

## Designing a Conceptual Model of the Third Generation University in System of Distance Education (The Case of: Payame Noor University)

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### Introduction

Universities have experienced different generations in during their lives. The first generation of universities had a purely educational function. The second generation of universities also had a research function. In the third generation, the application of research was considered. The third generation of universities is called the: Entrepreneur University. Third generation universities must be able to be independent and Prepare your graduates to enter in the job market. The purpose of this study is to design a conceptual model for third generation universities in the distance education system.

### Method

The method used in this research is Grounded theory. By using a purposeful sampling method, 46 faculty members of Payame Noor University were select. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews .Then the data were coded by the three-step method in Grounded theory.

### Results

Execution of the open coding step identified 114 concepts. In axial coding stage, concepts were summarized into 23 sub-categories and 8 main categories. Then a paradigm model was drawn with causal conditions (organizational space of university), contextual conditions (organizational

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infrastructure), intervening conditions (autonomy, globalization and effective interactions), central phenomenon (third generation university), strategies (administrative and executive review) and outcome (development-oriented society). Finally, conceptual model of the third generation university was created.

### **Discussion**

Based on the conceptual model obtained, the university should be reviewed. This review should be done in the field of university hardware and software. Therefore, changes in strategies, perspectives, facilities and equipment are necessary for the third generation. In this case, the university can be a factor in the comprehensive development of society. To achieve this, the university must support from the new ideas and creativity of its staff. Also, creative beliefs in the workplace should replace routine beliefs. In the field of hardware, the necessary equipment to develop the talents of employees should be provided to them. In addition, the university must have a good relationship with other universities and other sections of society. To become a third-generation university, administrative approaches must become more flexible and educational policies must change. The new needs for educational and research should be known and based on those needs, educational and research goals should be set. By making these changes, the university will be on the path of economic and social development which creates innovative products and creative services. Finally, the establishment of this type of university leads to sustainable development in society.

**Keywords:** Conceptual model; Third Generation University; system of high and distance education; Grounded Theory.

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**Author Contributions:** Mohammad Moshki Hassan Abad has planned general framework, initiated the project, executed the plan, analyzed the results, and reported the findings. Dr. Mahmood Ekrami and Dr. Ahmad Karimi Dashtaki provided the theoretical framework of the study and directed the overall research process. Dr. Hossein Hafezi collaborated in general framework planning and analyzing of conceptions, conclusions, manuscript content editing, submission and correction and the corresponding author. Authors discussed the results, reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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