Advancing Research in ODL: Where are the Missing Links?

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Plan

- Context
- Status of Research in ODL
- Emerging Areas of Research
- Where are the missing links?
- Towards a Culture of Research
CONTEXT
The Rise of Open Universities

UNISA

The Open University

Athabasca University

IGNOU
Asia has over 70 open universities, 13 of which are mega-universities!
Online enrolments: Global

- Aggregate growth rate is 7.6%. The highest growth rate is in Asia at 17.3%, followed by Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

- The top ten countries with the highest eLearning growth rates are Vietnam, Malaysia, Romania, Azerbaijan, Thailand, Slovakia, the Philippines, Senegal, China, and Zambia.

Ambient Insight Worldwide Report, January, 2013
- Private HE fastest growing sub-sector: 30% enrolments globally

- Some countries (Japan, South Korea) enrol 80% of students in PHEIs
The Rise of Private Provision

- D R Congo: 81.6%
- South Korea: 80.1%
- Chile: 77.6%
- Japan: 80%

Source: PROPHE Private and Public Higher Education Shares for 117 countries (Nov 2010)
ODL institutions continue to

- educate more people
- at lower costs
- open up opportunities for learning
What is the Role of a University?

- Teaching
- Research
- Outreach
STATUS OF RESEARCH IN DE
What is DE Research?

- Endogenous
- Exogenous

Borje Holmberg

Photo: https://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/honoured/Holmberg.htm
Status of Research in ODL

“Massive volume of amateur, unsystematic and badly designed research producing information of very little value”

“Lack of Theoretical Underpinning”


An examination of existing research shows that it is often atheoretical and predominantly descriptive

Perraton, H. (2000). Rethinking the research agenda. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 1*(1).

Assessment of DE Research

- Many experimental research projects have no rigour in their design
- Cultural, linguistic, environmental factors not considered
- Inadequate attention to teacher and tutor support
- Few studies based on current learning/pedagogical/psychological theories

O. Jegede (1999)
Trends in Research in ODL
(based on analysis of 675 articles in 5 Journals from UK, USA, Canada and Australia)

- “Dominated with issues related to Instructional Design and Individual Learning Process

- Innovation and change management and intercultural aspects of distance learning are dreadfully neglected”.

Olaf Zawacki-Richter, Eva Maria Bäcker, and Sebastian Vogt (2009, Review of Distance Education Research (2000 to 2008): Analysis of Research Areas, Methods, and Authorship Patterns in International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning Volume 10, Number 6.)
Trends in Research in ODL
(based on analysis of 675 articles in 5 Journals from UK, USA, Canada and Australia)

- 80% of the articles originate from only five countries (USA, Canada, UK, Australia, and China)
- From journals published from USA, UK, Canada, and Australia

Olaf Zawacki-Richter, Eva Maria Bäcker, and Sebastian Vogt (2009, Review of Distance Education Research (2000 to 2008): Analysis of Research Areas, Methods, and Authorship Patterns in International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning Volume 10, Number 6.)
Gender & Research in ODL
(based on analysis of 675 articles in 5 Journals from UK, USA, Canada and Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Male Count</th>
<th>Female Count</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Confirms the stereotypical view that female researchers are more likely to use qualitative methods”.

## Asian Contribution to DE Research (2000-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of the World</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asian Contribution to DE Research

![Bar chart showing contribution to DE research from Asia and Rest of the World from 1991-1996 and 2000-2008. The chart indicates a significant increase in contribution from Asia in the second period.]
Indian Contribution to DE Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Journal</th>
<th>Published Since</th>
<th>Number of Papers from India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Journal of Distance Education</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Education</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Learning</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Journal of Distance Education</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Journal of Open Distance e-Learning</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mishra, S. (2013). What Ails Indian Distance Education Research?
Status of DE Research in India

- 2/3 project-oriented; 1/3 degree-oriented (Panda et al, 1996)
- Fragmentary and lack of theoretical foundations (Sesharatnam, 1996)
- Focus on descriptive surveys (Kaul, 1997)
- Lack of rigor compared to international research (Powar, 2001)
AAOU Proceedings 2000-06

- Descriptive: 60%
- Case studies: 11%
- Surveys: 7%
- Experimental studies: 3%
- Qualitative observation studies: 5%

C Latchem & I Jung (2010), Distance and Blended Learning in Asia, Routledge, p. 199
Open Access: free to copy/use/distribute research

- According to a 2013 European Commission report, among new papers being published, half are now free.

- Findings of a 2014 study, “The Number of Scholarly Documents on the Public Web”:
  - As of 2013, there were at least 114 million English-language research studies available on the Web.
  - 27 million were open access —ie. one-quarter of online research in English is now free to the public.

Source:http://journalistsresource.org/skills/research/free-open-academic-research-online
March 2014, HEFCE UK published a new policy for open access.

December 2013, European Commission: Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Research Data in Horizon 2020

February 2013, White House announces new US Open access policy

July 2012, DFID Research: Policy opens up a World of Global Research
KEY AREAS OF RESEARCH
1. MOOCs and OER

- ODL institutions played minimum role in innovation and became more as a follower
- ODL institutions yet to adopt, appropriate and domesticate MOOCs
OER

MIT OpenCourseWare
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MERLOT
Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching

CONNE XIONS

OER Commons
Open Educational Resources
Massive Open Online Courses: MOOCs

Coursera

Future Learn

Google+

Udacity

Cloudcampus

edX

Udemy
Open Education Resources (OER)

- Who is responsible for the quality of repurposed OER?
- Does the use of OER reduce the costs of DE delivery?
- How can we involve stakeholders in creating OER?
MOOCs

- How can MOOCs help us reach the unreached?
- Can Learning Analytics improve outcomes?
- In which ways are pedagogic practices changing?
## 2. Distance Education and Cost-Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Effects measured</th>
<th>Cost-effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (primary and secondary)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Low usage of TV; learning gains not evaluated</td>
<td>Add-on costs considerable and no evidence of cost-effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast (primary)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Some gains in French language and maths</td>
<td>Perceived as grossly uncost-effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand (primary)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Improved maths test scores</td>
<td>No verdict on cost-effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (teacher training)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Children improved language test scores</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness unproven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi (secondary)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Large numbers of passes in tests</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness apparently demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (university)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Very large numbers of graduates</td>
<td>Highly cost-effective, <em>prima facie</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hawkridge, David (1988). Distance education and the World Bank

*British Journal of Educational Technology* Vol19 No. 2
## Open and distance education in mega universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>ENROLMENT</th>
<th>% of Campus Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>AIOU</td>
<td>456,126</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>CCRTVU</td>
<td>2,300,000</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>IGNOU</td>
<td>1,187,100</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>203,744</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unit cost per student as a percentage of the average for other universities in the country, NKC, 2004.
Internal Rate of Return of Non-Conventional Education (Distance Education + Part Time Education) in Malaysia

Industry-ODL Institution Collaboration in South Africa

- lack of cooperation between industry and the academia
- lack of government policies to facilitate industry-academic collaboration
- stakeholder attitudes
- lack of previous success experience in collaboration.

3. Learning for Development
The Impact of ODL on Development

“the development of distance education models, including massive open online courses [MOOCs]), very few studies show how these changes have impacted development”.

Post-2015 targets (UN High Level Panel)

- End poverty
- Empower girls and women
- Provide quality education and lifelong learning
- Ensure healthy lives
- Ensure food security and good nutrition
- Create jobs, sustainable livelihoods & equitable growth
Equitable, Quality Education & Lifelong Learning for All by 2030
UNESCO: post-2015 education agenda

- Basic Education (incl ECCE & lower secondary)
- Post-basic (incl upper sec & tertiary)
- Quality and relevant teaching learning
- Youth & adult literacy
- Skills for life and work
Post 2015 development framework for Education: Commonwealth

- **Access**: every child completes 9 years of basic education & has access to secondary education
- **Quality**: post-basic education for livelihoods and employment
- **Equity**: class, gender, special needs, location, age
Research on ODL for Development

- How can ODL add value to development process in terms of strengthening livelihoods, equity and sustainable development?
- How can ODL reach the marginalized communities and make a difference?
- How can ODL contribute to lifelong learning?
WHERE ARE THE MISSING LINKS?
Missing links?

- Social Role of open universities
- Lack of funds
- Inadequate training
- Channels for disseminating research
OUUK: Mission Statement

‘We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high quality university education....Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership we seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning’
Mission statement IGNOU

Take education to the hitherto unreached....Strive towards continuous development of methods and strategies for research and development for generation of knowledge in frontier areas, including Open and Distance Learning.
Funding

- IGNOU-DEC: minor and major grants
- 68 projects: 38 complete
- Rs 570,8700

M Srivastava, N Lele, Bharat Bhushan,
Role of DEC in promoting quality in open and distance learning system
Inadequate capacity
UNESCO-COL Chairs in ODL and OER
Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF)

Excellence in Distance Education Awards (EDEA)

Award of excellence for institutional achievement

Award of excellence for distance education materials

Award of excellence for an eLearning experience in difficult circumstances
AAOU Best Paper Award

AAOU Young Innovator Award

AAOU Best Practice Award
Research Through Mentoring

Panda, Santosh (2005), Research as Professional Development in Distance Education, *Indian Journal of Open Learning*, 14(3)
Dissemination channels
Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation
Towards Research and Policy in ODL

NC Farnes, Research and Policy Nexus in Open and Distance Learning, The first Conference on Research in Distance and Adult Learning in Asia: Research as Professional Development
Missing link: from research to action

- How relevant is our research?
- Are we using research to inform policy and practice in the OU’s?
- Do we have a culture of research within our institutions?
TOWARDS A CULTURE OF RESEARCH
Scimago Institutions Rankings 2014

Out of 4,851 ranked institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open University</th>
<th>Research output</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Web Visibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Open University UK</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University Netherlands</td>
<td>2419</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University of Israel</td>
<td>2598</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>2158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellenic Open University</td>
<td>2751</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scimago institutions rankings 2014  Retrieved on October 20, 2014
What drives research and innovation in industry?

![Bar chart showing what drives innovation](http://www.arcusgroup.ca/CEO_view_strategic_planning.html)

- **Corporate culture**: 34 managers, 18 C-level
- **Innovation processes**: 14 managers, 18 C-level
- **Adequate resources**: 19 managers, 23 C-level
- **Visible sponsorship**: 21 managers, 26 C-level
- **The right people**: 24 managers, 46 C-level

[Link to CEO view strategic planning](http://www.arcusgroup.ca/CEO_view_strategic_planning.html)
### Institutional Characteristics for Promoting Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and selection</td>
<td>Great effort is expended to recruit and hire members who have the training, goals, commitment, and socialization that match the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear coordinating goals</td>
<td>Visible, shared goals coordinate members’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research emphasis</td>
<td>Research has greater or equal priority than other goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Members are bonded by shared, research-related values and practices, have a safe home for testing new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive group climate</td>
<td>The climate is characterized by high morale, a spirit of innovation, dedication to work, receptivity to new ideas, frequent interaction, high degree of cooperation, low member turnover, good leader/member relationships, and open discussion of disagreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Beginning and midlevel members are assisted by and collaborate with established scholars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with professional network</td>
<td>Members have a vibrant network of colleagues with whom they have frequent and substantive (not merely social) research communication, both impromptu and forma, in and outside of the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Members have access to sufficient resources such as funding, facilities, and especially humans (e.g., local peers for support, research assistants, technical consultants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient work time</td>
<td>Members have significant periods of uninterrupted time to devote to scholarly activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size/experience/expertise</td>
<td>Members offer different perspectives by virtue of differences in their degree levels, approaches to problems, and varying discipline backgrounds, the group is stable, and its size is at or above a “critical mass.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Clear and multiple forms of communication such that all members feel informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Research is rewarded equitably and in accordance with defined benchmarks of achievement; potential rewards include money, promotion, recognition, and new responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokered Opportunities</td>
<td>Professional development opportunities are routinely and proactively offered to members to assure their continued growth and vitality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized organization</td>
<td>Governance structures are flat and decentralized where participation of members is expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive participative governance</td>
<td>Clear and common goals, assertive and participative leadership where active participation of members is expected, and effective feedback systems are utilized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bland, et al.
The German recipe

- Importance of collegiality
- Sufficient time for research
- Identify and build on existing strengths

‘Building a culture of research: recommended practices’, Hanover Research, 2014
A culture of research is an institutional culture that:

- Fosters an environment of creativity and innovation
- Values and rewards research
- Research informs both policy and practice
THANK YOU

Professor Asha Kanwar
COL President & CEO

Dr. K. Balasubramanian
Education Specialist,
Agriculture and Livelihoods

www.col.org