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Resistance, reluctance, and revelation: examining faculty perceptions of online learning options at a faith-based university

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RESISTANCE, RELUCTANCE, AND REVELATION: EXAMINING FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS AT A FAITH-BASED UNIVERSITY

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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VITA

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Universities Attended

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growth of online education and its seemingly fixed place in higher education, online education is still opposed, or at least viewed with suspicion by many faculty (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Faculty opposition of online education can be expressed in myriad ways, most prominently through shared governance, which can directly limit or completely block online education from occurring at an institution. This case study revolved around a non-profit, Faith-Based university (FBU) that is a newcomer to the inclusion of online coursework. This study sought to investigate the rationale faculty may have towards their support or opposition to online education by using mixed methods to bring to light the beliefs faculty have about online education. In examining the beliefs faculty at FBU have towards online education, this study also prompted faculty to reflect on whether their beliefs about online education have changed since the inclusion of online coursework at FBU, and if so, what factors may have contributed to the evolving beliefs. Data collected from 54 survey respondents and 12 faculty interviews helped to capture these beliefs.

The findings showed that faculty, on average, felt that the impact of online education on the quality of educational experience would be slightly diminished at the undergraduate level but slightly enhanced at the graduate level.

Faculty who indicated evolving beliefs or opinions about online education cited various catalysts. These catalysts fell into 3 categories: *external factors*- related to economic viability, changes in the higher education environment, and access; *information and opinions gather from trusted sources*- which would include literature, colleagues, and professional organizations; and *personal experience*- which stemmed from a direct personal involvement in teaching and/or learning experiences within the online environment.

Findings were examined through the theoretical framework of Rokeach's (1989) model of belief systems. This model may suggest that beliefs about teaching and learning are closely connected to one's identity and are thus highly resistant to change. Accepting and implementing new or different methods of teaching and learning, such as the teaching and learning occurring in online education, might require a major reorganization of beliefs about oneself.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

With a little over a decade into the 21st century, higher education finds itself adjusting to new realities. Growing external pressures are straining the way higher education operates, forcing a shift to the traditions and paradigms that have long been established and held dear. These external pressures, coming from a variety of national and international conditions, include: (a) the weakened national and global economy, (b) the international competition of a globalized economy and a globalized labor force, (c) competition from for-profit universities; funding reductions, (d) shrinking endowments, (e) demands to increase access, (f) demands to improve student learning, (g) mounting governmental regulations, and (h) mounting accreditation requirements (Angel & Connelly, 2011; Bruininks, Keeney, & Thorp, 2010; Scott, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Furthermore, recent trends indicate changes in the demographics of who is pursuing higher education goals and how they are pursing those goals. College campuses still have their traditional 18- to 22-year-old full-time residential students, but those traditional students now only represent about 15% of all post-secondary students (Angel & Connelly, 2011; Taylor, 2012). Our 21st century higher education students are capitalizing on the nearly ubiquitous personal computing power and web connectivity by increasingly choosing computer mediated modes of teaching and learning. In many cases, these computer-based technologies for learning look quite different from the traditional modes of teaching and learning that have been found on university campuses for centuries.

These pressing conditions and changing paradigms are at the very least stimulating discussions among university faculty and administrators about how or if they should respond in some fashion. While other industries have had to re-invent themselves when facing challenges of

similar magnitude, the knowledge industry of higher education remains largely unchanged and still conducts itself in a manner similar to how it conducted its services 50 years ago (Wildavsky, Kelly, & Carey, 2011), or even a century ago (Christensen & Eyring, 2011), and some say even farther back in time to when universities first originated (DeMillo, 2011). For many universities, though, these same external pressures and changing paradigms are prodding them to accept the risk of transforming themselves in order to stay relevant to the needs of society and to survive and thrive in the new normal rather than facing the potential risks of maintaining the status quo (Bruininks et al,, 2010).

Innovation in Higher Education

In the face of these current challenges, a growing number of higher education experts are calling for universities to break out of traditional practices and seek ways to be innovative (Angel & Connelly, 2011; Christensen & Eyring, 2011; DeMillo, 2011; Wildavsky et al., 2011). Higher education has been steeped in traditions, and while not all traditions should be rejected, the fact that so many traditions remain in higher education may reveal how little change has occurred inside higher education amid massive technological and societal changes occurring outside of higher education. Wildavsky et al. (2011) noted that, "the only part of college not mired in tradition is the price" (p. 1). Christensen and Eyring (2011) echoed this same sentiment by stating, "Only the costs of a higher education, one can argue, have kept pace with the times" (p. 13).

In 2006, the Spellings Commission released their report, which examined the state of higher education in America. The commission, made up of notable leaders in business, education, and public policy, formulated some unsettling conclusions.

> What we have learned over the last year makes clear that American higher education has become what, in the business world, would be called a mature

> enterprise: increasingly risk-averse, at times self-satisfied, and unduly expensive. It is an enterprise that has yet to address the fundamental issues of how academic programs and institutions must be transformed to serve the changing educational needs of a knowledge economy. It has yet to successfully confront the impact of globalization, rapidly evolving technologies, an increasingly diverse and aging population, and an evolving marketplace characterized by new needs and new paradigms. (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. xii)

When a change effort is attempted within higher education, several barriers specific to higher education can either prevent or delay the adoption of the change effort. Getz, Siegfried, and Anderson (1997) examined a mixture of 238 institutions from higher education and for-profit industries to compare the average length of time required for the two groups to adopt innovations. They found that, on average, the higher education institutions took three times as long as the industries did to adopt innovations.

Brewer and Tierney (2011) define innovation as, "a new method, custom, or device—a change in the way of doing things" (p. 15). Part of the reason that there have been few higher education innovations is because the way of doing things has been mostly beneficial to higher education with few downsides to be seen. Higher education overall has, until recently, maintained its prestige along with steady enrollment and steady revenue increases. Given the current external pressures threatening the status quo of higher education, however, a change in the way of doing things seems inevitable (Wildavsky et al., 2011).

Doing things in a new way is not completely foreign to higher education. Some of the changes to the teaching and learning practices within higher education have included team teaching, service learning, first-year seminar, role-playing, international experiences, undergraduate research, collaborative learning, writing across the curriculum, small learning communities, and the integration of IT into instruction (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Marcus, 2011). The success of these change efforts to push or pull higher education out of its status quo has

varied in terms of their widespread adoption and their lasting power. Perhaps the more visible departures from the norm within higher education might include online learning and the deployment of Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

When innovation does occur though within American higher education, it tends to follow a typical pattern:

> initial enthusiasm, proselytizing, promising assessments, growth from a small handful of institutions to larger handfuls, and then a plateau into a comfortable niche. Enough professors, departments, and, in a few cases, whole institutions adopt the practices to build small followings of enthusiasts. But the great mass of teaching continues more or less as before. (Marcus, 2011, p. 44)

Higher Education and Online Education

Some administrators at universities are seeking to adjust and transform to the new normal by looking to technology to innovate the delivery and structure of their teaching and learning. Many of these universities are offering certain courses or programs, or even entire degrees, in an online format rather than exclusively requiring their students to be physically present on their campuses.

The roots of online education lie in Distance Education, which has been globally implemented for over a century. Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek (2009) mentioned that distance education is at least 160 years old, citing a composition course being offered in Sweden in 1833 through the medium of the Swedish postal service. From that point on, distance education took many creative forms and was often built on emerging technologies as they became available (Simonson et al., 2009).

Since 1873, Americans who were geographically isolated from educational institutions or who were not satisfied with the educational choices provided by local educational institutions have sought ways to build their knowledge and attain educational and career goals through these

distance education options. Distance education began to attract a wider audience when 20th-century technologies allowed affordable personal digital computing capacities in the early 1980s. Curriculum, assignments, and software, initially exchanged by mail, gradually gave way to exchanges via data communication across burgeoning electronic networks. In the 1990s, learning opportunities available on the Internet through educational institutions grew in prominence and became the dominant mode of distance education (Casey, 2008).

Even though the evolving technologies brought changes to distance education over the years, the one remaining constant has been a widely held view that distance education, and its latest rendition-- online education, is to be treated with skepticism regarding the quality of the learning experience (Allen, Seaman, Lederman & Jaschik, 2012; Bacow, Bowen, Guthrie, Lack, & Long, 2012; Benton, 2009, Mitchell, 2009). Distance education has been, to some extent, an educational oddity that does not fit the *proper* teaching and learning model. While many distance education experiences were initiated out of university extension efforts, these less-than-ideal education options were not as welcomed into the mainstay of university life (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

Despite the view of some that online learning options are inferior to traditional options, almost 86% of higher education institutions in America are offering online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Many elite universities and the majority of public universities have determined that a high quality teaching and learning experience can be achieved with online coursework. Accrediting bodies like the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) have likewise determined the merits of online courses by extending accreditation status to these universities. Additionally, higher education students have increasingly sought out the perceived advantages of online courses over traditional courses. Since 2002, enrollment of online courses at higher

education institutions has grown by a "compound annual growth rate of 17.3%" compared to a 2.6% total enrollment growth rate for higher education students during the same period (Allen & Seaman, 2013, p. 18).

The adoption of the innovation of online education at these universities has come as the result of the successful navigation through or around the barriers of cost, regulation, accreditation standards, institutional culture, and faculty governance (Brewer & Tierney, 2011). Moving to an online learning format necessitates structural and procedural changes that might be prohibitive, or at least daunting, to some universities (Mitchell, 2009). Some universities may lack the needed resources to make the logistical jump of converting traditional courses to online formats. But, as prohibitive as the costs, regulations and addressing standards may be in making the shift to online courses, the most challenging barrier for universities to overcome may be due to an opposition to a perceived alteration of the established culture and identity of the institution (Berge, 2007; Cho & Berge, 2002; Massy, 2011; Schneckenberg, 2009). Conversely, if the culture of the institution were to see value in, and supported the idea of the inclusion of online education at their institution, the associated costs of online education and the regulatory and accreditation requirements would likely be met (Lucas & Wright, 2009). This study will utilize a case study method to gain insight into the academic culture of a Faith-Based university by examining the beliefs the faculty have towards online education.

The Influence of Faculty Beliefs on Change Efforts

Lucas and Wright (2009) define beliefs as, "subjective ideas about what we think is true about our world and about ourselves, and they are formed through our interactions with the world" (p. 78). Beliefs can both motivate and de-motivate our actions. Zander & Zander (2002)

expressed caution about remaining entrenched in certain beliefs and thus establishing or perpetuating actions that become deeply ingrained:

> Standard social and business practices are built on certain assumptions—shared understandings that have evolved from older beliefs and conditions. And while circumstances may have changed since the start of these practices, their continued use tends to reconfirm the old beliefs. For this reason our daily practices feel right and true to us, regardless of whether they have evolved to keep up with the pace of change. (Zander & Zander, 2002, p. 4)

In light of the rapid technological and societal changes presently occurring, institutions of higher education will continue to struggle with dilemmas that force them to re-examine their beliefs and decide which beliefs to anchor themselves to, and which beliefs need to undergo the process of redefinition.

Incorporating the use of technology in the teaching and learning practices within higher education serves as an example of one such dilemma that prompts re-examination of beliefs about teaching and learning. The barriers that might stop faculty from using technology in their classrooms are less likely to be extrinsic ones, such as time constraints and compensation, and more likely to be intrinsic ones, such as their beliefs about teaching (Lucas & Wright, 2009). With any technology adoption into the field of education that might result in changes to established teaching practices, educators base their acceptance of the adoption on whether the adoption supports what they believe about teaching and learning and technology (Ertmer, 2005). If faculty reject a realignment of their beliefs with the institution's technology adoption efforts, the change will likely be stymied or even prohibited from taking root.

Theoretical Perspective

This study examined the beliefs of faculty at a faith-based liberal arts university towards online learning in general, and the beliefs of the faculty towards implementing online education at their university. The beliefs and perspectives of these stakeholders were viewed through the

lens of a theoretical framework established by Rokeach (1989) that continues to have influence on current educational theory (Ertmer, 2005; Hermans, Tondeur, van Braak, & Valcke, 2008; Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Glazewski, Newby, & Ertmer, 2010; Pajares, 1992; Prestridge, 2012; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011).

Rokeach (1989) suggests that the many varying beliefs of individuals or institutions are organized around a *central-peripheral dimension*. The degree to which these beliefs are in proximity to the center signifies their stability and importance to the individuals or institutions. The more central a belief is, the more connected it is to other beliefs within the individual, and the more resistant the belief is to change. If a central belief does experience a change, then the implications of that change impacts other beliefs connected to it. A belief that is further away from the center has fewer connections to other beliefs. The less important a belief is, the more it is amenable to change, and if it does experience a change, there are fewer disruptions to other beliefs within the individual or institution. This study will seek to determine the central beliefs of the university faculty that have contributed to the near exclusive use of traditional face-to-face instruction.

Need for the Study

Up until 2011, Faith-Based University (FBU) prohibited the inclusion of non-traditional teaching methods for more than 25% of any course being offered. In the spring of 2011, faculty members gave a cautious approval to pilot a fully online graduate course during the summer semester, on the condition that data would be collected and reviewed. Since then, several online courses have been conducted in the graduate programs, with far fewer online courses being conducted in the undergraduate programs. This gradual shift in the teaching practice of the university suggests that faculty beliefs about online learning are evolving. This study was needed

to capture the beliefs that faculty may have redefined and to also identify the factors that promoted the redefinition of their beliefs, if any at all.

Other studies have sought to determine why some universities have been slow to adopt more online coursework (Kinkle, 2010). Several studies have looked at factors that have either motivated faculty to teach an online course at their university or dissuaded faculty from doing so (Bruner, 2007; Chapman, 2011; Chen, 2009; Kampov-Polevoi, 2010; Lesht & Windes, 2011; McAllister, 2009; Mitchell, 2009; Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009). While other studies have explored university faculty beliefs related to technology adoption (Berge & Muilenburg, 2000; Donovan & Macklin, 1998; Ertmer, 2005; Lucas & Wright, 2009; Osika, Johnson & Buteau, 2009). However, few have examined why faculty have blocked efforts to include online education at their respective institutions, and no studies to date have examined faith-based beliefs and their relationship to online learning adoption.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the central beliefs of faculty of a faith-based liberal arts university and to understand the effects those beliefs are having towards the potential adoption of online learning options at the university. The study also explored whether beliefs towards online education have evolved and what factors may have contributed to the evolved beliefs. The study may serve to offer guidance in strategic planning efforts, which may steer future policy and practice.

Overview of Methodology

This study was a case study that examined faculty beliefs associated with online learning at a faith-based liberal arts university, Faith-Based University (FBU). FBU was one of the few remaining universities that denied the implementation of online learning courses up until 2011.

The fact that faculty gave their approval to run a pilot online course back in the spring of 2011 may have indicated that the beliefs FBU faculty have towards online education shifted. This study attempted to shed light on the beliefs FBU faculty have towards online education, and if those beliefs did evolve, what factors contributed to the altering of their beliefs. Moreover, since the university is a faith-based university, this study may help to identify whether faith-related beliefs of the faculty influence their view of online education.

In order to gain a comprehensive view of the beliefs the faculty at FBU have towards online education, the first phase of data collection began with a survey emailed to all faculty at FBU. The snapshot view into the faculty beliefs from this survey were compared to the results of a near-identical survey given to the faculty by a university task force committee in the Fall of 2011. Semi-structured interviews made up the second phase of data collection for this study. These interviews were conducted with 12 faculty of FBU in an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of the central beliefs that may have contributed to their stance on online learning.

This study may assist the stakeholders at FBU, and at other universities in similar circumstances, in re-examining their core beliefs in light of the many technological and societal changes, and it may serve to strengthen their position going forward.

Research Questions

1. What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?
2. How have the beliefs faculty have towards online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?
3. What factors have served as a catalyst to any evolving beliefs?

Definitions

Blended/Hybrid Learning. Staker and Horn (2012) view Blended Learning in the following way:

> Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. (p. 3)

Distance education. As mentioned previously in this chapter, distance education has been around since the 1800s. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL, 2011) defines distance education as a "General term for any type of educational activity in which the participants are at a distance from each other—in other words, are separated in space. They may or may not be separated in time (asynchronous vs. synchronous)" (p. 5).

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs are a subcategory of online learning—all MOOC courses are examples of online learning but only a small number of online courses are MOOCs. According to Allen and Seaman (2013), just 5% of institutions of higher education offer MOOCs. MOOCs are massive in terms of their enrollment, which can be unlimited and reach into the tens of thousands and even the hundreds of thousands. These courses are *Open,* which means that participating students do not have to apply or be accepted to the offering institution. These courses are also typically free to take although some are charging fees for receiving some type of credit or certificate. These courses are conducted completely online and have certain expectations that students will engage with the content of the course and will interact with other students in the course (Audette, 2012).

Online education. Online Education is a subcategory of Distance Education. iNACOL (2011) relied upon Watson and Kalmon (2005) and the U.S. Department of Education Office of

Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service (2010) to define Online Education in this manner:

> Education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet (Watson & Kalmon, 2005). The term does not include printed-based correspondence education, broadcast television or radio, videocassettes, and stand-alone educational software programs that do not have a significant internet-based instructional component (U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service, 2010). Used interchangeably with Virtual learning, Cyber learning, e-learning. (iNACOL, 2011, p. 7)

Delimitations

The study included a single faith-based university in order to distinguish whether faith-based beliefs impact beliefs towards online education.

The study focused on the beliefs that FBU faculty had towards online education and does not included the beliefs of other FBU stakeholders, such as administration, staff, students, alumni, and the board of trustees.

The pool of interviewees in the study included only full-time faculty and not part-time or adjunct faculty. The rationale for this delimitation is that only full-time faculty are granted voting privileges in the faculty senate. It is in the faculty senate that the beliefs held by full-time faculty directly impact the policies and practices of the university. In addition, the commitment of being a full-time faculty leads to greater opportunities to develop relationships and to have a deeper and broader experience with the university culture. While the opinions and the perspectives of the adjunct faculty were incorporated in the survey, adjunct faculty were not included in the interviews.

Summary

Institutions of higher education are facing growing external pressures, and with the availability of evolving technology resources, more institutions are utilizing non-traditional

methods of addressing the educational outcomes of their students. Online learning is one such non-traditional instructional method that has gained footing in higher education settings. However, not all faculty endorse the use of this non-traditional instructional approach due to conflicts with their beliefs about teaching and learning. This study used surveys and interviews to examine the beliefs that faculty at a faith-based university had towards online learning and how those beliefs may have recently evolved. The next chapter highlights literature that examines the academic, social and spiritual outcomes of online learning. The literature presented also looks at the typical beliefs faculty in general have toward online learning, and how these beliefs impact the acceptance and practice of online learning at institutions of higher education. Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used in this case study. Chapter 4 details the findings of data collected from the survey and the interviews of the faculty at FBU. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions discovered from the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study sought to explore the central beliefs towards online education by faculty at a faith-based liberal arts university and how those central beliefs potentially shaped the receptivity to online learning options at their institution. This literature review will begin with addressing the significance of this purpose by looking broadly at barriers that typically impede change and innovation at higher education institutions. The review will then shift to examining the barriers that are specific to change efforts involving online learning. The next section of this chapter will then look at the theoretical framework of beliefs established by Rokeach (1989), an influential theorist whose framework on beliefs and values remains a defining element of current theory (Dovovan & Bransford, 2005; Mayton, Ball-Rokeach, & Loges, 1994). The focus will narrow further and discuss literature applying to beliefs held by faculty towards online learning and how those beliefs commonly serve to influence change efforts and innovation related to online learning. Finally, the beliefs and values typically endorsed at faith-based higher education institutions will be examined in light of research studies that deal with aspects of these beliefs and values in relation to online learning.

Efforts of Change in Higher Education

Change initiatives in any organization, regardless of field, face many challenges as they attempt to become successfully implemented and established. These challenges are great. Up to 70%of all change efforts to fail (Maurer, 2011; Mourier & Smith, 2001). Higher education no doubt shares many of the difficulties of implementing change as in other fields, but literature suggests that the context of higher education offers its own unique set of challenges.

Brewer and Tierney (2011) identify four barriers that can hinder higher education institutions from embracing change and innovation. These barriers are: (a) federal and state

funding mechanisms, (b) federal and state regulation, (c) accrediting and nongovernmental associations, and (d) faculty governance and contracts.

Federal and state funding mechanisms most profoundly affect public institutions, but these funding mechanisms also impact any higher education institution that accepts public research funding, and private institutions, both non-profit and for-profit, that receive tuition revenue generated from students receiving publicly funded financial aid. Brewer and Tierney (2011) point out that public institutions tend to firmly hold on to the security of public funding, and as such, they have little fear of market competition or other change forces. This financial security tends to perpetuate traditional practices since there is little incentive to reform. If economic conditions do turn significantly downward, as is the case currently, and budgets and operations are forced to tighten, these public institutions have no plans in place to enact various types of experimentation or reform efforts to respond to the new fiscal realities (Brewer & Tierney, 2011).

With funding coming directly from federal and state sources, or indirectly from these sources through student loans or grants, *federal and state regulations* exert a certain amount of controlling interest in how higher education institutions can operate or whether they can operate at all. This is obviously true for public institutions, but it is also true for private institutions as well. At the same time public funding may have the unintended effect of dampening innovation at public institutions, governmental and accreditation oversight is increasing for all institutions at such levels in such a way as to limit the expansion of some existing private institutions and even deterring new private institutions from entering in field of higher education (Brewer & Tierney, 2011).

While *accrediting bodies and nongovernmental associations* hold institutions to certain standards to ensure quality and credibility, these same standards can also serve as boundaries that force institutions to conform to established practices rather than seeking paths of innovation. Institutions wishing to design a program in a novel way, for example, or experiment with using competency-based credit instead of credit hours might be stymied by accreditation standards. Without receiving accreditation blessings, students would not be able to access federal and state financial aid, and without access to this indirect funding source, institutions would be limited in the enrollment required to sustain innovation. Nongovernmental associations also have influence over the acceptance of innovations. Brewer and Tierney (2011) report that it is often in the interest of these associations to act as gatekeepers, shutting out new entrants or potential changes while maintaining the status quo. Two examples given were the effort of the American Council on Education (ACE) to lobby against the interests of for-profit institutions, and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) that promotes legislation to benefit institutions "that employ full-time faculty as opposed to contingent labor" (Brewer & Tierney, 2011, p. 29).

Finally, *faculty governance and faculty contracts* were once innovative structures at higher education institutions in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. Since then, the practice of faculty governance has grown to be the dominant governance structure at public and private non-profit institutions. While faculty shared governance played an important part in bringing American colleges and universities to the international prominence they hold today, Brewer and Tierney believe that this structure can now be a hindrance, keeping institutions from being flexible or quick to respond to changing environments. Faculty governance has become more about maintaining the reward system for tenure faculty than it has to do with developing ways to improve the teaching and learning that occur at the institution (Brewer & Tierney, 2011).

Online learning is an innovation within higher education that has gained a foothold and has caused a shift in the traditional academic experience. The majority of higher education institutions have worked past these general barriers of innovation in order to be able to implement coursework delivered in the nontraditional format of online learning. In fact, Allen and Seaman (2013) determined that 62.4% of all higher education institutions offer both online courses and full programs online, while 24.1% of all higher education institutions offering some online courses, leaving 13.5% of all higher education institutions offering no online courses. For the 86.5% of the institutions that do offer at least some online courses, the objectives of doing so, according to Allen and Seaman (2013), are to improve student access, increase the rate of degree completion, and to appeal to non-traditional students for continuing and/or professional education. The next section chronicles the barriers that higher education has faced, and in many cases, continue to face, since the inception of online education.

Barriers to Offering Online Education

Much of the literature that discusses barriers related to online education most commonly cite barriers that prevent widespread adoption of online education at some institutions rather than discussing barriers that have prevented the implementation of online education altogether at other institutions. It is likely to assume that the barriers to widespread adoption of online education for some institutions might also make up many of the same barriers that prevent any implementation of online education at other higher education institutions.

At the turn of the 21st century, Berge and Muilenburg (2000) sought to determine the perceived barriers to distance education (not just online education) by managers and administrators involved in distance education. The study involved the use of a survey that collected 2,504 responses. While the purpose of the study centered on the perceptions of

managers and administrators, these two job categories only made up 32.5% of the survey responders. Also included in the study were survey responses from others involved in distance education, including support staff (13.8%), teaching faculty or trainers (45.9%), researchers (4%), and students (3.6%). The findings of the study revealed that each of the job categories came up with the same top 11 barriers to distance education, though there was not agreement with the ranking order of the 11 barriers. The 11 barriers to distance education, as ranked by managers and administrators were:

1. Increased time commitment
2. Lack of money to implement distance education programs
3. Organizational resistance to change
4. Lack of shared vision for distance education in organization
5. Lack of support staff to help course development
6. Lack of strategic planning for distance education
7. Lack of technical support
8. Slow pace of implementation
9. Faculty compensation, incentives, etc.
10. Difficulty keeping up with technological changes
11. Lack of technology-enhanced classrooms, labs or infrastructure.

Berge and Muilenburg (2000) concluded that all survey responders recognized the need for a cultural change within the organizations involved in distance education signifying perhaps that matters of culture within the organization served as a very strong barrier to distance education (Berge, 2007; Cho & Berge, 2002). The beliefs, expectations, and the norms of the established culture all have an impact on the acceptance of nontraditional forms of learning. The

same might be said about any change initiative facing higher education institutions (Massy, 2011).

Faculty Influence on the Adoption of Online Learning Initiatives

> The university has a range of purposes, participants and audiences, all of whom apply pressures for change to better suit their needs or resist changes that disrupt their perception of the university as an institution. (Marshall, 2010, p. 181)

A key component of the culture at higher education institutions is the role of the faculty (MacKeogh & Fox, 2009). Faculty not only carry considerable weight in sharing the governance of the institutions, they are really the ones who determine the daily practices of teaching and learning. Online learning has been, and still is, a disruptor of traditional higher education practice. Traditional teacher-centered, lecture-based methodology continues to dominate higher education despite advances in technology that allow for greater facilitation of communication, and greater levels of student participation and individualized learning. Online learning runs counter to traditional learning by capitalizing on the technological advances, and by promoting a greater range of pedagogical approaches (Bacow et al., 2012; Palloff & Pratt, 2007). Moreover, online learning is raising questions about what getting educated looks like (competency based vs. Carnegie unit-based), and who is to be included in higher education, both as a student and as a faculty member (Larreamendy-Hoerns & Leinhardt, 2006). Perhaps because of this shift away from the traditional higher education (HE) experience, faculty at large, are reluctant to support the adoption of online learning. Allen and Seaman (2013) found that less than a third (30.2%) of the chief academic officers at higher education institutions felt that their faculty accepted "the value and legitimacy of online education" (p. 27). What is shocking, especially in light of the tremendous growth of online education, is that this level of acceptance is slightly lower than the level of acceptance from 2004. Moreover, perceived acceptance rates vary depending on whether

institution offers complete programs online, or just online courses, or offers no online courses. The more committed the institution is to online education, the more likely the faculty will accept online education as being legitimate. However, even the institutions most committed to online education cite that less than a majority of their faculty (38.4%) fully accept online education (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

Similarities Between the Adoption Efforts of Instructional Technology in HE and the Adoption Efforts of Online Learning in HE

Efforts to bring more online learning into HE seem to parallel the adoption efforts made to incorporate other instructional technology into HE, which is perhaps not surprising considering that online learning is a rapidly growing trend in the use of educational technology. Mitchell (2009) ties the issues of technology integration and online education more directly by stating, "The move toward online education requires an acceptance of technology in relation to teaching" (p. 83). While there are successes in bringing in more technology into the teaching and learning experiences of many HE courses, widespread adoption efforts aimed at faculty still encounter resistance. Some of what has been discovered from studies on technology adoption can be applied to online learning adoption.

Lucas and Wright (2009) looked at barriers that tend to inhibit faculty from incorporating instructional technology into their practice. While their study does not directly relate to faculty adopting online learning, it does highlight aspects of what faculty consider when faced with options to alter to their daily practice. Lucas and Wright's review of literature confirmed the type of barriers mentioned in the Berge and Muilenburg (2000) study, as these barriers apply to the overall incorporation of instructional technology in higher education. The researchers noted, however, that other studies have shown how efforts to improve the integration of technology fall

short even when faculty are provided with incentives, time, professional development and other support structures (Donovan & Macklin, 1998; Osika et al., 2009). In other words, even when change efforts have directed resources towards meeting the extrinsic factors that may inhibit adoption, these change efforts produced few successes. Lucas and Wright (2009) speculated that intrinsic factors, or specifically, the beliefs faculty have about teaching and learning, and their beliefs about themselves have a more profound influence on whether instructional technology gets incorporated than from the extrinsic barriers faculty encounter. Before being able to effectively address the existing external barriers of incorporating technology into instructional practice, "the beliefs about teaching must be examined, discussed, and possibly changed" (Lucas & Wright, 2009, p. 92).

Brownell and Tanner (2012) would seem to agree to this assessment, even though their statements are directed toward calls for general pedagogical reform in science education rather than a stated use of instructional technology or online education specifically. Brownell and Tanner speculate that when it comes to faculty making lasting changes to their pedagogical approaches to teaching science, the barriers of doing so go beyond the often-cited barriers of lack of training, time, and incentives. The professional identity of the faculty and "how they view themselves and their work in the context of their discipline and how they define their professional status" (Brownell & Tanner, 2012, p. 339) is as likely a hindrance to true pedagogical reform as are the issues of training, time, and incentives.

Other literature that spans both K-12 education and higher education has supported the view that beliefs held by teachers or faculty members regarding their personal philosophy (Albion & Ertmer, 2002), or pedagogy (Ferguson, 2004), or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), or just *teacher beliefs* in general (Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992), impacts either their

integration of technology or the instructional methods they use in their classrooms. The consensus among this literature acknowledges that the beliefs held by teachers and faculty are very stable and resilient to change being imposed on them.

The 2009 Lucas and Wright study, in particular, might suggest that even if institutions allocate resources towards meeting the extrinsic barriers typically associated with online learning, institutions will still encounter resistance towards implementing online learning due to the beliefs faculty hold towards online learning.

Theoretical Framework

The belief system of an educator influences many aspects of their role as an educator, from their interaction with students, to the set of instructional strategies they put into practice, to the selection of content, and to the way they evaluate their students (Jones & Carter, 2007; Luft, Firestone, Wong, Ortega, Adams, & Bang, 2011; Luft & Roehrig, 2007). In fact, Pajares (1992) viewed that studying the beliefs of educators can be, "the single most important construct in educational research" (p. 329). Given the importance of an educator's belief system and how this belief system may impact the educational outcomes of students and institutions alike, this study used the work of Rokeach (1989) as a theoretical framework. Rokeach offers a model that provides insights into the nature of an individual's belief system; the shaping and formation of beliefs, the organization of beliefs, and why certain beliefs can waiver while other beliefs remain stable. These belief systems, comprised of beliefs, attitudes and values "are all organized together to form a functionally integrated cognitive system, so that a change in any part of the system will affect other parts, and will culminate in behavioral change" (p. ix).

According to Rokeach (1989), the vast array of beliefs each individual has is structured around a central-peripheral dimension. Beliefs stationed closer to the center of this dimension are

highly connected or in communication with other beliefs within the structure and are thus more resistant to change than beliefs that are stationed at the peripheral of the belief system. Rokeach considers the beliefs that are more centrally aligned to be more important since changes to these beliefs have the potential to disrupt a greater number of connected beliefs. The beliefs at the peripheral are less connected to other beliefs held by the individual. Thus, they are not as entrenched and are more vulnerable to being changed. Changes to the peripheral beliefs cause fewer disruptions to the belief system since the peripheral beliefs are not in communication with as many other beliefs.

Rokeach (1989) proposes that the connectedness of a belief can be assumed according to four criteria:

1. *Existential versus nonexistential beliefs.* Beliefs that are directly related to one's existence and identity have more connections to other beliefs in the belief system than beliefs not related to one's existence and identity.
2. *Shared versus unshared beliefs about existence and self-identity.* Beliefs about one's existence and self-identity have a greater connectedness to other beliefs if those beliefs are shared with others versus the beliefs that are not shared with others.
3. *Derived versus underived beliefs.* Beliefs that are formed indirectly from authority figures rather than from a direct personal encounter with the subject of the belief are derived beliefs. Derived beliefs are not as functionally connected as underived beliefs.
4. *Beliefs concerning and not concerning matters of taste.* Beliefs linked with matters of taste are arbitrary and not as well connected to the belief system. Therefore, there are fewer consequences to the belief system when a belief in changed in this criterion.

Rokeach (1989) then used the four criteria of beliefs to classify beliefs according to five types, ranging from the most central of beliefs residing in Type A beliefs (the most stable beliefs) to the most peripheral beliefs occurring in Type E beliefs (the most vulnerable to change beliefs).

Type A: Primitive beliefs, 100% consensus. These beliefs are shared, underived beliefs dealing with existence and identity of oneself or with the existence and identity of an object or an idea. Rokeach (1989) labels these beliefs as *primitive* because they represent axiomatic *basic truths* that reside in the fundamental core of the belief system. Beliefs, such as, *This is a table*, or *I am a male*, are examples of Type A beliefs and are in unanimous agreement with other people or groups of people in the individual's social context. A disruption to Type A beliefs may be severe enough to cause one to doubt one's senses, or competency, or even one's sanity. A disruption of this nature would potentially cause many inconsistencies throughout the belief system that "would require major cognitive reorganization in the content and in the structural relations among many other beliefs within the system" (p. 7). A great deal of effort and motivation would be needed in order to undertake this major cognitive reorganization, which is why the Type A beliefs are the most stable of the five belief types (Rokeach, 1989).

Type B: Primitive beliefs, zero consensus. Type B beliefs also deal with primitive matters of existence and identity as do the Type A beliefs, but Type B beliefs do not need to have any social consensus for these beliefs to be maintained. Such beliefs can be psychologically incontrovertible and can include beliefs that are,

> held on pure faith—phobias, delusions, hallucinations, and various ego-enhancing and ego-deflating beliefs arising from learned experience (for example, *No matter what others believe*, I believe in God, I believe I am a reasonably intelligent person, I believe I am a stupid person, I believe my mother does not love me, I believe my son is a good boy). (p. 8)

Type B beliefs are stable beliefs, but without the social consensus to reinforce these beliefs, they are not as resistant to change, as are the Type A beliefs.

Type C: Authority beliefs. Type C beliefs are *nonprimitive* beliefs that are formulated out of Type A beliefs. As a child matures, his/her exposure to authority figures beyond the realm of his/her parental authority gradually broadens. The child begins to make judgments about which authority figures to trust and which to distrust when they realize that his/her Type A beliefs are not shared by all the other authority figures they are exposed to. As the child grapples with the discontinuity of views held by authority figures, the associated primitive beliefs of Type A are no longer self-evident and take on a nonprimitive nature. These beliefs serve to round out and expand the child's belief system. The set of authority figures, also known as *reference persons* or *reference groups*, is different for every person and stems from the "learning experiences within the context of the person's social structure—family, class, peer group, ethnic group, religious and political groups, and country" (Rokeach, 1989, p. 10).

Type D: Derived Beliefs. The credibility given to one's established authority figures allows a person to adopt certain beliefs without having a direct personal experience with the object of the belief. It is possible to surmise a body of beliefs held by a person based on the authority figures associated with that person. However, the derived beliefs one acquires from their authority figures are not as central, or as well connected, to the belief system as the Type C Authority Figures beliefs. If a change occurs with a Type C belief, there is a potential for a significant reorganization of many of the beliefs associated with the authority figure. However, if a change occurs with a derived belief

(Type D belief), which has fewer connections to other beliefs in the belief system, then the potential disruption to the belief system is less significant (Rokeach, 1989).

Type E: Inconsequential beliefs. Type E beliefs are considered to be mostly arbitrary and regarding matters of taste. As such, they are minimally connected to other beliefs in the belief system. Thus, a change to this type of belief would have few, if any, reorganizational consequences to the belief system (Rokeach, 1989).

Uses of Rokeach's Belief System Model in Literature

Rokeach's belief system framework has been applied by researchers in the study of values (Mayton et al., 1994), and diversely applied to a broad spectrum of social issues, including, environmental issues (Henry & Dietz, 2012), management (Padaki, 2000), criminology (LaRose Maddan, Caldero, & Mathe, 2010), marketing (De Chernatony, Drury, & Segal-Horn, 2004), culture (Brummett, 2013; Chapman, Blackburn, Austin, & Hutcheson, 1983; Kasser, Koestner, & Lekes, 2002; Rutkowski, 2007; Smotrova & Gritsenko, 2010; Tsirogianni & Gaskell, 2011), tourism (Fall, 2000), political behavior (Braithwaite, 1994; Swedlow, 2008), and education (Sunley & Locke, 2010), to name a few.

Relating more to the topic of this case study, Rokeach's (1989) belief system model has been utilized by many educational researchers to reveal how educators' beliefs impact daily instructional practices. Pajares (1992) heavily relied on Rokeach's belief system model to "clean up" the "messy construct" (p. 307) of researching teacher beliefs. Sanger & Osguthorpe (2011) used Rokeach's work to facilitate their focus on the beliefs of pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programs. Luft et al. (2011) studied the alignment of the beliefs and the instructional practices of new science teachers with

regard to student-centered pedagogy. More frequently, Rokeach's model has been used to understand the link between teachers' beliefs and the integration, or lack of integration, of technology into instructional practice (Ertmer, 2005; Hermans et al., 2008; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2010; Prestridge, 2012).

The theoretical framework provided by Rokeach (1989) offers a lens to use in examining the organized beliefs held by faculty of Faith-Based University (FBU) towards online learning in general, and towards the possibility of online learning taking root at FBU specifically.

Faculty Beliefs About Online Learning

The growth of online learning has undoubtedly required more faculty to transition to online instruction for at least a portion of their course responsibilities. Several studies have explored the motivations and the reluctances that faculty confront when faced with teaching an online course. Some of the motivations some faculty have towards online learning are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Faculty Motivations for Teaching an Online Course

Motivation	Source
Improves access to higher education	Bruner, 2007; Chapman, 2011; Kampov-Polevoi, 2010; McAllister, 2009
Allows faculty to try out and learn something new	Chapman, 2011; Lesht & Windes, 2011; Kampov-Polevoi, 2010
Life/work balance, convenience/flexibility	Chapman, 2011; Kampov-Polevoi, 2010; Lesht & Windes, 2011;McAllister, 2009
Contributes a desirable image for the institution	Bruner, 2007; Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009
Receives financial rewards	Chapman, 2011; Lesht & Windes, 2011

(continued)

Motivation	Source
A well-managed distance education program would bring increased revenue to the institution	Bruner, 2007
A well-managed distance education program would bring additional ministry opportunities	Bruner, 2007

Some of the reluctant or negative beliefs faculty have towards online learning are outlined in *Table 2*:

Table 2

Faculty Reluctances and Negative Beliefs about Teaching an Online Course

Inhibitors	Source
It takes more time and effort to teach online	Bruner, 2007; Chen, 2009; Lesht & Windes, 2011; Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009
The quality and rigor of online learning is not as high as in a traditional classroom	Bruner, 2007; Lesht & Windes, 2011; Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009
Accelerated turnaround times, always "on"	Mitchell, 2009; McAllister, 2009
Lack of support	Lesht & Windes, 2011
Lack of personal synchronous interaction	McAllister, 2009
Lack of technical skills for faculty and/or students	Bruner, 2007; Lesht & Windes, 2011
The level of community involvement, personal contact, spiritual development and one-on-one contact would diminish	Bruner, 2007
Concerns for the institution	Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009
Low effort given by students	Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009
Student cheating/misconduct	Parthasarathy & Smith, 2009

Mitchell and Geva-May (2009) examined the attitudes of faculty towards online learning and how those attitudes influenced the success of implementing online learning at five *University-colleges* in British Columbia, Canada. Foundational to the study was the view by the researchers that implementation of a change initiative will be slowed or halted if there is an incongruity between the change policy being implemented, and the interests, values, and beliefs of those carrying out the change initiative. The greater the incongruity, the greater the resistance will be to the change being implemented. In higher education, this incongruity is evident in the disparity between administrators' willingness to accept and implement online learning and faculty's willingness to accept and implement online learning (Allen & Seaman, 2013; Allen et al., 2012; Bacow et al., 2012).

The Mitchell and Gava-May (2009) study looked at the degree of acceptance or resistance faculty might have towards online learning based on measuring their attitudes and perception of variables that are consistent with online learning implementation. The four variables used in the study were derived from four frequently cited barriers of widespread adoption of OL in Distance Education literature. The four recurring barriers were: intellectual reluctance, support, change, and cost-benefit. The researchers used a triangulation of an attitude questionnaire ($N = 382$, consisting of 346 faculty and 36 administrators), interviews ($N = 39$), and an analysis of institutional documents to explore the attitudes of faculty and administrators towards the four categorized barriers. The participants and the institutional documents of the study came from five public higher education institutions that had recently implemented online learning. The study revealed a high level of concern among the participants towards institutional change, followed by lesser degrees of concern for institutional support, cost-benefit outcomes,

and intellectual reluctance. Overall, the faculty at the five participating higher education institutions had a mid-level of concern about implementing online learning at their institutions.

The attribute revealed by the study that had the strongest influence on faculty's attitudes towards online learning was their perceived level of experience with online learning. The more that faculty had experience with online learning experiences, the less reluctance they had with online learning. These findings are similar to the findings from Allen et al. (2012), which found that "Faculty members who are currently teaching online courses are more than twice as likely as those who do not teach online to agree that online education can be as effective as in-person instruction in helping student learn" (p. 15).

The Mitchell and Geva-May (2009) study is important because it acknowledges the significant role that faculty attitudes have on change efforts in general, and towards online learning implementation specifically. Also, the study is useful in terms of its design as it incorporates the use of surveys, interviews, and an analysis of institutional documents to determine the cultural receptivity to online learning.

Even with these various studies mentioned previously regarding faculty reaction to or acceptance of online learning, Allen et al. (2012) determined, "There has been a vacuum of information on how faculty have all too often been missing from the conversation about online learning, with few cross-institution examinations of their opinions and practices" (p. 3). Allen et al. sought to remedy this gap by constructing a study which involved two separate, but similar surveys—one given to faculty, and the other given to administrators. The faculty survey included 4,564 responses from faculty across the United States and represented 2- and 4-year higher education institutions from the public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit sectors. Three-fourths of the responses were from full-time faculty. A little over one-fourth of all of the faculty

responders indicated they "teach online" (p. 4). The administrator survey included 591 responses from two job types, Chief Academic Officers and Academic Technology Administrators.

The Allen et al. study (2012) reveals that there is still a great deal of skepticism, in general, among faculty and administrators about the quality of online learning. However, the perception of online learning quality differs substantially depending on what role the survey responders had at their institutions, whether they were teaching an online course, and whether the institution they were affiliated with offered any online coursework, or some online coursework, or entire programs online. When asked to compare the learning outcomes of an online course to those of a face-to-face course, 65.7% of the faculty, in general, thought that the learning outcomes of online learning were either *inferior* or *somewhat inferior* to a face-to-face learning. The administrators' responses revealed less skepticism about online learning with 32% of the Chief Academic Officers, and 20% of the Academic Technology Administrators indicating they felt the learning outcomes of online learning were either *inferior* or *somewhat inferior* compared to face-to-face learning.

When the faculty responses were disaggregated according to faculty who were teaching at least one online course and those who were not, 39.1% of the online faculty perceived online learning to be *inferior* or *somewhat inferior*, whereas 75% of the traditional-only faculty thought of online learning as such.

Another large disparity occurred when faculty responses were broken down by whether their institution offered no online courses, or some individual online courses, or complete programs online. If their institution offered complete programs online, 55.4% of the faculty considered online learning to be *inferior* or *somewhat inferior*. The *inferior* perception climbed

to 69% of faculty at institutions offering individual online courses, and to 82.7% of the faculty at institutions offering no online courses.

Allen et al. (2012) give further evidence of the gap between the perceptions of administrators regarding online learning and the perceptions of faculty towards online learning. This gap will continue to thwart change efforts of incorporating more online learning (Mitchell & Geva-May, 2009). Moreover, the Allen et al. study (2012) reveals that both personal and corporate experience with online learning impacts individual perceptions of online learning.

Establishing the Context of the Institutional Values Held at FBU

Since this case study will examine the beliefs held by faculty and administrators at a faith-based liberal arts university regarding online learning, it may be helpful to understand the context of the belief systems typically held by Christian faith-based institutions of higher education. While there are 900 such institutions in the United States that identify themselves as having a religious affiliation (Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, 2012), this study involves a faith-based institution that is a member of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Henck (2011) describes how Christian colleges and universities are uniquely situated within higher education in the United States:

> They [Christian colleges and universities] are deeply embedded in and accountable to two worlds, each of which has a distinctive culture: the world of higher education and the church world. Both higher education and communities of faith have well-articulated values, expectations, and ways of operation, with each claiming its unique role in influencing administration and academics in Christian institutions of higher education. (p. 196)

Christian colleges and universities that make up the CCCU promote the integration of faith and learning, and in doing so must satisfy the academic community, with their associated professional and accrediting organizations, and stakeholders within the faith domain which can

consist of denominational affiliations, trustees, alumni, donors, parents and students as well as faculty and staff. Earlier, this chapter cited faculty skepticism about the quality of online learning as being a strong barrier to implementing online learning at an institution of higher education. When considering the components of a learning experience that would constitute a *quality* experience, it would seem reasonable that meeting *learning outcomes* (Allen et al., 2012) might make up a large part of what faculty consider when referring to *quality*. Perhaps *quality* may also encompass aspects of student-to-student and faculty-to-student social dynamics within a given learning experience. A Christian college or university, especially those who are members of the CCCU, may embrace a third dimension of a *quality* learning experience which would include a spiritual or faith-related component. If this is true, faculty at Christian colleges and universities may be even more skeptical towards online learning and its ability to satisfy academic, social and spiritual outcomes. With this perspective in mind, the remaining portion of this chapter will be devoted to discussing literature that demonstrates the potential for online learning to fulfill the academic, social, and spiritual aspects of a quality learning experience at a Christian college or university.

Online Learning and Academic Learning Objectives

Christian higher education and secular higher education share a commitment to seeing their students achieve learning outcomes. This section will focus on literature that addresses whether learning outcomes from coursework can be met as effectively within online settings as they can from traditional face-to-face settings. There have been many studies performed that seek to compare the learning achievements of online learning with the learning achievements of traditional face-to-face learning, and in an effort to ascertain generalizable outcomes of these

comparison studies, three meta-analysis studies conducted between 2004 and 2009 will be reviewed.

A meta-analysis by Bernard et al. (2004) examined 232 studies that compared over 600 outcomes between distance education (DE) coursework and traditional classroom instruction. The researchers found no difference between the two delivery systems overall as they compared the outcomes of achievement, attitudes, and retention. The studies Bernard et al. included in the meta-analysis were conducted between 1985 and 2002, and thus covered various distance education delivery medium that either pre-dated online learning delivery or took place at the dawn of online learning delivery. When Bernard et al. differentiated achievement outcomes by studies that compared synchronous forms of distance education versus classroom instruction, and studies that compared asynchronous forms of DE versus classroom instruction, they found that, in general, synchronous delivery was less favorable than classroom instruction, while asynchronous delivery was more favorable than classroom instruction. The synchronous delivery most used in the studies analyzed relied on two-way video to satellite classrooms for their synchronous communication.

Zhao, Lei, Yan, Lai, and Tan (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on 51 distance education studies and concluded that there is no significant difference between the effectiveness of distance education and the effectiveness of face-to-face learning. Zhao et al. do not provide a range of dates for the studies they selected for analysis, but they do point out that of the studies included in their analysis, those that were published before 1998 tended to show no significant difference between distance education and face-to-face education, while studies published after 1998 tended to show a significant difference favoring distance education from between the two educational delivery options. The distance education represented by the studies reviewed in Zhao et. al may

be far removed from the typical distance education found in 2014, but it does possibly serve to signify that changes to factors such as the type of technology being available, curricular resources, instructor training, and student comfort with technology, are helping to make distance education better than what it has been in the past. Zhao et al. emphasized that just as there is a great deal of variability in the outcomes of traditional education, there is also a great deal of variability of outcomes in distance education and one cannot assume that all distance education classes will be as effective or more effective than traditional education.

A meta-analysis study from the U.S. Department of Education (2009) differed from previous distance education meta-analysis studies, including those mentioned above, on three points.

1. The study only included studies in its review if the instruction for the distance education treatment group occurred via the Internet and was also led by an instructor. Studies that tested the effectiveness of video- and audio-based telecourses or computer-based instruction were eliminated.
2. Only studies that used randomization or a controlled quasi-experimental design were included in the analysis.
3. Only studies that reported on objective measures of student learning were included in the analysis (p. 51).

The U.S. Department of Education (2009) study found that of the studies analyzed, online learning was more effective, on average, than traditional classroom instruction. Moreover, their analysis showed that blended learning, which uses a combination of online learning and face-to-face instruction, had an even greater effectiveness on learning outcomes than face-to-face instruction alone and on online-only instruction.

While there are many anecdotal accounts of effective and non-effective online courses, the preponderance of research supports the determination that online learning, on average, is at least effective as traditional face-to-face learning.

Learning Theory and Online Learning

Palloff & Pratt (2007) suggest that online learning may be a better learning environment for our students today who have been weaned on a multitude of daily interactions with a variety of media. These interactions have caused our students to have expectations of activity when it comes to not only their entertainment, but also to acquiring knowledge. Online learning tends to foster the adoption of learning theories that are better suited for today's students. Constructivism and active learning are two such theories where:

> Learners actively create knowledge and meaning through experimentation, exploration, and the manipulation and testing of ideas in reality. Interaction and feedback from others assist in determining the accuracy and application of ideas. Collaboration, shared goals, and teamwork are powerful forces in the learning process. (Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 16)

The learning content of online coursework tends to be controlled less by the teacher and more influenced by the students when they are collaborating on assignments, and by participating in interactive discussions, while using critical thinking skills and research skills throughout. The "collaborative learning and the social construction of meaning" typically found in online learning environment promotes "transformative learning and reflective practice" (Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 19).

Integrating a Sense of Community with Online Learning

Some may still have the perception that online learning is similar to that of the old correspondence courses, where the learner works independently on their assignments and has very little interaction with their instructor or with other learners. While not discounting the

learning that can take place in an independent correspondence type of study, the concept of engaging the sociocultural dynamics of a group of learners is often interconnected with enhancing learning experiences (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Riel & Polin, 2004; Sung & Mayer, 2012). Thus, the online learning options found in most higher education courses today rely heavily on various technological resources to facilitate student-to-student interaction and student-to-instructor interaction.

If higher education faculty are to heed the advice of Chickering and Gamson (1987), authors who identified seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education, faculty would plan for and encourage social interaction in their courses, regardless of whether the courses are taught in a traditional setting or an online setting. The first two of the seven principles for good practice advise faculty to: (a) encourage communication between students and faculty; and (b) allow for mutual exchange and cooperation among students. Crafting ways to structure the social exchange implied in these two principles are challenging enough in traditional classrooms. The fact that students in online coursework are separated by distance and by time serves to add to this challenge as the study below illustrates.

A study by Wuensch, Aziz, Ozan, Kishore, and Tabrizi (2008) offers a comparison of student evaluations regarding the quality of communicating taking place with other students and their instructors in their (the students') most recent online course view versus the quality of communicating with other students and their instructors in their most recent traditional course. The study received 4,789 survey responses from 46 different higher education institutions and showed that students felt the face-to-face classes were superior to the online classes in the characteristics of *Communicating with Other Students* and *Communicating with Instructor*. Despite the prevailing attitude of the students surveyed showing that face-to-face classes were

superior to online classes in 9 of 11 pedagogical characteristics, the authors of the study held a belief that "it is possible for online systems to equal or surpass traditional face-to-face teaching methods in many ways" (Wuensch et al., 2008, p. 531). The authors of the study also made the point that student attitudes towards online learning are likely to improve with the application of sophisticated technology.

While the Wuensch et al. study (2008) obviously does not rule out whether social exchange takes place in online coursework, it does show a weakness of online learning that needs to be addressed by faculty, administrators and the staff who are responsible for delivering online learning. By nurturing and promoting social interaction within the online setting, "a valuable learning community where learning takes place in social contexts, can be established" (Drouin, 2008, p. 279). Ouzts (2006) affirms this stance saying that "courses designed to maximize the social aspects of learning can promote community online" (p. 286). Whether in an online course or a traditional course, a sense of community occurs among the students when the students have "a feeling that members belong to each other, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). In addition to improving learning outcomes in online courses (Liu, Magjuka, Bonk & Lee, 2007; Rovai 2002b), developing a sense of community has been associated with several other positive outcomes: increases in student engagement (Liu et al., 2007), student satisfaction (Drouin, 2008; Ouzts, 2006; Swan 2002), and retention (Rovai, 2002a; Rovai & Wighting, 2005).

Several studies have sought to compare sense of community differences between physical and virtual classrooms. Rovai (2002c) used the Sense of Classroom Community Index (SCCI) to measure students' perceptions of sense of community in seven traditional courses and seven

online courses. The SCCI is a 40 question self-reporting instrument that uses a 5-point Likert scale to respond to questions such as *I feel connected to others, I feel isolated in this course* and *I feel I am encouraged to ask questions*. Rovai found "no significant difference in overall sense of classroom community" (p. 52) between the students in the traditional courses and the online courses.

Rovai and Baker (2004) used the same Sense of Classroom Community Index (Rovai, 2002c) to measure sense of community perceptions occurring in traditional and distance education courses at both a Christian university and at a secular university. The Christian university used an e-learning system (Blackboard) to deliver its distance coursework, while the secular university used a closed-circuit television broadcast to remote locations for its distance coursework. The students at the Christian university perceived a stronger sense of community than the students at the secular university for both learning formats. However, the traditional students at both universities perceived a stronger sense of community than the distance students.

In 2008, Rovai, Baker, and Cox used the Classroom and School Community Inventory (CSCI; Rovai, Wighting, & Lucking, 2004) to examine differences in perceived sense of community again between traditional and online courses at a Christian university and at a secular university. In this 2008 study, both universities used the same e-learning system (Blackboard) for their fully online courses. The results of this 2008 study were similar to Rovai and Baker's 2004 study, where both the traditional and the online students at the Christian university perceived a stronger sense of community then the traditional and online students at the secular university. Once again, though, students in the on-campus, traditional courses at either university perceived a stronger sense of community than the online students at both universities.

Drouin and Vartanian (2010) conducted another sense of community comparison study with seven online sections and two face-to-face sections of the same undergraduate psychology course. All nine sections of the course were taught by either one of two instructors. Drouin and Vartanian used the Classroom Community Scale (Rovai, 2002d) to measure the students' perceived sense of community in their particular section of the psychology course. The researchers determined that the face-to-face students perceived more connectedness or sense of community in their sections of the course then the online students perceived in their sections of the course. However, the students in both learning formats expressed that they were content with the level of sense of community overall in their sections of the course. This is a helpful point serving to highlight that a sense of community can and does exist in online courses. In general though, three of the four comparison studies above showed that sense of community was stronger in traditional face-to-face courses than online courses.

Integrating Faith with Online Learning

The aim of quality Christian education endeavors to demonstrate a *cura personalis*, or a care for the whole person, with its students (Rovai et al., 2008). This *whole person* view seeks to promote not only the cognitive development of their students, but the character, moral, and spiritual developments of their students as well. This aim of Christian education remains true regardless of whether the education offered to their students is conducted in a face-to-face environment or at a distance (Rovai et al., 2008). The effort to deliver Christian education at a distance is not a recent endeavor, albeit it has looked much different from the technology enhanced Christian distance education of today. Some view the Pauline epistles of the Bible as the inception of delivering Christian education at a distance (Morris, 2012; Rovai, Baker & Cox, 2008). In the 13 books of the New Testament normally attributed to Paul, Paul strived to spread

the gospel of Jesus Christ and encouraged the early Christian churches covering a vast geographical area via open letters to not only renew their minds (Romans 12:2 New International Version), but to gain spiritual maturity as well (not needing spiritual milk; Hebrews 5:12-14 & 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Perhaps in a similar fashion, Quinn, Foote, and Williams (2012) see online learning as an opportunity for Christian higher education to expand the reach of their mission. In doing so, the Christian higher education institution must be diligent in integrating faith into the learning experiences in order to shape the spiritual formation of their students and to help them to develop and affirm a Biblical worldview. The following two studies, Woodson (2010) and Olson (2011), offer some insight into whether this integration of faith and learning is possible and/or being practiced in online learning environments at some Christian universities.

Woodson (2010) surveyed faculty members who were teaching online undergraduate courses at Christian Bible colleges. The study sought to determine the extent of whether their course design and instructional practice included both the affective development as well as the cognitive development of their students in order to impact the *whole person* of each individual. The sample for the study included 203 professors from 23 Christian Bible colleges. Of the professors who responded, the majority of respondents incorporated three targeted instructional methods in their online courses.

1. The majority of respondents challenged their students' existing worldviews through the use of dissonance.
2. The majority of respondents foster community and utilize instructional design that emphasizes all levels of interaction (student-content, student-student, student-teacher) in their courses.

3. The majority of respondents see themselves as faith-mentors and role models for their students, intentionally forming relationships with them (Woodson, 2010, p. 177).

Woodson's (2010) study revealed these participating online faculty members were very mindful of the significance of integrating faith and learning across all disciplines. They saw their role as faculty member at a Christian higher education institution as being more than just being a subject-matter expert. They acknowledged their role included being a "Christian disciple-maker" (p.177) as part of their educating and caring for the whole person in their online students.

The Woodson (2010) study shows that online faculty members teaching at Christian higher education institutions can have the intention and can make the effort to demonstrate a care for the whole person in an online environment. If this is true, then online students at Christian higher education institutions should be able to perceive and give value to the intention and the effort of their faculty to provide spiritual formation structure to online courses. Olsen (2011) provides insight into this possibility.

Olson (2011) used the Furnishing the Soul Inventory (FSI; Hall, 2006) to examine whether certain curricular or co-curricular programs within non-traditional programs had any impact on the overall spiritual formation of the students enrolled in those non-traditional programs. The study utilized survey methodology and included adult students ($N = 278$) attending a potential of 22 institutional members of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). Olson reported on five areas that had a slight to moderate positive impact on the spiritual development of the students enrolled in the non-traditional programs. The five areas included: mentoring faculty, staff/administrative relationships, student relationships, cultural diversity, and exposure to cultural diversity issues. Three of these areas give evidence

that relationships within online programs can be established and can be relevant enough to positively impact the spiritual development of the students. The survey also revealed that cultural diversity issues appeared to be a strength in the non-traditional programs and may have positively impacted students' spiritual formation by bringing about critical reflection and an openness to spiritual change.

Woodson (2010) and Olson (2011) indicate that encouraging the development of close and caring relationships with others and with God can occur within online coursework, especially if the faculty, staff and administration of the online programs are intentional about integrating faith and learning in the non-traditional format.

Summary of Chapter 2

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that the success or failure of many change-initiatives within higher education are often determined by how well the proposed changes align with or conflict with the individual and corporate belief systems of faculty members. Rokeach's (1989) belief system model offers a theoretical view into possible structured beliefs around a central-peripheral dimension.

The direction of the review then shifted to highlighting empirical evidence of common beliefs and attitudes faculty can have towards online learning. Faith-based universities acknowledge and encourage the development of spiritual-related beliefs within their faculty and their students. While faith-based universities strongly desire to advance the academic or intellectual development of their students, their care of the *whole-person* of their students also requires that they strive to enrich their students socially and spiritually. To that end, the last section of this review addressed literature that studied the impact that online education had on meeting academic, social, and spiritual outcomes.

Chapter 3: Methods

Overview of the Study

Under shared governance, faculty can influence the policies and practices of the colleges and universities where they serve. Even though the popularity of online coursework has increased dramatically over the last 10 years, many faculty support online education only reluctantly (Allen & Seaman, 2013). This lack of support of, and in some cases opposition to, online education can curtail the expansion of online coursework at some higher education institutions while completely blocking it at others. It may be helpful to understand what faculty believe about online education in order to understand their reluctance to support it.

This case study used surveys and interviews to examine the beliefs held by faculty at a faith-based university towards online education in general, and towards online education occurring at their university. The study also identified factors that have led to possibly evolving beliefs on the two topics. The theoretical framework provided by Rokeach (1989), as explained in Chapter 2, will furnish structure to the analysis of the data collected in the study.

Re-statement of the Research Questions

The following research questions guide the design of this study.

1. What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?
2. Have faculty beliefs regarding online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?
3. What factors have served as catalysts to the evolution of beliefs about online education?

Research Design

This is a case study of a faith-based or church-based university that is in the early stages of offering online learning options to its undergraduate and graduate students. Bryman and Bell (2003) assert that the subject of a case study design can be: (a) a single organization, (b) a single location, (c) a person, or (d) a single event. According to Creswell (2012), case studies are a form of ethnographic research, which are used for "describing, analyzing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (p. 462). Of the three types of case studies – intrinsic, instrumental, and collective – this study is an instrumental case study, meaning that the study has the potential to "provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The research methodology used in case studies can either be qualitative, or quantitative, or a combination of both (Bryman & Bell, 2003). In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methodology will be used to provide a rich and deep understanding of the data on perspectives being gathered. (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005).

Population

FBU is a mostly-residential, faith-based liberal arts university that offers over 60 areas of study at the undergraduate and graduate levels. FBU is 1 of 115 colleges or universities that are members of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), which is an association of intentionally Christ-centered institutions of higher education (CCCU, 2012)). Their mission is "to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth" (CCCU, 2012, para. 2).

Since this study considers the beliefs of the faculty of FBU toward online learning, certain core beliefs held by the faculty may be associated with beliefs about the role and identity

of a Christian professor. It might be helpful to distinguish the corporate faith-related beliefs FBU faculty have in general. In order to gain employment as a faculty member at FBU, each potential applicant is not only required to submit their curriculum vitae and letters of reference, but they must also write a statement of personal faith and they must describe their active participation with a church fellowship. These additional requirements, along with the FBU website references to being a Christian university and being a member of the CCCU, suggest that the faculty at FBU claim a personal faith-relationship with Jesus Christ that they assert is to be actively lived out as a faculty member at FBU.

There are over 100 full-time faculty and over 200 part-time faculty at FBU. Most of the full-time faculty teach at the undergraduate level. Almost all of the undergraduate faculty have their offices and teach their classes on the main campus. Almost all of the graduate faculty have their offices and teach their classes at the regional campuses. The sociocultural experience at the main campus does share many similarities with the sociocultural experiences at the regional campuses. However, given that the main campus students are mostly traditional full-time undergraduate residential students, while the regional centers are populated with graduate students who mostly have full-time jobs and family commitments to attend to, there can be great differences in the sociocultural experiences between the campuses as well. The sociocultural experience at a traditional residential undergraduate campus may by its very nature foster a lower perceived value of the non-traditional online learning format.

Up until spring 2011, FBU policy, established by shared governance, did not permit faculty to use non-traditional course delivery methods for more than 25% of their course delivery. In the spring semester of 2011, however, the faculty senate gave approval to the School of Education to pilot the online delivery of a single graduate course. A year later, the faculty

senate gave approval for all schools and departments of the university to begin to offer some coursework through online delivery as an option to traditional methods. Currently, FBU provides some fully online courses in their graduate programs, while offering no fully online courses in the undergraduate programs. There has been a great growth of blended or hybrid courses being offered, both in the graduate programs and in various undergraduate programs.

Data Collection Procedures

Faculty survey instrument. The study collected data on faculty's beliefs towards online education in two ways. A 27-question survey was emailed to all full-time faculty and adjunct faculty of FBU. The survey was built upon the 23-question survey issued to all FBU faculty in the Fall of 2011, prior to FBU allowing schools and departments of the university the option of offering online coursework. In addition to the original 23 questions, 3 questions were developed and added for the purpose of eliciting richness and depth of data regarding faculty perspective on online education.

The original survey was formulated by a taskforce, of which the researcher was a member. The original survey was commissioned by the FBU administration with the purpose of capturing the attitudes and opinions that the faculty held towards online education and whether online education should be a permissible course delivery option at the university.

- Seven of the questions collected demographic data determining:
    - Whether they were currently teaching at FBU
    - Where they teach the majority of their courses (main campus or a regional center)
    - Whether they teach at the undergraduate or graduate levels, or both
    - What area they teach or work (various colleges or schools)

    - Whether their status was full-time, part-time, or adjunct
    - How many years they have taught or worked in higher education
    - Whether they earned their baccalaureate degree from a Christian college or university like FBU
- Four questions dealt with faculty opinions of online education compared to traditional education.
- Eleven questions dealt with faculty opinions of distance learning options (video-conferenced courses, web-facilitated courses, blended/hybrid courses, online courses) occurring at FBU.
    - Eight of the eleven questions dealing with the distance learning options at FBU asked faculty to determine their agreement or disagreement with allowing these options to occur at the undergraduate level and at the graduate level separately.
- The last question was open-ended and invited faculty to provide comments about distance learning.

One hundred twenty-four faculty responded to the original survey, 23 of whom identified themselves as either part-time faculty or as adjunct faculty. A brief summary of the results of the original survey can be found in Appendix A.

The survey to be used in this study incorporated almost all of the questions from the original survey plus three additional questions.

- Two questions sought the faculty's direct response to whether their beliefs towards online education in general have changed, and whether their beliefs/opinions about online education occurring at FBU have changed.

- The last of the added questions sought open responses to what factors faculty think may have initiated any changes to their beliefs.

Faculty interviews. This case study utilized semi-structured interviews with 12 full-time FBU faculty. Only full-time faculty were interviewed because only full-time faculty are granted voting privileges in the faculty senate. It is in the faculty senate that the beliefs held by faculty directly impact the policies and practices of the university through their voting privileges. In addition, the commitment of being a full-time faculty leads to greater opportunities to develop relationships and to have a deeper and broader experience with the university culture. While the opinions and the perspectives of the adjunct faculty were incorporated in the survey, adjunct faculty were not be included in the interviews.

The researcher used random selection to generate a pool of potential faculty to be interviewed. By using the university website, the researcher made a list of all full-time faculty at FBU. Each faculty member was then assigned a unique number between 1 and 181. The researcher then used a random number generator to construct the list of faculty who were contacted in the order given by the random number generator. In all, the researcher sent out a total of 70 individual emails to the first 70 faculty on the randomized list, producing 12 faculty who were willing to be interviewed.

According to Bryman and Bell (2003), semi-structured interviews involve asking a set of established questions to all interviewees. The researcher does have flexibility in asking additional probing questions if the interviewer determines that a given response needs to be clarified or elaborated. The semi-structured interviews gives emphasis to "how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events—that is, what the interviewee views as important in

explaining, and understanding events, patterns, and forms of behavior" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 343).

The semi-structured interviews covered 11 questions and were conducted via telephone. The interviews took 15-40 minutes to conduct. The interview questions were designed to encourage a greater depth of reflection from the participants than what the survey may have initiated. Allowing the participants the opportunity to draw from their own experience and expound their beliefs and notions regarding teaching and learning may prove to have strengthened the findings of the study more so than what could have been possible with just the survey. The following questions provided the framework for the faculty interviews. Questions 3, 4, and 5 were taken and modified, with permission, from Kinkle (2010).

Faculty interview questions. The faculty were asked the following questions:

1. How long have you worked in higher education?
2. How long have you worked at this university?
3. How would you describe your experience with online education (Kinkle, 2010)?
4. What is your general opinion of online education (Kinkle, 2010)?
5. How might your opinion of online education be similar or different from the prevailing attitudes by students, faculty, and administrators at this university and at other universities (Kinkle, 2010)?
6. What might be some benefits of the university offering online coursework on a regular or increasing basis at FBU?
7. What might be some disadvantages of the university offering online coursework on a regular or increasing basis at FBU?

8. Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university? Why or why not?
9. Have your beliefs about online education changed in any way over the last 5 years?
10. If there have been any changes to your beliefs about online education, what factors have caused you to think differently about online education?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The audio recordings of each interview were transcribed by a web-based transcription service. The issue of privacy is a stated concern by the transcription company. The company promotes that they do not share client information or documentation with anyone and that their transcriptionist must adhere to a strict nondisclosure agreement. The researcher also received a Non-Disclosure Agreement from the transcription company.

The researcher assigned a number to each interviewee and used the designated number when referring to the interviewees instead of using their names. Both the recordings and the transcriptions of the interviews are stored on an external memory drive and will be kept in a secured location for 7 years.

Validity of the Survey Instrument and the Interview Questions

All but 3 of the 27 questions making up the survey instrument come from the original survey constructed by a task force from FBU. The three questions added to the original survey were field tested by a group of three faculty, each of whom were from different Christian universities. Three of the eleven interview questions were taken from and/or modified from Kinkle (2010). All 11-interview questions were field tested by the same group of three faculty who field tested the survey questions. Neither the survey questions nor the interview questions merited significant alterations resulting from the field test.

Data Analysis

As a reminder, the survey from this study is based on a similar survey given to the faculty of FBU in the fall of 2011. However, the response options for some of the survey questions could have distracted the respondents from the focus of this study. Therefore, in order to more fully address the three research questions of this study with greater clarity, *online education* was not associated with the *distance learning* categories of *video-conference* and *web-facilitated* used by the FBU taskforce. *Online education* in this study refers to the aggregate of two categories of courses: Blended/Hybrid courses (face-to-face blended with 30% - 80% online instruction and online courses (contains 80% or more online content delivery).

The responses for the categories of blended/hybrid and online courses were combined to form a new category of online education by first taking the arithmetic mean of each respondent's answers to only these two categories in the questions of interest, and then recoding that average to be consistent with the original Likert scale labels.

Analyzing data addressing research question #1. The first research question of this study, "What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?" was addressed by three hypotheses, with each being tested by the operationalized variables from targeted survey questions.

Research hypothesis #1. Faculty members, in general, oppose the inclusion of online education at their university.

This hypothesis was be tested by analyzing the responses to the following survey questions:

- Survey question #1 – FBU should routinely offer the types of courses in its undergraduate programs.

- Survey question #2 – FBU should routinely offer the following types of courses in its graduate programs.
- Survey question #3 – Would you support or oppose offering the following types of courses in your department/school?

The responses to these questions were first coded on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating, *strongly disagree* or *strongly oppose* and 5 indicating *strongly agree* or *strongly support*. Since these are 5-point Likert scales, they were treated as continuous variables for the purposes of this analysis. As such, calculating and interpreting the arithmetic mean of the responses to these questions helped to draw conclusions about this hypothesis.

Themes emerged from the interviews which directly addressed Research Hypotheses #1. The responses to questions #4 and #8 from the interviews, in particular, addressed Research Hypothesis #1. Interview questions #4 and #8 are stated below.

- Interview question #4: What is your general opinion of online education (Kinkle, 2010)?
- Interview question #8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university? Why or why not?

Each response from the transcripts of the interview for questions #4 and #8 were analyzed and coded based on themes initially generated from literature and from the survey responses. Themes that emerge from the interviews were added to the initial list of themes. The researcher recorded the analysis in a matrix that will allow themes and codes to be matched with the respondents. The researcher then drew synthesized conclusions across the respondents based on patterns in and prevalence of the occurrence of specific themes.

Research hypothesis #2. Faculty members, in general, feel that online education diminishes the quality of undergraduate education.

This hypothesis was tested by analyzing the responses to two survey questions:

- Survey question #6 – Now consider the impact each of the following types of courses might have on the quality of the undergraduate educational experience at FBU.

The responses to this question were first coded on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating *strongly diminish* and 5 indicating *significantly enhance*. Since this is a 5-point Likert scale, the responses were treated as continuous variables for the purposes of this analysis. As such, calculating and interpreting the arithmetic mean of the responses to these questions helped to draw conclusions about this hypothesis.

Research hypothesis #3. Faculty members, in general, feel that online education diminishes the quality of graduate education.

This hypothesis was tested by analyzing the responses to:

- Survey question #7 – Now consider the impact each of the following types of courses might have on the quality of the graduate educational experience at FBU.

The responses to this question were first coded on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating *strongly diminish* and 5 indicating *significantly enhance*. Since this is a 5-point Likert scale, the responses were treated as continuous variables for the purposes of this analysis. As such, calculating and interpreting the arithmetic mean of the responses to these questions helped to draw conclusions about this hypothesis.

Analyzing data addressing research question #2. The second research question, "Have faculty beliefs regarding online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?" was tested and addressed by two questions from the survey and one question from the interview.

- Survey question #24 – Regardless of whether you participated in the original survey, have your beliefs/opinions about online education, in general, changed over the last 2 years?
- Survey question #25 – Regardless of whether you participated in the original survey, have your beliefs/opinions about online education occurring at FBU changed over the last 2 years?

Both questions were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as mode and frequency distributions/histograms to chart the response to the questions. From these descriptive statistics, conclusions were drawn about the prevalence of evolving beliefs based on the frequency of responses.

Question #9 from the interview also responds to Research Question #2.

- Interview question #9 – Have your beliefs about online education changed in any way over the last 2 or 3 years?

Each response from the transcripts of the interview were analyzed and coded based on themes initially generated from literature and from the survey responses. Themes that emerge from the interviews were added to the initial list of themes. The researcher recorded the analysis in a matrix that will allow themes and codes to be matched with the respondents. The researcher drew synthesized conclusions across the respondents based on patterns in and prevalence of the occurrence of specific themes.

Analyzing data addressing research question #3. The third research question, "What factors have served as catalysts to the evolution of beliefs about online education?" was addressed by the responses to two open-ended questions, one from the survey and the other from the interview.

- Survey question #26 – If your beliefs/opinions about online education in general, or about it occurring at this university have changed over the last 2 years, what information or what factors contributed to the change?
- Interview question #10 – If there have been any changes to your beliefs about online education, what factors have caused you to think differently about online education?

Each of the open-ended responses from the survey question and from each of the interview transcripts of responses for question #10 were analyzed and coded based on themes initially generated from literature and from other survey responses. Themes that emerged from the survey question and the interviews were added to the initial list of themes. The researcher then recorded the analysis of the interview question in a matrix that allowed for themes and codes to be matched with the respondents. The researcher drew synthesized conclusions across the respondents based on patterns in and prevalence of the occurrence of specific themes. Lastly, the findings and conclusions drawn from each of the research questions were linked back to the theoretical framework and reported on in Chapters 4 and 5.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

This study was conducted in line with the principles of the protection of human subjects. Two Institutional Review Boards, one from Pepperdine University and one from FBU, reviewed the study for potential harm to the participants of this study. Both Institutional Review Boards

gave approval to conduct the study as designed (Appendix B). The faculty who participated in the survey and/or the interviews did so voluntarily. The identities of the participants will remain confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the stored data collected from the study.

The researcher has a favorable view of online education based on firsthand experience of learning that occurred in several graduate online courses. Additionally, the researcher was formerly employed by FBU. While both of these instances were rewarding and positive for the researcher, the study hinges on an objective, impartial examination of the attitudes and beliefs that FBU faculty hold towards online education. There is currently no conflict of interest since the researcher is no longer employed by FBU, nor is the researcher working with any of the respondents of the study.

Other ethical considerations and limitations. While employed at FBU, the researcher participated as a member of the taskforce committee that designed the original survey.

Some self-selection bias may have occurred with faculty who are personally and/or professionally reluctant to use online resources. These potential faculty may have been less likely to respond to an online survey regarding online learning. Self-selection bias may have also occurred with the faculty who were invited to participate in the interviews. Personal and/or professional opinions about online education and/or the researcher may have contributed to or lessened the likelihood of their willingness to be interviewed.

It is possible that the faculty who did volunteer to participate in the interview may not have been completely open with their responses based on their personal and/or professional opinions about the researcher.

The response rate to the interview requests may have been aided or reduced based on the fact that the faculty who were asked to participate in the interviews received the email requests

through their university email accounts during the summer, when most faculty were not contractually obligated to work.

The findings from this study may be generalizable to other universities, particularly with faith-based universities.

Summary

This study sought to examine the beliefs that faculty at a faith-based university have towards online learning. The design of this study incorporated two methods of data collection in order to more fully capture these beliefs. A 27-question survey was emailed to all full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty at FBU. The survey questions closely matched a survey giving to FBU faculty in the Fall of 2011. In addition to the survey, interviews were conducted with 12 FBU faculty in order to mine a deeper view of the potential beliefs. About 70 faculty were randomly selected to receive an email inviting them to participate in the interviews. Twelve of the seventy faculty receiving the emailed invitation agreed to be interviewed.

The data collected from the survey and the interviews was analyzed in an attempt to respond to the following research questions.

1. What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?
2. Have faculty beliefs regarding online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?
3. What factors have served as catalysts to the evolution of beliefs about online education?

Analysis from eight of the survey questions and four of the interview questions directly addressed the three research questions. Five out of the eight survey questions used a Likert scale format and were analyzed using the arithmetic mean of the responses from each question. Two out of the eight survey questions were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency

distributions/histograms to chart the response to the questions. One out of the eight survey questions and each of the four interview questions were coded by themes that emerge. The pattern and prevalence of the themes made it possible to make conclusions about the interview data.

The analysis of the data is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

This study was designed to examine the beliefs that faculty at FBU have towards online education and to determine what factors led to changes in their beliefs since the inclusion of online coursework at FBU, if any changes in their beliefs occurred at all. The study included data from 54 survey respondents and 12 interviewees in order to capture these beliefs.

This chapter is organized around each of the three research questions, first with the quantitative data from the survey analysis followed by the qualitative data from the analysis of the interviews. Of the 54 survey respondents, 47% were faculty who taught only at the undergraduate level, while17% of the faculty respondents taught only at the graduate level, and 36% of the faculty respondents taught at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels (see Figure 1).

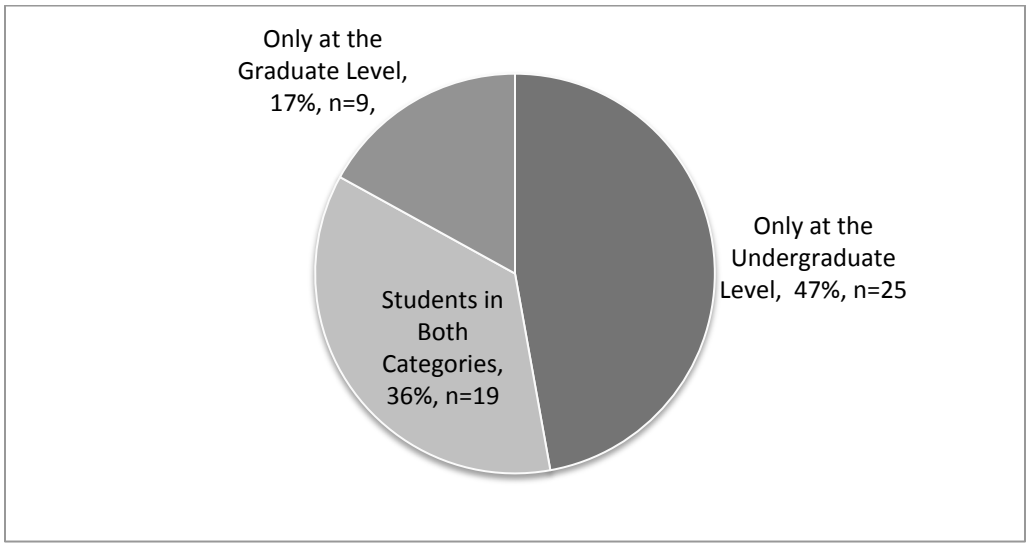

Figure 1. Teaching levels of faculty respondents.

Almost all of the 12 full-time faculty who participated in semi-structured interviews for this study have spent the majority of their higher education careers at FBU. The average length

of time the 12 faculty have been teaching in higher education was 14.6 years, while the average length of time these faculty have been teaching at FBU was 12.5 years.

Three of the twelve faculty, interviewees # 5, #7, and #11, had no direct experience with online education, while 9 of the 12 faculty did have some form of direct experience with online education. Of the nine faculty who had some form of experience with online education, the range of their level of experience is as follows.

- Interviewee #4 participated as a guest in a discussion forum for one week.
- Interviewee #1 participated in online professional development on how to teach an online course.
- Interviewees #3 and #7 have taught hybrid courses.
- Interviewee #9 completed a master's degree fully online.
- Interviewees #2 and #8 have participated in online professional development on how to teach an online course and have taught either hybrid courses or fully online courses.
- Interviewees #6 and #10 have participated in online graduate coursework as students as well as participating in some form of online professional development. In addition, these two faculty have both taught hybrid courses.

FBU Faculty Beliefs Towards Online Education

Research question #1: What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education? This research question has three hypotheses. Each hypothesis was tested from targeted survey questions that used a 5-point Likert scale. Analysis from the interviews will contribute to the confirmation or the rejection of the three hypotheses. The interview analysis also fleshed out a broader understanding of the beliefs the faculty have towards online education.

Research hypothesis 1: Faculty members, in general, oppose the inclusion of online education at their university. This hypotheses was, in part, tested by analyzing the responses to the following three survey questions:

- Survey question #1 – FBU should routinely offer the types of courses in its undergraduate programs.
- Survey question #2 – FBU should routinely offer the following types of courses in its graduate programs.
- Survey question #3 – Would you support or oppose offering the following types of courses in your department/school?

The responses to survey question #1 showed that, on average, faculty members were mostly neutral but leaning toward agreeing that online education courses should be offered in undergraduate programs (M = 3.48 on a scale of 1 to 5). The responses, however, were somewhat varied (SD = 1.20), suggesting that while the mean response hints of slight support, in actuality feelings of support toward including online education courses at the undergraduate level were quite mixed. However, when viewed through a frequency distribution (see Table 3), the percentage of faculty who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement was more than double the percentage of faculty who disagreed or strongly disagreed, 50% versus 22.3% respectively. Over a quarter of the faculty (27.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Table 3

FBU Should Routinely Offer Online Education Courses in its Undergraduate Programs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	4.9	5.6	5.6
	Disagree	9	14.8	16.7	22.2
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	24.6	27.8	50.0
	Agree	13	21.3	24.1	74.1
	Strongly Agree	14	23.0	25.9	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

When examining the opinions held by faculty on whether online education should be offered at the undergraduate level broken down by whether they teach at the graduate level, or the undergraduate level or both (see Figure 2), the faculty who actually teach only undergraduates are fairly evenly divided between disagreeing, neutrality, agreeing, or strongly agreeing. Very few strongly disagree, but everyone who strongly disagreed taught only undergraduate students. Forty percent of the *only-undergraduate* faculty either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while 78% of the graduate faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Faculty teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels were somewhat evenly split between expressing agreement with the statement (47%) and being neutral (42%), leaving 11% who disagreed.

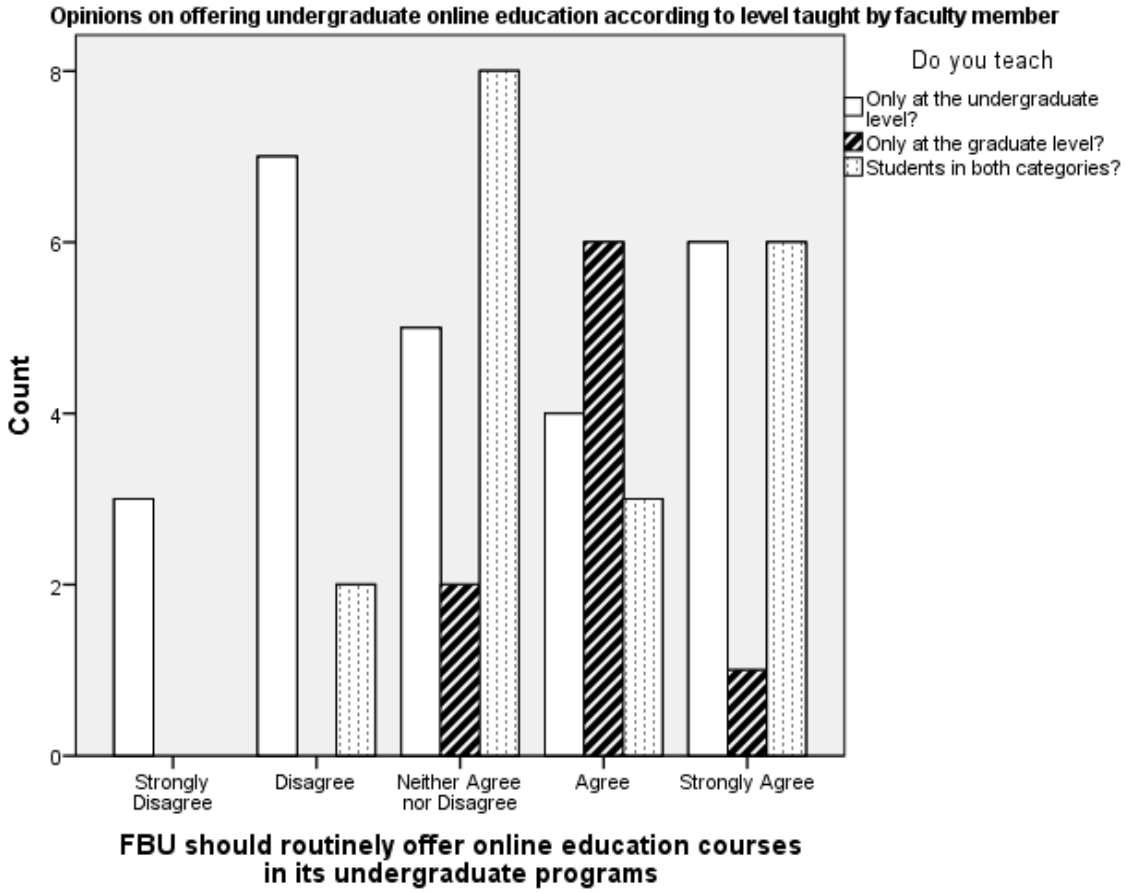

Figure 2. Faculty opinions on offering undergraduate online education according to level taught by faculty member.

Survey question #2 asked faculty to select their level of agreement or disagreement to whether FBU should routinely offer online education courses in its graduate programs. On average, faculty members tended to agree that online education courses should be offered in graduate programs (M = 4.05 on a scale of 1 to 5). The responses tended to cluster around strong agreement (SD = .98), with most of faculty falling within the levels of agreement rather than disagreement. This is borne out by the frequency distribution (see Table 4), showing 76% of the respondents expressing levels of agreement, and only 7.5% of the respondents expressing of

levels of disagreement. Seventeen percent of the respondents were neutral towards online education occurring at the graduate level.

Table 4

FBU Should Routinely Offer Online Education Courses in its Graduate Programs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.9	1.9
	Disagree	3	4.9	5.6	7.4
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	9	14.8	16.7	24.1
	Agree	20	32.8	37.0	61.1
	Strongly Agree	21	34.4	38.9	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

When examining the opinions held by faculty on whether online education should be offered at the graduate level broken down by whether they teach at the graduate, undergraduate level or both (See Figure 3), the faculty who actually teach only graduates are fairly evenly divided between disagreeing and neutrality, while a greater number of them agree or strongly agree. No faculty who only teach graduate students strongly disagreed. Faculty who only teach undergraduate students are overwhelming either neutral or supportive of offering online

education at the graduate level. The faculty who teach in both levels are overwhelmingly in some level of agreement with the statement.

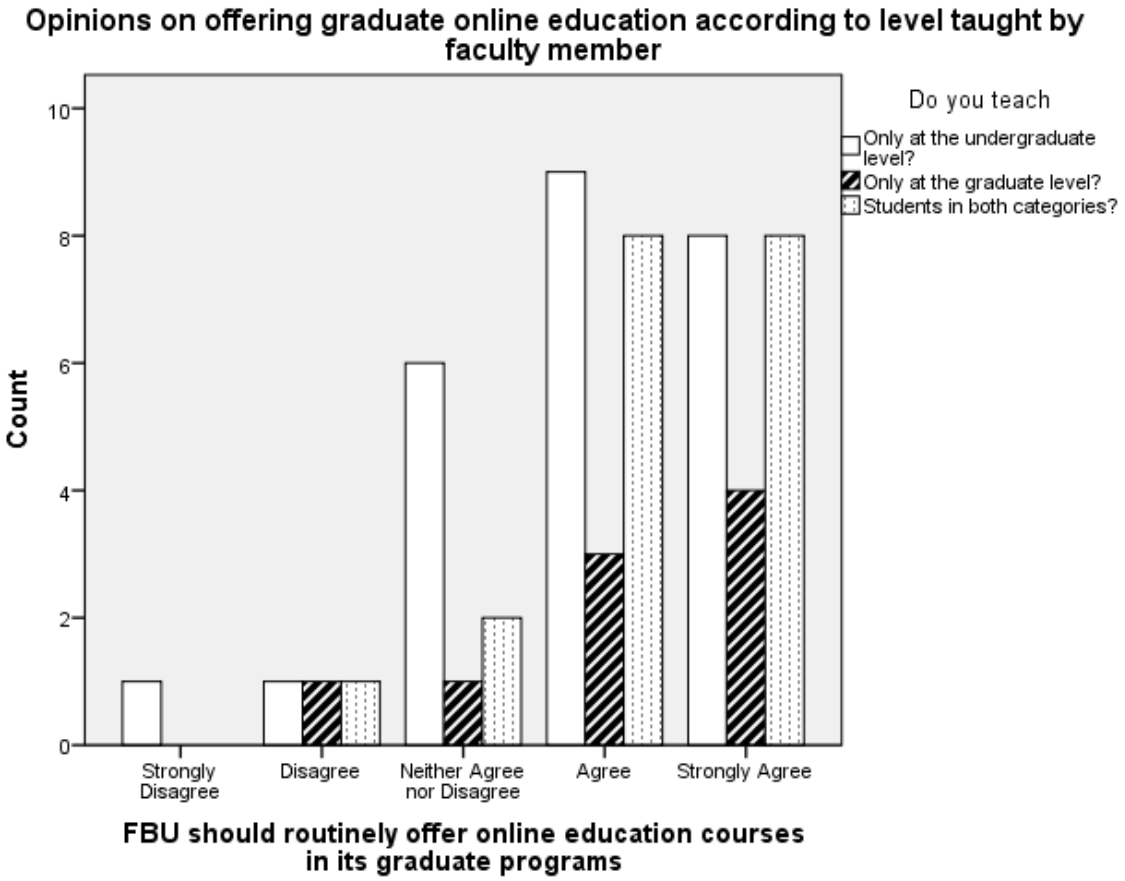

Figure 3. Faculty opinions on offering graduate online education according to level taught by faculty member.

Survey question #3 asked the faculty to select their level of support or opposition to offering online education courses in their department or school. On average, faculty members were neutral but leaning toward agreeing that online education courses should be offered in their departments or schools (M = 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5). The responses were somewhat varied though (SD = 1.3), indicating that while the mean response suggested slight support, in actuality, feelings of support toward including online education courses in their departments or schools

were diverse. However, when viewed by a frequency distribution (see Table 5), the majority of respondents (52%) express levels of agreement, leaving an equal distribution of the respondents expressing levels of disagreement (24%), and 24% of the respondents expressing neutrality.

Table 5

Would You Support or Oppose Offering Online Education Courses in YOUR Department/School?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Oppose	4	6.6	7.4	7.4
	Oppose	9	14.8	16.7	24.1
	Neither Oppose or Support	13	21.3	24.1	48.1
	Support	11	18.0	20.4	68.5
	Strongly Support	17	27.9	31.5	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

When examining the opinions held by faculty on whether online education should be offered at their department or school was broken down by the area in which they teach (See Figure 4), only faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences were strongly opposed to offering online education in their department or school. Faculty in the College of Social Sciences and

Professional Studies, and the School of Education were more likely to support, at some level, online education in their department or school.

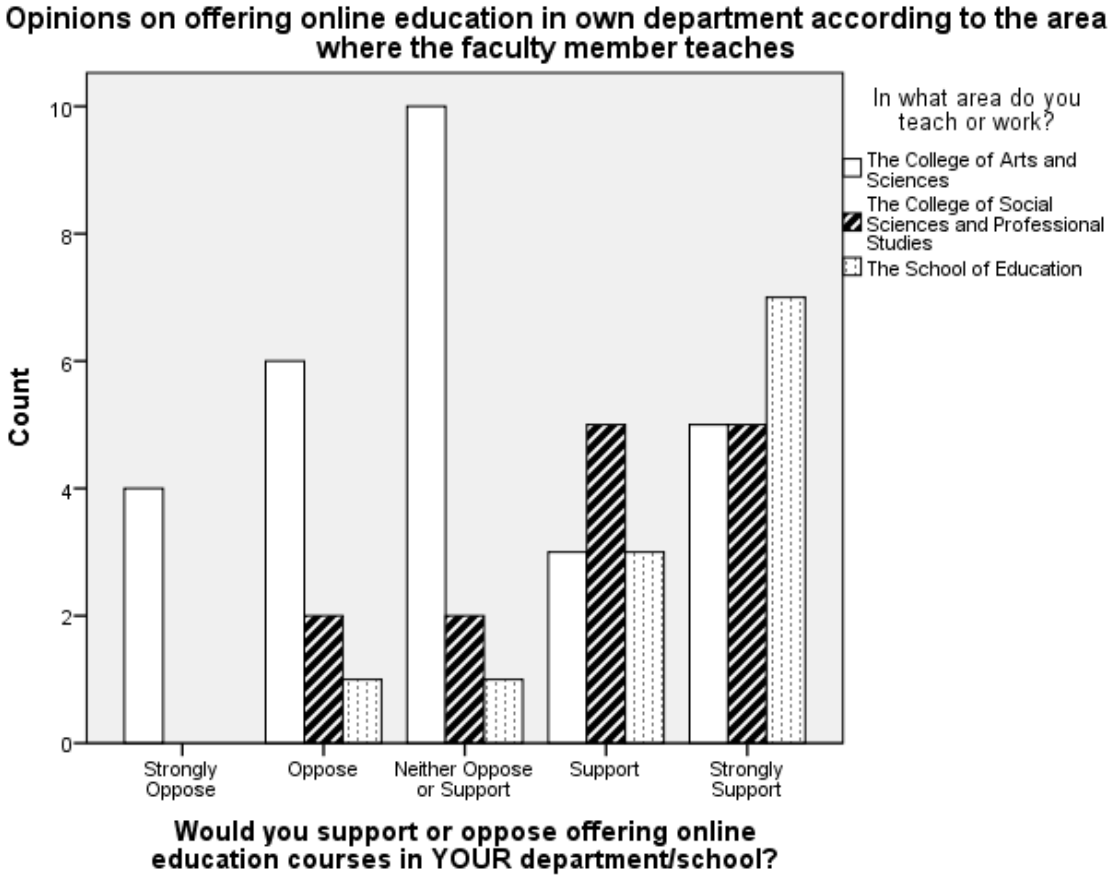

Figure 4. Faculty opinions on offering online education in their own department according to the area where the faculty member teaches.

Summary of research hypothesis 1: Faculty members, in general, oppose the inclusion of online education at their university. Three survey questions were used to assess the acceptance or rejection of this hypothesis. This hypothesis was not supported. On average,

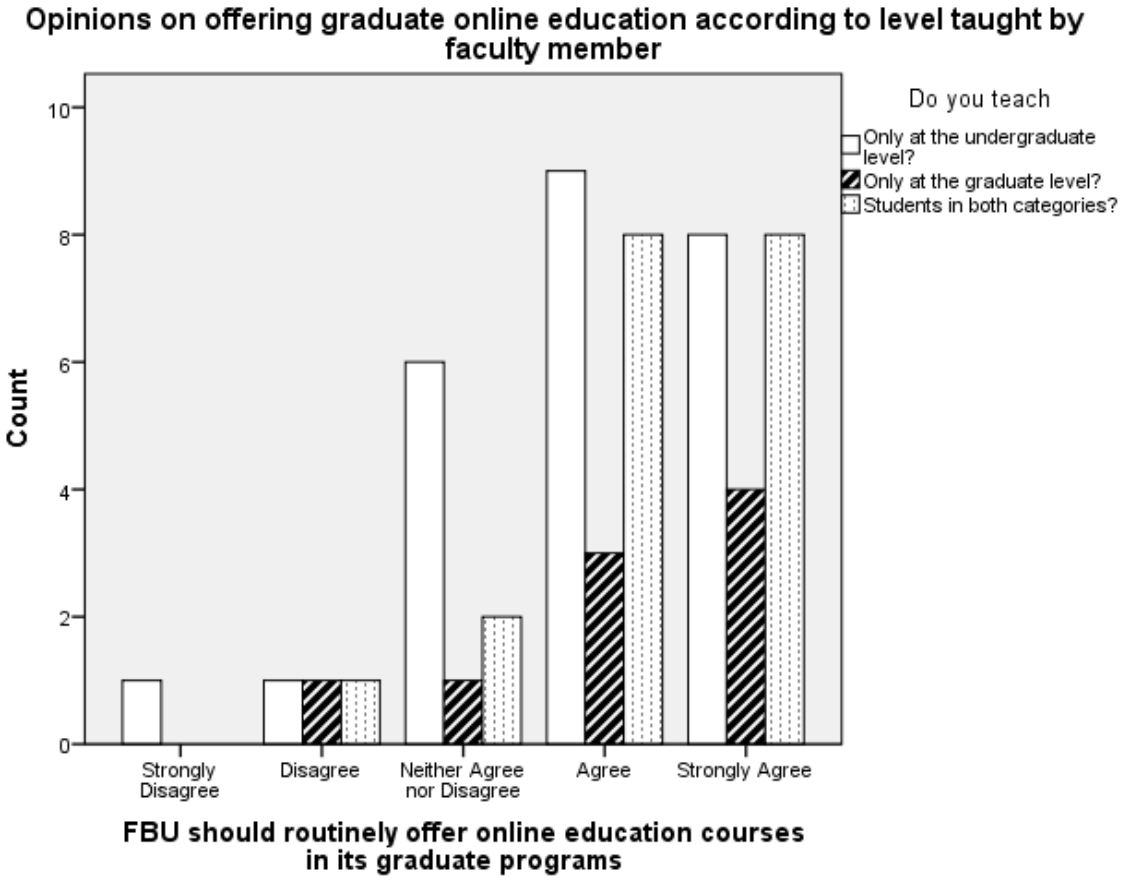

Figure 5. Faculty opinions on offering graduate online education according to level taught by faculty member.

faculty members were neutral but leaning toward supporting online education being offered at the undergraduate level, at the graduate level, and in their department or school.

Of the faculty interviewed, 4 out of the 12 were opposed to online education occurring at the undergraduate level but were less oppositional about online education occurring at the graduate level. It is important to note that, in general, the faculty who did express some support for online education supported the use of hybrid coursework rather than coursework taught completely online.

Research hypothesis 2: Faculty members, in general, feel that online education diminishes the quality of undergraduate education. On average, faculty members were neutral

tending toward slightly diminishing in whether they felt that online education courses diminish the quality of the undergraduate educational experience (M = 2.8 on a scale of 1 to 5). The responses were clustered around the neutral response (SD = .95) suggesting a certain homogeneity of responses. This is borne out by the frequency distribution (see Table 6), with 41% of the respondents expressing neutrality, 40% expressing feelings of diminishing quality, and the remaining 19% expressing feelings of enhanced quality.

Table 6

Now Consider the Impact Online Education Courses Might Have on the QUALITY of the Undergraduate Educational Experience at FBU

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Diminish	3	4.9	5.6	5.6
	Diminish	18	29.5	33.3	38.9
	Neither Enhance nor Diminish	22	36.1	40.7	79.6
	Somewhat Enhance	8	13.1	14.8	94.4
	Significantly Enhance	3	4.9	5.6	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

When examining the opinions held by faculty on whether online education diminishes the quality of the educational experience at the undergraduate level, broken down by whether they

teach at the graduate, undergraduate level or both (see Figure 5), 48% of the faculty who actually teach only undergraduates are of the opinion that the quality of the educational experience at the undergraduate level would be diminished, while 36% of the faculty from this category feel that online education will have no impact on the educational experience. Similar percentages are found with faculty who teach in both graduate and undergraduate levels, with 42% feeling that the undergraduate educational experience would be diminished and 37% feeling that there would be no impact on the quality of the educational experience. Only 11% of the graduate faculty felt that online education would diminish the quality of the undergraduate educational experience, while 56% felt online education would have no impact on the quality.

Summary of hypothesis 2. On average, faculty members were neutral, trending toward slightly diminishing, in whether they felt that online education courses diminish the quality of the undergraduate educational experience.

Most of the faculty interviewed either strongly suggested that the quality of online education is lower than the quality found in traditional education, or they at least indicated concern over the level of quality in an online course. Overall this hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 3: Faculty members, in general, feel that online education diminishes the quality of graduate education. On average, faculty members were neutral, trending towards slightly enhancing, in whether they felt that online education courses would impact the quality of the graduate educational experience (M = 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5). The responses were clustered around the neutral response (SD = .98), suggesting a certain homogeneity of responses. This is borne out by the frequency distribution (see Table 7), with 54% of the respondents expressing neutrality, 17% expressing feelings of diminishing quality, and the remaining 29% expressing feelings of enhanced quality.

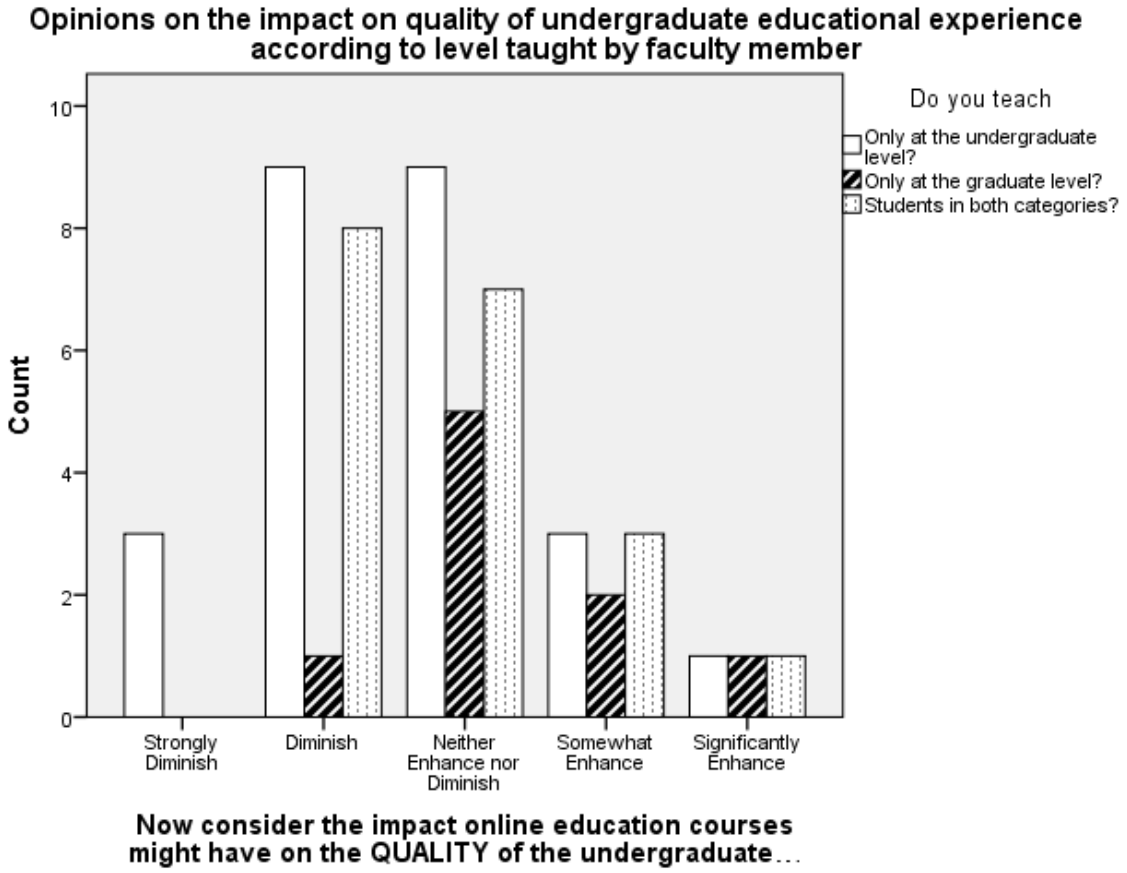

Figure 6. Faculty opinions on the impact of online education courses on the quality of undergraduate education according to the level taught by the faculty member.

When breaking down the opinions held by faculty on whether online education diminishes the quality of the educational experience at the graduate level by whether they teach at the graduate, undergraduate level or both (See Figure 6), the faculty who actually teach only graduates are fairly evenly divided on whether online education would enhance, diminish, or have no effect on the graduate educational experience.

Table 7

Now Consider the Impact Online Education Courses Might Have on the QUALITY of the Graduate Educational Experience at FBU

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Diminish	1	1.6	1.9	1.9
	Diminish	8	13.1	14.8	16.7
	Neither Enhance nor Diminish	29	47.5	53.7	70.4
	Somewhat Enhance	7	11.5	13.0	83.3
	Significantly Enhance	9	14.8	16.7	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

Summary of hypothesis #3: Faculty members, in general, feel that online education diminishes the quality of graduate education. Overall, this hypothesis was not supported. On average, faculty members were neutral, tending towards slightly enhancing in whether they felt that online education courses would impact the quality of the graduate educational experience.

From the interview data discussed in the next section, the faculty interviewed also seemed to give more latitude for online courses being offered at the graduate level versus the undergraduate level. The faculty interviewed did not specifically mention quality of the graduate

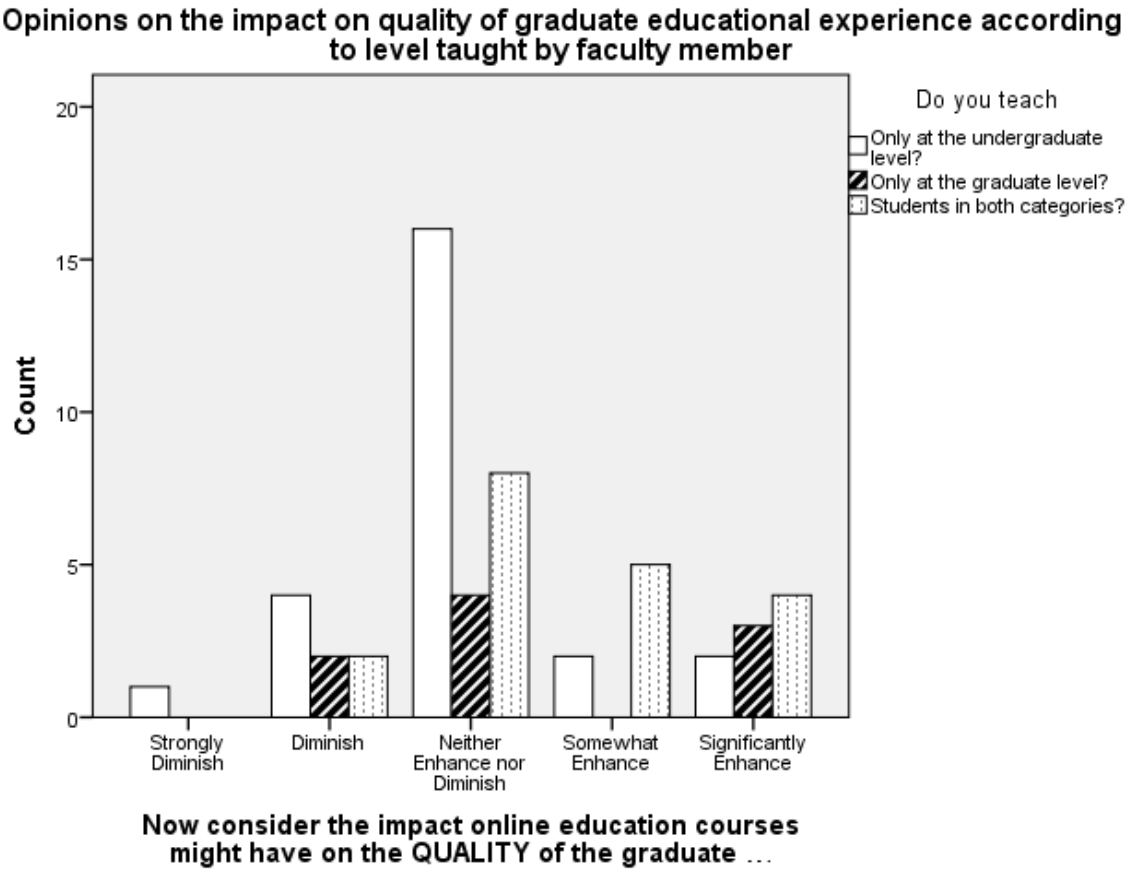

Figure 7. Faculty opinions on the impact on quality of graduate educational experience according to level taught by faculty member.

courses being offered online, but they were more receptive of online coursework occurring at the graduate level than the undergraduate level.

Interview data analysis for research question #1: Themes responding to research question #1. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews, which will be described in this section.

- Access: Can online education allow a broader population of students to attend the university?
- Financial: How might online education affect the financial status of the university?

- Quality: Can online education offer a quality education?
- Impact on faculty: How does online education affect the role of the faculty?
- Mission and Identity of the university: Does online education fit or support the mission and identity of the university?

Each of these themes addresses the question: What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?

*Access***.** Eleven of the twelve faculty mentioned aspects of access at some point in the interviews. Most of these 11 faculty brought up the topic of access when they were asked to think about the possible advantages of online education. The faculty seemed to be unanimous in thinking it would be a good thing to be more inclusive of students who wish to pursue higher education paths, but they disagreed on the motives for increasing access and on whether FBU could accomplish an increase in access while maintaining the mission of the university. Most of the faculty recalled the administration of the university citing access as a reason to offer online education options. However, several faculty suspected that the push for increasing access had more to do with increasing revenue to the university than to helping potential higher education students attain their educational goals. Specific comments made by faculty regarding the issue of access are included in Table 8.

Table 8

Interviewee Comments Regarding Access in Response to Research Question #1

Quote Synopsis *-Access-*	Quotes Regarding *Access* Theme
Interviewee #1 Not convinced OE will help with access.	I'm not convinced in terms of access. I know access is certainly a buzzword. I'm not convinced that it's the way to access people. Particularly poor people are more marginalized populations because it doesn't always seem to

(continued)

Quote Synopsis *-Access-*	Quotes Regarding *Access* Theme
	work super well for them. It's something they don't have access to the kind of Internet resources and computer and space and time that might be necessary to do these courses.
Interviewee #2 Attract more students without requiring more physical space.	I think the benefit I would say is marketing, recruitment, the ability to teach more bodies at a particular campus that can't take any more physical bodies.
Interviewee #3 OE can increase access without being tied to a specific campus location.	There's a chance of both increasing accessibility, and a certain type of portability that can still be there. You're not as tied to a campus and to having spatial material, say brick and mortar resources as much. You can get two different areas constituencies.
Interviewee #4 OE might be better for students who need to stay in their own setting or area.	I suppose there are some students who just do better in their own setting, not among others. It's just like, I assume it's better for some personality types as well and maybe for those who live in really far outlying areas who can't get into an actual college campus.
Interviewee #5 Increasing access is a virtue, but administration's push of OE with the justification that it will increase access is suspicious.	I think they want to be able to say that [FBU] offers this style of education tends to make it more convenient for a wider customer base. And I am using that word because it is their word and not my word; I don't think of my students as customers. I think part of the appeal of the online mode is the possibility of access and that's one of the things where it makes me crazy because it said like every other word by the administration. But I can appreciate that as a virtue of a Christian liberal arts university.
Interviewee #7 There is a need for more	At [FBU], it always comes down to two things. One is more revenue, and the other is what they're calling access. That is reaching more students, and they're obviously tied together. [A]s far

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Access*-	Quotes Regarding *Access* Theme
education, but access alone is not a compelling argument for FBU to adopt OE.	as access goes, it's a pretty common argument presented by [FBU's] administration that online education will allow us to provide this education to increasing numbers of students. I understand that there's a crying need for more education, and there's a cost factor and all kinds of problems like that. But I'm not sure that that constitutes a compelling argument that [FBU] should adopt online education. I kind of recognize a general need for it, in the same way in which I recognize a general need for community colleges, but I'm not convinced that this is something that [FBU] needs to do or should do. So, I feel very conflicted about it.
Interviewee #8 OE is a really good way to solve a lot of the challenges of face-to-face education.	If everybody in the world could have face-to-face education, great. But that's unrealistic and not appropriate college-wise for everybody, or not feasible. I think this is a really good way to solve a lot of the challenges of face-to-face education.
Interviewee #9 FBU is out of sync with younger generations by not offering OE.	If [FBU] is the only university not offering some of their coursework online, then we're obviously missing the mark with younger generations
Interviewee #10 Non-traditional students see OE as a huge benefit.	The non-traditional students really see it as a huge benefit because they can still work full-time. They can squeeze the online education in at night. I think for a lot of people, that's a lot better format.
Interviewee #11 OE will rarely provide a long-term benefit for	We often couch it in these terms of trying to help the underserved and things like that, but I see that as very suspicious; it sounds an awful lot like a payday loan commercial to me because in the end it isn't. I don't think it ... it is not very often going to be

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Access*-	Quotes Regarding *Access* Theme
the underserved undergraduate student. OE could accentuate a two-tiered education system were OE provides the cheaper, less effective system. OE is especially disadvantageous for students from weaker education backgrounds and from poorer backgrounds.	long-term beneficial for students…at least not for undergrads. I hope that in the end ... I do remain optimistic because I do feel like even those stakeholders and the big people in power who talk about it, from Obama on down, none of them are going to send their kids to online schools. If anything is going to happen, we could just accentuate this two tiered education system where all of those with, the elites, are still using traditional educational systems and we're funnelling the have-nots into a cheaper and less personal and I think less effective system, but I hope not. I think it's [online education] especially disadvantageous for students from weaker education backgrounds and from poorer backgrounds that are trying to save some money, and in fact, they are the ones, I think, are most likely to be harmed by an online course where they don't get the support they need, they don't get the help they need, and they just quit or they fail it.
Interviewee #12 We can reach a broader student population of those who cannot afford or do the residential experience.	Well, I think we can reach a broader student population. Right now we can only reach those students who can afford to come to the campus. Our campus values a residential experience, but the reality is that there's a huge number of people out there that aren't being reached who could benefit from a [FBU] education, but can't do the residential piece of it.

Financial. Over half of the faculty acknowledged that financial matters were involved in the decision of whether to offer online coursework. Some of these faculty saw that online education could potentially either generate a new stream of revenue or it could help the university financially by helping to cut costs. Either way, several faculty were skeptical about the

reality of online education providing financial benefits, especially if the value or worth of the courses were lessened. Specific comments made by faculty regarding financial issues are located in Table 9.

Table 9

Interview Comments Regarding Financial Issues I\in Response to Research Question #1

Quote Synopsis -F*inancial* -	Quotes Regarding *Financial* Theme
Interviewee #1 OE may not be the revenue source that FBU administrator's think it might be.	I think we're already behind the 8-ball in terms of the money to be made. I'm not sure that we can ever compete at the low level of cost that other institutions can. Simply, we can't get the economy of the scale. We don't have that number. I'm not sure that it's going to be the cash cow. Maybe that's not fair to say that some of the administrators see it as a cash cow. I think some see it as certainly a viable revenue source. I think administrators tend to view it more as, "We got into this and this will make money." I'm not as convinced with that. It may break even, but I'm not convinced it's going to bring in large sums, and nor do I think we can compete with a community college or the state university or some of the big dogs that are way ahead of the game.
Interviewee #3 OE can help to control costs.	This is actually part of what I was tasked is both efficiencies, we have to find ways of responding to the cost disease. As a faith-based intuition, we cannot consciously, according to our mission, just become an elite university for rich White people. At the same time, we can't become that because we don't have the financial resources. According to Bowen, there's some evidence that blended classes can save between 24% to 52%, or is it 26% to 52%? Something like that.
Interviewee #4 OE is a reality now and an economic	It [the interviewee's view of online education] used to be fairly dim and then now it seems like it's part of the overall educational mix. I will say not because I think is necessarily superior, but I think schools have moved that way financially because they have to. Well, I think the biggest one [advantage of online education] is the

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -F*inancial* -	Quotes Regarding *Financial* Theme
necessity, but not because it is superior.	cost, low overhead and, at least that's how I understand the economics structure with that there's an advantage to the school to do this. I think it's a reality now that we're all going to be involved in online education at some level. I think it's an economic necessity.
Interviewee #6 FBU will not survive without OE.	I don't think any of our universities would survive without online education. Well, the major benefit is we cannot die on the vine and be sucked into the world of not having [FBU] at all because we're not making ends meet. Financially, it's a smart move for the university.
Interviewee #7 Not convinced that OE will increase revenue.	More students means more revenue, I guess. At least that's the argument. Everybody is in favor of more revenue, so if in fact online education would increase revenue, then that would be a benefit. I'm not convinced that that's going to bring more revenue, but if it does, then that would be a benefit.
Interviewee #11 Administrators favor OE because it will generate new revenue streams, not because it is a desirable or a quality way of doing education. OE takes advantage of an underserved community and gives them an inferior product.	Administrators [think], especially at a school like ours where they really are looking for ways to generate revenue streams, online is just the golden calf. It's the best thing they've ever seen. It's the only thing they can really think about in some ways. There's definitely [a] much more positive view of it. My cynical side still insists that it's because of revenue streams. It's not because it's actually desirable or a quality way of doing education, but it is an undeniable revenue stream. There is, obviously, there is the potential financial benefit, but even that, frankly, I feel that especially for a school like ours it's getting awfully close to a version of payday loans, where you tell yourself you're serving an underserved community, but really you are just taking advantage of them and giving them an inferior product that they don't know is an inferior product, but giving them an inferior product for too much money and actually leaving them no better off than when they started. I know some schools have made good money off of it in the short term, but I look down the road and if Arizona State wants to offer degrees,

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -F*inancial* -	Quotes Regarding *Financial* Theme
No way to compete with larger schools. Only two things matter to students enrolling in OE - it is easier and it is cheaper.	how in the world are you going to compete when, if more and more larger schools, schools with more money behind them, for profit schools can throw money at it until the end ... I think it's an enormously risky use of resources that could end up in a few years where you say that you aren't getting any money from this because there's so many easier and cheaper options. Again, for students, at the end of the day the only two things that matter is it easier and cheaper.

Quality. Almost all of the 12 faculty brought up issues of quality in regards to online coursework. Even faculty who supported online education recognized that online courses can be done poorly, just as some traditional courses can be done poorly. There seemed to be an agreement among these faculty that if FBU does continue to offer online coursework, it needs to be done well. The faculty who opposed online coursework did not think it was possible to have quality teaching and learning in an online course. The faculty opposing online education thought that the quality of the online courses might be fine for courses that are strictly fact-based. Online courses, for the faculty opposing online education, were considered flat, static, and having only one-way communication. The faculty opposing online education could not equate quality with online discussions for example. Also, these faculty felt they would lose the ability to adjust their instruction if they did not have the traditional classroom setting where they can respond to students' questions, in-class discussions, the body language of the students, and the affect state of the students. Specific comments made by faculty regarding the issue of quality in online education are located in Table 10.

Table 10

Interview Comments Regarding Quality in Response to Research Question #1

Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
Interviewee #1 Mixed opinion on OE. Prefers OE more so for graduate programs.	I think my opinion [about online education] is mixed. I think some of it is done well. Some of it is done not so well. I have a strong preference. I still maintain a strong preference for online education more so in graduate programs or for adult learners that are more highly motivated than for traditional undergrads.
Interviewee #2 OE can be as good or as poor as any education. Students think OE is easier.	[Online education] can be as good or as poor as any education depending on how the course is designed and carried out. [It is] as effective or ineffective as any course mode of delivery. The students that I advise that have been taking online courses off of our campus, so they take them to transfer them in, almost exclusively believe that it's an easier way to go. It's an easier A for example. They clamor to go get that online course over the summer or in an off period to transfer back in. I think that has colored my opinion, mostly is what I hear from students who share that it's an easier way to get an A.
Interviewee #3 OE is not as effective as traditional for undergraduates. No economic or efficiency benefits from OE. Students perceive a difference in	My understanding is that it's not as effective as face-to-face for undergraduates nor does it provide any economic benefits and efficiencies in delivery. That in listening to students where they appreciate the accessibility of online, they do not see it as delivering the same perceptual quality for them, which is not to say they don't learn as much, but they do not enjoy it as much. Now, I will say that blended classes which constitutes with interacting, which is what I have been doing for general education, have shown to be as effective as a classroom.

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
quality in OE and don't like it as much. Blended classes are as effective as traditional.	
Interviewee #4 Students oppose online discussions. Students learn more from each other when in the same room wrestling with an idea.	The more I think about it, yeah, I also think the students are opposed to [the] kind of online discussion things. I think students learn from each other in, I think, face-to-face kind of an atmosphere. But I'm speculating here because I don't really have that much experience otherwise, but I do think that kind of, everybody getting in the same room and wrestling with an idea is a different experience than everybody getting on the same discussion board and wrestling with an idea. I don't think those are the same thing.
Interviewee #5 The physical classroom experience has conversational elements and community elements that are enhanced in the shared physical and time bound moments. These shared physical and time bound	Philosophically what I think extremely important about those developmental or character based humanities courses has to do with sort of intangible sort of surprises or unrepeatable moment in the classroom that has to do with all kinds of things that are really, really hard to predict or replicate on one class to the next. But it's like that conversational element, the community element that's found in a classroom. What happens whenever you hear the tone of someone's voice when they're speaking? What happens to them whenever they're on the spot in a room with people who are looking in their direction? How long does it take to like, turn to a particular page or everybody try to find where that paragraph is, whenever that guy was talking about that thing? Those sorts of moments in the classroom that are very physical moment, very time related moment. That physicality and temporality gets lost as I think when

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
moments get "flattened out" in the online course.	they're flattened out with the online mode. Time is lost. You don't know how long it takes someone to say something. You don't know how long it takes them to respond to something, or to find something or to figure something out. You don't hear a tone of voice. You don't see an expression, that kind of thing.
Interviewee #7 The mode of content delivery is significant. Education cannot be reduced to the transmission of educational bits, as OE is often described.	One thing that worries [me] about the way in which online education is often described, is that education often seems to be reduced to transmitting educational bits. In other words, I've heard this argument at [FBU], that it's as though there are facts that need to be transmitted, and whether they're transmitted over computer or vocally by me in person is more or less irrelevant. The important thing is the transmission of facts, and this strikes me as a gross and terrible misunderstanding of what university education is about. But you will hear people say, articulate that way, that the mode of delivery is incidental to the content, so the stakes between the content of education and the form in which it's delivered has been overworked to the point of this ridiculousness.
Interviewee #8 Some universities may have embraced OE "too much without valuing the importance of good pedagogy." We are doing more now with	Some universities are very, I don't want to use "the cutting edge" but I can't think of the other word I was going for. They've really embraced online. In fact in some ways it may be too much without valuing the importance of good pedagogy. I think you can overdo online or just not do it well. I think a lot of universities are really beginning to accept and understand it. We are doing more than we used to do. We used to take a course, make it Word documents, post it online and call it online course. Now we're doing a lot more than that. Creating presence, trying to create community, online community, I think that we can do that, we're doing that better. That's why it

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
online courses.	gives me some hope that we might be able to meet our mission at some point in the future if it's well researched.
"It gives me some hope that we might be able to meet our mission at some point in the future, if it's well research."	I think we have to be cautious. about creating rules when we talk about online classes. The pendulum can swing too far right or too far left. We first entered into this online thing, maybe 10 years ago. People were just doing a bad job of teaching online classes and taking regular face-to-face stuff and posting it and calling it online class. There were some people who were teaching online classes that were just not good instructors and doing a bad job face-to-face they do a bad job online. Now we've come a long way in the last decade to realize that people need training. People need to learn how to do online well and that there are ways to do online well. This is great but we can't make it, the guidelines, too rigid. For example, one of the guidelines we have is that that at [FBU] that the instructor's supposed to send some kind of note or contact point with the students every single day. This is a really bad guideline in my opinion because if you bug your students especially grad students every single day they're going to stop paying attention to the emails you're sending and the ways that you're contacting them. You become a pest, sort of. I think that we can follow the pendulum so far the other direction in giving so many restriction guidelines that people that know about good pedagogy lose some of the freedom of doing good pedagogy because you have to follow all these guidelines and restrictions.
Guidelines for teaching online are needed, but the guidelines should not be too rigid as to restrict faculty from some of "the freedom of doing good pedagogy".	
Interviewee #10 OE can be delivered	I think it [online education] can be delivered equally as well as any other forms. It can also be delivered equally poorly as any other form of education. I think it's a tool. It's just like any other tool in education. It can be used well and it cannot be

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
equally as well or as poorly as any other form of education. OE is a tool. The general population of students has little experience with OE and has a negative perception of it.	used so well. [As far as what students think about the quality of online courses] They don't seem to think it offers the same quality and from what I've seen in the surveys I've conducted, students by the end of the course seem to show a slight positive change in attitude towards taking the Blended Course so I think there is room to change but I think the general population of student has little experience with it and has quite a negative perception of it.
Interviewee #11 OE is "a poor substitute for face-to-face class." "…It loses everything positive about a classroom experience and education in general." The bigger danger of OE "is it's most destructive for the weakest students, for the students who know the least, who are not savvy enough, or don't have	I do not think it's a good way to do certainly traditional undergrad education. I think it's a poor substitute for face-to-face class. It is largely a monologue rather than a dialogue. It simply is ... put it this way; I would never want one of my kids to take a class that way. I wouldn't. To me, it loses everything positive about a classroom experience and education in general. No one will ever fall in love with a subject they didn't realize before by taking an online class, nor will you ever really build relationships between students/faculty through an online class. I cannot see the positives of it, and I think even bigger danger is it's most destructive for the weakest students, for the students who know the least who are not savvy enough or don't have the support systems, so I really don't like it on that front. I especially don't like it in, particularly, in the notion for using it for a general education type course. It just reaffirms what's already an existing student attitude that this is just something you check a box, that you're not really, that this doesn't have the value as a course to change your life or anything. So, no, I don't like it.

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Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
the support systems".	It can work, especially I think, for older students, grad students, people who have highly motivated, have a foundation to build from, that it is, in effect, like giving them, these are the three best books on the subject or this is the best research. Read that and interact with it. You don't need much guidance, I guess, at that point. You already have the motivation. You already have the tools. That said, I think there seems to be a growth industry right now in schools trying to come up with what strikes me as phony online degrees to try to generate revenue that I am not convinced are actually going to be helping somebody down the line, particularly compared to what they could have had in a traditional face to face environment. I don't have anywhere near as strong negative feelings towards that level as I do towards the young, healthy 18-22 year olds. I don't see the value there.
OE can work "for older students, grad students, people who have highly motivated, have a foundation to build from"	
Students will "never discover a passion they didn't know they had" for a subject in an online course.	In the end, like I say, I think a student will never fall in love with a subject through an online course. I can't see it happening. They'll never discover a passion they didn't know they had. They'll never build a relationship with faculty. I average, in the summer time, five wedding invitations a month and the rest of the year probably two to three wedding invitations a month. You're never going to be getting wedding invitations from online students. You just can't in any way build those kinds of relationships. I think, again this is my passion as a teacher, when I'm teaching, even when I teach to the same section back to back, no two classes are ever taught the same because I'm always adapting to the students in front of me, and how they're responding, and that feel you have for the room when you're teaching the way students are taking information, and no two classes are ever the same because of

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Quote Synopsis -*Quality*-	Quotes Regarding *Quality* Theme
Most of OE is "just a monologue." "It's just things stuck out there and received." That is not "a way to really learn…"	that, because of that back and forth between a professor and the students in a classroom. You lose all of that if you go distance learning, most of these online models. It's just a monologue. It's just things stuck out there and received. I just don't see that as a way to really learn, and yeah. I think that's a big disadvantage.
Interviewee #12 OE "promotes a lot of collaboration"	I also think that online learning promotes a lot of collaboration and while we are trying to have collaborative classrooms we still have a lot of people who just stand and lecture.

*Impact on faculty***.** This section features issues brought up in the interviews regarding online education impacting the role of faculty in some way. Two faculty spoke of the workload related to teaching online coursework, from the amount of planning required to set up an online course, to the excessive workload of always having to be available to their students at all hours of the day, every day. One of the faculty who was concerned about the excessive workload also had some appreciation of the flexibility of the work schedule that can occur when teaching online coursework. Two faculty thought hiring and/or training qualified faculty to teach online coursework will be an obstacle to establishing online education at FBU, and another interviewee speculated that online faculty will not have the same emotional commitment to the university as traditional faculty. The most commonly cited matter related to online education impacting the role of faculty has been the development of tension or division between faculty and administration. Six interviewees mentioned this tension or division between faculty and administration. The tension or division ranged from just having a

differing view of the potential benefits of online education to resentment and fear towards the administration. Specific comments made by the interviewees in regards to matters impacting the role of faculty are included in Table 11.

Table 11

Interview Comments Regarding OE's Impact on Faculty in Response to Research Question #1

Quote Synopsis -*Impact on Faculty*-	Quotes Regarding *Impact on Faculty* Theme
Interviewee #2 "Current faculty may not be ready or willing to teach in this modality."	At this particular university we might have a more difficult time securing online instructors that meet our criteria in the Christian sense because the current faculty, as a group, are not real excited about entering this modality of teaching. So a disadvantage could be turn over for this particular reason because our current faculty may not be ready or willing to teach in this modality. So I see that as a disadvantage because the faculty we currently meet the standard of the university in many, many ways so I do see a disadvantage of putting off current, wonderful, effective faculty.
Interviewee #3 Transforming classes to OE is time-intensive.	I spent about 10 hours per period to transform my class into a hybrid form. That only makes sense if I teach it ten times, then I could start co-opting.
Interviewee #4 The pay earned for teaching an online course is not commensurate with the time spent teaching the course in that modality.	I have a couple of friends who had done online classes as professors and they hate it for the following reasons. One is, there's a sense by the students that the professor should be available 24/7. Students get upset when the professor doesn't reply within minutes. For the actual hours that they spend teaching those classes online, the money is not commensurate with the time spent. I think those are some bugs that need to be worked out

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Quote Synopsis -*Impact on Faculty*-	Quotes Regarding *Impact on Faculty* Theme
There is an assumption of an online student "that the professor should always be available."	and it's in part from listening to their accounts that, I'm not particularly interested in pursuing this and so if somebody figures out a way to make it not just an enormous time suction for the professor. It seems like the very nature of it being an online class creates an assumption on the part of student that the professor should always be available and I find that problematic.
Interviewee #5 I not only dislike OE but also fear it. The administration seems to think highly of OE. "I think for a while there was this ideological shift going on in the university and it wasn't clear what was happening." There was a lot of push back	I am absolutely among the […] professors [where] there's not only a dislike of online but like a fear. There are people who are pretty upset about the move in that direction in recent years and who are pretty distressed about it. And the administration, they seem totally high on the idea. They think that's like the next best thing of whatever that's coming up. So, they're pushing it pretty hard and they're definitely encouraging us to get sort of trained in that. There's an expectation that every department, every major offer some portion of their stuff online in different modes, I think for a while there was this ideological shift going on in the university and it wasn't clear what was happening. Faculty didn't understand it. We were just sort of going along, people would resist in ways that were very predicable to various views on part of the administration. Because we had pretty big processes set up for faculty to have say over the curriculum matters, especially the modes of delivery of courses is under that purview typically. When we started moving in that direction of offering different modes of delivery there was a lot of pushback from faculty. A lot of people spoke that it is not the kind of thing that we do here, how we understand education, residential

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Quote Synopsis -*Impact on Faculty*-	Quotes Regarding *Impact on Faculty* Theme
initially when FBU started offering different modes of delivery. Now, "there seems to be no point in resisting at all."	campus, et cetera. But that has moved now that there seems to be no point in resisting at all. I mean, there's not a place for faculty to sort of offer any resistance in any kind of meaningful way. There's no point. It makes people get ticked off.
"…I'm hoping that I can at least remain fairly open minded about it and then get some feedback from the people that I trust, not my administration."	I have grown much more fearful of the sort of the course, certainly at my university, and I know it's all over the place, but at [FBU], the push for online education. But, on the other hand, I'm hoping that I can at least remain fairly open minded about it and then get some feedback from the people that I trust, not my administration. Those have been the main voices advocating for this. I don't trust that their thinking that this a good thing for our students pedagogically or something like that. They need to get other folks who like for pedagogical reasons before I have any sense that this is something good for us to do, which that might happen.
Interviewee #7 How do faculty who teach in OE "feel connected to the university and its ethos?" The administration's mandate to engage in hybrid education is connected to our financial situation rather	From my perspective, I've talked with some of the people who teach in the [Indiana Wesleyan University] program. One of the problems is, and this may be more of a question than a problem, but it's difficult for me to see how people teaching in that situation would feel, I'm not saying this very elegantly, but how they would feel connected to the university and its ethos. In other words, how are they different from just a hired person? The way in which hybrid education has become a virtual mandate from our administration with a clear connection to our dire, or our supposedly dire, financial situation, had a very negative impact on me. In other words, the implication is that [FBU] will be financially unsustainable unless we engage in hybrid education, which tells me that we don't have a sound

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Quote Synopsis -*Impact on Faculty*-	Quotes Regarding *Impact on Faculty* Theme
than that it is something to do for educationally justified reasons."	business plan. Not that, here's something we need to do for educationally justified reasons, but someone is not minding the store.
Interviewee #10 I appreciate the flexibility of OE. "…as an [online] instructor, you have to be much more available via e-mail and other communication method at all times of the day." Creating a blended format of a course previously taught probably took "three to four times as much work as it did the first time I ever taught that	I personally appreciate the flexibility of it. I think that makes it very appealing just being able to move the work around to when it's convenient. One thing I find in the Blended Format which you would find in any online is that because your students have flexibility to work, as an instructor, you have to be much more available via e-mail and other communication method at all times of the day. The thing for using the advantage of the online stuff to work on weekends and late at night and they'd schedule around that and they schedule heavy workloads so they're working all day and the only time they have to work on the online is late at night. Well now that means if you're going to help them with something, you have to be present for communication late at night. It makes it much more you're sort of always on-call which is a lot different. Previously you could leave the office and if you wanted not to check your e-mail. Well, I just finished creating one [course] that I've taught numerous times so I have a lot of experience with it and created it in the blended format and it probably took six hours to…well, probably three or four times as much work as it did the first time I ever taught that course face-to-face. You just have the added component of everything you have to do. It has to be formatted into a user-friendly Internet-based application. All of a sudden you add the complexity that you have to get all the software to work together. Whatever LMS you're using has

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Quote Synopsis -*Impact on Faculty*-	Quotes Regarding *Impact on Faculty* Theme
course face-to-face."	to work with the materials.
"The technology component makes that work much, much more difficult."	You have to deal with all of the compatibility issues students have from working on different browsers with different security settings and you have to make sure all of your materials apply work equally well across all of those. The technology component makes that work much, much more difficult.
Interviewee #11 How will FBU's implementation of OE be viable long-term since "we are going to compete with every institution in the universe that has a computer hook up."	I think the biggest, maybe... my biggest concern from the administrators fascination with it, is I, for the life of me, cannot get my mind around how it could be long term viable. It seems like, ultimately, you are going to basically say, "We are going to compete with every institution in the universe that has a computer hook up." There aren't that many students out there, and once you enter into that realm, I don't see how, long term, it's going to be viable.

*Mission and identity of the university***.** Given that FBU is a faith-based, or church-based, university, their mission centers on the development of the whole person in their students with an emphasis on strengthening their faith in God. With the impact of this mission and the values FBU embraces comes a branding or an identity that is unique to FBU. The faculty had much to say about the mission and identity of FBU in regards to its relationship with online education. Each of the 12 faculty interviewees contributed an opinion to this theme. Most of the comments in this theme came from the interviewees' responses to the interview question #8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university?

Almost every interviewee, regardless of whether they tend to support or oppose online education, indicated in some fashion how difficult it is, or would be to still address the mission and core values of the university with online coursework. This theme also includes comments about the perceptions that students and the community have, or may have, about online education in general, and of it occurring at FBU. Interestingly, the faculty interviewees who tended to support online education also tended to report that students favor online coursework, whereas the faculty interviewees who are opposed to online education unanimously reported that students have indicated to them that they are opposed to online coursework. Specific comments made by the interviewees regarding the mission and identity of the university are included in Table 12.

Table 12

Interview Comments Regarding the Mission And The Identity of the University in Response to Research Question #1

Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
Interviewee #1 Moving some courses to OE is "really not working well, or at least a feedback I get from my students." Skeptical that OE at FBU can still address the mission and core values of the	The students in my department in general don't tend to take a lot of online classes. Or when they do, they haven't always loved them. It depends, again, on the students. I know we've moved some [courses] in mathematical areas with some hybrid, and it's really not working well, or at least a feedback I get from my students. They don't really like it at all. I don't know. My official answer [to interview question #8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university?] is I am not sure. I am a little skeptical. With that being said, I certainly have colleagues who said they have been able to do that and do that well. I think that component is difficult, but I think it's possible. So

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
university. "…I think an online dialogue in many ways is difficult to get the fullest sense of diversity."	could we still do certain things? Maybe, and maybe for a particular clientele. Yes. The core values, it's really hard. One of the things that got me concerned, one of our core values is diversity. I think an online dialogue ... and again, I just think this and I have not seen any research on this, but I think an online dialogue in many ways is difficult to get the fullest sense of diversity. Like the way people look or the way people pronounce or say something, those kinds of things are important to me. There are things like that that do concern me. Can we get everything? You can probably assign some mission activities. You certainly can assign some service learning and some ideas like that that could work. I don't think it's impossible, but I think it's difficult. That's my sense in terms of really adhering to our core mission and our core value. I think it can be done, but I think it's difficult.
Interviewee #2 I do feel the university can absolutely provide online coursework, and still address the mission of the university, and our core values.	I do feel the university can absolutely provide online coursework, and still address the mission of the university, and our core values. The reason why is that I've learned through training how to infuse mission and values within the course very intentionally and overtly, and I've seen students respond to the opportunity to discuss these topics very openly, almost more so than in person. So I absolutely think that that is a benefit and a good possibility in online instruction. The other benefit is [of offering online coursework], I'd say, to the students at the university doing some flexibility in their learning modality and being more connected to the current student and the way the current students learn. I think it makes our university more relevant than it maybe has been recently.

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
Interviewee #3 "I think that we have often used spiritual development, student development, extra-curricular, co-curricular activity to drive the Christian mission of the university while the academics have been professionalized and in some way secularized."	I think that as universities have matured, they have taken academic versus spiritual life specialization dichotomy. I think that we have often used spiritual development, student development, extra-curricular, co-curricular activity to drive the Christian mission of the university while the academics have been professionalized and in some way secularized. I think that if one does that, that the church-based university … the good thing is it might force a deeper way of ordering all their knowledge to the knowledge of God. My suspicion is, however, they'll reduce it to a type of pietism and spirituality. I don't think that those who are going to online will have the theological sophistication to rightly order their academic discourses. What that will do is de-rationalize the Christian aspect, which will turn it into a sentimentality piety, which will no longer stand, which eventually just will be dismissed.
Adapting to the technology, applying shifting pedagogies, and transferring the mission of the university to an online environment will be difficult.	The answer [to interview question 8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university?] is yes, but two things cause me hesitancy. All of the work that takes place is to professionally form students or professors into taking, to adapting to the technology and the shifting pedagogies. They presume that professors will have the ability to do the transference as well for the mission of the university. Again, I don't like integration of faith and learning, for all learning always provides and presupposes faith. If you don't trust a professor, you will never learn anything from her.
Yes, FBU can still address the mission in an online	The issue is yes, you can [provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university], but I think

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
coursework, but the university may not have the resources or the will to do so.	that it would take as well a theological expertise and commitment to the mission that institutions either don't have resources for to do as they're trying just to expand audiences and constituencies or, two, don't have will to do so because then you get into the issues of you want your curriculum to be distinctive but not too distinctive.
The administration sees OE "as a technological issue rather than a way of rethinking the mission so that the academic mission can actually have the theological aspect be part of the knowledge rather than a value added to the knowledge.	You see, Christian universities will never be able to offer as cheaply as Bridgepoint because they're probably not going to be as exploited at their labor and working for markets. Although Grand Canyon, it's a fascinating emphasis because here, you're taking the Christian model into a for-profit model. We'll see where that goes over time. I think the not-for-profit as much, but at the same time, administrators are under such pressure to increase revenue to support the task already going on, on campus that I don't know if the proper engagement can take place at the proper places. They tend to see it as a technological issue rather than a way of rethinking the mission so that the academic mission can actually have the theological aspect be part of the knowledge rather than a value added to the knowledge.
Interviewee #4 I think it's hard to communicate the ethos of the university in a setting that's online only.	I think it's hard to communicate the ethos of the university in a setting that's online only. There are certain personalities that go along with certain schools and I would imagine, I'm not speaking from experience, I'm just speculating. I would imagine that would be difficult to maintain or even establish that kind of vibe from doing it Internet only.
Interviewee #5 Character development	I think that sort of face to face, embodied, in the same room, sharing the same time, seeing each other's expressions, et cetera, that is sort of unable to replicate it, I would imagine in an online circumstance.

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
gets lost in an online context. "Many of my students have a very big problem with online education and they see it as kind of cheapening of their education experience…"	It's as much about sort of character development in a particular context as any other thing, and that context is lost, at least as I imagine it, in an online context. Many of my students have a very big problem with online education and they see it as kind of cheapening of their education experience whenever they have done online courses themselves or often they'll talk about it as like easy route, do less work, less accountability, that kind of stuff. I don't think that they appreciate it for that reason. I can imagine other students appreciating it for those exact reasons because it's easier and more efficient and that kind of thing. I think it's easier for them. But I am sure they exist all over the place. I'm not naïve about that but I have definitely heard that from students, especially at FBU where they do feel that there's a problem in a different way that their education is coming at a pretty high cost. And so that it undervalues sort of the brand or whatever, like what does it mean to get a degree from FBU if it is kind of messed with these other kinds of modes of delivery.
"…in terms of like direct conversations with students I have had I have never heard anyone speak positively about their online education experience."	Those students and sort of … it varies…I'm going to imagine but in terms of like direct conversations with students I have had I have never heard anyone speak positively about their online education experience. But, again, it's a very, very biased circumstance. They're talking to me in the first place, and they're going to be my students while I'm close enough with them to be having those kinds of conversations. It depends on the course [in response to interview question 8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university?]. Even comparing a course, I don't know. I'm trying to even think of a

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
Fact-driven courses taught online is "probably fine…"	good example of like a pure fact driven course or something like that. It's like escaping every time I think of an example, I question myself about that. Let's say there is a course that is fact based and not in the humanities, but at that scale that they're teaching is really valuable for our students or whatever. Then I think that is probably fine, even though if feels like a missed opportunity for a community development or interaction with a professor.
GE courses that "apply directly to our liberal arts mission…would be falling very short of our mission if we offer those courses in the online mode…"	But in terms of the courses that I feel that the administration is most eager to offer us, that is general education courses, many of which are in the humanities or can apply directly to our liberal arts mission. Those courses, I absolutely believe we would be falling very short of our mission if we offer those courses in the online mode which again seem to be the courses that administration are most eager to offer in the online format. When the conversations first began [about online education occurring at FBU], it was laughable to even suggest that they ever offer general education in the online format. But this was purely [for] the professional studies, for mostly like master's degree status, like it was hilarious. Why would you even think that we would want to offer certifications to undergrad? Ha-ha-ha. Now, it's flipped completely to where that's the main, main push.
Interviewee #6	Absolutely, yes [in response to interview question 8].
Interviewee #7	There's a basic level on which the answer is no [to interview question 8]. For example, the university puts a great deal of emphasis on things such as required chapel and makes available to students, and very strongly encourages students to be involved in,
Chapel services, service learning opportunities,	

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Quote Synopsis *-Mission & Identity of the University-*	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
Bible studies and the like are emphasized at FBU. Is it possible to actualize those things in an online environment?	various types of service learning opportunities, both for credit and non-credit, Bible studies and the like. It seems almost impossible to actualize these sorts of things in an online environment unless the students somehow are very, very close to the university, but obviously there's no way to guarantee that. At that level, it seems pretty obvious that at least certain aspects of the university, the program, the mission, could not be realized with online instruction.
Is increasing the number of our students the central part of our mission?	At the same time, at least at [FBU], the mission is often kind of interpreted as a missionary impulse. In other words, it's imperative that we offer [FBU] education to increasing numbers of students. In that sense, the answer is, well, of course, online education allows us to increase the number of our students. Then we're accomplishing the mission because the mission is all about ... It's based on this missionary impulse to reach out to increasing numbers of students. That strikes me as a very dubious argument, probably fallacious. There's nothing about mission that implies missionary impulse to increase numbers. You will hear administrators talk that way, that access to increasing numbers is a central part of our mission, and the only way to do that is by means of online education. There is currently some debate about ... or, I guess I should say, there should be some debate going on about the nature of our mission. That seems to be a fairly pliable concept.
Interviewee #8 "…one of our strengths is that we do a very	As far as undergraduate goes, one of our strengths is that we do a very unique face-to-face undergraduate Christian education. I think offering some online for those students would be great continuing to increase that as needed and as the demand calls for. I would say that

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
unique face-to-face undergraduate Christian education." "I would say that I'm not sure I'm ready and I'm not sure much of the faculty's ready for us to have an undergraduate degree that is totally online. And, to call that the FBU degree."	I'm not sure I'm ready and I'm not sure much of the faculty's ready for us to have an undergraduate degree that is totally online. And, to call that the FBU degree. I think some online is good, all online I just think we don't know yet. Do we want that student to be called a FBU graduate if we don't know? Is there a coming out of a fully online program with the same character building that we really try to promote in the face-to-face student? You can definitely do it [provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university] for graduate students because they're already grown up. Can we do the shaping in an online course? My guess is yes. You can ask me to answer yes or no. My guess is yes. But I don't know that we know to do it yet. My hypothesis for the research would be yes, let's see if we can do this and do it well and train people well.
Interviewee #9 The students are for OE, but "…The argument is well put that we want to see the character, and the spiritual development, of young adults and we're worried that that could be missed if we don't get to see our students face-to-face as much, and have as much	I think students are all for it. The argument is well put that we want to see the character, and the spiritual development, of young adults and we're worried that that could be missed if we don't get to see our students face-to-face as much, and have as much interaction. There are some things you need to see in a classroom, an expression or a comment. I do worry about students who do have a difficult time socializing, retreating to as much on-line as they can, there's a lot of benefit from face-to-face classroom. I'm personally in favor of a hybrid model. There's concern that we may not get the same kind of character development, spiritual development, and since the mission, and vision, and values of the university are to teach, to shape, to send, if

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
interaction."	we thought we were missing that mark, I'm sure we, as a university, would re-evaluate whether or not we were doing the right thing. To that end, the university had put into place… a core values freshman-quad course, it might be called core values, and it probably replaced something else that we had. Since I'm out of the circle of GE's I don't remember what it is, and that would never be on-line, some of the very introductory course we want to make sure that we get everybody as freshman, it's important for those to stay face-to- face, in order to serve the university's mission.
Interviewee #10 Students, in general, have a negative opinion about OE. The community perception of OE is that it is not a quality education. With high tuition costs, students expect a professor in front	Students in general I think have the perception … a couple of perceptions. One, they tend to perceive that online courses are a joke, that there's not real material in it and that they perceive as they're doing all the learning on their own and hence, there's no sense. It's really a waste of a course. It's all stuff they can learn on their own so why do they need to pay for a class to do it? I think another big issue is that the perception from the community and a lot of people outside of academia hold the perception that online education means it's University of Phoenix or something that it's some sort of not high quality institution and I think that right now is probably one of the biggest ones for us is that if we offer it, people immediately think, well it's not a quality class and you must be lowering your standards. I think our students at [FBU] feel like they're spending a lot more money of their education and I think a lot of them feel like with that money, they should have a professor right there in front of them, but I do think, the numbers I've seen from student surveys are that they … that does change as they take the course and they see

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Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
of them. But, that does change if they take courses in OE.	some of the benefits.
	I don't think online education is any better or any worse of a format of instruction than traditional face-to-face. I think in terms of quality of instruction you can offer, it's equally as good. I think one of the difficulties for us or for the most part, can it address our mission and values? A couple pieces that make our mission and value unique are our belief that we're not just educating in the classroom but that it's … we're shaping the entire person through extracurricular activities, sort of the entire community life that we have on campus and I think that's a lot more difficult to do when you have people working remotely.
Shaping the entire person is more difficult to do remotely.	
	If part of your mission is building relationships in the community here, that's a tough thing to do when the people aren't actually present. For the most part, I do think it [online education] can still address our mission and values but those two key pieces of the mission, which is not our complete mission but a big part of it are difficult to address given that format.
Interviewee #11	It just reaffirms what's already an existing student attitude that this is just something you check a box, that you're not really, that this doesn't have the value as a course to change your life or anything. So, no, I don't like it. I'm speaking entirely of traditional undergrads here. I can see value, and I think what the whole idea was originally, of distance learning in general, was created for people in later adult life situations, for people in prison, hospitals, and the military somewhere. There can be scenarios.
OE has its place, but not in traditional undergrad.	
Students take online classes because it is easier and cheaper, and they	Students uniformly, when it comes [up], and I've asked students this question dozens of times and it's always the same; the only reason you take an online class is because you think it's going

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
do not feel good about doing it.	to be easier and cheaper, and none of them would say that they think it's something they feel good about doing. Actually, so rarely have I heard any of them say they had a good experience with it because sometimes it turns out to be harder than they thought. It can be expensive, too. Yeah, in discussing it with students after the fact, I've never heard a positive experience…
"To actually get to a core mission of a Christian Liberal Arts College, boy I don't see it."	Yeah. I would say definitely not [to interview question 8: Do you feel the university can provide online coursework and still address the mission and core values of the university?]. Both on that passion for learning and for the liberal arts, and the other side is that spiritual side. I just ... are you going to send them a verse for the day or something like that? I can't see, again, anywhere ... Okay there's probably rare cases out there, but I really cannot see building real relationships with students that way, relationships that deal not simply with what goes on in the classroom, but like I said, with their marriages and with the death of their parents, and with their crisis that they face, the kind of things that you interact with students on other levels. I just can't see where any of that has any way of connecting, and how ... there's just not enough you can do with online delivery to make your course all that much different from what's coming from Arizona State or something like that. To actually get to a core mission of a Christian Liberal Arts College, boy I don't see it. Maybe somebody does, but I don't see how that can be.
Interviewee #12 Establishing a personal relationship with	I can tell you one thing that I really value, and that is a personal relationship with the students, and I think that's very hard to accomplish online. Absolutely [the university can provide online coursework and

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*Mission & Identity of the University*-	Quotes Regarding *Mission & Identity of the University* Theme
students is "very hard to accomplish online". "I still think that we can achieve the mission of the University."	still address its mission and core values]. I think that to what level we provide, we accomplish that with the online course work is the question. How much, how much online course work can we have before maybe those things are compromised, but I don't think that the addition of online course work and incorporating that into our curriculum in some, in appropriate ways, I don't see that as being a barrier at all. I still think that we can achieve the mission of the University.

Static and Evolving Beliefs Towards Online Learning

Research question #2: Have faculty beliefs regarding online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU? This research question relies on three data sources; one coming from responses to questions in the survey, another coming from a comparison of responses to questions from the original survey and the survey given in this study, and the third data source coming from responses to one of the interview questions.

Survey data source. Two questions from the survey help to respond to research question #2. The first question is question #24: Regardless of whether you participated in the original survey, have your beliefs/opinions about online education, in general, changed over the last year? The second survey question responding to this research question is question #25: Regardless of whether you participated in the original survey, have your beliefs/opinions about online education occurring at FBU changed over the last 2 years?

Table 13

Regardless of Whether You Participated in the Original Survey, Have Your Beliefs/Opinions About Online Education, in General, Changed Over the 2 Years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I am more in favor of online education, in general.	22	36.1	40.7	40.7
	I am more opposed to online education, in general.	6	9.8	11.1	51.9
	My beliefs/opinions about online education in general have not changed over the last 2 years.	26	42.6	48.1	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

Overall, faculty members were almost equally divided on whether their opinions regarding online education in general and online education at FBU had changed in the last 2 years. Of those surveyed, 48% stated their opinion had not changed regarding online education in general, and 46% stated their opinion had not changed regarding online education at FBU (see Tables 13 and 14). Only a small minority felt more opposed to online education in general (11%)

or online education at FBU (9.3%). The remaining respondents felt their opinions of online education had become more favorable in general (40.7%) or more favorable towards online education occurring at FBU (44%).

Table 14

Regardless of Whether You Participated in the Original Survey, Have Your Beliefs/Opinions About Online Education Occurring at FBU Changed Over the Last 2 Years?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I am more in favor of online education occurring at FBU.	24	39.3	44.4	44.4
	I am more opposed to online education occurring at FBU.	5	8.2	9.3	53.7
	My beliefs/opinions about online education occurring at FBU have not changed over the last 2 years.	25	41.0	46.3	100.0
	Total	54	88.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.5		
Total		61	100.0		

Comparison of surveys' results. The survey used in this study was based on a survey given to FBU faculty in 2011. A comparison of the results from three identical questions asked in both surveys might give indication of changes in beliefs towards online education occurring at FBU.

Question #1 from both surveys asked the faculty whether FBU should routinely offer blended and online courses in its undergraduate programs. Both surveys asked faculty to use a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree) to respond. In 2011, the average score for this question was 3.01, compared to an average score in 2014 of 3.33, which is a 10.6% increase of the mean towards agreement (see Table 15).

Question #2 from both surveys asked faculty whether FBU should routinely offer blended and/or online courses in its graduate programs. Both surveys asked faculty to use a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree) to respond. In 2011, the average score for this question was 3.52, compared to an average score in 2014 of 3.94, which is an 11.9% increase of the mean towards agreement (see Table 15).

Question #4 from both surveys asked faculty whether they would support or oppose offering blended and/or online courses in their department or school. Both surveys asked faculty to use a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Oppose to 5=Strongly Support) to respond. In 2011, the average score for this question was 3.13, compared to an average score in 2014 of 3.35, which is a 7% increase of the mean towards supporting online courses in their department or school (see Table 15).

Table 15

Comparison of Survey Results From Three Identical Questions Asked in 2011 and 2014

Question	Average Likert score in 2011	Average Likert score in 2014
#1 FBU should routinely offer blended and online courses in its undergraduate programs.	3.01 (Neither Agree or Disagree) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree	3.33 (Neither Agree or Disagree) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree
#2 FBU should routinely offer blended and/or online courses in its graduate programs.	3.52 (Neither Agree or Disagree) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree	3.94 (Neither Agree or Disagree) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree
#4 Would you support or oppose OE in your department or school?	3.13 (Neither Oppose or Support) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree	3.35 (Neither Oppose or Support) 1=Strong Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree

Interview question responses. Interview question #9 asked: Have your beliefs about online education changed in any way over the last 2 or 3 years? Four out of the twelve faculty interviewed indicated that their beliefs about online education have not changed over the last 2 or 3 years. Three of these four faculty have the same supportive outlook of online education while the fourth faculty mentioned here is still undecided in supporting or opposing online education Eight of the twelve faculty did indicate that their beliefs have changed toward online education. Two of these eight reported being either more negative or fearful of online education than they were 2 or 3 years ago. One interviewee reported being both more enthusiastic while at the same time being more skeptical. Five of the eight faculty who said that their beliefs toward online

education have change indicated that they were at least more accepting of online education (See Table 16).

Table 16

Interviewees Responses to Whether Their Beliefs About Online Education Have Changed Over the Last 2 or 3 Years

Interviewee #	Have your beliefs about online education changed in any way over the last 2 or 3 years?
1	No. Still in the middle.
2	Yes. It is more positive.
3	Yes. More enthusiastic and more skeptical.
4	Yes. I think it is a reality now. I think it's an economic necessity.
5	No, not significantly. If any change, it is in [realizing] how much work it takes to do an online course.
6	No. Still very favorable to online education.
7	Yes, but in ambivalent ways.
8	Yes. We can do more than we used to.
9	No. Has always been an advocate for online and hybrid.
10	Yes. I have grown more fearful.
11	Yes. It has gotten more negative.
12	Yes. It is more positive.

Factors That Prompted Changes in Beliefs About Online Education

Research question #3: What factors have served as catalysts to the evolution of beliefs about online education? To answer this research question, written open responses from question #26 of the survey, and transcribed responses to question #10 from the interview were combined and categorized into themes. However, it is not known if some of the survey respondents are also part of the faculty interviewed for this study. Therefore, some of the opinions of survey respondents may also appear in the interview responses. Of the 54 survey respondents completing the survey, 22 of the respondents provided responses to question #26: What factors contributed to the change in your beliefs about online learning? Interview question #10 was similar in its wording: What factors have caused you to think differently about online education?

The following themes emerged from coding the survey and interview responses:

- *External Factors*: Issues related to economic viability, improvements in technology resources, the changing environment in higher education, and access.
- *Information and Opinions Gathered from Trusted Sources*: These sources could have included journal articles, blogs, reports, professional organizations, government resources etc., and also communication with friends, family, colleagues, and administration.
- *Personal Experience*: A direct personal involvement in either teaching an online and/or a hybrid class; or being a student in an online and/or a hybrid class; or by being a participant in professional development training on how to teach an online and/or a hybrid course. Also included in this theme is the personal

experience that one faculty had in opposing online education at FBU and in witnessing a shifting of power away from faculty governance.

Tables 17, 18 and 19 contain the responses to survey question #26 and interview question #10. The responses were grouped by table according to their alignment to the three themes. Once grouped into themes, responses from the survey were cited first, followed by responses from the interviewees. Some of the responses touched on more than one theme. When possible, such responses were divvied up, with each part placed in the appropriate theme if the integrity of the comment could be maintained. If the integrity of the comment could not be maintained when the effort was made to split it up, the entire comment was placed with the theme that best characterizes the comment as a whole.

Table 17

Survey and Interview Comments Regarding External Factors That Served as Catalysts To Evolving Beliefs About Online Education.

Quote Synopsis *-External Factors-*	Quotes Regarding *External Factors* Theme
Survey Respondent #2	FBU must move in this direction to stay current for our future students and they learning is occurring in the year [*sic*].
Survey Respondent #4	We need to provide what students are wanting. Online education is what this generation of learners are using daily, ie: smartphone, tablet, etc.
Survey Respondent #6	Economic necessities.

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*External Factors*-	Quotes Regarding *External Factors* Theme
Survey Respondent #9	In the School of Education, we need to prepare candidates for the 21st century and many K-12 schools also have on-line learning. Our students need to know what quality on-line learning is whether they teach that format in the future or not.
Survey Respondent #10	University's financial commitments and recognizing the lack of access some have to the traditional FBU experience.
Survey Respondent #11	Increased performance of technology tools and financial aspects for students.
Survey Respondent #12	[M]ore institutions experimenting with it and learning how to optimize the experience.
Survey Respondent #17	Online education is a good way to extend education to those who are in the third world. Online also offers a great source to the late bloomer who needs more skills and confidence to compete in a fast growing world.
Survey Respondent #18	We need the income / profit that online provides.
Survey Respondent #20 The majority of classes in the future will be in	I believe that online learning is going to be the future of the majority of classes, and would actually ease some of the current stresses we see with students. Being able to read the material and comment when free throughout the week, rather than have to sit in a classroom and be lectured to for hours on end, will promote each student learning in a way that suits each of them best. While some are concerned about an increase in cheating through using online

(continued)

Quote Synopsis -*External Factors*-	Quotes Regarding *External Factors* Theme
OE. OE can benefit student learning. Cheating may be an issue in OE, but no more so than in tradition courses.	technology, I don't foresee that to be a bigger issue than it is with traditional testing. One can analyze the scores, look at how long it took students to take a particular test, what IP address they accessed the site from, and was it taken simultaneously as anyone else, etc. These are all clues to discover cheating, should it occur.
Survey Respondent #22	It is inevitable, but that doesn't mean it's a good thing. If it wasn't for the cap and money we wouldn' t be doing it.
Interviewee #4	I think the only factor has been economic. That has changed my belief. I just think administrators feel like this is the only way that schools can survive and so we're all going there.
Interviewee #9 "Financial pressures from the outside make a difference…"	I think as faculty in private university, each one of us considers how we can be more effective with the dollars that we have, not going to lie here, I think the financial climate required the university to really look at their pedagogy, and see how we could improve it. Financial pressures from the outside make a difference, maybe not for me, but maybe for the university.

Table 18

Survey and Interview Comments Regarding Information and Opinions from Trusted Sources Served as Catalysts to Evolving Beliefs About Online Education

Quote Synopsis *-Trusted Sources-*	Quotes Regarding *Trusted Sources* Theme
Survey Respondent #1 Data collected on student outcomes in the various formats have been important catalysts.	Data. Bowen's Higher Education in a digital age has been important. Arum's Academically Adrift has shown the failures of the traditional classroom. We know certain things now. All online helps access, but doesn't perform as well for student outcomes, although not substantially less. Face-to-face has substantial problems in the educational module used most commonly by professors. The blended/hybrid format shows some enhancement of student achievement of outcomes, while also allowing between 26-54% savings. The categories bleed into each other, and most assessment studies have produced anecdotal, rather than rigorous results. Carnegie Mellon has produced the most reliable results for a statistics class taught via blended format.
Survey Respondent #7	More knowledge of how online learning can be done well.
Survey Respondent #8	*1.* The questionable assumption that online education will generate additional income for [FBU]. *2.* The impression, received from reports by a faculty member of my department who is experimenting with hybrid courses, that such courses amount to independent studies with a bit of face-to-face time.
Survey Respondent #9	Graduate students like on-line learning and appreciate a course with some on-line included
Survey Respondent #15	More time actually thinking about the concept of online education. More thought put into what makes for a good education and passion for teaching/learning. More discussion with students

(continued)

Quote Synopsis *-Trusted Sources-*	Quotes Regarding *Trusted Sources* Theme
	regarding all of it.
Survey Respondent #19	Better knowledge about designing coursework to teach on-line.
Interviewee #11 Discussions with peers and with students have led to an increase in negative beliefs about OE.	Frankly, it's gotten more negative just because of both the infatuation with it, but also beginning to see increasing discussion of it among peers at other places and research on some of these massive open online courses, things like that, and seeing some of the limitations of it, and then, like I said before, so many students conveying their negative experiences with it again, and again, and again, and feeling like that was the biggest waste of time they've ever done. They got it out of the way. It's done, but none of them ever coming back with, "Whoa, that's a positive thing."
MOOCs have their place for certain people, but not traditional undergraduate students.	Yeah. I'm, I'd say, I don't see any change in that trajectory. I think about this entirely in terms of 18-22 year old traditional students going to college. That's the cohort I'm thinking of there. As far as there are some possibilities, frankly, I look at some of these things about big massive open online course somewhere and I think that looks interesting to me. I might enjoy taking that, but it turns out that apparently that's typical. I saw one study said that something like 70% of the people who sign up for those courses already have a college degree, so it's basically just they're like me: Oh that looks interesting and we have a lot of interest, so we do things because we're interested in it. Yeah, I do see that in maybe focused things, specialized things. I was intrigued by something I was reading not long ago. Harvard is piloting an online, three courses for humanities students. You pay them $1,000. You take these three courses. Their three top courses online with the three big business professors and get a business literacy certificate or something like

(continued)

Quote Synopsis *-Trusted Sources-*	Quotes Regarding *Trusted Sources* Theme
	that. To me, it sounded like that might actually be a valuable thing. You get an undergraduate degree in history from somewhere like [FBU], but you think, "Man I could use a little more help in business literacy," or something like that. Here are the three best Harvard business professors, and I can take three of them for $1,000. That might be worthwhile, but it's Harvard and its three best at Harvard, and you already have, you've already basically completed and undergraduate degree. That, to me, is that is the kind of thing online stuff can do.
Interviewee #12	I think just knowledge in general about what online learning is and what can be done with it. Just correcting ignorance, maybe.

Table 19

Survey and Interview Comments Regarding Personal Experience That Served as Catalysts to Evolving Beliefs About Online Education

Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
Survey Respondent #3 Teaching online "feels soulless and manufactured…"	I teach an online class for a different university. It is taught completely online. The format is not ideal for the humanities courses that I teach, but it could work in other departments. However, it feels soulless and manufactured, so it is not a method that I would want used at a school like FBU.
Survey Respondent #9 "I have gone through some training and understand how to design a quality course."	I have gone through some training and understand how to design a quality course. I have seen the courses that have been designed and there is more accountability, more rigor in content and assessment and a conscious decision to include faith in each course.

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Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
Survey Respondent #14	The training that goes into preparing professors for the creation of the courses is far more rigorous than that for traditional courses. (It is not known if this determination was made by personal experience or by information gathered from trusted sources.)
Survey Respondent #16	I am currently teaching a course with 30% online capabilities and currently collaborating to potentially re-develop a face-to-face course to see if it can be redesigned as an online course.
Survey Respondent #21	Frustrated that the campus is moving away from its mission of serving. Need to have more programs and pedagogy that positions students to serve.
Interviewee #1 "…they had us watch a lot of lectures on ... a lot of lectures on the computer. I got to tell you, I hated that."	I think my opinions haven't changed because I haven't been absolutely opposed to online learning. I've had some questions. For instance, when I took [the training on how to teach online], they had us watch a lot of lectures on ... a lot of lectures on the computer. I got to tell you, I hated that. It's like I hate that. I do not want to go on and sit and watch lectures on the computer. Everybody is saying, lectures are bad in the classroom, why are we saying it's good on the computer? I don't know. That being said, my [relative] had a great class at [a seminary] where, in fact, that required people to immerse in the community. It was a cross-cultural intercultural type class. Then that was a good class. That was really well done.
"I've seen it work and not work. I've tried to continue to look… If I did not look at this, I think I would be really remiss in many ways,	You use, you post the right questions. You may think you do the right kind of assignments. You spark the right dialogue. I think it works. I'm not been, "No way, it's terrible. Does that make sense?" I think watching lectures all the time would be awful. Having good ... just asking good questions, facilitating good activities then

(continued)

Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
negligent in my own professional development."	can be mediated through distance, I think it can be very effective. Like I said, I've not been absolutely one way or the other. So, that's why ... and so I keep trying to learn and that's why also I've changed that much because I'm still not absolutely one way or the other. There are advantages and I think there are disadvantages. I think there are appropriate context and I think there are inappropriate context. Generally, the stuff that I've been reading typically, my opinions have been formed by other data and other information. Typically, my opinions have remained supported. They haven't changed. But if I was one way or the other, then I think they would change, if that made sense, because I thought I had ... let's wait and see. Let's try to figure this out. Let's see how it goes. That's why I think they haven't changed much because I haven't been really ideologically driven one way or the other. I've seen it work and not work. I've tried to continue to look. I think it's important to know and understand, especially in our day and age. If I did not look at this, I think I would be really remiss in many ways, negligent in my own professional development.
Interviewee #2 "The factors that have caused my change is my own education and my own experience and training in online education."	The factors that have caused my change is my own education and my own experience and training in online education. Now at least I know that there are very strong options and possibilities for designing online education and participating in online education. But it also solidifies for me that there are still plenty of online experiences that are not of quality. Because I know what it takes to make it quality and without the rigorous expectations that we are being held under at my university to actually deliver an online course, I can see that there are plenty of online courses that do, in

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Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
	fact, keep me with the attitude that some of them are just not very good.
Interviewee #3	Experience, students, reading.
Interviewee #5 The "general railroading from the administration" caused a more negative view of OE.	Just the general railroading from the administration, the general like "This is the way it's going to be!" You guys can sort of jump on board, do your jobs or whatever. Or not. For a long time you can sort of see the direction they're wanting to go, and like all of the time, every proposal that comes down is about the same and it's like "No, no, no, no. We've already benched this. Let's make a big impressive speech. Come on, guys. Let's rally. Let's not do this. We don't want this here. We are this kind of place, all of that." For a long time, a bunch of pushback, and successful, and [empowering faculty]. That has virtually gone away. That hope that like no, as a community we've decided we don't want to do that is completely gone. It doesn't matter if we as a community want to do it or not. That [if it is] a good idea or not. They're finding plenty of people that do this thing if we don't do it. …There once was extreme scrutiny, there's just almost none and it's almost as though you just get a free pass on a course if you offer it online. I mean, that's just like the awesomist thing you can do for them.
Interviewee #7 "I had a moderately positive experience of hybrid education with the […]	I had a moderately positive experience of hybrid education with the […] course, but then local circumstances gave me a much more negative assessment of it. I guess the other thing is ... Even at our […] program, this was obviously such an expedient, that we can't have a residential program for all kinds of various reasons. This was a compromise. I

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Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
course, but then local circumstances gave me a much more negative assessment of it."	guess I would say, anybody who thinks that the hybrid education, that students taking this course in a hybrid format are getting the same education that they would get if they took it in a residential program, I think those people would be wrong. It's not the same level of educational instruction. I think it's a compromise. It may be a necessary compromise in this case, but I still think it's a compromise.
Interviewee #8 Teaching in an online environment and gaining more knowledge about how OE is being done helped to change beliefs about OE.	Teaching it. There's no explicit course I've taken or book I've read. I just think maybe more communication has happened over the last 3 years but I can't pinpoint anything specifically. I just feel like I have more knowledge about things that the world is doing with online education that I didn't know about before but I don't know how I know that. I have seen, it's [creating a sense of community in online courses] a lot easier with hybrid I think. We can create that community day one and then build on that and the next time we meet a month later so the online discussion, I think it can go a lot faster. The community development can happen a lot faster with a hybrid course. Solely online I think it can be a little bit harder to do. It depends a lot on the instructor and the types of things the instructor has the students doing. There's a heck of a lot of face-to-face contact that have no community at all. It's very teacher specific.
Interviewee #10 Teaching in an online environment changed beliefs about the amount of extra work	Really my only change in belief is about the workload involved. I knew it would be more work but I didn't think it would be a significant amount more than the first time you prep for it, do a new class prep and after doing it, I realize that that was a significant underestimation of how much work is involved and then I hadn't expected all of the extra work that would go into

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Quote Synopsis *-Personal Experience-*	Quotes Regarding *Personal Experience* Theme
needed in order to teach online.	diagnosing technical problems or the extra work involved in sort of being on-call to answer student questions. All of that came out just from actually doing it and seeing how it goes.

Summary of Results

Quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study helped to address three research questions.

Summary of the findings addressing research question #1: What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education? Quantitative data from 54 survey respondents indicated general beliefs faculty at FBU have towards online education.

1. Faculty at FBU, on average, felt that the impact of online education on the quality of educational experience would be slightly diminished at the undergraduate level but slightly enhanced at the graduate level.
2. Faculty who taught at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels as well as the faculty who taught only at the graduate level had more favorable opinions about online education than the faculty who taught only at the undergraduate level.
3. Half of the survey respondents had some level of agreement that online coursework should be offered at the undergraduate level at FBU.
4. Eighty-three percent of the respondents had some level of agreement that online coursework should be offered at the graduate level at FBU.
5. The majority of faculty (52%) expressed some level of support of online coursework occurring within their department or school.

Interviews with the faculty revealed specific beliefs about online education that were categorized into five themes. The five themes were: *access; financial; quality; impact on faculty; and the mission and identity of the university*.

1. *Access*: While most faculty thought it would be good to increase access to a FBU education, there was disagreement among the faculty about the motive behind the push to increase access. Some faculty felt that access was part of the mission of the university while others felt the push for access was more about generating additional revenue.
2. *Financial*: Some faculty saw a potential financial benefit of offering online coursework, while others were skeptical about online coursework providing any type of financial benefit.
3. *Quality*: Almost all faculty expressed concern over the quality of the educational experience of online coursework. The faculty who opposed online education thought that online coursework might be somewhat justified for strictly fact-based courses but in no way was justified for a humanities course, for example.
4. *Impact on faculty*: The only mention of any positive impact that online education may have on faculty was that teaching an online course might provide more flexibility with their schedule. Other than that, faculty perceived the impact of online education in a negative light, such as requiring a great deal more time and effort to teach, making it more difficult to recruit faculty, and having faculty with less emotional commitment to the university. The most mentioned negative impact on faculty was the birthed tension between the administrators who support online education and the faculty who oppose online education.

5. *Mission and identity of the university*: The mission and identity of the university was a concern among all 12 interviewees and ranged from thinking it was challenging but possible to support the mission and the identity of the university, to others who thought it ludicrous to think that online coursework could address and support the mission and identity of the university.
6. *Faculty perception of students' views of online education:* in most cases, the faculty interviewees who tended to support online education also tended to report that students favor online coursework, whereas the faculty interviewees who opposed online education unanimously reported that students have indicated their dislike of online coursework.

Aside from justifying the need or use of online coursework with citing the need to improve access and/or the potential financial benefits, very few of the proponents of online education offered any other raison d'être for online education. One faculty member believed that blended courses are as effective as traditional without suggesting why this might be the case. Another faculty member felt that online education promoted collaboration among students. Lastly, one faculty member offered that online education gives students flexibility in using various learning modalities that are more suitable to the way they learn.

Summary of the findings addressing research question #2: Have faculty beliefs regarding online learning evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?

1. 48% of the surveyed faculty indicated that their beliefs/opinions about online education had not changed since the inclusion of online coursework at FBU. Meanwhile, 40.7% felt their opinions of online education had become more favorable while 9.3% felt more opposed to online education since the inclusion of online courses at FBU.

2. A comparison of the results of three questions from the survey from this study and the same three questions from the survey given to faculty in 2011 indicated a slight increase of the mean towards supporting online education occurring at FBU.
3. Eight of the twelve faculty who participated in the interviews indicated that their beliefs towards online education had changed. Five of the eight faculty who said that their beliefs toward online education had changed indicated that they were more accepting of online education.

Summary of the findings addressing research question #3: What factors have served as catalysts to the evolution of beliefs about online education? Faculty who indicated that their beliefs or opinions about online education have changed since the inclusion of online coursework at FBU cited various catalysts that led to changed beliefs. These catalysts fell into three categories: (a) external factors- related to economic viability, changes in the higher education environment, and access; (b) information and opinions gather from trusted sources- which would include literature, colleagues, and professional organizations; and (c) personal experience- which stemmed from a direct personal involvement in a teaching and/or learning experience within the online environment.

A discussion of the implications of these findings and of literature related to these findings will be featured in the next chapter. Moreover, recommendations for practitioners and recommendations for further research will be given.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study sought to capture the central beliefs that faculty at a Faith-Based University (FBU) have towards online education (OE) and its occurrence at their university. Furthermore, this study sought to examine any factors that may have contributed to changes in these beliefs, if any, towards online education. Implications from this study will be discussed first in this chapter. A discussion of the implications and related literature will lead to recommendations made in regards to education in general, and with regards to FBU, in particular. A conclusion of the study will close out the chapter.

Implications of and Literature Related to the Findings from Research Question #1: What Beliefs do Faculty at FBU Have Towards Online Education?

Implications related to findings for research question #1. There are three implications of the findings for the first research question.

Implication #1. In general, the faculty at FBU felt that online education would lessen the quality of the undergraduate educational experience. Moreover, there is some distrust of the rationale the administration is providing to faculty as to why online education is needed and why it is the right solution to meet the needs of the students. Therefore, the administration at FBU will not only have external barriers to overcome, such as time, training and incentives, but they will likely continue to encounter resistance from faculty if the administration seeks to expand the use of online education in the undergraduate programs based on their beliefs about online education.

Implication #2. In general, the faculty are in slight support the use of online education at the graduate level. Therefore, the FBU administration will still likely face the challenges of the

external barriers associated with implementing online education at the graduate level. However, the administration will not likely face faculty resistance in doing so based on lower internal barriers resulting from faculty beliefs supporting online education occurring at the graduate level.

The faculty interviewed for this study may have provided some insight into why this might be the case. In their view, graduate students are older, more mature, and are more self-disciplined than undergraduate students. Therefore, it seems that graduate students are more apt to achieve the learning outcomes of online graduate courses than are the undergraduate students with their online undergraduate courses.

Implication #3. Most of the faculty interviewed, even those who favored online education, were uncomfortable with the idea of moving towards more courses being taught in an online environment at the undergraduate level, fearing that doing so would be an affront to the collective identity of the university. An attribute commonly associated with FBU is the care of each student and the desire to attend to the development of the whole person of each student. This care and well being of the students may be more likely to be perceived through an overall campus-wide effort of promoting face-to-face human interactions with various levels of frequency and quality. The faculty interviewed, in general, felt that more online courses at the undergraduate level would take away from the on-campus supportive community and its ability to nurture and promote the well-being of the whole person in their students. Thus, offering more online courses, with its perceived inability to attend to the whole person in the students and its lack of apparent dynamic human interaction would run counter to the established identity of the university.

One way to keep some of the face-to-face human interaction while giving faculty and students a measured online experience is to incorporate more hybrid coursework into the undergraduate programs. This way, faculty and students can benefit from the social foundation of their course established by the traditional meeting times and yet have access to an online instructional modality that can serve to broaden and deepen the teaching and learning experience.

It should be noted that faculty acceptance of online education may not mean that faculty think online education is a worthy learning option for their students. In the case of FBU, many faculty concede that online education can and maybe should occur, but few faculty suggested that online education is a fertile learning environment for students. It may be that the FBU faculty accept online education's use because of external pressures, like access, financial, following the lead of what most other universities are doing, and administrative wishes, but they are really not convinced that it is commendable educational experience for students.

Literature related to the findings for research question #1. The following section will connect the study's findings from research question #1 to existing literature.

Online education's impact on quality and/or learning outcomes. Faculty at FBU felt that incorporating online education would lessen the quality of the undergraduate educational experience. This finding is very much in line with what Allen et al. (2012) found among the 4,564 faculty who participated in their study. Nearly two-thirds of faculty they surveyed thought that online education would lead to inferior learning outcomes. However, the Allen et al. (2012) study did not make any distinction between the faculty opinions of undergraduate courses versus graduate level courses, while in this study, a distinction was made between the two. When it came to graduate courses, the FBU faculty were less concerned about online education's impact on the quality of those courses.

According to the FBU faculty, administrators have a more favorable view of online education than do faculty. The administrators at FBU were not surveyed or interviewed in this study, but 7 out of the 12 FBU faculty who participated in the interviews indicated the administrators at FBU support online education more so than do the FBU faculty. If this is an accurate representation of the conflicting views of faculty and administrators' towards OE, it would be in agreement with the findings of at least two studies, Allen et al. (2012), and Allen, Seaman, Hill, and Poulin (2015). Results from these two studies confirm the disparity between administrators' support of online education and faculty support of online education.

Allen et al. (2012) report that nearly two-thirds of all faculty believe that online coursework leads to inferior or somewhat inferior student learning outcomes when compared to face-to-face coursework. This low level of acceptance of OE is in stark contrast to the almost 70% of the Chief Academic Officers surveyed in Allen et al. (2015), who felt that online education outcomes were at least the same as, or at some level of being superior than, the learning outcomes of face-to-face instruction. In addition, 70.8% of these same Chief Academic Officers viewed OE to be a critical to the long-term strategy of their institution.

Implications of and Literature Related to the Findings from Research Question #2: How Have the Beliefs Faculty Have Towards Online Education Evolved Since the Inclusion of Online Courses at FBU?

Implications related to the findings for research question #2. A single implication was identified, as related to research question #2.

Implication #1. The views by faculty at FBU, as expressed in this study, seem to show a slight increase in the acceptance of online education. Incorporating OE into coursework at FBU may have sparked the catalysts cited by faculty as causing their beliefs about OE to evolve. The

process of changes in beliefs may have started with discussions of external factors (access, financial benefits, institutional-peer pressure) that spurred consideration of OE taking place at FBU. Weighing the options of this implementation would have required gathering information from trusted sources about OE in general, and about OE occurring at faith-based universities in particular. Enacting online coursework would then give more opportunities for FBU faculty to gain personal experience with OE. These catalysts (external factors; information from trusted sources; and personal experience) may continue to influence the faculty's beliefs and opinions about online education. If these catalysts continue their trend of demonstrating a need for OE, of providing compelling information regarding the benefits of OE, of gaining personal experience with learning outcomes achieved through OE, then it seems likely that FBU faculty acceptance of OE will continue to increase. However, as will be discussed in the next section, this implication is not in line with what Allen et al. (2015) determined about faculty acceptance of OE in general.

Literature related to the findings for research question #2. The following section will connect the study's findings from research question #2 to existing literature.

Changes in faculty acceptance of online education? Findings from the survey and the interviews from this study seem to suggest that there has been a slight increase in the acceptance of online education from the time the original survey was given to FBU faculty in 2011, to the distribution of the survey from this study in 2014. When comparing this finding to the literature, the closest comparable finding dealing with a longitudinal view of the acceptance of online education by faculty is from Allen et al. (2015) where Chief Academic Officers offer their opinion about whether faculty at their institutions accept online education. From 2002 to 2014, Allen and Seaman have included the question, "Faculty at My School Accept the Value and

Legitimacy of Online Education" in their annual surveys to Chief Academic Officers. In the 12 years this question has been asked, the percentage of chief academic officers indicating whether their faculty accept online education rose from 27.6% in 2002 to a peak of 33.5% in 2007 and then decreased to 28.0% by 2014. The perception of Chief Academic Officers is that the level of faculty acceptance of online education has consistently remained low over the last 12 years. While Allen et al. (2015) point to the success of OE providing access to higher education to millions of potential students who might not otherwise be enrolled in higher education coursework due to time or geographic limitations, Allen et al. (2015) count the lack of faculty acceptance of OE as a failure in the evolving development of OE.

> A continuing failure of online education has been its inability to convince its most important audience – higher education faculty members – of its worth. The lack of acceptance of online among faculty has not shown any significant change in over a decade – the results from reports 5 or 10 years ago are virtually the same as current results. For all of this time there has not been a majority of any group of higher education institutions that report that their faculty accept the "value and legitimacy of online education." Current results, if anything, show that the problem is getting worse. (Allen et al., 2015, p. 21)

Allen et al. (2015) do point out that faculty at institutions with no OE occurring at their institution have a lower opinion of OE than do faculty at institutions that offer at least some online coursework. This may suggest that faculty support of online education will increase with having OE implemented at the institution. This study offers a possible explanation of why this might be the case. In 2011, when the first FBU survey on OE was taken, FBU had no online coursework. By the time the second FBU survey on OE was taken in 2014, FBU had institutionalized OE in many of its undergraduate and graduate programs. Perhaps the catalysts (external factors, information from trusted sources, and personal experience) that helped faculty at FBU gain greater acceptance of OE might also be the same catalysts that causes faculty at other institutions using OE to be more likely to support OE.

Implications of and Literature Related to the Findings from Research Question #3: What Factors Have Served as a Catalyst to any Evolving Beliefs?

Implication related to the findings for research question #3. The following implication was identified as related to the findings for research question #3.

Implication #1. The catalysts that lead to evolving beliefs about online education fell into three categories: (a) *external factors*- related to economic viability, changes in the higher education environment, and access; (b) *information and opinions gathered from trusted sources*- which would include sources such as literature, colleagues, and professional organizations; and (c) *personal experience*- which stem from a direct personal involvement in a teaching and/or learning experience within the online environment. Since there has been a slight increase in the acceptance of online education among the faculty at FBU, the catalysts that may have prompted faculty to change their view of online education might also continue to serve as catalysts leading other faculty to change their beliefs toward online education. The implication from this finding is that FBU will need to continue to address each of these categories in order to support the change effort of expanding the role of online education at FBU.

Literature related to the findings for research question #3. The following section will connect the study's findings from research question #3 to existing literature.

Faculty who have more direct experience with online education tend to be more positive about online education. Of the 12 faculty interviewed for this study, those who had more of a direct exposure or experience with online education were generally more in favor of online education. Conversely, the faculty who had virtually no experience with online education opposed online education the most. Regarding this experience level with online education, Allen et al. (2012) reported that

> among faculty members with no online teaching responsibilities for the current academic year, fully three-quarters report that online education outcomes are at least somewhat inferior to those of face-to-face instruction. Among instructors who are teaching at least one online course, this number drops to 39 percent. (Allen et al., 2012, p. 11)

However, Allen et al. (2012) point out that while there is a strong correlation between experience with online education and having a more positive opinion of online education, it cannot be concluded that exposure to or experience with online education leads to these opinions. It could be that faculty who have a positive view of online education are the ones to volunteer to teach or to be chosen to teach the online coursework.

With acknowledgement of this caution given by Allen et al. (2012), using the lens of Rokeach's (1989) model of belief system may give more credence to the idea that having direct personal experience with OE does positively impact the acceptance of OE.

Using Rokeach's Model of Belief Systems to View the Findings

Adopting a new method or a new mode of teaching requires an alignment of beliefs that may not only include the merits of the method or mode itself, but also beliefs about oneself, one's beliefs about his/her professional and personal identity, and one's beliefs about how best to teach and how best to learn (Albion & Ertmer, 2002; Bandura, 1986; Brownwell & Tanner, 2012; Ferguson, 2004; Kagan, 1992; Lucas & Wright, 2009; Pijares, 1992). As a result, evidence of *enduring* implementation of new or unfamiliar ways of teaching and learning that are often promoted in teacher education programs and in professional development events can be challenging to find. Rokeach's (1989) model of belief systems offers a beneficial framework in understanding why this might be the case.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Rokeach's (1989) model of belief systems classifies beliefs into five belief types, ranging from Type A beliefs, which are the most stable of beliefs, to Type

E beliefs, the least stable of the beliefs types. The relationship between Rokeach's model of belief systems and with the findings from this study will be limited to the two types of beliefs deemed to be most appropriate to this discussion - Type A beliefs and Type C beliefs.

Type A beliefs are the most stable of the five belief types since they are the most central of the beliefs in a belief system and "are learned by direct encounter with the object of belief…and that are, moreover, reinforced by a unanimous social consensus among all of one's reference persons and groups" (Rokeach, 1989, p. 6). At some point in a person's life, however, they discover that many of their Type A beliefs are not shared by everyone they encounter. The person must weigh the trustworthiness of differing authority figures or reference groups in order to determine what beliefs stay in their belief system. Such beliefs that stay in the belief system as they are, or as they get reorganized within the belief system are Type C beliefs and "serve the purpose of helping the person to round out his picture of the world, realistically and rationally to the extent possible, defensively and irrationally to the extent necessary" (Rokeach, 1989, p. 9). These two belief types identified by Rokeach may be useful in understanding the rejection or the acceptance of new or differing methods of teaching and learning that are more frequently being introduced to 21st century educators.

This study focused on the beliefs faculty have towards online education. One intriguing finding, from the researcher's perspective, is that faculty who have experience with online education tend to have a greater appreciation of online education. Perhaps this is because these faculty were able to witness firsthand some form of authentic teaching and learning experience in an online course. To faculty who have little to no direct experience with online education, the online education environment may be such a radical paradigm shift from the traditional course that the thought of authentic teaching and learning taking place in the online environment may

not seem at all possible. The familiarity and symbiotic relationship faculty have with the traditional education model stems back to when they themselves were students.

As students, these faculty were no doubt successful in the learning required and measured in their own education, and thus the way they learned was true and right for them. Moreover, perhaps the way that was true and right for them might naturally seem to be universally applicable to everyone else as well. The same may be true for the teaching experience in the traditional classroom. It has been said that educators typically teach as they were taught. The instructional practice that was good and right for the formative educators who were involved in the lives of current faculty as students would seem likely to also apply to themselves as they carry out their own faculty/educator role. Moreover, this traditional role and their traditional identity are affirmed through various reinforcements, such as arriving on campus with their faculty parking sticker, going to their faculty office, associating with their faculty colleagues, and from being front and center of a classroom of students. Each of these events, and more, confirm their traditional role and identity as faculty in the same way as they saw the educator authority figures in their life. All of this may help to reinforce the status quo of the teaching and learning environment. These beliefs that faculty are likely to hold to are Type A beliefs since they are integrally tied to (a) their direct experience with their own education and with their role in educating their students, and (b) their existence and their identity which are confirmed by consensus through subtle and overt reinforcements. These beliefs are at the very core of the faculty's beliefs and are thus highly resistant to change.

These Type A beliefs were likely confronted by rising authority figures or reference groups touting online education as a viable means for combining higher education coursework with the ability to take advantage of ubiquitous personal computing devices and high speed data

networks. Online education steadily inserted itself as a disrupter of traditional education as evidenced by the compound annual enrollment growth rate of 17.3% for online higher education coursework since 2002, compared with a 2.6% growth of enrollment in traditional higher education coursework over the same time period (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

For traditional faculty encountering authority figures or reference groups who seek to influence faculty acceptance or even faculty participation in online education, the faculty must determine which authority figures or reference groups to trust. They must also weigh the level of that trust with the formidable task of altering their established beliefs of how best to teach and to learn, and of altering their professional identity. Disrupting or altering these beliefs may cause faculty to have to undergo a "major cognitive reorganization in the content and in the structural relations among many other beliefs within the system" (Rokeach, 1989, p. 7). It is conceivable that changing such central beliefs pertaining to teaching and learning and to professional identity would be time-consuming, require a great amount of effort, and that doing so might even become an unpleasant experience. With this perspective in mind, perhaps it is understandable why change efforts in higher education in general, and with online education specifically have been resisted as much as they have been. Regardless of whether the beliefs evolve or not, by virtue of the lack of consensus regarding these beliefs about teaching and learning and about the professional identity of faculty, these beliefs become Type C beliefs, which are still resistant to change.

In light of the implications of the findings from this study and of viewing these findings with the perspective of Rokeach's (1989) model of belief systems, the next section of the chapter will discuss recommendations for practitioners as well as recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Promoting the expansion of online education. Department chairs and higher education administrators who are seeking to initiate or expand the number of online courses available at their college or university may find that their faculty are reluctant to support this change effort. Providing information about online education could be enough to challenge or persuade some faculty to change their belief about online education, but most faculty who oppose online education are not likely to do so given the connectedness and centrality of their beliefs about their own identity as a traditional faculty member and their own beliefs about how best to learn. Hearing from others who have had experiences with online education, even from those who are authority figures in their minds, may hold some sway in changing their beliefs about online education.

However, as Rokeach's (1989) model of belief systems demonstrates, since they themselves were not the ones who actually experienced the online education firsthand, the experiences of others might not serve to sufficiently challenge their own beliefs. Without the direct personal experience with online education, beliefs about this new approach to education may not ever lead to sincere endorsements from faculty. This is not to say that all faculty who have exposure to direct personal experience with online education will become supporters of online education. In fact, some faculty who contributed to this study became even more convinced that online education is not a suitable alternative to traditional course after participating in an online course, either as a student or as a teacher. Some of these faculty recounted, either in one of the open responses of the survey or in an interview, that their experience with online education was, in some fashion, a bad experience.

The researcher speculates that this bad experience in their initial exposure to online education may tend to suggest to these faculty that all online courses will be bad experiences. If this speculation has any basis in truth, it is somewhat ironic given an assumption that not all experiences in traditional education are good experiences, yet having a bad experience in a traditional face-to-face course most likely did not nor will not deter current educators from ever taking or teaching another traditional course. The point being that even in this current era of the relative infancy of online education, some educators will give very little grace to or forgiveness of a bad experience in the online environment. Perhaps even one bad professional development experience in an online environment may prevent faculty from ever again participating in another online professional development experience, which will likely serve to permanently stifle any alteration of their beliefs about online education. Therefore, the online experience that faculty are exposed to should be an example of best practices used in online education in order for faculty to be more receptive of any potential merits of online education.

Perhaps another way of introducing more faculty into the role of teaching an online course would be to give interested faculty access to an online course taught by a faculty mentor and have the interested faculty take on a low-risk role of a co-instructor or even as just an observer. This way, the faculty member who is new to online education can get a feel for the variety of ways of engaging students with the content of the course, or to get a sense of how the mentor establishes a sense of community with their online students, or to understand the ways the mentor may evaluate the student learning outcomes from the course.

Faculty who have gained a comfort level with engaging online teaching modalities might be ready to teach a hybrid course, which would give them more experience with the online

teaching/learning environment while still maintaining the familiar instructional footing of their traditional classroom setting.

Offering professional development opportunities. Change efforts and professional development events aimed at changing pedagogy or incorporating new strategies are not likely to be successful if the changes run counter to the personal and professional identity faculty have about themselves. Perhaps the most effective way of changing that belief is to have faculty experience the change for themselves. Learn by doing would seem to be a better way of conducting professional development rather than by lecturing, which only confirms the traditional way of teaching. As stated above, in the case of online education, encouraging the professors to take an online professional development course may be a step towards experiencing the potential learning benefits of the online delivery, but perhaps only if the experience serves as a model the best practices of OE.

Institutional identity and belief about its role in higher education. Just as faculty will likely need to confront and contemplate their own identity, their beliefs about themselves, and their beliefs about teaching and learning when facing the inclusion of online education at the university, the stakeholders of the university will also need to confront and consider a potential altering of the institutional identity and the core values of the institution if they, as an institution, are to take on offering a permanent and/or prominent role of online education at their university. Perhaps it is even necessary to institutionally wrestle with what is driving the need for change. Is it the need for more revenue, or more students, or is the need to be like peer institutions the reason for pushing the university towards online education? Being pushed in this direction without an alignment of a reexamined and reconstituted mission and identity may, for a faith-based university in particular, lead to a hollowed and sterilized version of what it once was.

Going through the process of reexamining and reconstituting the mission and identity of the university might empower the university to have institutional integrity and conviction in responding to questions like:

- Is providing online coursework a 2nd tier education, as one faculty put it?
- Is even a 2nd tier education better than no education for these students?
- Is a 2nd tier education worth the full price of tuition currently being charged to the 1st tier, on-campus students?
- If online education is a 2nd tier education, does that make online students 2nd tier students? Or, will online students feel like 2nd tier students based on their interactions, or lack of interactions, with faculty, staff, and student support services?
- Can the university be all things to all people, or students in this case? Or, will opening access to a FBU education dilute the strength and integrity of their mission?
- Should the university just continue to fulfill their mission role to the niche group of students they currently serve?

Recommendations for Future Research

The following represent some additional opportunities for further research.

Recommendation #1. Without incorporating efforts to instill a sense of community and to encourage the spiritual formation in online course at faith-based universities, the distinction between online coursework at faith-based coursework will not be significantly different from secular online coursework. More research is needed on effective ways of creating a sense of community in online coursework and on effective ways of encouraging the spiritual formation of online students.

Recommendation #2. The FBU faculty who had at least some teaching load in graduate programs were more likely to accept online education. More research is needed to determine if this is the case at other universities, and if so, to examine the reasons why faculty with graduate teaching responsibilities are more supportive of online education than undergraduate faculty are.

Recommendation #3. The findings of this study and the findings from Allen et al. suggest that there is a large discrepancy between administrators who believe online education is as good as traditional education and faculty who believe online education is as good as traditional education. Considering that many administrators do not teach courses, whether online or not, research is needed to determine why far more administrators believe in the ability of online coursework to successfully meet learning outcomes than do faculty.

Conclusion

Despite the growth of online education and its seemingly fixed place in higher education, online education is still opposed, or at least viewed with suspicion by many faculty (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Opposition of online education can be expressed in myriad ways, most prominently through shared governance, which can directly limit or completely block online education from occurring at their institution. A small percentage (13.5%) of higher education institutions do restrict or entirely prohibit online coursework from being offered (Allen & Seaman, 2013). This case study revolved around a non-profit, Faith-Based university (FBU) that is a newcomer to the inclusion of online coursework into their degree programs. This study sought to investigate the rationale faculty may have towards their support or opposition to online education by using mixed methods to bring to light the beliefs faculty have about online education.

In examining the beliefs faculty at FBU have towards online education, this study also prompted the FBU faculty to reflect on whether their beliefs about online education have changed since the inclusion of online coursework at FBU, and if so, what factors may have contributed to the evolving beliefs. Data collected from 54 survey respondents and 12 faculty interviews helped to capture these beliefs. The research questions driving this study were:

1. What beliefs do faculty at FBU have towards online education?
2. How have the beliefs faculty have towards online education evolved since the inclusion of online courses at FBU?
3. What factors have served as a catalyst to any evolving beliefs?

The faculty at FBU, in general, tend to resist the inclusion of online education into undergraduate programs while at the same time, they tend to support the inclusion of online education in the graduate programs. Where faculty do show some support of OE within the undergraduate level is in the use of blended classes, where only a portion of the course is conducted in an online environment. The support that faculty give towards OE occurring at the graduate level does not seem to indicate an endorsement of OE, but rather a conceding that online education can and maybe should occur due to access needs and revenue needs, and even because everyone else is doing it-- but they hardly accept that online education is a worthy educational option for their students.

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APPENDIX A

OVERVIEW OF FBU FACULTY'S OPINIONS TOWARDS DISTANCE LEARNING SURVEY AND THE EXPERIENCE WITH DISTANCE LEARNING SURVEY GIVEN IN THE FALL OF 2011

Overview

In order to provide some insight into the data that will be collected in this study, it may be helpful for the reader to first have an overall view of the opinions that faculty at FBU had towards online education based on the original survey given in Fall 2011. In addition, another survey given to faculty in Fall of 2011 asked respondents to give specific feedback on their experience with varying modes of distance learning. An overview of this survey will be presented in the next section.

FBU Faculty Opinions Towards Distance Learning. The opinion survey given to FBU faculty in Fall 2011 sought to obtain the opinions of faculty toward four categories of distance learning:

1. Video-conference courses (connects individuals at different locations in real time)
2. Web-facilitated courses (primarily face-to-face but with 30% or less online instruction
3. Blended/Hybrid courses (face-to-face blended with 30% - 80% online instruction
4. Online courses (contains 80% or more online content delivery)

The survey also sought distinctions of opinions of these four types of distance learning as they apply to undergraduate programs and to graduate programs. In general, the faculty had more favorable opinions towards the videoconference and web-facilitated side of distance learning than the side of distance learning consisting of blended/hybrid or online formats. Also, in general, opinions about distance learning were more favorable towards distance learning occurring at the graduate level than the undergraduate level as the next two tables demonstrate.

Table A1

Results from Question # 1 of Original 2011 Survey

Question 1 – FBU should routinely offer the following types of courses in its Undergraduate programs.					
	SD	D	N A nor D	A	SA
Video-conference	16%	15%	21%	32%	16%
Web-facilitated	7%	9%	19%	37%	28%
Blended/Hybrid	15%	15%	17%	31%	23%
Online	26%	27%	13%	20%	15%

Table A2

Results from Question # 2 of Original 2011 Survey: FBU Should Routinely Offer the Following Types of Courses in its Graduate Programs.

Course Type	SD	D	N A nor D	A	SA
Video-conference	6%	4%	19%	34%	36%
Web-facilitated	5%	4%	19%	28%	44%
Blended/Hybrid	9%	8%	19%	25%	39%
Online	21%	12%	19%	17%	31%

The last question of the survey provided faculty the opportunity to make comments about distance learning. As expected, based on the quantitative results of the survey, the comments ranged from being in favor of distance learning to being against distance learning. The for and against comments centered on two main concerns: financial/competitiveness; and, philosophical and pedagogical.

Some sample comments regarding financial aspects and the competitiveness of the university with or without distance learning options include:

Table A3

Sample Comments from Original 2011 Survey Regarding Financial Aspects and Competitiveness of the University Relative to Distance Learning

Stance	Comments
In Favor	• There are definitely challenges associated with teaching at a distance and via the Web. But there are also great advantages that it offers in terms of portability and access for students who otherwise would not have access to our programs. And pragmatically, in the current environment of higher education, we need flexibility to compete for students. • Every national conference that I attend, I am one of the VERY FEW that teaches in an environment that doesn't support some kind of online learning. This includes the top 10% of the universities in the country and the smaller liberal arts schools as well! I do not believe that online learning is for all programs or for all students. But....it should be an option!!! • The train has already left the station. We need to get aboard in a thoughtful, high-quality manner or go out business, eventually • In my view, not providing distance learning will jeopardize FBU's very existence in the future.
Against	• Distance-learning is about MONEY and has NOTHING to do with education. The sooner we own up to that fact the better.

(continued)

Some sample comments regarding philosophical and pedagogical aspects of distance learning include:

Table A4

Sample Comments from Original 2011 Survey Regarding Philosophical and Pedagogical Aspects of Distance Learning

Stance	Comments
In Favor	• I have never been a supporter of online courses, but it is clear these or other electronic media-oriented courses are here to stay. FBU cannot afford to be left behind, due to an out-of-date philosophy of teaching and learning. • My contention is that the undergraduate faculty members who have the most significant reactions to hybrid education have not formally participated in such format themselves. Once faculty participate in a hybrid system and see it done effectively, they might appreciate the benefit of delivering select content in a medium that this generation of students uses as a primary language. • I think face-to-face is best. But we can't be left behind the times. We need to offer options. And I think its great to offer some online courses to students who live here. Every class doesn't have to be face-to-face for the undergrad to have a full rich experience here.
Against	• I think knowledge can be learned quite well via the web, but FBU is hopefully in the business of not just increasing knowledge. • I have experienced most of the types of classes listed as a professor or a student. No distance education of any type approaches the quality of that

(continued)

Stance	Comments
	which takes place in a Christian learning community that lives and learns together. Providing distance education in general appears to lower the reputation of an institution. • Correspondence school has its uses and its limitations. Online degrees are correspondence school with faster feedback. • All told, I don't believe that it's in the best interest of our students, our university, or our mission to stray too far from the model of a residential campus with predominately face-to-face education. • Distance learning is an excellent venue for self-motivated post-graduate students. Undergrads need more of the formative encounters that only happen face-to-face.

The following demographic data may be helpful to know about the faculty taking the survey.

- 82% of the faculty taught at the main campus of FBU and not at one of the three regional centers
- 61 % of the faculty who took the survey taught only undergraduate students. 24% of the faculty taught both undergraduate and graduate students.
- 80% of the faculty were full-time faculty.
- 75% of the faculty had been teaching in higher education for at least 9 years.
- 61% of the faculty received their baccalaureate degree from a Christian college or university like FBU.

FBU Faculty Experience With Distance Learning. A second survey given to FBU faculty in the same semester as the first survey obtained information about the faculty's experience with the different modes of distance learning. Of the 168 faculty who took the survey, only 98 (58.3%) faculty had experience with distance learning (as an instructor or as a student). Of the 98 faculty who had experience with distance learning:

- 43 of the faculty had experience with a video-conferencing course format
- 46 of the faculty had experience with a web-facilitated course format
- 41 of the faculty had experience with a blended/hybrid course format
- 47 of the faculty had experience with an online course format

The distance learning experiences FBU faculty reported ranged from experiences with video-conferenced meetings and sexual-harassment training to completing fully online coursework as a student or teaching a fully online course(s).

The open responses available for faculty to describe their distance learning experiences alternated from positive to negative. Some examples of these comments are:

Table A5

Sample Comments from Original 2011 Survey Regarding Philosophical and Pedagogical Aspects of Distance Learning

Stance	Comments
Positive	• I have learned a great deal in the 100% online classes I have taken and am excited about the possibilities of online learning. I hope to teach more online classes in the future. • The previous question gave no room to answer for the various on-line courses I've taken. Some were fantastic, some not. The

(continued)

Stance	Comments
	fantastic ones were some of the best learning experiences of my entire learning career. What makes the difference? The way the course is structured and how the teacher interacts with students online and facilitates them interacting with each other.
Negative	• It went so poorly, I have sworn I would never do it again. • Professor was virtually unavailable for email, and the course was simply a recording of her reading the slides. I could have done as much on my own.

Other notable results from the survey include:

- 41% of the faculty taking this survey had experience with distance learning in the undergraduate setting (whether as a student or as an instructor) and 58% of the faculty had their experience with distance learning in the graduate setting.
- 73% of the faculty taking this survey taught the majority of their courses at the main campus while 27% taught at one of the regional centers.
- 72% of the faculty taking this survey taught full-time. 9% were part-time and 19% were adjunct faculty.
- The top five departments or schools represented by the faculty taking this survey were:
    - School of Education (29%)
    - Literature, Journalism & Modern Languages (13.5%)
    - Music (8%) and School of Nursing (8%)
    - School of Business (6%)

- More than half (51%) of the faculty responders earned their baccalaureate degree from a Christian, liberal arts institution.

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL LETTERS

[FBU][1] IRB
Expedited Review
1287

DATE: 3/17/2014
PI: Dan Hall
Additional Investigators: (Pepperdine University)
Faculty Advisor: Eric Hamilton, PhD
Title: Examining Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning Options at a Faith-Based University Through a Single Case Study

The research proposal was reviewed and verified as an expedited review under category 7 and has been approved in accordance with ####'s IRB and federal requirements pertaining to human subjects protections within the **Federal Law 45 CFR 46. 110**. Your project will be subject to approval for one year from the date of approval.

If your project is being conducted in an educational setting, please note that you must also comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations 20 U.S.C. 1232g(b)(1)(F) of the setting. Please consult the host school for FERPA or other internal policies that may apply to your project.

After completion of your study or no later than the same month and day in 2015, you must submit a summary of your project or a request for continuation to the IRB. If any changes to your study are planned or you require additional time to complete your project please notify the IRB chair.

For questions related to this correspondence, please contact the IRB Chair, Patricia ######, at the contact information below. To access the IRB to request a review for a modification or renewal of your protocol, or to access relevant policies and guidelines related to the involvement of human subjects in research, please visit the #### IRB web site.

Best wishes on your study,

Patricia ######, Ph.D., M.A. – S.S.A.
Department of Sociology and Social Work
Director, Social Work Program
IRB Chair

[Name and Address of FBU]

[1] FBU is the pseudonym used for the university in this study

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 11, 2014

Daniel Hall
[redacted]

Protocol #: E0214D08-AM1
Project Title: Examining Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning Options at a Faith---Based University through a Single Case Study

Thank you for submitting your application, *Examining Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning Options at a Faith---Based University through a Single Case Study*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Hamilton, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

> (b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:
>
> **Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

In addition, **your application to waive documentation of informed consent has been approved.**

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the