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Journey into Higher Education: A study of postgraduate Indian students' experiences, as they make the educational journey, to a new teaching and learning environment in the UK

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ABSTRACT

In recent years the number of postgraduate students from India studying in the United Kingdom (UK) has significantly increased, bringing substantial economic benefits to the higher education sector and the wider economy. In particular, Indian students studying on postgraduate programmes in the UK form the largest group of postgraduate students (58%), which is forecast to grow annually, by 3.1%, until 2024 (British Council, 2014; HESA, 2018). However, increasing international competition along with evolving government restrictions on student immigration and the decision to leave the European Union (EU), has put the sector in a very vulnerable position. Currently, there are various groups of international students who have come from different academic backgrounds and encountered various challenges moving to an unfamiliar Teaching and Learning Environment (TLE). Hence it is crucial that Higher Education Institutions (HEI) understand from a student perspective, the issues and challenges that students experience, so that they can design and implement appropriate support strategies which facilitate the needs of different cohorts of students.

The search for specific studies carried out on Indian postgraduate students' educational experience into HEI in the UK has generated few results. Indeed much of the research that currently exists about international students' educational experience has centred on specific aspects of transition such as: widening participation, social and academic integration, retention, and the social and academic institutional systems that support students and transition as a process and permanent state (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016; Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke and Longden, 2008). However, this study makes an attempt to move the discussion forward by viewing transition as an educational process rather than as an outcome.

By viewing transition as an educational journey, it allows the researcher to capture student's experiences as they make their "journey" from one TLE to another. This Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) study focuses on

capturing the educational experiences of a group of Indian students who have chosen to study on various postgraduate degree programmes within a Business School at a Scottish university. The study follows the students' educational journey, as they move from their previous TLE to a new TLE in the UK. Using a purely qualitative approach to gather data, the research captures students' experiences as they journey into a new TLE in the UK, thus allowing the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of the issues and challenges through the voices of students.

Research data were gathered using two sets of unstructured interviews, which were conducted at two critical points in the students' journey. There were six students interviewed at two different stages and each interview lasted between one to one and half hours. Subsequently, the data was analysed using thematic analysis which identified six specific themes that are presented and discussed. The findings suggest the issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students experience when they made the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. The findings also reveal that the support strategies implemented by the host institution were not effective in helping students to successfully adapt to their new TLE. The study makes a contribution to knowledge in three ways. Firstly, it moves the discussion forward by allowing the study of transition from a different perspective such as an educational journey that captures students' experiences. Secondly the study contributes to knowledge by extending the stages of transition to include students previous TLE. Thirdly, it provides a detailed information about the differences in the TLE between India and the UK.

The findings from the study are presented and include: three pre-arrival findings and three post arrival findings. The pre-arrival findings included students' motivations for studying in the UK, the characteristics of participants' previous teaching and learning environments (TLE) and their expectations and level of preparedness for studying in the UK. The second set of findings present the issues and challenges that students encountered in the new TLE and the level of engagement they had with support systems at the host

institution. Finally, the study presents four recommendations which include, a new induction and student support programme, implementation of student support strategies prior to studying in the UK, enhance staff awareness of Indian students' educational background and the introduction of a pre-arrival website. These recommendations are based on the needs of Indian students, with some ideas being unique because they were suggested by the students themselves. These can be used to inform the host HEI, the lecturers who teach these students, as well as the wider academic community

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List of Abbreviations

TLE: Teaching and Learning Environment

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HES: Higher Education Sector

SCTL: Student Centred Teaching and Learning

Acknowledgements

Chapter One: Introduction, Background and Context of Research

The purpose of this study was to obtain an understanding of Indian postgraduate students' experiences, as they make the educational journey from their previous teaching and learning environment (TLE) to a new teaching and learning environments (TLE) in the UK. The information gathered from Indian postgraduate students' experiences will help provide a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges the students encounter when they make an educational journey from their previous TLE to a new TLE in the UK.

1.1 Background

The number of international postgraduate students studying in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom (UK) has been growing at a rapid rate with more than 442,375 international postgraduate students studying on full time programmes outside their home countries in 2016/17 (HESA, 2018). The flow of international students has become a prominent student group and a lucrative market that generates £4.8 billion in tuition fees for UK universities, as well as an annual contribution of £25 billion to the UK economy (Universities UK, 2018). Indeed, these substantial figures, along with continuous cuts in government funding, demonstrates the importance of retaining such prominent markets. Currently, the USA and the UK are ranked as both having the world's strongest higher education systems (HESA, 2018). However, whilst the UK previously enjoyed an unrivalled position in the international higher education sector, the market is now inundated with competitors from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, who all offer an equivalent standard of education. Nonetheless, the USA has become the most popular destination, with the UK following closely behind. The largest group of students studying in the UK, come from China and the second largest group of students come from India (HESA, 2018). Both are expected to remain the largest in the marketplace until 2024 (British Council, 2014).

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the number of international students studying in the UK has been slowly declining since 2012 (HESA, 2018). A major contributing factor is the current immigration reforms, which have created a substantial amount of bureaucracy around student immigration, and consequently led to a decline in student numbers from India and many other countries (Universities UK, 2018). That said, despite these political challenges, the higher education sector (HES) in the UK, has managed to successfully maintain a strong international reputation, with the Home Office recently reporting a modest 27% increase in student visas being granted to Indian nationals in 2018 (HESA, 2018). Despite the slight increase, student numbers still have a long way to go to recover from the previous level in 2012. However, it is important to recognise that they are growing and that the UK is still considered an attractive destination for many international students to study. Indeed, India is forecast to be the fastest growing source of international postgraduate students, with numbers expected to rise from 88,000 in 2012 to 209,000 in 2024 (British Council, 2014). Nonetheless, there are other factors that are causing concerns in the HES, including the UK's decision to exit the European Union in 2016. Undoubtedly, this has caused some uncertainty regarding funding from the European Union (EU) for EU students, hence, there is a real pressure for HEI in the UK to not only retain their share of the European market, but also continuously maintain and improve the existing international student numbers from Non-European markets. Evidently, in this fiercely competitive environment it is crucial that HEI in the UK provide an excellent experience for all students. Hence, there is a need to understand from a student perspective, what issues and challenges they experience, Therefore HEIs can design and implement the appropriate support strategies that facilitate the needs of different cohorts of students.

1.2 Context

This study is set in the context of Scotland where the number of Scottish students studying in HEI has been continuously declining, due to a decreasing national population that shows no signs of changing in the foreseeable future. The Scottish HES has been able to respond to the demographic shortfall by

recruiting international students from various countries. In Scotland there were 241,935 international students who studied in various HEI in 2016/17, with 26,090 of them being registered on postgraduate programmes. Indeed, international students are a lucrative market that generates an income of £488 million from student fees and a further £441 million to the Scottish economy 2016/17 (UKCISA, 2018). In terms of postgraduate programmes, international students account for 58% of the overall number of students studying at postgraduate level. More specifically, Indian students are the biggest market and the numbers are forecast to grow annually, by 3.1%, until 2024 (British Council, 2014), with 64% of them choosing to study on Business Administration programmes (HESA, 2018).With the growing number of international students studying in HEI in the UK an abundance of research has emerged, which has examined international students' transitions from varying perspectives. However, previous research has generally centred around specific aspects of transition, such as: widening participation, social and academic integration, retention, and the social and academic institutional systems which support students, institutional transition and transition as a process and permanent state (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016, Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke an d Longden, 2008), Despite the plethora of research, none of these conceptualisations capture the students' own experience as they move from one TLE to another, yet previous research advocates the need to understand students' previous TLE (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016, Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke an d Longden, 2008), Therefore, an overarching framework for understanding this particular phenomenon is limited. More specifically, no study has been conducted to explore the experiences and educational journey of Indian postgraduate students as they move to a new HEI in the UK:

1.3 Significance of this Study

This DBA thesis is important in the sense that Indian postgraduate students constitute the largest percentage of international postgraduate students in the UK (British Council, 2014; HESA, 2018). Similar to many international

students, these students may face a variety of issues, such as adapting to the new teaching and learning styles, language barriers, difficulties adapting to independent learning and engaging in critical thinking. However, by following the educational journey of students and capturing and documenting their experiences, it can create a deeper understanding of the specific issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students encounter as they move from their previous TLE to a new TLE in the UK. Indeed, remaining competitive and enhancing the quality of education has become a priority for most HEIs in the UK. Consequently, HEIs need to understand, from a student perspective, what issues and challenges different groups of international student experience, so that they can respond to the specific needs of different cohorts of students. If HEIs are to remain a competitive student destination for Indian postgraduate students, then they need to provide an attractive higher education experience. This thesis makes a significant contribution to practice in terms of the findings, recommendations and conclusions which are offered in anticipation that they are used by HEIs to respond to the issues and challenges encountered by Indian postgraduate students studying in the UK and other western HEIs.

1.4 Motivations for this study

I have been employed as a university lecturer for eighteen years at three Scottish universities, which have predominately engaged with international partnerships in India, Hong Kong, Nepal, Singapore and Switzerland. As a university lecturer some of my responsibilities include, teaching students from various countries at home and overseas in the partner institutions. This current study has developed firstly from my role as a university lecturer, teaching various international groups of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and secondly through my role as programme leader for various partnerships between India and the UK. During my role as programme leader for India, I encountered many challenges in managing the programme, which ranged from a high level of failure, to low marks and a significant number of plagiarism cases. In fact, a common perception emerged among teaching staff that Indian students were weak writers, had poor language skills and were ill prepared for HE in the UK. Indeed, many lecturers criticised them because

they were frustrated with the low level of performance and additional work it created through re-assessments and academic misconduct investigations. However, over time, I started to notice similar patterns of academic behaviour and conduct from Indian postgraduate students who also appeared to have comparable academic issues. Granted, many of these issues may affect other groups of students to varying degrees, but the commonalities between Indian undergraduate and postgraduate students were extremely noticeable.

The teaching team responded to these issues by implementing various workshops related to good academic practice and the university designed various support classes that could help all international students with approaches to assessments and good academic practice. However, despite the various efforts, the situation did not change and many Indian students went home, and still go home, without gaining the qualification of a British degree, or a postgraduate degree. From a personal perspective, this was very difficult to observe because it was clear that, despite the academic interventions, students were not just struggling academically, but also personally. Indeed, this was very frustrating, and led to a curiosity about Indian students' educational experiences in their home institutions. Indeed, I had worked and travelled to India for thirteen years on a regular basis yet was completely unaware of Indian students' experience in their previous TLE. The teaching team at the host HEI, including myself, were only exposed to the frustration and anxiety that students encountered and there was never any explanation of why these issues and challenges were occurring with this group of students.

This reflection led me to contemplate whether the differences in TLE could explain why some Indian students found it difficult to make the journey into a higher new TLE in the UK. I also reflected on whether the support strategies and mechanisms implemented by the host institution were effective in helping Indian students to make a successful transition into their new TLE. Over time, I realised that there was a need to gain a more focused and holistic understanding of Indian postgraduate students' experiences, and the best way to find out why these issues and challenges were happening was to give students a voice. This DBA thesis was used as a platform to explore these issues and challenges and to help develop a better understanding of Indian

postgraduate students' experiences in a new TLE in the UK. It was hoped that the findings from the study could help to inform the design of appropriate support strategies that can better prepare Indian postgraduate students for a new TLE in the UK.

1.5 Aim and objectives of the research

The aim of this study is to explore postgraduate Indian students' experiences, as they make the educational journey to a new teaching and learning environment in the UK

In order to meet the aim, four research objectives will guide the study:

- To understand the experiences of the Indian postgraduate students' journey from their previous teaching and learning environment, to a new teaching and learning environment in the United Kingdom;

- To investigate and explore the ways in which students' previous teaching and learning environment influence their educational journey into the new one in the United Kingdom;

- To design a conceptual model that explores the issues and challenges and evaluates the effectiveness of existing support strategies for Indian postgraduate students in the host higher education institution.

- To identify the key factors that influence Indian postgraduate student's educational journey and to develop a set of recommendations for practitioners and higher education institutions.

1.6 Research Design

A single university was chosen as the study location and a qualitative enquiry method was adopted to capture students' experiences. The data was gathered from twelve interviews, which were undertaken at two critical points

in the students' journey to a new TLE in the UK. The sample included a cohort of six students, who undertook two interviews each, and studied their undergraduate degrees in various universities in India, and subsequently chose to undertake various postgraduate degrees in a Business School, in Scotland in 2017/18. The study adopts a constructivist ontological and subjectivist epistemological view because these perspectives helped to focus on exploring, understanding and interpreting the experiences of students, as they journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. This study explores Indian postgraduate students' experiences through a set of two unstructured interviews, which were conducted at two critical points in the students' journey, thus twelve interviews were conducted. The unstructured qualitative interviewing method adopted in this study was crucial in providing students with a voice and, hence the interviews offer more in-depth and accurate information about the experiences Indian postgraduate students encountered as they made the journey to a new TLE.

1.7 Contributions

This study draws on literature from various educational streams including transition, teaching and learning environments, student support strategies and international students. The research surrounding transition has yet to be conceptualised or applied as an educational journey, hence this study offers a unique perspective to enhance existing research in the field. This study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge because it focuses on capturing students' experience rather than focusing on what currently exists in the literature, such as: widening participation, social and academic integration, retention, and the social and academic institutional systems which support students, institutional transition and transition as a process and permanent state (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016, Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke an d Longden, 2008). Despite the plethora of research, none of these conceptualisations capture the students' own experience as they move from one TLE to another, yet previous research advocates the need to understand students previous TLE (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and

Steven, 2016, Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke an d Longden, 2008).

This study not only considers transition as an educational journey that captures students' experiences, but it moves beyond the traditionally accepted stages of transition to include students previous TLE as part of the educational journey. In doing so, the study identifies the key differences in the TLE between India and the UK. The study makes a contribution to knowledge in three ways. Firstly, it moves the discussion forward by allowing the study of transition from a different perspective such as an educational journey that captures students' experiences. Secondly, the study contributes to knowledge by extending the stages of transition to include students' previous TLE. Thirdly, it provides detailed information about the differences in the TLE between India and the UK. By filling these gaps in the literaure the conceptualisation of transition is stronger.

1.8 Structure of Thesis

Chapter Two: Historical Background of Higher Education in India

The purpose of chapter two is to provide context about the HES in India and to present details about three important historical periods that have helped shape and influence the development of the HES in India. The discussion begins with a description of the ancient Indian educational system and highlights its uniqueness and similarities to the teaching and learning practices being used in higher education today. The second stage looks at the development of the colonial educational system and the reasons behind its implementation by the British, before discussing its connection to the widespread problems that currently exist in HES in post-colonial India. Moreover, this chapter would not be complete without a discussion on the motivational factors that influenced Indian students to pursue a postgraduate education in the UK. A discussion about the historical development, current issues and motivation factors are important because they help to provide some contextual information regarding the HES in India, which is not widely known in the west.

Chapter Three: A Critical Review of the Literature on Transition and Teaching and Learning Environments

This chapter critically examines past and current literature related to transition, teaching and learning environments and student support strategies. The chapter starts with a review of literature related to transition in the HES before moving the discussion toward the transition of international students. Thereafter, the chapter identifies the important relationship between transition and international students' previous TLE, before evaluating the differences between the TLE in India and the UK. The remainder of the chapter will focus on international students' experience of the support strategies which are implemented by HEIs in the UK. The gaps identified within the current literature highlight that there is a limited amount of research conducted within the HES, especially from the perspective of students' experience and educational journeys.

Chapter Four: Philosophy, Methodology, Methods and Analysis

The focus of this chapter is to discuss the constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological views of the researcher and its influence on how knowledge is constructed in terms of the research design. The chapter also presents, discusses and justifies the choice of research design, in relation to the sample used in the study, the data collection procedures and the data analysis processes and considers its appropriateness in terms of achieving the aims and objectives of the study. Finally, the chapter considers the trustworthiness and credibility of the research, as well as highlights the values, neutrality and ethical concerns.

Chapter Five and Six: Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Chapter Five and Chapter Six relate to the results of data analysis and identifies six specific themes that are presented and discussed. Chapter Five relates to the pre-arrival themes and Chapter Six relates to the post-arrival

themes. The pre-arrival findings included students' motivations for studying in the UK, the characteristics of participants' previous teaching and learning environments (TLE) and their expectations and level of preparedness for studying in the UK. The second set of findings presents the issues and challenges that students encountered in the new TLE and the level of engagement they had with support systems at the host institution. The aim is to discuss the research findings with the relevant literature, in order to build a deeper understanding of Indian postgraduate experiences, and to highlight the implications of these results for the future development and practice in HEIs, as well as contribute to the creation of academic knowledge.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter concludes and summarises the research and confirms that the aim and objectives of the DBA study are accomplished. The final chapter summarises the key findings and discusses the accomplishment of the study's objectives. It also highlights the theoretical and practical implications of the study and proposes a set of recommendations unique to this study. The chapter also addresses the limitations and weaknesses of the research, before finally concluding the chapter.

1.9 Conclusion

The previous discussion highlights the area of interest for the proposed research. It is suggested that research surrounding transition has yet to be conceptualised or applied as an educational journey, hence this study offers a unique perspective to enhance existing research in the field. The gaps within the literature are acknowledged and it is argued that by following the students' journey, a deeper understanding of the subject area within the context of the HES will be achieved.

Chapter Two: Historical Overview of Higher Education in India

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of chapter two is to present the details of three important stages that have influenced and shaped the development of higher education in India. The discussion begins with a description of the ancient Indian educational system and highlights its uniqueness and influence on other parts of the world. The second stage looks at the development of the colonial educational system and the reasons behind its implementation by the British, before discussing its connection to the widespread problems that currently exist in HES in India.

2.2 Ancient Curriculum

The indigenous system of higher education, which evolved in different parts of the subcontinent, can be traced back to the ancient Indus, or Vedic Period, which flourished from the 5th to the 12th century. The ancient system of higher education was unique because it was moulded and shaped more by the Hindu religion, than by any political or economic influences. (Nachimuthu 2006; Jayapalan, 2000: Joshi and Gupta, 2017). Historical studies reveal that the ancient system was derived mainly from religious writings and scriptures (Vedas) by the sages (Gods) and taught by the Brahmins or Brahmanas from the Vedas and the Upanishads (Baker, 1969). The Vedas (Appendix 1: Four Vedas), which means knowledge in Sanskrit, are a large body of texts containing hymns, poems, and ceremonial formulae originating in Ancient India. They are the sacred texts of Hinduism, containing spiritual knowledge, that form the codes of conduct for human life, and serve a similar purpose as a curriculum in current higher education institutions. The Vedas consider four important stages of life, which are known as the Ashramas. The four stages include the Brahmacharya (bachelor student), the Grihasthas (householder) and Vanaprasthan (retired). The final stage, which only a minority of people

pass through, is the Sanyasashram (spiritual), which refers to the renunciation of all worldly and material pursuits to live a life of spirituality (Gupta, 2017).

2.3 Principles of Learning; body, mind and spirit

Studies reveal that the aim of the Vedic education was for individuals to reach emancipation through detaching themselves from worldly matters and activities. Nevertheless, this could only be reached through sravana, llistening to the words, or texts of the guru, or teacher, manana, which means reflection on the topic, and nididhyasana, which is the meditation and leads to self-realisation (Sheshagiri, 2008). Indeed, there has always been a deep level of sacredness associated with teaching and learning in India and this is still reflected in the various ceremonies which are connected to the different stages of an individual's education. However, the underlying principle of knowledge is the idea that true empowerment can only happen if the sources of knowledge and its components are understood, thus leading to unity with the universe. Many historians therefore consider Vedic education as more than just an educational system; it is a way of life, focused on the acquisition of knowledge and in developing a person's wisdom by forming a connection between body, mind and spirit. As can be seen from Appendix:2 (Aim and objectives of Vedic education) the Vedic education system offered a combination of vocational education and religious education, wherein master craftsmen and artisans taught their skills to younger students who trained under them. These unique characteristics therefore helped to create a balance between real life occupation and skill as well as higher thinking and philosophy (Altekar,1944; Nachimuthu. 2006).

Several historical studies state that it took twelve years for students to master the vedas, and during this period the students built a close relationship with their teacher, who taught them in accordance with their aptitude and capabilities (Crookes, 2009; Sheshagiri, 2008). The teaching methods consisted of the verbal method to memorise the mantras (hymns) and the Chintan, a method which means thinking, and were used to ensure that the

Richayas (versus) were preserved in their original form. Studies confirm that Vedic education was not merely confined to memorising the sacred texts. In fact, contemplation and understanding of their meaning were considered far more important than simply memorising the texts word for word (Sheshagiri, 2008). Thus, learning was focused on gaining a deep understanding that involved reflection, critical analysis/questioning and evaluation, which are important components of modern higher education in the west.

2.4 Ancient Teaching Activities

In the early part of the Vedic period, Vedas were usually taught at gurukuls which is a type of residential education that involves students being educated under the guidance of a guru on different areas of religion and philosophy, and latterly on vocational education (Nachimuthu. 2006; Joshi and Gupta, 2017). The system of education was rather informal because there were no fixed hours for teaching and learning or prescribed methods. Historical accounts dictate that during this period the guru was held in high esteem by students and was regarded as a friend, a philosopher, a spiritual and inspirational person who was their guardian, who helped mould their morals, values and knowledge. Specifically, the guru's role was to stimulate the student's mind and offer views that encouraged them to develop new ways of thinking through methods of debate, such as individual and group discussion, speculation and argument, which are currently used in western higher education today. However, if the guru could not answer questions, it was common for them to refer the students to more experienced gurus, sometimes even travelling to other parts of the world to attend large debates. Indeed, the relationship was based on mutual respect and equality, with the guru encouraging the student to be interactive and participative and to ask questions and express their own opinions, which, again, is similar to western higher education today.

2.5 Ancient Universities

Nonetheless, as the Vedic educational system became more advanced and prevalent, religion based higher learning centres were established throughout the subcontinent. In fact, based on many archaeological and literary experts

such as Altekar (1944) and Ghosh (2017), it is claimed that the modern concept of universities was first established during the Vedic period with the establishment of ancient educational institutions such as Takshila, which was constructed in the 5th century and is now considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Figure 1:Takshila University, Pakistan

(Sourced: Takshila, 2018)

Indeed, many scholars argue that these prominent centres of learning had an extraordinary influence and resemblance to the European medieval universities, such as the ancient university of Bologna, established in the 10th Century, and Cambridge, which was established in the 12th century (Nachimuthu, 2006, Joshi and Gupta, 2017; Harshananda, 2007). Furthermore, at their peak, the Takshila and Nalanda were extremely successful in attracting tens of thousands of students from countries such as Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia and Persia (Allekar, 1965; Sastri, 1986). Several historical studies state that various subjects were incorporated into the curriculum of Vedic education, including philosophy, agriculture, science, chemistry, mathematics, surgery, politics, astronomy, commerce, music, and dance, and structural engineering and architecture etc. (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakurl and Berwal, 2008). However, as the curriculum expanded, so did the nature of the pedagogies which went from being oral and

repetitive to include lectures and discussion, dialogue and debates in seminars, which historians believe evolved in India (Allekar, 1965; Sastri,1986; Harshananda, 2007). Indeed, forms of learning also adapted in ancient India to include critical analysis, introspection, story-telling, peer learning, question and answer method (Crookes, 2009; Sheshagiri, 2011), which are all used today in western universities.

Certainly, ancient temples such as those in Karnataka, Odisha Tamilnadu, and Khajuraho, demonstrate the advanced knowledge and expertise which ancient Indians had in terms of architecture, structural engineering, and mathematic. In fact, since their discovery various historians, religious scholars, art historians, photo-journalists, archaeologists, architects and sociologists have discussed, debated and tried to explain the existence of these temples, and the precision and skill that went into the architectural design and construction. Figure 2 depicts a picture of the Temples of Khajuraho, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site which were constructed between 950 -1050 BC.

Figure 2. Temples of Khajuraho

(Sourced: Khajuraho, 2018)

Over the centuries, many of the greatest minds around the world have studied this ancient civilisation and tried to understand the extraordinary legacy that they left behind, particularly in terms of their advanced knowledge about architecture, structural engineering, mathematics, linguistics, mathematic,

logic, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine. Indeed, many experts have attempted to uncover the teaching and learning practices of that period, and many highlight the similarities with practices being used in higher education today. Indeed, it can be seen that the Vedic education system was deeply rooted in the same ethos which many western universities abide by today, which is putting students at the centre of all teaching and learning practices in order to encourage deep critical thinking and independent thinking and learning. Yet, despite ancient India's rich tradition of teaching and learning, the country now has an educational system that is rated twenty-fourth in the world, with the top university, "The Indian Institute of Science", being placed at three hundred in the world university rankings (HESA, 2018). Indeed, this is quite a surprising demise given the education history, but the discussion so far does provide some insight into the advanced educational system that was prevalent in India, long before any invasions or colonisation. Likewise, it also demonstrates the similarities to western education today.

2.6 Demise of the Vedic Education System

Unfortunately, the ancient civilisation was not to last and it was conquered by the Islamic Mughal Empire. However, it is important to note that the Vedic educational system still continued to flourish and exist under the Mughal rule for three centuries.

While the discussion surrounding the historical development of the ancient education system in India is extremely interesting and deserves recognition, it does not represent the main focus of this study. Nevertheless, the Vedic period is relevant to this study because it acknowledges an educational system in India that was so advanced for its time, that its principles are reflected in the ethos of many western universities today. This raises questions about why it was changed in the first instance and whether such a sophisticated system could be reintroduced. The answers to these questions are debateable, and although the next two sections to some extent address them, it is by no means an in-depth discussion because that is beyond the realms of this study. However, what the previous discussion does provide, is an understanding of an educational system that reflects many of the components of modern higher

education in the west. Indeed, this is a system that should have advanced and progressed, yet it was eradicated with the arrival of the British who did not want a society of free-thinking people (Allekar 1965; Harshananda, 2007).

Certainly, many historians argue that by deliberately sabotaging the thriving educational system in India, it was much easier for the colonists to gain physical subjugation of such a vast and diverse country. Regardless of the reasons, a debate on this complex subject is outwith the scope of this study. However, it is important to recognise that the introduction of the new colonial education system was inextricably linked to a political agenda to take control of the country (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Indeed, this was the first time that Indian education had ever become influenced by any political or economic motive (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012).

2.7 Colonial Education in India

It is important to emphasise that when the British replaced the network of indigenous schools with a colonial system of education, it was never the intention to develop a robust education system or provide investment in anything that did not directly benefit the British colonist (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012). The British, who had initially come to India as traders through the East India Company, had subsequently become rulers and administrators, who eventually influenced the economic, political and educational systems of the country (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Certainly, it is widely recognised in historical literature that the education policy of the British colonial rule on India developed over three periods; the first period (1757-1813), the second period (1813-1860) and the third period (1860 onwards) (Gosh, 2013). During the first period of colonial rule, education suffered enormously because the East India Company was not interested in education and failed to provide the necessary grants to support educational institutions (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Nevertheless, during the second period, the renewal of the East India Company's contract by the British Crown imposed strict conditions that ensured the company reserved monetary resources to

support education. Nonetheless, the policies were never intended to bring about deep change within Indian society and resources were only used to maintain oriental colleges and student scholarships (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). However, the third stage witnessed the expansion of British power in the subcontinent and the formation of a rote based educational system that developed a supply of qualified Indian manpower to support the administration of law and order in the subcontinent Gosh, 2013).

Indeed, the rich cultural heritage and ancient methods of teaching and learning did not impress the colonial rulers who, despite the advances in education, regarded the natives as being intellectually and socially inferior (Allekar 1965; Harshananda, 2007). Moreover, the British did not consider the Indian educational system beneficial to them and they changed it in order to support their own agenda. Subsequently, there were British style universities constructed in Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai). These universities were established in 1857 and were based on the same model as the University of London. Nevertheless, the universities were under strict control of the colonists and, while the Indian universities focused on delivering subjects such as languages, literature, history and philosophy, other universities around the world were developing the fields of modern science and engineering, which, ironically, were prevalent in the Indian education system for many centuries (Basu, 2008. Gosh, 2013). Furthermore, despite the limited number of academic courses, the subjects were based around the British curriculum, which at the time favoured the rote learning method. Thus, it was ensured that society's thinking was only developed enough to follow the instructions of the rulers. Moreover, the language of instruction was English, which was subsequently adopted and used as the official language in the education system, the legal system and commerce, and, incidentally, is still in use today (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakurl and Berwal, 2008). Similarly, the rote learning educational system implemented by the British colonists continued to expand across India for the next one hundred years, despite criticism from great contemporary philosophers such as Aurobindo, Vivekananda and Tagore, who understood that the system did not

support national interest. Indeed, by the time India gained its independence, the country inherited an educational system with great educational disparities between men and women, upper and lower classes, and urban and rural populations. Moreover, there were lower caste people in society who had become impoverished and illiterate, yet the British have never accepted responsibility for this or any other colonial atrocity (Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Certainly, the systematic destruction of the Indian education system renders some sort of an apology and moral responsibility to help them rebuild an educational system that is comparable to other countries around the world.

2.8 Post-colonial Education in India

After Independence, in 1947, the Government of India was distracted with problems and issues related to post-partition. However, the leaders recognised that, in order to create socio-economic stability and encourage development, a strong educational system that created innovative leaders and a skilled and educated workforce was imperative. Consequently, a commission was established by two government organisations to review the entire education system in the country, resulting in a growth strategy to increase the number of schools, colleges and universities, which was only possible by allowing the private sector to enter the market. The strategy was successful in that there was a huge increase in the number of higher education institutions in India, but it also resulted in many other problems in terms of the levels of quality throughout the education sector (Harbinson and Mayers, 1964; Kumar, Anuj and Ambrish, 2015). The table below demonstrates the increase in the number of higher education institutions from 1951-2015;

Table 1. Increase in Higher Education Institutions in India

Year	Number of Universities	Number of Colleges
1951-1961	22	695
1971-1981	123	4,722
1982-1991	131	4,886
1991-2001	176	7,121
2001-2010	523	33,023
20010 – 2015	799	39,071

(Source; Statistics of Higher and Technical Education, 2015)

As can be seen from the above figures, since Indian independence, the increase in the number of higher education institutions has been significant. Simultaneously, the sector has also seen a huge diversification in terms of the programmes of study, in comparison to what was offered during the colonial period. The table below shows the different programmes that are offered in Indian higher education institutions.

Table 2: Student Numbers by Programme of Study in India

Programme of Study	Student Numbers	Programme of Study	Student Numbers
Arts	6,143,959	Medicine	508,950
Science	2,822,623	Agriculture	80,438
Commerce Management	2,607,638	Veterinary Science	20,4754
Education	366,621	Law	343,688
Eng./Technology	1,510,762		

(Source; Statistics of Higher and Technical Education, 2015)

Nonetheless, as the number of higher education institutions grew and diversified, the more complex issues became, including the lack of places in schools, colleges and universities to cope with the enormous and increasing demand (British Council, 2014). In addition, the emergence of different political

parties and subsequent corruption contributed toward a sub-standard and ineffective education system that is incomparable to either its own previous rich heritage or current global academic standards (British Council, 2014). Specifically, several researchers and educationalists such as Aggrawal, (2015), Chakrabarty (2011) and Sheikh (2017) have for many decades raised concerns about the quality of higher education in India, from both a global and domestic perspective. Indeed, it is well documented that rote learning is deeply ingrained and widespread throughout the entire educational system in India. This is discussed further in Chapter 6.

However, even though the government has made significant efforts to improve the higher education system, many of the documented issues are still prevalent today (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). Research related to the higher education sector in India indicates that it is plagued by low rankings in the global educational sector, poor standards of academic teaching and research, a shortage of infrastructure and poor and limited usage of technology, a shortage of educated and trained teachers, overcrowded classrooms and the delivery of an outdated and rigid curriculum (Aggrawal, 2015; Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Sharma and Sharma, 2015; Singh, 2011). Nonetheless, there have been several attempts to reform the Indian education system, but the results have been rather minimal and costly. Moreover, there are government groups who are campaigning to re-introduce the Vedic educational system, but the reality of that occurring could take generations and cost billions. Certainly, the current situation raises questions about whether the UK has some sort of an ethical responsibility towards supporting the Indian government. Perhaps both governments could implement an ERASMUS style scheme between both countries to help support the transfer of knowledge between institutions, staff and students.

Against this backdrop, a number of government studies have published reports which reveal that only around 30% of Indian graduates are currently considered employable (British Council, 2014; Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; National Skills Report, 2018; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). Furthermore, given the size of the population, there are also limited places in schools, colleges or

universities to cope with the enormous and increasing demand (British Council, 2014). Consequently, students are becoming increasingly concerned and many are making the decision to undertake their higher education studies abroad, which is actively encouraged by the Indian government (Singh, 2011).

2.9 Motivation for Studying Abroad

Much of the literature conducted on students' motivation to study overseas is based on a combination of push and pull factors. Many authors identify the push factors as being related to the political, social and economic conditions in the home country, while the pull factors are the perceived attributes or benefits that attract students to the host country (Abubakar, Shanka and Muuka, 2010; Kamaruddin and Baharun, 2010; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2001; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012). The most common push factors established in the literature are, lack of opportunities in students' home countries, perceived lower or internationally unrecognised standards of education, employer preference for overseas/international education, and the availability of courses. The most common pull factors relate to the reputation of country and institution, the university ranking, quality of education and employment opportunities, language skills, and the opportunity to experience a different culture and location (Wilkins et al., 2012).

Studies undertaken by De Wit (2010) and Waters, Brooks and Pimlott-Wilson (2011) argue that the reputation of the host destination and institution are more important than costs when it comes to students choosing where to study. Fortunately, this puts higher education institutions in the UK at a competitive advantage because the country has long been regarded as a prestigious destination that provides good quality education. In fact, global rankings often highlight the quality of education systems in both American and British universities, making these destinations the most popular in attracting international students (Choudaha, 2013). Indeed, various studies suggest that prospective students tend to choose the country first and then the institution (Bourke, 2000; Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002). However, Waters et al. (2012) argue that one of the main benefits attached to international students studying

overseas is not only the quality of the higher education, which might not be available in their home country, but also the opportunity to gain future employment in their host destination or another country.

In terms of the UK, international postgraduate students are an extremely lucrative market, with various financial, educational and employability contributions to the UK's economy and educational sector. These statistics were discussed in Chapter One. However, similar to many students at beginning of their programmes of study, international postgraduate students arrive with mixed experiences and expectations, which are influenced by their previous TLE. These experiences may not necessarily have prepared them for studying in the UK, which is evident from published statistics stating that the performance of international postgraduate students is much lower than domestic students (HESA, 2018). Given that international students fees range from £14, 000 to £20,000, there should be a moral obligation for HEIs to ensure that all students are prepared and can perform well in their respective programmes of study. This does not mean changing the content of a programme, but rather recognising the differences in TLEs and ensuring that students have the appropriate academic skills to flourish. Since HEIs are recruiting large numbers of international postgraduate students' they have a moral obligation to learn about students previous TLE and their cultural diversity in terms of their approaches to learning, so that they can design appropriate support strategies. This DBA thesis contributes to wider debate on international students' performance, but also on their experiences in HEIs in the UK. It was hoped that the findings from the study can help to inform the design of appropriate support strategies that can better prepare Indian postgraduate students for their a new TLE in the UK.

2.10 Conclusion

The purpose of Chapter Two was to present the details of three important stages that have influenced and shaped the development of higher education in India. The discussion was important in providing an understanding of the ancient Indian educational system which was considered so advanced that it helped to influence education in other parts of the world. This led to the

discussion on the development of the colonial educational system and the reasons behind its implementation before discussing its connection to the widespread problems that currently exist in HES in India.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of Indian postgraduate students, as they make the educational journey to a new teaching and learning environment in the UK. The first section of the literature review will analyse the early theories of transition, which have been crucial in identifying issues related to student drop-out, student withdrawal, student non-completion and student retention. It will go on to define and discuss the term "transition" and link this to international students and thereafter present the idea of transition being viewed as an educational journey. The next section will focus on the educational differences in the teaching and learning environments between India and the UK. Finally, the last section will discuss student support strategies, which are implemented in various higher education institutions in the UK. The key themes within the literature include: transition, teaching and learning environments, and student support strategies.

Figure 3: Key Themes in the Literature
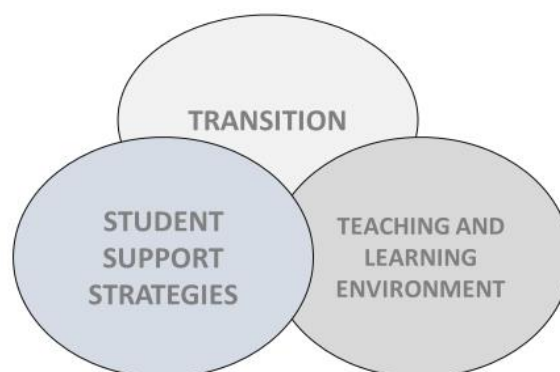
3.2 Early Theories of Transition: Integration and Retention

To date, research on student transition has been extensive, and various studies based on different theoretical models can be found in the education, psychology, sociology, and economics literature. Most of the early literature relates to student integration, student completion, and academic performance, which is measured in terms of grades, pass rates etc., and are generally defined in terms of voluntary withdrawals and dropouts, rather than failures or exclusions. Indeed, it is important to include these in the discussion because they demonstrate how the theory of transition has developed over time; from being centred on student faults which required a solution or response from the host institution, to becoming more of a process that needs to be followed and understood by both the original and host institutions.

Tinto's (1987) theory on "student dropout" is one of the earliest theories of student transition and one of the most widely accepted. His early theories of transition were based on psychology and focused on individual students' personal characteristics. However, his emphasis later moved to more sociological factors, whereby he developed a conceptual model of "student dropout", which was heavily influenced by Durkheim's (1961) suicide theory, and Spady's (1970) model of the student dropout process. The model emphasises that students who academically and socially integrate into the campus community, increase their commitment to the institution and are less likely to drop out of university, therefore making a successful transition and graduate (Tinto, 1987). Tinto's model is considered to be popular, which is most likely because it is easy to understand and simple to apply to practical situations. The model is useful for this particular study because it provides some insight into why some students drop out, withdraw, or persist in university. Nonetheless, the author argues that a student's ability to integrate largely depends on their previous qualifications, compatibility of previous TLE, their own individual attributes, and their family's attributes. Tinto's model of "Dropout from Higher Education" can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Dropout from Higher Education
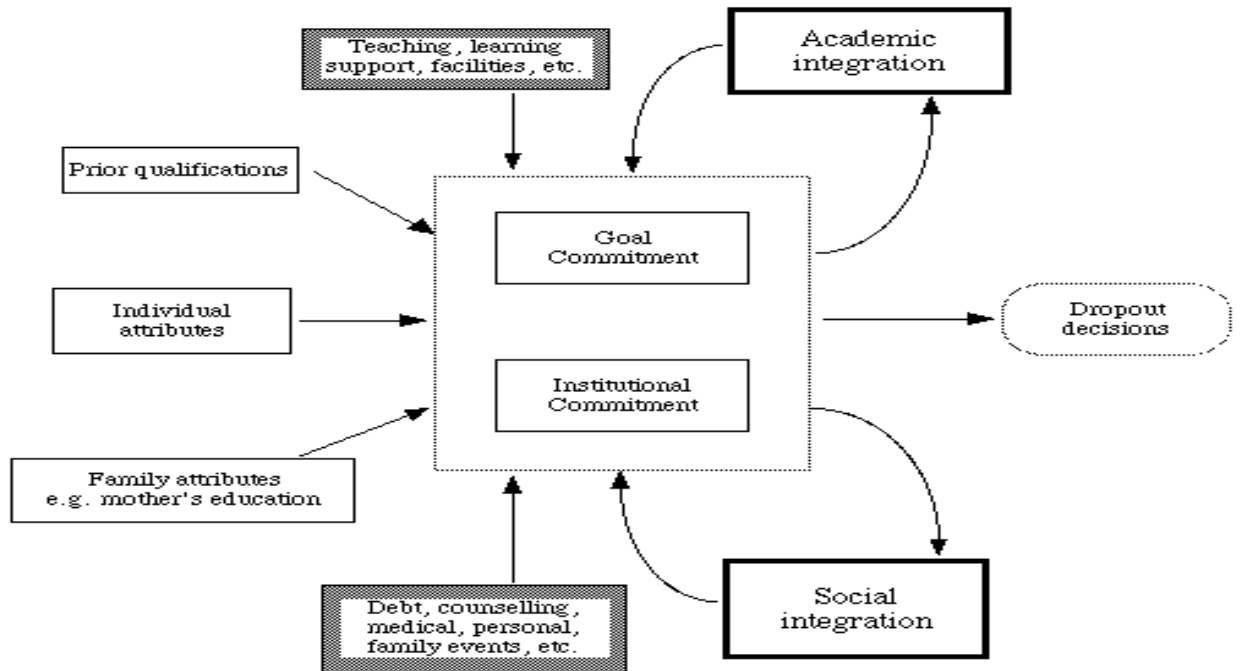
(Source: Tinto, 1987, p.89)

As presented in the above model, Tinto (1987) measured academic integration by assessing how well a student participates in and succeeds with their learning in terms of grades/marks; performance; their personal development; their academic self-esteem and with the identification and compliance with academic norms. Tinto (1987) measured social integration by the number of friends students had; their personal contact with academics, as well as the enjoyment of being at university. Whilst Tinto's research provides a good starting point in understanding how students experience transition, it is important to highlight that his studies are primarily focused on the outcome of transition, rather than the actual process of transition. Nevertheless, Tinto's (1987) work is valuable because it encouraged research to focus on the individual student experience, and also influenced it to focus more on the relationship between the individual and the social context.

Furthermore, the model also established the importance of understanding students' previous TLE and ensuring that they were compatible long before any other researcher. Although these aspects are important, Yorke and Longden (2008) argue that the model has its weaknesses because it fails to

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take into account the students' experiences. For example, their perceptions of the new TLE may change over time. Just because a student has difficulties at the start of their journey does not necessarily mean that they will not make a successful transition. Yorke and Longden (2008) also raise questions in terms of the characteristics which are used to measure social and academic integration. For example, part of the criteria that are used to measure social and academic integration is "student enjoyment" and "personal contact with academics". Indeed, everyone's perception of enjoyment is quite different, and what one person enjoys is not necessarily what another person will enjoy. In addition, there are students who never engage with staff, but who academically integrate rather than dropout and make an extremely successful transition.

Despite these limitations, it is important to highlight that research during this period did not view transition as a focus of enquiry for how it affects students' developing sense of self, but rather viewed it is a barrier that students had to overcome. Nonetheless, the research is useful because it begins to explore why some students' dropout or withdraw prematurely from their studies and investigates what HEIs could do to facilitate student transition in terms of induction and orientation programmes. However, Universities UK (2014) warn that there are limitations to the effectiveness of transition programmes. HEIs need to recognise that, although these programmes are useful, the diversity of students and their previous TLE need to be taken into consideration. It can be argued that the areas where international students need more support are not necessarily the same as other student cohorts. A key aspect in tackling these issues is understanding the TLE that students are leaving, as well as the TLE that students are entering (Flaga, 2006). That way, HEIs can identify areas where students need support.

Tinto (1993) later revised his model of Student Dropout and came up with the theory of Student Integration, as a way of understanding how students experience transition into higher education. The theory was encouraged by Van Gennep's (1960) stages of cultural transition, which asserts that individuals go through three stages of transition before they can adapt to a

new culture. Van Gennep (1960) believed that individuals making a cultural transition must first separate from their former selves, before they arrive at a stage of uncertainty, and finally reach the stage of incorporation which means the adoption of new values into their new TLE. Tinto (1993) aimed to explain the complexity of the transition by using the theory to understand students' movement, direction, and flow, as they progressed over time in a new TLE.

Tinto (1993) was heavily influenced by Van Gennep's (1960) stages of cultural transition, which emphasised that entry into university was similar to individuals being acculturated into a new environment. Van Gennep's (1960) study viewed this as a traditional Rite of Passage that incorporates three phases, including: separation, transition and incorporation. Tinto (1993) explains that for students to make a successful transition to university, they must also earn the "Rite of Passage". Tinto (1993) asserts that students must first separate from their previous teaching and learning environment before they can successfully transition to the new environment. In other words, students must "physically as well as socially dissociate from the communities of the past to fully integrate into the new academic life and succeed" (Tinto, 1993, p. 96). The second stage of transition begins when individuals experience an event that challenges their prior ways of learning. Tinto (1993) warns that, for students, this period of adjustment into the new environment is a time of risk, anxiety and new experiences. As a consequence, stress and a sense of loss and bewilderment can occur, resulting in an early withdrawal or departure from university. The final stage is incorporation; this marks the time of full integration and acceptance of the new environment. Tinto (1993) believes that students must go through all three stages before they can negotiate the rites of passage and have a successful transition.

There are many researchers who criticise Tinto's (1993) model, as Van Gennep's (1960) model was designed to describe the developmental progression within a culture, and not the assimilation from one culture to another (Braxton and Hirschy, 2004). Tierney (1992) elaborates on these comments and argues that in general most "models of cultural integration focus on inserting minority groups of individuals into a dominant culture" (Tierney, 1992, p. 611). Despite the criticism, Tinto's (1993) student integration

model is important, because he attempts to explain the theory of transition as a process, rather than an outcome. Indeed, some of Tinto's (1993) assertions in his new model still raise a number of concerns. For example, he fails to provide a reasonable explanation as to why students need to separate from their previous learning environments before they can transition socially and academically to the new environment. This view can be seen as slightly narrow minded, because students have and can be competent in both their previous and new TLE. Bransford, Brown and Cocking (2004) argue that learning depends on how prior knowledge is incorporated into building new knowledge, and thus teachers must take into account students' prior knowledge. However, despite the weaknesses and concerns, it must be emphasised that this theory was designed over thirty years ago, and is not based on the heterogeneous nature of the current student population of today. In fact, Tinto's studies were based on students from Ivy League institutions in the USA, and do not offer a great deal of insight into the experiences of a diverse range of students in the UK (Laing, Chao and Robinson. 2006). That said, Tinto's models have been used extensively in many research studies across various disciplines and are still currently being utilised and criticised by many researchers.

Beatty-Guenter (1994) was a researcher who sought to elaborate on Tinto's (1987;1993) drop out and student integration theories, and designed a model that directly focused on student retention. The model has become widely accepted and useful for universities to help them design transition initiatives and identify improvement areas in their transition strategies. Beatty-Guenter's (1994) "Retention Strategy Model" encompasses many similarities to Tinto's (1993) model; both experts believe that students and institutions need to adapt to each other in order to maximise student retention and ensure a successful transition. However, Beatty-Guenter's (1994) model was less concerned with the causes of student dropout and focused on the analysis of actions which could be taken by universities to improve the components and commitments of institutional retention strategies. The author asserts that these strategies have a number of different elements, which need to be properly balanced before a retention strategy can be effective and allow students to make a

successful transition to higher education. The elements were categorised as: sorting, supporting, connecting, transforming students, and transforming institutions. Beatty-Guenter's (1994) Retention Strategy Model can be seen below:

Figure 5: Retention Strategy Model

The Beatty-Guenter Retention Strategy Model
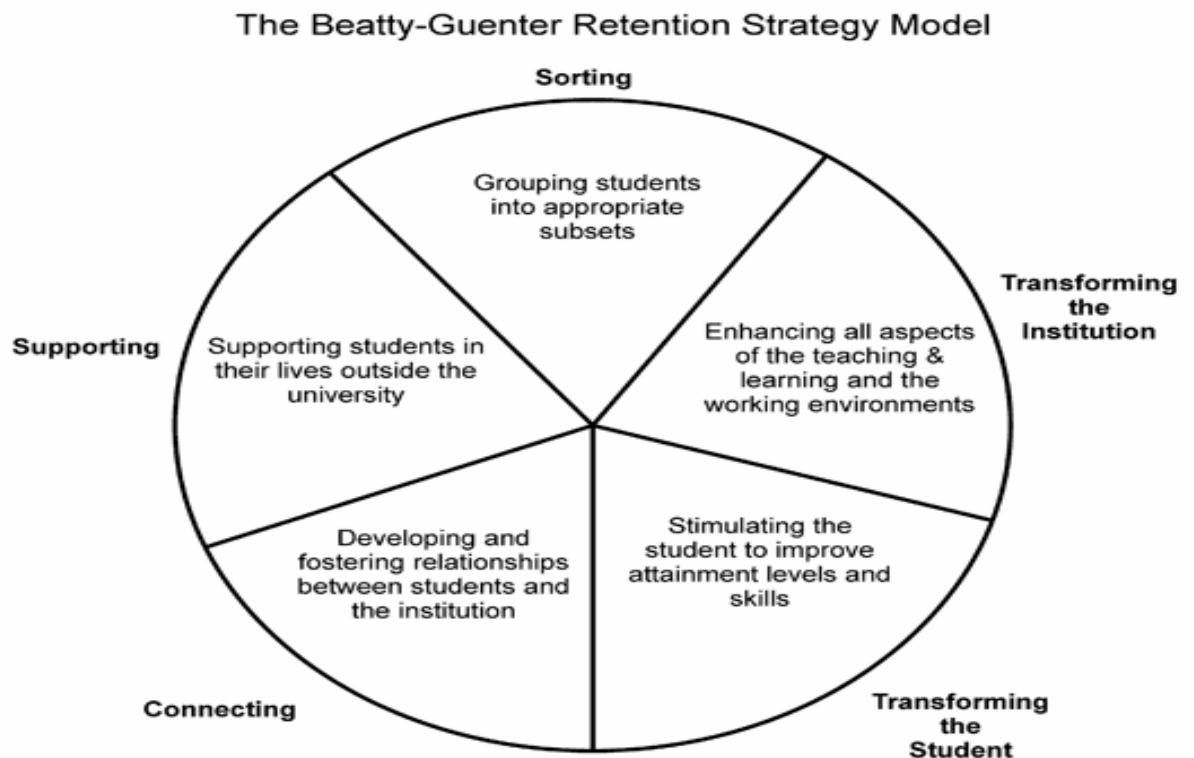
Source: Johnston, Veronique, *Developing Strategies to Improve Student Retention: Reflections from a Scottish University*, 2002, 4.

(Source; Beatty-Guenter, 1994)

Beatty-Guenter's (1994) model is a useful tool because it focuses on three very important aspects that are connecting the student, transforming the student, and transforming the institution. These three areas are valuable because they offer institutions the opportunity to identify student difficulties, and thereafter they can create interventions to improve student retention and transition. For example, an academic tutor providing additional advice for students who are struggling is a form of intervention. From the above model it can be seen that the intervention fits into the connecting field, as it seeks to facilitate faculty-student interaction and thereby help students to successfully integrate into university and make a successful transition. Another example is changing a curriculum to suit the needs of a culturally diverse group of

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students. The intervention fits into transforming the institution field, which seeks to enhance all aspects of the TLE.

Beatty-Guenter's (1994) does caution that in order for retention programmes to be effective, they must include techniques from each of the categories displayed in the above model. For the purpose of this study, the Beatty-Guenter (1994) model offers some useful points for thinking about retention strategies and programmes to assist student access and successful transition to universities. However, much like Tinto's first model of student dropout, it also focuses on the outcome of transition and not the actual process of transition, therefore it is difficult to gain any real understanding of the experiences related to a diverse group of students, which are currently prevalent in many UK universities. As a consequence, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) argue that this approach to transition ignores the wider social and political contexts that influence institutions to design the appropriate student support strategies. Moreover, with respect to this particular study neither model was designed to consider the period before enrolment at the new institution; therefore, it raises questions about the design, the content, and the effectiveness of the retention strategies.

Ozga and Sukhnandan (1998) developed a theoretical model, which also built on Tinto's (1975;1993) and Beatty-Guenter's (1994) models, and focused on transition from a non-completion perspective. The authors criticised many previous models of transition as being too focused on student faults, they argued that the cause of non-completion was shared equally between the student who did not fit academically or socially, and the institution that was not suitable for that student either academically or socially. The authors revealed that the fundamental factors which influenced student early departure, were related to student preparation and compatibility. The model also involved factors of student and institutional characteristics, such as students' age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and family history (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002). In addition, it concerned the proactive involvement of teaching staff, and the programme in terms of content, learning, teaching and assessment strategies (Cook and Leckey, 1999; Draper, 2002). Turner (2007)

advises that students who leave university early, do so because of a broad set of reasons, some of which the student has brought with them and others which arise from the institution's behaviour (Boyle, Carter and Clark, 2002).

Ozga and Sukhnandan's (1998) theoretical model outlines that the specific reasons for student non-completion include lack of academic and social integration. However, Draper (2002) argues that there is never really one single reason for a student to withdraw from university, nor does the decision take place at one point in time. In fact, Draper (2002) agrees that reasons for non-completion arise long before the student arrives at the university and extend for as long as that student has the potential to disengage. Nevertheless, despite these weaknesses. Ozga and Sukhnandan's (1998) theoretical model is extremely beneficial because it not only identifies reasons for student non-completion, but it has also influenced many institutions in formalising student support services which are designed to play a mediating role in preventing students from prematurely withdrawing from university.

It can be seen from the discussion that early models of transition have centred on specific aspects of transition, such as student drop-out, student departure and retention, which have all been closely linked to the social and academic integration of students into university (Tinto, 1987; 1993; Beatty-Guenter, 1994; Ozga and Sukhnandan, 1998). The development of these early theories of transition has made a significant contribution to the development of literature in this field of study. Rhodes and Cook and Rushton (2008) agree that the concepts of academic and social integration have been important. They help in understanding how students experience transition into university, and what can happen if students do not academically or socially integrate. Indeed, without these early theories, the institutional student support systems that are currently prevalent in higher education institutions may not have been here today, or at least may not have been so sophisticated. Making the transition from school or college to university is a challenging obstacle for many students, because it involves adapting to a new academic and social environment. Indeed, it is recognised by many experts that making this transition can be incredibly stressful, both academically and socially; such

stresses can often lead to a significant reduction in academic performance, and can eventually lead to the student dropping out or not making a successful transition (Chan, 2001; Cook and Rushton, 2008: Robotham and Julian, 2006). Indeed, if institutions and academics are to respond with appropriate support strategies, they need to understand the psychological stresses and experiences of individual groups of students, as they make the educational journey from one educational institution to another.

3.3 Current Literature Related to Transition

Since this DBA thesis is based around the transition experiences of postgraduate Indian students into a new TLE, it is crucial that the concept of transition is explained in the context of this study. In the literature there are numerous definitions of transition which can be found in the education, psychology, sociology, and economics literature. To date, much of the research has been defined by using components, such as: time, habitual, identity change, and the views on passing from one state, stage, place or activity to another. This complexity allows researchers to define and study the concept from opposing perspectives based on their personal interests.

A recent study undertaken by O'Donnell, Kean and Steven (2016, p5) explains that previous literature also lacks clarity an agreement in theorising student transitions in higher education, hence practitioners fail to move beyond the description and evaluation of transition, towards explanation and evidence-based interventions that support particular groups of students". In their study, O'Donnell, Kean and Steven (2016) examined four models presented by Ecclestone (2016) which are useful for understanding how student transitions have been defined and conceptualised within recent literature. The following represents how various student transitions have been defined and conceptualised within the literature:

Models of Transition:

- Institutional Transition (Ecclestone, 2016)
- Social and Contextual Transition (Pekrun, 2011)
- Transition as a Process (Gale and Parker, 2014)
- Transition is a Permanent Human State (Ecclestone, Biesta and Hughes, 2010)

In terms of the above models, it is interesting to note that "transition is conceptualised very differently by different authors, and attempts to explicitly categorise these different conceptualisations do not fully capture the range of different ways in which it is understood" (O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016, p5). More specifically, the lack of a universal definition causes confusion among academics, therefore, it is imperative that there is clarity when describing and applying transition in research. To demonstrate the differences, Ecclestone (2006) defines transition as an institutional transition, whereby students move from one educational context to another. Under this model. transition is viewed as an individual and linear progression from one level of education to the next, with the responsibility of a successful or failed transition being with the student. Ecclestone's (2006) second model assumes that the social and contextual aspects of transition are more important because these focus on the changes within individuals that happen as a result of institutions and their own social expectations. However, the author explains that the formation of a learner identity is central to a successful transition, but cautions that the student identity starts in students previous TLE. Despite this revelation, it is interesting to note that there are no studies linking transition and students' previous TLE, or transition with student experiences, thus, leading to more confusion not only about the conceptualisation transition, but its application in research.

The next model, "rejects the reliance upon particular institutions or contexts as framing transition, and focuses instead on transition as a process of being and becoming" (Ecclestone, 2006, p6). The author contends that transitions relate to the turning points, milestones or life events, which can be subtle or complex processes of an individual becoming someone either personally,

educationally, or professionally. The author suggests that these processes can be a response to particular events, and sometimes events arise out of shifts and developments in identity. For example, changes in cultural identity for international students studying in a new country might trigger a turning point or life event, or a turning point or life event may even arise even from one. From Ecclestone's (2006) perspective, the concept of transition as a process is interesting because it focuses on change and shifts in identity. Nonetheless Bridges' (2003) model also views transition as a process, but he considers transition as a process that occurs gradually in three stages that focus on the adjustment that people make when they are going through a transition. While these perspectives of transition as a process are helpful, the differences in how they are conceptualised only leads to further semantic confusion. Moreover, neither of these models take into consideration the experiences of students as they progress through the education system. Ecclestone's (2006) final model of transition rejects assumptions about transition being related to either life events, the involvement with institutions or milestones, and considers it an iterative process in a person's life. Transitions are therefore not always noticeable events or processes and a transition may happen long after subconscious changes in feelings and attitudes occur. Therefore, it is conceptually stronger to view transition as an educational journey that captures students experiences as they move from one TLE to another.

However, within the literature, there are also interchangeable terms being used to describe transition, such as settling, adjustment and coping with change, changing of expectations, and adaptation, which can be somewhat confusing to researchers (Bridges, 2009; Prescott and Hellsten). Furthermore, the misuse of the terms "change" and "transition" are common in many research studies, and this only adds to the existing complexities within the literature. Certainly, it is important to address this issue, and provide clarification on both of these inextricably linked terms, as well as offer a working definition for this particular study.

Indeed, several authors such as Bridges (2009), Jindal, Snape, Miller and Baird (2010) and Prescott and Hellsten (2005) define change as an external event that happens when an old situation ends and something new begins in

its place. An example of a change could be related to the ending of an undergraduate programme, to the start of a new career, or postgraduate programme of study, or perhaps even a change to another country, or both. The authors argue that transition is the emotional process individuals go through when dealing with external change. In other words, change is an event in an individual's external or physical world, while transition is the psychological process that happens in response to that change. For the purposes of this study, transition is defined by Bridges (2003) as;

The internal process in the mind which takes place when students undergo change and pass from the familiar to the unknown, responding to cultural, academic, social and cognitive challenges.

(Bridges, 2003) cited in Prescott and Hellsten, 2005, p76)

Bridges (2003) explains that transition occurs gradually in three phases, and it is about how individuals come to terms with the new reality that is important. The author continues that the starting point for transition is not the outcome but the endings that people have in leaving the old situation behind. Getting people through transition into the neutral zone and subsequently accepting the new beginning/environment is essential if the change is to work as planned. Figure 6 presents Bridges Transition Model.

Figure 6: Bridges Transition Model

Bridges Transitions Model

Ending, Losing, Letting Go	Neutral Zone	The New Beginning
• Resistance to the Change Initiative • Uncertainty and Fear • Emotional Upheaval	• Resentment towards the Change Initiative • Low Morale and Low Productivity • Anxiety about their Role or Identity • Skepticism about the Change Initiative	• Acceptance - People have Begun to Embrace the Change Initiative • High Energy • Openness to Learning • Renewed Commitment to the Group or their Role

(Source: Bridges, 2003)

Indeed, Bridges' transition model is helpful in terms of viewing transition as a process that students need to go through. However, the model is rather limited in its view of the transition process because it considers the transition period to start when students arrive on campus. Although many of the aspects raised by Bridges are important, it could be argued that the model fails to consider students' previous experiences. This could be the cause of the issues and challenges and it also does not distinguish between different groups of students.

Indeed, making the transition from school or college to university is a challenging obstacle for many students, because it involves adapting to a new academic and social environment. In fact, it is widely recognised that making this transition can be incredibly stressful, both academically and socially; such stresses can often lead to a significant reduction in academic performance and can eventually lead to the student not making a successful transition (Cook and Rushton, 2008: Robotham and Julian, 2006; Ryan, 2011). Entering higher education represents a very significant transition, but it is important to understand the experiences of different groups of students, and some of the difficulties they encounter as they become accustomed to a new academic environment. Many scholars agree that not all students share the same perceptions, experiences or expectations when making the transition into a new environment. Therefore, they cannot all be treated in the same way. For some students the initial changes are more substantive than others, and some transitions require considerable adjustments. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the literature related to the transition of international students has clustered students from various parts of the world together into one homogenous group (Taha and Cox, 2014; Lowe and Tian, 2007). Although there have been some attempts to distinguish between the international student groups, much of the research has focused specifically on student deficit rather than transition, and linked more toward Chinese students (Kuo, 2007; Lowe and Tian, 2007). This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring a specific group of students, and some of the difficulties they encounter as they become accustomed to a new TLE. If the issues and

challenges for different groups of students are understood, the information could be help HEIs to design appropriate student support strategies.

3.4 Transition and International Students

Although this study focuses specifically on Indian students, it is grounded on the assumption that all international students' previous TLE have an influence on their transition to HEI in the UK. Indeed, it is important to emphasise that many scholars agree that not all students share the same perceptions, experiences or expectations when making the transition into a new institution, therefore they cannot all be treated in the same way. For some students, the initial changes from their previous TLE are more substantive than others, and some transitions require considerable adjustments and interventions. Indeed, there is broad agreement in the literature that a students' transition to university life involves significant change for all students', and that it is a very complex matter for different groups of students (Harrison and Peacock 2010; Ninnes and Hellsten, 2005; Quan, Smailes and Fraser, 2013; Ryan, 2005; 2011; Sovic, 2008; Yorke and Longden, 2006). This is particularly true of international students, because in addition to adapting to a new teaching and learning environment and starting their degree studies, students are also adapting to a different way of learning and getting used to a new culture.

Certainly, it is well documented in the literature that international student groups, particularly those from rote learning backgrounds, have significantly greater transitional difficulties compared to home students in adjusting to academic requirements. These difficulties are documented by several scholars and include study methods, independent learning, critical/analytical thinking, participation, time management, and language skills (Janjua, Malik and Rahman, 2011; Morrison, Merrick, Higgs and Le Matais, 2005;). Moreover, some international students experience difficulties engaging in research, understanding the concepts of referencing and avoiding plagiarism, and understanding the academic writing requirements of Western cultures (Durkin, 2008; Quan et al, 2013; Ryan, 2011). Nevertheless, several authors argue that many of these difficulties are linked to the fact that international students find it difficult to adjust to a radically different teaching and learning

environment (Janjua, et al., 2011; Morrison et al., 2005). Indeed, there is a consensus in the literature that many students do not always adapt quickly enough, and the uncertainly consequently leads to stress, anxiety and even depression (Janjua et al, 2011; Morrison et al, 2005; Qua et al., 2013).

The literature refers to this as *"learning shock"* which is used to describe the emotional, mental, and physical impact when a new way of learning differs significantly from one's prior learning style (Gu, Huang and Marton, 2005). Moreover, there is a general acceptance that the education system of a country is closely linked to its national culture. Therefore, it is inevitable that most international students will experience the effects of culture shock, particularly because they enter university with expectations shaped by their previous learning experience (Clarke 2010; Thom, 2010; Turner 2006; Ward and Kennedy. 2001). Likewise, Gu et al., (2005) agree that different countries and their cultural traditions embrace different attitudes to teaching and learning, and whilst language is considered the most significant difference, many experts argue that the biggest difference is in the educational system (Clarke 2010; Thom, 2010; Turner 2006; Ward and Kennedy. 2001). Similarly, a study by Gu (2010) agrees that pedagogical factors can have a significant impact on the extent and the success of a student's transition to a new TLE.

Interestingly, much of the research that currently exists about international students' educational experience centres on specific aspects of transition such as: widening participation, social and academic integration, retention, and the social and academic institutional systems that support students (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; Roberts, Watkin, Oakey and Fox, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke and Longden, 2008). However, Gale and Parker (2014) explain that transition is under-theorised in the literature because it fails to move beyond the 'what' of transition towards an understanding of the 'how' and the 'why' of transition, which is where the potential lies for influencing and implementing effective practices to support transition. In this regard, this study makes an attempt to move the discussion forward by viewing transition as an educational process rather than as an outcome. Indeed, this study takes steps towards addressing these

fundamental gaps in the literature by focusing on how students experience the transition process. By viewing transition as an educational journey, it allows the researcher to capture students' experiences as they make the educational journey from one TLE to another. For the purpose of this study, an educational journey considers six important stages which includes students' motivations for studying abroad, students' previous TLE, students' experience as they arrive on campus, the issues and challenges encountered as they make their journey through the new TLE, students' expectations and level of preparedness for the new TLE and the student support strategies used to help students adjust. Furthermore, if the educational journey is understood, then HEIs could design and implement appropriate support strategies for different groups of students. An example of the educational journey is depicted in Figure 7: Educational Journey.

Figure 7: Educational Journey
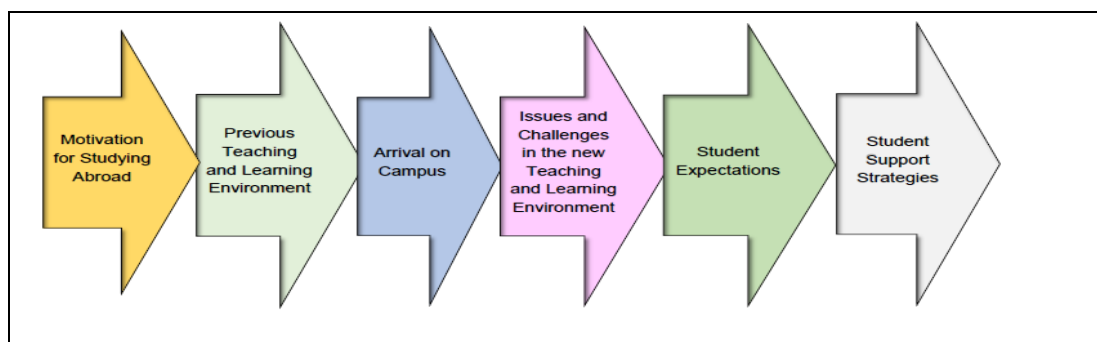
The next section of the literature review focusses on two important aspects which are crucial to understanding students' educational journey. These include:

- Literature related to various teaching and learning models, as this will help establish the key components that student's will encounter during their educational journey;
- Literature concerning student support strategies in HEIs in the UK.

3.5 Teaching and Learning Environments

An educational journey relates to every aspect of change that students experience when they move from one TLE to another. Indian students come from diverse academic environments and it is crucial to identify and understand the differences between this group of students' previous TLE and the new TLE in the UK. Indeed, large numbers of Indian students study at various levels in UK universities, including postgraduate, undergraduate and direct entrants, with many undertaking induction and orientation programmes to support them. However, all students, to some degree, will experience issues and challenges, as they make the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. A key research objective for this study is to investigate and explore the ways in which students' previous TLE influence their educational journey into the new TLE.

Research related to TLE has been a topic of interest in HE for many decades, and its popularity has created a rather complex framework of overlapping concepts, methods, and findings which make it difficult to understand (Biggs, 1987; 1999; 2003, Biggs and Tang, 2011; Entwistle, 2003). Nonetheless, the research has exposed some very important relationships between lecturers and students and identified students' different approaches to learning and studying. A review of the emerging literature has presented many different models of teaching and learning and, more importantly, established the idea that every teaching model in HE is a learning model at the same time. Thus, a large number of studies agree that teaching and learning are both interdependent components (Atherton, 2008; Biggs and Tang, 2007; Light, Cox and Calkins, 2009; Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 2009). Nevertheless, several studies confirm that over the past few decades HE in western countries have undergone a pedagogical shift in their approaches to teaching and learning (Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011). Specifically, many HEIs have moved away from a traditional teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach which focuses more on enhancing students' experiences of learning, as well as in the environment where learning is experienced (Lea, Stephenson, and Troy, 2003). However, a review of the emerging literature suggests that

this move may present challenges for various groups of international students who are more familiar with a traditional teacher-centred approach (Biggs and Tang, 2011; Light, Cox and Calkins, 2009; Ryan, 2005; 2011).

3.6 Teacher-Centred Model Versus Student-Centred Model

The literature presents various models of teaching and learning including the teacher-centred approach that focuses on the teacher as the expert in transmitting knowledge to the student (Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011. Harden and Crosby, 2000). The model, which is prominent in the Indian higher education system, has received extensive attention because it concentrates on individual student differences and labels students either a 'good' or 'bad' student (Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011). Carroll and Ryan (2005) offer a stereotypical representation of students from teacher-centred TLE as being passive in learning style and weak in written and oral skills. A review of the emerging literature has informed the development of the key characteristics related to the teacher-centred teaching and learning which are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Key Characteristics of Teacher-Centred Teaching and Learning

Teacher-Centred	Teacher-Centred
Teacher dependent	Lack of critical thinking/analytical skills
Strict authoritarian environment	Rote learners
Memorisation and regurgitation	Emphasis on surface learning and understanding
Poor written and oral skills	Exam focused

(Adapted; Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Harden and Crosby, 2000)

Indeed, many studies have heavily criticised this model because it fails to take into consideration the whole TLE, and only addresses students and not teachers' deficits. Furthermore, the deficit model, as it is often referred to has very little interest in whether students are motivated, interested, or even engaged with the teaching and the tendency is to explain student failure in terms of poor motivation, low interest and low ability levels (Biggs, 2003; Biggs

and Tang, 2011). These practices which are always to "blame the student" are prevalent throughout the higher education system in India (Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011).

In contrast. the more contemporary models related to teaching and learning have investigated various aspects of how students learn and how teachers can help to teach them more effectively. Although many models have been designed, a Student-Centred, Teaching and Learning model (SCTL) has been identified as one of the most influential and powerful models of improving teaching quality in HE (Hyland, Kennedy, and Ryan, 2006; Nordrum, Evans, and Gustafsson, 2013). The SCTL, which is favoured in the UK, focuses on active learning, understanding through interaction, experiential learning, and reflective dialogue, by using various teaching tools and support mechanisms that promote these conditions. According to many authors, the purpose of the active learning technique is the development of independent learning and critical thinking which is defined as "the ability of thinkers to take charge of their own thinking" (Attard, Lorio, Geven and Santa, 2010; Duron, Limbach and Waugh, 2006; Maclellan, 2008). In practical terms, the SCTL rewards students for the quality of their thinking, the argument presented, and the application of knowledge to new problems (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 20011; Boyle, Carter and Clarke, 2002; Morrison et al., 2005; Pelletier, 2003). Students are therefore encouraged and expected to develop as individuals, with their own opinions, independence of mind, creativity and originality. Consequently, a university teacher's role has developed and become more focused on creating a teaching and learning environment that encourages students to obtain an effective acquisition of knowledge and skills and become active, independent and critical learners. Table 4: presents the key characteristics of student-centred teaching and learning.

Table 4: Key Characteristics of Student-Centred Teaching and Learning

Student-Centred	Student-Centred
Reliance on active rather than passive learning	Emphasis on deep learning and understanding
Responsibility and accountability for students' own learning	Increase sense of autonomy on the learner
Interdependence between teacher and learner	Self-monitoring of own learning process
Mutual respect within learner teacher relationship	

(Adapted: Biggs, 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Lea et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2007).

Indeed, the discussion so far has highlighted the vast differences in the TLE, but moving from the teacher-centred environment to a student-centred teaching environment presents a number of significant obstacles for international students who are not accustomed to the host academic practices. Huang and Brown (2009) explain that it is not uncommon for international students to have problems adapting to a new TLE, particularly if their previous TLE was very different. It is therefore concerning to note that Indian students' who come from teacher-centred environments, are expected to unlearn their past learning experiences and adapt to an unfamiliar TLE with universities in the UK having little or no understanding of their previous experience or how it might affect their learning (Brown, 2008; Elen, Clarebout, Léonard, and Lowyck, 2007), Notwithstanding, the host TLE plays a significant role in creating these conditions and helping students to adjust (Kissil and Davey, 2012).

3.7 Studies related to Indian Students Experiences in Western Higher Education

There are many authors who offer a critique about Indian students studying in HEI in the UK. Nonetheless, it is important to note, that to date, much of what has been written about Indian students, focuses on students' difficulties from a western teacher's perspective. Moreover, while much of the key literature spans over twenty years, there seems to be a paucity in the research over the

past ten years. Perhaps the reason for the lack of research relates to Chinese students becoming the most prominent market for the UK, in terms of undergraduate numbers. Nevertheless, as already established in Chapter 1, Indian students are currently the largest postgraduate market for the UK. Hence, it is important to gain an understanding of the previous research related to Indian students.

Indeed, early research related to Indian students has not been particularly positive, and over the past two decades academics have viewed them as being weak writers who are renowned for consistently plagiarising, which is usually because they either lack appropriate language skills or lack integrity (Deckert, 1993; Handan and Power, 2005; Park, 2003; Robotham and Julian, 2006); Moreover, various studies contend that plagiarism within this group of students is particularly high; and consequently throughout the years, a consistent debate has grown among academics regarding the level of academic ability associated with Indian students (Park, 2003; Robotham and Julian, 2006). Subsequently, many academic studies have focused on the negative perceptions of Indian students and conclude that they are cheats, who are often held responsible for lowering academic standards in universities, due to their alleged consistent plagiarism (Park, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Ramburuth, 2000; Robotham and Julian). Moreover, many academics have complained that Indian students come from a copy and paste culture and are simply not prepared for higher education in the UK (Chaurasia, 2016; Crabtree, 2006; Trotter and Roberts, 2006). However, to accuse Indian students of being cheats and ill-prepared for higher education is debatable (Handa and Power, 2005; Robotham and Julian, 2006) and demonstrates a lack of understanding about the students' previous TLE.   Indeed, it could be argued that since Indian students come from a completely different TLE and are renowned for having a high percentage of plagiarism, then it raises questions about the level and type of support offered by HEIs (Chaurasia, 2016; Handa and Power, 2005).

Interestingly, a considerable amount of research has been carried out which examined the possible causes of plagiarism and academic integrity. Many

researchers identify that students commit these acts due to time pressures, or carelessness and some simply to achieve easy marks (Bannister and Ashworth, 1998; Carroll, 2005; Harris, 2001). However, Hallett, Woodley and Dixon (2003); Hamilton, Hinton and Hawkins (2003), Robotham and Julian (2006) warn that plagiarism and academic integrity are not simple issues and many students actually commit plagiarism due to their confusion. This finding is confirmed in studies by Handa and Power (2005), who suggest that the perceived lack of academic integrity associated with international students is most likely due to a lack of understanding and poor academic skills. Therefore, lecturers need to look beyond students' inadvertent plagiarism and see the situation as a learning opportunity for students, rather than something that needs punished. Indeed, it is the case that the previous academic experience of Indian students occurs in a culturally different context to the UK, and it is important to understand students' previous teaching and learning experience in their home country, before making such assumptions (Leask, 2004; Robotham and Julian, 2006). Nonetheless, Ryan (2012) and Leask (2005) offer a more balanced perspective on the above factors and suggest that, rather than penalising the students, the responsibility for understanding the academic rules and regulations should be shared by the students and the HEI who are responsible for ensuring that the students are equipped with the appropriate academic skills. In the light of these studies, this leads to the next part of the discussion which is to investigate and explore the differences between the TLE in India and the UK.

3.8 Comparison of the Teaching and Learning Environments; India and the UK

Teaching and learning environments often vary quite substantially within the same country, therefore comparing educational environments in different counties is rather complex (Alabi, Oduwaiye and Fasasi, 2009). For example, in some countries, such as India, the student deficit model is heavily adopted, whilst the student-centred model is adopted in the UK. Hence, these differences make it difficult to compare. Nevertheless, the model in Figure 8 identifies key components from each of the models, which together constitute

an education system that reflects the experiences that students in this study encounter when making the journey from one TLE to another. The information in the orange boxes link to the teacher-centred environment, while the green boxes relate to the student-centred TLE.

Figure 8: Teaching and Learning Environment
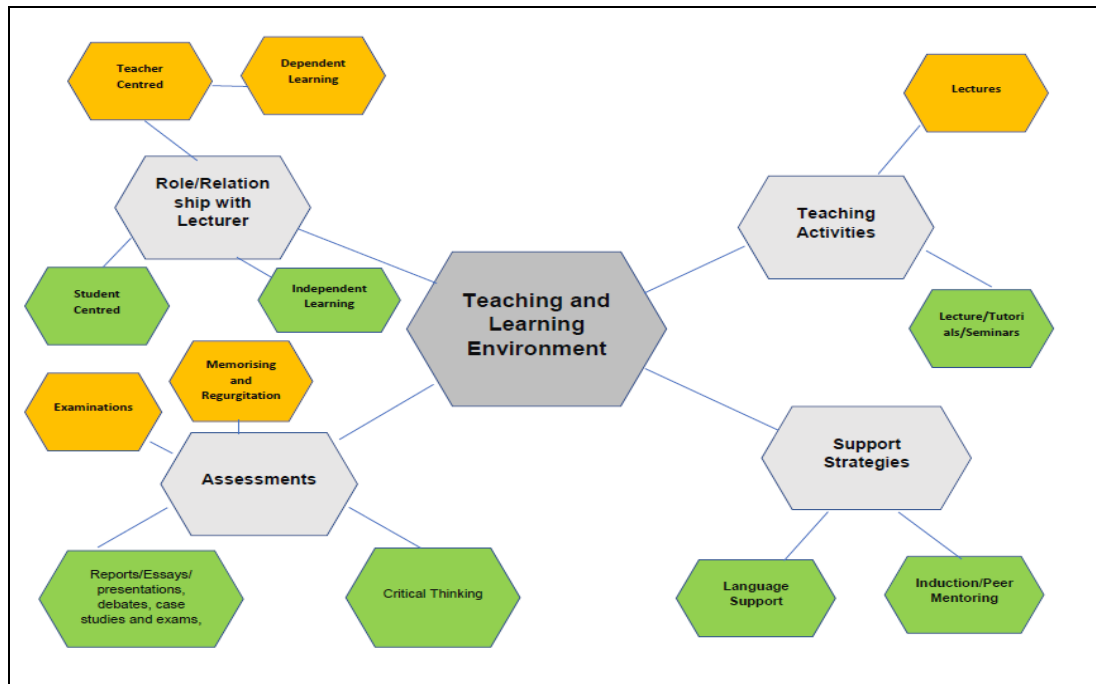
These components include the students' relationship with the teacher, and teaching methods, including lectures, tutorials and seminars, assessments, independent learning and critical analysis (Biggs, 1996; 1999; 2003; 2011; Entwistle, 2003; Ramsden 2007). However, it is important to emphasise that any one, some, or all of the components from the students' previous teaching and learning environment can significantly influence students' educational journey and therefore have an impact on the quality of their experience. (Biggs,1999; Biggs and Tang, 2003, 2011; Entwistle, 2003).

3.9 Expectations about Teacher-Student Relationships

It is widely acknowledged that the teacher–student relationship is one of the most powerful components within the teaching and learning environment because it helps to create feelings of connectedness to a university and prevent students from feeling alienated (Liberante, 2012; Ryan, 2000; 2005).

However, several studies reveal that cultural variances may cause differences in students' perceptions about the teacher-student relationship, which could prevent them from building relationships with teachers and seeking necessary support (Denzine and Pulos, 2000; Gopee, 2011; Ryan, 2000; 2005). Nevertheless, not all teachers are aware of the differences in student-teacher relationships in other countries and lecturers who have only worked within one academic culture, tend to take for granted that international students will easily adapt and know the correct way to interact with staff and behave in lectures and tutorials (Carroll, 2005; Ryan, 2000; 2005). Indeed, several researchers such as Trahar (2010), Louie (2005) and Leask (2007), contend that all societies, communities and countries have their own culture, but emphasise the importance of lecturers who are teaching international students to have knowledge about the cultural differences in students' previous TLE. Studies by Trahar (2010) and Carroll (2005) also highlight the importance of being aware of the level of respect between students and their teachers, as well as understanding the power distance. The authors also contend that teachers need to be more knowledgeable about their own academic culture and explicitly explain their expectations to international students and not assume that they know.

In contrast, research suggests that teacher approachability and communication are other essential qualities that are required to build the relationship because they help to facilitate positive teacher–student interactions (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Ryan, 2000; 2005). Consequently, lecturers in western universities tend to be friendly and approachable (Ryan, 2000; 2005) and their ability to communicate is often considered an important factor in cultivating effective student-teacher working relationships (Gopee, 2011). However, at the other end of the spectrum, Indian education tends to foster a hierarchical and stricter teacher and student relationship (Chakraborty, 2015) with the lecturer adopting an authoritative role in a highly directed environment, in which the subservience and obedience of students is common (Clarke, 2010; Morrison et al, 2005; Purdie, 2000; Sheikh, 2017). Various studies by Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010) and Sheikh (2017) explain that lecturers who operate within a teacher-centred environment, also tend to demand a high

level of respect and formality, and the more this is provided by the students, the more it puts the lecturer in a powerful position. Indeed, these conflicting perspectives can be confusing to many Indian students, because they come to a new TLE with expectations about teacher-student relationships that are based on their previous experience and view lecturers as powerful individuals, who are considered to be of a much higher status than them (Biggs, 1993; Biggs and Tang, 2011: Chaurasia, 2016; Clarke, 2010; Sheikh, 2017; Zachariah, 1993). With these differences in mind, Indian students are most likely unaware that in western universities it is more than acceptable to foster a relationship with the teacher and ask questions if something is not understood.

Biggs (1996; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011) and Clarke (2010) identify further differences, which include, students in western TLE being expected to engage, participate and communicate in classes with lecturers and fellow students. In contrast, this behaviour is considered unacceptable in India because students are expected to play a more passive role and be respectful and humble (Chakrabarty, 2011). Furthermore, students are expected to avoid embarrassing their lecturers by refraining from speaking or asking questions in class, even if they do not understand the information (Chakrabarty, 2011; Sheikh, 2017; Stephens et al, 2012). Yet, when Indian students come to study in the UK, they need to adapt to the culture of the new TLE and very quickly become active learners who learn through various forms of interaction with the lecturer and fellow students. Challenges exist because if students expect a hierarchical relationship with their teachers this may lead to them hesitating in seeking support (Sheikh, 2017), therefore creating even more problems because the teacher will just assume that everything is fine.

3.10 Teaching Activities: Teacher-Centred versus Student-Centred

A review of the literature suggests that in a teacher-centred TLE, the only teaching method that lecturers employ is the formal class lecture (Biggs, 1996 and Clarke, 2010; Ryan, 2000; 2005). Several studies confirm that in India, during the lecture it is common practice for the lecturer to present the

information from books and thereafter test students' knowledge by way of examinations. It is widely acknowledged that during these lectures there is no time allocated for student interaction, engagement or digestion of any new concepts or ideas. Therefore, if there is something that students do not understand, they are expected to continue reading until they find the answer in the book (Chakrabarty, 2011; Powell, 2003; Lowyck, 2007; Sheik, 2017). Indeed, while reviewing the literature, various authors point out that cultivating this type of environment and depending on the traditional lecture method, tends to encourage a passive style of learning, which subsequently leads to a surface approach to learning that promotes very little meaning or understanding (Elen, Clarebout, Leonard and Lowyck, 2007).

In contrast, a student-centred TLE which is prominent in HEI in the UK utilises various forms of teaching and learning methods including lectures, tutorials, seminars, and participation in classroom. These methods aim to encourage active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class (Attard et al., 2010; Barnett 2008; Blackie, Case, and Jawitz, 2010; Eleni, Clarebout, Leonard, and Lowyck, 2007; Geven and Santa 2010). However, the teaching methods in western HEI are very different from Indian students' previous experience and therefore might present some challenges for them in their new TLE, particularly in terms of engaging in an active tutorial and seminar sessions. Indeed, students are expected to immediately adapt from being a dependent to a more active learner, by engaging with the lecturer and participating in tutorials, seminars and class discussions without any difficulties (Sheikh. 2017). Yet, in India students are expected to play a more passive role and be respectful and humble towards the lecturer who is considered the provider and evaluator of all knowledge (Chakrabarty, 2011). Indeed, students are discouraged from engaging with lecturers or from even asking any questions for fear of bringing attention to themselves and looking like a bad student (Denovan and Macaskill, 2013; Thurber and Walton, 2012; Wrench et al., 2013). Nevertheless, a reason for the lack of engagement may stem from the fact that it is the lecturers' priority to ensure that students stay focused on when and what to learn because the

lecturers are under immense pressure from governing boards to ensure students pass examinations. Therefore, lecturers rarely deviate from the curriculum regardless of whether it generates any interest or understanding of the subject matter (Chakrabarty, 2011; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011).

In contrast, studies conducted by Gibbs and Coffey (2004) explain that in the student-centred TLE, the teacher is seen as the facilitator of knowledge and students are encouraged to actively engage with them and ask questions if they have problems. The priority of the teacher is to cultivate students' learning using innovative teaching methods that encourage students to improve and widen their knowledge and learning, and, consequently, enhance their critical thinking skills, and prepare them to become independent lifelong learners (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004; Tengku and Furbish, 2010). However, given the vast differences in these two teaching approaches, it is inevitable that adapting to these new methods may present challenges for some Indian students, whose learning experiences are shaped by the teaching methods used in their previous TLE (Kissil, and Davey, 2012).

3.11 Teacher-Centred Assessments versus Student-Centred Assessments

Assessment methods are another area that presents significant differences in the TLE between India and the UK. It is well known in the literature that the Indian educational system is dominated by teacher-centred approaches to learning which makes significant usage of examinations as a means of testing students' knowledge and understanding (Biggs, 1993; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Chaurasia, 2016). Indeed, examinations often encourage rote learning which is the memorisation and regurgitation of facts which students are subsequently able to instantly recall. However, this learning technique is heavily criticised because it encourages students to be passive, which leads to a surface approach to learning (Biggs, 1993; Chaurasia, 2016; Sheikh, 2017). In other words, although it enables students to recall information, there is very little meaning or understanding attached to the knowledge. Indeed, many researchers have found evidence that this type of approach does not encourage students to critically analyse, evaluate, question and develop

individual opinions, which are all key elements in western higher education that promote higher level thinking (Biggs,1993; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Chakrabarty, 2011; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). In contrast, research studies stress the importance of higher educational institutions promoting a deeper learning strategy to help students improve their academic performance and skills (Asikainin, 2014; Hamm and Robertson, 2010).

Over the past thirty years researchers such as Biggs (1996), Biggs and Tang (2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010), Morrison et al. (2005) and Sheikh (2017) have highlighted concerns about the usage of examinations, memorisation and regurgitation strategies that are commonly used in international educational systems, such as India. However, their views have been challenged by Cooper (2004) and Sinhaneti and Kyaw (2012) who claim that rote learning is not always meaningless, and it can be effective in some learning contexts such as spelling, maths and multiplication tables which are areas that are frequently used to recall numbers. Furthermore, despite the negativity surrounding rote learning, the memorisation of content is an essential element of some academic courses such as medicine and law (Atherton, 2011; Draper, 2013), as well as an essential tool to help support the development of deeper understanding and critical thinking skills (Morton, 2011; Safda, 2013; Sinhaneti and Kyaw, 2012).

Nevertheless, assessments in the UK are designed to be student-centred and include individual, or group academic and consultancy reports, essays, presentations, debates, case studies and exams, with some being formative and others being summative. Moreover, students in HEIs in the UK are made to think about the concepts they are learning, with the emphasis of the curriculum being focused more on comprehension, free thinking and challenging ideas (Major, 2005). Students are therefore expected to "unlearn" their past learning experiences and adapt to the western ways of teaching and learning with little or no regard for their previous educational experience (Ninnes and Hellsten, 2005; Holmes 2004). However, as evidenced in the literature, this can create issues and challenges for international students and it is therefore not surprising that it often takes students many months before they accumulate the required study

skills to engage and cope with their new environment (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Boyle *et al.*, 2002; Morrison *et al.*, 2005; Pelletier, 2003).

3.12 English Language Proficiency and Accents

In the pedagogic literature language is often considered as one of the main causes of international students' difficulties, because of the challenging demand of studying in a second language (Carroll, 2005a; Mclean and Ransom, 2005). However, English has been spoken in India since the 1700s and despite the controversy surrounding its usage (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008), it is the official language used by the Indian government. Likewise, since 1957 it has been used in many traditional universities including Mumbai (Bombay), Madras (Chennai), New Delhi (Delhi) and Kolkata (Calcutta), as the official language of instruction (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Since adequate language proficiency is vital for international students' educational journey into a new TLE, it could be argued that Indian students have an advantage over other international students. However, all international students have to meet the English language requirements by undertaking an English Language Test (TOEFL/IELTS) which is a mandatory requirement for all international students who want to study in the UK. Nonetheless, achieving the required test score does not automatically mean that international students are prepared for the practical issues and challenges that might arise in an academic environment, neither does it mean the ability to converse fluently, and read and write at postgraduate level (Bayliss and Ingram, 2006; Sovic, 2007). Certainly, it is well documented that many international students arrive in the UK to discover that their English language skills are not sufficient to allow them to cope in a typical English-speaking TLE, thus leading to frustration, stress and a loss in confidence (Carroll, 2008).

Over the past few decades, various authors have explored these challenges and concluded that the language difficulties experienced by international students were due to their experience of learning English in their previous TLE (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Sawir, 2005; Welikala, 2008). For

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example, as explained by Sawir (2005) and Miles and Singal (2010) many international students' prior English language learning is didactic, concentrating on grammar and limiting practice of spoken English, thereby limiting their level of preparedness to function in an English speaking TLE. It is suggested that in terms of Indian students, although English is widely spoken in many academic institutions they do not focus on developing reading, reflective writing, critical analysis and research skills, but instead pay more attention to oral communication. Furthermore, Indian students come from a TLE that encourages the memorisation of information which they are subsequently expected to regurgitate in national examinations, in order to demonstrate their understanding. However, as discussed in Chapter 3.11 this type of assessment does not prove any understanding has even taken place, nor does it prove that students have the required language skills to write at postgraduate level. Interestingly, studies undertaken by Hyland, Kennedy and Ryan (2016) and Cole (2012) state that language competency and academic writing are still major concerns related to international students because the authors consider it as being crucial in students, academic journeys and developing the learners' autonomy.

A further review of the literature identified studies by Biggs (2011) and Carroll and Ryan (2005) who suggest that international students find the pace, accents, choice of words and terminologies used in their new teaching and learning environment extremely challenging. This perspective is confirmed in studies undertaken by Campbell and Li (2008) and Khawaja and Stallman (2011) who not only identified issues caused by different accents, but also suggest that it has led to students not understanding their lecturers, thus creating substantial obstacles in terms of students' successful adaptation and social integration into the new TLE. Indeed, many Indian students have been taught the English language in their previous TLE, but they most likely have been taught by a non-native English speaker who had a strong Indian accent. Indeed, every country that speaks in English, does so in a different accent, even the countries where English is the native language. It is therefore inevitable that, to some extent, when Indian students are communicating with various regional accents and dialects, they may encounter challenges

understanding what is being said. Even so, for some international students, studying in English, particularly at Master's level can be an extremely arduous and stressful experience.

3.13 Critical Thinking and Analysis

Most definitions of critical thinking refer to the intentional application of higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving, inference and the evaluation of other points of view (Shaheen, 2016; Durkin, 2008; Fletcher, 2013; and Shaheen, 2016). It is widely accepted that many international students struggle with the terms critical thinking and analysis. Indeed, many experts argue that students from teacher-centred, or rote learning TLE are extremely uncomfortable with critical discussion because they consider it inappropriate to critically challenge their teachers and academic literature (Durkin, 2008; Fletcher, 2013; Pithers and Soden, 2010; Shaheen, 2016). As previously mentioned, in a teacher-centred TLE the lecturer is regarded as the facilitator of knowledge and it is the student's responsibility to learn and understand the knowledge presented by them, hence students might be reluctant to offer a critical opinion (Shaheen, 2016). Indeed, it is inevitable that students arrive at their host institution with knowledge and expertise from their previous TLE, but this is largely overlooked by the academics in the host institutions. Kingston and Forland (2008) and Durkin (2011) argue that this is cultural imperialism because it is commonly accepted and expected that international students adjust to the TLE in the UK in order to benefit from a UK education. Certainly, critical thinking and writing are fundamental requirements at universities in the UK, and it is expected from all students, particularly at postgraduate level, in students' written work and their tutorial classes (Durkin, 2008;11; Fletcher, 2013; Pithers and Soden, 2010 and Shaheen, 2016). Academic practice in the UK is embedded in the Socratic way of thinking, which places importance on argumentation, logical reasoning, evaluation and seeking truth through thinking critically. It also puts emphasis on engaging in and gathering supporting evidence in order to accept or reject an assumption, idea, concept or theory (HEA, 2013b; Davies, 2013 and Shaheen, 2016).

Naturally, Bosher and Rowekamp (1998) and recently the HEA (2013), Davies (2013) and Shaheen, (2016) have raised concerns about international students' ability to think and write critically. Furthermore, it is evident from the literature that it has been an on-going concern for more than two decades, particularly with students from rote learning backgrounds (Davies, 2013; Lillis and Turner, 2001; Paton, 2005;11; Shaheen, 2016). In fact, researchers suggest that many international students feel completely overwhelmed and that there are many marks lost under the criterion of critical evaluation (Biggs, 1993; 2003; 2011; Boyle, Carter and Clark, 2002). Yet, despite these concerns the dilemma still seems to remain unresolved. Manikutty et al., (2007) and Sulimma (2009) claim that HEIs need to recognise that learning styles can vary from one TLE to another (Manikutty et al. 2007; Sulimma, 2009) and a mismatch match between TLE and students' learning styles can have a profound effect on their performance (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992; Romanelli, 2009; Sulimma. 2009). Biggs (1993; 2003; 2011) Ramsden (2003) and Clarke (2010) advocate that higher education in the UK expects students to develop a deep understanding of the course content and to foster a range of critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills. In contrast, higher education in India tends to adopt a surface approach to learning and expects students to memorise information from books and regurgitate it in the form of an examination (Biggs, 1993; 2003). Indeed, Indian students have spent their entire educational lives cultivating a surface approach to learning, which has coincidently been confirmed for many years in the literature as being incompatible with independent forms of teaching and learning (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Cook and Leckey, 1999; Romanelli, 2009) Despite the above, students arrive at their new TLE in the UK and are expected to adapt to a new style of learning. However, Felder and Silverman (2000) and De Vita (2007) warn that when the learning styles of students are incompatible with the environment, a student's performance can be hindered, and they can become extremely discouraged about their studies in the new TLE. Regardless, critical thinking and analysis is a requirement in UK higher education and how different groups of students are affected by it and how it is perceived and exercised in various countries and cultures, is of particular

interest to HEIs and to this particular study (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992; Romanelli, 2009; Sulimma. 2009).

3.14 Independent Learning

Studying in a HEI in the UK means that students are required to take individual responsibility for their own learning and are, therefore, expected to become independent learners (Knight, 1997; Reynolds, 1997). However, various experts suggest that international postgraduate students are likely to experience issues and challenges when adapting to independent study because their previous TLE was most likely teacher-centred and therefore students are more reliant on the teacher (Bache and Hayton, 2012). In contrast, while most students from student-centred TLE, such as the UK, would expect their teacher to act as a facilitator, students from teacher-centred TLE, prefer teachers to give more input, support, and guidance, consequently leading to frustration by both parties (Bache and Hayton, 2012; McClure, 2007). Indeed, taking responsibility for one's own learning comes with issues and challenges, but if the teacher portrays an enthusiastic style of teaching and the host university implement appropriate support strategies for students, then adoption of Independent learning can be achieved (Bryson and Hardy, 2011). One of the key research objectives for this study was to investigate how the differences in the TLE influence Indian postgraduate students' educational journey into the new TLE.

3.15 Student Support Strategies

In the light of the differences in the TLE, it is imperative that all students, including Indian postgraduate students, receive academic support and guidance to introduce them to the academic rules and regulations of the host HEI (Ryan, 2000; McInnis, 2001; Handa, 2003; Carroll, 2004). Indeed, many students arrive at the host destination from a completely different TLE and may never have been exposed to these academic practices. Nonetheless, it is often assumed that all postgraduate students have the skills or can easily adapt to the different styles of teaching and learning, cope with the different

assessments, undertake research and reference, critically analyse and become active and independent learners (Guilfoyle, 2004; Ryan, 2000; McInnis, 2001; Handa, 2003; Carroll, 2004). Challenges therefore exist because, in order to adapt to their new TLE, Indian postgraduate students must adapt and acquire the academic practices of the new TLE (Misra, Crist, and Burant, 2003). Johnson (2010) explains that effective approaches to supporting a student's educational journey and transition into a new TLE need to include proactive involvement of teaching staff, and also need to be embedded within programmes, in terms of content, learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Similarly, Handa and Power (2005) and later Johnson (2010) explain that whilst it is the student's responsibility to abide by the academic practices of the host HEI, there is a moral and ethical obligation for HEIs and its academics to adequately and effectively communicate and explain knowledge about the academic practices to students.

With the increasing number of HEIs in the UK relying on the revenue gained from international students, it is imperative that they acknowledge the issues and challenges experienced by different groups of students and design student support strategies that meet their specific needs. However, academic staff need to acknowledge the diversity of different groups of students and perhaps adapt their style of teaching to ensure that students become well integrated into their new TLE (Barber and Hassanien, 2008; Hultberg, Hendry and Kiellgren, 2008; Olzga and Sukhnandan. 2005). Nevertheless, Murtagh (2010) warns that for different TLE, most notably those favouring rote-learning and teacher-centred approaches, it is essential to promote and facilitate extra academic support at the beginning of students' studies. Several studies have identified a wide range of tools which can be exploited for promoting and enhancing effective student understanding and adjustment to a new TLE in the UK (Biggs, 1993; 1999; 2003; Entwistle, 2003). For example, in the UK most HEIs implement induction programmes, peer mentoring schemes and study and language skills workshops**.**

3.16 Induction Programme

Most universities in the UK offer induction programmes in order to help international students adjust to their new TLE and academic life (Haggis 2003; 2009; Barber and Hassanien 2008; Hultberg et al., 2008; Olzga and Sukhnandan. 2005; Yorke 1999). Generally, induction programmes are designed to help students adapt to university life and include an introduction to the universities administrative, academic and personal support systems, an introduction on how the programme works, as well as an introduction to the university's technological resources such as the virtual campus and library. Sidoryn and Slade (2008) argue that induction is a critical stage, which starts right from the initial entry into university to the students' final completion. Whilst many researchers would agree that the 'educational journey' starts at the initial entry, there are also many who would disagree. Indeed, several authors such as Flagg (2006), Barber and Hassanien (2008), Johnson (2010) and Olzga and Sukhnandan (2005) argue that the pre-university period is more crucial, as it provides an array of opportunities for institutions to develop appropriate student support strategies that could accommodate a wide range of students. Nonetheless, although these support strategies have been found to enhance the learning outcomes of students (Russell, Rosenthal and Thomson, 2010; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman, 2008), it is evident from the literature that there are still many issues related to international students. Some authors suggest that the issues arise because the support strategies are only implemented in the first week of arrival, which some argue is too late (White and Carr, 2005; Johnson, 2010), whilst others argue that the induction programmes are flawed because they are designed to accommodate a wide range of students and do not support the specific needs of different groups of students (Russell et al. 2010; Zhou et al. 2008). Furthermore, Shobrook (2003) adds that not all induction programmes are successful because students can become overloaded with information during the first week. In response, Campbell (2006) and Whittaker (2008) explain that induction programmes should be a longitudinal process rather than a one-week event at the start of the academic year

Specifically, in order that academics and institutions implement appropriate student support systems, it is fundamental that they understand where students come from, both academically and socially. Academics may not be aware of the fact that different groups of students experience different issues and challenges, nor may they even recognise that some groups of students are entering into an unfamiliar TLE that they are expected to adapt to rapidly in order to successfully adjust (Johnson. 2010; Mackinnon and Manathunga, 2003). Morosanu (2010) explains that international students are bound to be confused by the unfamiliar academic practices and assessments, thus creating a better cultural understanding and awareness between the HEI, the teachers and the students is paramount (Johnson, 2010; Handa and Power, 2005; Mackinnon and Manathunga, 2003; Manikutty et al., 2007; Sulimma, 2009). Yet, despite the challenges, it is crucial for international students to attend induction programmes because the primary reason for hosting them is to help students to adjust to their new environment (UKCISA, 2017).

3.17 Peer Mentoring Scheme

Other types of support strategies include peer mentoring schemes which are designed to partner more experienced international students with newer international students, to support their learning on programmes of study or on specific modules, as well as to help them cope with their new cultural environment. Studies undertaken by Hughes and Wisker (1998) explain that the introduction of a peer mentoring scheme can help facilitate communication and reduce the number of problems that international students experience. Indeed, by communicating with students who have already progressed through the programme new students can gain advice on aspects of the new TLE such as academic study skills, for example conducting research, referencing, and help with approaches to assessments and language difficulties (Bamford, 2003).

3.18 Study and Language Skills Workshops

Differences in study skills between international students' home and host TLE can present significant issues and challenges. Biggs (2003) and Gallon (1990)

explain that HEIs in the UK, expect students to develop a deep understanding of the course content and to foster a range of critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills. In contrast, HEIs in India, students spend a lot more time in class and the teacher is considered the source of all knowledge. However, when students arrive at the new TLE in the UK, they are expected to adapt to a significant increase in academic reading, as well as develop the ability to synthesise that information in a critical way and engage in the writing reports and essays in another language (Biggs, 2003; Cook and Leckey, 1999 Gallon, 1990; Romanelli, 2009). For many international students this presents significant issues and challenges, particularly since students are expected to adapt and submit assessments within the first eight weeks of commencing the programme. Yet, Indian students have never had to write reports or essays, or engage in critical analysis or referencing. In fact, they have spent their entire educational lives cultivating a surface approach to learning which has, coincidently, been confirmed for many years in the literature as being incompatible with independent forms of teaching and learning (Biggs, 1993; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Cook and Leckey, 1999; Gallon, 1990; Romanelli, 2009).

Study skills and language workshops are therefore crucial in providing students with guidance on good academic practice such as language skills, researching, referencing, essay and report writing and presentation skills. That said, despite the benefits, various studies have identified that international students exhibit a lack of interest in study skills classes, mainly due to students' concentration skills whist notetaking, as well as poor time management (Shahidi, Dowlatkhah, Avandi, Musavi and Mohammadi, 2014). Certainly, attending these workshops is considered an important factor in students' academic success (Cottrell, 2008). This perception is reinforced by a study undertaken by Shahidi, Dowlatkhah, Avandi, Musavi and Mohammadi (2014) who examined the quality of study skills and identified the important role it played in students learning, such as an increase in academic performance and grades. The study recommended that study skills programmes should be included in the students' curriculum formally or implemented as workshops for students

In light of this knowledge, it is important that the HEIs recognise the different ways in which students from different cultures approach learning and help them to develop appropriate learning approaches by implementing the right support mechanisms. Moreover, there also needs to be some recognition that learning styles can vary from culture to culture (Manikutty et al. 2007; Sulimma, 2009) and support mechanisms that are suitable for one group of students may not be suitable for another. Indeed, it is well evidenced in the literature that a student's ability to successfully adapt to a new teaching and learning environment is predominately affected by their level of preparedness (Gallon, 1990; Tinto, 2012; Tinto and Pusser, 2006). Indeed, Hall (2007) and Smith (2008) advise that pre-teaching materials could help students to successfully adjust to the new learning environment, yet most institutions do not provide these prior to arrival. Another key research objective for this particular study relates to whether HEIs are providing effective support strategies for Indian postgraduate students, and to what extent Indian postgraduate students use these support strategies.

3.19 Main Themes Arising from the Literature

In most research studies a review of literature raises important questions that need to be considered in the research design. However, this study intends to provide Indian postgraduate students with a voice, designing predisposed questions will prevent that from happening and subsequently distort the very essence of the study. However, the final literature review has presented six initial themes which may affect Indian postgraduate students' educational journey. These themes are presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Main Themes Arising from the Literature

Issues and Challenges Affecting Students Educational Journey (Findings from the literature)				
Motivations for Studying in the UK	**Previous Teaching and Learning Environment in India**	**Teaching and Learning Environment in the UK**	**Key issues and Challenges**	**Student Support Strategies**
Prestigious reputation	**Teacher-centred**	**Student-centred**	Rote learners and cheats	Induction programme
Valued and recognised educational system	Teacher dependent	Reliance on active rather than passive learning	Ill-prepared for higher education	Peer mentoring scheme
	Strict authoritarian environment	Responsibility and accountability for students own learning	Poor written and oral skills	Study skills and language support classes
	Memorisation and regurgitation	Interdependence between teacher and learner	Lack of research skills	
	Poor written and oral s\kills	Mutual respect within learner teacher relationship	Low performance, marks and pass rates	
	Lack of critical thinking/analytical skills	Emphasis on deep learning and understanding	High levels of plagiarism	
	Rote learners	Increase sense of autonomy on the learner	Academic integrity is often questioned.	
	Emphasis on surface learning and understanding	Self-monitoring of own learning process	Often held responsible for lowering academic standards in universities	
	Exam focussed			

3.20 Conclusion

This study chose to review literature from various educational streams including transition, teaching and learning environments and student support strategies because utilising them helps to goes beyond what has already been established in the literature. It was found that research surrounding transition has yet to be conceptualised or applied as an educational journey, hence this

study offers a unique perspective to enhance existing research in the field. As can be seen form the literature, successful student transition is linked to students' previous teaching and learning environments; however, there is no evidence of any study focussing on this relationship or any other study exploring the experiences of students' moving from one TLE to another. For this reason, this study intends to embark on a comprehensive study, to explore and analyse the issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students experience when they make the educational journey to a new TLE in the UK. It is imperative that there is deep understanding from a student perspective, of the issues and challenges that students experience, so that HEIs can design and implement appropriate support strategies which facilitate the needs of different cohorts of students.

Chapter Four: Research Philosophy, Methodology, Methods and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the plan and procedures taken by the researcher to answer the research questions related to the study. First, it discusses the philosophical position of the researcher, which guides the choice of research strategy, design and the methods chosen to conduct the study. In particular, the methodological approach needed to be conducive to exploring the views, expectations and experiences of Indian postgraduate students, therefore a constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological perspective was considered the most appropriate. Subsequently, the use of qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews and thematic analysis, which is used to analyse the data, is examined and justified. Finally, this chapter considers the strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research findings, before highlighting the evaluation criteria such as values, neutrality and ethical concerns. The chapter concludes with an outline of the 'golden thread' and philosophical framework for the research. Appendix 3 presents a model depicting the research philosophy, methodology, methods and analysis.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Designing or identifying the most appropriate research methodology is crucial for every researcher, because it helps to meet research objectives and establish the credibility of a study. Research philosophy refers to a set of beliefs, or worldview assumptions, about how things work, and is strongly influenced by the way that a researcher thinks about the development of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007; 2009). Cresswell (2009) argues that research is underpinned by the philosophical worldview held by the researcher. The research philosophy is concerned with three aspects: ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (how surroundings are conceived), and axiology (the nature of value). Collectively, these form an

inquiry process which is designed to find responses to worthwhile questions by means of a systematic and scientific approach (Welman and Kruger, 2012). A critical step prior to undertaking any research is designing an appropriate paradigm to conduct the study. In their research, Weaver and Olson (2006, p. 460) explain that "research paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate and guide inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished". According to Blaickie (2000; 2007) and Guba (1990) a research paradigm is crucial for any research and includes; ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology and methods. These are reflected in Figure 9: Research Paradigm.

Figure 9: Research Paradigm
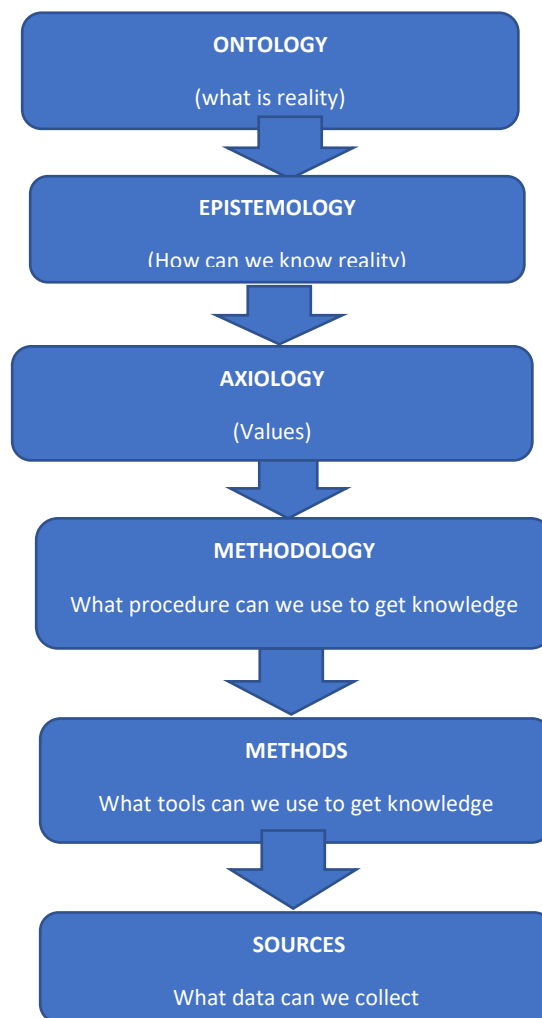
(Source: Blaikie, 2000; 2007; Guba, 1990).

4.3 Ontology

According to Blaikie (2007) ontological claims are claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. Indeed, ontological assumptions are strongly influenced by the way a researcher thinks about the development of knowledge and what he/she believes constitutes social reality (Blaikie, 2000; 2007). Several studies confirm that there are two distinct ontological positions which are objectivism and constructivism (Blaikie, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). In terms of objectivism, this position is influenced by the view that that the social phenomena and their meanings exist in a way that is independent of social actors, in other words it is void of any human experience, knowledge and thought (Blaikie, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). This ontological position is attained through measurement, observation, cause and effect and statistical analysis, which is embedded within the positivist paradigm (Grix, 2004), It generally entails collecting objective facts and gathering large volumes of data, which can be difficult to manage, read and understand and can often lead to findings that do not adequately represent the real world (Burns, 2000). Furthermore, the objectivist ontological perspective considers the research study and the researcher as being separate entities, thus it assumes that the research findings are not influenced by the views and values of the person conducting the research. Regardless, many scholars criticise this "excessive claim to objectivity and argue that the externality of the researcher, and generalisability do not always stand up to scrutiny when used in both the social and natural sciences" (Houghton, 2011). Moreover, since this study is situated in the field of social science and focuses on the study of human experience, the objectivist view is considered inappropriate because it focuses more on finding explanations, rather than exploring any deep understanding of social actors.

In contrast, constructivism is influenced by the view that social phenomena and their meanings are socially constructed from multiple realties that are complex and constantly changing because they exist in people's minds

(Bryman and Bell, 2011; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). This ontological position supports the idea that the researcher is not a detached observer, but part of the research process that helps humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their own ideas. Within a constructivist view there are multiple interpretations of realities because individuals and groups make sense of situations based upon their own individual experiences, memories and expectations; thus, making it a form of relativism whereby individual people perceive and interpret reality differently.

By adopting a relativist ontology, a researcher can discover and understand the meanings and the contextual factors that influence, determine, and affect the interpretations reached by different individuals (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, it is important to note that the data collection and analysis of data is often considered quite time consuming, challenging and complex, even for the experienced researcher, because there are no hard facts and no definite truth. Still, it gets the researcher closer to the situation and the actors, in order to develop relevant and true statements related to the problem being researched (Bryman and Bell, 2011). By adopting a social constructivist approach underpinned by a relativist ontology, it will provide an opportunity to add meaning to situations and identify factors which are not easily exposed in a positivist approach through numbers and prior theory.

This study follows Indian postgraduate students, as they make the educational journey from their previous TLE to a new TLE in the UK. It is therefore crucial that the methods chosen to gather data about students' experiences can capture a deep understanding of the issues and challenges and provide students with a voice to discuss their own individual experiences. If the study does not give voice to the students, then their journey will never be clearly understood. Subsequently, the study could then explore the differences between the TLE and identify the specific issues and challenges encountered by the Indian postgraduate students and their engagement with the support strategies implemented by the host TLE. That being said, a consideration of the different views on what constructs reality is only one part of designing a

research paradigm. Another important question relates to how that reality is measured, and what constitutes that reality. Indeed, it must be noted that the ontological and epistemological foundations of research are inextricably linked and therefore an understanding of epistemology is deemed necessary before any considerations are made final.

4.4 Epistemology

Epistemology represents the "theory of knowledge" and is more concerned about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher, reality and how we know what we know (Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, 2001; Marsh and Furlong, 2010). A researcher's epistemology therefore seeks to identify how truth and certainty are established. It highlights the limitations of what is known, based on how it has come to be known, as well as addresses how knowledge can be gathered and communicated (Cresswell, 2009; Saunders et al, 2007). Likewise, epistemology is similar to ontology, in terms of having two major positions, which include a positivist epistemology and subjectivist epistemology, which can both lead to the accumulation of different views and opinions about the same social phenomena (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). A positivist epistemology claims that knowledge of the world is objective, based on logical discovery, and only phenomena that are observable and measurable can be claimed as being knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003). In contrast, a subjectivist epistemology is not concerned with trying to achieve complete objectivity, but rather sees reality as being constructed from the interaction between actors and their worlds and is developed and transmitted in a social context (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: Crotty, 1998). My epistemological position considers knowledge to be gained through an understanding of individuals' personal experiences. In this regard, it is crucial to get close to the participants' world in order to interpret their experiences through a process of de-construction and reconstruction (Laverty, 2003). This can only be gained by adopting a social constructivist approach underpinned by a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology.

4.5 Axiology

Axiology relates to judgements about value and specifically links to the role the researcher's values play in guiding all stages of the research process and how it is conducted (Cresswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2007). It is a branch of philosophy that considers what researchers value, how they value it and why they value it. These are important questions because they not only affect how the research is conducted, but also affect what value or outcomes will be presented in the results of the research. Indeed, many experts raise concerns about a researcher's personal values shaping research (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Saunders et al., 2007). However, despite these criticisms, there are many authors who argue that, when carrying out qualitative research, the concern should focus on whether the researcher has been transparent and reflexive about the processes by which data has been collected, analysed, and presented (Polit and Beck, 2014). Thus, a researcher's axiology needs to be clearly defined, articulated and demonstrate an understanding of the right and wrong in conducting research. My own personal values relate to family, education, learning and development, trust, honesty, independence, along with fair and equal relationships with everyone, regardless of their background. Certainly, I reflected on what these values mean for the research in terms of my world view, and how these values shape and influence the research. As an academic managing various undergraduate programmes in India and teaching and supervising Indian students at home, it became apparent that this group of students were experiencing similar difficulties when studying in the UK. Indeed, when conducting a review of the literature, much of it highlighted various issues such as a lack of critical thinking and independent learning skills, poor written skills, high levels of plagiarism and poor academic and language skills. However, given that these issues and challenges have existed for over twenty years, it was evident that there is very little understanding about the root causes. Granted, over time, universities have implemented various support strategies, but key literature (Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008) and my own experience suggest that these are not very effective because Indian students are still encountering similar problems.

My values are significant in bringing these issues to the surface because I believe that education should change individuals' lives for the better, particularly in terms of developing individuals' knowledge and encouraging them to become independent and lifelong learners. Nevertheless, many of the Indian students studying on postgraduate programmes in the UK, struggle to adapt and many suffer from stress and anxiety. Indeed, as an educationalist I felt a moral and ethical obligation to explore and identify the root cause of these issues and challenges and my values dictated that the only way to achieve this was by providing students with a voice to share their individual experiences. These values fit with my ontological and epistemological position which relates knowledge being gained through an interpretive understanding of individual personal experiences. By adopting these perspectives, I seek to understand and interpret the experiences of the participant through a process of gathering, de-constructing and reconstructing students' individual experiences as they move from one TLE to another.

4.6 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research was adopted for this study rather than a quantitative approach because it was more likely to achieve rich and descriptive detail about the subjective experiences of Indian postgraduate students, as they made their journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK.

4.7 Sampling

Qualitative research is also related to an in-depth understanding of the subject in question, and it is important to choose an appropriate sample of students who can give full-bodied explanations of their experience. Within qualitative data collection, it is essential that the sample size is chosen strategically and meaningfully and provides enough information for the research question to be thoroughly addressed and at the same time produce meaningful results (Mason, 2002). Various scholars argue that, when choosing a sample, it does not need to encompass a whole population, but should be representative of a key area within it (Mason, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 2009). More

specifically, Adams, Khan, Raeside and White (2007, p.146) advise that "when choosing the sample for interviewing, participants should be representative of the group which the study is intending to focus".

The sample being explored within the full-scale study includes six Indian students who have studied undergraduate degrees at various higher education institutions in India, who will make the journey from their home TLE to study in a new TLE in the UK. Adams et al (2007) suggest that this type of non-probability sampling, which is qualitative in nature, is the best way to select participants; it allows a purposive sample of the population to be identified, incorporating students who are relevant to the area being researched. However, Miles and Huberman (2009) explain that there are weaknesses associated with purposive sampling, such as distortions to the data being collected because of the insufficient breadth of sampling; distortions introduced by changes over time, such as participants dropping out of the study, and also the possibility of poor in-depth data being gathered at various stages. In order to address these concerns, the sample consists of eight students who meet the aforementioned criteria. This will ensure that the data gathered from students denotes a broad range of institutions in India and represents a range of postgraduate degree programme in a Business School in the UK. In doing so, I safeguard against any changes to a particular programme of study and ensure that if there are any students who drop out that there is very little impact on the research study.

4.8 Methods

The main purpose of the method for this particular study is to draw out the individual experiences of Indian postgraduate students, and to encourage them to talk about their personal and individual experiences during their journey from their previous TLE to a new TLE in the UK. This is a qualitative research study, which is primarily descriptive in nature and concerned with capturing opinions, feelings, and experiences (Boyce and Neale, 2006). Merriam (2016) claims that interviews are a common qualitative method to use within research, and it is chosen as the method for this particular research

study because it allows a deeper exploration of students' issues and challenges, and helps to draw out deeper and rich information related to their experiences.

A structured interview is the most common to employ within qualitative research, and it involves each participant receiving and answering similar types of questions related to a particular phenomenon and interview stimulus (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Merriam, 2016). However, despite the prevalence of structured interviews, these are not considered suitable for this particular study because using an identical set of questions, might encourage identical responses and predictable results that may lack any real insight into the student's journey. Nevertheless, qualitative research also lends itself to the use of unstructured interviewing strategies, which provide much more detailed information than any other data collection method. Bryman and Bell (2007) defined unstructured interviews as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. The authors explain that the success of these interviews rely on the researcher giving the participant enough freedom to discuss the phenomenon from their own perspective. Indeed, utilising an unstructured interview encourages more in-depth discussion that leads to more honest and insightful information and results (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Davies, 2007; Kumar, 2005). In terms of the pilot study, it was appropriate to review the data collection methods that were intended to be used in the full-scale study, because it can be used to address potential practical issues, particularly in unstructured interviews (Castillo-Montoya's, 2016; Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002).

4.9 Pilot Study

Undertaking pilot interviews for the aforementioned unstructured interviews was 'crucial' as a means of trying out the interviews, because it gave the opportunity to make any changes that have been overlooked, prior to the full-scale. The aim of this pilot study is:

- To establish myself as a qualitative researcher;
- To design a set of themes to guide, if necessary, the unstructured interview;
- To practice the unstructured interviews in person;
- To reflect on the pilot study and refine, if necessary, the set of themes and the use of unstructured interviews.

The sample being explored within the pilot study were three Indian students who studied undergraduate degrees at various higher education institutions in India and subsequently studied on various postgraduate programmes in a Business School in the UK. The researcher undertook an individual unstructured interview with each student, in order to understand their experiences as they made the journey from their previous TLE to another in the UK. Although, the interviews were unstructured and lasted for one hour, the researcher used a set of themes to ensure that appropriate information was gathered, and that the data specifically related to the student experiences at each of the critical points in the journey. These can be found in Appendix 4: Interview Themes. However, the intention was only to use them if the participants digressed from the subject area. This allowed me the opportunity to ask, change, and adjust questions to meet the aims and objectives of the study. It also, or so I thought, ensured that any knowledge gathered from the participants was based upon their own experiences and not influenced by a predetermined set of questions. I audio recorded and transcribed the gathered data from the unstructured interviews and reflected on whether or not they drew out the necessary data that met the aims and objectives of the study.

4.10 Reflection of the Data Collection and Analytical Methods

As previously mentioned, the pilot study provides an opportunity to make any amendments or refinements to the data collection methods and analytical tools, prior to undertaking the full-scale study. Although it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to work through the various stages of a pilot study, it is a crucial part of any research project. Undertaking the pilot study gave me the opportunity to trial the method and techniques employed in the study, as

well as provided the time to reflect on their suitability. The main method of data collection to be reviewed in this study is the unstructured interviews. Indeed, it was decided from the beginning that unstructured interviews were the most appropriate method for the full-scale study, but it is important to stress that these interviews were intended to take place at two critical points throughout the student journey, which include: within three to four weeks of the students arriving at the university in the UK, and within three to four weeks of the second trimester. However, for the pilot study this was not possible due to time constraints, as the whole process would take a full academic year. I therefore, slightly adjusted the procedure, by combining the loose themes from each of the interviews into one.

The interviews with participants lasted for one and half hours each, but they did not go as well as anticipated. Notably, I found this stage of the research very challenging, which was perhaps due to my own anxieties and insecurities about being a competent researcher. However, I came across studies that explained that it is a very common to experience these feelings during the initial stages of research, and that these are mainly due to a lack of knowledge and a sense of having to prove oneself (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Merriam, 2016). Certainly, whilst conducting the pilot interviews, I was careful not to influence participants by guiding the flow of the discussion. However, on subsequent reflection I realised that I had dominated the interviews by focusing too heavily on getting students to answer every single theme, rather than allowing them to discuss their own experience. Indeed, this was in complete contrast to what was I was trying to achieve, and I initially considered replacing them with structured interviews, mainly because it seemed an easier and more organised process to follow.

Anyway, I contemplated more deeply on the interview process, I realised that it was not the actual data collection method that was inadequate, but more my interview techniques that needed to improve. Indeed, the aim of the study was to capture a true and honest account of students' experiences. Therefore, I had to create the conditions that allowed students to discuss their own personal journey without being guided or influenced by predisposed questions.

In hindsight, information related to the structure of the interviews would have helped the participants to be more prepared for the interviews and have a better understanding of what the study was trying to achieve. Nonetheless, for the full-scale study, I decided to take the themes with me, but keep them in a folder for security just in case anything went wrong. In addition, I intended to use the following opening statement at the beginning of each interview:

> *"I do not have a set of predisposed questions, but if there is a topic that you touch on that needs to be explored further, then I will just ask you to elaborate. Apart from that this is your story, your experience and I do not want to influence any of your discussion, so I will now just sit back and listen to you discuss your educational journey from India to the UK".*

Another significant challenge in conducting the pilot study was preparing the gathered data for coding, and then designing themes for analysis. I chose this method of analysis because of its flexibility, and because it was supposed to be a relatively easy and quick method to learn for a novice qualitative researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Specifically, this was very much a trial and error process, because I had little experience or knowledge of any formal system to follow. I preferred to work through the transcript manually, and colour coded important information. However, I found myself highlighting everything that I thought was significant, which accounted for most of the data in the interviews. In addition, the coding was undertaken without even considering whether it related to the research question. I eventually felt frustrated because I had collected an enormous amount of data, which seemed to be impossible to analyse. To be honest, I felt out of my depth, but I continuously returned to the data, the literature, and took advice from my supervisors in order to improve my understanding and to ensure accuracy. Thereafter, I made tables in a word document, so that I could keep track of all of the different themes that emerged. Similarly, narrowing things down by collapsing and combining similar themes was also very difficult, because I did not have the experience to instantly recognise them, and I found myself continuously questioning and doubting my abilities. This stage was a very time-consuming process, but it did teach me some valuable lessons and the importance of always reflecting on the research questions during the process

of coding and identifying themes. However, in preparation for the full-scale study, I realised that I needed to be more focused in terms of managing and organising the vast amount of data collected and that I also needed to practice the process of undertaking thematic analysis.

In the full-scale study, the individual unstructured interviews lasted for one hour and took place at two critical points in the student journey, which included: within three to four weeks of the students arriving at the host university in the UK, and within three to four weeks of the second trimester (Appendix 5: Schedule for Conducting Interviews). The interviews were conducted with six Indian students who studied undergraduate degrees at various higher education institutions in India and who subsequently studied on various postgraduate programmes at a Business School in the UK. Initially, there were eight students recruited, but two dropped out of their programmes and returned to India before the first set of interviews. Table 6 presents the participants' educational background.

Table 6: Participants Educational Background

Name	University	Gender	Age	Postgraduate Programme
Participant 1	University of Calcutta	Female	31 years	MSc Tourism and Hospitality Management
Participant 2	University of Madras	Female	24 years	MBA Master of Business Administration
Participant 3	University of Mumbai	Male	25 years	MSc International Festival and Events Management
Participant 4	University of Delhi	Female	26 years	MBA Master of Business Administration
Participant 5	University of Delhi	Male	27 years	MSc International Festival and Events Management
Participant 6	University of Calcutta	Male	25 years	Master of Business Administration
Participant 7	University of Mumbai	Male	27 years	Dropped Out MSc International Festival and Events Management
Participant 8	University of Mumbai	Female	27 years	Dropped Out Master of Business Administration

4.11 Data Analysis

Qualitative data is related to gaining an understanding of people and situations under investigation and provides a platform for interpreting the participant's words and actions (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Smith, 2009). It is argued that the analysis of qualitative data is fundamentally a personal activity (Braun and Clarke, 2013) and essentially a non-mathematical procedure (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Smith, 2009**).** Thematic analysis has been adopted for this study because it is a qualitative method that is used for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This is achieved through a persistent and controlling process of comparing ideas which are gathered from interviews, conversations, discussions and observations (Braun and Clarke,

2013; Collins, 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, it is important to recognise that thematic analysis is not just about word or phrase counting, but rather involves a systematic process of analyses that must identify and describe both implicit and explicit ideas from a particular phenomenon which are related to a specific research question (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

4.12 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is useful for this study because concepts and theories are developed out of the data through a persistent and controlling process of comparing the ideas with existing data, and improving the emerging concepts and theories, by checking them against new data collected specifically for that purpose (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Typically, these themes become clusters of linked categories which convey similar meanings and emerge from either the deductive or inductive analytic process. Specifically, a deductive approach is when themes are driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area and are generally regarded as predetermined themes. In contrast, an inductive approach is directly informed by the data rather than preconceptions and may not bear a strong relation to the actual questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, it is important to note that if appropriate themes are not identified by the researcher, then the whole process can be unsuccessful; thus, suggesting that the success of identifying codes and themes largely depend on the ability and experience of the researcher (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Indeed, it is widely recognised that theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research and also one of the most mysterious. This is because it is intended to capture something important about the data in relation to the research aim (Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, it is crucial to understand that a theme is different from a code in the sense that a theme connotes the outcome or result of coding, not that which is coded. The code can be seen as the label that is given to particular pieces of the data, which contribute towards a theme. In thematic analysis there are also different levels at which themes can be identified and these include semantic and latent themes.

Thematic analysis has been popularly practised for many years, particularly in analysing qualitative research. Nonetheless, it is rarely acknowledged in the literature when compared to more prevalent methods such as grounded theory, narrative analysis, or discourse analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). Although there are similarities in these models, thematic analysis is distinguished from other models by the fact that it does not require the researcher to subscribe to the implicit theoretical commitments of other approaches. Braun and Clarke (2013) argue that this theoretical freedom makes it an accessible form of analysis, particularly for early career researchers, where thematic analysis is often seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. Furthermore, the authors maintain that thematic analysis offers flexibility to a wide group of researchers, because it can be adopted by an essentialist, realist, or constructionist epistemology. However, the authors contend that before utilising thematic analysis, the theoretical position of a researcher must be made clear (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Indeed, there have also been some criticisms of thematic analysis as being ill-defined and providing insufficient guidelines for researchers to follow (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). These weaknesses originate from the fact that thematic analysis does not actually identify codes and themes from the gathered data, but they are rather identified by the researchers themselves through a process of repetitive reading. The success is therefore entirely based around the ability of an individual. That being said, although the process is said to be somewhat complex, the end product is laid out in a very simple fashion, which is easy to read and to decode, and can generate rich and detailed data (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

4.13 Phases of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is useful for this study as it is theoretically flexible and focuses on individual experiences, views and perceptions of a particular phenomenon (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, it provides freedom to the researcher and also complements the research themes which will help to produce an insightful analysis of the experiences of Indian postgraduate

students. Braun and Clarke (2013) designed a series of six phases and these were used as a guide to conduct the thematic analysis on this particular study. These phases include familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Table 7 depicts the various phases of thematic analysis which will be applied to this study.

Table 7: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with data:	Transcribing data and then reading and re-reading
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis and producing a report of the analysis

(Adapted: Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp 87)

4.13.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation with Data

In order to ensure that the data collected from each interview was accurate, the audio recordings were listened to several times before transcribing them into raw text. The first reading of the transcripts allowed me to familiarise

myself, with the information gathered from each of the student interviews. Subsequently, this enabled me to document repetitive words in the transcripts and write notes and ideas in the margin of transcripts. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), in repeating the process of reading and listening to the recordings of data, the interviewer is able to obtain data immersion, which ensures that researchers understand and are close to the data. The authors also suggest that analysis begins at this stage with the researcher beginning to notice things of interest that might be relevant to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Although in terms of this particular study the identification of some themes was somewhat apparent, the majority were discovered in the latter stages of the analytical process. Appendix 6: Transcript provides an example of one of the interviews.

4.13.2 Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

The second phase of thematic analysis is the "coding stage", which involved the systematic construction of codes generated from the notes and ideas which were gathered in the initial stage. However, before starting the process, it is important to recognise that in order for information to be classified as codes it must identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the researcher, and links to the raw data in a meaningful way (Boyatzis, 1998). Likewise, Braun and Clarke (2013) advise that a code should be clear and concise, as they become the foundation for the themes that are going to be used by a researcher. Codes can be categorised into three different types, which include descriptive codes, interpretive codes, and pattern codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This study chose to utilise pattern codes, which means that the codes were generated by documenting where and how patterns existed across all the gathered transcripts from the student interviews.

Indeed, it is important to recognise that these patterns, themes and categories, do not emerge on their own, and the researcher always plays an active role by selecting the most important information (Tuckett, 2005). However, Braun and Clarke (2006) warn researchers that coding is not a simple procedure, because it is an iterative process in which researchers continuously read, alter,

and modify their analysis, to reflect the data and ideas that emerge. This creates both a complex and time-consuming process. As previously mentioned, the categorisation of data into meaningful codes or themes can also be deductive and/or inductive in nature. This study chose to adopt an inductive analysis of the data, whereby the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis emerged out of the data, rather than being imposed by myself prior to data collection and analysis. Indeed, during this stage, I was extremely careful to include only data that was relevant to meeting the aims and objectives of this particular research study. I systematically examined all of the transcripts very closely, giving equal attention to all of the data. Braun and Clarke (2013) state that it is important in this stage to label as many potential codes and themes as possible, because they could be useful later. Once the codes were identified, they were reviewed with the data extract in order to identify and collate similar codes together. As previously mentioned, codes can also be developed at both the semantic and latent level, with this study adopting the latent level, because it involved examining the underlying conceptualisations which may be shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. Indeed, I have followed this approach because it is suitable with my philosophical and epistemological assumptions.

Generally, coding can be done using a software programme, such as NVivo or Atlas, however, I decided to do it manually, using highlighter pens, post-it notes and files. The manual approach was chosen because I wanted to deepen my knowledge and immerse myself into the data from the participants' interviews, and therefore enhance my understanding. The process of the detailed analysis which began in the first stage, was undertaken with each of the interviews being read carefully, in order to find similar words, phrases, and repeating words and ideas which related to each research objective. Thereafter, any ideas that were repeated in each of the twelve transcripts, were all highlighted, paying particular attention to ideas that were repeated by the six participants.

4.13.3 Phase 3: Identifying Themes

The next important stage of thematic analysis was identifying potential themes from the list of different codes that were identified from the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) generating themes involves combining codes into overarching themes, which accurately reflect the data from the entire set of interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) caution that this process requires analytic perception, and simply using interview questions as the themes results in poor analysis. My search for common themes started with the examination of coded data that was generated from student interviews. This resulted in similarities and overlaps in the codes being clustered together to form potential themes, and with some larger, more complex codes being incorporated into different potential themes. After a considerable amount of reflection on the relationships between potential themes, they were each given a label descriptive of its content. By the end of this process, I had obtained an established group of potential themes and sub-themes that told a rich and complex story about the data gathered from the student interviews. However, there was still a lot of information in the sub-themes which still needed further analysis.

4.13.4 Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

The fourth phase of thematic analysis started with the previously designed potential themes being refined to ensure that they tell a rich and complex story about the coded data gathered from the interview transcripts. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) there are two levels of reviewing and refining themes; level one focuses on reviewing the coded data extracts and level two focuses on reviewing the coded data in relation to the entire data set. I started the refinement process at level one by reviewing the extracts from each of the potential themes and evaluating their coherent pattern. During the refinement process, it became clear that some of the potential themes did not really have enough data to support them and were therefore collapsed into other more substantial themes, with a few of themes being excluded from further analysis. I continued this process of refinement until I was content with the analysis and thereafter provided provisional names and flexible definitions for each

emerging theme. Notwithstanding, Braun and Clarke (2006) caution that if the analysis seems incomplete, the researcher needs to go back and find what is missing. As previously mentioned, level two involved a similar process, but extends to reviewing the coded data in relation to the entire data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that it is important at this stage to re-read your entire data set in order to ascertain whether the themes 'work' in relation to the data set and to further code any additional data within themes that has been missed in earlier coding stages. The authors appreciate that it may be necessary for some researchers to re-code because coding is an ongoing organic process. That being said, they do recognise that there is a point of saturation and they advise that when a researcher is satisfied, then they should move on to the next phase. However, in practice and in order to manage the large volume of data effectively, it was necessary to design themes, which made it easier to establish the overarching themes and sub-themes, and also to allow the instant observation of any links and relationships between them.

4.13.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

The fifth phase started when engaged in the deep analytic work that was involved when undertaking thematic analysis. During this phase it is important to define and refine the themes that will be presented for analysis, because this is the critical process that moulds the data into its complex detail (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This stage involved naming the themes, with each theme being clearly defined and accompanied by a detailed analysis. Considerations were then made not only of the story within individual themes, but how these related to the overall story that was evident within the data. Subsequently, the final naming of each theme was completed, with consideration being made to names that would convey an immediate understanding of a theme's relevance to the research study. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) warn that researchers conducting thematic analysis should go beyond the surface meanings of the data and tell an accurate story of what the data means.

4.13.6 Phase 6: Final Report

Recording the results is considered the final step of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and is about combining the themes together into a compelling story which reflects the dependability of the analysis. The findings for this particular study are presented in Chapter 4: Findings.

4.14 Evaluation and Establishment of Trustworthiness

All qualitative research studies need to evaluate and establish trustworthiness to demonstrate confidence in the presented results. Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Bryman and Bell (2011) recommend the following criteria to measure trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility refers to the similarity between the researcher's interpretations and construction of the data and those of the participants. A common criticism of qualitative research is that data from interviews can be unreliable and sometimes influenced by the researcher's own biasness and interpretations. However, Silverman (2001; 2008) and Gibbs (2011) stress that the credibility and consistency of interviews can be increased if other researchers code samples of the same set of transcripts and identify similar findings. Similarly, Bryman (2008) and Silverman (2008) explain that interviews can be considered credible if they can be replicated and have the same findings each time the study is repeated, thus analysis could be done by more than one researcher (Silverman, 2001; 2008). For this particular study, two colleagues were asked to each code three full transcripts in the first set of interviews and three full transcripts in the second set of interviews. Simultaneously the coding was also undertaken by the researcher across the entire data set in the first set of interviews and the same process was applied in the second set of interviews. Subsequently, the codes arising from colleagues were compared with the researcher's and the differences and similarities were discussed. While comparisons between the colleague and researcher on the same interview transcript showed a strong level of agreement, there were a few insignificant differences. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and copies were given to the participants involved in the research to check the trustworthiness of the transcript before and after

the analysis phase. Thereafter, member checking extended to the researcher's supervisors to determine if the findings and interpretation of participants' experiences were well presented.

The findings include thick and detailed descriptions of the students' experiences which can be found in the results chapter. Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that the goal of qualitative research is to provide a thick description that reflects a deep, dense, detailed account of students' experiences where quotes from the data are crucial in ensuring the credibility of the data. I believe that the study presents thick detailed descriptions of the data which communicate students' experiences through the findings as accurately as possible. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) claim that thick, detailed accounts of participants' experiences can provide a depth of analysis that can be transferrable to other contexts. However, one of the main concerns regarding dependability is whether the data has been collected and analysed in such a way that the findings can be used with confidence in different but similar contexts. To obtain detailed data, it was constantly compared and analysed to identify and verify themes, along with undertaking numerous conversations with supervisors and various discussions with colleagues to validate interpretations and increase the study's trustworthiness and credibility. As such, the findings may be transferrable to other higher education institutions in the UK and overseas and perhaps to similar cohorts of international students in higher education.

In terms of dependability this is the process whereby the researcher maintains an audit trail of the data that is systematically recorded, tracked and accessible (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). I designed a detailed audit trail of the data to demonstrate dependability and quality. The elements of this include the process of data analysis documented in this chapter, which includes the use of manual analysis, as well as a detailed account of the analytical process itself, and the decisions taken to come up with the research findings. The study provides detailed transcripts that have captured the students' experiences throughout their educational journey, showing details of the different stages of thematic analysis, from coding through to the identification of the key themes.

Throughout the thematic analysis process, the researcher continuously consulted and discussed various challenges with supervisors, in order to seek clarification and advice, which inevitably contributed towards a robust and detailed set of findings and analysis. Finally, confirmability in a study ensures that the researcher's construction of the data is rooted in the constructions of the experiences of participants and not influenced by the researcher's own personal values (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011). Indeed, after every transcript was constructed, it was sent to the participant to confirm that they agreed with the content.

4.15 Values, Neutrality, Reflexivity and Ethical Concerns

My values are linked to the adopted ontological and epistemological positions which relate to knowledge being gained through an interpretive understanding of individual personal experiences. By embracing these approaches, I seek to understand and interpret and give voice to the experiences of Indian postgraduate students through a process of gathering, de-constructing and reconstructing their individual experiences as they move from one TLE to another. In this regard, it is crucial that I get close to the participants' world and interpret their experiences through their own voice. Indeed, the aim of the study is to capture a true and honest account of students' experiences, therefore I need to create the conditions that allow students to comfortably discuss their own personal journey without being guided or influenced by my values or biases.

In research, the term neutrality implies that research inquiry is free of bias or is separated from the researchers' background, position, or personal circumstances. However, a qualitative researcher is not independent from participants, but is considered part of the research process because they are engaged with participants in constructing their point of view. Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that the neutrality of research and biasness can be reduced by being self-aware and reflecting on the influence of one's own personal values and opinions about a particular research topic. However, in order to achieve neutrality, relationships between the findings and the data must be clearly

established, thus, in order to reduce biasness, I employed unstructured interviews because the data was generated from the participants themselves. Moreover, a conscious effort was made to ensure neutrality by treating participants as informants and allowing their voice to come through by creating the space for them to discuss their own experiences. Indeed, I deliberately sought to establish neutrality during the interviews and engaged in very little conversation. In fact, my only questions during the interview process were to ask participants to elaborate on a particular point that they had raised. In addition, prior to the interviews taking place, I clearly defined and articulated my role and the participants role, so they understood that I just wanted to listen to their experiences.

Bryman and Bell (2011) define reflexivity as the process of self-awareness and analysis that a researcher should conduct in relation to their role within the research process. It is an important concept to consider because researchers can influence the collection, selection and interpretation of data. Therefore, researchers need to be continuously aware of their possible biasness. They need to understand that it can have a significant effect on the accuracy of the gathered qualitative data and research outcomes (Hammersley, 2008). Nadin and Cassell (2006, p. 208-209) explain that the benefits of reflexivity are that "one is made more aware of the role and impact of the researcher; it increases the trustworthiness of the data and integrity of the research process".

This research study was conducted within a Business School in a HEI in Scotland, where I am employed as lecturer. I am a British female who has lived in the UK for most of her life, but I have been travelling to India in my role as programme leader for thirteen years and have built many valuable friendships along the way, including three of my closest friends. In managing the programme, I have encountered many challenges, which ranged from high failure rates, low marks and a high of number of plagiarism cases. As a consequence, there has been pressure from senior management and colleagues to improve the situation because it creates a lot of work with re-assessments, additional exam boards and plagiarism investigations. However, despite various interventions, the situation never improved. As a result, I have

witnessed many Indian students go home without gaining the qualification of a British degree or a postgraduate degree. Many of these students, some that I have come to know on a personal basis, have taken huge loans to finance their studies in the UK and going home without the qualification puts immense pressure on these students financially, psychologically and emotionally. From a personal perspective this was very difficult to observe, even more so when I discovered that some students' parents re-mortgaged their homes to send them to the UK. Certainly, it was evident that this group of students were struggling academically from the moment they arrived on campus and as an institution and practitioner we have moral duty to ensure that all students are prepared for higher education. Hence, I designed this doctoral study in hope of developing an understanding of why Indian postgraduate students encountered these issues and challenges and to explore whether the differences in TLEs could help to explain.

Indeed, as I progressed with the research and reflected more deeply on my experience with the research process, I had to ask how my positionality as a British female who worked in the host institution influenced the interactions with student participants, the research questions, and the interpretation of the findings. My beliefs, morals and value systems are present and inseparable throughout the research process and I recognise that my experience could influence the data and responses that were provided by the participants. I also recognised that power dynamics flow through the research process; therefore, it was my ethical duty to ensure that the students were given a voice and that contextual power in the interplay of the research process was fair and focussed on creating the conditions that encouraged students to talk honestly and openly about their experience. Wherever possible in the research process, I tried not to allow my position as an academic influence the dynamics or content of the data gathered from the interviews. The purpose of this study was to give students voice, but appreciated that just like their experiences were crucial in the research process my own experiences could influence the process. Therefore, building trust to obtain accurate and honest data was crucial for this study.

My positionality of being an academic who was culturally aware and knowledgeable about the Indian educational system and history helped break down communication barriers and allowed us to build trust before the interviews took place. In fact, students were surprised at how much I had travelled and knew about their country and culture, which was the main focus of the conversation that day. As an academic working in the host institution and recognising the power dynamics in the research process, I deliberately recruited participants from a range of different postgraduate programmes across the business school and ensured that I would not be teaching or supervising them in any capacity. I attended various induction programmes, informing students that I was undertaking a doctoral study and that I required Indian postgraduate students to take part in my study. I provided my email address and asked students who were interested in sharing their experience to get in touch. Subsequently, I had eight offers and I met all potential participants that same week for a coffee and chat. The aim was to make the students feel as comfortable as possible and to answer any questions they might be concerned about before the interviews. At this stage, participants were informed that it was crucial to gather an honest account of their experiences. In order to achieve this, I would refrain from asking them questions and just listen to their story. My aim was to make the participants feel like the interviews were a social interaction rather than a tool for collecting data (Alvesson, 2003, p.169). We chatted throughout the meeting on various topics about Indian and we all seemed to be at ease with one another.

I was careful not to influence interactions with my students, so unstructured interviews were employed because the data was considered more honest and reliable, and it allowed participants the opportunity to express their own personal experiences and feelings. Thus, I managed to capture more realistic account of their educational journey (Fontana and Frey, 1994) rather than being influenced by any predetermined questions. At the start of each interview participants were reminded that their honest experiences were crucial to the success of the study. Consequently, the interview process was more like a one-sided conversation, whereby participants discussed their experiences. Although, this is exactly what was supposed to happen, there

can never be any assurances about participants' honesty, but I got the impression that they were trustworthy. Indeed, the students did not know each other, yet there were many similarities in their experiences. As evidenced by the wealth of data gathered from the interviews, the participants had no shortage of experiences to draw upon in our conversations. However, as I completed the research and analysed the research data, a complex picture emerged of the students' experiences. These were not influenced by my positionality as a researcher trying to identify issues and challenges, but rather an accumulation of interesting and similar experiences from each student. These were presented in the students' own words, so the interpretation and analysis of the findings are as accurate as possible. This research study is also concerned about the ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration.

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define ethics of research as the standards or norms of behaviour that lead to the ethical choices about the relationships with others. In other words, it relates to the appropriateness of my behaviour toward the subject of the study. My ethical stance towards this piece of research has been primarily influenced by the principles in the university's ethical base. I have considered all four areas of ethical principles by Diener and Crandall (1978): "harm to participants", "lack of informed consent", "invasion of privacy" and "involvement of deception" (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Prior to the interviews being undertaken, permission was granted from the participants to digitally record their discussion. In addition, participants' names were not revealed in order to guarantee confidentiality in the transcripts and the analysis. A disclaimer was provided for all participants to inform them of their rights to discontinue the interview at any time. It was also highlighted that, by participating in the study, the participant is giving their consent for the results to be used as evidence in the research. By including this declaration of consent, it eliminates any concerns regarding consent being given by the participants (See Appendix 7: Consent Form). I also considered the fact that unstructured and in-depth interviews, represent an ethical challenge because they often expose participants thoughts, feelings, knowledge (Patton, 2002).

However, there were no ethical issues that emerged, and if they did, then I would have terminated the interview.

4.15 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the adopted research framework for this study, and emphasised the relationship between the ontology, epistemology, research design, methods and analytical tools. The chapter also emphasised the reasons for the choices and implications these had on the research study. The chapter also presented the strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research findings before highlighting the evaluation criteria such as neutrality and ethics. Finally, the chapter provides an outline of the 'golden thread' and philosophical framework for the research.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion (Pre-Arrival)

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, interpret and discuss the research findings from both sets of interviews. In this chapter, the research findings from both sets of interviews are synthesised and relevant literature is utilised to build a deeper understanding of the researched phenomenon. The aim is to provide more clarity to the phenomenon and to highlight the implications of these results for the future development and practice in universities, as well as to the creation of academic knowledge. However, it is important to emphasise that both sets of interviews were completely unstructured and, as a consequence, participants revealed crucial information in an unstructured manner. The findings and discussion are divided into two different sections and include Chapter Five which relates to the pre-arrival themes and Chapter Six which relates to the post arrival themes. The first section focuses on the first part of the students' educational journey which relates to their motivations for studying in the UK. The second section discusses the characteristics of participants' previous TLE. The final section focuses on the next part of the students' educational journey, which highlights participants' reflections about their expectations and level of preparedness for the new TLE. The findings from both sets of interviews have been analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis which was discussed in the previous chapter. The analysis has resulted in the following thematic framework.

5.2 Key Themes

The analysis has resulted in the following thematic framework.

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Table 8: Key Themes

Pre-Arrival Themes	Definition	Sub-Themes
Motivation	Motivation for Studying in the United Kingdom	Prestigious reputation Valued and recognised educational system International exposure and practical way of learning
Previous Experience	Previous Teaching and Learning Environments	Relationship with teacher (authoritarian/fear) Teaching Activities–only lectures (no tutorials) Assessments
Expectations and Preparedness	Student expectations and preparedness in moving to a different teaching and learning environment	Expectations about the teaching and learning environment in the UK Student expectations
Post Arrival Themes	**Definition**	**Sub-Themes**
Arrival on Campus	Induction/Arrival at the University in the UK	Technology: • ipoint • Timetable • Moodle • Plagiarism and Turnitin Online Library
Challenges in New Environment	Host Teaching and Learning Environment (Trimester One)	Relationship with the teacher Teaching Activities Accents Assessments • Critical Analysis • Independent learning Adaption to a new teaching and learning environment • Impact on progress • Marks/feedback
Support Systems	University Support Systems	Student Support Systems • Induction programme • Extra study skills classes on campus • Tutor Support Tailored Bridging/support Programmes • Implemented by both institutions • Support for students prior to arrival in the UK • Reflection and moving forward • Final comments

5.3 Motivation for Studying in the UK

This section focuses on the first part of the educational journey, which is the motivational factors that influence participants to study in the UK. The three key motivational factors which were identified in the findings include 1) the prestigious reputation of the educational system in the UK; 2) the internationally valued and recognised educational system in the UK; 3) the international exposure and the practical way of learning in the UK. The main purpose of this section is to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon by using relevant literature to enhance the discussion.

Identifying the motivational factors that influence a student's choice to study in a particular destination is complex, but it is a stage that needs to be understood because it forms an integral part of a student's journey. Granted, this stage occurs before the physical journey takes place, but motivational factors play a fundamental part in the student's decision-making process to study overseas, and therefore it must be included as part of the overall educational journey. Furthermore, motivational factors are closely linked to students' expectations, but these will be discussed in more detail in Section 5 of this chapter.

Much of the literature conducted on students' motivations to study overseas is based on a combination of push and pull factors. Authors such as Abubakar, Shanka and Muuka (2010) and Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman (2012) identify the push factors as being related to the political, social and economic conditions in the home country, while the pull factors are the perceived attributes or benefits that attract students to the host country. The most common push factors established in the literature are: lack of opportunities in students' home countries, perceived lower or internationally unrecognised standards of education, employer preference for overseas/international education, and the availability of courses. The most common pull factors relate to the reputation of country and institution, the university ranking, quality of education and employment opportunities, language skills, and the opportunity to experience a different culture and location (Wilkins et al, 2012).

5.3.1 Prestigious Reputation

argue that the reputation of the host destination and institution are more important than The findings from this particular study reveal that one of the main motivators and pull factors for participants choosing to study in the UK is the prestigious reputation of the higher education system. These findings mirror results from previous studies undertaken by De Wit (2010) and Waters et al. (2011), who costs when it comes to students choosing where to study.

Certainly, participants' were aware of other competitors in the market, but none of the participants expressed an interest in studying in these destinations. This is most likely because the US, UK, Canada and Australia are all considered four of the most popular destinations for students to study overseas. Therefore, despite the political climate in the UK, the higher education sector has managed to maintain its reputation as a prestigious destination for international students to study and retain a substantial share of the market. This is most likely because the UK not only offers international students a good standard of living and employment opportunities, but it also has a reputation for hosting some of the best universities in the world. This finding strengthens the argument that the country image and reputation both play important roles when prospective students make the decision to study overseas (Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002; Waters et al. 2011).

Another interesting finding from the study revealed that participants first thought about studying in the UK while they were undertaking their undergraduate degree in their home countries, but mentioned that they had not given much thought to the choice of university. This finding is well supported by the argument that prospective students tend to choose the country first and then the institution (Bourke, 2000; Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002). This, fortunately, puts HEIs in the UK at a competitive advantage because the country has long been regarded as a prestigious destination that provides good quality education. Nevertheless, participants mentioned that they later put a lot of time and effort into choosing a university and had undertaken a thorough investigation about the university's ranking and their preferred programme of study before making any final decision. Nonetheless,

participants cautioned that a postgraduate programme of study was a huge financial investment and they all confirmed that the desire to study in the UK was not taken lightly. Indeed, all mentioned that the decision involved an extremely thorough and well researched process with some participants saving for a number of years.

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5.3.2 Valued and Recognised Educational System

All participants mentioned that they would much rather invest in studying and gaining a qualification from a university that is valued and internationally recognised, rather than obtain a qualification from their home country which is not rated very highly in the international community (see Chapter 2). These findings link well to international statistics which ranked both the USA and the UK as having the world's strongest higher education systems (HESA, 2018). In fact, the UK is considered to host some of the best universities in the world, with Oxford University being number one and Cambridge University being number two in World University Rankings (THE, 2018). In contrast, although India has many good universities, the overall educational system is rated twenty-fourth and the top university in India "The Indian Institute of Science" is number three hundred in the world university rankings (HESS, 2018), and, thus, a significant reason why students seek to obtain international degrees. In addition to the low rankings, the government of India does not require higher education institutions to be accredited, and, as a consequence, many educated professionals from India cannot capitalise on international employment opportunities.

During the interviews, participants revealed the main advantages of obtaining a western qualification was that they would develop themselves both academically and professionally and believed that obtaining a degree from a UK university would set them apart from other graduates. These sentiments are evident in a study undertaken by Waters et al. (2011), who identified that one of the main benefits attached to international students studying overseas was not only the quality of the higher education, which might not be available in their home country, but also the opportunity to gain future employment in

their host destination or another country. Granted, there is a perception that some Indian students come to the UK for economic reasons. Nevertheless, the participants who were interviewed all expressed ambition and hopes for the future, but none of them revealed any intention to stay in the UK. In fact, three of the participants came from very wealthy backgrounds and aimed to go back home and work in the family business. The other three participants had not made any notable comments about future plans but stated that the UK qualification was more respected by employers, both internationally as well as in their home country, and therefore expected to gain good employment opportunities. This suggests that participants in this study chose to study in the UK because they wanted to further their careers by obtaining a qualification that was valued and internationally recognised, and not necessarily for the economic benefits.

5.3.3 International Exposure and Practical Way of Learning

Further findings from the study reveal that participants desired international exposure and stated that it was an extremely important part of their decision to study overseas. Indeed, most participants agreed that they chose to study in the UK because they could work and study at the same time, and thus build their skills and future career prospects in an international environment. Participants also mentioned that they favoured studying in the UK because they believed that the teaching and learning would be undertaken in a practical way. At first, these comments were a little confusing to the interviewer, but because all participants mentioned it, then it was necessary to get some clarification. When probed on this point, all participants revealed that in the UK education was more practical because the theory was applied to businesses and case studies, giving them the opportunity to use the knowledge that they had gained in a practical way. The participants explained that in India everything was theoretically driven and focused entirely on memorising books and examinations. This finding confirms the practice of rote learning in India, thus coinciding with what has been identified in the literature (Biggs,1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Chaurasia, 2016; Clarke, 2010; Morrison et al., 2005).

Indeed, it comes as no surprise that participants in the study freely admitted that, because the system focused on memorisation and regurgitation, they only concentrated on learning the necessary material that would allow them to pass exams. This thinking also corresponds with much of the literature (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Chaurasia, 2016) but what is concerning about these facts is that they have been known for a number of years and, thus far, the discussion has not moved beyond identifying the issues and challenges. It is well-known in the literature that Indian education is plagued by rote learning that fails to provide students with any in-depth understanding of a subject. Yet, to date there is a lack of evidence in the literature that explores the lived experiences of Indian students, or identifies the specific challenges faced by them, particularly in the context of a postgraduate programme of study.

Whatever the reasons for the lack of research in this area, there was a consensus among the participants that they felt frustrated with this system. The participants explained that they wanted to achieve more than just the theoretical knowledge and aspired to develop the necessary skills to apply their knowledge to the real world. In their discussion, some participants even questioned the relevance of their degree because they did not feel equipped for industry. This is quite an important finding because it challenges assumptions in previous research that considers Indian students to have a copy and paste attitude towards learning and a preference towards rote learning environments (Chaurasia, 2016; Handa and Power, 2005). In contrast, the findings from this study reveal that all participants knew and agreed that they had shortcomings in their knowledge and even admitted that they felt frustrated because they did not have the ability to apply any of the knowledge that they gained in their previous studies to real life situations. In addition, rather than maintain the status quo, the participants in this particular study chose to study in the UK because they wanted to develop their knowledge and understanding, and not just simply cut and paste. However, it is important to recognise that this system is prevalent in India, and it is an environment that students are exposed to during their entire educational experience. As previously mentioned by participants:

This is the way that it is in India, and if we want to pass, then we need to follow the system (participant 1)

Given that the educational system in India is so different from the UK, and since Indian postgraduate students are the biggest postgraduate market, these comments raise questions about how universities can best support these students. All international postgraduate students pay as much as £20,000 for student fees, and for that cost universities have a moral obligation to ensure that students are well prepared for their programme of study. If HEIs are to respond with appropriate support strategies, they need to understand from a student perspective, the issues and challenges that students experience.

5.4 Theme Two: Previous Educational Experience

The next section focuses on the second part of the participants' educational journey, which relates to how they experience the TLE in their home/previous higher educational institution. Currently, there is a large body of literature related to the educational environment in India, but there is no evidence of studies that focus on how students actually experience the TLE in their home countries. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the differences in the teaching and learning environments, it is important to obtain a thorough understanding of the Indian students' experiences in the TLE in their home countries. Theme three explores this concept and focuses on subthemes that include: 1) role/relationship with the lecturer; 2) differences in academic practices/teaching and assessments; 3) grades.

5.4.1 Role/relationship with the Lecturer

Early research from Biggs (1993; 2003) and Biggs and Tang (2011) explains that a rote learning environment focuses on a teacher centred approach, in which the lecturer is an authoritative figure. Evidently, from the participants' comments below, a rote learning environment and teacher centred approach was prevalent in their home/previous TLE. Participants explained that the relationship between

the lecturers and students is extremely formal and students are considered good students based on their politeness and how much they follow the rules and etiquette of the institution. This finding coincides with Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010) and Sheikh (2017), who reveal that lecturers who operate within a teacher centred environment demand a high level of respect and formality, and the more this is provided by the students, the more they were considered a "good student". Interestingly, during the interviews some participants conveyed a hint of frustration and resentment towards the authority of the lecturer, as well as towards the rules and regulations. Perhaps the frustration links back to the poor reputation associated with India's lecturers in HE, as well as the education system itself (Chapter 2.8). Similarly, it could also relate to the motivations for Indian students to study abroad, or a combination of both (Chapter 2.9). Nevertheless, it is an important finding because it highlights students' apparent feelings of frustration with the educational system in India, which as mentioned in Chapter 2.8, but not discussed in any detail in the literature.

These findings corroborate with research from Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010), Sheikh (2017) and Zachariah (1993), who emphasise that a teacher centred approach promotes a very highly directed TLE, which has the lecturer in control of the classroom and discouraging students from speaking to the lecturer, asking any questions, or even thinking independently. Indeed, Chaurasia (2016) and Clarke (2010) caution that this environment can encourage students to be passive learners who depend and receive information from the lecturer to help them pass exams. However, even though it is widely accepted in the literature that the aforementioned are common issues in a teacher centred TLE, there is no discussion in the literature that relates to how these issues impact students, in particular Indian students. Moreover, it is also widely accepted in the literature that a rote, or teacher centred, approach to teaching and learning is somehow preferred or adopted by Indian students (Biggs,1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Carroll and Ryan, 2005). Yet, nowhere in the literature is there evidence that confirms this, nor finds that Indian students have ever been given a choice. Indeed, it is apparent from the findings in this study and in the literature, that Indian students may be

considered victims of a TLE that is criticised because it fails to take into consideration the whole TLE, and only addresses students' and not teachers' deficits (Biggs,1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011). Thus, given a choice, which the participants in this study did in terms of their postgraduate studies, would have much preferred a TLE that was more student oriented (Chapter 3.5). This is quite an important finding because it goes against assumptions in previous research that considers Indian students to make choices, or be directors of their own educational journey, when in fact they are following a system that they have no control over, and which quite clearly frustrates them. In many respects, Indian postgraduate students could be considered "scarred learners", who have been subjected to a TLE that has been battling for change since the British colonist left. The effects of this system are evident in global rankings, students learning and the way lecturers teach.

Another factor that contributes towards participants' feelings of frustration, is the power distance between the lecturers and the students and the clear lack of approachability. Similar statements from participants confirmed that they could not go the lecturer for help about a topic because the answer was always similar to the statement below:

> *oh you don't know, everyone knows it, but you don't know. It is almost like a form of humiliation, but you are certainly so embarrassed that you dared not go back and ask another question* (Participant 2).

Indeed, what emerges from the above comment is not just the issue related to the power of the lecturer and their lack of approachability, but it also raises questions about the extent to which a lecturer's power can be abused. It is quite concerning to note that a student, in any country, would be too afraid to ask a teacher for help or support because they feared being humiliated. Even more concerning is that comments like these were not just given by one participant; all participants in this study echoed similar experiences. Certainly, this raises questions about the extent to which a teacher's power can be abused. Nevertheless, perhaps the reason for the lecturers' attitude is that they have undertaken a similar educational journey and therefore find it acceptable to

behave in such a manner. Furthermore, the lecturer may also have similar shortcomings in their education and might not even know the answer themselves.

Unfortunately, much of the above findings coincide with literature from Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010) and Sheikh (2017), who agree that a teacher-centred approach does put the teacher in a very powerful position because the emphasis is on students listening to the teacher's instructions without question and learning what they are told to learn, rather than engaging in any real critical debate or discussion in the classroom. Nevertheless, although there are anecdotal cases of unethical practices in HEIs in India, there are no cases discussed in the literature. A possible reason for this limitation is, perhaps, that, whilst issues such as control and fear have been identified, no researcher has focused on providing an understanding of why these issues have happened in the first place. Perhaps, if research was to delve a little further, then many other issues might be brought to the surface. However, the Indian HES has more complex issues to contend with, including the shortage of academic and research staff and the fact that the standards of academic teaching and research are low and declining (Aggrawal, 2015). Indeed, this particular section of the study has been helpful in building an understanding of Indian students experience in their previous TLE. It is imminent that HEIs and lecturers in the UK have a thorough understanding of Indian students' previous teaching and learning environment, otherwise how can they respond to their needs.

5.4.2 Teaching Activities

As mentioned in the literature, various concerns about the quality of higher education in India, from both a global and domestic perspective, have been documented for many years (Carnoy, 2006; Makkar, Gabriel and Tripathi, 2008; Powar and Panda, 2012). However, even though the government have made significant efforts to improve the higher education system, much of the documented issues are still prevalent in Indian university classrooms (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). To date, there has been an abundance of research undertaken by various authors, such as Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra, (2008), Sheikh (2017) and Singh (2011), who have

documented that the higher education sector in India is plagued by a shortage of infrastructure and poor and limited usage of technology; these have both been discussed in Chapter 2.8. The other concerns which will be discussed in this section relate to the shortage of teachers, the poor level of teaching activities, overcrowded classrooms and the delivery of an outdated and rigid curriculum (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Sharma and Sharma, 2015; Singh, 2011).

According to the British Council (2014), Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra (2008), Sheikh (2017) and Singh (2011), one of the biggest challenges facing higher education in India is the huge shortage of educated and trained teachers. This has led to a high student/teacher ratio which impacts on the quality and time spent on the delivery of the curriculum (Chakrabarty, 2011; Sheik, 2017; Singh, 2011). As a consequence, a lecture-based classroom is still the main delivery method that is used to disseminate the curriculum, despite the fact that there are many different teaching methods and approaches which have been developed. This evidence in the literature corresponds with participants' experiences in their respective undergraduate programmes. Participants in this study agreed that the only teaching method used in their undergraduate programmes was the traditional lecture method. As identified in the literature, although lectures can be a good method of passing on knowledge, they do tend to encourage a passive style of learning when used on their own (Ryan, 2011). Clearly this is evident from participants' comments which convey a very passive tone; "*we don't talk, we just listen, and then we work on our projects".* Other parts of this discussion (Chapter 3.5) and literature from Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra, (2008), Sheikh (2017) and Singh (2011), also acknowledge the passive nature of higher education in India. However, research argues that when lectures are used in conjunction with other methods of teaching, they can encourage student participation and active learning (Biggs, 2003; 2011; Carroll and Ryan, 2005). Indeed, lectures are heavily used in higher education institutions in the western world, but they are used in combination with tutorials, seminars, lab work, to facilitate and support learning (Zepke, 2013; Zepke and Leach, 2010). Nonetheless, this is not the situation in India, and, as a consequence, students are sitting in class for eight hours per day, which includes five hours of lectures, six days per week, with little

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or no engagement with their teachers and trying their best to memorise the chapters of books (Chapter 3.10).

Other factors that might help to explain the dominant use of lectures include large class sizes and a shortage of teachers, with tight time constraints. Certainly, whilst participants in this particular study confirmed the dominant usage of class-based lectures, they also drew attention to the issue of large class sizes. This corresponds well with the literature from the Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra (2008) and Sheikh (2017), who agree that large classes of between two hundred and five hundred students are common in India because of the shortage of teachers, the time constraints due to long teaching hours and poor classroom infrastructure. Furthermore, it is also confirmed in the literature that a combination of these issues forces many higher education institutions in India to combine students into large groups, in order to make it possible for the teacher to deliver the curriculum (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). This is quite an important finding because it helps to explain why students who come to study in the UK have never been exposed to any other teaching method, and also it helps to shed some light on why they are reluctant to ask questions when they do not understand something in class. Furthermore, perhaps the overcrowded classes suggest that using lectures as the main source of delivery is a matter of economies of scale and maybe getting through the curriculum is the priority, and not likely to change in the near future. This point certainly resonates with participants' experiences as the findings imply that there is a clear focus on delivering the curriculum and that lecturers do not deviate from this task. As explained by Chakrabarty (2011), the priority of the teacher is to ensure that students stay focused on when and what to learn in order to pass the examinations. This coincides with much of the literature that highlights the pressure that teachers are under from governing boards to ensure students pass examinations (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Singh, 2011). As a consequence, this is most likely a contributing factor to why there is very little time for interaction between staff and students and why the TLE is so rigid. Furthermore, as mentioned, the curriculum which is being delivered is centrally designed, outdated and many researchers, such as Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra

(2008), Sheikh (2017), Sharma and Sharma (2015) and Singh (2011), have emphasised its poor quality. Indeed, this could be a reason why many students who study undergraduate programmes in India do not find their education useful in employment and in work situations. This point was raised by participants in this Chapter . Indeed, a number of studies from the British Council (2014), Chakrabarty (2011), Mitra, (2008), National Skills Report (2014), Sheikh (2017) and Singh (2011) found that only around 30% of Indian graduates were actually considered employable. This also links to Chapter 1.3 which focuses on students' motivations for studying postgraduate degrees in the UK.

As can be seen from the discussion in this section, the teaching activity in Indian HEI has a very poor reputation from both a global and domestic perspective. Factors, such as the shortage of teachers, the poor level of teaching activities, overcrowded classrooms and the delivery of an outdated and rigid curriculum, identified by Chakrabarty (2011), Sheikh (2017), Sharma and Sharma (2015) and Singh (2011), have all been extremely helpful in validating the experiences of participants in this study. Interestingly, not much was known about the teaching activity in the HES in India, except that it is a rote learning environment and therefore it is predominately associated with memorisation, regurgitation, lack of any critical analysis and a very strict TLE. However, the research provided by the aforementioned authors has been extremely helpful in providing a thorough understanding of what actually happens inside classrooms, as teachers teach and students go about the task of learning. Evidently, from the discussion so far, it is very different from the UK and, therefore, it is important to understand the previous experience of students in their home TLE.

5.4.3 Assessments

Over the past thirty years, researchers such as Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010), Lefrere (2007), Morrison et al. (2005) and Zachariah (1993) have highlighted concerns about the usage of examinations and the memorisation and regurgitation strategies that are commonly used among students in India. Indeed, the dominant usage and

negative experiences of examinations as an assessment tool is frequently reflected in the participants' experiences in their respective TLE in India. In fact, participants highlighted various problems associated with the examination system, which included the emphasis on memorisation and regurgitating the necessary information to pass exams. However, participants admitted that very soon after the exam they could not remember or apply any of the knowledge in the real world. This coincides with an early study undertaken by Zachariah (1993, p 122) who revealed that it was common practice for students to "read the textbooks and memorize from guidebooks ready-made answers to essay or other type questions asked in several previous public examinations". Unfortunately, this practice still seems to be prevalent today, with participants from this study revealing that they used memorisation learning techniques to pass exams. All participants revealed similar experiences with assignments. A typical response disclosed the following consensus:

> *It's not like we have to write it in our own words, that's not important. So it's like we read the textbook, learn it, and just write what is in the book. So, we are not pushing, or developing ourselves, as I told you before. Sometimes we just open the book before the day of examination, and study it, and then we just write* (Participant 1).

Indeed, all participants stated that they were not encouraged to give their own opinions and stated that this was the typical TLE in India. If they did not follow the rules, then they would quite simply fail the examinations. However, there is another interesting point to this finding that has not been discussed in any detail in the literature. Nevertheless, it is an issue that impacts on the breadth and depth of students' knowledge and will no doubt have an impact on students' educational journey to a new TLE in a UK. For example, Sheikh (2017) and Zachariah (1993) both highlight the use of "reading the textbook, memorising the material and regurgitating it", yet, nowhere in the literature does it examine the fact that students are heavily reliant on one book to base their entire knowledge of a subject. Certainly, Zachariah (1993), in his early research, and more recently Sheikh (2017) imply that using one book is common practice, but they stop short of raising it as an issue. Nonetheless,

five of the participants in this particular study confirmed that they used only one book, and the other participant said that they used two in some subjects, but not all. That said, the participants did raise it as an issue and mentioned that they had concerns about their level of understanding, and, as previously mentioned, recognised shortcomings in their knowledge. Nevertheless, although some lecturers in the UK design entire modules around one core text book, students' assessments are varied and they are encouraged to look at various academic sources to widen their knowledge and understanding

The above discussion resonates strongly with the literature and therefore leaves little doubt that the participants' undergraduate studies in India were heavily dominated by examinations. However, the evidence also indicates that there might be some challenges in terms of coping with the differences in assessments in the new TLE. However, these challenges will be discussed in more detail later in this section. In the meantime, it is important to remain focussed on discussing the key elements related to the TLE in India. Indeed, findings in the study also reveal that participants were regarded as strong academics in India. In fact, most of the participants were very keen to highlight that they were the "class toppers", or "student with the highest marks" throughout their undergraduate programme. Similar sentiments were echoed by all participants who explained that:

> *Coming from India, when I went for my exam I was scoring like seventy/eighty {percent} in exams; but when it comes to essays here in the UK I am like on the fifties and sixties and struggling* (Participant 5).

Indeed, it is not uncommon for students to become confused, or even deflated about the differences in their marks. However, much of this stems from the lack of understanding about the differences in the grading system. Table 9 presents information about the Differences in the Grading System between India and the UK

Table 9:Differences in the Grading System between India and the UK

Percentage Grading (India)	Letter Grades (India)	Percentage Grading (UK)	Letter Grades (UK)	Postgraduate Grading Scale (Host Institution)
60-100	A	70-100	D (distinction)	D5 D4 D3 D2 D1
		65-69	M (merit)	P5
55-59	B+	60-64	P (Pass)	P4 P3
50-54	B	50-59	P (Pass)	P2 P1
40-49	C+	40-49	F (fail)	F5 F4
34-39	C	0-39	F (fail)	F3 F2 F1
0-34	F			

(Adapted: Statistics of Higher and Technical Education, 2015: ENU, 2018)

Working from the bottom of the scale 0 to 34, Indian HEIs categorise this grade as a fail, which is equivalent to F1 in the UK system. The next grade is from 34 to 39, which is a fair result from an Indian perspective, but is still considered a fail in postgraduate programmes of study in the UK. In terms of marks ranging between 50 to 54, both countries seem to be more aligned, but the grade ranging goes off balance between 50 to 59 because this is regarded as a high mark in India, but it differs quite considerably in the UK, with the equivalent ranging from 60-64. Moreover, significant differences can be seen at the top end of the marking scale, with the highest marks in India ranging from 60 to 100. This is quite a large scale to have nothing in between, particularly when it is compared to the UK scale. Furthermore, the top grading

scale in India cuts across three grading scales in the UK, which includes pass, merit and a distinction. Indeed, it is not surprising that Indian students get confused with the marking scales, particularly because they are used to being awarded high marks in India. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear about students receiving 99% for their examinations. Of course, this type of environment can only flourish if there is a highly prescribed and rigid curriculum that students can memorise and regurgitate.

5.5 Theme Three: Expectations and Preparedness

The next section of this chapter focusses on the next part of the students' educational journey which related to how well they felt their expectations were met and how prepared they were for the differences in the new TLE. The expectations of students studying in the UK identified the following four sub-themes which will be discussed in the following section: 1) expectations about the teaching and learning environment in the UK; 2) challenges including adaption to a new teaching and learning environment; 3) impact on student progress; 4) marks and feedback.

5.5.1 Expectations

As mentioned in the literature, student expectations relate to a pre-enrolled students' judgement about the delivery of a prospective programme of study (Serenko, 2011; Willis and Kennedy, 2004). Clearly, marketing plays a crucial role in attracting and motivating international students (Vuori, 2013; Willis and Kennedy, 2004) to study in a particular destination, with websites and online communication that showcase the university and the content of programmes being the most popular. However, there is very little information beyond this. Therefore, prospective students from India resort to using the services of local agents to guide them through the complex process of studying overseas. These agents help facilitate the visa process and provide guidance and support about the reputation of prospective institutions and programmes of study in destinations such as the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In general, the agents act as intermediaries between prospective

students and universities and provide valuable knowledge and understanding about overseas education systems (British Council, 2016; UKCISA, 2015). However, agents are not exclusively employed by one university because their goal is to operate as profit-making entities that send as many students as possible to the UK. That said, in order to ensure quality, the international student recruitment office at Edinburgh Napier University maintains regular contact with their agents through various visits and attendance at recruitment fairs.

Nevertheless, students still come to the UK with very little knowledge or understanding of what is expected of them when they arrive at their host institution. One reason for this is that prospective students are very rarely exposed to a programme of study prior to their enrolment and, as a consequence, they tend to form their own expectations (Serenko, 2011). As evidenced in the literature, these expectations can vary enormously, and are primarily influenced by factors such as culture, gender, age, religion, and students' previous experiences in educational institutions and other programmes of study (Cook and Leckey 1999; Serenko, 2011). Another possible explanation for prospective students' unrealistic expectations is the agents' lack of knowledge and understanding about the higher education system in the UK. If agents have never visited or studied in the UK, then how can they convey information to prospective students (British Council, 2014; UKCISA, 2015). This situation might help to explain why participants in this study held agents responsible for the abject failure to prepare them for the new TLE in the UK.

This is an interesting finding because it clearly demonstrates three important factors that are not being addressed by the host university. Firstly, it highlights the huge disparity between students' expectations and the actual reality that they encounter when they arrive at their new TLE. Secondly, it exposes the areas that students are most concerned about, such as essay and report writing, critical analysis and research which have all been discussed in Chapter 6. Thirdly, it reveals that, when students are exposed to the differences in the TLE, they are more than willing to work on improving these

skills, even before they arrive in the UK. However, despite the fact that Hall (2007) and Smith (2008) state that pre-teaching materials, such as workshops, help students to successfully adjust to a new TLE, neither the university nor their agents provide such support or information. As a consequence, students arrive in the UK with unrealistic expectations and completely unprepared for their programme of study. Indeed, there is an opportunity for the university and their agents to work in tandem to at least inform students about the differences in the TLE. Given one participants' comments about "confidence being kicked so low", demonstrates the necessity for this information to be communicated, prior to students arriving in the UK. Certainly, universities have a responsibility to ensure that students are prepared when they arrive on campus to study, otherwise the lack of understanding invokes feelings of anxiety, stress, frustration, low confidence and unprepared students. By simply making recruitment staff and their agents more aware of these issues, it could play a small part in a wider initiative to help Indian students cope with the differences in the TLE. Students spend months waiting to hear about visas, and this time could be used by prospective students to prepare themselves for studying in the UK.

5.5.2 Preparedness

As can be seen from the above discussion, the extent of Indian students' preparation for studying overseas consists of agents guiding students through the visa application process and finding suitable universities and programmes in the country of their choice. It is therefore not surprising that Indian students arrive at their respective institutions in the UK, oblivious of the fact that they are about to embark on a journey for which they are completely unprepared. Indian students have never been exposed to the TLE in the UK, therefore naturally assume that it is the same as India. It is only on arrival at the host institution that students discover the differences, and subsequently realise that they are completely unprepared. Granted, universities implement various intervention strategies to enhance student preparedness, but as already established in Chapter 5, these do not appear to be effective, particularly in terms of this study. Indeed, it is well evidenced in the literature that a student's ability to successfully

adapt to a new TLE is mainly affected by their level of preparedness (Gallon, 1990; Tinto and Pusser, 2006). Yet, prior to leaving India, the participants in this particular study were not provided with any information about the differences in the TLE. In fact, it was only on arrival at the university that the differences were highlighted. Not surprisingly, two participants felt so overwhelmed that they even regretted their decision to study in the UK.

These findings raise questions about whether universities are doing enough to prepare Indian students to cope with the challenges they encounter in their new TLE. For example, Indian postgraduate students arrive at their new TLE with a particular style of learning, yet they are immediately expected to adapt to another style of learning without any preparation. Felder and Silverman (2000) and De Vita (2001) warn that when the learning styles of students are incompatible with a TLE, a student's performance could be hindered, and they can become extremely discouraged about the programme. Certainly, the findings reveal that participants' learning styles were incompatible with the new TLE, and students did not feel prepared for their new programme of study. This is despite the fact that research has continuously shown that a match between TLE and learner's learning styles can enhance learner's performance, motivation and efficiency (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992; Romanelli, 2009; Sulimma. 2009). This is an interesting finding because it emphasises the fact that students were not equipped with the appropriate learning skills to help them meet the academic requirements of their new TLE. In light of this knowledge, it is important that the university recognise the different ways in which students from different cultures approach learning and help them to develop appropriate learning styles by implementing the right support mechanisms, at the right time. However, there also needs to be some recognition from the university that learning styles can vary from culture to culture (Johnson, 2010; Handa and Power, 2005; Mackinnon and Manathunga, 2003; Manikutty et al., 2007; Sulimma, 2009) and support mechanisms that are suitable for one group of students may not be suitable for another. This does not seem to have been considered by the host university because all international students are treated as a homogenous group and support is provided on arrival, rather than prior to students coming to the UK.

Furthermore, if lecturers were aware of students learning styles, then, perhaps, they could consider more exam-based assessments at the beginning of the programme, until Indian students acclimatise to their new TLE.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and discussed the first set of findings from interviews undertaken by Indian postgraduate students who studied on a postgraduate programme in the UK. The three themes which were identified in the study suggest that many of the issues experienced by the participants are typical of other Indian students who study on postgraduate degree programmes in the UK. It is clear from the discussion that students chose to study in the UK because of its prestigious reputation. However, they were completely unaware of the vast differences in the TLE and arrived on campus unprepared. Chapter Six relates to the next part of the students journey and discusses how these differences affected students.

Chapter Six: Findings and Discussion (Post Arrival)

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, interpret and discuss the second section of research findings which focus on the post arrival themes. The first section focuses on the first part of the students' educational journey to the new campus. The second section discusses the issues and challenges that students encountered in the new TLE. The final section focuses on students' engagement with students support systems at the host institution.

6.2 Theme Four: Journey to the New Campus

This section of this chapter, it primarily focuses on the physical part of the students' journey, which relates to the experience participants encounter when they arrive at the host university campus. This section focuses on the previously mentioned key areas in the findings and include: 1) arrival and induction; 2) technology including the university Ipoint, timetable, moodle and the online library; 3) plagiarism and turnitin. Arriving on campus can be quite a daunting experience for most students, but more so when students move from a developing country to a developed country. All participants highlighted similar experiences when they arrived on campus, with comments on how beautiful the campus was, and how excited they were to be studying in such a "state of the art building". Indeed, the participants mentioned that they were really keen to start their respective programmes of study.

6.2.1 Induction Programme

Nevertheless, the excitement was a little premature because all participants felt challenged when they arrived at the host HEI to attend the induction programme. Most HEIs host induction weeks or orientation programmes for all new students entering the university. The aim of the programme is to help students to adapt to university life and to feel part of the academic community. The induction programme at the host institution focuses on and introduces

students to the university's administrative, academic and personal support systems as well as the technological resources, such as the university Ipoint, timetable, moodle and the online library. The induction programme lasts for five days and also provides students with the opportunity to meet fellow students and the academic staff who teach on their programme. In most cases, international students do not get the opportunity to visit the campus before they embark on their studies, so when they arrive for the induction week this is typically the first time that they have visited the campus. It is, therefore, crucial that all students attend the induction/orientation programme so that they can acclimatise to the new environment. A study undertaken by Sidoryn and Slade (2008) confirms that it is crucial for international students to attend induction programmes because the primary reason for hosting them is to help students to adjust to their new environment.

During the induction programme for this particular study, all participants highlighted similar experiences with respect to the university technological resources and the concept of plagiarism. However, it is important to emphasise that two participants were late arrivals due to visa issues and, as a consequence, were unable to attend the induction programme. Nonetheless, the arrival time did not seem to raise any significant differences in the participants' experiences because they discussed similar challenges about their experiences during the first week at the university campus. The only real difference was the actual time that the challenge occurred.

6.2.3 Technology (ipoint)

After arriving on campus, participants were expected to register on their programme of study, locate their timetables and find out where and what induction classes they were required to attend. As with most higher education institutions in the UK, these activities were administered using information technology. At the host institution the technology is called the "ipoint" which is a modern-day reception desk, or information centre. Indeed, information technology is widely used in schools, colleges, universities, libraries, businesses and households throughout the UK. In fact, ninety percent of British households have access to the internet through computers, laptops or

smartphones (Office of National Statistics, 2017), along with universities and colleges in the UK. However, this is not the case in India because the educational system is fragmented and associated with poor infrastructure and usage of technology (Chakrabarty, 2011), and not everyone can afford the internet in their homes. As a consequence, there are not only vast differences in the educational systems between India and the UK, but there is also huge variance in the usage of technological resources.

Hence, it is no wonder that participants felt overwhelmed and confused when they experienced the differences in the administrative activities. In particular, participants found the term "ipoint" strange and stated that in their country there is a reception desk with at least five people there to help and provide them with advice on administrative actives such as class timetables, where and what time to get registered and so on. However, on arrival at the university campus participants were directed to the "ipoint". Surprisingly, participants stated that they had never experienced such "state of the art technology" and initially felt overwhelmed and intimidated. A possible explanation for this finding is that in India technology is expensive to implement and, as a result of high student numbers, most educational institutions may not have the financial resources to implement such an advanced system. Certainly, the students gave this impression, as they all studied at prestigious universities in India and had never seen this type of technology prior to coming to the UK. Granted, although participants initially found differences in administration practices and the use of the "ipoint" challenging, once they got used to the differences they acknowledged and welcomed its efficiency. Actually, it was quite refreshing to witness participants' positive reactions to technology that is often taken for granted in the western world (Chapter 5.4.1).

6.2.4 Moodle and On-Line Library

During the induction programme all participants were introduced to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and given access to moodle as well as the on-line library and physical library. The introduction to these resources lasted for one hour and included getting students organised with their passwords and providing demonstrations to access module information such as

lecture/tutorial materials as well as a demonstration of the online library and visit to the physical library. However, the participants were not as positive or constructive in their comments when it came to using the university technological resources. In terms of the participants who arrived on time for the induction programme, they all admitted that they felt slightly overwhelmed with the volume of information and agreed that it was very difficult to comprehend in such a short timeframe. Indeed, all of the participants had very limited experience of a physical library and found it very difficult to even access books from the library itself, never mind comprehend such a sophisticated piece of software. As a consequence, all participants, including the late arrivals, revealed that, rather than actually feel ready to start their respective programmes, they were left feeling overwhelmed, anxious and confused with the volume of information. These sentiments mirror findings from Shobrook (2003) who explains that not all induction programmes are successful because students can become overloaded with information during the first week.

Clearly, these findings suggest that the induction programme did not effectively deliver the session about technological resources in a way that supported the Indian students' learning. This is despite the literature highlighting the importance of the induction process (Barber and Hassanien 2008; Hultberg et al., 2008; Olzga and Sukhnandan. 2005; Yorke 1999) in helping students to adjust to academic life in the UK. The programme organisers do not seem to have considered the fact that, whilst most students from western educational institutions have a basic understanding of IT resources, this is not always the case, particularly with students from developing countries. Furthermore, it is also evident that the programme has not taken into consideration the different learning needs of students from different cultural backgrounds. According to Johnson (2010) there should be a variety of different tools used to promote and enhance effective understanding and adjustment to a new TLE in the UK (Biggs, 1996; 1999; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Entwistle, 2003). Furthermore, it also raises questions about the students who were late arriving and missed the induction programme due to visa restrictions. These students are paying the same amount for their course, yet there are no alternative support strategies to help

them integrate into the new TLE. Perhaps, the host institution needs to consider the timing of the induction programme, particularly since some authors advise that induction programmes should be a longitudinal process rather than a one-week event at the start of the academic year (Campbell, 2006; Whittaker, 2008). Certainly, a longitudinal approach to induction would help students to feel less anxious and confused and at the same time accommodate late arrivals and students who need additional support throughout the year.

Indeed, the challenges of moving to a new country are summed up eloquently by Evelyn Greenslade, the character played by Dame Judy Dench in the movie 'The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel'. In her famous quote about living in India the character inadvertently asks the question:

> *Can there be anywhere else in the world that is such an assault on the senses? Those who know the country of old just go about their business. But nothing can prepare the uninitiated for this riot of noise and colour. For the heat, the motion; the perpetual teeming crowds* (Evelyn Greenslade, 2012)*.*

Evelyn clearly expresses the level of force that her new surroundings inflicted on her and explains how completely unprepared she was for the differences. Likewise, that same 'assault on the senses' can also work in reverse, particularly in terms of Indian postgraduate students who study in the UK. Therefore, it is crucial that HEIs recognise these differences and consider how they affect different groups of students.

6.2.5 Plagiarism and Turnitin

Furthermore, participants also admitted that, until the induction programme, they had never heard of the term plagiarism or turnitin. However, they mentioned that it was included as part of the one-hour session related to technological resources. Indeed, participants expressed their concern about plagiarism because in their home TLE they were expected and actively

encouraged to memorise and regurgitate from the books and this was never considered plagiarism (Biggs, 1993; 2011; Chaurasia, 2016; Clarke, 2010; Morrison et al., 2005). Given that the consequences of plagiarism could mean the withdrawal from a programme of study, it is unreasonable to expect students to gain a comprehensive understanding of plagiarism and turnitin from a one-hour workshop. Nevertheless, since Indian students are renowned for having high numbers of plagiarism cases (Chaurasia, 2016; Handa and Power, 2005) there need to be more specific interventions to support them through these changes. Indeed, during the interviews, participants suggested they may have been more prepared, if the university had implemented some additional workshops that focus on improving their academic skills and understanding of plagiarism. However, academic staff also need be made more aware of students' previous TLE and recognise how the differences impact this group of students. These sentiments coincide with findings from Handa and Power (2005) who advised many years ago that academics need to look beyond students' inadvertent plagiarism and see the situation as a learning opportunity for students, rather than something that needs punished.

Another concerning finding from the study is that five of the participants did not get access to the electronic resources for thirty-five days, despite the fact that four of them attended the induction programme. Participants also revealed that it took them a further thirty days to get used to using the resources, which is two months into studying their respective programmes. From the findings, this situation obviously has an impact on the participants' ability to focus on their studies because they are trying to adapt to a new teaching and learning environment while trying to get used to new technological resources, and at the same time try to comprehend the content of their programme. It is, therefore, necessary that academic staff and administration staff work together to implement a reasonable and acceptable timeframe that ensures students are registered with the university's resources as quickly as possible. International students are paying customers and they deserve to receive the very best service that supports their education.

6.6 Theme Five: Issues and Challenges Encountered in the New Teaching and Learning Environment

This section of the chapter takes steps towards addressing the issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students encounter in the new TLE in the UK. The following six sub-themes which relate to the participants' experiences, will be discussed in the following section: 1) the relationship with the lecturer; 2) lectures/tutorials; 3) accents; 4) assessments; 5) independent learning; 6) critical analysis and research.

6.6.1 Relationship with Lecturers

Relationships with teachers presented some interesting challenges for participants when they made the educational journey to their new TLE in the UK. As already discussed in the previous section and the literature, participants came from a rote learning background which is characterised as teacher-centred and therefore demands a high level of respect and formality from students (Biggs,1993; Biggs and Tang, 2011; Chaurasia, 2011; Clarke, 2010; Morrison et al, 2005; 2017; Zachariah, 1993). In contrast, the teaching and learning environment in the UK is characterised as student-centred and focuses on creating a TLE that encourages students to become independent learners and obtain an effective acquisition of knowledge and skills (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 20011; Boyle, Carter and Clarke, 2002; Morrison et al, 2005; Pelletier, 2003). Indeed, having to adapt to a different TLE can be overwhelming and intimidating for most students. However, it is how institutions manage these differences that can help support or hinder students' educational journey to their new TLE.

The findings from the study reveal that, when students made the educational journey to their new TLE, they expected the relationship with the teacher to be exactly the same as it was in their home institutions. However, participants reported that, although their first impression of lecturers was that they seemed to be friendly, they were still anxious about engaging with them. The participants admitted that in the beginning they limited their interactions in

class and deliberately refrained from asking questions for fear of bringing attention to themselves and looking like a "bad student". This supports the views of Denovan and Macaskill (2013), Thurber and Walton (2012) and Wrench et al., 2013), who argue that students experience these emotions due to the changes in their TLE.

This is an important behavioural finding as it appears that participants were affected by their previous TLE because they continued to perceive the lecturer in the new TLE as being an authoritative expert whose ideas should be respected and never questioned. It also suggests that participants' educational journey into the new student-centred TLE was hindered because of their own perceptions. Consequently, building a relationship with lecturers as quickly as possible is an important factor to consider because it impacts on students' learning experiences during the first few months of their programme. If students are to be encouraged to ask for help and support early in the educational journey, then the appropriate conditions need to be created to allow this to happen. However, the host teaching and learning environment plays a significant role in creating these conditions and helping students to adjust (Kissil and Davey, 2012).

Regardless, participants went on to explain that, because the new TLE was so unfamiliar, they did not fully comprehend the etiquette in terms of the relationship between students and lecturers. The findings in this study, however, found that even as participants progressed through the programme and were evidently struggling to comprehend the new environment, they refrained from asking the lecturer questions for fear of being embarrassed or even humiliated in front of their peers. This corroborates with the literature from Denovan and Macaskill (2013), Thurber and Walton (2012) and Wrench et al. (2013). Nevertheless, near the end of trimester one (week 10) after participants discovered that they had either been charged with plagiarism, failed or not done particularly well in their first assessment, they realised that they had no choice but to discuss the issues and challenges with the module leader. For most participants, this took a tremendous amount of courage. However, to their surprise teachers were friendly, approachable and willing to listen and support them. Participants even stressed that communicating with the lecturer was a pleasant surprise and they

seemed to be genuinely astonished that lecturers would even help them, never mind engage with them.

Although interactions with lecturers were initially driven by participants' lack of academic success, they reported that their interactions with them were extremely positive and they found lecturers to be very helpful and supportive. In their communication with the lecturers, participants initially discussed issues related to their first assessment, but thereafter felt comfortable enough to continue to seek guidance about future assessments and other academic concerns which are discussed in Chapter 6.1. This finding links well to the literature that suggests positive relationships with lecturers can be an important factor that supports students' educational journey to their new TLE because it helps build the students confidence and creates a sense of belonging (Liberante, 2012; Ryan, 2011). However, from the participants' discussion, it seems that the host university has not implemented sufficient resources to help foster relationships with their lecturers at a sufficient stage in the educational journey. Granted, all students had access to the induction programme, but participants have already highlighted concerns about its content in Chapter 6.1. Given that relationships with lecturers have a profound impact on a student's development on their respective programmes, it is crucial that the university identifies ways to foster these relationships as soon as or before students arrive at the university. This is not to suggest that the host TLE needs to create another dependent environment, but students do need support when entering an unfamiliar TLE. One possible solution is to ensure that programme leaders and teaching staff are aware of the differences in terms of the relationship between lecturers and students in India. Perhaps many are already aware but do not fully appreciate how it impacts the student. Indeed, if academics are aware of the student's backgrounds, then they are more able to respond to the needs of this group of students and help them make an easier educational journey to an unfamiliar TLE. Since participants in this particular study revealed that the relationship with lecturers was one of the most helpful resources during their educational journey to university, it is therefore crucial that these relationships are fostered early. Students therefore

need to be assured and encouraged to ask for support, long before they reach a critical point. It is evident from the findings that participants were in a vulnerable position because the differences in the relationships with lecturers was a factor that hindered them from communicating with the lecturer.

6.6.2. *Teaching Activities*

Similar to other parts of the TLE, the differences in the usage of teaching activities also presented some challenges for participants whilst making the educational journey from their home TLE to their new TLE in the UK. Indeed, the differences in the teaching activities are complex and varied, with India adopting a teacher-centred approach (Chakrabarty, 2011; Mitra, 2008; Sheikh, 2017; Sharma and Sharma, 2015; Singh, 2011) that uses lectures to disseminate the curriculum, whilst the UK adopts a student-centred approach that uses a combination of lectures, tutorials and seminars.

As discussed in the literature, student-centred learning is based on developing autonomy and independence by putting the responsibility of learning in the hands of the learner (Akerlind, 2003; Attard et al. 2010; Barnett, 2008; Blackie, Case, and Jawitz, 2010; Geven and Santa, 2010; Light and Cox, 2005; O'Neill and McMahon, 2005). The purpose of the student-centred approach is to encourage students to develop the right skills that can enable them to become life-long learners and acquire a set of independent problem-solving techniques and critical thinking skills (Attard et al. 2010; Geven and Santa 2010; Maclellan, 2008). Moreover, student-centred learning is considered a more effective approach to learning than the teacher-centred approach (Biggs, 1993; 2003; Biggs and Tang, 20011; Boyle, Carter and Clarke, 2002; Morrison et al., 2005; Pelletier, 2003). because students are expected to participate and engage in tutorials, seminars and workshops (Attard et al. 2010; Barnett 2008). In fact, most higher education institutions embrace a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, and Edinburgh Napier University is no different. In terms of teaching activities at the university the methods of instruction include lectures, tutorials, seminars and workshops. These methods aim to encourage active learning, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss,

explain, debate, or brainstorm during class (Attard, et al., 2010; Barnett, 2008; Blackie, Geven and Santa, 2010).

However, the findings from the study reveal that, when students made the educational journey to their new TLE, they expected classes to be delivered in exactly the same as they were in their previous TLE. Chaurasia (2016) and Clarke (2010) state that this is not uncommon. However, participants reported that they were very surprised to discover that, as well as lectures, they also had tutorials and seminars which required them to participate in class discussions. The participants explained that initially the lectures were difficult to follow, and admitted that they found the tutorials and seminars a little stressful and confusing because they had never experienced them before. Indeed, these feelings of difficulty and confusion correspond well to the literature by Huang and Brown (2009), who explain that it is not uncommon for international students to have problems adapting to a new TLE, particularly if their previous TLE was very different. As already discussed, Indian students come from a more teacher-centred approach to teaching and learning and although they were previously accustomed to large lectures, these were delivered in a completely different manner. For example, in India the lecture is delivered by the lecturer. Thereafter the lecturer provides the students with the book and then informs them what chapters they need to study (Chapter 6.1). In contrast, in the UK, students attend the lecture and thereafter are expected to undertake further directed reading, as well as draw on other academic resources that will help build their understanding and knowledge. However, participants found the differences quite stressful because they were in complete contrast to their previous TLE.

In addition, participants also highlighted that they found the lecturers' accents difficult to follow in the lecture. This is an interesting finding which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.3. However, it is concerning to note that some lecturers seemed to be unaware of these issues and refrained from asking probing questions that might have led to students poor understanding being exposed much sooner. As a consequence, participants felt that the teacher did not take their individual needs into consideration because they were never asked if they had understood the lecture, despite the fact that there were many students who came from different countries. One possible reason for this is,

perhaps, that during lecture time the opportunity to interact with teachers is very limited. Most teachers have enough time to deliver the material and do not have time to ask students if they understand. The teacher, therefore, delivers the lecture and afterwards assumes that students have understood and that they will enhance their knowledge and understanding by engaging in directed and further reading. However, Indian students are not used to independent learning which is discussed in Chapter 6.6 and it is therefore evident that their previous TLE has not been taken into account. Another reason could be that participants who were already hindered by their previous TLE were simply too afraid to engage with the lecturer and highlight their lack of understanding for fear of being humiliated (Chapter 6.2). Nevertheless, it does raise questions about how the issue can be addressed sooner. Perhaps a simple one on one meeting with lecturers early in the programme/module may help to raise the issue and allow the university and lecturers to put mechanisms in place to ensure that students do understand the lectures instead of waiting until week ten to inform someone. Organising one on one meetings with international students is more likely to get students to open up and problems can therefore be identified early.

Granted, there are opportunities to raise these issues in the tutorials, but initially participants had difficulties understanding the purpose of tutorials and, evidently, the influence from their previous TLE impacted on their confidence to approach the lecturer. Furthermore, participants also mentioned that they felt "too scared to talk in class in case they answered the question wrong". However, within a couple of weeks participants started to see the purpose of the tutorials and, as time progressed, began to build enough confidence to engage and talk more in class. Nevertheless, participants mentioned how difficult it was to come from a strict lecture-based background to one that used different teaching methods that encouraged students to participate and be active learners in classes. In fact, they mentioned that it took nearly a whole trimester to get used to the fact that someone was interested in their opinion because nobody had ever asked for it in their previous TLE. These findings are consistent with the literature from Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang (2011) and Ryan (2005), who explain that adapting from passive to active

learner can be a fundamental stumbling block for some students until they eventually adapt to the new TLE. Creating a comfortable environment for students to speak up about the issues and challenges they encounter needs to happen before week ten because it has a profound impact on the student grades and experience.

Another challenge that was raised in the findings was the issue concerning the huge reduction in student contact time. In India students attend classes from 8am to 5pm, six days of the week, yet they are expected to adapt to nine hours per week when they move to their new TLE. A typical module at postgraduate level consists of three hours of classes every week. However, a significant expectation of each module includes an additional one hundred and sixty-four hours of independent study. This is a quite important finding because it suggests that participants arrive at the university with expectations about how their programme of study will be structured, but on arrival are completely overwhelmed. As a consequence, the time that was supposed to be used for independent learning and study has not been used effectively. Chapter 6.2 discusses independent learning in more detail. Subsequently, this has led to difficulties with participants effectively engaging with their respective programmes, with all participants agreeing that they wasted a lot of time in the beginning because they did not fully understand or appreciate the meaning of independent learning. Moreover, participants even highlighted that it was very easy to become complacent with the lack of class contact time and at the start of their programme they did not quite anticipate how much actual time, effort and work went into researching and developing their own knowledge and understanding. Indeed, it could be argued that these issues could be similar to other cohorts of students, particularly direct entrant students, but this study is focused on gaining a detailed understanding of Indian postgraduate students and a wider discussion is out with the scope of this study.

Indeed, these are interesting findings, because it appears to have been taken for granted that students can easily adapt to a new TLE without any challenges. Yet, the findings of several authors, such as Bache and Hayton (2012) and Bryson and Hand (2007), state that a student's previous learning experience can have an impact on their new teaching and learning experience (Fisher, Lee and Bert,

2002). The participants in this particular study have been educated in a rote learning environment throughout their entire educational lives and, therefore, have developed certain ways of learning. As a consequence, participants in this study found it difficult to move from a highly regulated TLE and adapt to one utilises active teaching methods. Evidently, it took participants nearly the whole trimester to be able to engage and participate in class as well as recognise the concept of independent learning, yet, Indian students are expected to adapt without question.

As can be seen from the discussion so far, if Indian students do not have knowledge about their prospective TLE, then they will not have the right skills or knowledge to get the best out of their respective programmes from the beginning of their journey. It is therefore suggested that the host university designs ways to prepare students to adjust to these different styles of teaching activities, but also prepares them for the lack of contact time at the university and guides them to make the best use of their time. For example, the development of a pre-enrolment website that emphasises the need to take part in workshops, or even the development and organisation of structured classes as part of their timetable, would help students be more prepared.

6.6.3 Accents

English has been spoken in India since the 1700s and despite the controversy surrounding its usage (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008) it is the official language used by the Indian government. Likewise, since 1957 it has been used in many traditional universities, including Mumbai (Bombay), Madras (Chennai). New Delhi (Delhi) and Kolkata (Calcutta), as the official language of instruction (Gosh, 2013; Sharma and Sharma, 2012; Thakur and Berwal, 2008). Coincidentally, these universities are the same institutions where participants studied their undergraduate programmes. Therefore, all had a good command of the English language before coming to the UK. In fact, participants mentioned that they chose to study in the UK because they felt comfortable communicating in the English language. Nonetheless, whilst, language should have been an advantage for Indian students because of reduced language barriers, the reality was quite different. For example, all

participants found it very difficult to understand the local accent. Indeed, accent is an important factor to consider because it impacts on students learning experience during the first few months of their programme. Given that most postgraduate programmes only last for one year, taking a few months to understand the lecturers' accents can have a significant impact on students' adjustment into university life. This finding coincides with Carroll (2008) who states that many international students arrive in the UK to discover that their English language skills are not sufficient enough to allow them to cope in a typical English-speaking TLE, thus leading to frustration, stress and a loss in confidence.

This finding is similar to Campbell and Li (2008) and Carroll and Ryan (2005) who reveal that international students find the pace, accents, choice of words and terminologies used in their new TLE extremely challenging. Indeed, many Indian students have been taught the English language in their previous TLE and they most likely have been taught by a non-native English speaker who has a strong Indian accent. Although participants mentioned that they spoke to their lecturers about the issue and that they were very helpful and supportive in clarifying any points that they misunderstood, it is evidenced in the findings that it took participants a few months to even raise the courage to speak to their lecturers in the UK. Consequently, this adds to participants' stress and confusion because they are already feeling overwhelmed with challenges in using the technological resources and attending classes that they cannot understand. In order to alleviate or reduce these symptoms it is therefore important for Indian students to understand a wider variety of British accents before they actually come to study in the UK. Overcoming the challenges with accents can be resolved by encouraging students to engage with the university resources which provide various podcasts, videos etc. that focus on "good academic practice". This engagement would not only help students to become more accustomed to the different accents, but it will also help improve their knowledge about academic conduct and expose students to the technological resources prior to studying in the UK. Of course, this would require a shift in university policy to allow prospective Indian students access to these resources, but perhaps a simpler solution could be to design a customised programme that allowed access to these resources at the point of being accepted on their programme of study.

Regardless, of the solution, students should be able to start their programmes without any hindrances that will impact on their chances of a successful completion. It is therefore crucial that specific interventions are implemented to allow this group of students to have an easier educational journey. Other possibilities to reduce the impact related to students' understanding of local accents is directing students to "youtube" videos, or even being assigned a mentor from the local area to support them during the first trimester at the university.

6.6.4 Assessments

Assessments also presented some interesting challenges for participants during the educational journey to a new TLE in the UK. As already established in the previous section various authors, such as Biggs (1993; 2003), Biggs and Tang, 2011), Chaurasia (2016), Clarke (2010), Lefrere (2007), Morrison et al. (2005) and Zachariah (1993), identified the usage of examinations which encourage memorisation and regurgitation strategies being a common assessment tool used in the higher education sector in India. In contrast, the assessments in the UK are designed to be student-centred and include individual or group academic and consultancy reports, essays, presentations, debates, case studies and exams, with some being formative and others being summative. However, as with other areas of the TLE, all participants mentioned that they thought the assessments would be exactly the same as they were in India. On learning that the assessments were different and varied, participants revealed that they felt shocked and anxious. Indeed, these are quite important findings because it clearly demonstrates the level of culture shock that participants experienced with regards to the vast differences in assessments. Evidently, the adaptation to these new types of assessments seemed like quite an overwhelming prospect for participants, most likely because they have never been exposed to any other form of assessment apart from examinations. These findings correspond with the literature from Denovan and Macaskill (2013), Gu et al., (2010), Thurber and Walton (2012) and Wrench et al. (2013) who state that during a transition, or educational journey, it is common for international students to experience learning shock and agree that it is usually associated with feelings of anxiety,

discouragement and disbelief about the changes in their TLE. Thurber and Walton (2012) and Wrench et al. (2013) explain that *"learning shock" is* the emotional, mental, and physical impact when a new way of learning differs significantly from ones' prior learning style. Indeed, many of these issues have been experienced by the participants in this study, but they have also been identified and discussed in the literature over the past few decades (Denovan and Macaskill, 2013; Durkin, 2008; Gu et al., 2013; Quan, Smailes and Fraser, 2013; Ryan, 2011; Thurber and Walton, 2012; Wrench et al., 2013). In fact, many universities have responded by designing and implementing induction and orientation programmes, as well as providing support classes for international students, to help support their educational journey to the new TLE. However, although not identified in literature, it is revealed by the participants in this study that a one-week induction programme is insufficient to prepare them for a new TLE in the UK. These issues and challenges related to induction are discussed in Chapter 6.1.

The differences in the assessments are vast and the findings in this study are significant in helping to provide a thorough understanding of the various challenges that Indian students face when they encounter these assessments. Inevitably, these challenges resulted in some participants feeling so anxious and concerned about their ability to complete the assessments, that they wished they had never started the programme and had stayed in India to undertake their postgraduate studies. Participants explained that in India they understood the system and what was expected, whereas in the UK everything was so unfamiliar. These comments reflect the findings from studies conducted by Brown and Holloway (2008) who state high levels of doubt about academic ability are common in the early stages of a student's educational journey.

From the participants' narration of their experience, it is clear that they were overwhelmed and had a great deal of doubt and insecurity about their ability to complete the assessments. The literature refers to this emotional state of mind as academic shock (Ryan, 2005) or 'learning shock' (Gu, Huang and Marton, 2005). This is an important finding because it appears that the participants' educational journey was hindered by their previous TLE and they had difficulty adjusting to what was expected of them in terms of completing unfamiliar

assessments. This can be a very difficult point in the journey for Indian students because they are more familiar with examinations and the process of memorisation and regurgitation (Biggs, 1993; 2003; 2011; Chaurasia, 2016). Yet, prior to studying in the UK, participants had never written a report or an essay, they also never had to research or reference assessments, nor were they ever required to give their own opinion or be critical about anything. Certainly, it could be argued that these issues and challenges might relate to other cohorts of students, but the aim of this study is to gain a deep understanding of Indian postgraduate students' experience. Indeed, Indian students were expected to adapt to these new assessment tools and different ways of learning without any question. Granted, the host institution provided workshops that focused on assessment support, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.1. However, the participants revealed that although they provided support on how to write reports and essays, they did not focus enough on their concerns about critical thinking and writing skills.

6.6.5 Critical Analysis

As identified in the literature, most definitions of critical thinking refer to the intentional application of higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving, inference and the evaluation of others' point of view (Durkin, 2008; Fletcher, 2013; Shaheen, 2016). Critical thinking and writing are fundamental requirements at HEIs in the UK, and it is expected from students, particularly at postgraduate level (Durkin, 2008; Fletcher, 2013; Pithers and Soden, 2010; Shaheen, 2016). Nevertheless, all participants in this study struggled with the term critical thinking. Many participants even admitted that they did not even know what it meant, or how to apply it in assessments. One participant remarked that:

> *I don't know what critical analysis is and that scares me, but this makes me lose confidence and I worry with stress because I think that I will fail the course* (Participant 1)

Other participants revealed that they were confident prior to studying in the UK, but the term "critical thinking and writing" made them very nervous and concerned because they might not be able to adapt to this level of writing, or perform at the

standard the university required. Coincidently, these comments confirm concerns related to early research from Bosher and Rowekamp (1998) and more recently from the HEA (2014), Davies (2010) and Shaheen, (2016) who have raised concerns about international students' ability to think and write critically.

Several significant points emerge from the findings. Firstly, participants have clarified that their concern is not related to their level of English, but rather to the critical style of writing that is expected at postgraduate level. Secondly, participants reveal that they did not even know what the term "critical thinking, or writing" meant prior to studying in the UK and agreed that their current style of writing was mostly passive. Thirdly, the participants agreed that they did not know how to improve their writing, in terms of being able to think and write critically. Indeed, these are important findings because, whilst it is widely accepted in the literature by Davies (2013), Fletcher (2013) and Shaheen (2016) that international students have difficulty with the English language, the participants in this particular study have disagreed and revealed that the issue is not with their "level of English", but relates specifically to their ability to think and write critically. As mentioned, Indian students previous TLE is based on a rote learning approach that focuses on the memorisation and regurgitation of information (Biggs, 2003: Biggs and Tang, 2011; Chaurasia, 2016; Clarke, 2010; Morrison et al, 2005; Zachariah, 1993). Considering the vast differences in approaches, it is therefore not surprising that Indian students face challenges making the educational journey to their new TLE. Furthermore, it is evident over the past two decades that students from rote learning backgrounds have problems related to critical thinking (Davies, 2010; Lillis and Turner, 2001; Shaheen, 2016). Yet, the dilemma still seems to remain unresolved. Perhaps a reason for this can be found in participants' comments about not understanding what the term "critical thinking, or writing" actually means, combined with the earlier revelations that "it will take more than a few workshops to make improvements in my critical thinking and writing skills". Certainly, these revelations raise questions about whether universities are providing the correct support for students to develop critical thinking and writing skills. The participants explained that they wanted to develop the necessary skills to be critical thinkers and improve their writing skills, but they were not offered the opportunity to do this.

6.6.6   Independent Learning

Studying in a HEI in the UK means that students are required to take individual responsibility for their own learning and are therefore expected to become independent learners (Knight, 1997; Reynolds, 1997). All participants disclosed that they struggled with the term "independent learning" mainly because they had never heard of it prior to coming to the UK. As previously mentioned, participants came from a highly regulated TLE and were subsequently expected to manage their own time and assessments. Notwithstanding, many of them questioned their own abilities with one student remarking that they thought that they were on holiday because there were very few classes. However, when it came to submitting their assessments, students felt overwhelmed and frustrated. This coincides with the literature which suggests that international postgraduate students are likely to experience issues and challenges when adapting to independent study because their previous TLE was most likely teacher-centred and, therefore, students are more reliant on being told what to do and what to study by the lecturer (Bache and Hayton, 2012). Indeed, students mentioned that they should have had more guidance on timekeeping and stated that they had preferred more support. These comments are very much in line with the literature which suggests that international students prefer lecturers to give more input, support, and guidance, consequently leading to frustration by both parties (Bache and Hayton, 2012; McClure, 2007). Nevertheless, although the discussion has identified the issues and challenges experienced by Indian postgraduate students, it does raise questions about HEIs in UK understanding of their prior learning. Indeed, when students are admitted onto postgraduate programmes of study, there is an assumption that they have the right skills and the potential to succeed.

6.6.7 Impact on Progress

In the first few weeks of the second trimester, participants had just received some of their marks and feedback from trimester one. All participants mentioned how deeply disappointed they were with their marks. Two participants scored a minimum pass, one participant failed their first assessment and three were charged with plagiarism. Although the low marks and plagiarism coincide with

much of the literature, which regards Indian students as having low marks and being consistent plagiarisers (Park, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Ramburuth, 2000; Robotham and Julian, 2006) students revealed that they merely approached the assessments in the same way that they did in India. Indeed, studies by Hallett, Woodley and Dixon (2003), Hamilton, Hinton and Hawkins (2003) and Robotham and Julian (2006) warned a decade ago that plagiarism and academic integrity were not simple issues and explained that many students actually commit plagiarism due to their confusion. Interestingly this seems to be the case with the participants in this particular study who only have experience in memorising information from texts and then regurgitating it. Yet, it is interesting to note that many students are discharged from their programmes of study for this very reason.

This is an interesting finding that raises several important issues and ethical concerns for universities, their staff who recruit students from India, and for the staff who directly teach Indian students. Indeed, communicating the differences between the TLE is crucial and should be made explicit to students. That way, students can make an informed choice but also be afforded the opportunity to seek further support if necessary. Furthermore, communicating this information with university staff and providing appropriate professional development for those who directly deal with the Indian students would better equip the university to respond to students' needs.

6.8 Theme Six: Engagement with Student Support Systems

The final part of the students' educational journey focuses on how well they felt supported by the host HEI. This section discusses the university support systems identified the following two sub-themes which will be discussed in the following section: 1) induction programme, support classes; 2) tailored student support including specialised bridging programmes and support for students before they come to study in a higher education institution in the

6.8.1 Induction

As previously mentioned (Chapter 2), most universities in the UK offer induction programmes in order to help international students adapt to their new TLE.

According to the literature, it is often assumed that all postgraduate students have the skills or can easily adapt to the different educational practices in the host institution (Guilfoyle, 2004; Ryan, 2000; McInnis, 2001; Handa, 2003; Carroll, 2004). However, the findings in this particular study reveal (Chapter 2) that although participants found the induction programme helpful, it went too fast and they felt overwhelmed and confused with the volume of information.

This is an interesting finding because, although it is a common for HEIs in the UK to host a one-week induction programme at the start of the academic year, some experts advise that induction programmes should be a longitudinal process that happens throughout the academic year (Campbell, 2006; Whittaker, 2008). Nevertheless, this does not seem to be a process that is adopted by the host institution and, as a consequence, it has had an impact on Indian students' understanding. Given that induction programmes have been found to enhance the learning outcomes of students (Cook, Rushton, McCormick, and Southall, 2005; Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008), it is argued that the host institution needs to consider the implications of these programmes, particularly in terms of international students. Furthermore, Shobrook (2003) adds that not all induction strategies are successful because students can become overloaded with information during the first week. Certainly, this seems to be a key issue at the host institution because students are not adapting to the academic practices which are introduced during the one-week induction programme and are starting their classes without acquiring the appropriate skills. Challenges therefore exist because, in order to adapt to their new TLE, Indian postgraduate students must adapt and acquire the academic practices of the new TLE. Misra, Crist, and Burant (2003) and Johnson (2010) explain that effective approaches to supporting students' educational journey and transition into a new TLE need to include proactive involvement of teaching staff, and also need to be embedded within programmes, in terms of content, learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Similarly, Handa and Power (2005) and later Johnson (2010) explain that, whilst it is the student's responsibility to abide by the academic practices of the host HEI, there is a moral and ethical obligation for the HEI and its academics to adequately and effectively communicate and explain knowledge about the academic practices to students.

6.8.2 Support Classes

Granted, the host institution does offer additional support classes/workshops for students, but these primarily focus on subject knowledge and assignment support. The workshops do not focus on the issues that are raised in the literature or this particular study such as critical analysis, paraphrasing, or research. Yet, according to the research, in order for students to achieve their academic goals, using the right academic support services is important, especially for students who come from a different educational system (Cook, Rushton, McCormick, and Southall, 2005). Indeed, all participants acknowledged their attendance at some of the support classes, which they declared was attractive because they focused on assessment support. Nonetheless, although participants agreed that the support classes were helpful, they highlighted the need for additional support on other areas such as paraphrasing and writing critically. Unfortunately, these areas were not a priority in the support classes and many of the participants felt too embarrassed to ask for assistance, particularly given that the classes had a large number of students in attendance. Nonetheless, attending these workshops is considered an important factor in students' academic success (Cottrell, 2008). It is therefore crucial that academic staff acknowledge the diversity of different groups of students and perhaps adapt the design of their induction programme and their style of teaching to ensure that students become well integrated into their new TLE.

6.8.3 Tailored Bridging/Support Programmes

Despite the efforts of the university, all participants suggested that it needs to provide more tailored workshops that focus on areas that students would most benefit. Although the suggestions included the continuation of the above support classes for assessments, it also included additional support classes for paraphrasing and critical writing which have been discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, the participants added that these support classes need to be scheduled around a more accessible timetable that does not clash with other classes.

Indeed, it is concerning to note that support classes were scheduled around students' other classes, but it seems that there may have been a timetabling issue that needs to be addressed in the future. However, all participants did make some valid suggestions about the university delivering workshops focusing on research, paraphrasing, critical writing and assessment approaches being conducted straight after classes. This links well to Murtagh (2010) who suggests that for different TLE, most notably those favouring rote-learning and teacher-centred approaches, it is essential to promote and facilitate extra academic support at the beginning of students' studies. Indeed, participants believed that additional support would help build their confidence and ensure that they were writing at the correct academic level. However, although all participants agreed with the content of the support classes, some participants argued that it takes time to develop these skills and that the workshops might be better placed before students' arrival in the UK.

6.8.4 Support Prior to Arrival

Some participants remarked that:

> *If I could have attended workshops in India, then I definitely would be doing these at least two to three months before coming to UK. I would then be ready to start and have all the right skills to tackle everything like assignments and all. I think there must be other students who are not really aware of the system and would use these workshops in India and or in the UK before their programme starts. The workshops or some sort of a programme should focus on how to do research, essay and report writing, and critical analysis because this would have prepared me for the UK university straight away* (Participant 1)

This is a very interesting finding because although there is a large body of work that focuses on the challenges that international students face when they make the educational journey from their home TLE to the UK, there is no research that specifically focuses on Indian students' experiences. Indeed, the issues and challenges related to Indian students have been identified and discussed in detail

throughout this study. However, the findings go beyond simply identifying the issues and challenges and, as can be seen from the above quotation, provide important suggestions from the participants on how to resolve these issues and challenges. Indeed, as previously mentioned, participants have suggested specific content to be included in the support classes, as well as presented some ideas about support classes being undertaken before students arrive in the UK. It is believed that this would alleviate the levels of anxiety and confusion and provide students with the right skills to tackle their respective programmes from the start. Certainly, there is a strong argument to support these suggestions, particularly since research suggests students can become overloaded during induction weeks. However, to date there are no studies that have investigated the benefits of hosting similar support classes prior to students arriving in the UK. However, these findings do make sense considering that participants have continuously suggested that it takes time to develop these skills, and that they are confused and anxious trying to cope with the demands of a new teaching and learning environment at the same time as developing the necessary academic skills.

Counteracting these issues and challenges should be a priority for most HEIs because students should be academically equipped with the right skills to get the best out of their programme. Given that participants believe that it is both the agents' and the university's responsibility to prepare them, then perhaps there is an opportunity for both to work together on a commercial basis to provide workshops that will prepare students for higher education in the UK. This suggestion will be discussed further in the next chapter.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and discussed the findings from interviews undertaken by Indian postgraduate students who studied on a postgraduate programme in the UK. The six themes which were identified in the study suggest that many of the issues experienced by the participants are typical of other Indian students who study on postgraduate degree programmes in the UK. However, some aspects such as the participants' desire and willingness

to change their way of thinking and learning before they came to study in the UK was not found in the literature. Furthermore, there was also very little evidence in the literature that focused on understanding the experiences of Indian students' previous TLE and how it impacts on them when they arrive in the UK. These areas can both be considered as contributions to knowledge, but further research could establish whether these issues and challenges were just specific to Indian students.

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Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study explored the experiences of postgraduate Indian students, in order to gain a better understanding of why some students found it difficult to make the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. The final

Chapter (Chapter 7) discusses the accomplishment of the study's aim and research objectives and summarises the key findings of the research. It also highlights the theoretical and practical implications of the study and proposes a set of recommendations. The chapter also addresses the limitations and weaknesses of the study, before finally concluding the chapter.

7.2 Accomplishment of Aim and Objectives

The study has met its aim and objectives (Chapter 1) by analysing appropriately gathered data and identifying and analysing the key issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students experience when they make the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. Consequently, in achieving these objectives, the study has been able to design a set of recommendations, as well as make contributions to both theory and practice.

This thesis attempted to fill a significant gap in the literature related to transition and the differences in teaching and learning environments by producing a study into the educational journey of Indian postgraduate students. The purpose was to advance existing knowledge in transition and examining the differences in teaching and learning environments. The aim of the study was to explore Indian postgraduate students' experiences, as they made the educational journey to a new teaching and learning environment in the UK. An in-depth qualitative methodological approach was adopted, which entailed a social constructivist research approach underpinned by a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology to explore Indian students' experiences. To

achieve the aim, four research objectives were identified and have been addressed throughout the thesis. Each of the objectives have been summarised and evaluated in the following sections:

Objective One: To understand the experiences of the Indian postgraduate students' journey from their previous teaching and learning environment to a new teaching and learning environment in the United Kingdom;

Chapter Two achieved this objective by providing an in-depth critique of the theory related to student transition and teaching and learning environments. The existing literature on student support strategies was also reviewed to provide a conceptual framework for the study. The final part of Chapter Two explored the application of an educational journey as a theoretical construct in educational research.

Objective Two: To investigate and explore the ways in which students' previous teaching and learning environments influence their educational journey into the new one in the United Kingdom;

Chapter Three presented an in-depth literature review of previous research surrounding transition and the differences between the teaching and learning environments in India and the UK. This provided a theoretical base to develop qualitative inquiry that drew out these the differences which were subsequently presented in the Findings and Discussion chapters

Chapter Six followed postgraduate Indian students' experiences, as they made the educational journey from India to the UK, and as a result identified context-issues and challenges arising from this particular group of students. Objective Two was achieved by gaining a holistic understanding of postgraduate Indian students' experiences.

Objective Three: To design a conceptual model that explores the issues and challenges and evaluates the effectiveness of existing support strategies in the host higher education institution.

The third objective involved the creation of a conceptual model that synthesises the issues and challenges and evaluates effectiveness of existing support strategies in the host HEI. These are presented in the Findings and

Discussion chapters. Objective Three was achieved and presented in Chapter Four in the development of a conceptual model, which was achieved by synthesising the issues and challenges students face and evaluating the existing support strategies for Indian postgraduate students in the host higher education institution.

Objective Four: To identify the key factors that influence Indian postgraduate students' educational journey and to develop a set of recommendations for practitioners and higher education institutions.

The final objective involved developing a set of recommendations for the host university and other higher education institutions. Chapter Seven of the thesis presented a range of recommendations that could help Indian postgraduate students make an easier educational journey to a new TLE in the UK. The study has met its aim and objectives (Chapter One) by filling a significant gap in the literature related to transition and teaching and learning environments. The objectives were also met by designing and analysing appropriately gathered data and identifying the key issues and challenges that Indian postgraduate students experience when they make the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. Consequently, in achieving these objectives, the study has been able to design a set of recommendations, as well as make contributions to both theory and practice.

7.3 Conclusion and Summary of Findings

The findings were developed from the data accumulated during the interview process and reflect the experiences of Indian students who studied on a postgraduate programme at a HEI in the UK. Within this context, this study has explored, identified and discussed the issues and challenges encountered by Indian postgraduate students as they made the educational journey from their home TLE to a new TLE in the UK. The study identified six themes which were discussed and analysed in both the findings and discussion chapters. These themes can be found in Table 9.

As previously discussed, (Chapter 2), universities are under increasing pressure to recruit international students because it is considered a lucrative market. Currently, there are various groups of international students who come from a range of different countries and their previous experience presents challenges for the students when they make the educational journey to an unfamiliar TLE, as well as for HEIs in terms of how to best support them. This study has primarily focused on Indian students studying various postgraduate degree programmes in the UK. The findings from the study found that all participants knew and agreed that they had shortcomings in their knowledge and even admitted that they felt frustrated because they did not have the ability to apply any of the knowledge that they gained in their previous studies to real life situations. This was one of the key motivations for students to study in the UK. However, the findings revealed that when students arrived on campus for their induction programme, they encountered various challenges with the technology and the speed that the induction programme was delivered. This situation contributed towards the challenges that participants encountered when they made the educational journey from their home TLE to the new TLE in the UK. The findings also reveal that participants were completely unprepared for these vast differences and, although the university had implemented support strategies (Chapter 6), these did not appear to be effective. As a consequence, participants felt overwhelmed, anxious, stressed and confused.

Indeed, whilst some of the findings in this study might be relevant to all international students, this study focused on the causes of the challenges and therefore identified important findings specifically related to Indian students. These included the issues and challenges that students encountered in the new TLE in the UK, as well as the level of students' preparedness to adapt. It also identifies specific issues students encountered with the university's student support systems. Certainly, the purpose of this study is to resolve these issues and challenges and, as such, these areas are considered when designing the recommendations (Chapter 7).

7.3.1 Implications for Research: Contribution to Knowledge

Similar to other research studies, the DBA is also expected to demonstrate a significant contribution to theory, alongside a significant contribution to practice. Although this particular study adds to an existing body of knowledge related to transition, it specifically focuses on the experiences of postgraduate Indian students. As previously mentioned, research surrounding transition has yet to be conceptualised, or applied, as an educational journey, hence this study offers a unique perspective to enhance existing research in the field. This study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge because it provides a new conceptualisation of transition by viewing it as a learning journey that captures students' experience.

Previous research has focused on widening participation, social and academic integration, retention, and the social and academic institutional systems which support students, institutional transition and transition as a process and permanent state (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016; Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke and Longden, 2008). Despite the plethora of research, none of these conceptualisations capture the students' own experience as they move from one TLE to another, yet previous research advocates the need to understand students' previous TLE (Harvey, Drew and Smith, 2006; Johnson, 2010; O'Donnell, Kean and Steven, 2016; Roberts, 2003; Trotter and Roberts, 2006; Yorke and Longden, 2008). This study takes steps towards addressing these fundamental gaps in the literature by moving the discussion forward and viewing transition as a learning journey that captures students' experiences. Therefore, the significance of this contribution is that it can provide different groups of students with a voice to share their experience. In respect of this study, it is a group of Indian postgraduate students.

This study not only adds a contribution to theory by viewing transition as an educational journey that captures students' experiences, but also because it extends the traditionally accepted stages of transition to capture students' experiences from their previous TLE. While transition has previously been

explored within the academic literature, this study is the first to view it as an educational journey and include students previous TLE as part of that journey. The significance of this contribution is that, while transition is advocated in the educational literature as being an ideal tool to identify students' issues and challenges which contribute towards HEIs developing student support strategies, the findings in this study have argued that there are many under-reported issues and challenges which are specifically linked to the differences in the TLE between India and the UK.

From a broader perspective, this study contributes to knowledge and understanding about the differences in TLEs between India and the UK. While there is an abundance of literature related to different types of teaching and learning models and approaches in HEIs, this is the first study to specifically identify and provide a detailed account of the differences between India and the UK. As a consequence, from the findings of this study there is now an understanding of how these differences impact students and this has far-reaching applications beyond the host institution and into other HEIs where international students are a prominent market. A key contribution from this perspective is that, although HEIs are aware that many international students require student strategies to assist their journey into a new TLE, there are still significant issues and challenges that various groups of international students encounter. This study captures the experiences of a group of Indian postgraduate students and these experiences act as important dialogue for management to improve and implement new support strategies that are specific to different groups of students.

To summarise, this study makes a contribution to knowledge in three ways. Firstly, it moves the discussion forward by allowing the study of transition from a different perspective such as an educational journey that captures students' experiences. Secondly the study contributes to knowledge by extending the stages of transition to include students' previous TLE. Thirdly, it provides detailed information about the differences in the TLE between India and the UK.

7.3.2 Implications for Practice – Contribution to Practice

As well as making a contribution to knowledge, DBA research studies are also expected to make a contribution to practice. This particular study has captured ideas from findings which could be useful for both the host institution, other higher education institutions and commercial organisations, thus resulting in an important contribution to practice. This DBA study identified how participants experience the TLE in their home countries, which helped to provide a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges encountered by Indian students when they made the educational journey to a new TLE in the UK.

Firstly, the study raised various issues related to the induction programme that posed challenges for participants and warrants further consideration by the programme team who are involved in its design and delivery. Specifically, the team might consider incorporating some of the ideas that participants suggested (Chapter 6.6) into the content of the induction programme, as well as pay attention to the timeframe that the induction programme is delivered. These include extending the length of time of the induction programme, perhaps a two-week programme, or additional programmes spread throughout the first trimester, which might help to prepare students more for their new TLE. A review of the content of the programme to include more practical classes focusing on moodle, the online library, plagiarism and turnitin would better prepare students.

Secondly, the study identified the key issues and challenges raised by participants and included: 1) the relationship with the lecturer; 2) lectures/tutorials; 3) accents; 4) assessments; 5) independent learning; 6) critical analysis and research. Certainly, in terms of contributions to practice these issues and challenges present a range of opportunities for management to create strategies to raise awareness across the university. Through staff workshops and seminars there are opportunities to raise awareness about the differences with the staff/student relationship which

could provide academics with a better understanding of why students are very quiet and rarely participate in class. Assessing, evaluating and considering the factors influencing students' behavior could also be helpful for academics when designing tutorial/seminar sessions and assessments.

Another strategy that could provide an opportunity for practitioners are to integrate more workshops/seminars to focus on essay and report writing, critical writing and analysis and research and paraphrasing skills. These and the aforementioned workshops could be delivered throughout the host institution and disseminated by management to academic staff and support staff. Furthermore, through future development, these strategies could be beneficial to external organisations.

Indeed, lack of preparedness caused participants a tremendous amount of anxiety, stress and frustration, as well as hindered their transition and progress on their respective programmes. There is an opportunity, prior to recruiting students, for management to establish training and development programmes with recruitment staff and agents, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the differences in the TLE. Thereafter, these training experiences and additional knowledge can be used to help inform prospective students about the differences in academic practice, so that they can seek help and support prior to commencing their programme in the UK. As previously mentioned, students should be well prepared and ready to start their programmes without any hindrance that could impact their successful journey into the new TLE. It is therefore crucial that these specific interventions are implemented to allow this group of students to have an easier educational journey. Certainly, the information in this study will be useful and relevant for both HEIs and practitioners, as it provides an understanding of the issues and challenges encountered by Indian students, which can then be used to design and implement appropriate student support strategies. Certainly, there is a commercial opportunity for both universities and private organisations to capitalise on these findings from this study, but these will be discussed in more detail in the recommendations.

In terms of contributing to my own academic practice, undertaking the doctoral study helped to obtain a more profound understanding of the issues and challenges that so many Indian postgraduate students encounter in their new TLE. In practice, I have tried to transform students' approaches to learning by encouraging them to develop a more independent approach to their learning by implementing techniques that encouraged students to gather and access academic literature. In my module, I created a formative assessment, whereby students were asked to conduct a debate in groups of six students with three members of the group focusing on the pros and three members focussing on the cons. The debates focussed on answering questions related to the first assignment, but each group in the class were given a different topic. On each side of the debate the argument was based on knowledge that each student gained from sourcing two academic journals. This meant, at the end of the debate each group of students had a set of twelve academic journals which focused on a particular topic in the first assignment. Notwithstanding, each group got the opportunity to watch other groups in the class, which resulted in the accumulation of even more journals and more constructive arguments to help students undertake their first assignment. At the time, students did not realise that by undertaking this formative assignment they were building research skills and familiarising themselves with the online library, learning appropriate techniques to build a constructive argument and preparing for their assignments long before they were due. This a very helpful technique that can be applied to other modules and extended to include other types of assessments. Other changes to practice included being more vigilant in identifying students who were not actively engaged and encouraging them to contribute and to access appropriate support systems, particularly writing workshops, assessment workshops and referencing classes.

7.4 Recommendations to the Study Organisation

The following recommendations might be considered useful for different universities, as well as different cohorts of students from similar rote learning backgrounds. However, it is hoped that the recommendations are adopted by the host university, because the reason for doing the study was to help Indian

students make an easier educational journey to a new TLE in the UK. That said, there is also the potential for private organisations to provide a service.

7.4.1. Recommendation 1: New induction and student support programme

As previously mentioned, most HEI host induction weeks programmes for all new students entering the university. The induction programme at the host university focusses on and introduces students to the university's administrative, academic and personal support systems, as well as the technological resources such as the university Ipoint, timetable, moodle and the online library. However, the participants in this particular study revealed that the induction programme was overloaded with information which subsequently left them feeling overwhelmed and confused. Indeed, the induction programme only lasts for five days, therefore it is highly recommended that the team who design the induction programme review the amount of time allocated to the programme. Perhaps a two-week programme, or additional programmes spread throughout the first trimester, might help to prepare students more for their new TLE.

A review of the content of the programme to include more practical classes focusing on moodle and the online library is also recommended. Moreover, considering that participants had never heard of concepts such as plagiarism or turnitin, there needs to be more time and emphasis placed on preparing students in these areas. As previously mentioned, the consequences of plagiarism could mean a student's withdrawal from a programme of study. It is therefore unreasonable and unrealistic to assign a one-hour class and expect students from a different cultural background to gain a comprehensive understanding.

Furthermore, although the induction programme touches on essay and report writing, critical writing and analysis and research and paraphrasing skills, participants revealed that the time spent on these areas was insufficient. Again, participants revealed that they had never written an essay or a report and did not even know what the term "critical thinking, or writing" meant prior

to studying in the UK, therefore how can these students be expected to adapt their learning style with an induction programme that lasts for five days. Granted, universities implement various support classes to enhance student preparedness, but, as already established (Chapters 2 and 6), these do not appear to be effective because the classes do not focus enough on these areas, nor do they provide the required time to adapt. It is therefore highly recommended that the university designs a more tailored support programme that includes workshops that address these weaknesses. These workshops could be delivered long before students arrive in the UK and will help to ensure that Indian students are well prepared for their transition into a new TLE in the UK.

7.4.2. Recommendation 2: Improve student support strategies prior to studying in the UK

The second recommendation relates to delivering these tailored programmes in India, prior to students arriving in the UK. Certainly, prior to leaving India, participants in this particular study were not provided with any information about the differences in the TLE. In fact, it was only on arrival at the university that the differences were highlighted. The participants explained that even if they knew about the differences and wanted to develop the necessary skills to be critical thinkers and prepare their essay and report writing, research, paraphrasing and writing skills, they were not offered the opportunity by the university, and they were not aware of any other organisation that could help. Nevertheless, all participants in the study have requested workshops that focus on developing their critical writing skills, their paraphrasing skills and their research skills. However, participants recognise that it will take more than a few workshops to gain these skills and even suggested that it would take anywhere between three to six months.

This situation provides an opportunity for universities or private organisations to embark on a commercial opportunity by providing tailored made pre-arrival support programme. For example, offices could be opened in some of the larger metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai and focus on the

key areas that Indian students find challenging. Obviously, it will take students time to develop these skills, therefore the pre-arrival support programme could last for the same number of weeks as a standard module, which is 15 weeks. The pre-arrival programme could focus on the following three modules/workshops:

- Workshop 1: Writing Development
  - Developing writing skills
  - Paraphrasing
  - Critical thinking and writing

- Workshop 2: Research Development
  - Identifying relevant sources
  - Preparing for assessments; essay and report writing

- Workshop 3: Technology Development
  - Moodle
  - Turnitin
  - On-line library
  - Referencing

Indeed, these modules/workshops have incorporated the specific content that participants have suggested needs to be included in the support classes, as well as presented the idea of support classes being undertaken before students arrive in the UK. As previously mentioned, (Chapter 6), counteracting the difficulties that students encounter should be a priority for most HEIs because students should be academically equipped with the right skills to get the best out of their programme. It is quite concerning to note that Indian students still come to the UK with very little knowledge or understanding of what is expected of them when they arrive at their host institution. It is believed that this strategy could alleviate the levels of anxiety, stress and confusion and at the same time provide students with the right skills to tackle their respective programmes from the start. As well as provide academic support, these pre-

arrival support classes will also help students to acclimatise to the local accents, which, in turn, means that they will at least understand what the teachers are saying by the time they arrive in the UK. In addition, the classes will also help students to become more used to the style of teaching and help them build relationship with teachers faster. Given the vast amount of challenges that the pre-support classes address, it is clear that there is a strong need to implement this recommendation.

7.4.3. Recommendation 3: Enhance staff awareness of Indian students' educational background

As previously mentioned, (Chapter 2 and 6), Indian students' previous educational experience is quite different from what is expected of them in the UK. In fact, their entire educational experience has been spent cultivating a surface approach to learning. Yet, when Indian students arrive in the UK, they are expected to instantly adapt their learning styles to a deep approach to learning and foster a range of critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills. Evidently, as identified (Chapter 2), Indian students' learning styles were incompatible with the new TLE. Therefore, students did not feel prepared for their new programme of study. Furthermore, it is also clear from this study (Chapter 6) that neither the administrative staff nor teachers in the host university are aware of the vast differences in TLE or how these differences affect Indian students. Indeed, if these issues and challenges were highlighted, then administrative and teaching staff could be more vigilant and equipped to respond to students' needs. It is therefore recommended that the university puts in place a system that improves the levels of awareness and understanding of Indian students' previous TLE with both administrative staff and teachers.

A wider university initiative could be designed to help administrative staff and teachers who work directly with international students to become more aware of different challenges and issues related to different cultural backgrounds. For example, by simply making recruitment staff more aware of these issues, they can inform students of the differences from the start and students can then

make the choice to either seek support through the pre-arrival support programme, which is recommended above, or wait until they arrive at the university. Similarly, individuals who design the induction programme need to be more aware of students from different cultural backgrounds and allocate more time to accommodate students who need additional support in areas such as plagiarism, critical writing, paraphrasing etc. Granted, a lot of these areas will be factored into the pre-arrival support programme, but since universities or private organisations will be charging a fee, the induction programme in the UK still needs to exist but make the necessary adjustments to support students from all cultural backgrounds. Finally, it is also important that teaching staff are aware of students' previous TLE, particularly when most Indian students have never written an essay or report prior to studying in the UK. Perhaps, teachers could break assessments into a combination of smaller assignments including examinations and academic presentations during the early part of the module and leave the essays and reports to the later part. That way, students will have the time to adjust to the new TLE, but at the same time build up their academic experience with assessments that are familiar.

7.4.4 Recommendation 4: Pre-arrival website

The fourth recommendation for this study relates to the pre-arrival website. Similar to most other universities, the host university also provides a student pre-arrival website which contains information about the university and provides activity-based learning resources that are designed around key aspects of academic study skills which are required in the UK. However, these activities are not interactive and, as identified in Chapter 5, Indian students have difficulties becoming independent learners. Therefore, the chances of them using these activities is very slim. Perhaps, a solution to this problem is to encourage agents and recruitment staff to direct students towards the pre-arrival website and advise them of the wealth of support. However, it is recommended that the pre-arrival website be updated to include a sophisticated interactive web learning tool that supports international students' academic writing skills, but it should be available to all students. It is also recommended that the pre-arrival website provides access to induction

material, Moodle, the online library and Turnitin, so that students can familiarise themselves with the tools prior to arriving in the UK. Indeed, no student should have to wait thirty days to get access to these resources, particularly given the fact that it takes students a further thirty days to get used to using the resources. These recommendations will also be useful in providing support for students who are late arrivals and missed the induction programme due to visa restrictions. However, it is also recommended that the university review this issue and provide additional induction classes, and perhaps mentors from the previous trimesters' cohort of students to help support all new international students.

7.5 Limitations of Study

Similar to all research studies, this DBA thesis also encountered some limitations. Firstly, although participants came from various different universities in India, only one UK University was used in the study. Furthermore, although students came from all over India to study at the university, a bigger sample size would certainly have helped to strengthen the results. Certainly, the number of participants chosen for this study did conform with the conditions of the DBA. Secondly, although this research examined the process of transition and not the outcome of transition, it did so only by focusing on a particular section of Indian students' journey, however a longitude study may bring additional results. This is discussed in the following section.

7.6 Reflection on Methodological Approach and Recommendations

The methodological approach for this study was extensively discussed and justified in terms of its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the research topic (Chapter 3). However, as with any doctoral study, it is important after completion of the research to reflect on whether the chosen methodology was an appropriate decision. Indeed, it was necessary to choose a data collection method that would allow students' voices about their experiences to come through. This could only happen with an unstructured interview, which was used to gather the primary data. Certainly, the adopted philosophical position

influenced the choice of data collection method, but the unstructured interviews managed to capture rich and meaningful information about Indian students' experiences. While other methods, such as student diaries, were considered in conjunction with the interviews, it was thought that the use of excessive approaches might overload participants during their studies as well as complicate the data collection process. However, conducting two sets of unstructured interviews was chosen, even though it was a challenging and time-consuming process, especially when identifying a student sample, managing the timing of two sets of interviews and a large volume of data. However, the approach was successful, and the study did achieve the targeted results which were to capture participants experiences in their own words.

Indeed, this approach could be useful for similar studies that adopted a constructive philosophical position and wanted to capture participants' experiences. The usage of unstructured interviews meant that participants discussed the areas that were important to them, rather than what the researcher perceived as important. Although the study focused on students undertaking various postgraduate programmes, they were enrolled on one particular HEI. Nevertheless, although the study does not claim that all Indian students have similar issues and challenges, the study did meet its aim and objectives. The findings in this study could therefore help universities to respond to the issues and challenges related to Indian students by adapting material that can help them become prepared and, hence, more productive when they arrive in their new TLE. In addition, the study could be developed further by conducting studies that include cohorts of Indian students from other universities in the UK, and perhaps other parts of the world that recruit postgraduate Indian students such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

7.7 Recommendations for Future Research

This section has already discussed the DBA study's contribution to knowledge and practice (Chapter 7.3.1), but some of the issues and challenges identified in the study are important enough to conduct further research. One of the most significant findings within the study was that participants were completely

unprepared for the educational from their home TLE to the UK. Granted, the university implemented support strategies to help students' journey, but the participants in this study identified many weaknesses, particularly with most elements of the induction programme, which left them feeling overwhelmed and confused. Subsequently, as participants embarked on their journey through their respective programmes of study they identified further issues and challenges when making the educational journey to the new TLE. These included: 1) differences in the relationship with the lecturer; 2) differences in lectures/tutorials; 3) understanding lecturers' accents; 4) challenges with different assessments; 5) independent learning; 6) critical analysis and research. Indeed, all these topics, including the challenges with the induction programme, warrant more in-depth research because this study has merely brought the issues and challenges to the surface. While the current study focused on drawing out the issues and challenges and identifying ways to resolve them, a more in-depth study on these individual topics might provide a deeper understanding. Similarly, a study undertaken at other universities in the UK might also be useful. However, participants from this study all undertook their undergraduate degrees in different universities in India, therefore the chances of identifying different issues and challenges is rather slim. However, it is anticipated that this study will generate interest on research related to the experience of Indian students, not only in the UK, but in other destinations where Indian students are enrolled such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is therefore suggested that, if the university implements the recommended (Chapter 7) tailored support strategies, that a comparative study with other universities be undertaken to identify if the tailored support strategies have been successful. Finally, a longitudinal study to determine the effectiveness of the current support systems for different groups of international students in UK universities would be extremely useful. This would help universities to design and implement appropriate support strategies that reflect the diversity of current student market in the UK.

7.8 Conclusion

This doctoral thesis is being submitted as partial requirement of a Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) Programme. Undertaking this doctoral study has been a very useful journey because it helped answer various questions about why some Indian students found it difficult to make the educational journey to a TLE in the UK. By focussing on the process of transition and following the students' educational journey from their home TLE to the UK, it helped uncover the root causes of the issues and challenges specifically experienced by Indian students. Indeed, many of the outcomes of the students' educational journey, such as anxiousness, frustration, stress and low confidence, have been documented for many years. Moreover, universities have responded by implementing student support strategies, which, to some extent, have been extremely useful. However, as evidenced in the literature, many of the issues and challenges encountered by international students still exist. The most likely reason is that universities treat international students as a homogenous group and by implementing generic support strategies they treat the symptoms of the issues and challenges, rather than the root cause. This study has tried to get to the root cause of the issues and challenges that are encountered by Indian postgraduate students and the findings are presented (Chapters 5 and 6). The study has also offered some recommendations (Chapter 7) which will be shared with management and colleagues. The researcher intends to publish the research in the International Journal of Education and share the findings with international colleagues at the Critical Tourism Conference in Ibiza, 2019. However, the journey does not end here because the researcher would like to undertake more in-depth research on areas related to some of the challenges that were raised in the study.

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Appendix 1: Four Vedas

Four Veda's	Description
Rig Veda	This is the oldest and most important Vedas, which compromise a collection of ten books which include 1,028 Sanskrit hymns (Sanskrit: mandalas) dedicated to the Rigvedic deities to bring courage, happiness, health, peace, prosperity, success, and wisdom to society. These texts also made a referral to the first use and definition of the word yoga.
Sama Veda	The Sama-Veda is purely a collection of melodies (saman) used during sacrifices to elevate one's consciousness. It compromises 1549 stanzas, taken entirely (except 78) from the Rig-Veda.
Yajurveda	The Yajur-Veda ('Veda of sacrificial formulas') consists of archaic prose mantras and also in part of verses borrowed from the Rig-Veda. Its purpose was practical, in that each mantra must accompany an action in sacrifice but, unlike the Sama-Veda, it was compiled to apply to all sacrificial rites.
Atharavaveda	The Atharva–Veda consists of spells and charms to dispel evil, disease and misfortune. Its hymns are of a more diverse character than the Rig-Veda and were composed of a simpler language making them more accessible to the general population.

(Adapted: Altekar, 1965; Flood. 1996; Radhakrishnan, 1957)

Appendix 2: Aim and Objectives of Vedic Education

Aim	Description
Character Formation	In education ancient Indians believed that physical, mental, intellectual and morality were equally important.
Personality Development	The development of the individual's personality and character was encouraged through self-realisation and self-respect.
Social Awareness	The students' responsibility is to treat everyone as equals and have a. healthy, positive attitude and dignity to all kinds of labour, which was necessary for a better future life.
Practical Education	Vedic education is not based solely on learning out of books, practical training in professions that interested the students were also encouraged.
Preservation of knowledge and culture	The preservation and the transmission of knowledge, and cultural traditions was necessary and the duty of all of those who held it.
Achieving Enlightenment	While education was used to make students productive members of society, it has a spiritual element to teach students the importance of the non-physical world.

(Adapted: Altekar, 1965; Flood. 1996; Radhakrishnan, 1957)

Appendix 3: Philosophy, Methodology, Methods and Analysis

Epistemology	Objectvism	Critical Realism	**Constructionism**	Subjectivism
Research Approach	Postivism Post Positism	Pragmatism Realism Naturalism Transcendental	**Interpretivism**	Post Modernism Structuralism Post-Structuralism
Methodology	Experimantal Research Survey Research	Ethnography Grounded Theory Qualitative and Quantatative Research	Ethnography Grounded Theory Action Research Feminist Standpoint Research	Discourse Theory Archaeology Genealogy Disconstruction
Strategies and Methods	Sampling Measurement and scaling Statistics Questionnaires Focus Groups Interview	Questionnaire Qualitative Interview Observation Statistical Analysis Case study	Qualitative Interview Observation Participation Case Study Life Narrative Theme Identification	Autoethnography Semiotics Literary Analysis Pastiche Intertextuality

Appendix 4: Research Themes

The following set of research questions are designed to guide the interviews and to ensure that the correct information is gathered at each of the critical point in the students' academic journey. However, it is important to highlight that the questions are only intended to be used as a guide to ensure that the researcher captures the correct data from each participant.

STAGE 1: How do Indian students experience the educational from their home institutions to a higher education institution in the United Kingdom?

- What are the motivating factors that influenced you to study in the United Kingdom?

- Has your institution in India delivered/organised any bridging/support programmes in conjunction with the higher education institution in the United Kingdom?

- What are your academic expectations in a higher education institution in the United Kingdom?

- To what extent did/do you feel prepared for higher education in the United Kingdom?

- Do you think there will be any differences in the teaching and learning environments in India and the United Kingdom?

STAGE 2: What factors within Indian students' previous teaching and learning environments, and the United Kingdom hinder/promote a successful journey?

- Are there any distinct differences in the teaching and learning environments between India and the United Kingdom?

- What factors were different in terms of teaching and learning practise?

- In terms of the teaching and learning environments, what challenges did you encounter during your journey?

- How did you/didn't you overcome the challenges in terms of the differences in teaching and learning environments?

STAGE 3: How do the factors that hinder/promote a successful journey affect students' development?

- Did the differences in the teaching and learning environments hinder/promote your academic development?

- In what way did it hinder/promote your academic development?

- Did your grades increase/decrease during the journey from one teaching and learning environment to another?

STAGE 4: To what extent did Indian students use the university support systems, and, and do these systems help overcome challenges?

- What most important forms of support (needs, types, and functions) did Indian students perceive they needed for a successful educational journey?

- How do you perceive the importance of the bridging/support programmes implemented by either/both institutions as being part of your journey?

- Do you think the university is doing enough to identify and review the existing student support strategies – do you think they are aware of your specific issues?

- How do you think both organisations in India and the United Kingdom can better assist Indian students in their academic journey?

Appendix 5: Schedule for Conducting Interviews (2017/18)

TIME	NAME
TRIMTSTER 1	
Friday 29th September (11.30)	Participant 1
Friday 29th September (10.30_	Participant 2
Friday 29th September (14.30)	Participant 3
Friday 2nd October (13.30)	Participant 4
Friday 2nd October (09.30am)	Participant 5
Friday 2nd October (11.30am)	Participant 6
TRIMESTER 2	
Monday 5th February (10.30)	Participant 1
Monday 5th February (12noon)	Participant 2
Monday 12th February (11.30)	Participant 3
Monday 12th February (15.45)	Participant 4
Tuesday 13th February (12 noon)	Participant 5
Tuesday 13th February (11am)	Participant 6

Appendix 6: Example of transcribed interview

Participant 1

It's just been about two weeks and the second week I came to Edinburgh Napier. The first day that I came here was on the 11th of September, which was a Monday morning and ah… as I walked through the campus I was like wow! This is where I am going to be? This is great!

I was definitely excited, but at the same time I was confused because I did not know where I was supposed to go. We have in my country something called "the reception area", and here it was called the ipoint. So, it took me five to ten minutes to actually understand: is this the desk I shall go to.

So yes, that is the first thing here, I finally got it, went there to the ipoint, and what they said was: "you are a new student, the first thing you have to do is you have to get yourself matriculated"

I did try before to do it online, but was unsuccessful. But they said: the first thing you have to do is give me your matriculation number, whoever you have spoken before.

Interviewer
You can´t get access?

Participant 1

So I was, I have to get my matriculation done ASAP, obviously

At the ipoint I was guided and I spoke on the phone.

So, in my country what happens is like: from one desk for help and then you go to the other desk for help because there's a lot of man-power there. So, there is one person on one desk, two desks, three desks, four desk. Obviously, it is more time consuming, because you have to wait in line, sometimes they are there, sometimes can be lunch time, or other. This was just more effective, I think it was faster, but the only different and new experience for me was to do it by the ipoint and I was like … If there was something that I needed to find out, the resetting password thing, or when I went back again after five minutes I was speaking to a different person online.

So, I had again to explain the entire process, but I think in two days time I got the matriculation number.

Interviewer
How did that make you feel when you went through all that?

Participant 1

I was confused, I was like oh my god! I mean if I don't get matriculated, I was going to arrived so delayed like by a week.

I was not there for the induction, and for the welcome week. I think that would have made things easier for me, but my visa came in late and my visa application and everything was like delayed by a week or so, and by the time I could come in, and by the time I got my tickets, landed on the 10th of September. So I missed out the welcome week, I didn't miss out much so. So the missing part didn't have to do anything with my classes, but I missed out the guidance for the orientation week so, but then it was not very difficult.

Obviously, the whole of the 11th of September I came here at 9am, and I came back at 2/3pm, but I had still not been able to matriculate.

It was on the 12th of September that I finally got matriculated and I was happy, I was very happy! I was like okay, I mean it was something very different, I mean was a new experience for me. Obviously, 11th September I was like, I was clueless because I couldn't get access to my time table, or moodle.

But after the matriculation, 12th of September it was like easy, quick; then the next step was the student card and the time table thing. Obviously the time table thing was available, but I didn't know where to find my timetable. I mean, this is the first time they've mentioned timetables for students, but I didn't know where to see my own timetable, or even know the modules on my programme

So, I was like I don't have my individual timetable and so I went to the ipoint again, by this time I knew where I should go. I just had to go to the ipoint for any and everything. So, I go up to the I-point and I tell them that I got matriculated, and that I had a problem with my time table and they were like: "you should be getting your own timetable" The guy explains to me about moodle and of the ipoint. On the i-point they told how can access everything with my matriculation an and after these steps I could to get access to or my timetable and Moodle.

Interviewer

So, you had not been able to attend induction week because of your visa not arriving on time: Did you missed the workshops, or was there any other further workshops there to help support you?

Participant 1

No, unfortunately not!

There were no more workshops and I could.. there were the students on my modules and the people at the ipoint, they were always there to help me.

Interviewer

So, did they show you how to access on the university technological resources. Did someone show you that, or did you just figure out that yourself?

Participant 1

No, I figured it out that myself, they just explained to me verbally and I just talked to the ipoint and I was able to get there.

Interviewer

But how did that make you feel when you went into the computer system ? and how different was it from, India ?

Participant 1

The first two-three days I was like "oh my God" this technology thing it has like moved up and developed very fast. I wish I was more familiar because we still have timetables on the mynapier board, we still have all the information on the mynapier board. However, in three days time I was like: "everything is like a click of a button, and all the information is here, I don't have to run to different places, so it's like definitely makes life easy".

This two or three days of anxiety was over, finally. Then the next was.. I go to the ipoint and they are like having formal student gathering, and they are like you know: "you are not a current student - you have to go for your immigration and finance checks"

I'm like: Ok I've got my CAS letter, I've got my visa, I've got a lot of my documents rituals and I am not a current student ? I´ve got my matriculation. So she's like: "no, no worries you just have to meet the immigration and finance checks, and you just have to let them know how you're going to pay your fees" and it's just like ahh…

From ten to twenty minutes meeting with this department, and this is again on the Merchiston campus, it's not at Craiglockhart. Obviously, they were coming to Craiglockhart, but like that was like it would take another two to four days there because they have certain days that they come to Criaglockhart. Merchiston was the very next day, so now getting to know how to get to the Merchiston campus.

So these were just the initial teething problems on the getting to know how it was, familiarising myself. Obviously, there were moments of anxiety of like which bus to take, but I think every person who goes to a different place and new place experiences these issues.

I think anyway, that there's a lot of support, students support - even for international students, because you are guided at every step. It's not like you get lost and you don't do things, you just have to be on the go all the time and ask questions all the time because it is so different. You come, and there is not like if there is nobody who is going to look after you.

Everything is there, all the information is there beforehand, you just have to follow the instructions. Obviously, there's no person coming for your studies I mean like for your graduation or post-graduation. You're supposed to be responsible taking care of all things for yourself. Being able to manage things,

so obviously there is no "spoon feeding", nobody is going to tell you that "you have do this, that after this you have to do this and that.." You have to get things done, you just can´t be sleeping in your hostel or in your accommodation and you don't expect things to just happen.

Interviewer

So, is this environment quite different from India?

Participant 1

Yes, it's different, very different in the sense that obviously that they the whole system it is so very different from my country. Obviously there is technology such as mynapier, moodle and the e-library.

I don´t know how many universities would be having this technology in my country because I have restarted after a gap of thirteen years or so.

Interviewer

Good for you!

Participant 1

So, maybe the students who were just studying after their undergraduate graduation and have just come from post graduation has not seen an advance on technology.

Because there wasn't any of this when I did my graduation, was basically everything was on paper, and you have to go to different desks, so here there is the ipoint, the phone where you are instructed, there is like a PC in all the libraries you have to be like ahh, or on your phone, you just have to download the application, you know. Like I said before, everything at the click of a button, its all very fast for me, Everything happens in minutes and, I don't need to write anything: my calendar time table tells me "in two days you have this class, in one hour you have this class, etc.. So, in the moment I open my App, I get updated the appointments for next week, the time management becomes easier, you know. That you've got any other engagements on the following Tuesday or the following Wednesday you have this class and so on.

I think I feel very good about it, more confident with moodle, with the idea because everything is like here you are updated about the future events, I mean, that that the upcoming events the upcoming workshops and according to your interests and needs according, I mean: it's all there.

Interviewer

So, have you started classes now?

Participant 1

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Yes, on the 14th of September I started my first class. On Thursday. I missed the class on Tuesday on 12th September, I just missed one class, I was unhappy about it, but then again the modules, the class that I missed out the previous week, or the previous work or whatever has been done, its all updated, its all put up on your own moodle, so I was able to catch up.

So you can always go back, and you can have a look up, and you can even meet your professors. If you haven't understood a particular module, you just tell them and they will be able to explain it to you, and my first class was like WOW.

I loved the lectures, it was amazing that all of them have worked in the industry, they are just not academic experts, because all of them are Doctors, so you know you are tutored by experts and they have experience as they have been there in the industry. It is not just academic thoughts. I just loved the lectures.

Interviewer

Did you prepare for the lectures, did you find your lectura material?

Participant 1

Yes, they are updated. Some are a week ahead, always you have enough time to get familiar. Tutorials are also very interesting, my big challenge was to understand the assessment becasue we had written exams in India. In India, it's only when you do your Phd, or your dissertation, that its all in written, and its like a presentation? Here, in some modules you have to get groups, get into groups, so it's like an assessment to build a report. Then you need to check plagarisim and turnitin sodtware, all this was again technology that I have never heard of. Then I was like, I could like brush up on my technology and I could be more tech savy. So far, this was the only part that I think this is a struggle. For international students, I mean, it's obviously just been two weeks, but if I could give some advice to the students who get to come here to te UK, I would tell them to brush up on technology skills, so it's like they are a bit prepared…

Interviewer

How did you feel then, by going into classes and not knowing all these things?

Participant 1

Well, I was numb, I was shocked not thinking was able to do this… for a week I was very upset, I was like, in October I had to submit an assignment worth like 40%. All these new terms, haven´t heard about this, of course, you do your reference thing in my country, but there is not problems, or anything. I mean, you are suppose to have an opinion, even after the lecture, you are suppose to have a point of view, and you have to justify your point of view. You even have to justify your point of view in your assessments. For exampe, if you are writing something about your topic, so why do say why you think it is.

So I was… in my country you are not encouraged to have your own opinion, your professors tell you this is right and this is not. I mean, you don't have an opinión, but here, after every lecture, the professor encourages you to ask questions, encourage you to ask if you haven't understood something, they will be very happy to explain everything to you. And after every discussion, are new questions, and they want you to question. Like: what do you think? Is it a corporate responsibility, or is it a personal responsibility? So, you have to decide on one of those, and…

Interviewer

So, here they ask… I am just trying to draw what you are saying: Here they ask for your opinión, but in India, it's not your opinion they are asking for, but they are asking if you understood what is on the book?

Participant 1

Exactly, that´s the basic difference.

Here, your answer cannot be wrong; In India you have like: this can be a right answer and this is a wrong answer.

And here you although you don't have right or wrong answers, but you have to give your logical interpretation, and now I question if I even have the ability to particularly think at that level or in that way. I ask myself, do I even know how to think for myself, think independantly.

Have I ever been even given the freedom to have my own opinion? And if not, how am I suppose to have an opinion on things, all in a sudden?

So this has been particularly a big leap for me, students are ready, professor are ready all to listen to you, they have time for you. But then, having an opinion, and thinking about it, without even training yourself to even think about. So an independent opinion, or critical opinion its like a very huge task for me. For me, I have been struggling with developing myself to have an opinion about everything, so over there: you read and you read, and you accept.

Interviewer

So, where do you get the module material from in India, is it the teacher that gives it to you?

Participant 1

Yes, it's the teacher that gives us a reference that you are suppose to read. Here, you are suppose to read journals, industrial reports, update yourself. I don't know, in my country I don't even have the post graduation level, how far I mean, if the students do not read journals, or have case studies and so on.

Interviewer

So, do they give you a list of books?

Participant 1

Yes, they gave us a list of books, you had to go to library and find yourself. Yes, you have to go to the library, and do some reference, which is not very much.

Ok, but the book that you studied from, is that the text that your exams were based on, because you said there were written exams?

Yes, written exams. You have to reference on the topic and you have to make notes and you have to write.

Interviewer

So, is that based on one book, two books, or several books?

Participant 1

Yes, they were like two to three reference books that you have to read on a topic, but like I said, you couldn't have an opinion, so the books are basically theory, they introduce you to basic foundations about the topic.

But I think the journals that I read, they all had findings, they focus on a particular place, or country and people… they have finding, I mean, they have interviews, they have research data. Every journal has something new to offer. I don't know whether my country whether the students are encouraged to read that journal. I never read a journal in my country, never been told to, it's been books, I mean I don't know..

Interviewer:

And are those books up to date, relatively new?

Participant 1

That's what I am not sure about, I suppose the latest and revised editions are there on the library, but like I said… How updated are we are with the present scenario, what is going on globally. I am not sure.

Interviewer:

So, ok, so obviously you mention vast differences coming from India and you mention that you were finding that quite challenging. Could you elaborate on this?

Participant 1

Yes, I am still anxious, as I am meeting for my first assessment, although, I have got a fair idea on how to do this. I spoke to my professor and he said "Ohh no you just come to me and after you just put it in the box at the ipoint and you are submitted". And they sent us links on watch tube, but I don't know whether the kind of report I'm about to submit is the right thing that im doing, or is it, am I going on the right track.

I ask myself many questions. Am I doing things on the right way? Will I be able to fit in? Will my work going to be as good as its suppose to be? That is all there.

Interviewer:

So is it causing you a lot of anxiety?

Participant 1

Yes, obviously if i come for my post graduation, I came with the intention of doing it well. There is a lot of difference, a lot of support, but I hope I will be able to catch up, or adapt quickly? So there are a lots of questions right now.

Interviewer:

Okay, that´s good, could I just ask you another question. What was your reason to come here, why did you choose to come here and do a masters in the U.K. but also: is this what you expected?

Participant 1

I think… actually I had kind of expected all of this because the UK system of education is recognised globally. British degrees are like valued, recognised, accepted. Valued by institutions, employers, governments. all acrozx ss the world. So I knew it would be challemging because this was a very short and intensive course getting a postgraduate degree in a year time. The educational system here is so strong and intense like even a bachelor degree is not only three but four years in the UK.

So obviously studying here also allows you to get the work experience also, you get to work no the industry, so coming into the UK and studying on the UK, it's been on my bucket list since a long time. I kind of expected the differences, but when I am actually here inside within this area of higher education it is fasinating, and at the same time is intimidating, because: I know where I come from, i.e. technology wise we haven't been able to do as much.

My main anxiety is: will I be able to succeed?

Like, the dissertation part, for me its like a mountain, so I am like lets start with the assessments first, you know, there is a lot to do, a lot to learn, but at the

end of the day, I hope that I will be able to do it. So I keep thinking about all this.

Interviewer:

So did you feel prepared for now that you have discovered this?

Participant 1

There is a lot of support as I said, my professors are like: stop thinking about the topic, and focus on your assessment now. I don't want primary methodology, I want secondary now… that's only for your dissertation. So when you don't know a lot of people and specially I haven't started working, I am like "will be able to", then, there is you know, like a proposal before the dissertation that has to be accepted prior to my dissertation and this has to be accepted. It's lot of obstacles…There are still miles to go, which is intimidating. I mean, there is a lot of support, you go to library, you ask a question and they are there. Nobody has told me: "please I don't have time", "go away" etc. I never got a negative, but will this be enough? That is my question.

Maybe in January I´ll be able to give you a better answer to this.

Interviewer:

There is no right or wrong answer, what you are discussing is absolutely perfect.

Participant 1

Thank you

Participant 1

Thank you so much

Interviewer:

I am just gonna stay on this, because we are gonna finish shortly: You are saying there is a lot to take care of, there's a lot to do, a lot of challenges; However, you also mention support from your tutor… are you aware of any other support services within the University?

Participant 1

Yes I am, of course, for academic purposes, for your report, assessments… there are always the tutors, your program leaders, I mean. If we did not have drop in sessions, there is the library. There is also I think a "forum for international students" as well. There is basically, I mean there are people who are like "just come and speak to us if you have a problem. I mean, if you have any problem, it doesn't matter how trivial, just come over we will help.

In India, we have the professors, well qualified, experts and so, but are they as approachable - I am not so sure.

Like, before you approach them, you have to think twice.

Interviewer:

Why are you concerned if a tutor is approachable or not?

Participant 1

Over there you are supposed to be like "Good morning" "Good afternoon" "Good evening" and here, we are like "Hello and Hi". It is much more casual, you can leave the class when you need to and you don't have to stand up when the teachers enter, or leave the room!.

Interviewer:

So, is there a sort of etiquette?

Participant 1

Yes, it's an etiquette, its like friendly here, and there is respect I think. Straight from the heart. I am very fascinated with this.

You don't have to follow a certain "code of conduct", I mean, a smile is enough! So this has been very cool for me!

Interviewer:

I am glad, and I can see the smile and your eyes lighting up.

Participant 1

Yeah, and over there, even if you are a good student, if you have not wished a good day to the professor, only just smiled, it's like, you are bad mannered.

Over there if you go to a lecture a bit later you can't dare to join in. So the first class when I missed my bus here, I didn't know, I had not much idea, went to ipoint and i said: "I am fifteen minutes late, so can I go in and attend the lecture or? She was like, yes you can.

So I went in, and my apologies was, well I think I was the only one who heard my "sorry". I mean, the professor was absolutely fine with it, so.

Interviewer:

So, what you expected before, you were talking about: maybe you didn't expect this level of technology, etc.. Did you expect this vast differences in terms of the teaching and learning environment?

Participant 1

I did not, I thought I am going to the University and like I said, they all have doctorates which for students its fascinating, I thought was going to be like… British has etiquettes, unlike the States -they were suppose to be the "cool" ones. British suppose to be for me the very proper ones, and I thought I had to do all of that, but hey, it was surprising, you could be smiley, happy and not disrespectful at the same time here.

Interviewer:

So, to sum up, how do you intend to progress on the programme?

Participant 1

To sum up I would say: all the anxieties, the fears of writing are all related to my personal self. There has been no incident or event that would have intimidated me more than my already inherent fears of writing and undertaking the assignments. However, with every passing day, and week it is getting better. Like yesterday, we had a brief tutorial on how to write a report in details, the professor said what he wanted back from the students. So, that was a clear description, but once I seen the structure of the report I was confused, and I was scared. So, yesterday I was feeling better and the the tutors are like "we are going to have drop in sessions" so don't worry about that.

All you need is to read, reference, and be in focus, so I felt better. I was like maybe I could do this, lets see! So I think the fears and anxiety are related to my personal insecurities.

It is intimadating being exposed to people which is part of different system educations, but at the same time it is comforting to find the support. You are not being looked down upon, everything is ok: your questions are ok, your fears are ok, anxiety is alright.

And all of a sudden I get an email from you about your research on Indian students, about their feelings and anxiety where they can openly talk about. So I mean when you talk about things, when you have the possibility to speak that also make a big difference to reduce the anxities. You also made me see there are many other people feeling the same, I am not the only one. I think it has definitely helped me to recover a little and to progress on the programme. Thank you so much.

Interviewer:
Thanks very much for participating in the interviews, and thanks very much for being extremely honest. **End of Interview.**

PARTICIPANT 1 (INTERVIEW 2)

Interviewer:

Hello ???, how are you, you´re looking a lot more relaxed since the last time we met?

Participant 1

I am actually enjoying this semester, and thinking I just got a few months left and actually loving it: September to December was depressing, unfamiliar, felt lonely, felt like if I did a big mistake, I thought I'd take it up a very big leave and I think it was I think I would´ve regretted.

I don't know what changed, somehow, miraculously things changed. I'm like I look forward to the second trimester because I mean its very short, but because we just got one more taught trimester. So, this trimester I'm not going to be doing regular classes, but in trimester three I will be sitting at home and you know writing - writing – writing my dissertation. I'm just like sad, because January is gone, February's here, and in no time there's going to be April.

I´ve made loads of friends, and I got to know lot of my professors, and I mean thank you so much for your support - you're going to be obviously a very important part of my Napier´s memories.

So, thank you so very much I hope whenever you come to Calcutta, I can actually just introduce you to my people and tell them about you because - I mean that you played a major role in my Napier´s journey, thank you so much.

Interviewer:

But listen, I'm really glad that you saying things that are so positive, particularly you know, reflecting back to September, you felt quite lost and quite anxious

Participant 1

Lots of contrast, yeah I can tell you!

And I am honest, because when I came in September I actually didn't have anyone from India or any friends. At this time, there have been a few of my classmates have just joined the January starts and fortunately they´re all from India. There are three girls and I have started bonding with them, I mean, right from day one. However, before the joined I used to see students who would all sit together; they eat together; they go out together; but for me it was like I still did not know anybody, and was very sad. Gradually, so I met a friend who is Scottish, I have two friends who are Germans, have a very good friend who was from Hong Kong, I mean of course I got to know my classmates better and I actually made friends; and we can call each other "friends" as we´re chatting every day, discussing things.

I did not expect that because you are here barely for ten to eleven months, and you are like attending classes, everybody has different modules, I mean

there's so many different. So, I have one friend from one module, the other friend from the other module, I mean we just meet once a week.

I am actually enjoying it!

For my first assessment, which was devastating, so I could not understand the requirements, and instead of giving specific answers, I gave a very generic report, and I got forty nine which is F1. For the second assessment, for which I obviously I went to the the professor, who was very helpful and kind and supportive. He actually pointed out to the areas I need to improve. For the final assignment for trimester one, I got eighty-five! Wow.

Interviewer:

So what do you think changed back from that first assignment to the second one?

Participant 1

The technique, the method, the academic - I am still working on my academic style of writing, and it is because of me, as I came back to studying after thirteen years, graduated in 2001, and I stopped writing.
But I do realise now, what I'm doing and what I'm expected. So it's like my answers tended to be descriptive, and here you have to have a critic, an element, so you have to be, and it all makes sense.

Interviewer:

Do you feel that you can note now the process of being critical? Do you feel that you've grasped that?

Participant 1

Don't know, at least I know where I am going, it's not like, "what am I doing here?" I am not in that kind of phase anymore, I'm like, I try to get it right, I try to make the assignment as correct as possible. I try to argue, because at the end of the day then I don't fail. To pass my assignment is fine for me, and I realise that there's a difference between all these people in the class. I don't think I'll be able to come to such a level, but I think I got it now. I basically know what the requirement is, and previously I didn't know. I thought after my first trimester I would like to quit, because I will be failing in all my modules.

I thought that I will not be able to complete. I don't know what I'm expected to write. I'm weak and I will not be able to write. Now I realise that yes there is a technique that is a process that also involves lots of hard work and building experience. For that I mean it doesn't come in a day, or maybe not in three months also, so but then I do realise that: it's been a learning experience for me.

I´ve got the pattern basically how I'm supposed to write reports. In my country it is still you know, you get the right answers and you learn them, and you just put them on the paper.

You know, this is a different kind of an approach where you´re actually reading and it's not just the academic journals, you are supposed to be like giving the up to date industry data, and I mean obviously from relevant sources, you can´t just pick any.

Interviewer:

How do you think that's affected to your learning development then?

Participant 1

Well, I´ve been able to like previously, if I read the newspaper, I read a piece of news I am like: ´okay´ and I always believed it.

But now, the thing is that you question, or you think about it, how authentic the inofrmtaion is; or I mean I question the person who was quoting; like after reading something you have at least like three questions.

Its been a huge learning experience for me and that's why I'm actually enjoying it, I'm just trying, basically just trying to get the academic style of writing right, but I don't know if I have that yet.

I might be far behind at the end of the course. Also, I might not be able to do as well as the others, but sitting with my contemporaries, or my professors its an amazing-amazing-amazing learning experience. I am actually enjoying the whole process.

Interviewer:

Alright, ok. Why do you think that?

Participant 1

Because my friends have been in the industry, and like my friend from Hong Kong, he´s just done a Master from Napier from Hong Kong, so for him it's like, he completes his assessment and assignments, in like three days he writes. It is that he knows what exactly is expected, and I'm still struggling with the referencing you know, and the other colleagues have either been working in the industry or they are familiar with this kind of learning process.

I still need a lot of hard work to reach that.

Interviewer:

But you don't know that?

Participant 1

(Laugh) Yes, that´s what I think, realistically I am like, ok so I just have to go on and try hard, I just have to go on working hard and let's see how it works.

I'm actually enjoying this.

BUT, I don't want to quit anymore!

Interviewer:

Good, and you don't look like you want to quit, you´re full of energy and..

Participant 1

Yes, definitely, here in the UK you are like encourage to speak, even if whatever you say is nonsense, or is not directly related to the topic. You are still encouraged to speak and when you ger it wrong, then you are guided very well. Wheras, in India we are discouraged from speaking and we are defiantely not allowed to question any book, In fact, all of the right asnswer as said to be in the books and we are forbidden even question that.

There´s a lot of difference basically.

Interviewer:

So there is no fear?

Participant 1

No, there is no fear**.** I mean for my previous assessments I didn't even have the courage to go in for the drop in sessions, because I thought what I was writing was nonsense. What will they think of me?!? Who even gave me the admission?

But now I'm absolutely fine. I communicate and I tell them this is what I'm thinking about; am I in the right direction? …

Interviewer:

So, the drop-in sessions have been a huge source of support for you. I am pleased that you are now able to talk to your teachers.

I don't want to put words in your mouth, but if you reflect back on this past year, do you do you think there was maybe anything that could have been done that would have maybe helped your journey?

Participant 1

Yeah, like I said, as an international student I come through an agency and basically, before we fly out, before we come here, they should have sessions

that talk about like, "yes you go there, you get your matriculation number, you get your bank account, you get your things done, your …" everything I mean, your checks and everything.

But, I think what is equally important is that they don't tell you that you know there's like this "whole", this big big challenge for you: the learning process, I mean and the huge differences in the teaching and learning environments. A least you should be told to move develop a critical thinking element. I mean you should be made aware at least, like… been told about the plagiarism and referencing and writing essays and reports.

For me, thankfully I did not have problems with the plagiarism, but some of my class did.

What has been my weakness was the academic side of writing and the critical analysis. My assessments tended to be more descriptive because that's what I was expected to do in India. I guess I realise now that maybe this style of writing created a big problem for me here, but thats all I know how to do.

Maybe plagiarism it's like a common thing here, but I think should definitely the agency or whoever is sending you; or whoever is handling your international study: I think they should definitely give you some background of the academic system and provide details about the difference is the teaching environments and what is expected in the UK.

By the time I found out what was expected, and where I was lacking, It's like the first trimester is already gone!!

I mean, I am just thinking that after my first trimester, after submitting my assessments in December, actually went to the library and I got this, "critical reading and writing book for postgraduates".

And I actually read through and I was like "Oh my God!!" I was like absolutely off track, here. So, I think if they would just suggest that you try to develop a particular kind of writing, or this is how you read, this how you make projects. Basically, my professors had actually guided me, but obviously there is a lot of academic skills that are required to do a postgraduate course at this level and to gather these skills in the first few weeks is too difficut along with adapting to the technology and the classes.

I speak personally for myself who has actually lost touch with reading and writing. Maybe in India, I don't know why, maybe in India, they are moving towards that kind of study. I am late coming back to education after a gap of like a decade, and then I've been out of touch and whatever.

Participant 1

I definitely think the agencies must give an introductory session, because they know very well the business and all the universities requirements. They must be aware that students struggle with the huge difference in the teaching and learning environment, If I was to be aware of these things before I came to the UK, then of course I would have done my best to prepare myself. But then the

question is asked who is responsible for ensuring students are prepared. Is it the students, or the agents, or the universities: maybe it should be a joint effort.

Interviewer:

Even if the agents had told you about the difference, do you think it would it helped you, or would you have needed more?

Participant 1

Yeah, I mean like if they could have arranged a workshop or something, would have been the best, but even if your can´t do that, at least you can actually give a briefing! I think that this is what is expected, I mean studying in UK is so not very cheap, for us it's like a good amount of money, and definitely I would want to do my best and gain a good academic degree.

So, if I would have done these workshops before, then perhaps, maybe when I came in September I would at the academic stage that I am at now. Instead, I feel like I wasted one trimester getting used to the difference and I lost a lot of marks along the way.

Interviewer:

Can I can I just ask you a question: did you use, apart from getting support from your tutors -did you use any other support mechanisms? you mentioned: going to writing classes?

Participant 1

Yes I did the academic skills workshop.

Interviewer:

How did you found those?

Participant 1

Basically, obviously these sessions are like. just one, or one and a half hour and there are like a lot of students. Obviously you can't just start writing in a different way after attending just one session. But yes, definitely had taught me the techniques of paraphrasing, and how the quotations should be just like once in a while; even you're putting in the names you just can't fill in your entire assessment with direct quotations. These were some of the writing points that I learned, but I think I still have to do a lot of my own homework.

Obviously, it needs to develop your writing and thinking , I mean a lot of it's your own hard work and practice, but if we start to practice long before we come to the UK, then maybe we might have an easier time when starting the postgraduate program.

Interviewer:

So, if you could go back to the point before you came here: What sort of a things do you think would have supported you?

Participant 1

The students are going to be coming, I mean apart from settling down in the country and the rules and regulations, I would definitely I mean if they're coming for an academic study, or an academic degree, then I would definitely tell them to if they can take workshops before they leave India, to help them to know what reading critically reading and writing is, to learn about plagiarism, and learn how to gather and synethesise knowledge. Definitely, I would also advise to do worshops on report and essay writing, because most of us have never done this previously, so it very very difficult. But mostly, I will tell them to be absolutely prepared for the changes in the teaching and learning environment.

Interviewer:
Looking back would you have known how to do that?

Participant 1

No, I would definitely need some guidance, definitely. I think if I go back I can definitely tell my agency: "Look, please, I would like to just prepare some slides and show the students some of the examples. I mean if I could just get some information, maybe students who are like already doing the postgraduate programme then I could inform the new students what needs o be prepared. I think there must be like at least 1% of students like me who would have liked that support prior to coming to the UK.

Actually, these would've made a vast difference to my whole learning journey and my experience if they were held prior coming to UK, and I would ensure that I attend every single class.

Interviewer:
So, is there a point where you would like to start these workshops?

Participant 1

Yeah, the earlier the better, If I could have come back, I´d have started at six months before coming to the UK.

Interviewer:

You said that you used the writing workshops, was there any other support systems that you used in the university?

Participant 1

Yes, I started going for these "drop-in sessions" for my second assessment, communicating with my tutors, and that was very helpful basically, that helps you a lot.

Interviewer:

I am just trying to collate some of the things that you mention, just to get a clear picture. So, you've said that that some of these workshops particularly the writing workshops, critical analysis workshops would've made a vast difference, and in case they were held prior coming to UK, would you have attended the classes?

Participant 1:

Definitely yes, I would have appreciated that warning information in first place, only thing I knew was only, "plagiarism", nothing else. And secondly, as I was totally committed I definitely would have attended them.

Interviewer:

Well, I thinks that i should finished now, and I would like to just thank you sincerely for being part of this study. Your time and information have been absolutely invaluable, and thank you!

Participant 1:

Thank you for letting me be part of your study.

APPENDIX 7: Consent Form

                                        Pauline Anne Gordon
                                        The Business School
                                        Edinburgh Napier University
                                        Tel. 0131 4554391
                                        E-mail:p.gordon@napier.ac.uk

RE: Consent Form :   Date:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the participation information
    sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to
    withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without giving any
    reason.
3.   I agree to take part in this study.

Name of Participant: Date

Signature

....

Name of Researcher: Date

Signature

....

Requirements: 2 COPIES: from both the researcher and the participants.
APPENDIX 8: Interview Cover Letter

Pauline Anne Gordon
The Business School
Edinburgh Napier University
Tel. 0131 4554391
E-mail; p.gordon@napier.ac.uk

RE: INTERVIEW COVER LETTER   Date:

To whom it may concern,

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in my interviews which are part of the requirements for my Doctor of Business Administration study. The aim of the study is to listen to the experiences of international students, in order to record their journey from their home educational institutions, to higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The information gathered from the interview will be treated in confidence and will only be used for academic purposes and to inform policy and recommendations intended to enhance the study. Any direct quotations included in any future publications will ensure that the participant is not identifiable, Thank you very much for your time in participating in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

Pauline Anne Gordon