



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE MARKET ON CURRICULAR PROVISION
BY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN MONGOLIA**

By

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the changes in Mongolian higher education in the context of the market and to assess their influence on institutions of higher education, in particular on curricular provision at undergraduate level. There is a sufficient number of theoretical as well as empirical research studies and publications on market-oriented or marketised higher education systems, but the literature reveals that there has been little research specifically addressing the effect of the market on undergraduate curricular provision. In the context of post-communist countries, there is also scant research that addressed the issues that arose in undergraduate provision during the transition period.

Employing a multiple case study as a methodological approach, this thesis engages with Clark's (1983:142) concept of 'the triangle of coordination' with, the three elements of coordination - state, market and academe -, and Jongbloed's (2003) model of 'the eight conditions for a market' for higher education institutions. It shows what the nature of changes in Mongolian HE is since the first new democratic Education Law that set the foundation of market practices in higher education, how they came about and what the causes were, in order to understand the influence of this context on the provision. Through the thematic analysis of interviews and document review, the study shows how the higher education reform policy has been interpreted and implemented at the institutional level, and how this context has influenced undergraduate curricular provision.

The study finds that, for Mongolian universities, academic programmes were the core factor in the increase of financial resources, consumer attraction and an institution's reputation. There were two distinctive phenomena in terms of curricular responsiveness. One was the emergence of a wide range of new courses and new fields. The other was conceptual changes in delivering knowledge. The findings of causes for opening new fields were important as these illustrated the strength of the influence over undergraduate provision by either state or market.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACBSP	Accreditation Council for Business School Programs
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADB I	Asian Development Bank Institute
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CFE	College of Finance and Economics
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
ESRC	Economic & Social Research Council
ESS	Education Sector Strategy
EU	European Union
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratios
GNP	Gross National Product
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IZIU	Ikh Zasag International University
MDG	Millennium Development Goal

MECS	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MNCEA	Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation
MSUE	Mongolian State University of Education
MUST	Mongolian University of Science and Technology
NCHEA	National Council for Higher Education Accreditation
NPM	New Public Management
NUM	National University of Mongolia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER 1 THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT IN MONGOLIA

1.1 Introduction

The main focus of this study is the change in the higher education market and its influence on undergraduate curricular provision in Mongolian HEIs since 1991. This investigation of these areas is timely and important for the following reasons. The first is that the government of Mongolia initiated the marketisation as part of a reform and restructuring policy for HE with the transitional change from a socialist system to market economy, and the market practices seem to be present at HEIs at first glance. However, higher education in general is the field that has been little studied in the country, and there is, as yet, no published research on the influence of market on higher education - with reference to undergraduate curricular provision. Over the past 20 years a great many initiatives were taken, and a number of projects have been implemented in the country's higher education sector with the financial support of international organisations and donor countries. They include the privatisation of HE, curriculum reconstruction, assessment standardization, higher education structural reform, and the establishment of an accreditation system. Considering the scale and intensity of the initiatives, positive outcomes and developments were expected. However, higher education in Mongolia is challenged by dysfunctional policy, regulations and governance, leading to a decline in standards (ADB, 2008:5). Given that there are many problems in Mongolia's higher education sector, little is known about the market conditions and the marketisation process in the sector. ADB 2010 Mongolia Report (2010: 5) emphasises this by stating that 'market research on Higher Education has not been conducted yet.'

Second, there is a substantial literature on the application of market mechanism in HE and its impact on the sector in a western context, but more research is needed in the context of a developing transitioning country in order to enhance knowledge of this area. The significant reason for this is globalisation. One of the most challenging external environments in which the higher education system now exists is globalisation and the rise of the knowledge economy (Keeley, 2007:13). These factors have a profound impact on universities. Globalisation is 'the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions' (Altbach et al, 2009:iv). Moreover, globalisation has been accelerating the market-driven environment for higher education. Thus, in this market-driven globalising

world, the importance of the factual knowledge of higher education, which greatly contributes to the creation of knowledge in society as a whole, in other than a western context will enrich our knowledge. Besides, coupled with the country's booming mining industry and its enormous mineral resources, foreign investors are inevitably attracted to the higher education situation in Mongolia because the issue of human resources grabs their attention.

In addition to the importance and relevance of the research focus, the interest in this topic of market conditions in higher education was born out of the following two circumstances: first, as a practitioner in the sector, it was my personal and professional concern over the contradictions occurring during transition and changes taking place in higher education. For example, it concerns me that after over 20 years of transition to market economy the content of textbooks on social science and the humanities, for example, philosophy, sociology and ethics books, has not changed fundamentally since the socialist era. These books still carry the ultimate truth of Marxist political ideology and indirectly the 'scientific communist theory' even though the government insists on an open-minded policy. This situation triggers the question whether we are still able to prepare the next generation for the global community. Second, although I felt the same as the general public that higher education is in a state of crisis and there is a pressing need to realistically evaluate Mongolia's changes in HE, my final decision to carry out research on HE was pushed by the government policy. The reason is that I was required to select a topic on higher education in order to receive a Government Education Loan for my tuition at the University of Leeds.

I have worked in the education sector in my country for over 20 years, and have been involved in the HE sector for over 18 years working as a teacher, an international manager and a departmental assistant. I started out as a Russian/Homeroom teacher in a local secondary school, during which time I was also greatly involved in curriculum building and the improvement of changes in teaching methods through the Unit of Teaching Methodology. After graduating from the University of Urals in Russia as a philologist I taught Russian until 1992. When socialism collapsed in Mongolia, to adapt to the needs of the new system, I began to learn English to be transferred into teaching English for beginners as there was a lack of people who knew English. I have taught English both in state and private HEIs. I have striven to improve myself professionally and have succeeded in acquiring a MEd from the School of Education, University of Leeds, during which I had an opportunity to pursue half of my studies in educational issues in which I had always had an interest. As a result I developed a more serious interest in education in general. The reading has enabled me to understand some aspects of the critical situation of education in the country, and thereby I have reflected my ideas in my articles. Some of my writings include, 'Approaches to Modern

Educational Policies', 'Public Policy on Education: A Conceptual Analysis' in the journal *Education Management*, 'Have there been Real Reforms in Curriculum and Textbook Content in the Educational Transition of Post-Socialist Mongolia?' in *Working Papers* of the Academy of Management, 'Reform of Public Administration and Higher Education' and 'Changes and Perspectives in Higher Education Policy and Management' in *Journal of Public Administration in Mongolia*. In these writings I have expressed my ideas and discussed the sector conceptually while reflecting on my own experience as a practitioner. However, these were not empirical pieces of research. Therefore, I find my current research presents an opportunity to reflect on my experience from theoretical and methodological perspectives to provide insights into Mongolian HEIs.

Finally, as the country was moving aggressively toward market economy, there were more negative consequences than positive on education overall, and particularly on higher education, my interest was more in line with the topics of marketisation and market forces which led me to review the literature more closely in this area.

The research has three principal objectives in the light of the conceptual knowledge from the literature:

- To explore the nature of the changes in Mongolian HE in the context of the market. This will illuminate the policy context by examining the government policy toward HEIs, and how institutions perceive and interpret policies;
- To examine the market conditions in Mongolian HE. This will shed light on how far market mechanisms have penetrated Mongolian HE.
- To investigate the influence of market on curricular provision at undergraduate level and seek the causes of change in academic programmes.

In order to address these objectives and shed light on the problems, the present study is underpinned by two research questions:

1. How and in what ways has the HE market in Mongolia changed since 1991?
2. How has undergraduate curricular provision been influenced by this change in the market?

In line with the research questions set, the research is intended to provide insights which could have an informing impact on the current state policy and the existing problems in Mongolian HE. It also aims to contribute to the existing theoretical knowledge on the impact of market forces on HE in respect to the undergraduate provision.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the contextual background for the study. It explains the socio-political and economic changes that have taken place in Mongolia in general, the change in the education system within this context, and the evolution of the higher education

marketplace in Mongolia. It also provides a comprehensive legal policy overview in regard to higher education.

1.2 The Mongolian Context

Mongolia is the most sparsely inhabited country in the world with a population of only about 2.68 million, of those approximately 1.26 million people live in the capital Ulaanbaatar. It is a landlocked country with a total area of 1,564,116sq.km located in the Central Asia between the Russian Federation in the north and the People's Republic of China in the south (Eurasia Capital, 2009). It is a lower-middle income country, with GNI per capita of only 3 160 US dollars (World Bank, 2013). The country's traditional industry is animal husbandry, the stock consisting of over 40 million of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, Bactrian camels and yaks according to the Statistics Office 2012 report. Since 2000, however, the mining industry has been expanding rapidly and is expected to grow fast in the near future through the exploitation of its enormous mineral resources. According to the World Bank (2013) estimation, 'the share of mining in GDP today stands at 20 percent, twice the ratio of a decade ago. The economy grew by 17.3 percent in 2011, compared to 6.4 percent GDP growth in 2010. GDP is expected to grow at a double digit rate over the period from 2013 to 2017'.

Mongolia like many eastern European countries is also transitioning from communism and a planned economy to a market economy. It was the second country in the world to declare communism in 1924. After being under the communist regime with a single-party system for almost 70 years, Mongolia held its first free election in 1990, and the first democratic Constitution was approved in 1992. For the first time in the history of the country, the Constitution declared the ultimate principles of the State to be democracy, justice and freedom. Overall, the political transition from communism to democracy was smooth and 'it is considered that Mongolians enjoy more political freedom than the populations of any other former communist country in the Central Asian region. Only Eastern European countries are comparable to Mongolia in this sense' (Fish, 2001, cited in Yano, 2012:3).

Yet, the transition from a centrally planned command economy to a market economy had drastic consequences. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the country suffered a severe economic and financial shock. The reason was that from 1924 until 1990, Mongolia had close economic ties with only socialist bloc countries and the CMEA through which it received a great amount of assistance. The USSR alone provided an annual aid that reached 30-32 percent of

Mongolia's Gross Domestic Product (Robinson, 1995:3) and trade with the Soviet bloc accounted for more than 90 percent of all imports and exports (Lee, 1993). One illustration of the extreme consequences is seen in the GNP, 'which changed from an estimated US \$1600 per capita before 1991 to US\$463 afterwards' (Wu, 1994 cited in Robinson, 1995: 2). Another illustration of the economic shock is the inflation rate that shot up to 320 percent in 1992 from an already high figure of 120 percent in 1991 (Goyal, 1999 cited in Yano, 2012:4). Moreover, food and other supplies were in such scarcity that the government needed to take desperate measures and introduced a rationing system.

In response to this 'economic near-collapse' (Yano, 2012:4), the government adopted a policy of 'shock therapy' (Enkhbayar, 2007; Dierkess, 2012) to establish the basis of a market economy by liberalizing prices and trades, abolishing subsidies and privatizing state sector assets, public enterprises, collective farms and animal herds, and the land. However, as Dierkess (2012: 7) states 'Repercussions from this shock therapy continue today as Mongolian economy has continued to experience upheavals and spurts of development and decline'. In 1991, the Law on Privatisation was introduced creating the legal basis for privatizing state properties. In 1992, the new Constitution officially ratified the existence of the private sector and protected the rights of the owner. Following the Constitution and the Law on Privatisation, in 1995 the State Great Khural (Parliament) of Mongolia issued Decree¹¹ on the direction of state policy towards privatisation. The purpose of this decree was to speed up the process of transition to a market economy and to improve the legal environment for privatisation. It also summarised that 50 percent of the domestic production, the whole of the trade and service sector, and 90 percent of animal ownership were privatised, despite the difficulties and some corruption occurring during privatisation and concluded it had been a historical step in the country's market transition. As a result, the share of the private sector in the country in 2004 reached 76 percent of GDP, with the social and education sectors amounting to 12.1 percent and 14.5 percent respectively (Enkhbayar, 2007:8).

Moreover, the country continued to struggle with its socio-economic reform not only financially but also because of the lack of knowledge and experience in managing a market-oriented society (Enkhbayar, 2007:14; Tsedev, 2008:194; Yano, 2012:5). During this transformation, Mongolia had no choice other than to embrace the international community - IMF, WB and ADB (Enkhbayar, 2007:1) - and the condition to accept the key economic policies imposed by these organisations to receive financial support. Enkhbayar was critical of the fact that policy makers had few policy options other than to follow the proposals of external advisors, who lacked knowledge of the working conditions of Mongolia's economy;

they ignored everything built for 70 years. In addition, early on in the transition period, policymaking was incoherent and fragmented, poorly sequenced' and 'policy measures were introduced without public debate or explanation leading to low levels of public understanding and support' (Enkhbayar, 2007:13). For example, the reforms introduced in education were 'mostly ad-hoc and donor-driven' (Yano, 2012:12) and as a result they were 'slow in implementation and revision of the reform items' (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2006:12).

After two decades of transition towards a free-market economy, the country is still struggling with poverty and unemployment. Poverty remains one of the major social concerns for the government. In 2012, according to the World Bank, 39.2 percent of Mongolians were living below the national poverty line. The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty Index (HPI) includes Mongolia as one of the fifty poorest countries in the world (Pastore, 2009). In 2006, its ranking was 116 (HDI) and 42 (HPI), which by 2012 had improved to 108 (HDI). Youth unemployment is another major problem for the country where for those in 2012 aged 15-24 years unemployment was as high as 21.1 percent, while the rate among the youth aged 20–24 years was even higher at 23.1 percent (ILO) as of 2012.

In the context of this political, socio-economic condition, the education system has been transformed and undergone a major transition to a market orientation.

1.3 Change in the Education System

Until 1990, the state of Mongolia like other communist countries heavily invested in education. In 1990, for example, education received the largest share of government expenditure (17.6 percent; 11.3 percent of GDP) and the adult literacy rate was estimated to be 93 percent (Robinson, 1995:3). Moreover, 'the achievements in education (gross enrolment ratios of 98% in primary schools, 85% in secondary schools, and 17% in higher education), which compared favourably with those in middle income countries, were secured through a high level of investment made possible by assistance from the former Soviet Union and CMEA' (Mongolia: Education Sector, ADB, 2008). Therefore, education was one of the important achievements of Mongolia during the socialist era. The education system of the country was similar to the Soviet and Eastern European model until the end of 1989. This means the entire system of education including higher education was under the total state control. Most importantly, education was free at all levels and the system was entirely subsidized by the state. The state was fully responsible for the policy-making, human power planning, curriculum content and development.

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and CMEA, there have been tremendous changes in the education system. The transition has been from a 'rather extreme model of socialism to a rather extreme model of capitalism' like in some eastern European countries (Bray, Davaa, Spaulding, & Weidman, 1994). In 1991 the new Education Law of the Republic of Mongolia was first adopted. This new law, which set the education reform, was a reflection of the new government's pledge to create a market-oriented economy to accommodate the new socio-economic demands of the country. The Education Law (2002) stipulates the allocation of at least 20 percent of the government's budget to education. It has not yet reached this goal, being approximately only 15 percent (Yano, 2012:17). The reform has affected all aspects of education: organization and structure, the curriculum content, language policy, and teachers' workload and roles. 'New curricula have been developed, phasing out heavy Soviet influence and communist ideology and reviving Mongolian national heritage' (Robinson, 1995:5). In the 2005/06 academic year, the government introduced a new structure for school education changing from grades 1–10 (4 years primary + 4 years lower secondary + 2 years upper secondary) to grades 1–11 (5+4+2), a 12-year system (6+3+3) starting in 2008/2009 with the expectation of completing it in 2014/2015.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is the main body that formulates educational policy and sets the standards for each level of formal education. Promotion to each educational level is through a system of examinations. At the end of each level of education, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, students are required to take state examinations. To be admitted to HEIs, graduates of schools are required to take a general education examination. Until recently, every institution used to organise its own entrance examination created by their own academic staff. In 2006, this was changed to a single general examination system for all institutions. The score of the general examination is valid for any HEI in Mongolia and enables a student to compete with others by his general exam scores to register with several HEIs. The current structure of Mongolia's education system is as shown below in the Table 1.1.

Table 1-1 Structure of Mongolia's Education System

Figure Length of study	Age	Category of Education						
22	27-	Higher education	Vocational/technical education	Doctor (PhD) (60 credit, 3-4 years)				
21	26-			University	Bachelor (120 credit, 4-6 years)	Master (30 credit, 1-2 years)	Master (30 credit, 1-2 years)	
20	25-					Diploma (90 credit, 3-years)	College, HEI	(1-3 years)
19	24-							
18	23-							
17	22-			General education (primary, secondary)		Upper secondary school (2 years)	Vocational school	Non-formal education
16	21-							
15	20-					Lower secondary school (4 years)		
14	19-							
13	18-							
12	17-							
11	16-	Primary school (5 years)						
10	15-							
9	14-							
8	13-							
7	12-							
6	11-	Preschool education		Kindergarten				
5	10-							
4	9-							
3	8-							
2	7-							
1	6-							
	5-							
	4-							
	3-							
	2-							
	1-							
	0-							

Adopted: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2011

<http://www.meecs.gov.mn/article-396-434.mw>

1.4 Overview of the Key Changes in Higher Education

Since the 1990s higher education in Mongolia has undergone a fundamental transition due to the new socio-political and economic changes in the country. During the socialist era, all HEIs were fully controlled by the state in terms of governance, employment of teaching staff, student enrolment and the curriculum content. In terms of funding, HEIs were fully subsidized by the state. Moreover, every student used to receive a monthly stipend for living along with free accommodation, if needed, in addition to a free education service. The government allocated a large proportion of expenditure on education and students received generous stipends every month. As an example, in Mongolia educational expenditure exceeded 10 percent of the total GDP (Bray, Davaa, Spaulding & Weidman, 1994). As one of the former socialist countries, Mongolia's higher education system was modelled on that of the Soviet Union. This meant that there was a high degree of specialisation by having single discipline institutions. Until the end of 1989, there were eight such institutions such as the Institute of Medicine, Technical Institute, Institute of Agriculture, Institute of Foreign Languages, Teachers' Institute and Military Institute. Most of these, following the Soviet model, provided 5 years of study to diploma level. Later in the 1990s, this five year study was considered to be equal to a bachelor and a masters' degree together, and therefore many people who, during communism, had five to six years of study at HEIs (including at Soviet Union universities) were re-issued with a masters' diploma. Notwithstanding the field of study they chose, all students were taught the main ideologies of Marxism, Leninism and atheism. Under this regime, graduates were subject to the state's strict manpower planning similar to many other former communist countries. Reisz (1994:283) describes this policy in the context of Romanian higher education:

The graduates of any Romanian higher education institution prior to 1990 had to go through a period of compulsory employment after their studies at a workplace they had to choose from a rather short list prepared by the Ministry.

Line ministries responsible for every HEI in their respective areas would allocate jobs to all graduates so that no one was left without a workplace. But since there was a strict selection process by examination to enter the limited number of higher education institutions, under socialism higher education was not accessible to all who wanted to acquire it, nor choice of employment.

However, all these privileges of higher education under socialism were dramatically restructured as the wind of change swept the whole society. One of the immediate effects in higher education was the funding system. There was a sudden cut in state funding of state

HEIs due to the economic hardship and pressure exerted by international financing organisations. Yano (2012: 13) states:

In 1990, education received the largest share of the government expenditure (18.5 percent, as calculated by the Asian Development Bank, 2008) and the education sector employed more than 10 percent of the workforce (Wu, 1994). This level of expenditure and labor was perceived as being too high and was heavily criticized by international financial organizations (World Bank, 2002). Then, between 1990 and 1992 real expenditure on education declined by 56 percent. At the same time, IMF and development banks imposed several cost-cutting and recovery measures, including freezing capital investment, retrenching non-teaching staff, introducing partial cost recovery for kindergartens and boarding schools, and charging fees at the post-secondary and higher education levels.

In the early 1990s, higher education already began to encounter financial difficulties. As a result, state HEIs began to introduce tuition fees in 1993, while the establishment of privately owned institutes began to emerge leading to the beginning of higher education expansion. According to the 2005 Education Study by the ministry, until 1997 the Central Finance and Education Authorities used to determine first the amount of tuition fee to be charged, and then the amount of financing to be allocated from the state budget. However, from 1997 the government began to finance only maintenance costs or fixed costs such as heating, electricity and water. Starting from 2003 the state budget for the fixed costs allocated to HEIs stopped completely. State HEIs were run like private institutions until the late 2000s when the budget for fixed costs was reintroduced again. During this time HEIs were financing their costs through their own revenues the majority of which was tuition fees. Up to 70-80 percent of the income from tuition fees were and still are spent on teachers' salaries.

For the first time in 1995, the law on Higher Education came into effect legalising the multiple sources of revenue for state HEIs: state budget, research income, tuition fees, non-academic income, donations, loans and aid and other sources of income. But not much income comes from research in universities as research activities have generally been concentrated since the socialist era at a separate institution under the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. In recent years, however, universities have begun to put more emphasis on research, and this is being encouraged by the state.

As far as students' maintenance is concerned, those students from vulnerable groups such as the disabled, orphans and from poor families have been able to receive financial aid or loans for their tuition fees during these years, however, there was not financial support for their living expenses. From January 2011, the state introduced new legislation on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students. According to this law, students receive two types of national grants: national and merit. All state loans and grants are dispersed through the State Education Fund Authority under the ministry. This fund was set up in 1993.

All those studying a full time course for a bachelor degree at the ministerial attested HEIs of the country are entitled to receive a monthly national grant for their living expenses for a period of 10 months each year during their study. The amount of grant is equal to 50 percent of the minimum wage. Merit scholarship is awarded to those students excelling academically and to those studying in demand fields. Fields in demand are determined by the government. With the enforcement of this law, the Government of Mongolia issued Resolution 19 with a list of professions in highest demand, or strategically important fields in the country (see Table 1-2).

Table 1-2 Priority list of the most needed qualifications in Mongolia

List of the most needed qualifications	
1. Road construction	12. Information technology
2. Primary school teacher	13. Petroleum storage and transport
3. Pre-school teacher	14. Plumbing and construction engineering
4. Natural science teacher	15. Renewable energy
5. Geology	16. Nano engineering
6. Hydrogeology	17. Biotechnology
7. Hydromechanical engineering	18. Nuclear energy
8. Water resources ecology	19. Medical diagnostics
9. Mining technology	20. Paediatrics
10. Equipment for mining engineering	
11. Veterinary	

Government of Mongolia, Resolution 19, 2012

This law also reinforces the obligations of the government stipulated in the Education Law 2002: the fixed costs of state universities, HEIs and colleges would be financed from the state budget. As mentioned earlier the state budget means the budget for fixed costs.

The next biggest change started in the HE sector in the 1990s has been the structural change. The first 1995 Higher Education Law of Mongolia launched the transition of the higher education system from the Soviet model to a completely new structure – a tiered degree system with a credit content modelled partially on the American system: diploma, bachelor, masters' and doctoral levels. It has been a complicated process and it will be discussed further in Chapter 4.2.1.

Finally, a new system of accreditation has been introduced to assure the quality of HE service providers. In 1998 the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA) was set up to assure consumers of the quality of the higher education provided. According to article 26, Education Law, accreditation has been defined as the process of

approval for higher education institutions and professional training centres to objectively evaluate the level of institutional operation and quality of curriculum execution by a professional third party. This definition implies the institutional accreditation. The process of accreditation must be performed by independent entities and observers sanctioned by central government agencies responsible for education and issues of education. Now all HEIs are required to go through institutional accreditation, and only those providers that pass the accreditation process become eligible to receive government financial support. Likewise, only students enrolled in accredited institutions become eligible for government grants and loans. As the process of institutional accreditation is voluntary, HEIs are required to apply and to pay for the whole process. According to the MNCEA report, almost all HE providers have now gone through institutional accreditation, and some for the second time.

In addition, the renewed 2002 Education Law states to accredit academic programmes by MNCEA, and to attest all HEIs by the ministry. Accreditation of academic programmes takes place at the accredited HEIs at the request of the institutions, and this kind of accreditation focuses only on the evaluation of a certain academic unit or programme the institute offers, such as the undergraduate curriculum in law, or undergraduate curriculum in chemistry. This has resulted in the standardisation process that has been undertaken through a credit transfer system, a standardisation of bachelor's education programme, an accreditation of academic programmes, and also through the approval of academic curricula and assessment by the ministry. However, the programme accreditation process at the national level has been rather slow since the enforcement in 2002, with only 104 curricula being accredited from over 460 as of 2012.

As far as attestation is concerned, it has been inactive since it has been legalised in 2002. Attestation is different from accreditation in the sense that it sets the standards and norms, and evaluates the implementation of laws and regulations in higher education institutions. With realisation of the Government Action Plan 2008, the attestation process of HEIs by the ministry has become intensive. Although the Education Law defines the purpose of attestation as to establish the standard and norms (hereon identified as the performance evaluation) of higher education, the attestation could be considered more effective than accreditation because the former is more a compulsory administrative process, while the latter is regarded as a voluntary action. An illustration of the implementation of this policy was reported on the ministry's website. It said that in 2011 they attested 55 HEIs of which 14 were shut down. The key principles of attestation lie in implementing Mongolia's laws and regulations in the higher education sector and being objective, transparent and impartial. According to the 2011 Regulations for Attestation of HEIs, the results of the attestation

process must be publicised electronically as well as in the media in a transparent manner. It states that the list of higher education establishments to undergo attestation must be approved within the academic year by a representative of the government in charge of educational affairs, and the notification of the higher education institutions to be included in the attestation process must be handled by the unit of the ministry in charge of higher education. All HEIs must be attested once in every five years.

1.5 The Evolution of the Higher Education Market in Mongolia

Before the higher education market was let to Mongolia, it went through several phases. The first phase was higher education in communist Mongolia. Higher education had in fact been founded during the communist period with the establishment of the first university, the Mongolian State University, in 1942. Until the collapse of socialism, there was only that one university, and a few higher education institutes in the country.

Then with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, the country faced sudden political and economic changes that led the higher education system to move abruptly from state total control to a self-governing and self-financing system. This was the beginning in 1990 of the second phase, the phase of transition to a market orientation for higher education continuing up to 2000. During this period it was essential for the government to enact major legislation to facilitate the market in this sector, starting with legal and policy changes. Looking back chronologically at the main legislative policy documents between 1990 and 2000, this decade was devoted to the formation of the legal basis for a higher education market appropriate to a market economy. The first new democratic Education Law of the People's Republic of Mongolia (since the 1992 Constitution it is known as Mongolia) was adopted in 1991. It set the foundation of market practices in higher education by decentralising governance at all levels, and ensuring the emergence of the private sector and fee-paying principles, including the legal basis for institutions to introduce tuition fees. State HEIs began to introduce tuition fees in 1993, while the establishment of privately owned institutes led to the beginning of higher education expansion.

This transition period is characterized by the expansion of the student population and increase in number of institutions. In 1994, the Government approved the Education and Human Resource Master Plan (1994-98). The main aim of this policy document was to reform higher education and to privatise HEIs, in line with the 1991 Law on Privatisation which had already resulted in the privatisation of a number of state HEIs. The reform package and the privatization policy were carried out with the support of international

organisations. During the transition it was common for higher education policies to be imposed by international loan granting organisations, or to be imported from other countries voluntarily by institutions. For example, in 1997-1998 the government, under the pilot project implemented with the support of the World Bank, contracted out to a team of people the management of the CFE (Gantsog & Altantsetseg, 2003). On top of this, former specialized HEIs have been upgraded to a university status following the implementation of the education reform. Consequently, the number of HEIs rapidly grew to 184 by 2005 of which 134 were private providers (MES statistics, 2002). The student population also increased rapidly: between 1997 and 2000 it rose from 49 634 to 84 970 respectively.

With the support of EU, in the period 1996-2004 TACIS/TEMPUS projects at the Mongolian National State University, Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Institute of Trade and Commerce and the Medical University, had a great deal of influence on the policy formation at the institutional level. As Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe described Mongolia's education situation, 'Mongolia's educational reforms both before 1990 and after have been entirely in line with what other socialist or post-socialist countries have been experiencing... The "traveling policies" had the same objective - the transformation of the previous Soviet system of education into an international model of education - designed by international financial institutions and organizations. This model was imposed in a few cases, but for the most part it was, in subtle ways, voluntarily borrowed for fear of "falling behind" internationally' (2006:13).

One of the achievements of this transition period was the enactment in 1995 of two laws. The first was the new Education Law of Mongolia and the second was the Higher Education Law - the first ever legislation for higher education. The Education Law set the legal basis for introducing education standardisation and accreditation. It was believed that it would bring up the quality of the sector, which had been much criticized by the public for poor quality in comparison with education during the socialist time, through the process of standardization for both state and private HEIs. It also legalised the private educational institutions as both for profit and not-for profit whereas state educational institutions were to be only not-for-profit. For the first time this law legalised the board for educational institutions. The second important legislation was the first Higher Education Law of Mongolia. This law put into effect a number of key conditions for higher education. First, this law launched the transition of higher education system from the Soviet model to a new tiered structure. Second, it also determined the curriculum content of higher education which would consist of general higher education subjects, professional and specialised subjects. Third, it legalised the opportunity for multiple sources of revenue. Finally, former socialist total control over the governance

and management, human resources and curriculum content of HEIs was deregulated and transferred to the power of institutions. In terms of governance, rectors were to be appointed by the institutional board and approved by the ministry: they were to be responsible for the appointment of academic staff and setting their salaries. Overall, this legislation was seen to endorse the changes in higher education suited to a new society.

During the transition to a market orientation, the government also approved a few policy documents (State Great Khural Decree 06 State Policy towards Education, 1995; State Great Khural Decree 26 Mongolia's Development Concepts 1996-2020, 1996) which mainly reasserted the legislation enforced in the 1990s. These documents highlighted education as being the cornerstone of the country's development, the foundation for advancement in science, the basis for acceleration of economic and social development, and the creation of the material base and intellectual wealth of the country. Therefore, the education sector, which incorporated the concept of human development has been regarded as the priority sector for the government. Despite the adoption of a few policy documents between 1990 and 2000, there was not a single government document that specifically addressed the subject of higher education on its own. The 1995 Higher Education Law was the first legislation devoted to higher education implying that the state had a rather loose supervisory role rather than actively directing policy.

From 2001 onwards state policy has been more focused on higher education, with the intention of consolidating the system and recognizing the need for reinforcement or coordination. This can be seen as the start of a new phase. This decade has known more policy regulations enacted for higher education than ever in its history. During this consolidation period, the 1995 laws on education and higher education were invalidated and renewed with the 2002 Education and Higher Education Laws. With the adoption of the new Education Law, the state re-asserted its presence and took more control over the governance and curriculum. First, in regard to institutional governance, the Education Law stipulates that the power to appoint the rector at state universities, institutes, and colleges and the directors of state vocational schools, lies with the Ministry of Education and Science (article 28.1.12, Education Law). According to this legislation, rectors of state universities are to be appointed by the Minister of Education based on the selection process for a period of five years with a one-time opportunity for re-appointment.

Second, with regard to the curriculum, the state has been increasing the role of its involvement in curriculum coordination. The overall purpose of this policy is believed to be in setting international standards to become internationally competitive and to improve the

quality of the higher education service. The renewed Education Law stipulates to accredit academic programmes and to attest HEIs. The law also specified licensing requirements for new academic programmes and the establishments of HEIs. In accordance with this law, the Ministry is in control of the development of educational standards and is responsible for registering them with the State Standardisation and Measurement Office. In line with the Education Law, the Higher Education Law specifies the quantity and quality of required inputs for the programme or course: classroom space, teaching staff, library, equipment and class size. Within this policy framework, since 2006 the Ministry of Education and Science has been announcing certain fields as priority sectors or fields in the country. Although the first two lists were not much known among people, the last or the 2011 priority list of 20 fields has become the most influencing factor in creating demand in the market.

The state not only holds a policy toward encouraging these fields in this table but also began to invest in students by providing additional grants to those who study in these areas. In this way the state began to make efforts to steer the market demand because, as the ADB report concluded that 'there is a dis-balance between demands for workplaces and supply of the specialists. However a number of the graduates from the universities exceeds the workplaces available for them in a labor market' (ADB, 2010:3). In order to recover from this mismatch the government has been tightening the role of the state by coordinating curriculum through enrolment and supply of programmes (Master Plan to Develop Education 2006, Government Action Programme 2008-2012, National Development Concepts based on Millennium Development Goals of Mongolia, Education National Programme 2010-2021, HE Reform Roadmap 2010-2021). In this regard, the Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia 2006-2015 developed by the government was the most significant education policy document. It aims to rationalize enrolment and the courses offered. To do so it planned to increase the enrolment of students majoring in engineering, technology, natural science, teachers and agricultural professions, so that their enrolment is increased from 29.1 percent to 45 percent in total. It also targeted the reduction of those majoring in social and humanitarian science from 38.9 percent to 34.0 percent. It also aims to cap the percentage of graduates with complete secondary education enrolled in HEIs at 70.0 percent, which at the time of the document approval in 2006-2007 was at 80.4 percent

During the period of consolidation, controls were increased over the entrance of new HEIs into market. In 2007, the state renewed the 1998 regulation for founding new HEIs, and tightened the requirements for their entrance into the market. For example, according to this renewed regulation, there must be own building with eco system which complies the detailed standards set in the regulations. During the transition period it was allowed to rent some

rooms in a building to organize classes (some institutes even used to be run in basements). In 2008 the government also introduced attestation regulations for HEIs, six years after its first endorsement in the Education Law in 2002, resulting in reduced numbers. During the Coalition Government (2008-2012) especially, strict control over the attestation process which led to a decrease from 184 to 97 HEIs. The coalition also began the Higher Education Reform, and initiated the restructuring process of state universities by merging and integrating them, as they believed, to benefit the quality. Its reform goal was stated in the Government Action Plan 2008-2012 to 'prioritize not the quantity but the quality of the higher education institutions and improve the quality by enforcing new standards'. As the ADB Report (2010) highlights 'there is a high political commitment for higher education reform'. On the other hand, the most controversial idea in the Master Plan 2006-2015 was to reduce the percentage of students studying in private universities by 6.7 percent to maintain it at 25.0 percent in total. Despite this intention, the percentage of consumers served by private HE providers has been continually increasing from 2001-2002 to 2011-12 from 32.9 percent to 39.5 percent respectively (MES statistics, 2012). Private providers occupy over 70 percent of the higher education market in terms numbers (there are 77 private HEIs as of 2012).

This decade has been more significant than the transition period for student financial support. The recent legislation on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students states students will be paid a national monthly stipend regardless of who they are just like in the old socialist times. However, financial support has not been the same for the higher education providers despite the legislation. Although one of the sources of income for HEIs in accordance with the above laws is to be the tuition fees, the government has always put a ceiling on them. In addition, financial support from the government is very limited, covering only universities' basic expenditures (i.e. fixed maintenance fixed costs alone, such as heating, electricity and water are subsidized by the government) that is equal to 5-7 percent of a university's income.

As mentioned earlier this period has known numerous policy regulations for higher education. In addition to the policies above, there is another important policy on Developing Universities in Campuses initiated by the government in 2010. This policy was first stated in the Government Action Plan 2008-2012, the main emphasis being the improvement of the quality of higher education and the increasing the competition. It thought that reaching this goal was the campus development of universities in the country because it would provide an opportunity to optimize the structure for the purpose of strengthening the relationship of teaching, research, industry and business. Another reason for this was envisioned in bringing closer the national universities to the standards of the world leading universities in

order to develop competitiveness at international level. Therefore, it also encouraged private HEIs to merge to create a student population of up to 5-10 thousand and support them with land to initiate a campus development.

On the other hand, there have been continuous amendments to the legislation on Education as well as on Higher Education Law during this period in 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2009. As Yano (2012:184) stressed 'it becomes clear that they are largely correctional measures to ameliorate the adverse effects of the initial higher education reform of the early 1990s'.

Taking into account the policy review, it is very important to understand and look at different perspectives of policy makers and different perspectives of the institutions in case studies. It is also worth mentioning that there are some key themes running through these policy documents: the theme of expansion, the theme of market demand, the theme of governance and funding, the theme of curriculum coordination, the theme of student choice enhancement, and the theme of quality and competitiveness. These are the themes we will look at in the subsequent chapters.

1.6 Summary

This introductory chapter provides the contextual background of the study. It sheds light on the importance and relevance of the research focus, and my personal interest in this topic. In addition, it briefly introduces the challenging external environment for the higher education system. The chapter offers general information about the socio-political and economic changes in Mongolia, its educational system within this context, and the evolution of the HE marketplace. It also provides a comprehensive legal policy overview relevant to higher education.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the background to the current study in the light of the global trend, and to identify the perceived advantages and disadvantages of a market-driven approach and marketisation in higher education. It reviews the literature in terms of the two themes: change of relationships in higher education between the state and the market looking at the issue at a system level in general, and the influences of the market-oriented trend on higher education. The first theme aims to focus on the literature background to shed light on research question one: How and in what ways has the HE market in Mongolia changed since 1991?

The focus of the second theme on the influence of the market approach to higher education is to concentrate on the impact of the market in general, and it aims to illuminate the second research question to some extent: How has undergraduate curricular provision been influenced by this change in the market? The background literature reflected in these two themes will provide a basis to the conceptual framework discussed in the chapter for the research investigation. Finally, the chapter discusses a case for further research from international and local perspectives to emphasise on the significance of the study.

Here I will briefly focus on some terms central to the research issue such as market, marketisation and market failure.

Defining market for educational institutions

Kotler et al (1995:194) focus on customers and the offers for the market as the key attributes of the market for educational institutions. They define market in the context of education as the set of actual and potential customers for a market offer. The authors also explain who could be the customers for educational institutions by clarifying them as applicants, students, participants, donors, or any other appropriate category. According to them 'the term market offer represents a service, programme, idea, product – in fact, anything that might be offered to a market and an institution's market depends on what the institution has to offer.'

Generally, Teixeira (2006) shares a similar view with Kotler et al seeing market for higher education as the offers that institutions can propose although he defines the concept in the economic context. Teixeira thinks market as the free exchange of comparable goods and services based upon price and stresses that there is hardly a single market in higher education but rather many possible markets. He distinguishes these markets: 'Higher

education institutions not only produce first level degree programmes, but also research doctoral programmes, professional master's programmes, and in-service training programmes. In addition, universities produce knowledge related goods and services including professional consulting, research, and scholarship. Each of these goods and services potentially represents a different market' (Teixeira, 2006:13). Jongbloed (2003) also echoes the view of 'multitude of markets' for higher education.

With specific reference to higher education, Hufner (2003:341-342) provides a definition for the market of higher education: the higher education market is the intellectual construct of a place where demand for higher education on the part of students ('buyers') and their parents meet with a supply of study places in higher education institutions ('sellers'). If to express it in another terms, he still indirectly refers to market offers as study places and customers as buyers.

The most distinguishing definition is presented by Marginson, (2004:177), where he argues that market is a socially structured process of economic exchange, a process not merely economic but one with social, political and cultural aspects and implications. He further specifies that 'markets in all sectors, especially state-regulated higher education, are partly formed by government action and always conditioned by social interests.' Here the writer identifies the government control of market and social interests. He provides a constructive classification of two types of commodities produced in higher education: student goods (positional and other goods for self-improvement) and knowledge goods (tradable intellectual property). In some countries, Syria for example, market forces and market competition do not exist among public institutions because they are free of charge and oversubscribed (Al-Fattal, 2010:12). The case in Mongolian state HEIs is different where all HEIs are fully dependent on tuition fees and other sources to cover teachers' salaries and other expenses.

To sum up, the market for higher educational institutions is the offers for customers including students and other relevant buyers at prices determined by providers.

Defining Marketisation

According to Brown (2008:78) the term marketisation was first used in 1992 by Gareth Williams. There are a number of definitions in regard to the term 'marketisation'. Kwong (2000:89) writes that marketisation in education refers to the adoption of free market practices in running schools that include the business practices of cutting production cost, abandoning goods not in demand, producing only popular products, and advertising products to increase sales and the profit margin. Lynch (2006:3) shares the same view but in

a university context: marketisation of the universities has its origins in neo-liberal politics and 'it treats education as just another service to be delivered in the market to those who can afford to buy it.' Munene (2008) defines marketisation as 'the adoption of market practices without necessarily privatising the organisation', whereas Wedlin (2008:143) describes it as an interaction between university and market. All these authors share similar views on the definition of marketisation in a sense that all recognise the fact that market principles have already penetrated the higher education service due to modern societal changes. Brown (2011a:17) provides a general definition of marketisation that encompasses all the above ideas: 'Marketisation is the organisation of the supply of higher education 'services' on market lines.' However, Dill, (2003:2) emphasises the idea of purposeful policy in his definition of marketisation by stating that marketisation in the context of higher education is government policy employed for the purpose of creating market mechanisms 'designed to make universities more effective and efficient.' I agree with Dill that the government encourages market mechanisms by its policy and this can be a purposeful policy. Therefore, I define marketisation as the penetration of market practices in higher education caused by external forces. Here in this context, market practices are understood as decentralising governance at all levels, and ensuring the emergence of the private sector and fee-paying principles, including the legal basis for institutions to introduce tuition fees.

Defining privatisation

The term 'privatisation' has been defined by many authors and organisations. It is also related to marketisation as one of its types (Ngok, 2007 cited in Al-Fattal, 2010), and 'liberalisation' where agents are freed from government regulations (Belfield and Levin, 2002). According to the definition by the United Nations (1993:4), 'privatization is defined as a transfer of ownership and control of SOEs (state-owned enterprises) from the public to the private sector, with particular reference to asset sales.' Many authors seem to agree with this definition of privatisation. For example, Belfield and Levin (2002:19) define this term in a similar manner: 'Privatization is the transfer of activities, assets and responsibilities from government/public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies.' Brown (2011a:17) also defines it as 'the penetration of private capital, ownership and influence into what were previously publicly funded and owned entities and activities.' All these definitions do suit the western context where there is a history of well- established market economy. For this research, privatisation is defined as the introduction of private interests in previously state owned institutions as a matter of government policy, with the purpose of handing them over to private individuals or a group of individuals later on.

Defining quasi-market

The concept of the quasi-market derives from a description of public sector organisations which have 'seemingly' (i.e. 'quasi') market features, including the mechanisms of consumer choice of providers and institutional competition to enhance efficiency and quality of provision, but nevertheless do not operate as true or perfect markets determined exclusively by the laws of supply and demand. Hence in higher education, while student consumer choice and competition between universities for funding are encouraged, the sector is still regulated by government, e.g. regarding undergraduate student numbers and the level of public funding. In this wider conception of the quasi-market, Vanderberghe (2002, cited in Bertolin, 2011:2) offers a very useful definition in terms of 'a subtle combination of the principle of public funding - followed by State controls - with the perspective of market and competition in education.' In the Western context, a number of other writers have elaborated on the concept of the quasi-market. It is believed that the notion of a quasi-market has its origin in the proposal by Milton Friedman who promoted voucher mechanisms that would allow all families, including those economically and socially deprived, to choose the school that would better adjust to their values and to the needs of their children (Bertolin, 2011:1). Later the definition of quasi-market was formulated by Le Grand (see Lee, 2011:8). In fact, Le Grand (2011:80) distinguishes two principal features of quasi-markets: the existence of user choice, and provider competition. In my opinion, there is another distinguished feature of a quasi-market that is connected with the issue of financing. Under a quasi-market system, 'the purchasers of the service are financed from resources provided by the state instead of from their own private resources', and 'the provision of a service is undertaken by competitive providers as in pure markets' (Le Grand, 2011:80). Providers can be either public or private. For the purposes of this study, I define a quasi-market as introducing consumer choice of providers and competition amongst state organisations through state funding followed by controls and regulations in order to enhance the efficiency of central organisations.

Defining market failure

Markets do not always produce the best outcome from a society's point of view. Some markets can persistently produce too much or too little of goods and services, challenging the self-regulating capacity that economists usually associate with a market mechanism, i.e., the capacity to adjust to situations of excessive or insufficient supply (or demand). This is a case of market failures (Teixeira, 2006:10). The main types of market failures are externalities and public goods, information asymmetry, and monopoly powers. Various forms

of market failure justify government intervention which can have the shape of public production, the provision of government subsidies, and the issuing of laws and regulations (Brown, 2011:10-11). Public production of higher education takes place when public organisations provide teaching and research on behalf of the government. When production takes place in private institutions, government 'buys' education and research on behalf of society (i.e. the students). This is the case when the costs of higher education and research are partly met through government subsidies. In the latter case, the remainder of the costs is met by private contributions, such as tuition fees (Teixeira, 2006:11).

Defining curricular provision

For the purpose of this study, curricular provision is defined as the term used to describe the full range or complement of the programmes of study offered by a given institution at a certain level (in this study - undergraduate level), where a programme of study is a formally defined body of content and learning activities the assessment of which leads to a formal award of the institution (in this study – bachelor degree).

Dickeson (2010:59) points out, 'Most undergraduate degree programs require a substantial exposure to general or liberal education courses, also presumably taken outside the content specialty.'

2.2 Review of Global Changes in Higher Education

Higher education systems worldwide have been facing a challenge and ever increasing pressures to position in and adapt to the globalising world market. The main causes of this challenge have been globalisation, mass higher education, and financial stringency (Whitty & Power, 2000; Wedlin, 2008; Locke, 2011; Brown, 2011a, b, c). 'One of the most visible aspects of globalization is student mobility' (Altbach, et al.. 2009:iv). Globalisation has been accelerating the market-driven environment for higher education while it is being fostered and pressured by international organisations such as OECD, World Bank, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund as conditions for receiving educational loans and aids (Kwong, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2006; Munene, 2008; Yano, 2012), or through the process of 'Europeanisation' (the Bologna Process) (Hufner, 2003). As a result globalisation has become the most important context for universities. Lynch, (2006:4) correctly points out as this external force is 'the pressure to move education from a public service to a tradable service is very much part of the ideology of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), the purpose of which is to liberalise all services in all sectors of the economy globally.'

Another challenging factor for HE has been the massification of higher education. Higher education in developed countries has been changing from 'an elite led university to a varied array of institutions that constitute mass higher education' (Williams, 1992:65; Teixeira, 2006) toward being more exposed to market forces (Jongbloed, 2003; Meek, 2000; Jongbloed, 2011; Morphey, & Taylor, 2011).

Similarly, there has been higher education massification in the developing world but different from that of developed countries, the focus of which here will mainly be on countries in transition from centrally planned communist control to a market-oriented education (Bray, & Borevskaya, 2001; Leisyte & Kizniene, 2006; Kweik, 2011). It is believed that the United States was the first country to demonstrate the model of mass higher education as it was intrinsic to the fulfilment of the American Dream (Bassett & Tapper, 2009; Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). According to Altbach et al., the United States had 40% of the age cohort attending post-secondary education in 1960 (Altbach et al., 2009: vi). While most of the countries, in particular in Western Europe and some developed countries of Asia have increased the rate of their higher education participation in the 1980s, the post-communist countries faced the rapid expansion of the student population from the 1990s. Altbach et al. (2009:vi) report that 'globally, the percentage of the age cohort enrolled in tertiary education has grown from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2007, with the most dramatic gains in upper middle and upper income countries.' As Meek (2000:31-32) points out, the importance of the massive expansion of the higher education system in nearly all OECD nations is so fundamental that this argument led to the OECD publication of *Redefining Tertiary Education* in 1998. He further comments that a 'new paradigm is emerging whereby participation in some form of tertiary education may be expected to become the norm in our societies' (OECD, 1998:9). According to the OECD report (OECD: 37), the elements of this new paradigm include:

1. the continually rising aspirations and expectations among individuals and societies;
2. the universalisation of full secondary education, a phenomenon in most countries of only the past three or four decades;
3. the directions of public policy in many countries which project eligibility for tertiary education of 60, 80, or 100% of those completing secondary education;
4. the realisation by adults of the need to continue or restart formal learning and of the opportunities to do so;
5. the constantly reiterated social demand and human capital theses which are a stimulus to individual and social investment in ever higher levels of skills and competences;
6. the equity-based attention to previously under-represented groups;
7. the relative ease of access to highly flexible and accommodating forms of study whether home-, workplace- or institution-based.

As a result, transition to mass education and response to mass demand have led the countries both in developed and developing worlds to various key changes that have taken place in higher education in the past decades. Morrison (1998:13) defines change as a dynamic and continuous process of development and growth that involves a reorganisation in response to 'felt needs'. He states that change is a process of transformation, a flow from one scale to another, either initiated by internal factors or external forces, involving individuals, groups or institutions, leading to a realignment of existing values, practices and outcomes. On the other hand, in the context of higher education, Altbach defines reform as 'planned change', and the concept of reform applies to substantial changes in structure, organisation, or curricula in higher education. Reform does not necessarily connote improvement, it is only planned change (Sabloff, 1995:xiv). Green (1997) proposes seven types of forces that drive change in higher education: access, funding, economic and social development, accountability, autonomy, technology, and internationalisation.

Lastly, the key responses to the cost of mass higher education is that higher education institutions were forced to diversify their funding resources through the third income even if in most cases public money remains the most important source of income (Hufner, 2003:343-344). Financial stringency and seeking second or third income resulted in the marketisation of education. With the era of mass participation in higher education, public funding for higher education has been challenged, which in turn has led to the scarcity of resources in universities. One of the solutions for governments was to consider the market as an efficient allocator of resources. Williams (1992:66) describes how governments of the 1980's in many countries realised that higher education institutions were very responsive to financial motivation, like other economic enterprises, and hence governments began to view the introduction of market mechanism as the effective way of influencing their activities. He views the move towards market mechanisms in two forms; selectivity in public funding and expansion of other sources of funding.

2.3 Changing Relationships in Higher Education: University, State and Market

Under the circumstances of globalisation, massification and financial stringency in the past decades, change in higher education has led mainly to changes in the relationships between state and market towards higher education. In many cases, change in education, in particular in the higher education system, mainly occurs when pressured by external forces (Morrison, 1998; Bleiklie, 2002) such as socio-economic needs, or political changes in the country. An example of such a change is the major reforms that have taken place in the

higher education system of post-communist society; higher education has become more vocationally orientated to serve the needs of the society. Having knowledge as its central concept, a higher education institution, or university - the main institution of knowledge creation and dissemination - as Clark (1983:11) puts it 'has been a social structure for the control of advanced knowledge and technique'. As a result, the role of the university has been called upon to be useful 'to produce knowledge – for civic and regional purposes, for national purposes, and ... most knowledge eventually comes to serve mankind' (Kerr, 1972:vi). The increased role of universities led governments to place an emphasis on higher education by increasing its influence to some extent as funding. For example, a study on university autonomy in twenty countries (Anderson & Johnson, 1998:7) reported that governments in Anglo-American systems, which traditionally enjoyed considerable autonomy, increased their requirements for accountability in the last decade. Their survey revealed that it was common for the governments to 'steer universities 'from a distance' using financial authority, and they concluded that the change is happening in the direction of 'greater deregulation and exposure to market competition', but this 'by no means will result in greater autonomy' (Anderson & Johnson. 1998:25). In the analysis of higher education policy in England, Norway and Sweden, Bleiklie (2002) states that one characteristic applied to all three countries was that higher education had become more politically prominent over the years. The governments were more concerned about the cost of higher education, and therefore, 'they were interested in steering a wider array of affairs and in this sense power was centralised rather than decentralised' (Bleiklie, 2002:27). The more the procedural role of government in steering higher education, the more the institutional autonomy is affected. I shall use the term university autonomy to involve an understanding of 'the freedom of an institution to run its own affairs without direction or influence from any level of government. Government influence may be based on legislative authority or executive suasion related to financial power' (Anderson & Johnson, 1998:8). Berdahl (1990:171) differentiates the concept of autonomy using a distinction between 'substantive' and 'procedural' autonomy. He describes that substantive autonomy is the power of HEI to determine its own goals and programmes – the what of institution whereas procedural autonomy is the power of HEI to determine the means by which its goals and programmes will be pursued – the how of institution.

Ashby (1966:296) suggests a list of essential ingredients for safeguarding autonomy to ensure that 'these are widely understood among the public, politicians and civil servants'.

1. Freedom to select staff and students to determine the conditions under which they remain in the university;

2. Freedom to determine curriculum content and degree standards;
3. Freedom to allocate funds (within the amount available) across different categories of expenditures.

Berdahl (1990:171) and Neave & Van Vught (1994:7) emphasised the importance of distinguishing university autonomy from the academic freedom of 'individual autonomy' (using the definition by Ashby, 1966), that is the freedom of individual scholar in his/her teaching and research to pursue truth wherever it seems to lead without fear of punishment or termination of employment for having offended some political, religious or social orthodoxy.

Clark (1983:138) argues that 'higher education systems vary widely between dependence on authority and dependence on exchange: the more loosely joined the system the greater the dependence on exchange'. He continues that this kind of coordination, in particular state coordination has been moving from 'loose arrangements to tighter system', or the other way around through decentralisation. In the context of Mongolia, this kind of loose arrangements by the state seemed to occur during the 1990s, but it has been tightened since the middle of the 2000s. In line with this notion, Ferlie et al (2009) also talk about three conceptions of the HE system: academic freedom, state role in orienting the development of HE and the role of the market in HE governance. But this relationship varies from country to country. The world has seen another trend in which governments worldwide began to place a high importance on the quality of the workforce which led to the increased emphasis on the human capital. Human capital, 'defined by the OECD as the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being', is seen as the key factor in the economic growth of the nation (Keeley, 2007:30). On the other hand, costs associated with massification led the state to hold a policy towards market orientation in the hope of producing a more effective and efficient higher education system (Meek, 2000; Teixeira, 2006). As a result, the issue of integrating market mechanisms in the management of higher education has attracted the attention of scholars from the end of 1970s to the 1990s (Friedman, & Friedman, 1980; Clark, 1983,1998; Williams, 1992; Tooley, 1995; Harvey, & Knight, 1996; Marginson, 1997; Marginson, 2004).

The higher education system is seen 'often as a 'stand alone' sector, which is not directly or easily comparable with other types of organisation, even within the public sector' (Ferlie et al, 2009:3), because of its features of academic and institutional autonomy, education as a whole is one of the major public services of the public sector. Therefore, the change of coordination in higher education has been closely integrated with the changes that taken place in public sector management of many countries. Over the past three decades the shift

of the state market-steering policy towards higher education has differed from country to country. However, the literature distinguishes this transition taking place in the industrialized countries from those of developing countries (Munene, 2008; Oehler-Sincai, 2008). The 1980s and the 1990s are seen as the era of the reforms in public sector that is associated with increased market competition, accountability, performance-orientation and efficiency of New Public Management (NPM). This public sector reform has had an impact on education including higher education to some extent. New Public Management is the shift in public management styles (or public management reform) that “consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better” (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004: 8).

Oehler-Sincai, (2008:35) distinguishes the countries which have undertaken New Public Management (NPM) reforms as NPM-archetype countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA, Canada), in comparison to NPM-importer countries (e.g. Malaysia, Chile, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda), or NPM-resistant countries (e.g. Japan). In this context, Mongolia could be considered as a NPM-importer country that imported the New Zealand model of NPM at the end of 1990s with the support and ‘lobby’ of the Asia Development Bank (Batsuh, 2009:5; Tsedev & Pratt, 2008:198; Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2006). In order to increase efficiency and lower costs in public service, it is considered important to apply market-like competition, and therefore, NPM sees efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery in the use of private sector management techniques. To understand the background of higher education transition to marketisation, it is necessary to identify the main characteristics of NPM as it has become a context and policy agenda for education in different countries though at different levels of intensity (Leisyte & Kizniene, 2006). For example, in the 1980s England started the reforms that deregulated the university sector by raising demands for accountability and cost-effectiveness: key dimensions in the NPM policy. Though the reforms were largely top-down, they had most of the attributes of market system by 1980s (Marginson, 1997; Leisyte, & Kizniene, 2006; Locke, 2011). After 10 years, the neo-liberal agenda, one of the theoretical bases of NPM, took over China’s economic reform penetrating into other public spheres including higher education. This neoliberalism as Gray and Block (2012:114) said:

Neoliberalism entails not only government intervention to maintain the conditions that guarantee a free market for goods and services, it also involves the deliberate creation of markets and the implementation of market principles where none had previously existed.

The new policy is characterized by ‘cost-sharing and cost-recovery, diversifying the traditional mode of higher education finance in which the state was the sole patron’ (Zha,

2009:472). Leisyte et al (2006:377) wrote that on Lithuania's public sector, after 15 years of changing the modes of coordination, NPM rhetoric has begun to penetrate the higher education policy agenda.

To describe the key characteristics of NPM, I use the characteristics described by Tolofari, (2005:82-83) in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Characteristics of NPM

Characteristics of NPM	Description	Some examples in Mongolian context
Large-scale privatisation, corporatisation and commercialisation	Government disengaged from the trading aspects of its commitments that could best be left to the private sector, or run autonomously by agencies like private sector businesses.	In the context of Mongolia, there has been a large scale of privatization in every sector including higher education. For instance, the University of Humanities and the Institute of Finance and Economics and some other colleges have been privatized by the Government at the end of 1990s and beginning of 2000 in Mongolia.
Processes of managerialism and marketisation	Business sector management style is introduced, wherein top public managers can exercise a great amount of discretionary power, exhibiting and using such tools as mission statements, development plans, labour contracts and performance agreements.	Some large higher education institutions in Mongolia have their own institutional policy statement paper in which vision, mission statement, and development plans are stated. The National Academy of Governance where I work internal auditing of performance is carried out every three year and labour contracts are extended accordingly.
A shift from maintenance management to change management	Public sector managers are becoming transformational change managers.	University administrators and managers became different in managing financial resources in the sense that they began intensively to seek various sources of income.
Cutting costs	Cutting costs and applying only the least necessary amount of resources with the aim of achieving the maximum utility possible	This has become the policy of the state organizations.
A shift from input controls to output and outcome controls	Resources are allocated on the basis of a fair assessment of the satisfactory outcome; the result must justify the expense, irrespective of the process	This shift has been widely exercised in state organizations through performance contracts with general managers.
Creation of quasi-markets and greater competition	The attempts to make the provision and quality of services customer driven, and more contracting and	Customer orientation is of most importance. The ministries started introducing one-stop service for customers.

	outsourcing to stimulate contestability in service delivery	
Devolution/decentralisation	The delegation or spreading of management authority, organisational unbundling and the institution of new forms of governance structures, e.g. boards of governors or chief executives.	Schools and departments of higher education institutions make decisions concerning their own affairs including hiring teachers and setting salaries. Under socialism employment was purely ministerial decision.
Tighter performance specification	Widespread employment of contracts between principals and agents that specify in detail their respective obligations, the use of performance indicators and league tables, etc.	Ministers of the government conclude employment contracts with the agency heads and directors of state institutions. As an example, the Minister of Culture, Science and Education concludes employment contracts with the Rectors.

With the application of NPM principles in public sector, higher education has intensified its market mechanisms. But the degree of the achievements in application of the principle of NPM is dependent on how well it was domesticated in the importer-country. For example, NPM principle was not as successful as it was expected in the Mongolian higher education system which will be discussed in the chapter on Perspectives on National Policy.

Nonetheless, phenomena like marketisation, privatisation, quasi-market, managerialism, frugality and creation of competition (Brown, 2011; Morphew & Taylor, 2011; Kweik, 2011; Marginson, 2000; Marginson, 1997) in higher education demonstrate the fact that the application of market theory to the provision of higher education is unstoppable (Brown, 2011:1), and 'Higher education policy is thus an adjunct of public policy as well as of wider changes in government itself' (Brown, 2013:14).

The transition to market-driven approaches to higher education funding seems to have been based on the following main propositions (Williams, 1992; Kwong, 2000; Marginson, 1997, 2004; Altbach, et al., 2009; Brown, 2011a, b, c). One is that governments can transfer some of the cost burden to the private sector. Governments increased their political preference for privatisation of educational services once provided by the state. Another is that because many of the benefits of higher education are received by private individuals, they should pay for the services they buy. Education has become considered not only as a 'public good' by being essential to the social and economic well-being of the nation but also as a 'private good' because it gives privileges and other benefits to individuals and carries with it more social prestige. Therefore parents or students become increasingly involved in paying tuition fees and other related costs. The third proposition is that both the external and the internal efficiency as well as responsiveness of institutions can be improved under market. The market mechanism makes higher education institutions more responsive to the consumers'

demands to satisfy their wants. In this case, a government's desire is to satisfy these demands at minimal costs. The final proposition is that funding shortages due to mass higher education triggered institutions to seek ways of generating their own revenues. The university-industry link, higher tuition, service fees, endowment and donations become the sources of income. As Geiger (1996: 202) puts it 'when resources are tight, the market is a much more powerful force for the differentiation of higher education institutions and functions than centralised policy and control.' Thus the market forces or marketisation policy of the governments are seen as one way of treating the faults in higher education. On the other hand, government mission is 'to detect, prevent or repair market failures... by intervening if threatened by the increase of market forces' (Ferlie et al.,2009:5). These authors, Ferlie et al. highlighted this point that the role of market does not reduce the role of the state but stimulates the strength of the market forces. This would encourage students to behave more like consumers which in turn leads to competition among HEIs and achieves greater quality.

As the literature illustrates, there are more adversaries than advocates of market for higher education. Brown (2011b:21) describes this situation saying, 'The critiques of markets in higher education are both relatively numerous and specific, the writings in favour are both scarcer and generally less specific.' Nonetheless, both advocates and critics agree on the advantages of market for higher education. According to the literature (Brown, 2011b; Brown, 2008; Jongbloed, 2003; Clark, 1998; Kubler et al, 2010; Williams, 1992; Tooley, 1995) the following are the benefits the market brings to higher education: efficiency and responsiveness; innovation; pluralistic set of decision makers; variety of funding sources; and improved quality by consumer demand. For example, the 2010 Browne report places a high emphasis on meeting consumer demand. Browne (2010:25) stated:

Relevant institutions will be able to expand faster to meet student demand; others will have to raise their game to respond. ...Their choices will shape the landscape of higher education. We are relying on student choice to drive up quality.

Whitty & Power (2000) argue that there have been some positive innovations though marketisation and privatisation policies have not brought the expected positive outcome. Jongbloed, (2003:110) points out, 'Students and higher education providers have more room to make their own trade-offs and interact more closely on the basis of reliable information.' He argues that a key role for the government is to co-design framework conditions and facilitate interaction in a more demand-driven and liberalised higher education sector.

There is a great deal of discussion in the literature of the negative impacts the market has on higher education. The implications based on studies and arguments raised by scholars (Brown, 2008, 2011; Dill, 2003; Kwong, 2000; Marginson, 1997; Zha, 2009; Molesworth,

Nixon & Scullion, 2009) illustrate the main disadvantages of market-driven approaches to higher education. Brown's (2008; 2011) classification of market disadvantages best describes this negative impact:

- Increased marketisation leads to increased stratification of social groups and institutions. Social inequality is seen in two ways (Marginson, 2004): inequality to opportunities and access to them. For instance, according to 2004 Century Foundation study (cited in Brown, 2008:31), only 3% of the entering undergraduates at the 146 most selective US institutions are from the lowest socio-economic status compared with 74% from the highest status. As for institutions' stratification, there is 'steeper hierarchy of institutions' (Marginson, 2004:234), - former polytechnics (which became universities in 1992) are generally less prestigious.
- Institutional diversity is in danger by modelling on the successful ones. Meek, (2000:36) states that in terms of extremes, there are two possible institutional responses to increased market competition: institutions can diversify in an attempt to capture a specific market niche, or they can imitate the activities of their successful competitors. This imitating behaviour, also indicated as 'academic drift' (Neave, 1979 cited in Zha, 2009:464), creates a tendency of moving away from diversity and towards uniformity, i.e., towards the standards of excellence of the prestigious research universities."
- Poorer value for money as resources are diverted into wasteful positional competition despite the envisaged benefits of market to guarantee a more efficient allocation of resources (value for money).

Brown (2008:81; 2011b:42) raises a concern for the decrease of quality based on the existing studies and lists some of the indicators that marketisation may be reducing overall levels of quality: a reduction in the quality of student learning due to less contact with lecturers and tutors, and bigger teaching groups; a move within institutions towards more revenue-bearing activities and courses away from less revenue-bearing ones; greater pressures on pass rates, grade inflation, increases in plagiarism and other forms of cheating; a diversion of resources away from the core activities of teaching and research into marketing, enrolment, student aid and administration; separation of teaching from research at the level of the individual academic; educational products and processes being valued for their exchange value (especially in the labour market) rather than their use value to the student .

More disadvantages are also emphasised: increased internal differentiation between research and teaching; increasing penetration of values and practices of business and

commerce. Dill, (2003:154) concludes that 'in this early, formative stage of market competition in many countries it would appear that allowing the market to rule in higher education would be a particularly naïve choice for policymakers.' While criticising Browne for his market populism, Collini (2010:23) highlighted that Lord Browne encourages us to think of higher education no longer as the provision of a public good, 'instead we should think of it as a lightly regulated market in which consumer demand, in the form of student choice, is sovereign in determining what is offered by service providers (i.e. universities).'

In terms of curriculum context, Molesworth et al (2009:285) make the criticism, 'Incorporating marketing mechanics into HE thus inevitably transforms pedagogic practice from being to having, from a learning experience of challenge, risk and potential transformation to one where we mistake such experiences as skills to acquire, 'things' to possess.' As shown, market forces affect the way of teaching and the educational offerings in higher education. Consumer attitude leads to a desire of 'having a degree' for employment reasons, thus education has become a 'commodity' that can be bought.

The literature (Brown, 2008; 2011b; Jongbloed, 2003; Marginson, 1997) also states the limitations of market over higher education due to its non-market characters. First, higher education carries both public and private goods' characteristics, and without public subsidy it will be undersupplied.

The second concerns information: no one has the necessary information at the right time for the right people. This is the most complicated one to be reached by higher educational institutions. Brown (2008:79) writes that according to the market theory of information, students and others should be able to make and to act upon judgements about the quality of programmes and awards at different institutions. This theory states that it must be possible to produce valid and reliable information about the comparative quality of programmes and awards at different institutions and such information must be available to students and other decision-makers in a timely and accessible manner being tailored to the needs of each individual student. Moreover it must be acted upon by those students and lead to actions to adjust policy on the part of the providers. Brown rightly emphasises that it is crucial that 'each and every one of these assumptions must be correct if the higher education market is to function as a market. Unfortunately, none of them is.' (Brown, 2008:79)

Though these limitations restrict the higher education system to become a purely market-oriented system, the movement towards the 'market' has been rapid in both developing and developed countries. Many governments in the world want their universities to become contributors to the society, and the state is to play a regulator's role as Browne (2010) saw it.

2.4 The Influences of the Market-Oriented Trend on Higher Education

Both developed and developing countries accept a more market and economically oriented higher education sector as important to the national interest due to the global knowledge economy (Mason, et al 2001; Kubler, & Sayers, 2010; Harrison-Walker, 2010; Brown, 2011). As Harrison-Walker (2010) agrees the market has taken over higher education and it cannot go back. The most prominent phenomenon, or the most distinctive consequences of this market-based policy is marketisation of higher education. While the process of marketisation in higher education has taken place in western countries as a result of NPM reform, in the former socialist countries it has coincided with the process of socio-economic and political change of the early 1990s. As a result of social transition due to political change in these countries, the higher education system has undergone a tremendous change that leads the system to a market-oriented transition. Bray & Borevskaia, (2001:345) distinguish the social transitions of these countries according to two types: (1) transitions from centrally-planned communism to market economy: where communism was officially abandoned (Soviet Union and its satellites) and (2) remaining communist at an official level but moving to market economy (China, Vietnam and Laos). As Mongolia was one of the communist countries, it has undergone a dramatic social change followed by transition to market-economy when it publicly abandoned communism in 1990.

There are similarities and differences in terms of application of marketisation policy in the above two categories of countries compared with Mongolia. Although the two categories of countries differ in the sense that some are still communist while others are former communist countries, there are several points that are similar in higher education management to the Mongolian situation as the countries come from the same political as well as economic background (the transition from a command-driven, communist economy to a market-driven, open economy and from a communist authoritarian bureaucracy to a parliamentary democracy). Former socialist countries had similar higher educational systems modelled on the Soviet Union. As Zha (2009:471-472) writes 'The Chinese higher education system used to be characterized by a very high degree of specialization, as a result of the reorganization in the early 1950s in a close imitation of the then Soviet Union patterns.' After the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with the social transitions, these countries began to take a different path for their higher education though a number of similarities still exist.

On the one hand, in terms of fee paying tertiary education, Mongolia is more similar to China than to Russia: Mongolia introduced fee-paying education for higher education, however did

not support a non-government sector like China while Russia retained fee-free state university education and supported private schools from the state budget. On the other hand, Mongolia, like Russia, is more delineated in terms of political democratisation rather than economic terms where the key motive for Chinese educational decentralisation is fiscal decentralisation, the main principle of which was linking education to economic reforms (Hawkins, 2000). As Mok (2000) states China has definitely been going through a process of marketisation since the 1990s with the adoption of the socialist market system. Similar to China, Mongolia has adopted a fee-paying principle, but there was a complete cut of the state funding for HEIs in the early 1990s. However, the Chinese central government was carefully watching the content of schooling as the country is still politically Leninist (Hawkins, 2000). In contrast to China, the government of Mongolia officially provides the framework for the reform and market orientation. The problem was at the realisation stage where the senior lecturers who should implement it were very reluctant to do so due to their belief in Marxism and Leninism and socialist economics (Hall & Thomas, 2003). Hall & Thomas (2003:397) also emphasise that 'in policy the government of Mongolia required the market-oriented approach to higher education.' In terms of a third stream income for higher education institutions, the possibilities in general have not been fully exploited apart from dormitory rent and some additional market-driven courses. This situation was similar for Lithuania (Leisyte & Kizniene, 2006) and Mongolia.

On the other hand, in terms of private sector involvement in higher education, there is a number of similarities between Mongolia and Poland. First, the private sector has grown to a great extent in both countries. In Mongolia, private higher education institutions emerged so rapidly that the number has grown from zero to 184 in the ten years to 2005 whereas in Poland private institutions reached 324 in 2007 (Kweik, 2011:136). The main academic function of private sector higher education in both countries is focused wholly on teaching. Research is only as additional source of income for both private and public institutions (Kweik, 2011:136). However, the private sector was more active in responding to market demand in the early 1990s by offering more business and language related first degrees and courses than the public sector.

Overall, despite all the market-oriented activities in higher education systems of post-communist countries, it is still in a process of transition (Hufner, 2003; Oehler-Sincai, 2008). As Teixeira (2006:18) argues, even in Western countries in spite of the increasing market in higher education there is still a long way to go before there is a higher education market. Therefore, the effective operation of markets needs government regulation for the social benefits (Teixeira, 2006; Brown, 2008; 2011c; Marginson, 2004).

Another type of consequence of the market-driven approach seems to be the changes in academic choice, or curricular provision including proliferation, or expansion and closure of subjects or fields HEIs offer. As little is known about the changes and expansion in curricular provision in post-communist countries, apart from few (Reisz, 1994; Wang, 2008), discussion of the literature is mainly in the context of Western countries. Due to the market-oriented trend, expansion of academic choice has become consumer demand-driven because of the massification. The reason is that universities are engaged in the exchange of academic knowledge for financial resources (Dill, 1999:57). Dill (1999:57) observes, 'In this exchange there is the assumption that an academic curriculum offers socially valued attributes, which may be defined as human capital in the form of knowledge, skills and values'. Nowadays, because students are regarded as customers and consumers, the attention of higher education providers has shifted to the question of how to adapt the courses and programmes to recruit more students in the market. In the case studies by Boys & Brennan et al (1988:198-205) patterns of curriculum change were identified. The ones that apply to the study were the following:

- Negotiation of subject boundaries: growing tendency of multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, combined and modular courses. These may be seen as responses to what is marketable because HEIs regard it as a way of increasing income and winning new students. When new domains like tourism and other service industries open up HEIs set up new courses and combinations and promote inter-disciplinary links (Boys & Brennan, 1988:199). Youll and Brennan (1988) state that those institutions most in need of external earnings and increase of student numbers are more likely to follow this path.
- Course-led development: there was tension between course-led and discipline led development. Course-led development is those multi-disciplinary and area studies whereas discipline-led development typifies the more usual mode in mono-disciplinary and academic degrees. Course-led development tends to be more responsive because these degrees are more likely to have employment related aims while discipline-led development is less likely to be responsive to economic and employment demands.
- Efficient curriculum: efficient use of resources which lead to increased individual study time for students, increased size of tutorial, cutting teaching to earn more income through research and consultancy. Under these circumstances, courses that require few resources such as banking and finance may become a 'winner' because success is measured not only by what is marketable but also by what can be put together economically. The increased class size limits wishes of both student consumers and teachers.

- Student needs and demand: recruitment of well qualified students was important in maintaining status. Therefore, PR work, promoting existing courses, and setting up new marketable courses were one of important activities. However, the study did not show that student preferences were pushing the curriculum either to more academic or to more vocational treatments.
- Vocational shift: there were curriculum changes in the study to make their undergraduate courses more relevant to employment. One of the influences was student demand. In economics, for example, new and more vocational courses attracted better qualified students. But there was also evidence that more able students like in physics preferred strong academic courses whereas the less able chose applied courses.

In short, the above study demonstrates the trend to market-driven approach in the academic offerings in response to consumer demand. Consumer demand in turn shifts its focus to employment needs. In this regard, Parker (2003) was critical of the categories of the 'emerging curricula' (Barnett et al., 2001) modelled on employability: 'education = skills plus knowledge'. He was against the view of advancing universities as 'the country's employment training institutes' when employers have their own training departments (Parker, 2003:533). De Weert (1996:43) in his study of curriculum change in the humanities and social sciences concludes that employment-based response has led institutions to the creation of courses that aim to increase employability of occupations. But he said that courses organised around problem areas or thematic orientations are less stable because of their sensitivity to societal and fashionable changes unlike disciplines based on a generally accepted core of theories and methods. He takes an example of Russian studies and explains that it is quite specialised in politics, economics or law, and the more Russian society moves in the direction of capitalism and democracy, the more the exclusivity of knowledge and skills of sovietologists wears away. Moreover, Parker was not happy about the absence of traditional 'liberal education' elements in that employment-based curriculum. He questions the purpose, or values of higher education (2003:534).

What about study for its own sake, for personal and lifelong intellectuality and critical appreciation? What about education for transformation and developing maturity?

Karhus (2009:9) illustrates the possibility of this danger in his case study of Norwegian Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) degree courses. He states that 'these programs of study are being adapted in order to appeal to the latest whims of the "student consumer", rather than due to critical, analytical reflection about the pedagogical challenges of contemporary teaching Physical Education. ...an easy readable degree system is being supplanted by value for money, and in the context of autonomy and marketisation,

knowledge thereby increasingly detached from the knower and commodified.' Clark (1996:421) defines the intense specialisation on a world-wide scale as uncontrollable, and concludes that disciplinary differentiation is many times greater than institutional differentiation. He said:

Proliferating at a rapid rate, modern academic knowledge changes fields of study from within, alters universities from the bottom-up, and increases the benefits and costs of decisions on the inclusion and exclusion of various specialties. (Clark 1996:417).

Fields, or courses that do not attract students, or do not promise employment prosperity are put into a threat of being closed because higher education market has become consumer preference-driven. In regard to this consumer-driven demand, Collini (2010) criticised Lord Browne (2010:24):

Lots of courses may have to be closed and lots of people sacked, but that must mean, by definition, that they weren't offering a product the consumer wanted, so good riddance. The Browne Report, in keeping with the ethos of market populism, shies away from anything that might seem to involve a judgment that one activity is more worthwhile than another: all you can go by are consumer preferences, what people say they think they want.

Yet the market-driven approach has been questioned if it is likely to lead to the negative consequences for the long-term future of strategically important subjects. (Collini, 2010; House of Commons: Science Provision in English Universities, 2006). An illustration of this has been the closure of chemistry departments at Exeter University, King's College - London, Queen Mary College - London and Swansea University, Wales (House of Commons: Science Provision in English Universities, 2006:7) despite the government's promotion of maintaining a continued supply of high quality graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). During the discussion of a proposal on the closure of the chemistry department by the University of Sussex in 2006, the report by the House of Commons, Science and Technology Committee, recognised the market is imperfect as a means of matching graduate output to the country's need for STEM graduates (Science Provision in English Universities, 2nd Report, 2006:16). It has raised the issue of HEFCE having less powers therefore, to give it more powers to intervene if necessary to support its policy aims. The report also emphasised the importance of cross-subsidising between departments. Although it is up to the university to decide on the closure of the chemistry department, it was advised to consider the government's intention of enhancing STEM provision and to take account of impact on regional and national provision. Browne's report also puts a strong emphasis on the necessity of maintaining these strategically important subjects by providing an additional and targeted investment by the public in certain courses (Browne, 2010:47). Here as Collini (2010:24) said 'Browne is

admitting market failure: applicants might make 'irrational' decisions. The only social value the report seems able to think of is economic: these subjects contribute directly to the economy, it is alleged, and so we must have them. The Comprehensive Spending Review has reinforced this emphasis on science and technology by maintaining the science budget (which supports research, not teaching) at its present level. Browne implies that other subjects, especially the arts and humanities, are just optional extras'. In other cases, student consumer choice is highlighted as the decisive factor for the provision. Browne (2010:31) said

Our proposals will improve the information that is available about employment prospects. The UCAS portal will allow students to compare courses on the proportion of students in employment after one year of completing the course; and average salary after one year. Courses that deliver improved employability will prosper; those that make false promises will disappear.

This shift toward marketability of academic programmes may have advantages in terms of enhancement of choice for consumers, increase of competitiveness for providers by developing a new product that may lead to student retention (Sauer & O'Donnell, 2007), and demand-driven delivery that could assume greater employability for customers (Yorke & Knight, 2003; Browne, 2010). Also it is assumed that strengthening accountability and service-driven consumer perspective could lead to high standards (Taylor & Judson, 2011). Moreover, Silver and Brennan (1988) state that at the level of the knowledge fields, there are fields that have emerged in response to professional needs such as electrical engineering and business studies (Silver & Brennan 1988). They said that they are knowledge fields orientated more towards their use-value to society, rather than to a disciplinary knowledge base (Silver & Brennan, 1988:180). They distinguish eight types of course/employment relationships.

Also the market mode of operation, marketisation and the dynamics in the HE market may affect the pedagogical discourse (Karhus, 2009). Terms like employment-based, ability-based, skills-based, vocationalism and performativity have already penetrated curricular discourse (De Weert, 1996; Barnett, 2001) contrary to the discipline-led model. Some argue that those links to economic or market discourse contribute to the re-articulation of tradition and (market) relevance discourses and the (re)formations of subject positions that transform higher education (Lowrie & Willmott, 2006:238). However, others claim that a change in curriculum reviews such that the implementation of standardised review processes has turned the attention of educators from academic aims to economic aims, from multi-faceted aims of education to utilitarian, labour-market responsive or vocationally explicit aims (Arvast, 2006:9).

In addition, there is another issue is being raised with the consumer demand-driven delivery. It is the quality of delivery of teaching and learning. Due to the expansive participation in higher education, 'the very notion of a specialised subject degree, once taken as a defining feature of the system, is under question in a context in which knowledge tends to be parcelled out and measured, and achievement consists in demonstrating its successful assimilation. Most of the issues in relation to professional curricula can be seen as representing some kind of concern with the quality of provision' (Becher, 1994:238). This demand for quality increases a form of interaction between the state and the university curriculum. This type of interaction has been evident in the case of Mongolian higher education where the ministry instructs standardised curriculum at least in some part of it to ensure the quality for students at both state and private HEIs as quality of courses provided has become a big debate in the country.

Lastly, the market-driven approach to education has called for marketing devices to be employed in higher education institutions. Maringe (2005:565) even proposes a curriculum-oriented marketing model (CORD) to achieve customer satisfaction because according to the relationship marketing, educational institutions share their responsibilities with their consumers as students. He argues that hence HE is changing globally towards demand-driven competition where the diversity of university programmes and products are increasingly becoming heterogeneous with broader choices for students HE has no choice other than to embrace the marketing idea and thus needs to domesticate business marketing model. As Kotler & Fox (1995:195) state, 'An institution's market depends on what the institution has to offer', and we earlier mentioned that HEIs have been expanding academic choice to meet the consumer demand. This has led institutions to employ marketing strategy to some extent. On the other hand, Maringe & Gibbs (2009:44) argue that marketing in HE is still a relatively underdeveloped concept, and generally the belief that marketing is about advertising and promotion is still prevailing among administrators of HEIs. Nonetheless, image and reputation building is important, especially for new institutions to position them in higher education market (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009). Therefore, institutional reputation is one of the key factors in a student choice of a university (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009:145). Because higher education is regarded as a service provider, relationship communication between institution and student plays an important role in marketing. Gronroos (2001:265) differentiates two types of marketing communication: traditional media marketing communication such as advertising and promotion which communicates expected service, and interactive marketing communication which communicates experienced service. Interactive marketing communication conveys messages about an organisation and its offerings by customers during the service process. This is good or bad communication by

word of mouth. Gronroos (2001:269) states that word of mouth communication has 'huge marketing impact greater than that of planned communication' because it spreads messages about the organisation, its credibility and trustworthiness. Consumers who are happy with the service of the organisation become advocates for that organisation by recommending it to their friends and colleagues. This means interactive marketing communication greatly contributes to the process of creating a brand image of a service offered in the mind of consumers.

Institutional education services influencing student consumer's choice is the academic programmes a university offers. In fact, Kotler & Fox (1995) place the academic programme in their 7Ps marketing mix model as one of the most important factors in student choice of a university. The relation between programme choice and future employment, and the relation between programme and an institution's reputation in the Syrian context was further supported in Al-Fattal's study (2010). The issue of making decisions about educational offerings may be solved by a marketing strategy suggested by Kotler & Fox (1995:164):

- The institution's current programmes and markets – whether to maintain, build, or drop them;
- Future new programmes and market opportunities;
- Analysis of competitors;
- Positioning of the institution in relation to competitors;
- Selection of target markets and designing of the marketing mix.

Kotler & Fox (1995:164) propose an academic portfolio strategy and an adapted version of product portfolio matrix by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) for HEIs for the above strategy to be implemented. The academic portfolio strategy includes a set of criteria for evaluation of departments on centrality to school's mission, on the quality of the programme in terms of academic depth and quality of teaching, and on market viability in terms of the extent to which there is present and future demand for study. Courses are ranked high, medium, or low on each dimension. For example, a field of study may be of high quality and central to the school's mission, but if there is little interest in that area, it will not survive unless the institution subsidises it from other sources. On the other hand, according to the BCG product portfolio matrix, there are four quadrants defined by Newbould (in Kotler & Fox, 1995:167): stars (programmes in high-growth fields in which the institution has market share dominance in terms of relative numbers of students; require heavy investment), cash (programmes in low growth fields that attract a high share of the market; produces revenues that can be used to support high-growth programmes, or those with problems), question marks (programmes

in high-growth fields but in which the institutions has a low market share; the institution faces to make a decision whether to increase or reduce its investment) and dogs (programmes that have a small market share in slow-growth or declining fields; unless dogs must be offered for other reasons, maintaining them may come at the expenses of other opportunities). Then each field is rated high or low on two criteria: one is on market growth rate (the growth in full-time students (FTS) in that field over the past five years); another is on market share dominance (the ratio of FTS in that field at the largest competing institutions to FTS in that field at the institution doing the analysis).

These two marketing strategies may be useful in making decisions on curricular provision by HEIs and could be adopted to accommodate the country's specifics, but the question is if this kind of approach has ever been used in the educational context of the post-communist world as none has been encountered so far during this study.

Another consideration of choosing curricula is the importance of introducing the rule of coherence (Dill,1999:57) by HEIs. The rule of coherence of an academic programme draws attention to the coherent learning experience for students because teaching, unlike research, mainly involves the transfer of what is known in a subject or field, not what is undiscovered. The rule of coherence (a tangible measure of coherence – ongoing, summative, evidence that its students have had a coherent learning experience) would provide consumers and the state with information on valued attributes of academic curricula, and therefore, decrease the uncertainties involved in exchange (Dill, 1999:62-63).

2.5 A Case for Further Research

Gaps in our knowledge are looked at from two perspectives: international and local. In respect to the international perspective, first there are a substantial number of theoretical as well as empirical research studies and publications on market-oriented or marketised higher education systems (Kotler & Fox, 1995; Brennan et al..1999; Marginson, 1997, 2004; Maringe & Gibbs, 2009; Teixeira, 2006; Lowrie, & Willmott, 2006; Brown, 2008; Brown, 2011a,b,c; Brown, 2013, Browne, 2010). However, the majority of the studies on this subject focus on market related issues of higher education in industrialized countries (Dill, 2003; Lynch, 2006; Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009). Though there are a certain number of empirical studies on non-western higher education (Hawkins, 2000; Kwong, 2000; Mok, 2000; Maringe, 2006), the issue of market forces and their impact on higher education in non-western context or in a specific culture needs further investigation (Munene, 2008)

Second, in general, little attention has been paid to the higher education curriculum (Barnett, 2001; Blackmore & Kandiko 2012) though 'the curriculum remains one of the most important products that higher education institutions offer to their customers' (Barnett, 2001:435). Clark (1996:423) emphasises the importance of the study of 'micro dynamics and determinants' because 'alongside of the student expansion we need to place the study of knowledge expansion. The basic problems for the future is seemingly more set by the growing complexity of the knowledge than they are by the growing complexity of student aggregation'. Barnett (2001:435) summarises that there have been a few significant studies in the past that have attempted to describe major components and the variation between disciplines (Boys et al 1988; Squires, 1987; Silver & Brennan, 1988; Brennan et al 1996; Goodlad, 1997). Echoing this view, Shay (2011:315) calls for the need for a more fine-grained conceptual framework for the study of knowledge and curriculum in higher education.

Third, the literature reveals that there has been little research that specifically addresses the effect of the market on undergraduate curricular provision. However, there have been views expressed on the effect of 'market-populism' on university curricula, teaching and learning (Collini, 2010) and a few studies (Lowrie & Willmott, 2006; Karhus, 2009; Arvast, 2006; Sauer, & O'Donnell, 2007) that address undergraduate programmes mainly in terms of marketing. In the context of post-communist countries, there is little research that addressed the issues that arose in curricula during the transition period (Reisz, 1994; Hall & Thomas, 2003).

From a local perspective, although the government of Mongolia initiated the marketisation as a part of reform and restructuring policy for higher education and the market practices seem to be present at the higher education institutions at first glance, my questions are what the change in terms of reform and transformation policies are, what the characteristics of marketisation in HE are, how they can be described in conceptual terms, how they influenced academic offers and how they can be examined methodologically so that it is possible for me to contribute to the analysis of the market regulation in Mongolian higher education.

Even though there is a substantial literature on the application of market mechanism in higher education in a western context, it highlights that further investigation is needed in non-western countries, particularly in the context of a developing country transitioning from communist central economy to market economy. Although some of the publications in this

area for example Karhus (2009), Munene (2008), and Maringe, (2006), have little direct value to an understanding of Mongolian higher education, they still provide insights.

From an extensive and thorough literature search no study on the impact of market on higher education with particular reference to curricular provision in Mongolia could be found. Higher education is the field that has been little studied in Mongolia. As an example, between 2001 and 2010, only 65 PhD dissertations on educational issues were defended in the country. Of these only 7 dissertations were on topics related to higher education. Apart from two (Erdenechimeg, 2004; Boldbaatar G, 2003), the rest of these dissertations (Batrinchin, 2001; Boldbaatar L, 2003; Tuul, 2004; Oyuntsetseg, 2005; Bayarmaa, 2005) deal with different areas of higher education studies. To be more specific, these are Organisational and Methodological issues of Entrance Examinations for Universities and Colleges (Batrinchin, 2001), Improving Financial Management of Higher Education Institutions (Boldbaatar L, 2003), Environment Management for Teacher Development of Higher Education Institutions (Tuul, 2004), Monitoring Registration Information for Higher Educational Institutions (Oyuntsetseg, 2005) and Quality Management Study on Higher Education in Mongolia (Bayarmaa, 2005). Because the topics and themes are not directly relevant to my research, these dissertations have not been examined fully. However, the methodologies employed have been taken into consideration. Generally, the studies mostly employed survey design and based their conclusions on responses to questionnaires.

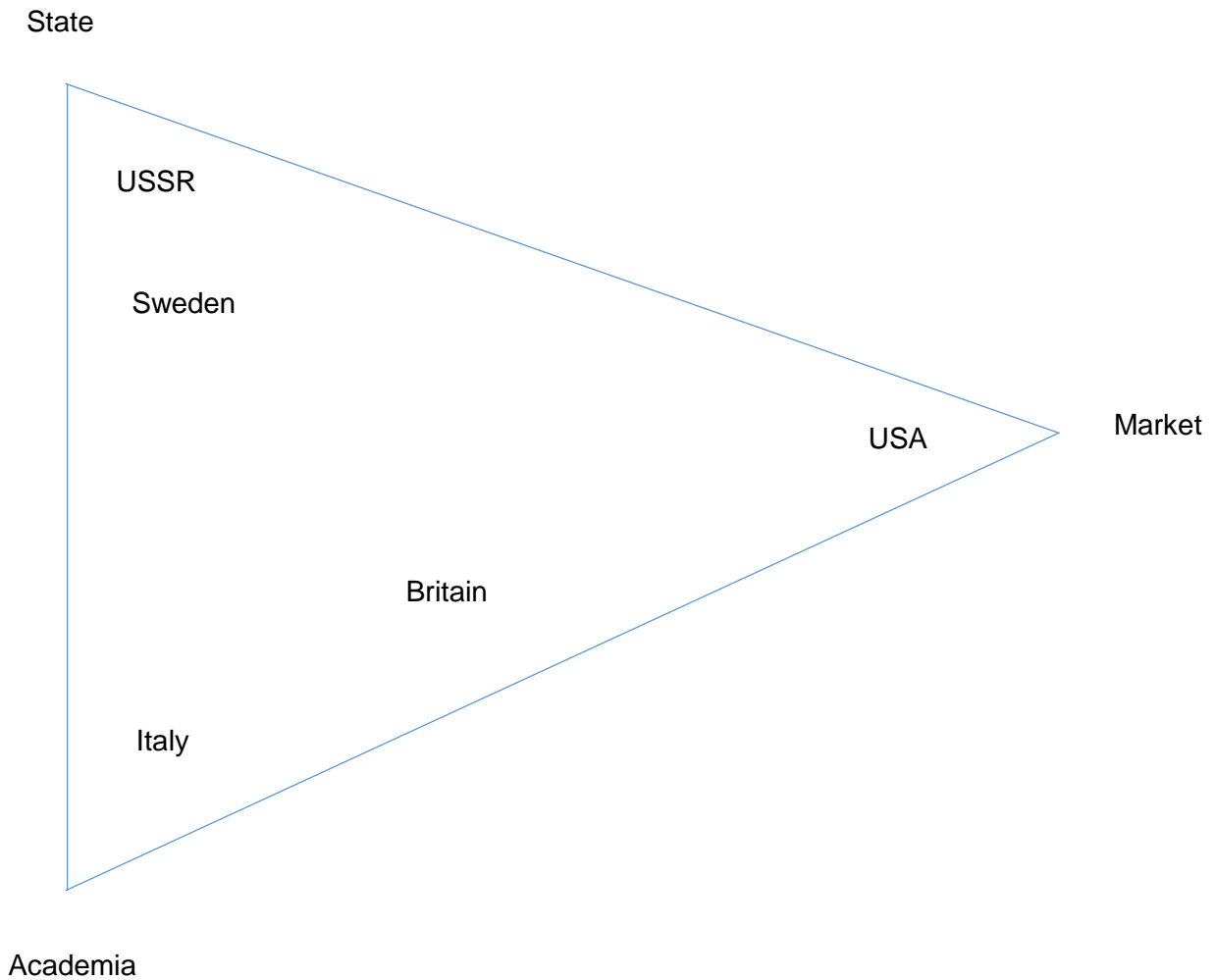
One of the two dissertations that has some relevance to my study is Methodological issues for Strategic and Business Planning Development of Mongolian Higher Educational Institutions by Boldbaatar (2003). The other is Developing Marketing Planning for Mongolian Higher Educational Institutions by Erdenechimeg (2004). The latter investigation is interesting in the sense that it is a case study carried out at one of the former state universities that were privatized in the 1990s. On the other hand, it has limited relevance for this study as it was conducted at only one university, the University of the Humanities. Moreover the author generalizes her conclusion to all higher education institutions in Mongolia both state and private. This study does not focus either on market impact and conditions or the university's response to marketisation with particular emphasis on curricular provision. The author does not discuss or seek an in-depth understanding of the concept and practice of marketisation in her dissertation. Accordingly, I was not able to identify any studies on 'market impact' in the Mongolian context. As a result, I mainly used literature from western countries. Though it may differ from the Mongolian context, it can help to conceptualise the subject from a different perspective.

To sum up, as it shows there is only a handful of research projects on market effect with particular focus on curricular provision, further systematic research is suggested in this area. The impact of market forces on higher education has been immense in terms of quality of teaching and research, provision of programmes, institutional autonomy and institutional relationship with the state in a wider context of society and industry. However, the research focusses only on the market impact and its influence on the provision of curricula in the context of Mongolia.

2.6 Establishing a Conceptual Framework

The establishment of a conceptual insight for the research was grounded mainly in the following two theories. The first is Burton Clark's 'triangle of coordination' (Clark, 1983) which provided an insightful perspective into the change of the relationship between state and market in higher education system and will assist in determining where Mongolian higher education could be from this coordination perspective. The second was the 'market model' developed by Jongbloed (2003) in which he identifies the market conditions from a perspective of both the suppliers and the consumers of higher education services. This model facilitated in identifying a higher education market in the Mongolian higher education system, and the ways in which academic programmes are supplied.

Clark's (1983:142) triangle of coordination (see Figure 2-1) represents the coordination of the higher education system through the interplay of three forces: state control, the market and the academe. According to Clark, each corner of the triangle signifies the extreme of one form and a minimum of the other two while locations within the triangle represent combinations of the three forces in different degrees. This concept has been used to portray the change in national steering systems (Jongbloed, 2003) in which the interaction of the state authority and the market is pictured in the move from state control to state supervision, for example (Neave & Van Vught, 1994). This coordination is also known as three models (Becher, 1994) of the relationship between governments and universities: the command model, the autonomy and the exchange model.

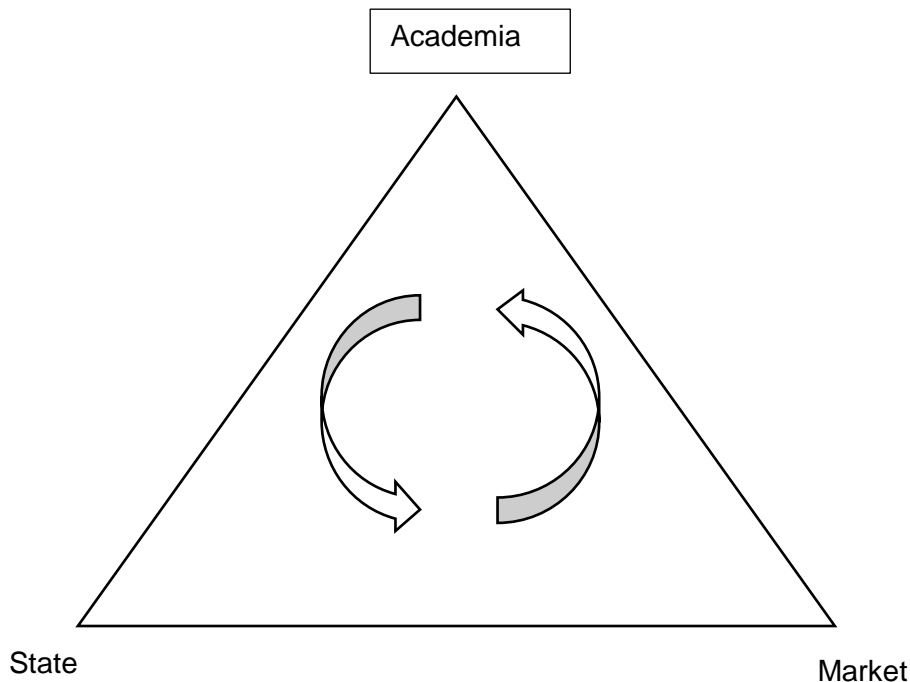
Figure 2-1 Triangle of coordination

Adopted from Clark, 1983:143

In this coordination, the state controls and manages the governance of higher education through bureaucratic and political authorities whereas market force is dependent on exchange. Academe is at the mercy of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. State authority of bureaucracy is exercised through various mechanisms such as layering, jurisdiction expansion, personnel enlargement, administrative specialisation and rule expansion. Clark (1983:150) states that 'political authority is a legitimate form of power in and around higher education systems, serving as a basic alternative to bureaucratic and professional forms' and politicisation is common in developing societies producing often bitter struggle between state officials and the academics. Supporting this view, Omari (1994:54) claims that the form of state control 'through direct funding, appointments of key positions, legislative regulations limiting academic freedom and day to day direct interference in the operations of institutions of higher learning' applies in many developing

countries. Ferlie (2009:4) also emphasises that the role of the state increases when HE grows bigger, more expensive, politically more visible and economically more strategic as the system massifies. This puts more external and government pressures on the HE system. As the state regulation in the form of government has become a central topic, Neave & Van Vught (1994:4) describe it 'as the efforts of government to steer the decisions and actions of specific societal actors according to the objectives the government has set and by using instruments government as at its disposal'. They expanded the concept of state authority in the coordination, and distinguished two types of degree of state influence as the state control and the state supervising model based on the public administration theory (Neave & Van Vught, 1994). The first is a state control model an example of which is the continental higher education model as in France (Neave & Van Vught, 1994:9). It is a model where the state is a powerful regulator of the higher education system which controls almost all aspects of the system. The higher education system in former socialist countries including Mongolia had this type of tight state control, but it was in its extreme form. In the case of the state supervising model, an example is the USA and the traditional British higher education system where the state has a limited influence on higher education in terms of the management of educational institutions' own affairs, such as admission, curricula and hiring of its academic staff. The state supervises the HE system in terms of assuring academic quality and maintaining a certain level of accountability, but government respects the autonomy of HEIs. Neave & Van Vught (1994:9) claim that the movement towards the state supervisory model is preferable, and this has increased in both the developed and the developing world with globalisation and the rise of the knowledge economy. Later, Jongbloed (2003:132) further developed the triangle model of coordination in which he proposed 'the new paradigm of national government, with government being the initiator and sustainer of a dynamic and knowledge-based market economy' (see Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2



Adopted from Jongbloed, 2003:132

In academia, 'knowledge is authority' where 'state coordination becomes 'unrealistic' as it becomes out of step with the organic professionalised understructure' (Clark, 1983:158), especially, in the subject area professional authority is the core, and therefore, the state must take this into account, he points out. But Neave and Van Vught (1994:9) argue that institutional autonomy to a large extent is dependent on the way governments try to regulate their higher education system. In the context of the developing world, Omari (1994:56) extended this notion with lists of the potential areas of friction between universities and the state:

- Academic freedom in the sense who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught and who may be admitted to the university;
- Appointments of key university officials such as university president, deans of faculties and directors etc..;
- Determination of enrolment growth rate;
- General day to day management including finances and other resources;
- Management of staff including promotions, mix and their movements;
- Freedom of associations;

- Freedom to invite guest speakers of whatever leaning including from the opposition parties.

As Clark (1983) pointed out market coordination works through exchange of interaction in contrast to authoritative command. He says (1983:162):

For example, one coordinating function of market system is constant occupational reassignment, with consumer preferences and occupational preferences reconciled in a reshuffling of labour from one field to another, one specialty to another. When students avoid Greek and Latin, would be teachers in those fields are encouraged to become something else, even sociologists.

Using Lindblom's formulation of 'the three market system' (Lindblom, 1977), Clark identifies three types of markets in higher education: the consumer market, the labour market, and the institutional market. Whereas the consumer market is reliant on consumer choice, the institutional market is dependent on a choice of providers by both students and staff. The labour market is that in which people offer their capabilities and energies for money. Here academic staff, administrators and graduates can constitute this market in higher education. At all three levels, institutions compete for a better exchange with reputation as the main commodity of exchange because they are not analogous to business enterprises where there are retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers (Clark, 1983:165). Instead, relations play an important role through which institutions attempt to have a niche market in the consumer market. This shows that in the context of HE, competition takes place in the three market system through the exchange of relations. Marginson identified four layers of educational competition in higher education: the pre-market world of broad day-to-day layer of lived educational practices, pre-market competition for social status in education, economic market competition and capitalist market. Competition is here as 'a socially structured contest between one and other agencies – whether people, institutions or nations – for individual advantage' (Marginson, 2004:181-182).

In order to achieve a better understanding of the market in the context of Mongolian higher education, the assessment of the market conditions developed by Jongbloed (2003) can be utilised as an insightful approach to the Mongolian context. This will enable us to understand the extent of market competition in our context. This higher education market model was originally devised by Onderwijsraad (2001:41 cited in Jongbloed, 2003). Jongbloed identifies 'essential ingredients of markets' in terms of increasing the freedom of consumers (students) and suppliers (higher educational institutions) that eradicates the obstacles for demand and supply as shown in Table 2-2. He assesses the extent of marketisation in higher education in the context of the Netherlands' higher education system.

If we look at the 'essential ingredients of markets' (Jongbloed:2003) (see Table 2-2) for Mongolian higher education based empirically on the experience, at first glance we can assume that a considerable number of market ingredients are present in Mongolian higher education system. On the providers' part, those are the freedom of entry, freedom to specify the product, freedom to use available resources and freedom to determine prices with some government restriction. On the part of consumers, these are the freedom to choose a provider with restricted adequate information on prices and quality, and to pay tuition fees (direct and cost-covering prices paid). The question is to what extent these market conditions are met in higher education system of Mongolia, and in our case how free the supply of programmes is.

Table 2-2 Eight conditions for a market

'Four freedoms' for providers	'Four freedoms' for consumers
Freedom of entry	5. Freedom to choose provider
Freedom to specify the product	6. Freedom to choose product
Freedom to use available resources	7. Adequate information on prices and quality
Freedom to determine prices	8. Direct and cost-covering prices paid

Adopted from Jongbloed,2003:114

Provider Freedoms

1. Freedom of entry

Here the aim is to determine how free the new higher education providers are to enter the existing market. Despite the degree of freedom given to the new providers, a number of questions are considered central: Are the programmes and degrees recognised as being higher education degrees and do the new providers have to meet specific (quality) criteria? Do the new providers qualify for government funding on the same terms as the regular providers? Due to the initial cost involved new providers may be constrained to access the market or prefer a 'cherry picking' market segment.

In general, these are the question of legal, financial and political requirements necessary for new providers.

2. Freedom of supply of programmes

Here the focus is to establish how free providers are to specify the product. Due to the specific characteristics of higher education, it is considered essential that academic

professionals should be responsible for the contents of programmes. According to Brown (2011a:8), in the case of undergraduate education this includes every aspect of programme or course through course content and delivery to assessment and accreditation. Brown further argues that 'any regulation is usually a combination of state sanctions and academic judgments.' There are standards and norms to guarantee customers including students and future employers about the academic degrees offered. In addition to general standards, there may be freedom to offer other educational programmes.

3. Freedom of resourcing

Here the focus is how free higher education providers are to choose and use institutional resources: students, staff, and financial assets and budgets. Students are considered as inputs in the 'production process.' Therefore, on one hand, the questions are how free institutions are to select their entrants and if they can refuse entrants. On the other hand, how free institutions are on personnel inputs: qualifications, salary and employment terms. Finally, it is the freedom to generate income from contract research, consultancies, contract teaching, and company training, seek donations, sponsoring, alliances, as well as other ventures between higher education institutions and entities in the public, semi-public and private spheres. Resources can also be 'freed up' by outsourcing some of the institution's non-core activities to private companies and use financial means to enrich educational programmes.

4. Freedom of pricing

Here the aim is how free educational institutions are to set the prices for consumers for their products they provide to cover some of the cost of educational activities. In higher education, tuition fees charged to students are viewed as price cost though they do not cover the true reflection of the cost. This is because higher education is subject to government subsidies more or less depending on the government policy. Jongbloed (2003:122) points out that 'Differentiated fees might be a stimulus for institutional diversity, programme differentiation and new forms of programme delivery. In addition, they give institutions the possibility to charge additional fees for educational programmes that, compared to other programmes on the market, supply an added value to their students.'

Consumer Freedoms

5. Freedom to choose a provider

Here the focus is how free students are to choose their providers for their educational service. This freedom is closely linked to the third freedom of providers. Here is the demand side for education service. The point is that students should be free to choose the institutions provided they have the appropriate qualifications. This freedom may be constrained either by a limited number of providers or high cost of enrolment due to monopoly and student loan market failure.

6. Freedom to choose a programme or course

Here the programmes and courses are regarded as the product in the higher education market. The issues are 'the availability of subjects, courses and places; customization of programmes or awards (credits); students' ability to shop around and/or combine elements and courses offered by different institutions; and accessibility and cost' (Brown, 2011b:8). With a growing student population, the demand for diversification is increasing, and Jongbloed argues that there should be room for institutions making an effort to provide personalised curricula (or 'pathways') (Jongbloed, 2002 cited in Jongbloed, 2003: 124).

7. Freedom of information

Here the focus is how free students as consumers are to assess the necessary information about the programmes and institutions to enable them to decide in which they will enrol on. They need to know about the content and quality of the programmes on offer and other reliable information on prices. However, Jongbloed (2003) and Brown (2008) argue that access to information is the big issue in the higher education sector due to the higher education character of so-called 'experience good': the quality is revealed during the 'consumption'. That is why government regulation is justified to fix this information failure with government publishing (evaluation reports, accreditation, ranking, quality assessment reports, performance indicators).

8. Cost-covering prices paid direct

This is the final requirement for a market. Here the focus is whether students are willing to pay the cost of the educational services they will consume, and if the answer is yes, to what extent. The cost includes tuition, living and opportunity costs. Charging fees makes providers more consumer sensitive. As a result, 'it provides an incentive for quality improvement in organisations such as universities where teaching and student services are hard to measure. As such, charging cost-covering fees is instrumental in achieving more of the features of a market in higher education' (Jongbloed, 2003:127).

However, there are some countries that do not charge tuition fees for higher education or charge little. In addition, as Jongbloed stresses economic theory suggests that government subsidies are needed to ensure the societal benefits such as economic growth, therefore government intervention is still necessary.

2.7 Summary

The literature reviewed demonstrates that there is no pure market regulation in higher education due to its public character despite being private for individuals, and government intervention is necessary in coordinating market failures. To summarise using the words of Jongbloed (2003:134): 'The state is stepping back, stepping in again, and cooperating all at the same time. There is no such thing as a truly 'free market' in higher education. Rather, the question is how market failures can be corrected through a cleverly designed balance of government regulation, price signals, monitoring instruments, quality assurance policies, and so on'. In the literature there is a mixed reaction toward market-steering of higher education with much criticality than advocating it. Zha (2009:464) writes 'The current environment encourages institutions to compete on the breadth of offerings, not on what they do exceptionally well. This environment may favour selective (typically research-intensive) universities that offer a range of undergraduate, graduate, professional, and lifelong learning programmes, and that are able to create and draw upon diverse revenue streams. Competition might further reinforce imitation drifts rather than stimulating diversity on the vertical dimension'. On the other hand, OECD Redefining Tertiary Education (1998: 27) argues that a 'market' is the most appropriate instrument to ensure the responsiveness of provision to the new demand. Nonetheless marketisation has become a reality, and therefore more investigation is needed in non-western contexts, in particular in transitional post-communist countries.

Within the theoretical and analytical framework discussed above, the investigation, in view of the triangle of coordination by Clark and educational market model by Jongbloed, is aimed at finding out what the changes are in the relationship between the higher education, the state and the market, and what the impact is of the market on academic and consumer choice. These two models will provide a reflective basis for the current study. Higher education in modern society has been regulated by market forces. These forces are believed to be helping at liberalising markets and strengthening student choice leading to the improvement of the variety and quality of the services offered by the providers of higher education.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the aspects of the research methodology employed in this study. It begins with posing the research questions followed by the discussion of the two modes of research inquiry: qualitative and quantitative. It justifies using the qualitative research design for this study, and describes sampling methods and the appropriateness of employing multiple case studies to answer the research questions. The chapter also addresses the details of approaching data collection including the pilot study and the fieldwork, and describes the data analysis procedures in this study. This is followed by the discussion of the issue of trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Questions

The aims of this study were to investigate the policies and practices surrounding the changes in Mongolian HE in the context of the market and in the light of the relevant literature, and to assess their influence on HEIs, in particular on curricular provision at undergraduate level.

Given the context and the theoretical framework stated earlier in chapters 1 and 2 respectively, the aims of the study are underpinned by two research questions in order to study the nature of the changes in the context of market at two levels: state and institution in general, and in particular the changes in relation to undergraduate curricular provision. In order to consider the changes taking place in the latter, it was necessary first to examine the history of the background policy before directly addressing the core of the thesis which is the changes in undergraduate curricular provision.

Question One: How and in what ways has the HE market in Mongolia changed since 1991?

Question Two: How has undergraduate curricular provision been influenced by this change in the market?

The first question aims to find out how the overall landscape of the HE market has been changing since the first new democratic Education Law of the People's Republic of Mongolia adopted in 1991 that set the foundation of market practices in higher education, and what the nature of the relationship is between the state and HEIs in Mongolia is and how it has changed in the light of the conclusions drawn from a review of the literature. This question is based on the application of Clark's (1983) concept of the 'triangle of coordination' to an

understanding of the three elements of coordination: state, market and academe in the university case studies in Mongolia. Thus it also aims to identify the extent of the market impact on HE. This idea is based on the concept of the 'conditions for a market' for HE by Jongbloed (2003). The question examines the 'market conditions' at both the government and institutional level by investigating documents and eliciting perspectives on the issue from important actors.

The second question addresses how HE is changing and what are the patterns in a particular context, namely, the undergraduate curricular provision of HEIs in Mongolia, and how it has been influenced by the market. This question reflects on the first question in a way that it investigates the external influences on the supply of academic programmes, and how a higher education institution operates in the context of market, aiming specifically at finding out the impact of the market on courses of the undergraduate programme. These two questions are the basis of the analytical frame I employed in my inquiry.

3.3 The Rationale for Employing a Qualitative Research Approach

With the purpose of seeking answers to the research questions, this study was undertaken through qualitative research design. The approach and position of the researcher in this study are explained in terms of research paradigms to clarify the underlying paradigm of the current research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003b:33), a research paradigm is 'the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises.' From the two main paradigms (quantitative and qualitative) in educational and social science research discussed in the literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen, & Manion, 1989; Robson, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Weber, 2004; Silverman, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2011; Hammersley, 2013), I have chosen qualitative research approach. As the object of inquiry, the Mongolian HE market, lends itself to an inquiry of the interpretivist ontological and epistemological concepts outlined by Lincoln & Guba (2003) and Ritchie & Lewis (2011), it was important to understand the realities in this context through the perspectives of different stakeholders, because, in the case of interpretivism, reality is socially constructed and thus an inquiry has a value-laden nature in contrast to positivism which views reality as context-free and value-free (Lincoln & Guba, 2003:13). Having considerable experience of working in higher education, I acknowledge that I cannot completely separate my subjectivity from my study. However, I have tried to guard against this in a way I tried to be credible in what I report and analyse: I have been open with the data, I have been open about my thoughts and I have been open about my analysis. At the outset of the literature, I was not sure about my position toward the

phenomenon in which I was interested, but having done the literature review, I came to think that this social phenomenon of the change in HE market I studied is socially constructed and cannot be studied outside its context. Thus I understand why people do what they do, or why particular institutions exist and operate in characteristic ways without grasping how people interpret and make sense of their world and act on their interpretations (Hammersley, 2013). Driven by these ontological and epistemological arguments, the methodology I used in my study was qualitative to establish understanding through in-depth interviews and well described context.

As seen here the main difference of the primary focus between quantitative and qualitative research is that qualitative research tries to understand particular people and events in specific social contexts, or labelled as an idiographic focus, as against positivism's concern with nomothetic knowledge – with knowledge of universal, timeless laws (Hammersley, 2013:27). From this point of view, the current study is aligned with the qualitative/interpretive paradigm, as the research questions require the perspectives of stakeholders in the higher education sector to understand the nature of the change and the relationship between state and HE in the context of the market. Therefore, respondents are not only participants but also are regarded as active informants in their real social context. There are more reasons to utilize the qualitative approach for this particular research.

First, the research questions presented above need rich information which the researcher cannot obtain through quantitative analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Denzin & Lincoln (2003:13) explain that 'the word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount intensity, or frequency'. Babbie (2004:281) stresses that this type of research can produce a richer understanding of many social phenomena.

Second, one of the chief problems of the study is the uncertainty of the situation in the context. Furthermore, there is a paucity of literature on the issue in the Mongolian context. Consequently, to get a clear picture of the changing nature of HEIs in the Mongolian university context, it is necessary to gain thorough information from important actors, namely policy makers as well as from case studies of universities, to answer the questions related to the rationale. In this sense, qualitative case studies are valuable because they enable us to present an in-depth examination of particular phenomena which may easily be overlooked in large-scale surveys (Munene, 2008:4).

Lastly, the key advantage of a qualitative approach is its flexibility. Robson (1995), Blaikie (2000) and Neuman (2003) see the qualitative research as a flexible and learning process that encourages slowly focusing on the topic throughout a study. The qualitative data gathering procedure is more open and accommodating that allows 'a language of cases and contexts' and 'examines social processes and cases in their social context' (Neuman, 2003:146). Johnson and Christensen (2004:46) point out that in case study research, the researcher provides a detailed account of one or more cases.

For this study, multiple-case studies are chosen to explore the nature of the change in order to compare the common features as well as the differences among the selected universities.

3.4 The Research Design

3.4.1 The rationale for a multiple case study approach

This is a study of HE market in relation to undergraduate provision in Mongolia. With the purpose of investigating this, I undertook multiple cases of five universities. Moreover the study involved two types of cases: state universities and private universities. With respect to choosing a case study approach for this research, a case study has a number of advantages (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995; Bassey, 1999; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Silverman, 2011). First, case study as a research strategy involves empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Robson, 1995:5; Yin, 1994). By using the case study, I was able to analyse the practice of the government policy perspectives in depth in a particular context of market. Second, the reason why case study is especially good for individual researchers is it gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied at some depth within a limited time scale (Bell, 1987:6). Third, the in-depth picture of the change taking place in higher education market with emphasis on curricular provision was analysed through multiple techniques to generate data from higher education policy makers, senior administrators and document review, because a case study provides an opportunity to adopt 'multiple methods' (Yin, 1994; Bassey, 1999; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Thomas, 2011). Thus, case study enabled me to use multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 1995:5; Yin, 1994). Fourth, for this study, a multiple case study has been chosen because studying more than one case provides an opportunity to compare cases for similarities and differences (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:378). Therefore, the most significant advantage of using a multiple case study was to look at more than one case of universities to provide a descriptive picture, seeing the relationship between them and state, and comparing the similarities and differences between two types of cases and amongst each type. Fifth, the purpose of this multiple case study was instrumental as this form of

study facilitates deeper understanding of the situation. Johnson & Christensen and Thomas state that the cases in a multiple case study are usually studied instrumentally rather than intrinsically. Thomas (2011) supports this view stating that a case study with instrumental purpose is a study in which the case is of secondary interest serving as a tool to facilitate the understanding of something else. Through an instrumental case study, a researcher aims to understand something other than the particular case, or something more general as 'the case is seen as important only as a means to an end.' (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:378). Finally, a multiple case study provides a possibility to apply a theory (Bassey, 1999; Johnson & Christensen, 2004) of 'the triangle of coordination' by Clark (1983) to see the changing nature of the relationship among state, market and academe.

Johnson & Christensen (2004:378) state that there is a disadvantage of studying multiple cases as the depth of analysis may have to be sacrificed because of the breadth of analysis. Generally, I accept their argument that there is 'the classic depth versus breadth tradeoff' in a multiple case study, but the primary objective of the study is to understand the overall landscape of the HE change in my context, and therefore, this choice serves my purpose. Then again, the depth would not be lost in the sense that my unit of analysis also focuses on the particular context, the change of the undergraduate curricular provision at these universities.

3.4.2 A multiple case study: sampling of institutions and participants

The research focuses on five universities of which three are state and two are private.

Sampling of institutions. The first priority for the study was sampling of cases. The sampling rationale for the five universities was based on purposive sampling and local knowledge. Burgess (1984:55) supports the approach of purposive sampling by stating that in this form of sampling, cases may be selected following the criteria established by the researcher. The selected five universities are of two types: state and private. When the current research started in 2011, there were 113 HEIs in total, of which 14 were regarded as universities including 10 state and 4 private universities and the rest were regarded as institutes according to the 2010-2011 education statistics issued by the Mongolian MES. However, in the category of state university, two are for special national purposes: defence and home affairs. These universities are also on full government budget in comparison with the other civil universities which exist primarily on tuition fees. Another two universities were also the target of my pilot study. As a result, three civil universities of the remaining 6 were selected as they are a more or less comprehensive type of university. Selecting two types of

universities helps to see the full picture of higher education in the country. The state universities for exploration were State University West, State University East and State University Central. The two private universities selected for the case study are similar to each other in that both are regarded as the only two run for profit, and in addition, represent half of that type (four in total). These are Private University South and Private University North. In accordance with purposive sampling, I have chosen the criteria which illustrate the key features of the universities. These features are the commonality of location, size and type of affiliation as these serve the purpose of my research:

Location. In Mongolia most of the HEIs, to be precise 100 of the 113 HE institutions (including private higher educational institutions) were situated in the capital. All five of the universities selected are located in the capital, while three are within walking distance of each another.

Size. The size is appropriate because one is comprehensive and other two state universities are emerging comprehensive establishments. The student population in each of the three state universities ranged from over 13000 to over 30000, while it was between 2000 and over more than 6000 at the two private universities according to the 2010-2011 statistics. All five universities are considered to be the largest of their type. As of the 2010-2011 academic year, there was an overall student population of 164,773 in the country, and of this 100581 were in the state funded establishments. This means the student population of the selected universities totalled to approximately 60000, or a third of the entire student population in Mongolia.

Affiliation. There were 113 higher educational establishments in Mongolia and of those 16 were state-owned when the research started. The remaining 97 of them were private institutions. Although the number of state institutions look few compared to the private, as noted above the size of state-funded institutions is very high. This provides an opportunity to compare and reveal the similarities and differences between them.

Familiarity. Another reason for selecting the cases is familiarity. Following Thomas' categorization, these cases are local knowledge cases because I am familiar with the situation and it gives 'a ready-made strength for conducting a case study' (Thomas, 2011:76).

Sampling of participants for the cases. During the course of the case studies, various higher education managers were interviewed, ranging from six to nine from each university. The sampling strategy was 'key informant' sampling strategy. Key informants are often critical to

the success of a case study, as 'such persons not only provide with insights into a matter but also can suggest sources of corroboratory or contrary evidence' (Yin, 1994:90). The sampling of these people was also based on the positions they held and their length of service in the higher education sector. Persons in management positions are more involved in policy related activities than the academic staff. Also those administrators who have served the sector longer than anybody else have insightful information. Thus, the four categories of administrative staff of the five universities, totalling 41 were selected for interview: from rectors or vice-rectors and heads of schools to heads of departments and administrators involved in marketing activities.

Sampling of documents for the case. This multi-site case study also involved document reviews. Yin (1994:87) highlights the importance of document review to augment evidence from other sources on the one hand, and on the other hand he cautions not to treat these documents as 'unmitigated truth, as every document was written for some specific purpose and some specific audience.' As for documents, internal records e.g. university strategic plans, regulations, some administrative reports, relevant newspapers, marketing fliers or brochures as well as prospectuses served as primary sources and constituted a major part of the review. University websites served as a secondary source of data.

3.4.3 Interviews with policy makers: sampling of participants and policy documents

In order to obtain various perspectives on the two research questions related to the nature of the changes, interviews were conducted with key policy makers. The sampling of this category of people was similar to the sampling of the higher education managers: the positions held and the length of service to the higher education sector. It involved 8 policy makers from the departments of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and other relevant institutions, including officials from the department of Higher and Vocational Education, the National Council for Education Accreditation and the Education Research Institute.

For government policy documents, relevant laws, education master plan, government national educational programmes, newspaper articles, the ministry's statistics, and some ministerial orders and resolutions served as primary sources. The ministry's website provided a major source.

3.5 The Research Process and Data Collection

The research was conducted in two stages as summarised in Table 3.1: the pilot study and the actual data collection stage. Before I undertook the actual case studies, I conducted pilot interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted with senior administrators of institutions different from the selected universities. The objective of the exploratory interviews was to extend the understanding of the issue being investigated in the light of the literature and theory studied and to identify further ideas and suggestions for the main research in addition to clarifying the themes. The pilot study also assisted me to grow my interviewing skills and to develop relevant lines of questions – possibly providing conceptual clarification for the design (Yin 1994:47). The rationale for selecting participants for the pilot was convenience, access and geographic proximity in accordance with Yin's suggestion (ibid:75). I conducted the pilot interviews at four institutions. In this research, the initial exploratory pilot study was followed by case studies of universities in a sequential way (see Table 3.1 below) so that each lead to a more refined process in the next case. When the pilot study was finished at the end of March, I examined my exploration and made conclusions in April, and I was then ready to move on to the next stage, the actual study, based on the experience I gained from the pilot study.

The actual data collection consisted of six sub-stages that included case studies of five universities, and a study of national policy perspectives. In Table 3.1 below a summary of the data collection process is presented describing issues such as when and where the pilot and actual study data collection took place, why I selected particular institutions, what I did during the data gathering process, and how I collected my data.

The research process was based on the principle of concatenation (Stebbins, 2001, cited in Wilson, 2006:103-104) which is a case of learning from each stage, or learning from one case study before starting the next, or learning from one set of interviews before doing others, so that alterations and development are possible as the study proceeds. The process of concatenation is 'flexible and creative aimed at development through the progressive accumulation of confirmatory data from a sequential study of each case' (Wilson, 2006:104). Stebbins (2001:15-16 cited in Wilson, 2006:104) recognises three benefits to this process which are relevant to this study:

1. As the data is accumulated from each case study, the level of validity is strengthened.
2. The process capitalises on the enhanced experience and 'cumulative expertise' of the researcher in moving from one case study to the next.

3. The process facilitates a comparative perspective between organisations and their units of analysis.

To begin with, I made a decision to conduct the case studies at two different types of universities have some knowledge of the two types and to prepare for the coming interviews with policy makers. I started the first case study at State University East, and then the second at Private University South. I spent approximately a month at each university (see Table 3.1). Prior to the interviews with policy makers, I carried out an analysis of publicly available documents in addition to the two case studies I had already done. Therefore, the interview with officials from the ministry and the other two organisations (see Table 3.1 below) was held in between the case studies. After the interviews with policy makers, I continued the case studies at the remaining three universities in the order stated in Table 3.1. However, this process in researching these five universities was not that linear as suggested in the table, as I needed to go back and forth between cases in order to check information, or to attend an event at a university studied earlier, or if necessary to contact an interviewee for approval of my notes. I will describe this in more details in the following sections.

Table 3-1 Summary of the data collection process

Stages of data collection and field study	When	Where	Why these institutions	What was done and how the data was collected
Stage1: Pilot Study	Feb.2012 until April, 2012	- The institute where I work; - small private institute; - State university; - MES	- familiarity; - geographic proximity; - convenience; - access and - different context: private and state institutions; - policy perspective.	- visited field sites for exploration; - studied Mongolian policy documents on education and higher education, relevant prospectuses of institutions, media information and websites; - interviewed one administrator from each institution (4 in total).
Stage2a: Actual study: Case University One	Throughout May 2012	State University East	- There were 10 state universities in the country: two for special national purposes - defence and home affairs (so excluded), and other two universities were the target of my pilot study. As a result there were 6 civil universities remaining. 3 universities from the remaining 6 were selected to represent half of that type; - These 3 universities are a more or less comprehensive type of university.	- studied the university history, prospectus, relevant statistics, university strategy document, previous year's report, meeting minutes and information on the website; - visited the university 3 times to become familiar with facilities and people before the interviews; I talked to students and read leaflets, board announcements and information; - made a list of people through the main contact in the university; - attended an Open Day at one school; - interviewed 9 people; - translated and transcribed some recordings straight after interviews.
Stage2b: Actual study: Case University Two	Beginning of June until middle of July 2012	Private University South	- similarity; - the two private universities represent half of that type (four in total).	- studied the university history, prospectus, relevant statistics, information on the website; - visited the university 4 times (the campus is spread across the city) to become familiar with facilities and people before the interviews; I talked to students and read leaflets, board announcements and information; - made a list of people for interview through the Rector and one of the administrators; - interviewed 9 people; - attended an Open Day and university promotional exhibition; - translated and transcribed straight after interviews.
Stage2c: Actual study: Policy Perspective	End of July until beginning of September 2012	MES and its affiliated institutions; NGO and donor organisations	See Stage2a	- studied Mongolian policy documents on higher education, statistics, media information and websites; - interviewed 9 people (7 from the ministry and 2 from NGO and donor organisations).
Stage2d: Actual study:	End of August	Private	See Stage2b	- studied the university history, statistics, studied information on the

Case University Three	until the end of September 2012	University North		<p>website;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visited the university 4 times to become familiar with facilities, and to see how the enrolment process and registration are organised before the interviews; I read leaflets, board announcements and information; - made a list of people to interview through the Vice Rector. - interviewed 8 people; - typed the notes from one interview as the interviewee did not want to be recorded, sent by email for approval; - translated and transcribed straight after interviews.
Stage2e: Actual study: Case University Four	Beginning of October until beginning of November 2012	State University West	See Stage2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - studied the university history, prospectus, university previous year's report, university Master Plan, Business Strategy and Development Roadmap and information on the website; - visited the university 3 times to get familiar with facilities and people before the interviews. During the visit I explored the new library, new e-school facilities and read leaflets or any board announcement and information. - made a list of people through the contact in the university. - interviewed 9 people. - transcribed some interviews by translating straight after interviews - typed the notes from one interview as the interviewee did not want to be recorded and sent by email for approval.
Stage2f: Actual study: Case University Five	Middle of November until the middle of December 2012	State University Central	See Stage2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - studied the university history, information on the website; - visited the university 2 times to become familiar with facilities and feel the atmosphere before the interviews; I made notes of leaflets, board announcements and information; - made a list of people for interview through the Vice Rector. - interviewed 6 people. - translated and transcribed straight after interviews

3.5.1 The pilot study

The pilot study commenced in February 2012 and continued until the end of March. It was conducted with four administrators from four different HEIs along with studying relevant documents. As a preparation for the pilot study, I conducted an interview of 30-40 minute with three PhD students from the University of Leeds, School of Education. After the pre-pilot interviews, I chose three HEIs and the Ministry of Education and Science, and interviewed one person from each institution in an administrative position. Pre-prepared questions were used as a guide for the interviews. The first interview was held at the institute where I work. However, in my opinion, the first interview, which lasted approximately forty minutes, was not successful as I was unable to prompt and probe properly, and allowed the interviewee continue talking in terms that were far too general and unfocussed. I failed to probe more and to elicit examples.

The second interview was conducted at his office with the General Director of a private institute who was a friend of mine. Before the interview, I looked into his institute by surfing the website. This is a small institute with only 952 students. It offers fields of study in education, computer software and accounting. The interview lasted one hour and was still not good enough to bring out the important points.

The third interview was carried out with the vice-rector of one of the state universities. Before the interview, I visited the university site twice and carried out some observation around the campus, and studied the university website. I also studied a few documents such as university newsletters, prospectus and promotional brochures on academic programmes. The interviewee also invited the department head of academic affairs to our interview. The meeting was held in the main interviewee's office. This was a much improved conversation with the two interviewees and lasted an hour. From this interview I learned what should be considered for the next interview. For example, I realised that I would have to examine the ministerial regulations for the index specialism and the general standard for university curriculum. With my third interview, I gained greater confidence in asking the relevant questions. I was able to probe and ask for examples. I was also able to ask them on what basis they make decisions for introducing a new field of study. Having developed more confidence, I was ready to make the next important meeting with a ministerial officer with whom I set up a time to meet in a restaurant as he wished. The interview lasted for 40 minutes and he was genuine in his conversation and responses. He also advised as who would be most helpful to answer questions in my area of interest.

Lessons learned from pilot study: During the pilot interviews, I always kept in my mind how far my interview questions provided data that would answer my research questions. My main concern was whether I might need alternative methods of data collection, or more interviews with a different population such as students for a wider data base. Although my first two interviews were not as successful as I had wished, I learned to engage in conversation with my interviewees. In my next two interviews I was able to engage in conversation in a more confident manner, and was able to converse with them with a purpose using prompts and probes to direct the discussion. What is more, I learned that I had to study the background details of the university well in advance, and do observational visits to feel and know more about the condition and atmosphere on site before the interviews.

I was able to improve my interviews through the advice of my supervisors. I sent them the translation of the first two interviews and received valuable comments. My first interviews tended to be more descriptive due to the nature of the questions I asked. So I tried to improve them by asking for examples and probing more. All my interviewees agreed to be recorded and this made my work much easier during translation. I listened to them several times and transcribed directly into English. This type of directly translated transcription has made communication with my supervisors much easier, and in addition I have been able to become immersed in my data. For this reason, I made the decision to do the same for all interviews for my future analysis.

My initial interview questions were more semi-structured and with little engagement. I learned from the pilot interviews that I should begin interviews with more open questions and to avoid leading questions.

3.5.2 The field study

I worked on five universities: two private and three state. The reason for choosing two private universities, both of which are regarded as the only ones run for profit, was that it gave a representation of 50% as there were only four private universities in the country. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the number went up to seven. I then started the first case study in May, 2012 at State University East (see Stage 2a in Table 3.1) and it continued throughout that month. I completed the whole of the field work by the middle of December 2012.

With regard to state universities, there are ten universities of which two are for special purposes: defence and home affairs. Two universities were the target of my pilot study. Of the remaining six three universities were selected for this multiple case study.

Studies were also carried out at the Ministry of Education and Science of Mongolia and two institutions under the ministry. In total I interviewed 50 university administrators and decision-making officials including two leaders from non-governmental organisations that are directly involved in higher education issues. When I visited private universities, I first met with a 'gatekeeper' to obtain permission to interview his employees. The situation with state universities was different. Here administrators were responsible for themselves and did not need permission from above. Usually, at the first meeting, I left my research information sheet along with a consent sheet to be picked up at the second meeting when the interview was held. The main procedure I followed at my site study was as described below.

First, I studied the university's history, relevant statistics about it, any relevant reports to be found, and I scanned university websites a number of times for further information. It took me at least 5 working days for each university.

Second, I visited all the universities at least 3 times to become familiar with facilities and people. There were often many buildings in state universities, sometimes on separate campuses, and I tried to visit as many as possible. I talked to students during these visits, and read leaflets, any board announcements and available information making notes of what I saw and heard, enabling me to feel the atmosphere and to get more acquainted with each university.

Third, where possible I contacted a person whom I knew who works at the university in order to get an insider's view. This person provided me with additional valuable information about the university which I would not find anywhere else, such as which administrator works for a longer number of years and who is new to a position. Sometimes I would ask the person for a recommendation whom I should meet, and if they could provide me with their mobile phone number. I used this strategy because it is the way we deal with this situation in my country.

Fourth, I decided whom I should meet, and made a list of the people relevant to my study. As mentioned earlier in chapter 3.4.2, the sampling strategy was 'key informant' (Yin, 1994:90) sampling strategy. The sampling of these people was based on two principles: the positions they held and their length of service in the higher education sector. Persons in management positions are more involved in policy related activities than the academic staff,

and, I therefore tried to select this category of people. Also those administrators who have served the sector longer than anybody else have insightful knowledge, and the insider's information helped me in this decision. Thus, the four categories of administrative staff of the five universities, totalling 41, were selected. As stated in chapter 3.4.3, the sampling of policy making people was similar to the sampling of the higher education managers: the positions held and the length of service to the higher education sector.

The method of reaching these people was straightforward: I usually went to their office directly and requested a few minutes to talk, which, for me, is more efficient than trying to arrange a meeting over the phone with people you do not know. This is a commonly accepted cultural practice in my country. I did arrange meetings on the phone with four people, but the rest of them I visited in person. Using this opportunity I explained the purpose of my visit and asked for a convenient time for another meeting. Sometimes the person was not there and I would wait for hours. Sometimes the person would not be in the place we arranged. For example, one of my interviewees changed his appointment six times because he was the most important person in charge of academic affairs at one of the universities. He was very busy and I was very patient with all these changes and visited his office six times.

It was challenging work to arrange meetings with my targeted people. I interviewed the following types of academic administrators, decision makers and leaders of NGOs totalling to 50 (see Table 3.2). All respondents were interviewed once, and interviews lasted approximately from half an hour to an hour.

1. At each university I interviewed either the rector or vice-rector in charge of academic affairs, or the vice-rector in charge of finance. I also interviewed the head of academic affairs, a media person if there was one, school directors for social science, natural science and languages, director of international relations, director for student support, and department heads. All the people I interviewed for each university ranged from six to nine people.
2. At MES, I interviewed two department heads in charge of higher and vocational education, and three senior officers. In addition I interviewed the senior administrator of the research institute under the ministry, and senior administrator from the National Accreditation Council.
3. In the non-governmental sphere, I interviewed the vice-president of the Private Higher Education Institutes' Association. Also I interviewed the chief coordinator of the project on Higher Education Reform supported by the Asian Development Bank.

I have given the roles of my respondents in Table 3.2, but for ethical reasons and to protect their anonymity and commitment, I have not given their institution's full name or their detailed work responsibilities because a majority of my respondents held the only position in their institutions. All except three interviewees agreed to be recorded during the interview. Of those who did not to be recorded I took notes, and I emailed the written notes to them for approval.

A parliamentary election took place during my fieldwork in Mongolia, and it was strange and uncomfortable to observe how some of the people I had interviewed were replaced by the new government.

By the time I finished my field study in the middle of December 2012, I had already translated into English and transcribed 37 recorded interviews - not a selected version but a full translation of the recorded interviews in Mongolian. This transcription was completed by March 2013, before I started my data analysis.

Table 3-2 Roles of interviewees

No	<i>A. University administrators</i>	Number of Interviewees	<i>B. Ministry officials</i>	Number of Interviewees	<i>C. NGO and Donor Organisation</i>	Number of Interviewees	Total
1	Rector of university	1	Head of department	2	Executive Director for HE NGO	1	
2	Vice-Rector of university	5	Senior officers	3	Project chief coordinator	1	
3	Directors for undergraduate academic programmes	5	Directors of institutions under the ministry	2			
4	Head of school	16					
5	Head of department	2					
6	Manager for undergraduate academic programmes	3					
7	Senior academic staff	1					
8	Deputy Director of School	1					
9	Head of Centre	1					
10	Marketing Director	1					
11	Media representative	2					
12	General economist	1					
13	Head of administration, evaluation and monitoring	1					
14	Director of student affairs	1					
	Total	41		7		2	50

3.5.3 The data collection sources

There are two elements of the study designed to answer the two research questions. The first is understanding the change in higher education in relation to the market. The second is understanding higher education universities' behaviour, and precisely how the change is taking place in the particular context of course provision. The relationship between these two elements can be examined through the perspectives of policy-makers and higher education managers. In order to answer research question one, or to understand the first element, I undertook an examination of publicly available documents in relation to market policy and interviewed a range of senior officials. In order to answer research questions two, or to understand the second element, I focused on multi-site qualitative case studies of higher education which involved document review and interviews. However, I also acknowledge that I have the perspectives of policy makers on question two, while higher education managers likewise communicated their perspectives on question one.

As explained, the primary methods to be adopted for the study were the interview and document review for the purpose of obtaining a fuller picture of the change in HEIs in Mongolia.

Interview. Interviews are the main method in this study employed to answer my two research questions. In order to achieve respondent triangulation through comparison, the interviews took place with two groups: senior administrators from the university case studies, and key officials at ministerial level. The sampling of the participants for interview is discussed in the previous part. The next step was to determine the type of interview the study needed. This study was planned to adopt the semi-structured one-on-one type of interview because it can provide 'the best of both worlds combining the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up as necessary' (Thomas, 2009: 164; 2011:163). Bryman (2001:315) also points out that in the case of multiple-case study research, the researcher will need some structure to be able to make cross-case comparison. Bryman argues that 'if the researcher is beginning the investigation with a fairly clear focus, rather than a very general notion of wanting to do research on a topic, it is likely that the interviews will be semi-structured ones, so that the more specific issues can be addressed' (ibid:315). However, it should be noted that the interviews were not strictly structured as during the pilot interview it was decided to be more open-ended. Nonetheless, interview schedules contained certain points to align with research questions.

Interviews were scheduled as a way of exploring the issues under investigation in greater depth. As presented in Table 3.2, a sample of 50 interviewees representing 14 types of groups of respondents who are generally in administrative positions at the case universities, and three types of the key personnel from the ministerial level were chosen.

Two separate interview schedules (Appendix 3) were prepared for university administrators and senior ministerial administrators. There were both common and specific questions in the interview questions in relation to research questions to facilitate comparative analysis of perceptions of respondents, and to reflect differences in role and responsibility. There were five parts in the interview schedules in which the first and the very last parts were designed to be similar for all interviewees. The first part of the interview was designed to talk about roles and work context of the interviewees, while the last part was concluding remarks and inviting the addition of any ideas. In designing the interview schedules, three main research topics were identified: the nature of the changes in Mongolian HE in the context of the market, the market conditions in Mongolian HE, and the influence of market on curricular provision at undergraduate level and the causes of change in academic programmes. The aim of identifying these three topics was to ensure consistency within the conceptual framework and to align to the research questions. Within each of the three topics there are between four and seven questions. They are generally similar for each group of respondent but they are specific to the role and the responsibilities of each (see Topics 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix 3). Especially, the questions for Topic 4 (Appendix 3) were very specifically tailored to the roles and responsibilities of the respondents. Generally, there are fewer questions under each topic because the purpose of the schedule was to assist in generating what Burgess refers to as 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1988:153 cited in Wilson, 2006:87) suggesting the value of dialogue in the interview process. Based on the conversation concerning the work context, and depending on the position the respondent held, the conversations revolved around the topics related to the core interest discussed in the theoretical framework: government and university relations, the market in practice in terms of university autonomy, consumers, competition and academic programmes (questions under Topics 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix 3). The issue of 'government and university relations' aims to reveal the government policy toward higher education leading to answers of research question one and two, whereas the thematic issue 'market in practice' intends to investigate the influence of market on universities, thus leading again to questions one and two. The issues 'consumers' and 'competition' focus on whether the government is involved in university decision-making, such as student choice and curricular provision, and it leads to the answer of question two. The first issue was covered through policy makers' and university administrators' interviews, and the second and third topics were dealt with mainly

through interviews with higher education managers. The interview schedules served as a loose framework to be followed as long as the issues under discussion were relevant to the study. Within the framework of the interview schedule, each interviewee was interviewed only once with the core questions being modified slightly to tailor to the role and responsibilities of the interviewees. These interview schedules were tested and improved through the pilot interviews.

All the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent (see Appendix 1, 2 and 4). An interview protocol was used. As one of the participants from Private University South cancelled his meeting five times because he was very busy, I meanwhile interviewed as a back-up an officer who is under his supervision. However, despite the loss of my time and fuel by traveling a long distance several times for the sole purpose of interviewing him, I eventually succeeded. The meeting was worthwhile as the administrator was very enthusiastic. As a result I decided not to transcribe his officer's interview, but I was able to compare information from both interviews.

Document review. Documents were one of the supporting tools for gathering data for the study. Yin (1994:79, 81) writes that documentation is one of the most important sources of data collection for case studies because they can 'provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources.' The study examined two types of documents: government policy documents (see Appendix 5) and regulations that were publicly available, and documents of institutions. Policy related documents assisted in uncovering the underlying reasons for the policy. As mentioned earlier, documents of the institutions were mainly sought from the five universities' internal existing records. Access to the universities' documents was gained mainly through websites, prospectuses, promotional documents and brochures. In addition, public newspaper articles about those universities and the ministry's positions were another source of information.

3.6 Approaches to Data Analysis

As there was a large amount of interview data, managing data has been the most important issue. The data collected through interviews with policy makers and higher education administrators has been analysed in a similar way with a three stage procedure suggested in the literature (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1984): preparing the data for analysis by transcribing, reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and representing the data.

3.6.1 Interviews

As the study involved a large amount of data from 50 interviews, the thematic analysis served the purpose of the study. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative method and it is used for 'identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (ibid) explain that themes or patterns within data can be identified either in an inductive 'bottom up' way (citing Frith and Gleeson, 2004), or in a theoretical, deductive 'top down' way (citing Boyatzis, 1998 and Hayes, 1997). However, I acknowledge that top-down and bottom-up process are interactive in some way because the research keeps a specific interest in identifying themes influenced by the theoretical framework. Braun and Clarke (2006:85) also state that using the data collection questions (such as from an interview schedule) as the 'themes' are the 'worst examples of thematic analysis'. The questions employed in the interviews were always more open-ended to begin with, followed by the key points relevant to the research questions ready on paper to ask, appropriate to respondents' posts and positions. Prompts and probes were also used as appropriate.

I chose to work on NVivo software to analyse the interviews because I was anxious about my large amount of interview data coupled with being restrained by time. Although I used the NVivo programme on the basic level of coding and theme development, it was indeed useful as it enabled me to manage a large amount of data in a very short period of time. Apart from being time efficient, using NVivo had other advantages. First, it was helpful and efficient in arranging and organising interview transcriptions and audio recordings in different folders under various themes by only dragging and dropping, and by looking at and listening to them at the same time when clarification was needed. It was very user-friendly as I can see on screen a number of items at the same time which would be very difficult to do with manual coding. In addition, the same piece of text could be coded at many nodes. Second, it was very useful because of the visual presentation: sources of codes were automatically counted on NVivo, and I could already see which themes and subthemes were prevailing in interviews during the coding process. Third, I could import and export any document when needed. Fourth, models created from nodes were handy for visualisation and exploration of themes and relationships. Last but not least, as I worked with my data in NVivo, I could create notes about my thoughts on the analysis, or notes about similarities and differences in a Memos folder. Now, I describe the process of the interview analysis I used.

Process of the thematic analysis in interview data:

Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarisation, data coding, and theme development and revision. The procedures used for the analysis of the interview data are in accordance with this approach:

First, familiarisation with data has been internalized through transcription and translation of the interviews. The audio recordings of the interviews of 47 respondents out of 50 were listened to a number of times for their accurate translation and transcription. Due to a lower degree of importance, three interviews were not transcribed but were listened to a few times. One respondent was interviewed as a back-up, and another was referred to by one of the administrators, but was found to be very old and hardly remembered anything. Another was found out to be recently appointed to the post and did not provide much information. All interviews were directly translated into English, verbatim, by the researcher. The importance of translating the interviews as they were transcribed was to understand the meaning rather than the language, or linguistic features first. Second, the pre-translated transcriptions helped me to communicate with my supervisors during the process of soliciting advice on coding and theme development. Most of the translated transcriptions were carried out straight after the interview to consider any clarification. This process was carried out on Microsoft Word Office.

Second, the transcripts and audio recordings were imported to the NVivo and transcripts were coded on it while listening to recordings when necessary. On NVivo, I created the analysis of data in two ways to begin to generate codes. The purpose was to look at transcripts from two perspectives. First, to look at the data from a data-driven perspective, and coded in inductive way. Second, to look at them from the research question perspective to check if the data was responding to the questions, and if it was giving sufficient information in response to research questions and associated principles. Having satisfied that the codes generated from five of the transcripts were aligning with research questions and were adequate for the purpose, the data-driven coding was continued with to look for the patterns of meaning. An extract from the process of coding in NVivo nodes is presented in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 Coding on NVivo

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface for a project named "My NVIVO project_22 April 13.nvp". The interface is divided into several main sections:

- Top Ribbon:** Contains tabs for File, Home, Create, External Data, Analyze, Query, Explore, Layout, and View. The Home tab is active, showing various toolbars for workspace, item, clipboard, format, paragraph, styles, editing, and proofing.
- Left Panel (Nodes):** Shows a hierarchical tree of nodes. Under "Inductive coding", several nodes are listed, including "admission quota", "board", "controversy of controlling tuition and admis", "Counter initiative by institutions", "licensing for programmes and curriculum", "standard setting & offerings", "state policy", and "state support".
- Center Panel (Inductive coding):** Displays a list of nodes with checkboxes. The "admission quota" node is selected, and its details are shown in the right panel.
- Right Panel (Reference View):** Shows the text of the selected reference. It includes a link to the source file, coverage percentages, and the full text of the reference. The text discusses admission quotas and their impact on university enrollment.
- Bottom Panel:** Shows the current view settings: "In Nodes", "Code At", and "Unfiltered". It also displays the number of sources (24) and references (36).

Reference 1 - 2.59% Coverage

Apple2: We include the new field in the promotion of the university to be announced. Then people interested in knowing more about it approach us. We sent out letters to local government from the university. There is a quota of 30-40 people and at least one person from each aimag send their people. There will be 20 entrants from the capital. We sent out leaflet at the admission process. Due to the financial issue such as state loan, there is quota for each field.

Reference 2 - 17.96% Coverage

N: You say there is high demand. What do you think of the demand and quota relationship?

Apple2: Quota is low and it restricts the entrance. This quota is to do with money and this causes restriction in number. However, it is not necessary for all to get state education loan. Granting a stipend to everyone is a wrong system. These lead the state to set a quota. Why all need to get a stipend? Why all need to study on state loan? Certainly, poor people need a loan. But that does not mean entrance number needs to be restricted.

The above Figure 3-1 shows that under the theme *Power*, there is subtheme *State Involvement* and under this subtheme, there is sub-subtheme *Admission quota*. In this sub-subtheme *Admission quota*, the current page shows only two references coded from Senior Administrator2, State University West.

Third stage was the theme development. At this stage, coded nodes on NVivo were printed out, read and reread to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). As the preliminary analysis presents, initially there were 13 main categories with their subcategories.

As the Figure 3-2 shows, NVivo automatically counts the number of times how many sources referred to each theme and subtheme. Although the stages used in the analysis of the data look sequential, they were very repetitive while being built up on the previous stage. The process of theme development on NVivo has been presented below in Figure 3-2:

Figure 3-2 Theme development on NVivo

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface for a project named 'My Nvivo project.nvp'. The main window displays a table of inductive coding results. The table has the following columns: Name, Sources, References, Created On, Created By, Modified On, and Modified By. The data is organized into a tree structure on the left, with 'Inductive coding' selected. The table lists various themes and their associated statistics.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
CHANGES IN HE	65	945	27/01/2013 21:42	JN	08/04/2013 15:47	JN
Curricular responsiveness	49	218	24/01/2013 20:15	JN	14/04/2013 09:39	JN
Emergence of Private HEIs	31	61	24/01/2013 20:05	JN	08/04/2013 10:32	JN
Historical comparative perspective	26	49	10/02/2013 18:44	JN	08/04/2013 10:12	JN
Legal and policy changes	21	41	10/02/2013 18:56	JN	31/03/2013 20:01	JN
Sector development	57	273	30/01/2013 21:10	JN	08/04/2013 10:49	JN
Structural and management change	57	283	28/01/2013 18:02	JN	08/04/2013 10:50	JN
COMPETITION	52	246	24/02/2013 21:22	JN	09/04/2013 20:09	JN
CONSUMERS	61	261	08/02/2013 21:34	JN	09/04/2013 20:09	JN
COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT	21	36	30/01/2013 21:31	JN	09/04/2013 20:09	JN
INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE	50	337	29/01/2013 22:06	JN	09/04/2013 20:45	JN
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON	28	65	30/01/2013 21:08	JN	09/04/2013 20:46	JN
MARKET DEMAND	50	205	30/01/2013 21:06	JN	09/04/2013 20:13	JN
POWER	55	424	29/01/2013 22:07	JN	09/04/2013 20:46	JN
QUALITY	43	168	29/01/2013 22:28	JN	09/04/2013 20:46	JN
REASONS FOR INTRODUCING NEW COURSES	51	305	29/01/2013 22:07	JN	08/04/2013 15:54	JN
Introduction process of new courses	26	55	30/01/2013 21:34	JN	13/04/2013 18:30	JN
Needs and demand	45	188	30/01/2013 20:56	JN	14/04/2013 10:00	JN
Profit motive	21	26	30/01/2013 20:58	JN	14/04/2013 09:59	JN
University expansion policy	27	36	30/01/2013 20:57	JN	08/04/2013 10:44	JN
REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING COURSES	24	48	24/02/2013 20:49	JN	09/04/2013 20:46	JN
STATE HEIs VS PRIVATE HEIs	35	66	07/02/2013 22:09	JN	09/04/2013 20:56	JN

Fourth, these 13 categories have been amalgamated into 11 and into 7, and was further reduced to 5 as in Figure 3-3: university context, institutional autonomy (power), competition, consumers and changes in curricular provision (curricular responsiveness). Thomas (2003) points out that 'Most inductive studies report a model that has between 3 and 8 main categories in the findings.'

Figure 3-3 Theme development on NVivo

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface with the 'Inductive coding' window open. The window displays a table of coding results. The table has the following columns: Name, Sources, References, Created On, Created By, Modified On, and Modified By. The data is organized into a hierarchical tree structure on the left side of the window, showing the relationship between parent and child nodes.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
POWER	42	370	29/01/2013 22:07	JN	20/04/2013 13:16	N
CURRICULAR RESPONSIVENESS	44	456	20/04/2013 11:30	N	20/04/2013 13:16	N
Reasons for withdrawing courses	21	45	24/02/2013 20:49	JN	20/04/2013 11:31	N
Reasons for introducing new courses	44	411	29/01/2013 22:07	JN	20/04/2013 11:31	N
Introduction process of new courses	23	50	30/01/2013 21:34	JN	20/04/2013 11:26	N
University expansion policy	25	34	30/01/2013 20:57	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Profit motive	25	37	30/01/2013 20:58	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Needs and demand	40	290	30/01/2013 20:56	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
CONSUMERS	46	219	08/02/2013 21:34	JN	20/04/2013 10:41	N
Freedom of a choice	10	15	16/03/2013 18:36	JN	25/05/2013 20:33	N
Future good job	25	38	27/02/2013 21:59	JN	20/04/2013 10:41	N
Students and offerings as source of money	25	40	28/02/2013 15:34	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Student satisfaction	26	36	23/03/2013 13:54	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Freedom of information	28	38	26/02/2013 11:04	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
More opportunities for students	28	43	28/02/2013 14:49	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
COMPETITION	46	526	24/02/2013 21:22	JN	20/04/2013 13:16	N
Quality improves competitiveness	11	14	03/03/2013 22:57	JN	20/04/2013 11:09	N
Preference for Market driven or state-driven management	12	15	03/03/2013 22:47	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Private vs Private	13	24	06/03/2013 14:07	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Market entrance	15	16	28/02/2013 15:11	JN	25/05/2013 20:33	N
Promotion	19	26	08/03/2013 11:40	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N
Market positioning	29	65	28/02/2013 14:50	JN	29/04/2013 14:58	JN
State Institutions vs Private Institutions	36	79	06/03/2013 14:09	JN	23/06/2013 18:55	N

For example, in the Group queries of NVivo, Figure 3-4 shows how the interview transcript of SA1 has been coded to nodes. This transcript has been coded from two perspectives: data-driven or inductive, and research question perspective or deductive. Here I will explain only about the data-driven perspective. As the figure shows, the transcript for SA1 indicates a range of nodes or themes. These are the themes along with their sub-themes and sub-subthemes: Power or State Involvement (political influence, conflict of interest), Curricular Responsiveness (reasons for introducing new courses, university expansion, needs and demand), Consumers (student satisfaction), and Competition (state HEI versus private HEI, market positioning, institutional reputation and academic capacity).

Figure 3-4 coding for SA1

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface for a project named "My NVivo project_22 April 13.nvp". The main workspace displays a "Group Query" for "SA1" with a table of node statistics. The table lists various nodes under the "SA1" scope, including "STATE POICY", "POWER", and "FREEDOM TO USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES". The table columns include "In Folder", "Find", "Create", "Create", "Modifie", and "Modifie".

Scope Item	In Folder	Find	Create	Create	Modifie	Modifie
SA1	Internals\Interviews\	79	24/01/	JN	11/03/	N
Range Item						
STATE POICY\realisation of the policy	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	08/03/	JN	
STATE POICY\deviation of power	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	24/02/	JN	
STATE POICY	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	17/02/	JN	
POWER\State involvement\licensing for programmes and curriculum	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	23/06/	N	
POWER\State involvement\controversy of controlling tuitoin and admission	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	23/06/	N	
POWER\State involvement	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	25/05/	N	
POWER\Power misuse	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	25/05/	N	
POWER\Political influence	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	25/05/	N	
POWER\Conflict of interest	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	20/04/	N	
POWER	Nodes\Inductive coding	30/01/	JN	20/04/	N	
FREEDOM TO USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	03/03/	JN	
FREEDOM TO SPECIFY and CHOOSE THE PRODUCT- supply of programmes\product qualit	Nodes\Deductive co	13/02/	JN	13/02/	JN	
FREEDOM TO SPECIFY and CHOOSE THE PRODUCT- supply of programmes\product qualit	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	03/03/	JN	
FREEDOM TO SPECIFY and CHOOSE THE PRODUCT- supply of programmes\introduction o	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	03/03/	JN	
FREEDOM TO SPECIFY and CHOOSE THE PRODUCT- supply of programmes	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	08/03/	JN	
FREEDOM TO DETERMINE PRICESS; Consumer Direct and cost-covering prices paid	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	08/03/	JN	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	08/03/	JN	
FREEDOM OF ENTRY; FREEDOM TO CHOOSE PROVIDER;	Nodes\Deductive co	09/02/	JN	08/03/	JN	
CURRICULAR RESPONSIVENESS\Reasons for introducing new courses\University expansio	Nodes\Inductive codi	08/02/	JN	23/03/	JN	
CURRICULAR RESPONSIVENESS\Reasons for introducing new courses\University expansio	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	01/04/	JN	
CURRICULAR RESPONSIVENESS\Reasons for introducing new courses\University expansio	Nodes\Inductive codi	30/01/	JN	18/03/	JN	
CURRICULAR RESPONSIVENESS\Reasons for introducing new courses\University expansio	Nodes\Inductive codi	29/01/	JN	23/04/	N	

Later, during the case analysis, the respondents' transcripts were manually blind re-coded again for each case university. This last stage of procedure was carried out just to double check the themes developed. NVivo was useful and helpful, however, any form of data analysis does have a number of limitations. Ishak and Bakar (2012:102) state,

NVivo is just another set of tools that will assist a researcher in undertaking an analysis of qualitative data. However, regardless of the type of software being used, the researcher has to dutifully make sense of all the data him or herself, without damaging the context of the phenomenon being studied. Inevitably, the software cannot replace the wisdom that the researcher brings into the research because at the back of every researcher's mind lies his or her life history that will influence the way he or she sees and interpret the world.

NVivo is very limited in its usefulness in that it displays all the coded nodes of sources together under one given theme, rather than a complete set of coding for an individual transcript. For example, as shown in Figure 3-3, theme or heading 'Curricular responsiveness', all the 44 sources that were referred and coded are displayed, but an entire set of coding for a single transcript are not presented. Consequently I decided to use an alternative method to double check the data analysis with manual checks during my case analysis. By using both the computer-assisted data analysis coupled with manual checks, it improved trustworthiness, credibility and validity of the findings. In order to check, I selected a sample including some of the earlier coding and I did blind recoding and satisfied myself. If the sample gave a cause for concern I would have done all again. This manual re-coding check did not take much time as I was very well familiarised with the transcripts in the previous stages. Braun and Clarke (2006:86) have already highlighted, 'Analysis is typically a recursive process, with movement back and forth between different phases. So it's not rigid, and with more experience (and smaller datasets), the analytic process can blur some of these phases together.'

3.6.2 Documents

Both government and university documents were reviewed and the themes were triangulated with the themes from interviews thus to provide the possibility of exploring the same issue from different angles. First, government documents, e.g. ministerial orders, decisions, resolutions, policy documents, other relevant legal documents and statistics, were reviewed well before the start of interviews with policy makers and university administrators. They were used to frame the main part in the context chapter 1 as these documents assisted in contextualizing the state policy in a national context, and in addressing the perspectives of respondents. Second, the review of the institutional documents was a continuous process

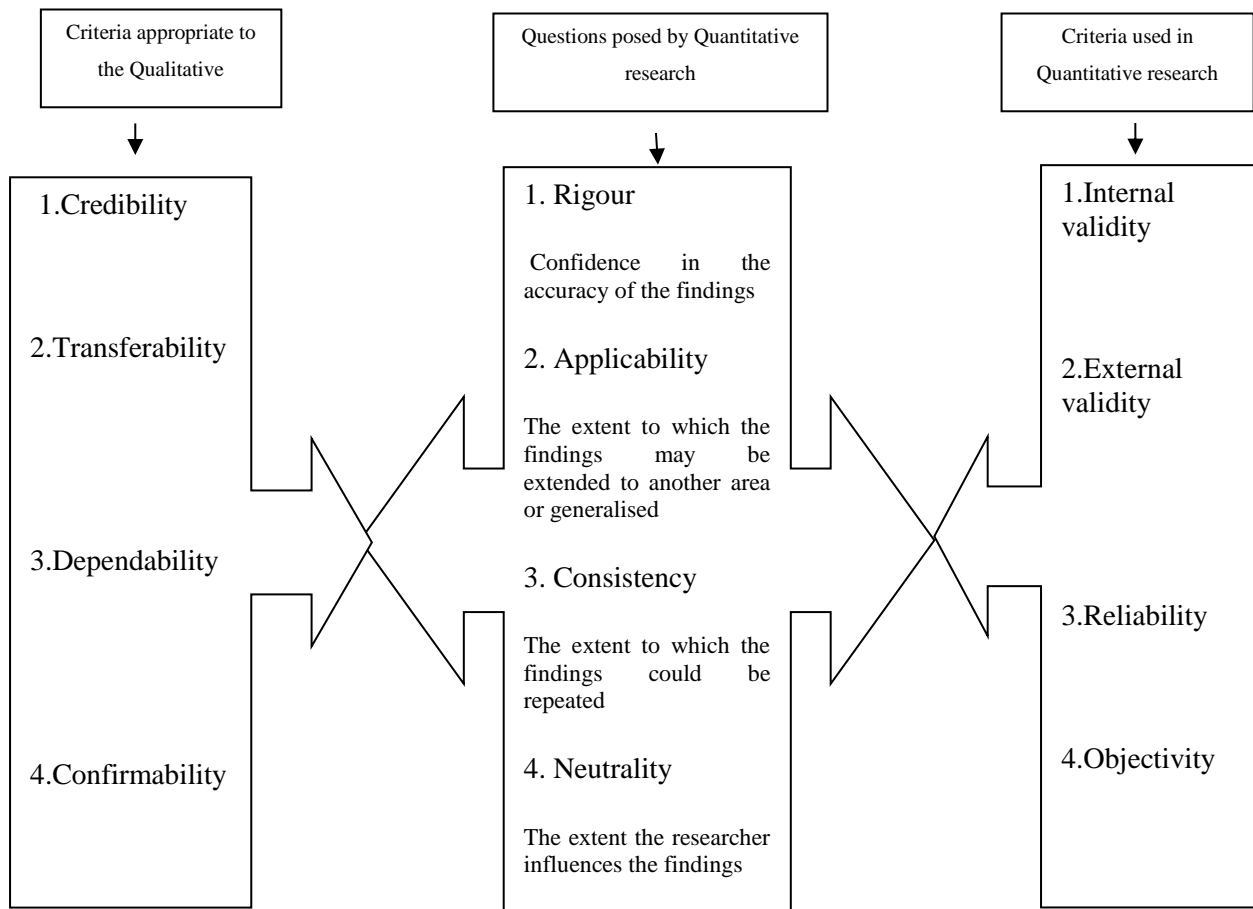
because it was carried out both prior to and during the site visits when more documentation was obtained from the respondents. I have to acknowledge that not all five universities were generous with providing their internal documents apart from State University West, State University East, and Private University South. But I found it difficult to find even prospectuses from Private University North and State University Central. As a result, I relied mainly on the website information of these two universities and their promotional articles in national newspapers.

3.6.3 Comparative analysis

Case studies of the five universities were analysed on a comparative and thematic case by case basis in a sequential order. Each university case was described individually in detail under the umbrella of state and private university case studies. The theoretical insights were the basis for comparative analysis of these two types of cases. Hence, the approach to the cases was embedded rather than holistic, and they were analysed in relation to the research questions to ensure the specific focus of the study. The data and the findings of the comparative analysis were triangulated with the data and findings from the policy perspectives and were synthesized in separate chapter 7, and the policy perspectives were discussed in that chapter too.

3.7 Ensuring Trustworthiness

In this study, validity and reliability were achieved through consulting and examining the key concepts, methodology and analysis of the data. However, the terms 'validity' (internal and external), 'reliability', and 'objectivity' are more commonly used in quantitative research, and some scholars (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) advocate the concept of 'trustworthiness' to achieve the rigour in qualitative research. Following Lincoln and Guba, this study uses the term 'trustworthiness'. They (1985:328) further argue that to be 'the study worthy of confidence', it needs to meet four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba explain these criteria in relation to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity which evolve in response to the questions of rigour, applicability, consistency and neutrality posed by the quantitative research. The response to these issues is the point where both quantitative and qualitative researchers meet. Below I present the definitions of these qualitative terms comparable to quantitative terms in accordance with the research literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290-331; Bassegy, 1999:75; Creswell, 2007:204; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007:183) in order to be able to observe them further in my study.

Figure 3-5 Terms defining the trustworthiness of the study

Adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985

Summarising from Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility can be ensured through 'prolonged engagement in the field' and through triangulation. I spent approximately one and a half months at each university exploring the facilities, and on some occasions attending events such as Open Day, education exhibition and admission registration during which I met and talked to current and prospective students, and lecturers and support staff. Triangulation strategies are discussed separately in this section.

Transferability may be achieved through 'a thick description' to 'enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility'. In other words, transferability can be equated with generalisability of the findings which may be extended to another area. This is the most controversial issue for qualitative researchers as Creswell (2007:74) emphasises, 'as a general rule, qualitative researchers are reluctant to generalise from one case to another because the contexts of the cases differ.' However, there can be analytical (Yin, 1994) and naturalistic generalisation (Stake,

1995). Yin (1994:37) states that survey research relies on statistical generalisation, whereas case studies rely on analytical generalisation through replicating the findings in second or third cases to test a theory. In contrast to Yin's view, Stake (1995:86) proposes naturalistic generalisation which is located within the realm of private knowledge. He points out that it is important for case researchers to provide input into the reader's naturalistic generalisations: 'the reader will take both our narrative descriptions and our assertions to form vicarious experience and to work existing propositional knowledge to modify existing generalisations.' Having considered the prospects of generalising from qualitative data, the decision was made to dismiss Yin's idea of analytic generalisation, however, in terms of Stake's notion of naturalistic generalisation, this can be demonstrated by the research which has been done. Therefore, the findings of this study can be naturally generalised by the reader who thinks and decides if the study is transferable to his/her situation.

Lincoln and Guba stress 'There can be no validity without reliability and thus no credibility without dependability. Rather than reliability, the qualitative researcher seeks dependability that the results will be subject to change and instability. An inquiry audit (ibid: 295), or a detailed account of the research process should help to provide dependability. Robson (2002:173) writes that the writer's position should 'be able to identify areas of potential bias' and open in what he/she does. In the chapters of this dissertation, I aim to provide as much detail as possible regarding my methodology, the theoretical concepts I am influenced by and my position as a researcher. Both dependability and confirmability are established through auditing of the research process.

The credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were the goals to be achieved in this study to satisfy the requirements of trustworthiness of the study. In order to strengthen these goals, the following three approaches or strategies (Hammersley, 1996) were employed:

- Triangulation
- Facilitation
- Complementarity.

Triangulation. As for triangulation, I understand it as obtaining as many perspectives as possible (Denzin, 1989; Stake, 1995) in order to understand what is happening in Mongolian HE and to explain the policy for change and the actual practice. Three types of triangulation have been relevant to my analysis. One of them is methodological triangulation which was reached through multiple sources of data generation encompassing documents, interviews and case studies of five universities. Through triangulation, bias can be reduced by using

alternative sources of data (Denzin, 1970; Stake, 1995; Bryman, 2001; Blaikie, 2000; Hantrais, 2009). Accordingly, my data was generated from various actors like government officials and senior administrators to achieve respondent triangulation. Diverse perspectives from varying actors were analysed through comparison. In terms of theoretical triangulation, I used two theories to underpin the research investigation. In order to understand the issue to a greater depth and to think about my findings, I used the Clark model (1983) of 'triangle of coordination' and the Jongbloed model (2003) of 'market conditions for higher education.' Bringing these theories together, I was able to triangulate different theoretical tools to understand and explain the HE market and its influence on HE in relation to curricular provision in Mongolia.

On the other hand, Creswell (2007:208) stresses that the process of triangulation will involve 'corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective'. However, Blaikie (2000:265-270) criticises that triangulation metaphor in social science misrepresents its use in surveying. Moreover, corroboration may not happen in qualitative research. Creswell himself states that 'we conduct qualitative research because we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue. This detail can only be established by talking directly with people' (Creswell, 2007:40). Therefore, the purpose was not to search for the truth but to try to get more understanding through triangulation by getting different perceptions which gave me deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Facilitation. With the aim of facilitating the research process, one research strategy is employed in order to aid research using the other research strategy (Hammersley, 1996; Bryman, 2001; Hantrais, 2009). In this study, the initial review of publicly available documents helped to facilitate in preparing and defining interviews with policy makers and senior administrators. Exploratory interviews also helped facilitate the design of a much improved follow up in-depth interview for use at a later stage of the research.

Complementarity. Complementarity is the integration of different methods rather than using them in parallel or subordinating one to the other. It is used to fill gaps in data that are not accessible using the other approach (Hammersley, 1996; Bryman, 2001; Hantrais, 2009). This is a strategy employed in order that different aspects of an investigation can be dovetailed. In this study documentary evidence complemented interview evidence in the sense that each provides sources of information that the researcher would not find in others. Documents could provide statements of the state policy, organisational values, institutional priorities and a wide range of descriptive statistics. Interview evidence could

complement this by providing insights into how managers and lecturers in an organisation interpret such values and statements.

To sum up, in this study, credibility was aimed to be achieved through respondent as well as methodological triangulation. I understand that interviewing one person in the position does not provide representativeness. During the interviewing process I was open to the possibility of identifying other persons involved in the same activities by function. Or the other way around, functions are there but might not be referred to with the terms 'marketing or market manager'. Many people could be involved in this role by functions. Thus to be more credible, interviewing those involved in the same activities were necessary to get other perspectives from those first selected. For instance, apart from marketing personnel, there may be others in the financial department, international office or even student office who are involved in recruitment activities and who might be helpful in obtaining an idea of how they understand the marketing functions in an institution. In fact, this was the case in four universities apart from Private University South.

As far as transferability is concerned, the present study attempted to describe the research process as much as possible to provide a thicker description. This did not mean the study aimed at generalisation as its objective is not to generalise the findings as representative of the entire Mongolian context. Nonetheless, it is expected that the findings would be relevant to other public and private higher educational institutions in Mongolia though some may not be applicable to private institutions. Moreover, in the Mongolian context, the findings of this study will provide useful insights into other higher education institutions.

As the literature suggests, the reliability in quantitative research is typically achieved through replication and comparison. To ensure dependability in this study, a detailed description of the research process is conducted through accurate field notes, a good-quality recorder and accurate transcription. Creswell (2007:209) emphasizes that 'reliability can be enhanced if the researcher obtains detailed field notes by employing a good-quality tape and by transcribing the tape'. In addition, I attempted to replicate and follow the same data gathering procedure with the five cases in my case study.

Neutrality is the last but not least of the key topics for ensuring trustworthiness. In qualitative research neutrality is seen in terms of confirmability. With confirmability, emphasis is shifted from the researcher to the data characteristics: 'Are they or are they not confirmable?' (Lincoln and Guba (1985:300). As Richards (2009:150) points out if the researcher sets the standard and makes the data available to the reader through transparency and good documentation then readers see 'you deliver the goods'. In the study, in order to inspire

confidence in the results, the process of the data collection and data analysis were thoroughly documented and observed with standards and consistency.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In considering research ethics, the research complied with both western and Mongolian formal codes and principles. It also complied with the requirements of the Ethics Review Committee at the University of Leeds.

In the Mongolian context, there are professional codes of ethics approved by the ministries and by organizations, though there is not any code of conduct designed specifically for conducting social science research. In the higher education context of Mongolia, Professional General Code of Conduct for Teachers of Universities, Higher Educational Institutes and Colleges (MECS, 2006) has existed since 2006. The major part of this document relates only to teaching ethics rather than to the conduct of research. In addition to this code, every institution has its own ethical code of practice much of which is also related to teaching conduct. There is unwritten agreement among researchers of social science to be ethical in conducting their research. On the other hand, it is considered acceptable to openly discuss their case of study such as institutions and organisations and their participants unless the information is regarded as confidential by a researcher. For example, names of case institutions are openly used during the thesis defence. Though the names of respondents are not directly used, the respondents can still be identifiable because their post and position such as director, or deputy director etc. are not anonymous. Moreover, there is no ethics procedure to follow in conducting research. However, in recent years, some research projects, especially internationally joint research, have been employing a consent sheet for participants.

In contrast to the home institution, the host university provides a set of established ethics procedures to go through in order to get a research proposal approved. At the Host University, I applied to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee with an eleven-page proposal for internal ethical approval. The research proposal was reviewed by the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee at its virtual meeting. On the basis of the information provided, the Committee requested me to clarify three points in terms of maintaining anonymity, preserving data for a longer period and audio recording consent before the approval was granted. In short, the following Table 3-1 displays the difference between two institutions.

Table 3-3 Difference of requirements for ethical procedure between home and host institutions

Requirements for Ethics Procedures	Home Institution	Host University
Approval by Research Ethics Committee	-	+
Ethical issues always to be addressed in the proposal	-	+
Written informed consent	-	+
The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants	-/+	+
Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion	+	+
The anonymity of respondents must be respected	-/+	+
Harm to research participants must be avoided	-/+	+

+ signifies 'yes'; - signifies 'no'; -/+ signifies 'little'.

In accordance with BERA (2004) and ESRC (2005), there are three broad areas of ethical concern for the researcher. These are the responsibilities to participants, responsibilities to the community of educational researchers and responsibilities to the sponsors of research. These ethical principles were observed in the study.

Responsibilities to participants. One of the most important ethical concerns is respect for any persons involved in the research directly and indirectly. This implies getting the consent of those who are involved. It also means that subjects must base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved. During the fieldwork of the research, each of 50 participants was provided with full information of the study on a separate sheet along with the consent form. In order to obtain the voluntary participation and consent from respondents, it was necessary to provide them with as full as possible information about the research. I used the Host University Participant Consent template form with the information sheet for the written informed consent. These forms were translated into Mongolian by the researcher. Many scholars (Oliver, 2004; Wiles, 2013; Snyder, 2002; and McNamee etc. 2007) emphasise the importance of explicit statement to the participants as to whom will access the data and who will see the information. Before the interview took place, I clearly stated to the participants that the interview transcripts would be shared with my two supervisors which was also mentioned in the sheet.

- a. The information sheet contained the following:
- the nature and purpose of the study
 - expected benefits of the study
 - possible harm that may come from the study

- information about confidentiality, anonymity, how data will be kept and for how long, with details of when data will be destroyed
 - ethics procedures being followed and appeals
 - my full name and contact details
- b. The option for a potential participant to choose to take part or not.

However, it was only possible to obtain the written consent on the spot when I met the participants face to face.

As the interview was the main method of this study, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was sought with the initial contact as well as in the interview session. 'In the research context, confidentiality is that identifiable information about individuals will not be disclosed and the identity of research participants will be protected through various processes designed to anonymise them' (Wiles, 2013:42). Anonymity is 'a cornerstone of research ethics' (Oliver, 2004:77). A researcher must give a chance to respondents to hide their identity. The most common way of anonymisation is through giving 'fictional names' (Oliver, 2004:80) or the use of pseudonyms (Wiles, 2013:50). Pseudonyms were used for the universities and the participants. In the literature, for the purpose of credibility, some researchers (Grinyer, 2002; [in] Wiles, 2013:51; Oliver, 2004:79) argue that well-suited pseudonyms that match the characteristics of the participants are advised. However, in this situation when many of respondents tend to occupy the only position in their institutions, the above approach may reveal their identities. Consequently, I did not employ equivalent pseudonyms to signify all my participants.

Instead I have given different geographical names to institutions involved in the study and have numbered all the participants. The geographical names do not represent any geographical meaning, position or hierarchy. They do not bear any relationship to reality. In order to secure the anonymity of the institutions and the respondents, I also omitted some identifying information and facts if used in the quotes unless it was essential to the research. For example, I left out the names of institutions or individuals referred to by the respondents. To limit disclosure, an individual might be ascribed a different gender, job or medical condition (Lee, 1993; cited in Wiles, 2013:48-49). In this study, all administrators are depicted as male, although some are female.

Oliver (2004: 80) states the possibility of editing the data if there is any risk of respondents being identified, and the necessity to explain the action in the report to preserve the validity of the research. This could open the possibility for the researcher to exploit all the important information provided by the respondents. Access to the universities was gained through the 'gatekeepers' – the rectors or vice rectors.

There were two issues during the study that need noting.

First, it was interesting to notice that private university participants were more cautious than those in the state universities in deciding whether to be interviewed or not. Two respondents, who initially agreed to give an interview, declined in the end to take part. The main reason they gave was that because researchers in Mongolia tend to be open about the institutions' names and participants they did not want to be named in the research. Even though the researcher gave written and verbal assurance, they did not trust it. Another two participants did not want to be recorded for the same reason, but agreed with they agreed with notetaking. After the interview, the researcher emailed the notes to the interviewees to check the content for accuracy. One of them was satisfied but the other never replied even after two or three attempts at email as well as telephone contact. The implication here is that due to the lack of established ethics regulation in the country, respondents do not feel safe and secure to participate in research even if they are interested in it.

Second, during the interview session, the majority of respondents, in important positions, were very open – more open than one would imagine. Being very open, they were very critical and were saying some quite serious things about the role of the government and the power of the Ministry of Education, such as misuse of power and political influence. Some of the respondents used the names of institutions and officials that might have been involved in wrongdoing. Then again, some of the information provided by the respondents had already been openly discussed in the publicly available national newspaper.

Nonetheless, it was essential to protect the interests of the participants as well as the names of the people and institutions mentioned by the respondents in order not to harm their reputation and risk their job.

Responsibilities to the community of educational researchers. According to the definition by BERA (2004), the community of educational researchers is all those engaged in educational research including academics, professionals (from private or public bodies), teachers and students.

The current study followed all the necessary standards of research to ensure the integrity and honesty of the study to be undertaken. Babbie (2004:69) suggests researchers tell the truth about all the pitfalls and problems the researcher may face in the course of his study to serve his peers. Every effort was made not to bring research into disrepute by falsifying research evidence and manipulating findings.

Responsibilities to the sponsors of research. BERA (2004) defines this type of responsibility as a sponsor of research that to be 'any person or a body that funds research (e.g. a research charity or government body) or facilitates it by allowing and enabling access to data and participants.' As for this research, the researcher does not foresee any kind of pressure on the study in any way.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the methodological underpinnings and the research design that would assist in answering my research questions. The research questions have been elaborated in the beginning of the chapter. The study adopted the qualitative case study approach that serves the purpose of the study. I also explained the details of data collection and techniques for it. The primary method for this multi-site case study was chosen as interviews to get multiple perspectives, and document review was chosen to augment the sources of evidence. Interview data are generated from two types of participants: policy makers and university senior administrators. The data analysis process has been influenced a great deal by Braun and Clarke's concept (2006). Ensuring trustworthiness of the findings has been discussed in the light of the qualitative research through addressing the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The issues of research ethics surrounding this study have been explained in the light of the responsibilities addressed by BERA (2004) and ESRC (2005). The assurance of anonymity and confidentiality was explained and some incidents during the fieldwork related to consent have been presented.

CHAPTER 4 PERSPECTIVES ON NATIONAL POLICY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores in greater depth the perspectives on national higher education policy in general as well as in relation to curricular changes from both documentary evidence and interviews with nine respondents, including eight policymakers in the MES and a senior official from the private HE sector.

Three main themes emerge from the findings: creation of a market orientation, policy re-orientation and consolidation, and curriculum coordination, each with a number of sub-themes.

4.2 Creating a Market Orientation in Higher Education in Mongolia

4.2.1 Transition to a market-oriented system

Higher education in Mongolia has undergone transformation through the application of market practices that were imposed as a result of fundamental changes in the society. From a historical perspective, socio-economic and political changes and the transition to a market economy were abrupt, and they left deep scars on higher education. Based on the respondents' reactions, it was clear that there had been three major difficulties faced by higher education during the transition. Firstly, the financial austerity which hit higher education so hard that state HEIs were left without any financial support. Six out of nine respondents brought up this financial issue in their conversation. All were in general agreement that the state higher education providers suffered financially as the state focused more on secondary education during the 1990s. The following description offers a deeper insight into the situation.

It can be said that there was no investment in higher education in the last 20 years. In the first years of market economy, higher education was just abandoned and it was left to survive on tuition fees. Even expenses for fixed costs were not provided at that time. Recently, the state's covering of fixed maintenance costs has been reinstated. Even now expenses for renewing laboratory equipment and for introducing new technology are still not funded by the state (SA27).

The above extract shows that higher education experienced considerable financial stringency during the transition, and the situation appears to have improved little since the 1990s. A number of respondents from the institutions studied felt this was the main obstacle to improving quality: this will be discussed further in the Institutional Perspective chapter. This lack of state financial support contradicted the 1995 legislation on Education and Higher Education which stipulated that no less than 20 percent of the state annual budget would be

spent on education, and the fixed costs for HEIs would be covered by the state. However, during the transition of 1990, the state was unable to pay even the fixed costs.

Secondly, the lack of appropriate knowledge about the new market system contributed to the problems, as made clear by the interviews with the majority of the policy makers. There were errors in policy legislation and regulations which were corrected over the course of time on a regular basis (SA25, 27, 29). One of the respondents (SA25) said mistakes were made as no one had any experience of the new system, which was totally different from the previous system. The whole society was subjected to trial and error at that time. '...We made mistakes and corrected them on the way' (SA25). The policy makers therefore looked to international experience as a guide to what to adopt into higher education. Although this borrowing of foreign policies and experience led to some undesirable consequences (SA25, 26), it was generally considered advantageous during the early transitional times as can be seen from the next quotation.

One of the biggest changes was the introduction of a credit system based on the American model. This enabled institutions to provide students with more choices. In addition to selecting their subjects they could choose their teachers (SA29).

Substantiating the above account, one respondent explained his university's policy for development which was to adapt the principles of the American credit system, the professoriate's team structure of Germany, together with Russian scientific approaches (SA9). The introduction of international experience sometimes led to errors (SA25) often caused by a deficiency of prior knowledge, and this occurred not only at the national policy level but also at the institutional level. Another respondent (SA27) explained how difficult the development of new laws was for the new system. He agreed that the researchers and policy makers who were involved in the process of developing new legislation did not sufficiently understand well the market society and social educational relations in the market system.

Though none of the policy makers identified specific errors made in the policy, one of the former institutional leaders reflected on how he would have done things differently and better had he understood the American credit system they borrowed (SA15). He described how there was a great deal of public criticism about a tiered degree system, because the bachelor and master's degree courses were not introduced at the same time. This was because of a lack of understanding of the master's programme, and a decision was made to change to the bachelor programme first which did not match the principles stated in the Education Law. The law stipulated that a bachelor degree programme was to acquire higher

education but not to gain a specialised profession in its narrow sense. This is his reflection on the tiered degree system.

... We would have extended the bachelor programme further to a master's programme by making the study continue for five and a half or six years. This would have enabled us to span all subjects properly over these two programmes. ...But we did not know who and what to teach at master's level, and we did not know what master's level was. Because of this we made mistakes (SA15).

There was significant difference between the previous socialist education system and the western tiered degree system, coupled with poor understanding of the latter. Consequently the transition took a long time, much longer than expected. Foreign systems were not as easy to import and adapt as the government expected: there was no preparation for the adoption, and the local situation was not adequately assessed. The introduction of the credit system, officially legalised in Higher Education Act in 1995 is a good illustration: by 2012 it had still not been fully realised at institutional level, as the case study shows. An example is the State University Central and some private HEIs where the teaching load is still estimated in teaching hours, while the content of student learning is measured in credits. It was perceived that the whole society was still in its transitional stage, even after 20 years, from the old planned command economy to a market economy, including the HE system. As some respondents stressed, it was a transition to a totally different system (SA2, 3, 25, 12, 47, 49): 'We are entering the market when other nations did it a hundred years ago... we have only a 20-year experience of the market' (SA25).

One respondent pointed out that the state lost control over the emergence of new private providers, and over the supply of new programmes that HEIs offered during the transition to market orientation (SA48). This resulted in the mushrooming of higher education providers (SA48, 25, 28, 50). All nine interviewees agreed that this rapid expansion had a negative impact on higher education because it led to poor quality.

4.2.2 Marketisation of higher education

One of the most distinctive responses to the market-oriented trend in the higher education industry was marketisation - the emergence of private sector development, the application of market mechanisms for financing higher education, and of the managerial approach in educational administration. These themes are discussed in the light of both the early transition and the latest development of higher education marketisation.

With the declaration of the right of a citizen to found a new institution in this sector, the number went up with lightning speed at one point reaching 184 within fifteen years. Many

participants called this period as mushrooming after the rain. At the beginning, the state policy towards the emergence of HEIs was quite free and flexible because it was important to provide opportunities for the private sector to enter the higher education market (SA25). Looking back, one participant explained the policy of that period further.

We needed the private sector. It would not have happened if there was not an opportunity. If we demanded a two-storey building and lecturers with PhDs at the initial stage, there would not have been a private sector. Here we needed a flexible policy. So at that time a two-room space with two teachers was sufficient to start a new institute. Those were the requirements. Today if someone comes up with these kinds of conditions we would say 'hey sorry, do you think this is good enough?' (SA25).

This was the policy Brown (2011:16) calls 'low barriers for entry to the market'. As we saw from the interviewee's reflection, the government did not set high standards during the emergence of the private sector, and the conditions and requirements for new private providers remained very low. This meant that there was an opening for 'lots of competing suppliers, significant private and/or for profit providers offering serious competition to public institutions' (Brown, 2011:16). Based on the respondents' reflections, it can be seen that the first ten years of transition was 'a period of making an effort to create a new environment' (SA25).

On the other hand, four (SA25, 27, 28, 48) of the nine respondents thought the state policy was loose not because of the flexibility but because of the inconsistency in the policy, and to some extent the politics. For example, SA28 said that during the early transition ministers of education tended to be replaced frequently, and every time, before they stepped down, they would grant a lot of licenses without checking the requirements. By allowing ministers or high ranking officials to grant licenses, the ministry was not complying with the requirements set in the laws. However, in recent years the policy began to be tightened up with the government introducing new attestation regulations (2008) setting high standards that led many private providers to close or merge their institutions (SA28). Three of the respondents (SA28, 25, 26) were happy with the results of the new regulation and considered it a good step to shut down many low quality private institutions. General agreement was in two areas: first, management of private institutions was no longer adequate and, second, too many small private providers were wasting financial and human resources. The following viewpoint illuminates this justification.

The current private institutes have a leader who is a former leader in education or science, and who founded the schools. ...But there needs to be a whole team to lead a school...These small schools themselves are not able to stand on their own feet, too/either. It is necessary to have a concentration of financial and human

resources in order to bring quality. This leads to the necessity of reducing the number of institutes (SA25).

On the other hand, one respondent was strongly against this policy of reduction (SA48), seeing it as interference in market regulation. He felt that there could be two ways to improve the situation. First, the state should make information about these institutions more transparent allowing people to choose. Second, standards should be tightened on a regular basis. For example, the percentage of teaching staff with a PhD could be increased from 10 percent to 15 percent by 2015. In this way poor quality institutions would eventually cease to exist. He described what happened recently.

Some ministerial officers would run to the institutions and put a lock on the door....If we set appropriate criteria for standards, there would be less force from the state. Then these private institutions would organize themselves (SA48).

Nevertheless, in just over 10 or 20 years since the 1990s the increase of private market share in higher education has been significant, and more has been invested in it than state institutions (SA25). Based on the responses of the interviewees, it appears that the main reason for decreasing the private market share by the state was caused by the poor quality of teaching, learning facilities and entrants to the private sector.

One market mechanism introduced into higher education was the fee paying principle. As mentioned in chapter 1, according to the Education Law, state higher education providers had been charging a tuition fee since 1993. Though de jure higher education providers are allowed to set their prices for the services they provide, the ministry has been the de facto regulator of tuition fees. However, policy makers agree that the ministry should have control over tuition fees for state HEIs. In contrast, private institutions have the power to set their own price. The following account expressed by a respondent from state institution illustrated this fact.

Student quality and teaching quality are interconnected. In a case where tuition fees are restricted to a certain level, salaries would not be increased by much. We do not have sufficient income from other sources. Tuition fees provide 80-90% of our income. As a result we are dependent on tuition fees (SA6).

This respondent implied that if teachers' salaries are low the quality of teaching will be low because first, there would be no motivation for teachers to work hard, and second, it would be difficult to hire highly qualified teachers and professors for low salaries. In any case, the introduction of tuition fees and the financial stringency have had positive as well as negative impacts on state institutions. As for the negative impact, firstly up until now state institutions have been 'surviving' on tuition fees alone with only maintenance costs provided by the state (it is between 5-7 percent). Second, the shortage of money has led institutions to make

some controversial arrangements. For example, a respondent described one financial set-up.

All state HEIs keep two types of accounts: state funds account and commercial bank account. This is a legal distortion. According to laws on Education and Financing Higher Education, it is stipulated that these institutions are state budgeted organisations. However, up until now they were unable to receive the supposed budget from the government and they do not enjoy the status of being a state institution (SA26).

The fact that HE providers have two accounts has been a source of great debate. Despite the controversy of having two accounts, many institutions still keep them in the hope of keeping their income separate from the state bureaucratic centralised budget, and also to increase their income through gaining interest, or other non-academic activities. Although the board of the university is expected to make decisions on the level of tuition fees in accordance with the Education and Higher Education laws, every government interferes with it and sets new limits on the increase. This policy has not been widely welcomed by all state universities. They felt it very unfair and considered the policy as contradictory. For example, one of the institutional administrators (SA2) pointed out that higher education should follow market laws since the state is not financially able to maintain this sector. He thought it was questionable to pursue this policy when the government is demanding high standards requiring a lot of investment. Moreover, the state restricts the entrant numbers. As a result the staff or leaders feel that it has become an issue of how to survive in the market.

At the same time, almost all respondents agree with the idea of liberalising the tuition fee but they acknowledge the influence of politics in this. According to SA26, the ministry had been instructing the state institutions not to exceed the inflation rate determined by the statistics office, and to direct the university boards to maintain this policy when they established the tuition fees. This policy maker viewed it as short-sighted because the instruction was an obstacle to the improvement of the quality of higher education. Another policy maker (SA25) described the political side of the issue, and explained the way it is approached makes it seem as if the tuition fee is freed from control but in reality it is not completely freed. He also acknowledged that 'the decision is always political. ...If there is courage, it could be freed easily. It might be freed by this new government.' Otherwise, he said that the ministry personnel feel it necessary to liberalise tuition fees because they believe that a service provider should set the price. It was clear from the interviews that the third stream income for generating revenue has not been fully exploited at the institutional level. However, one way of generating income for both state and private HE service providers has been the introduction of market driven courses to attract more students. This phenomenon has been greatly evidenced in private institutions and it is discussed further in the case studies.

Despite all the contradictions, the introduction of tuition fees enabled universities to become more financially independent of the state, and in addition they are in full control of their limited financial resources. Recently, some successful leading universities are looking forward to the application of the recent new Law on Innovation.

Although the freedom to price for higher education service providers has not yet equalled the cost of the education service, market forces are in evidence in higher education an example of which is the privatisation - an attempt - to apply new public management principles. Some authors consider privatisation as a type of marketisation (Ngok, 2007, cited in Al-Fattal, 2010:14). In the interviews, privatisation was addressed by respondents in policy holding positions in neither a positive nor negative way, but it is interesting to note that some respondents from current state institutions saw former state institutions more efficient in running their internal affairs (SA11).

Another type of marketisation was the application of new public management principles. Mongolia imported the New Zealand model of new public management (NPM) with the support and lobby of the ADB at the end of the 1990s (Batsuh, 2009:5; Tsedev & Pratt, 2008:198). The policy of NPM was legalised in the Public Sector and Finance Law of Mongolia in 2002. The main purpose of this law was to regulate relations connected with the authorities and responsibilities of state organisations and officials to control the budget and accountability system. Yet the law was not fully realised in the education sector especially in higher education because of a strong resistance and criticism from educators. The implementation was realised only at the top level, in the form of concluding performance contracts with the general managers or the university rectors by the minister and the state centralised budget. As a result it was decided the law should be annulled after 10 years. But as we saw, the principle of privatisation originating in the new public management practice had been successful in the higher education market. According to one of the policy makers, the contradictions in the realisation of this legislation were many, and in the interview he described them well. For the purpose of illustration of these contradictions, the following conversation with the interviewee is given below.

SA26: ... In general this is not an optimal system for the education sector.

Interviewer: Can you clarify if the law was or was not introduced in the education sector?

SA26: On paper yes but in real life it was not. ... This law was introduced only at the level of paper and has led to much criticism since then. For example, a salary should be determined by performance and a score system used according to this law. It had been tried at secondary school level which led to too much argument. As a result it had not been implemented in real life. Anyway, this law will be

annulled as of January 1, 2013. There is only one thing that had been fully introduced. That was the centralisation at ministerial level of the budget. That was all but as you see we still have the salary scheme. In accordance with this law it should not be practised this way. ...

Interviewer: So you think this law should have been implemented in full [effect]?

SA26: No. I think this was not a suitable system for the education sector. In my view, Mongolia did not have a suitable system for this form of management. Or we hadn't prepared well in advance for this change. ...The transition to this kind of management was very abrupt. Before we were told anything, it had already been decided after a half year of lingering in decision. No preparation at all. After 10 years all agreed that this law did not work and came to the conclusion to annul it.

The interview revealed that the process of introduction of the new public management model was carried out without much consultation with specific groups of people who were in the sector and it was just imposed without any groundwork. This policy demonstrated the failure of policy borrowing caused by the absence of effective strategies.

4.3 Policy Re-Orientation and Consolidation

4.3.1 Improving quality and increasing competitiveness.

In line with the policy documents in Chapter 1, all nine policymaker respondents highlighted the importance of quality in all spheres of the higher education system, in particular the quality of teaching and teachers, and the quality of learning and students for both state and private HEIs. This theme ran through almost all topics. Generally, the respondents (SA25, 27, 29) saw this policy as an important target for the last decade. The themes of quality and competitiveness were the main topic of the policy documents in 2001-2011. One of the respondents (SA27) stressed that 'we have all the forms. Any international expert who comes to Mongolia would say the standards are appropriate. But the question is if the content is being implemented as it is stated on paper. And the quality.' Superficially, the forms in terms of organization, credit system and written curriculum contents are in accordance with the legislation and are quite similar to western standards. The issue the respondents raised was the implementation at institutional level.

It was interesting to find out how the respondents interpret the term quality. According to the Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia (2006), Government Action Plan (2008) and National Programme for Education (2010), quality implies high standards equal to developed countries, in building competitive human resource capacity and in competing for quality. For example, the Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia (2006:21) highlighted the objective as follows:

to ensure favourable conditions for improving quality at higher education institutions; link the accreditation of academic programmes with international standards; improve teaching capacity at higher education institutions; provide favourable legal framework for competing in quality.

In addition to the above policy objectives, in particular a process of attestation and accreditation of HEIs was considered as a good quality by the respondents. They thought that these actions would ensure the production of good quality products - the graduates. The extract presented below illuminates this view.

The quality is measured by the attestation process carried out by the ministry throughout the country. As long as an institution meets the attestation requirements, it is regarded as an institution that is conducting appropriate academic teaching (SA26).

Another participant (SA25) supported this view from a consumer's perspective and explained

If a graduate has a top quality profession he will be able to get a job. His purpose is to live a good life and to get a good job. So if the teaching meets this purpose it is closer to the desired quality.

As has been demonstrated here, respondents reflected on the understanding of the term quality the same way as the state policy and they were consistent over it. What is more, they elicited a number of examples of the policy implementation we talked about in Chapter 1. Following the Government Action Plan, the government conducted the attestation among HE providers in the name of the state (SA27). Each respondent reflected on the process of attestation from their own viewpoint, but all were in support of this policy. For example, one said that 'a great deal of tidying up had been done beginning with the state institutions' (SA26), and another explained that 'because many institutions did not meet the attestation requirements, many were closed down' (SA28). Following the merger and reduction policy, there had been structural changes at the state institutions. The merger took place in private HEIs too. After the first attestation process many private institutes scrutinised the service they offered and voluntarily either merged with others or closed down as one respondent (SA26) stated. He said that the ministry was announcing to the public the names of the institutes which were closed down as a result of the attestation. Some private institutes even decided to revoke their own licenses. This action was supported by a respondent from a private institution (SA31) who recalled this process:

Six institutes came to join us because they could not survive the market competition. Some failed to pass the attestation, some had financial difficulties. Some were forced to close by the ministry. So students from these schools were transferred to those universities that are regarded as promising... (SA31).

The implication here is that the level of standardisation is still low, despite all efforts by the state which we will discuss later in the Curriculum Coordination section of this chapter.

As one of the respondents (SA26) concluded, for HE providers it has become 'hard to survive in the higher education market unless they offer good quality education'. This statement implies that HE service suppliers are required to compete for quality. As mentioned earlier the government sees quality in well-qualified teachers (Government Action Plan 2008-2012) and in producing competitive graduates (Education Development Master Plan 2006-2015). One of the highlights of the recent policy has been the increasing number of those who study in developed countries which improves the quality and competitiveness of the teaching capacity. Since 2000 the state began to provide non-repayable grants or loans to both students and teachers for study abroad. Moreover, the state aims to attract those who completed their study abroad in the hope of gaining new ideas and fresh experience from them. This policy has become particularly emphasised in the last few years (SA25, 26).

While the ministry is cautious with the tuition fee increase, the institutions struggle with funding and all respondents acknowledged the fact that it has been challenging for the providers to improve quality when they lack funding and sufficient investment from the state. One respondent (SA28) strongly disagreed with the current policy to retain a cap on tuition fees. Every year the government places a cap on the increase of tuition fees. He said that in 2012 HE providers were allowed only a 10 percent increase in tuition fees. This resulted in a high rate of enrolment leading to poor quality of students. He said this issue has been discussed at ministry level frequently. He explained further that

approximately 70% of the income is spent on teachers' salaries. Less than 10% of the university income is from the state pocket. The rest, or very little, is devoted to other expenses. It is obvious what quality we will get in return.

This interview showed that the government has been well aware of the issue, but has been unable to solve it.

Although respondents did not particularly address the issue of competition as much as was expected, they related it to quality of institutions. Nevertheless, there were several important points expressed. One is the new situation with new competitors. A respondent (SA25) described it in the following account and highlighted the importance of meeting the quality or licensing requirements which were unknowingly or knowingly ignored in the early years of transition. He emphasised that new institutes are still being opened and that the ministry encourages new competitors. He continued

If good new good schools (meaning HEI) come we will support them. Bad ones need to go. The market itself pushes them out. There is a big choice for people. We do not force them and assign them, they choose for themselves: they go to study, go to look, and consider the reputation. Market measures and market standards are entering in spite of us (SA25).

On the other hand, according to the ministry's latest document on Higher Education Reform Roadmap 2010-2021, one of the objectives is to tighten the criteria and conditions for new providers. But it is worth mentioning that legally the entry of new higher education providers, or new competitors, into the market is free. As SA48 said, 'There is some kind of selection process going on.' Despite the tightening [of the] policy, the respondents are positive about prospective competitors even with the increased financial burden. SA27's statement illustrates this position.

These will not be an obstacle. ...The main requirement is to have a building. This is a financial issue. There are big companies that are interested in this market. They will eventually join the market.

But if it is really is that simple for them, we will see a different perspective in the case study of Private University South.

4.3.2 Dimension of institutional autonomy

Here the dimension of institutional autonomy is examined in terms of institutional governance, freedom for management of resource inputs, and freedom over content.

In terms of autonomy, the relationship between the government and the HEIs has become strained due to the control over the key appointments - the rectors and the government's representation on the university boards. The responses from the interviewees to the current legislation varied depending on the positions they held, a policy maker or an institutional administrator. There were four policymaking respondents out of nine who addressed the issue of the appointment of rector. All four discussed it from a perspective of political influence. For example, SA27 pointed out that the development of policy documents result from political decisions. It is up to the government to decide whether or not to continue with these policies. As far as the appointment of rectors is concerned, one political party might make a decision for the state to appoint, whereas another would decide differently: '...be free of politics and the Academic Council of universities needs to appoint them.' At the institutional level, not only university administrators but also the academic staff expressed their dislike of this kind of decision making. In some instances the deliberate appointment of rectors by the state can lead to controversy among the academic staff. This is illustrated by a university interviewee's description.

In 1996, teachers voted to replace Rector X with Rector Y. ... However, the latter ran the university for 12 years until 2008. ... Since 2000, university lecturers began to question the misuse of the university finances in connection with Y's leadership... A teachers' union and a reform group were formed and a number of meetings were held ... But nothing happened until 2008. In the end, the ministry organised a selection process for a/the rector. One of our school directors was elected from among the candidates, but the minister did not appoint him for political reasons and because the elected person criticised his party a lot, and the party did not like him. As a result a new minister announced another selection process by voiding his selection (SA14).

As the above respondent illustrated, the government can overrule and undermine democracy in universities. Politics has been one of the aspects influencing not only governance of higher education but also tuition fees as we saw in the previous section. With the appointment of a rector, the minister signs a contract with him indicating performance outputs on an annual basis and the latter reports back to him. In addition, universities have a governing board of which up to 60 percent consists of state representation. A respondent described the way a board is formed and what is its primary duty (SA23). At his university there are 17 members on the board of which nine are state representatives. The board makes the decision on how much tuition fees will be for the coming academic year. But other people are also involved, such as teachers, students, union, and parents' representatives. He explained that

in the end the state has the final word. ... Because we are a state institution, the board's director is the representative of the leading party. So when the ministry is led by any leading party, they do not try to increase the tuition fee in order to please the people. We have been fighting consistently (SA23).

As the above statements illustrate, the state involvement has been increasing for political purposes and the autonomy of state HE providers is rather limited in terms of governance. In contrast, the dimension of institutional autonomy is increased at a lower level – in schools and centres within universities. Internal institutional power is solely vested in the rector of a university. The ministry is not involved either in the appointment or the dismissal of school directors and academic staff. SA29 confirmed this and summarised the situation with management at HEIs: More freedom for universities - less vertical management.'

Freedom to manage resource inputs in terms of staff, students and finance is at the discretion of universities. In this sense, HE providers exercise a broad spectrum of rights as stated in chapter 1: to employ staff, set salaries, establish structure, and decide on admission and graduation of students they think to be adequate. With regard to academic content, document reviews and interview sources validated that the setting up of new study programmes is principally the responsibility of providers, but is required to have approval

from the ministry. HE providers may confer any academic degrees including bachelor, master or doctoral. Freedom for/over content will be developed later in this chapter.

4.3.3 Consumer freedoms

As Clark (1983:162) points out, 'whenever we hear the word 'tuition' we are in the presence of a consumer market' and 'the central feature is consumer choice'. Based on the review of state policy documents and respondents' accounts, consumer choice or freedom was investigated in terms of choice of a provider, financial support, freedom to information, and choice of a course.

Consumers of higher education in Mongolia are provided with a wide range of providers to choose from (97 HEIs). A majority - seven respondents - discussed to a certain extent the issue of consumer freedoms, and agreed that consumers are provided with more freedom than ever before. One respondent (SA47) stressed that 'democracy opened up an opportunity for an individual. An individual can have as many as three bachelor degrees if he so wishes.' He and another respondent (SA48) shared the same view on individuals' interests in pursuing higher education. They considered it was up to a person what he chose to study, whether to choose law or economics. Both asked why a shop assistant or taxi driver could not get higher education, since they too might need to know a foreign language, to become computer literate, or to acquire some economic and accounting skills. And they did not agree with a common complaint that the country has too many lawyers and economists. SA27 felt that, on the whole, 'a legal environment has been relatively easily created for student choice owing to a single general examination system.' In accordance with the Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia (2006), the policy is to reduce the percentage of graduates enrolling into university in the same year they graduated because the share of this type of student has been continuously increasing from 62.5 percent in 2001-2002 to 84.3 percent in 2011-2012, according to the ministry's statistics. This is an indication of how high consumer demand is. On the other hand, the state is also aiming to steer the labour market demand through legislation. The recent law on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students is an example. SA29 clarified the aim of the policy in the following extract.

If they do well the state will increase the amount of the state grant. If they pursue their studies in the fields that are high in demand for/in the country, the state will allow better grants. ... The emphasis is made on the fields of study that are in high demand.

HE providers thought that this policy was wrong. An example of this view is illustrated in the following comment:

But it is wrong to give a stipend to everyone.... Because the state does not have money, it restricts the number of entrants in order to demonstrate that it reaches all. The Mongolian economy is still in [a] crisis. Mining is trying to stand up and accumulate capital but the state misuses it by wasting it and giving it all away. Giving away leads more to negative consequences rather than to positive ones. The money should instead be spent on [recovery of] the economic recovery (SA2).

Policy makers were aware of this widespread view among educators against a universal stipend and they tried to explain it from a different perspective. One of the policy makers (SA26) said that 'the aim of the law is to financially regulate and support the institutions' operation.' Despite different positions, consumers enjoy substantial financial support from the government such as half price on city transport and return air travel for those whose hometown is a distance of over 500km from their place of study.

Although there is a high degree of choice for consumers, there is a lack of information about programmes and institutions. The ministry provides a full range of information on its website, but this does not guarantee the truthfulness of information supplied by providers via the media and advertisements, and there is no regulation of it. Only one of the nine respondents (SA48) referred to this issue and described it as a major problem. He claimed that all essential information related to internal regulations, and to finance, such as spending on investment in education services, improvements to the academic environment and immovable property, is not open to the public as it should be in order to enhance the choice. The extract from his interview illuminates this.

Unfortunately, information is not freely available to people and they are tricked by false promotion and advertisement. The state's policy should aim at making their information open and letting people choose from amongst them. Then the market will rule them (SA48).

How consumers receive the necessary information for making an appropriate choice of a provider will be discussed in the case study of each university in the Institutional Perspective Chapter. In terms of academic choice, it was claimed by some policy makers that this has been enhanced through the introduction of the American-based credit and transfer system between institutions. But the implementation of this system at the institutional level is varied. SA27 considered that it is limited in some institutions due to their low capacity, despite opportunities being there. It is especially evident at small institutions where fewer subjects are on offer. He summarised:

Private schools began to provide this opportunity very recently. In comparison with small institutions bigger schools offer more opportunities. There are offerings in

major and minor. Though some schools do not use the term major and minor, they began to offer choices (SA27).

Even though the state introduced this credit system opportunity in 1995, private HEIs have still not implemented it fully. This indicates how slow the policy implementation has been, perhaps due to the lack of preparation. It is up to institutions to decide on their curriculum and the electives they offer, but the range varies, depending on their size and capacity. SA27 supported the view that small private institutes have a low capacity resulting in a poor choice of subjects, and in addition a restricted choice of teachers:

A teacher would teach two or three subjects. No choice for students. This is how they serve people. They are supposed to be offering ten or twenty subjects to choose from. But small institutes do not have that capacity (SA27).

As the above responses show, there are differences in the way the policy is perceived by both policy makers and institutional administrators. It is also difficult, as respondents claimed, to implement the policy at the institutional level in terms of the choice of a course for consumers. Though the government considers it important for consumers to be able to choose a course of study with a view for/to future employment, institutions do it in their own way. This perhaps led the state to intensify the coordination of curricula in recent years.

4.4 Curriculum Coordination

4.4.1 Curricular reform

General evidence made it necessary for the state to transform the academic content in response to the changes in the country. New concepts, new attitudes, new terms, new sectors and new industries have emerged. All nine respondents referred to the curricular provision in the early years of the transition and pointed out that completely new courses, programmes and fields were continuously emerging at that time. The relationship of the state toward curricular provision was, as SA48 described, loose and weak. He was the only one to be critical of the situation, claiming that 'the ministry was led by the decision of HEIs', while the rest perceived it as a natural occurrence. He continued:

There was no consistency in organizing academic teaching at private institutions. For example, X University would offer Japanese language only for 3-4 years then cease to offer it and instead would begin to offer French. No consistency. So how did the market affect the content of higher education institutions? It was uncontrollable.

My personal experience can also illustrate the situation at that time. In 1990 the Institute of Management Development under the Government of the People's Republic of Mongolia invited Japanese Professor R. Hirono to speak (with translation) to lecturers on the market

economy. His lecture was then published to spread this fresh information. This was the first ever lecture on the market economy in Mongolia and it was challenging for many of us to understand. Consequently, these new phenomena resulted in the re-arrangement of the higher education content and objectives to specify the programmes and curricula, which in turn contributed to the evolvement in 1995 of the first Higher Education Law. This legislation set out the basic conditions and standards for programmes and curricula that HE providers now have to observe. SA27 said the legal changes were to eliminate the errors:

As a result, norms and standards which did not meet the market relations were reflected in the laws. The changes made later in the education legislation were aiming to eliminate those obstacles and to liberalise higher education to a greater extent (SA27).

A number of amendments were made in the 1995 Higher Education Law that were then invalidated in 2002 with the adoption of the new Higher Education Law; several further amendments followed. Two respondents (SA25, 28) mentioned that a new package of laws is already underway for the next upgrade.

Based on the interviews and policy documents it was clear that the transition to a new content went through a long process of change and standardisation. Six respondents talked about the standardisation process of academic programmes. According to the education law, the ministry is in control of the development of educational standards. In fact, following the minimum standard for a bachelor programme, 30 percent of the content in curriculum should be devoted to general higher education knowledge, 40 percent to foundational professional knowledge, and 30 percent should be dedicated to a range of specialised courses for students to select from. Jongbloed (2003:117) states that ‘...within the context of general standards there may be room for providers to offer general, selective or specialist educational tracks.’ Indeed, one of the policy holding respondents (SA27) emphasised that there is room in the standards for HE providers. His statement illuminates this:

...The process of developing bachelor degree educational standard will be completed during this new government. Approximately 100 professional standards for bachelor degree have been done. These standards are valid for both state and private institutions. ...This means about 60 to 70 percent of the content has been standardized and the rest, or 30-40 percent, is left to the universities to decide. What subjects to teach and how to decide on this percentage are/is up to the university (SA27).

He also stressed the importance of the general higher education subjects that develop social skills of graduates such as ‘communication skills, team working skills, skills for obtaining information using information technology, paper producing skills and foreign language skills’. Though this standard is followed more or less at both private and state institutions, there is a

lot of criticism among educators in this regard, especially at State University West. The cause of criticism will be further discussed when we talk about State University West in the Institutional Perspective Chapter.

The documents and interviews suggest that the process of developing a curriculum is generally a bottom-up process: initial development by a relevant department, then discussion at two levels - a parent school council and the university academic council. But the final decision rests with the rector. He approves the curriculum based on the ministerial permission. The ministry issues the professional index and HE providers make a request for setting up a new academic programme within this index. The request is evaluated against the standards. Then again, there is also a criticism by providers that the ministry does not update the index efficiently, therefore it leads to an obstacle in opening a new field. In response to this particular criticism, one of the respondents justified their action.

In general we hold to the UNESCO professional index. We are unable to keep all the indexes known worldwide. We consider our possibilities and keep possible ones. We update it from time to time, sometimes [in]after two years['] time]. We cannot prepare all specialisations that are in market demand. Yes, there are occasions when some specialisations are not introduced due to the fact that it is not in the index. We discuss it with professionals and specialists. For example, pilot engineering and Nano technology (SA25).

There is a general consensus among policy makers (SA25, 27, 28, 29 and 48) that 'there is no restriction on academic freedom' because 'only general standards are instructed by the ministry, whereas the right to approve the curricula is under the rectors' (SA27).

It is necessary for HE service suppliers to be licensed to set up a new programme or course. The respondents supported the restrictions on licensing a programme and regarded enacting a restriction as the most important and necessary step by the ministry. They all came up with their own reasoning but they thought first, this is to do with the country's developmental immaturity; second, it guarantees quality; and third, it protects consumers' interests. For example, SA27 stated that the licensing system has to be under the ministry's control when the country is not a developed one. It was very concerning that he did not trust HEIs at all, but he explained his distrust because of previous experience:

It is impossible to leave it under the power of the university. ... If we let it loose to the university, the students' rights may be violated due to the bad quality programmes. All HE institutions may misuse the consumers' demands by introducing new subjects and programmes that do not meet the requirements and standards. This did happen in the early years of the market transition.

Because they felt that there was a danger that the institutions would undermine the quality and consumers' interest, they were very supportive of the above policy.

4.4.2 The coordination of the supply of programmes

Half the respondents thought that there was not much control over the supply of programmes to consumers. Nonetheless, they claimed that the state began to take a number of initiatives towards curricular provision in recent years after having had a rather loose policy for over 10 years. One of the reasons for tightening up the policy was that too many professionals were qualified in social sciences in the last decade and control had been lost (SA26). A similar viewpoint was expressed by other respondents, too. The insights from interviews regarding the policy on supply of programmes were examined in terms of the prioritisation policy of professional fields, supervising opening and closing programmes, and the policy towards setting the entrance limit.

Brown (2011:10) argues that some products can be under- or over- supplied due to market failure. In the case of Mongolia certain fields such as social sciences in particular, law, economics and the humanities, are regarded as oversupplied, whereas there is a shortage of professionals in the engineering and natural sciences. The 2005 ministry study on the education sector showed these disparities by details of enrolments in the fields of study (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Bachelor students by enrolments in science areas

	Science areas	Academic year		Increase compared
		2000-2001	2004-2005	
		Total students	Total students	Total
1	Education	8706	11167	28.2%
2	The Humanities	7161	14244	98.9%
3	Social sciences	21024	42471	102.0%
4	Natural sciences, mathematics	3167	4598	45.2%
5	Computer science	1381	2991	116.6%
6	Engineering and Technology	12951	18114	39.8%
7	Agriculture	2686	3392	26.2%
8	Medicine	3346	7213	115.6%
9	Services	3829	5078	32.6%
	Total	64251	109268	70.1 %

Adapted from MECS (2005:72) Education Sector Development Programme

Table 4-1 shows that the number of those studying in social studies, the humanities, computer science and medicine had each doubled, whereas the areas with smallest increase were education and agriculture, both of which had an increase of 26-28 percent between 2000 and 2005. As the study states, enrolment in medicine had increased due to the new program: social work. Compared to 2000, natural sciences and engineering and technology had increased by 45.1 and 39.8 percent respectively in 2005. In Table 4-2 the number was presented in proportion.

Table 4-4-2 Proportion of students enrolled in science areas

	Science area	School year		Change (%)
		2000-2001	2004-2005	
1	Education	13.5%	10.2%	-3.3 %
2	Humanities	11.1%	13.0%	1.9 %
3	Social sciences	32.7%	38.9%	6.2 %
4	Natural sciences, mathematics	4.9%	4.2 %	-0.7 %
5	Computer science	2.1%	2.7%	0.6 %
6	Engineering and Technology	20.2%	16.6%	-3.6 %
7	Agriculture	4.1%	3.1%	-1.1 %
8	Medicine	5.2%	6.6%	1.4 %
9	Service	6.0%	4.6%	-1.3 %
	Summary	100%	100%	0

MECS (2005:72) Education Sector Development Programme

Table 4-2 shows the proportion of those enrolled in a given science area in relation to the total student number. In 2000-2001, students in social sciences and the humanities combined were taking up 43.8 percent of the market, while in the 2004-2005 academic year, the number increased to 51.8 percent. Although computer science has been one of the most popular fields, the market increased from 2.1 percent in 2000 to 2.7 percent in 2005. However, the number enrolled in natural sciences and mathematics, and engineering and technology together decreased from 25.1 percent in 2000 to 20.8 percent in 2005. This study showed how strong the market influence was on undergraduate provision until 2005. Therefore, from this period of time the ministry began to intervene more by announcing the priority list which is justified by many. For example, SA29 stressed that 'the emphasis is made on the fields of study that are in high demand'. The Education Development Master Plan 2006-2015 and National Education Programme 2010-2021 aim to accommodate the quality and number of HE graduates in the labour market and to increase their employment rate. In sum, the main point of the policy is to encourage students to pursue their study in fields that are regarded to be in high demand in the country, and the state would provide better grants.

It was interesting to find out about the process of the decision to prioritise certain fields that were in high demand, but the answer was rather controversial. There was an impression that the ministry did not carry out solid research in order to propose this priority list, but rather

took an intuitive approach. As respondents stated, the list was produced based only on 'information'. The conversation with SA28 was interesting in the sense that as he elicited this issue clearly. According to him, this list was made in a rather short time – possibly in a half year. During the interviews, it was revealed that the ministry did not conduct research to come up with the priority list but as he said 'it was based on information. It is hard to conduct study on a national level. Only line ministries carry out this kind of study. ...So we got information from HEIs and line ministries in addition to considering entrants' interest....It was supposed to come out of the market demand and needs research.' He said the ministry considered a few factors to come up with the decision. These are:

First, what fields attracted more people. Another factor was what professionals are most needed for entities and enterprises. Third factor was in what direction the economy of the country is heading.

He also came up with examples of justifications as to why these fields were selected as high priority. Below is an illustration of one justification.

For example, lately there has been fast development of motor roads. It has started with constructing the millennium road through which the central area has almost been connected with the western area. However, we lack road construction engineering professionals. Some years ago when there was no road construction we did not need these specialists. Now with the development of this sector we need more and more professionals in this area.

Though the above respondent stated that the ministry received information from HE providers, none of the respondents from higher education service providers confirmed it and they said they were not contacted for this purpose. The following response by a respondent from a university is an example.

I do not know how the ministry came up with this list. They did not involve us in the study if there was any. In my opinion, the ministry promotes these fields of study with the intention of creating them in the country as there are not enough professionals in Mongolia in these 20 fields. With the social change, these fields emerged in the country and the state aims to financially support those who study in these fields. This is a policy but I do not think it is based on the study (SA46).

Nevertheless, this prioritisation policy influenced the market to an extent that it triggered consumers with high examination scores to compete for these fields more than others. The result was seen markedly in the boost of interest among higher education providers and entrants. One respondent confirmed it.

Leading professional fields are more in demand. Institutions do their best to get permission for these fields. The market needs these professionals and the ministry listed them as most needed. In connection with this, institutions try to introduce these courses (SA28).

Especially, when private universities began to compete to open these fields, some state universities while being monopolistic in certain fields felt unhappy with the ministry's decision to allow private universities to enter this market. In addition, there were other government programmes that might encourage people to choose certain courses more. The latest policy paper on National Programme for Education (2010) emphasises the importance of English language skills for graduates of higher education. This document certainly added to the ever-increasing consumer interest in English. We will find out more about how government policy programmes triggered market demand when we study case universities at the Institutional Perspective Chapter.

The permission to set up a new programme of study is granted in the form of delivery as day or full time, evening or part time, and extramural. The purpose of various forms of education service delivery is thought to allow flexibility of choice and an opportunity to combine working and learning. Neither a state nor a private higher education provider is allowed to organise a bachelor degree programme in a certain field without approval from the ministry. Any request for introducing a new academic programme is required to meet standard criteria to be evaluated against. This includes a sample of curriculum, and field specifications, course objectives, in addition to classroom size, relevant textbooks, available laboratories and qualifications of teaching staff. In the latest amendment, HEIs are requested to submit a market study to prove the demand for this programme of study. Eight respondents discussed the policy towards curricular provision. Most were happy with the policy being consolidated or tightened up. But one respondent (SA28) looked at this regulation from a different angle and pointed out that there was too detailed a control in issuing a licence for a new programme of study. This was his standpoint.

Let's say that we granted a licence for economics to a certain institution, but it did not mean we granted another licence to them to conduct extramural or evening courses on economics. The last two could have been decided independently by that institute since they already have the licensing for offering economics, and since they already have the teaching staff and the facilities. ...But it is not like that. Once permission for a certain type of major is granted, it should be up to that institute whether they offer it in regular day classes, evening classes or extramural. It would be open to them (SA28).

Nonetheless he still supported the view that the right for running a new course should be granted by a relevant state central organisation. As illustrated above, the state issues a licence not only for a programme but also for the form of delivery. Based on the respondent's reaction it can be said that the license granting process was rather a formality earlier on, but more recently the government began to tighten up the process.

There was serious criticism by HE providers regarding the licensing procedure too. Even though the state emphasised the significance of the quality and standards, unfavourable practices still do exist to some extent. Overall, 14 respondents of all 47 interviewees addressed the issue of misuse of power and conflict of interest in relation to licensing of new programmes at both policy-making and institutional levels. The following quotation is an illustration of the use of the 'back door' in the process of licensing.

It may happen. I cannot say there is not that kind of influence. There is influence from above. There can be an occasion where a request for a new specialism is allowed easily even though the quality and the requirements are not met. Certainly we try hard to make them meet the requirements. Using the back door is not an unusual thing (SA27).

Another respondent (SA28) shared his experience on this matter in the way he stood up against this practice. He said that insiders who work at the ministry, or even department bosses, often tended to influence the decision for permission.

The institute I refused at the first stage, which did not meet any requirements, but made a number of people including my bosses to put pressure on me. So I needed to show the boss their documents in order for him not to pressurise me.

There were also other examples from institutions that supported the fact of misuse of power. The following reaction by/of one respondent illustrated this.

As for private institutions, it seemed not so difficult to get permission for programmes from the ministry. Even working in the commission (Accreditation Commission) I did not get our programme approved but I saw with my own eyes one incident when an institute was able to get [the] permission so fast. They came to the ministry just before 6 o'clock and got away with the permission which would be difficult for us. The curriculum they got approved was not up to the standard. Nothing like that. ... I got so/very upset because we spent so much time on it (SA10).

The practice of power misuse really provokes distrust among higher education providers. Moreover, due to the immaturity of the private sector an unusual phenomenon also occurred in the process. One respondent (SA28) compared state and private institutions in terms of the number of requests they made. As she described it, large state institutions make requests for only those courses they really need, whereas private institutions make requests for as many as 20 professions, in the hope of receiving at least two or three of these. The above accounts from interviews demonstrated the fact that the higher education market is still immature in that there is a big difference between the written documentation and the reality. Moreover, there is misuse of power.

With regard to the closure of the programmes of study, according to the Education Law the ministry exercises this power. Though the closure of programmes by the ministry is not

widely practised, it can happen on rare occasions if the requirements are not met. Only one respondent (SA28) talked about the procedure of closing courses. He explained how they closed some courses during the attestation.

In a process of attestation, we visited and checked the standards and if there were faults we terminated the right for offering that field of study. We also terminate the right for offering a new field if the institution does not operate within 6 months of receiving the permission. ...Personally I terminated one to/or two majors in five institutions. The reason for closing these majors was for not meeting the criteria set in the regulations such as teaching staff, books, library etc..

In fact, his remarks about closing programmes were in line with the attestation policy that was intensified during the past two to three years.

Coupled with the policy for the licensing of programmes, the policy for the entrance quota looked like the ministry was attempting to use them as a means of coordinating the labour market demand. This issue along with the tuition fee capping was revealed as the most controversial issue for both policy makers and institutional administrators. In general, of all 47 respondents, 29 reflected on these problems of admission quota and the capping of tuition increases, and most were not happy with these regulations because many institutional administrators regarded them as one of the biggest interference in university affairs.

However, policy holders did not agree with this view. For example, SA26 thought it was the right action to set a quota for admission because this enables them to oversee and forecast how many people in what fields and in what areas are produced. In his opinion, leaving the entry open may lead to too many low quality people with too many unnecessary qualifications which in turn would lead to the loss of control. He further continued that another reason for the quota is due to the financial consequences, as the state budget for student grants is based on the admission numbers. As the interview evidences suggested, setting a quota and licensing new programmes were also interrelated in the sense that the government tries to regulate the market demand. This approach was well illustrated in SA26's statement:

In the past three years, we did not let institutions open fields in social sciences. Only a few –the teacher's qualifications were allowed. For example, we lack primary school teachers. We also lack pre-school teachers. Institutions were permitted these. Otherwise, we granted more in fields of natural and technical sciences, technology, engineering and mining. Obviously, many institutions offer social science fields now, therefore we set a lower quota for these fields.

However, this standpoint was contradicted. The reason was that the limited quota led some institutions to take defensive methods to survive. As the number of entrants is important to the increase of institutional revenue as discussed earlier, out of five case universities, at

least four were exceeding the quota to some extent, and one had taken an extreme measure which was demonstrated in the next description.

We had our own tricky method of increasing income while not violating the law. For example, we used to admit entrants by 'so-called donation'. For example, many entrants liked to enter Schools X and Y. Many who were below the red line wanted to get admitted. So we set a rule for this class. The donation amount was dependant on how many scores a person lacked to reach the red line and what level of competitive school he chose. For example, if an entrant had 10 scores below the red line to enter physics class he may pay only 50 000tugrugs. However, if an entrant wanted economics class and lacked only 2 scores, he might pay one million tugrugs. This way the price was different depending on the demand (SA15.)

The respondent admitted that the ministry as well as the inspection office knew it but they needed to pretend not to know because they also were aware that the university lacked money.

In general, the state policy on admission quotas appeared to lead to defensive but debatable actions by HE providers, and there were differing, sometimes contradictory, views on it. The policies on the entrance quota and licensing new programmes seemed not to work well because of the shortage of finance as the state sets the cap on the tuition fees. As the respondents from institutions argued, all these in turn seem to lead to poorer quality by making it harder for the state to implement its policy for high quality and competitiveness. This assumes that the state has to have an appropriate policy in terms of financing either to liberalise the tuition or to subsidise HE providers with more funding. We will discuss further about how the state policy in this regard has been accepted by universities in the Institutional Perspective Chapter.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has been wide ranging in the sense that it provided the basis for a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the changes in higher education through the perspectives of the policy makers. It investigated the policy in terms of undergraduate study by means of interviews and document review. A broad picture of the state policy in relation to the research questions has provided the contextualisation for the next stage of the research that is the Institutional Perspective. This chapter illuminates an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the Mongolian state policy towards higher education and the relationships between the various policies. The complexity of the policy relationship has been discussed in three overarching themes through interview analysis and document review: creating market orientation, policy re-orientation or consolidation, and curriculum coordination, all with their sub-themes.

Based on the evidence of findings, from a historical perspective, it can be said that since 1990s the higher education state policy has gone through two evolutionary stages. In the first decade, it focused more on adapting and creating a policy suited to the new system of market economy in the society as the transition was very alarming to higher education providers. This policy was evident in the emergence of new legislation, new policy documents and new relationships between the government and HE service suppliers. The second stage is characterised by the shift of policy towards consolidation and re-centralisation. This re-orientation of policy was evidenced by the control of tuition fees, admission quotas and curriculum coordination. The policy towards curriculum coordination has been tackled in terms of standardisation and supply of programmes. It was interrelated with both policies on market orientation and re-orientation to re-centralisation. It was also noticed that there were de jure regulations some of which were not practiced in real life, because the respondents at both policy making and institutional levels understood and acknowledged the contradiction in certain policy regulations. Clear evidence of this kind of contradiction was the lack of observance of the admission quota regulation set by the ministry.

The findings have also revealed that examples of the market conditions for higher education discussed in the literature (Jongbloed, 2003; Brown, 2011) have been reflected in the policy documents and debated in the interviews. The eight conditions for a market were addressed across the two stages of policy evolution under different subthemes. For example, the theme on freedom of entry was discussed within the subtheme on emergence of a private sector, under the theme of creating market orientation as well as within the subtheme on improving quality and increasing competitiveness under the policy re-orientation section. This aspect of market conditions will be further considered in the Discussion Chapter.

Despite the increasing control and tightening of policy, the interviewees at policy making level were positive that the current state policy is more in tune with the market context, and the future looks promising in terms of institutional autonomy with the upcoming package of HE legislation. This optimism was clearly illuminated in the following summarising statement.

I think our policy is in harmony with the market and with the international trend. I think that our universities need to develop self-reliance.... I do not agree with much government interference and I work towards reducing it. If we control higher education too much, this means we are returning to the old system. Recent official documents issued by the ministry do not oblige universities to blindly follow them. We say this is just a suggestion and the universities have the power to adapt them within this framework. They have the right to adopt their rules and make decisions while taking into account the suggestions the ministry provides. ... We tried to delegate more power to HEIs in the upcoming new law (SA26).

CHAPTER 5 INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE ONE: THE STATE UNIVERSITY CASE STUDIES

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the findings of case studies of state universities: State University West, State University East and State University Central. The findings are presented in a case-by-case approach to highlight the uniqueness and individuality of each case. It aims to illustrate in what ways the universities responded to issues raised by policy makers in previous chapters. It also aims to shed light on the changes in general that have taken place at these universities from 1990 to 2012, in particular the changes in terms of academic programmes. In total nine administrators each from both State University West and State University East, and six from State University Central agreed to be interviewed, and their reactions and responses were studied for an in-depth analysis. Based on the interviewees' responses and the universities' document review, the following changes relevant to the subject of the thesis have been identified: university context, university autonomy, consumers, competition and curricular changes.

5.2 Case Study 1: State University West

5.2.1 University context

The State University West is one of the former specialised higher education institutions which was upgraded to university status during the socio-economic reorganisation in the country in the 1990s. Over the past two decades this university has gone through a number of changes.

First, there has been a rapid quantitative expansion from an institute with 3600 students and over 300 academic staff to a university with 36000 students including postgraduate students, and 1300 academics. The university has also expanded in terms of structure. It grew from an institute with 9 faculties and 31 departments to a university with 17 schools, 95 professors' chairing teams and 51 centres. In recent years the university began to speak out about the issue of the ever-increasing student population. All nine of the university administrators considered it important, not only to grow in numbers but also to improve the quality. As an example, an administrator at decision-making level (SA6) stated that it is important for them to know what knowledge and skills to deliver. He emphasised:

The market demand is a requirement that needs to be met not only in terms of quantity... requirements mean to prepare professionals and specialists with

appropriate knowledge and skills that meet the needs in the market. It is to do with the quality. We aim to focus more on the quality rather than on numbers.

Another administrator (SA4) supported this view but he came up with a different perspective on the expansion of HEIs. He thought the rapid expansion led to poor quality because higher education had become a business for profit:

Higher education began to have a mass character due to the increased number of HEIs. Nowadays, it is as if everyone is entering a shop-assistant course. To me HE must be expensive, good quality, fewer and compact. Universities become a business. As a result the quality has become poor.

Second, State University West had been quite reflective towards the state policy while being innovative at the same time. The university was timely in developing its own policy documents to reflect all the state policy documents. For example, the university introduced its Master Plan-2015 just a year after the Government Education Master Plan2006-2015. Another example was the University Roadmap 2012-2021 that followed the ministry's Higher Education Reform Roadmap 2010-2021.

The university sees its mission internationally as well as nationally to prepare competitive professionals and researchers while being sensitive to a market demand. It also aims to provide a good quality, efficient and sustainable service with the purpose of contributing to the country's knowledge based economic development (MUST Master Plan 2008:13). This mission echoed the government objectives aimed at ensuring quality and matching higher education to the national economic structure and labour market demand (Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia in 2006-2015:xvii).

On the other hand, State University West went beyond the state strategic objectives (Higher Education Reform Roadmap 2010-2021) and aimed to become as an entrepreneurial university by 2021 (University Development Roadmap 2010-2021). The university acts quickly on legislation and is the most enterprising in comparison with other universities in the country. SA9 emphasised that the university focuses strongly on creating the interrelation of teaching-science-industry through which the works of the researcher-teachers are introduced into industry. He said they aim to make this interrelation as the main leverage for the university. An example of a quick response to favourable legislation can be seen in the following statement of this administrator:

There is one positive legislation that has taken place recently: the Law on Innovation. But the legal environment is still not clear. Our university's policy is to establish a Start-Up Company. We have already made a decision to establish the company but the ministry needs to adopt the regulations. So we sit and wait for the legal 'visa' to be issued. Due to this delay we also delay writing our internal regulations. Founding science incubators and applying research in the industry is

one source of revenue for the university. Currently, there are 50 research centres at the university and they finance their own activities.

Moreover, the university began to develop a Business Plan on a yearly basis and evaluate the results it achieved, and then aimed to tackle the difficulties facing it.

Third, when the freedoms were allowed to develop a product and be in charge of the resources, State University West responded fairly quickly and extended its products for offering to other fields such as the social sciences and humanities. Now it offers over 134 fields of study. In addition it identified a niche in the market while building up its core offerings. More details about the niche market approach will be discussed later in this section. But the statement by one of the administrators illuminated the nature of the main change in offerings:

We used to offer only technical fields but now we offer courses in social sciences and the humanities. What are the advantages of this change? We began to approach teaching from a broad view of social development. Technical people began to look at the world not only from a perspective of technocrats but also from a social perspective (SA9).

Despite the achievement, the university experiences difficulties. The abrupt stop of the state fund in the early 1990s up until late 2000 led the university to introduce tuition fees, but the university has been stuck with severe financial constraints. As a result, the university was forced to increase its student population by any means despite the lack of academic staff. According to the university development strategy roadmap, the student teacher ratio is 28:1, higher in comparison to the other countries (ADB:Mongolia: Strengthening Higher and Vocational Education Project, 2010:5). Retaining academic staff especially in technical and engineering fields has become an acute problem for the university because of the insufficient salaries. Almost all respondents interviewed from the university addressed this issue. This can be illustrated by the statement of one of the administrators (SA3):

Because of the low salary we could not hire anyone for If we increase the salary, student fees need to be increased. If we decide to increase tuition fees, the ministry puts a ceiling on it. Students study for about 1.5 million tugrugs. This means we provide teaching suited to this price. Teachers accepting this salary prepare students appropriate to that salary. This is our quality.

As the latest business plan highlights the low tuition fees and low financial support from the state are the chief weakness for the university, leading to a number of contradictions which will be discussed in the following parts.

5.2.2 University autonomy

The issue of university autonomy is one of the main concerns both for the state and the university. This issue was looked at from three perspectives: management and finance including freedom of using resources, international and domestic cooperation and partnership, and freedom for the content.

First, from a historical angle, the university has gained a great deal of autonomy in terms of managing its internal affairs compared to socialist times. Although the university leadership and management is hierarchical, all 17 schools and over 50 research centres are independent to a great degree in terms of conducting their internal affairs such as making financial decisions, recruiting their staff, and developing their cooperation and partnerships. A long serving administrator (SA9) at decision making level said that

In the 1990s we established schools of social science, language and mathematics because we expanded to a university level. The policy of the university has been to set up independent schools to decentralise the management so that the new schools could develop financially independently. If they were departments, they would not have had an opportunity to develop as fast as they did now and they would not have enjoyed many opportunities to focus on research and offer their own professional courses. This is growth.

This statement was supported by another administrator (SA1):

One of the most progressive actions the university did was the delegation of power. The power to decide its finance was given to the school and to the director. This in fact helped the university to develop faster in the last ten years. The issue of financial autonomy has not been resolved at other state universities until recently... We make decisions on sending lecturers abroad to conferences etc.. Just last year we sent 20 lecturers on international trips.

But in terms of governance, there was 50% of state representation on the university board and the rector of the university was appointed by the ministry. So from the university perspective, their autonomy was politically dependent. All those interviewed regarded this kind of appointment as political, and they strongly criticised it as interference in university autonomy. Moreover, a number of respondents from the university were not satisfied with the way the ministry gets involved because they thought the market forces should play a major role in determining tuition fees and the number of entrants. The following statement clearly demonstrated their general position:

The market must determine the admission but the ministry is determining it now. This is inappropriate involvement. The leading party appoints rectors. With the new appointment he tries to build a team from his party. The ministry is not paying attention to the autonomy of the universities. Universities know how to be sensitive to the market demand and needs but the ministry gets involved in this affair. This

is politics, political interference. There is also the Board. HEIs must be free of politics. Formally, those who want to be the rector nominate their names and propose their programme. There is a selection procedure. But the Minister always manages to appoint his man (SA9).

Moreover, State University West's main source of revenue is tuition fees though there was some income from research and other activities. On the other hand, the university was not allowed to increase the tuition fees to the degree they wanted. This issue made the university very vulnerable and all nine respondents expressed their disapproval of the government involvement with considerable emotion. The university is able to increase tuition fees only by 9-10% every year as the ministry suggests the inflation rate should not be exceeded. One administrator (SA1) clarified this suggestion:

Even though we estimated the increase of tuition fees to be over 20% and reported this to the ministry, they forced us to reduce it to 10%. If this enforcement is not complied with, they threaten to dismiss the leadership. ...in a case like Mongolia where the inflation rate fluctuates so dramatically, how can universities survive with an increase of only 10%?

The majority of the respondents thought that this interference is largely to do with politics. The following extract illuminates this viewpoint:

Last year we had a different proposal for tuition fees increase while taking into account the inflation rate. The country's inflation is very different from that of Ulaanbaatar which is higher. Taking inflation into account is a university policy. But politicians prefer low tuition fees because they promise the people it will not be increased. This is one of the best promises to please the voters (SA6).

Another important respondent (SA9) echoed this view from a different standpoint by stating that it is unnecessary for the state to interfere in this affair when it is economically not capable of covering the costs associated with HEIs. Although the state has been declaring in their policy documents that financial support for state universities will be increased, this particular university receives funding only for maintenance expenses at 6-7% of all revenue, and this maintenance cost (water, electricity and heating) has only just been reinstated in 2007-2008. Even though the Higher Education Law guarantees income from some operational activities, the university finds it also contradictory. As one administrator (SA5) admitted 'we are sometimes very close to violating laws. This is because we are not allowed to run production and service activities according to the Education Law'. He continued

However, we are permitted to conduct experimental production. Under the name of experiment we produce products on a larger scale and earn a lot of money. But then the tax office demands that we pay value-added tax. But following the Education Law, we are not tax-payers. ...

He was very sincere about the university's financial struggle to retain their academic staff. For this reason, the university began to invest in housing for them. He said that the university

took advantage of their students and employees to design the architecture and other relevant blueprints to solve the housing issue for our staff. We have set up a mortgage contract with the banks for our teachers. The rate is low and the price is below the market price. We are losing our researchers and academic staff due to the X booming in the country. Nonetheless, however hard we try we are still not able to pay higher salary than the X companies.

Despite all the contradictions the university enjoys full freedom with regard to selecting its staff and entrants, or refusing entrants. The university also determines the salary, terms and qualifications for their staff. On the other hand, the university enjoys the right of being a state university through state initiated international aid and projects such as Asian Development bank (ADB) support. An example is the redecoration of the main buildings with the financial aid of ADB. The university has wide cooperation and partnership with domestic organisations and companies. A respondent described this as follows:

We work with these companies in the areas of scholarship, internship (for 4 months) and joint projects. At their request we carry out research in which both teachers and students take part. ... We draw up contracts to organise training for their human resources and in return they buy us software programme licences, or furnish our classrooms (SA3).

Lastly, with regard to the freedom of supply of programmes, the university enjoys more autonomy than during the old days under socialism. Transition to a market system in the country enabled the university to expand its offerings on the one hand. On the other hand, the university was pushed to expand its offerings due to the financial stringency. From being purely a specialised institution they made a transition to offering other fields such as social sciences and language. It is at the university discretion to propose new fields and courses but they need to be approved by the ministry. Referring back to Brown (2011b:8) the content of the undergraduate programme at the university consists of a 'combination of state sanctions and academic judgement'.

The Education Master Plan of the country favours the main offerings of the university because it encourages the engineering and technical fields they specialise in. However, academics at the university criticised the ministry for imposing too many general education subjects on to the general part of the curriculum. For example, one respondent described it:

As for the credit system and content, in 1997 we transited from an hour based system to a credit system for the first time. Now we provide 134-credits of teaching to a bachelor degree. If we look back to the 1990s curricula, it was equal to 180 credits. All the little bits were taken out. The ministry approves the standards. ...Let's say curriculum content is 100 percent. The ministry says it should be with a ratio of 30:40:30. But it is now 40:30:30. This is, as we call it, a top-heavy curriculum because the general education part has been increased and reached nearly 40 percent of the whole curriculum, and this is too much (SA7).

He continued to explain how the inconsistency that is created by the ministry complicates the content of the course and the freedom of choice for students:

Every year we prepare a handbook for new students free of charge. ... In 2005 the ministry made changes to the curriculum by increasing a foreign language subject to 12 credits.This meant reducing professional subjects in order to include all 12 credits. Before that a foreign language used to be only 6 credits. Then suddenly it was changed as compulsory professional English. Any student could have argued that this subject was not compulsory in the handbook when they entered. So they may decide not to do it. All these sudden changes are not in favour of student choice (SA7).

It seems the ministry does not consult academics or institutions, and as a result of this poor coordination the institutions encounter problems with their customers. This was criticised throughout all interviews.

The university has undergone several stages of transition in their curricula and it is still an ongoing process. For example, the latest change in the curriculum content initiated by the university was an attempt to take control of some parts of the content. SA6 explained that other universities would be allowed to do this soon. The following statement describes this action:

...we are changing the process of curriculum approval and we agreed it with the ministry. ... We proposed to the ministry that the university must have the power to change the last two parts of the curriculum: professional and specialised. The ministry can be responsible for the first or the general education content and overall package. By doing so we will be able to change our curriculum as many times as it is required (SA6).

The State University West was one of the few universities which pioneered the transition to a tiered degree system: bachelor, master and doctor. The university was also a pioneer in introducing a credit system. The respondents were proud of being a pioneer in their initiatives:

Can you believe it if I say Russia is now copying the credit system of our university? Rector X first initiated and introduced a credit system based on the American model. Now he is a UNESCO regional representative for higher education in Moscow. Russians translated his book on the credit system to use it as a reference for the introduction of a credit system in Russia (SA1).

As the above illustrated, the university has been consistently pursuing its mission of leading the higher education market in the country and aiming to become competitive at an international level.

5.2.3 Competition

State policy has been aiming at the improvement of quality in higher education and competitiveness at international level. This policy has been in line with the university aims which were stated in the University Master Plan 2015, Business Plan and the University Roadmap. As the university documents and interviews showed it, State University West approaches this policy more closely in terms of reputational competition and quality competition. Though it does not have much of a role, promotional competition and positioning also has a place in their policy. However, these three are not clear-cut but on the contrary are tightly interrelated. Almost all the nine respondents from the university addressed the reputation in terms of prestige, pride and advantage. Reputation was seen by them as a way of increasing demand. It is exemplified in one of the respondent's statement (SA2). He stressed that in spite of having many other state and private HEIs offering the same fields as in his school, many entrants with the highest scores compete for these fields in his school. He was confident that it was because of the quality and good teaching they offer. He also thought that

It is to do with the reputation and image of the university. Up to 80-90 percent of graduates from our school find employment easily and companies compete for them. Those employed have a good reputation and it triggers others to follow in the same footsteps. This raises demand for our school. It is connected with the university's reputation and quality of our graduates.

Another respondent (SA4) equalled the high image of the university to a brand. He declared that

In comparison with other universities and private HEIs, X (abbreviation of the university) is the most popular and prestigious university not only in Mongolia but also in Asia. X has gone through many accreditations. Therefore it is peoples' desire to study at (X). ... X is already a brand.

In fact, all those interviewed brought out the issue of competition in quality as the highest priority. The quality was seen in terms of teaching and teaching staff, existing students and graduates, and the learning environment. They determined and perceived the quality from a perspective of the university end products – the graduates. For example, a respondent explained how she determines the quality:

To me the quality is seen in whether graduates from our Y school are regarded as immensely capable employees, and in whether they are sold as good products so that employers compete for them. This is the quality (SA7).

Another administrator (SA2) shared a similar view but he saw the quality not only in terms of the graduates but also in terms of the existing students.

The first indicator is how many are employed after graduation. Companies apply for our students even when they are in the 2nd or 3rd year. They make contracts for internship and employ them straight away after graduation. In the labour market, the reputation of institutions is measured by the numbers of their graduates in the workplace. Second, results of competitions and Olympiads in the country in management, marketing and human resource management. We won this Olympiad for the last four years. So prospective students and parents watch it and want to join us.

With regard to the competition in quality of teaching and teaching staff as well as the learning environment, the following response by an administrator (SA6) illuminates this subject. His opinion of the working and learning environment of his university was very high so he compared his university with other state and private universities:

I do not expect our teachers working in our university environment to quit for other universities. In recent years private institutes purchased laboratories and installed them. It is easy for them because they have money. But the question is are they in a position to keep capable teachers there. No, they cannot. Though we have almost 100 HEIs they do not prepare professionals at the same level. Even at our university some fields are up to the international level but some are not. For example, a team of seven people at one department of our university consists of only those who did their degrees abroad. I expect they produce good products. So it depends on the field of study.

This statement shows the quality of the service is not even and is very dependent on the investment in a sector. The Business Plan of the university emphasises that the main policy toward competition is 'to lead by quality' (2011:16) and this was reflected in the government Education Development Master Plan 2006-2015. A number of respondents raised the issue of the difficulty of delivering a high quality service to society and consumers because of the shortage of finance.

Finally, as a state university, State University West finds it easier to attract students-customers from the higher education market. The university occupies a monopolistic position in its specialised areas. However, despite its high reputation and high prestige amongst the people, the university pays a great deal of attention to its promotional activities in order to position itself in the new fields they entered, and to attract customers including students with high potentials and their parents. State University West also takes part in the Education Fair and uses mass media for its promotion. The marketing strategy in the Business Plan (2011:16) of the university states that

the university will maintain the leading strategy in the market in technical and technological fields and develop a new product (a new field of study) in order to keep and increase its market share... The chief policy is to maintain the balance of supply and demand in these fields.

As three administrators pointed out the university also attracts students by taking part in various international and domestic competitions and leading in them. The following extract from SA2 exemplified this approach:

For example, students from our university won the first two places in the past two years. We also participated in the International Robocon competition. Then prospective students try their best to go to this school. ...We received an award from the EDU Universal. My school became one of the 1000 world best schools. We are the only one in Mongolia that received this award. Who would not want to study in this school with such an image? These have a big influence on future students.

Thanks to its high reputation and successful competition in the market, the university has increased its customers ten times over the twenty years and became the largest university in the country. Nonetheless, the university administrators were not happy with the emerging competitors from the private sector and disapproved of the ministry's decision to grant licences to them. For example, a respondent expressed his disapproval:

Since the 1990s the number of private institutes has grown like mushrooms after the rain. Private institutions do not have facilities, base and materials. They do not have human resources. That is why they do not offer ...(X)... But in recent years the ministry has become loose by granting a licence to them and letting them offer ..(X). ... This action deceives the society. ...Our lecturers go there and teach part-time. Therefore attestation and accreditation must be strict (SA9).

In general, none of the respondents had a positive impression about private HE institutions and all were very critical of them.

5.2.4 Consumers

Based on the university policy document and respondents' accounts, the consumer freedoms at the university were looked at from the perspective of choice of a programme or course, freedom of information, and employment opportunities for students. The university offer over 130 fields at undergraduate level and it boasts of introducing the very first credit system in Mongolia that has enabled students to enjoy a wider choice. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that a customer's freedom of choice of a course is closely interwoven with the provider's supply of programmes and courses. The university has taken a number of measures to expand the diversity of delivery of courses. For example, there is an international joint programme on which the university makes decisions solely at its own discretion.

What is more, State University West is the only university that fully implements a double major programme. The university developed a double major policy regulation for those students who decide to take up this kind of study. As an administrator explained it

It is open for a student to select his second major as long as he is through 70 credits of his first major. ... We provide a choice and an opportunity for them to take advantage of studying at our university (SA6).

The latest development of choices for its customers is online courses and classes. This is the first ever opportunity in Mongolia. Though the university has a policy to reduce the number of students (SA6), it also tries to increase its accessibility to be in line with state policy. This is illustrated in the statement of SA5:

There is high demand for young people to acquire higher education and we have to try to meet it... We strive to provide as many people as possible with quality education to supply the labour market. That is the objective of the state. We manage as many as 36000 students with UNILMNS system and could manage more than that with it. However, the issue is facilities. Therefore we are moving towards online teaching. We are the first in Mongolia in this regard. We have already opened an e-Open school at the university.

However, at the moment the university offers only some classes online such as computer applications and physical education at the undergraduate level (SA8).

Next, at this university, freedom of information for customers is very much mixed with promotional activities. For example, SA8 explained how they disseminate a new offer to prospective customers:

Via mass media: newspapers, the university website, interviews on TV and radio. We also issue a special edition of a journal. In that journal we explain all the details of every field: what the examinations are in a certain field and all other essential information.

The responses confirmed that the university intensifies the above activities only during the spring entrance period. As Jongbloed (2003:125) states 'In order to make a well-founded choice, consumers require information on the relative prices and quality of the services on offer. ... Students are often poorly informed about the content and quality of degree programmes'. The university estimates the cost per credit and announces it on its website. It aims to reach not only students but also parents. The university has a special section on its website dedicated only to parents, and provides all the necessary information to give them a clear idea as to what a credit system is. The contradiction is that information about tuition fees comes out only just before the new academic year, because the university needs to negotiate any increase with the ministry. Nonetheless, the website provides information about the state loan grant and other types of scholarship from university partners.

As for the quality of programmes, the university boasts of having the best teaching in the country. Some respondents hold a strong negative attitude, however, about the quality of their entrants. The following statement illuminates this viewpoint:

The quality of HE has become poorer. One reason is the quality of entrants. ...too many poor quality people make the teaching worse. It is tough load on a teacher's shoulder to teach people with poor potential. The difference is like chalk and cheese: teaching two people with potential compared with teaching 10 with poor potential. Enrolment became too accessible (SA4).

Another respondent expanded this view and said that HEIs have not been strict enough towards students by treating them too gently:

I think we should reduce the number and expel students in order to improve the quality of students. ...Expel those who have poor credits. In the old days, it was like that. Students used to make a lot of effort not to be expelled. Nowadays, they do not care because they can choose to do the subject again if they get bad marks (SA8).

As for the information on the content of the courses they offer, the university began to provide full and detailed information about them as they had once experienced a misunderstanding about the title of a course, when entrants assumed it was offering something else. An excerpt from one of the interviews describes this wrong choice of a course:

In 1997 we introduced a field of study called ..(X).. At first, there were many interested in it, probably, because of the name of the course. So in the first five years, it was in high demand. Eventually we found out that entrants misunderstood the title of the course. Many thought that they might become ..(X) after graduation. When they found out that they misunderstood the term for the course title, the number went down (SA7).

In the comprehensive detailed information about the content of all included fields, the university also provided information about employment possibilities for these fields and uploaded it onto the university website.

The interview responses as well as the documents made it clear that the university tries to meet the needs of its customers at all levels. With this purpose in mind the university developed in 2009 a special programme on the 21st Century Student aimed at meeting their needs in all areas, and began in 2011 to hold Parents' Annual Meetings. State University West is very responsive to labour market demands. Most respondents emphasised the importance of employment opportunities for their graduates. This view was very much in line with the state policy, and it is clearly stated in the university policy documents such as the Master Plan and Business Plan. This policy is also reflected in the curricular changes. The

schools at the university try to meet the customer needs in order to prepare them for future employment. One of the administrators describes this:

We study the market and the demand all the time and do our best to integrate software and languages into our curriculum. If there is new software on the market we train our teachers and students in its use as soon as possible. We make it the main subject in the curriculum and got it approved by the ministry (SA3).

The university is very proud of having high employment rates among graduates. This was exemplified by some statistics on the employment of graduates from the latest academic year (2011-2012). Even though it was only 3 to 4 months after they graduated, it was very high:

OK. I'll show you the study now. We have X graduates this year and X are employed, or 77.46%. ...Generally we have a high rate of employment. Some are self-employed. This means they set up their own companies and work for themselves. ... There are even fields with 100% employment such as ...X and . Y. Just yesterday A and B companies called me on the phone asking for any graduates, it even did not matter if a student had not yet graduated as they would let them work part-time (SA8).

He also said that the Student Employment Centre at the university focuses on helping 'students in searching for a part-time job while studying, finding an internship and a job after graduation'. This Centre was set up in 2009 at three universities on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare.

5.2.5 Curricular responsiveness

Since the 1990s State University West has experienced many changes in the courses and programmes they offer. More specifically, the university was very successful in identifying its niche market in the fields of social sciences and the humanities along with its traditional main specialised offerings in technical and technological science. In order to distinguish itself from other HE providers the university targeted the 'new' fields and succeeded in becoming a pioneer in many areas as the country's transition to a new market system was a fertile ground. Eight of all nine respondents referred to the change in curricular provision and its responsiveness to market demand. One respondent (SA2) recalled this time and said it was a transition to a completely new system which led the university to make major changes. His school was one of those mostly affected due to the emergence of new branches:

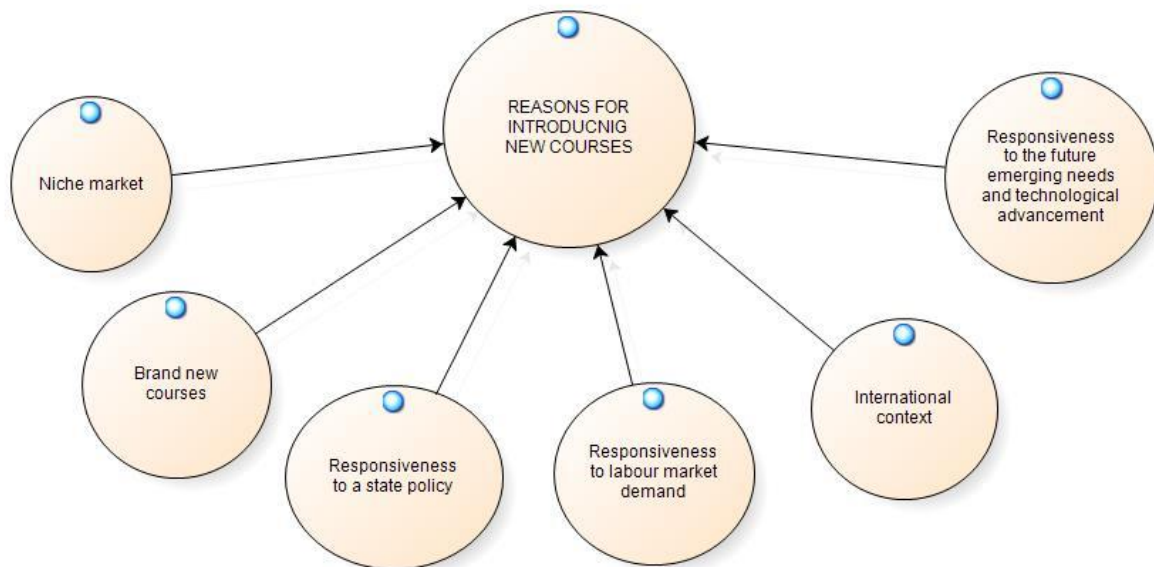
Our school has two branches: computing, and economics and management. These two branches have been constantly advanced due to the transition to a new system as well as technological advancement. As a result our school has been one of those which has had major changes and new fields introduced.

SA1 shared the same view and was very proud when he pointed out the specifics of the fields his school now offers: new, applied and technological:

We open the fields that have never been offered in Mongolia before. We do not offer classic fields of specialism that the National University offers. It would be meaningless. There would not be any market nor any need.

Based on the respondents' accounts, the change in offerings at the university can be looked at from two perspectives: introduction of new courses and change of course names. First, in terms of introducing new courses and subjects, the major reasons for it were more to do with meeting the demand and needs as well as with the university expansion policy. The main reasons were classified as shown in Figure 5-1:

Figure 5-1



According to the Figure 5-1, finding a niche in the existing market was one of the strategies the university employed. When they made a decision to introduce a new course or a new subject, it was common for it to be based on the existing resources such as teaching staff and the facilities, but it was important to differentiate the course from those of other providers. There were three respondents who mentioned the differentiation of their courses from other providers but none used the term niche market. Another respondent (SA4) highlighted in her talk the specifics of the course they offer. He was confident that customers choose translation courses in his school rather than in other institutions because they could find the niche market in this translation field. His school built upon the resources the university has and was able to offer a specific course rather than a general translation course which is offered by many other competitors:

In recent years, Chinese involvement in mining is growing and many joint companies with China have emerged. So the need for the Chinese language has grown a lot. There are many other HEIs that offer it: NUM, the Humanities, Ikh Zasag University and others. Despite this number, many people have a keen desire to work in mining, technical and technological sectors such as technical translators. Considering the above mentioned reasons, we made a decision to offer Chinese. We receive requests from organisations. They make enquiries if we prepare translators in certain areas... Future employers - for example, if a company receives applications from a translator in general Chinese and a translator specialised in technical Chinese, they prefer the last one. There are work places for them.

In fact technical and technological fields were the existing resources the university had and they took advantage of these resources by making them interdisciplinary to fit a niche and began to offer a Chinese technical translator's degree course. Another example of using existing resources and finding a niche market was a tourism course. SA1 said that they took advantage of their academic base and decided to offer natural, cultural and eco-tourism because the university has specialised schools in that area. SA1 gave this reason:

Until recently there were 54 state and private institutions that offer tourism. We began to offer the most popular type of course: tourism management. But we had an advantage in offering tourism. We can exploit people from schools of food technology for food and hospitality. We can offer languages by exploiting the school of language education. We offer cultural tourism. This is the most important strength that no other institutions have.

Another variety of expansion policy was introducing brand new courses in the country. It has been a university policy ambition in the policy to lead or to be a pioneer in their activities: they boast of being pioneers. It was clear from the responses that they are very proud of being the first in the country to offer completely new courses. The statement by SA2 exemplified these reactions:

What is the specific to our school is that we set up a new school to prepare completely new fields of study in Mongolia. In business administration we offer 10 fields and in computer science- about 10 fields. All were new fields. At that time the university administration made a decision to develop these new fields. The school had a base for it because we used to offer a field called engineering-economics (SA2).

Another respondent explained how they recently came up with a new course in the university:

There was nothing to copy as this is a new field for Mongolia. We compared many countries. For example, in Russia there are about 22-23 areas just in public relations. Here in Mongolia we only knew political PR. We had no idea about industrial PR or cultural PR (SA1).

In the early years of transition, the university made more emphasis of the new offers to attract more students. As a newly upgraded university, they were expansive in searching for

new offers and this seems to be continuing. While investigating at the university, the researcher happened to meet a department head who was vigorously searching the internet and other sources to create a new course suited to the area of her department of languages.

Another factor in introducing a new course was their responsiveness to state policy, a topic addressed by five respondents. At the same time they also referred to the state's recent policy on the prioritised professions of which seven are offered by State University West. One of the respondents stated that the university was unable to meet the demand in some fields. Therefore, these fields are on the government priority list. On the other hand, two respondents stressed that policy initiatives can trigger a demand for that field because sometimes it leads companies to act on the policy. For example, SA3 gave an illustrative account of one policy that led to the emergence of a new course at the request of a company. This policy in fact resulted in the increase of a certain type of business and work place:

In 1991, the government approved X Programme. Upon approval of this programme, Y company made a request to open a new class for Z. This company paid tuition fees for those students on the course. As a result of the government's X Programme, many people became employed and many Z were created in the country.

The reason for the policy triggering demand in a certain area could be that both entrants and parents become interested in that specific field because they may think they might easily find a satisfactory job later on. According to SA6, even the fields that are not currently in need may become needed due to the state policy towards them as in the example of hydrogeology. Another reason for the increase of demand is 'legislation' he said. For example,

If a law stipulates that a company needs to have at least one engineer for a certain area etc.. then the demand will grow.

At the university new courses were also introduced in response to labour market demand. This is very much connected with the country's socio-economic development. According to three respondents, the entities and enterprises approach the university and trigger the development of a new field of study. They said that it has become common for employers to propose that they open a new course because they need human resources in that area. The following statement by SA7 illustrates this kind of responsiveness:

Employers proposed it: for example, X state organisation and private companies. Lately, Y sector has become the most important sector in Mongolia. In 2011, the statistics stated that the contribution to the state budget from Y companies was much higher than the other old large companies. ...Although Y sector is

developing fast we do not have human resources specialised in it. This means we need to offer Y specialisation.

What is more, technological changes affect the changes in curriculum that result in the introduction of new subjects, SA6 emphasised.

The international context was one of the most important factors in introducing new curricula. Six out of the nine respondents reflected on the international context to some extent. They considered it essential to learn and compare international experiences when their schools make a decision to offer a new course or subject. The respondents' reaction revealed that the university did not want to be left behind, therefore, they consider world trends and tendencies as a guide. The following extract demonstrates this reaction:

Our professors and teachers had been involved in research in this area. They gave presentations on their research and discussed it a lot: in this information era no organisation would survive without computer security. It is regarded as very important in the world. In the end they decided to introduce it in the school. It was needed in Mongolia. Company directors often brought up this issue (SA2).

On the other hand, it was revealed that following world trends might fail the demand as happened with one of the fields at the university as was evidenced by the statement of the following respondent:

Since 1992 we have begun to offer X. This is a very important field. Nowadays we enrol entrants only every second year. Labour demand is not high. People do not understand it well. Companies also do not hire them often. X is not well developed in Mongolia and therefore, people do not understand it. Graduates from this field convert by themselves to do different work in other sectors. ...The reason we introduced it was that the issue of X was a hot discussion at the international level. The 1992 Constitution drafted an article on it. Also Mongolia joined the Rio de Janeiro Agreement. ...The first ever introduction of this field in Mongolia was based on the world development tendency (SA3).

There was only one administrator who brought up the responsiveness of curricula to the future emerging needs and technological advancement in the country. SA6 predicted that a certain field would be in high demand very soon and that the country's development required that qualification. He further explained that

First, it is very dependent on the level of development the sector is on. Second, we need to start new professional fields for future sectors that are likely to emerge. For example, X industry - it is becoming necessary. X industry is emerging in the country and professionals in this sector will be in high demand.

In addition to introducing new courses, curricular changes took place for other reasons. An example was the introduction of international joint programmes. The university has a number of joint programmes with foreign institutions and respondents were proud that these institutions accepted and recognised their curriculum, as the following extract shows.

These foreign institutions scrutinized our curriculum and accepted it. At both levels we discussed the content and the number of subjects. We made some adjustments when necessary...We already have graduates from the joint programmes from X and Y universities (SA9).

However, this autonomy was not earned easily as one respondent described it:

It is thankful that the ministry does not get involved in it. At first, they used to interfere and this created a lot of problems for us. We protested so much that they stopped interfering. When we made a decision to develop a joint programme with an international institution they would meddle with it. As a result of our protest and argument with the ministry, they finally stopped doing that. Now we alone make decision on joint programmes. We conclude our agreements with foreign institutions and are responsible for our actions (SA9).

A new kind of course also emerged due to the change in the course name. As a consequence, the content of the curriculum would be changed to suit the newly renamed course. There were two respondents (SA2 and SA7) from two different schools at the university who shared this experience. The following is an example:

For example, X. No one chooses it. Then later it was changed to a different field - Y (SA2).

What was interesting was that the university tried to avoid withdrawing courses even if there was low interest from customers - it would still keep them. A statement by one of the respondents described it well:

Even though we went through hardships in the market we did not close any courses. Instead we enrolled entrants in other fields that were in high demand. Sometimes we let the teachers leave for some time and when there was an enrolment they would come back (SA3).

Although some respondents complained about overlapping of the courses offered, no data was available for comparison. In addition, data of graduates in the fields of interest to the research was unavailable.

5.3 Case Study 2: State University East

5.3.1 University context

The State University East is the university to have been founded in Mongolia during the communist era. Over the past 20 years the university has experienced numerous changes, as many other HEIs in Mongolia, in its aims to become a world-class institution of excellence in research, innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development (The University Strategic Plan 2011-2020). One of the main changes at the university was its expansion in various spheres - the most significant one of which was the growth in the student population,

teaching staff and its offerings. According to the 2010-2011 University Report, the number of students has grown from 8559 in 2005 to over 22000 in 2011; and the size of the teaching staff has increased from 589 to 962 over the same years. The university itself has grown from 12 faculties, 73 departments and 33 research institutes and centres in 2007, to 16 schools with 94 departments and 34 research institutes and centres in 2012. In terms of freedom for provision of content, the university has seen a substantial change in the supply of programmes by diversifying its offerings with new fields of study, and by broadening student choice.

Another significant change has been in the expansion of international cooperation. The State University East has extended its international cooperation in four areas: by sending academic staff for study abroad, and inviting international professors to give lectures; cooperating in research with international institutions and increasing publications in international journals; introducing international joint academic programmes; and by increasing the number of international students and exchange programmes. The university boasts of having more academic staff who did their degrees in developed countries than any other HEIs. For example, one (SA11) stated that

There are 117 lecturers at my school, and of those 45-50 percent have degrees from abroad: USA, UK, Germany, Japan, Korea and Russia.

To illustrate the expansion of international cooperation in research, the university organised 34 international research conferences, 14 international seminars and workshops in the 2010-2011 academic year alone. The university was proud to lead research organisations in the country by publishing over 80 articles by its academic staff in international research journals in the same year.

In addition the university invites researchers and professors from various countries including Nobel Prize laureates, to speak and lecture not only to the university audience, but also to the general public, by announcing the lectures on mass media. The university considers it important to meet a double agenda through this kind of activity: 'to promote the university and to increase its reputation among the public, and to enlighten the public' (2010-2011 University Report, 2011:180). In addition, the State University East has the largest number of international students (around 300) from several countries, including Russia, China and Korea.

Since 2005 the State University East has placed a great deal of emphasis on information transparency in all spheres. As a result of this policy, the university is considered to have the most transparent website amongst all HEIs (Chantsaldulam, 2012). The website provides

details of all the financial, auditing, research and other reports, as well as necessary information for students. The online communication has become a vital part of the university's function.

Finally, though the State University East has been reflective towards state policy (for instance, to become a research university which is the main strategy in the Roadmap for HE), it did not develop any Master Plan or Business Plan at university level like some other universities. In some cases, the university has been slow in accepting state policy. For example, as the university report stated, the introduction of a credit system, legalised in 1995 Higher Education Law, still has not been finalised although it was expected to be speeded up from 2011. Nonetheless, the university has very detailed bylaws and regulations for the university community. Since 2006 it has been adopting the University Strategic Plan.

Since the 1990s transition, the State University East has been encountering a number of problems. The most difficult issue for the university has been finance. The main source of income is tuition fees which make up 86.8 percent of all revenue (University Report 2010-2011). All nine respondents addressed this financial need as the most urgent issue requiring government attention. The university therefore regards this as the most challenging problem for developing it as a research university. As a consequence, the university faces the problem of retaining capable lecturers. SA12 explained that

If we look at our salaries, it is really hard to stay at the university. Because companies promise a lot of money, it is tempting for young lecturers. ...I am looking for a lecturer specialised in the area for a year, I cannot find anyone.

This sometimes has resulted in some controversial methods being employed to resolve the university's financial hardship. This will be discussed in the coming sections of this chapter.

5.3.2 University autonomy

The State University East considers autonomy as one of the most important issues for them. The university strategic plan (2011:3) emphasised that 'in a new era of economic development it is necessary to improve and reform the academic structure in order to accommodate the market demand and to create legal environment for autonomy'. Five from nine respondents reflected on this subject and discussed it from perspectives of governance, internal management and financial self-regulation, international cooperation, and freedom for content.

In terms of governance, the University Board consists of state representatives, academic staff, Union and student representatives. The state representation in the Board is 62 percent, considered to be higher than stipulated in the Education Law which specified it can be up to 51 – 60 percent. However, the board is not involved in the running of the university including decisions on course provision. There has been a history of difficulty with the government over the appointment of the rector. In the years of 2000 the university has been struggling for gaining the right to have its rector elected from among the academic community, but following the struggle the selection processes employed by the ministry were as much political as they were before. As one of the respondents (SA14) described, they even reached the court on this matter:

We sent our complaints to the administrative court case with justification that the selection process was a forged one. It took a year until our appeal went through. The court made a decision on our side and the minister needed to organise another selection process. ...Nothing we could do. It is really impossible to achieve anything. The last appointment was a purely political appointment. Now our X group aims to make this kind of appointment independent of politics (SA14).

On the other hand, a significant change occurred in the management of schools and departments that distinguished it from other state HEIs. As a result of the above mentioned struggle, the university succeeded in selecting directors of schools from among the academic community in their respective areas. This means internally it has become more democratic because the appointed rector does not form his team for directing the school, but has a team of elected directors. For example, the following response gave an insight into this process:

Our university is different. At other state universities the rector is appointed by the ministry and the rector forms the team for schools. We are different. The rector is appointed by the government but we are elected from among the staff. This is why we stand for our staff and we are relatively independent of the rector. We push the leadership hard and criticise a good deal. Both sides – the top and the bottom 'contest' well. If I were appointed by the rector I might have been flattering him but we are elected by our academic staff and we need to stand up for them (SA12).

As a result of the internal management structural changes, the schools enjoy financial as well as other freedoms, and trade with each other the courses they offer. One of the administrators (SA10) explained this situation as follows:

The teaching is run like exporting and importing between schools. In a bachelor programme there are state-granted courses for general higher education that are compulsory. For example, the Mathematics School sends its teachers to other schools to teach and earn money; School of Foreign Languages and Culture sends teachers to other schools within the university to earn money. It is like shopping around. There are therefore export and import accounts between schools.

But there were also people who did not approve of this election process. One of the respondents (SA14) thought that ‘this is such a mess again, because the candidates also organise all sorts of lobbying using proper and improper ways, such as taking people to restaurants.’

With regard to employment of academic staff, the university has full freedom to make decisions on employment requirements, including salaries and admitting and refusing entrants. The university is very proud to announce that 41.3 percent of the academic staff has a doctorate and it pays a lot of attention to the qualifications of the staff.

In terms of finance, since the 1990s the main source of income for the State University East has been the tuition fees. From 2008 the state began to contribute to the maintenance costs. One administrator (SA11) stated that ‘though we are regarded as a state organisation, the university is run like a private organisation and we live only on tuition fees’. All respondents were very dissatisfied because the ministry became involved in their decisions by sending a warning letter to the university administration after the board set the tuition fees. The above SA described the university’s financial autonomy below:

State institutions are financially strangled. We cannot increase the number of students but neither can we increase the tuition fees. Then there is no funding from the state but we are -called ‘state’s’.

Another shared the same view from a different aspect:

We estimated the cost per student accurately and proposed the tuition fees. The board held its meeting in June and approved it. Then the ministry interfered and instructed that it should be reduced. ...‘If the tuition fees are not reduced, we will have to discuss about your job’ said the minister on television (SA13).

Due to the lack of funding the State University East encounters a number of problems. For example, there was little investment in the improvement of the learning environment as salaries take 65 percent of all expenses (SA13), and students now study in shifts until late evening due to the lack of space. Another illustration of its financial hardship was that the university took a debateable action in order to increase its income. They opened ‘donation classes’ in popular programmes for students for those whose examination scores did not reach the red line and these entrants had to pay double tuition fees for the substandard scores. Then the university set up a development fund based on the income from these classes. One of the respondents blamed the state for these measures taken by the university because it failed to support state institutions as stipulated in the laws. He explained how hard it was for the administrators:

The Education Law states that donations are one of the sources for HEIs. But the ministry said that a donation is voluntary and a figure cannot be set. Then we renamed these classes as 'additional admissions'...We acted in this way because we exhausted all means to find money for the university. If everything was as it is stated in the law, we would not have worried about it. Also if an entrant was below the red line, he should not have requested to be admitted and pressurised us through a member of parliament (SA15).

A majority of the respondents felt the retaining a cap on tuition fees was to do with politics as any ruling government tries to please the voters by not increasing them. This shows how the leadership in Mongolian higher education is not functioning as it should be (SA11). He continued:

One leader is dependent on another leader because the minister appoints the rector. ...At that management level, there are few professionals but mostly politicians. Professional managers are not in that position. The criterion for selecting people for the management team is usually 'unquestionable obedience'. This may be the cause of the university's limited development.

As shown above, the financial deficiency resulted in many undesirable consequences, including the inability to develop. Many administrators interviewed considered the development of the university as stagnant. On the other hand, the university began to attract more students and some of the top industrial partners in the country. Since there are not many universities sharing the resources for the natural sciences in recent years, the departments and schools offering these disciplines began to make profits.

Even the financial autonomy within the schools was liberalised only two years ago, whereas some other universities such as State University West have been enjoying internal financial autonomy for a long time. One positive effect of the recent development of internal financial autonomous management was to increase the motivation of school directors. One administrator was very optimistic when he talked about it:

Beginning this year, all schools are becoming financially autonomous. We are required to work as enterprises. ...When the school becomes financially self-regulating, a negative budget can turn into plus budget. Also when we transfer money for administrative expenses we will be able to monitor their expenses (SA12).

Nonetheless, the State University East concluded in the Strategic Plan 2011-2020 that it would be impossible to develop a research based university if it were dependent only on tuition fees, and therefore - it would work toward increasing income from intensive research projects and other sources. On the other hand, the state has no control over its income (SA13, 14) and also it enjoys other advantages of being a state university such as accessing international aid through the government. For example, a respondent (SA13) recalled the

ADB financial support given for full redecoration of internal and external parts of the buildings as the biggest ever investment since the market transition.

The State University East has been expanding its international and domestic cooperation fast in the last ten years. The university reports stated that this kind of cooperation significantly contributes to the development of the university, an example being the income gained in some periods from international students. In addition, a number of joint language and cultural centres were set up in cooperation with international as well as domestic organisations, and these were beneficial not only to the university but also to the population of the country. Five respondents addressed the issue of international cooperation. They emphasised mainly the importance of increasing offerings in the English language, but because of the lack of English instructed courses, the university was not able to recruit as many international students as they wished to.

Finally, in terms of the freedom for content, the respondents had three perspectives. First, they thought that the university was enthusiastic in expanding its offerings. It began to offer more new subjects and fields of study while being dedicated to its fundamental science fields. This university regards itself as the only resource for the future supply of human capital in the country's pure science industry. It sought out all possible methods to keep on providing natural science disciplines rather than closing any of them during the low market demand. The reason was that the university recognises that it is the country's main science base for the country. What is more, private institutes do not offer natural sciences because they do not have science facilities or science lecturers. A concern for a possible shortage of scientists was already raised not only in Mongolia at that time but also at an international level in the 1990s. Beltramo et al (1996:227) wrote that 'governments are anxious to avoid a scarcity of scientists which could cause delay in the development of knowledge and in economic growth'. In order not to cut off supplies in natural sciences, the university made a strategic decision to cross subsidise these departments internally, in addition to setting lower tuition fees for these fields to attract prospective students. SA11 described:

In the beginning of market transition, there was no demand for natural sciences. So other departments needed to support them. As for economics, it can find a market anywhere. High demand and less cost.

Another (SA16) pointed out that in order to support science schools the university set different tuition fees for schools considering the demand: higher tuition fees for law and economics but lower tuition fees for natural sciences. This policy indicates that the university values its social role.

Second, the respondents were critical of the ministry for increasing the number of general higher education subjects such as IT technology, philosophy, Mongolian history, physical education and English. One respondent (SA11) said that as a result of more general subjects being in the curriculum, the choice for students was becoming more limited. He stressed that 'mandatory subjects as instructed by the ministry need to be changed'. He was very critical not only about the ministry but also about the university. In his opinion there was too much bureaucracy in the process of programme approval. He said that

In Mongolia, it is very slow to get programmes approved. Many layers of bureaucracy. After the school level discussion, the proposal is discussed at the university level and then it is sent to the ministry. This takes too much time. ...The decision making in this regard should be given to the primary unit. For example, subjects in the general education part of the curriculum approved by the ministry are becoming more and more.

Lastly, three respondents thought that the university should lead the changes particularly in curriculum, but not the ministry. One of the SAs stated that

The ministry may need to follow the changes happening in large universities. We think it is our internal business what to offer in the market. We certainly will follow the standards and the quality criteria set by the ministry (SA10).

The same respondent (SA10) was, on the other hand, very optimistic about the curricular reform that has taken place in the university. Even though the ministry has not approved these new curricular options of five combinations in major and minor, he was confident that 'our new curricula will be approved by the ministry in the coming new academic year'.

5.3.3 Consumers

Based on the evidence from the documents and interview responses, it was clear that the State University East prioritises, as one of the most important things, student choice as well as student satisfaction. Six of all nine interviewees addressed the issue of student choice from various perspectives, but the most significant ones were the enhancement of student choice in terms of supply of programmes, the issue of high student population, employment opportunity, and flexibility of tuition fee payment. Finally, provision of information was regarded as central in student choice.

According to the 2011-2012 academic report on the bachelor programme, the State University East offers 148 fields of study. The university pays a lot of attention to the enhancement of student choice. The main focus of the recently started curricular reform was expanding the degree options for students. This will be discussed in details later in this section.

There is a general agreement among the respondents including those from other case universities, that the quality of entrants to the State University East is considered to be the best in the country in comparison with other HEIs, because the majority of entrants with the highest scores usually select this university. Nevertheless, SA15 compared the current students with students from the socialist time, and stated that 'under socialism about 30 percent of school graduates used to go to university, but nowadays almost 80-90 percent are admitted to HEIs'. He implied too many poor quality students are entering the university. He was also very critical about the state universal stipend to all students because grants 'are not aiming at quality.'

As was observed, the only reason for the increase in the number of students at the university was that they were seen as source of income - tuition fees - according to the responses from the interviewees. The following account illustrates this view:

In order not to lose teachers and create a favourable learning environment, state institutes were forced to increase the student population. The ministry was not able to control it. For example, in mathematics they limited the number to 30 when in total it was supposed to be 120 but the university was able to extend the number up to 200. The ministry only checked the number in the beginning of the academic year and later they forgot or did not care. May be they pretended not to know even though they knew (SA15).

In recent years due to the new mission, the university aims to achieve high quality, so the expansion of the student population is no longer the main goal. SA12 said that 'we try to balance everything. It is not stimulating to admit more than we can handle. We do not want to overload teachers because we aim to become a research-based school'. He continued, 'an increase in the student number does not develop the university. At the beginning it could be profitable, but after some time it is not'.

The State University East has a student affairs' office, the purpose of which is to serve the needs of new and current students in a number of areas. These include international student affairs, employment support, social welfare and cultural activities and to provide students with up-to-date information. The university believes that 'it should provide all necessary services to students since the main source of university income is the tuition fees' (SA17). The employment rate of graduates is important also to the reputation of the university. Therefore, this office pays special attention to it. In the following extract this administrator explained that 'for graduates we organise a job fair. Large Mongolian companies take part in this fair and it has become an annual event'. This office also carries out a study on the employment of all graduates. According to her, and according to the report, the employment of the 2010-2011 graduates was just over 60 percent. However, apart from her, only one

respondent talked about the importance of the employment of graduates while not emphasising development of work skills and attitudes, or discussion about employers.

Lately student–consumers began to have a choice on how to pay their tuition fees. Before this the regulations required them to pay the tuition fees in one instalment but now there is a flexibility in the payment scheme. They can pay tuition fees on a quarterly basis depending on how many course credits they select.

Finally, in terms of information dissemination for its customers, the State University East is quite efficient in using the university website. Though only three respondents talked about the information, it was obvious that the university paid a lot of attention to the transparency of information. According to the regulation for the bachelor programme of the university and the prospectus for prospective students provided online, there is broad information regarding tuition fees, scholarships and explanation of professional fields along with future work opportunities. As one of the managers (SA10) described ‘all lecturers are required to upload their lectures and syllabus, and the university uploads curricula on the university site’.

5.3.4 Competition

The State University East prioritises entrepreneurship as its mission in its Strategic Plan. The university is also aiming to become a research-intensive university that is in line with the state policy discussed in chapters 1 and 4. Based on the documents, it can be said that the university is striving to achieve these ambitious goals, however, the responses of the interviewees did not specifically address the above-mentioned goals. Nonetheless, eight of the nine respondents discussed the issue of competition in terms of quality improvement and reputation.

In terms of the improvement of quality, since the middle of the 1990s the university has been working towards the improvement of human resources capacity and teaching. As a result it has gained considerable achievements. One of the achievements was seen in the academic staff development. As the 2010-2011 university report stated, the percentage of those who have doctorates has been increasing constantly by 4 -5 percent yearly up to 50 percent. A number of respondents boasted that there was a high number of lecturers who returned from abroad and joined this university rather than other universities. The following extract elicited this view:

The foundation of running a good course is to have capable and qualified lecturers. ...In the last 20 years, the university has gone through a lot of changes in its human resources. An example is that there are departments which have 10

lecturers with doctor's degrees earned abroad. In comparison with other HEIs, the return of lecturers who studied abroad is high. This is to do with the university policy as well as with its reputation. This is a big advantage. This high return has a positive impact on the department as these people bring new ideas to the university (SA10).

This extract also illustrated the fact that the reputation of the university plays a big role in their return. In fact, one of the university's advantages is considered to be the traditionally high profile among the public for having a rich history of being the longest university of the country. The university thinks that they have a decent base of high technology for fundamental and applied sciences (University Report2010-2011). Despite losing some qualified lecturers to the private sector, the university was able to retain a good portion of foreign-qualified academic staff not only by concluding contracts with them to return (because the university administration thinks that those who go to study abroad use the image and reputation of the university and go through the university connections), but also by encouraging their research. As some respondents (SA11 and 12) stated, 'true researchers' returned to the university. Indeed the university has a monopoly in the market in the area of natural sciences. One of the administrators pointed out that 'there is no competition in fundamental science for us' (SA12). He further explained

In natural science, the State University East is the only one. Chemistry, physics, biology and mathematics etc. I mean the fundamental sciences. There are chemistry faculties in other institutes...like chemical technology at X, chemistry teacher at Y etc. But they are in applied sciences. The private institutes do not have money to carry out the load because the expenses are very high.

Another respondent substantiated this:

Professors at science schools are those who have internationally recognised works published in international journals, and well-known scientists in the field of chemistry, physics and mathematics (SA10).

Despite some achievements in this respect, the university still finds it difficult to maintain high quality researcher- lecturers in the field of natural sciences because of financial hardship. Three respondents thought that it was strategically important for the university to have state financial support in order to maintain high standard of teaching in the field of natural sciences.

Although the university dominates the market in natural science, it competes with other state and private HEIs in the area of social science. Three respondents (SA14, 15 and18) acknowledged this. As one of the respondents (SA15) stated, 'there are some good quality private institutes emerging in the market. They teach law and economics well - almost equal to state universities. This creates competition'. Even the quality and the capacity of teaching

staff at the university is different depending on the field of study, as SA14 pointed out. Though one of the social science administrators (SA18) boasted about competing in quality with other HEIs, another (SA14) was very critical about the teaching quality in some social science fields. The following account illustrated his point of view:

It is dependent on if the academic staff graduated here or there, or if they are old cadre or not, or if they use only Russian or not. Especially, in social sciences and the humanities, their research attitude has changed very little. In law and social sciences (excluding economic studies), there are teachers who say dialectics is the main methodology in research. It is completely different with hard sciences such as chemistry, mathematics and biology and information technology. They graduated in developed countries and they know how to conduct research because they compete at world level. Their coming back did influence the teaching and research areas in science.

In spite of the achievements in the development of academic staff, overall development of the university is believed to be low according to some interviewees. There is general agreement amongst respondents that the university development is stagnant in comparison with private HEIs. SA11 thought there were two reasons for it. First, as he stated, 'private institutes have already transited to market but such a huge institution cannot fully transit. It is impossible because sciences such as chemistry, biology and physics need to be supported by others'. Second, he commented that 'the changes at the university are very slow and it is moving ahead just because of its huge inertia'. He continued,

All possibilities and opportunities were not used to our satisfaction. There could be a higher level of development. Especially in terms of resources. A small private institute is constructing a huge building, but this large university cannot build a single building.

He thought that this situation was to do with weak leaders appointed by the government for political reasons. They thought that inefficient leadership was unable to make changes fast when 'changes need to be made faster to attract more students and to meet their interests. Otherwise, schools are left behind' (SA11).

Another way of improving the reputation of the university and the quality of teaching was seen in receiving recognition by international as well as national accreditation of academic programmes. One of the schools of the State University East has already become a candidate of the American Association of Economics and Business School Accreditation (ASBSP) and as a result the university has changed a number of regulations to meet the requirements of this organisation. However, despite having a good reputation and admitting the best students, there are few accredited programmes at the national level. Of all 148 academic programmes they offer, only 11 programmes have gone through the national accreditation (Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation, 2013). One of the

administrators was critical of the accreditation of academic programmes in general. He pointed out the following issues:

Programme accreditation may indicate the quality level. In general this process is lagging behind. Programme accreditation must be based on standards. But these standards are quite bleak because some are half developed. Second, evaluation must be external but the experts are not external in our case due to the lack of professional organisations. For example, when schools of economics or business are accredited, experts tend to be those from the same schools. Chemistry is the same. As a result, it is impossible to carry out real quality evaluation (SA15).

The documents and interviews showed that the State University East did not focus much on promotional activities until recently. For example, a respondent (SA10) said that 'some academic programmes do not need any advertisement and promotion. Law and economics, for example. These are well recognised programmes at the market in terms of the quality'. Another respondent supported this view:

We do not advertise and promote much because there is already a lot of competition for our school. Every year we have 1500 students competing for a limited admission quota. In one group we only admit 20 students. Those with the highest examination score compete for it (SA16).

However, due to the requirements of the international accreditation organisation and the ministry's new policy, the university began to intensify its promotional activities by taking part in the Education Fair, by advertising on mass media, and through its website. Recently, the university started to organise Open Days in all departments.

What is more, the university administrators are confident that employers usually prefer their graduates rather than those from other HEIs (SA10), and said the study proved it.

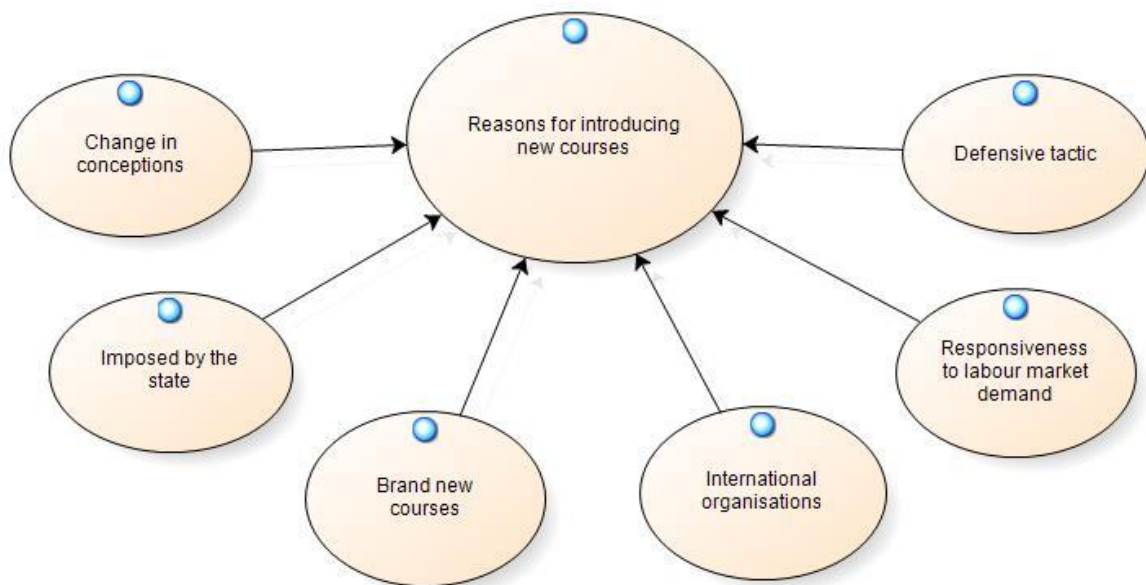
5.3.5 Curricular changes

Over the past 20 years the State University East, like many other HEIs in the country, has gone through a number of changes in its curricula and curricular provision. Seven respondents addressed the issue of curricular changes and the problems associated with them. During the early 1990s transition, the university received significant support from international organisations to carry out these changes. According to the responses, in 1993-94, the university began to introduce a degree programme with the support of the European Union within the TACIS project (SA10), as well as the Open Society of the Soros Foundation. Then from the middle of the 1990s the university was involved in a nation-wide project on the academic programmes of institutes for business and economic studies, supported by the Asian Development Bank (SA11). At this time curricular changes took place every second or third year: the old subjects needed to be abandoned or changed, and

the new subjects and courses needed to be introduced to adapt to the new socio-economic changes in the country (SA10). Based on the interviewees' accounts, it is possible to see the changes in the curricular provision for the bachelor degree programme in terms of new offerings.

The university introduced new courses or subjects for the following reasons as displayed in Figure 5-2:

Figure 5-2



The reasons is discussed in the order presented in Figure 5-2.

In the early 1990s there were major changes in the social sciences. Some courses and subjects, such as political economics and scientific communism, became irrelevant in a new market economy. As a result of conceptions changing, the names of these courses were changed. Two respondents brought up this issue, and the reflection of one exemplified the nature of the change well:

Marxism consisted of three parts: economics, politics and philosophy. The notion of economics has changed a great deal because the society has moved to a market economy and the planned economy was no longer suitable. As for politics, there used to be scientific communism. In our politics department there is a slight change, there are very few who graduated in foreign countries. Therefore, the old Russian doctrines are still in existence. But the law school had a lot of changes because the legal system itself has been changed completely (SA14).

As we saw, the old courses (so-called political economics and scientific communism) were changed conceptually due to the social demand, and new courses such as economics and politics emerged from them. Lecturers specialising in these fields were converted into teachers of economics and politics. However, SA14 was very critical of some of the content adapted for new courses. He said that

‘in terms of the content, apart from economics, social sciences hardly changed. On the surface philosophy, history, religion, pedagogy and psychology do not employ Marxism but the methodological approach is still Marxist. Twenty years of transition is not enough to fix all. But it is slowly improving.’

A change in curricular provision was also initiated by the government. Three of the respondents stated that a new course was imposed by the government. University administrators were not encouraged by these initiatives, instead they thought this kind of pressure restricted student choice. For example, SA11 expressed his view on it as follows:

The ministry orders what subjects to provide and how many credits to teach for each. Because of this, the number of subjects aimed at specialisation are getting less and less. This makes us – universities - to look as if we do not care about human choice.

As presented in case study 1, this kind of disagreement with government involvement was expressed by the State University West administrators too. One of the respondents (SA10) pointed out, ‘Curricula are changed due to the social development of the time and a new policy leads to a new principle’. An example is a new course on ecology and environment introduced by the government in the general education curriculum, as a result of the policy on the green economy, sustainable economy, and the environment.

State University East began to offer brand new courses to meet the country needs. Although the university was not as expansive in new offerings as the State University West, it has even founded a totally new school that offers fresh fields of study in foreign service. As the university felt responsible for the development of the country, and diplomatic relations began to develop rapidly, it cooperated with the relevant ministries to set up this school to meet the new needs in this area. Moreover, as the most prestigious university of the country, it attempts to be an example to other HEIs. SA16 explained that

Because this is a new field of study in the country, the standard we set becomes a standard and a model for other institutions, such as private institutes.

Another factor for introducing new curricula was international organisations, and the new offers they proposed or suggested. For example, an interviewee (SA10) stated that the UNDP proposed the introduction as an elective of a course on human development, and the

government directed the line ministry to accept it. This led to a change in the general higher education section of the curriculum for all HEIs. What's more, an international move was considered important in developing curricula, a view expressed by one of the respondents:

In the future, there will be more inter-disciplinary, inter-sectoral fields such as economics and hard science, or social sciences and economics. Employers express their need for inter-sectoral professionals. This kind of qualification already exists in other countries but not in Mongolia.

He continued 'when there is advancement in the field, and new developments in the world, we need to catch up and spread them. We adopt them fast – having, as a school in a prestigious university, the principle of leading in this field.'

Another important factor in introducing new fields of study to the university was the responsiveness to a labour market demand. Due to high demand in the market, like all HEIs in the country, the university has created new fields of study. These new offerings tend to be based on existing fields. Four out of nine respondents addressed the issue of meeting the high labour demand. According to their responses, high demand meant 'work places available for graduates' (SA15), 'identifying market size and future needs based on requests from organisations and private companies' (SA12). The following account illustrated this:

In 2000 there were very few fields of specialisation: we used to offer only three to four fields. Following the market needs and labour demand we are now preparing specialists in nine fields such as chemical technology, coal chemistry and gas chemistry etc. These are in accordance with the applications in the market (SA12).

There was one administrator who was fairly critical about some new courses offered by the merged university. He made it clear that the university, which had been merged by the government with the State University East, in order to be separate used a defensive method to differentiate its offerings, and to find a share in the market. Here is this respondent's criticism:

We need to introduce professional fields that meet world standards. We cannot introduce professions that do not exist. Some schools have this kind of mess. X University opened an inorganic chemistry course in order to have more classes and to be different from our university. This is not standard. Any chemist would just laugh at it (SA12).

Based on the responses of the administrators, there seemed to be no specific attempt by the university to find a niche in the existing market in the process of enhancing curricular provision. Instead the university seemed to rely on its reputation for what it already offered.

In general, the university's expansion of offerings led to some problems. As a large university, the State University East provides a wide spectrum of programmes, and new

offerings were seen as one way of increasing income. But this resulted in different departments offering similar courses, an expansion which resulted in negative consequences, creating a great deal of overlap in the content. As one respondent explained:

Superficially it seems nice to offer over 110 academic programmes for the sake of variety. But there is a lot of overlap of the content in the programmes. For example we have three tourism programmes and three environmental programmes in different schools and departments (SA10).

He thought that this rapid expansion of supply of programmes was caused by the immature market transition. He stated that 'all schools opened all possible types of academic programmes to earn money. This in turn became an obstacle to development', a view substantiated by another respondent:

Up until recently, we saw tuition fees as the only source of income. As a result we increased the number of students along with the number of subjects. In order to increase the number of students, the university came up with various types of courses (SA12).

In order to overcome the problem of content overlapping in curricular provision, the university aims to consolidate all similar programmes in the appropriate departments. An illustration of this policy was the merger of English teachers working independently in different schools and departments throughout the university. Despite having the School of Foreign Languages and Culture which can provide a specialised language service to other schools, some schools used to have their own department of English. The main reason for this was explained by an administrator:

Every school tried to hire math or computer teachers too. These schools do this because they do not want to import teachers from the professional English schools or computer schools within the university to avoid paying much money to those teachers. It is one way of saving money for their own schools. This created such a mess at the university, and weakened the mechanism for controlling and monitoring the standards. Therefore, we brought all single discipline teachers into one place, merging for example, the three tourism programmes into one school – the school of geography (SA10).

These responses were in line with the data from document sources. Table 5-1 illustrates this overlapping phenomenon in several schools. As seen in the table, four languages, including Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English, were offered in two schools while tourism was offered in two different schools in the university. Moreover, among those four languages Chinese, Japanese and English were offered across three schools, where the School of Mongolian Studies offered these three languages as a combined degree with the Mongolian language. However, in 2005 the university began to eliminate overlapping of content and as

a result the School of International Relations was closed for restructuring, re-appearing with different fields on offer. Nonetheless, the overlapping still persists in the university.

Table 5-1 Overlapping of fields in some areas of specialisation

Category	Schools	Some overlapping fields							
		Mongolian	Korean	Chinese	French	Russian	German	Japanese	English
A	1. School of foreign language and culture	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	2. School of international relations	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
	3. School of Mongolian studies	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	+
		Some overlapping fields							
B	Schools	Geographer and teacher	Tourism	Gas minerals	Biotechnology	Ecology			
	1. School of geography and geology	+	+	+	-	+			
	2. School of biology and biotechnology	-	+	-	+	+			

+ signifies 'offered'; - signifies 'not offered'

Created from the State University East website data

This shows the lack of coordination of the management of both the school and central management.

Lastly, the State University East has recently carried out a curricular reform to enhance degree options for students. In order to improve consumer choice, the university began to offer five options: a single major; a major with a minor in the same field (e.g. a major in economics with a minor in business administration); a major with a minor in a different field (e.g. a major in economics with a minor in physics or chemistry); a double major in the same field; and a double major in different fields (SA10). But this initiative is in its initial stage, and therefore there are majors with minor options in only a few schools. In addition, the university is aiming to speed up and finalise the transition to a credit system, and a transfer system between departments as this was started 17 years ago. The university considers the enhancement of student choice as a way of quality improvement to meet employers' needs (2011-2012 University Report). As one administrator stated, these curricular changes are new in Mongolia, and therefore it is difficult to make the ministry understand the need for giving new curricula:

A student decides what to study and he plans his own study. This increases the freedom of a choice for a student. ... But it is becoming a big deal to make the ministry understand it. We do not know how other HEIs feel about it. ...nonetheless the ministry praised us for accepting the challenge to accelerate the transition to a full credit system and I am confident that the ministry will approve our new curricular changes in the coming academic year (SA10).

As can be seen, the freedom of choice for a student - customer has been enhanced at the university, and they feel positive about getting approval from the ministry. In order to start these steps the State University East made changes in all relevant regulations within the university. However, as SA10 admitted, there were concerns within the schools about these changes. He said some academic staff thought some disruption in the flow of study might result, but felt that not every student would be able to pursue these curricula since they would need to meet certain requirements. As a result there is a limitation to student freedom of choice for study: a student needs 'to be highly responsible, have a conscious attitude towards his study, or he may need to study longer than four years. Or in some cases may pay more tuition fees'. He continued:

The choice looks to have increased, but on the other hand it requires high commitment to study. And at the same time there is an increased responsibility on the part of the departments.

5.4 Case Study 3: State University Central

5.4.1 University Context

The State University Central is a former specialised higher education institution upgraded to university status during the socio-economic changes in the country. Over the past two decades this university has experienced a number of changes.

The first significant changes were expansion in all spheres, particularly in terms of the student population. However, the increase in teaching staff has not been as high in proportion to the growth in student numbers. While this has more than tripled (from over 4000 students in 1992 to over 14000 in 2011), the academic staff has increased by only 1.3 times (from 319 to 426).

Structurally, the university has grown from a university with 37 departments to a large institution with 12 schools, 2 colleges and 50 departments. However, some respondents, felt that, this quantitative expansion might be leading to a decrease in the quality of teaching. One respondent posed a question:

The number of teachers in the 1990s at the school of X at the university is still the same but the student population had quadrupled since then. In this situation, there is little sense talking about good quality, is there? (SA23)

Second, in comparison with State University East and State University West, State University Central did not develop any master plan or strategic plan into reflection of state policies. Nonetheless, it has been working closely on the implementation of major national programmes such as the Programmes on Education, on Mongolian Old Script, and for English. The policy of these national programmes appears to be in line with the mission of the State University Central, which states that it will provide an open and good quality service to citizens that meets individuals' interests, and that is in line with international trends. On the other hand, the university has very detailed bylaws and regulations for the university community, and the bylaws fully address the substance stipulated in the Constitution of the country, and the legislation on Education and Higher Education.

Third, State University Central started to offer fields in addition to its traditional, specialised ones over these past two decades. The curricular provision has been doubled from 30 fields of study to almost 60 in its bachelor programme alone. The university also offers over 28 subjects to master's level and almost 20 to doctor's programme students. Moreover, it has been responsive to the market demand in that it has extended its products to other fields of study such as tourism and languages like Chinese and Korean which were popular. In some

cases, it identified a niche in the market while building up on its core range. Further details will be discussed later in this section. But the statement by one of the administrators illuminated the nature and the specifics of offerings in the university:

Our university is different from other universities. ..Though the state is keen that non-dual fields be offered, we have to consider the specifics of Mongolia. Especially in teaching fields! For example, a teacher of both physics and mathematics, or of IT and mathematics. This kind of pairing is necessary. In rural areas, we have only a single school. What will this school do with a person who teaches only physics? There are not many hours of teaching in schools for a physics teacher. The ministry understands the situation and allows it (SA19).

Like other state universities, this university has been experiencing financial difficulties from the early 1990s up until now. The university was a pioneer in introducing tuition fees in 1990, but has nevertheless been hampered by continuing severe financial constraints. As a result, it became essential, to increase the student population. All respondents saw this as an acute problem, as illustrated in the statement of SA23:

We increased the student number automatically just to earn money for salaries and for improving the learning environment. As a result service delivery has been weakened. ..development is tightly connected with money, whether you like it or not.

As the university report stated, about 60 percent of the income from tuition fees was spent on salaries. The lack of money led to a number of contradictions to be examined later in the section.

5.4.2 University autonomy

The responses of the interviewees from this university show how important is university autonomy in terms of governance, finance and freedom for supply of programmes.

Compared to the respondents from the previous two cases, the respondents from this university did not say much about the political influence of governance. Only one respondent implied it when discussing the financial struggles:

Rectors are appointed by the minister. Then the minister says a certain limit in the increase of tuition fees should not be exceeded. How could the rector refuse to follow this instruction? Impossible! In future, it is my understanding that this restriction will cease (SA23).

According to the documents and responses, state representation on the university board is 53 percent. The board makes both the structural and financial decisions, but does not interfere in the running of the university, including the types of courses it offers.

In terms of finance, all interviewed expressed their disagreement with government decisions. Although most respondents acknowledged the state involvement, they wanted it be clear-cut in financial decisions. They thought if the university was regarded as belonging to the state, then the state should be fully responsible for funding. SA20 stressed that unless the government wholly funds the university, power over the admission quota and tuition increases have to be vested in the university. Another senior administrator was desperate about money for his university:

In order to improve both the quality of and the university's image, we need money. Though the government tries to support us, it is just not up to the needs. For example, the state invests in their institutions when they get money from international organisations. The ADB helped us to improve the library, but this is not enough as the state shares a drop of money between all state HEIs (SA23).

One administrator (SA23) brought up an interesting idea. He revealed an entrepreneurial approach, saying 'We want less interference from the government. There should be a management team to lead- the financial administration and to be responsible for it before the state.'

This financial struggle leads to violations of the ministry's regulation for the admission quota, as happened at the State University East. SA20 remarked:

I always have 36 people in each class because of the space available to us, but they say 25. Although I am not specifically punished for this, my name has always been mentioned in reports. We should be able to control our admission numbers according to space available, and to be in charge of the tuition fee increases.

Another interviewee expressed a similar view in regard to the quota:

I don't think the ceiling must be that strict. When we propose to admit 50 in Chinese, the ministry reduces it to 25. When we propose a number, we certainly take into account the space and facilities available (SA21).

But according to another respondent (SA23), the ministry allowed the university to increase the number of entrants 'by internal entrance' in the last academic year. This meant that it could recruit more students as long as they agreed not to demand any benefits from the state, and signed a document to that effect.

In terms of internal autonomy compared to the previous two cases, the schools within the university do not exercise internal financial autonomy to the extent they would wish to. The school directors interviewed thought there was less internal financial autonomy within the university. Only 70 percent of the tuition fees from a school is vested in the power of the school directors, whereas the other two universities delegated full power to their directors. In

addition, as one administrator stated, one of the schools is not financially able to sustain itself at all, but the university subsidises it because it offers the core courses that give the special identity to this university. He explained:

We must keep this school separately even if it offers only two disciplines. This school has fewer students. If we disperse the staff of this school amongst other schools, then we will lose first our identity, and fail the policy of being State University Central (SA23).

Nonetheless, the university enjoys full freedom to select its staff and entrants, or to refuse entrants. The university also determines the salary, terms of employment and qualifications of their staff.

Finally, in relation to freedom of content, the university is still a specialist institution to a certain extent despite offering some other additional fields. In comparison with socialist times, however, it has been enjoying considerably more freedom in determining its curricular provision. The respondents had various views on the issue.

Firstly, all the respondents agreed that the university took advantage of the expansion policy and began to offer fields other than the traditional ones. They said the university was persistent in offering dual fields for teaching disciplines despite the ministry's discontent. But in some areas the university followed the ministry's instruction not to offer dual fields other than in fields such as computing and English.

Second, the government's prioritisation of fields of study favours some of the disciplines offered by this university. Academics of this university were, however, very critical of the government for allowing these fields to be offered by private HEIs, the justification of the two senior administrators (SA22 and 23) being that they do not have the personnel, material base and facilities to teach these priority fields that used to be offered by State University Central alone. The respondents thought that these fields required high responsibility on the part of the providers. Here is a part of the statement by SA22:

Grants for these fields are larger. So private institutions became interested in offering them. It is our university which offers these fields and we know who are specialised in them. All those who defend doctoral degrees in these subjects go through our academic council, and there is no one from any private institutions who did it. They have nobody specialised in this X field.

The university seemed to prefer having a monopoly and was in disagreement with the government policy of encouraging new providers in these fields.

Thirdly, the respondents shared the same view and had the same criticism as other respondents from the State University East and Central Universities on the ministry's imposition of general education subjects in the curriculum. One respondent complained:

The most difficult thing is that the ministry makes these subjects compulsory. For example, English needs to be eight credits, but for those whose English is up to the level they could have chosen a different subject instead of it (SA19).

He acknowledged that 'academic freedom for the content of curricula is relatively limited'.

Over the years the State University Central has had several changes in its curricula. To make the latest change in content it needed permission from the ministry to pursue slightly different standards to meet the needs of the field-specific content of the curriculum they wanted to offer. The following extract presents this:

The old standard required 30:40:30. This means general HE courses occupied 30 percent in the curriculum, professional courses -40 percent and courses for specialisation were 30 percent. The current standard is 25 percent in the general HE section, and this means 25 to 30 credits. This means we have extra six credits to decide on: we can offer what we want (SA19).

According to the university's website report, the State University Central introduced a credit system in 1993 but still has not fully changed over to it: teaching loads are still being measured in teaching hours, unlike the other two universities.

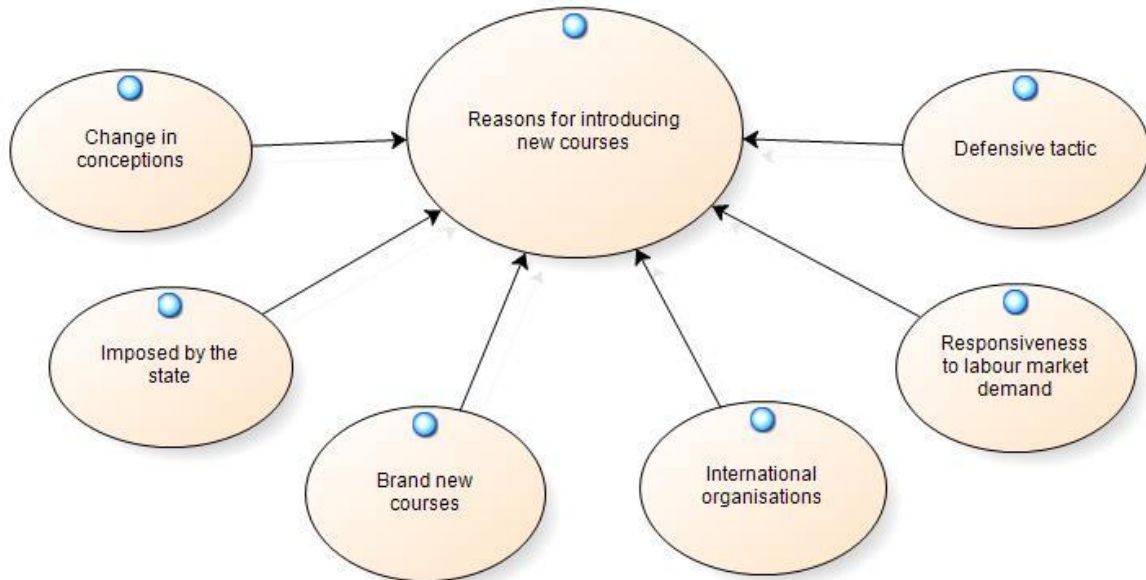
5.4.3 Changes in curricular provision

Since the early 1990s, there have been a quite number of changes in curricular provision at State University Central. Its main traditional area of specialisation is still the fields of teaching. But the most significant change was providing new non-teaching fields of study, mostly in the social sciences, with the exception of a few technological fields. Five out of all six respondents addressed the curricular changes and the responsiveness of the curricular provision to market demand. One respondent explained that 'these non-teaching fields have a close relationship with our traditional offers. For example, we offer statistics because it is based on mathematics' (SA22). Three administrators emphasised that the old socialist teaching technology has been completely renewed, and new products of offers came out to suit the market needs in secondary schools, as well as in the higher education market as a whole.

Based on the information from the interviewees, change in curricular provision at State University Central is examined in terms of the following two perspectives: introduction of new courses, and the closure of some.

First, in regard to the introduction of new subjects and courses, the key reasons were to meet market demand, as well as with the university expansion policy. The chief motives were as shown in Figure 5-3:

Figure 5-3



One respondent (SA22) explained the reasons for offering new disciplines:

'It has to do first with demand, second with resources and base, and lastly, with a desire to expand education delivery service.'

As Figure 5-3 displays, State University Central finds that offering totally new subjects in the country is one way of expanding its education service. New fields and courses gave an opportunity to increase its income. Though senior administrators did not admit this, or did not want to admit it, it was implied from overall discussions with interviewees. The university is proud of being the first to offer the new field, for example, of social worker. SA22 stressed that this 'originated with the university', while another (SA23) boasted that 'other institutions copied from us the introduction of the course for social workers'. The university developed additional courses in this field, one recently being that of industrial social worker. The university now supports this field internally because the school to which it belongs cannot sustain itself financially. The implication is that due to limits in specialisation, the university has been unable to be expand as it would like, through offering brand new subjects as did the State University West.

Another factor in the expansion of its education service delivery was responsiveness to a labour market demand. State University Central like many other HEIs in the country has

created new subjects that were in high demand but based on its existing academic as well as material resources. This was referred to by three out of six respondents. They clarified high demand as the first on a list of priority fields in the country proposed by the ministry (SA19); second, meeting future needs and individuals' personal plans concerning work opportunities (SA21, 20), while also serving organisations' and companies' needs (SA22). One senior administrator described:

A need has arisen in schools for teachers specialised in these languages. Because schools have begun to offer these subjects we need to staff with qualified people (SA21).

When both the need in the market and the university policy coincide, there is an opportunity for it to expand its offers:

We cannot say that it will give us a lot of economic benefits for opening only one class. First, there was a need, and second a school specialised in that area in our university happened to be expanding its functions (SA19).

Another external pressure for new subjects and courses was the apparent government imposition. Respondents admitted the government sometimes initiates and instructs universities to introduce new subjects into the curriculum. As with other respondents from State University East and Central State Universities, most of the respondents here were critical of this imposition. Two respondents (SA19, 22) even questioned the ministry's decision on curriculum content. SA22 said:

The ministry could only provide a broad framework, and we could then decide on the details. But they instructed that PE should be exactly 3 credits. Some subjects may not be useful in preparing teachers.

This, to some extent, implies that the ministry does not consult with academics and educators on its decisions.

The State University Central was unique in the sense that it has been responsive to the specific needs of the country according to the respondents' reactions. As the university is the main supplier of HE to rural areas of Mongolia, it needed to consider the specific situation of rural schools, and to take into account the consumer organisational needs. All respondents interviewed were in agreement that the university should offer dual fields in teaching because rural areas have specific needs. Justification was exemplified in the following statement:

We can offer a single language, or a pair of languages. The pairs are to meet the needs of rural areas because it is short of language teachers. There a teacher can teach two subjects (SA21).

Here the respondent emphasised the importance of meeting the shortage in qualified personnel in the rural areas. Other respondents (SA19, 20) came up with a different practical reasoning connected to future employment of graduates:

Health education teacher as a single profession would have a problem because teaching only health education will not accumulate enough teaching hours. When it is combined as Health and Physical Education, then it works. Who would employ only a Health teacher, especially in rural areas? (SA19)

All soum (a territorial administrative unit in the rural areas) centres have only one class. Therefore, a person who teaches social sciences needs to teach other social science related subjects. Otherwise, he won't be able to find a job in the labour market and we will be producing graduates who do not meet social needs (SA20).

Though State University Central did not intensively search for a niche market there is a small evidence of applying searching strategy. For example, a senior administrator described how they made a decision to offer some subjects:

There is a different story for subject X. First we introduced X to prepare translators and continued it until 2007. From 2007 we changed it into a course for teachers of X. There are a number of reasons for that. We focus on preparing teaching personnel so we need to be in line with this focus. Also we did not want to offer training for translators because other schools offer that. We didn't want to duplicate this when others do it (SA21).

This illustrates the way the university attempted to place its offering in the appropriate position in the market.

There was only one administrator (SA22) who thought of the importance of the responsiveness of curricula to future emerging needs. He felt that it was necessary to predict and meet the emerging demand in the area of special needs teaching, to avoid being short of qualified people in the future. Though it will be a completely new field of study in the country, the university sought support from Japan to introduce this field. He justified the university's decision as lately the number of children with special needs has been increasing in the country in comparison with former times. The last generation of Mongolian people qualified in this area in Russia and Hungary are now retiring. His foresight on this issue was similar to that expressed by SA6 of State University West.

Finally, only one administrator (SA21) out of six emphasised the importance of special government policy on fields which were of low interest but of strategic importance to the country's dissemination of knowledge. He felt that if it was necessary to the country, it was justifiable to introduce new courses and subjects even to a limited extent. Although the

university has not come up yet with this kind of proposal, he said he keeps this in mind for the future. The following illustrates his standpoint:

In my opinion, as an independent country we must study world languages (example, Arabic). We must not only consider profit but we also need to study those strategically important languages which will enable us to study original sources relevant to our history even in studying our history. Otherwise, HEIs are closing down these languages due to the low interest (SA21).

This statement highlighted the issue of HEIs not being driven always by demand, but also having to be conscious of national priorities.

With regard to the closure of subjects and courses, unlike the other two case universities, State University Central decided to close some areas of study due to reasons of content overlap, for economic reasons, and the ministry's stipulations. Three respondents referred to this topic. One respondent justified his decision:

I closed two fields. The reason was that both have the same fundamentals and the content was overlapping. It is economically unprofitable because the class was not full. We filled the classes to their full extent and as a result now we offer five fields (used to be seven) but still have the 700 students (SA20).

Another respondent stated that the university closed down some fields of study due to the ministry's requirements:

The combined field of IT and English does not exist anymore according to the 2010 minister's order. We did not enrol any more new students in it, and our 4th year students will be graduating soon (SA19).

However, statistical data on graduates in different fields and document evidence of overlapping of courses were not obtainable. As a result, the responses of interviewees have played a big role on the discussion of curricular change.

5.4.4 Consumers

The available documents and the responses of interviewees allow us to examine consumer freedoms from the perspective of choice of courses and employability of graduates. All interviewed administrators referred to this topic, and it was clear it was of great importance to them. Based on the university report, website information and the responses of senior administrators, the university offers two types of fields: teaching and non-teaching fields that total about 60. Due to the class system on which the university still operates, the choice of courses for students is not wide. SA19 explained that the class system means if a student chooses biology when entering the university, they have to carry on with it for the following

four years. He admitted that even in dual fields students need to stick to the first two chosen fields until graduation. Another administrator clarified that

In the 4th year, students usually select electives and any course can be proposed by teachers. However, not a single student but the class as a whole must choose it. Students discuss in the class and inform the department of their choice (SA20).

A senior administrator was honest in admitting the limited choice for students by acknowledging that

Personal choice is not possible with us. If I had graduated from MIT, the subjects on my diploma would not be identical to anyone else's. For our university, transcripts of all our graduates are the same for everybody who studied chemistry, for example (SA19).

The university also aims to improve the quality of its entrants and graduates. As for prospective students, they have become the main concern for both the state and the university. There has been criticism amongst both the public and educators that those entering this university tend to be of poor quality in comparison to those of State University East and State University West because a majority of entrants with low scores usually end up in it. One of the administrators summarised entrants' choice of universities:

State institutes are chosen in this order: first, national university, medical university, university of science and technology, agricultural university. In the end, the less able ones choose our university (SA22).

As a result, State University Central has cooperated with the ministry to increase national grants for those choosing this university, in order to attract high-scoring entrants. The reason is that the majority of their graduates are future teachers who will be working in schools, and poor quality entrants are seen as a threat to the level of general education. The university's website and prospectus advertised national grant opportunities well. Though the university aims to increase the cut-off score for entrants, some administrators are concerned that 'hardly anyone would enrol in our university because the social image of teachers itself is low in society' (SA22). However, another reason for poor quality students could be found in financial income. According to the responses from the interviewees, the only reason for the increase of the number of students was tuition fees. For example, the following account illustrated this view:

Nowadays once a person is admitted, he would somehow be allowed to complete his course because his tuition fee is needed. That is the policy. If we let him go, we will lose money. How we can talk about quality in this sense? (SA20)

It has been important for State University Central to consider the future employment of its graduates. It has therefore always been insistent on offering dual-fields in teaching, and the

ministry permits this only in teaching fields. SA19 was very sensitive about this topic, and when the interviewer wished to clarify it he came up with the following reason:

The state allows these duals which have proved their practicality. We will retain them. The reason is that we never had a large population like China. As long as there will be a need for teachers, it is impossible for the state to remove these duals. We cannot copy other countries.

Five respondents held the same view on dual subjects. They thought that the offering of dual fields suited the country's needs since schools in rural areas have only a few children in a class. SA20 explained the reason for dual fields:

If there was a teacher of social studies in a soum, he would be able to teach only four hours per week at 10th grade, and he would probably not do it for such little money from part-time work. So to receive a full salary it is necessary for him to teach other social science related subjects.

This is also to do with the state policy to supply rural areas with qualified personnel for human development purposes. The ministry therefore accepts this solution. The difference of these dual fields is that graduates would receive only one diploma rather than two double majors for separate subjects.

In addition, the image of graduates has been deteriorating since the 1990s. As one administrator admitted, 'We cannot guarantee that our graduates are up to the required level. This belittles the image of teachers' (SA23). In order to improve the image of the university for its graduates, it has been implementing a number of projects such as Mongolian teacher for the new century - aimed at current students. The main purpose of all the projects was to improve the image and qualification of a future teacher. This is in line with the latest government policy, and the intention of improving the quality of general education in schools as a whole. Nevertheless, the employment of the 2010-2011 graduates was 65 percent, considered as average (SA22). The university also considers it important to carry out a study on the supply and demand for teachers in all fields of education, differentiating between the city and rural areas. An administrator stated:

We need to study the market and then make a decision. In the future, even to prepare a teacher of Mongolian or literature we have to study the situation. There are many other institutions that offer these subjects. The question is will all the graduates have a work place in four year's time? (SA22).

5.4.5 Competition

In accordance with the state policy on quality improvement and competitiveness discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, State University Central aims to improve its competitiveness in terms of

the quality of entrants as well as of graduates, teaching capacity and accreditation. It is interesting to note that all six interviewees talked about competition in relation to the improvement of quality and reputation. Based on the respondents' reactions it can be said that the university sees private HEIs as its competitors, while positioning itself as superior to them. But it was felt that informally it ranks itself as inferior to other state universities.

In terms of competitiveness in quality, the documents and responses revealed that it has become the priority for the university, apparent in the quality of students, academic staff and accreditation of subjects they offer. These three aspects of teaching and learning were to do with improving the quality of programmes and courses they offer, and to become competitive in the national market.

Though promotional competition does not play much of a role, the university began to place an importance on it in its policy. Moreover, freedom of information is pretty much linked to promotional activities. Generally, on its website the university provides information about all fields on offer, tuition fees and scholarships but with few details as compared to the previous case study universities.

As attracting good entrants has been a major issue, the university runs a number of activities in order to attract good quality entrants: Olympiads on different subjects such as mathematics, chemistry and the Mongolian language, cooperation with employers, an Education Fair, and the occasional promotion through mass media. The following extract summarised this policy:

Marketing has become important to us. Through promotion we want to recruit good entrants. We cannot remain and merely say we are a big university; we need to act in order to attract them. We organise Olympiads in all subjects, and organise training workshops in cooperation with local secondary schools. We offer places in our university to those who came in the first three, first five or ten. During admission, we do radio programme, and take part in the Education Fair (SA22).

However, it was noted that the university does not have a marketing office, or personnel to deal with the above activities. They are divided and the work carried out between different offices. What is more the university also pays a great deal of attention to the promotion of work places and employers for its graduating students - by organising promotional days and finding work places for them.

Next, in terms of teaching, the university believed that the quality of teaching staff is at the appropriate level but it varies depending on the area when compared to the international standard. The respondents thought that generally the university has a high reputation in the

country as a state university, especially in areas such as Mongolian Studies, mathematics and languages. SA23 described the capacity of the teachers as follows:

We were able to create a team of scholars and teachers who studied in various countries in various fields. Let's take as an example the mathematics school. We use textbooks that are of international level. It was our policy to increase the competitiveness of the academic staff. Thanks to Russian schooling, our mathematics level is usually very high. One of our young lecturers was invited to teach in a professorial post at Copenhagen University, and another was invited to teach in Italy. However, some fields like X and Y can be rather poor.

According to the university report and responses, 50 percent of lecturers have a doctorate. The respondents criticised its private competitors for lacking teaching personnel and borrowing lecturers from the university for part-time work.

Lastly, the university supports the policy on accreditation and standardisation, and has recently focussed on this activity. As a result, seven subjects at the university have been given accreditation in just one year, and more are being prepared. It is the university's ambition to set an example for other HEIs, particularly private institutions, by developing standards for the curriculum in teaching qualifications. Some respondents expressed what they thought constituted good quality. For example, one administrator described it as:

Guaranteeing quality means creating a system of qualitative measurement of standards for entrants, teaching and graduates, and for this there should be a third party evaluation, by the ministry for instance (SA22).

The university felt responsible for bringing the quality up to the appropriate level for the sake of consumers. The following account illuminates this viewpoint well:

There are about 40 universities and institutes which offers a teacher's qualification. We are the largest – the national university. Others are private institutions. We need to have one general standard for all these institutions. Otherwise, while we teach pedagogy here, the private institutions teach something else over there. In addition, all entrants do not have the same standards. We require certain standards from our graduates but we do not know what private institutes demand. Therefore, we need a common standard for both state and private institutions. This way we will be able to assure quality throughout (SA22).

As seen above, on one hand, the university finds it hard to trust the quality offered by private institutions, but on the other hand, it felt superior and experienced in the area. In other words, State University Central is aware of the responsibility that it bears. The process of setting standards has resulted in improving the content of programmes and courses. For example, SA22 pointed out that

With the introduction of standards for graduates, the curriculum was changed to some extent. It required us to change from having too much academic character

to a more teacher-oriented focus. As a result we made a number of changes in curricula across the board.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the case study and analysis of three state universities, State University West, State University East and State University Central, in relation to the research questions. This multiple case study provided an in-depth understanding of the changes, in particular complex issues related to the supply of programmes in these universities.

The findings of these case analyses demonstrate that the major changes at these universities were in three aspects: university autonomy, competition, and consumers. These aspects were directly connected to the university offerings in the sense that the changes were reflected in the curricular changes. Consequently, curricular changes were examined in terms of the responsiveness of curricular provision to the market. Curricular responsiveness was mainly evidenced in terms of introducing new courses to accommodate the new and emerging needs of the nation. In some cases, as with State University West, the university kept its traditional specialised courses even in the circumstances of low demand, while in other cases, as in State University Central, the university decided to withdraw some subjects for economic reasons. The case study showed that all three universities have greatly experienced a problem of content overlapping in their courses offered at different schools.

State University West was found to be the most market-driven university in comparison with other two universities. This was the university that has embraced the market with enthusiasm.

It has also been found that the responsiveness of State University East to the market was slow, and it seemed to rely on reputation more than on the market. In fact, the responsiveness varied depending on the school of specialisation. It was evident that a majority of the respondents from State University East was not satisfied with the development of the university despite their enthusiastic struggle. It was also noticeable that State University East has gone through evolutionary stages in curricular changes. In the early transition, the university extensively cooperated with international organisations to adapt its programmes to the new society. The later stage is characterised by consolidation issues, and student choice enhancement.

State University Central was found to be slow in implementing state policy on credit introduction compared with other two universities. As with the majority of respondents in other case studies, the respondents from the State University Central were extremely critical of private competitors.

There is a significant presence of market elements in these universities but some such as marketing and student choice of product are immature and still in transition. It has also been revealed that despite the limited funding from the state, these universities are still under significant state control through governance and curriculum content. The state also restricts admissions through a quota, and attempts to supervise the consumer demand.

All respondents were of the same opinion that the improvement in competitiveness and quality depends greatly on investment in the sector as a whole. The following brief statement summarised this viewpoint for all the administrators interviewed:

Today Mongolian higher education fails in quality due to the failure of financial support (SA20).

CHAPTER 6 INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE TWO: THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY CASE STUDIES

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sheds light on the changes, particularly on the issue of curricular provision by private universities in the market context. The findings in this chapter represent two case studies: Private University South, the fourth case study and Private University North, the fifth case study. The chapter investigates the reactions and responses of administrators from these private universities, ten from Private University South and seven from Private University North, along with the document reviews of the prospectus, promotional documents, newspapers and the universities' websites to get an in-depth analysis of the changes, in particular those in the supply of programmes. The case studies were looked at in the light of the previous three case studies, from which following topics were identified: university context, consumers, competition and changes in curricular provision.

6.2 Case Study 4: Private University South

6.2.1 University context

Private University South is among the pioneering private HEIs in Mongolia. According to SA30, in the early 1990s the university started functioning with fewer than fifty students and four teachers in temporary rented rooms, similar to many other private institutions. But despite being established less than 20 years ago, the university has expanded considerably in all areas. Within this short period of time, it has grown to its current large size with a student population of 7000 and 300 teaching staff spread out in ten extensive premises, three dormitories and other comfortable facilities such as libraries and sports halls. The university now has 14 schools offering a number of fields of study at undergraduate level, as well as master's and doctoral programmes. When it started, it offered only law, as this field was the most popular among common people, and it could draw more prospective students. However, since its establishment the university has expanded its offerings to other social science areas and the humanities.

Private University South is very ambitious in its aspirations. The most distinguishing characteristic of the university is to become a leading institution in the study of national history and culture, and it therefore, set up a centre and continues to initiate many activities around the country. The university makes every attempt to make students aware of this

intention through the curricula they provide and through all other student social activities.

The following reaction illuminates this:

If this law title was known in the 13th century, we honour this title with our academic institution in the 21st century. As long as our institution becomes well-known, the name of our great leader's law becomes more renowned... There have been achievements, but there is so much work still to be done to expand our reputation and image (SA30).

What is more, this university also aspires to produce qualified professionals for both international and national labour markets as it has recently been licensed as an international university. It has worked hard in a number of ways in order to achieve this goal. The most significant achievement is that the university has been rapidly expanding its international cooperation, and has set up joint schools and twinning programmes with foreign universities. In addition, it has already enriched the composition of the academic staff with international members. This is the only private university where one institute has all courses instructed in English owing to its international staff.

Another prominent characteristic of this university is in its marketing. Promotion has become its main marketing strategy and to the university mass media was seen as the most efficient tool for its advertisement. One of the administrators pointed out that

The university actively got engaged with the media since its establishment, as its goal was to promote this young institute. ...Our Rector worships the media. As a result of all the many promotional activities, the outcome is this big university that he founded (SA37).

The marketing activities are central to the university and will be further examined in this section.

Private University South is very different from state universities and many other private HEIs in the sense that its environment and the whole atmosphere of the university was felt by the researcher to be homely, friendly and comfortable. The university website posted a slogan saying 'Private University South is my home and my country'. SA30 emphasised 'We treat our students just like our children. ..We know every one of them'.

In terms of management, Private University South is led by a founder and owner. The university also operates under the university board that comprises of 20 representatives in accordance with the Education Law. SA34 pointed out, 'The specific advantage of our university is that it is very efficient in making decisions'. Others supported this saying decisions on teaching and new subjects are made very fast.

However, achieving within such a short time the level of success where the university is now was not a straight path. As the above respondent recalled, social attitudes in earlier times towards private HEIs were not supportive at all. People used to call them 'cellar or basement schools' and disparage them. But the time has changed and as SA30 said

They cannot belittle us now. Even members of parliament stopped disparaging us. We have invested billions in the education sector of Mongolia. We have created many work places. We are paying the social and health insurances of all employees; we are paying tax and income tax. We are contributing a lot in the upbringing of our people.

6.2.2 Consumers

Private University South places great importance to consumers of all types: it specifically targets to attract students from all areas of the country including city and rural areas. This mission has been successful and has expanded the student population by 175 times since the establishment of the university. There were no other state and private HEIs like this university which prioritise consumers' satisfaction as highly as they did. SA38 stressed

The most important thing is to work with your current students during their study period so that they have an excellent experience of studying here. So we carry out all types of activities in order to meet current students' satisfaction. Unlike here student satisfaction is left behind at state universities.

All ten interviewees addressed the issue of student satisfaction from various perspectives, but the most significant one was the method of communication with existing, prospective, and graduating students, and with the public in general. The aim of communication is to reach all its consumers in order to build up a close relationship and enhance its reputation. Based on evidence from the documents and interview responses, it was clear that Private University South looked at consumers' satisfaction from the perspectives of supply of programmes, social consciousness, and employment opportunity.

In regard to programmes, the choice and supply are not wide in comparison with state universities, but it has wider choice than the rest of the private HEIs in providing over 40 fields of study in social sciences and the humanities. Recently it has expanded into technological fields in cooperation with a Korean university. Despite its limited choice in courses and subjects, the university tries its best to accommodate students' decisions by providing them with an opportunity to study their chosen elective subject. The following statement demonstrates this:

There are electives. For example, if there are students who want to learn more business English, then we delegate a teacher to them. A class is formed for that subject. ...even if there are only five students (SA34).

Unlike the above, in state universities it is impossible to offer a course for five people because it is considered to be uneconomical.

The university places a high priority on developing the social consciousness of their students, and integrates this in a special curriculum for them to earn a credit. Almost all respondents referred to this specific curriculum and they considered it to be a contribution to the development of citizens. The following extract provides an insight into this:

Our university offers a complex education curriculum. Students not only acquire academic knowledge at the university, but they should also acquire skills to live in harmony in society. These are ethics and cultural education, and self-development skills such as team working and sports (SA32).

Another respondent (SA35) stated, 'Since our establishment we set an aim to encourage students to develop and express themselves as independent and responsible individuals. We also provide an opportunity for each to develop his talents in addition to studying'. All interviewees thought learning these skills in addition to academic study was not a burden to students, but rather an enhancement to the employability of graduates. The following conversation with an interviewee illustrates their viewpoint:

SA35: At work, our graduates have better skills in communication and manner of approach than anybody from other institutions. They are socially active and express themselves well, and take part in any activities – good team workers. They are creative.

Interviewer: How do you know that your graduates are better than anybody in team working and communication?

SA35: From employers. There are many of our graduates in the legal sector. We often communicate with employers and they say 'The graduates from Private University South are very different from those of other institutions'.

The university maintains a very close relationship with graduates and has a working alumni association unlike all other HEIs in the country. The respondents always referred to the graduates positively in conversation implying that definitely they are in good relationships with them in every aspect. SA31 described:

Our alumni works hard to get information from graduates. After having worked in a team for four years, they keep contact with each other well and their feedback is always very good. Next year we will celebrate the 10000 graduates' day.

He continued that schools will run retraining and upgrading courses for unemployed graduates in the future after finding out what skills they lack. This was seen as the beginning of another programme in life-long learning for their graduates. In addition, the university sees graduates as a resource and utilises them well, inviting graduates – prosecutors or judges for instance - to lecture to current students. This motivates and inspires current students a great deal. It boasted of having 88 percent of graduates employed in the last year.

According to two respondents, the university re- invests in students a great deal. One respondent (SA38) declared, 'Our university sends children of ordinary backgrounds to study abroad when in Mongolia those usually sent abroad are children of people with senior positions'. What is more one administrator (SA30) explained 'We cannot increase tuition fees too much, as no one would then be able to enter HEIs. We need to consider the money in peoples' pockets so it cannot be more than the pocket can hold'. These statements implied that the university also targets prospective students from poorer families.

In relation to the issue of the quality of entrants which was one of the main issues of other universities, the respondents seemed to be satisfied with the situation. They compared entrants to other small private institutions with their own and considered themselves higher than theirs. However, the situation is different when compared to state universities. One respondent's reaction illuminated this situation well:

Those who failed to pass the cut-off score at the X school of the national university come to us to study. That is to our advantage (SA33).

Another echoed, 'Most entrants from the city were those who did not pass the state university entrance level' (SA37). This supported the assumption spread among the public that private HE could be a second option for people. Nonetheless, the university is taking over the higher education market with confidence.

6.2.3 Competition

Private University South is unique in positioning itself in the higher education market and promoting its activities to the public in comparison with other case universities, including both state and private ones. Since its inception, marketing (according to SA38) has played a high role in the university's promotion, and it has worked hard to build up a positive image and a good reputation in society. As a result of this efficient marketing strategy it has emerged as the largest private university, almost equal to a state university. Though the university did not produce any specific policy documents such as a Master Plan or Strategic Plan, it has been working towards the realisation of the state policy on improving quality and its

competitiveness. The university mission has a double agenda. First, it aims to become a leading university in national history and culture in the country. The second long term goal is to become a university of Central Asia. In order to achieve this ambitious mission, the university has been implementing a number of expansive promotional and competitive activities in three areas: students, teaching and teaching staff, and curricular content. These are carried out through specific marketing strategies: word of mouth, mass media and social activities within the university. Freedom of information for customers such as information on curricular provision, curricular content, tuition fees and other matters have all been part of promotional activities aimed at attracting prospective students. Nine out of ten respondents focused on this issue to some extent and this indicated how important the promotion is to the university. It was also interesting to note that Private University South has a Marketing Department in its structure, which distinguishes it from many other HEIs in the country.

First, in regard to students, Private University South believed that the image of the university is dependent on its students and graduates. Five respondents stressed this, and one even specified:

The market in the country is small, therefore word of mouth is very important. This is the most specific type of marketing because it does not only mean advertising. Word spread by a student is important because it will spread opinion about your university's reputation (SA38).

He continued, 'If we satisfy students' interest well, they will spread the good word. If parents are pleased they will send the next child. It is common for our university to have siblings, or all the children from a single family, or relatives of extended families. This is because we were able to reach every student and they were extremely satisfied'. Reputation by word of mouth is considered to be an important 'social source' of information (Bonnema and Waldt, 2008) because essential details about a university come from the existing sources, current students in this case. Reputation earned through word of mouth was also revealed in the context of Syrian private higher education (Al-Fattal, 2010). It could be especially efficient in a small market like that of Mongolia where all HEIs are only in the city and all compete within a small population.

Marketing in regard to students was also focused on the media. The university has media representatives and invests in promotional programmes and news to such an extent that some state universities and private institutions thought it too excessive. But the respondents would not agree with this standpoint and thought the university really benefited from it. One respondent described:

Our university pays great attention to its media. The university expansion, its recognition by the people of Mongolia and its image growth among international institutions are all thanks to the media promotion. First we focus on the university policy, its vision and mission; second we aim to present the face of our students. We have not only home students but also international students: from Azerbaijan, Russia, China and Turkey. Our main purpose is to prepare our students for the society they live in (SA37).

The above respondent admitted that owing to the radio promotional programmes, even the composition of the student population has changed: now there are more students from rural areas. The university is very competitive in attracting rural students because it offers low-price dormitories. What is more, the university offers fields such as law, economics and accounting that are favoured by rural students, because those qualified in these fields are believed to find jobs easily and their qualifications are effortlessly convertible. Respondents also stated that the university delivers information efficiently to its targeted audience about all the programmes they offer. SA35 boasted:

We are very different from other institutions in reaching people. We are very good at disseminating information. We have our own university TV station, FM radio station, and Private University South newsletter. Also we are the only one which organises an Open Promotional Day. There we promote all fields of study we offer. We send teachers to rural areas to promote our university. In addition, we have student ambassadors who are selected through competition, and they run display counters, visit secondary schools, and work in their home places during holidays.

Another respondent (SA34) substantiated the fact that the schools prepare professional descriptions of all subjects, including information about the details of what they will be studying and where opportunities for work are after graduation. When teachers visit rural areas, they take information with them. These descriptions show how promotional activities carry the whole range of information about the university and its supply of programmes, besides giving an idea of life at the university. The researcher attended the Promotional Open Day during fieldwork and was impressed with all the exhibitions created by students. It was an event that one rarely sees in the country: all schools advertised and displayed their programmes and courses in a very attractive way using high technology. Every year after this Promotional Open Day the university displayed for three months all the information about curricular provision they offered in an exhibition on the campus. Anyone interested is able to find out things they want to know by visiting this exhibition, and there is always someone ready answer visitors' questions. In addition, all 14 schools published brochures and large colourful leaflets about their programmes, handed out to those who were interested.

As SA38 stressed, marketing at the university focuses more on social activities for students.

He continued:

Every year we emphasise one topic. We organise a competition for best speaker' among graduating secondary school children, and those who won the first three places were awarded study at our university. This year we organised X Show and winners from this show - 10 students - are being sent abroad to continue their study. This kind of marketing works really well. Everything is geared to students at our university.

Owing to the fact the university had expanded its international cooperation, they arranged to send the winning students from this show to the foreign Asian universities they cooperate with, free of tuition fees and by paying their travel expenses and some other costs.

Second, in terms of teaching and teaching staff, Private University South places much importance on the teachers. Despite a majority of their teachers being quite young, the university recruits former high-ranking officials such as former ministers, judges, retired professionals, and academics to give lectures to students. SA30 was proud to say that the university had 'famous lawyers' in the past. This policy can be seen as a strategy to heighten the university reputation as well as to attract prospective students. Even currently working officials, academics from state universities, or well-known people in their fields, are recruited as part-time teachers, allowing them to keep their main positions or jobs. As one administrator (SA31) stated, 'Teachers' skills are an inseparable part of academic quality'. Therefore the university pays considerable attention to the quality of the programmes by recruiting such experienced people. In addition, the university is the only university to have more international academic staff than any other HEI in the country. However, there is a problem in that some of the international staff work only part-time. This leads to lack of communication, on the part of these teachers, with students when they need help. This was noticed during a fieldwork visit to the university.

Otherwise this university is very supportive of young teachers, and organises a number of training schemes for them. The following statement by SA31 illuminates this insight:

We organise training for our teachers in order to update them in modern trends in their fields and the latest changes in legislation. We provide a two-week induction course for new and young teachers to introduce them to the university code of ethics, evaluation regulations, what academic programmes we offer, what our university is. We also send our teachers abroad on exchange programmes to improve their language skills.

In fact, this policy distinguishes it from other state and private HEIs especially because the issue of teacher education on the job has been abandoned in Mongolia since the 1990s.

Finally, having emerged as a new institution, the Private University South has gone through stages of development in its curricular content. In the earlier stages, those who were assigned to develop the curriculum in their own subjects studied the curriculum of other institutions, and practically copied them. Three respondents (SA32, 33 and 35) admitted it, but later said they changed the first version and improved it further as they gained confidence in their subject areas. The following account exemplifies this approach:

We first offered tourism management in 2000. The basis for the content of the curriculum was the tourism course of the State University East State and State University Central State Universities plus two other private institutions. This meant we studied four institutions and adapted the content of their courses to fit our university specifics. However we made changes to it in the following years to follow the market needs (SA32).

In fact, the university took the initiative in improving and introducing a standard in this area after they successfully took over the market. The university has already taken the lead in this sector and they are proud that they 'do not imitate competitors, but try to determine its direction of development' (SA32). This respondent continued, 'We joined a project to develop the standard for the tourism curriculum. The purpose of this is to standardise the curriculum because institutions offering this field do not have common ground for teaching. It is necessary to standardise what subjects and courses should be compulsory, and what content should be covered for tourism management'. Of 57 institutions which offered this field, only 40 have survived so far as a result of the attestation process by the ministry.

What is more, in recent years Private University South has aimed at improvement of quality of teaching, and has already taken first steps towards accreditation of its programmes both at national and international levels. As the case study revealed above, this university, like other state universities studied, saw quality in terms of teaching and teaching staff, existing students and graduates, and the learning environment. Though it is one of the few private institutions with only one programme being accredited, it has already become a member of the Asia Pacific Quality Network and is in the preparatory stages for ACBSP accreditation.

However, one out of ten respondents referred to the overall condition of the private higher education market and stressed that the freedom of entrance for new providers is limited due to financial requirements:

Now it is really hard to establish a new institute. Not only is there no site, plus there is also an incredibly high cost for constructing a building. Not everyone would be able to invest in it. In the last four years, the ministry permitted possibly one or two institutions to set up. We were lucky to start in the good old days (SA30).

6.2.4 Curricular provision

As a newly founded institution Private University South has been exploiting various ways to expand and diversify its delivery of programmes and courses to consumers. Having started with only one subject, law, the university responded to market demand and the popularity of the field at that time. The main reason was that this subject was thought to be associated with getting a decent job, and therefore was sought after by people. Although recently the government felt this subject to be oversupplied in the country and therefore has a policy to reduce the entrants' number for this particular field, the popularity of this subject remains high and the university has a large law school within its structure. SA35 highlighted:

Law is a transferable skill. It is not necessary to work only in the legal sector. A person specialised in law can work as a legal advisor for a company, or personal assistant, human resource manager, or civil servant in a governor's office. This is a very transferable and convertible profession. A person can even run his private business.

Over time, with the change in demand and in popularity of fields and courses, the university moved to include other specialisations in social sciences and the humanities, as mentioned earlier. It has broadened student choice by twinning programmes in cooperation with international institutions. Eight out of ten interviewees referred to the issue of curricular provision and addressed it from various angles. The respondents confirmed that both the central management and the rector are key in making decisions on curricular provision. Three respondents shared this view as an example here illustrates:

There is an office for academic affairs and policy coordination of the university headed by the director. There is also the vice-rector responsible for academic programmes. These two people are in power of making decision to open or eliminate subjects and courses. This is not in my own power. ...it was decided that X field should be offered at our school – that is what the rector explained it in the meeting (SA33)

The above statement implied that decisions relevant to programmes at this university tend to be a top-down process, different from state universities where it is generally considered to be a bottom-up process. It was also interesting to note that the university openly declares that it is a for-profit university unlike many other private institutions. One respondent responded to the question as to what the main reason was in deciding to introduce this new subject as follows:

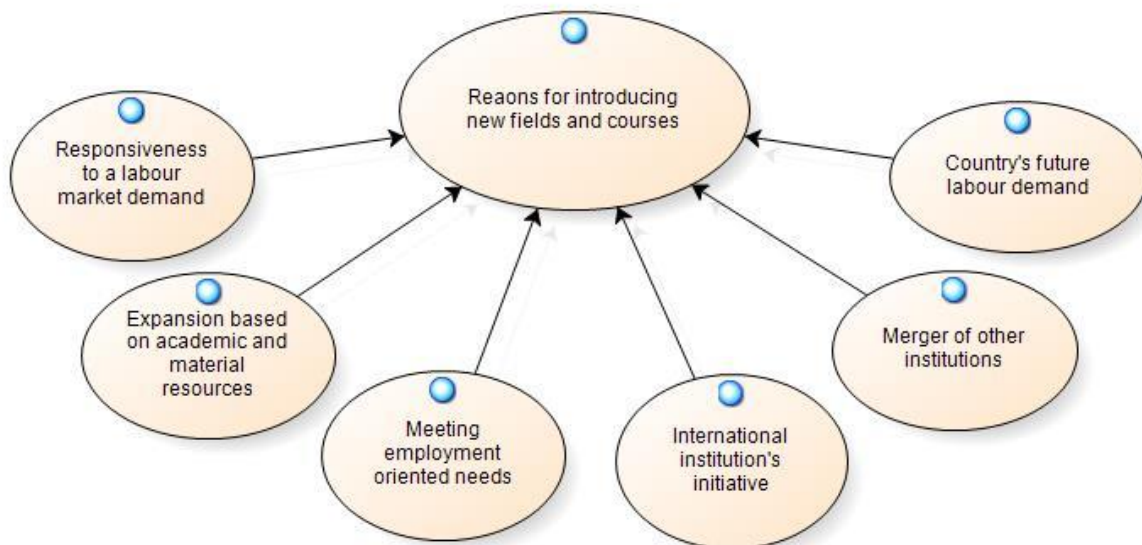
Obviously, we are a private organisation. Even though education is considered to be not for profit, the end purpose is to gain a profit. Certainly we desire to open a new field that attracts more students. Job employment with X field looks good, as there is the need in the market (SA34).

Although the main purpose of expanding its offers could be profit, Private University South was well aware of its social responsibility and was even critical towards state universities in this regard. One administrator (SA38) stated, 'State universities lost their sense of social responsibility. Even though people still maintain the attitude that state universities are better to study in, in reality their quality has deteriorated considerably. Their leaders can be changed easily.' Generally there have been changes in the types of programmes and courses as a result of the development of the university, one administrator (SA31) stated. He explained that changes occurred because first, the university could offer other new courses by taking advantage of its international staff; second, the mission of producing competitive graduates with skills and capabilities of working at national level and in the world labour market required the university to reconsider its curricular content; and lastly, in line with the university vision, it aims to bring the university up to international standards. All these policies were reflected in the content of the whole range of programmes offered at the university. In particular, the university has been moving from a purely theoretical teaching method to a teaching format that combines theory and practice. The following statement illustrates this:

We set up a Law Clinic Centre at our school so that students are provided with an opportunity to serve citizens with legal advice free of charge. It helps them to apply the laws and legal provisions in life (SA35).

Based on the respondents' reactions and the documents reviewed, the curricular provision at the university was examined mainly in terms of introduction of new fields in relation to the reasons for establishing them. The responses to this question provided the following drivers presented in Figure 6-1

Figure 6-1



The reasons are examined in the order presented in in Figure 6-1. Since its foundation Private University South has been quick to respond to labour market demand. Several respondents considered this as the most important criterion for the university. They thought requests from organisations, graduates' advice and market study form the basis for determining the labour market. Based on the interviews it appears that the university targets general types of jobs for people, and tries to enhance graduates' competitiveness in targeting work places. An extract from one interview exemplifies how the university targets work places in introducing a new course:

We made changes in the curriculum because we introduced Hotel Management to follow market needs. We renewed the whole curriculum taking into account the needs of the tourism market at the time. During this change we merged some courses, and divided up others. After having the experience of offering this field one learns what is better for the future employment of our graduates (SA32).

Another method of introducing a new subject is to create additional offerings using the existing academic and material resources. This way the university expands its programme. For example, one respondent explained:

We first offered tourism management. Two years later we expanded this field with more courses: hospitality management, foreign language and tourism, and history and tourism (SA32).

Another administrator (SA34) came up with the same reasoning for a new subject he proposed to her university:

I proposed this new field because we already have graduates in customs for two years. This means we have the academic base for expanding it to X.

In addition, when the university used its existing resources to expand the offers, it did not seek a niche to differentiate itself from competitors in the sector, whereas in the previous two cases State University West and State University Central searched and found a niche in the existing market.

Private University South was distinguished and specific from other private HEIs in the sense that it developed a comprehensive self-development curriculum for students. In order to align with the university mission, this programme aims to develop the skills and appropriate manners required in a work place. Students earn 0.5 credits per semester for this programme by implementing projects on various topics. SA31 described this:

Graduates from our university need to have most commonly required skills to work in any labour market. They need to learn how to work in a team, how to express themselves in their mother tongue as well as in a required foreign language, and they need to grow as a principled, responsible, ethical and punctual individual who can handle personal relations in any situation. We consider these as the main requirements for an individual to work and live in a modern and globalised world.

All interviewees were content with this institution's specific programme that aimed at increasing the competitive work skills of students for future employment, and were proud of the results mentioned earlier. In addition, in order to make graduates more employable and to construct programmes for the benefit of graduates, the university takes measures to accommodate these future employment needs. For example, an administrator (SA33) explained why they decided to make changes in the title of the course:

We proposed to merge Japanese and the study of Japan with Japanese translation to make it Japanese Translation and the study of Japan. There are not many work places in the country for this field of the study of Japan alone. The market needs more translators of the Japanese language rather than students of the study of Japan. It is therefore beneficial for graduates to acquire skills more essential to the market. Our graduates said that they could not work as translators because the diploma does not state that they were also qualified in translation.

Private University South also attempts to forecast future labour demands of the country and tries to produce specialists in advance of the market. An interviewee said that 'X is going to be introduced in cooperation with a Korean university. This is a joint programme – the first two years are studied in Mongolia and the third and fourth years are spent at Y university' (SA31). One administrator (SA30) was confident that the country would have manpower in X by the time it needs specialists at home. He continued:

Students will study for two years here in Mongolia and then go to a Korean university where there is an industry. After graduation they will work there in accordance with the contract.

In fact the above policy is closely connected to the next reason for expanding the supply of programmes at the university. That is to open new subjects with the support of foreign institutions. The university had already established schools with the investment of Japanese, Korean and Chinese organisations. These schools offer fields of studies in the area of those countries. This is quite different from being imposed by international funding organisations as we discussed in chapter 1. In this case, the university identifies its capacity and makes a decision for itself. This can be assumed from the following statement:

We receive a lot of proposals from international institutions, and we cooperate with them if we think they are agreeable. Just yesterday, Akita University of Japan proposed that they should work with us in the field of medicine and open a branch at our university (SA30).

Furthermore, new provision of fields emerged as a result of the merger of other private institutions with Private University South. Six private schools were merged with this university, which continued the fields these schools were offering in the market. One administrator commented on how this merger affected her university:

These six institutes came to merge with us because they could not survive the market competition. Some failed to pass the attestation, some had financial difficulties. Students from these institutions regarded as promising were allowed to transfer to us (SA31).

It should be noted that data on the number of degrees awarded in different fields was unavailable from sources such as documents and the website. Therefore, it was impossible to look into the changes of provision over a number of years.

6.2.5 Autonomy

As a private institution, Private University South is in full power to decide on its governance, management, use of resources and finance including setting the tuition fees. The tuition fees at Private University South are not as high as expected of private HEIs. SA38 said:

Though we are not dependent on the tuition fee cap we do not ask much for tuition. Students pay less as their years of study go up.

It was felt that institutional autonomy seemed to be natural to the respondents as none of the respondents specifically addressed this issue except for the curriculum content. Three respondents said that the university is required to receive licensing to introduce new subjects, and it also needs to follow the general framework for bachelor programmes by the

ministry. None felt that there is state pressure on the university, instead they even supported the state policy on admission quota. SA38 stated that his university functions within the legal framework provided by the state.

Only one respondent (SA31) was critical of the state policy saying that politics are making the education policy discontinuous. He complained, 'According to the Education Master Plan, English language was announced to be the second most important language. As a result, graduates' diplomas were printed in Mongolian and English, but from last year it was said diplomas need to be printed in Cyrillic and Mongolian Old Script. It is also said if universities want, they can print graduates' diplomas in English as a second version. Who would want to waste money?'

On the contrary, institutional autonomy might be of importance to some administrators in terms of internal autonomy. All the schools within the university are managed by the central administration in terms of resources, finance and supply of programmes and content. One administrator explained:

The structure of our university is rather different in comparison to other state and private institutions. For example, the dean is responsible for all organisational administrative work. In state institutions, deans are at the centre of research (SA34).

The top-down management could be seen in decisions on curricular provision as three respondents (SA34, 33 and 37) pointed out. For example, a recently introduced new subject was based on the academic resources of the existing school, but was transferred to be offered by another school following the rector's decision. This decision then raised an issue at the second school which then had to prepare for teaching this new field. Such an action demonstrated the fact that curricular provision at the university is a decision of central management solely. What is more there is not much coordination on the part of central management with the parent school which might have offered that subject. This also could be confirmation of the ministry's assumption addressed in chapter 5, that in Mongolia private institutions are led by a founder-leader, in comparison with large state universities which need to be led by a whole team.

6.3 Case Study 5: Private University North

6.3.1 University context

Private University North was one of the first private institutions in the country. According to the university's website, it was launched in a rented building in the early 1990s, with over

180 students and seven teachers. Established as a foreign language institute, it was at that time offering five languages. The university moved to its own building the following year and began to expand its programmes to other social science areas such as law and economics, similar to many other HEIs of that period. Although not as expansive as was Private University South, the university has now grown to a point where around 90 teachers deliver an education service to over 2200 students (ministry's statistics; 2011-2012). Its overall mission is to turn out professionals with convertible skills that meet the country's economic and social needs. At undergraduate level three schools offer fields in the main areas: languages, law and economics and business; and at postgraduate level there is provision for master's and doctoral students.

As one administrator (SA40) pointed out, the peak of the university's development came in the period 2008-2011 when its facilities were increased: three new large complexes were built, and online library services were set up. The university still however lacks dormitories for rural students, and is therefore restricted from promoting in rural areas. But the university courses are still in high demand despite the government's belief to the contrary, as another administrator (SA46) said:

Though it is said that lawyers and economists are in excess in the market, there is still a demand for these people. Engineers and mining specialists are not needed in every organisation. If there are 20000 organisations, I am sure all need accountants. And these subjects are important for individuals to study just for their own benefit.

One of the specifics of the university was reliance on reputation. Despite its status of being a private institution, the university has a strong faith in reputation rather than in promotion and marketing. But almost all seven respondents felt the necessity for greater promotion. I noticed that the university did promote itself as the best private university during the Education Fair of HEIs, offering an inviting clean and comfortable environment in which to study. I found that to be the case during field visits.

Private University North was founded by a well-known politician, and consists of a governing body with management led by a rector. The founder is still the key person in decision-making even though she has no formal position in the university's administration. In alignment with the government's intention of attracting young specialists from abroad, the university has recently begun a management change by appointing young people who were educated abroad to important administrative positions.

6.3.2 Consumers

Private University North regards its current and graduating students, together with their parents, as the main consumers, and maintains a close relationship with them, like Private University South in case study four. One administrator (SA42) emphasised, 'a university's purpose is not only to transmit knowledge. It is important we pay attention to the development of a good human being. We therefore cooperate closely with parents a great deal. There is a class tutor'. However, with the change of the management, young administrators seem to hold a different view as one respondent stated:

A student needs to learn to be independent. In our case, there is a lot of participation on the part of teachers. ... Teachers do constant face-to-face interaction in order to check everything. This may be causing students to grow dependent. So we now aim to balance this attitude and try to develop the skills for independence (SA45).

Graduates from the university are regarded as an important resource and the respondents were proud of them. SA42 explained that the university maintains a database of all graduates and keeps contact with graduates on a regular basis. This helps current students to find internships in their respective fields. Another (SA41) boasted, 'Our graduates are very competent in their areas. We produce highly qualified people'. The university features photos of well-known graduates and their current positions on the front page of the website.

Here consumer freedom at Private University North was looked at from the perspective of freedom of choice of both a provider and a subject, and freedom of information. Based on the respondents' accounts, from the perspective of choice of a provider, it appeared that they thought the university did not try to put pressure on a prospective student to choose this university. Four respondents compared the university with other private HEIs in the way it provided freedom of choice of a provider. They were critical of much advertisement by some private institutes, and their unfair treatment of entrants. The following extract show their attitude towards promotion:

One specific aspect of our university is that we do not advertise too much. We are already recognised by people and they therefore, select us based on our reputation. Some private institutes keep running ads non-stop, even a month after the academic year has started. This way they keep enrolling students (SA46).

Another (SA43) stated that they do not want to give a false impression or anything like that by too much promotion: 'People visit and see our university with their own eyes. So it is up to them if they decide to choose us or not'. SA45 clearly pointed out that Private University North holds the historical tradition that a student himself chooses his place of study. These comments suggest the administration was not so supportive and enthusiastic about

promotion despite their eagerness to attract more students. In recent years, the student population has gone down in numbers a long way, and it failed to recruit the quota permitted by the ministry. The university analysed the decrease and came up with its own conclusions. According to the interviewees, key reasons were that there was a major doubling in tuition fees, plus a fall in birth rate affecting those years, in addition to the lack of promotion and the government admission quota, while some language subjects such as Japanese and Korean were less popular, and the lack of dormitories for students from rural areas meant they were not attracted. But here we will focus only on the reasons relevant to curricular provision.

Students at the university are provided with a choice in 12 fields of study in social sciences and the humanities. These, however, are the fields regarded by the government as extra to market needs. As a result the ministry's policy was to reduce the number of entrants in these fields as discussed in chapters 1 and 4. One interviewee complained:

This year we proposed to admit 90 entrants in each discipline of law and economics but the ministry reduced the number to 60. I mean 90 people in each class, two classes giving a total of 180. Every year, the ministry reduces the number we propose (SA43).

This was an example of the government's coordination of the numbers of specialists supplying the country's needs. However, the interviewee and all other administrators from the university did not support this policy as they believed it limited consumers' freedom of choice. One administrator expressed his strong disagreement:

I don't agree with it. I am against it. Why can't we recruit 200 poor quality students if they want to, but of those let 20 good ones complete. The ministry is reducing the number of admissions in social sciences year by year. I do not think this is right. If somebody wants to study that subject why must we say 'no?' (SA46).

Moreover, the respondents stated that the demand in some supposedly excessive fields is still high. SA43 said, 'Our university offers law both as full time and part time studies, but all law classes are filled up first'. One administrator felt that a consumer should have the freedom to choose his area of interest for study rather than being restricted by the government:

The more professionals in the country the better the competition. It is up to the graduates what jobs they get. Capable ones will manage to find work in their specific areas, and the less well qualified ones are left to do the shop assistant's work (SA46).

Another administrator held a different view – why choices at the university are limited. He said:

We are not able to let students choose their teachers and subjects as they do at State University West. We have a class system. Students can then choose one subject for specialisation from those suggested few electives (SA42).

The latest development in providing choices for potential students was a 2+2 joint programme with a foreign university. The university advertised this opportunity on its website's promotional programme.

Generally, the respondents recognised that consumers choose Private University North as a second option, which was the same case with Private University South. SA41 said, 'If someone passes the cut-off score at a state institution, she prefers to study there rather than here. If they cannot pass the cut-off score they come to us. We are the best amongst private institutions'. This interviewee was the only one who was critical of other private institutes for their violation of consumer choice of a provider by forcing an entrant to stay with them. According to his account, some small private HEIs keep hold of all official personal documents of a potential student and do not return these upon the student's request if he wants to join another institution.

Fair treatment and respect for consumers as shown by Private University North was highly valued by all respondents. Unlike some small institutes, this university has a principle of providing information as accurately as possible in its promotion. Freedom of information about curricular provision, tuition fees, and scholarships is promoted by the university during the Education Fair, on its website, on the occasional TV programme, and in newspaper advertisements. Their promotional leaflet states clearly that the university does not have dormitories for those from rural areas. On the other hand, it was noticed that the university provides only general information on teaching capacity and curricular provision on its website, and it was not as comprehensive as State University East and State University West.

6.3.3 Competition

Private University North was largely relying on its reputation and took it for granted in attracting prospective students. All seven respondents referred to this being its main strategy in competing with other private HEIs. One administrator said:

If you look at other private institutions, they send their teachers to rural areas assigned with the task of enrolling at least five students. In comparison with them, we use our reputation. If people from rural areas come to us and want to study here, we will enrol them as long as their scores meet the requirements (SA46).

According to the interviewees' responses, the claim to a high reputation was seen in five dimensions: being the first private university in the country (SA41, 40), having a well-known politician as a founder (SA40, 42 and 43), an inviting and comfortable learning environment (SA40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45), employing full-time teachers unlike many other private institutions (SA43 44, 45 and 46), and offering extensive English courses for students in all fields of study for three years (SA41, 44, 45 and 46). As the first three were addressed earlier to some extent, the last two dimensions are now examined.

First, in terms of teaching capacity, the university places an importance on recruiting full-time teachers, rather than having part-time staff: there was only one part-time teacher out of nearly 90 according to SA43. The importance of providing full-time teachers was seen in maintaining the quality of courses they offer. A respondent ranked teaching quality in her field at the university compared with other state and private HEIs:

In journalism, the first in rank could be State University East. Next is probably the University of the Humanities. But if we at Private University North are not the third, we are at least the fifth in rank of all 18 institutions offering journalism. I found out that there are institutions which do not even have full-time professional teachers, but only part-time teachers, which still offer this field of study. State University East has seven full-time teachers (not including part-time ones). But we have more full-time teachers than any other institutions (SA44).

He also described how students prefer to have full-time teachers:

This year, two students came to us wanting to be transferred. They explained that there are no full-time teachers at X with whom you could meet and discuss with after class. All are part-time teachers. We have a big advantage in this sense.

As maintaining full-time teachers requires investment, the university recently doubled the tuition fees which resulted in a decrease in entrants. Nonetheless, an administrator explained:

Our university does not advertise much. We usually promote only during the entrance period because we need it. The belief of the university is that people will come to us whether or not we advertise. Money for advertising should rather be invested in teachers' development and the students' learning environment (SA45).

The policy of attracting full-time teachers for the purpose of providing good quality courses works well at the university. They believe that the percentage of those who returned from overseas education is quite high. SA45 stated, 'The university welcomed me back when I returned after my PhD. The salary was higher than I expected. It is not only me, but more than 10 others from law and economics schools, returned to the university. It can stimulate your ambition to come back.'

According to SA45, the university is aiming to move its orientation to research in teaching, and it therefore began to focus on the development of research skills at bachelor level study. In order to achieve this goal, the university began to reduce the teaching load in order to provide teachers with more research time. This was an innovative approach for a private institution because, as has been recognised by all parties, to reduce the cost of human resources, private institutions load teachers with many hours of teaching to meet the needs of students.

Second, Private University North saw an advantage in providing more hours of English study for its consumers. The respondents were in agreement that English language skills add value to the employment opportunities of their graduates. SA41 emphasised that this was another policy which made the university different from other private institutes, in that it offered more English teaching: in the first year general English, in the second year business English, English for special purposes such as law, and economics. Another administrator echoed:

We specifically focus on mastering students' language skills even if they specialise in fields other than language. The reason for doing so is that this skill increases a chance of saleability of graduates in the market (SA44).

SA45 stated that they made a decision to introduce more English courses based on analyses of students' needs.

It was also interesting to note the general agreement among all seven respondents that in spite of relying solely on reputation, the university seemed unable to win the competition to attract more customers, even in some special areas that it offered. They used to believe that the university is distinguished from other private HEIs by this, but now felt it was essential to increase advertising and promotion of the university, and to construct a new dormitory for rural students. Though reputation might play a major role for state universities, it was a problem for a private institution. The following statement reflects one respondent's view:

I think sometimes if we had run promotions on TV at a regular time for three months we would have been able to recruit more students (SA45).

Another respondent said that in order to keep our status and to survive, we need promotion (SA44). However, the university does not have a person responsible for marketing or public relations, but these duties are shared among the teachers of journalism. Having this double load found to be quite difficult for them.

6.3.4 Changes in curricular provision

At the time when Private University North was founded, foreign languages were the most popular fields of study. The country had just opened up to the world and people began to have freedom to travel abroad and vice versa. Diplomatic relations were expanded, and international companies and organisations came into existence. As a result a number of private foreign language institutes emerged to meet this high demand and satisfy the broad interest of people: among them Private University North was the pioneer. Looking back at the history of the university, the interviews and the documents showed that its curricular provision fluctuated a great deal over past years. Amongst all other universities researched, this was the university which changed its academic programmes most often. One of the policy making administrators described it as follows:

Private institutions tended to open new fields of study and close old ones when they ceased to be taken up. Whatever gave you profit they rushed for it. If you look at the academic programme of Private University North, you will see such a pendulum that would look like an electrocardiogram. The diagram would illustrate how they were led by market demand (SA48).

Based on the responses, it is apparent that the central characteristics for closing some subjects and establishing new ones was very much connected with the popularity of these subjects in the market. For example, it was revealed that from 1991 to 2000, almost every year the university introduced new specialisations considered to be popular and sought after. During that time it made a shift to other fields of study in social sciences. The following extract illustrates the university's main policy:

Market demand coordinates our activities. Some years ago we used to offer X but now we do not offer it anymore. Instead, other languages have emerged following the demand in the market (SA40).

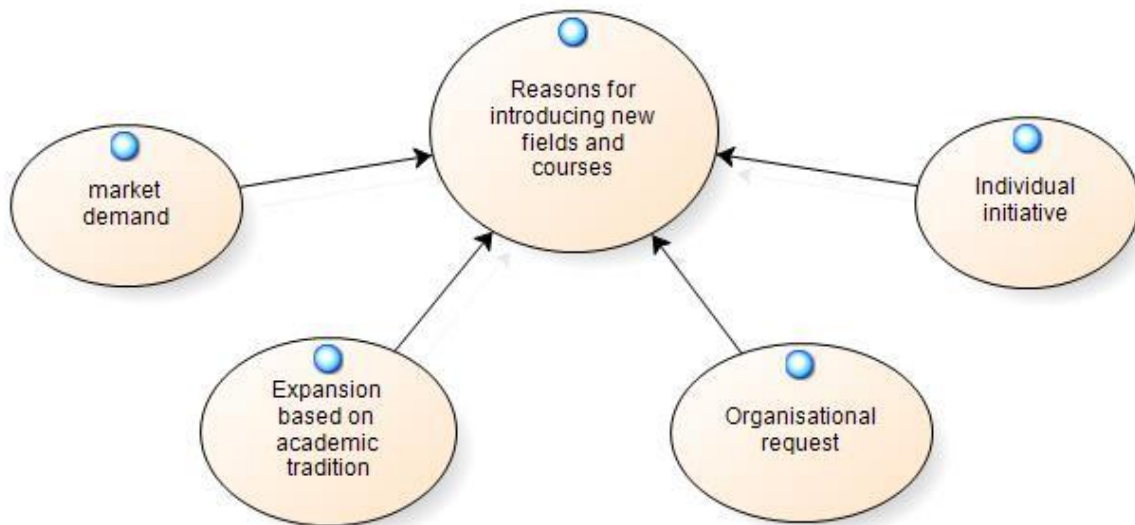
According to the responses of the interviewees, the term high demand was determined as consumers' interests including those of parents, students, employers and graduates, and observation of the market tendency among other HEIs (SA40 and 45).

Since 2000 it has widened student choice creating joint programmes with some international institutions, and respondents were proud of this expansion. The initiative to expand its provision is usually handled by the central management, and as a result decision on supply of programmes is a top-down process similar to Private University South. Although the main purpose of the expansion could be profit, none of the respondents openly admitted it. But this implication was made based on some respondents' reactions (SA40, 41 and 44): 'The

University is in the private business sector competing to attract more students,' and 'if it is financially worthwhile to continue to offer certain fields of study.'

The changes in curricular provision at the university was investigated in relation to the introduction of new fields and the closure of offerings. The reasons for introducing new fields were classified as represented in Figure 6-2:

Figure 6-2



The reasons for introducing new fields of were looked at in the order presented in Figure 6-2. The most important factor for the university which affected the introduction of new fields of study was market demand, on which seven interviewees agreed that in the majority of cases the market demand was a trigger for a new offer. The following statement illustrated this standpoint:

Generally the market tends to affect what we offer. When there is a demand and there is a base for it in the university, this is an opportunity for us (SA46).

At the same time the university tried to maintain its original academic tradition – language teaching and translation (SA42, 46). Despite the efforts of the university, the demand for some languages is going down, and in addition the government also maintains a policy to reduce the number of students specialising in these areas. The respondents held a view that knowledge of a language is no longer considered to be an independent profession by consumers, but as a skill that everybody needs to acquire (SA41, 43, 44 and 45).

Nonetheless, the interest in English is still very high, and therefore the university aims to equip its students with English skills to a competent level for the purpose of communication at work. For this reason it introduced English for special purposes in all fields, offered

throughout all the years of study. It was mentioned earlier that acquiring English was seen as a market requirement because the language began to dominate the market along with Chinese. SA44 posed a question:

Who would hire a journalist who does not know English? Who would report the Prime Minister's or the President's trips abroad?

Another administrator (SA45) concluded, 'We extended the hours of English teaching because it has already become the main requirement for all positions at work'. English was highly regarded by other case universities but the Private University North placed far higher emphasis on it. All these statements demonstrated the growing significance of English in the national market, and the fact that the teaching of English has already become an industry (Block et al, 2012) in the country because of its linguistic capital value. It is also interesting to note that student demand is determining more and more what is offered in the curriculum.

On the other hand, a newly introduced field - supposedly high in demand, pre-school teaching opened recently, appears not to be attracting consumers despite the lack of specialists in the market. According to the respondents, the university introduced this subject based on its own study, and later it was pronounced by the government as one of the most wanted areas in the country. But respondents reported that the university could not even fill the quota permitted by the ministry. The reason for this was explained by one of the interviewees:

This is a status issue. The reason is that in the old days pre-school teachers were not trained in HEIs but at technical colleges. Due to this former low esteem for pre-school teachers, people are not interested in it now (SA45).

He continued that in real life the country is in genuine need of these professionals, both in the city and in rural areas. Another respondent noted:

You know it is interesting that city children do not like to be pre-school teachers. We have been offering this field for the last two years. When we ask entrants if they would like to choose this field, city children would make a face, or just smile (SA43).

These statements indicate the potential conflict between offering courses which satisfy student demand, and courses which are seen to be of strategic importance to the country as a whole.

Another factor for starting a new subject was a policy to expand curricular provision based on the academic tradition the university was first affiliated to. Having been founded as foreign language institute, Private University North made every effort to expand its subject

area of languages. Three respondents (SA42, 45 and 46) out of seven referred to the university's tradition of academic provision to be of significant importance. SA45 pointed out, 'We offered fields based on our traditional subjects that we have always offered from the start'. Since its establishment, the university attempted to provide eight foreign languages in the area of teaching and translation. However, half of them have already been closed due to low demand, and two are on the verge of being shut down.

Next, there was a situation at Private University North that caught attention in the introduction of one specific field. It introduced a field of study at the request of two organisations, which is outside the main traditional field (SA46), but this had only one single graduation in it (meaning it ran for only four years). However, as the funding for this subject ceased, the university discontinued it in comparison to state universities which, if they once establish subjects at the request of organisations or companies, they continue them as one of their offers after even the funding stops. This indicates a profit-driven motive involved in curricular provision.

Finally, there was another field offered at Private University North which was initiated and organised by one former high ranking official who used to teach at the university. But this discipline is no longer in existence because it again ran for a single four-year course. SA40 was so proud of the quality of this course:

This was a high quality class. The majority of the administrators in the current X area are those who graduated from our university. These graduates expressed their full satisfaction about their study during the university anniversary.

The reason for closing down this discipline was economic. Introduction of new fields and closing them down at the university are very much interrelated with each other due to two main factors. One is the economic reason as was the case with X discipline. Another reason was low demand and low popularity. As far as the economic factor was concerned, four respondents (SA40, 41, 43 and 45) considered that the university closed certain types of courses due to the lack of academic staff and the cost of the course involved. For example, SA40 explained:

A number of things were required in order to offer a good quality course for this discipline. At least, all types of displays were needed. In short, there must be sufficient funds to run it. Next, the employment of academic staff was another problem. Not only a lecturer in economics but also engineering lecturers were required to establish a proper course. Even though there is still a need for this specialism, we could not continue it.

Tourism management faced the same fate. Two respondents shared the same view, that offering a course on tourism involved a higher cost because particular facilities were needed

for student practice, such as a tourist camp in the countryside, vehicles, and other materials to train guides (SA40 and 43). In addition, the popularity of this field was declining (SA43). In comparison with universities in other case studies, which searched for the appropriate niche and greatly expanded this field of study, Private University North failed. Private University North closed down courses and subjects if the demand went down. For this reason it shut down several language fields, and two language courses are currently in the process of being closed as, according to the respondents, few people are choosing them. One administrator acknowledged:

If we do not have students we cannot organise teaching. If there is no demand in the labour market, graduates will not be able to get a job. They cannot earn a living in this profession. As a result courses are forced to shut down (SA45).

Though the university says it maintains its academic tradition, it preferred to cease teaching those languages even though some people had chosen to study them. What is more its traditional fields of study are to be only two languages in the very near future. SA43 explained that with just over 10 students the university will need to open additional class which will incur extra costs. Based on the university website data, the change in undergraduate provision is presented in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Change in undergraduate provision at Private University North

Areas of specialisation	Year of the opening of the field	Year of the closure of the field
Humanities		
English teacher and translator	1991-1992	
German teacher and translator	1991-1992	2007-2008
French teacher and translator	1991-1992	1995-1996
Chinese teacher and translator	1991-1992	
Japanese teacher and translator	1991-1992	2010-2011
Russian teacher and translator	1992-1993	1994-1995
Spanish and English teacher and translator	1993-1994	1994-1995
Korean teacher and translator	2005-2006	2009-2010
Journalism	1994-1995	
Political science	2010-2011	
Economics, business, management		
Transport business management	1994-1995	1995-1996
Finance	1999-2000	

Accountancy	1999-2000	
Tourism management	2005-2006	2008-2009
International trade management	2005-2006	
Public administration	2006-2007	2008-2009
Law		
International law	1994-1995	
Business law	1997-1998	

Created from the university website data.

The table shows that the university, within the 20 years of its existence, has offered 18 fields of study of which 9 were closed. Findings from the responses revealed that the main causes for closure were first, low demand and second, unworthy investment. However, this also can be explained as the university seeking firm ground to stand on. Having started as a language institute, it found it difficult to continue its commitment due to the decreasing demand in languages.

6.3.5 Autonomy

Private University North, similar to Private University South, has the authority over its governance, management, use of resources and finance, including the setting tuition fees. SA40 said, 'There is not much government involvement in the affairs of a private university. Certainly there is supervision at the professional level such as monitoring of curricula and standards.' In general, the respondents took it as normal that the ministry controls the curriculum for bachelor degrees, and provides licensing of new subjects. They (SA42, 43 and 46) only commented when there was restriction about the admission quota. One administrator (SA46) was critical of this:

An admission quota could be practised at state institutions which receive subsidies from the state for their fixed costs, but private institutions do not get any financial support. Then the state regulates the admission number. What is more the ministry reduces the number of admissions in social sciences. I don't think that is right.

Two respondents (SA41 and 42) felt that there was too much checking on the part of the ministry such as accreditation and attestation, but these two could be combined as only one instead. In addition, there is scrutiny from professional inspection office to check if admission and teaching capacity are in compliance with the requirements.

This university has a top-down central management like Private University South. A respondent (SA40) described the management clearly:

We are different from state universities. First, its operational management is very good – management is centralised. This could be due to the fact that it is owned by one individual. When there is a decision to carry out a change, it is done fast. Second, we have a tight discipline. Teachers are very punctual and are attentive to their teaching.

Another respondent (SA46) substantiated it saying that the schools are financially dependent on the central management. However, they can make an independent decision on both the selection process of academic staff and the hiring of from those selected. It was felt that the decision on supply of programmes is also vested in the power of top management. SA42 said that a recently introduced field of study was initiated by the rector.

6.4 Summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the development changes at Private University South and Private University North employing a case study approach. The case studies demonstrated the growth of newly founded private universities. The chapter pursues a goal to provide an insight into the changes in the supply of programmes. The findings of the investigation illuminated the changes that had taken place at these private universities since their establishment. These findings were looked at from three perspectives: consumers, competition and curricular provision. However, these three aspects were not clear-cut and separate, but were tightly interconnected with each other in terms of supply of programmes. The most significant changes occurred in the supply of courses. Consequently, curricular responsiveness was examined in regard to market demand, and mainly evidenced in terms of introducing new subjects and courses, and closing fields in low demand, to accommodate consumers' needs.

As private institutions, these universities were similar in the sense that they are quite responsive to the market demand by expanding their offers with new subjects. Moreover, the findings also revealed the specific marketing strategy the universities use, that of 'word-of-mouth' addressed by Gronroos (2001) and Bonnema and Waldt (2008), in addition to the use of mass media. However, Private University South was unique in its methods of competition by employing specific marketing strategies whereas Private University North was less active in marketing itself.

There were differences between these two universities in the changes of curricular provision where Private University South has not closed any subjects or courses despite low demand in some cases, while Private University North was the most market-sensitive institution. The findings showed that student demand was determining the universities' offerings more than their academic tradition. But in the case of Private University South, it attempts to integrate

its mission in its curriculum, whereas in the case of Private University North, the university's mission and goals played little role in the provision. The implication was that so much dependence on the market may lead to an uncertainty for future offerings and a concern among teachers for their job security which can be sensed in the following statement:

I hope we will expand in the future. On the other hand, it is hard to say what will happen in the future because I cannot foresee the university entrance trend in my field (SA44).

These private universities assumed they have autonomy because they are private, while the administrators took autonomy as a natural part of their working environment.

CHAPTER 7 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This is a cross-case analysis of the different universities, with the purpose of identifying the general features amongst them. Given that the state and private sector has been an important differentiator, the chapter is organised in order to compare the similarities and differences across this divide and within each type. This chapter therefore presents a synthesis of findings from the five case studies from a comparative perspective. At the same time, the particularity and individuality of each case study are not overlooked as differences have also been highlighted. Based on Clark's (1983:142) concept of the triangle of coordination, the three elements of coordination - state, market and academe - were identified in the university case studies and this concept is used to underpin the analysis. In this coordination, the state controls and manages the governance of higher education through bureaucratic and political authorities where state authority of bureaucracy is exercised through various mechanisms such as layering, jurisdiction expansion, personnel enlargement, administrative specialisation, and rule and regulation expansion. As for market forces, it is dependent on exchange. Academe is at the mercy of institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

The comparative analysis of the state and private universities and the analysis within each type were developed based on the two themes of state/university and market/university relationships. Aspects of the state coordination were identified through the theme of autonomy, in particular by means of the analysis of governance, finance, internal management within the university, international and domestic cooperation, and the freedom to determine curriculum content and supply of programmes. These aspects were grouped under the theme of state and university relationship. Market/university relationship was compared by means of the analysis of competition, consumers and curricular provision. The role of academe was seen throughout all the above mentioned themes because state and academe were not mutually exclusive categories of coordinating mechanisms. Consequently it is important to note that these three aspects were interrelating, interacting and overlapping with each other. In the discussion section, with the purpose of determining the three elements of coordination, the 'market model' developed by Jongbloed (2003) is used to identify the eight conditions for a market. This model facilitated the identification of a higher education market in the Mongolian higher education system, and the ways in which academic programmes are supplied. According to this market model, the eight kinds of freedom for providers and/or consumers in the higher education sector are established or enhanced by marketisation policies. On the providers' part, those are the freedom of entry,

freedom to specify the product, freedom to use available resources and freedom to determine prices. On the part of consumers, these are the freedom to choose a provider, freedom to choose product, freedom to get adequate information on prices and quality, and pay direct and cost-covering prices. This model is all about enhancing consumer sovereignty and producer sovereignty (Jongbloed (2003:115) so that consumers and producers are, or should be, equipped with it in order to decide rationally.

7.2 Discussion from a Comparative Perspective

7.2.1 The nature of the change at the state universities

State and University Relationship: 'Autonomy' has been identified to be the most important factor for these three state universities: State University West, State University East and State University Central. In general, these universities felt that they have not been provided with sufficient autonomy. There were more similarities related to autonomy among the three universities than differences because many aspects of this issue were coordinated according to the legislation and the state regulations. The differences at this level were revealed in the way each university acted and reacted differently to the government regulation. State control has been exercised at these universities through two key measures following the Education Law: appointments of the key positions of rectors, and dominance of state representation in the governing body of a university. Nonetheless, the universities considered this as politically influenced regulation, and State University East struggled unsuccessfully against this kind of appointment in the 2000s. This evidence supported Clark's (1983:150) statement that politicisation is common in developing societies producing an often bitter struggle between state officials and the academics. In terms of finance, all three universities were restricted to a certain extent in determining tuition fees. This has always raised much friction between the government and academics. All respondents hold a similar view that retaining a cap on tuition fees is politically influenced rather than consideration for consumers, because politicians promise voters that they will maintain lower tuition fees. Due to low funding from the state (equalling to 6-7 percent of maintenance cost subsidy), universities are under a great deal of pressure to put up fees to maintain teaching at an appropriate level. As a result, the universities raised the issue of quality which they felt was dependent on money. The issue of quality has become the biggest concern for these universities. All three were similar in the massive expansion of student population because it was seen as a way of increasing revenue from tuition fees. This, in turn, led each university to take certain, sometimes questionable, steps. In case study 2, State University East made a decision to introduce double tuition fees for those whose examination scores did not reach the cut-off score line in programmes in high demand. What is more, students at this university study in shifts until

late evening due to the lack of space, whereas in State University Central, this financial struggle leads to the exceeding the ministry's regulation for the admission quota. In contrast to these two universities, State University West was more creative and entrepreneurial in generating revenue from other sources, such as producing a larger number of products in the name of experimentation despite high dependence on tuition fees. The universities needed to take these measures to retain teaching staff and to improve the learning environment for an ever-increasing student population.

In terms of freedom for curricular provision, all universities are required to receive licensing for offering a new field of study and to get their curricula approved by higher authority, the ministry. In addition to this restraint, one third of the curriculum content for undergraduate programme is imposed by the ministry. Although during the transition of the 1990s, the universities enjoyed a full freedom in their offerings because the new governments were weak to control the newly emerging higher education market. The state might have had a desire to control it, however no respondent discussed it. As a result these universities have gained a considerable freedom in running their academic affairs, but now the biggest concern for them is the inability to extend their full authority over curricula they offer. 'A combination of state sanctions and academic judgments' (Brown, 2011b:8) was clearly evidenced in the case of undergraduate education at these universities. However, in some cases these universities were able to push the government to withdraw its interference in academic coordination. An illustration is that when the ministry began to get involved in a decision by State University West to twin its programmes with international universities, the university was able to stand against this interference which resulted in overall success for other universities. Otherwise all three universities enjoyed the academic freedom in the sense who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to the university including conferring degrees, all of which can be a problem in developing countries as Omari (1994) points out. Moreover, the power of management of staff including selection, promotion and salaries rests with the universities. Within the university, internal management at school level has been more autonomous, but a degree of autonomy varies from university to university. In this respect, State University West was distinguished from the other two by letting all of its schools high internal autonomy to function. Nonetheless, schools at the other two universities began to enjoy this freedom in the last couple of years.

Market and University Relationship: Market coordination was clearly present at these three universities in comparison with the pre-market world in Mongolia in the sense that they have grown to be more competitive with each other and with private universities in their activities to recruit more students. Competition for these universities meant a better quality service in

terms of teaching and learning, and enhancement of student choice with better opportunities for further employment.

Market and university relationship at these three universities was compared in terms of university/customer and university/public relationships.

First, the university/customer relationship has been identified in the aspects of educational experience, student life experience, and finance. The three universities have provided evidence of motivation to improve their quality as they were concerned that student population expansion leads to poor quality in teaching and learning. It was implied that these universities were put in a dilemma because they felt they needed to recruit more students to increase income on the one hand, and on the other hand, they felt the quality was not improving due to the high student and teacher ratio and the lack of money. Especially at State University Central where the student and teacher ratio is 32:1, the issue of poor quality entrants has drawn the attention of both the public and the government. As a result, the university in cooperation with the government developed a strategy to increase national grants for those choosing this university in order to recruit high-scoring entrants. At State University West respondents complained that it has become challenging to deliver teaching to so many students on the one hand, and therefore the university began to seek optional service delivery that is an online training. On the other hand, the respondents admitted that the university is forced to hire teachers accepting the low salary: a low value teacher delivers low quality service (SA3). What is more, all these universities recognised the fact that the market-driven augmentation of academic programmes led to the overlap of content in courses they offer. At State University East, students with high scores until recently selected marketable courses such as law, economics and computer science, and science subjects were chosen by those with low scores, or there were not enough students. As a result, science schools were unable to sustain themselves financially. These findings supported Brown's concern (2008:81; 2011:42) that marketisation may be reducing overall levels of quality: a reduction in the quality of student learning due to less contact with lecturers and tutors, bigger teaching groups; and a move towards more revenue-bearing courses away from less revenue-bearing ones. Nonetheless, the three universities aim to improve the overall quality of teaching, and they pay a great deal of attention to accreditation. All three case universities were found to be leading the market with the number of accredited programmes according to the national accreditation council report. Although these universities emphasise the importance of having highly qualified teaching staff, State University East was distinguished from the other two cases by putting much effort on the strengthening the teaching capacity and their recognition at international level by becoming a

candidate to an international accreditation association. It was considered by other HEIs that high scoring students usually choose this university. In respect to enhancement of student choice, these three universities approached it from different angles. While State University East began to focus on offering five types of options with majors and minors, State University West has already been offering dual majors alongside a single major and has initiated online offerings; and State University Central focuses on offering: dual fields with one diploma for teaching specialisation. In terms of academic programmes, each university dominates the market with its own specialised areas, and therefore the meeting point of competition for them is chiefly in the area of social sciences, computer science and the humanities. In fact, market-driven approach was well evidenced in the supply of programmes at these universities and this will be discussed later in a separate section.

In terms of providing a good experience of student life, all three universities perceived the quality from a perspective of the existing students and the graduates. Therefore, each university took its own various initiatives: State University East set up a new office for student affairs which did not exist before, whereas State University West organised a series of student programmes aimed at satisfying student needs in various areas. All three highly emphasise employment opportunities for their graduates and actively engaged in their employment.

However, finance in terms of tuition fees is a field of friction between the universities and consumers. As these universities struggle with the state to put up the fees, students tend to react to every increase. Therefore, the universities come up with their own solutions for payment. State University East was more inventive in the way its consumers began to have the flexibility in the payment scheme so that they can pay tuition fees on a quarterly basis.

Second is university/public relationship. With the aim of recruiting as many top class students as possible and enhancing the university's reputation in the market, these universities employ marketing-based practices such as traditional way of promotion on media, taking part in education fairs and printing booklets which are intensified to some extent during the spring entrance period. But none has a marketing or public relations department, nor an office to handle specifically this activity. All three were similar in that, each school within the university is responsible for its own promotional activities.

Dissemination of information about their programmes and promotional activities were closely interwoven at these universities. The difference was only in to what degree and how they communicated them. Amongst them, the School of Economic Studies, State University East was the most actively engaged school in marketing events such as open day because it was

pushed by an international accreditation organisation to fulfil its requirements. State University East also tries to reach out to the public through a series of lectures by prominent international figures. State University West was the only university to attempt to build and strengthen relationships with parents by initiating Parents' Annual Meetings events. Both State University East and State University West have well-functioning websites to communicate and portray their universities as institutions that are well accredited and recognised locally and internationally, whereas State University Central's website seems to have less attraction. State University East especially provides the best information with its information transparency policy in all spheres. This university was the only university which provides information on academic provision and graduates with their specialised areas and it was accessible to outsiders including the researcher. However, State University West does not allow outsiders to access the information on provision and graduates. State University Central was the least involved in promotions for economic reasons. Although all three universities claim the marketing strategies to be important in their documents, in practice they considered their reputation as the main marketing device to attract the best students. Being state universities, State University East and State University West seem to take this prestige and reputation for granted, while State University Central finds it difficult to enjoy this prestige competing with private universities to recruit better quality prospective students in the market. Overall, State University West seems to be the most successful in branding itself, and has succeeded in becoming equal in competition with State University East which once was the only long-established university.

7.2.2 The nature of the change at the private universities

State and University Relationship: This relationship has been identified within a framework of autonomy: governance, finance and the freedom to determine prices, internal management (to select staff and students), and the freedom to determine curriculum content and supply of programmes. In this respect, there were more similarities, but with some differing attitudes and actions. The issue of autonomy at these two universities seemed not to be a big concern. Both considered themselves relatively independent of the state. Nonetheless, they commented on the state control from various perspectives. Private University South felt it normal to be instructed on curriculum content for general framework, whereas Private University North was critical of the restriction about admission quota. Some respondents from the latter felt admission quota should only be practised at state institutions, but not at private institutions. Contrary to Private University North, at Private University South none felt that there is state pressure on the university; instead they even supported the state policy on admission quota in order to push out low-quality private institutions. It was implied that

internal autonomy at both universities is limited because both have a solid central management with a strong influence from the founders at the top. However, respondents from the universities perceived this kind of top-down management as efficient because they thought that the decision-making process is usually fast as in the introduction of a new subject. Both universities acknowledge that they are for-profit companies. Although the freedom to generate income such as by contracting research, consultancies, contract teaching, company training, as well as other ventures between higher education institutions and entities in the public, semi-public and private spheres (Jongbloed, 2003), the universities seemed to be not mature enough to become engaged in these kinds of activities. However, Private University South admitted to having sources of revenue from other than the tuition fees business, but Private University North is dependent solely on tuition fees. Both enjoy full freedom to determine tuition fees as there is no restriction on their increase by the state. In this respect, Private University South limits its tuition fees closer to the rate of state institutions, while Private University North recently put up its fees a little higher than the other case.

Market and University Relationship: Competition is well evidenced at these two universities. Although competition at these universities takes place at the three levels of market, i.e. 'consumer', 'labour' and 'institutional' as classified by Clark (1983), consumer or customer-orientated competition has been revealed as the most intensive exchange of relations. Therefore, the market and university relationship at these private universities was compared in terms of university/customer and university/public relationships.

First, the university/customer relationship has been identified in the aspects of educational experience, student life experience, and learning environment. Both Private University South and Private University North regard prospective, current and graduating students, together with their parents, as the main consumers, and maintain a close relationship with them to build up its relationship through which to enhance its reputation. Private University South is unique in the way it makes a great deal of effort to attract students from all areas of the country, and as a result it increased its student population by 175 times since its establishment, while Private University North struggles to reach the targeted quota because it is able to recruit students only from the city.

With the aim of providing a high quality educational experience, both universities strive to offer an excellent delivery of teaching, and both claim to have the best team of teaching staff. Both aim to recruit former high-ranking officials such as former ministers, judges, and well-known people in the fields the universities offer, but these prominent people tend to be

retired, or work only part-time. But both are still unable to reach the percentage of doctorate teachers set by the ministry. The ministry requires universities to have at least 30 percent of doctorate teachers, but at Private University South this percentage is far less than 10 percent, whereas Private University North has higher than 10 percent. Both aim to assemble a full-time body of teaching staff of which many are graduates of these universities, and therefore, the composition of staff is quite young. In comparison with Private University South, Private University North encourages those graduates who completed their postgraduate degrees abroad to return to work at their home university. Private University South enriches its staff with international teachers some of whom work part-time. One of the criteria used to portray high quality education is considered to be accreditation at national and international levels. Both universities passed the attestation by the ministry, but only Private University South has one programme accredited at national level, and has already become a member of the Asia Pacific Quality Network. This university is also in the preparatory stages for ACBSP accreditation. High level of competition has been seen in their offering of courses and subjects. Both case universities focus more on consumer-driven courses in social sciences and the humanities, but this will be discussed later in a separate section. These two universities endeavour to incorporate job-oriented skills in their curricula. All respondents of these universities supported the argument by Yorke & Knight (2003); Browne (2010) that demand-driven delivery leads to greater employability for customers, and therefore both case universities integrated skills such as English, communication and team working skills in their curriculum. In this respect, Private University South was very specific because it looked at consumers' satisfaction not only from a perspective of supply of programmes, and employment opportunity, but also from a perspective of social consciousness, and developed a special curriculum for students to earn a credit. Although the universities place a high importance on cooperation with international institutions to impact on prospective and existing students, and to improve their reputation and build a positive image, Private University South succeeded not only to twin its programmes with international institutions which was the case with Private University North, but also set up schools within the university. Building a positive university image through 'internationalisation' is one form of marketing strategy (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009), and this strategy was also widely practised in Syrian private universities (Al-Fattal, 2010).

In regard to the student life experience, the university/student relationship was built around social and cultural activities, and sports events. Both universities rank consumers' satisfaction highly, yet not as strongly as Private University South which carries out a whole range of activities including organising competitions and TV shows for students with prizes to

study in its university free of charge, or to study at one of its partner international institutions with reduced tuition fees.

In addition, creating a comfortable learning environment has been a priority for both universities. An inviting, comfortable, homely and clean environment distinguished both universities from other state universities. However, Private University South was different from Private University North in the sense that it also provides low-priced comfortable accommodation for its students which enables it to attract students from rural areas.

Second, the university/public relationship has been identified as an important tool for the private university cases. Communication with the public is another method for creating a good reputation in the market place. Case studies four and five have employed their own methods to communicate with the public. Private University South has employed marketing devices more strongly than Private University North. For Private University South, promotion via mass media such as TV and newspapers is an important part of its marketing strategy. The university policy is to continuously reach the public through the means of media. It was the only university to have a marketing office with two personnel in addition to a media representative. The media representative's goal is to feed the media with news, or special programmes about this university. This university invests a great deal in printing leaflets and brochures about itself. All relevant information about curricular provision, curricular content, scholarships and other matters are in those printed materials and have been part of all promotional activities. Another significant method was the 'word of mouth' strategy. This university carries out this strategy with specific aims by sending student ambassadors to their home places to disseminate information about the university. Organising social activities for prospective and current students as well as for graduates is another way of reaching the public.

Private University North has been found to rely heavily on its existing reputation compared with Private University South. The university policy does not encourage media promotion much, on the contrary seeing it as a waste of resources. Therefore printed promotional leaflets or brochures about this university are rare to find. Nonetheless, it moderately uses promotions on mass media and takes part in educational fairs. Although it does not have a separate PR or marketing personnel, it assigned this duty amongst some of its teaching staff. The university's belief is that its established reputation is spread by word of mouth reaching potential customers. They also maintain a close relationship with parents.

Both universities use their website as one way of promotion, but these do not provide details about academic related information such as cost of study, curriculum, or course description.

In general, these two universities equally recognise image and reputation building as important, especially for new institutions to position them in the higher education market, because institutional reputation is one of the key factors in student choice of a university (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009:145). However, while the method of communication with the public employed by Private University South is very dynamic and well managed, Private University North perceives it differently by relying more on its earlier created reputation. In fact, the way Private University North treats mass media promotion is similar to the attitude of state universities. Overall, both case studies suggest that relationship marketing strategy dominates at these universities. The difference between the universities is that Private University South employs both traditional media marketing communication such as advertising and promotion which communicates expected service, and interactive marketing communication which communicates experienced service (Gronroos, 2001:265) intensively, while Private University North prefers interactive marketing communication more.

7.2.3 Changes in curricular provision: the state university case studies

All three universities employed similar tactics in response to the emerging market in the country. This is the expansion of student choice for academic programmes. As identified in the case studies, academic offer has been the key leverage to attract more consumers through which the universities could increase their revenue with tuition fees. Their motives or the reasons were compared to identify the similarities and differences in introducing new courses and subjects. The following table shows these features at the three state universities. In this table '+' represents the presence of the motives for curricular expansion the universities have. The motives, in turn, were derived from the state university case studies in Chapters 5.2.5, 5.3.5 and 5.4.3.

Table 7-1 Motives for expanding provision of subjects and courses

Causes University	Finding a niche market	Response to labour market demand	Introducing brand new courses	Triggered by state policy	International context	Response to future emerging needs & technological advancement	Change in conceptions	Defensive tactics	Country specific needs
State University West	+	+	+	+	+	+			
State University East		+	+	+	+		+	+	
State University Central	+	+	+	+					+
total	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1

'+' - presence of the motives

The table illustrates that the most common motives for all three universities to expand academic programmes were the responsiveness to labour market demand, responsiveness to state policy and becoming leaders in setting up brand new courses in the country. All universities have been found responsive to the labour market demand which was demonstrated in the way they introduced new fields in their respective specialised areas and in new domains such as tourism and foreign languages. For example, English language is more appealing to consumers on its own as a field of study, or in any other specialisation, and consequently all universities set up a new English course which resulted in various outcomes. While at State University East, schools within the university set up their own independent departments of English which resulted in the loss of coherence of study and overlapping, at State University Central it was introduced as a dual field like English and Russian to fit its specific teaching specialisation.

Another factor was setting up completely new fields of study which has been considered as prestigious to these universities in addition to attracting more consumers. In this respect, both State University West and State University East have been successful in creating a whole new school, in contrast with State University Central. Nonetheless, the latter has also been a pioneer in a few fields. All three were similar in the sense that they responded to a state policy to a certain extent that resulted in opening a new subject area. This external pressure for new subjects and courses was the apparent government imposition on the one hand, and on the other hand, a certain state policy may trigger a demand for that field

because sometimes it leads companies to act on the policy which, in turn, triggers a popularity of the field sought after by people. This was the case that caused the setting up of a new programme at State University West.

The second similar motives were identified in finding a niche market, international context and the responsiveness to the future emerging needs and technological advancement. Though the two universities, State University Central and State University West, were similar in having the above mentioned reasons for expanding their programmes, they did not specify that they searched for a niche market. However, according to the interviewees' responses, it was revealed that they employed this strategy to some extent when opening certain courses. Based on their existing resources, State University West set up cultural tourism course, different to other tourism courses offered in the market when tourism was the most popular course in the country: whereas in the case of State University Central, one school searched a way to differentiate from other competitors its new offer for translators. SA21 from that school highlighted that they did not want to duplicate this offer when others did it, so they targeted customers in secondary schools. Another factor influencing the new offer was an international context, or international organisations as identified at State University West and State University East. Although none of the respondents brought out this factor at State University Central, it could be applicable to this university, too. The reason is that when a course is initiated by an international organisation the implementation of which is being supported by the government, it applies to all HEIs. This was the case of an elective course on human development by UNDP. The universities were also very conscious of the world trend in order not to be left behind, and they introduce new courses emerging in the international universities. But sometimes this may fail in the country's context due to low understanding of the field, or low interest on the part of the companies to hire people with that specialisation. This happened with an ecology course at State University East in 1992, but it was striking that the university did not close this field despite low entrance, because they thought it was important for the country. Responsiveness to the future emerging needs and technological advancement has also been an important factor in setting up a new field as identified at State University West and State University Central. They were very specific in emphasising the necessity of identifying the future needs of the country to be able to prepare in advance for that. The case of State University Central was remarkable in the sense that they have already predicted the future emerging demand for special needs teaching, and had already begun to seek support from abroad to set up a new course.

Finally, the two universities, State University East and State University Central, were distinguished in having a few different tactics in their new offerings, that of changing

conceptions to come up with a new domain, using defensive tactics and proposing the importance of considering the specific needs of the country.

However, in regard to closing low demand courses, State University Central was more market-driven unlike other two case universities. It closed some areas of study due to the reasons of content overlap and economic reasons, besides the ministry's requirements. But then again, this university maintained some fields that are important to its identity but which do not draw many students. State University West and State University East were consistent in avoiding the withdrawal of courses even if there was limited interest from customers. They considered it important not to withdraw some fields that faced low demand and poor quality students entering them. The universities were aware of the responsibilities they bear as these strategically important fields such as natural science subjects, engineering and technological fields, were offered only by them. Although there were more similarities than differences at the three universities in introducing new fields of study, each was unique in its own way of approaching the market.

7.2.4 Changes in curricular provision: the private university case studies

Case studies four (Private University South) and five (Private University North) share a similar view in the expansion of their academic programmes that is a market-driven approach as has been identified. Table 7-2 illustrates the similarities and differences of motives of these universities in provision of courses. In this table '+' signifies the presence of the motives for curricular expansion the private universities have. The motives, in turn, were derived from the private university case studies in chapter 6.2.4 and 6.3.4.

Table 7-2 Motives for expanding provision of subjects and courses

Causes University	Finding niche market	Introducing brand new courses	Triggered by state policy	Response to labour market demand	International context	Response to future emerging needs & technological advancement	Change in conceptions	Defensive tactics	Country's special needs	Expansion based on academic & material	Meeting employment oriented needs	Merger of other institutions	Individual initiator
Private University South				+	+	+				+	+	+	+
Private University North				+		+				+	+		+
total				2	1	1				2	2	1	2

'+' - *presence of the motives.*

As presented above, the two universities have been found to be similar in their motives, that of the responsiveness to the labour market demand, the expansion based on existing academic and material resources, and initiation by individual teaching staff. The responsiveness to labour market demand has been identified as the most important criterion for the two universities with each being fast in their changes to curricular provision. Although each reacted rapidly to the demand and popularity of courses in the market, each had a different approach. Private University South preferred to open more and more new courses and subjects expanding its offerings, whereas Private University North maintained the most market-driven attitude which led to the fluctuations in its curricular provision. Alternatively, this university highlighted the potential conflict between offering courses which satisfy student demand, and courses which are seen to be of a strategic importance to the country as a whole: even though the country is in genuine need of some professionals, consumers do not choose them. The implication is that student demand is determining more and more what is offered in the curriculum. Next, the proliferation of offerings based on the existing academic and material resources has been another factor. In this respect, Private University North attempted to retain the traditional subjects that they have always offered from the start. However, language related courses were less stable because of their sensitivity to societal and fashionable changes as De Weert (1996:43) argued: courses organised around problem areas or thematic orientations are less stable, unlike disciplines based on a generally accepted core of theories and methods. An illustration of this is that since its establishment, the university attempted to provide eight foreign languages in the area of teaching and translation, but half of them have already been closed due to low demand earlier, and two are on the verge of being shut down. It was also interesting to note that both universities, there were occasions where an individual teacher could initiate a new course. However, the decision as to which school should offer that field tends to be in the power of the top management, which was the case at Private University South.

It also should be noted that across all curricula, the two universities emphasise the link between content of courses and a student's employability. But Private University South was distinguished from Private University North in the sense that it was rather far-reaching in its expansion of academic offerings with motives to consider international context, future emerging needs and technological advancement, meeting employment oriented needs while expanding the provision merging with other institutions. The evidence of course/employment relationship was strong at Private University South. This relationship has been discussed widely in the literature (Silver & Brennan, 1988; Boys et al., 1988; Brennan et al., 1996).

This university even endeavours to design its curriculum in relation to employment needs. In addition, it developed a comprehensive self-development curriculum for students which aims to develop the skills and appropriate manners required in the work place because graduates need to demonstrate attributes of value to employers, in addition to the possession of a particular degree (Silver & Brennan, 1988).

In short, the private university case studies well demonstrate the trend of the market-driven approach in course provision in response to consumer demand. Consumer demand in turn shifts its focus to employment needs.

7.2.5 Comparative analysis between state and private universities

This section presents a synthesis of findings from all five case studies by means of comparative analysis. Comparative analysis between the state and the private universities has been carried out in terms of state/university, market/university relationships, and the causes for curricular expansion.

State and University Relationship: This relationship has been identified in the four main areas, and extent of autonomous decision making at the institutional level along with subcategories shown in Table 7-3: governance, finance, internal management, and the freedom to determine academic content. This table summarises the findings relating to the extent of autonomy at state and private universities based on the evidence collected from the interviews and the documents discussed in Chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6. It illustrates the similarities and differences in the extent of autonomy between the state and private universities discussed earlier in this chapter. ‘+ High degree’ means to define the full autonomy in regard to the given item; ‘+/- medium degree’ means that a university exercises the right to decide on certain areas given in the table but are still controlled by the state; ‘- low degree’ means a university does not have any control over the area specified in the table. In short, the table shows that private universities have a high degree of autonomy in nearly all areas, with maybe slightly less in terms of freedom to determine admission numbers, supply of programmes and curriculum content. In comparison, state universities have a low degree of autonomy in terms of governance, including appointment of rectors and the governing body, but with a degree of autonomy similar to that of private universities in relation to freedom to determine admission numbers, supply of programmes and curriculum content.

The category of governance was compared in relation to the appointment of rectors and the state representation in the governing body at these two types of universities. The category of

finance was grouped into freedom to determine prices and to generate income from other sources; and the internal management category was grouped into freedom to select staff and students, and freedom to determine admission number. The last category is the academic content which was looked at from curriculum content and supply of programmes.

Judging from the table, state involvement is fully present in the governance of state universities, whereas private universities are free of government influence on this matter. As supported in an earlier section, in this respect, private universities considered themselves relatively independent of the state. In relation to finance, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, neither state nor private are legally restricted to determine tuition fees and to generate revenues from other sources, but in practice the ministry retains a cap on tuition fees for state universities as identified in the case studies. This capping of tuition fees raises the issue of quality by the state universities as they always face financial hardship. The association between quality and resourcing has already been highlighted by Brown (2011: 21).

Although private universities are free to set their tuition fees, they try to maintain tuition fees not too high and closer to that of the state universities. With regard to internal management, it is interesting to note that both state and private universities enjoy full freedom in selecting staff and students to employ and to enrol, and in cooperating with domestic and international organisations, but they have the limited degree of freedom in terms of admitting students with quota restriction. The difference is in the internal management of financial resources and the supply of programmes, where state universities tend to allocate much power to their schools unlike private universities. In relation to academic content, the state controls both types of universities allowing them the same degree of freedom to determine supply of programmes and curriculum content.

Table 7-3 The extent of autonomy

Categories	Appointment of rectors	State representation in Governing body	Freedom to determine tuition fees	Freedom to generate income from other sources	freedom to select staff & students	Freedom to determine admission number	international and domestic cooperation	Freedom to determine supply of programmes	Freedom to determine curriculum content
Universities	Governance	Finance		Internal management			Academic content		
State Universities	-	-	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-
Private Universities	+	+	+	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-

+ high degree; +/- medium degree; - low degree

Market and university relationship: The market and university relationship has been identified as the most diverse relationship in both state and private universities. There were more differences than similarities within both types of university: state and private. Market and university relationship has been compared in relation to consumer/university and public/university relationships.

First, customer-orientated competition has been identified in both categories of university as their chief concern was recruiting more students. However, based on the findings from the case studies, it has been concluded that both state and private universities have gone through evolution of competition for consumers. In the earlier years of the societal transition from the 1990s to the middle of the 2000, competition for attracting more consumers has been high, but in the case of state universities it had slowed down by 2010 as their material capacity has not grown further to accommodate more students due to continuous financial hardship. Their focus has largely shifted to the competition for better quality students, best teaching staff and excellent learning environment. In contrast to state universities, the two private universities are still in the process of quantitative growth in all aspects. The difference between the two universities is that Private University South has already reached a certain level of satisfaction with its current expansion, whereas Private University North still struggles to draw more consumers. In terms of teaching staff, state universities enjoy well-established academic staff, whereas private universities rely more on their own graduates and retired professionals. Even the share of doctorate teachers may show the difference between the state and the private universities with an approximate ratio of 40:10 respectively. However, private universities differentiate themselves in the relationship with students. They treat their students in a more parenting and caring way with their close relationship with both students and parents. Also the learning facilities of private universities are very different from state universities in the way that they are felt to be much more homely and comfortable, an aspect of which all respondents were very proud.

Second, public/university relationship has been a centre of attention for both categories of universities. In this respect, state universities have grown to a greater extent compared with the pre-market higher education institutions. They communicate with the public in various ways, but the level of communication has not been as high as it is with one of the private universities, specifically with Private University South. The findings from the case studies suggest a number of areas in this regard which are presented and compared in Table 7-4. This table summarises the findings from the case studies discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Here the findings in the aspects of communication were compared and grouped into two types using the classification by Gronroos (2001:265): traditional marketing communication and interactive marketing function. In the table ‘+ high degree’ means intense, or consistent communication with the public through that specific means of communication. For example, as the table illustrates, four universities apart from State University East, use education fairs as the most important means of communication, and interviews from the case universities support this finding. Whereas ‘+/- medium degree’ signifies that a university utilises the given means of communication to a moderate degree but not to that high degree; ‘- low degree’ means a university does not use the given means of communication specified in the table.

This comparison shows how diverse the ways of communication are at both state and private universities. Among all five universities, Private University South was the most market-driven university followed by State University West. The comparison also indicates that Private University South combines traditional marketing promotion and interactive communication from high to moderate level. This university stands out from all other universities with its relationship marketing approach by employing a student ambassador in local areas and by organising an Open Day as a major event. Its Open Day is also remarkable in the sense it is organised as an expansive means of communication that is rarely seen in the country. Through the means of relationship marketing communication Private University South aims to build a good word of mouth reputation to spread knowledge of its experienced service (Gronroos, 2001:265).

Table 7-4 The areas and extent of communication with the public

Areas of communication		Media: TV and newspapers	Printed promotional brochures and leaflets	Education Fairs	Website	Open days	Student ambassadors	Organising social activities: competitions, Olympiads,	Public lectures	Job Fair	Alumni connection
		Traditional marketing communication					Interactive marketing communication				
State	State University West	+/-	+/-	+	+	-	-	+	+/-	+	+/-
	State University East	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	-	+/-	+	+/-	-
	State University Central	-	-	+	+/-	-	-	+	+/-	+/-	-
Private	Private University South	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+/-	+
	Private University North	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	-	+

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

+ *high degree*; +/- *medium degree*; - *low degree*

In contrast, Private University North is the university which uses the lowest level of interactive communication. My assumption that private universities may employ a high level of marketing communication was not supported in the case of Private University North. This university was not even aggressive in traditional marketing for promoting its expected service. However, what is also striking was that the two private universities have a strong alumni connection, and former graduates support their universities and contribute a great deal in their promotion. On the whole, the two private universities presented two extremes of levels of communication with the public, whereas the state universities maintained a medium level of communication. The state universities also integrated both means of traditional and interactive relationship marketing communication to a certain extent, but, as respondents from these universities highlighted, they rely heavily on their established reputation. Among all case universities, only Private University South has a marketing office with two people and a separate media representative.

Based on the findings from the case studies, it has been found that an unofficial ranking does exist among these universities. With regard to this unofficial ranking, students compete for these universities. Nonetheless the implication is that the universities which employed a wide range of communication with the public seemed to draw more consumers, compared with those which use less.

Changes in curricular provision: As the case studies show, one of the major changes in all universities has been the expansion of academic programmes regardless of their affiliation to the state. One characteristic of the two private universities is that they offer fields in only social sciences and the humanities; they do not offer natural science courses because they do not have the appropriate facilities, or science lecturers. As the three state universities carry the burden of some important fields like chemistry and engineering, or physics teaching, these universities do their best to continue these subjects as in State University East and State University West. They kept their traditional specialised courses even in the circumstances of low demand, while in other cases, like in State University Central, the university decided to withdraw some subjects for economic reasons.

Based on the previous analyses of curricular provision covered in the earlier sections, the findings of similarities and differences in the causes for this expansion are synthesised in Table 7-5. All categories of causes were grouped into three subcategories taking into

account the motives identified in university intentions discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and compared earlier in this chapter. These are the market-driven and the state-driven causes. By market-driven motive, I mean those courses introduced by the universities in response to market demand. By state-driven motive, I mean those courses either imposed by the government, or triggered by the state policy as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. There is also a couple of university specific single occurrences grouped separately. It should be noted that there is a dynamic interrelation between these categories and there is no clear-cut separation among them. For example, expansion based on academic and material resources in the market-driven tactic was more characteristic of private universities, but it does not mean that state universities do not employ it. As an example, in the case of State University West, the aim of this university was to find a niche in the existing market when it introduced tourism, and even used its academic and material resources as the base for this subject. Whereas the aim of private universities was to employ this tactic as the main intention to create a new offer.

Table 7-5 Causes for expanding academic programmes

Causes Universities		Triggered by state policy	International context & international organisations	Finding niche market	Response to labour market demand	Introducing brand new courses	Response to future emerging needs & technological advancement	Expansion based on academic & material resources	Meeting employment oriented needs	Merger of other institutions	Individual initiator	Country's special needs	Defensive tactics	Change in conceptions
		State-driven			Market-driven						University specific occurrences			
State	State University West	+	+	+	+	+	+							
	State University East	+	+		+	+							+	+
	State University Central	+		+	+	+	+					+		
Private	Private University South		+		+		+	+	+	+	+			
	Private University North				+		+	+	+		+			
	total	3	3	2	5	3	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	1

+ - presence of the causes

+ - sign in Table 7-5 signifies the presence of the causes. As the table shows, the expansion of academic offers by all universities has been triggered largely by the market-driven motive. This motive, in turn, led universities to employ various tactics to bring the new subjects on board. The most significant feature was found to be the responsiveness to the labour market demand common to all five case studies, followed by the response to the future emerging needs and technological advancement. Responsiveness to labour market demand has been phenomenal in all five case universities. In this respect, competitiveness among them has been found high because all aim to introduce those fields of study that are popular in the market. For example, when the tourism industry began to prosper in the country, both state and private universities rushed to open a field of tourism each employing own tactic. An illustration is the State University West which employed a niche market strategy for this field, while State University Central introduced it as a dual field. Both private universities also entered this market but did not seek a niche to differentiate themselves from competitors in the sector. In the following years, among them Private University South was the most remarkable by becoming the most competitive in the market, while Private University North gave up and withdrew this subject.

In terms of introducing brand new courses in the country, state universities were different from private ones which preferred to enter an already existing market. This could imply that

state universities have been more innovative and conscious of the situation when the country lacked many fields, while embracing the market economy.

In terms of market-driven motives, state universities were different from private ones that the two state case universities endeavoured to locate a niche market. In the case of private universities, meeting employment-oriented needs are highly evident, and they put a great deal of effort into integrating these skills into their curricula with internships and other practical experience. But it does not mean that state universities overlook the internship programme for their students. Private universities make every effort to create new courses by employing a tactic of expansion based on academic and material resources.

With regard to the state-driven motive, the state universities reflected on this cause in a more negative way than the private universities. Although private universities are also affected by the state imposition of subjects following the general regulations, they did not bring this out as a problem but rather accepted it as an essential general policy for maintaining standards. In contrast, state universities were critical of the imposition and considered this was government interferences in academic freedom. Nonetheless, state universities also recognised that state policy, such as a government priority list of the most important fields for the country trigger a demand in the market with high employment expectations. Although international context may influence the opening of new fields of study, it tends to be connected with state policy, as in the case of the subject of ecology at State University West. For example, SA3 explained:

The reason we introduced it was that the issue of ecology was a hot discussion at the international level. The 1992 Constitution drafted an article on it. Also Mongolia joined the Rio de Janeiro Agreement. ...The first ever introduction of this field in Mongolia was based on the world development tendency.

In the case of private universities, both Private University South and Private University North felt the importance of the international trend, but Private University South made more effort to integrate it into their teaching.

Finally, universities have also been differentiated by employing university specific tactics in the process of opening new subjects. For example, private university cases suggested that individual senior academic staff could initiate a new field and have it implemented, although the outcome varied at each university. The merger with other smaller institutions added up to the expansion of academic programmes at Private University South because it continued those subjects that were new for the university rather than closing them. Among state universities, State University East was distinguished with its two single tactics: defensive tactic and change in conception. Defensive tactic was employed by one school within the

university to differentiate itself from other competing departments despite the overlap of the content. Also major changes in the social sciences led the old outdated courses (so-called political economics and scientific communism) to be changed conceptually due to social demand, and new courses emerged from them such as economics and politics.

7.3 Further Discussion

From the comparative analysis and the perspectives on national policy in chapter 4, two key issues or themes emerged as being worthy of further discussion. These are the identification of the market conditions i. e. a higher education market in Mongolia; and the interaction of the state, the market and the university. In the light of the market conditions, the market impact on the supply of programmes is discussed. This discussion further leads to the discussion of the changing nature of the relationships between the state, market and the university in this three-dimensional conceptual space (Clark, 1983:144) of the triangle of coordination mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter.

7.3.1 Identifying a higher education market in Mongolia, and its influence on the supply of programmes

The findings of the comparative analysis suggest that there has been a great deal of change since 1991, and there is a substantial presence of the market mechanisms which were introduced into the universities following the marketisation policy of the government. With the aim of reflecting on the outcome of this change in the light of the marketisation, the eight market conditions for higher education proposed by Jongbloed (2003) have been adapted to illustrate the extent of the market conditions fulfilled. In chapter 2, I said that I would use the term university autonomy to involve an understanding of ‘the freedom of an institution to run its own affairs without direction or influence from any level of government. Government influence may be based on legislative authority or executive suasion related to financial power’ (Anderson & Johnson, 1998). Also Ashby (1966:296) suggests a list of essential ingredients for safeguarding autonomy. These ingredients are:

1. Freedom to select staff and students to determine the conditions under which they remain in the university;
2. Freedom to determine curriculum content and degree standards;
3. Freedom to allocate funds (within the amount available) across different categories of expenditures.

According to this definition, three of Jongbloed’s four conditions of freedoms for HE service providers share similar conceptual characteristics with the essential ingredients for

safeguarding autonomy by Ashby (1966:296). From this it can be implied that the higher the autonomy provided, the more the freedoms there are on the part of the providers. In addition to these four conditions for providers, Jongbloed also describes four market conditions for consumers explained in Chapter 2 and in the introduction of this chapter. Based on the findings, however, the eight conditions have been increased to ten to fit the situation in Mongolian higher education. The reason is that the aspects of the freedoms to determine tuition fees, to determine student admission number, to specify the supply of programmes, and determining curriculum content have been found to be the most important conditions for the case universities to function in the market, and therefore the last two aspects were added to the market conditions. Moreover, the policy makers (Chapter 4) also recognised the importance of these issues, but more from a perspective of controlling them. As the issue of determining curriculum content in this context has been found to be a distinct problem on its own, it was classified as an independent item in market conditions apart from the freedom to specify supply of programmes. The market conditions (Table 7-6) have also been compared with the two periods of marketisation taking into account the historical perspective the respondents emphasised in the National Policy Perspective chapter.

Table 7-6 Market conditions in universities in Mongolia

For providers	Early period of creating a market orientation	Late period of re-orientation and consolidation
	Extent to which condition is fulfilled	Extent to which condition is fulfilled
Freedom to enter market	+	+/-
Freedom to manage resource inputs: (select staff and students, manage available financial resources)	+	+
Freedom to determine student admission number	+	-
Freedom to determine tuition fees	+	+/-
Freedom to specify supply of academic programmes	+	+/-
Freedom to determine curriculum content	+/-	+/-
For students		
Free choice of providers	+	+
Free choice of academic programmes	+/-	+/-
Adequate information	+/-	+/-
Cost-covering fees paid	+/-	+/-

+ fully; +/- partially; - not at all; Adapted from Jongbloed 2003:128

For the case universities, six freedoms are identified as essential to move and to compete in the higher education marketplace as 'competition can only be realised when entities have some freedom to move' (Jongbloed, 2003:114). This table summarises the findings from the

case studies substantiated by interviews and documents discussed in chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6 in relation to the extent the market conditions are fulfilled. In the table ‘+ fully’ signifies that the given condition in the market has been fully met for either providers or students. While ‘+/- partially’ indicates that the given condition is not fully provided by the state; ‘- not at all’ denotes the specified freedom has not been fulfilled at all. All these freedoms are explained and discussed one by one below.

On the whole these freedoms are the reflection of the state policy carried out since the 1990s, and these market elements were well represented by the policy in the first period of marketisation compared with that of the consolidation period. To begin with supply side, the freedom to enter the market in the former was more open than it has been in the latter period. In the latter period, the criteria and conditions for new providers have been tightened (Higher Education Reform Roadmap 2010-2021; 2007 Regulation for Founding New HEIs), in particular the financial burden, including requirements to have own building with eco system and other detailed standards set in the regulations, has been increased (SA27). As a result, the state began to tighten the entrance regulations, coupled with the Government Action Plan later, the attestation among HE providers in the name of the state (SA27) led to the closure of many ‘institutions which did not meet the attestation requirements’ (SA28). Identifying market conditions for Mongolian universities was important in order to locate them in the triangle of coordination, to see how far market mechanisms have penetrated, and to find out what caused any changes in the conditions.

The freedom to use resource inputs including selecting academic staff, students and available financial resources has been opened up in the early market creation period which continued to be open throughout the consolidation period. This freedom has been recognised on both levels of policy-making respondents and institutional administrators.

The next is the freedom to determine the number of students the institutions admit. This has become the biggest friction point between the policymakers and the institutions. As the state held no restriction policy towards it in the early period of marketization, HEIs saw it as an interference in the academic affairs when the ministry set an admission quota in the late 2000s. On the one hand, the state policy (Education Development Master Plan 2006-2015) aims to reduce the percentage of graduates enrolling into university in the same year they graduated from school because the share of this type of students has been continuously increasing from 62.5 percent in 2001-2002 to 84.3 percent in 2011-2012 according to the ministry’s statistics. On the other hand, university administrators thought that market forces

should play a major role in determining the admission of entrants: if there is high consumer demand it should be met. The statement by SA9 clearly illustrated their general position:

The market must determine admission but the ministry is currently determining it.

This kind of state involvement in determining the enrolment growth rate could be seen in the developing countries as Omari (1994:158) pointed out. In the case of Mongolia, the main reason could also be economic because the state started to allocate universal national grants to all students in 2011, and since then it has tightened the admission quota. However, this policy has had other negative impacts on institutions leading them to controversial actions as they began to manoeuvre around this regulation, as revealed in the case studies. This suggests it is necessary to reconsider this policy.

Another major problem has been identified in the freedom to determine tuition fees. This aspect has been pretty much connected with the freedom to determine the admission numbers for economic reasons. However, de jure higher education providers are allowed to set their prices for the services they provide, while the ministry has become the de facto regulator of tuition fees in the last decade despite there being no adequate state subsidies. Case studies confirmed that the institutional leaders do not agree with this policy control over tuition fees for state HEIs. They raised the question of a need for substantial state subsidy unless they fully liberalise tuition fees. This policy raises controversies around it as with the case of admission quotas. The reason is that the legislation is being violated by all successive governments as the board of the university is expected to make decisions on the level of tuition fees in accordance with the Education and Higher Education laws. One of the institutional administrators (SA2) pointed out that higher education should follow market laws since the state is not financially able to maintain this sector. Otherwise quality is jeopardized due to the lack of finance - all case university administrators were in full agreement on this. Moreover, the state restricts the entrant numbers to draw more consumers. On the one hand, policy makers agree with the idea of liberalising the tuition fee, but on the other hand, both policy makers and institutional administrators acknowledge the influence of politics on this. This policy caused universities to carry out other manoeuvres such as doubling the tuition fees for those who did not pass the cut-off score line for admittance, or to create various academic programmes with overlapping content, or to exceed the limit of entrants.

The freedom to specify supply of programmes has become a great advantage for HEIs, especially in an early stage of transition. This was seen another way of generating income for both state and private HE service providers as they were continuously opening up new fields of study, especially market-driven courses to attract more students to each academic

offering. This phenomenon has been greatly evidenced in private university case studies. At that time the state policy was loose, even inconsistent as SA48 highlighted. A sudden boom of private institutions with an orientation solely in law, social sciences and the humanities resulted in the over-supply of these specialisations, but with a shortage of professionals in the engineering and natural sciences. There was a pattern of provision in HE across the country moving in a way that HEIs rushed to offer consumer-demand-led subjects even after the emergence of imperatives for engineers, or specialists in natural science. Added to that, as case studies showed high demand in English, Chinese, economics, accountancy and law has been kept up despite the growing high competition in the labour market.

This was an indication of the dominance of 'an easy readable degree system' by value for money (Karhus, 2009:9). The market failure in the supply of strategically important fields in the country called for state intervention. As a result, by the mid-2000s, the state gradually began to focus on the problem leading to the announcement of the priority list of the most needed qualifications. The main point of the policy is to encourage students to pursue their study in fields that are regarded to be in high demand in the country, and that the state would provide better grants for those. The Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia 2006-2015 (2006) developed by the government aims to rationalise enrolment and the courses offered: the increase of students majoring in engineering, technology, natural science, teachers and agricultural professions. But those majoring in social and humanitarian science were targeted for reduction.

In order to see the impact of the state policy on undergraduate provision quantitatively, I compared some statistics in Table 7-7. In this table, for the purpose of analysis, I integrated the data from the 2005 study by the ministry with its 2011 statistics. Here I examined the fields in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering and technology as these fields have drawn the state attention most. These areas of study were analysed in terms of the market share by enrolment. According to the table, those enrolled in the humanities and social sciences occupied 44.1 percent of the market in 2000, which increased to 51.9 percent in 2005. Within this group, there was a growing tendency in 2005 compared to 2000 in the percentage of students in both categories of field by 1.9 percent in the humanities and 5.9 percent in social sciences. 2000-2005 was the period when the state did not introduce a strict policy towards undergraduate academic provision. With the rationalisation of enrolment with specific emphasis on the humanities and social sciences specified in the Master Plan 2006-2015 by the government, the policy on the priority list of the most needed qualifications was introduced. Although this list was not distinctively known among the public until the latest 2011 one, the statistics show the indication of the impact of

this policy over the supply of academic programmes. In 2011 compared to 2005, those enrolled in the humanities and social sciences decreased by 8.7 percent. Within this group, the number of the humanities' students dropped by 4.3 percent whereas those in social sciences went down by 4.4 percent nearing the 2000 market share. According to the respondents' interviews, coupled with the state tighter policy toward the field of humanities, low market demand was the other reason for the decrease in the percentage of those in the humanities, in particular in language.

In the case of the fields in natural sciences, and engineering and technology, those enrolled in these two areas were taking up 25.1 percent of the market in 2000 within which those enrolled in natural sciences occupied 4.9 percent, and those in engineering and technology 20.2 percent. However, this proportion fell by 4.3 percent in 2005 dropping to 20.8 percent.

Table 7-7 Bachelor students by enrolment in science areas

	Science areas	Academic year			Increase compared		Market share (by student numbers)		
		2000-2001	2004-2005	2011-2012	2000-2005	2005-2011	2000	2005	2011
		Total students	Total students	Total students					
1	Education (Teacher in all subjects, Pedagogy, Education Studies)	8706	11167	20652	28.2%	85%	13.5%	10.2%	13.4%
2	The Humanities	7161	14244	13228	98.9%	-7.1%	11.1%	13%	8.7%
3	Social sciences (economics, business, law etc..)	21024	42471	53223	102%	25.3%	33%	38.9%	34.5%
4	Natural sciences, mathematics	3167	4598	4980	45.1%	8.3%	4.9%	4.2%	3.2%
5	Computer science	1381	2991	5586	116.5%	86.8%	2.1%	2.7%	3.6%
6	Technology, engineering, construction	12951	18114	30343	39.8%	67.5%	20.2%	16.6%	19.7%
7	Agriculture	2686	3392	4394	26.2%	29.5%	4.1%	3.1%	2.8%
8	Medicine (including public health, social welfare and social work)	3346	7213	14457	115.5%	100.4%	5.2%	6.6%	9.4%
9	Services: transport, policy, PE, sport	3829	5078	7517	32.6%	48%	6%	4.6%	4.9%
	Total	64251	109268	154380			100%	100%	100%

Within this group those studying natural sciences fell by 0.7 percent, and those in engineering dropped by 3.6 percent. By 2011 the percentage of those enrolled in natural sciences and engineering slightly increased by 2.1 percent reaching 22.9 percent compared to that of 2005. However, while the market for natural sciences fell by 1 percent dropping to 3.2 percent the same year, the share of the market for engineering went up by 3.1 percent reaching 19.7 percent. The increase in the number of students enrolled in engineering and technology was for two reasons: market demand and state policy. Coupled with the state policy prioritising engineering and financial leverage for those who choose this field, there has been a tremendous demand in the market for mining, construction and technological engineers because of the booming industry. Thus even though this indicates the influence of the state policy over undergraduate provision, it does not play much role on its own unless there is demand in the market.

In addition, HE service suppliers began to be licensed to set up a new programme or course. Any request to introduce a new academic programme is required to be evaluated against standard criteria. Policy making SA27 stated that the licensing system has to be under the ministry's control when the country is not a developed one, and institutions would undermine the quality and consumers' interest if it were not under ministry control. He explained this is because of previous experience:

It is impossible to leave it under the university power. ... If we let it loose to the university, the students' rights may be violated due to the bad quality programmes.

Case study universities were in support of this regulation for the purpose of maintaining quality and standards. However, Private University North, one of the private universities, could not accept the policy for the reduction of fields in social sciences and the humanities, as discussed in Chapter 6.

The freedom to determine curriculum content had been unrestricted until the 1995 Higher Education Law. Even after the legislation was introduced, the curriculum content to be divided into general higher education subjects, professional and specialised subjects, was fairly free until the late 2000s because of the slow process of standardisation. Coupled with this, content overlapping has been found to be a big problem at state universities. Although two of the three case universities did not supply their data, the respondents from all three admitted this fault. However, based on the State University East website data, an illustration of this overlapping was presented in Chapter 5 in Table 5-1. According to that data, four languages, including Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English were offered in two schools, while tourism was offered in two different schools in the university. Moreover, among those

four languages, Chinese, Japanese and English were offered across three schools where School of Mongolian Studies offered these three languages as a combined degree with the Mongolian language. The study found that this type of overlapping was caused by a desire to attract more consumers and thus to earn more income. This phenomenon was undermining the quality due to the scattered human and material resources. The universities themselves were unable to control this phenomenon for a long period because of the resistance by the schools and those who teach these subjects. But the issue of quality is driving these universities to eliminate it and they began to combine these courses. Moreover, the state pushes them with its standardisation policy.

The demand for quality increases a form of interaction between the state and the university curriculum (Becher, 1994:238). This type of interaction has been evident in the case of Mongolian higher education where the ministry instructs that there should be a standardised curriculum, at least in some part of it, to ensure the quality for students at both state and private HEIs, as quality of courses provided has become a big debate in the country. However, the case study universities took this policy to be an interference in academic freedom. Although there is a general consensus among policy makers (SA25, 27, 28, 29 and 48) that 'there is no restriction on academic freedom' because 'only general standards are instructed by the ministry, whereas the right to approve the curricula is under the rector's' (SA27), the providers did not agree with this view. Disagreement with this view can be seen in the following criticism by an institutional leader.

They say these subjects are compulsory for all those who study at HEIs. It is the state policy. But it needs to be flexible and some subjects need to be reconsidered due to the field specifics. ... Otherwise, the academic freedom for the content of curricula is now relatively limited. ... For example, English requires 8 credits of study but for those students whose English is relatively up to the level, they could have had only 6 credits and could have studied a different subject for the remaining 2 credits. We do not have that kind of freedom (SA19).

Following the minimum standard for a bachelor programme, 30 percent of the content in curriculum should be devoted to general higher education knowledge, 40percent to foundational professional knowledge, and 30 percent should be dedicated to a range of specialised courses for students to select from, but the case studies revealed that the state fills even the general part for higher education knowledge up to 40 percent. This makes universities frustrated that they are unable to deliver the necessary knowledge to the extent they wish. These findings suggest that the state has exceeded its power by interfering with the academic content which is expected to be in the power of academics (Ashby, 1966). What is more, the policymakers emphasised the importance of work related skills such as 'communication skills, team working skills, skills for obtaining information using information

technology, paper producing skills and foreign language skills' (SA27) in the curriculum, and the case study universities, especially the private ones, make a great deal of effort to integrate those skills into the curriculum. However, this 'emerging curricula' (Barnett et al, 2001) modelled on employability raises a question by some scholars. Parker (2003:533) was against the view of advancing universities as 'the country's employment training institutes when employers have their own training departments'.

In some cases, foreign policy borrowed from other countries' systems were found not as easy to import and adapt as the government had expected. The introduction of the credit transfer system, officially legalised in Higher Education Act in 1995, is a good illustration of this. By 2012 it has still not been fully realised at institutional level, as the case studies showed. An example is State University Central and some private HEIs where the teaching load is still estimated in teaching hours, while the content of student learning is measured in credits. Direct importation did not work quickly because there was no preparation for the adoption, and the local situation was not adequately assessed, coupled with poor understanding of the credit system. Consequently the transition to a credit system has taken a long time, much longer than expected.

On the demand side, or in relation to the freedoms for student-consumers, legally there have been no restrictions at all apart from limited choices created by institutions. It should be noted that more in-depth studies needs to be carried out to cover a wide spectrum of student perspectives on this matter. Nonetheless, the documents and the perspectives of policy makers and university administrators could provide a broad understanding on the matter. It has been completely free for consumers to choose a place of study in both early and late periods of market orientation. However, the respondents from the private case universities brought up an issue related to this choice, that of possible influence by incorrect information from promotions and advertisements. This will be therefore be further discussed in this.

Freedom for students to choose academic programmes has been one of the biggest achievements in comparison with the socialist time. Policymakers claimed that this has been enhanced through the introduction of the American-based credit and transfer system between institutions, but acknowledged that the range of choice varies, however, depending on their size and capacity. The literature acknowledges that providers obviously cannot satisfy every demand, and instead offer a choice of more or less 'standardised' products (Jongbloed, 2003:124) due to the cost and content. In this context, the case studies also supported policy makers' views that private institutes have a low capacity resulting in a poor choice of subjects, coupled with a restricted choice of teachers despite opportunities being

opened up. There is a lot of choice at the level of programmes, but inside each programme they all follow the same because of the class, as discovered in the three case studies: State University Central, Private University South and Two. Students practically need to vote for which modules to choose. There is a programme with various options and electives but they all have to do the same elective. This means the transcripts are identical for the entire class which suggests the choice is rather illusory. Nonetheless, in an effort to distinguish themselves from other competitors, universities try to diversify offers with a range of additional courses and subjects to accommodate their consumers' employment needs.

Provision of adequate information has been identified as an issue in an earlier period at both levels of the policy making authority and the institutions, however it has been improved in the later period with improved website information at all levels. Nevertheless, it still causes a problem for all parties concerned. An illustration is information on tuition fees which tend to be announced by the state universities after prospective students have already chosen their providers. Information failure has already been recognised in literature (Brown, 2011; Jongbloed, 2003). It was also noted that the university could misuse promotions to attract prospective students. During the interview and the document review in one of the cases, this has been to an extent that there was a mismatch between the list of fields in the promotional leaflet and the ministry's index of fields. The following conversation elicited a hidden tactic for attracting prospective students:

Interviewer: According to the ministry's index of fields for higher education, there is only a field in International Trade Management but no field called International Tourism Management. Here in this leaflet, it says you offer International Tourism Management, and Tourism Management and Tourism Economics. Why is this different?

Administrator: We offer tourism economics. International Tourism Management is the field in Foreign Language and Tourism. This is just a tactic to attract people. Once they are enrolled in the university we explain that its title is actually foreign language and tourism. We added international because it sounds more attractive than foreign language.

The above conversation implied that in a few cases some universities might have disseminated some untrustworthy and inaccurate information to attract students. This showed the importance of the need for reliable information for consumers which was declared by one of the policy makers. A similar case was exemplified in Zhi Wang's (2008) study of a Chinese university. Zhi Wang (2008:177) stated, 'Market-based practices are employed by universities with the aim of recruiting more students and enhancing the university's reputation in the market, for example, adjusting the course name and structure to fit in the new market environment by renaming the courses with fashionable and attractive names although the basic content of each course is the same as before.'

In regard to cost covering fees paid by students, they are charged with tuition fees as discussed earlier. Recently, with the adoption of the law on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students, students began to enjoy a socialist type of stipend for every student without any discrimination on their study achievement. HE providers thought that this policy was wrong. An example of this view is illustrated in the following comment:

But it is wrong to give a stipend to everyone.... Because the state does not have money, it restricts the number of entrants in order to demonstrate it reaches all. Mongolian economy is still in a crisis. Mining is trying to stand up and accumulate capital, but the state misuses it by wasting it and giving it all away. Giving away leads more to negative consequences rather than to positive ones. Instead the money should be spent on recovery of the economic recovery (SA2)

Policy makers were aware of this widespread view among educators against a universal stipend and they tried to explain it from a different perspective. One of the policy makers (SA26) said that the aim of the law was to financially regulate and support the institutions' operation. However, it does not seem to work that way in the current situation in Mongolia as there is a great deal of criticism in the public media that the rate of alcoholic drink use among students rises on the stipend day. As charging realistic fees may urge providers to pay more attention to their customers, and turns students into discriminating consumers (Jongbloed, 2003:127), this universal stipend policy should be more motivating and differentiating for each consumer depending on their study achievements.

7.3.2 The interaction of the state, the market and the university

The above analysis of market conditions in Mongolia brings us back to the discussion of the changing nature of the relationships between the state, the market and the university. This discussion revolves around the two periods mentioned earlier to present the nature of the change. As the findings of the case studies and the comparative analysis showed the relationship between these three forces has not been static but dynamic as highlighted by Jongbloed (2003). This dynamic can be presented through the 'triangle of coordination' of Clark (1983) in a historical perspective of the two periods: the early period of creating a market orientation and the late period of re-orientation and consolidation. This is presented in Figures 7-1 and 7-2 in that order. Figure 7-1 depicts the location of the Mongolian higher education in the triangle of coordination.

With the abrupt collapse of the tightly controlled socialist system, during the early period of the 1990s the state alienated itself from the system of higher education. In general,

marketisation of Mongolian HE was not a process on its own but was rather profoundly connected with changes in the political, social and cultural context of the country. During the first decade of the socio-political transition to the democratic and market society (1990-2000), the whole system was in a state of confusion and instability. As a result, the situation was similar to the one in Romania described by Reisz, (1994:286) - 'the state stepped back from all decisional structures, changing its role from dictating to approving. All decisions were lowered to the institution, basic unit and even personal level, and central government approval during that period was given practically unconditionally'.

In particular the economic situation was unstable as mentioned in Chapter 1.2. During this period Mongolia critically needed external financial support due to the collapse of the socialist system, that of Soviet Union and CMEA on which the country was totally dependent. The need for the Mongolian HE system to be organised on a market-based approach was influenced by the external pressures (see Chapters 1.4 and 4.2.1). By joining the IMF, WB and ADB, Mongolia was required to carry out structural adjustment in all spheres including the education sector in order to receive agreed grants and loans. However, having had no history of capitalism or market economy or democracy, the country lacked not only financial support but also the knowledge and experience of running this emerging new capitalist democratic system imported from outside. There was no social structure in the country suited to the market economy. In fact, it was necessary for the whole country to learn everything from scratch. As stated in Chapters 1.5 and 4.2, in 1993-2000, Mongolia's Education and Human Resource Master Plan, higher education reform, financing, and accreditation were carried out with the financial aid of or loan from the ADB, one of the influential organisations which imposed the policy. In addition to bodies like the WB and the ADB (the largest donor), other donors have contributed to the various sectors of the country. Important donors have included GTZ (Germany), NDF (the Nordic Development Fund) and NEMO (the Netherlands Mongolia Development Fund). All these have contributed to social policy projects, mainly for institutional and programme construction. There were other big donors in the 2000s: EBRD (the European Bank for Research and Development), JICA (Japanese government aid body), and the US government's MCA (Millennium Challenge Account) in 2008. The Soros Foundation and World Vision have been important NGO donors with considerable input into social projects. Moreover, when Mongolia joined the IMF, WB and ADB in the early 1990s, the conditions for being given loans were the privatisation of state assets, price liberalisation and financial banking reforms. As Dierkes (2012:7) highlights, the Mongolian government adopted a radical 'shock therapy' policy 'following the advice of international institutions and donors that aimed to replace the planned economy with free-wheeling capitalism.' An illustration of that policy in HE is the

sudden cut in funding, the introduction of tuition fees in HEIs and privatisation of HEIs. In the context of Mongolian higher education, privatisation has been a gradual process. During the process of privatisation of state assets in Mongolia, the pilot project was implemented in 1997-1998, with the support of the WB, and took place management privatisation of the College of Finance and Economics. The privatisation process has been very different from that of the western context, at least in terms of methods. In Mongolia - the country which had no experience of market economy and which suddenly faced socio-political changes in 1990 - there was no private capital or property. Literally, no one had enough money to invest in any business. This is why the government made a decision to give away free shares to its all citizens to enable them to 'buy' previously state-owned small and medium sized entities and assets. It was important for the government to awaken a private interest among its people in order to privatise state properties.

Moreover, the huge change in the political structure when it moved from socialist Marxism and Leninism where the state ran everything including the education sector, to a democratic society, was complicated and inconsistent. It was complicated because of the political situation of the country where the party struggle and inter-party struggle were intense. A multi-party system was a completely new phenomenon and all new parties had to learn how to handle democratic politics and social issues. During this period governments changed several times (there were six governments during the period 1990 to 2000) which led to inconsistency in the policy. This affected the HE sector too. The state policy became weak towards HE at that time, not because of its flexibility but from lack of appropriate knowledge of the new market system which led to the inconsistent policy later on, as policy makers acknowledged (SA 25, 27, 29). 'The whole society was subjected to trial and error at that time. We made mistakes and corrected them on the way,' SA25 admitted. Decisions regarding higher education were therefore left entirely to the discretion of the university and the market as portrayed in Figure 7-1. As SA28 said, 'During the early transition ministers of education tended to be replaced frequently, and every time, before they stepped down, they would grant a lot of licences without checking the requirements. By allowing ministers or high ranking officials to grant licences, the ministry was not complying with the requirements set in the laws.' In fact, this irresponsible action considerably added to the fast expansion of HEIs. There were setbacks to the reform of HE because of instability in the politics and mistakes made due to limited knowledge (see Chapter 4.2.1). As a result, during the consolidation period 2001-2012 (see Chapter 1.5 and 4.3) it was necessary for the state to reconsider the situation in the HE sector and to renew the regulations and laws mentioned in Chapters 1.5, 4.6 and 4.3 as the crisis in HE caught the attention of the public. Then again, during the consolidation period, the centralising policy – in part a legacy of the hierarchical

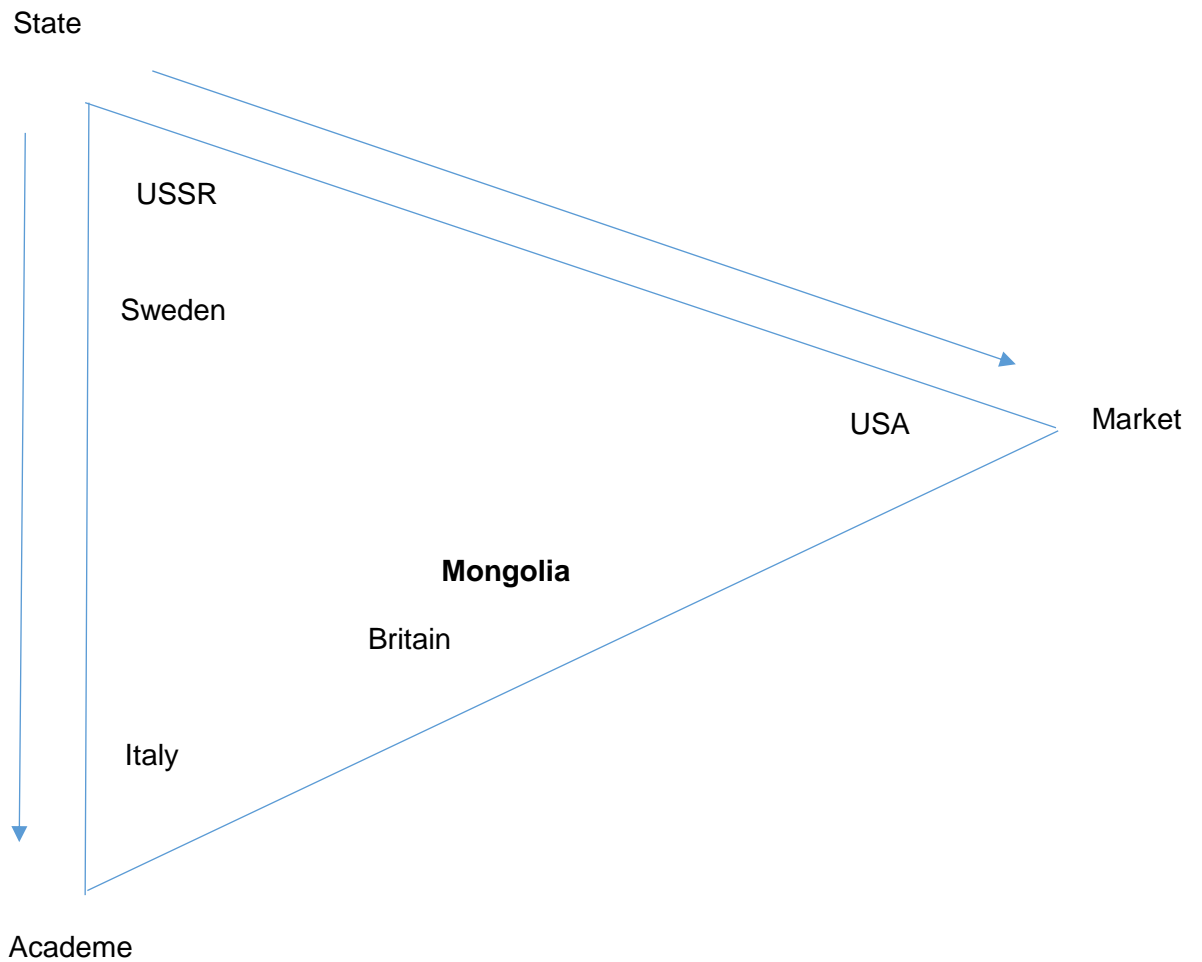
concentration of power under Leninist socialist parties (Dierkes, 2012:298) – has been generally dominant coinciding with the rule of the Mongolian People's Republic Party (former Communist Party) 2001-2008. This might explain some of the changes in legislation relevant to HE during the period 2001-2012: introduction of attestation in HEIs, appointment of rectors by the ministry, and the increased role of the state in curriculum coordination (see Chapters 1.4 and 4.3).

With sudden socio-political changes in the country, there was a mixture of feelings among people: a sense of great excitement as everybody felt that they were given permission to do whatever they wanted, but at the same time a fear of an unknown future. The people were experiencing 'abrupt transition from state sponsored security to individualised risk' (Dierkes, 2012:57). The whole society – institutions and individuals – was overwhelmed while going through this process of sudden change. It became necessary for them to adjust 'many of their fundamental assumptions, norms and behaviours' which 'may be called a cultural change' (Hatch, 1997 cited in Wedell, 2010:2). The HE sector needed a cultural change: HEIs were given the freedom to run their own affairs in the 1990s. It was a shock for all parties concerned because it was necessary for them to learn everything and to develop a new system including a new tiered structure, new curricula and new programmes. In addition to what the larger donors did, there were projects undertaken by smaller entities to help institutions adjust. For example, Manchester University helped to reconstruct the Economics curriculum of the National University with the support of the EU Tacis project (see Chapter 1.5). Cambridge University did the same for Social Anthropology. JICA has supported reform of engineering in higher education. However, there was salient resistance due to the existing culture. Hall, D. & Thomas, H. (2003) emphasised in their article the obstacles to the detailed implementation of curriculum reform at the National University by pointing out that although the Mongolian government provided the framework for the reform, the senior lecturers who were to implement it were very reluctant due to their strong belief in Marxism, Leninism and socialist economics.

Due to all these factors mentioned above, the process of marketisation of HE has taken longer than everyone expected and it was not as straightforward as it looks in Figure 7.1. For example, marketisation can be a purposeful policy in a western context (see Chapter 2.1), but in the case of post-communist Mongolia, marketisation of higher education was not a purposeful process to begin with, but rather has been more of an inevitable choice than a policy for all parties concerned including the government and HEIs. In other words, it has been more like a response to external globalised pressures rather than something which is being a systematically planned strategy within neoliberal ideology as has been in the case of

many western countries. This figure only tries to position and to compare Mongolian HE in this triangle: two arrows running down both sides of the triangle show how the state lost its control by rapidly changing its position from one extreme to another. Mongolian HE was in a similar position to where the former USSR was, but during the early period of market orientation it was hastily and abruptly relocated to the other two extremes of market and academe.

Figure 7-1 Triangle of coordination in Mongolia in the early period of creating a market orientation

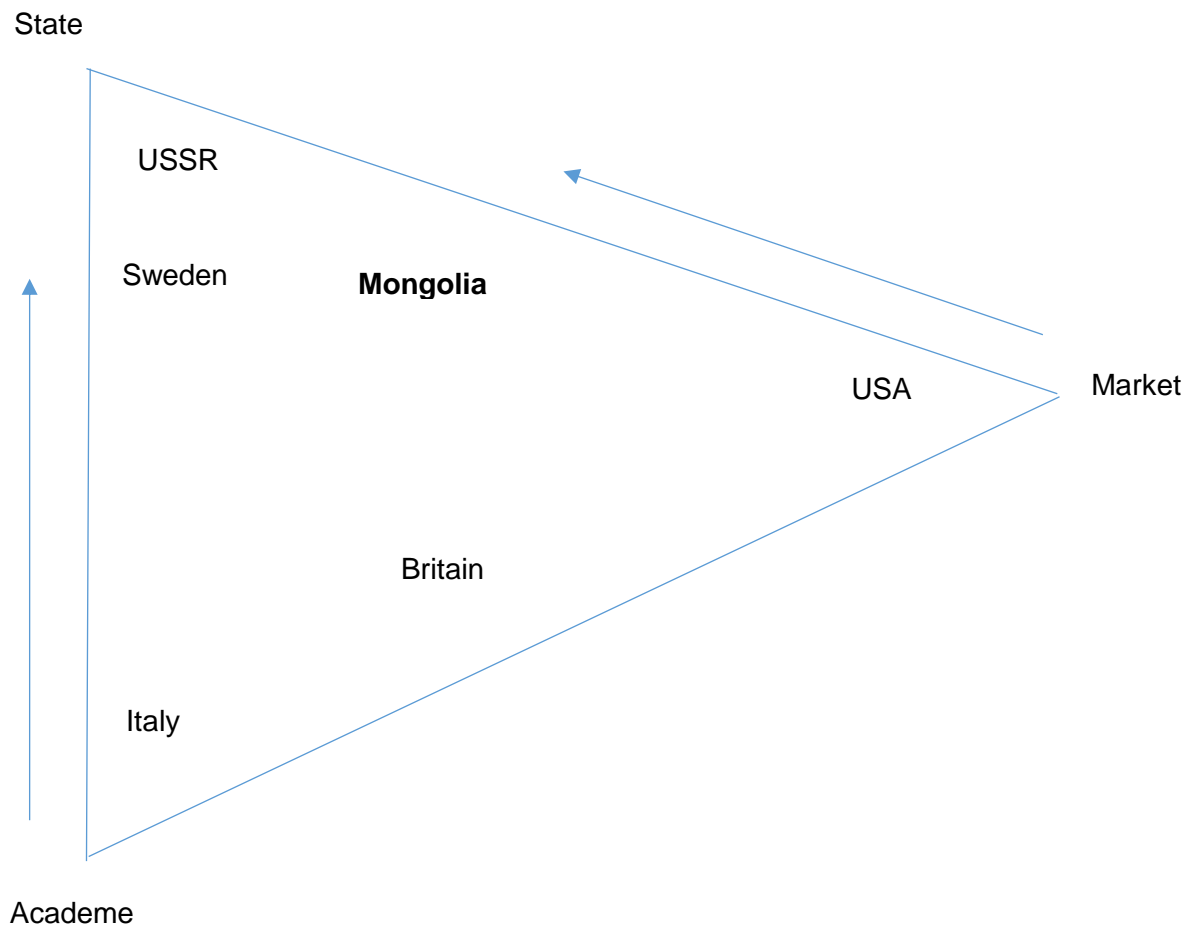


Adapted from Clark, 1983:143

An opening for 'lots of competing suppliers, significant private and/or for profit providers offering serious competition to public institutions' (Brown, 2011) could be seen as an advantage, which was phenomenal in the early period of marketisation. The policy makers also supported this view explaining that the state policy towards the emergence of the private sector in the higher education market was quite flexible, otherwise 'If we had demanded a two-storey building and lecturers with PhDs at the initial stage, there would not have been a private sector' (SA25). However, the freedom of entry for providers had become out of control in the country. This resulted in emerging of 184 HEIs of which some would have only a few students. An essential element of a market system to determine the prices charged to consumers (Jongbloed, 2003; Brown, 2011) has been introduced into Mongolian higher education since 1993 following the Education Law. Moreover, similar to the Romanian situation 'the need to expand, or the need for disciplinary renewal, a period of rapid change started as the academics saw the possibility of acting on their own' (Reisz, 1994). As case studies revealed, all schools opened all possible types of academic programmes to earn money. This in turn became an obstacle to development and it still causes a big problem with content overlapping in curricular provision. In fact, the supply of programmes based on a consumer preference-driven approach favoured by Browne (2010) created an imbalance of qualified professionals in the country. The assumption, that the market can regulate the needs for professionals such as engineers and primary school teachers, currently lacking, was not justified because consumers were not making rational decisions. In this respect, Collini's (2010) view was supported by the findings that entrants did indeed make 'irrational' decisions. Moreover, some HEIs, especially private institutions, could change their academic programme offerings so fast that it was hard to see any coherent policy for curricular provision there. SA48 called this kind of phenomenon of fluctuating course offers as a 'pendulum'. All these show that the immature market seemed unable to regulate this situation by creating chaos in the system at that time, and the public demanded state control. This resulted in the redefinition of the role of the state.

Figure 7-2 portrays the location of Mongolian higher education in the late period of consolidation. The two arrows running up along both sides of the triangle show how state power was reinstated, and institutional autonomy was weakened.

Figure 7-2 Triangle of coordination in Mongolia in the late period of consolidation



Adapted from Clark, 1983:143

The findings confirmed that the direction of the state policy in the first decade had been more de-regulating and de-centralising towards institutional autonomy. In the last decade, however, its manner has become more consolidating, or even re-centralising to some extent. But this has still been in a supervisory manner. In this period, a weak example of a quasi-market is seen. Although it is hard to say that there is a quasi-market system in the Mongolian HE which fully fits the definition given in Chapter 2.1, there is high consumer freedom of choice of providers which creates a competitive market partially regulated by the

state. Even though the state has not been able to control the HE market through public funding because of its poor funding (see Chapters 1.4, 4, 5 and 6), it has strengthened its regulations and control over consumer choice and competition with the new legislation on student grants. Moreover, during this decade, the state re-asserted its presence and took more control over governance and curriculum. Changing relationship between government, market and university was well evidenced in the changes of curricular provision. The primary purpose of the state policy has been to assure the quality of programmes and to increase competitiveness. All respondents from the policy making institutions and the universities were in agreement that the existing quality has not been meeting consumers' as well as employers' expectations. The state authority has been restored through political influence and legal homogeneity (Neave & Van Vught, 1994:269) to create a similarity of provision and conditions within the national system of higher education. Nevertheless, in just over 20 years since the 1990s the increase of private market share in higher education has been significant, and the government does not take the market as 'antithetical' because, as with many other countries, the Mongolian state sees a more market and economically oriented higher education sector as important to the national interest (Kubler, 2010:10). An illustration is the prioritisation policy of fields of study and the new regulation for new providers enacted by the ministry. However, the findings also showed that academic freedom has shrunk to a great extent with the ministry's involvement in the curriculum content through standardisation and licensing, along with the admission quota for both state and private institutions. This in turn also began to cause a different type of dysfunction.

7.4 Summary

This chapter presented a synthesis of findings from all five case studies. Comparative analysis between the state and the private universities has been carried out in terms of state/university, market/university relationships and the causes for curricular expansion. In the case of state/university relationship, institutional autonomy was the target of the analysis as Neave & Van Vught (1994:9) argue that institutional autonomy to a large extent is dependent on the way governments try to regulate a higher education system, therefore the form of state control was more evident in the analysis of university autonomy to a greater degree than in the analysis of competition. The case of market/university relationship has been found to be more diverse among both state and private universities. There were more differences than similarities even within both categories. Nonetheless, generally, it can be said that the state universities tend to employ reputation reinforcing tactics based on their established reputation of belonging to the 'state', while the private universities focus more on

reputation building tactics. Market and university relationship has been compared in relation to consumer/university and public/university relationships.

Finally, this chapter focuses on the discussion based on the findings from the comparative analysis of the case studies of state and private universities, and the perspectives of policy makers to reflect on the changes that have taken place in higher education in Mongolia in the context of the market. It identifies a higher education market in Mongolia by means of determining the market conditions, and its impact on the supply of programmes. There were six freedoms identified on the supply side and four freedoms on the demand side. The analysis of the market conditions in Mongolia led us to determine the changing nature of the relationships between the state, market and the university in the 'triangle of coordination' by Clark (1983) as dynamic in a historical perspective of the two periods: early period of creating a market orientation and late period of re-orientation and consolidation.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter is one of reflection on the overall research and evaluation of its outcome. It evaluates the outcomes in terms of the two research questions, assesses the strengths of the research and the original contributions to knowledge, while reflecting on the limitations of the study. Based on these contributions and apparent limitations of the study, opportunities for further research are suggested.

8.2 A Summary and Evaluation of the Research Outcomes

Since the thesis is about the nature of the change in undergraduate curricular provision in the context of the changing market, first it was necessary to answer the question what the nature of changes in Mongolian HE is, how they came about and why, in order to understand the influence of this changing market on the provision. To achieve these aims, the study developed the two research questions through which the research outcomes are reflected and summarised in this section.

8.2.1 Research question one: how and in what ways has the HE market in Mongolia changed since 1991?

This section summarises and evaluates the outcome of the first research question.

Summary: The HE market in Mongolia has changed a great deal due to the external and internal factors in a wider context. External factors were two types: world-wide and country-specific factors. World-wide trends of globalisation, massification and financial stringency were clearly evident in the country's HE market. However, the aspect of globalisation was mainly the pressure created by international organisations to move HE of the country from a public to tradeable service (Chapters 1, 2 and 4). Despite being a middle-lower income country, Mongolian higher education has many elements of a new paradigm of tertiary education defined by OECD (1998) such as a phenomenon of universalisation of full secondary education; eligibility for tertiary education of 60, 80, or 100% of those completing secondary education; adults needing to continue or restart formal learning and of the opportunities to do so; and the equity-based attention to under-represented groups (Chapters 2 and 3.2). In respect to massification, this has been a major characteristic of Mongolian HE. The number of students – the main buyers and consumers of HE has increased hugely. This phenomenon of student expansion in the HE market was well

evidenced by sources from case studies, interviews and policy documents (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). Financial stringency emerged as a result of the massification, and the country's economic hardship led HE to marketisation including privatisation, development of a private sector and student fee paying principles.

Country-specific external factors include those which occurred due to the wider changes in the country which resulted from the transition from a socialist command economy to a market economy (Chapters 1 and 4). This context has had an enormous influence on the HE market including reforms throughout the education system to adjust it to the emerging new social, political and economic systems.

Triggered by these two types of external forces, HE was pushed by internal factors. These were the need for legal and policy changes followed by the structural and management changes in HE. Twenty one interview sources referred to legal and policy changes as the most important fundamental transformation in transitioning to and creating a new higher education system. The adoption of the 1991 Education Law set the foundation of market practices in higher education by decentralising governance at all levels, and ensuring the emergence of the private sector and fee-paying principles. In accordance with the legal changes within the higher education system in Mongolia, HE has become more interactive with market forces. The significant outcome of this change is the emergence of the private sector. In terms of student-consumers, it now accounts for more than one third of the market while the number of private HEIs occupies over 70% of the market.

Structural and management changes were referred by 39 interview sources which emphasised that higher education in Mongolia, as a result of introducing a credit system, transitioned to a completely new tiered degree system: bachelor, master and doctoral. What is more important was that institutional autonomy has been increased, in comparison to the former Soviet model, despite the increasing contradiction between the HEIs and the state in regard to governance, tuition fee capping and enrolment limits in recent years. More market forces took over the system. Competition and promotion have become types of activities HEIs regard as important, though the scale and intensity of these differed from institution to institution which was evidenced in the case studies.

Evaluation: In line with the research aims, the study has examined the policy context and the government policy toward HEIs, and how institutions perceived and implemented policies. The purpose of this examination was to determine the overall environment since post-communist transition in which the undergraduate provision has evolved. Under the external and internal forces, there have been changes in the relationships between state and market

towards higher education (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7). The change in this triangle of relationship has been gradual, not constant but dynamic over the past two decades. Market forces on higher education also were not continuous as the state tightened its intervention in the last decade. The cause for this intervention was the chaos created by the new HE market: excessive quantitative expansion of HEIs with some having only a few dozen students with course content overlapping across disciplines. This was seen in policy documents and regulations, and in the practices of universities. In general, the case universities have complied with the regulations and instantly reacted to the policies, but manoeuvred around when these were in contradiction with their interests like admission quota policy and academic provision. What was interesting is that within this context, case universities were found to be not passive players, but were active in the sense that they could influence the ministry's decision when their core interest was affected. An example was the ceasing of the ministry's interference in their dealings with international twinning programmes as a result of their intense resistance. Consequently HEIs are now free to offer joint undergraduate programmes with international institutions and to decide on the content of the curriculum in cooperation with their international partners. However, politics tended to take over some decisions and the universities were unable to confront these. An example was tuition fee capping to which all case universities were forced to obey despite the contradiction with Higher Education Law.

The next research aim was to identify the market conditions in Mongolian universities and to shed light on how far market mechanisms have penetrated, in order to locate HE in Clark's 'triangle of coordination' and to find out what caused any changes in the conditions. In general, the market has had both positive and negative impacts on HE. But it should be mentioned that positive and negative impacts were not mutually exclusive as some positive impacts led to negative ones. With respect to positive impacts, case studies evidenced that these universities have grown to be more financially self-reliant by seeking ways to generate a variety of funding sources. Also in the case of State University West, a sense of entrepreneurial and managerial approach was evidenced in the management, and in its start-up company and research centres. It was interesting to note that in state universities the freedom of expression in the decision making process has clearly been better than in private universities. Moreover, consumer choice in terms of providers and academic programmes has increased as HEIs have become more responsive to consumer's demands to satisfy their wants. Although the context of the study was different from that in western countries, written in this regard these positive impacts confirmed the literature (Brown, 2011c; Brown, 2008; Jongbloed, 2003; Clark, 1998; Kubler et al 2010; Williams, 1992; Tooley, 1995).

The findings also revealed a few unique features that were different from a western context. One is connected with institutions' stratification. The findings of the study showed that a former polytechnic institute in the case study (Chapter 5) has been able to increase its prestige and reputation to an extent almost equal to a national university level, despite its having a short history of university status. The implication here is that this might have happened due to the immature market relations in the society, and therefore the university was able to take advantage of this opportunity. Another feature was the behaviour of newly emerging private institutions in response to market competition. On the one hand, in relation to academic offerings, these institutions first built up their academic programmes on the existing market, but in the following years they began to differentiate through new rapid development of academic collaboration with international organisations. These universities did not make an effort to set up a brand new course in the country which was the case with the state universities. On the other hand, these private institutions differentiated themselves from state universities in terms of their structure and management. The implication is the findings suggest that institutional diversity in the country has not been in danger thus far as the literature sees it in a western context (Meek, 2000; Brown, 2011c).

In respect to negative impacts of the market, the findings of the study revealed a great concern for any decrease of quality throughout the system since 1991. Case studies and policy perspectives completely converged on this issue. The indicators of poor quality were seen in student learning and teaching that lead to poorer quality of graduates. Due to the shortage of funding, universities offered bigger teaching groups with limited academic facilities. Also resources were diverted away from the core activities of teaching and research into enrolment marketing. These tendencies confirmed the concerns raised in literature (Brown, 2008:81; 2011:42). Based on the findings, it is concluded that consumer attitude to a desire of 'having a degree' for employment reasons, and the providers' desire to meet this need has been prevalent (Molesworth et al, 2009). Thus it confirms the implication by Molesworth et al (2009) that pedagogic practice is transformed from being to having, from a learning experience of challenge, risk and potential transformation, to one where we mistake such experiences as skills to acquire, for 'things' to possess. The study also showed that the market was unable to control the excessive proliferation of HE providers. This market failure called for state intervention. Market failure was evidenced in undergraduate provision which is discussed in the next section. Dill (2003) warned about the inappropriateness of the choice to allow the market to rule in HE in those countries which are in their early, formative stage of market competition. However from my point of view, for Mongolian policy makers it was not a choice but an unavoidable path because of the abrupt political and economic changes. As mentioned earlier, the market has created a chaotic

situation in Mongolian HE in general, and in particular in curricular provision and teaching. Therefore, the market conditions which were freer and more open in the first decade of marketisation have in the last decade been tightened up by the ministry in order to establish stability and consistency, and to focus on the improvement of quality and overcome this chaos.

There was some contradictory evidence found in the study in terms of state/university relationships. Although the policy makers in the study believed that market conditions for Mongolian HE were enhanced and there was a great deal of freedom for curricular content and supply of programmes, it was found that there has been a growing state intervention in this direction. This was indicated in the perspectives of university administrators and documentary sources, including the policy documents and regulations. Another unexpected finding was that policy makers believed that universities have fully transferred to the credit system as it was introduced in 1995. But the case studies revealed that some have not fully transferred to a credit system in terms of estimating the teaching load.

In terms of the market/university relationship, an unexpected reality has been found. At the beginning of my case study, I approached my research with an assumption that both private universities and state universities shared similar features and patterns of behaviour according to their affiliation. However, in the case of private universities, completely different realities have emerged. The way the private universities in the case studies behaved and responded to the real world changing around them was very individual. An illustration is in their approaches to marketing and to undergraduate provision. Private University South was far too intensive in its marketing strategies to attract more consumers, while Private University North was not in favour of marketing strategy and was very passive. The outcome of their approaches to marketing was exceptional in the sense that the one which employed intensive marketing methods succeeded very quickly in achieving enormous resources and expansion, whereas the other did not thrive to that extent. This confirms the importance of marketing strategy in emerging universities. In respect to the difference in academic provision, Private University South has been found more stable with its commitment to the original discipline while extending to other fields of study, and has been found consistent in its provision. The other university has been found to be inconsistent in its commitment to academic provision by being driven by market demand to such an extent that it changed its undergraduate provision like a roller coaster. What was surprising was that although this inconsistency might imply poor quality, this university has been regarded by the ministry as one of the better quality private universities, and the case study supported this.

Thus, the first research question was fully answered, covering a wide range of aspects in terms of the changing nature of the HE marketplace in Mongolia.

8.2.2 Research question two: how has undergraduate curricular provision been influenced by this change in the market?

One of the biggest responses to overall change in the HE market was curricular change in undergraduate provision, and this was addressed by 49 interview sources. This section summarises and evaluates the second research question along with its aim.

Summary: The case universities faced the necessity to transform their academic content as this was crucial to adapt curricula to changing external needs, and to introduce a wide range of courses. There were two distinctive phenomena in terms of curricular responsiveness. One was the emergence of new courses and new fields. Another was conceptual changes in delivering knowledge.

The study (Chapters 4.4, 5.2.5, 5.3.5, 6.2.4, 6.3.4, 7.2.5 and 7.3.1) evidenced that in response to the changing market, the state institutions began to expand their offerings to new fields along with their old specialised areas, while newly emerging private institutions started up with specialised areas such as solely language, or solely an institute of law. Then within four or five years those private institutes rapidly extended their academic programmes primarily in the fields of social sciences and the humanities. As SA48 described it, the ministry was led by the decision of HEIs and there was no consistency in organizing academic teaching at private institutions. Although the market influence was generally evidenced in expansion of provision both at state and private universities, it was strongest in the case of private universities. The difference between state and private universities was in the way they expanded their courses. While overlapping of courses across schools was typical at state universities, for private universities the case was different for each university: one kept extending new courses to the existing programmes, while the other kept changing its courses. An example of an extreme case was revealed in one of the private universities (Table 6-1) where the findings showed that student demand resulted in the university's offering more than its academic tradition. Findings from the case study revealed that the main causes for closure were first low demand, second unjustified investment. However, the ministry did not intervene in this rapid change of provision at this university. In the case of Private University North, the university's mission and goals played little role in the provision, while in the case of Private University South, it has made a great effort to integrate its mission in its curriculum. The implication was that so much dependence on the market may

lead to an uncertainty for future offerings and a concern among teachers for their job security.

Yet the market gradually failed to supply the country with specialists with relevant qualification because consumers rushed to choose only popular courses such as law, economics, computer science and business management, and consequently the universities, in particular private universities, focused on supplying only those marketable courses to win students and earn income. There has been a pattern in the undergraduate provision of popular courses. For example, if in the early 1990s law and any language were the most popular fields, since 1995 the choice has become more selective and has shifted to English, Japanese and Korean. The reason for this selectivity was connected with the labour demand in the country. The latest trend in language has been English followed by Chinese. This market-driven characteristic was indicated in the documentary sources and responses of the interviewees. This situation created an imbalance in the human resources of the country, a significant feature of market failure. The market failure in the supply of strategically important fields called for state intervention. As a result, by the mid-2000s, the state gradually began to focus on the problem which led to the recent announcement of the priority list of the most needed qualifications, and the admission limit in the fields of social sciences and the humanities. The consequence of this quantitative expansion has been seen as a deterioration in quality because there were not enough qualified academic staff to keep up with teaching, and as a result they have to teach several closely-related subjects. In the name of maintaining the quality and standards, the state has introduced attestation for all institutions and academic programmes in addition to the accreditation process.

In terms of conceptual changes, the aims of curriculum and curriculum content have significantly changed. Interview sources illustrated that the aims of curriculum have been shifted from more academic, or as some people call it 'theoretical, or Russian type', to more 'pragmatic' or a 'more American' model. The latter was viewed as a curriculum focused primarily on producing graduates who are able to apply knowledge and skills in specific areas of employment. The aims of courses were exhibited through the content of curriculum such as knowledge transmission, skills, practical experience, socialisation and personal development. These characteristics were emphasised more by interview sources from private universities. All case universities were inclined to set up combined courses or new courses when new industries were opened up in the country. Youll and Brennan (1988) stated that those institutions most in need of external earnings and an increase in student numbers are more likely to follow this path, and this was so in the case universities studied. This tendency also illustrates the pattern of curriculum change in HEIs in Mongolia that is

moving toward negotiation of subject boundaries identified by Boys & Brennan et al (1988:198-205): growing tendency of multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, combined and modular courses. But the state stepped up to regulate this trend. Another pattern was noted in the curriculum - vocational shift. This was particularly demonstrated in private universities (Chapter 6). The two private universities manoeuvred around the undergraduate curriculum standard in order to make their undergraduate courses more relevant to employment. One demonstration is increasing the credits of English courses (Private University North), or introducing additional credit-earning courses on improving skills (Private University South). Also curricular provision of marketable courses has been regarded by all case universities as an important instrument to recruit well qualified students in maintaining status. Therefore, PR work, promoting existing courses, and setting up new marketable courses were all important activities.

To sum up, the findings of the study demonstrated the rising trend of the market-driven approach in academic programmes in response to consumer demand on the one hand, and on the other hand there is an increasing state coordination policy to steer it in a direction beneficial to the country.

Evaluation: In line with the research aim to investigate the influence of market on curricular provision at undergraduate level, the study researched the nature of change in the supply of programmes in Mongolian universities, and sought the causes of change in academic programmes within the framework of market conditions. The study confirmed that, for the Mongolian HEIs, curricular provision was the core factor in the increase of financial resources, consumer attraction, and an institution's reputation.

The findings suggest that there were both positive and negative impacts of the market on curricular provision in HE. On the one hand, rapid expansion in academic offers could be viewed as an expansion of student choice and academic proliferation of differentiation. On the other hand, the findings showed that this process was uncontrollable due to the state's liberal policy in the beginning of the early market transition. The worst consequence of market forces was the chaos created in Mongolian HE, in particular in curricular content and undergraduate provision. The interview sources and documents indicate this chaotic phenomenon which still persists in the case of state universities. An illustration has been found in the data of State University East where tourism was offered in two different schools: geography and geology, and biology and biotechnology. English, Chinese and Japanese were offered across three different schools: foreign language and culture, international relations and Mongolian studies. But according to the responses in two other case

universities this problem has been eliminated. This type of content overlap must have led to the scattering of resources and poor quality by jeopardising the essence of the field of study. What is more, rapid fluctuation in provision may have led to poor quality although it was not confirmed in the cases studied, based on the findings in documents and interviewees' responses.

The findings of causes for opening new fields were important as these illustrated the strength of the influence over undergraduate provision by either state or market. It was concluded that the market has had strong influence over curricular provision during the early transition, but this has been slightly changed in the middle of the 2000s in favour of the state with increasing state coordination as the interviewees' responses confirm. Nonetheless, the influence of state policy over enrolment in different fields has still not been effective when compared over the last decade. An illustration was that over the last ten years between 2000 and 2011, with regard to enrolment, the fields of social science together with the humanities were taking up 44.1 and 43.2 percent of the market correspondingly, while the fields of natural sciences occupied only 4.9 and 3.2 percent in those years despite government efforts. As these statistics show, there has been a slight market decrease of 0.9 percent in social science and the humanities over a decade, but similarly there is a larger decline of 1.7 percent in the natural sciences. This data supported the interviewees' responses about the fields of social sciences and the humanities dominating curricular provision in terms of the early period of creating a market orientation, and it indicates on the one hand that the influence of the market was stronger than the state intervention. On the other hand, there is a very different picture for 2005. In 2005 the market share of those enrolled in social sciences and the humanities occupied 51.8 percent indicating 7.7 percent of increase compared to 2000, but it decreased by 8.6 percent in 2011. Therefore, it does indicate that the state has influenced academic provision in the last consolidation period. Nonetheless, the state target to increase the enrolment in natural sciences to 3.5 percent by 2010-2011 (Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia 2006-2015) missed it by 0.3 percent, whereas the target to reduce the enrolment in social sciences and the humanities to 34.0 percent is too far away from the goal with its prevalence of 43.2 percent in 2011. However, this data only shows the outcome of the intervention before the introduction of the 2011 priority list by the ministry, and the law on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students in 2011. The outcome of the latest policy might be seen in a few years' time and would be an area of interest to explore further.

8.3 Strengths and Contributions to Knowledge

The significance of the research can be seen in the strengths and original contributions of this study in three areas of knowledge: theoretical or conceptual knowledge, content or factual knowledge and methodological or procedural knowledge.

In respect to theoretical knowledge, this study extends an understanding of the concepts of the 'triangle of coordination' by Clark (1983) and 'market conditions for higher education' by Jongbloed (2003) that have been applied as an overall framework to explain the change in HE market and its influence on HE in relation to curricular provision in Mongolia.

Accordingly, this study contributes to theoretical knowledge in terms of the testing of the two theories applied, as well as theory refinement i.e. from the application of these theories to the Mongolian context

Therefore, the theoretical contributions are claimed in three aspects. First, in the triangle of coordination, the Mongolian HE was positioned for the first time in its two decades of historical development (Chapters 7.3.2): the early period of creating a market orientation and the late period of re-orientation and consolidation. Evidence from the case studies and interviews confirms Jongbloed's (2003) concept that the relationship between the three forces of state, market and academe has not been static but dynamic. What is more, the findings showed that the change in this triangle of relationships was rapid and unstable in the case of transitioning Mongolia whereas this type of change tend to be gradual in developed countries. The purpose of locating Mongolian HE in this triangle was to reveal the existing coordination of three forces and to compare it with other countries to compare. This is important for the country's policy makers, administrators and practitioners, because the HE sector as a whole was studied and this is a useful contribution to policy evaluation. It is timely because the government is now in the process of policy change toward HE and this could provide them with insightful information. This also suggests an implication for further research to see if the case is similar in other post-communist transitioning countries.

Second, in respect to market conditions for HE, the original eight conditions, based on the findings, have been modified and increased to ten to fit the contextual situation in Mongolian HE. This implies that market conditions for HE may vary depending on the very specifics of the country to move and to compete in their home higher education marketplace. Added to that, the study looked at the market conditions (Table 7-6) in terms of the perspectives of historical comparison to see the change in market development and this is a new approach. The purpose of determining the market conditions for Mongolian state and private universities was to identify the freedoms which are considered essential to compete in the

higher education marketplace (Jongbloed, 2003:114). It is also informative for policy makers in their policy decision making because the perspectives of institutional administrators on the issues of supply of programmes, curricular content, admission quota and tuition fees, are useful in their effort of finding the balance of coordination.

The last conceptual contribution is in the findings of comparative analysis because the way different types of universities responded to the change in the HE market could enrich our theoretical understanding. Generally speaking, the significance of the findings was that these institutions were responding to the market in a similar way by expanding their academic offers. It strengthens the theoretical aspect of predominance of the market discourse. In particular, the study confirmed that market appears to have a strong influence on curricular provision (Sauer & O'Donnell, 2007; Karhus, 2009; Browne, 2010; Taylor & Judson, 2011). The causes identified in expanding academic programmes (Table 7-5) could be an addition to the concept of academic choice and patterns of curriculum change, not only in a post-communist context but also in a wider context as universities are engaged in the exchange of academic knowledge for financial resources (Dill, 1999:57).

With respect to content knowledge, there has been a major contribution in terms of insights and factual knowledge of Mongolian HE from the case studies and policy perspectives. This study provides a holistic overview of the status of the HE market and its impact on the Mongolian HE market and curricular change and provision. As there is very little information in this area, this study has filled gaps in the literature both at domestic and international level by opening the path for further research at both levels. Mongolian private universities were examined in case studies for the first time. This is important because the patterns of their development were examined in detail, and informative for future local providers as there is no study on private HE in the country. The study revealed the strength of the growing private sector even though the government wants to reduce its share in the market. An illustration is the increasing percentage of students studying in private universities. Although the government desires to reduce it by 6.7% and wants to maintain it at 25.0 percent in total enrolment (Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia 2006-2015), as of 2011-2012 academic year the student population of the private universities occupied 39.5 percent, with an increase of 6.6 percent compared to that in the 2001-2002 academic year (MES statistics, 2012). This indicates the reality and the strength of the private market in the Mongolian HE market place. Thus the findings of the study about state and private universities with its useful insights are likely to be of interest to government authorities, international organisations and foreign companies in Mongolia, as the issue of human resources for these organisations and companies is one of the most important in particular,

mining companies have become involved in sponsoring students. According to the website information of Mongolia Focus, there are 56 large non-Mongolian mining companies active in Mongolia, but the site states that this list has 'a giant blind spot when it comes to Asian investments in the Mongolian mining sector, especially the many small-to-medium scale investments from China.'

In terms of methodological or procedural knowledge, the findings are trustworthy because the study was based on a rigorous design and analysis despite using conventional approaches. First, it confirmed the value of triangulation. In this study, through triangulation, I was able to carry out less biased investigation, to enhance validity, and to reach a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. The validity of this research was enhanced through methodological and respondent triangulation, and theoretical triangulation with the purpose of providing fresh insights in understanding of the Mongolian HE market. I combined different data sets like information from documents with interview data, in order to get a much more comprehensive picture. Trustworthiness is also increased because I had insights of a variety of respondents to compare their diverging perspectives, not just of a particular group but the perspectives of different types of organisations and people at different levels of responsibility. In order to achieve the objective of the study, I initially reviewed publicly available documents which facilitated in preparing and defining interviews with policy makers and senior administrators. Also exploratory interviews facilitated the design of a much improved follow up in-depth interview for the actual study. In this study, documents and interviews complemented each other providing sources of information that I would not find in others: statements of state policy, organisational values, institutional priorities and a wide range of descriptive statistics were found in documents, and insights into how managers and lecturers in an organisation interpret such values and statements were gleaned through interviews. Second, to enhance the validity of the data analysis from interview data I decided to use an alternative method to double check the computer-assisted coding with manual checks. This approach to the analysis of my interview data also enhanced my confidence in developing themes. Although I used the NVivo programme on the basic level of coding and theme development, it was time efficient. Using NVivo had other advantages, too. First, it was helpful and efficient in arranging and organising interview transcriptions and audio recordings in different folders under various themes by only dragging and dropping, and by looking at and listening to them at the same time when clarification was needed. It was very user-friendly as I can see on screen a number of items at the same time which would be very difficult to do with manual coding. In addition, the same piece of text could be coded at many nodes. Second, it was very useful because of the visual presentation: sources of codes were automatically counted on NVivo, and I could

already see which themes and subthemes were prevailing in interviews during the coding process. Third, I could import and export any document when needed. Fourth, models created from nodes were handy for visualisation and exploration of themes and relationships. Last but not least, as I worked with my data in NVivo, I could create notes about my thoughts on the analysis, or notes about similarities and differences in a Memos folder. Later, during the case analysis, I referred to respondents' transcripts again for each case university. This last stage of procedure was carried out just to double check the themes developed. NVivo was convenient and helpful, however, NVivo is very limited in its usefulness in that it displays all the coded nodes of sources together under one given theme, rather than a complete set of coding for an individual transcript. Therefore, I during my case analysis, in order to check my data analysis, after a period of time, I went back and re-coded blind some of the coding. I rechecked some of the earlier coded examples, took a random sample which I blind re-coded to satisfy myself. There were some uses of slightly different terms but I fundamentally was content. For example, on NVivo I would code a paragraph as 'market positioning', but on my manual transcripts I coded that paragraph as a 'niche'. By using both the computer-assisted data analysis coupled with reflection through manual checks, it improved trustworthiness, credibility and validity of the findings.

8.4 The Limitations of the Study and the Implications for Further Research

I acknowledge that there are limitations in this study in addition to the constraints in time and resources. On the one hand, in terms of methodology, this study was based solely on qualitative research and therefore, there is a potential for doing quantitative studies or mixed method studies based on survey approach using questionnaire, or statistical data while building on these qualitative insights. Then the issues relevant to the market influence on HE, particularly on curricular provision, could be looked in a greater breadth while this investigation is one in depth. This additional research may raise a new or different research question as the current study has covered the context to a great extent.

On the other hand, there are limitations regarding representativeness in relation to sample and scope. First, this study was unable to select all universities in the country as inclusion of all universities is beyond a single person. Second, it was unable to include the second potentially important group of student-consumers as the current study was focused mainly on the perceptions of administrative members of staff therefore, it is important to see the other side of perceptions in relation to freedoms for student-consumers. Consequently the findings are not necessarily transferable or generalisable to all universities in Mongolia. So

based on these limitations, other implications arise for further research. One is replication, so that further research uses the same method as in this study but applies it to other cases including a wider range of respondents. Another is to conduct more in-depth studies to cover a wide spectrum of student perspectives which could contribute to a better understanding of the issues under investigation as this study is my contribution as to what further research could build on these foundations. Further study could also be conducted to investigate if student preferences were pushing the curriculum either to more academic or more vocational treatments.

The study also had limited data on the number of degrees awarded in three case universities. If I had had data on these institutions, it would have been a very interesting insight into the trends, to compare different courses which had been offered and how these had changed over a number of years. Also the ministry's data on enrolments in different areas of study during the 1990s was not available. Instead, I used the data from a study on the education sector by the ministry which covered 2000-2005, and compared these statistics with the 2011 statistics that were available. In this respect, an area of interest to explore further in a few years' time would be to see the outcome and the impact of the latest policy on curricular coordination (the ministry's 2011 priority list and the 2011 law on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students).

Finally, this study is limited to the reflection of an in-depth knowledge of department and programme leaders responsible for undergraduate curricular change and curricular provision in their universities, as, due to the time constraints and resources, it focused only on general changes in academic programmes at a macro level, and determined the reasons for programme expansion. Subsequently, this limitation is seen as giving an opportunity for further research in this area.

8.5 Summary

Overall, this research has contributed to broadening the understanding of the dynamic relationship between state, market and academe, the influence of the market on curricular change in general, and in particular on change in curricular provision. The findings are useful for the insights they give to policy makers, HE administrators and HEIs.

This research has been a collaborative journey of my growth as a researcher. Due to my own slowly changing 'old socialist values' and my professional background achieved free of charge, at first I did not fully advocate the concept of market-steering or marketisation of higher education, especially in my personal context. However, despite my originally rather

negative view, I have come to understand the necessity for the emergence of this phenomenon of market and marketisation in the higher education sector of the country. With my understanding of this issue in greater depth, I present my investigation as a contribution to the field. I have found my research to be an opportunity to reflect on my experience, and I believe I was fully transparent in my investigation, while acknowledging the possibility of my subjectivity and unconscious bias that might have influenced the research. In addition, I must acknowledge that the insights and familiarity of the context helped me better understand and interpret the data during my research. Finally, I must state that the invaluable advice I received from my two supervisors, the courses on methodology I undertook and other training programmes I attended at the University, enabled me to grow into a stronger and more confident researcher.

In this final chapter, I should also mention that I have been following another wave of new rapid developments occurring in the country's higher education. An illustration has been the latest selection process of university rectors in which the government played a significant role. This followed the new structural change led by a new rector at one of the largest universities. In addition, a newly emerging trend of twin programming has been encouraged by the ministry, which began a new ten-year project in collaboration with the Japanese government on engineering and technological higher education to train and upgrade thousands through this type of curricular provision. This new development will lead to a massive curricular reform in mechanical engineering, construction engineering, and electrical and electronic engineering. These developments suggest yet another avenue of inquiry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Model Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Influence of the Market on Curricular Provision by Higher Education Institutions in Mongolia

Name of Researcher: _____Narantuya Jugder_____

Initial the box if you agree with the statement to the left

- 1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/ letter *[delete as applicable]* dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. *Insert contact number here of lead researcher/member of research team (as appropriate).*
- 3 I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential *[only if true]*. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
- 4 I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
- 5 I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the principal investigator should my contact details change.
6. I agree that the interview be audio recorded.

Name of participant Date Signature
(or legal representative)

Lead researcher Date Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated

consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Зөвшөөрөл Хүсэх Хуудас

Судалгааны нэр: Монголын их дээд сургуулийн сургалтын хөтөлбөрт зах зээлийн үзүүлэх нөлөө

Судлаачийн нэр: _____ Жүгдэрийн Нарантуяа _____

Зөвшөөрсөн тэмдэглэгээ хийнэ үү

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Би [.....огноо]- өдөр дээрхи судалгааны тухай мэдээллийн хуудастай уншиж танилцсан ба энэ судалгааны тухай лавлаж асуух боломж надад гарсан. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Би өөрийн сайн дураар оролцож байгаа бөгөөд ямар нэг тайлбаргүйгээр, сөрөг үр дагаваргүйгээр судалгаанд оролцохоос татгалзаж болно гэдгээ ойлгож байна. Хэрэв тодорхой асуултанд хариулах хүсэлгүй бол би түүнд хариулахгүй байх эрхтэй. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Надтай хийсэн ярилцлагыг чанд нууцална гэдгийг ойлгож байна. Миний нэрийг нууцалсан ярилцлагын мэдээлэлд судалгааны багийн гишүүд нэвтрэхийг би зөвшөөрч байна. Миний нэр судалгааны материалтай холбогдохгүй ба судалгааны тайлан, тайлангуудад би таньж мэдэгдэхгүй гэдгийг ойлгож байна. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Надаас цуглуулсан мэдээллийг цаашдын судалгаанд ашиглахыг би зөвшөөрч байна. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Би дээр дурдсан судалгаанд оролцохыг зөвшөөрч байгаа ба миний холбоо барих хаяг өөрчлөгдсөн тохиолдолд мэдэгдэх болно. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Би энэ ярилцлагыг аудио бичлэгт буулгахыг зөвшөөрч байна. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Оролцогчийн нэр

Огноо

Гарын үсэг

Судлаач

Огноо

Гарын үсэг

Оролцогчийн дэргэд гарын үсэг зурж, огноог тэмдэглэнэ

Хуудасны хувь:

Энэ хуудсанд талууд гарын үсэг зурсны дараа, оролцогчид гарын үсэг зурж, огноог тэмдэглэсэн хуудсын нэг хувийг судалгааны мэдээллийн хуудас болон бусад мэдээллийн хамт өгнө. Гарын үсэг зурж, огноог тэмдэглэсэн зөвшөөрөл хүсэх хуудсын нэг хувийг судалгааны үндсэн баримтуудын хамт аюулгүй газар хадгална.

Appendix 2

Model Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title:

The Effect of Market on Curricular Provision by Higher Education Institutions in Mongolia

2. Invitation paragraph

I invite you to take part in this research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

This is a PhD research study. The study attempts to explore and understand the phenomenon of the market for higher education in the context of Mongolia. To identify the cause and effect of the market policy, I will be interviewing people to elicit various perspectives on the issue.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You are chosen for this interview because your work involves activities related to higher education. There are other 24 participants in a similar position recruited for the interview.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to give an interview only once unless otherwise we agree. It will take place in your work place and will last no more than an hour. The recording of the interview will be kept in a safe place with password only access.

7. What do I have to do?

You will be interviewed on the topic of market policy for higher education in Mongolia.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no specific risks or harms arising during the research for you as the interview will be mostly about the information that would be publicly available. However, I will ensure that there is no traceable link: by coding or by not specifying the institutions or departments' names.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for you participating in the project, it is hoped that you could benefit from the research being as a part of the study and contributing to the perspectives on the issue. Conclusions/outcomes of the research in terms of effect of market in higher education could be an interest to you. Summary of the research results may be provided to you if you wish so.

10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. In order to maintain the privacy and anonymity of your participation, I will use codes or other forms of identifiers and the personal information will be kept confidential.

11. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

I will ask questions relevant to market policy for higher education in Mongolia and your thought about its effects on undergraduate programmes for my doctoral research study.

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research will be used only for this doctoral study and you will not be identified in any report.

13. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

14. Contact for further information

Name of the researcher: Narantuya Jugder
 Address in Mongolia: National Academy of Governance, Ulaanbaatar
 Telephone: 976 99021838
 Email: narantuyajugder@yahoo.com

Address in the UK: School of Education
 University of Leeds
 Leeds LS2 9JT
 UK
 Mobile: 07786389179
 Email: edu8jn@leeds.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

Thank you for taking part in the study.

Судалгааны тухай мэдээлэл

1. Судалгааны нэр:

Монголын их дээд сургуулийн сургалтын хөтөлбөрт зах зээлийн үзүүлэх нөлөө

2. Урилга

Таныг энэ судалгаанд оролцохыг урьж байна. Та энэ судалгааг явуулах болсон тухай мэдээллийг цаг гарган уншина уу. Та асуух зүйл байвал лавлан асууж оролцох эсэх шийдвэрээ гаргана уу. Танд баярлалаа.

3. Судалгааны зорилго юу вэ?

Энэ нь докторын зэрэг горилох судалгааны ажил юм. Судалгаа нь Монголын дээд боловсролд нөлөөлж буй зах зээлийн асуудлыг судлахыг зорьж байгаа. Зах зээлийн бодлогын үр нөлөө, үр дагаврыг судлан тогтоохын тулд салбарын хүмүүсээс ярилцлага авна.

4. Яагаад намайг сонгосон бэ?

Таныг дээд боловсролын салбарт, энэ чиглэлээр ажилладаг тул ярилцлагад урьж байна. Тантай адил албан тушаалтай, энэ салбарт ажиллаж байгаа өөр 32 оролцогч мөн ярилцлага өгнө.

5. Би оролцох ёстой юу?

Энэ судалгаанд оролцох эсэхээ та өөрөө шийднэ. Хэрэв та оролцоно гэж шийдвэл энэ мэдээллийн хуудсыг, зөвшөөрөл хүсэх хуудсын (гарын үсгээ зурах) хамт өгөх ба хүссэн үедээ судалгаанд оролцохоос татгалзаж болно. Та татгалзсан шалтгаанаа тайлбарлах шаардлага байхгүй.

6. Хэрэв би оролцвол надад юу тохиолдох вэ?

Бид өөрөөр тохиролцоогүй бол та нэг удаа л ярилцлага өгнө. Ярилцлагыг таны зөвшөөрсөн газар эсвэл ажил дээр чинь нэг цагаас хэтрэхгүй хугацаанд явуулна. Ярилцлагын аудио бичлэгийг зөвхөн нууц үгээр нэвтрэх боломжтой аюулгүй газар хадгална.

7. Би юу хийх ёстой вэ?

Та Монголын дээд боловсролын зах зээлийн бодлогын сэдвээр ярилцана.

8. Энэ судалгаанд оролцсоноор ямар сул тал, эрсдэл бий болох магадлалтай вэ?

Судалгааны явцад ямар нэгэн эрсдэлтэй, хохиролд хүргэх онцгой зүйл гарахгүй юм. Ярилцлагыг ихэвчлэн нийтэд нээлттэй сэдвээр хийнэ. Ярилцлагын бичлэгт тусгай код хэрэглэж, байгууллага, хэлтэс, тэнхмийн нэрийг огт дурдахгүй тул мөрдөж гаргах ул мөр үлдэхгүй болно.

9. Энэ судалгаанд оролцсоны давуу тал юу байж болох вэ?

Хэдийгээр энэ судалгаанд оролцсоноор танд шууд ашиг байхгүй ч судлагдаж буй асуудалд хувь нэмэр оруулснаараа та түүний нэг оролцогч болно. Танд судалгааны дүгнэлт, үр дүн сонирхолтой байвал, таныг хүсвэл үр дүнгийн товчийг танд хүргүүлнэ.

10. Миний судалгаанд оролцсон тухай мэдээллийн нууцыг хадгалах уу?

Судалгааны явцад танаас олж мэдсэн бүх мэдээллийн нууцыг чанд хадгална. Таныг судалгаанд оролцсон хувийн байдлыг болон нэр нууцлалыг тань хадгалахын тулд би тусгай код, бусад төрлийн таних тэмдгийг хэрэглэнэ. Хувийн мэдээллийг чанд нууцална.

11. Надаас ямар мэдээлэл авах вэ? Судалгааны зорилтыг биелүүлэхэд яагаад ийм мэдээлэл цуглуулах хэрэгтэй вэ?

Би танаас зөвхөн докторын судалгаандаа зориулж Монголын дээд боловсролын зах зээлийн бодлогод хамаатай асуулт, түүний баклаврын хөтөлбөрт үзүүлж буй үр нөлөөний тухай таны бодлыг сонирхон асууна.

12. Судалгааны үр дүнг яах вэ?

Судалгааны үр дүнг зөвхөн докторын судалгаанд хэрэглэнэ. Аль ч тайланд таны нууцлалыг хадгална.

13. Миний ярилцлагыг бичлэгт буулгах уу, түүнийг хэрхэн ашиглах вэ?

Судалгааны явцад хийгдсэн аудио бичлэгийг зөвхөн анализ хийхэд ашиглана. Таны бичгээр өгсөн зөвшөөрөлгүйгээр уг бичлэгийг өөр зорилгод хэрэглэхгүй ба судалгааны багийн бус аливаа хүн бичлэгийн эх хувьд нэвтрэх эрхгүй.

14. Цаашид холбоо барих хаяг

Судлаачийн нэр: Жүгдэрийн Нарантуяа
Монгол дахь хаяг: Улаанбаатар, Удирдлагын Академи
Утас: 976 99021838
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Их Британи дахь хаяг: School of Education
University of Leeds
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Танд тус мэдээллийн хуудсын нэг хувийг өгнө.

Судалгаанд оролцсон танд баярлалаа.

Appendix 3

The interview schedule

Topic	<p style="text-align: center;">One:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Questions for Personnel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">from the Ministry and affiliated institutions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Two:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Questions for University Administrators</p>
1. Roles and work context	(1) Can you tell me about your work and your responsibilities? (2) How long have you worked in HE sector?	(1) Can you tell me about your work? (2) How long have you worked for this university?
2. The nature of the changes in Mongolian HE in the context of the market	(1) What kind of changes have taken place in HE of Mongolia in the last 20 years? How has the state policy towards higher education changed during these years? (2) Why do you think all these policy changes are being introduced? What are the reasons? (3) Do you think the government holds a different policy toward the state and private universities? - If yes, to what extent is it different? (4) What do you think of the level of state involvement in the affairs of HEIs?	(1) How has higher education in Mongolia been changed since 1990 in terms of competition, student population and programmes? (2) Can you tell me about your school and the changes taking place in your school? (3) What is your view on private sector emergence in HE? Do you feel there is any policy difference towards state and private HEIs by the Ministry? (4) Do you feel any pressure from the Ministry?
3. The market conditions in Mongolian HE	(1) What do you think of the new entrants to the market? Will the requirements become an obstacle to them? (2) How independent are HEIs in terms of programmes or introducing new specialisations? (3) What do you think of the Ministry establishing an admission quota both for state and private HEIs? (4) What do think of the situation where the state sets a tuition ceiling for universities every year?	(1) What are the sources of income for your university? (Does your university lose academic staff due to the financial restrictions?) (2) How free is your university to set the charges for students (tuition fee, living costs, other service fees such as photocopying etc.)? (3) How do your prospective students obtain the information about the programmes? (4) Why do you think students choose your university? What are the unique aspects of your university?

<p>4. The influence of market on curricular provision at undergraduate level and the causes of change in academic programmes</p>	<p>(1) How do you think these changes have affected the professional fields universities offer? (2) What kind of changes have taken place in the introduction of new programmes at HEIs lately? (3) How autonomous do you think both state and private institutions are in providing new programmes, professions and curricula? (4) Why has the Ministry proposed a list of the most needed qualifications?</p>	<p>(1) What professional fields does your school offer? (2) What is the procedure for obtaining new fields of specialisation? (3) What are the reasons for introducing new courses or programmes? (4) Can an increase in income be one reason for the university to offer more fields? (5) Has your university had to discontinue a course or programme due to its economic non-viability? -If yes, what courses are they? (6) To what extent does the government get involved in introducing new programmes and disciplines such as ? - course content, delivery, assessment, accreditation. (7) What do you think of the state's high priority list of fields? Have you been approached for an opinion?</p>
<p>5. Concluding remarks and inviting any ideas</p>	<p>(1) Is there anything you would like to add in the way of comment, information or advice? (2) Are there any other remarks you would like to make on this issue?</p>	<p>(1) Is there anything you would like to add in the way of comment, information or advice? (2) Are there any other remarks you would like to make on this issue?</p>

Appendix 4

Extract from an interview with one ministry personnel

N: Can you tell me how the state policy toward higher education has been changed, let's say, in the last 20 years?

SA27: As for the state policy, the reform of the legal environment for higher education is important. There have been several changes in laws on higher education and education in general in the past 10 years. All the necessary changes regarding structural and organizational changes have been included in these laws. There are a number of policy documents: the millennium development policy describes the development of HE over the coming 20 years. The last government approved the 'Education National Programme'. It determines a comprehensive educational policy. The policy document on developing universities in campuses was also approved by the last government. This paper addresses all the ideas for developing state universities into research universities, a system for innovation, and creating its legal environment. There is a document on Reform Roadmap for Higher Education developed by the government. The Roadmap brought together all the policy objectives and other important goals in a matrix. In short, both the foundation and the legal environment for future reform of higher education have been created to a certain extent. The last government signed an agreement on a project of financial support for higher education in the years 2010-2016 with the Asian Development Bank. This will be a big assistance in speeding up the reform process.

N: Why do you think all these changes in policies are being introduced? What are the reasons?

SA27: We had the first Higher Education Law in 1995. This was the first year of transition to market system so all necessary educational laws were adopted at that time. At the time of developing these laws, those researchers and policy makers who were involved in this process did not understand market society and social educational relations in the market system well. As a result, norms and standards that did not meet market relations were generally reflected in the laws. The changes made in education laws aim to eliminate those obstacles and misunderstandings and to liberalise higher education to a greater extent. In contrast to earlier legislation, the late policy documents are relatively better because they look to the future. On the other hand, these policy documents were developed by previous governments and it is a political decision if these policies are to be continued by the current new government. This can be seen by the appointment of rectors. One political party would decide that the rectors should be appointed by the state and the minister would appoint them. Then another political party would decide that this position needs to be free of politics and the academic council of universities needs to appoint them. As a result some decisions are changed and may be reversed.

N: Do you mean that the policy on Higher Education is not so stable, and is dependent on politics?

SA27: No. Policy is stable but some elements are not stable. Some elements are influenced by politics such as governance and financing.

N: In the document called the Reform Roadmap 2010-2021, it states that the autonomy of higher educational institutions will be enhanced and strengthened, but that the ministry keeps control of the tuition fees, student numbers and academic programmes What do you think of this?

SA27: These are the objectives. We aim to reach those objectives. Autonomy consists of several elements. First, the issue of governance, composition of the board and appointment of the leadership. Representation on the board is overwhelmed by the state. It needs to be decided within a legal framework. Then the rector's issue. Who will appoint the rector? What is the level of public participation and academic staff? The more the representation of academic staff the more the independence. Next is the issue of some centralisation of power by the ministry, such as tuition fees and financial management. How to transfer the financial autonomy and financial power to universities? Otherwise, the right to hire lecturers, to decide the organisational structure, to select entrants and organise their graduation, to set salaries - all these rights are with the university. As for curricula, only general standards are with the ministry but the right to approve the curricula is under the rectors. There is no restriction on academic freedom.

N: For example introducing a new specialism?

SA27: It is under the ministry's control. It is licensing. It needs to stay under state control. It is impossible to leave this under the power of the university. We are not a developed country. If we leave it up to the university, students' rights may be violated due to the provision of bad quality programmes. All HEIs might take advantage of consumers' demands by introducing new subjects and programmes that do not meet the requirements and standards. This did happen in the early years of the market transition. Therefore, we demand HEIs meet certain conditions and standards when introducing a new specialism or proposing to run a school. This is a licensing system. The question is when to obtain a licence.

N: There is an objective in the Roadmap to motivate university competition. But the government holds a policy to reduce the number of HEIs with the purpose of improving quality, as it has said. What are the relations between these two aims?

SA27: Improving the quality and increasing the competitiveness are the objectives. However, we have a history of only 20 years of market economy. Private higher education has been founded just 20 years ago. They are just in the early stage of development. At that time, private institutions were established very messily. They had few students and the quality was bad. There are still some in existence. The system controlling education consists of three types. First, accreditation. This is based on a voluntary initiative. But state control has been weak. Although the legal environment was

created, the attestation system was not very satisfactory. The last government made a decision to improve the legal environment for attestation which brought positive results. Now attestation is carried out in the name of the state. So we require them to meet the attestation requirements. If you do not meet the attestation requirements demanded by the state, you can no longer operate. As a result, unqualified schools were weeded out by this filter. Even founders agree with these quality requirements. This was a populist type of time during which political parties promoted establishment of new HEIs: both the People's Party and the Democratic Party. Even parliamentary candidates promoted the establishment of HEIs in rural areas in their election programmes. As a result, many private institutions that do not meet licensing requirements were established. This was the state's fault. Those schools are now closed and the founders did not blame the government and did not argue in court. It was a good signal to those who continued to operate and they are now aware of the fact that the state requirements need to be met. This type of attestation process will continue.

N: What do you think of the new entrants to the market? Will these high requirements become an obstacle to them?

SA27: They will not be an obstacle. In fact, the first HEIs were established even though they did not meet any of the requirements. As long as new entrants meet the requirements it is open for them.

Appendix 5

List of the main documents reviewed

STATE POLICY DOCUMENTS	
Transition period to a market orientation 1991-2000	Consolidation period 2001-2012
1991 Education Act of the Peoples' Republic of Mongolia	2002 Renewed Education Law
1995 Education Law of Mongolia	2002 Renewed Higher Education Law 2002 Law on Public Sector and Finance
1995 Higher Education Law of Mongolia	2011 Law on Financing Higher Education and Social Security of Students
1994 Mongolia's Education and Human Resource Master Plan (1994-98)	2001 State Great Ikh Khural Decree No 10, Directions for Privatisation of State Properties 2001-2004
1995 State Great Ikh Khural Decree 06, State Policy towards Education	2002 Minister's Order No 390 of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Mongolian Higher Education Standard Framework
1996 State Great Ikh Khural Decree 26, Mongolia's Development Concepts 1996-2020	2006 Master Plan to Develop Education of Mongolia, Government of Mongolia
1997 Government Resolution No89, Main Directions of Education Reforms for 1997-2005	2008 Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Attestation Regulation for HEIs
	2008 Government Action Programme 2008-2012
	2008 Government Resolution No 12 , National Development Concepts based on Millennium Development Goals of Mongolia
	2010-2021 Government Resolution No 31, Education National Programme
	2010-2021 HE Reform Roadmap
	2010 Government Resolution No 149, Developing Universities in Campuses
	2012 Government Resolution No 19, List of high in demand professions in Mongolia