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Strategic Planning Implications in Higher Education

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Abstract

Strategic planning is a systematic process for designing the future of higher education institutions. The planning process usually focuses on enhancing the quality of teaching, increasing research and scholarly outputs, and fostering community partnerships in academe. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of leaders and faculty members on strategic planning implications at a selected business school. As a case study, the research was conducted at the College of Business Administration in King Saud University (KSU-CBA), Saudi Arabia.

The population selected for this study included 449 faculty members. The sample for the research included only 348 faculty members. There were 17 personal interviews conducted and a survey was administered with a sample size of 248 faculty members. Subsequently, the responses were statistically analyzed.

The findings that were derived from the analysis of the data collected in this study include: KSU-CBA leaders and faculty members did not significantly differ in their perceptions of the historical evolution of strategic planning process in higher education. KSU-CBA leaders and faculty members perceived that strategic planning helps in designing the future of their school and respondents agreed on the potential use of strategic planning in higher education, and both leaders and faculty members perceived that the current strategic planning of KSU-CBA was as successful as possible; however, the full implementation of the plan would benefit the institution in sustaining its identity, image, and reputation.

Keywords: Strategic planning implications; Academe; Institutional image; Identity; Reputation

Introduction

Strategic planning is a systematic process for designing the future of higher education institutions. The strategic plan is generally expected to involve a coherent, consistent, and careful approach to ensure the long-term aspirations of the organization [1-4]. Bryson [5] defined strategic planning as a "disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it". Furthermore, strategic planning is to align continuously the organization with its ever-changing environment [4,6]. Such planning usually focuses on enhancing the quality of teaching, increasing research opportunities, and fostering community partnerships in higher education institutions [7].

Strategic planning has evolved for more than 60 years in the for-profit business sector. Formalized strategic planning was developed during the 1950s [8], and the concept process was expanded during the 1960s to most large corporations in the United States [9]. The decade of the 1960s was considered a boom period for strategic planning in the for-profit sector [10], but it is relatively a new concept for the non-profit sectors, and more specifically, to the institutions of higher learning [11,12]. The conception of strategic planning in higher education accentuated its use as a rational tool for systematic management. It has been widely accepted-as a management practice-in academia lately [5,13,14].

Strategic planning has significant implications toward shaping the institutional culture in higher education institutions. Authors [5,15-18] have mentioned that strategic planning has many implications toward strengthening the institutional identity, image, and reputation of organizations including institutions of higher learning. Hence, irrefutably effective strategic planning is essential for seeking broad strategies in order to establish strategic goals and objectives that can set strategic indicators to advance the institutional identity, image, and reputation of higher education institutions.

Literature Review

Strategic planning is important for the success of higher education institutions since it allows an institution to analyze the present condition and forecast the future. Similar to other businesses, higher education institutions also should use a comprehensive strategic planning framework in order to grow and prosper in a competitive environment [19]. Strategic planning is essential for effective resource allocation at any organization including higher education institutions. Some governments require the submission of a formal strategic plan for funding approval process [20]. It is very true in the case of universities functioning in many Asian countries. A strategic plan helps to develop and sustain its position and/or standing in the competitive environment. However, each university mission, which is a major component in a strategic plan, has different beneficiaries and it is impossible to reach unanimous consensus since individual beneficiaries read the mission of a university from different perspectives [21].

Although strategic planning has evolved for more than 60 years in the corporate world, it is a relatively new concept for the non-profit sectors, and more specifically, to institutions of higher learning [11,12]. In the beginning of 21st century, strategic planning has been embedded as a decision-making tool in higher education institutions around the globe [19]. Most of the higher education institutions in the United States have stated (on their web pages which are freely available online) that they are involved in strategic planning; however, they have paid

little attention to the implications of their planning toward sustaining their identity, image, and reputation [9,11,22].

Modern higher education trends in the US have indicated that institutions of higher learning have prioritized the strategic planning processes; however, the assessment of such processes for their implications toward sustaining the institutional identity, image, and reputation has been lacking. Higher education institutions often struggle with planning for future needs of resources; survival, growth, and profitability; and sometimes, for retrenchment. As student populations expand and as faculty members adopt new and effective methods of teaching and learning, colleges and universities struggle to support these needs [23]. Therefore, a systematic planning-in the form of a strategic plan-would be the solution for such struggle in higher education.

Strategic planning allows an organization to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future. Similarly, active participation in a strategic planning process benefits institutions of higher learning in a variety of ways. Strategic planning encourages management to think ahead systematically, forces an organization to sharpen its objectives and policies, leads to better coordination of organizational efforts, provides clear performance standards for control, and helps organizations to understand how to compete more effectively for the future [24,25]. According to Lerner [26] the benefits of strategic planning in higher education may include the following:

1. Creates a framework for determining the direction a university should take to achieve its desired future;

2. Provides a framework for achieving competitive advantage;

3. Allows all university constituencies to participate and work together towards accomplishing goals;

4. Raises the vision of all key participants, encouraging them to reflect creatively on the strategic direction of the university;

5. Allows the dialogue between the participants improving understanding of the organization's vision, and fostering a sense of ownership of the strategic plan, and belonging to the organization;

6. Aims to align the university with its environment;

7. Allows the university to set priorities.

Birnbaum [27] considered fads in higher education management, including strategic planning. He identified how slavish adherence to any management technique has pitfalls. He suggested that there are great organizational gains from such fads as strategic planning, but institutional administrators need to decide consciously on how to maximize these. If properly implemented, strategic planning can have a powerful impact on advancing and transforming colleges and universities [28] stated if an effective strategic planning process is in place in an institution, the following should be evidenced:

1. A clearly defined and articulated institutional direction,

2. Institutional ability to choose priorities based on self-evaluation and understanding,

3. Knowledge and ownership of the institutional direction by all major institutional constituencies, and

4. Clearly identified placement of the institution within the local and church environments (including the educational environment).

Luxton [29] further stated that an effective strategic planning could bring-in additional benefits to higher education institutions such as: institutional openness to growth and change; institutional ability to respond thoughtfully, but quickly, to new challenges, unified plans and actions, with clear lines of accountability; strong financial and resourcing plans to back-up identified strategic directions; institutional leader's constant focus on the plan with all constituent groups; and an efficient but effective assessment and reporting strategy.

Previous research on the strategic planning implications on higher education institutions whether public or private, for-profit or non-profit are complex entities. Strategic planning, particularly at higher education institutions, is either administratively centered or crafted by the institutions' specific departments or committees with the participation of a few faculty members, staff, and students [28, 30-36]. The studies conducted by the above authors neither showed a strategic planning process that was exclusively designed by faculty members nor faculty perceptions of the process. Other researchers reported inconsistencies in faculty participation in shared governance and in the strategic planning process at their institutions [37].

One of the major elements about which the literature had less information was whether the faculty members at higher education institutions understood the strategic planning process at their institutions or not. Additionally, faculty may not have the knowledge of process to contribute to strategic planning, and particularly to know implications and institutional effectiveness and developmental activities. Moreover, researchers often have described and analyzed the image, identity and reputation as systems that are interdependent on several core elements i.e., policies, people (stakeholders), physical and financial resources, technology, activities, and offerings [38-43]. These core elements contribute to each other for enhancing and sustaining the institutional identity, image, and reputation as competitive advantages in higher education sector.

The strategic planning process has been practiced in United States institutions of higher learning extensively, at least for the past two decades. However, little has been done to assess the implications of strategic planning for sustaining institutional identity, image, and reputation of business schools in the United States. Alessandri et al., [44] argued that academic literature on corporate identity is available, but similar literature on (higher education) institutional identity has been more difficult to find. There have been few case studies which have focused on university visual identity changes [45,46] and a limited number of academic articles focusing on university image [47,48].

Despite the availability of literature on strategic planning in higher education for managing the reputation of a business school, there is little scholarship about how strategic planning essentially impacts the comprehensiveness of institutional identity, image, and reputation of a business school [31,49,50]. Alessandri [22] claimed that the identity of an organization is its "strategically planned and purposeful presentation of itself in order to gain a positive corporate image in the minds of the public, which is established in order to gain a favorable corporate reputation over time". Yet, diminutive research has focused on the strategic planning implications at business schools. To address that gap, this study explored the perceptions of business school leaders and faculty on the strategic planning implications at the College of Business Administration in King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of

business school leaders and faculty members on strategic planning implications at a selected business school. Additionally, the study also explored the differences in perceptions between male and female faculty members as well as between business school leaders and faculty members. The study included the business school leaders, who were the administrators, i.e., dean, associate dean, program director, and director of admissions; and all the faculty members of the College of Business Administration (CBA). The institution in which the data were collected was King Saud University's College of Business Administration (KSU-CBA), in Saudi Arabia. KSU is a premier public institution in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the research study analyzed the overall perceptions of the business school leaders and faculty members on strategic planning implications. The following six research questions guided the study:

1. How did the strategic planning process evolve in the selected business school?

2. Why did the selected business school embark in a strategic planning process?

3. How was the strategic plan formulated, implemented, and integrated within the selected business school?

4. How did the business school leaders and faculty members perceive the implications of strategic planning at a selected business school?

5. What were the differences in the perceptions between male and female faculty members, and between business school leaders and faculty members regarding the strategic planning implications toward sustaining the institutional image, identity, and reputation at a selected business school?

6. How did participant leaders in the strategic planning process believe that the process could be improved to make the planning more successful?

The primary purposes of a research design are to establish procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies. The research design represents different models for doing research, and these models have distinct names and procedures associated with them. Rigorous research designs are important because they guide the methods decisions that researchers must make during their studies and set the logic by which they make interpretations at the end of studies [51]. Creswell [52] also indicated, "A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem". The four major types of mixed methods designs are the triangulation design, the embedded design, the explanatory design, and the exploratory design.

The study used a mixed methods research design comprising quantitative data supplemented with qualitative elements to understand the perceptions of business school leaders and faculty members on the implications of strategic planning for sustaining institutional identity, image, and reputation of a business school. According to Creswell [53], "A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem". In recent years, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in studying the same phenomenon has received significant attention among the scholars and researchers [54].

The use of mixed methods by blending quantitative and qualitative

analytical techniques, and data for analyzing the perceptions of leaders and faculty on strategic planning implications can help to ensure a successful outcome [55]. Since a case study is a general approach to understanding phenomena that can involve many specific methodologies such as interviews and direct observation [56], as part of the mixed methods research design, a case study research method has been used in this study to evaluate the perceptions of business school leaders and faculty members in a selected business school. The College of Business Administration in King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, was selected to conduct case study research. According to Yin [56] a case study design should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Since five out of the six research questions for this study have been designed to seek answers for "how" and "why," this study was qualified to use a case study method.

Triangulation in a case study design ensures that data collected from many different sources of evidence are used to corroborate the same fact or phenomenon [56] and thereby establish reliability and increase the credibility of research findings [57]. Since triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings, triangulation was established in this study. The triangulation included the data collected from the survey administered with the faculty members at KSU-CBA, as the first element of triangulation; the qualitative data collected through personal interviews conducted with leaders at KSU-CBA, as the second element of triangulation; and the information derived out of examining the strategic plan and its related documents at KSU-CBA, as the third element of triangulation, which provided additional corroborating information about the strategic planning process at the KSU-CBA.

The population selected for this study included 449 faculty members listed on the payroll of the KSU-CBA. Although the researcher was interested in studying the whole population, the sample for the research included only 348 faculty members (including the 21 leaders) due to the non-availability of 101 faculty members at the college to participate in the study.

The study used three approaches for the purpose of data collection: A set of interview questions for gathering perceptions from leaders and faculty members; a survey questionnaire; and historical documents of KSU-CBA including the strategic plans for the past 15 years, minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held as part of the 2011-2016 strategic planning cycle, and the decision letters of the KSU-CBA's Council for the past 15 years.

A triangulation method of data collection, focusing on three phases, was used to address research questions. Phase one involved interviews to gather qualitative perceptions. In phase two, the quantitative study survey was used to gather responses to questions. As was appropriate to a research question, phase three focused on examination of historical documents to further identify aspects of the process of using strategic planning. These documents included the strategic plans of KSU-CBA for the past 15 years, minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held as part of the 2011-2016 strategic planning cycles, and the decision letters of the KSU-CBA Council for the past 15 years.

Following the tradition recommended for case study analysis by Creswell [53], Hatch [58], Merriam [57], and Yin [56], the researcher

used an open coding process to analyze the data from the transcribed interviews and to group them into patterns [59]. There were recurring topics and subtopics which contributed to emerging themes and subthemes from these patterns. The axial coding helped to establish the relationships between topics and subtopics, whereas the selective coding assisted the researcher in focusing on the main ideas that emerged in the topics and subtopics [60].

The study used software called Dedoose to analyze the interview responses. In search of patterns of conceptual themes in the interview narratives, the Dedoose narrative analysis process was used. This allows a review of the frequency with which topics recur in narrative responses. Knowing the frequency of topics may aid the researcher in suggesting the importance respondents place on topics or issues and in deriving themes to summarize qualitative judgments.

Findings

Historical evolution of strategic planning process at KSU-CBA

Research question one examined the perceptions of KSU-CBA leaders and faculty members on the extent to which they perceived the historical evolution of strategic planning process. What observations and experiences did respondents have with the strategic planning phenomenon? And (later after interviews and in survey questions), how much did respondents perceive that strategic planning was ongoing, new, significant, or of value? The leaders were interviewed and faculty members were surveyed to examine their perceptions. The analyses included a triangulation approach namely analysis of the interview responses, analysis of the survey, and analysis of strategic planning related documents.

Analysis of the interview responses: The business school leaders responded to interview questions one (historical evolution of strategic planning), two (apparent motivations for initiating strategic planning), and three (perceived involvement in strategic plan development) to offer their perceptions pertaining to these research questions. The responses were transcribed, coded, reviewed, and reported as shown in Table 1.

The themes suggested relate to topic frequency reported in Table 2. It may be noted that the most frequently occurring topic (f=3) was related to the relative newness of strategic planning at the KSU-CBA.

As shown in Table 2, 12 out of 17 leaders (70.6%) stated that the strategic planning process started at KSU-CBA less than 15 years ago. Additionally, 14 out of 17 leaders (82.4%) articulated that vision and mission statements were developed and 13 out of 17 leaders (76.5%) mentioned that a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted during the strategic planning process. It is also noteworthy to mention that some of the leaders of KSU-CBA have never used these subtopics in their responses as it can be observed from the frequencies.

Analysis of the survey responses: The first three survey items of the survey instrument were designed to provide quantitative data pertaining to research question one. An analysis of the responses to first three survey items yielded the descriptive statistics as shown in Table 3. The survey results revealed that the faculty members perceptions (n=248, M=4.21, SD=0.79279) regarding the historical evolution of strategic planning at KSU-CBA is that it is a relatively new concept in higher education, the planning process has changed the dimension of higher education, and the strategic planning processes that are designed for military or corporate business organizations can be used in academic institutions.

Analysis of KSU-CBA strategic planning documents: The analysis of the historical documents at KSU-CBA pertaining to its strategic planning activities revealed that it is relatively new. And, respondents believed that its evolution had begun in the early years of the new millennium.

Need and benefits of strategic planning for KSU-CBA

Research question two examined the perceptions of KSU-CBA leaders and faculty members to identify the need to embark in a strategic planning process and its benefits to the college. The leaders were interviewed and faculty members were surveyed to examine their perceptions. The analyses included a triangulation approach analysis of the interview responses, analysis of the survey, and review of strategic planning documents.

Pattern	Emerging themes	Subthemes
Historical evolution	1. Strategic planning, while recent at KSU-CBA, is valued and important.	a) SP is relatively new at KSU-CBA. b) It started less than 15 years ago. c) It is a centralized process at the University.
	2. Developmental process is best when democratic for optimum involvement of stakeholders.	a) Stakeholders develop vision and mission. b) Getting stakeholder involvement is important. c) SWOT analysis contributes to SP.

Table 1: Themes on historical evolution of strategic planning (SP) at KSU-CBA.

Subtopics		n	%	f
1a	Relatively new at KSU-CBA	08	47.1	3
2a	Development of vision and mission	14	82.4	2
2b	Involvement of stakeholders	11	64.7	2
1b	Started less than 15 years ago	12	70.6	1
1c	Centralized process at the University	09	52.9	1
2c	SWOT analysis conducted	13	76.5	1

n: Number of Leaders; f: Frequency of Occurrence.

Table 2: Topics in historical evolution of strategic planning at KSU-CBA.

Variable	n	M	SD
SP has changed the current dimension of higher education	248	4.36	0.716
SP is relatively a new concept to higher education	248	4.18	0.746
SP designed for military/business can be used in higher education	248	4.10	0.915

Table 3: Perceptions on historical perspectives of strategic planning (SP).

Analysis of the interview responses: The business school leaders responded to interview questions two through five to offer their perceptions pertaining to this research question. The responses were transcribed, coded, reviewed, and reported as shown in Table 4. It also reported the themes suggested by the interview narratives.

The themes suggested relate to topic frequency reported in Table 5. It may be noted that the most frequently occurring topic (f=12) was related to effective teaching strategies at the KSU-CBA.

As reported, 14 leaders out of 17 leaders (82.4%) stated that the strategic planning process is a regular activity at KSU-CBA. There were 15 out of 17 leaders (88.2%) mentioned that vision and mission statements were developed and 14 out of 17 leaders (82.4%) mentioned that strategic planning is required by the central administration of King Saud University. Additionally, 13 out of 17 leaders (76.5%) indicated that strategic planning has helped KSU-CBA to improve the quality of faculty, students, and academic programs. It is also noteworthy to mention that some of the leaders of KSU-CBA have never used these subtopics in their responses as can be observed from the statistics.

Analysis of the survey responses: The survey items four through 10 were designed to provide statistical data pertaining to research question two of the study. An analysis of the responses for survey items four through 10 yielded the descriptive statistics as shown in Table

6. The survey results revealed the need for KSU-CBA to embark on strategic planning as the faculty members perceived (n=248, M=4.23, SD=0.82082) that strategic planning is a regular activity and it is considered important at KSU-CBA. Furthermore, the survey responses confirmed that the strategic planning involves many stakeholders and is applicable to several administrative functions and areas at KSU-CBA. All the participants in the survey have agreed that the strategic planning helps in designing the future of their school and agreed upon the potential use of strategic planning in higher education sector. The faculty members at KSU-CBA agreed that strategic planning provided many benefits.

Analysis of KSU-CBA strategic planning documents: The researcher conducted a review of KSU-CBA strategic planning related documents such as: The strategic plans of KSU-CBA for the past 15 years, minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held as part of the current strategic planning cycle (strategic Plan 2011-2016), and the decision letters of the KSU-CBA Council for the past 15 years. The review of those documents revealed that the strategic planning process at KSU-CBA is an important regularly scheduled activity. Furthermore, the documentary evidences confirmed that the strategic planning involves many stakeholders and is applicable to several administrative functions and areas at KSU-CBA.

Pattern	Emerging themes	Subthemes
Need for SP	1. Regular and continuous. SP is good for KSU-CBA	a) SP needs to be done on a regular schedule b) SP is considered as an important activity c) SP is required by the Central Administration
Benefits of SP	2. SP helps to design the future of programs	a) SP increases quality of faculty, students, and programs b) enhanced academic climate c) effective teaching strategies d) improved student engagement e) quality of research output
	3. SP helps to advance the CBA communication	a) SP enhanced marketing and communication b) SP increased administrative leadership c) SP helps in resource allocation

Table 4: Themes on need and benefits of strategic planning (SP) at KSU-CBA.

Subtopics		n	%	f
2c	Effective teaching strategies	12	70.5	12
1c	Required by the Central Administration	15	88.2	11
2a	Quality of faculty, students, and programs	13	76.5	10
3c	Better allocation of resources	11	64.7	10
2b	Enhanced academic climate	09	52.9	09
2e	Quality of research output	07	41.2	08
1b	Considered as an important activity	12	70.5	07
2d	Improved student engagement	10	58.8	07
3a	Enhanced marketing and communication	09	52.9	07
1a	Carried out on a regular schedule	14	82.4	06
3b	Effective administrative leadership	10	58.8	06

n: Number of Leaders; f: Frequency of Occurrence.

Table 5: Topics on need and benefits of strategic planning at KSU-CBA.

Variable	n	M	SD
SP is considered as an important process at KSU-CBA	248	4.39	0.728
SP is a regular activity at KSU-CBA	248	4.32	0.610
SP provides many benefits to KSU-CBA	248	4.28	0.746
SP has strong potential use in higher education	248	4.27	0.733
SP helps designing the future of KSU-CBA	248	4.20	0.803
SP is applicable to several functional areas at KSU-CBA	248	4.09	1.143
SP process involves many stakeholders at KSU-CBA	248	4.07	0.978

Table 6: Perceptions on need and benefits of strategic planning (SP).

Formulation, implementation, and integration of strategic plan at KSU-CBA

Research question three examined the perceptions of leaders and faculty members about the role and development of the strategic plan in view of its formulation, implementation, and integration at KSU-CBA. The leaders were interviewed and faculty members were surveyed to examine their perceptions. The analyses included a triangulation approach namely: Analysis of the interview responses, analysis of the survey, and review of strategic planning-related documents.

Analysis of the interview responses: The business school leaders responded to interview questions six through ten to offer their perceptions pertaining to this research question. The responses were transcribed, coded, reviewed, and reported as shown in Table 7.

The themes suggested relate to topic frequency reported in Table 8. It may be noted that the most frequently occurring topics (f=9) were related to democratic process and impact of strategic planning on goals at the KSU-CBA.

As reported, 14 out of 17 leaders (82.4%) perceived that the in-house development of a strategic plan at KSU-CBA is much better than outsourcing it to a consultancy firm. However, 7 out of the 17 leaders (41.2%) believed that the strategic planning could be outsourced. There were 16 out of 17 leaders (94.1%) perceived that strategic planning is a democratic process at KSU-CBA. There were only 10 out of 17 leaders (58.8%) perceived that the strategic plan has been implemented

fully. In other words, 41.2% of the leaders believed that the strategic plan has not been implemented to entirety. At the same time, all the leaders (100%) believed that the strategic planning objectives have been integrated in all the departments of KSU-CBA. It is also noteworthy to mention that some of the leaders of KSU-CBA have never used these subtopics in their responses as can be observed from the statistics.

Analysis of the survey responses: The survey items 11 through 20 addressed the research question three of the study. An analysis of the responses for survey items 11 through 20 yielded the descriptive statistics as shown in Table 9. Regarding KSU-CBA faculty members' perceptions about the formulation, implementation, and integration of the strategic plan within the school at KSU-CBA, the analysis of the survey results revealed that KSU-CBA faculty members perceived (n=248, M=3.97, SD=0.8968) that the strategic planning should not be outsourced to a consultancy firm. Although the faculty members have perceived positively (M=4.10 or higher) for seven out of ten survey items, there were three survey items that scored less than M=4.10. Those items were namely strategic planning can be outsourced to a consultancy (M=2.58 and SD=1.38900), strategic planning process at KSU-CBA starts with an environmental scanning (M=4.05, SD=0.85229), and faculty members participate freely with a sense of belonging in SP at KSU-CBA (M=4.02, SD=0.85805).

Although the survey item regarding outsourcing the strategic planning process to an outside consultancy firm yielded a lower perception level (M=2.58), the interview responses confirmed the

Pattern	Emerging themes	Subthemes
Existence of SP	1) Formulation of SP needs to be fully participatory and in-house	a) In-house development of the plan is preferred b) Outsourcing the planning activity is not desired c) A democratic process at KSU-CBA is essential and time-consuming but everyone is not included
Organizational Structure	2) Implementation of SP takes time and much input	a) SP affects the structure of KSU-CBA b) SP impacts goals and objectives of KSU-CBA c) SP is difficult to be fully implemented
	3) Integration of SP must permeate all Departments	a) Objectives are integrated in all departments b) Stakeholders need to be further motivated to participate fully

Table 7: Themes on role and development of strategic plan (SP) at KSU-CBA.

Subtopics		n	%	f
1c	A democratic process at KSU-CBA	16	94.2	9
2b	Impact on goals and objectives of KSU-CBA	10	58.8	9
1a	In-house development of the plan	14	82.4	8
1b	Outsourcing the planning activity	07	41.2	5
2c	Level of implementation of SP at KSU-CBA	13	76.5	4
3b	Stakeholders need to be further motivated	07	41.2	4
2a	Affects the structure of KSU-CBA	11	64.7	3
3a	Objectives are integrated in all departments	17	100.0	3

Table 8: Topics on role and development of strategic planning at KSU-CBA.

Variable	n	M	SD
SP has been implemented at KSU-CBA	248	4.21	0.833
SP results are communicated to everyone at KSU-CBA	248	4.19	0.813
SP objectives are integrated in all the departments at KSU-CBA	248	4.18	0.844
All the stakeholders are involved in the planning at KSU-CBA	248	4.16	0.879
SP is the primary responsibility of the leaders at KSU-CBA	248	4.15	0.816
SP follows a specific model at KSU-CBA	248	4.13	0.804
SP starts with an environmental scanning at KSU-CBA	248	4.05	0.852
Faculty participates freely with a sense of belonging in SP	248	4.02	0.858
SP is a democratic process involving faculty at KSU-CBA	248	3.98	0.876
SP can be outsourced at KSU-CBA	248	2.58	1.389

Table 9: Perceptions on the role and development of a strategic plan (SP) at KSU-CBA.

preference of developing a plan in-house at KSU-CBA. With regard to the lower perception level of respondents about conducting an environmental scanning (M=4.05) and the freedom for the faculty members to participate in the planning process with a sense of belonging (M=4.02), the results provide an indication that KSU-CBA should involve them in planning or improve such aspects in the future. Table 9 provides descriptive statistics pertaining to all 10 survey items analyzed for research question three of the study.

Analysis of KSU-CBA strategic planning document: The researcher conducted a review of KSU-CBA strategic planning related documents. The review of those documents revealed that the strategic planning process at KSU-CBA is an important regularly scheduled activity. Furthermore, the documentary evidences confirmed that the strategic planning involves many stakeholders and is applicable to several administrative functions and areas at KSU-CBA.

Strategic planning implications at KSU-CBA

Research question four examined the perceptions of leaders and faculty members regarding the strategic planning implications at KSU-CBA. The leaders were interviewed and faculty members were surveyed to examine their perceptions. The analyses included a triangulation approach namely analysis of the interview responses, analysis of the survey, and review of strategic planning related documents.

Analysis of the interview responses: The business school leaders responded to interview questions 11 through 14 to offer their

perceptions pertaining to this research question. The responses were transcribed, coded, reviewed, and reported as shown in Table 10.

The themes suggested relate to topic frequency reported in Table 11. It may be noted that the most frequently occurring topics (f=4) were related to adapt to changing environments and student academic performance at the KSU-CBA.

As reported, 16 out of 17 leaders (94.1%) perceived that strategic planning impacts the students' academic performance at KSU-CBA. While 14 out of 17 leaders (82.4%) thought that strategic planning helps to recruit qualified faculty, 15 out of 17 leaders (88.2%) believed also that strategic planning impacts positively on the research output of the faculty at KSU-CBA. There were only 7 out of 17 leaders (41.2%) believed that strategic planning helps to adapt to changing environments and only 5 out of 17 leaders (29.4%) believed that it enhances the leadership skills of the leaders at KSU-CBA.

Analysis of the survey responses: The survey items 21 through 32 addressed the research question four of the study. An analysis of the responses for survey items 21 through 32 yielded the descriptive statistics as shown in Table 12. Regarding KSU-CBA faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications, the analysis of the survey results revealed that faculty members perceived (n=248, M=4.18, SD=0.78455) that strategic planning has positive impacts at KSU-CBA.

Although the faculty members have perceived positively (M=4.10 or

Pattern	Emerging themes	Subthemes
Future Growth	1. SP provides a clear road map for the unit	a) SP helps to forecast the future of the school b) SP helps the unit to adapt to changing environment
Governance	2) Implementation of SP takes time and much input	a) SP affects the changing leadership needs b) Leaders need to adapt to changing goals
Stakeholders	3. Students who know changing missions are	a) SP impacts student academic performance b) SP impacts the employability of graduates more employable

Table 10: Themes on strategic planning (SP) implications at KSU-CBA.

Topics		n	%	f
1b)	Helps to adapt to changing environments	07	41.2	4
3a)	Impacts student academic performance	16	94.2	4
1a)	Helps to forecast the future of the school	09	52.9	3
2b)	Enhances the leadership skills at KSU-CBA	05	29.4	3
3b)	Impacts the employability of graduates	12	70.6	3
4b)	Impacts the research output of faculty	15	88.2	3
2a)	Affects the structure of KSU-CBA	10	58.8	2
4a)	Helps to recruit qualified faculty	14	82.4	2

Table 11: Topics on need and benefits of strategic planning at KSU-CBA.

Variable	n	M	SD
SP affects school capability to adapt to changing environment	248	4.35	0.703
SP forecasts quality of faculty	248	4.28	0.769
SP affects prevailing academic climate	248	4.25	0.744
SP impacts research output of faculty	248	4.22	0.749
SP forecasts growth	248	4.21	0.704
SP impacts recruitment of quality students	248	4.21	0.827
SP requires strong administrative leadership	248	4.21	0.755
SP affects students' employability	248	4.19	0.770
SP impacts the successful academic performance of a cohort	248	4.19	0.786
SP impacts marketing communication	248	4.16	0.771
SP requires resourcefulness of the institution	248	4.13	0.862
SP affects institutional governance	248	3.80	0.968

Table 12: Perceptions regarding strategic planning (SP) implications at KSU-CBA.

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higher) for 11 out of 12 survey items, there was a survey item that scored less than M=4.10. The item was strategic planning affects institutional governance (M=3.80, SD=0.96899). However, the perceptions of faculty members for this item stay parallel to the perceptions of leaders at KSU-CBA. Table 12 provides descriptive statistics pertaining to all 10 survey items analyzed for research question three of the study.

Analysis of KSU-CBA strategic planning documents. The researcher conducted a review of KSU-CBA strategic planning related documents. The review of those documents revealed that the strategic planning process at KSU-CBA is an important regularly scheduled activity. Furthermore, the documentary evidences confirmed that the strategic planning impacts several aspects of academic operations at KSU-CBA.

Differences in perceptions between male and female faculty members, and between leaders and faculty members at KSU-CBA

Research question five examined potential differences of the perceptions regarding strategic planning implications on sustaining the institutional image, identity, and reputation at KSU-CBA. Survey items 33 through 35 addressed research question five of the study. As there were three portions in research question six of the study, each survey item (i.e., 33, 34, and 35) addressed these portions individually. To determine if there were significant differences in perceptions between male and female faculty member and between leaders and faculty members, t tests for independent samples were conducted.

Differences in perceptions between male and female faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image: Survey item 33 addressed this portion of research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the KSU-CBA male and female faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image are presented in Table 13. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were no significant differences in perceptions between male (n=137, M=4.24, SD=0.87888, t=-1.719, p=0.087) and female faculty members (n=111, M=4.42, SD=0.76928, t=- 1.743, p=0.083).

Differences in perceptions between male and female faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity: The survey item 34 addressed this portion of research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the male and female faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity are presented in Table 14. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were no significant differences in perceptions between male (n=137, M=4.18, SD=0.83927, t=- 1.276, p=0.203) and female faculty members (n=111, M=4.31, SD=0.76030, t=-1.289, p=0.199).

Differences in perceptions between male and female faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining school's reputation: Survey item 35 addressed this portion of research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the male and female faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining the school's reputation are presented in Table 15. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were no significant differences in perceptions between male (n=137, M=4.24, SD=0.95890, t=-1.827, p=0.069) and female faculty members (n=111, M=4.45, SD=0.81730, t=-1.858, p=0.064).

Differences in perceptions between leaders and faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image: Survey item 33 addressed this portion of research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the KSU-CBA leaders and faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image are presented in Table 16. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were significant differences in perceptions between leaders (n=18, M=4.67, SD=0.59409, t=1.824, p=0.069) and faculty members (n=230, M=4.30, SD=0.84599, t=2.461, p=0.022). The statistical analysis revealed that the leaders at KSU-CBA believe more strongly than the faculty members' perceptions that strategic planning has major implications toward sustaining the institutional image.

Differences in perceptions between leaders and faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity: Survey item 34 addressed this portion of

	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	111	4.42	0.769	-1.743	0.083
Male	137	4.24	0.878	-1.719	0.087

Table 13: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA male and female faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image.

	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	111	4.31	0.760	-1.289	0.199
Male	137	4.18	0.839	-1.276	0.203

Table 14: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA male and female faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity.

	n	M	SD	t	p
Female	111	4.45	.817	-1.858	0.064
Male	137	4.24	.958	-1.827	0.069

Table 15: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA male and female faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining school's reputation.

	n	M	SD	t	p
Leaders	018	4.67	.594	1.824	0.069
Faculty	230	4.30	.845	2.461	0.022*

*p < .05

Table 16: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA leaders and faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional image.

research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the leaders and faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity are presented in Table 17. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were significant differences in perceptions between leaders (n=18, M=4.61, SD=0.50163, t=2.076, p=0.039) and faculty members (n=230, M=4.20, SD=0.81844, t=3.130, p=0.004). The statistical analysis revealed that the leaders at KSU-CBA believe more strongly than the faculty members' perceptions that strategic planning has a major implication toward sustaining the institutional identity.

Differences in perceptions between leaders and faculty members regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining school's reputation: Survey item 35 addressed this portion of research question five of the study. The differences of the perceptions between the leaders and faculty members' perceptions about the strategic planning implications toward sustaining the School's reputation are presented in Table 18. The statistical analysis using t tests for independent samples indicated that there were no significant differences found in perceptions between leaders (n=18, M=4.56, SD=0.70479, t=1.078, p=0.282) and faculty members (n=230, M=4.32, SD=0.91525, t=1.348, p=0.192).

Suggestions to improve strategic planning process at KSU-CBA

Research question six examined the perceptions of leaders about how the process could be improved to make the strategic planning more successful in the viewpoint of leaders of the KSU-CBA. The analyses included a triangulation approach namely analysis of the interview responses, analysis of the survey, and review of strategic planning-related documents.

Analysis of the interview responses: The business school leaders responded to interview questions 15 to provide their perceptions pertaining to this research question. The responses were transcribed, coded, reviewed, and reported as shown in Table 19.

The themes suggested relate to topic frequency reported in Table 20. It may be noted that the most frequently occurring topic (f=3) was related to involving more people.

As reported, 15 out of 17 leaders (88.2%) believed that it would be helpful if more people could be involved in the strategic planning process at KSU-CBA. There were 16 out of 17 leaders (94.1%) who perceived that the current strategic Plan (2011-2016) has not been fully implemented at KSU-CBA. At the same time, 5 out of 15 leaders (29.4%) thought that it would be useful if the School could be more transparent in disseminating information and distributing data pertaining to achievements at KSU-CBA. While 11 out of 17 leaders (64.7%) suggested involving more people in the strategic planning process in order to improve the planning process, there were only 7 out of 17 leaders (41.2%) who believed that the use of the current strategic plan has enhanced the global position of the CBA.

	n	M	SD	t	p
Leaders	018	4.61	.501	2.076	0.039*
Faculty	230	4.20	.818	3.130	0.004*

*p < .05

Table 17: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA leaders and faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining institutional identity.

	n	M	SD	t	p
Leaders	018	4.56	0.704	1.078	0.282
Faculty	230	4.32	0.915	1.348	0.192

Table 18: Differences in perceptions between KSU-CBA leaders and faculty regarding strategic planning implications toward sustaining school's reputation.

Pattern	Emerging topics	Subtopics
Suggestions to improve	1. To be more effective more democratic involvement is needed	a) Full SP requires extended effort b) All stakeholders need to be involved environment c) Transparent communication is needed
Governance	2. The current SP needs to be more fully implemented	a) Full implementation takes time b) SP can enhance global reputation

Table 19: Strategic planning (SP) implications at KSU-CBA.

Subtopics		n	%	f
1b	Involve more people	15	88.2	3
1a	Exert more effort	11	64.7	2
2a	Not fully implemented	16	94.1	2
1c	Be transparent	05	29.4	1
2b	Enhanced CBA's global position	07	41.2	1

Table 20: Statistics pertaining to suggestions to improve strategic planning at KSU-CBA.

Variable	n	M	SD
Broader distribution of results could improve the process	18	4.33	1.028
More people could be involved to improve the process	18	4.22	1.003
More efforts could be put into to improve the process	18	4.22	0.548
Current SP was as successful as possible	18	3.88	0.832
CBA could be placed on a better position in the international arena	18	3.33	1.084

Table 21: Leaders' viewpoints on improving strategic planning (SP) process at KSU-CBA.

Analysis of the survey responses: The survey items 36 through 40 addressed the research question six of the study. An analysis of the responses for survey items 36 through 40 yielded the descriptive statistics as shown in Table 21. Regarding KSU-CBA leaders' suggestions to improve the strategic planning process, the analysis of the survey results revealed that leaders perceived (n=18, M=4.20, SD=0.89951) that the strategic planning process could be improved if more people could be involved, more efforts could be put into it, and the results were distributed in a broader scope at KSU-CBA. Table 21 provides descriptive statistics pertaining to the survey items 36 through 40 being analyzed for research question six of the study. It is worth mentioning that the leaders perceived to a lower degree of positivity that current strategic plan was successful as possible and CBA could be placed on a better position in the international arena.

Analysis of KSU-CBA strategic planning documents. The researcher conducted a review of KSU-CBA strategic planning related documents. The review of those documents revealed that the strategic planning process at KSU-CBA is an important regularly scheduled activity. Furthermore, the documentary evidences confirmed that KSU-CBA could work on its flaws and pitfalls faced in the past planning periods to improve the strategic planning process. For example, several strategic initiatives of the strategic Plan 2006-2011 were not at all implemented until the final year of the five-year planning period.

Discussion

Strategic planning is important for the success of a college or a university since it allows an institution to analyze the present condition and forecast the future. Similar to other businesses, higher education institutions also should use a comprehensive strategic planning framework in order to grow and prosper in a competitive environment. A clear understanding and active involvement of leaders and faculty members at higher education institutions would certainly enable them to understand their roles in university governance and other development related initiatives. Therefore, the perceptions of business school leaders and faculty members about the strategic planning process at the higher education institutions are important. This discussion will primarily address how the leaders and faculty members at KSU-CBA perceive strategic planning. The purpose, findings, and conclusions of this study have been divided into four areas that correlate with the research questions: The need and benefits of strategic planning; the role and development of a strategic plan; the implications of strategic planning at higher education institutions; and suggestions to improve the strategic planning process.

If an effective strategic planning process is in place at an institution, the following should be evidenced:

1. A clearly defined and articulated institutional direction,

2. Institutional ability to choose priorities based on self-evaluation and understanding,

3. Knowledge and ownership of the institutional direction by all major institutional constituencies including business school leaders and faculty members, and

4. Clearly identified placement of the institution within the local and global educational environment.

Furthermore, strategic planning helps to forecast future growth; affects the school capability to accommodate a changing environment; affects students' employability; impacts quality of research output; affects the prevailing academic climate; impacts the successful academic performance of a cohort; and impacts the overall image, identity, and reputation of a business school.

The strategic planning at higher education institutions necessarily needs to follow a structured process [27]. A "structured process" means that there are designated and sequenced activities such as brainstorming, small group work, listing, summarizing, prioritizing and the like. Additionally, a structured process requires a facilitator who is responsible for maintaining the process without having input into the content. A structured planning process makes it possible for everyone in attendance to participate fully, while discouraging domination by high-verbal, and high-status group members [11].

In the strategic planning process reliance on adequate data and information is imperative as the basis for decision-making [5]. The quality of data related to curriculum, teaching and learning, research, faculty accomplishments, students, resources, and other stakeholders are needed for the planning process. The more reliable data and information that are available to describe the current situation, the better the chances of a good plan [61]. Therefore, it is important to collect data and information prior to the start of the strategic planning process.

Conclusion

Good strategic planning process at higher education institutions requires adequate time of leaders, faculty members, and other stakeholders. Undeniably, time means money in a professional environment. The cost of a good strategic plan is accrual of high cost. Obviously, schools should determine their ability and be prepared to invest the right amount of time in the strategic planning process. The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

1. Business school leaders and their faculty members have similar positive perceptions regarding the historical perspectives on the use of strategic planning in academe.

2. University leaders and their faculty members perceive that strategic planning is an important activity.

3. The strategic planning process should involve many stakeholders in a democratic process.

4. Strategic planning helps to incorporate goals and objectives within departments and their programs.

5. Strategic planning can positively impact the image, identity, and reputation of business schools.

6. Strategic plans may be difficult to implement fully.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations for practice that evolved from the findings and conclusions of the study.

1. KSU-CBA leaders need to respond and align to the emerging challenges in higher education, i.e., changing students' demographic make-up, growing new models for providing higher education since changes in educational needs, struggle to balance between the traditional model and an advanced technology-driven model of course delivery, and adapting to the needs of consumer-driven markets such as offering courses on a schedule convenient to the students.

2. KSU-CBA leaders should seek and encourage greater

participation of a wide range of stakeholders including faculty members in the strategic planning process.

3. KSU-CBA should take proactive measures to implement the current Strategic Plan (2011-2016) to its entirety.

4. KSU-CBA leaders should recognize that the faculty members may defer to administrators the primary responsibility for strategic planning process at KSU-CBA.

5. KSU-CBA faculty members should recognize that the leaders perceive, to a greater extent, faculty members' involvement in the formulation, implementation, and integration of strategic planning at KSU-CBA and further onto their departments and programs is crucial.

6. KSU-CBA should exert more efforts and involve more people in the strategic planning, and implementing processes if they want to sustain their image, identity, and reputation since the strategic planning affects the academic climate and academic performance of the students.

7. Business school leaders should encourage and motivate the faculty members to participate in the strategic planning process.

8. University leaders should find ways to implement strategic plans fully.

The following are the recommendations for further study that evolved from the findings and conclusions of the study.

1. The study was limited to the KSU-CBA in Saudi Arabia; therefore, the study should be done with other business schools internationally.

2. A follow-up study should be conducted at King Saud University (KSU) system-wide to incorporate the perceptions of leaders and faculty members of other colleges at KSU and to compare the results.

3. A follow-up study should be performed later (probably after five years) to see if KSU-CBA leaders' and faculty members' perceptions change over time.

4. A follow-up study should be performed later to compare the perceptions across departments, which vary in the content emphasis regarding strategic planning processes.

5. A replication of this study could be performed at other business schools or other schools and colleges within the KSU system or in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (and even wider in the Arab States/Middle East and in other parts of the world) that have similar systems.

6. Business schools around the world should be involved in a similar kind of study to understand the strategic planning implications at their schools.

7. As there is a shortage in literature, researchers should develop more case studies to study the implications of strategic planning on sustaining institutional identity, image, and reputation among business schools, which would help fill the gap in literature in this area.

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