Monitoring and evaluating implementation of an International Partnership at a Saudi University

By
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1 Introduction

Like other nations worldwide, the KSA endeavours to secure the mastery and assets required to safeguard its future in all areas. The Saudi government believes that all attempts to overcome adversity begins with a reasonable vision, which is the purpose of 'Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030' (henceforth, 'Vision 2030'); it aims to decrease Saudi Arabia's reliance on oil by advancing a diverse economy that includes key administration segments, such as wellbeing, training, framework, diversion, and the travel industry (Rashad, 2016).

Various components are involved in accomplishing 'Vision 2030', but colleges play an instrumental role. Specifically, the objective is for five Saudi colleges to internationally rank among the top 200 colleges, which means that they must achieve results above the universal norm that is determined by worldwide instruction indicators. As a result, many Saudi colleges are adopting a wide range of approaches to improve their results. Although global college partnerships are not a new approach (Jie, 2010), their numbers have significantly grown worldwide over the last twenty years, and currently, numerous Saudi colleges are partnered with organisations on a global scale.

Since TBU is among the colleges that seek to advance scholarly postgraduate projects, it has implemented an Agency for Graduate Studies and Research. The basic role of this organisation is to establish psychological, social, and logical participation between individuals from TBU and its local and global partners. Thus, in association with GWU, TBU is constructing a doctoral programme of (PhD) in instructive authority and organisation. The partnership seeks to offer equal, coordinated scholarly efforts to advise students on the structure of educational PhD programmes, education in general, and aptitude advancement. The stakeholders involved in the project are described below.

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1.1 TBU

TBU was established in Medina, KSA in 2003, and it offers diplomas for various degrees: Associate, Bachelor, General Diploma, Higher Diploma, Master (MA), and Doctoral level qualifications (PhD). The college has five primary goals: (1) provide exemplary scholarly projects in different fields; (2) create and bolster inquiry, including the improvement of informational quality and the accomplishment of advancement objectives; (3) address the issues of national improvement and the employment market's requirements to deliver graduates that are fit to enter the learning economy from the perspective of globalisation; (4) bolster TBU's role in network administration and in building a learning society; and (5) provide a domain to help support profitability and success.

The Department of Educational Administration (DEA)

The DEA is a department within the College of Education at TBU that primarily provides graduate projects to create and train experts in the fields of instructive organisation, administration, and finance.

1.2 GWU

GWU is a congressionally sanctioned, non-revenue driven organisation situated in the District of Columbia, US. The programme's members, which are discussed in this paper, were drawn from the University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD) in the College of Education. The university is the largest advanced education organisation in the US capital, offering degrees, such as an MA, EdS, PhD, EdD, and Graduate Certificate projects to prepare future pioneers, who apply the learning and scientific skills they acquire in a broader social context. It annually selects students, graduates, and expert undergraduates nationwide as well as from over twenty other nations.

1.2.1 GSEHD

The GSEHD at GWU seeks to provide a solid theoretical comprehension of the connection between a hypothesis, research, and practice in order to develop the skills of researchers and insightful experts, investigate basic issues in the field, individually consider student advancement, and beneficially enhance this unique undergraduate study. It provides a broadly perceived Education Administration programme certified by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a specialised professional association.

The primary aim of the partnership that this paper is concerned with involves constructing a PhD programme that prepares students for

network administration, instruction, and research in K-12 and advanced education by thoroughly preparing students in the principles, research, and practice that is required to lead their organisations, according to national and global standards. The initial segment of this programme is comprised of six courses (eighteen credit hours), which are jointly instructed according to a mixed learning model that is taught by GWU and TBU employees. Successful candidates receive a Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) in Educational Leadership and Administration from GWU with credit hours that have been earned at TBU.

2 Research questions and methodology

It features issues related to the 'Vision 2030' goals of constructing an instructional framework that is aligned with the market's requirements and creating a solid, monetary establishment though the TBU and GWU partnership. In constructing a PhD programme involving this partnership, key steps were followed (see Figure 1), which were proposed by Sallis (1990). This approach enables an organisation to establish requirements and determine how they can best be accomplished. As a participatory procedure, it engenders trust, builds staff confidence, and encourages the supervisory group to handle any changes that may arise.

The first seven stages of Sallis' (Ibid.) model were discussed in a previous paper by the present author (Alhazmi, 2017), who is one of the principal agents involved in the programme. Since an overarching organisation has already been established, the current study seeks to address the final step ('Monitor progress'), which was not covered in the previous paper. Thus, this study is concerned with the screening and assessment of the partnership's organisation, which is accomplished by utilising a subjective approach and philosophy and employing interviews to assess perceptions of the partners/recipients (see Table 1).

The nature of this venture requires a method of evaluation because a vast range of challenges may emerge at this stage that could be avoided in similar future projects at TBU. Observation and assessment methods ensure the stakeholders that they are appropriately proceeding with the project, and the outcomes are satisfactory. In this situation, an approach has been employed to address the following exploratory questions:

1. At the implementation stage, what is the level of the partnership process in terms of inputs, activities, and outputs?
2. What are the outcomes of the partnership at the implementation stage?
3. Has the partnership resulted in any benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes in terms of department management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students?

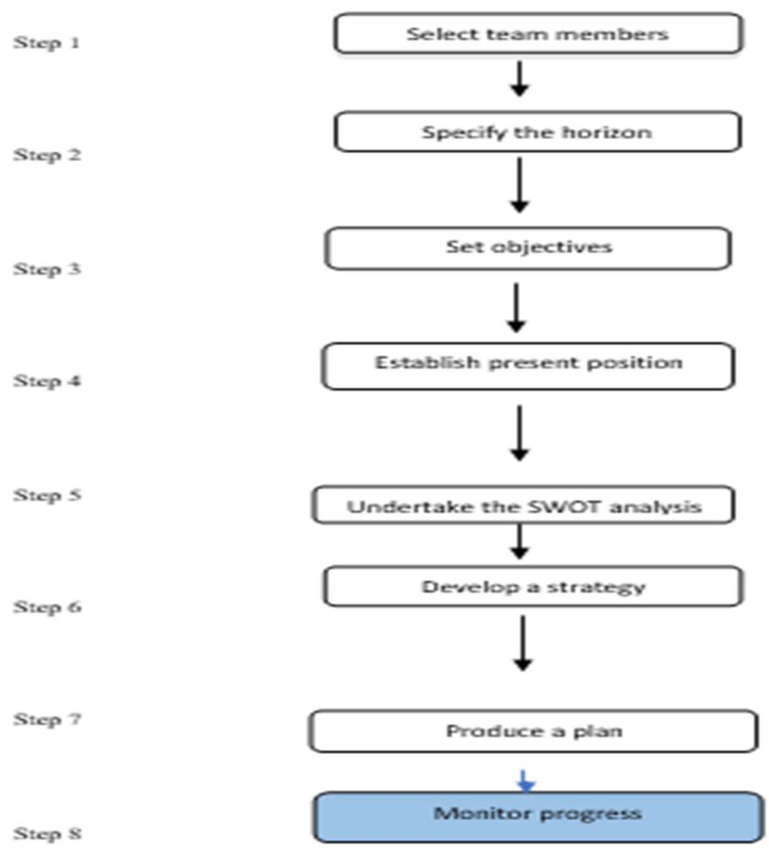

Figure 1. This represents the various stages involved with establishing a project. (Source: Sallis, 1990)

The current research concerns the monitoring of the partnership at the implementation stage, and asks: (1) What is the level of the partnership process in terms of input, activities, and output? (2) What are the partnership's outcomes? (3) Has the partnership resulted in any benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes regarding the

department's management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students?.

3 Monitoring and evaluating a programme

3.1 Monitoring

Any task requires the implementation of adequate processes to guarantee effective functioning, which can be achieved through observation. This involves efficient and constant gathering, examination, and the utilisation of data for executive control and basic leadership. The act of checking is a vital aspect of everyday administration, as it involves the examination of data to assist in recognising, facilitating, and executing issues. This way, the administration and primary partners of an organisation can receive early notification regarding signs of progress (or a lack thereof) in a certain department or the accomplishment of the required results (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] Evaluation Office, 2002). Specifically, observation entails routinely checking data to ensure progress, which includes regular monthly and quarterly reports of the yields, practices, and utilisation of assets (e.g., individuals, time, finances, and materials) to guarantee that the plan is proceeding within the required limits of the designated assets.

3.2 Assessment

An assessment concerns the evaluation of a task, programme, or strategy that is either in progress or complete, including its structure, execution, and results. This stage determines the issue's pertinence, the degree of satisfaction concerning its outcomes, formative productivity, viability, effects, and maintainability. An assessment should provide trustworthy, valuable data that enables a consolidation of the lessons that have been learned into a basic leadership approach for the beneficiaries and donors (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017).

An assessment seeks to methodically and dispassionately evaluate progress and the accomplishment of a desired result. It includes appraisals that vary in extent and depth, which are conducted during specified periods according to the requirements of the evaluative information needed to achieve a certain result. All of the assessments—even for tasks that survey pertinence, execution, and other criteria—should be connected to the end results rather than merely establishing practices or yields (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2010). Assessments enable a greater comprehension of the extent to which tasks are achieved and the impact regarding

individuals' welfare, while also facilitating the evaluation and determination of the next steps. The information that is gathered enables a group to anticipate the future and evaluate the current programme's execution in order to ascertain whether it is proceeding on schedule and if certain aspects should be adjusted to guarantee the preferred outcome (Ibid.).

3.3 Checking and assessment

The practices of checking and assessment, which are involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), involves an intuitive, measured process that provides government authorities, senior staff members, and the wider society with concrete evidence of the gain that has resulted from their involvement in a project. This improves administration conveyance, arranging and designating assets, and demonstrating the project's results, as a component of the project's responsibilities to its key partners (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017).

Moreover, M&E helps to improve the execution of a project and accomplish results. Observation and assessment seek to estimate and evaluate the execution of a project and facilitate the comprehension and handling of the results and yields, which are known as the 'advancement results'. Observation and assessment are concerned with surveying data sources and executing forms with an emphasis on assessing the suitability of different variables for a given advancement result (e.g., yield, associations, arrangement guidance/exchange, backing, and handling/coordination). These involve two particular and firmly associated points, and the first concerns the yield, which arises from the contributions of the programme, venture, or exercise. For example, it may include sensitive, impromptu assistance that is conveyed outside of the primary undertaking (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [UNISDR] Secretariat, 2009). The second point, on the other hand, concerns the results of the programme's improvement endeavours, which are the adjustments that the programme expects to accomplish through its undertakings. In terms of the results, the generation of yield and accomplishing the project's commitments are connected. Therefore, M&E should be a fundamental component of every programme, providing a means of assessing its success or progress to accomplish its objectives, while informing key stakeholders of the outcomes (Webb & Elliott, 2002).

The targets (that the checking and assessment practices are concerned with) change and are contingent upon the programme or undertaking. In general, the aim is to evaluate a programme's viability, efficiency,

and its suitability for achieving the initial desires. Furthermore, M&E considers both the end client and the aspirations of the undertaking. An end client may simply wish to know whether the programme has achieved its targets, or they may wish to evaluate the expenses involved in accomplishing these targets and whether the contributed assets could have been better deployed. Alternatively, they may wish to establish the programme's impact in accomplishing the recommended goals (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017).

Observation and assessment practices are normally connected, and it is vital to recognise the motivation behind them. Observation tracks the utilisation of information sources and yields, but it may also track results. Meanwhile, an assessment occurs at specific periods and enables a programme's progress to be evaluated over a longer timeframe. It tracks changes, while highlighting the results and effect levels (UNISDR Secretariat, 2009).

3.4 Types of M&E

There are various distinctive elements involved in the checking process, which each relate to the type of data required and the observation's consistency. Observation can vary in terms of consistency and its elements. Both the assessment and observation processes should be possible to conduct during the mid-term, end, and ex-post assessment stages to either help steer the undertaking or determine the exercises for future tasks and programmes. The assessment is led by a group, which is selected by the contributing organisation and directed as a 'mission' (UNDP Evaluation Office, 2002).

Towards the end of a venture, data of the task should be gathered, as this can be utilised to improve upcoming plans. It involves recording the resources employed, the results, and the progress made towards the desired outcome. An assessment can be employed to determine whether the appropriate course of action was selected and that the correct combination of systems and assets was employed. Generally, the assessment is either developmental, such as creating learning and comprehension opportunities for the partners involved in the venture, or it is summative to demonstrate the level of accomplishment. It is usually centred on the results and its association with the yields. Therefore, an assessment can be diverse, depending on its timing and focus (Umhlaba Development Services, 2017).

4 Methodology

4.1 Investigation systems for observation and assessment

A reasonable structure is fundamental for managing checking and assessment practices during a project, and it should clarify the programme's desired function by delineating its elements and intentions regarding how to accomplish the ideal outcome. A structure, therefore, determines a programme's objectives and targets, while characterising the connections between the components that are key to its execution. It also explains the internal and external components that may influence the programme's success.

In the present study, the researcher spent several weeks considering the data to identify the appropriate system that would include all the project's angles and dimensions. Although no perfect system of observation and assessment exists, certain approaches should be employed in different circumstances. The three most widely recognised systems include applied systems, results systems, and coherent structures/rationale models (Frankel & Gage, 2007).

4.1.1 Calculated structures

Calculated structures are charts that distinguish and delineate the connections among significant components (e.g., authoritative and individual) that may impact a programme's success. They help ascertain which variables (e.g., fundamental, social, monetary, and socio-political) will be influential and depict how each of these elements may align with the results. They do not shape the reasons for the observation and assessment exercises but may help clarify a programme's results (Ibid.).

4.1.2 Results systems

Results systems, or key structures, illustrate a project's immediate connections, from the moderate aftereffects of specific exercises to the general targets and objectives. They demonstrate the causal connections between the programme's targets and illustrate how each of the results or yields impacts the accomplishment of every goal. Results systems also show how the desired destinations are connected to each other as well as with the definitive objectives. These structures shape the reasons for observation and assessment exercises at the goal level (Ibid.).

4.1.3 Coherent structures or rationale models

Coherent structures, or rationale models, provide a straightforward, coherent translation of the connection between the sources of information, exercises, yields, results, and the contacts of a project's targets and objectives, demonstrating the causal connection between

these elements and their effect on the project's objectives and desired destinations. Sensible structures establish the sources of information that are expected to achieve the exercises/procedures that will deliver the specific yields that produce certain results and effects. These structures shape the reasons behind the checking and assessment exercises for all phases of a project (ibid.).

For the present study, a rationale model was selected, which is dependent on periods of association, and the aspects were determined by observation and assessment (see Table 1). A rationale model is a guide, or streamlined illustration, that illuminates the associations between assets, exercises, and an undertaking's results. Based on an assessment practice, a realistic portrayal of a project facilitates positive progress. The rationale model has numerous advantages, as it helps distinguish between what has been done and the results, guides the work's focus, increases expectations, enhances reasoning, helps prioritise and allocate the assets, and it encourages the recognition of critical qualifying factors. Moreover, a rationale model also encourages consideration regarding why a programme is being undertaken in a certain way, including the determination of the effects. It enables the investigation and construction of a common comprehension of the elements involved and assists with the consideration of the project's needs, including how to address them. Furthermore, this model is helpful for identifying the timeframe of a project's goal(s) and providing a pathway for estimating progress. It distinguishes between tasks to determine potential dangers within a programme and ways to overcome them.

A rationale model also allows one to convey the reasons behind a project to the stakeholders or beneficiaries. It improves the probability that a programme's endeavours will be fruitful by communicating the motivation behind the project, the anticipated outcomes, and the activities that are expected to prompt the ideal outcomes. So, it serves as a reference point for the programme's stakeholders and improves the staff's ability to arrange, execute, and assess the project's various elements. While involving the project's partners, it also improves the probability of asset duty by incorporating the discoveries of other research and exhibition ventures and identifying potential deterrents to the programme's tasks. This way, the staff can address issues at an early stage.

Logic models can help educators plan and monitor programme evaluations. The four major components of education programmes are

resources (i.e., inputs to the programme), activities (i.e., aspects of implementation), outputs (i.e., observable products of the completed activities), and outcomes (i.e., effects or impacts within various timeframes) that are short-, mid-, or long-term (Lawton, Brandon, Cicchinelli, & Kekahio, 2014). When these components are depicted as a sequence of events, the resulting graphic reflects the logic underlying the programme. For this reason, it is dubbed a 'logic model' (Figure 1).

Rationale models also enable evaluators to determine how well the assessment questions are being addressed. Furthermore, employing rationale models in programme assessments provides the data that is required to make determinations concerning programme assets, exercises, yields, and results. These elements are frequently an assessment's focus and may include questions, such as:

- **To what degree were the assets adequate for actualizing the programme?**
- **To what degree were the programme exercises conducted as planned?**
- **To what degree were the normal programme yields achieved?**
- **To what degree did the programme accomplish its short-, mid-, and long-term aims?**

A rationale model demonstrates a causal association between the needs established, the actions conducted, and how this affects both individuals and networks. Thus, a rationale model was created for the present study as an 'ebb and flow' examination (Table 1).

4.2 Methods of data collection

Activities from all a project's elements should be incorporated in an M&E work plan. The process is dependent on the logic model of checking and assessment practices, which determines the data that needs to be gathered, the best collection method, and how to disseminate and utilise the findings of an M&E process. To gather the necessary information for addressing its inquiries, this project employed individual perception and report investigation methods.

Ebb and flow research utilises subjective information, including interviews, perceptions, and reports, to create a general picture of different perspectives in the rationale model. Table 1 presents the logic model that was constructed from this project's gathered information.

Table 1. Logic model for the current project

			Methods of data collection		Monitoring (Process)			Evolution evidence of change (outcomes)			Impact
	Level	Duration	Methods and samples	Purposes	Project resources (inputs)	Core project component (activities)	Evaluation of project Implementation and participating (outputs)	Short- Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term	
GWU and Partnership	Program implementation level	One year	- Interviews - Sample: students - Team members - Two leaders in both universities - Observation	- Evaluate the implementation phase of the program	- Students - Announcement (by means of university website) - Time and dates - Student's files - Smart Room - Facilities - Blackboard	- Review program and course specifications - Cooperation with course instructors online - Meeting leaders at Taibah U.	- Drafting the final file of the program announcement. - Implementing the admission process at both universities	- Meeting and introductory session on the first day	- Course delivery: the first semester of PMC (i.e.fall semester)). - Creation of a new program to promote improvement in students academic writing. - Committee to facilitate and support the program.	- Course delivery: the second semester of PMC (i.e. spring semester)). - Writing a full report of the year for the President and Ministry of Education. - Meeting with the committee.	- Challenges - Benefits - Recommendations - Enthusiasm/ satisfaction expressed by team members at both universities concerning the achievement of the program phases, including the subsequent step (I . e. implementation). - Creation of a strong relationship between team members and university leaders. - Recognition of a strengths and weaknesses during all service contract phases. - Building a friendly and strong relationship between the teams in both universities .

										-Feedback from instructors and students.	- Addressing resistance to change. - Students enthusiasm for their achievements. - Interest of society . - Encouraging other universities to use this partnership as a model - Build a friendly relationship abroad. - Promote the ability for students and faculty members to share knowledge abroad. Reduce the level of resistance to change
					(Monitoring Questions) 1. What is the level of the partnership process in terms of inputs, activities and outputs at implementation levels?			2- What are the outcomes of the partnership at implementation levels?			(impact Questions) 3. Has the partnerships resulted in any impact in terms of: departmental management; team members; leaders; course content; teaching/ learning processes; and students?

The above model was developed to encompass all the elements involved in the partnership's implementation. It includes the chief components of the logic model, the M&E process, and contains keys that provide additional details.

5 Results

Based on the literature review and the data collected, the logic model can be divided into the following categories:

1. Duration
2. Data collection
3. Monitoring the project resources (inputs), core project components (activities), and evidence of project implementation and participation (outputs)
4. Evaluating evidence of change, or the outcomes (short-, medium-, and long-term)

5. Impact

6. Three primary components (monitoring, evaluation, and the impact of questions)

This logic model captures the logical flow of the performance story and connections within, organising the data to promote readers' understanding and allow them to evaluate the hypothesised connections. A detailed explanation of the logic model's content is provided below.

5.1 Programme implementation, one year (PMC)

Along with observations and a document analysis, fifteen participants were interviewed, including eight students, four course instructors, and three team members. Data was collected to answer the primary research questions concerning the monitoring, evaluation, and impact of the project:

1. What is the level of the partnership process, in terms of inputs, activities, and outputs at the implementation stage?

2. What are the partnership's outcomes at the implementation stage?

3. Has the partnership resulted in any benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes, regarding the department's management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students?

5.2 Monitoring process

Data was collected to answer the principal question of the monitoring aspect of the implementation stage, which concerns the level of the partnership process, regarding inputs, activities, and outputs. The logic model revealed the key inputs: (1) students, (2) announcements on the university's website, (3) time and dates, (4) student files, (5) smart room, (6) facilities, and (7) blackboard. Meanwhile, the project's core components were also categorised:

1. Reviewing programme and course specifications

2. Cooperating with online course instructors

3. Meeting leaders at TBU

The teams from both universities reviewed the programme and course specifications to ensure that the service contract's agreements were in place. Then, course instructors were appointed at TBU to provide the data concerning the Saudi educational system. This enabled students to compare the core elements according to US and KSA standards and ascertain any similarities and differences. Many files that had been translated from Arabic to English were provided to the course instructors by the TBU team to explain:

1. The education system and political situation in the KSA
2. Teaching Special Education Law in the KSA, concerning the improvement of pre-service teacher education and services for students with disabilities
3. Rules of behaviour and attendance
4. Teacher evaluation and accountability
5. Teacher evaluation forms

The assignments were subsequently amended, according to the knowledge objective type that was published by the KSA. After cooperating with the course instructors to finalise the course and programme specifications, the TBU team met with the project leaders to plan the next phases of the service contract, draft the first proposal of the admission process, and record potential challenges.

The programme implementation steps can be divided into two stages: (1) drafting the final programme announcement and (2) implementing the admission process. To attract the best students, the teams at both universities cooperated to complete the announcement. They discussed the basic admission requirements, modifying some aspects, such as the English language requirement. The teams experienced some challenges with the Chair and other TBU leaders due to their divergent opinions regarding the requirements and overlooking the agreements that had been made between the teams. Although TBU's fully centralised system caused many challenges, and even prompted a leader to suggest the omission of program information in favour of the requirements, the team overcame these hurtles. A suitable announcement was published on the TBU website, which included the following:

1. Introduction
2. Brief information concerning the PhD program
3. Admission criteria
4. Documents to be submitted to the Dean of Admission for Graduate Studies
5. Guidelines on how to submit an application
6. Selection of applicants
7. Important dates
8. Written and oral test sites
9. Contact information

Subsequently, TBU received approximately 320 applications and created three committees to organise the files in accordance with the university's system: (1) a preliminary screening committee for applicant data, (2) a committee to prepare and correct acceptance tests (e.g., written and interview tests), and (3) a committee for the electronic

installation of the courses and program hours on the TBU system. The steps taken by each committee are described in detail below.

5.2.1 First committee

The first committee reviewed the applicants' preliminary data and checked it against the admission conditions and the results of the written tests and interviews. Then, it nominated eight applicants to be admitted into the program by taking the following into account:

1. **The preliminary data prepared by the Head of the DEA is utilised during the preliminary screening of the applicants. This is completed by a competent committee and focuses on the applicants' English proficiency.**
2. **Before announcing the names, examination dates, and personal information, the committee selects twenty applicants and twenty advanced candidates, who were approved by the Rector.**

5.2.2 Second committee

The members of the second committee collaborated to prepare the written and oral tests, which were primarily conducted in English, to assess the students' academic skills. The written exam included three sections:

1. **Three questions related to leadership and administration (40 points)**
2. **Ten questions related to research (20 points per question)**
3. **Questions related to English language ability (40 points)**

The oral test included three questions about leadership and four questions about the master's dissertation. All forty students took the test, which was marked by the teams at both universities and organised from the highest to the lowest scores. During the committee's final meeting, the members determined that the best candidates should be chosen based on the highest test and interview scores first. Second, the foreign university graduates should be recognised by the ministry. These criteria were determined because the program would be presented in English and be subject to GWU teaching methods. Therefore, those who spoke fluent English and had prior experience with Western education were given priority. However, these criteria were subject to the test and interview results as well as the candidate gaining approval from their employer to undertake full-time study. Other considerations included the capacity, or level, of English testing for graduates from foreign universities and the relevant mechanisms of the program's scientific content. The final list of candidates for admission to the PhD program of Educational Leadership was provided by the Faculty of Education in cooperation with GWU.

5.2.3 Third committee

To prepare the students for the programme's commencement, GSEHD permitted its team members to work directly with their counterparts at TBU in order to provide the facilities and procedures for students to register and complete their files. The University Education Unit requested that each student's certificates and files be submitted to the agencies accredited by GWU to verify their validity. However, since this process required somewhere between fifteen and sixty days to complete, the team at TBU requested that this step be bypassed. While this was accepted by GWU's Graduate School, the Admissions Office was unwilling to make this exception. Following negotiations and the submission of select student files from accredited universities, the office accepted the students' files as an exceptional case for admission. Finally, all accepted students were registered with both TBU and GWU, and all the committees reported their achievements and challenges to the Dean of the College of Education at TBU.

5.3 Evaluation of change (outcomes)

Data was collected to answer the research question concerning the partnership's outcomes at the implementation stage. According to the logic model, these consequences can be divided according to whether they involve short-, medium-, or long-term impacts. The short-term outcomes are comprised of a single element, which is a meeting and introductory session of the TBU team on the first day. They plan how to best receive the students, which includes setting up a 'smart' meeting room. The TBU team introduced themselves to the eight students, who had been accepted onto the program, and they helped them follow GWU's Blackboard program's steps. Then, they delivered a presentation about the program, which addressed many of the students' queries. The meeting ended with the TBU team giving the students guidance about how to best benefit from the program. The students met with the other programme participants and the course instructors from the PMC program at GWU. Some of the students initially expressed concerns about the programme, but these were alleviated by the team's guidance.

Next, the medium-term outcomes were divided into three themes: (1) delivering a course during the first (fall) semester of the PMC, (2) creating a new committee to facilitate and support the program, and (3) submitting a report to the Saudi Ministry of Education.

5.3.1 Course delivery

Following the programme's admission, registration, and orientation, the members of the project's team at both institutions established a

schedule to deliver six courses, which totalled eighteen credit hours over two semesters (fall 2017 and spring 2018). Six instructors, one co-instructor from GWU, and two co-instructors from TBU, held PhDs in the field of education and taught these six courses over the two semesters.

The following three courses were taught during the fall semester:

Course #1: S-B-L examined the functions, processes, and best practices involved in school principal leadership. The course integrated theory with practice through sustained field-based experience to develop the students' capabilities, competencies, and approaches as they transitioned into a leadership position. A variety of instructional methods, including case studies, scenario-based activities, Socratic seminars, and problem-based practice, were employed in order to orient students to the role of principal leadership as well as its setting.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (40%), Assignment 2 (20%), Assignment 3 (40%)

Student achievement totals: 90.33%, 95.33%, 95%, 97%, 98.33%, 92.00%, 97.33%, 97.33%

Course #2: I-H-E developed the students' marketable skills by engaging them in a semester-long experience in a functioning area of a college or university that was related to a professional association, government agency, or another organisation that was relevant to higher education.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (15 points), Assignment 2 (10 points), Assignment 3 (30 points), Assignment 4 (30 points), Assignment 5 (10 points)

Student achievement totals: 90.70%, 92.30%, 95.80%, 94.00%, 98.80%, 90.60%, 94.20%, 94.00%

Course #3: I-N-A introduced students to the role of a principal (as the curriculum leader) and to the curriculum's practice and theory at national, state, district, and school levels. This course also included information about planning and supervising the curriculum, determining the appropriate curriculum (i.e., what information should be taught and tested), and how to evaluate the alignment of written, taught, and tested curriculum elements. The participants also defined what a curriculum is and is not. The materials and course activities gave the students an opportunity to observe instruction in relation to a curriculum and assessment.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (16 points), Assignment 2 (10 points), Assignment 3 (14 points), Assignment 4 (20 points), Assignment 5 (40 points), and a bonus of 5 points

Student achievement totals: 76.30%, 94.25%, 94.00%, 101.50%, 102.50%, 78.50%, 82.50%, 90.25%

The data revealed that during the first semester, all students successfully passed the course requirements, although the instructors and co-instructors recognised that some still needed to improve their academic writing skills. The GWU team suggested an online workshop to address this, but it was scheduled during the mid-term holiday when the students were unavailable. Instead, the teams at both universities decided to provide regular feedback to address any weaknesses in the students' writing, including their dissertations. One of the co-instructors, who had studied abroad, gave the students advice on narrowing the gap between the two cultures to minimize their stress and potential culture shock. The students expressed strong satisfaction with the support from their instructors and co-instructors.

The second medium-term outcome of the partnership was the creation of a new committee to facilitate and support the program. At the end of the first semester, the team encountered administrative and logistical challenges due to the Saudi system's centralisation. To address this, the Supervisory Committee for the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership was created, and it entailed the following duties:

- **Review the schedule for the program's implementation according to the contract's terms.**
- **Review the payment of the financial dues according to the contract's terms.**
- **Prepare a document that is designed to protect the programme's intellectual property in accordance with its regulations.**
- **Coordinate with the Dean of Distance Education and the Dean of Information Technology to electronically support the programme in meeting the course requirements.**
- **Continuously maintain planners and periodic reports to support the programme and overcome difficulties that may arise.**

The committee met monthly or bi-monthly to academically and administratively review the program, which was proven to be effective at solving many challenges, such as issues involving technology, time management, and students' personal issues. At the end of term, the team submitted a report to the committee members.

Three long-term outcomes were revealed by the data: (1) course delivery during the second (spring) semester of the PMC; (2) feedback from the instructors and students; (3) the submission of a full report (that covered the entire year) to the President and Ministry of Education in KSA.

The second semester was comprised of the following three courses taught by GWU instructors, who were in collaboration with TBU co-instructors.

Course #1 aims:

1. Expose the students to models, practices, and processes that are critical for the development of a teacher through authentic, engaging, and sustainable instructional leadership strategies.

2. Focus on the roles and functions of instructional leaders to improve a teacher's quality through evaluations and nurturing to increase the levels of students' authentic and rigorous learning, the supervision of staff's development and human relations, and the capacity for managing the changes that are inherent to these processes.

3. The class included ten hours of sustained, authentic, theory-to-practice experience in settings that were either public, charter, private, or at other educationally approved sites. This enabled students to synthesise and apply both their knowledge and practice to develop their skills through sustained, standards-based work in real-life settings in a way that was designed and guided by the course instructor and the school district personnel.

4. A requirement for the course was one sustained theory-to-practice experience that was comprised of two integrated parts.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (35/200 points), Assignment 2 (35/200 points), Assignment 3 (35/200 points), Assignment 4 (20/200 points), Assignment 5 (75/200 points)

Student achievement totals: 94%, Incomplete, 99%, 99%, 100%, 98%, 91.5%, 100%

Course #2: I-K-A fulfilled the ELCC Standard 7 Laboratory Setting/Internship by providing students with opportunities to synthesise and apply the knowledge, practice, and the development of the skills, which were identified in the ELCC Standards 1-6 through substantial, sustained, and standards-based work in real-life settings. At their internship site, the students identified a school/district/administrative office that aligned with the leadership position they aspired to obtain after exiting the program. In this setting, a seasoned mentor provided the experience that was necessary for them

to transition into the role, which was cooperatively planned and guided by the institution and school district personnel. The students were able to integrate the practice and theory that they had learned from the program's coursework.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (10/100 points), Assignment 2 (10/100 points), Assignment 3 (10/100 points), Assignment 4 (30/100 points), Assignment 5 (10/100 points), Assignment 6 (15/100 points), Assignment 7 (15/100 points)

Students achievement totals: 90.70%, Incomplete, 96.70%, 100%, 100%, 98.70%, 92.75%, 100%

Course #3: S-L-P provided an overview of the critical federal and state constitutional and statutory provisions for public school education: (1) the origin and legal status of the school unit; (2) the nature of the school board; and (3) the rights and responsibilities of the employees, parents, and pupils within public education systems. This course enabled students to determine, interpret, understand, and implement federal and state law, case law, and local public-school district policies and regulations.

Course requirements: Assignment 1 (25/100 points), Assignment 2 (30/100 points), Assignment 3 (25/100 points), Assignment 4 (20/100 points)

Student achievement total: 86%, Incomplete, 96%, 100%, 100%, 100%, 86.5%, 100%

The students successfully passed all the course requirements in the second semester. They found Course #3 the most challenging, as it consisted of laws and regulations that do not exist in the KSA education system. Some students experienced difficulties understanding the differences between KSA and US systems.

Following completion of the PMC program, the TBU team submitted a full report (in Arabic and English) to the Saudi President and Ministry of Education, including an Executive Summary, details of the doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Administration, the curriculum study plan table, details of the PMC (the fall semester in 2017 and the spring semester in 2018), and recommendations for the leaders at TBU and the Ministry of Education. The Supervisory Committee for the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Administration subsequently met to discuss the report and develop initial marketing and investment ideas for the programme. The committee planned additional meetings to finalise the program, including a ceremony and other potential research areas. When the evaluation process was complete, this information was collected and

organised according to observations and discussions from the teams and leaders of both universities as well as the student and instructor evaluations (as discussed below).

5.3.2 Student feedback

In total, eight students were invited to provide feedback on the program. The information they provided revealed that they had learned about the program from various sources, including the workshops organised by TBU and GWU as well as through friends and TBU's invitations to join the program. All the students had a degree in instruction, and the majority were residents of MA, except for one student, who scored lower than the others in all the courses. The students expressed satisfaction with the course but recommended an improvement in blending theory and practice. Specifically, they were satisfied with the teaching and teaching methods used for the instruction and appraisals, which included the completion of numerous exercises to improve their aptitude. For example, they were required to study the US and KSA education models to develop a school vision, an individual initiative theory, and to contrast the relevant laws and moral issues in the US with those in the KSA. Most of the respondents stated that they would recommend the programme to others, and they were satisfied with both the timing of the live class sessions and the access to support. However, they were disappointed with the study hall office and especially the poor internet connection. Finally, they expressed the hope that TBU and the Ministry of Education could cooperate in the future to facilitate the program, as it enabled significant improvement in the KSA's teaching quality, especially regarding teaching administration.

5.3.3 Instructors' feedback

The two instructors and co-instructors involved in the program concurred that the program, course reading material, and extra materials suited the students' needs. Regarding the students' capacity, the educators observed that those with previous instructive experience, who were deemed to be experts in the field, profited more than those without related experience. Also, it was observed that students with proficient English and academic compositional skills could better adapt to meet the course's requirements. Furthermore, they noted that the educational methodologies employed in the courses suited the students and helped them fulfil their goals. The evaluation of the educational aspects in US and KSA contexts enabled both the students and teachers to acknowledge the critical nature of the programme for instructive pioneers in the KSA. Generally, the programme was deemed a success

by the students, and all the GWU teachers valued the assistance and collaboration of their associates at TBU. The programme's tasks were effectively completed by using models, such as Bloom's Taxonomy, while also observing government-funded school homerooms.

5.4 Impact

Data was gathered to address the research question regarding the programme's various effects (e.g., benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes), concerning the department's management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students.

According to the interviewees' perceptions, the programme's impacts included obtaining mastery of its subject matter and achieving positive human connections, while other significant aspects involved the programme's elements that the partnership addressed in a particularly interesting and useful way. From the perspective of GWU, the key qualities of the programme involved excitement, upgraded collaboration, and adaptability. In fact, when the researcher worked with the GWU pioneers and employees, it was clear that they were enthusiastic about the programme:

Since I found out about the partnership between our college and the TBU group, and being recently engaged with this task, I have become truly enthusiastic about it, particularly as it is the principal association we have had with a Saudi University in regards to building up a PhD program (Interviewee A).

Meanwhile, Interviewee B noted, 'I am anticipating managing Saudi students and examining [issues with them that are] identified [in] the course schedule'.

Based on the specialists' perceptions and discussions with GWU staff, it was clear that they were understanding and adaptable. They sought to comprehend the KSA setting before participating in the courses and planning the programme's details. Specifically, two workshops, which were held at the two colleges, were highlighted in the administration's contract and played a critical role in helping colleagues from these different colleges meet and discuss various issues regarding the students' ideas and lifestyles as well as the courses, offices, and the frameworks that were established in the respective colleges. Following the workshops, the connection between the groups became more grounded, adaptable, and affable. One student, who participated in the workshop and had almost completed her PhD, inquired as to whether she could attend the new programme established by the association:

We need to be in another situation, gaining new views, and learning from various groups and training frameworks… we need to be inspired about American schools by their employees… As you are most likely aware, we as young ladies cannot consider going abroad for social and family reasons (Workshop participant).

During the five days of the workshop, a solid foundation was established for the partnership, and the participants' criticisms were enlightening for all parts of the organisation. Subsequently, TBU prepared a report on the workshop for the Saudi Ministry of Education.

The second workshop, which was held at GWU, was also carefully designed, and both the TBU and GWU groups reported that their participation was extremely rewarding. The duration of the workshop allowed the two groups to examine all the programme's details first-hand. Numerous exercises were finalised in the subsequent report that was prepared for the Saudi Ministry of Education, including suggestions for additional fields to create open, advanced education opportunities. A range of additional content could be included in the two workshops, and the present researcher plans to discuss this in future works.

This PhD programme was the only one at a KSA college that employed scholarly contributions from the GSEHD at GWU. The PMC at GWU offered a credit exchange alternative to the TBU PhD programme by providing instruction, social opportunities, meetings, and an assessment. The programme enabled the students to experience several practice ventures that expanded on practical matters rather than the theoretical aspects of the course content. As a result, the programme promoted the consideration of future coordinated efforts and joint universal gatherings (ISEP), instruction, social opportunities, meetings, and observations. To pursue these, both colleges selected representatives with outstanding scholarly abilities to develop the relevant procedures, which was deemed to be one of the primary benefits by the TBU pioneers and workshop participants.

For TBU, these activities add to the advancement of self-financing forms of education, decreasing the current overwhelming dependence on government support (which has begun to change under new economic conditions), and the increasing legislative emphasis on self-financing and private division collaboration to relieve the state's monetary burden. Both workshops revealed widespread enthusiasm for participating in similar collaborations to create graduate projects in

other areas of expertise. Finally, in addition to the opportunity of spending three weeks in the US, the programme enabled students to enter the educational administration field and become equipped with the knowledge and skills provided by its courses, particularly the PMC. Participants noted some of the programme's accomplishments and advantages:

- **All the students effectively completed the PMC courses with grades that ranged from being better than expected to remarkable, as compared to previous evaluation tables. Although one student was on maternity leave for approximately fourteen days at the time of writing, she was working with educators to complete the tasks she had missed.**
- **The students' scholastic learning, encounters, and abilities improved significantly, particularly in the fields of academic composition, basic reasoning, time management, connecting theory to practice, and investigating instructive issues from alternative perspectives in national and global contexts.**
- **Through the assignments and class exercises, the students understood the necessity of cooperation and collaboration involved with accomplishing a shared objective.**
- **The students could access a range of resources at TBU and GWU, including libraries.**
- **The students' feedback demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with the programme's learning aspects, like how the information and meetings enabled them to become effective instructive pioneers. (See appended duplicate of students' input.)**
- **Since one student was among the top 15% of school and college sophomores, juniors, and seniors, they were also a top-performing graduate student in all fields of study. For this scholastic accomplishment, the Golden Key Honour Society granted them a Golden Key Certificate. The Golden Key Honour Society is the world's largest university-related society, and it has over two million members, including former US President Bill Clinton, Desmond Tutu, and Elie Wiesel.**

6 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the international partnership between TBU and GWU supports the objectives of the KSA, as stated in their 'Vision 2030'. The partnership followed the steps proposed by Sallis (1990), which were discussed in a previous paper by the present author (Alhazmi, 2018). This paper concerned the monitoring of the

partnership, focusing on the following questions: (1) What is the level of the partnership process, in terms of inputs, activities, and outputs at the implementation stage? (2) What are the outcomes of the partnership at the implementation stage? (3) Has the partnership resulted in any benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes, in terms of department management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students? This paper employed a subjective approach, including interviews, reports, observations, and assessments. The resulting information was used to create a logic model (Rush & Ogborne, 1991; Corbeil, 1986) that encompassed all aspects of the partnership's implementation, including the M&E process.

The programme proved to be a success, and GWU stated that it entailed improved enthusiasm, collaboration, and adaptability. The researcher's discussions with the GWU pioneers and five employees revealed that they thought highly of the programme as well. The GWU staff were adaptable and willing to comprehend the KSA setting. Furthermore, the two workshops conducted at the two colleges facilitated discussions on various issues, including undergraduates and their lifestyle as well as the two colleges' courses, offices, and frameworks. Thus, the workshops further enhanced the relationship between the two colleges. The programme was distinguished by its viability, which enabled undergraduates to enter the educational administration field fully equipped with the relevant skills that they acquired from the programme's courses, particularly the PMC and the period of study in the US.

Some of the challenges faced during the implementation of the PMC included the following:

- **Late admission of students to the programme**
- **Locating suitable classrooms**
- **Workload, academic writing, cultural differences, student-instructor expectations regarding assignments, grades, and personal issues (e.g., family matters)**
- **The students' failure to participate in GWU's free workshop sessions to improve TBU students' academic writing skills**
- **The omission of one student from the TBU registration system**

6.1 Recommendations from the Department of Education

The DEA in the KSA welcomed the successful implementation of the PMC and made the following recommendations:

1. During the PMC courses, the students and instructors should identify topics that are essential for educational leadership in the KSA to compare and contrast these with the US experience.
2. All students should compose their dissertations in English.
3. If the partnership is renewed, GWU faculty members will provide the seminars, dissertation guidance, and other support services, assisting the Department of Education and its faculty members to implement the remaining aspects of the programme, which will assist the department's implementation of the entire programme.
4. If the partnership with GWU is not renewed, new candidates should be informed in advance that the entire doctoral programme will be conducted by TBU to avoid complaints, legal challenges, and copyright issues. At the time of writing, inquiries about the course had been received from potential students who assumed that it would adhere to the current arrangement of a PMC in collaboration with GWU, and the remaining part at TBU.

6.2 Limitations and strengths of the study

This study has two major limitations. First, it is solely focused on TBU, omitting the potential scope for comparison. Second, the study only covered the pre-usage period. However, it did not seek to generalise the findings but only to undertake an in-depth investigation of the particular partnership. As future work is planned, this study serves to contrast the organisation concerned with comparable associations at different Colleges of Education throughout the KSA.

The study has many strengths as well. First, the researcher is a member of the association group, which is a unique position for assessing the undertaking. Second, in accordance with the research questions, the researcher employed a rationale model that included some improvements.

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Monitoring and evaluating implementation of an International Partnership at a Saudi University

Abstract

This paper shows that the international partnership between Taibah University (TBU) and George Washington University (GWU) in the United States (US) supports the goals of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as stated in the Kingdom's Vision 2030 statement. This partnership was formed to build a doctoral program in educational leadership and administration. The current research relates to monitoring and evaluating the partnership in the implementation phase, and asking: (1) What is the level of the partnership process in terms of inputs, activities and outputs? (2) What are the results of the partnership? (3) Has the partnership resulted in any benefits, challenges, recommendations, or changes related to department management, team members, leaders, course content, teaching/learning processes, or students? In order to follow the steps of this partnership, the researcher used the major steps by Sallis (1990). This approach enables the organization to identify requirements and determine the best way to achieve them. The first seven stages of the Sallis model (1990) were discussed in a previous paper by the current researcher (Alhazmi, 2017), one of the executive members of the programme. The current study seeks to address the last step ("monitoring progress"), which was not addressed in the previous paper. The researcher uses a logic model approach that is generated from information gathered from self-study, including interviews, visualizations, and reports, to create an overall picture of the different perspectives in the logic model. The participants' feedback was generally positive, and the two universities' work teams made sure that the program and course specifications were met, as agreed in the terms of the partnership contract.

Keywords: University Partnership, Taibah University (TBU), George Washington University (GWU), Higher Education programs.

متابعة وتقييم مرحلة التنفيذ لبرنامج الشراكة الدولية في إحدى الجامعات السعودية

الملخص

توضح هذه الورقة أن الشراكة الدولية بين جامعة طيبة (TBU) وجامعة جورج واشنطن (GWU)في الولايات المتحدة تدعم أهداف المملكة العربية السعودية، كما جاء في بيان رؤية المملكة ٢٠٣٠. تم تشكيل هذه الشراكة لبناء برنامج الدكتوراه في القيادة والإدارة التربوية. يتعلق البحث الحالي بمراقبة وتقييم الشراكة في مرحلة التنفيذ متسائلاً عن التالي: (١) ما هو مستوى عملية الشراكة من حيث المدخلات والأنشطة والمخرجات؟ (٢) ما هي نتائج الشراكة؟ (٣) هل أسفرت الشراكة عن أي فوائد أو تحديات أو توصيات أو تغييرات تتعلق بإدارة القسم أو أعضاء الفريق أو القادة أو محتوى الدورة التدريبية أو عمليات التدريس / التعلم أو الطلاب؟ من أجل متابعة خطوات هذه الشراكة، تتبعت الباحثة الخطوات الرئيسية لساليس (١٩٩٠). يمكّن هذا النهج المنظمة من تحديد المتطلبات وتحديد أفضل طريقة لتحقيقها. تمت مناقشة المراحل السبع الأولى من نموذج ساليس (١٩٩٠) في ورقة سابقة من قبل الباحثة الحالية (الهازمي، ٢٠١٧)، أحد الأعضاء التنفيذيين للبرنامج. تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى معالجة الخطوة الأخيرة ("مراقبة التقدم وتقييمه")، والتي لم يتم تناولها في الورقة السابقة. يستخدم الباحث نهج النموذج المنطقي الذي تم إنشاؤه من المعلومات المجمعة من الدراسة الذاتية، بما في ذلك المقابلات والتصورات والتقارير، لإنشاء صورة عامة لوجهات النظر المختلفة في النموذج المنطقي. كانت ملاحظات المشاركين إيجابية بشكل عام، وقد تأكد فريقي العمل في الجامعتين من استيفاء مواصفات البرنامج والدورة كما هو متفق عليه في بنود عقد الشراكة. ومع ذلك، وبناءً على الأهداف المعرفية للمملكة العربية السعودية، تم إجراء عدد صغير من التعديلات. تنقسم نتائج الشراكة إلى فترات قصيرة ومتوسطة وطويلة الأجل. وبشكل عام، نجح البرنامج في تغطية جميع شروط الشراكة بين الجامعتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشراكة الدولية في الجامعة، جامعة طيبة، جامعة جورج واشنطن، برامج التعليم العالي.