing foreign words into the common lexicon without consideration to translate these terms into Mandarin Chinese.

In the final course to be analyzed, we look at Intellectual Property Law.
**Bachelor program in law.**

**Intellectual property law course.**

Like the Department of Chinese Literature, the Department of Law fell under the Faculty of Art and Law. The program in Law was among the first offered when the OUC was established in 1979. Enrolments in the Department of Law were among the most populated; 140,309 enrolled as bachelor degree students and 180,726 enrolled as diploma students. The professor interviewed from this department, C8, had joined the OUC in 1984 and had previously studied in Jilin and Beijing. The courses organized under this professor were Civil Law, Intellectual Property Rights Law, Attorney Law and Marriage and Family Law, of which the first two were core courses for Bachelor Degree students. The duties of C8 revolved around course production and preparation and to assess teaching across the country. In broader terms the Department of Law, at the government’s request, offered continuing education to those working in the field of the National Prosecutorial system as part of the Supreme People’s Protectorate. The aim of this in-service program was to augment the skill set and credentials of approximately two-thirds of the professionals, amounting to roughly 20,000 employees.

On the topic of online learning, C8 noted that in 1999, when the OUC was becoming engaged with online learning, the four major courses that were targeted were Finance, English, Computers and Law. Law was selected for various reasons. The enrolments in the program were the highest in the University and it was deemed that the central OUC and local branches were well-equipped to make this transition to online learning from the print-based programs. As well, a bidding process was required as part of the modern distance education project and the law program was selected. C8 was one of the main designers and editors of one of the courses, the History of Chinese Law.

When describing the process of course design for online learning, C8 made references to “the requirements of the country,” and more pointedly, students’ learning needs in the distance environment and how online teaching strategies can be best employed. One strategy used by the OUC for many of its courses is to recruit famous professors in the particular discipline. Distinguishing the OUC with the statement, “no other universities can use the best
teaching resources in the whole country like we do,” C8 proceeded to list three professors belonging to differing universities who were the designated teachers for particular courses (through pre-recorded video lectures). This statement by C8 is rather accurate. With a network of institutions throughout the country, supported with nearly three million students, the OUC carries an audience like no other institution. It would be hard to imagine a professor of high standing turning down an offer to share his or her knowledge with such large student populations, particularly in consideration of the social function aligned to the mission of the OUC.

The particular course that was chosen was Intellectual Property Law. C8 noted the beginnings of the discipline could be traced to the west dating to the Industrial Revolution when the areas of trademark law, protection and copyright law were first institutionalized. In more contemporary terms China’s patent law, which was introduced in 1984, was based on the UK’s own patent law. Modifications occurred based on Japanese and American laws and in 2000, based on the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), more modifications were made in preparation for China’s accession into the WTO in 2001. According to the text, China has entered about ten agreements and treaties on IPL. Gaining entry to the WTO opened China to new rules and regulations and more international conventions and treaties that further altered Chinese domestic law (e.g., Chinese copyright law, patent law). Definitions included in the text are based on international conventions and treaties. Other origins of Chinese IPL that emerge from the book are treaties and agreements that stem from bilateral and regional agreements. The division between domestic and international cases is skewed towards being Chinese in origin with only some international cases.

In terms of teaching the course, C8 identified a particular policy congruent with C3 that indicated instructors were required to respond to students’ online queries within three days. There were also tools to monitor students’ activities online and noted there were certain expectations in the law courses for student study hours online. The entire process, however, was complex as C8 indicated there were several thousand teachers (in the OUC as a whole) and
that monitoring progress, as the leader of the course, was a difficult task. To gain insight into the issues teachers had, C8 also engaged in face-to-face teaching in Beijing, a practice consistent with some other professors at the OUC headquarters.

Looking ahead at growth, C8 echoed similar sentiments with other professors that the OUC was the top institution for offering adult education programs in the country. The downside was the absence of autonomy with some examples cited as the inability to offer master and PhD programs.

Comparisons and Conclusions

In pulling together the results and analyses let us re-visit the research questions that have guided this Chapter:

2.1 How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?

2.2 How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

It was described at the end of Section II that there was a clear hierarchy in place at both the OUC and IGNOU in relation to the design of courses. Where differences lie is the accrediting body; in the case of the OUC, the MoE grants approval to a course, whereas at IGNOU, it is an internal matter decided by the Board of Management. Course designers adhere to the policies particular to each University when designing a course, with the inclusion on course teams of educational technologists located in-house, and subject-matter experts who generally hold academic positions in conventional universities.

At the OUC it was shown that there are other firm policies in place. Providing at least three technologies to accommodate those students who are differently connected and a
defined online response time between teacher and learner were a few examples. At IGNOU there is an ad hoc practice in the development process. Interaction is limited with the exception that students are being directed to access resources online, as instructors balance new teaching and administrative duties. Some are finding ways to better engage learners online, a process that will likely continue. The experimentation of providing walk-in admissions and unique assessment procedures employed by the Cyber Law program are other examples of experimentation that seem to be working adequately. Higher enrolments are sought, and with the maturation of the programs growth should come. The partnership between Rainmaker and IGNOU in offering the LPO program had offered new ideas to widen the appeal of the programs.

We may therefore conclude that in relation to the first question, policies are integral to course development at the OUC. At IGNOU there is some experimentation that is occurring, but otherwise, the policies in place for course design in conventional programs are adhered to for the online programs. This provides a segue to address the second question on the flexibility of the curriculum organization process. Because of the comparatively experienced faculty (e.g., recall C3 noting the Modern Chinese course was in its 14th offering) and the expectations of students (e.g., recall C10 stating that students being on line is something “they have to have access to...”), there seems to be a good structure in place for online learning at the OUC. Various professors shared differing strategies to better engage learners suggesting there was some flexibility to the curriculum organization process. One curriculum designer, C6, whose course was not analyzed, stated that because of the difficulty in accommodating a student population with diverse learning needs and interests the OUC encouraged “creation and reform... so we keep operating experiments...”. On a smaller scale, there was some evidence of experimentation at IGNOU in the case of I4 who found some success with the presentation of problems to engage learners in the e-counselling sessions. The evaluation scheme employed in the Cyber Law program is another example of exercising some flexibility in the curriculum organization process. In essence flexibility is a relative term. It would appear that the breadth of flexibility was dependent on the circumstances of the curriculum designers and their experience in using the online medium.
We may carry forward the question of flexibility to the third question posed on the origin of content. This was the third section of the Chapter and comprised the bulk of the analyses. Like the degree of flexibility exercised in course design, the extent of Indian or Chinese knowledge present in content seemed course dependent, and overall, a concern of minor importance to the course designers.

Drawing comparisons between IGNOU and the OUC cases shows primarily experiences between immature and mature implementations with online learning, with the comparison of course content between two institutions situated in two distinct cultures being less pronounced. At the OUC the four OUC courses analyzed were established, with some having been running since 2001 when the online initiatives were first launched at the OUC. If we begin with the textbook in Business English we find it was wholly de-contextualized from the learning environment in China. Not only were local references non-existent there were no explanations or translations of unique foreign terms in Chinese. The Marketing course was rooted in western concepts, though there was some evidence of localizing the content. The instructor was a co-author for the textbook that was written in Chinese and the online medium had been used to promote some unique work by the students. Modern Chinese was clearly the course that most represented Chinese content (or knowledge), using the study of Chinese as the focal point. Some unique uses of the online medium by students had been shared as well. Lastly was the course on Intellectual Property Law. Like Marketing, many foreign concepts had been used with foreign cases and treaties being integral to understanding domestic issues in China with IPL. What was interesting is that three of the four course designers paraphrased China’s architect of the social-market economy, Deng Xiaoping. His famous analogy, “If you open the window for fresh air, you have to expect some flies to blow in”, draws a comparison to China opening its borders to the world, with the expectation that some negative influences will inevitably arrive. To suggest that the use of concepts, or even textbooks, that are foreign to China, may present negative influences is an exaggeration. China is maintained as an interventionary state, where the role of government is influential and pervasive, particularly in public institutions such as higher education. The added filter of language also maintains a degree of distance, though this may also trigger a greater affinity towards things foreign in nature. In regards to the theoretical
concerns we may conclude that within the OUC the awareness and participation with globalization is met less with resistance, and more with a sense of interdependence. For the OUC it seems to be about students learning the content which is augmented through online learning and that in broader terms, the OUC’s participation in globalization will be on its own terms.

The analyses presented through IGNOU showed findings that were rather localized in terms of course design and in a point of convergence with the OUC, relatively unmoved by any negative connotations to globalization.

Of the four courses analyzed from IGNOU the two from the law programs were both new whereas the two from the Library and Information Science program had been previously offered in print format. The considerations for localization seemed rather acute. The IGNOU courses showed a range of content that represented up to 48 percent of references being categorized as Indian in origin (Information Communication and Society course belonging to the Library and Information Science program). It was also the case that one course had as little as five percent of references designated as Indian in origin (Legal Education and Proficiency belonging to the Legal Process Outsourcing program). Course designers seemed to have perceptions on the importance of localizing, and internationalizing, the content. Whereas the course designers affirmed the necessity to localize content, they also lauded the content as suitable for an international audience. Unique to the IGNOU course designers were more pressing concerns on the topic of launching the program, getting students to interact, and ensuring that those teaching students have adequate training to work in the online environment. As noted by I11 in Section I, there were no negative connotations to the presence of globalization on the IGNOU courses. The accessibility of resources external to IGNOU augmented the quality of the courses to the point that there was a subtle confidence in the ability to offer these new online programs internationally.
In answering the question,

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

For the courses from the OUC, we may conclude there is limited concern with the origin of course content, unless the course is focused specifically on studies unique to China, as is the case with Modern Chinese. The notion that content (or knowledge) that is Chinese in origin may be compromised by China opening its door to the world, seems to be an accepted trade-off to the larger objectives of advancing China’s social-market agenda. The ubiquity and strength of Chinese adds another layer of insulation from any negative effects. For IGNOU, there is indeed ample consideration to preserve content that is Indian in origin, or to contextualize foreign content. This may be rooted, in part, in the country’s historical proximity to the west. Carving out a differentiated identity in terms of designing courses that fuse Indian and non-Indian knowledge seems all the more possible when there is a relatively grounded understanding of knowledges and cultures external to the country. Where Mandarin Chinese acts as a filter to separate knowledge from beyond the boundaries of China, having English as a lingua franca in India similarly provides a filter to differentiate knowledge that is non-Indian in origin.

Following is Chapter 8 where the results of the student questionnaire are presented.
Chapter Eight: Students’ Experiences and Perceptions

Introduction

Chapter Seven looked at two main areas: The process of curriculum design for online learning and considerations to include Indian or Chinese content in course curriculum. It was found on the first point that curriculum design was rather systematic in both the OUC and IGNOU. Course development starts at the school level and includes subject matter experts external to the University. Approval of courses occurs at higher ranks. In the case of the OUC, final approval is granted through the Ministry of Education. At IGNOU, course approval occurs internally, with the Board of Management making final decisions. Both institutions follow program reform that occurs approximately every four to five years. For online learning it was found that the OUC has in place varying policies, such as the inclusion of media other than the Internet as access points for a particular course. The infancy of the online programs at IGNOU meant less structure was in place. For one, expectations to teach were external to the normal duties of faculty. Variations with course assessment and admissions were also being trialed.

On the topic of origin of content, the majority of courses from both Open Universities made efforts to represent knowledge that was Indian or Chinese in character, even if a particular discipline was relatively novel or comparatively under-researched in the country. Examples of the Marketing course at the OUC, and the Commerce Course at IGNOU demonstrated efforts to localize the content. It was also the case that some courses were quite de-contextualized from China and India. Overall, there were some patterns among the perceptions of course designers in terms of globalization and its connection to the design of courses. A theme among the OUC participants was the awareness of foreign influences that might be incongruent with Chinese culture, but also a sense that the proper modifications to content would minimize any potentially negative effects. From IGNOU, this was less of a concern overall. At the level of course development, there seemed to be only minor attention drawn to contextualize content, where possible. The concern was more about making courses pedagogically sound and even internationally competitive.
In both the examples provided from the OUC and IGNOU cases, it would seem that any sense of resistance to globalization is nominal.

Connecting this last point about globalization and resistance to globalization (or the importance of knowledge representation) to the student perspective is the objective of this Chapter. To address this third issue the following sub-research questions are posed:

3.1 What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?

3.2 What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?

To address these questions, the analysis in this Chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section will give a summary overview of the sample (described in more detail in Chapter Three). The ensuing two sections will be based on students’ experiences and students’ perceptions with online learning. The discussion of students’ experiences is focused on outcomes-based results, whereas that of students’ perceptions is focused on opinions-based results. The data was retrieved from an online questionnaire. Analyses use both descriptive and inferential statistics as described in Chapter 3. A summary and conclusions will be drawn at the end of the Chapter based on the two sub-research questions.

Section I: Summary Overview of Samples

The combined sample totaled 238. There were 121 participants from the OUC and 117 from IGNOU. As noted in Chapter 3, the majority of participants in the sample lived in urban settings, worked full-time and had attained some form of post-secondary education. The geographical distribution of participants was quite varied. Only four regions were not represented by the OUC participants and 22 or 35 regions were represented by the IGNOU sample. In both cases those unrepresented regions were identified as having lower levels of GDP, signaling that there are likely some socio-economic barriers to Internet access. There was
a balance in gender distribution from the OUC, though there was double the number of males to females in the IGNOU sample. Mean age was 29 at the OUC; 36 at IGNOU.

The analyses are centred on ten programs; five from each institution. In Chapter 7, part of the analyses presented was based on eight courses, representing four programs from the OUC and three programs from IGNOU (two courses were analyzed from the Master of Library Information Science program). To garner a larger response rate to the student questionnaire, one program was added from the OUC and two programs were added from IGNOU that were not included in the curriculum analyses in Chapter 7. From the OUC all programs led to a degree. From IGNOU three programs were post-graduate diplomas, one program was a post-graduate certificate and one program was for a Masters degree. The breakdown by program to respondent is indicated in Table 8.1, with the corresponding course analyzed in Chapter 7 in brackets (where applicable).

Table 8.1

Program by Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUC: Program</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Literature (Modern Chinese)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Accounting (n/a)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration (Marketing)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law (Intellectual Property Law)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (Business English)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals                             | 121 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IGNOU: Program</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Process Outsourcing</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Legal Education and Proficiency)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety and Quality Management</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n/a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Law (Commerce)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture (n/a)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Information, Communication and Society; Management of Library and Information Centres)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals                             | 117 |
The first set of results to be analyzed is the range of students’ experiences with using computers and working online.

**Section II: Students’ Experiences**

In this section the results from students’ experiences are analyzed and compared between the two samples from the OUC and IGNOU. Experiences are defined as tangible outcomes based on participants’ engagement with online learning. Overall, the experiences measured are about confidence or comfort level with using networked computer technology. The domains categorized under students’ experiences are listed in Table 8.2 below. Included in the table are the types of statistical measures used for analysis, number of items under each domain, forced or optional answer, number of cases per domain and *Cronbach’s α* score, where applicable.

Table 8.2

**Summary of Experiences Measured**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Forced</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Computer Skills</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>C: 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Experience Learning online</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>C: 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preferred mode of learning</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>C: 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Types of websites accessed</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>C: 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Origin of websites accessed</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>C: 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Denotes a Cronbach’s α of .70 or higher indicating strong reliability.

For those domains where the Cronbach’s α score was below .70, other inferential statistics were employed as elaborated in Chapter 3.
Domain 1: Computer skills.

To gather a sense of experience using computers, qualified as computer skills, participants rated competencies on a four-point Likert scale. The corresponding competency qualifiers were Expert (rank of 4), Experienced (rank of 3), Intermediate (rank of 2), and Beginner (rank of 1). The competencies included: Word processing, email/chat, searching the web, downloading programs, uploading files, creating Webpages. Total scores were computed and a test of reliability performed.

Table 8.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill with Computers</th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scores of computer</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s alpha produced a high score of reliability for both participant groups (α = 0.88 for OUC; α = 0.87 for IGNOU). An independent sample t-test indicated a significant effect for computer skills t(236) = 5.31, p < .001, with higher average scores for IGNOU (M = 2.88, SD = .65) than the OUC (M = 2.43, SD = .68). One-way analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) were calculated for each sample to ascertain what independent background traits (e.g., age, gender, employment experience, education, living density, program) may have impacted participants’ computer skills competencies. Only the OUC sample had any significant results.

For the OUC participant sample computer skills by living density was significant, \( F(2, 117) = 4.23, p = .017 \). OUC participants living in urban settings (\( M = 2.57, SD = 0.68 \)) had stronger computer skills than those in semi-urban (\( M = 2.38, SD = 0.47 \)) or rural settings (\( M = 2.15, SD = 0.63 \)). Bonferroni post-hoc test compared pair-wise differences. OUC participants who lived in urban settings were significantly different from those in rural settings (\( p = .016 \)) only.
These results indicate that there was only one trait in the OUC sample and none in the IGNOU sample that had an impact on students’ computer skills. Examined another way, age, gender, employment experience, education, program of study, and, in the case of the IGNOU sample, living density, had no impact on each samples’ computer competencies. Overall, the IGNOU student sample had a higher level of computer competence than the OUC sample based on the identified computer skills. It should also be noted that in the range of competencies listed, scores from both samples fell between *Intermediate* and *Experienced*.

**Domain 2. Experience learning online.**

To ascertain the volume of online learning and computer use, participants were asked four items as outlined in Table 8.4 below.

Table 8.4

*Experience Learning Online*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th></th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Number of years of online learning</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Number of courses completed online</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Hours per week learning online</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Computer use (hours/week)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study centre/Café</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 8.4, the IGNOU sample had a mean average of 1.5 (*SD = 1.7*) indicating number of years learning online, whereas the mean average score of the OUC sample was nearly doubled at 2.9 years (*SD = 3.1*). OUC students had completed nearly five courses online on average (*M = 4.92, SD = 1.9*) compared to IGNOU students (*M = 1.92, SD = 2.1*). These two results should be expected considering the comparatively longer duration that the OUC has offered courses online.
In terms of hours online and hours of computer use by location, the means showed similarities, but the wide standard deviations suggest there was little consistency in the range of hours spent in front of a computer with either sample.

**Domain 3: Preferred mode of learning.**

For the *Preferred Mode of Learning* domain low reliability scores from both the OUC and IGNOU samples (IGNOU: .56; OUC: .65) rendered analyses to be carried out on individual items. Table 8.5 shows the results of pair-wise differences between online learning and other modes of learning available. A five point Likert scale was used to score ‘Preferred mode of learning’ as is the case for the remaining domains in Section II.

Table 8.5

*Preferred Mode of Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>IGNOU</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$Mdn$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$Mdn$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$z$</td>
<td>$Mdn$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.12***</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.12***</td>
<td>4.31***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>6.09***</td>
<td>8.32***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.06***</td>
<td>-.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* ***$p < .001$*

For the OUC sample it can be concluded that, in all cases, students showed a stronger preference to use online learning in comparison to other modes of learning. In the IGNOU sample there were significant differences between online learning and TV and radio only. Overall, both samples demonstrated a high median score for online learning.
Domain 4: Types of websites accessed.

Domain 4, *Types of Websites Accessed*, was in relation to online supports used to aid in the particular program other than the course website. There were five items for websites accessed listed as follows: *Online libraries (publicly accessible), Websites from other universities, Wikipedia, Blogs, Search Engines*. Results follow in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Websites Accessed</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Libraries</td>
<td>OUC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Univ. websites</td>
<td>OUC</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
<td>OUC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>OUC</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Engines</td>
<td>OUC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In looking across the data presented in Table 8.6, there are some differences worth noting among the two samples. For one, the IGNOU sample had a higher mean score for all items, with the exception of *Other Universities’ Websites*. With reference to the first item, searching for materials in online libraries was an activity done with a degree of regularity among participants within both institutions. Online resources were available through the OUC website, though not at IGNOU at the time of the survey. Inquiring where students sought such online materials, particularly from the IGNOU sample, would be worthy for future study. Using
Wikipedia seemed to be favoured by the IGNOU sample, a finding that would be expected considering the proportionally higher number of entries that are English in origin on the Wikipedia site. The highest mean scores for both samples was using Search Engines. It should also be noted that there was a relatively low level of dispersion for this item within both samples, based on the standard deviation, suggesting that individuals in both samples chose Often or Always for this particular item.

**Domain 5. Origin of websites accessed.**

For origin of websites, the question offered four items as follows: Native language websites hosted domestically (.in or .cn domain), English websites hosted domestically, Native websites hosted internationally, English websites hosted internationally.

Table 8.7

*Origin of Websites Accessed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Websites Accessed</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In China/India in Chinese/Hindi</td>
<td>OUC 24</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU 13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In China/India using English</td>
<td>OUC 9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU 48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign using Hindi/Chinese</td>
<td>OUC 4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU 9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign using English</td>
<td>OUC 4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IGNOU 44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 8.7 we find predictable results based on language abilities. For the OUC sample, the tendency was to search for information on sites in Chinese that were hosted domestically. It is worth noting however, that for English language websites there were 72 participants who indicated either Sometimes, Often or Always in searching information on English language
websites in China and 52 participants who selected the same responses for English language websites hosted outside of China (and it should also be reminded there were only 13 students who identified as belonging to the Business English course). Overall, the results from the OUC sample were not exceptionally strong in searching websites external to the course site. One suggestion from this data is that the information provided to learners on the particular course website is generally favoured as the main source for information online. Conversely, the IGNOU sample had a stronger propensity to search for English language websites hosted in India or outside of India. In relation to Hindi, IGNOU students had a weak propensity to seek Hindi websites hosted in India and Hindi websites hosted outside of India. Seeing how all online programs offered through IGNOU were in English only, the findings for the IGNOU sample were to be expected. Like the OUC sample, the means scores were not particularly high, suggesting that the information provided on the course website is adequate for students’ learning.

**Interpretation of Section II.**

From Section II the results were mixed. The level of computer skills was expected to be higher than the mean scores of 2.43 (OUC) and 2.88 (IGNOU). As well, little evidence was found of demographic variables having an impact on computer competencies. The lone exception was of higher competencies scored for urban participants compared to rural participants in the OUC sample. In interpreting these results, it should be reminded that for computer skills, respondents were asked on competencies including Word processing, email/chat, searching the web, downloading programs, uploading files, creating WebPages. These latter two had comparatively lower mean scores and therefore affected the overall mean score. Nonetheless, students’ ratings on these skills would be classified as being between *Intermediate* and *Experienced*, on average.

Despite relatively low scores on computer competency, both samples demonstrated a high preference for learning in the online mode over other mediums available.

The other domains on experience were based on the websites accessed to acquire knowledge about the particular course being studied. Both samples scored highest for using
Search Engines to find information for the particular course and IGNOU participants also showed a propensity to find materials on Wikipedia. In regards to language, the results were not surprising with the OUC sample using websites hosted domestically and in Chinese, whereas the IGNOU sample used websites that were in English regardless of where they were hosted. The use of English language websites was somewhat surprising among the OUC sample. Measures to ascertain English proficiency would have been helpful to explore these results further. This is re-visited in Section III.

**Section III: Students’ Perceptions**

In this section students’ perceptions will be analyzed and compared between the two samples. Perceptions are defined as opinions and are therefore differentiated from experiences. In Section II ‘experience’ could be measured based on identifying how many hours are devoted to studying online, determining which websites are accessed to support learning, etc. Data in this Section is more subjective in nature when compared to data provided in Section II. The domains categorized under students’ perceptions are listed in Table 8.8 below, containing similar headings to Table 2. All items under each domain were scored on a 5 point Likert scale in the following ranges: *Strongly agree* (rank of 5), *Agree* (rank of 4), *Neutral* (rank of 3), *Disagree* (rank of 2), *Strongly disagree* (rank of 1).

Table 8.8

*Summary of Perceptions Measured*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Forced</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Where do you feel the content has originated</td>
<td>Descriptive Inferential</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>I: .28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C: 121</td>
<td>C: .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does this course represent ideas that are Indian/Chinese in origin?</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>I: .92*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C: 121</td>
<td>C: .85*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well does this course suit employment prospects?</td>
<td>Descriptive Inferential</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>I: .81*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C: 121</td>
<td>C: .89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What do you think is the future of OLL</td>
<td>Descriptive Inferential</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I: 117</td>
<td>I: .86*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C: 121</td>
<td>C: .83*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Denotes a Cronbach’s α of .70 or higher indicating strong reliability.
With the exception of Domain 6, all other domains had a strong reliability score. For Domain 6 individual items were compared.

**Domain 6: Origin of content.**

Each sample was asked to score perceptions of where content originated based on the following three items: Open University, Other national institutions, Other international institutions. The results, by choice, are shown in Table 8.9 below.

Table 8.9 Origin of Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of Content</th>
<th>OUC Mdn</th>
<th>IGNOU Mdn</th>
<th>z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where do you feel the majority of content has originated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other national institutions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international institutions (located outside of India or China)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-4.68***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *p < .05; ***p <= .001

All tests were significant. It can be understood that among both samples there was a relatively high median score of 4 in relation to content originating from the particular institution. OUC participants held stronger perceptions for content originating from other institutions in the country. Conversely, IGNOU participants held stronger perceptions in regards to content originating from outside of India or China. Overall, the scores were moderate, or Neutral, to moderately high, or Agree.

**Domain 7: Representation of national ideas.**

Domain 7 explores students’ perceptions on the representation of ideas that are Indian or Chinese in origin in the course content. Items included the following: History, Culture,
Current achievements, Contemporary societal conditions, Contemporary economic conditions.
The findings are located in Table 8.10 below.

Table 8.10

National Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC Mdn</th>
<th>IGNOU Mdn</th>
<th>z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well does the course content represent Indian/Chinese ideas/values</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.78**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p < .01

In comparing the two samples, the OUC had a higher median score (Mdn = 4.0) on the perception that course content represented Indian or Chinese ideas/values. We may draw parallels to Domain 6 where it was found that student perceptions from the OUC sample showed a lower score on the choice of content originating from international institutions. The scores from both samples however, also point to the perception that the representation of Indian or Chinese values in the course content was moderately high, or Agree, and between Agree and Neutral.

Domain 8: Course relevance to employment prospects.

Domain 8 pointed to more specific aspects of employment prospects. Under this domain participants were presented with the following items: Provide skills suitable to the local job market, Provide skills suitable to the larger domestic job market, Provide skills suitable to the global job market, An employer will have positive perceptions of the online program credential. The results are presented in Table 8.11.

Table 8.11

Course Relevance to Employment Prospects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC Mdn</th>
<th>IGNOU Mdn</th>
<th>z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well does the program suit</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-3.41***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparison of medians showed that difference was highly significant, $z = -3.41$, $p = .001$. The IGNOU sample showed a marginally stronger score for course relevance to employment prospects. In both samples, it would appear that overall, students are confident about the employment prospects based on having the credential of the online program. It should be noted however, that already being employed, as indicated by a clear majority from the OUC sample (OUC: 88.3% Full-time; 7.5% Part-time) and IGNOU sample (73.5% Full-time; 7.7% Part-time), may have influenced the relatively high score for this domain. If we draw some inferences on the difference between the two samples, this may be connected to the credential earned. At the OUC, all students were sampled from undergraduate programs, and as noted at the beginning of Section I, were an average age of 29. From IGNOU, all participants had at least a University degree and were pursuing more specialized qualifications in post-graduate work either through diploma, certificate or degree (Masters). As well, the IGNOU sample had an average age of 36, and therefore more experienced and therefore familiar with the job market.

**Domain 9: Future outlook for online learning.**

To end the questionnaire instrument student perceptions’ were collected in regards to the future outlook for online learning at the OUC or IGNOU. The items under this domain included: *Create more opportunities for lifelong learning and continuing education*, *It will create more opportunities to pursue bachelor and/or graduate degrees*, *It will enable the Open University to expand program offerings to larger populations domestically*, *It will enable the Open University to expand program offerings internationally*, *Online learning will make course content more global and less representative of Indian/Chinese ideas (e.g., culture, history, innovation)*. The findings are presented in Table 8.12.

Table 8.12

*Future Outlook for Online Learning*
What do you think is the future of online learning at your Open University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUC Mdn</th>
<th>IGNOU Mdn</th>
<th>z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the future of online learning at your Open University?</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>-4.35***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.***p < .001

A comparison of the median between each sample was significant, z = -4.35, p < .001. The test showed that IGNOU participants responded with a higher median score than the OUC participants on the items identified above. In fact, this last domain showed the highest scores on perceptions for both the IGNOU and the OUC samples (the OUC sample did not exceed a score of 4.0 in any other domain). This suggests that the perceptions held by respondents see that the use of online learning by IGNOU or the OUC will enhance learning opportunities both domestically (lifelong learning and post-graduate education, for example) and internationally. If we look to the last choice, *Online learning will make course content more global and less representative of Indian/Chinese ideas (e.g., culture, history, innovation)*, the suggestion is that students from both samples perceived that growth in online learning will come with a decrease in the representation of national knowledge in course content. We will address this further in the Interpretation of Section III.

**Interpretation of Section III.**

In Section III perceptions were explored on a range of domains. On *Domain 6, Origin of Content*, both samples scored high on content originating in-house (with the assumption of students knowing in-house course teams are comprised of experts external to the University), yet discrepancies arose on other origins of content. The OUC sample scored relatively high on content originating domestically, whereas the IGNOU sample scored relatively high on content originating internationally. A similar pattern can be connected to *Domain 7, Representation of National Ideas*. Here the IGNOU sample scored lower than the OUC sample. We may draw connections to the design of content described in Chapter 7. It was clear that in design there were efforts to include Indian references, although findings indicated that non-Indian references were disproportionately represented overall. On this topic, caution is needed in making generalizations as the findings in this Chapter included students from two programs,
Acupuncture and Food Safety and Quality Management, which were not analyzed for content in Chapter 7. Nonetheless, the perception of students should be noted by policymakers and curriculum designers, particularly at IGNOU, in their considerations for refinement and design of content for courses. In addition to the prospect of widening such research methods to other online courses is to ascertain what might be the outcomes of responses among participant groups enrolled in online and offline modes (or print-based) of the same programs (e.g., the Cyber Law program that is offered in both modes). For the latter, the clear hypothesis would be that the online participant group would likely have perceptions that reflect content being more international, than national to India or China, in representation of ideas and knowledge. If such a hypothesis were tested, the content of the particular course would need to have relevance in ascertaining the extent of balance between these dichotomies (conducting such a study on the online Spanish program at IGNOU, for example, would likely yield results of little value).

The other domains on perceptions were related to future outlook in terms of employment and more generally, on the use of online learning within each University. As noted under Domain 8, Course Relevance to Employment Prospects, a large majority of both samples was employed which likely influenced the relatively high median scores. This may also speak to the quality of the online programs, the relevance to participants’ current employment or to future employment opportunities. In differentiating the samples, where the IGNOU respondents showed a higher score for this domain, it was also stated above that the nature of the programs at IGNOU were more specialized, and that the IGNOU sample was on average seven years older than the OUC sample.

Among all the domains, Future Outlook for Online Learning scored the highest. It would seem that participants from both the OUC and IGNOU are enrolled in online learning because of an interest in gaining experience using this medium and the flexibility that accompanies learning online. The actual results suggest that learners are satisfied with the online programs, a finding that should be particularly comforting to IGNOU, as the online courses are new and have been better defined by ambiguity, than structure, as has been explained in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. This also speaks well of the multiple groups involved in the programs, including the
technologists, course designers and instructors. The same should be said of the OUC. These programs have survived the *honeymoon phase*, and have undergone refinements over the years. Though specific questions were not posed on how well course content is updated, etc., we may infer that the processes in place are, on average, adequate in terms of the online experience of the sampled students at the OUC.

We also find in this result for Domain 9 the perception that through online learning the programs of each institution will grow and diversify, bringing in new groups of learners both domestically, and internationally. This latter finding is particularly interesting for the OUC, as their international exposure has been more closely associated with the import rather than export of knowledge. Added questions along the lines of language barriers (or issues), or targeting programs to learners overseas, might garner more pointed results on this topic.

Language is perhaps perceived as an asset among the perceptions of IGNOU students in relation to international exposure. The use of English provides one less barrier to access, and cost is likely another. The comparative advantage to IGNOU is having access already to populations of overseas learners in their conventional print-based programs. Gathering an understanding about their prospective access concerns and needs (or current access concerns and needs) would be wise if IGNOU were to venture into overseas online offerings, a venture that would seem as one of the next logical steps, if the current online programs continue to operate successfully. Of course, the most pressing concern for growth in IGNOU is within India. Any needs assessment for online learning should start domestically. The growth of Internet users should be but one indicator among many including program suitability, alignment to employment prospects, etc.

Perhaps the most interesting interpretation we may draw from the findings in Domain 9 that is relevant to the research questions is regarding the representation of knowledge. The final choice for Domain 9 was *Online learning will make course content more global and less representative of Indian/Chinese ideas*. IGNOU is at a pivotal moment in its online course offerings. The support of faculty and the prospect of widening offerings to more and more programs within the institution are sound indicators that growth is ahead. The realization at
this early point among learners that the future use of online learning will move content in a
direction that is less representative of Indian ideas and knowledge, may be a matter of concern
for future development. As was noted by some IGNOU curriculum designers in Chapter 7, there
were some beliefs that the programs should be more international in scope with the prospect
of contextualizing the content for a broader learning audience. For IGNOU policymakers and
curriculum designers, weighing the merits of such a direction are worthy of further research
and debate. Again, IGNOU’s objectives are domestically oriented first, and perhaps the
developments in online learning should reflect these objectives.

For the OUC, it is difficult to make these same interpretations, particularly with the
involvement of government and the filter of language. At the same time, the question that is
raised is whether content is more Chinese in origin because of government involvement and
the filter of language? These raise some interesting concerns about future developments.
Because of the size of the online population in China, compared to India, we can assume that
users in China are, on average, more tech-savvy. To further explore this point, consider that the
advancements in browser technology have aided the development of this investigation
tremendously. The OUC website for example, has both Chinese and English versions, though
the Chinese version is populated with much more content. Through Google Chrome, the
investigator has been able to retrieve a translation instantly of a particular page. Although the
translation is not perfect, it allows a degree of understanding that is nothing short of
remarkable considering the incongruencies between the two languages, and the speed in which
this barrier essentially evaporates. This also connects back to Domain 5. Origins of Websites
Accessed where it was found the OUC sample had a somewhat significant propensity to access
websites in English. In addition to gathering a better understanding of users’ proficiency in
English it would be helpful to understand if particular software, or websites, are used to aid in
the access to English language websites. In the bigger picture, the likelihood that language will
become less and less of an issue for on-line learning is plausible. Under these circumstances
discussion about maintaining a reasonable representation of course content that is Chinese in
origin is worthy of further consideration for the OUC.
In both cases measuring such perceptions over time is one focus for future research.

**Comparisons and Conclusions**

In conclusion some insights may be offered in relation to the two research questions posed, repeated here as follows:

3.1 *What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?*

3.2 *What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?*

Students’ experiences of using computers seemed moderately satisfactory across both samples. No demographic factors offered deeper insights into this phenomenon, with the exception of an urban advantage in the OUC sample. It can be gleaned, however, that there is a degree of enjoyment and satisfaction from using computers that we can connect to the experience of learning online. It should also be noted that the populations are relatively young (OUC = 29; IGNOU = 36), considering the programs cater to adult learners. In several years time, it can be stated with a degree of confidence that skills will improve, and exposure to online learning will increase. The origin of websites accessed showed expected results with the OUC participants seeking websites in Chinese that were hosted domestically. There were also a significant number of respondents from the OUC who visited English language websites to inform their learning. The IGNOU sample demonstrated a stronger propensity to access English language websites, as was expected. In regards to the findings of OUC students accessing English language websites, addressing competencies in English and follow-up work to address how foreign websites are accessed based on advancements in browser functionality would be worthy of further study.

In comparing students’ perceptions, the data suggests that in comparative terms, content is seen to contain more of a Chinese character among the OUC sample, and conversely, that content is viewed as having more of an international character among the IGNOU sample.
(from Table 8.9). This may perhaps be linked to the different uses of language between the two samples, with Chinese acting as an added insulating factor in the preservation of knowledge in China, whereas the ubiquity of English proficiency among the educated in India has naturally resulted in more global content. Additionally, it is interesting that students tended to perceive that with growth in online learning, the representation of Indian or Chinese ideas will diminish.

Determining whether technology presents a threat to culture and knowledge are intriguing questions. In terms of education, another question that emerges is what might be deemed sufficient content to preserve knowledge, culture, etc. and in the same vein, what amount of content might be so nationally entrenched that quality is compromised? And does this question have a different level of importance for higher education in comparison to lower levels of education?

Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine have dealt with policy on on-line learning in the two jurisdictions, curriculum design and content and finally student experiences and perceptions. They have responded to the three major sub-questions posed in the thesis. We now move to Chapter Nine, which responds to the overarching research question and brings the study to a conclusion.
Chapter 9: Conclusions

Introduction

Informing much of the work in this thesis was the field work and daily interactions with faculty and staff from the OUC and IGNOU. When I first arrived at each institution, the reception was mixed. Building rapport took more time at IGNOU, where my presence was initially met with skepticism. Further, little direction was offered, with the exception of being informed when meals were to be served at the guest house. I could meet with whomever would agree to offer their time and go around the campus as I pleased. At the OUC, on the other hand, I was readily given an office space, the aid of an interpreter, and even a meal card, to be used in the cafeteria where I was to eat daily with colleagues. I quickly learned that such accommodations also came with the expectation that I was to be at the office Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Whether having to justify my intentions, or follow the routines of other staff and faculty, such differing experiences led to the same opportunities to interact and build rapport with the individuals of each Open University and contributed to the richness of the research presented in this study. These experiences and encounters, while fascinating to the investigator, carry two larger realizations in relation to comparative education that have been emphasized throughout this investigation: Context is paramount to understanding the phenomena under investigation, and that indeed, one investigation does not provide enough exposure to context! Having an understanding of this shortcoming may have created the basis for a lifetime of research. Another realization that has come out of this research is that comparative education melds together the exploration, analysis and presentation of not only similarities but differences. Without the latter, it would prove that much more difficult to make advancements in the field.

As stated in Chapter 3, the purpose of this investigation was to compare the Open University systems of India and China, both as contributors to the larger social aspirations in each country and in more specific terms, in their engagement with online learning. The
increasingly globalized contexts, in which both institutions choose to function, as reflected in their international and online endeavours, have undoubtedly re-shaped their purpose, focus and direction in recent years. To what extent this is the case, has been a central question in this investigation. Since they are such tremendously large learning systems my interest was narrowed to focus on an examination of the online operations of each Open University. In the case of the OUC the operations were larger and more mature than IGNOU, though early developments suggest IGNOU will make up ground in the coming years.

With the broader comparisons of histories, organization, infrastructure and programs as a backdrop, the most logical place to begin interpreting the online learning initiatives was to understand how each University operates, and therefore the policies that govern each institution were explored. Taking an understanding of policy and mapping this to the organization of curriculum led to taking a slice of each University’s course offerings and with the filter of program popularity in the case of the OUC, and availability, in the case of IGNOU, a clearer picture of the extent of purpose, focus and direction was presented. The third layer to this analysis was to gather what the experiences and perceptions of online learning were for some of each institution’s learners.

Using a case study methodology a linear presentation of each Open University was given, followed by a comparative analysis of three aspects in relation to online learning: policies, curriculum, students’ experiences and perceptions. A mixed methods design was employed with qualitative methods used for policy analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods used for curriculum analysis, and quantitative methods used for student survey responses.

The following sub-research questions were posed:

For policy:

1.1 What are the implications of government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?
For curriculum:

2.1 How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?

2.2 How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

For students:

3.1 What are students’ experiences of learning in the online programs of IGNOU and the OUC?

3.2 What are students’ perceptions of curriculum in regards to the representation of global or national knowledge?

Policy Issues for Online Learning

The policy question was rather complex as it was required to situate the question in the national context and provide an overview of developments since the late 1990s in both countries. This was complemented with the perceptions of participants from each Open University, which included policymakers, and some curriculum designers. Drawing on theoretical considerations in relation to policy development enabled some conclusions to be made. In the OUC, policy development for online learning was categorized as linear and state-centric, according to Clark’s Triangle of Coordination (1983). We used the multiple streams framework to describe IGNOU policy development in online learning, seeing it as characterized by ambiguity and a ‘learning while doing’ approach (Richardson & Martinez, 2009). The unique position of IGNOU, serving as both an institution of higher learning, and a regulator of distance education in the country through the Distance Education Council, indicated the presence of a
strong academic oligarchy (Clark, 1983). We can therefore answer one-half of this particular sub-research question.

**Implications from government.**

Implications from government policy in the development of online learning at the OUC will likely keep the University highly regulated and closely aligned to the larger objectives of the CCP. One major indicator was referenced as the National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020), which, as shown in Table 5.1, projected an astounding increase of nearly 200 million people in continuing education by the turn of this decade. It would appear that only advanced technologies, like online learning, could circumvent the need for infrastructure and respond to these figures (by moving classrooms to home computers, for example). As the OUC is the only institution nationally that has the current capacity to service exceptionally large learning populations with quality distance education materials, all signs suggest that the University will be highly involved in provision. To do so, more differentiation will be required, as the current number of programs (50) is far from adequate. IGNOU, by comparison has created a highly differentiated system offering 338 programs, organized through over 3500 courses. The administrative and pedagogical capability to offer such a breadth of programs, ranging from short-term appreciation to doctoral programs, is expertise that the OUC could certainly learn from.

Though similar enrolment projections were unavailable in the case of India, there is a goal of reaching 22.4 million enrolments in higher education at the end of the 11th five year plan (See Table 5.2), in which India’s Open Universities are to play a significant role (taking up to 30 percent of enrolments). The connections to the role of online learning, however, remain ambiguous and government regulation over higher education is minimal. We may conclude that there are few if any implications from government involvement towards the development of online learning at IGNOU.
Implications from the institutions.

The other half of this sub-research question is the role played by the institution in the development of online learning. Based on what was stated above, and largely gathered from the perceptions of policymakers at the OUC, there is deference to government in terms of the implications of policy for online learning. One individual noted, “...the use of online technology in the field of education needs to be fully promoted by the government.” Another, when asked about the impact of the President, plainly stated, “I can’t see any difference because all the presidents, the past one, the current one, they all attach importance to the use of online”. A rather unique, dialectical perception expressed by one policymaker (C2) was the desire to have more freedom from government oversight so that the institution may better serve the objectives of the government. With the outlook of hundreds of millions of additional learners flooding an already saturated system by 2020, one can speculate that some devolution of government oversight is inevitable.

Within IGNOU, as has been repeated through much of this investigation, the implications from institutional policy for the development of online learning will be altogether different. As governed by the IGNOU Act, the University operates independently of any direct government oversight. Any major actions taken by the University are determined by the Board of Management. Although the Board is comprised predominantly of figures external to the University, it is chaired by the VC (see Figure 5.7). We can go so far as to say that the implications of institutional policy on the development of online learning are very much controlled by the VC of IGNOU. It was noted that the ethos of IGNOU has often been dictated by the role of the VC and in the current setting, there was only optimism in participants’ perceptions of the job done by the VC. Where criticism was found was in the absence of a clear purpose and an established policy. Although such voices were among the minority, they should not be discounted. IGNOU’s rather brief history with online learning has not been overly successful, particularly when compared to its counterpart in China. IGNOU has taken an organic approach to the development of its online learning initiatives. Having started with only two programs in 2008, the IGNOU Online site now hosts 11 programs spread across five schools of
study. With a more mature Internet population domestically, all signs suggest that growth will continue, but it is unlikely to be at the breakneck speed witnessed with the OUC and other institutions participating in China’s Modern Distance Education Project.

A note should be added here about IGNOU’s growth potential overseas with online learning. All indicators would suggest online learning will be the next step in this area when considering the ease of delivery, assurance of quality and ability to interact with learners, etc. Might curriculum be contextualized to the national context where overseas learners reside? In broader terms it is quite fascinating to consider IGNOU’s role as a global institution, and expansion overseas is a near certainty, particularly with the current VC at the helm. We may place such activities alongside those of the Confucius Institutes, which run through varying institutions of higher learning in China, including the OUC. The impact of the Confucius Institutes is beginning to be explored (Li, forthcoming), and it will only be a matter of time before IGNOU’s globalizing endeavours receive greater attention.

For this particular section we may conclude that implications from institutional policy on the development of online learning at IGNOU will enable the continuation of grass-roots developments emerging from the 21 schools of study. These outcomes will likely be far-reaching, considering that the Distance Education Council, as the apex body for distance education in India, takes some of its direction from the developments within IGNOU.

**Curriculum Issues in Online Learning**

There were three curriculum questions that explore differing aspects of online learning in each institution. The first question asked about the affect of policies on the design of online courses and how curriculum designers were involved in the process. The second question, on how flexible is the curriculum organization process, is clearly linked, and these two will be answered together. The third question on the origin of content will follow.

**Organization and flexibility.**

At both the OUC and IGNOU it was shown that there was uniformity in the design and approval of online courses. One commonality was the policy to contract the services of external
experts as a means of augmenting the quality of the content and to market a particular course based on the credentials of the course writers. Using a reputable academic to add value to a particular course was more prevalent at the OUC. On the point of experts, it was documented that policymakers from both institutions acknowledge the expertise of their faculty does not lie so much in relation to content knowledge, but in understanding the concepts of open and distance learning, and therefore in co-ordinating, or teaching the particular subject. In the case of IGNOU, it should be noted that all online programs were the creation of faculty and that these individuals had been contacted by other schools of study within the University to provide expertise in getting new online initiatives off the ground. The growth in online programs noted above speaks positively of such collaborations. In this case we see some incongruence with policymaker concerns over the quality of the IGNOU faculty. We will return to this point in addressing students’ experiences and perceptions with online learning. Across both Open Universities the inter-collegiality that is a by-product of course design, as well as the interest garnered from the conventional universities in either country, suggest that such collaborations, which may also be categorized as professional development, will certainly continue.

In the delivery of courses, the OUC demonstrated more established policies with defined response times online, having three technology access points for courses and a clear division of ownership, such as the 60 percent/40 percent course divide, between the central University and its provincial counterparts. There were also examples of innovative uses of the online medium in the Modern Chinese and Marketing courses. Course designers from IGNOU were admittedly experimenting with the initial online offerings, taking on the dual roles of coordinator and instructor, and seeing how well walk-in admissions and portfolio-based assessments might work. There were some glitches shared by the course designers, in particular with the duties of teaching and technical issues on the user end, but such occurrences should not be surprising, and some faculty reported finding solutions to some of these issues.

We may conclude that the policies of the OUC are well-established and well-implemented by faculty. IGNOU policies on course development have altered little with these
new online programs. Some experimentation has occurred, which seems to be a necessary process for future development. This also addresses how prescriptive or flexible is the design process (sub research question 2.2). Both institutions adhere to long-standing policies on using subject-matter experts external to the institution, though there is also evidence of autonomy given to IGNOU and OUC faculty on some matters relating to flexibility in course delivery.

**Origin of content.**

The third sub-research question posed in Chapter 7 was on the considerations of the inclusion of national content in the online course curricula. At the OUC we found mixed results. In the design of the Modern Chinese course the origin of the materials was obvious, though the course designer expressed some concerns about the apathy of Chinese netizens about the use and absorption of foreign terms into the lexicon of Mandarin. The Marketing and Intellectual Property Law courses adopted a combination of foreign and domestic cases to explain varying concepts particular to each discipline. Both course designers expressed little concern regarding the impact of foreign content on their specific programs. The last course analyzed from the OUC was Business English. As noted the course materials were completely imported without modification as evidenced by the rubric where only six of 1,389 references were categorized as originating in China (Table 7.6). Acknowledging this shortcoming, the curriculum designer mentioned that this problem had been identified and that the Faculty of Foreign Languages was going to be re-organized, and this would ensure such issues would be dealt with.

In general, the influence of any negative external influences on online learning and the resultant under-representation of Chinese knowledge was perceived as a worthwhile compromise to growth in quality and access. This was captured in the re-phrasing, by three of four curriculum designers interviewed, of Deng Xiaoping’s famous edict of China opening its window to the world. With the application of three screens it is argued that there are adequate filters that insulate the online learning initiatives from drastic external influence. First, the language of Chinese is anything but threatened, a conclusion that can be drawn simply by the number of Internet users in China. Any content that is imported is naturally filtered through
interpretation and translation. The second layer is the close scrutiny of the government on education, with the oversight of the OUC as a salient example. The organization of the OUC mimics the administrative structure of the PRC and there are government workers from the MoE who are regularly seconded to the OUC. Courses require final approval by the government, and as was shown in the interview data, participants consistently referred to the government to provide guidance to the OUC. The third layer is culture. Indeed, language is symbolic of culture, but there are many other forces which shape Chinese society. In Chapter 4 a cursory overview depicted the exceptionally rich histories of each country. For China, its collectivist nature, Confucian heritage and history of experience with foreign contact, are but a few examples of characteristics that are ingrained in society. Professor C11 was happy to recall how keen students were to contribute case studies of a Chinese nature to the development of the Marketing course, a suggestion of student interest in finding more local elements associated to the subject matter. The professor from the Modern Chinese course found success in novel uses of Chinese through the online medium. Here we get a glimpse of what Appadurai meant by indigenization and disjunctures. On the one hand, students’ desire to have more contextualized knowledge created a space to advance understanding through particular case studies on marketing grounded in the Chinese context. In terms of disjunctures, novel uses of the Chinese language made available through the western technology of the Internet, has little or no influence on the linguistic advancements made with a particular program or website.

By comparison, the IGNOU courses demonstrated clear efforts to have Indian content with an overall balance that was slightly skewed to being less Indian in origin according to the results of the rubric. The perceptions from participants were mixed. Some suggested that localizing content was essential to the design of courses at IGNOU, whereas others pointed to the need to make the materials suitable for international use. It is difficult to find patterns of consistency with these remarks, which points to the first suggestion that further research, particularly over a wider distribution, or different selection of courses (and course designers), would add clarity. It would seem by the rubrics used that Indian content was on average well infused in the curriculum. As well, the targeted population of learners is and will remain of
Indian origin for some time to come, including the institution’s overseas operations, suggesting that the tradition of constructing content that is Indian in character will remain.

It seems as though we have answered the question,

2.3 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

From the OUC sample of courses it was shown there are some concessions made to localize content, but then in the case of the Business English course there was complete neglect of such considerations altogether. It was found however, that where course content was lacking, other elements that could be deemed as Chinese in character appeared in collaboration among students and instructors. The writing of materials in Chinese seems to act as a natural filter, though the question of how well materials are translated, if and when imported, raises other questions as well. Overall, the OUC does a formidable job in ensuring the quality of its courses; first and foremost by appointing top academics from China as course writers or lecturers. An added layer of credibility bestowed on the OUC programs comes with the fact that degrees are conferred by well established public universities that cooperate with the OUC. For the IGNOU courses, representing content that was Indian in origin was generally consistent, though the perceptions of the curriculum designers in terms of the importance between including Indian and non-Indian content in courses were more mixed.

Students’ Experiences and Perceptions

The last sub-research question posed was on students’ experiences and perceptions. In terms of the demographic data, the most interesting finding was the distribution of students. Considering the relatively small sample sizes from each Open University, the location of students varied considerably. There were 31 of 35 administrative areas represented in the OUC sample and 22 of 35 in the IGNOU sample. Those areas that were not represented were located among the more impoverished regions of each country suggesting that barriers to access are linked to socio-economic status.
Experiences.

On the topic of experiences, it was found that students’ computer competencies from both samples were average based on the parameters of word processing, searching the Internet, downloading files, etc. Seeking websites in Chinese in the case of OUC students, and English in the case of IGNOU students were predictable results. One suggested area for follow-up would be to ascertain English proficiency amongst a sample from the OUC and how browser technology may influence the types of websites they access to inform their learning.

Perceptions.

In terms of perceptions, there were two related domains that we can connect from Chapter 8 to findings in Chapter 7. They are: Domain 6: Origin of Content and Domain 7: Representation of National Ideas. The IGNOU sample showed stronger perceptions that course content originated external to the University, either nationally or internationally, and that the representation of course content as national in character was perceived as comparatively less than the OUC sample. As was noted in the summary of Chapter 7 above, content of the IGNOU courses was skewed towards being more foreign in nature, yet there were considerations to include Indian content as found from the results of the rubric and interview data. Several avenues for further research would be to 1) widen the analysis to a larger pool of learners belonging to more courses, 2) comparing student responses to online and offline modes (this is more pertinent to IGNOU where there is a clear distinction between the two modes of delivery), and 3) A cross-institutional comparison of courses belonging to the same discipline – the course on Intellectual Property Law from the OUC, for example, is now also offered at IGNOU. Indeed it was found that there were some parallels in content in the Intellectual Property Law course selected from the OUC and the Commerce course (part of Cyber Law) from IGNOU, though limitations on analyzing course content at the OUC, and the low number of responses for the particular courses (13 respondents from the OUC; 15 respondents from IGNOU) prevented a deeper analysis.
Overall students held strong positive perceptions of online learning at their respective Open Universities, an indicator that speaks well of both universities, though particularly of IGNOU, considering the infancy of the programs and some of the growing pains endured (as noted in Chapter 7).

The highest scores from each sample were found in *Domain 9: Future outlook for online learning*. On this last domain from the survey, there were several inferences drawn from the results. First, a perception held by students and likely shared among policymakers and curriculum designers in both institutions, was that the number of programs will likely grow, and become more differentiated in terms of offerings – and student body, with the prospect of greater internationalization, particularly at IGNOU. A more interesting interpretation from this Domain (Domain 9) was the perception that content, as a consequence of being online, would become less and less representative of Indian or Chinese ideas. This should be noteworthy to policymakers and curriculum designers at both institutions as they move towards larger populations served by online learning in their institutions. Though the OUC is somewhat insulated from the de-contextualization of content, the perceptions of students suggested this could also be a concern.

On this last point it should be stated that the use of the survey was more for illustrative purposes than to establish clear patterns on the behaviour of the OUC and IGNOU students who study online. Suggestions for future research would aim to better illuminate these findings in relation to the particular sub-research questions.

We may conclude that the experiences of students using online learning at either institution were varied, but characterized by moderately satisfactory computer skills and some tendencies to explore content that was external to the Chinese or Indian context. Perceptions on the future outlook of online learning at each institution were somewhat surprising, particularly from the OUC sample. The perception that global content will increasingly displace national ideas is perhaps the most interesting finding and something to take note of by the decision makers at each Open University.
We will now turn to the main research question that has guided this investigation:

_How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?_

With answers provided to the sub-research questions, we have a clearer picture to address the main research question. In doing so it is pertinent to return to the theoretical considerations that are underpinning this investigation. The theories of Galtung and Appadurai were meshed to provide a unique lens to understand the nature of the Open University systems of India and China in the context of globalization.

**Galtung and Appadurai: Revisiting the Theoretical Considerations**

Galtung’s theory of imperialism (1971) provides a unique lens to understand the uneven relationship between core and periphery nations. Among the five forms of imperialism; military, political, economic, communications and cultural, we sought to ascertain the prevalence of the latter two in aiding to formulate the research question. The communications and cultural forms of imperialism were shown to be symbiotic. Galtung’s depiction was that the superior technologies of communications (including print forms) held by the core perpetuate the dominance of its culture, while marginalizing those values held by the periphery. These two forms of imperialism may be perceived as subtle and operate through omission, creating a soft power that gradually displaces what is contextual to the periphery. Pursuant of alternatives, Galtung advocates for reduced harmony between the cores and reduced disharmony within the periphery. The reduced harmony within the core would also have application in the domestic context of peripheral nations. It is suggested that greater harmony exists between the periphery’s core (e.g., urban centres) and other core nations than between the periphery’s core and the periphery’s periphery (i.e., urban/rural divide).

The more contemporary counterpoint to Galtung is Appadurai, who suggests that the state of world affairs is less about core and periphery and more about disjunctures between the economy, politics and cultures (1994). He suggests that the de-territorialization of the nation-
state is creating greater awareness of otherness through the forms of finance, culture, media, technology and, ideology. Rather than cede to such flows, societies actually re-calibrate, or indigenize the foreign influence, to suit the local context. What is even more interesting to Appadurai’s hypothesis is that these flows seem to be increasingly multi-directional. Several contemporary occurrences support this argument of multi-directionality. The flows of media reporting on the self-immolation of a Tunisian man, for example, were the catalyst for the Arab spring, forcing the heavy hand of the ideologically driven Arab world (as well as new rebukes from governments in the west that had previously propped up some of these regimes). We see in action technology and cultural flows through the beloved American icons of Google and Hollywood which have been indigenized as Baidu in China, and as Bollywood in India, both corporate conglomerates that now rival the size and reach of their originators. And lastly, we have seen that the debt crisis in the small Mediterranean nation of Greece has upended markets throughout the world for much of 2011. Although these flows are connected to the nation state, and enable some degree of the core periphery organization to persist, Appadurai’s conception of the state of global affairs as being pushed by flows that are de-territorial and multi-directional remains fairly persuasive. Let us now find how the ideas of Galtung and Appadurai shed light on this investigation.

Galtung, Appadurai and the Open University Systems of India and China: Organization

The view that India and China should be seen as peripheral nations is becoming increasingly obsolete, particularly when one considers that they are two of the four largest economies in the world and their combined GDP figures of 14 trillion USD is equal to the US at purchasing power parity (World Factbook, 2011). In relation to the place of their higher education systems however, both countries, and India in particular, will continue to play catch-up to their western counterparts in the foreseeable future (Altbach, 2001). Altbach references inadequate funding, under-represented scholarship, poor infrastructure and the international language of English for research as major obstacles to emerging nations creating formidable higher education systems. This core-periphery dynamic is substantiated by global rankings and
scholarship adding support to the iso-morphism of higher education globally, as suggested by neo-institutionalists (Meyer et al., 2006).

China and India require unique solutions to the growing unmet demand for higher learning in their countries. From an organizational point of view, the Open University systems, as microcosms of their national contexts, have responded admirably to these demands. Having been modeled on the Open University in the UK, the OUC and IGNOU are good examples of Universities that are national (and even local to an extent) in character. Catering to nearly three million students each is characterized by exceptionally different structures than those of the OUUK, which has enrolments that equate to less than a tenth of IGNOU and the OUC. The infrastructure of the larger Open University networks is also unique. The OUC operates through a network of semi-autonomous provincial OUs, along with smaller units to access all corners of the country. IGNOU is more centralized in administration, though there are also 13 State Open Universities that are largely independent from IGNOU. Another unique deviation from the OUUK model is IGNOU’s Distance Education Council, which is an adaptation of the University Grants Commission, designed specifically to service the distance education institutes in the country. We see that in a national context, the Open Universities aim to enhance the harmony of the periphery within the country through higher education access and in the case of the OUC, this is further enhanced through the bi-annual meetings with figures from all Open Universities in China. Through regional and global networks of Open University bodies such as the Asian Association of Open Universities, the International Council of Open and Distance Learning, and the Commonwealth of Learning, there is an added layer of making connections across Open Universities.
Galtung, Appadurai and the Open University Systems of India and China: Policy, Curriculum and Students

Policy.

We may use the analyses of policy and curriculum to better understand the elements of communications and cultural imperialism in relation to Galtung, and disjunctures in relation to Appadurai.

In both the OUC and IGNOU online initiatives, there was no evidence of policy borrowing, acquisition of foreign expertise, or adoption of a foreign online platform. Policy development at the OUC was linear, and state centred. At IGNOU policy development for online learning was emergent and devised internally. Expertise seemed to have been driven from within, and both CRTVU online and IGNOU online were platforms that were designed in-house by programmers belonging to either University.

The question that arises is, What was the purpose to implement online learning? Was there a practical value or was it of purely cosmetic value?

If we look to 1998, when both institutions were preparing to engage in online learning, Internet penetration rates were hovering around one million in both India and China. Internet costs were high and bandwidth was low. Content was predominantly western in origin. All these conditions seemed diametrically opposed to the concept of access, the guiding principle shared by each Open University.

One may surmise the rationale was simply that online learning seemed to work well in the west, so why not in India or China? The notion of soft power creeps into the discussion, linked to the communications dimension of imperialism. Perhaps the first implementation of online learning in both contexts was a product of communications imperialism, where early on, Wade’s argument that, “… Western suppliers benefit disproportionately.” (p. 462) rang true.

Though it is uncertain if similar sentiments were documented with the adoption of the television, telephone, radio or automobile, these earlier technologies have had little negative
impact on the particular cultures; quite the opposite in fact, enabling better communication, mobility and access to information.

At the OUC it would seem that in the late 1990s online learning was genuinely needed (though practically unknown at the time) and was adopted for practical purposes as enrolments soared after only a few years in operation. Government oversight was the main driver, as measures to widen participation rates in higher education occurred in unison with infrastructure projects to widen access to the Internet throughout China. IGNOU, on the other hand, engaged in online learning in small scale and largely isolated initiatives. With planning at the institutional, academic oligarchy and government levels being only marginal, growth quickly piqued with a few thousand students before quietly receding by 2003. It seemed as though the attraction of going online had superseded more relevant or practical applications.

Although this may be partially true, it should also be noted that a shared emphasis by Open Universities on using current, or novel technologies to advance distance teaching and learning is a tradition that has existed since the beginnings of the OUUK. Had IGNOU never initially engaged in online learning, it is unknown if such current developments would have come to fruition. Consider the implications had either University refrained from using television or radio technologies to widen access through the 1980s to today. The millions of learners who have benefited from learning through the OUC or IGNOU would likely have little opinion about the supposed impact of imperial tendencies in relation to their learning experience. Before discounting the application of Galtung’s communications imperialism to the experience of the OUC and IGNOU, it should be remembered that communications in its innumerable forms causes the transcontinental (or transborder, transcyber, etc.) movement of culture, the other form of imperialism relevant to this investigation. We will return to this in the following section on curriculum and students. Before this departure however, it is useful to find some application of Appadurai’s notions of indigenization and disjunctures to this discussion. In simple terms, the actions to ensure content is Indian or Chinese in character in online learning at the OUC and IGNOU has given rise to new disjunctures that undoubtedly show some resemblance to a foreign initiative (consider the use of bulletin boards, for example), but distinctions are evident,
and understood as Chinese or India in origin. On this point we may move towards curriculum and students.

**Curriculum and students.**

Not surprisingly, the analysis of curriculum showed that courses belonging to each institution had integrated some foreign content. With the exception of the Business English course, content was clearly localized, though foreign content still comprised the majority of references in IGNOU courses. Apart from Modern Chinese the remaining courses all dealt with issues that required an international understanding. Marketing, Intellectual Property Law, Cyber Law, Legal Process Outsourcing and Library and Information Science courses all had foreign contours to the knowledge represented.

Two related questions posed in Chapter 7 that we address here were posited as, *What is too much foreign content? What is enough?* The first aspect to consider is the nature of the course itself. It is clear that content for Modern Chinese is Chinese in character, whereas Legal Process Outsourcing certainly requires content that would be proportionally foreign in nature.

Despite the origin of content, there seemed to be in both the OUC and IGNOU, considerations either of direct modifications to content, or through course delivery, the need to localize content.

A quote pulled from the professor of Marketing, C11, was that students would be more in tune with the use of local names to contextualize material. Drawing a distinction between the use of western and Chinese names, this professor affirmed that students “love to listen” if there is familiarity, a finding that resonated with the investigator. When analyzing the Business English textbook, the tendency of the investigator was to take time to convert the cost of an airline ticket from Sterling to dollars, and sidetracked again when trying to ascertain where in the UK Leeds, Manchester and the Maitland Hotel are located (see Figure 7.9). Considering that Canada, where the investigator resides, and England, are essentially identical to an outsider, imagine what difficulties a Chinese learner would have making sense of such terms. In all
likelihood, little time would be devoted to this, but perhaps learning would also be compromised.

In the open and distance learning setting course design is particularly important in comparison to conventional universities. As noted by C9, one must consider the design of content, syllabus, teaching methodology, and use of media. In the distance learning environment, which is independent by nature, the content is arguably the most important component. The sentiment shared by students was that content was moderately adequate in terms of representing Chinese or Indian knowledge and the future outlook for online learning was positive. The domain of future outlook (Domain 9) however, included the items, It will enable the Open University to expand program offerings internationally and Online learning will make course content more global and less representative of Indian/Chinese ideas (e.g., culture, history, innovation). The former domain is an intriguing finding, particularly when considering that the flows of knowledge, as identified by Appadurai, have been disproportionately unidirectional. How programs might expand internationally, particularly from the OUC will be interesting to see unfold. The latter domain brings us back to Galtung and Appadurai.

If knowledge becomes increasingly homogenous through online learning as perceived in general terms, by both the IGNOU and OUC samples, would this be considered an outcome of cultural imperialism? Where does Appadurai’s notion of disjunctures fit in this scenario? This is a larger question that does not offer any immediate answers, unlike a better understanding offered on the policy question above. At the level of curriculum analysis and perceptions of curriculum designers, it would seem that the localization of content is currently adequate based on the rubric used and the corresponding perceptions from those interviewed. As online learning grows however, the possibility of further homogeneity encroaching on the design of content in the online medium is clearly a real one. One indicator will certainly be the strength of higher education institutions in India and China. The curriculum design process of each institution relies heavily on the knowledge brought from academics emanating from the conventional universities in the country and this should be a positive factor for the maintenance of a balance between national and global knowledge.
What is important here is to remind those involved at the levels of policymaking and curriculum design at the OUC and IGNOU of these findings that map to the larger online learning initiatives within their institutions.

The Main Research Question

To address the research question,

*How far differentially are the Open University systems in India and China seeking to assert national values as compared to the development of a more homogenized global curriculum in online learning?*

we may conclude that the differences outlined between the two Open University systems are stark, yet both are clearly products of the national settings which they serve. At the institutional level ample evidence was presented to demonstrate contours that were deemed as Indian or Chinese to each University. Where the model of the OUUK was adopted, both institutions modified the organizational design to suit the local setting. Some examples include the Provincial Open University system under the OUC and IGNOU’s Distance Education Council as a separate body to monitor the distance education programs in the country. Policy for online learning proved to be well-tailored to the larger social needs of the government in the case of the OUC, whereas at IGNOU similar policy initiatives were ad hoc, yet organically crafted. Chinese or Indian experts are used who, in combination with OUC and IGNOU faculty, make efforts to include content that is Chinese or Indian in origin, while offering a balance that situates courses in a global milieu (where relevant). The language of Chinese was perceived as an added filter to these processes. Because of the infancy of online learning at IGNOU, there was more of an adoption of print-based materials, though some experimentation had occurred both pedagogically and administratively to enhance the delivery and organization of the online programs. Students’ perceptions of the content were generally positive and it was found that IGNOU students held stronger perceptions that there was less Indian content in the course curriculum. Where the OUC has the added filter of language for the preservation of Chinese ideas and values, IGNOU seems to ensure the use of Indian terms, cases, and theories. To
conclude, two points are offered. First, it can be stated from this investigation that one Open University does not demonstrate a stronger propensity than the other to assert national values and ideas in their online programs. The student experience however, demonstrates that IGNOU students were aware of a greater share of content that was foreign, an outcome that will likely continue.

In concluding this Chapter, some final thoughts are offered on the place of comparative education in this study in relation to the theories used.

**Final Thoughts: The Comparative Method and Reflection on IGNOU and the OUC**

It was identified above in the core-periphery terminology used to explain Galtung’s theory of imperialism in relation to higher education, that the higher education systems of India and China fall into the periphery (though by and large they can no longer be classified as peripheral countries). What should be noted, however, is that the core-periphery model may also be applied regionally. The concern about globalization having a homogenizing force on local institutions may be less than the fear of the imposition of a neighbouring country, where there is a shared, yet contentious history (Appadurai, 1994, p. 295). Both India and China may be emerging as hegemons in their respective regions of South and East Asia. For Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and other countries, India is more of a threat than the US or any other western nation. The same can be said for many of the countries of ASEAN, where China has been perceived as intimidating its neighbours, with its various maritime claims in the South China Sea. In relation to IGNOU and the OUC we can assume that such sentiments are much more tempered, though the position of these two countries certainly has an impact on higher education in the region.

We note that no other South Asian country has ventured overseas like IGNOU and that the OUC is the largest established Open University in the East Asian region (The Open University of Japan is comparatively small and enrolls approximately 90,000 students). A comparative study of the regional role of Open Universities might show core and periphery patterns that mirror some of the imbalances brought about by globalization.
More relevant would be to seek a basis for interregional cooperation. Although India is located in South Asia and China in East Asia, the two countries share two separate borders and as was noted in Chapter 4, a history that dates back to the trade routes along the Silk Road. In relation to the particular Open Universities there has been very little collaborative exchange between the two institutions. Two anecdotes will serve to illuminate this shortcoming in relations between the two institutions.

As noted at the beginning of this Chapter, my initial presence at IGNOU was met with skepticism, a feeling that was garnered from early interactions with two senior faculty members (one a policymaker, another who was classified as both a policymaker and a curriculum developer). Their collective opinion was that a valid comparison between the two institutions was impossible with one pointing to differing learning behaviours and social and cultural practices, and the other to the difference between the infrastructures of these institutions.

The other anecdote was derived from the OUC at a conference in 2009 celebrating the 30 year history of the University where the question was posed about an absence of collaborations or partnerships (unfortunately the VC of IGNOU was scheduled as a keynote, but had to cancel at the last minute). Later by email an answer was provided from an individual indirectly connected to the institution. To paraphrase the email, it stated that there was little to learn from India in the area of distance education, as the country is not as developed as the western world, so what can be learned?

This thesis has shown that there is indeed much to be learned and shared between the two institutions. Hopefully, it will stimulate the possibility of forging a partnership between the OUC and IGNOU that will be helpful in addressing the social concerns that affect each country. In relation to online learning, clearly the OUC has the upper hand in terms of expertise and breadth of programs offered. IGNOU on the other hand, has displayed savvy in internationalizing its programs and offers a range of certificate, diploma and degree options that from the point of view of administration, efficiency and pedagogy, the OUC has much to learn from, as it moves towards a focus on lifelong learning. Both have tremendous potential
for future development as they seek to meet the learning needs of their huge populations, as well as much to learn from each other.


IGNOU (2011c). Unit 3, governance and organizational structure of IGNOU. In *Block 4: Planning and Management at IGNOU, Management of Distance Education (course)*. Post graduate diploma in distance education. Retrieved from http://www.egyankosh.ac.in/


OECD (2011a). *Social and welfare issues*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/document/59/0,3343,en_2649_37419_2512699_1_1_1_1,00.htm#issue


Appendix A: Ethical Approval

University of Toronto
Office of the Vice-President, Research
Office of Research Ethics

PROTOCOL REFERENCE #21923

January 28, 2008

Prof. Ruth Hayhoe  
Dept. of Theory and Policy Studies  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto  
252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6

Mr. Kirk Perris  
Dept. of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto  
252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6

Dear Prof. Prof. Hayhoe and Mr. Perris:

Re: Your research protocol entitled, “Online Learning in the Open University Systems of India and China: A Comparison of Responses to Globalization”

ETHICS APPROVAL  
Original Approval Date: January 28, 2008  
Expiry Date: January 27, 2009  
Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that a member of the Education Research Ethics Board has granted approval to the above-named research study, for a period of one year, under the REB’s expedited review process. Ongoing projects must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

The following consent documents (received January 14, 2008) have been approved for use in this study: Administrative Consent Form and Individual Consent Forms for Policymakers and Curriculum Designers.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Bridgette Murphy  
Research Ethics Coordinator

McMurrich Building, 12 Queen’s Park Cres. W, 3rd Floor Toronto, ON M5S 1S8  
TEL: 416-946-3273 FAX: 416-946-5763 EMAIL: ethics.review@utoronto.ca

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Appendix B: Information Letter for Policymaker and Curriculum Designer Participants

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter to request your participation in an investigation comparing the National Open University systems of India and China in their engagement with online learning. This research is part of my Doctoral studies at the University of Toronto.

The purpose of this research is to understand how decision making is shaped in policy and curriculum design and enacted and perceived at the level of the learner with this novel mode of learning. Comparisons will be made to ascertain how these systems, comparable in enrolment, geographical distribution and central organization, assert local or national values and ideas as against promoting a homogenized global curriculum in their development of online learning.

As a [policymaker/curriculum designer] at [IGNOU/OUC], your involvement in this investigation is integral to providing the information pertinent to the research, particularly in relation to [the design and implementation of policy/the design of the [NAME] programme]. Your participation involves being interviewed by the investigator of this study. Questions will pertain to your role in [policy/ designing curriculum] for online learning. It is expected that the interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any time and you may decline to answer any question. The researcher will request your approval to tape record the interview.

There should be no foreseeable risks based on your involvement as the nature of this investigation is not controversial. Though names will not be used in any publications emanating from this investigation, you may be identifiable in publications where quotations you make are used, based on the content you provide in the interview. The data from your interview will be kept strictly confidential and available only to the investigator. Audio tapes will be destroyed once the analyses are complete, and no longer than two years from the date of institutional approval from [IGNOU/OUC].

Upon completion of the dissertation an electronic copy will be sent to you, if requested.

If you have any questions regarding your participation in this investigation, you may contact the investigator at 1.647.299.7182, or by email, kperris@oise.utoronto.ca. You may also contact the Ethics Review Office of the University of Toronto at 1.416.946.3273, or by email, ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

Thank you,

Kirk Perris, Doctoral Candidate, University of Toronto
Appendix C: Consent form for Policymaker and Curriculum Designer Participants

University of Toronto/OISE-UT

Theory and Policy Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto
Ontario, Canada M5S 1V6
Fax: 416-926-4741
www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/tps

Consent form to participate in investigation, “Online Learning in the Open University Systems of India and China: A Comparison of Responses to Globalization”

I have read and understand the conditions of my participation in the above titled project being conducted by Mr. Kirk Perris, as outlined in the information document I have received.

I understand that I may withdraw from the interview at any time and that I may decline to answer any questions asked by Mr. Perris.

I hereby authorize the use of comments I make during the interview to be used in the dissertation and any publications emanating from this investigation by Mr. Perris.

I agree to being audio-taped for this interview (please check one box only)

Yes ☐ No ☐

______________________________  __________________________
Signature                              Date

______________________________
Printed Name
Appendix D: Student Survey (Chinese Version)

学生对于在中央电大和其他各广播电视大学的在线学习的经验和认知

此调查问卷的目的是收集您使用中央电大和其他广播电视大学的在线学习后的经验和认知的信息。我们将对了解中央电大学生如何进行网络在线学习的研究有重要的参考价值。如果您在您的专业中没有使用网络学习，您不需要完成这份调查问卷。

此调查问卷将花费您15分钟左右的时间完成。

请填写以下信息：

a) 城市：
b) 县/区：

c) 请描述您所在地区的情况，并在以下选择框中勾选。

- 市区
- 近郊
- 远郊

第一部分：关于您个人背景和电脑专业见识的信息
对以下每个问题，请在适当的格框里打勾(✔)或者提供有关的答案。

1. 性别

   - 男
   - 女

2. 年龄

3. 您所取得的最高教育水平

   - 小学
   - 中学
   - 大专
   - 本科
   - 研究生

4. 职业情况

   - 全职
   - 兼职
   - 退休
   - 无业

5. 请注明你现在在做的或者曾经做过的工作的类型。

   1)
   2)
   3)
   4)

6. 您参加工作的总年数

7. 您从中央电大毕业后从事的工作类型

   1)
   2)
   3)

8. 您目前中央电大学习的课程(专业和课程)

   - 专业
   - 课程

9. 除了使用www.open.edu.cn外，如果您同时也登录在你所在省或地方电大的网站进行在线网络学习，请写下这些网站的名称。

   -

10. 您在家、工作中或在学校里一周使用电脑多少小时？

   - 在家
   - 在工作中
   - 在学校里

11. 您从哪一年开始了电大的学习？

   -
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. 您希望于哪一年毕业？</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. 您一学期平均上几门课程？</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. 您在高等教育中参与网络在线学习的总年数？(包括您在中央电大和其他高等院校的学习时间)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. 请写出您每周花在课程上(与在问题8里您回答的课程一致)的在线学习的时间(以小时计)。</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. 在中央电大的学习过程中有几门课程您应用了网络在线学习？</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. 下列哪个场所是您经常上网参加在线课程(与在问题8里您回答的课程一致)的地方？</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大学/学习中心→</td>
<td>办公室→</td>
<td>家→</td>
<td>网吧→</td>
<td>公共图书馆→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. 请在与您技能等级相匹配的评价选项中打勾(√)。</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>专家级</td>
<td>高级</td>
<td>一般</td>
<td>初学者</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) 文字处理</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 电子邮件/聊天</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 浏览网页</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 下载程序，资料</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 上网查阅到分享网站(比如：土豆网，YouTube，Wikipedia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) 制作网页</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. 请按照您对以下各种学习模式的喜欢程度排序。 (&quot;1&quot;代表最喜欢，依此类推)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) 录像</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 电教</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 广播</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 印刷的教材</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 面对面授课</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) 其他，请说明并排序：</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) 其他，请说明并排序：</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) 其他，请说明并排序：</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

第二部分：在线课程/网络的使用理由和情况

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20. 您在中央电大的课程学习中使用网络在线学习的原因是什么？</th>
<th>强烈赞成</th>
<th>赞成</th>
<th>中立</th>
<th>不赞成</th>
<th>强烈不赞成</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) 提高电脑和因特网使用技能</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 便于其他学习形式</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 灵活的学习环境</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 与授课教师更好的互动</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 与同学更好的互动</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) 使得就业前景更好</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) 其他，请具体注明→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>21. 您在课程学习上如何使用互联网资源？</th>
<th>一直</th>
<th>经常</th>
<th>有时</th>
<th>很少</th>
<th>从来没有</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) 与老师交流并从其处获得帮助</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 与同学交流并从其处获得帮助</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 从课程网站上获取信息</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 从其他网站上获取信息</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 其他，请具体注明→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22. 除了您在问题9里说明的网站(包括www.open.edu.cn和您所在地市或地方电大的网站)，您还使用什么类型的网站来帮助您的课程学习？</th>
<th>一直</th>
<th>经常</th>
<th>有时</th>
<th>很少</th>
<th>从来没有</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) 中央电大网上图书馆</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) 其他大学的网站</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) 中国学术期刊网、中国知等学术期刊和论文网站</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 博客</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) 通过百度或谷歌等搜索引擎搜索出的网站</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) 其他，请具体注明→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. 除了您在问题9里说明的网站（包括www.sinoscholar.cn和您所在地或电大以外的网站），您所使用的其他网站一般来源于哪里？

a) 中国大陆并使用中文的网站（域名为.cn）

b) 中国大陆并使用英文的网站（域名为.cn）

c) 中国大陆以外并使用中文的网站（包括港、澳、台和其他国家）

d) 中国大陆以外并使用英文的网站（包括港、澳、台和其他国家）

e) 其他，请具体注明 →

*注释：如果您在b,c,d,或e项选择了“一直”和“经常”，请继续回答问题24和25，否则请跳到第三部分外的第26题。

24. 您为什么选择中国大陆以外的网站或中国大陆并使用英文的网站？

a) 这些网站是被课程内容所指定的

b) 这些网站是被其他人所推荐的

c) 曾经在这些网站里查过资料

d) 想从中国提供的网络课程里得到更深入的理解

e) 想从全站性的视角对课程内容进行更深入的理解

f) 其他，请具体注明 →

25. 这些非基于中国国内的网站是影响您的学习的？

a) 它们使我了解了更多的中国的文化和社会

b) 它们使我了解了更多的中国的文化

c) 它们使我了解了更多的你当地的文化

d) 其他，请具体注明 →

26. 您认为课程内容大部分来源于哪里？

a) 中国教育网

b) 教育部

c) 中国其他高等教育院校

d) 其他

27. 所学的课程是否能够表现出下列选项中的中国文化的和价值：

a) 历史（例如，是否能适当地介绍中国过去的历史人物、思想、探索等）

b) 历史文化（例如，是否能适当地介绍中国过去的历史人物、思想、探索等）

c) 当代的成就（例如，发明、中国的人物）

d) 当代社会状况（例如，社会不平等，对社会问题的解决方案和信息披露）

e) 当代经济状况（例如，就业市场）

28. 您对课程学习内容与当地、全国以及全球范围知识的关系有怎样的认识？

a) 兼容性较强，涵盖了地方性差异（理念和知识与具体地方的差异）

b) 基于历史/地区文化，内容有充分的中国的文化

c) 有充分的内容涉及中国所在的地方

d) 有充分的内容涉及世界的其他地区
### 30. 课程是否能较好的适应就业前景？
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>选项</th>
<th>强烈赞成</th>
<th>赞成</th>
<th>中立</th>
<th>不赞成</th>
<th>强烈不赞成</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 31. 您认为电子化学习为何要使用网络课程？
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>选项</th>
<th>强烈赞成</th>
<th>赞成</th>
<th>中立</th>
<th>不赞成</th>
<th>强烈不赞成</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 32. 您认为未来的电大网络课程学习将会怎样？
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>选项</th>
<th>强烈赞成</th>
<th>赞成</th>
<th>中立</th>
<th>不赞成</th>
<th>强烈不赞成</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 33. 如果您有其他的建议，请在下面的括号中具体写明。
### Appendix E: Student Survey (English Version)

**Student Experiences and Perceptions of Online Learning at CCRTVU/RTVUs**

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather information on your experiences and perceptions of using online learning at CCRTVU/RTVUs. Your participation in this study will be valuable for understanding how learners at CCRTVU are engaging with online learning. If you do not use online learning as part of your programme, please do not complete this questionnaire.

Please answer ALL questions.

This questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Please indicate the following:

a) City:

b) County/District:

How would you describe where you live? Please check the appropriate box.

- a) Urban  →
- b) Semi-urban  →
- c) Rural  →

**Part A: Information on background and computer expertise**

For each of the following questions, please tick (✓) the appropriate box or provide the relevant information.

1. **Gender**
   - Male  
   - Female  

2. **Age**
   →

3. **Highest level of education obtained – PLEASE CHECK ONE ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College/Diploma/Cert.</th>
<th>Bachelor degree</th>
<th>Graduate degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. **Employment – PLEASE CHECK ONE ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Retired</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. **Please indicate the type(s) of occupation(s) you have or have had in past**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

6. **Total number of years of professional work experience**
   →

7. **Please indicate the type of occupation(s) you seek once you graduate**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

8. **Current course of study at CCRTVU (Programme, Course)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. **In addition to [www.open.edu.cn](http://www.open.edu.cn) (or in place of), what is the website you use to sign in for your online course at your Dianda?**
   →

10. **Indicate the number of hours/week you have been using computers at home, work, school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. **Which year did you begin your degree at CCRTVU?**
   →

12. **Which year do you expect to graduate?**
   →
13. How many courses do you take per semester (on average)?

→

14. What is the total number of years you have been involved with online learning in higher education (in addition to your time at DianDan)?

→

15. Indicate the time (in hours) you spend on-line each week doing work for the course you identified in question 6.

→

16. How many courses have you taken that have an online component at CCRTVU?

→

17. Where do you most often access the Internet for the course you identified in question 8?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University/Study Centre</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Internet café</th>
<th>Public Library</th>
<th>Other, please indicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Please rate your skill level on the following applications by inserting a √ in the corresponding columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Beginners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Word Processing
b) Email/chat
c) Searching the Web
d) Downloading programmes
e) Uploading to peer-based sites (e.g., Tudou, Wikipedia)
f) Creating Web pages

19. What is your preferred mode of learning? Please rank the following items (1 indicates highest preference)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Online</th>
<th>b) Television</th>
<th>c) Radio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) Print

e) Face to face

19f) Other (list):
g) Other (list):

h) Other (list):

3

Part B: Rationale and use of online course/Internet

20. What is the rationale for using online learning in your course at CCRTVU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Improve computer and Internet skills
b) Preferred to other modes of learning
c) Flexible learning environment
d) Greater interactivity with tutor
e) Greater interactivity with classmates
f) Improve job prospects
g) It is necessary to use online learning to do well in this course

h) Other, please indicate →

21. How do you use the Internet for this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a) Interact with instructor
b) Interact with other students
c) Access information from the course website
d) Access information from other websites
e) Other, please indicate →

22. In addition to the website(s) you indicated in question 9, what types of websites do you access to help your learning in this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

a) The online library of CCRTVU
b) Websites from other universities
c) Wikipedia
d) Blogs
e) Whatever websites turn up from searching via Baidu/Google
f) Other, please indicate →

23. In addition to the website(s) you indicated in question 9, what is the origin of websites that you access to help your learning in this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

a) Websites hosted in Mainland China using Chinese (on
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24. What is your rationale for selecting websites outside of Mainland China or in Mainland China that use English?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) These websites are resources in the course content</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) These websites have been referred by other classmates</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) I have searched for these websites on the Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) I want to have a larger understanding of the course content from a Chinese perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) I want to have a larger understanding of the course content from a global perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Other, please indicate</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25. How has using these non-Chinese websites affected your learning?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) It has enabled me to learn more about Chinese knowledge/culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) It has enabled me to learn more about my own local culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) It has enabled me to learn about global ideas/culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Other, please indicate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part C: Perceptions on online course/online learning and content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>26. Where do you feel the majority of content from this course originates?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) China Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) CCRTVU</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Other institutions of higher learning in China</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) From outside of Mainland China</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) Other, please indicate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>27. Does this course represent Chinese ideas/values in terms of:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) History (e.g., is there adequate mention of past scholars, ideas, discoveries from China)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Culture (e.g., are there references to festivals, pop culture, religion, local dialects/languages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Current achievements (e.g., discoveries, ideas of Chinese)</td>
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<td>d) Contemporary societal conditions (e.g., issues of social inequalities, recognition and information of rural/underdeveloped regions)</td>
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<td>e) Contemporary economic conditions (relevance to job market)</td>
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<td>f) Other, please indicate</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>28. What are your perceptions of the course content in terms of local, national and global knowledge?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) It is inclusive to multiple groups including those from rural/underdeveloped regions (e.g., ideas/knowledge specific to these areas is addressed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) It has sufficient Chinese content in terms of ideas/values/history</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) It has sufficient content applicable to East Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) It has sufficient content applicable to other areas of the globe</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) Other, please indicate</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>29. What are your perceptions in regards to the online course you have taken from CCRTVU?</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) I have improved my knowledge of the course content through online learning more so than other distance modes of learning</td>
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<td>b) Course content online is comparable to courses in other conventional institutions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
c) Course content is relevant to global trends

d) Course content is relevant to the Chinese job market

e) Course content is relevant to my local context

f) I will continue to enroll in courses online at CCRTVU, if applicable and available

g) Other, please indicate →

30. How well does this course suit employment prospects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) This course will provide me with skills suitable to the local job market</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) This course will provide me with skills suitable to the Chinese job market</td>
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<td>c) This course will provide me with skills suitable to work in a job that is global in nature</td>
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<td>d) An employer will have positive perceptions of my course/degree as it has been completed online</td>
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<td>e) Other, please indicate →</td>
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</table>

31. Why do you think Dianda has used online learning in courses?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) To improve interaction for students</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) To encourage students to seek information external to the course requirements from a Chinese perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) To encourage students to seek information external to the course requirements from a Global perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) To enhance computer skills</td>
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<td>e) Because online learning is trendy</td>
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<td>f) To compete with other institutions engaged in online learning</td>
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<td>g) Because of government regulations</td>
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<td>h) Other, please indicate →</td>
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</table>

32. What do you think is the future for online learning at Dianda?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) It will create more opportunities for lifelong learning and</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

b) It will create more opportunities to study graduate degrees (masters, doctorate)

c) It will enable Dianda to expand course offerings to larger populations in China (e.g., rural areas)

d) It will enable Dianda to expand course offerings outside of Mainland China

f) Online learning will make course content more global and less Chinese (i.e., in terms of ideas, history)

g) Other, please indicate →

33. If you have additional comments, please indicate in the space provided below.

End of questionnaire – thank you for your participation
Appendix F: Policymaker Interview Guide

Policymaker Interview Guide

In relation to Question 1:

1.1 What are the implications from government and institutional policy towards the development of online learning in the Open Universities of India and China?

Background information:

Professional Title:
Years working with OUC/IGNOU:
Academic background/qualifications:

1. What was the institutional rationale for implementing online learning courses in 1999/2000?
   - What funding was allocated for online learning course/program development and from where did this originate?
   - What needs analyses were conducted in regards to:
     - Student requirements?
     - Ministry/Department of Education requirements?
     - Economic need?
     - Private sector need?
   - What were the desired outcomes?
     - Technological skill development?
     - Development of the individual in terms of local/national/global awareness/connect wider sources of information (local, national, global) to course content?
     - Employability?

2. Describe the process of developing online learning programs/courses at OUC/IGNOU since 1999/2000.
   - What has been the role of the Ministry of Education (China)/Department of Education/UGC/Distance Education Council (India) in the development of online learning at IGNOU/OUC?
   - How were the online programs developed?
     - How was a website/online learning platform developed?
       - Internal expertise? Based on what requirements?
       - External expertise? Based on what requirements?
       - International expertise?
       - National expertise?
       - Local expertise?
     - How was the online program advertised?
     - Did qualifications for enrolment differ from other programs? If so, how and why?
- How were online courses developed?
  o From where was consultation sought?
    ▪ Internal expertise? Based on what requirements?
    ▪ External expertise? Based on what requirements?
      • International expertise?
      • National expertise?
      • Local expertise?
    ▪ How did ideas differ and how were final decisions made?
- What courses were originally included for online learning?
  o How many courses had been already in existence, taught/delivered through other channels?
    ▪ How was curriculum modified to an online environment?
    ▪ Do these courses remain in other forms? Why?

3. Describe the formation of policies for online learning at OUC/IGNOU. To what extent have the following been considered:
- National knowledge in policy development?
- Local knowledge in policy development?
- Global knowledge in policy development?
- How standard are policies in relation to other institutions delivering online learning in India/China? How unique?
- How are policy decisions made (in relation to online learning)?
  o Who/what organizations are involved?
  o How have ideas differed and how have final decisions been made?
- How is policy enacted at the level of online course curriculum development?
  o Is this related to quality assurance mechanisms?
  o Is this related to course accreditation?

4. How have decisions on expansion been determined?
- What funding has been made available? What percentage of costs have been recovered through student fees, private partnership, government funding?
- What needs analyses have been conducted? How has this evolved from 1999/2000?
- What are the desired outcomes? How has this evolved from 1999/2000?
- What social and economic forces have caused continued implementation and expansion? Elaborate.

5. Describe how online courses undergo reform.
- Is there a cycle?
- What quality assurance mechanisms have been established?
  o How were these formulated? From where?
  o How are they implemented?
- Who is consulted? Has this changed since 1999/2000?
6. Describe policy reform for online learning
   - How has policy been reformed since 1999/2000?
   - Who is consulted? Has this changed since 1999/2000?

7. What is the future outlook for online learning at OUC/IGNOU?

End of Questionnaire
Appendix G : Curriculum Designer Interview Guide

Curriculum Designer Interview Guide

In relation to Question 2:

2.1 How do Open University policies affect the design of the online course curricula and how is content being developed by course designers/developers?

2.2 To what extent are there considerations for the inclusion of national content in the online curricula?

2.3 How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process?

Background information:

Professional Title:
Years working with CCRTVU/IGNOU:
Academic background/qualifications:
Experience with online learning course development:
Why you were contracted/employed to develop the curricular content for a course:

How are Open University policies on the content of online learning articulated in course curricula and how is content being developed by curriculum designers? How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum organization process? How well-aligned are courses to meet socio-economic demands?

1. Describe the process of curriculum organization for your particular online course(s).
   - Who is involved in the organization of a course?
   - What training is given in preparation for the organization of an online course? Consider connectivity with other courses, online learning platform.
   - What funding is allocated for online course curriculum?
   - What guidelines/materials are given to develop an online course from:
     o The Ministry of Education/Department of Education/UGC/Distance Education Council?
     o Internal expertise at CCRTVU/IGNOU?
     o The private sector?
     o Other stakeholders?
   - How are objectives and outcomes aligned with content, assignments and examinations?
   - How has curriculum been modified to an online environment?
   - What are the desired outcomes from your online course?
     o Technological skill development?
     o Development of the individual in terms of local/national/global
awareness/connect wider sources of information (local, national, global) to course content?
- Employability?
  - How is the Internet used to enhance the course?
    - How is curriculum altered?
    - What websites are included as resources and why?
    - How is the online learning platform used?
    - How technologically sophisticated is the online learning environment and what are the expectations of students to work online?
- What ideas/content have been borrowed/licensed from other sources?
  - From where was consultation sought?
    - Internal expertise? Based on what requirements?
    - External expertise? Based on what requirements?
      - International expertise?
      - National expertise?
      - Local expertise?
      - How well balanced is the course in relation to these levels of expertise?
    - How did ideas differ and how were final decisions made?

2. How are Open University policies on the content of online learning articulated in course curricula and how is content being developed by curriculum designers?
- How prescriptive or flexible is the curriculum design process?
- How well-aligned are courses to meet socio-economic demands?
- What policy documents have you been given to guide in development?
- How is policy enacted at the level of online course curriculum development?
  - Is this related to quality assurance mechanisms?
  - Is this related to course accreditation?

3. Describe how online courses are maintained and reformed.
- Is there a cycle?
- What quality assurance mechanisms have been established?
  - How were these formulated? From where?
  - How are they implemented?
- Who is consulted? Has this changed since 1999/2000?

4. How are courses accredited?
- What is the process to having a course accredited?
- How long has this taken in your experience?
- What are the criteria given to a curriculum designer to satisfy accreditation requirements?

End of Questionnaire