



DEVELOPMENTS OF OPENNESS THROUGH DIFFERENT PRACTICES

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Summary

The University of Payam Noor (PNU) has been established in 1988 as the only distance higher education in IRAN. It is being run under the supervision of the ministry of science and supported financially by both the government and the students as well.

At the outset 818 students registered in only 4 different disciplines, in 28 study centers throughout the country. They had been chosen by an entrance examination run by the university itself. Now, after, two decades its students population increased to 1017000. Its media, as a single- mode institution, developed to a multi- mode version. Its entrance examination has been changed to 6 models of admissions; thus reaching the point that every school leaver interested could be able to enter. In this article we shall analyze in more details the growth of population quantity, its means as support modes of learning and its challenges as has been overwhelmed quality. We would have a prediction of population, and the interaction of challenges towards quality improvements, cooperation and collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

For the sustainable development would better focus on supporting the higher *education institutes to assure better society. Fostering the higher education system* towards maintaining a responsible role in the society as a whole in a key issue. The prerequisite for this problem is a positive attitude by the policy maker in particular and the cultural and social sectors in general. This idea makes more sense when we are involved in a developing country.

Fortunately, in the case of our country, IRAN. The society as a whole and the parents in particular emphasis on higher education of their children. The youth, in particular the girls are eagle in entering a credential university wherever possible.

DEVELOPMENT PHASES

The development of the university has been taken place written three periods, though there were no specific plan at the outset for implementing these phases. We could describe this development as responses for different interactions either towards the needs of the society or as a mean to cover its expenses economically. Also, a virtual competence with the private

sector of higher education may be released as a motivation for developments in a particular period.

Phase 1, (1988-1997)

This period starts with admissions in 1988 for the first time up to the year 1997. The student population rose from 818 to 125329. The overall discipline has been risen from 4 up to 18, mainly humanities. In table 1 we outline these growth by the relevant figures.

Table 1

	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
C	28	30	43	62	73	88	117	123	124
D	4	6	11	14	15	16	18	18	18
S	818	16493	32523	51958	66458	82020	100376	106031	125329

C= Center; D=Discipline; S=Student

In this period PNU could be ranked as a single mode university, benefited mainly from the self-study books developed solely by the university. These printed materials were sometimes used by other traditional students as well. More over the counseling hours were defined and practiced. But a Hending such classes were not compulsory for the students.

Quality assurance were implemented and emphasized by the headquarter of the university via centralizing the final examinations.

The four disciplines, Persian literature, education, Government Management, and accountancy cover %67/18 all students population . These four branches constitute %77.79 of all humanities students. The main challenge for the university development office was to furnish the centers with relevant laboratories need for establishing science discipline. In table 2 the distribution population in shown within different disciplines.

Admission, the only way for admission of the students was the central entrance-examination for all universities running annually by the ministry of higher education. Thus the openness phenomena could be interpreted in the relation with the number of students admitted.

By other traditional universities. By the end of this period the students admitted by PNU could be compared with the total number admitted by 45 public universities and higher institutes owned by the government.

Phase 2, (1997-2005)

In 1997 university council approved a complemented method of admission, called encompassment method , parallel to the former central entrance examination method which had been run by the ministry.

In this new method every school leaver (6 grader) could enter the university and register for between 12-16 university discipline line unit course.

After this first term , viewed as a preliminary term , any student with the mean 12 mark out of 20 could continue in the same discipline register in the first term . this method made a breakthrough challenge to other to additional public universities and the private university as well. The challenge came from the igniuing the main law that every one who wants to enter any(governmental) univ. Should attend the CEE.BUT having implemented for the first year the Islamic Programming Council , a supreme council responsible for every main strategy concerning the cultural /scientific movement , approved the encompassing method Proposed

by the council of the university. Thus the openness mission PNU has been fulfilled in some respect.

For the first time to see the impact of this challenging method of admission that posed on whole of the country we will have a quick look at the statistic in table 3. In 1983 only 8.9 percent of the total applications for higher education could benefit from the traditional universities privileges.

By the year 2005 when we add the contribution paid by PNU , this has been risen to 29.9 per cent.

Table 2

	No of st	Contribution D. in GH	Contribution OF D. in GH	Contribution Of D. in GH
Islamic theology	6/145	1.06	1.54	1.6
Statistics	3/619	0.63	0.92	0.94
Atelics S	2/107	0.48	0.7	0.1
Geog	7/849	1.35	1.9	4.5
Accountancy	30/888	5.33	7.78	9.4
PSYC	4/152	0.71	1.05	1.6
MATH	14/945	2.57	3.76	6.15
PL	33/498	5.78	8.44	19.05
EL	3750	0.64	0.94	10.13
Phisiol	4320	0.76	1.09	1.5
GE	6724	1.16	1.7	1.58
SSc	12163	2.1	3.06	7.8
En	26063	4.5	6.56	11.19
PSC	4113	0.13	1.21	0.44
Man (G)	26400	4.55	6.65	6.52
Man (B)	6951	1.2	1.75	2.62
GSc	2531	0.43	0.65	0.22

As the table shows nearly 70 percent of PNU students belonging to humanities in this period.

The number of participants at the entrance examination has increased by about 216 per cent within the past eight years , whereas the number of admitted students show about 173 per cent increase during the same period.

Total participants at Entrance Examination in Relation Total Admissions at State Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

Year	Entrance Exam Total participants	State Universities Total admissions	Admissions Percentage
1983	366752	32600	8.9
1984	351263	35858	10.2
1985	442507	44475	10
1986	586086	61816	10.5
1987	554502	64050	11.6
1988	604528	65120	10.8
1989	752343	54590	7.3
1990	790495	56542	7.2

The above mentioned figures of admissions of 1988 to 1990 do not include the total admissions of Payame Noor University which will be discussed later. In its first, second and third year of operation, this university admitted respectively, 8377, 9869, and 22658 students. Including these figures, the total admissions had been increased by about 243 percent. The teaching media of the univ has been gradually changed from single- mode to multi-mode during this era. Nearly all core courses has been broadcast by the national television, used not only by the student of PNU but also by the universities as well. The total no of study counters reached up to 220 counters in this era, stretching all over the country including the small cities.

Phase 3, (2005-2008)

In this period the university developed geographically and numerically in all respects.

GEOGRAPHY

The no of all teaching centers reached up to 444 centers, some of which called units. Covering nearly every town and small city, thus PNU now could be viewed as a mega-university.

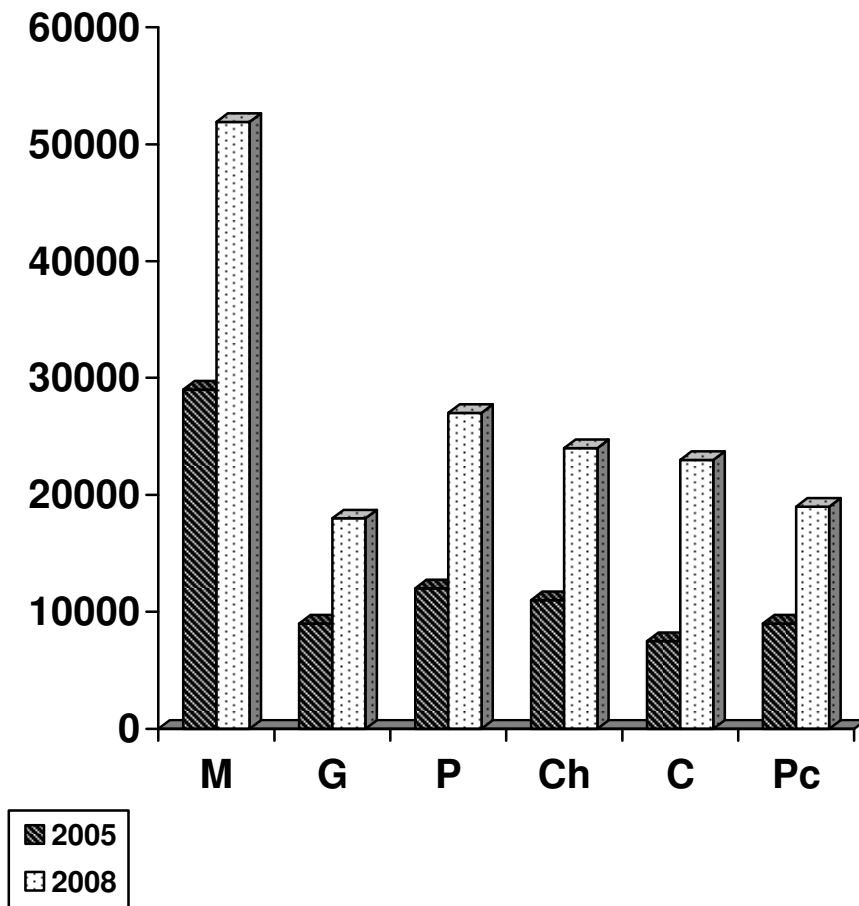
DIVERGENCE OF DISCIPLINES

The no of discipline increased to ☺ in BSc courses. Post –graduate courses increased to ☺ for MSc and 24 disciplines in PhD. But post-graduate courses established solely in provincial greater cities. Note that by the end of phase 2, only 2 disciplines, namely, Persian literature and Distance Learning had been established. The openness mission of the university has been fulfilled totally in entrance; The overall no of students increased by 100 percent, from 410000 in 2005 to 1000000 in 2008.

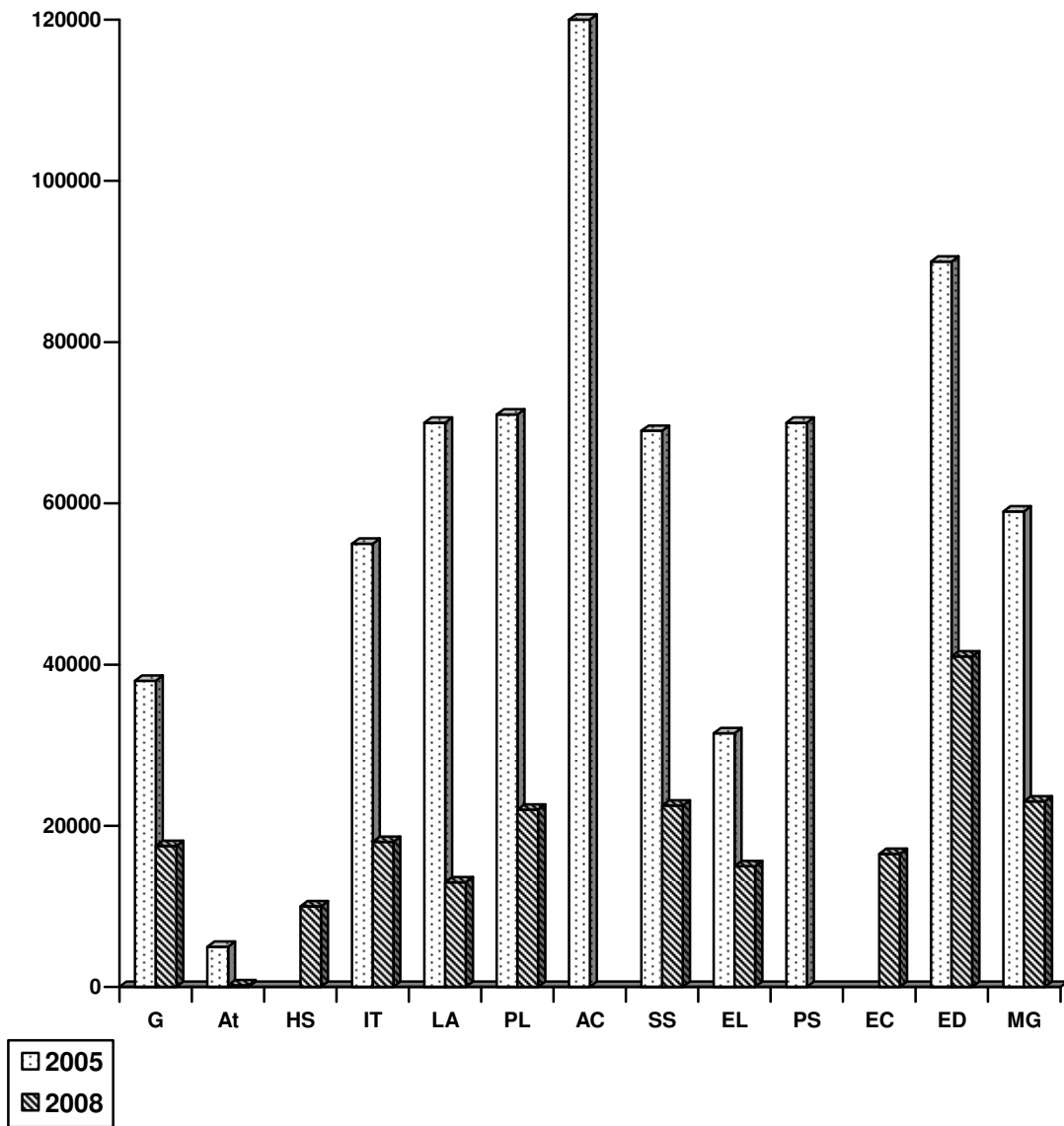
OPERTUNITIES AND CHALLENG

- (a) PNU benefited significantly both from the ministry of higher education in supporting new disciplines and from acknowledging the government as a whole. The economy of the university nearly tripled, the rules and by laws concerning teaching, registration and transferring changed in favor of students. This in turn pose some challenges towards keeping quality assurance.
- (b) New disciplines demand the relevant means, in particular formal texts. But producing new teaching material demands sufficient time for contracting with authors, developing curriculum, writing down the context, editing and producing the approved material.
- (c) VIRTUAL LEARNING
By the end of 2005 only 2 disciplines had been defined and implemented in virtual environment. These included computer science (software) and Moral science. By this number has been increased to ☺ by the year 2008.

**Comparing Growth in Figures
2005 – 2008
SEC1 – PURE SCIENCES**



SEC2: Humanities



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Conclusion

Whenever there is a positive attitude towards higher education, it is possible to design develop and implement a higher education institute, beginning from the zero point, and fulfill even a mega one within a couple of decades.

Nevertheless, there would be some challenges concerning mainly quality assurance. The quality of service, teaching and learning, is a function of the management and the potential of academic responsible for developing the means and assessment tools as well.

Description

This paper concern a case study of the growth of the Payame Nor university, starting registration in 1988. This university, embodied more than a million students in the largest government owned university in IRAN. Teaching activities included all level of university degrees, but the cultural and under grate level is the main mission of the university.