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Organization Change and Development in Higher Education, a Neo-Institutional Approach of Accreditation: The Case of a Lebanese Business School

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ABSTRACT

The greater competitiveness and uncertainty of today's environment have led a growing number of organizations to alter drastically the way in which they operate (Cummings and Worley, 2015). This article discusses organizational change and development in higher education with a neo-institutional approach of an accreditation process. It presents accreditation as a fundamental change especially after becoming a central issue for trust and accountability, student mobility requirements and borderless markets for higher education following the Bologna agenda. Within this context, the neo-institutionalism theory was adopted in order to explain and analyze why organizations end up having the same organizational structure even though they evolve in different ways. Using a qualitative approach, this paper reveals the actions currently undertaken by the Faculty of Business and Management in Saint Joseph University in Beirut which recently entered into the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) process of accreditation; pushed to extreme change in a very competitive environment in order to assume its competitive role on the market.

Keywords: Organization Development, Neo-Institutional theory, Accreditation, higher education

Organization Change and Development in Higher Education, a Neo-Institutional Approach of Accreditation: The Case of a Lebanese Business School

The concept of quality in the sense of achieving academic excellence has always been a central value in higher education (Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2007); in this context accreditation was introduced in 2001 at the Bologna ministerial conference in Prague, as a mean to achieve quality assurance (Haug 2003). This awareness has led to numerous new developments in

accreditation which became a central issue for trust and accountability, student mobility requirements and borderless markets for higher education..., leading to proliferation of accreditation systems starting in the USA (Hämäläinen et al. 2001).

As described by Mintzberg (1979) and Santos et al. (1998) higher education institutions are complex adaptive systems permanently interacting with their environment and changing their behavior as needed to survive, to thrive or to avoid deterioration; They are constantly challenged by the internal and external changing environments which play an important role in determining their capacity and willingness to change.

According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983), wider belief systems and cultural frames are imposed on or adopted by organizations; thus, in order to survive, organizations must conform to these rules and belief systems prevailing in the environment. Furthermore Meyer and Rowan (1977), noted that the success of an organization depends on factors other than just efficiency; organizations are sensitive to external assessment criteria of worth (certification, accreditation, praise, etc.). From this point, accreditation can be seen as either a mandatory or voluntary external pressure that can influence the internal operations of an organization (Morest, 2009). In fact, the neo-institutionalism approach is adopted in order to promote accreditation and provides a way to explain and analyze why organizations end up having the same organizational structure even though they evolved in different ways (Carroll and Hannan, 1989).

Our research is a further investigation of the theory of Neo-Institutionalism and Organizational Development in a very active and competitive environment, the higher education institutions in Lebanon thriving their way toward the accreditation in their quest for quality and competitive advantages. The choice of the Faculty of Business and Management (FBM) in Saint Joseph University in Beirut (USJ), as a case study is valid; in addition of being a locally renowned higher education institution strongly engaged in the quality assurance processes, the FBM is a framework that one of the three authors knows quite well having worked there as a teacher-researcher for many years.

Furthermore, the choice of proceeding with a case study is linked to our intention to carry out a fine collection of practices revealing all the complexity of these concepts. Using a qualitative approach through centered semi directive interviews conducted with the actual dean, the formal dean, the accreditation agent and the members of the new structure created within the process, this paper reveals the actions currently undertaken by the FBM which recently entered into the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) process of accreditation.

In the light of what was mentioned before the main research questions are:” What were the FBM’s reasons behind entering into an accreditation process? What are the main benefits of accreditation for a business school? How does FBM intend to overcome disadvantages and to deal with the resistance to change if any”?

In order to determine the organizational change and development occurring in the FBM

with a neo-institutional approach of an AACSB accreditation process, we are going first to define the organizational development and its principle, the neo-institutional concept and their role in an accreditation process in a higher education institution. A summary of the context of the research will follow, with a proper presentation of our results and findings along with their discussion, implications and limitations.

Literature review

Organizational Development (OD)

For organizations to gain the competitive edge over their rivals there has to be an effective change management process (Burke and Trahan, 2000). Organization development can be define as planned process of change (Burke, 1982); it is a long-term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization’s renewal processes (French and Bell, 1999); it is a process that focuses on the organization and not the individual (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016).

It is important to note that organizational change is more likely to succeed when top management is truly committed to the change process and the desired goals of the change program (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001); the top-down pattern of change is characterized by deliberate planning while the bottom-up pattern is rooted in spontaneity, improvisation and subsequent sense-making. In the top-down model changes are made; in the bottom-up model they are emerging. Both planned and incremental/emerging changes may be driven by either internal or external factors (see Table 1).

Table 1: Different forms of change in universities

		Source of change	
		Externally driven	Internally driven
Type of the change	Planned	Changes generated by policy mandates or new government regulations	Changes initiated through institutional level strategic planning
	Emerging	Changes generated by broad social and cultural trends in society	Changes generated by grass roots initiatives

Source: Bess & Dee, 2008

Despite the fact that change is implemented for positive reasons like adapting to volatile environment conditions and remaining competitive, organization members often react to change efforts negatively and resist change (Boohene & Williams, 2012); in fact resistance to change takes place on three levels, namely, the individual, managerial, and organizational levels; and there are various reasons that cause this resistance (Schultz, 2003): **on the individual level**, resistance to change may be caused by fear of the unknown, potential job loss, peer influence, low self-efficiency, external locus of control, inconvenience or distrust of management; **on the managerial level**, resistance to change may be caused by loss of authority, loss of status, exposure of previous inadequate approaches and behaviors, or added

responsibility related to change processes; **on the organizational level**, resistance to change may be caused by cost, the time and effort required to change, deep-rooted organizational culture, bureaucracy, maintaining stability, and also previous investments in buildings, technology, and equipment.

Emener, Hutchison, and Richard (2003) suggested the following guidelines to minimize resistance to the change process: **encourage genuine participation right at the start**. If employees participate in meetings and decision making from the beginning, they tend to have enthusiasm for the change; **an environment of trust** and shared commitment is only created when top management communicates relevant, timely, and accurate information to employees; **employees and managers expect to share** in the economic gains of a change program. Organizations should reconsider their reward structures as part of the change process and communicate them to all employees as an incentive to support changes; and finally **develop and communicate a strategic human resources** plan for the retention, retraining, and redeployment of employees.

The internal and external environments are forces that induce change in organizations; in fact, higher education institutions in the twenty first century are constantly being challenged by their 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 (Richard J. Torraco, 2005). The transformation of higher education has several implications on the institutions' activities and structures (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Neo Institutional Theory (NIT)

According to Wiseman, Astiz, & Baker (2013) neo-institutional theory represents a distinctive approach to the study of social, economical, political, and educational phenomena. For DiMaggio (1988), organizational stability and change are key concerns of neo-institutional theory.

The NIT helps to explain organizational change, it suggests that change occurs when institutional contradictions, caused by exogenous and endogenous dynamics, increase over time to the point where change can no longer be resisted (Cooper et al., 2014); it postulates that, to survive, organizations must secure legitimacy from stakeholders by conforming to external expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Today, organizations are shaped by the phenomena in their institutional environment and increasingly conform to their environment by embracing practices that engender legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977); they must initiate internal organizational efforts to conform to the external expectations for securing legitimacy.

When organizations change according to institutionalized expectations, they do so in a context of taken for granted norms and beliefs, thereby showing little of the active choice

behavior that a resource dependence perspective would predict (Oliver 1991). Furthermore, conformity is often of a ritualistic nature where organizations construct symbols of compliance to environmental change (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Edelman 1992; Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Organizations thus are seen to combine conformity to environmental expectations with organizational stability. In this respect a neo-institutional perspective will emphasize the stability of organizations and the barriers to change that exist within organizations. Neo-institutionalists such as March and Olsen (1989) have given special attention to the latter and have discussed and demonstrated how deliberate attempts at organizational change were frustrated by organizational resistance, whereas most changes in organizations are the result of relatively stable routine responses that relate organizations to their environments (March 1988).

The work of neo institutionalists in organizational analysis highlights the relationship between the organization and its institutional environment and the way in which this relationship shapes the organization's internal structures (Robken 2004). For Rowan (1982) an institutional approach appears especially useful in discussions of organizational change in educational organizations. In fact, the NIT has been adopted in higher education: it was applied to investigate the changes that have taken place in the liberal art colleges (Kraatz & Zajac, 1996), the organizational innovation in public universities (Bastedo, 2007), and the relationship between organizational changes in higher education and governmental policies (Gornitzka, 1999).

For Greenwood and Hinings (1996) this theory provides a model for change that links organizational context and the organization's internal structures. For Baldrige (1983), the societal context surrounding schools and universities has always been the most powerful source of change in educational organizations. Similarly, Brint and Karable (1991) argue that educational organizations operate in the "institutional" environments par excellence.

Accreditation in Higher Education

Accreditation, as one possible mechanism of quality assurance in Europe, was proposed in 2001 at the Bologna ministerial conference in Prague (Haug 2003). With origins in the United States, accreditation is “a process of quality control and assurance in higher education, whereby, as a result of inspection or assessment (or both), an institution or its programs are recognized as meeting minimum acceptable standards” (Adelman, 1992; Sin, Tavares, and Amaral, 2016). As it verifies the fulfillment of pre-defined criteria, accreditation represents a quality seal for an institution or study program. In the absence of a brand name, which is the case for all but a handful of institutions, accreditation can thus be essential for an institution to be competitive. In fact, accreditation is a concept acknowledged by a major number of universities worldwide as a necessity to mention in their strategic plans in order to reflect their commitment to quality assurance in the first place and in order to underline the thrive of the university to success through improvement (Hämäläinen 2003). The term expresses the abstract

notion of a formal authorizing power and refers to the issuing of a quality label to institutions or programs.

Haug (2003) confirmed that “good quality needs to be demonstrated and this requires some sort of external certification”. So, Accreditation is a formal, published statement regarding the quality of an institution or a program, following a cyclical evaluation based on agreed standards (CRE, 2001). It is a process of external quality review used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and higher education programs for quality assurance and quality improvement (CHEA, 2000). In fact, the specific object of accreditation is to certify a defined standard of quality (Hämäläinen, 2001).

The oldest, best-known and most respected business school accreditor is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business - AACSB (White et al., 2008; Lindsay & Campbell, 2003; Jantzen, 2000). According to Stepanovich and Dan Benson (2014), the mission of the AACSB is “to spread accreditation to advance the quality of management education”. The AACSB has been successful communicating the importance of its quality assurance mission, that many schools now perceive the lack of accreditation as a competitive disadvantage (Lowrie and Wilmott, 2009; McKee, Mills, and Weatherbee, 2005). For higher education institutions, accredited status makes a program or institution more attractive to students (Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2007). In fact, many business deans think that the AACSB accreditation helps attract and graduate better students (Romero, 2008).

Within neo-institutional theory, accreditation has been identified as a key normative mechanism to initiate change (Scott, 1995). For Shiffler and Bowen (2015), accreditation can be seen as either a mandatory or voluntary external pressure that can influence the internal operations of an organization. A properly designed and mandated accreditation system could well “be a powerful force for quality and change in any complex system” (Boelen and Woollard, 2009). This is to say that accreditation can guide organizations' development and hence make them more accountable within a “higher social impact”.

Methodology

In order to study OD applied to a higher education institution and precisely to the FBM at Saint Joseph University and analyze the effect of a neo-institutional approach in AACSB accreditation process, we based our methodology on qualitative data collection and analysis.

Centered Semi-Structures interviews were conducted with the actual dean (D1), the formal dean (D2), the accreditation agent (AA) and the members of the committees created within the process (CM1, CM2, CM3, CM4) and the administrative manager (AM). According to Romelar (2005) the centered semi-structured interviews can enable us to collect data adapted to the case studies.

By this qualitative approach, we aim to reveal the actions that the FBM is currently doing in order to succeed the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

process of accreditation, which it recently entered to. Note that data consolidation and treatment was conducted using the NVIVO software which allowed us to determine specific and essential results replying to our research question.

The context of the article: the Faculty of Business and Management (FBM) in Saint Joseph University in Beirut (SJU)

The transformation of higher education has several implications on the institutions' activities and structures. Higher education institutions face high levels of uncertainty in its complex and to some extent intangible processes; in fact, the roles of modern universities have expanded (Bess & Dee, 2008) pushing accreditation to become a central issue (Hämäläinen et al. 2001) for trust and accountability, for student mobility requirements following the Bologna agenda, and for Borderless markets for higher education (the globalization agenda), leading to proliferation of accreditation systems all over the world and Lebanon is not an exception.

Founded in 1875, Saint Joseph University of Beirut, a private Lebanese university, formed the first Catholic and Francophone University in the region. It has 13 faculties, 14 institutes, and 5 schools with 12,000 students. One of its main faculties is the Faculty of Business and Management (FBM) created in 1957, which forms an essential pillar of the SJU at all levels; it has more than 2000 students distributed on four regional campuses in Lebanon. It has a diversified portfolio of bachelor's, master's, MBA, and EDDBA programs.

The credibility of higher education programs and qualifications means a great deal to students, employers, the public at large and the academic community itself especially in Lebanon, a regional hub for quality higher education. In fact, two of the main business schools competitors of SJU in the local market (the American University in Beirut AUB and the Lebanese American University LAU) are already AACSB accredited, and therefore it became a must for the FBM to get accredited. In fact, the FBM started its AACSB accreditation process in 2015 leading to some major changes in its structure (by creating new units and committees: Pedagogical, research and community relations) activities and programs, creating resistance to change and supporting major costly arrangements.

Neo-institutional theory suggests that organizations change occurs when institutional contradictions, caused by exogenous and endogenous dynamics, increase over time to the point where change can no longer be resisted, this is exactly what happened in the FBM as we shall see; in fact, accreditation is an institutional pressure that may lead to organizational change (Parkes and John, 2014).

The Findings

The results of our study in the Faculty of Business Management at the Saint Joseph University (USJ) allowed us to shed the light on the accreditation process in progress, and its consequences in the context of organizational change and neo-institutional theory. The results of our research provide significant insight on the importance of the accreditation in business

schools sector in general and the AACSB in particular being one of the finest accreditation bodies for business schools around the world. In fact, the accreditation process is a long term process in which the human factor plays a big role: “it is a long process spread over 5 years, So It is not easy for people to adapt to this change” (AA); “a big disadvantage of integrating AACSB accreditation process is the human or the social factors, especially when you have people that do not fit in the new structure” (D1, CM1, AA) which will certainly lead to resistance.

The main reasons behind the FBM decision of entering into the accreditation process were identified by:

The external environment and the competition: “FBM did not take the initiative to change, but the environment imposed that change” (D1, D2, CM1, CM2). In fact, the university had to undergo this step in order to face the environmental change and the level of competition. FBM entered the accreditation process after its main competitor American University of Beirut (AUB) took the step: “once the AUB got it we couldn’t sit still, we needed to act fast” (D1, D2). The FBM Accreditation was a mandatory external pressure that influenced her decision (Morest, 2009).

An internal need to organizational development and change: FBM started internally to think about accreditation since 1998 by filling the gaps: “But long ago it was part of our expectations we knew at that time that we had many gaps so we started to prepare ourselves since 1998, we started to prepare ourselves; we were trying slowly to improve our standards” (D1) which confirms French and Bell (1999) definition of OD as a long-term effort. But no actions were taken until its main competitors got accredited.

Seeking external legitimacy: The accreditation process would give the FBM more legitimacy, affecting its ranking and responding to the international standards, it will acquire credibility by meeting formalized standards of certification (Barlett, Pallas, Frostenson 2013): “It will give us more legitimacy, it will affect our ranking pushing us worldwide” (D1, D2, CM1, CM2, CM3, CM4) especially when facing the competition on the Lebanese market: “it is a must now that the AUB got it” (D1, D2).

The main benefits of accreditation for the FBM were mainly facilitating mobility of students and professors and easier collaboration with other universities (Hämäläinen et al. 2001), and increasing the faculty’s credibility and reputation in the market: “Making the mobility easier for faculty member and students” (D1, D2); “Well perceived by the market and the HR managers” (D1, CM1); “It presents an added value to the students and all the stakeholders (Shiffler and Bowen, 2015) related to our institution” (CM1, CM2, AD); on the other hand accreditation will help FBM “**creating a brand of quality** that could go internationally” (D1, D2, CM2, CM3) and “enhances the image of USJ in general and the FBM in particular” (CM1, CM4, AD); giving FBM more legitimacy, affecting its ranking and finally meeting the

international standards. Furthermore it will help the FBM to **Face the internal competition** on the Lebanese market: “we need to catch the AUB and the LAU or else we will start losing” (CM1, CM3); “we need to adapt and change in order to survive” (CM2, AD) confirming Santos et al. 1998.

The FBM intend to **overcome disadvantages, especially dealing with resistance** to change through communication and involvement: “The human or social problem is a major issue especially when you have people that do not fit in this new structure” (D1, CM1, AA) “they will certainly resist any change” (CM1,CM2); “the only way to deal with resistance is through communication and involvement” (D1, AA, CM2); “If you want commitment you need involvement” (D1); “we should raise more awareness about accreditation through communication” (CM1, CM3, CM4); “when people are aware of the objective of this change and accept the fact that any action taken is based on a subjective decision the change will occur more smoothly” (CM2); “Sharing information and changing the beliefs is necessary to overcome disadvantages” (CM1, CM2).

As for dealing with the extra financial cost through negotiation and the involvement of the top management: “we have to bridge the gap and to bring in some new resources, for now, FBM is waiting the final feedback about the cost before entering into negotiation with the governance of the university” (D1). “we need to consider whether we are going to transfer this cost to students through increasing tuition fees or whether we can absorb it in our actual budget” (D1, D2, AA); “There is considerable concern about the cost of accreditation, not just the upfront cost, but the hidden cost of staff, time allocated in preparing documents and the briefings required for visits (D1; Lock, 1999).

Discussion

A university operating in an open, highly internationalized context finds itself in a complex and dynamic environment almost by default. As a consequence, it is likely to be much more open to change than one which serves mainly national or smaller regional constituencies. This is the case of the FBM. More complex and more dynamic environments in turn may lead to the emergence of new internal organizational arrangements that will test the institution’s capacity and willingness to change.

For Robken (2004), undergoing fundamental organizational change is problematic in any organization, but especially in professional bureaucracies, such as consulting firms, hospitals, or educational institutions, in which highly trained and autonomous professionals, rather than administrators, determine the activity structure of the organization.

For Meyer and Rowan (1977), the success of an organization depends on factors other than just efficiency; organizations are sensitive to external assessment criteria of worth (certification, accreditation, praise, etc.). this is why many Lebanese universities and business schools either got accredited or currently seeking one; in fact, accreditation can be seen as either a mandatory or voluntary external pressure that can influence the internal operations of

an organization (Morest, 2009); for the FBM it was a little bit of both, but the formal decision to launch such a process was certainly due to external pressure.

Furthermore, within neo-institutional theory, accreditation has been identified as a key normative mechanism to initiate change (Scott, 1995), it alludes to the concept of legitimacy in which firms may acquire credibility by meeting formalized standards of certification (Barlett, Pallas and Frostenson, 2013). A properly designed and mandated accreditation system could well “be a powerful force for quality and change in any complex system” (Boelen and Woollard, 2009).

Organizational change efforts began in FBM in a planned and systematic manner since many years ago. The vision of entering international standards was clear from the beginning but change was not required. The FBM entered the accreditation process after its main competitor American university of Beirut (AUB) took the step. The core idea of institutional theory is that organizations are shaped by the institutional environment which surrounds them. As Covaleski and Dirsmith (1988) note, “the general theme of the institutional perspective is that an organization's survival requires it to conform to social norms of acceptable behavior”. In fact, the neo-institutionalism approach is adopted in order to promote accreditation and provides a way to explain and analyze why organizations end up having the same organizational structure even though they evolved in different ways (Caroll and Hannan, 1989).

According to Lock (1999), business schools exhibit considerable ambivalence about accreditation. Those who are excluded by a particular form frequently rail against it and sometimes seek or even establish other accreditation bodies. Those who are accredited see it as valuable distinguishing mark for high quality provision and one which enhances demand and the fees that may be charged; the FBM is among the latter, in fact, when they started to look for accreditation bodies they considered many options before choosing the AACSB: “we started considering EQUIS and AACSB before finalizing our choice with the latter” (D1). According to Corcoran (2006), the presence of accreditation doesn’t differentiate an elite business school, but the absence of it does cause more noise and questions.” Non-AACSB schools now may worry that they will be viewed negatively by the public (Hunt, S., 2015).

“Theoretically, the change is always positive but practically it can be positive or negative” (AA). For Hlapolosa (2000), in order to change, people need to end or stop what they used to do and embrace the new reality. This takes some psychological doing. People need to be helped to leave the old situation behind and embrace the new; the FBM needs to consider the social factor during its second phase along with the financial one.

For Lock (1999), there is considerable concern about the costs of accreditation, particularly when there are multiple significant accrediting bodies (EQUIS, AMBA, TQ, AACSB...). It is not just the upfront costs, which are increasing, but the hidden costs of staff time in preparing documents and the preparations and briefings required for visits, quality fatigue is increasing frustration among business schools with duplication of effort. In fact for Hämäläinen (2001), accreditation is a costly arrangement that must be repeated in a cycle (for

instance, every 5 to 10 years) to ensure that quality continues to meet the defined standard. The key question, in this regard, is whether it is possible to create internal quality assurance procedures that make the public confident in the quality of that program. This is exactly what pushed the FBM to create a special unit for quality assurance within its new structure: “we decided to create a quality assurance unit reporting directly to the dean in order to sustain and follow up the quality assurance issues” (D2).

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The term accreditation refers to the issuing of a quality label to institutions or programs, it gives acceptance (or not) that a certain standard is met in a higher education course, program or institution. It is one of several complementary measures in a quality assurance system, whose starting point is the need to maintain and improve good quality in institutions of higher education.

The credibility of higher education programs and qualifications means a great deal to students, employers, the public at large, and the academic community itself. Additional efforts are needed at institutional, national, and international levels to inform the different stakeholders (and actors) of new opportunities for education and professional mobility while keeping them aware of the new risks of rogue providers and diploma and accreditation mills.

The AACSB is one of the finest accreditation bodies for the business schools around the world and the FBM must continue this process for the various reasons mentioned above (Competition, student’s needs, image etc...). It must conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of progress made on the goals and objectives in order to realize this achievement on the institutional level.

The FBM’s allocation of resources and its planning for evaluation must demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its objectives and improve the quality of its education. This plan will also be responding to future challenges and opportunities. But before that it should deal with its actual problems (Resistance and cost) through a proper communication plan and involvement of the different stakeholders. It can reinforce communication through training sessions, meetings in order to explain this process and to make the objectives clear to the concerned parties. Encouraging participation and creating an environment of trust through communicating every step of the process. In this regards the work of Emener, Hutchison, and Richard (2003) can form an excellent guideline in order to minimize resistance to the change.

Finally, the FBM must think about the next steps to be taken during and after the end of accreditation process, focusing on elements of differentiation will be necessary in the future of the FBM due to the mimetic accreditation isomorphism.

Conclusion

Neo-institutional theory provides insights into the organization-environment relationship and

how this relationship shapes the organization's internal structures (Robken, 2004). According to this approach, organizations attain legitimacy because they conform to the salient institutional norms of important constituencies, rather than because of their "technical efficiency" and the value or effectiveness of their educational products. In this context the neo-institutional theory provided a good basis for an account of organizational change in the Faculty of Business and Management in Saint Joseph University in Beirut, one of the pioneer business schools in Lebanon pushed to enter an accreditation process by external pressures. Accreditation is believed by many colleges and universities to be valuable in improving their "brand," and thus enabling them to better attract students and to help in their placement upon graduation.

Our research has its limitations around the external validity of the qualitative methods despite that it represent a quite valuable research in terms of new avenues it has opened for future research. The generalization of the results was never our primary objective; we are well aware that the results presented in this research are very specific to the Faculty of Business Management at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut, and we openly express our reservation concerning the generalization of our results.

Further research must be done to build and elaborate on our findings, either within the FBM or within other higher institutions in Lebanon.

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