MANAGING UNIVERSITIES: TRADITION AND RESPONSIVENESS. THE CASE OF A PRIVATE LEBANESE UNIVERSITY

Omaya KURAN
ISEOR Research Center
University Jean Moulin Lyon 3
(France)
University of Balamand
(Lebanon)

ABSTRACT:

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in society and the economy and they are required to realize a triumvirate mission. Universities seek excellence in teaching, research and service while faced with dynamic forces among which are globalization and technological change. In the midst of this challenging environment, universities have to be responsive and adaptable to change in order to better serve the students. This research is an intervention research that focuses on improving the performance of administrators and the quality of services pursuing the Socio-economic approach to management.

SEAM provides a holistic view and improves performance of institutions. This intervention research tackles the issue of how and why universities behave as they do and how the socio-economic approach enhances the management of the modern university to become entrepreneurial, more humane, responsive to change, and cost effective. Hence, this intervention provides a better understanding of the complexity of higher education systems and studies the topic of organizational transformation in the context of a Lebanese private university. Moreover, it creates change initiatives and a roadmap that the university may adopt as it strives for sustainable growth.

Keywords: Change management, Higher Education, Socio-Economic Approach to Management, and Intervention Research.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional university models are facing major challenges and external pressures as well as internal challenges shaping the entrepreneurial future of universities. Drivers of change in the higher education sector are increasing. In this context of globalization of higher education, institutions must develop strategies of excellence and policies must respond to the demands and expectations of stakeholders (employees, students, industry, etc.). This development is strongly constrained by competitive pressures between institutions. Today, universities compete with each other across the nation, the region and internationally. Given this dynamic environment, it is increasingly important for universities to express a single, compelling voice in everything they do. It is also important to implement excellence in management and in all the services offered. In order to better understand how modern universities can effectively address management, this research has been undertaken. The challenges faced require changes in universities structure, governance and stakeholders' relations. The needed change could be done by looking at the complex administrative structure of the university through Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) lenses.

This paper is the application of SEAM in a private Lebanese university. The main objectives of the intervention research are to improve the performance and productivity of the institution and to generate knowledge. This intervention research focuses on developing the human potential and building the capacity of administrative staff in order to better serve the students and the whole community.

This paper first reviews the dynamics of change in higher education sector, and then it identifies drivers of change emanating from the external as well as internal environments. Then the hypothesis is stated based on the assumption that today's challenges put pressure on HE education institutions to become more agile and responsive to change, however rigid structures hinder adaptation. Therefore the SEAM intervention methodology facilitates the implementation of change. Based on the SEAM intervention, the internal and external challenges faced by the case university are clearly described and summarized. Recommendations facilitating the required change are suggested in the last section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Universities are considered to be conservative although they are supposed to promote innovation. With the rise of consumerism, the decrease of government funding and technological advancement, Higher education market has become much more competitive. HEI compete for a prestigious position in the academic hierarchy, therefore they constantly develop innovative new programs, seek more research grants, and thrive to recruit qualified students. However, according to Klein (2013) "universities did not react well to the technological chock". Universities may not be managing competition as should be. Furthermore, former Harvard University president stated that "undergraduate education changes remarkably little over time" and the difficulty of reforming curriculum has been compared with moving a cemetery (Summers, 2012).

Even if universities' structure is at high cost and with little benefit, it has not changed. There exists a separation between disciplines (faculties and departments) on one hand and academic and administrative operations are divided on the other hand. Academic tribes and territories is a metaphor that illustrates how members of a particular discipline act as tribes who depend on their territory for their livelihood and who are not integrated into the system of the institution. This also implies that borders exist between disciplines affecting communication and collaboration (Becher & Trowler, 2001). The way how universities are designed and structured result in the building of silos on campus (Helfand, 2013). The different departments do not share information with others in the same university and this mindset affects negatively the institution performance and productivity. Within today's context and considering all the drivers of change in the HE sector, are universities still operating with the silo mentality? Is the metaphor of academic tribes and territories still relevant? (Courtenay, 2013). Another good question would be "whether there were alternative and/or better frameworks available for thinking about academics, disciplines and their relationships, and about the policies that impact upon them" (Tight, 2015).

Conformity or Differentiation

Within a competitive environment and in order for a university to strategically position itself, a crucial question has to be asked: should it be different or be the same? (Deephouse, 1999). Universities may adopt the strategy to differentiate their structures and programs in order to attract students. Another strategy may be to follow the traditional and familiar norms and to accept the competing pressures for conformity. These pressures actually limit the strategic choices of institutions as is implied by the institutional theory (Bess & Dee, 2008). Commonly, the market standards are copied by higher education institutions, since societies tend to legitimize institutions that conform to external expectations and constituents probably will not support institutions that deviate from the expected norms. The set of expectations shapes HE practices and defines the institutional environment in which universities are embedded. Accrediting bodies, governments, professional associations and other external agents generate procedures, rules, regulations, and requirements for HEI performance and quality assurance. The External pressures limit an organization to an "iron cage" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The isomorphism phenomenon confines the organization to the characteristics, structures and strategies that look like organizations that are perceived to be effective and in the same field. It is argued that there are three kinds of conformity: coercive, mimetic, and normative (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Institutions are either forced to conform to rules or they intentionally imitate successful organizations in order to reduce competitive uncertainty. The third kind of conformity is to follow standards that are applicable universally.

In the field of higher education, the accreditation process justifies coercive conformity. Because accreditation associations set the standards of quality and ensure that HEI meet those standards. Likewise, governments enforce conformity as they intervene to regulate the sector and require institutions to adhere to policies. Next, the competitive market forces explain mimetic conformity. For instance, if a competitor expanded its athletic complex, created important athletic activities and gained exposure, other universities will follow as they believe that athletic activities has become an expectation and they do not want to be positioned at a disadvantage when compared with competitors. Lastly, the strong social and cultural expectations for certain behaviors reinforce normative conformity**.** For example, everyone expects that universities have programs, set curriculums, schedule courses for credits and grades, and award degrees. Consequently, almost all HEI follow the same system that ends with students' graduation. If a university deviates from this system, it would risk losing legitimacy and prospective students may not apply.

In this century organizations would not survive if they are not constantly innovating and changing. Some HEI ignores convention and operates successfully outside the bounds of normative expectations. Change in higher education is headed by institutions that accept the risk of nonconformity and are passionate for becoming trendsetters. Leaders of innovative initiatives determine how far they can spread out of the legitimacy frameworks set up by the traditional and often dominant institutions. Going too far beyond the endorsed model might take the initiative out of the market. On the other hand, numeral institutions remain undistinguished as they develop trapped in the middle. Accordingly, innovating and differentiating or aiming for similarity depends largely on the leader and the potential of a creative and different model. Senior executives must believe in the changes and new practices and the human potential should be engaged and in charge of proposing, creating, and debating practices in culture change programs. Drivers of change in HE sector are increasing in today's dynamic environment, therefore the next section describes the most prominent ones.

External and Internal Challenges in HE Sector

The famous Greek philosopher Heraclitus states that change is the only constant in life. Even though the meaning of change is delicate and elusive, researchers are working to understand the "what", the "how" and the "why" of change. Change is proved to be inevitable and it is affecting all sectors. Today's business environments are chaotic, therefore, understanding and adapting to change is crucial to the management of organizations. The internal and external environments are forces that induce change in organizations. The internal environment includes factors inside the organization that impact operations, decisions and actors' behavior and attitudes. For instance, the human resources, the structures, the culture, the mission and the style of leadership are internal aspects of an organization and are controlled by the organization. The external environment includes factors that the organization does not control like competition, customers, technological evolution, and socio-economic, legal and political dynamics. The external environment happens outside the boundaries of an organization; however, it affects significantly the operations, the development and the long-term sustainability of the organization.

The changing landscape of universities and the growth of these institutions were studied by many scholars. In the past, higher education institutions were viewed by society as ivory towers, but this image ceased to be a reality. Universities in the twenty first century are constantly being challenged by the internal and external changing environments. Accountability, activities coordination, managing highly skilled employees, culture and identity are internal challenges faced by universities (Bess & Dee, 2008). Increased competition, changes in businesses that hire university graduates as well as changes in technology are external factors that can no longer be ignored.

The external factors, discussed in this research, that stimulate change in higher education organizations are: (a) the highly competitive environment, (b) the diversified student body, (c) the shift in university's ultimate markets, and (d) the advanced ways for delivery of education.

Globalization influenced higher education institutions from various perspectives. One effect of globalization is the increased competition among universities in their endeavor to recruit qualified students, as well as human and financial resources (Jung Cheol Shin, 2009). The higher education market is becoming more competitive because the number of players in higher education market augmented. The players or the academic institutions in the market increased in number and nature. In addition to the traditional academic institutions, the for-profit and online universities are currently competing. Some universities decide to offer diplomas in exchange for more money and less effort from learners. Other universities emphasis the quality of teaching and deliver services to students and the community at large. The research institutions focus on quality of research with the objective of enhancing their rankings (Stromquist, Internationalization as a response to globalization: Radical shifts in university environments., 2007). Noting that university rankings changed the higher education market since it has had a great impact on the players' behavior (Meredith, 2004). It is argued that universities' diversified mission has been lost for vertical stratification (Teichler, 2008). The global market mechanisms challenge higher education institutions to improve the quality of teaching and research outcomes without sacrificing their competitive differences.

The second external challenge triggered by the continuous expansion of the higher education sector is the heterogeneous composition of the student population. The demographics, backgrounds, motives, talents and job perspectives of learners are diversified (Teichler, 2008). Moreover, globalization means that students are traveling internationally for higher education and this talent movement has far-reaching effects on institutions structures and activities.

Globalization not only impacted the universities' student body, but also, the job market. Higher education institutions founded hundred years ago aimed at serving the purposes of the emerging industrial age. Today in the 21st century, universities serve the purposes of the emerging global knowledge-based economy in the interconnected world. Nowadays knowledge economy, skills are valued more than knowledge. Employers will hire graduates with skills immediately applicable on the job. This factor is also affecting universities' performance. They tend to focus more on skill building, on specialized and technical training highly required for students' future success. Traditional academic institutions are offering skills-based programs to give their students a competitive edge in the job market. Some universities are partnering with companies to design programs that match the job requirements.

In addition to the three above mentioned factors, the advanced way of delivery of education is an essential external factor stimulating change in higher education systems. Information technology is considered to be the medium for universal access to higher education (Burrage, 2010). All kind of knowledge is accessible on the internet to everyone in their homes and workplaces. Internet is one of the major drivers in promoting higher education globally and creating universal access through online education. This is the trend in education including the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). It is an evolving model of online courses and ongoing learning that have the potential to transform higher education. The education sector is very dynamic and university leaders are constantly capitalizing on the old methods while embracing the new ones. More and more innovation in education is expected as new technologies continue to unfold.

After reviewing the external factors, the internal forces inducing change in universities are discussed below. The transformation of higher education has several implications on the institutions' activities and structures. The roles of modern universities expanded, and their structures considered being complex (Bess & Dee, 2008). Higher education institution faces high levels of uncertainty in its complex and to some extent intangible processes. Education differs from other sectors in a number of significant ways and the organization of higher education institutions differ from most of the profit-making businesses. It is argued that "the separation of roles of academic and administrative personnel and the sharing of authority and responsibility" (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 36) are major differences between the organization of higher education and corporations. Although, income generation forms are an increasingly significant part of higher education institutions activities, universities run on an essentially 'not for profit' basis. Universities operate within a controlled environment of external controls, shared governance, and participative process and shared power. Another difference is also noted, the functions of university personnel is divided between academic and administrative (Bess & Dee, 2008). The academic areas of higher education are different than the business world; however the administrative and auxiliary service areas often function in ways similar to typical service providers. Higher education provides a distinctive context in which to study the internal environmental factors driving change in organizational activities and structures.

Some of the internal challenges stimulating change in higher education are: (a) the increased pressure for accountability to stakeholders, (b) the variations in missions and values within the organization, (c) the multifaceted activities and processes, (d) the needs and expectations of employees.

The institutional accountability environment of higher education organizations is characterized by diverse stakeholders. Universities' stakeholders range from the single student as the primary customer to the whole community. Demands of stakeholders vary as per their relationship with the institution (Kanji & Tambi, 1999). For instance, students and their parents seek high-quality degrees and demand a safe and enjoyable campus. Employers demand employable graduates with the right set of skills. Government and politicians require compliance with laws and procedural regulations. They would also want assurances that higher education institutions are being involved and are contributing to "national good" (e.g. economic development). Donors need evidence that their contribution have been spent justly and as per their agendas and priorities. Alumni look for the reputation of their Alma matter to add value to their degree. Hence, higher education institutions are socially, politically and economically held accountable of their "products" and processes (Vaira, 2004).

The variation in missions and values is considered as an internal challenge faced by higher education institutions. The higher education transformation has somehow shifted governance values from purely academic values to administrative business with increased focus on self-funding and rankings. The resulting structures create losers and winners from the beginning and hence move away from the ultimate goals of teaching and learning.

Another internal challenge faced by modern universities is the mission focus (Jung Cheol Shin, 2009). Higher education institutions have several roles to perform and have to embrace three pillars in their mission: teaching, research and engagement. It is argued that Governments are pressuring universities to expand their core activities to include engagement with business and community (Wedgwood M. , 2006). The third mission entails a wide range of activities through which universities interact with and contribute to the economy and society. Universities will have to reconsider their structures and invest in their human resources capacity. Not only the people engaged in research and teaching activities are important but also the managers and administrators providing support services in all areas are essential to the development of the institution.

The third internal challenge faced by twenty first higher education governance is the units' coordination pressure to perform interrelated and multifaceted activities (teaching, research, innovation, outreach programs, community service…). The variety of the required activities has to be coordinated efficiently by leaders of the institution. Even when every university is unique (in culture and structure), there are common features: universities are bureaucracies and political entities (Kretovics, 2011). Because of the nature of their structure, it is argued that the decision making process in higher education institutions is complicated. Moreover, the traditional structures of higher education institutions do not cultivate collaboration among individuals (Kezar, 2005). The structure of academic institutions has been described as vertical and disconnected (Keeling, Underhile, & Wall, 2007), resulting in poor or inefficient work coordination between different faculties and offices. One of the complications in higher education systems is the balancing of differentiation and integration.

The management of the human capital is another factor challenging leaders of higher education institutions. The higher education enterprise is labor-intensive. The success of the institution depends on the motivation and commitment of its members. Therefore, understanding and addressing the needs and demands of faculty members, staff and administrators is crucial to meet organizational goals. It is a challenge to understand the interpersonal side of the higher education organization since people working at the university have different backgrounds, competences and assume diverse roles and responsibilities (Bess & Dee, 2008).

The economic and social roles performed by current universities and the challenges faced in the internal and external are driving change in the higher education sector. Hence, traditional university models are facing major challenges and external pressures shaping the entrepreneurial future of universities.

The Entrepreneurial University

In today's economy, the higher education sector is responsible for creating a sustainable ecosystem; the word "ecosystem" is being used more often lately and it has become "the next big business buzzword" (Hwang, 2014) . Ecosystem is defined as an "extended system of mutually supportive organizations; communities of customers, suppliers, lead producers, and other stakeholders, financing, trade associations, standard bodies, labor unions, governmental and quasigovernmental institutions, and other interested parties." (Moore, 1998, p. 168). Hence, Universities, companies and government must establish interfaces for collaboration in order to contribute to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The job market is changing and the unemployment rates are increasing worldwide. The opportunity of startups adds value to economy and to jobs creation (Storey, 1994; Decker, Haltiwanger, Jarmin, & Miranda, 2014). In this environment, the higher education system is liable for providing entrepreneurship education and promoting entrepreneurial activities and initiatives among their students and alumni on a national and international level. Universities are required to develop and adapt competencies and skills and to disseminate current knowledge and technology. The "triple-helix model" highlights the importance of collaboration between universities, industries and government (Etzkowitz, 2016). These three key institutions have interrelated roles in today's innovation-driven economy. In addition to teaching and research, higher education institutions have an entrepreneurial mission. Therefore, universities need to be more involved in the exploitation of their research results and they have to collaborate more intensely with industry. How can universities move from the traditional research and teaching approach to an entrepreneurial mindset, ecosystem creation, industry collaboration and youth empowerment?

The entrepreneurship concept is explained in the economic and management literatures (Hebert & Link, 1989). This concept evolved over years to include different entrepreneurial initiatives like appreneurship, intrapreneurship, social entrepreneurship, political entrepreneurship and knowledge entrepreneurship. This concept has also developed in the higher education literature as "academic entrepreneurship" and researchers begun to disclose the numerous connections between entrepreneurship and higher education, however "it is essential to both define the conceptual and theoretical boundaries of entrepreneurship as an analytical framework in order to strengthen its contributions to higher education scholarship." (Mars & Rios-Aguilar, 2010, p. 457). Academic entrepreneurship might seem as an oxymoron. However, the changing economic, social and research environment sets challenges for the traditional university and higher education systems are living a paradigm shift. The entrepreneurial mindset is becoming a necessity in the current time. There are several Well-known examples of entrepreneurs' initiatives that have changed organizations. For instance, Uber changed how the world moves and disrupted the transportation business and Airbnb has become the worldwide accommodation leader. What will happen when the sharing economy meets education? (Young, 2015).

The economy shifted from the factor-driven stage, to the efficiency-driven stage and at this time to innovation-driven stage (Porter, Sachs, & McArthur, 2001).

An increase in entrepreneurial activity is notable at the 21st century economy whether it is called knowledge economy, digital economy or sharing economy; and whether this economy is based on information, knowledge, collaboration or innovation…. And so, universities worldwide are also shifting from a traditional model to an "entrepreneurial" university model characterized by the creation of scientific knowledge and active contribution to the development of businesses locally and internationally (Etzkowitz, 2016). Emphasizes is placed on developing intellectual capital to create value and jobs. Universities role is not only to nurture talent but also to stimulate economic growth (Etzkowit, et al., 2008). Economy will be accelerated through research outcomes that are relevant to industry and through the commercialization of technology. Entrepreneurialism has entered scholars' lives since they are required to do research that have an impact (Shapiro, 2016). The scholarship model developed by Boyer identifies four types of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching (Boyer, 1991). Scholars are encouraged to use and harmonize all their scholarly voices in order to meet this information age (Shapiro, 2016).

Traditional university models are facing major challenges and external pressures shaping the entrepreneurial future of universities. Governments' funding to the higher education sector have become directed and tied to its contribution to economic growth. Moreover, pressure for impact in research and relevance in teaching has grown. The global information technology revolution opened up the sources of knowledge and the global competition is increasing as well as the need to recruit students. Universities are bound to accountability in terms of public value and they are being judged for excellence in quality and management. These pressures in the environment lead the universities to be more entrepreneurial and to expand their networks and engage in active partnerships in research and teaching to assure relevance. The key question is not if universities should be more entrepreneurial, however we ask how universities should be lead and managed (Leih & Teece, 2016). What are the possibilities of using the sharing economy concept in institutions of higher education? It is acknowledged that the initiation and facilitation of change in a university system is a challenging task since universities are complex and bureaucratic organizations traditionally designed to primarily advance their teaching and research missions.

CONCLUSION

Higher education institutions face great contradictions (Clark, 1998) and in order to deal with these contradictions and to survive in the globalized world, the organizations should be able to quickly respond to the fast environmental changes. Many researchers argue that traditional university governance models are becoming obsolete and are not adapting to the changing environments. Hence, modern universities ought to be run in a fundamentally different way. Agility, responsiveness and entrepreneurialism are essential strategies for modern universities. This conclusion has been approved by many; however there exist different answers and opinions to the question of how would the new structure look like.

Most people consider that transforming or changing an organization means downsizing and cutting costs. Also a common emotion associated with the act of transformation is exhaustion. However due to the globalization, relentless competition and advances in technology among other factors, all organizations are constantly required to change. Hence, transformation and change can no longer be perceived as exhausting and a solution must be found. Everyone agrees that organizational change is hard and that people tend to resist especially when it is imposed on them. Therefore, researchers have looked for methods and management approaches that make change successful and smooth and the Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) is one successful transformative methodology since it empowers and energizes people first. This methodology uses the participatory management approach and reinforces collaborative behaviors to formulate change initiatives and actions that will transform the way the organization operates and that drive growth. It also develops skills and provides the actors with management tools needed along the way.

HYPOTHESES

The aim of this research is to clarify uncertainties that exist around the concept of organizational development and change in higher education institutions. This research will analyze the influences of SEAM principles on the change process required in this case under study. The central hypothesis of this research represents the researcher's choice in addressing the research objectives and responding to the research problem (Savall & Zardet, 2011).

In response to the problem identified, the descriptive, explicative and prescriptive hypotheses are:

Descriptive	The University is slow to respond and adapt to changes in the internal and external environments
Explicative	• Complacency: we are good enough and low urgency • Low receptivity to effortful Change • Mistrust and low sharing of useful and timely information • Mechanistic Action: low creativity and low adjustment • More talk than action, then misaligned action
Prescriptive	**SEAM intervention** creates a new mindset for **management** and enhances the **performance** of administrators. Hence it contributes to managing current required **changes** and dealing with the numerous constraints faced in the local and global context and improve the **quality of services** provided to students

METHODOLOGY: SEAM INTERVENTION RESEARCH

The Socio-economic approach to management is a collaborative and transformative intervention research in the field of management. SEAM interventions have the potential to further advance and develop management science. The dissemination of effective scientific interventions across diverse organizations through Qualimetrics methods enables win-win situations for organizations and scholars. It comprises field methodologies in order to theorize professional practices. It also promotes reciprocal knowledge since it incorporates theories into practice and integrates practice into theories.

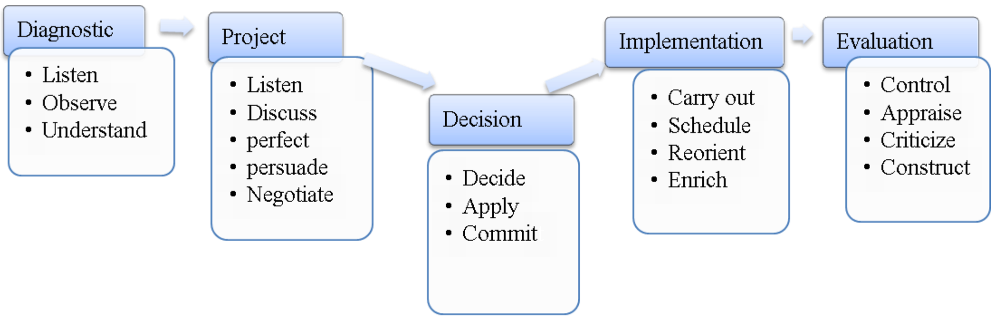
In SEAM intervention research, the field is not a perceived as an aquarium or a place for experiments to be observed from the outside. Instead, the field is a place where practical knowledge is mastered and theories are assimilated and applied. The researcher's hands-on knowledge, the partnership with actors and collaborative efforts lead to organizational growth and development. Therefore, my intervention research approach aims to transfer the acquired SEAM knowledge and to integrate its concepts, methods and tools into the university. On the other hand, knowledge is also transferred from the field and the internal intervener has to distance himself from the field and reflect on the experiences. Being both an academic and a practitioner, the intervener is required to learn from practical experiences and translate them in the contribution to knowledge in organization science. Based on empirical observations and experiments theories can be formulated. For instance, the wright brothers changed history as they taught the world to fly and "their experiments off the ground were initially derived from meticulous observations of birds in flight" (McCullough, 2015).

SEAM is a theory and methodology in the Organizational Development (OD) field of research. It is a transformative intervention research dedicated at improving the individual and the organizational performance. Similar to Action research and OD intervention principles, SEAM adopts a systematic process to improve organizations' capacity for solving problems and meeting future challenges. It is an iterative and ongoing process that aims at accomplishing a successful organizational change. SEAM is a theory produced based on intervention research and on the interactions between structures and behaviors. It aims for scientific work applying intervention research in order to further develop and advance theory.

From the perspective of bridging the gap between theory and action, Van de Ven (2006) values the mutual contribution of the professional and research practices. The engaged scholarship principles changed the traditional views of the lab generated research knowledge that may not be applicable in the field. These principles also avoided the traditional debates between qualitative versus quantitative methods, core versus diversity, rigor versus relevance, and positivist versus interpretive (Van De Ven & Johnson, 2006). In this context, one particular aspect of SEAM is that it "brings meaning to both words and numbers" (Bonnet & Peron, 2014, p. 663). This method is a comprehensive intervention research methodology that incorporates simultaneously the organization's economic and social elements. This methodology combines the qualitative data (interviews and observations) with the quantitative and financial data (hidden cost) (Boje & Rosile, Comparison of Socio-economic and other transorganizational development methods, 2003). Quantitative techniques tend towards measuring cost, capacity and time. Qualitative methods focus on value and human behaviors. Together, they offer insights into results and drivers or causes. SEAM follows rigorous methodologies and produces knowledge that can be readily used by practitioners.

The intense involvement of the researcher in the organization and with the actors is a distinctive criterion of the Qualimetrics method (Savall & Fiere, 2014). The intervener-researcher and the actors work together to identify key problem areas of the organization and analyze the root causes of dysfunctions. Another specific aspect that differentiates Qualimetrics from other methods of action research is the concept of generic contingency (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). This method benchmarks against a dataset accumulated from interventions in a large number of enterprises (Boje & Rosile, 2003).

ISEOR Research examined the introduction and implementation of socio-economic projects within organizations over a period of time. Significant changes were indorsed over time when actors appropriated the new management practices into their work. Organizational members responded better to challenges and initiated changes in structure and coordination mechanisms. ISEOR's findings provide the empirical basis for an intervention-based research on organizational transformation as it emphasizes the micro-level changes that actors endorse over time as they make sense of the process and act to realize the transformation. SEAM strategy moves away from rigidity, influence and control to flexibility, agility and learning. According to Savall and Zardet, the more the problem-solving cycle progresses, the more the tools become established, the more the decisions of transformations are taken and implemented.



The research work of ISEOR emphasizes the importance of understanding the interactions between individuals and organizational environment and their inevitable dynamic nature. What usually happens is that when members in the organization identify a problem, they fail to identify the real root causes as they tend to accuse one person or look at the dysfunctional behavior from one perspective and ignore the others. A practical example from the field is when the university president holds the students' recruitment manager as the only responsible person for the decrease in students' enrollment. In a similar case, SEAM would inspire executives to consider the different environmental factors affecting student enrollment and not only focus on the individual behavior. Another important consideration is to identify the originators and circumstances that led to this situation and the current condition may be explained by the unhealthy interaction between the individual and the system. The organization system plays the role of integrating the individuals' talents, knowledge and effort to transform them into products and services. Hence, the most important task of management is to establish the necessary collaboration and coordination at the University.

THE CONTEXT AND RESULTS

A description of the Lebanese context and the research field is imperative at this stage. The general Lebanese context and the university in particular will prove in the study to have great influence on the performance of the organization and individuals. This section examines the external challenges and the internal challenges faced by the case institution.

The External Challenges

The Lebanese higher education system is one of the oldest in the Middle East region. Some universities were founded since more than 140 years ago. Lebanon's higher education system has played an important role in the development of Lebanese society and the economy. Lebanon's education system was renowned for its high standard universities and schools and numerous families over the region send their children to study in Lebanon. However, the war years (1975-1991) have severely affected the development of the sector. After the war, the higher education sector witnessed a chaotic boom in the number of young private universities and geographic expansion of existing universities. Educational standards and quality deteriorated.

Many universities opened and expanded chaotically in the absence of the fair intervention of the legislative and government bodies. Most of the 44 universities operating at present in Lebanon were established in the late nineties. The fast expansion in the higher education industry and the growing concern for quality necessitate introducing processes that insure high productivity in delivering efficient and effective services to stakeholders.

The private universities tuitions are subject to annual increases and the only one public university is almost for free but is unable to accept large number of students. Students and their parents pay large tuition fees even though the student attend a commercial university, a university that offers education in regard of lower fees, they are the main competitors of the public university. Students who do not pass the examinations choose one of them. On the other hand, the Lebanese market is not offering an increase in the quality of work and opportunities for students while the Lebanese higher education is developing and attracting higher number of students. We as Lebanese people believe that education became a necessity. An additional challenge appears the migration. Highly educated people are travelling abroad to find jobs that have higher return on their investment on education. The complementarity between unemployment and migration can be easily demonstrated in economics.

The deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon and the region and the competitive burdens in HE sector are increasing the need for fundraising. It is becoming necessary to expand revenue from private sources due to a steady decline in tuition revenue. To understand the impact of tuition revenue in this University, one must look at the annual revenues and 93 percent of the university annual revenue is dependent on the net tuition revenue. Hence the financial stability of this university is similar to most private Lebanese universities in Lebanon, it dependents on revenue generated from enrollment. However, the limited access to student loans due to a tightening of credit requirements, rising unemployment, and a general lack of confidence in the economic recovery led to a drop of enrollment at private universities throughout the country.

The trend towards privatization encourages universities to decrease their dependence on public funds and to become "entrepreneurial" and competitive, and to demonstrate efficient professional management (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). It is important to note that Lebanese universities were established long time ago and they have developed good practices in terms of governance, accountability and responsiveness to society, however modern management practices need to be improved.

The Internal Challenges

The university where the researcher intervenes was established in 1988 and since then it has witnessed great success and has been constantly growing. The university reputation has been growing beyond its local region, but relatively the University is a young university striving to secure a niche for itself in a highly competitive market. All existing universities in Lebanon are competing for the same pool of students as explained above.

The organization in question is a private, not for profit independent Lebanese institution of higher education. The University has 11 Faculties and 5 Campuses. Currently the number of students enrolled is 5,700 students and 89% are Lebanese. The number of alumni is 12,942. The university has 1,203 full-time and part-time faculty members, 155 Staff members and 79 Workers. The university was founded 29 years ago and despite its young age, it is one of the most prestigious universities in the country. The university has begun the process of accreditation through accrediting bodies in Europe and United States. The university developed a 10 years strategic academic plan (2010-2020) and considered a restructuring or a reorganization of more than one of the university's facilities.

The organization of the university was developed spontaneously in order to cope with a rapid growth. Several buildings and facilities have been added in addition to buildings currently under construction. Moreover, the number of faculties, the number of campuses and the number of staff and students increased dramatically. The identification of key improvement opportunities relative to administrative operations and enhancement of the operating environment are a priority to sustaining growth.

This intervention that was based on SEAM principles guided the researcher in establishing an understanding of the context and diagnosing the dysfunctions so that the start of the transformation process is identified within the framework of the institution's culture. Culture can be both an accelerator and a brake to organizational performance. Peter Drucker states that "organizational culture eats strategy for breakfast" (Rick, 2014). Culture also reflects the management style and atmosphere of the organization. For instance, the style of management in UB is personalized. It was shown in interview expressions such as *"Some decisions are personal and are more favors",* "*Each person does what he sees well in the highest academic level",* "*We are in a transition phase, the family got bigger and the family spirit should not overweigh the professional spirit*", "*There is a gap in handling academic matters because they are left up to the University Council and the president and based on the relationship between the deans and president*" and "*each dean and director imposes his style of management and protects his territory*". The consistency of treatment is violated in this case. Such style of management alienates actors who are not part of the closed circle and as a consequence resentment reactions escalate.

The process of influencing a culture and transforming an organization starts by understanding the existing culture. A well-known quote attributed to Kurt Lewin states that "If you want to understand an organization you try to change it". In order to understand the organization, the SEAM intervener-researcher spends some time at the organization; he observes and approaches actors with an open mind. Moreover, he learns to speak their language. The intention is to work within the culture and introducing new management styles to help the organization to learn and self-develop. This management consultancy project critically examines the dysfunctions at the University, since challenges are relative to the context and there is a need to select the most prominent amongst them, and the most salient with respect to the future status of the case institution. The following issues were emphasized by the executive employees at the University:

1) **Accreditation**. Accreditation process in higher education is a continuous quest for excellence. It is not only a simple application of a set of administrative rules and procedures. It requires and induces a change of mindset and creates an institution "on the move". One interviewee stated that *"The main challenge is that persons heading departments are university founders and started those departments. They imposed their style on the department they are running however are these the best practices? These practices need to be scrutinized and steeped through the accreditation process."* The quality assurance stimulates institutions to assess their needs, outcomes, policies and procedures. Moreover, it entails self-reflection on the institution's activities and performance. It enables a prioritization of objectives. It is a self-assessment for whole system taking into account the social, economic and cultural context. Engagement in the rigorous

accreditation process to improve the quality of the institution may lead to an institutional transformation. Accreditation also serves as an exogenous change agent and catalyst for promoting quality in all academic systems and processes (Cooper, S., Parkes, C., & Blewitt, J. 2014). The debate on the quality dimensions in higher education institutions continues to grow in importance. Getting an accreditation in the presence of the fierce rivalry between Lebanese universities is a means for national and international recognition as mentioned by one executive leader *"accreditation is becoming a trend more than an efficient tool and in order to be able to be competitive and fulfill international standards, we need to adjust."*

2) **Communication**. A range of challenges are pressuring higher education institutions as they seek to meet the expectations of students, their parents, faculty members, and the requirements of employers. Since higher education institutions are complex organizations where the strategy has to be well aligned, the quality assurance requires strong leadership and collaboration between all actors. A common issue faced by actors of the University is the poor or inefficient internal communication. Several members stated that there is a lack in coordination between academicians and administrators for example employees state that: *"It is not clear how academicians and administrators coordinate"*, and *"Sometimes faculty members or other colleagues are harsh, they feel that administrators are their servants"*. From another angle, offices and faculties in the university fail to coordinate with each other since *"there is a trust problem and it is affecting productivity"*, and *"There is an unhealthy competition among faculties"*. This creates a need to coordinate the efforts and align the goals of the different departments and faculties in order to improve the University's performance.

3) **Accountability.** Nowadays, universities strive to provide their stakeholders with enhanced transparency in relation to their services, operations and finances. A primary reason for doing so has to do with greater expectations by their stakeholders for accountability regarding performance, financial efficiency, technological advancement, and governance. The private Lebanese higher education sector is well developed and autonomous. However, "it is critical that when universities are granted autonomy that they also have internal and external accountability systems in place." (World Bank, 2013, p. 23)**.** The organization expanded rapidly and in a short period of time and it lacks a system for accountability and a system for monitoring and evaluation. Many members of the organization are aware of this challenge as they state: *"We lack three important things: Audit, Accountability and Corrective procedures", "Regardless of doing the job right or wrong, staff do not know to whom they are accountable", "Some persons do not reprimand or penalize since they do not want to be penalized or blamed or criticized", "There is no monitoring to indicators, no check marks"...*Internal audit plays a leading role in mitigating risks related to internal controls, financial reporting and compliance systems. Accordingly, the internal auditor works with management and gives attention to the processes and governance mechanisms of the institution, with the objective of reporting directly to the president. Therefore, internal auditing, as part of the governance structure in the University, can be a

mechanism to assist executive management in demonstrating better stewardship of the University's resources.

4) **Multi-Campus.** Equally important to accreditation, communication and accountability is the fact that the university has grown into a Multi-campus University and running a Multi-Campus University represents a new challenge: *"The administrative challenge is to make a link between campuses and insure that we have the same quality. Geography may hinder cooperation*", "*How would other campuses staff and students feel committed to university and they do not know the main campus? We need to go there and they have to come to main campus for them to belong to the university and not a campus", "Management of multi campus is not clear; we either give the campus autonomous mandate or assign responsibilities to the main campus", "There needs to be real effort made to proper governance and management of multiple campuses".* The administrative structure need to be reconsidered in order to ensure equity in programs and services, and equity in standards in management and accountability.

5) **Equity.** Ethical decisions should be handled with wisdom since the effects of an incorrect decision could be devastating to the organization. The university president asserts that *"as we expand in buildings and programs, we should not lose sight of the moral caliber of the University and its humane and humanistic mission under God***."** Every institution is expected to provide fair working conditions for the employees. However, there is a sense of an organizational injustice that is presenting a challenge to the University actors who acknowledge that the decision making process is influenced by favoritism and personal interest. Some members feel that the organization favors faculty members at the expense of the administrative staff. Other organizational members complain that they are treated unfairly and colleagues in the organization receive rewards for the same or less effort. The following are some examples of the collected witness statements *"Administrative staff know that Professors' salaries exceed their salaries by up to four times and that they have better benefit", "Staff is the university backbone and they are not appreciated as such".*

Equity at the workplace impacts employees' motivation (Adams, 1965). Colleagues compare their work to the work done by someone; employees at the university say things like, *"Faculty members are not contributing equally towards the university; a few members are doing most of the work", "Some Faculty members abuse the system. And some faculty members are working another job and others work very hard"* or "*Salaries vary unfairly from office to office*" and they also say "*The concept of strong personal relations as well as personal interests is dominant at the institution. This creates bias treatment."* These statements clearly identify employees comparing their efforts with someone else and also comparing their own efforts to what they are getting in return. Motivation is lost in the process. Moreover, corruption is commonly defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain and members at the university stated that *"Personal interests are stronger than any regulation",* corruption is recognized as an organizational problem driving to inequality and conflict.

6) **Absence of a Strategic HR office:** The managerial practices in Lebanese organizations have some particularities affected by the country culture. Studies conducted in the Lebanese context label relatively analogous features. The management style in Lebanese organizations is emotional and personal since the private and the professional life of employees is connected and the family and social ties are stronger than structure. Furthermore, nepotistic practices are prevalent in Lebanon. It is argued that nepotism has a negative connotation as it is linked to poor performance, job dissatisfaction and lack of professionalism. At the University employees say that the HR office is weak, top-level leaders control decisions and employees' recruitment, assessment and incentive system is absent. For instance actors state that *"there is a problem of fair recruitment in this country: you cannot recruit the right person in the right place."* Members of the organization also questioned *"Are we employing staff on need or credentials?", "Are we recruiting because we have a job vacancy or we create the vacancy because we have a candidate?", "Are we recruiting through personal connections or do we follow recruitment policies?".*
   Furthermore, the university members believe that an integrated training program do not exist as it was stated that *"We need to have training programs tailored to the employees need. People who sacrificed their life for the university cannot be told that they are not qualified today. Therefore they have to be trained in alignment with their needs."* And an executive said that *"Our staff has to be trained to meet new and fast developing technology and to increase productivity."*

In order to grow sustainably and to meet the challenges mentioned above, the university has to consider initiating socio-economic projects, review future needs and implement new changes as well as develop the human potential. Based on this diagnosis, the intervener suggestions for the restructuring process are described in the following section.

SEAM CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The previous sections presented and described the methodological intervention and diagnosis of dysfunctions. The purpose of this section is to present the contribution of SEAM to the change management of the university. Certainly, universities in Lebanon are subject to intense competition and must consider profound changes. New modes of management and new technologies have changed the operations of higher education institutions, while there is a need for new steering methods for universities to be accountable for their actions. The university should engage in new activities to respond flexibly to changes while guarding its traditional values. SEAM is a theoretical methodology that guides the researcher to see beyond his functional roles and positions and begins to take note of relationships across the organization and between the organization and its environment. This intervention highlights not only the role of each actor in the university, but also leads to a deeper awareness in the modes of management, the culture and the need to deliver quality services to students. The outcome of gaining theoretical knowledge is not just doing the same job better; it involves seeing the organization as a whole in a different light. This section describes the initiatives and recommendations of the researcher.

UB is a private higher education institution that developed in a rural area and expanded quickly. Most of the employees are from the region and they have offered a lot to the university and equally, the university contributed largely to its community. However, the faculty and staff commitment level diminished recently and the university members' feelings towards the institution changed. There is a profound sense of unfair treatment as expressed by a majority of members interviewed. This is somehow caused by the growth stage of the institution. Nearly every nonacademic function (e.g., admissions, maintenance, purchasing) reports to the vice president for administration. A great deal of duplication in certain functions is noticed; also there are significant gaps in other areas. Therefore the reorganization of the administrative functions is a requirement in this stage as was apparent in the dysfunctions analysis and the mirror effect. Creating a more efficient administrative structure, and clarifying who is accountable for which outcome is a priority. The reorganization will save the institution visible and hidden costs and will enhance its performance.

Higher education institutions, long considered static and rigid, need to consider important structural and practical changes. Institutions in this sector are now confronted with a rapidly changing environment that have direct impacts, which necessitate changes in their processes, procedures, their mission, but also to change profoundly their management practices and their relationships with their external and internal environment. The need for change, innovation and transformation is no longer a choice, but rather a necessity. Normally employees resist change initiatives. SEAM is a participatory approach which aims at engaging actors in the transformation process to lessen the resistance effect and enable change achievements. However, the personal conflicts, lack of coordination and unhealthy competition between the university actors may result in opposition and a delay in the change process. In order to avoid strong resistance, SEAM socio-economic projects are built on the basis of teamwork. Mobilizing people in groups alleviate many of the conflicts and disagreements through more frequent communication and collaboration. For instance staff members are engaged on a task force with academicians from different fields. In order to reap the benefits of collaboration and insure successful results these teams need to have specific objectives as well as "head and heart driven actions".

The Rise of Teams

The internal intervener is neither required nor capable of changing the formal structure of the university; instead, a new structure is created. The mobilization of individuals and forming working groups creates dynamism and flexibility within the overall rigid structure. The dual structure proposed by Kotter (2015) describes how the traditional hierarchical structures of large institutions work with a network of employees teaming up to nurture and accelerate change initiatives launched by top management or an executive committee. This would create the best of both structures.

The complicated and slow decision making processes in HEI is caused by the existence of dual structures, the academic and the administrative. Hence the need to link the different parts of the system and assuring the channels of communication and cooperation. Accordingly, the task force members are a blend between administrators and academicians in order to facilitate the interaction between these two entities and result in successful collaboration while implementing actions. Moreover, the rise of teams enabled officers to quickly move from their administrative positions and academic status to projects that are mission and action oriented. The advantage of this initiative is that team members have their position saved within the larger structure. Hence, they work together to complete the group mission and objectives.

Forming interdisciplinary teams is another challenge facing modern universities who suffer from the traditional structure that separates disciplines per faculty. However, an interdisciplinary approach develops lifelong learning skills that enrich the student learning experience and multiply the research directions. Therefore the created teams consist of faculty members from different faculties. The team members are a think tank for cross-departmental or cross-faculty cooperation. This network of teams when empowered and provided with rapid and required information will achieve results at a quick pace. These teams were formed based on the chosen baskets and following the SEAM principles.

Civic Engagement Task Force

Civic engagement and service learning are an affirmation of the mission of the University and the president vision. Service learning is a pedagogical method that unites classroom theory with practical work in the community. The aim is to engage students in community work that would empower them, teach them, and directly benefit community partners. In other words, it is a tool through which the needs of the community are partnered with the learning objectives of the students through the guidance of the faculty and with the support of the university.

Civic engagement would serve to connect our University with its community directly, and, in so doing, would benefit both the community and the University. In addition, our students' learning would be expanded since they would implement the theory they learn in their classrooms through their interaction and work with the community. The theory would become action. Consequently, their learning would be magnified, and, by working with the community, their personal growth would also be encouraged. Our faculty would also benefit. They would be building projects, preferably multi-disciplinary projects, and those projects would last beyond a four-month, one-semester period. Their potential for research, and thus publications, would increase, and, would be grounded in applications that directly benefit their surroundings. Classes in which civic engagement is implemented, faculty members recognize tremendous results in students attitude and learning, they also recognize great potential for the community, other faculty, and the university.

The short- and medium- term goals and objectives of the task force is to facilitate the training of colleagues in civic engagement within their courses and disciplines, and to empower civic engagement throughout the University. The goals and objectives are, in the long-run, to empower the University to become a fountainhead for service learning and civic engagement not only in the region but throughout Lebanon. This objective is both necessary and obtainable.

The Task Force would provide the team with an official mandate, and thus encourage faculty to cooperate with them. Furthermore, by being a Task Force, and not a Committee, it becomes clear that this group of people is working towards one objective and will not exist in perpetuity. The Task Force's mission would be to assess the achievements, needs, capabilities, and potential of the professors and faculties throughout the University in developing and/or strengthening civic engagement and service learning through a survey and selective interviews, and, based on that assessment, to then develop a proposal for strengthening civic engagement at the University.

Task Force on Academic Entrepreneurship

Modern universities are becoming more and more entrepreneurial. The silos and lack of coordination between different departments create inefficiencies; therefore a task force on academic entrepreneurship within the context of education will contribute to sharing new ideas and developing collaborative models through multi-disciplinary lens. This task force is formed to develop and communicate a new image for the institution. The entrepreneurial concept for HE resonates well with some faculty and staff members and, in turn, they will initiate change and alter the identity of the institution. UB instructors and administrators, who acknowledge the rapidly changing environment, are searching for new opportunities to spur economic development and to align scientific research and innovation with the market needs. The task force will recommend and develop actionable items about how to elevate the significance of academic entrepreneurship to the university.

The task force aims to develop a framework to collectively define what comprises academic entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is basically defined as the process by which ideas are turned into action. The entrepreneurial mindset is essential to creatively solving problems and taking actions. This mindset is also essential to cross disciplines and subjects, and learn and teach beyond the curriculum. Faculty members are encouraged to identify connections and integrate real problems in the classroom. So, it is brought to the forefront the need to understand the factors that affect the performance of academic entrepreneurs.

Experts see academic and entrepreneurial activities as being compatible and go hand-in-hand. The entrepreneurial experience can open new doors to academics. The intersection of academia and industry provides a valuable perspective and complementary skills. Academic entrepreneurs think more broadly and creatively, and are able to solve issues that would not necessarily emerge within a smaller-scale lab environment, improve their presentation and negotiating skills, and their ability to manage multiple teams and limited time and resources. Studies claim that the profession of the academic entrepreneur will become normality in the scientific practice with an increasing demand for academic entrepreneurs especially in the humanities and the social sciences, fine arts and the cultural sciences. The task force on academic entrepreneurship aims to draft a definition of this concept in the UB context and to describe the risks and opportunities, and the corresponding internal mechanisms that support or hinder the process.

Social Media Task Force

The Social Media Task Force will develop and implement an action plan with specific indicators to leverage social media presence for academic programs, campus activities and community outreach at UB. The analysis of UB current social media status created a sense of urgency to action. Little to no coordination exists among UB social media accounts. Several accounts appear to be inactive. Moreover, accountability and guidance to the administrators of active accounts is missing. These different accounts are managed by various individuals. Students, communications staff, support staff and some faculty members manage these different accounts with varying levels of activity and/or effectiveness. This approach to social media management creates a lack of consistency of message and jeopardizes the brand and identity of our University. This Task Force will coordinate and strengthen the university’s social media presence. It aims to enhance communication, engagement, and collaboration and information exchange.

CONCLUSION

As diagnosed through the analysis of in-depth interviews, the university faces administrative dysfunctions. On the other hand, UB has strong assets and it strives for academic and administrative excellence. The university is requested today to adopt bold plans, to initiate new frameworks, and to introduce innovative systems and widen staff circles in order to sustain the intended excellence endeavor. It has to draw the academic, administrative and artistic cadres able to strengthen the university efforts, ensure its productiveness and enhance the collective performance, all with the conception of the proper motivations it requires. At the present time, UB enjoys a distinctive campus and talented human potential and in order to move ahead and to better serve the community, the university is solicited to develop agile methods able to adapt to change, face the challenges and contribute to the implementation of plans emerging from its own actors and mission. The initiation of the above mentioned socio-economic projects and the improvement of administrative offices are of great importance for the university's future.

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