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Strategic Intelligence Strategies for Improving Performance in the Nonprofit Sector

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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MS, University of Rennes 1, 2001

BS, University of Economics, Varna, 1997

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Nonprofit leaders face competition, rapid changes, increasing complexity in their operating environments, and diminishing financial support, all of which threaten achievement of their organizational missions. The purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies nonprofit leaders used to develop plans for performance improvement based on strategic intelligence. The research sample was composed of 3 leaders of a nonprofit organization located in the midwestern region of the United States who implemented nonprofit strategic initiatives to improve their organization's performance. The conceptual framework used for this study was Maccoby and Scudder's strategic intelligence conceptual system for leading change. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and a review of public and internal documentation and performance outcomes. Data were manually coded and thematically organized. The results of data analysis showed leadership and organizational philosophy, foresight effectiveness, systems thinking and knowledge centricity, and smart motivation as the key themes. Findings provide evidence that developing and implementing strategic intelligence-based plans can assist nonprofit leaders in improving organizational performance. The implications of this study for positive social change include providing strategies to nonprofit leaders for how to guide their organizations through rapidly changing environments, compete successfully, and sustain delivery of high-impact goods and services to the public and communities that they serve.

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Dedication

To my husband, Galabin, for his relentless support, encouragement, and understanding. To my wonderful children, Juliana and Simeon, who are my inspiration. To my parents, for their unconditional love; help throughout the years; support to my choices; and the values of hard work, learning, and continuous improvement they instilled in me. To my grandparents, in memoriam, for the tender care and the firm belief they had in me. I am so grateful to all of you; I love you all.

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I owe this doctoral journey to many people, including my family, my superior, and my friends, who provided help and encouragement, and believed in me, and I thank them all. I am grateful for being selected for the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) Consulting Capstone program, under the guidance of Dr. Robert Hockin as my chair. In memoriam, thank you, Dr. Hockin, for your benevolence and willingness to share knowledge and the consulting experience. Thank you, Dr. Peter Anthony, for having accepted to serve as my chair and for offering continuous guidance, competence, appropriate advice, encouragement, and a positive attitude. Thank you, Dr. Janice Garfield, for serving as my second committee member. Thank you, also, for the valuable and stimulating input you offered and for teaching us that "feedback is a gift, always." Thank you, Dr. Denise Land, for serving as my university research reviewer and for providing your knowledge and guidance. I am grateful to all Walden University instructors I had during the program who helped me learn and progress; thank you all.

During the time I worked with my client organization, I had the unique chance to learn and feel inspired by their determination to achieve excellence and have a positive impact and by their respect for people and open-mindedness. I am deeply thankful to my client leader and to all of the participants who dedicated time and shared information and experiences with me. I appreciated the opportunity to be matched with an exceptional organization, and I thank all persons who made it possible.

To all of you, I say, Thank you!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Strategic planning is essential to achieve and improve performance in the nonprofit sector (Rana, Rana, & Rana, 2017; Wolf & Floyd, 2017). Yet, according to experts, strategic planning and management are underused practices among nonprofit organizations (Concord Leadership Group, 2016; Meehan & Jonker, 2017). In this study, I explored the strategies some nonprofit leaders use to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving organizational performance. For my conceptual framework, I used Maccoby and Scudder's (2011) strategic intelligence conceptual system for leading change. This system offers nonprofit leaders insight on how to achieve a systems perspective in their strategic planning efforts, consider and interpret context, and improve performance (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). In Section 1, I present the background of the problem, the problem and purpose statements, the nature of the study, the research question, and the conceptual framework. I also provide a review of the literature related to strategic intelligence, strategic planning, and improving performance in the nonprofit sector.

Background of the Problem

Change, complexity, competitiveness, and *pressure* are some of the words researchers have used to describe the actual operating environment for the nonprofit sector (Bish & Becker, 2016; Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2016; Petitgand, 2017). Flynn (2017) and Topaloglu, McDonald, and Hunt (2018) emphasized the increasing number of nonprofit organizations, diminishing financial support from governments, and the entry of business entities into fields where nonprofits traditionally operated as the major reasons behind severe competition in the nonprofit sector. Intense competition in the nonprofit sector has led to a global phenomenon of transformations of nonprofit organizations, such as enhanced business orientations, and provoked nonprofit leaders to increasingly use management tools to sustain their organizations (King, 2017; Maier et al., 2016; Petitgand, 2017).

Strategic planning is one of the most long-established, acknowledged, and prescribed management tools (Wolf & Floyd, 2017). As Rana et al. (2017) and Wolf and Floyd (2017) noted, strategic planning is beneficial for formulating and developing strategy, assessing alternatives, setting objectives, making strategic choices, as well as for achieving organizational success in the nonprofit sector. Among other advantages, the Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence conceptual system of leadership for change is helpful to organizational leaders with the provision of tools to achieve a systems perspective in their strategic planning efforts. Results of surveys have shown that strategic planning and strategic management are problematic in the nonprofit sector, which may result in deteriorated organizational performance (see Concord Leadership Group, 2016; Meehan & Jonker, 2017). The focus of this study was on understanding the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving organizational performance. Supporting nonprofit leaders with strategic intelligence approaches to improve performance might help sustain nonprofit organizations and scale positive social impact (e.g., continued delivery of beneficial services to individuals and communities).

Problem Statement

Pressured by competition for diminishing resources and motivated to ensure their organizations' survival and progress, nonprofit leaders are increasingly seeking to achieve strategic leadership for improving organizational performance (Maier et al., 2016; Petitgand, 2017). The results of a longitudinal study indicated that only 47% of the leaders of nonprofit organizations in San Francisco Bay Area had strategic plans with few of them including forward thinking; only 12% of nonprofit organizations had leaders who conduct annual revisions of strategic plans (Horvath, Brandtner, & Powell, 2018). The general business problem is that without strategies for developing plans based on strategic intelligence, nonprofit leaders may fail to implement organizational roadmaps, resulting in deteriorated organizational performance. The specific business problem is that some nonprofit leaders lack strategies to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. The target population was four senior leaders of a U.S. nonprofit organization located in the Midwestern region of the United States who have developed effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. The implications for positive social change are that the findings of this study could enable nonprofit leaders to guide their organizations through rapidly changing environments, compete successfully, and sustain delivery of high-impact goods and services to the public and communities that they serve.

Nature of the Study

Researchers can choose from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches to conduct their studies. Yin (2018) recommended using qualitative research if there is a need to understand a phenomenon and a context in detail, and if the research question is exploratory. A qualitative method was suitable for this study because I explored the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop a strategic plan based on strategic intelligence. One of the primary advantages of using the qualitative method in the field of strategic intelligence is the opportunity it affords for gaining an in-depth understanding of changing environments (Walsh, 2017). Researchers use the quantitative method to examine a theory's relevance by testing hypotheses about variables' relationships or groups' differences (Park & Park, 2016). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study as I did not engage in examining theories' relevance through testing hypotheses. Mixed methods was also inappropriate as there was no quantitative component required to address my study's purpose.

For this study, I considered using such qualitative designs as phenomenology, ethnography, and case study. Researchers can use a phenomenological design to reveal the meanings of participants' lived experiences or ethnographic one to research groups' shared cultures (Willgens et al., 2016). The case-study design is appropriate for exploring a real-life phenomenon, gaining an in-depth understanding, and considering the context (Gaus, 2017). The advantage of the single case study design is that it enables a researcher to conduct a more in-depth investigation of the organization's documentation and interview participants about their experiences, which can lead to a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Ridder, 2017). An in-depth understanding of the strategic intelligence-based strategy development within a nonprofit organization was the focus of my study. As such, the single case study was an appropriate design.

Research Question

The overarching research question was, What strategies do nonprofit leaders use to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance?

Interview Questions

The interview questions for this study were

1. How do you collect data for your strategic planning process?
2. How do you analyze data for your strategic planning process?
3. How do you determine if the data gathered and analyzed are relevant?
4. How do you address your strategic challenges and advantages in the data collection and analysis process?
5. How do you address potential risk elements you detected into the data gathering and analysis process such as changes in your regulatory and business environment?
6. How do you ensure accuracy of your understanding of the competitive environment and the strategic challenges your organization faces?
7. How do you assess and improve the effectiveness of your organization's strategic planning process?
8. What additional information can you provide about the strategies you use to develop a strategic plan based on strategic intelligence?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used in this study was the Maccoby and Scudder's (2011) strategic intelligence conceptual system of leadership for change. In 2011, Maccoby and Scudder posited that the globalization of markets, the speed of technology, the changing nature of organizations and customers, and increased competitiveness require leaders of change to achieve particular competences. The Maccoby and Scudder conceptual system provides a means to support leaders in understanding the context in which they operate and includes (a) foresight, (b) visioning with systems thinking, (c) partnering, and (d) motivating and empowering. The strategic intelligence components are interrelated, and their achievement depends on the leaders' philosophy and personality (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011).

Nonprofit organizations' leaders face complex changes in their operating environments and increasing competitive pressures. To sustain their organizations and ensure performance in challenging contexts, nonprofit leaders need to leverage strategies for adopting strategic considerations designed to support leading change (Maier et al., 2016; Petitgand, 2017; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). The strategic intelligence conceptual system was an appropriate lens, I concluded, for understanding nonprofit leaders' strategies to develop a strategic plan based on strategic intelligence.

Operational Definitions

Baldrige Excellence Framework: A systems-based organizational and performance management tool that helps for-profit and nonprofit leaders from all industries to reach their goals and continuously improve their performance through an integrated alignment of leadership, strategy, customers, knowledge management, workforce, and operations-related organizational areas (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2017).

Nonprofit organization: An organization existing to deliver benefits of interest to public or community, without aiming to generate profit (USA.gov, 2017).

Nonprofit organizational performance: A holistic and flexible framework comprising such core interdependent nonprofit performance dimensions as (a) input, (b) organizational capacity, (c) output, (d) outcome as behavioral and environmental changes, (e) outcome as client or customer satisfaction, (f) public value accomplishment, and (g) network and institutional legitimacy (Lee & Nowell, 2015). The framework shows scholars and practitioners how to choose appropriate performance measurement indicators for a particular nonprofit organization depending on the funding type, task programmability and observability, and environmental turbulence (Lee & Nowell, 2015).

Strategic intelligence: A conceptual system that helps leaders to guide change and involves qualities and tools for developing (a) foresight, (b) visioning with systems-thinking, (c) partnering, and (d) motivating and empowering; alignment and achievement of these components depend upon contextual challenges and relationships, as well as the leaders' personalities and philosophies (Maccoby, 2015; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Nkwake and Morrow (2016) defined assumptions as the researchers' convictions, suppositions, and reflections, which are considered true without formal proof and which underlie the researchers' decision-making throughout the study. For this study, I assumed that the qualitative method and the single case study would be the best method and design to address the research question and purpose. Also, I assumed that a sample of four senior leaders from a single nonprofit organization would be appropriate. Another assumption was that the senior leaders would provide truthful answers. I assumed that data gathering through interviews and internal and external document reviews would be adequate. Finally, I assumed that the participants in the study had developed effective plans which led to organizational improvement.

Limitations

Marshall and Rossman (2016) highlighted the importance of researchers understanding the imperfections of their studies and discussing limitations. The two primary sources of qualitative research limitations Marshall and Rossman emphasized are the conceptual framework and the design of the study. The conceptual framework of my study was the Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence system for leading change, which I applied to analyze the findings. In using the case-study design, I sought to achieve an in-depth understanding of the strategies nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. An inherent limitation of the case study design is the lack of transferability of the results (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Ellis and Levy (2009) explained that limitations are issues the researcher can identify but cannot control, which may threaten the internal validity of the study. Stating the study's limitations is essential for the researcher to allow appropriate understanding and interpretations of the findings (Ellis & Levy, 2009). A limitation inherent to my study was the fact that participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any moment, even if they had previously provided their informed consent. The participants have different backgrounds and experience, and their roles in the strategic planning process of the organization vary and are limited in time.

Qualitative researchers have identified the following as limitations of case-study designs: lack of transferability of the findings and nonapplicability to other industries, possible incompleteness of the results, and limited sample sizes (Boddy, 2016; Dasgupta, 2015). In the present research study, the sample size was limited to three senior leaders, as I reached data saturation with three interviews instead of four as initially planned. Another limitation was the fact that a single nonprofit organization operating within a particular higher education area was the focus of the study. Additional factors also could have influenced the completeness of the results, relating to the understanding, background, and experiences of both the participants and the researcher.

Delimitations

Delimitations are conscious choices researchers make to frame the research study, relating to the thematic focus, spatial, and temporal boundaries (Rule & John, 2015). Ellis and Levy (2009) referred to delimitations as what the researcher voluntarily leaves outside of the study, given the research purpose. The focus of this research study was on understanding the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop strategic intelligence-based plans for improving organizational performance. As an example of one delimitation, the interview questions I devised were designed to gather information about the most critical components of the strategic planning process because of the study focus. To gain a systems perspective and an in-depth understanding of the research topic, I incorporated the Baldrige Excellence Framework as part of my single case-study design. The spatial delimitations for this study included the location of the nonprofit organization in the U.S. Midwest, as well as the specifics of its substantial international operations in more than 60 countries worldwide. Also, the information-gathering period covered approximately 1 year.

Significance of the Study

Leaders of successful nonprofits manage to achieve their organizations' goals and scale their organizations' impact. Setting appropriate goals for moving an organization towards the desired direction is part of strategic planning and strategy development processes (Bryson, 2018; Maccoby, 2015). Approaches related to developing strategic intelligence-based plans can help leaders achieve a systems perspective and successfully anticipate, navigate, and drive changes, which could result in enhanced competitive positions and improved organizational performance (Maccoby, 2015).

Contribution to Business Practice

Nonprofit executives of leading organizations face the challenge of securing leadership in a complex environment. These executives need techniques for developing sound strategies and sustaining organizational performance. The findings from this study could have significance to business practice because they could support nonprofit executives in building successful organizational strategies through strategic intelligence.

Implications for Social Change

The study's implications for positive social change include the potential to provide an approach to nonprofit leaders for guiding their organizations through rapidly changing environments, competing successfully, and sustaining delivery of high impact to the public and communities that they serve. Nonprofit organizations serve various social needs and defend significant societal causes. Scaling the positive impact and continually looking for excellence may further benefit society members.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. In the knowledge era, the operating environment of the nonprofit sector is characterized by increased competition and decreased resources, requiring specific strategies for leading change (Maier et al., 2016; Petitgand, 2017; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Researchers have identified strategic planning as a valuable management tool for assessing the operating environment and detecting opportunities and threats, formulating strategies, and implementing plans to address change and improve performance (Rana et al., 2017; Wolf & Floyd, 2017). Maccoby and Scudder (2011) posited that in the knowledge era leaders need new methods and competencies. Maccoby and Scudder developed a multidimensional and interdisciplinary conceptual system of leadership for change that is helpful in achieving a systems perspective, which they called strategic intelligence. Among other merits, the strategic intelligence system is helpful for guiding the strategic planning efforts of organizations (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Nonprofit leaders may benefit from the use of strategic intelligence; some surveys show that strategic planning and strategic management are problematic in the nonprofit sector and may adversely affect organizational performance (Concord Leadership Group, 2016; Meehan & Jonker, 2017).

I explored the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. In the following subsections, I provide a comprehensive summary of the academic and professional literature related to the research topic. My objective was to achieve an understanding of how strategic intelligence relates to strategic planning and how leaders use strategic intelligence to achieve various organizational outcomes. I structured the literature review around the following categories: (a) Maccoby and Scudder's (2011) strategic intelligence system and supporting and contrasting theories, (b) recent research related to strategic intelligence, (c) performance improvement among nonprofit organizations, and (d) strategic planning in the nonprofit area. I did not find studies showing the application of the entire strategic intelligence system as conceived by Maccoby and Scudder. Peer-reviewed articles from the last 5 years show some partial investigation of strategic intelligence where researchers explored some of the perspectives or components.

I used the research question to orient my literature search and organize the literature review content. I searched scholarly articles using Google Scholar and the following databases, which I accessed from Walden University's online library: ABN/INFORM Collection, Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, and Science Direct. Searching keywords included *strategic intelligence*, *nonprofit organizations, competitive intelligence, market intelligence*, *strategic planning*, and *improving performance.*

For the literature review, I consulted peer-reviewed articles, seminal books, and government and professional organizations' websites. An essential requirement for the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) program is that students complete an exhaustive search of all references from peer-reviewed sources pertaining to the focus and conceptual framework of the study. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the 113 references I used for the literature review are from peer-reviewed sources.

Another requirement for the DBA program regarding the literature review is that scholarly sources should include current sources that were published within 5 years of the study’s completion date. To ensure currency, I prioritized searches in the databases starting from 2015. Ninety-four percent of the literature review sources have publication dates from 2015 to 2019.

Conceptual Framework: The Strategic Intelligence Conceptual System

The conceptual framework for this study was the Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence conceptual system of leadership for change. Maccoby (2001), a psychoanalyst and anthropologist, first introduced the strategic intelligence system in 2001, in an article where he briefly reviewed why emotional intelligence was not sufficient to explain successful leadership. Maccoby presented the strategic intelligence concept as a group of five competencies operating interrelatedly: (a) foresight, (b) systems thinking, (c) visioning, (d) motivating, and (e) partnering. Later, Maccoby and Scudder (2011) delivered a more detailed and elaborate view of the functioning of the strategic intelligence system, which showed the integration of the visioning and systems thinking elements. Maccoby and Scudder explained the significance of considering the contextual challenges, the culture, the personalities of the followers, and the philosophies and personalities of the leaders to achieve effective leadership. Maccoby accumulated knowledge from different areas and used it to develop and articulate a system for effectively leading change (Maccoby, 2015). Maccoby’s (2015) strategic intelligence idea arose from the need to amalgamate various competencies about products, systems, processes, motivation, learning, and so forth. The combination of different knowledge related to involving people with different talents and ensuring collaboration and illustrated how to successfully lead change (Maccoby, 2015).

Understanding how to address and lead change is a significant advantage for modern leaders. Researchers have noted the high speed of change as one of the dominant global challenges shaping the organizational environment (Bish & Becker, 2016; Calof, Richards, & Santilli, 2017; Maier et al., 2016; Petitgand, 2017). Scholars from sociology, psychology, leadership and management, engineering management, and industrial engineering who study change and leadership have dedicated their efforts to exploring and identifying ways to realize change successfully (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). After reviewing the academic literature related to change since the beginning of organizational development theories, Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) identified the need for an integrated approach. The Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence system provides such an integrated perspective.

Maccoby integrated understanding and knowledge from systems, complexity, management, and leadership theories, as well as engineering, industrial management, and psychology, to compose the strategic intelligence framework (Maccoby, 2001, 2015). Among others, Maccoby referred to Ackoff's systems thinking, Deming's problem-solving approach and concept of variation, and Fromm's social character and personalities (Maccoby, 2001, 2015; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). In integrating approaches from different disciplines, Maccoby addressed change simultaneously at the levels of the drivers, methods, and outcomes.

The strategic intelligence framework (Maccoby, 2015; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011) provides a way for organizational leaders to navigate and lead changes, cope with increasing uncertainty, and develop strategies to achieve competitive advantage.

Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011) placed the individual's perceptions and interactions with the environment at the heart of the idea of leading change and organizational transformation. They expressed strategic intelligence as a set of leadership qualities and interactions. In addition, they observed that the globalization of markets, the speed of technology, the changing nature of organizations and customers, and increased competitiveness require leaders of change with particular competences. The needed abilities involve interrelatedness among (a) foresight, (b) visioning with systems thinking, (c) partnering, and (d) motivating and empowering, which are expressed through the leaders' philosophy and personal intelligence (Maccoby, 2015; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). The context and the fit between the leaders' personalities and the context matter to success or failure (Maccoby, 2015; Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Maccoby and Maccoby and Scudder described and compared several types of personalities and their typical behaviors and discussed the importance of conflict management and motivating and empowering as leaders' abilities. In his vision of strategic intelligence for leading change, Maccoby emphasized the significance of understanding and blending both intellectual and emotional qualities.

Foresight. Maccoby (2001, 2015) determined foresight as the leader's ability to detect nonobvious coming changes and perceive the related opportunities and threats. Different from predicting the future or forecasting, foresight stems from combining core knowledge with monitoring the business environment and interpreting global trends and patterns (Maccoby, 2015). In an article from 2001, Maccoby synthesized the meaning of foresight in comparing the business opportunity to an arriving wave which leaders can capture and ride. Maccoby (2001, 2015) provided various examples from his consulting experience of companies' leaders who managed to grasp future trends and succeeded, as opposed to other leaders who provoked a loss of momentum, competitive advantage, or opportunities because they lacked foresight. To develop foresight, Maccoby (2015) suggested that leaders should think and gather information about the market, political, economic, competitive, consumer, technological, and other types of changes and how they might impact their organizations. Environmental scanning, exchanging information with experts, exploring cutting-edge organizations, and serving on other organizations' boards are some of the options Maccoby (2015) recommended to leaders as being helpful to develop foresight.

Researchers have positively linked foresight to innovation, coping with uncertainty, strategic planning processes, competitive advantage, and improved strategic and tactical decision-making (Calof, Arcos, & Sewdass, 2017; Carayannis, Meissner, & Edelkina, 2017; Rohrbeck, Battistella, & Huizingh, 2015). Studies on foresight as part of strategic intelligence concept have shown a positive relationship with organizational agility, an impact on entrepreneurial orientation, and foresight as a way to support decision-making in complex situations (Abuzaid, 2017; Al-Zu'bi, 2016; Nieminen & Hyytinen, 2015). Scholars agree that foresight is a means to respond to or anticipate change (see Abuzaid, 2017; Al-Zu'bi, 2016; Calof, Arcos, et al., 2017; Carayannis, Meissner, et al., 2017; Nieminen & Hyytinen, 2015; Rohrbeck et al., 2015).

Visioning with systems thinking. Maccoby (2015) described visioning as conceiving the ideal organization. Leaders should build their future ideal organizations by using Ackoff's systems thinking, idealized design, and interactive planning (Maccoby, 2015). Ackoff (1974) extended the shaping role of von Bertalanffy's systems as a scientific concept to organizations. Ackoff described systems as structurally inseparable and posited that elements and subsystems or subgroups of a system are interdependent, and the changes within an element impact the functioning of the entire system. In Ackoff's terms, systems thinking, as opposed to analytical thinking, starts with understanding the whole first and then considering the role of an element or subsystem within that whole. Maccoby (2015) found that non-Asian managers lacked skills about systems thinking and suggested the use of two models to support their learning. In the first model, Maccoby suggested considering (a) strategy, (b) stakeholder values, (c) shared values, (d) systems, (e) structure, (f) skills, and (g) style. Leaders can also use (a) purpose, (b) practical values, (c) people, (d) products, and (e) processes model to achieve systems thinking (Maccoby, 2015).

From the direct exchanges during common consulting experiences with Ackoff, Maccoby (2015) derived that Ackoff's view about designing an idealized organization consisted of respecting technological and operational feasibility, as well as building learning and adaptation capabilities. Leaders should design the vision and communicate it understandably so that people can share it (Maccoby, 2015). The vision should show the organization as a system, and leaders should bind its achievement with time and concrete actions (Maccoby, 2015).

To implement the designed vision, leaders need planning (Maccoby, 2015). Ackoff's (1974) interactive planning involves the entire organization and requires coordination, integration, and continuity. Maccoby (2015) recognized Ackoff's contributions to describe the learning and adapting organization. Maccoby thought about adding processes as a necessary component to achieve learning. Maccoby emphasized the role of processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement, as well as to enhance the organizational purpose and practical values. Maccoby shared that leaders can build a learning organization by applying what Deming saw as continuous improvement and profound knowledge.

Some recent studies reflect the use of visioning by researchers and refer to Maccoby's strategic intelligence concept (see Abuzaid, 2017; Al-Zu'bi, 2016). Abuzaid (2017) found that visioning and motivating have a higher positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation. In contrast, Al-Zu'bi (2016) observed a moderate effect of visioning, among other strategic intelligence components, on agility. Al-Zu'bi interpreted agility as the organizational capacity for rapid responses to business challenges arising from changes in the organizational environment. Al-Zu'bi highlighted the significance of a systems approach in the concept of agility and the maintenance of a high level of performance as the result of an agile organizational response to changes. Last, Al-Zu'bi found that all strategic intelligence components had positive statistically significant effects on agility.

Partnering. Maccoby (2015) explained that often strategic intelligence is beyond the reach of an individual. Thus, leaders of change need to develop various partnering relationships inside and outside of the organization and form a leadership team with individuals whose combined abilities cover all aspects of strategic intelligence (Maccoby, 2015). Maccoby highlighted the significance of understanding the different personalities and their emotions in choosing the right partners and maintaining meaningful partnerships over time (Maccoby, 2015).

Maccoby (1997, 2015) considered partnering with suppliers, customers, related organizations, departments, and individuals. Maccoby developed and presented a partnering scale based on two dimensions, value and trust, and composed of five levels. The starting level is the commodity supplier competing on a price-quality basis (Maccoby, 1997, 2015). Preferred suppliers rely on quality recognition and a continuing, but traditional, type of contract (Maccoby, 1997, 2015). Next, the relationship can evolve from the value-added supplier offering a particular opportunity, through alliance where the focus is on a joint, time-bound project, to a strategic partnership (Maccoby, 1997, 2015). Maccoby viewed strategic partnerships as trust-based relationships in which the partners share information broadly and look for common solutions.

Motivating. Maccoby (2015) pointed out the role of understanding personal needs, drives, and values to engage, inspire, and persuade. Understanding and knowing how to engage the intrinsic motivation is central for successful leaders (Maccoby, 2015). Recognition and autonomy, in addition to appropriate economic incentives, are central means to make employees’ work valued and connected to a common cause (Maccoby, 2015).

Maccoby (2015) viewed various ways to motivate people and created the notion of *smart motivation* as part of strategic intelligence. Smart motivation consists of a combination of understanding personality types and building a motivating culture while relying on various intrinsic and extrinsic elements (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Smart motivation tools, which are personality intelligence, extrinsic and intrinsic motivational drives, and organizational philosophy, help leaders magnify collaboration for change (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011).

Maccoby and Scudder (2011) created the five Rs, the core of smart motivation, which are (a) reason, (b) responsibilities, (c) recognition, (d) rewards, and (e) relationships (see also Maccoby, 2015). As part of smart motivation, Maccoby and Scudder (2011) suggested that leaders should consider the way to communicate a meaningful organizational purpose so that they can leverage consistency between organizational and personal values and support employees' self-esteem. Leaders should ensure they assign roles with a sufficient level of challenge and responsibility to employees in connection with the employees' skills and values (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Leaders should craft an environment of *fear eviction* where people can demonstrate transparent behavior and transform mistakes in learning occasions (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). Also, leaders should develop accurate reward systems which enhance collaboration, offer a means to recognize employees' contributions to the organization, and provide ways to engage employees' personal development and strengthen relationship building (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011).

Researchers found evidence supporting Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2001) views about significant aspects of motivating. A study's findings of the positive effect of leaders' motivating language on employees' organizational commitment, supported Maccoby's view about the significance of good working relationships (Sabir & Bhutta, 2018). In contrast, Erkutlu and Chafra (2017) revealed that leaders narcissism involving hostility among other expressions leads to employees' organizational cynicism implying a negative attitude towards the employing organization. Also, Carnevale, Huang, and Harms (2018) found that leaders' narcissism demotivates through affecting the employees' organization-based self-esteem, but that consultation tactics may attenuate the adverse effect. Carnevale et al. viewed narcissistic leaders as self-centered, having excessive egos and demand for admiration, and being insensitive to other persons' needs, which negatively impacts employees' feeling of belongingness, and need for care and acceptance. Carnevale et al. discussed that because narcissistic leaders may depend on their employees' cooperation, they tend to use social influence tactics temporarily, such as consultation, expressed as decision-making involvement without the narcissist's tendency to insult or otherwise diminish employees' personal and professional value. Among other negative effects, Carnevale et al. revealed that leaders' narcissism results in the employees' rejection to help others at work and to share views and ideas.

Leadership philosophy and profound knowledge. The essence of Maccoby's (2015) view about leadership philosophy resumes to the ability to instore and communicate trustful organizational culture and guide decision-making in all areas. Maccoby placed purpose, values, and aligned results measurement in the center of the organizational philosophy and highlighted the direct connection with innovation and cooperation. Profound knowledge implies systems thinking, understanding of statistics and variation, motivation, and knowledge creation (Maccoby, 2015).

Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011) linked the employment of the strategic intelligence system to leading change to achieve competitive advantage and improve performance. Maccoby and Scudder highlighted knowledge creation as a primary axis that the leaders can use to achieve improvement. Maccoby and Scudder explained that understanding knowledge creation is essential and various approaches exist. Maccoby and Scudder emphasized the possibility to develop theories and test them in using the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) approach, the interactive side of the knowledge creation process, the impact of values and attitudes, and the significance of fear of punishment in case of mistakes instead of improvement opportunities consideration.

Supporting Theories

To develop the strategic intelligence system, Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011) referred to concepts and theories from various fields. Another distinctive feature of the strategic intelligence system compared to other leadership and management theories is its coupling with Maccoby's notion of context and its interpretation. Combining many and diverse academic fields and linking them into a coherent scheme for leading change effectively, is unusual, although in harmony with the vision of Maccoby and Scudder (2018) about the imperatives of the knowledge era. Because of the somehow revolutionary approach of Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011), direct comparisons with other existing theories are difficult. In the following subsections, I refer to some theories which highlight or bring contrast to a single component or assumption of the system, but not to the strategic intelligence system as a whole. Although Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011) used some of the supporting theories, they also built upon their limitations.

Total quality management. Total quality management (TQM) is a managerial approach structured around the centrality of quality, cooperation, and customer satisfaction (Tasie, 2016). Tasie (2016) stated that TQM is an essential part of organizational performance. Some basic TQM premises include (a) customer-satisfaction-led quality understanding, (b) continuous improvement, (c) active collaboration, genuine involvement, and rewarding of quality, and (d) quality-oriented training and education, and so forth (Tasie, 2016). Researchers acknowledged the role of TQM-based practices for improving performance, especially in manufacturing (Metcalf, Habermann, Fry, & Stoller, 2018; Tasie, 2016). Metcalf et al. (2018) also reported some failures to achieve the desired outcomes. Possible reasons for the absence of success results scholars identified are that the TQM approach does not include sufficient organizational and leadership perspectives (Metcalf et al., 2018).

Maccoby and Scudder (2018) discussed the mismatch between the Deming's TQM and the context of the knowledge era. While acknowledging the unique contribution of TQM and the learning acquired with Deming, Maccoby, and Scudder pointed to the TQM's requirement for a detailed specification, which becomes incompatible with the problems the knowledge workers are facing presently.

Systems theory. Shukla (2018) noted that von Bertalanffy's systems theory further developed in such directions as (a) socio-technical systems theory, (b) living systems theory, (c) soft systems methodology, (d) and social systems sciences. Ackoff's system thinking contributions belong to the social systems sciences (Shukla, 2018). Belinfanti and Stout (2018) viewed systems theory as a suitable tool to evaluate design and performance, primarily used in the management sciences, but also in various other fields. The tenets of systems theory hold that (a) systems consist of separate elements, (b) the elements are adjusted and interconnected, and (c) the elements purposefully operate as a whole (Belinfanti & Stout, 2018). Belinfanti and Stout discussed a fourth possible tenet, which is the systems' execution of function or purpose over time. Belinfanti and Stout considered systems theory as helpful to understanding organizations' nature and purpose, as well as the best tool for performance improvement and measurement.

For the concept of strategic intelligence and leading change, Maccoby (2015) built upon Ackoff's system theory view and tools. Maccoby noted a limitation of Ackoff's understanding of an idealized organization. The missing link Maccoby identified is the process of organizational learning.

Fromm's social character theory. Fromm and Maccoby (2014) posited that people who belong to the same group within a society, exhibit similar character structure. The common character structure is the result of the shared economic, social, and cultural factors present within the society (Foster, 2017; Fromm & Maccoby, 2014). Fromm and Maccoby called the common character structure *social character* and explained that its significance resides in the fact that the social character is the foundation of group behavior. In Fromm and Maccoby's view, the social character is the way through which the individuals belonging to a specific social structure manage to transform the *psychic energy* into a specific one serving the needs of social functioning. People belonging to different social characters relate differently to themselves, to peers, superiors, and subordinates (Fromm & Maccoby, 2014). Social and individual characters interact and represent a system (Fromm & Maccoby, 2014). Changing the character system is dependent upon the flexibility each of the elements has and its regenerative power (Fromm & Maccoby, 2014).

Maccoby (2017) used Fromm's methods and theories, enriched and upgraded, and applied them to study leadership in advanced technology companies. Maccoby (2002) explained that the concept of Fromm's social character is not easy to grasp and the specific reason behind the difficulty is its interdisciplinary nature combining knowledge from such academic fields as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics. Fromm's significant contributions to the development of the social character theory were the introduction of the *marketing type* of personality completing Freud's *narcissistic, erotic,* and *obsessive types*, and the concept of *productiveness* (Maccoby, 2002, 2007). Productiveness in Fromm's terms meant the power of reason-driven activities, and its intensity is dependent upon the level of acquiring knowledge about work, learning, and people (Fromm & Maccoby, 2014; Maccoby, 2002). Productiveness may help to transform a character type (Maccoby, 2002). Maccoby considered the concept of productiveness somehow idealistic. Fromm's concepts of socio-political relationships and social selection are helpful to understand the social character idea and how a social character may change (Maccoby, 2002). Maccoby (2002) considered that Fromm defined the social character, informed about the forces forming a social character and its role in society, and proposed a method to study it.

Contrasting Theories

With strategic intelligence, Maccoby (2007) critically reformed and revolutionized his previous knowledge, thinking, analysis, and use of leadership and management theories. Maccoby observed that the researchers working with most of the favored leadership theories focus on the strengths and the positive sides of leaders' personalities, claiming some qualities like empathy, and modesty as essential to successful leaders. Maccoby took a realistic perspective to analyze his extensive research practices and findings, as well as other researchers' methods and conclusions and noted that none of the studied empathetic or self-effacing leaders are successful in highly innovative and competitive environments. Maccoby suggested that knowledge about personality types and context is essential. The personality type Maccoby considered suitable for leading disruptiveness and change in highly competitive markets is the one with narcissistic dominance. In considering the entirety of a personality type and the context a leader may need to fit, Maccoby questioned the (a) situational leadership, (b) emotional intelligence, (c) Level-5 leadership theories, and (d) Maslow and McGregor theories.

Situational leadership. Academics and practitioners use the theory of situational leadership with the aim to understand and influence managerial effectiveness, sometimes understood as the employee job satisfaction or follower performance (Fernandez, 2017; Thompson & Glasø, 2015, 2018). The central tenet of the situational leadership theory is that managers should adapt the levels of directiveness or supportiveness they apply according to the followers' seniority development (Thompson & Glasø, 2015, 2018). Beginning employees need more directiveness while to more senior followers, leaders should provide supportive actions (Thompson & Glasø, 2015, 2018). Recent development of the situational leadership theory is the integration of the partnering for performance perspective (Thompson & Glasø, 2018).

Unlike Maccoby's (2007) strategic intelligence, the situational leadership theory helps to understand the relationship between leader and follower in a dyadic pattern and mainly with the consideration of flexible behavior toward identified needs (Thompson & Glasø, 2018). With the strategic intelligence approach, Maccoby (2007) and Maccoby and Scudder (2011) suggested the integration of a more profound personality type knowledge of leaders and followers, and a holistic perspective regarding the role of the leader's personality type about the purpose and system of effective leadership in a particular business context.

Emotional intelligence. Upadhyaya (2017) traced back the evolution of the emotional intelligence theory. The concept originates from Thorndike's social intelligence in the 1930s and during the years researchers brought developments of emotional intelligence in three directions, (a) the ability model, (b) the mixed model, and (c) the trait model (Upadhyaya, 2017). In 1995, Daniel Goleman popularized the mixed model of emotional intelligence (Upadhyaya, 2017). The Goleman's emotional intelligence original concept includes five components, (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skill (Tyler, 2015). Tyler (2015) reported that for Goleman emotional intelligence rather than technical skills and intelligence quotient was central to leadership and a driving force to perform.

The collision between the strategic intelligence and emotional intelligence views appears in how the researchers view performance and success, as well as personality. Maccoby (2001, 2007) argued that a realistic approach to understanding personality types, acknowledging both the person's strengths and negative sides, is more relevant. Without denying the necessity for leaders to meet some minimum emotional intelligence standards, Maccoby (2007) reported findings from counseling and research, showing that successful leaders of highly innovative and disruptive companies are far from being good examples of emotional intelligence. Also, Maccoby revealed examples where strong emotional intelligence may lead to failure because of the inappropriateness of the personality type to a highly competitive and changing business context. In Maccoby's view, what makes the difference to success in changing and competitive environments, is the level of mastering the strategic intelligence set of skills.

Level-5 leadership theory. Castillo and Trinh (2018) resumed Collins Level-5 leadership view for a successful leader to the combination of personal humility with a powerful desire for achievement and a focus on the organizational cause and success as opposed to personal success. Toscano, Price, and Scheepers (2018) also pointed at the significance of humility within the Level-5 leadership approach, as a necessary personal trait to successful leaders. Toscano et al. findings showed some contradictions also with the Level-5 philosophy. Toscano et al. revealed that although a humble CEO may foster collaboration within the top management team, the effect of humility on cohesiveness and consensus is lower than under a neutral CEO. Toscano et al. concluded that humble CEOs, although slightly preferable to arrogant ones, are less effective than the neutral ones.

In his book *Narcissistic Leaders: Who Succeeds and Who Fails,* Maccoby (2007) openly questioned several aspects of the Level-5 view. First, Maccoby pointed to the narrow interpretation of the success of the Level-5 researchers, which included a high shareholders' cumulative return on stock for 15 years. Next, Maccoby disagreed with the interpretation of the Level-5 researchers about personality types, as well as about what constitutes a moral judgment of personal qualities and facts of unethical behaviors. With strategic intelligence, Maccoby defended the non-judgmental and realistic understanding, of a personality as a whole, as opposed to idealized and optimistic versions, brought a more balanced view about various additional elements to consider as organizational outcomes and success, and included the knowledge about followers and business context as essential parts of leading change.

Allio (2016) supported Maccoby's view about the inappropriateness of idealized leaders and the threat the leaders' good character, emotional intelligence, and humility may involve in situations requiring difficult choices. Allio also questioned the relationship between the leaders' good character and the ability to envision an innovative breakthrough. Allio pointed to a societal moral paradox regarding the praising of leaders' good behavior and friendly attitude combined with the pursuit of profits and huge bonuses.

Maslow hierarchy of needs and McGregor theory X and Y leadership. Maslow's hierarchy of needs comprises five levels of motivational drivers, possibly influencing behavior (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith, & Huang, 2018). The levels are (a) physiological needs, (b) safety, (c) love and belonging, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization (Hale et al., 2018). Although one of the most popular and used theories among scholars and practitioners, researchers criticized the hierarchy of needs theory for ethical, anthropological, and other shortcomings (Acevedo, 2018).

McGregor viewed a dual way of people management in organizations and categorized the negative premises under theory X and the more positive ones under theory Y (Sudiardhita, Mukhtar, Hartono, Sariwulan, & Nikensari, 2018). Theory X assumptions include the employees' dislike of work, supervision, threat and punishment, responsibility, and lack of safety (Sudiardhita et al., 2018). Theory Y's cooperation, self-direction and self-supervision, proneness to take responsibility, and the capacity to innovate are positive assumptions about motivating and managing employees (Sudiardhita et al., 2018).

Maccoby and Scudder (2018) noted the evolution and the dominance of knowledge work, an essential part of the current context. Maccoby and Scudder explained that in this context, managers need to lead through empowering workers, in making them learn new skills and prepare them for more responsibility. Leading through empowering is different from providing workers with a procedure to accomplish a task, which potentially may lead to another needs' level (Maccoby &

Scudder, 2018). What Maccoby and Scudder found as missing in the motivational theories of Maslow and McGregor is the consideration of social character within the changing context (Maccoby & Scudder, 2018).

Researchers used the term strategic intelligence to design various processes or tools and associated the use of strategic intelligence to different outcomes. There is no recent peer-reviewed article showing a study in which researchers explore or apply the entire strategic intelligence system as conceived by Maccoby and Scudder (2011). In the following subsection, I review the literature related to the researchers' interpretations of some perspectives or components of the concept of strategic intelligence.

Strategic Intelligence-Related Research

Leaders willing to help organizations grow and perform better in the current highly competitive and knowledge-driven environment need new skills and approaches (Amar & Hlupic, 2016). Knowledge in organizations' success has an increasing and predominant weight, leading to a shift of power towards the individual workers (Amar & Hlupic, 2016). Improving the performance of professional services organizations is also knowledge-dependent, and competencies become strategically critical (Fanelli, Lanza, & Zangrandi, 2018). Although knowledge is essential in organizations' success, focusing only on competencies is insufficient to drive performance (Fanelli et al., 2018; Maccoby & Scudder, 2018). Leaders in the global and knowledge-driven era facing rapid changes need new types of intelligence stemming from the capacity to draw competence, skills, and information from various organizational and technical fields, as well as from and together with human beings, and link these into a meaningful and purposeful whole (Maccoby & Scudder, 2018).

Maccoby and Scudder (2018) emphasized the leaders' understanding of personality and systems thinking as the most critical areas to lead change and drive performance in the knowledge-led environment.

Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence system is interdisciplinary, system-based, context, culture, and personality-type-sensitive, and allows for using multiple tools and concepts. Interdisciplinarity, multiple methods, and the ability to consider complex interactions among factors appear essential in the area of strategic intelligence from other researchers' perspectives also.

Walsh (2017) pointed at the interdisciplinary origin of strategic analysis and at the need to better assess complex and emerging matters through strategic intelligence. Landon-Murray (2017) emphasized the role of complexity and systems theories as providing a focus on the interaction among different factors. Walsh argued qualitative approaches are useful in providing a better understanding of the dynamic threats and opportunities through a systematic approach complementing the analytical skills and highlighted the possibility to gain a long-term perspective of the strategic drivers' understanding. Ben-Haim (2018) also recognized the significance of integrating human-related knowledge in strategic intelligence analysis.

The role of intelligence in strategic management. In the Maccoby and Scudder (2011) system, strategy is part of the visioning component and requires systems thinking and interactivity. Foresight is another component of the Maccoby and Scudder's (2011) strategic intelligence system which is necessary for perceiving a strategic opportunity. In Maccoby's view, leaders can develop foresight in combining core knowledge with monitoring the business environment and interpreting global trends and patterns (Maccoby, 2015). To develop foresight, Maccoby (2015) suggested leaders should think and gather information about the market, political, economic, competitive, consumer, technological, and other types of changes and how they may impact their organizations. Maccoby's (2015) primary recommendations consist of environmental scanning, exchanging information with experts, exploring cutting-edge organizations, and serving at other organizations' boards. In the following paragraphs, I discussed some recent studies about the relationship between foresight and strategy.

Foresight methods and tools. Examples of practical approaches to applying elements of strategic intelligence within the organizations involve the use of such concepts and tools as the balanced scorecard, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, business intelligence, competitive intelligence, open innovation, and so forth. Maritz and du Toit (2018) noted the lack of standard definition of competitive intelligence and the multitude of terms used interchangeably, such as market or marketing intelligence, competitive intelligence, business intelligence, and so forth, to describe more or less identical concepts. Maritz and du Toit positioned competitive intelligence within the *strategy as practice* field, and listed such practices related to the strategy process as (a) environmental scanning, (b) SWOT, (c) strategy formulation, (d) provisions and adjustments to strategy, (e) strategy communication, (f) implementation, and (g) medium and long-term decision-making support. Maritz and du Toit argued that competitive intelligence is supportive of every stage of the strategy formulation and execution process. Alnoukari, Razouk, and Hanano (2016) also combined intelligence and strategic management. Alnoukari et al. defined as strategic intelligence the alignment between strategic management and business intelligence and viewed business and competitive intelligence as both necessary in providing information for SWOT, industry, and competitors analyses. Competitive and business intelligence together help leaders to use the Balanced Scorecard strategically and to formulate, implement, and evaluate mission, goals, and strategy (Alnoukari & Hanano, 2017; Alnoukari et al., 2016).

Calitz, Bosire, and Cullen (2017) noted the significance of business intelligence systems to higher education institutions' strategic planning. Scholtz, Calitz, and Haupt (2018) discussed that classic business intelligence tools do not help satisfy strategic needs for sustainability management. Scholtz et al. promoted information and communication technologies (ICT) and *the stakeholder dialogue* as innovative business intelligence approaches. ICT and the stakeholder dialogue facilitate the integration of environmental, social, and financial data, and stakeholders' reporting input and customization, which can improve strategic considerations (Scholtz et al., 2018). Also, Edgeman and Wu (2016) viewed data analytics for strategic intelligence as an essential driver of supply chain proficiency, necessary to achieve sustainable enterprise excellence, resilience, and robustness.

Researchers observed a relationship between competitive intelligence and competitive advantage. Seyyed-Amiri, Shirkavand, Chalak, and Rezaeei (2017) found that competitive intelligence influences competitive advantage in the Iranian insurance industry and recommended the use of competitive advantage as a management tool. Shujahat et al. (2017) revealed that knowledge management and competitive intelligence together lead to competitive advantage and have a central role at every stage of the strategic management process, starting from the mission and vision development, the SWOT analysis, long-term objectives definition, strategy selection, implementation, and final evaluation. Also, Rakthin, Calantone, and Wang

(2016) linked market intelligence, competitive advantage, and performance, and found that firm innovativeness mediates the relationship between market intelligence and competitive advantage expressed as customer retention and acquisition.

An approach to practicing strategic intelligence is open innovation. Calof, Richards, et al. (2017) discussed the open innovation concept and practices to source new ideas for answering the current business needs and suggested moving the competitive intelligence concept towards *open intelligence*. The substantial internationalization of various business operations, the high-speed of occurring changes, and the growing complexity as modern phenomena caused some deficiencies in the traditional competitive intelligence practices (Calof, Richards, et al., 2017). The Calof et al. idea of open intelligence involves planning, data collection, analysis, and communication beyond the traditional and widespread in-house approach, with *cross-pollination*, or even external and *cocreation ecosystem's* components.

The concept of open intelligence as described by Calof, Richards, et al. (2017) and as far as its practicing may provide for external participation, is an opportunity to think about what types of information and when decision-makers would consider disclosing. Bagnoli and Watts (2015) explored the strategic stimuli of companies about organizing competitive intelligence activities in a way to acquire specific information characteristics. Bagnoli and Watts suggested a model which involves the consideration of a company's private information useful to the firm and its competitors to varying degrees. Bagnoli and Watts demonstrated mathematically that there might exist information structures for which the companies' decision-makers may decide a disclosure policy and other information structures for which decision-makers do not adopt disclosure policies. Bagnoli and Watts showed that the leaders make a disclosure choice articulated around the relative usefulness of the information.

Regarding the European Union entrepreneurial policies, Carayannis, Meissner, et al. (2017) also viewed sharing knowledge, ideas, and collaborating as challenging, although essential components of the strategic planning process. Carayannis et al. explained that the most significant components of the strategic planning process and the *smart specialization* approach are open innovation and foresight networks. Uncertainty, risk, breakthrough technologies, and market pressure trigger the competitive advantage searches and are central to smart specialization, open innovation, and foresight (Carayannis, Meissner, et al., 2017). Sautter (2016) discussed that European industry could regain knowledge-based competitiveness through effective strategic intelligence, strategic decision-making, and innovation. Sautter listed such strategic intelligence activities as foresight, impact assessment, and road mapping.

Carayannis, Meissner, et al. (2017) considered technology, competition, and risk as the possible sources or drivers of intelligence. Garcia-Alsina, Cobarsí-Morales, and Ortoll (2016) also detected that while external pressure and uncertainty increase, the Spanish universities competitive intelligence teams increased intelligence work as well. Alternatively, researchers considered the sources as both drivers and outcomes or benefits of intelligence and strategic planning. When examining the companies located within a Nigerian region, Ezenwa, Stella, and Agu (2018) found that (a) strategic intelligence significantly impacts technological know-how, (b) innovation impacts brand reputation, and (c) there is a significant relationship between human intelligence networks and employee loyalty.

Despite the strategic intelligence benefits researchers claim, some small organizations' leaders reject the incorporation of intelligence into their activities. Bisson and Dou (2017) observed that the French small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) leaders were reluctant to applying economic and strategic intelligence techniques mainly because of psychological resistance and lousy reputation of intelligence. To help French SMEs in decision-making and in facing the increasing quantity of available data, Bisson and Dou suggested a strategic system for early signals. The system comprises five stages, and some of them include tools like Porter's five forces, political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses.

Foresight effectiveness. The way leaders conceive, organize, and apply intelligence may condition the level of success of the strategic process. Quality and completeness of information are some of the dimensions of the practice researchers considered regarding intelligence effectiveness. Another significant dimension is the way leaders organize the intelligence function within the organizational structure.

Quality of information and practice. Garcia-Alsina et al. (2016) provided an example of inconsistent application of competitive intelligence. Garcia-Alsina et al. reviewed the competitive intelligence practices of Spanish universities with a focus on the academic offers design within the adaptation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) requirements. Garcia-Alsina et al. analyzed the intelligence function according to the (a) location, (b) responsibilities, (c) resources, (d) frequency, and (e) orientation. Garcia-Alsina et al. found (a) different university units gathering and managing the information, (b) rarely formalized procedures, and (c) not optimally allocated resources. Garcia-Alsina et al. observed that the universities accomplish intelligence-related activities on an irregular basis, reactively, and with a tactical orientation.

To ensure effective strategic planning and solid decision-making leaders should rely on accurate information and a variety of information perspectives. Yap and Rashid (2011) highlighted that publicly accessible information and more specifically, the one available from the Internet, may not be considered for strategic decision-making. Drevon, Maurel, and Dufour (2018) explained that information, experience, intuition, and social context are all useful in decision-making. Drevon et al. suggested that strategic intelligence helps to maintain the process of decision-making in (a) reducing uncertainty, (b) detecting weak signals, and (c) legitimizing decisions, meaning that strategic intelligence may support decision-making before and after the decision had place.

The type and use of information sources may depend on the organizations' operating sector, mission, and legal environment. Within the higher education sector in Spain, for instance, Garcia-Alsina et al. (2016) detected information sources which include documents, commissions, internal working groups, meetings and digital networks, stakeholders, and internal units. Garcia-Alsina et al. found that collective analyses dominated, based on self-evaluation guidelines techniques, and benchmarking and SWOT to lower levels. Intelligence production was collective (Garcia-Alsina et al., 2016). Garcia-Alsina et al. noted some particularities of the higher education sector, like the legislation about governing bodies and the social role of universities, which may hinder or shape the intelligence practices.

The breadth and depth of intelligence activities are additional necessary perspectives to understand and evaluate impacts. Oubrich, Hakmaoui, Bierwolf, and Haddani (2018) identified two notable gaps in the competitive intelligence literature which relate to (a) the lack of empirical research evaluating the companies' competitive intelligence maturity and (b) the predominance of the developed markets in the existing studies. Oubrich et al. revealed that the Moroccan companies operate primarily at the early stage of competitive intelligence maturity where competition is not intense, and the intelligence practice resumes mainly to environmental scanning.

Structuring the intelligence activities. Views vary about how managers should organize strategic intelligence practices inside the organizations. Calof, Richards, et al. (2017) indicated that intelligence activities predominantly locate in closed units within the organizations. Yap and Rashid (2011) shared supporting findings and reported that 62% of the companies in Malaysia have a formal competitive intelligence unit, and 79% of the units are part of marketing or market research or corporate planning department. In Morocco, over 50% of the companies also have dedicated competitive intelligence structures (Oubrich et al., 2018). Søilen (2017) identified seven competitive and market intelligence models, such as the (a) special department model, (b) professional model, (c) top-down model, (d) integrated model, (e) down-up model, (f) advisory model and (g) consulting model. Søilen argued that competitive and market intelligence and the way leaders set their practicing, are central to achieving competitive advantage. Søilen pointed at the possible problematic attitude of top management towards competitive and market intelligence persons because of the idea that efficient intelligence may reveal the real contributions of managers.

Besides setting the intelligence activities within the organization under a particular model, decision-makers may impact the effect of competitive intelligence with their skills and knowledge. Grèzes (2015) detected that managers lack knowledge about what information to request and proposed a model, helping to identify competitive intelligence needs. Baei, Ahmadi, Malafeh, and Baee (2017) found a positive relationship between knowledge and wisdom and practical intelligence as strategic intelligence parameters and organizational development.

Also, the effectiveness of the process of strategic intelligence may depend on the users' practices and perceptions while using monitoring tools (Fourati-Jamoussi, Niamba, & Duquennoy, 2018). Fourati-Jamoussi et al. (2018) used a competitive and technological intelligence (CTI) tool among groups of students to understand the choice of monitoring tools and the perceptions. Fourati-Jamoussi et al. concluded that the introduction of CTI tools in companies might induce cultural and organizational changes accompanied by resistance.

Leaders willing to achieve sustainable growth for their organizations need to develop a long-term perspective of their knowledge about competitors and markets (Stefanikova, Rypakova, & Moravcikova, 2015). Competitive intelligence practices and the duration of maintaining them in the time impact market share and competitive positions of companies (Stefanikova et al., 2015). Stefanikova et al. (2015) study of Slovak firms indicates a relationship between competitive intelligence and sustainable growth.

Improving Performance in the Nonprofit Sector

Scholars identified the need for nonprofit organizations' leaders to adopt performance measurement systems because of the increasing expectations about the social role of the nonprofit sector and the current competitive pressures (Lee & Nowell, 2015; Pirozzi & Ferulano, 2016). Nonprofit organizations suffer from a lack of tangible metrics to evaluate performance (Houck, 2017). Houck (2017) discussed that the consequence of missing metrics might result in a difficulty to show accountability and emphasized how significant is for leaders to orient the strategy towards performance. Lee and Nowell (2015) detected the increasing number of scientific attempts to address the need for nonprofits' performance measurement framework, and the lack of a shared vision. Lee and Nowell suggested a flexible and adaptive to the nonprofit organizations operating context approach and indicated that leaders of nonprofit organizations following the commercial funding model, for instance, should focus on acquiring the necessary financial and other resources, and combine human and structural features to deliver the services and programs directly linked to the accomplishment of the organizational mission. Also, depending on the level of nonprofits' tasks programmability and observability, leaders may need to build performance focus on behavioral and environmental changes, customer satisfaction, and network or institutional legitimacy (Lee & Nowell, 2015). The variety of performance perspectives nonprofit leaders should incorporate involves a vast array of organizational areas and dimensions which shows the centrality of leadership.

Leadership. Organizations use leadership training programs to help develop executive talent for reaching strategic goals, changing culture and performance. Packard and Jones (2015) studied a leadership development program that involved individual leader development aiming at changing the performance and cultures of the participating organizations. Packard and Jones evaluated the leadership development program of human service managers and found significant improvement in job performance and self-efficacy perceptions and viewed leaders' self-efficacy as a significant variable associated with performance in organizations. Perceived self-efficacy, receptivity to feedback, sensitivity to the external environment, and valuing employee input shape the leaders' capacity to use performance information (Johansen, Kim, & Zhu, 2018). Johansen et al. (2018) explained that performance information is helpful only when managers use it to improve their organizations. Johansen et al. found that both sector and management style influence the purposeful use of performance information and that managers need both incentives and capacity to use performance information. The presence of market competition, for instance, is a motivator for nonprofit managers to engage in performance management (Johansen et al., 2018).

Knowledge and learning. Strategic management and marketing researchers pointed to innovation, learning, market, and entrepreneurial orientations as sources to adapt to changing business environments and improve performance (Baba, 2015). Research in the nonprofit sector shows increasing attention and recognition to the role of learning and knowledge-related concepts (Baba, 2015; Pirozzi & Ferulano, 2016; Vakharia, Vecco, Srakar, & Janardhan, 2018). Baba (2015) tested the relationship between learning orientation and nonprofit performance. Baba found that learning orientation is the most significant strategic orientation for nonprofit organizations and that learning orientation helps nonprofit managers achieve better financing results through an improved noneconomic performance related to better addressing mission-based tasks.

Pirozzi and Ferulano (2016) discussed the links between intellectual capital and innovation, change, leadership, and performance, and promoted the integration of a performance excellence framework with intellectual capital for knowledge-intensive nonprofit organizations. Vakharia et al. (2018) found a strong positive association between knowledge-centricity and the human dimension and resilience, which means that managers may positively influence performance through developing these areas. Also, Vakharia et al. found that the knowledge-centric practices related to (a) collecting and managing data, (b) strategic use of data, (c) training and professional development of staff, and (d) effectiveness in using technology systems are the most strongly associated practices that affect financial and operational performance of some nonprofit organizations. Carayannis, Grigoroudis, Del Giudice, Della Peruta, and Sindakis (2017) suggested that organizational leaders may achieve sustainability excellence in balancing *knowledge exploration* and *exploitation*. Knowledge exploration is about effectively pursuing change and performance, while knowledge exploitation is about consistent policies and structures (Carayannis, Grigoroudis, et al., 2017).

Innovation. Kong (2015) discussed the significance of tacit knowledge for strategic advantage, of knowledge acquisition for innovation, and innovation for the sustainability of nonprofit organizations. Kong found that *social intelligence* is essential to the nonprofits' organization-specific knowledge and innovation. Social intelligence is an initial stage for the nonprofits' innovativeness and helps leaders integrate external knowledge into internal learning processes (Kong, 2015). Social intelligence is the leaders' and members' tacit knowledge and competencies to sense, understand, and integrate the needs of external stakeholders to achieve organizational benefits (Kong, 2015).

McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, and Sullivan Mort (2015) explained that nonprofit leaders needed to engage in innovation to ensure sustainability. Leaders of organizations with limited resources should pursue only incremental innovations reactively (McDonald et al., 2015). Leaders of nonprofit organizations with exemplary performance in both the financial and social areas can pursue innovation proactively (McDonald et al., 2015).

Mission statement. Nonprofit organizations are mission-led, and researchers claimed that mission statements are a strategic tool impacting the organizations' performance (Macedo, Pinho, & Silva, 2016; Pandey, Kim, & Pandey, 2017). A primary condition for the positive impact of mission statements is the clarity of the expressed cause (Rana et al., 2017). Pandey et al. (2017) examined the relationship between nonprofit mission statements' semantic attributes and instrumental and expressive financial and nonfinancial performance of nonprofits in the field of the performing arts. Pandey et al. found that the mission statements' semantic attribute activity is positively associated with both instrumental and expressive aspects of nonprofit performance. The Pandey et al. findings partially support strategic management research indicating the central role of mission statements to organizational strategy. The findings support the view that entrepreneurial orientation adoption with an emphasis on the activities and programs is beneficial for nonprofit organizations (Pandey et al., 2017). Macedo et al. (2016) also explored the significance of mission statements for organizational performance. Macedo et al. found an indirect effect of organizational commitment on the mission statement –

performance link indicating that meaningful mission statements are effective strategic tools if employees align well with the values. Also, Macedo et al. found a direct positive link between mission statement and performance, indicating that managers who use mission statement development to inspire organizational members, promote values, and show a common direction, may improve their organizations' performance.

Financial sustainability. Financial and management factors matter for the performance of nonprofit organizations as well (Qian & Kapucu, 2017). Improved organizational performance and sustainability are central outcomes of effective strategic planning processes in the nonprofit sector (Rana et al., 2017). A necessary condition to improve the performance is the implementation of the strategic plans (Qian & Kapucu, 2017).

Strategic planning. Rana et al. (2017) discussed that strategic planning is essential for the nonprofits to gather volunteers and donations and emphasized the role of nonprofit leaders in strategic planning. Qian and Kapucu (2017) examined the effect of revenue diversification, board involvement, and strategic plan implementation on performance. Qian and Kapucu found that strategic plan implementation may help reduce the financial vulnerability of nonprofits. Qian and Kapucu highlighted the significance of implementing the strategic plans and not only developing them. Implementing strategic plans may help detect opportunities and sustain or expand existing activities and contribute to the overall financial performance of the organization (Qian & Kapucu, 2017).

Board of directors' involvement. Views diverge about the effect of board involvement on nonprofit organizations' performance. Qian and Kapucu (2017) did not find a statistically significant relationship between board involvement and financial performance during times of crisis. On the contrary, Zhu, Wang, and Bart (2016) found that active involvement of boards in strategy development helps financial performance, industrial competitiveness, and innovation for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Zhu et al. highlighted the significance of strategy-dedicated board meetings in the nonprofit sector and their usefulness for the board's involvement in strategy.

Organizational culture. Researchers argued that culture impacts organizational performance in the nonprofit sector (Stock & McFadden, 2017). Stock and McFadden (2017) examined the relationship between patient safety culture and hospital performance in nonprofit United States' hospitals. Stock and McFadden found that patient safety culture positively associates with patient safety, process quality, and patient satisfaction. Langer and LeRoux (2017) contended that developmental culture, involving innovation and risk-taking, may help nonprofit organizations' reactivity and efficiency. Langer and LeRoux revealed that nonprofit leaders perceive a significant relationship between developmental culture and effectiveness of activities like growth-seeking, resources acquisition, and reaching external support. Recent research in the for-profit area indicates that organizational culture is the most significant enabler of knowledge management, intellectual capital, and organizational capabilities, and that the appropriate combination of the four factors may lead to innovation for competitive advantage and long-term success (Chatzoglou & Chatzoudes, 2018).

Strategic Planning in the Nonprofit Sector

Research in the area of nonprofits' strategic planning indicated that the use of performance measurement is essential and intertwined in the strategic planning process (Chen, 2017; Sharpe, Mehta, Eisenberg, & Kruskal, 2015; Strang, 2018). The integration of performance measurement in strategic planning helps to support the nonprofits' mission-achievement (Newcomer & Brass, 2016). Nonprofit organizations' leaders need to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programs to the public and using performance measurement information indicates program achievement capacity which leaders may adjust through strategic planning (Chen, 2017). Some of the tools researchers discussed and analyzed in the areas of strategic planning and performance measurement overlap (Al-Hosaini & Sofian, 2015; Sharpe et al., 2015; Soysa, Jayamaha, & Grigg, 2017).

Mission achievement and mission impact. Nonprofit organizations' strategy is mission-driven, and the nonprofit version of the Balanced Scorecard illustrates the mission as the starting point for the organization's functioning (Soysa et al., 2017). Soysa et al. (2017) aimed at validating a nonprofit organizations' performance measurement model in the Australian healthcare industry. Soysa et al. tested a combination of the nonprofit version of the Balanced Scorecard and a business excellence model suitable to healthcare organizations. Soysa et al. found that the mission is the initial source of impact for both the strategy and the financial health of the organization, the strategy and the financial health influence people and organizational infrastructure, and subsequently processes and stakeholders' satisfaction. Given the importance of missions for driving the nonprofit organizations functioning, leaders should consider articulating consistent, authentic, and engaging mission statements, and avoid generic and vague versions (Sharpe et al., 2015).

Levine Daniel and Kim (2018) findings also supported the idea of the centrality of missions for the nonprofit organizations' revenue generation. Levine

Daniel and Kim found that nonprofits' earned revenues' embeddedness and integration with the organization's mission lead to better performance, while external to the mission revenues lead to poor performance. Levine Daniel and Kim used a framework allowing to compare the integration of the earned revenue activity into the mission through organizational technology and target market. Levine Daniel and Kim explained that organizational technology involves financial, human, and technology resources as the primary components of organizations' activities.

To execute the mission over time, the nonprofit leaders need to ensure the continuity of funding from grants, donations, or services, and demonstrating accountability and performance becomes imminent. Knox and Wang (2016) noted the agreement of researchers that performance measurement is helpful for nonprofits accountability and performance improvement. The leaders of small and midsized nonprofit organizations may face difficulties to implement a performance measurement system because of insufficient or lacking capacity (Knox & Wang, 2016). Knox and Wang advocated the adoption of a capacity-building approach. Knox and Wang found that (a) leadership and stakeholder support, (b) technical competency and staff expertise, and (c) change institutionalization are essential factors for the successful implementation of the performance measurement system in small and midsized nonprofits.

Strategic planning tools. Nonprofit leaders may need to engage their organizations in strategic planning for a variety of reasons and in expecting a multitude of benefits within a pertinent process (Bryson, 2018). A possible benefit of strategic planning is improved decision-making about the organization's current and future actions and the related consequences (Bryson, 2018). Therefore, developing a capacity to sense the future may prove helpful in strategic planning. Kim and Lee (2017) discussed the significance of detecting weak signals during the current business uncertainty and shortened technological lifecycles. Kim and Lee aimed at focusing on technology-centered signs that can constitute technology foresight. Kim and Lee referred to the environmental scanning and Ansoff's surveillance, mentality, and power filters as the traditional method for weak signals detection. Kim and Lee suggested a framework for identifying weak signals through novel information and novelty detection technique, the local outlier factor technique, from futuristic data. Kim and Lee suggested four stages process, starting with collecting patent and futuristic data. The following stages are (a) building keyword document matrix, (b) assessing rarity and transformation power, and (c) developing signal portfolio map. Kim and Lee concluded that the framework is helpful in enlarging the sources and improving the sensitivity to weak signal identification. Kim and Lee considered such futuristic data as predictions, facts, trends, and stimuli that are different from and complementary to patent data and included information from both experts and the public, which was helpful in finding weak signals.

Researchers referred to the balanced scorecard and SWOT analysis in nonprofit strategic planning and performance measurement articles as some of the primary tools. Al-Hosaini and Sofian (2015) aimed at justifying the use of the balanced scorecard in higher education institutions to drive organizational change following necessary innovation and competitiveness initiatives. Al-Hosaini and Sofian highlighted the significance of the financial perspective for universities as nonprofit organizations and advised the use of a SWOT for defining the mission and vision, as well as the balanced scorecard with the strategy map tool to relate the mission to a comprehensive strategic plan and management system. Al-Hosaini and Sofian suggested that apart from the four main dimensions of the balanced scorecard, the universities' leaders should consider (a) community participation, (b) strategic partnership, and (c) scientific research excellence, to help graduates acquire competences relevant to the market needs.

The nonprofit operating field and the stage of strategic planning are some factors to consider while choosing a suitable tool. Sharpe et al. (2015) discussed the challenge radiology groups are facing with the new healthcare reform in the United States. Sharpe et al. discussed that the new aim is to provide high quality care through customer value. Sharpe et al. advised radiology leaders should follow a 4-step approach, (a) clarifying and articulating purpose, (b) identifying strategic goals, (c) prioritizing strategic enablers, and (d) tracking progress and adapting. Sharpe et al. provided guidance about what relevant mission and vision statements are, highlighted the need to avoid generic or vague mission statements, and suggested the five whys approach. Sharpe et al. proposed SWOT analysis as the primary strategic planning tool to use during the second stage. To prioritize strategic enablers, Sharpe et al. suggested using the possible-implement-challenge-kill idea approach (PICK). For the final stage, Sharpe et al. suggested using the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) approach and the balanced scorecard.

Soysa et al. (2017) listed the balanced scorecard as an existing performance measurement model that nonprofit healthcare leaders in Australia may use. The initial balanced scorecard version contained four dimensions, (a) innovation and learning, (b) internal business processes, (c) customers, and (d) financial (Soysa et al., 2017). In the later versions, the four initial dimensions remained intact, but with the concept of strategy map the balanced scorecard authors brought additional clarifications about measurement selection and suggested a version suitable to nonprofit organizations (Soysa et al., 2017). In the nonprofit version, strategy is mission-driven and the financial perspective is the antecedent of the internal processes' perspective and equally important as the learning and growth dimension (Soysa et al., 2017). Soysa et al. identified a missing component of all versions of the balanced scorecard, which is people satisfaction. Also, Soysa et al. compared the balanced scorecard to business excellence frameworks like the Baldrige and European excellence model and used a specific to the healthcare organizations excellence framework. Soysa et al. noted the similarity between business excellence and nonprofit balanced scorecard frameworks which consists of the systems approach and outlined the distinctive difference which is the strategy driver, organizational leadership for the business excellence models, but mission for the nonprofit balanced scorecard.

Strategic planning effectiveness. Strategic planning is not relevant in crisis situations, or when leaders' commitment, skills, and resources are absent (Bryson, 2018). While nonprofit leaders can achieve various organizational benefits through engaging in the strategic planning process, success may depend upon the willingness of participants and how well leaders adapt the process to the organizational situation and context (Bryson, 2018). Also, the type of participants in the strategic planning process, and the presence of organizational politics may condition the level of use of performance measurement information and process' effectiveness (Chen, 2017; Elbanna, 2016).

Newcomer and Brass (2016) suggested that nonprofit leaders should design a more substantial, strategically oriented, evaluation function within the organizations to better support mission execution, grouping performance measurement, ad-hoc impact studies, and other applications of program assessment skills. Chen (2017) discussed the role of performance measurement in the public sector and highlighted the need of evidence about the effectiveness of programs. Chen noted that performance measurement helps to translate organizational goals into objectives and actions and indicates implementation capacity of departments, information which leaders could link to strategic planning and adjust as necessary. Chen found that diversity of stakeholders' participation increases the chance of using performance information in strategic planning. Chen revealed that the participation of the internal stakeholders positively and significantly influences the application of performance information to strategic planning. Chen concluded that because of technical rationality, managerial effectiveness, and political accountability, internal stakeholders are able to generate a stronger effect on the use of performance information than external stakeholders.

Governance and management style are also factors impacting the strategic planning outcomes. When exploring the touristic industry, Elbanna (2016) hypothesized the impact of managerial autonomy and strategic control on organizational politics, as well as the influence of organizational politics on the effectiveness of strategic planning. Elbanna found that high levels of managerial autonomy combined with low levels of control negatively impact the effectiveness of strategic planning by increasing organizational tensions. In some highly specialized and high performing nonprofit organizations, such as science and technology laboratories, governance type may alter strategic planning outcomes (Mirabeau, Kinder, & Malherbe, 2015). Mirabeau et al. (2015) revealed that the relationships between governance strategic planning processes, funding, and performance evaluation vary as per the laboratories' governance archetypes.

Bryson (2018) considered that leaders might have different priorities in crisis, and executing the strategic planning may not correspond to an adequate reaction of an emergency. Other researchers argued that during times of economic crises, strategic planning is essential for nonprofit leaders willing to achieve an effective strategic response (Raffo, Clark, & Arik, 2016). Raffo et al. (2016) noted the augmented need of nonprofits' strategic responses and strategic planning during the 2008 economic crisis. Raffo et al. mentioned human resources and financial related response strategies including staff reductions, salary freezes, reassignments, use of more volunteers, boards relationships and fundraising efforts, and new programs for revenue streams. Raffo et al. aimed at determining how the nonprofits responded strategically to the crisis, which factors determined stronger strategic responses, and which responses led to financial growth. Raffo et al. found that (a) fewer funding sources associated to lower level of strategic response, (b) a website presence and visibility of a board of directors related to stagnant or increasing resources reporting, and (c) experience in the market and firm size were not significant to predict strategic response levels. Raffo et al. suggested nonprofit leaders should ensure strong visibility and human resource capacity, as well as increase strategic response level during crises.

Leaders' ability to assess the capacity to implement a strategy at the strategy formulation phase is another effectiveness-related factor (Bryson, 2018). After exploring the strategy statements of 203 AACSB accredited universities worldwide and their rankings, Rustambekov and Unni (2017) found that the higher ranked universities promote faculty emphasis in the strategy statements and have longer well laid-down strategy statements, while the lower ranked promoted students focus. Rustambekov and Unni revealed that successful university leaders managed their activities in compliance with the strategy statement which helped them achieve higher performance.

Finally, strategic planning is a critical success factor for nonprofit organizations (Bryson, 2018; Strang, 2018). For nonprofit leaders, the mission is the most significant strategy driver (Soysa et al., 2017). Sharpe et al. (2015) advised that nonprofit leaders should consider SWOT analysis in their strategic planning efforts to identify strategic goals. Leaders' style, assessment skills, as well as organizational relationships, governance, and stakeholders' participation impact the strategic planning effectiveness (Bryson, 2018; Chen, 2017; Elbanna, 2016; Mirabeau et al., 2015; Newcomer & Brass, 2016). Strang (2018) found that strategic planning and innovation are some of the nonprofit critical success factors identified from the literature review and validated by a group of practitioners. The practitioners' principles elicited from a SWOT-TOWS analysis, are (a) leadership and resource structure, (b) strategic planning and innovation, (c) document procedures and training, (d) human and technology resource management, (e) financial management, (f) accountability practices, (g) ethics and communications policies, (h) collaborative fundraising and marketing initiatives, and (i) performance success evaluation.

Transition

In Section 1, I presented the foundation of this study, the conceptual framework, and a review of the professional and academic literature. The purpose of the literature review was to explore how strategic intelligence relates to strategic planning and how leaders can use strategic intelligence to improve performance. Some key points are the significance of knowledge and learning, leadership, and organizational culture to achieve innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, and competitive advantage in an era of increased competition and constant change. Researchers pointed to the need for leaders to adopt a long-term perspective for sustaining growth, ensure input from a broad base of stakeholders and use of performance measurement data in the strategic planning process, keep missions purposeful and consistent, and ensure mission-driven activities, revenues, organizational values, and employees' and volunteers' commitment. Researchers advised using such strategic tools as SWOT analyses, the balanced scorecard, and excellence models.

Section 2 contains information about the organization and execution of the study. I discussed the research purpose, the methodology, and design, my role as the researcher, the participants, the data collection instruments, and techniques. I provided information about the methods I used to ensure the ethical execution and the reliability and validity of the study.

In Section 3, I presented the analysis of my client organization structured as per the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework (2017). The Baldrige framework is a systems-perspective tool facilitating the integrated thinking. The critical success areas of analysis are as follows: leadership, strategy, customers, measurement, analysis, and knowledge, workforce, operations, and results.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I present the study purpose and discuss the research method and design, the role of the researcher, and the data collection methods and techniques. The primary method of data collection consisted of semistructured telephone interviews with three senior leaders who have experience in strategic planning and contributions to organizational performance. Additional data collection methods included reviews of organizational documents and publicly accessible data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. The target population was four senior leaders of a U.S. nonprofit organization located in the Midwest who have developed effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. However, I achieved data saturation with three interviews. The implications for positive social change are that the findings of this study could enable nonprofit leaders to guide their organizations through rapidly changing environments, compete successfully, and sustain delivery of high impact goods and services to the public and communities that they serve.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's most significant role in qualitative research consists of being the instrument for data collection, interpreting the analyzed data, and ensuring various aspects of validity and reliability (Gaus, 2017). In the data collection process, the responsibilities of the researcher include objective and ethical data gathering, clarifying his or her interpretation of data, and establishing a process of analysis and collaboration with the participants (Fletcher, De Massis, & Nordqvist, 2016). In conducting this qualitative single case study, I served as the primary instrument for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting the data.

Researchers can use various strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Some of the strategies researchers use relate to reflexivity, triangulation, and member checking (Hays et al., 2016). I had no previous experience working in the nonprofit sector, with the participants of the study, or as a consultant. Furthermore, I did not work or was otherwise involved in the field of accreditation. In some of my professional roles, I served as a strategic planning expert and business planning leader, which may have given me some familiarity with certain points or aspects participants might have shared during the interviews. In acknowledging the potential for this bias, I used techniques to monitor for bias concerns during the research process and applied appropriate methods to limit the possible impact.

Yin (2018) highlighted the significance for case study researchers of pursuing the highest ethical standards and values. The requirements for ethical research involving human subjects of the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979), include such guiding principles as (a) respect for participants, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. Researchers need to ensure individuals' understanding of the nature of the study, voluntary participation, confidentialityIand privacy (Yin, 2018). In engaging in ethical behavior, the researcher should prevent harmful actions and effects of all types (Yin, 2018). A prerequisite of conducting a study at Walden University is obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Walden University, 2018). The scope of

IRB oversight includes approval of data sources and provision of informed consent to the participants. Walden researchers have the responsibility to comply with the directions set forth in their IRB approval (Walden University, 2018). I adhered to the requirements stipulated by the IRB in carrying out this study.

Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is a primary requirement for quality, and researchers can address the required rigor by using various strategies (Hays et al., 2016). One responsibility of the case study researcher and an aspect of ethical research is detachment from predetermined positions (Yin, 2018). Fusch and Ness (2015) explained the significance of understanding and providing the participants' perspective and emphasized the difficulty of the task. Fusch and Ness recommended acknowledging and maintaining awareness of one's personal lens as ways to limit the researcher's bias. I heeded this recommendation by acknowledging my previous experience in strategic and business planning and remaining attentive to limit the possible impact of my experience on the conduct of my study. Additionally, I used an interview protocol and relied on triangulation and member checking to achieve neutrality and thick description.

The use of an interview protocol is essential for improving research quality and mitigating the researcher's bias (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix) to ensure consistency of execution of all interviews, remain open-minded, and provide flexibility to introduce changes based on participants' wishes. Use of the interview protocol helped me prepare and organize an essential part of the data collection process, as well as achieve data saturation and mitigate bias.

Participants

Leaders of the DBA Consulting Capstone program of Walden University assigned a nonprofit organization to me. The study participants were among the assigned nonprofit organization's senior leaders. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some nonprofit leaders used to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organization's performance. The target population was four senior leaders of a U.S. nonprofit organization located in the Midwest who have developed effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. I reached data saturation with three interviews. Researchers can select participants based on the information they can provide pertinent to the research question (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Singh, 2014). The selection criteria for participation in this study aligned with the overarching research question. The eligible participants demonstrated characteristics showing engagement in the organization's strategic planning processes and a resulting achievement of performance.

The working relationship of the scholar-consultants who are part of the DBA consulting capstone with the assigned organizations and senior leaders rests on the requirements of the capstone program, the IRB approval and informed consent process, and the use of the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Walden University consulting capstone leaders provided me with access to the organization's senior leaders at the start of my assignment. I interacted with the senior leaders upon obtaining the IRB approval. As a consulting capstone student, I followed the 2017-2018 Baldrige Excellence Framework to structure the data gathering and achieve an integrated perspective of the organization's performance.

The IRB approval requirements for the DBA Consulting Capstone allow for the use of public data, internal documents, peer-reviewed and other professional literature, and interviews with the participants. Because of the geographical distance between my residence and the organization’s location, I communicated with the organization’s senior leaders through digital means and telephone. The first contact with the study participants happened through e-mail with the aim to clarify the purpose of the study and my involvement with the organization. In her interview protocol refinement framework, Castillo-Montoya (2016) highlighted the importance of achieving a natural discussion during the interview. After the initial e-mail, I requested a brief call with each potential participant, and if accepted, I attempted to establish more personal contact with the aim to prepare for a natural conversation style during the interview. In a second e-mail, I addressed the informed consent process and the need for written acceptance to persons who showed interest in participating.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Researchers can choose from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach to conduct their studies. Birkinshaw, Brannen, and Tung (2011) recommended using qualitative research if there is a need to explore a phenomenon and understand a context in detail. In this study, I used a qualitative method as I explored the strategies some nonprofit leaders use to develop a strategic plan based on strategic intelligence. One of the primary advantages of using the qualitative method in the field of strategic intelligence is the opportunity for gaining an in-depth understanding of changing environments (Walsh, 2017). In using qualitative methods, the researchers can gather information about the behavior of participants in real conditions (Kross & Giust, 2019). In this study, I combined observations from documents and literature reviews with the participant's descriptions of the strategic intelligence-based strategies they used for organization improvement, and how the participants accomplished various parts of the planning process. The qualitative method allowed for an in-depth understanding and a rich description of the organizational process of strategic planning and the integration of strategic intelligence components for organizational improvement.

In contrast, researchers use the quantitative method to examine a theory's relevance through testing hypotheses about variables' relationships or groups' differences (Park & Park, 2016). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study as I did not engage in a justification context to examine theories' relevance through testing hypotheses. Venkatesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) explained that the mixed methods research methodology is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches and techniques. Palinkas et al. (2015) recommended employing the mixed methods research methodology in cases where a qualitative or quantitative method alone is insufficient and incomplete for a study. I considered that the mixed methods approach was also inappropriate for this study, as there was no quantitative component required to address my study's purpose.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit organizations' leaders employed to develop strategic intelligence-based plans for organizations' improvement. In using a case study design, researchers aim at understanding the uniqueness of the specifics and the complexity of what they are exploring (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Some distinctive features of case studies are the identifiable boundaries of the case, the possibility for an in-depth investigation in real-life settings, the inclusion of the contextual conditions in the exploration, and the use of various data sources (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Gaus, 2017; Leppäaho, Plakoyiannaki, & Dimitratos, 2016; Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015; Ridder, 2017). Yin (2018) explained that one of the most significant elements of guiding the case study choice is the nature of the research question and case studies relate to how and why questions, contemporary events, and do not show a requirement for controlling participants' behavior.

A primary reason to prioritize a single case study design is the situation in which the researcher can have exceptional access to the phenomenon under study to achieve a greater understanding (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The advantage of the single case study resides in the possibility to gather a detailed understanding of the phenomenon by an in-depth investigation of the organizations' documentation and interviewing participants about their experiences (Ridder, 2017). Gaya and Smith (2016) advanced the researcher's possibility for a holistic and concentrated investigation within a single case study and justified the use of the design in the area of strategic management. Because the in-depth understanding of the strategic intelligence-based strategy development within a nonprofit organization was the focus of my study, combined with the unusual research access through the consulting capstone program, the single case study was the appropriate design for addressing the specific business problem.

Phenomenology is another qualitative design to explore experiences and is useful in organizational research (Gill, 2014). Researchers can use phenomenological design to reveal the meanings of participants’ lived experiences (Willgens et al., 2016). Researchers using phenomenological design bear interest in exploring attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and feelings with a particular focus on the inside perspective rather than on the contextual settings provoking them (Percy et al., 2015). Also, as the primary aim of using the phenomenological design is the understanding of the experiences, researchers focus on gathering the data directly from the participants in verbal form (Gill, 2014), which may limit the researchers’ possibilities to enhance validity through triangulation methods. Phenomenology was not the appropriate design for this study as I did not explore the participants’ experiences.

With ethnography researchers can pursue the investigation of shared cultures, through the network of social groupings, customs, beliefs, behaviors, and practices (Percy et al., 2015; Willgens et al., 2016). Aiming at identifying similarities or differences in a large group of people, ethnographers can use various data sources to achieve a deep understanding (Duque et al., 2019). Additionally, as ethnographers focus on the causes while searching for common group patterns, some authors recommended the use of ethnography for market research to enhance innovation and disruptiveness (Meyer, Crane, & Lee, 2016). Given the merits of ethnography in advancing deep understanding, the shared culture of individuals and the common patterns were not the focus of my study.

Nelson (2016) explained that data saturation is essential in qualitative research and researchers need to adapt the search for saturation to their specific design and case. Fusch et al. (2018) noted the role of triangulation in contributing to rich data and a deep understanding and promoted triangulation as a viable path to achieve data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) contended that a researcher achieves data saturation when additional sources do not bring new information and new coding is not possible anymore. I achieved data saturation in following Fusch and Ness recommendations and combined data from interviews of three senior leaders from the assigned nonprofit organization, detailed notes-taking, internal documents reviews, and publicly available data.

Population and Sampling

After formulating the research topic, the researcher needs to work on selecting the population and sample (Yin, 2018). The population for this study comprised senior leaders of a United States nonprofit organization located in the Midwest who have developed effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. I chose a sample size of four participants with the aim to increase the possibility to obtain valuable data relevant to increasing organizational performance through strategic intelligence. However, I reached data saturation with three interviews. Francis et al. (2010) noted the tendency of justifying sample size with data saturation in qualitative studies involving interviews of participants. Nelson (2016) mentioned the lack of guidance about how to estimate the qualitative studies' sample sizes as problematic to the concept of data saturation and provided a different perspective about achieving data saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that researchers should think about ensuring the richness and thickness of data to reach data saturation, rather than determining a sample size. Therefore, achieving an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through quality and quantity of data was the guiding principle and I considered that the sample size of three senior leaders was appropriate for contributing to data saturation.

I selected participants as per the eligibility criteria to take part in this study. The requirements included a senior leader of the nonprofit who has participated in the strategic planning process of the organization and has developed effective plans for increasing organizational performance. A popular method of selecting participants in qualitative research is the purposeful sampling with the aim to reach respondents possessing critical, pertinent, and abundant knowledge about the research question (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). I used purposeful sampling for this study to ensure the information I gathered from the participants aligned with the research question and supported data saturation.

To achieve data saturation, I interviewed the senior leaders, reviewed internal documents, took notes and searched for related literature and public information. I also relied on the exchanges with my assigned client organization leader and the information I gathered through the Baldrige framework related discussions. The exchanges with my client organization leader were essential to my understanding of the holistic functioning of the nonprofit organization, and the information added value to data saturation. Also, my client leader was a different person from the potential respondents and represented an additional source of information. Various information sources can help improve the quality and quantity of the data to achieve saturation and triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Nelson, 2016).

Ethical Research

I received Walden University IRB approval before the start of the exchanges with the assigned client organization leader. My Walden University IRB approval number for this study is 11-16-17-0647570. Upon the participants' identification, I contacted them to explain the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, the audio recording procedure during the interview, and addressed the official informed consent letter for consideration and reply. The informed consent is part of the ethical process of protecting human subjects through informing participants about possible risks the study may present and obtaining the participants' agreement to participate in the study (Perrault & Keating, 2018). The informed consent letter I addressed to the senior leaders repeated the brief description of the study, interview procedures, voluntary nature of participation and procedures to withdraw, privacy information, researcher, and Walden University contact information for additional questions. As many persons participating in social sciences research do not read the consent form or do not understand it, I followed Perrault and Keating (2018) recommendations to use a short text containing only essential information. Also, the discussions or e-mails before sending the official form supported the participants' attention to the process of informed consent.

Yin (2018) discussed the fact that research involving human subjects requires that researchers are attentive to various ethical aspects. Tolich et al. (2017) highlighted the significance for researchers to respect the participants' autonomy through the concept of voluntary participation in the process of informed consent. Voluntary participation and confidentiality are some of the primary ethical components researchers use to provide the possibility for potential participants to take an informed decision about their willingness to take part in the study or not (Ruiz-Casares & Thompson, 2016). Once I received a consent, verbal or written, for the senior leaders' participation in my study, I addressed the official informed consent e-mail, containing the explanation of voluntary participation. Voluntary participation means that participants are free to withdraw from the study at any moment. An informed decision to participate involved responding to the official informed consent e-mail with the words “I consent”.

I informed the senior leaders who confirmed with an informed consent their participation in the study about the procedures to withdraw from the study. Participants could withdraw by notifying me by phone or e-mail about their decision at any time. Also, I have the responsibility to keep confidential the information participants provided, and I ensured the data is safe and not revealed to any other participant. The participants in my study did not receive any form of compensation for their participation. I will keep confidential the identities of the nonprofit organization and the senior leaders who participated in this study. I used the pseudonym “BC” to refer to the organization. To protect the respondents’ identities, I used such labels as Participant 3, Participant 5, and Participant 7. I ensured the participants understand that the interviews’ transcripts were confidential, but they could access their respective data for exactness review at any moment. After the study, I ensured storing the data in a secured and protected place for 5 years.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research (Fletcher et al., 2016; Gaus, 2017; Yin, 2018); I held this role for my study. I collected data through semistructured interviews, and reviews of internal and public documents and peer-reviewed literature. I conducted semistructured interviews with open-ended questions with three senior leaders of a United States nonprofit organization located in the Midwest.

Hawkins (2018) stated that semistructured interviews with the identified participants are one of the most popular data collection methods in qualitative research. Researchers use semistructured interviews to reveal the participants' views about an experience in connection with the research topic (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). When combined with other sources of information, data from interviews are useful to achieve triangulation and saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I developed eight interview questions for the study participants in connection to the research question and in considering the Baldrige framework. My intention was to use the interview questions systematically to help ensure that every participant received one and the same procedure. As recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016), I used an interview protocol (see Appendix) as a guide during the interview process for consistency purposes.

After having transcribed the interviews, I conducted member checking with the participants to ensure my analysis of the responses was accurate and met the intent of their responses. To check and confirm the results after interviews and data analyses, the researchers can use member checking (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Member checking consists of providing the interviewer's analysis back to the participant with the aim to obtain confirmation of accuracy in capturing the intent of the responses (Birt et al., 2016; Morse, 2015). To ensure accuracy and recognition of the interviewee's experience, I submitted my analysis of the interview responses to the participants to review to ensure I captured the intent of the responses.

Data Collection Technique

For this qualitative single case study, I used semistructured interviews with the sampled senior leaders of the organization, as well as reviews of internal documents, and such publicly accessible information as related websites and official nonprofit reports. I also used triangulation and member checking to help me achieve data saturation. I completed each interview using the interview protocol (see Appendix). The semistructured interviews as a data collection technique are helpful to researchers for revealing the participants' perspectives about an experience in connection with the research topic (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Interviews involving open-ended questions will provide the opportunity to gather detailed and informative responses as compared to the answers of closed-ended questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The disadvantages of using interviews as a data-collection technique involve bias and miscommunication (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Harvey, 2015).

Yin (2018) explained that reviewing various documents to complement other data sources is part of the *listening* process in case study research. The advantage of using documents review to complement other sources include achieving data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Yin discussed a possible disadvantage of documents review might occur in cases when the documents are not complete and can lead to selective information.

Birt et al. (2016) explained that member checking is a process the researcher can use to ensure that results reflect the experiences of the participants. Member checking consists of allowing the participant to review the researcher's analysis to verify the accuracy of the interpretations (Birt et al., 2016). I used member checking after the interviews to enhance accuracy, validity, and reliability.

Data Organization Techniques

Yin (2018) discussed that researchers need to be attentive to the organization of the data they collect from the respondents as well-structured data can help to enhance understanding. Additionally, in efficiently organizing the data in a system, researchers can ensure time-saving access (Yin, 2018). I stored and organized the data from this study in organized folders on my computer. The folders and files had names in a way to form a logical system, pertinent to the research topic, the Baldrige framework categories, and the interview questions. Ensuring confidentiality is essential in ethical research (Ruiz-Casares & Thompson, 2016). To ensure confidentiality during data storing I used a pseudonym for the nonprofit organization and confidential labels for the participants.

I used Microsoft Word software for the interviews' transcriptions. I stored each transcript separately, dated, and under the coded designation of each participant. In separate folders, I saved the internal nonprofit organization documents and data pertinent to the Baldrige categories. As I could have access to various types of internal documents, the ethical responsibility to the organization requires that I referred to information which is pertinent to the research topic. Taylor and Land (2014) suggested that researchers should restrict organizational data use to what is relevant to the research topic. Also, I will keep safe the research related data and documentation for 5 years succeeding the completion of the study.

Amankwaa (2016) explained that creating and using a reflexive journal can help qualitative researchers address mainly confirmability, but also credibility, and transferability. The reflexive journal is a diary the researcher can create to note methodological decisions and thoughts about understanding, values, and believes during the research process (Amankwaa, 2016). In a separate Microsoft Word file, I noted my understanding of the organization's and participants' data at the interview, analysis, and theme production stages.

Data Analysis

Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, and Gonzalez (2018) reviewed strategies to improve the quality of qualitative research. Abdalla et al. promoted triangulation as an effective strategy. One of the most widely used strategies, methodological triangulation, is the crossing of multiple data with the aim to obtain thorough information about the research topic (Abdalla et al., 2018). For the analysis of the data from my study, I used methodological triangulation. Fusch et al. (2018) defined methodological triangulation as the use of several sources of data within a case study. Triangulating data from interviews and documents for the analysis is helpful to achieve data saturation, improve data comprehension, and enhance the study's credibility (Abdalla et al., 2018; Fusch et al., 2018; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018). To support the methodological triangulation, I categorized the data from the interviews and the documents into themes, aligned the sources as per the categories and searched for possible patterns across the sources.

The data analysis process involved the following steps: (a) listening of the interviews' recordings, (b) transcription, (c) categorization and coding, and (d) member checking. Coding is an essential process of data analysis and respecting clarity of codes' definition and mutual exclusiveness rules when coding semistructured interviews positively influences the reliability of the study (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). I compiled all data into a Microsoft Word document and looked for recurring themes across data and sources. Once I identified and highlighted repetitive or similar information, I assigned a specific code to respect mutual exclusiveness. I reorganized the data according to the coded themes in the file manually.

The codes and themes I developed entered in a comparison with the components of Maccoby and Scudder (2011) strategic intelligence system. Additionally, I used the Baldrige framework for data collection purposes which assisted me in detecting factors for organizational improvement. As the conceptual framework for this study is Maccoby and Scudder strategic intelligence system, I cross-referenced data from the interviews, documents, the Baldrige framework, and the components of strategic intelligence.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Yin (2018) and Singh (2014) referred to reliability as the capacity to show that such operations as data collection, for instance, are repeatable and can lead to identical results. Yin and Singh viewed case study reliability as the researcher's undertakings to deal with mitigating errors and bias. Morse (2015) explained that dependability is a strategy to ensure rigor in qualitative research and that researchers should understand dependability as reliability. Authors discussed various means to achieve a study's dependability, such as using triangulation, following an interview protocol, and acknowledging the researcher's personal lens (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Fusch et al., 2018; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse, 2015).

To ensure the dependability of my study, I used different data sources, such as interviews with three senior leaders, reviews of internal and publicly available documents, the Baldrige-led discussions with my client leader, and note-taking. During the interviews, I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix). I used member checking to ensure accuracy of interpretation and mitigate the personal lens interference.

Validity

Singh (2014) explained that validity issues in case study research relate to the researchers’ focus on findings rather than on the process of reaching them, the researcher’s sole capacity to process the information, and the researchers’ private work on the field. Morse (2015) provided some strategies to enhance qualitative research validity and reliability. Some of the validity strategies include prolonged engagement, thick description, triangulation, and researcher’s bias clarification (Morse, 2015).

Gaya and Smith (2016) explained that credibility is a criterium of trustworthiness in single case study research and is comparable to the internal validity of quantitative studies. Harvey (2015) noted that the most significant technique researchers could use to ensure credibility is member checking. I used member checking to verify the accuracy of my analysis and achieve credibility of my study. I contacted each participant and submitted his or her transcribed interview and the interpretation of the data.

Another criterium of single case study trustworthiness is the transferability or external validity (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Fusch et al. (2018) explained that qualitative research transferability is the provision of the necessary information to replicate the study. Transferability is not about generalizing the findings across contexts but rather about ensuring a justified research process from which the readers and future researchers can determine the transferability of the findings (Fusch et al., 2018). Teusner (2016) discussed the significance of presenting the collection and interpretation of the data and the findings openly and transparently to ensure validity and also avoid the external validity debate. Fusch et al. noted the worth of triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings. I ensured a detailed description of the data collection and interpretation and used methodological triangulation.

Researchers linked confirmability to objectivity (Morse, 2015; Teusner, 2016). Hays et al. (2016) discussed that confirmability is the accuracy of perceiving and presenting the views of the participants and limiting the interference of the researcher's bias. Some strategies to ensure confirmability include prolonged engagement, thick description, triangulation, and member checking (Fusch et al., 2018; Hays et al., 2016). Amankwaa (2016) suggested using reflexive journal techniques to enhance a study's confirmability. I noted in a separate Microsoft Word document my understanding of the organization's and participants' data at the interview, analysis, and theme production stages.

Data saturation impacts the study's quality and validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Nelson, 2016). Using triangulation can help researchers achieve a depth of the collected information and data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018; Nelson, 2016). Nelson (2016) highlighted the significance of making data saturation decisions during the research process and reporting them accordingly in the study. In my study, I applied methodological triangulation in using multiple data sources and reported on the achieved data saturation.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I discussed the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, the research method and design, and the participants' eligibility criteria and sample size.

The section also included information about data collection methods, and techniques, and ethical procedures. I presented some strategies to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. I conducted semistructured telephone interviews with three senior leaders of my client organization to explore strategies some nonprofit leaders use to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organizations' performance. I applied methodological triangulation in using data from the interviews and the documents the client leader will provide about the organization. I used methodological triangulation also to achieve data saturation. I organized and secured the data and performed the data analysis through themes development. I used member checking and notes taking to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

In Section 3, I presented the organization BC's profile. The section included a review of the organization as per the Baldrige framework components. Finally, I presented the findings, an executive summary of key themes, project summary and contributions, and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

Professionals around the world consider the Baldrige Excellence Framework to be the best standard management tool for ensuring improved performance in organizations through a systems perspective (Bailey, 2015). Leaders from the for-profit and nonprofit sectors in all industries, including health care and education, and many countries apply the Baldrige Excellence Framework to cope with change, improve results, and achieve organizational excellence (Bailey, 2015). Experts working for the Baldrige initiative reported impressive levels of return on investment (Bailey, 2015). For the Baldrige Award double winner organizations, growth in sites, revenues, and employment ranged between 60% and 95% (Bailey, 2015).

Organization BC (pseudonym) is one of the 60 U.S. accrediting organizations recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The leaders and members of the organization strive to ensure the highest educational standards in many countries worldwide, and they have an ongoing commitment to developing successful strategies to face challenges related to regulatory, social, technological, and other changes. Organization BC leaders are part of the world community of professionals relying on the power of the Baldrige Excellence Framework to ensure continuous improvement and lead change in higher education.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

Organization BC is a U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in the Midwest. Organization BC is one of the 60 accrediting U.S. organizations recognized by the CHEA. In establishing the organization, the senior leaders addressed the need to help advance the teaching orientation of schools. Organization BC is a professional service organization, and its primary services are accrediting business, accounting, and business-related programs at the associate, baccalaureate, master, and doctoral levels worldwide, within the scope of CHEA's recognized accrediting activities.

According to records provided by the organization's members the senior leaders of Organization BC designed the accreditation standards to promote students' success orientation in teaching and learning methods, as well as to meet local and international employers' needs for knowledgeable decision makers able to address complex issues. Continuous improvement is central in the accreditation processes, and the senior leaders guide their organization's accrediting members towards implementing its principles through the use of the Baldrige framework. The focus on the Baldrige framework is essential for the accredited entities and also supports students' preparedness to face business challenges and meet employers' expectations.

Accreditation is a way to ensure education's quality, and Organization BC activities show the organization's significant role in promoting teaching excellence around the globe. Organization BC senior leaders, staff, and volunteers lead accrediting operations in more than 60 countries, work with more than 1,200 member-campuses, and have accredited approximately 3,000 business education programs. The organization's leaders aim to provide a unique accreditation process that is helpful in improving both business education and practice, while valuing their individual members' specifics and success.

Organizational environment. Organization BC leaders operate within a knowledge-centric and regulated environment. The leaders ensure the mission's execution through a member-centric approach based on an excellence- and continuous improvement-driven organizational philosophy. However, the leaders may face a need to reinvent the organization's purpose and role following possible significant changes in regulatory requirements.

Product offerings. Organization BC primary services include (a) accrediting business education programs at the associate, baccalaureate, master, and doctoral levels; (b) accrediting certificates; and (c) delivering accreditation-focused workshops and Baldrige model trainings. Supporting services include (a) editing a peer-reviewed journal to foster teaching excellence through research in various business disciplines; (b) developing and putting in place partnerships to enhance students' learning and experience, as well as to foster educational members' continuous improvement; and (c) promoting a large international forum for networking among academic and corporate professionals. The organization's leaders and staff have also put in place for their members a branded articles shop offering selected small merchandising materials the members can use in their operations.

According to reviewed documents and interviewed leaders, the primary services and the accompanying process designed as per the Baldrige framework ensure the educational quality of the accredited programs and certificates. The organization's senior leaders articulated the accreditation process around a systematic approach directly bound to Organization BC's mission. Some guiding principles the senior leaders engraved within the organization's primary activities are the recognition of the diversity and accessibility components of institutions' missions. The primary activities design shows practical support and excellence-driven tools which the organization's staff and volunteers deploy as a direct input to the members' accreditation-related efforts. The procedures the senior leaders, staff, and volunteers follow for delivering the organization's primary services demonstrate a willingness for accountability to stakeholders, reinforce the accrediting institution's legitimacy, and are central to its performance.

Joining Organization BC as a member involves meeting the eligibility criteria and then completing a membership application form available online and supplying the required documentation with the membership fee. Members willing to pursue accreditation need to submit a specific candidacy document (also available online), pay the required fee, and answer a questionnaire accessible through a dedicated online platform. A volunteer mentor elaborates a gap analysis and provides authorization for a complete self-study. Upon completion and submission of the self-study, Organization BC staff and volunteers execute site-visits of the institution. Delivering Organization BC's primary services involves using technology, staff, and volunteers' engagement and time, travel, knowledge, rigor, and ethics in the evaluation pipeline. Together with engagement and integrity, the volunteers' knowledge of and respect for the organization's accreditation guidelines, criteria, and procedures are essential for the quality of the delivered services and may impact the organization's activities and reputation. As more than 60% of the newly accredited programs are international, Organization BC leaders enjoy a high level of volunteer diversity within their members' pool.

Mission, vision, and values. Organization BC senior leaders have shaped the organization's mission, vision, and activities in compliance with such leading values as teaching excellence and the significance of students' learning (see Figure 1). The accreditation criteria show the promotion of core values emanating from the Baldrige and some other compatible excellence models. The core competency of the organization consists of recognizing excellence in education and piloting continuous improvement and directly relates to the mission statement. The senior leaders chose to develop a vision based on a desire to accredit each qualifying business program globally.

Figure 1. Mission, vision, and values.

Workforce profile. Appointed by and reporting to the board of directors, Organization BC's CEO employs 16 persons in permanent positions focused on accomplishing and promoting the organization's mission. Split into departments, the permanent employees perform duties in the areas of accreditation, membership and administration, marketing, communications, events, accounting, web design, and information systems, and direct the organization's local and foreign activities. Four of the employees joined the organization in 2018 to enhance the organization's international growth and stakeholder focus, public relations, and accountability.

Three of the 17 permanent positions represent the presidential and chief officers' functions, all of them highly and uniquely experienced and skilled in their respective areas, possessing masters and doctoral degrees as required. Seven persons direct the dedicated units supported by seven more experts, who also fully meet the required skills and educational qualifications. The members of the organization's permanent team engage in delivering Organization BC's mission and vision through their passion for excellence, learning, and continuous improvement. Table 1 includes information on the educational level of Organization BC members by role.

Table 1

Workforce Profile as per the Minimum Requirement for Education

Role	*f*	Educational requirements
Board members	19	100% met earned master's degree
Boards of Commissioners' members	23	100% met earned master's degree
Accreditation Governance Board	11	100% met earned master's degree
Chief officers and directors	10	100% met earned master's degree
Full-time staff members	7	100% met earned bachelor's degree
Volunteers	350	100% met earned master's degree

Organization BC employees undergo safety instructions when joining and follow health and safety training to maintain knowledge about how to react in critical situations or prevent from daily accidents. The organizations' working facilities correspond to the applicable health and safety requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Assets. The primary assets of Organization BC include the knowledge, people, and technology related directly and indirectly to the mission's execution and the teams and volunteers' motivation and commitment. The senior leaders of the organization conduct operations from offices in the United States, Europe, and Latin America, equipped with information and communication systems. A specific technological asset is the webpage of the organization, equipped with a secured and dedicated online platform, allowing to process, follow-up, and review the accreditation candidates' self-study, submit and receive comments and feedback, and review accreditation process progress. The webpage is usable by the general online public worldwide and is helpful with information about the organization, programmatic accreditation and the advantages for the various stakeholders, how to join and pursue accreditation, as well as about the related organization's events and news.

Regulatory requirements. Organization BC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization as per the provisions of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code. To respond to the IRS requirements of a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, the senior leaders elaborate and submit an IRS Form 990 as the annual financial report. Organization BC senior leaders respect the required IRS compliance and annually submit IRS Form 990, the most recent submission dated October 2018.

Organization BC is also a professional service nonprofit organization affiliated and officially recognized by the CHEA. Because their organization is one of the organizations recognized by the CHEA, Organization BC senior leaders must render the functioning of their organization fully compliant with the CHEA requirements. Two types of accreditation exist in the United States, institutional and programmatic. The institutional accreditation, national or regional, shows that an entire university or college has the necessary level of academic quality. The specialized or programs accreditation demonstrates the academic quality of a single program within an educational institution. Organization BC specializes in business education program accreditation. The CHEA decision makers recognized the organization as a business education program accreditor in the United States and internationally. Organization BC decision makers accredit business education programs in compliance with the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation in the United States and many foreign countries, within already nationally or regionally accredited institutions, or otherwise legally complying to academic quality if international.

The members of the CHEA put forward strict standards for their recognized members. The standards include six main areas, which are (a) advancing academic quality, (b) showing accountability, (c) helping to plan for change or improvement, (d) making decisions while using trustworthy procedures, (e) continuously evaluating accreditation practices, and (f) having adequate resources (CHEA, 2010). The mission of Organization BC, as well as the accreditation procedures and criteria the leaders apply, are consistent with the CHEA-recognized scope and intense focus on academic quality. To maintain the recognized status, CHEA member institutions' leaders need to undergo a complete review process every 10 years and supply interim reports every 3 years. Organization BC leaders executed a CHEA interim report in 2017 and are heading towards a 10 year review in 2020 unless changes in the Higher Education Act impact the functioning of accreditation institutions.

The 2017-2018 suggestions and steps about rethinking the United States' Higher Education Act, including the accreditation provisions, may lead to substantial changes in the actual concept and practice of accreditation (CHEA, 2018). The CHEA leaders informed their members about the challenges the major changes may provoke (CHEA, 2018). Some of the primary concerns the CHEA leaders advanced to their members' attention are the (a) focus on public accountability instead of academic quality, (b) requirement for innovative approaches to quality reviews backed up by some regulatory relief and flexibility, (c) complete revision of the accreditation principles and practices, and (d) different role of the United States Department of Education (USDE) about accreditation (CHEA, 2018). The implications of the targeted changes may lead to a different meaning and execution of students' learning and teaching, profoundly altered competitive settings, and changed relationships among accrediting organizations and the USDE as the inherent controlling authority. The potential regulation changes, if agreed and implemented, may lead to the need to reinvent the purpose of accreditation. The leaders of all accrediting organizations like the Organization BC, firmly compliant with the CHEA recognition scope and requirements, may need to envision and guide organizational metamorphoses.

Organizational relationships. The leaders of Organization BC established structures and processes to ensure the organizational relationships' integration with the execution of the mission. The leadership philosophy the leaders articulated towards excellence, coupled with the values of respect and valuing input, enable the ample functioning of timely and fulfilling relationships with the organizations' members, stakeholders, and suppliers and partners. The leaders appropriately set for an amalgamation of working, contractual, and communication-led settings to address the mission achievement and organizational improvement purposes.

Organizational structure. Organization BC founders and leaders set for a member-centered organization. The organization's members, with one vote per institution, elect the board of directors, the two boards of commissioners, and the accreditation governance board. All educational institution members of the organization are also members of one of the commissions dedicated to either associate degree or baccalaureate and graduate degree, depending on which is the highest degree the member's business unit offers. The commissions' members approve changes or creation of accreditation policies and procedures with 2/3rds of the votes of the present commissioners. The accreditation governance board members help the commissions' members with periodic reviews of the accreditation policies and procedures.

The board of directors comprises 18 voting members and one non-voting ex-officio member, the president and CEO. The permanently employed persons of Organization BC report to the board of the directors. The members of the board of directors establish the guiding lines necessary to the functioning of Organization BC, monitor and evaluate management and activities progress, approve policies, annual budget, and fiscal planning. Among the functions of the board of directors' members are public relations, promotional, information gathering, and representative activities. The members of the boards of directors and commissioners can establish various ad hoc and standing committees and task force groups, as well as assign their specific duties about the desired initiatives or projects. The committees' and task force members input is essential to the proper functioning of the organization. The possibility to establish committees and taskforce groups is the result of the willingness of Organization BC leaders to achieve a high level of inclusiveness and collaboration among members.

Figure 2 shows a visual representation of the connections among the organization's governing bodies and the main focus of their functions. With the set governance structure, the members of the organization have a central role in providing input and participating in decision-making. Mirabeau et al. (2015) argued that governance structure might have an impact on strategic planning outcomes in some specialized and high performing nonprofit organizations. The organization's BC governance setting is helpful to facilitate intense information gathering from different parts of the world and increase stakeholder participation and collaboration.

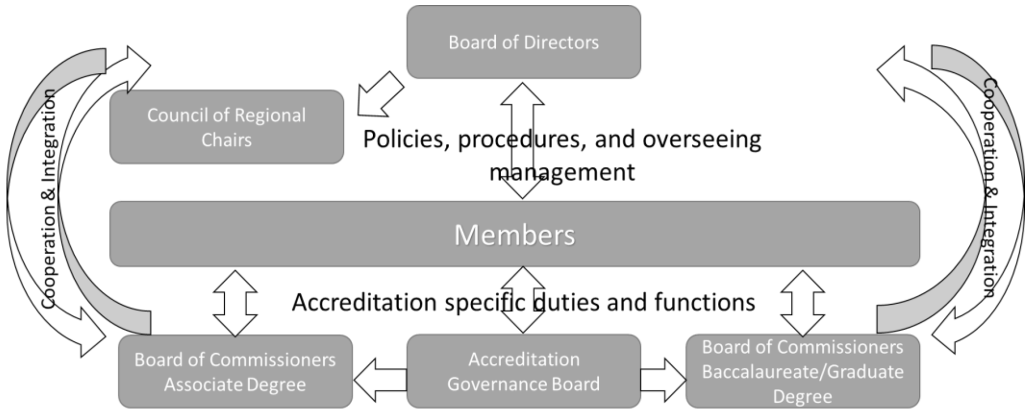

Figure 2. Governance structure.

Customers and stakeholders. The Organization BC leaders consider their members as the primary customers and deploy their efforts and resources to support teaching quality excellence achievement and continuous improvement of accreditation candidates and accredited members. The organization's leaders, staff, and involved volunteers apply rigorous eligibility and assessment criteria based on the Baldrige excellence framework to ensure constancy in quality levels and engage members in existing improvement opportunities about teaching and students' learning outcomes assessment. The Organization BC leaders identified three customer segments, one grouping the associate degrees members, another one involving members delivering baccalaureate and doctorate degrees, and a third one including members delivering certificates. Dedicated manuals to each of the segments show to evaluators and members the processes, procedures, and detailed criteria about how to engage and achieve accredited status. The Organization BC teams support learning about accreditation and Baldrige through additional training, conferences, and events. The organization’s leaders also surpass the pure focus on accreditation and quality with some recent initiatives designed to offer research and statistical data on various topics about education, teaching, learning, and business.

The Organization BC leaders consider students, employers, and the general public as their primary stakeholders. The senior leaders promote communication and the Organization BC benefits to students through the organization’s webpage, social media, a dedicated brochure to students’ benefits, and through their institutional members. The students’ benefits from choosing an Organization BC-accredited school include (a) being part of an education community offering various exchanges and international learning opportunities, (b) participating into socially-oriented entrepreneurial projects, and (c) demonstrating the quality of education to employers.

The Organization BC website, a dedicated brochure, and the accredited educational members’ business advisory boards are the most significant communication tools to inform and stay in touch with employers, as well as to learn about their future needs and expectations. The global education network opportunity, enhanced local business relationships, and the readiness for high performance in challenging situations of the students, are some of the advantages Organization BC accreditation can bring to employers. Table 2 shows the way Organization BC leaders aligned the key customers and stakeholders'-related processes to reflect the necessary levels of communication regarding the organization's mission accomplishment.

Table 2

Key Customers and Stakeholders Requirements

Key customers	Key requirements	Integration
Members delivering associate degrees	Dedicated eligibility criteria, standards, and detailed process manual	Processes designed to deliver support to each customer segment: Baldrige-based assessment guidance and training, dedicated sessions, conferences, networking opportunities, one-on-one meetings, provision of statistical data, and research, related to education, teaching, learning, and business
Members delivering baccalaureate to doctorate degrees	Dedicated eligibility criteria, standards, and detailed process manual	
Members delivering certificates	Dedicated eligibility criteria, standards, and detailed process manual	
Key stakeholders	**Key requirements**	**Integration**
Students	Awareness about the benefits of choosing an accredited program	Communication through the accredited institutions, social media, and a dedicated brochure available on the website; Partnerships to support students' decision-making learning.
Employers	Information about the employers' needs and expectations, as well as about the benefits of hiring from accredited programs	Communication through the business advisory boards, dedicated brochure available online, website, and events
General public	Ethical communication of accredited programs and certificates	Training and on-going compliance verification of members' communication
Community	Environmental-friendliness and volunteering	Up to three days paid leaves for volunteering

Suppliers and partners. The Organization BC leaders decided to outsource payroll and human resources services and are using a specialized company supporting the organization's team focus on delivering the mission and receive professional input at an optimal cost. The organization's teams also use external suppliers for some specific web and database management needs, specific business research, and some marketing materials and merchandising needs. A significant group of suppliers for the organization's mission execution are the volunteers serving as mentors and evaluators. Some of the suppliers' groups have a specific contribution to promoting the achievement of supporting innovation in different areas, and all suppliers contribute to the successful accomplishment of the organization's mission in respect with the efficiency of using resources.

Organization BC leaders offer the possibility for a corporate membership to such organizations as businesses, nonprofit, government institutions, professional associations, and so forth, not delivering academic degree courses. The corporate members are partnering with the Organization BC in areas supporting educational members' development, growth, and planning, student enrolment, student learning, assessment, and career development. The Organization BC senior leaders promoted partnerships pertinent to the organization's mission and supporting innovation, knowledge, and outreach. The corporate members also receive multiple advantages and the opportunity to promote their businesses and sell ideas to a large, international, and well-targeted segment of educational institutions. A significant benefit is the possibility of corporate members to participate in various committees, share ideas, and influence the policies and procedures of the Organization BC, which also represents a two-way communication option with a high level of involvement.

The Organization BC leaders have four affiliate organizations. The affiliate organizations' relationship involves a signed memorandum of understanding for mutual support. The relationships with the affiliates, based on sharing common values and goals, help the senior leaders ensure keeping a close sight at the area of accreditation and its advancement. Table 3 shows how Organization BC leaders chose to position the types of suppliers' and partners' relationship within the partnering continuum to ensure the mission's execution appropriately.

Table 3

Key Suppliers and Partners Requirements

Key suppliers	Key requirements	Integration
Human resources and payroll	Contractual	Cost optimization for targeted services, allowing the team to focus on delivering the mission
Web and database management	Contractual	
Marketing and merchandising	Contractual	
Legal, accounting, and financial audit service providers	As per the bylaws' dispositions, financial auditors change every three years after a successful bid; Contractual	Highly specialized services as per the governance rules, in respect of ethics and transparency
Research and consulting services	Contractual, ad hoc	Targeted services, providing information to members and supporting their planning and excellence orientation
Volunteers as mentors and evaluators	Knowledge about the accreditation process, criteria, and Baldrige Dedicated training accomplishment Proximity	Part of the core competency necessary to deliver the mission Involvement in training and events to acquire the needed knowledge and align with the values
Key partners	Key pequirements	Integration
Corporate members	Not delivering academic degree courses	Targeted choice, compelling in supporting the educational members' development and growth Two-way communication and active involvement opportunities
Affiliates	Memorandum of understanding for mutual support Share common values	Accreditation and excellence-focused

Organizational Situation

The leaders of Organization BC face intense competition from established and newer similar organizations for securing existing memberships and acquiring new ones. Changing regulations in the area of accreditation are another significant factor the leaders are considering, as they can impact the roles and number of accreditors. The leaders prioritized a risk-related approach for the short and midterm strategic choices to ensure performance improvement.

Competitive environment. The leaders of Organization BC run their operations in competition with two primary accreditors providing similar services. The organizational resources of the three competitors are significantly different. The leaders of Organization BC chose the Baldrige framework adherence to build the distinctiveness of the organization's competitive positioning.

Competitive position. The Organization BC is part of the 60 CHEA-recognized programmatic accrediting organizations. Among the accrediting organizations, two United States-based organizations are direct competitors with international outreach. The Organization BC ranks second among the three organizations as per the level of revenues.

Competitor 1 is the oldest organization, delivering services since 1916 and having the largest pool of members, accredited programs, and international presence. As observable in Figure 3, regarding total revenue, Competitor 1 is 10 times bigger than Organization BC. Competitor 1 is also a formerly recognized organization by both the CHEA and the United States Department of Education.

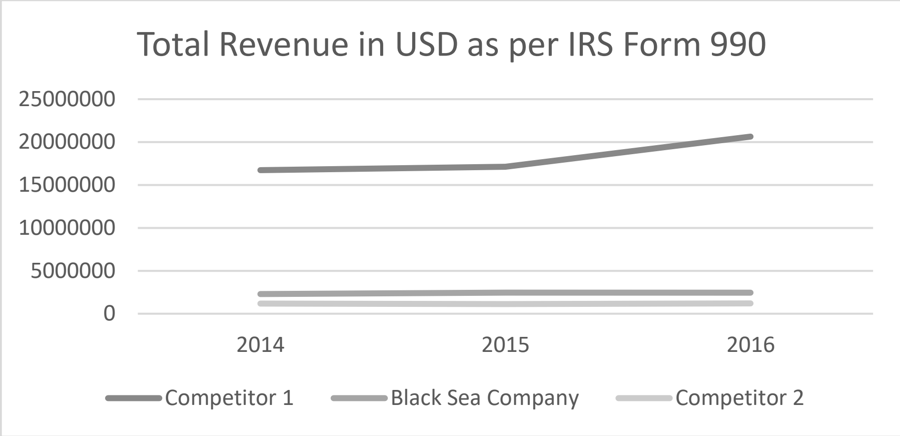

Figure 3. Competitors' revenue levels and growth.

Since 2016, Competitor 1 leaders decided to withdraw from the CHEA recognized status following a non-compliance with the CHEA standard about public accountability for students' achievement. Competitor 1 leaders chose to pursue certification from the International Standardization Organization (ISO), the leading businesses standardization body. The Competitor 1 leaders' choice of ISO certification may help them place the organization more effectively closer to business organizations, provide new strategic, compelling partnership axes, and support an extended positioning far beyond education quality and teaching.

The youngest accrediting organization, with CHEA-recognition status, operating from 1998, is Competitor 2. Although relatively recent, the Competitor 2 leaders' accrediting activities and revenue generation show a position right behind the Organization BC. As Figure 3 indicates, the revenue gap between Competitor 2 and the Organization BC is relatively much smaller than the revenue gap between the Organization BC and Competitor 1.

Competitor 2 leaders accredit programs while focusing on the educational outcomes directly emanating from the accredited business unit's mission, which may provide for a fast-growing base for institutional and programs recruitment and accreditation. Competitor 1 leaders ground their competitive positioning in powerful inspirational visions largely surpassing the pure accreditation and education focus. Competitor 1 leaders embraced a mission about designing the future leaders in connecting students, businesses, and education, while relying on the highest excellence criteria, asserting quality, business education intelligence, as well as on the reputation of long and successful history of accreditation, leading institutions, and personalities. The essence of the Organization BC current competitive positioning shows a sharp, still narrow, focus on teaching quality, related excellence, and continuous improvement, vigorously consistently executed throughout the organization and its activities.

While reflecting and studying the three organizations' competitive positionings, researchers did not find evidence for a sufficient distinction among the three organizations (McConnell, Rush, & Gartland, 2016). Bennett, Geringer, and Taylor (2015) found that students selecting undergraduate business majors have positive perceptions of accreditation, but lack knowledge and awareness about the specialized accrediting organizations. Bennett et al. also revealed that although positively perceived, accreditation value is not a factor in the university choice, but that location and cost of tuition are the major influencers for undergraduate students. Doh, Prince, McLain, and Credle (2018) found that for a specific segment of colleges, Competitor 1 accreditation does not support students' enrollment success. Doh et al. distinguished among the three competitors' positioning in noting that Competitor 1 leaders practice research-oriented requirements and guidance, while the two other organizations' leaders focus on outcomes-based approaches. Doh et al. mentioned that all three organizations' accreditations are a sign of distinction in business education for the accredited programs. Hunt (2015) did not find consistent evidence about the superior effect of Competitor 1 accreditation on students' jobs finding, teaching quality, and so forth, and advanced the view that some educational institutions' leaders may use accreditation as a necessity to prove meeting some standards than excellence standards. The Organization BC leaders' choice of amplifying the use of the Baldrige model, however, is a compelling path for building a distinctive positioning shortly. Organization BC leaders can consider a complete integration with Baldrige and other dominant business excellence global organizations to identify as the Baldrige educational and accrediting body. The Organization BC leaders can combine the choice of becoming fully incorporated into the Baldrige institution with a new approach towards students and employers.

The figures in Table 4 show a general progressive increase in total revenues for the three organizations. However, the revenues from program services' figures show a slight irregularity for Competitor 1, which compensates with the steadily increasing contributions. Unlike Competitor 1, the figures reflecting the Organization BC revenues from contributions show a decreasing pattern. Competitor 2 leaders reported no revenues from contributions for the last 5 years.

Table 4

Revenues and Expenses Highlights per Competitor

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total revenue in USD as per IRS Form 990						
Competitor 1	$15,104,685	$16,051,558	$16,729,549	$17,127,021	$20,637,532	$20,530,524
Organization BC	$1,935,405	$2,066,185	$2,287,839	$2,455,363	$2,433,713	na
Competitor 2	$963,471	$1,071,344	$1,167,658	$1,123,580	$1,198,925	na
Total revenue as per IRS Form 990 and evolution						
Competitor 1 in USD	$15,104,685	$16,051,558	$16,729,549	$17,127,021	$20,637,532	$20,530,524
Evolution versus past year		6.27%	4.22%	2.38%	20.50%	-0.52%
Organization BC in USD	$1,935,405	$2,066,185	$2,287,839	$2,455,363	$2,433,713	na
Evolution versus past year		6.76%	10.73%	7.32%	-0.88%	
Competitor 2 in USD	$963,471	$1,071,344	$1,167,658	$1,123,580	$1,198,925	na
Evolution versus past year		11.20%	8.99%	-3.77%	6.71%	
Revenue from program services as per IRS Form 990						
Competitor 1 in USD	$12,149,538	$11,686,555	$12,605,982	$11,314,381	$15,739,204	$15,001,089
Evolution versus past year		-3.81%	7.87%	-10.25%	39.11%	-4.69%
Organization BC in USD	$1,414,339	$1,376,302	$1,694,145	$1,981,160	$2,044,676	na
Evolution versus past year		-2.69%	23.09%	16.94%	3.21%	
Competitor 2 in USD	$630,090	$731,400	$789,984	$902,877	$989,462	na
Evolution versus past year		16.08%	8.01%	14.29%	9.59%	

(*table continues*)

Revenue from contributions as per IRS Form 990						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Competitor 1 in USD	$3,388,500	$3,464,425	$3,597,775	$3,887,875	$4,549,900	$4,720,625
Evolution versus past year		2.24%	3.85%	8.06%	17.03%	3.75%
Organization BC in USD	$52,590	$56,052	$33,436	$10,552	$15,364	na
Evolution versus past year		6.58%	-40.35%	-68.44%	45.60%	
Competitor 2 in USD	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	na
Evolution versus past year						

Functional expenses: Accounting fees as per IRS Form 990						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Competitor 1 in USD	$56,360	$54,814	$52,535	$44,188	$53,343	$45,000
As percentage of total revenue	0.37%	0.34%	0.31%	0.26%	0.26%	0.22%
Organization BC in USD	$5,000	$5,250	$5,500	$0	$8,454	na
As percentage of total revenue	0.26%	0.25%	0.24%	0.00%	0.35%	
Competitor 2 in USD	$19,761	$21,337	$37,056	$9,816	$8,827	na
As percentage of total revenue	2.05%	1.99%	3.17%	0.87%	0.74%	

Functional expenses: Advertising & promotion as per IRS Form 990						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Competitor 1 in USD	$362,506	$603,712	$693,281	$601,582	$643,723	$564,666
As percentage of total Revenue	2.40%	3.76%	4.14%	3.51%	3.12%	2.75%
Organization BC in USD	$5,058	$9,020	$950	$4,060	$42,319	na
As percentage of total Revenue	0.26%	0.44%	0.04%	0.17%	1.74%	
Competitor 2 in USD	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	na
As percentage of total revenue	0	0	0	0	0	

(*table continues*)

Functional expenses: Information technology expenses as per IRS Form 990						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Competitor 1 in USD	$274,374	$327,514	$407,876	$591,530	$1,109,287	$1,565,897
As percentage of total revenue	1.82%	2.04%	2.44%	3.45%	5.38%	7.63%
Organization BC in USD	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	na
As percentage of total revenue	0	0	0	0	0	
Competitor 2 in USD	$11,387	$12,073	$22,877	$19,211	$22,125	na
As percentage of total revenue	1.18%	1.13%	1.96%	1.71%	1.85%	

When considering the functional expenses, the figures for Competitor 2 show the highest weight of accounting fees as compared to the total revenues, although decreasing. Also, Competitor 2 figures show no indication about advertising and promotional activities. The figures indicate Competitor 1's leadership in advertising and promotion spending with annual expense ranging from 2.40% to 4.14%. The Organization BC's advertising and promotional expenses have lower weight as part of the total revenues, ranging from 0.17% to 1.74%. The observation of the higher advertising and promotional expenses as part of the total revenues of Competitor 1 may lead to the idea of different target levels, as well as to varying approaches to marketing activities.

Additionally, Competitor 1 figures show a drastic increase in information technology expenses, achieving almost 8% of total revenues in 2017, which may also indicate the initiation of a specific information-technology-based project. The figures for Competitor 2 show some steady engagement in using information technology. The Organization BC leaders should reconsider the role and further even more intense use of information technology in the future to leverage more compellingly the strengths of the organization and support the achievement of a well-differentiated perceived competitive positioning.

Competitiveness changes. The major competitive changes impacting the entire programmatic accrediting industry involve the potential new regulations implementation as the result of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in the United States. At the moment of writing the paper, there is no decision about the suggested changes and there is no indication about a clear time lag of the possible new regulations' introduction. If and when implemented, the regulations' implications may lead to higher intensity of competition not only at the recruitment stage, but even once institutions and programs receive accreditation. The new regulations may also lead to reconsider not only eligibility, but also evaluation criteria and the excellence-based and quality approaches of all competitors. The willingness of the Congress to promote innovation and to reduce funding support to some educational institutions may lead to some contradictory necessities of deploying significant resources by the accreditors while facing difficulties to invite them from the United States' institutions with diminishing financial support. The contradiction may result in the decrease of sources of financial viability from the United States educational institutions.

Some researchers' indications about the lack of accreditation awareness among students and some tangible impact on students' jobs' placement and other significant expectations about the social or public role of accreditation (Bennett et al., 2015; Doh et al., 2018; Hunt, 2015; McConnell et al., 2016) are another signal to the Organization BC's leaders about taking the opportunity to consider a profound reinvention of the purpose, scope, and possible impacts of accreditation, as well as brand and image building initiatives. Also, Maccoby (2015) and Maccoby and Scudder (2018) explained the significance of knowledge about social character and personality types. Social character is culturally different, and changing and the most critical causes of the change are the ways the most competitive and dynamic businesses function and how people succeed within these environments which influences emotions, attitudes, and beliefs (Maccoby & Scudder, 2018). The success of educational programs may depend on the relationship instructors build with the students through the teaching processes and course content. Organization BC leaders can consider facilitating the relationship building with students through guiding learning and knowledge gathering about social character and cultural differences. Efforts in sociodemographic and psychographic data about students can complement foresight and brand definition efforts.

In 2013, Competitor 1 leaders launched an essential initiative about redefining their role for businesses, management education, and society. Some partial outcomes of the ongoing initiative are visible from the enlarged Competitor 1 mission about connecting businesses, students, and more. Competitor 1 leaders move to bind their future activities to the ISO will provide their organization with a solid international and reputable positioning, as well as will strengthen their relations with reputable businesses. The more flexible eligibility principles of Competitor 3 are appealing to newly established schools and those with reducing financial support and resources. The changing regulatory environment in the United States, coupled with relative employment stagnation and low expected immediate business growth should show grounds to the Organization BC leaders to consider a profound repositioning.

Comparative data. The primary input of comparative data for the

Organization BC is the permanent exchange with numerous members spread around the globe. The Organization BC teams receive and process part of the data through the self-studies and the answers of the Baldrige-based questions during the evaluation procedures. The leaders receive another part of the comparative data during regular annual meetings, conferences, and events, through tailored membership surveys about a specific topic, as well as through specific surveys from external research service providers. Analyses of archived e-mail exchanges with the members on specific topics from the last 5 years are another source of comparative information. The Organization BC leaders' strong adherence and integration within the Baldrige community is an alternative path for gathering comparative data with a larger than education and accreditation scope.

Strategic context. Table 5 shows a summary of Organization BC's critical strategic challenges and advantages. The significant challenges for the organization relate to an eventual need to change the strategic positioning and direction as a result from possible regulatory developments implying competition intensification. The key advantages are the historically strong quality reputation, strong leadership philosophy articulated around excellence, continuous improvement, and inclusiveness, as well as the steady growth progress. In response to the regulatory uncertainty, Organization BC leaders decided to apply a risk-based approach to improve and reorganize their strategic planning processes and practices.

Table 5

Organization BC's Key Strategic Challenges and Advantages

Key strategic focus area	Key strategic challenges	Key strategic advantages
Business	Although consistently performing with the current organization's mission, the leaders may face the need to reinvent the purpose of accreditation and re-orient their mission and scope of actions because of United States regulation, competitive, and social character changes. The leaders must embrace a consumer-based business model, reformulate the value proposition, align the supply chain, change the students' role from primary stakeholder to a primary consumer/user, and connect with the students.	The Organization BC leaders and teams are dedicated to excellence-level accrediting and consistently deploy their mission through the Baldrige model, helpful to continuous improvement. CHEA recognition is consistent with the organization's mission.
Operations	With the current mission and focus, the leaders may need to consider reinforcing some branding and awareness perspectives of the current website and other communication means, as well as the dynamic and more up to date tone and feel. In case of a mission's overhaul, the functioning of the system may need review and adaptation.	The leaders conduct operations within highly respectful and valuing diversity member-driven environment and decision-making processes. The leaders can rely on the historically strong quality reputation of the organization's operations.
Societal responsibilities	In the current context, raising awareness about the social impact of accrediting initiatives.	Ensuring quality of business education is the primary social role of the Organization BC leaders. The Enactus partnership, although not exclusive, is a significant engagement towards positive social change, surpassing the scope of accreditation.
Workforce	In pursuing growth and higher impact, the leaders may need to enlarge specific or all parts of the permanent teams.	Highly and uniquely skilled accrediting staff, and passionate teams about excellence and improvement. Highly performing and dedicated president/CEO, establishing a culture of respect, collaboration, and inclusiveness, allowing for innovation, learning, and continuous improvement. Active volunteer involvement and structured interventions are helpful to the mission's execution.

Performance improvement system. Until 2016 the performance improvement system of Organization BC was inherent in the strategic planning processes, which involved regular and timely evaluation and monitoring of the activities based on performance measurement data. Radical changes in legislation can provoke crisis effects for established operations. Bryson (2018) explained that in crises situations strategic planning might not be relevant; and to be successful leaders may need to adapt the process to the organizational situation, context, and consider different types of participants. Since 2016, Organization BC leaders have put in place a risk-based approach to detect and address various types of issues. The Board of Directors established a Risk Assessment and Management Committee. The members of the committee work with the Accreditation Governance Board, the two Boards of Commissioners, and the Audit and Bylaws Committees, to detect risks in various areas potentially impacting the organization's mission and goals accomplishment, as well as to elaborate mitigation strategies. The members of the Risk Assessment and Management Committee evaluate and categorize sets of risks and set up respective subcommittees. The subcommittees' members focus on identifying, describing, and estimating the probability of the risks' occurrences. The process involves three orientations, risk assessment, risk management, and risk mitigation, each occurring with a well-defined frequency and transparent reporting on progress. The risk-based approach is compliant with the ISO risk definition and is helpful to the mission achievement to the extent of preventing costs and loss of reputation. However, risk-based approaches may contain the threat of focusing on clearly identifiable and internal issues, which may lead to losing foresight, and subsequently growth and innovation opportunities (Kuosa, 2014). Therefore, and unless otherwise addressed, it is recommendable that the Organization BC leaders consider introducing the risk of insufficient environmental scanning and foresight, and addressing it with the appropriate efforts to maintain strategizing and envisioning capacity.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

Leadership

The leaders of Organization BC have a primary role in guiding the strategic direction, leading organizational improvement, and effectiveness. The leaders established a culture of excellence and collaboration, based on mutual respect, allowing for active input from all members of the organization. The organizational philosophy and the culture led by human values enable the leaders to achieve a high level of foresight effectiveness.

Senior leadership. The senior leaders ensure the organization's mission accomplishment and successful running of the operations. The leaders also have a significant role in supplying global organizational data and ensuring the quality of information and practice. The leaders ensured organization-wide information gathering processes and a strategic planning output centralized in a small group of people possessing the required expertise and skills.

Mission, vision, and values. The founders and leaders of Organization BC established principles of excellence, continuous improvement, and a set of Baldrige-based values since the creation of the organization. The senior leaders deploy the vision and values primarily during presentations, training sessions, brochures, website, and in practicing leadership by example. The leaders start communicating the values to the workforce since induction through a specially tailored orientation program. The website and dedicated brochures are the primary tools for deploying the values to suppliers. The organizations' partnering members can participate in various events and committees and gain additional understanding and experience of the Organization BC values. The senior leaders organize values deployment to the members, their primary customers, and other significant stakeholders during numerous events taking part throughout the year, as well as through the active involvement of members in the working processes, decision-making, and accreditation practices. The leaders demonstrate their commitment to the values through their ongoing daily activities and at all occasions, they meet and communicate with internal and external parties.

Ethical behavior and legal compliance are essential to the mission's accomplishment and the organization's legitimacy, public trust, and reputation. The Organization BC senior leaders dedicate incremental efforts to support the deployment of ethical and legal behavior throughout the organization. All involved in accreditation teams participate in dedicated team meetings and team building activities designed to enhance ethical and legally compliant behavior. The Organization BC leaders faced unethical behavior from a volunteer only once since the inception of the organization and engaged the entire organization in initiating various processes and tools to prevent such behavior happening in the future.

Communication. The organizations' leaders maintain a highly collaborative working environment and foster employees' and members' active participation. The employees and the members have the opportunity to request meetings with senior leaders whenever needed with a previously prepared agenda and suggest the topics of their interests or concerns. Using e-mail is an alternative for employees and members to face-to-face meetings, and is helpful to reach the senior leaders during busy times or for more personal matters.

The Organization BC employees maintain the presence of the organization on the website, social media networks, like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and also administer their profiles on the networks. The organization is visible online, and the employees and leaders are also publicly accessible through the webpage coordinates and social media profiles. Huang and Ku (2016) explained that nonprofit organizations' website functions and content are a means to build the desired brand image. Huang and Ku suggested that nonprofit leaders should associate different types of information with different dimensions of an image to build the desired brand image. The information categories include (a) objective and service, (b) operational management, (c) communication and consultation, (d) online services, and (e) convenience and contact (Huang & Ku, 2016). The image facets involve (a) usefulness, (b) dynamism, (c) efficiency, and (d) affect (Huang & Ku, 2016). The Organization BC website functions correspond to the information categories Huang and Ku evoked. Organization BC leaders can consider leveraging the image facets and further bring dynamism and affect, as well as consider developing content adding focus on such stakeholders as students and public or communities.

Social media platforms, like Twitter, have features that nonprofit leaders can use to communicate with stakeholders as part of their communication strategy (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2016). Milde and Yawson (2017) argued that social media is a valuable instrument for nonprofit organizations to meet social, environmental, and financial goals, the triple bottom line. Milde and Yawson emphasized the significance of the careful integration of the social media efforts into the organizations' mission, and the adverse effect social media may provoke in case of mistaken campaigns. Milde and Yawson proposed starting with the development of clear guidelines for social media implementation to fit the organization's vision. Organizations' decision-makers should decide about the level of social media management, the suitable mix reflecting the types of messages to convey, and the geographic areas to serve (Milde & Yawson, 2017). Although not costly, social media campaigns are highly time-consuming and nonprofit leaders should include a cost-benefit analysis to support their strategic engagement and avoid persistent problems (Milde & Yawson, 2017). Various privacy, regulatory, theft, and other types of risks may involve, which also requires consideration (Milde & Yawson, 2017). Milde and Yawson also noted that younger generations involved easier in text messaging and withdrew from Facebook utilization, which requires nonprofit leaders to consider mobile communications in cases of campaign organization. Organization BC leaders can consider including the development of social media and mobile communications policies and guidelines as part of the risk assessment and management initiative.

Sundstrom and Levenshus (2017) explored strategies organizations can use to improve Twitter engagement with online stakeholders. Sundstrom and Levenshus observed that (a) useful information promoted the companies as thought and industry leaders in involving in hot topic discussions, (b) social media and online channels integration supported return visits, and (c) interactivity and message synergy formed the dialogue, involving exclusive content. Gao (2016) found that nonprofit organizations did not sufficiently use audio, video, emotional appeals, dialogic, and interactive features, although employing two-way communication with followers involved. Gao observed that followers' engagement and communication interactivity increased when nonprofit organizations used multimedia and interactive components.

Organization BC has a presence on several social media platforms where two-way communication with followers is possible. Organization BC's content on social media relates primarily to current activities, events, and newsletter and is increasingly accompanied by visual elements, such as pictures or images. The organization's leaders can consider enlarging and engaging the online community and the principal stakeholders through participation in mission-related impactful discussions while bringing useful information and more emotional video content, and engaging in the debate.

To communicate changes and decisions to the employees, the senior leaders prioritize face-to-face communication at team meetings, and sometimes e-mails. In addition to e-mails and official letters, the leaders inform other stakeholders about important decisions during regional and annual meetings. The senior leaders also use team-building exercises to stimulate employees towards high performance. The principles of respect for people and empowerment which the senior leaders practice as the leadership philosophy are also leading motivators for employees to dedicate efforts and focus on serving the organization's mission and the members.

Mission and organizational performance. The Organization BC senior leaders create a highly collaborative and engaging environment for the achievement of the mission by building a comfortable, safe, and family-like atmosphere. To ensure organizational agility, various team and management meetings help the leaders receive feedback and information about occurring changes, measure performance against goals, make informed decisions, prepare immediate reactions to changes or customers' needs. The most common way of pursuing organizational learning for the Organization BC leaders is through regular evaluation processes of what they accomplished. Some of the leaders' practices supporting workforce learning include tuition reimbursement.

The team and management meetings are a primary process and tool for reflecting upon innovative solutions and approaches, as well as for practicing and educating about intelligent risk taking. The senior leaders build occasions during the annual regional conferences and workshops to confront employees and workforce directly with the needs of their members and customers, during which employees have the opportunity to achieve a greater understanding of their customers' endeavors and experiences. The conferences and workshops also show opportunities for personal relationships development, which additionally fosters customer engagement culture through personal involvement.

The Organization BC leaders introduced a risk-based approach and processes. The committees' members of the Risk Assessment and Management process identified high priority risk with immediate urgency level in the area of succession planning. The accomplishment of the organization's mission directly relates to specific competencies and skills involving business and teaching experience, as well as knowledge about the system and practices of educational institutions, quality management, the Baldrige framework, and accreditation. The members of the Accreditation Governance Boards, the president/CEO, together with the chair of the Board of Directors, and the chief accreditation officer directly engage in resolving the succession planning risk.

The Organization BC is a Baldrige-based organization. The senior leaders use the Baldrige framework to direct the organization towards performance orientation and continuous improvement. Also, the CHEA recognition and the process of CHEA assessment linked to maintaining the recognized status are additional tools for external performance assessment and feedback about possible improvements. The two Boards of Commissioners, the Board of Directors, and the Accreditation Governance Board members are directly involved in practices and processes related to performance evaluation and have the duties to guide continuous improvement. The senior leaders identify needed actions through brainstorming, strategic planning or risk assessment and management, as well as through reviewing the Board of Commissioners' reports and Board of Commissioners' evaluating processes. The risk assessment and management plan is also the process for senior leaders allowing them to set expectations for organizational performance and guide the creation and balancing of value for the members and other stakeholders.

The members of the Board of Directors undertake evaluations of their accountability for the organization's actions four times per year. The leaders maintain regular external financial audits and share the financial status at the annual meeting.

Governance and societal responsibilities. To ensure accountability for senior leaders' actions, the Organization BC personnel committee members review President/CEO performance in applying a systematic and structured approach. The personnel committee members hold meetings regularly, four times per year. Also, the Board of Directors members evaluate and endorse when needed the President/CEO's actions. Senior leaders ensure accountability for strategic plans through the risk assessment and management committee organized meetings once a quarter. The audit committee members are in charge of ensuring fiscal accountability, and the leaders maintain external financial audits once per year.

A previously designed person accompanies operational meetings and makes the minutes which after the meeting become public. The decisions about accredited programs are also publicly accessible on the Organization BC website, as well as on the CHEA website. Through transparent and timely communication, the leaders ensure organizational accountability.

The organization's bylaws are publicly accessible on the organization's website and show the election and nominating procedures. All board members sign a document to ensure avoiding conflict of interest and respecting confidentiality. The process enables Organization BC leaders to raise awareness and support ethical behavior.

To achieve independence and effectiveness of audits, the leaders ensure that audit committee members change over a specific period. The leaders launch bids for the external audits and the auditing service provider changes every 3 years. The senior leaders' succession planning is part of the risk assessment and management process.

To determine executive compensation, the personnel committee members use the evaluations to determine compensation. The leaders use the feedback from the evaluation for professional development purposes. The information from the evaluations helps Organization BC leaders apply elements of smart motivation.

The Organization BC leaders established a formal complaint process, designed to address possible issues related to the services and operations. Members can initiate the formal complaint process directly from the organization's website. The leaders also informed the members about the process through the process books.

The risk assessment and management process helps leaders to anticipate societal concerns with the future offerings and operations. The organizations’ leaders organize surveys to question their members about future services. The information provided by the members helps to anticipate and handle possible adverse impacts. As volunteers are an essential part of the organization’s supply chain, the leaders proactively train volunteers for new services. Additionally, the leaders also practice environmental friendly attitudes and have built an eco-friendly office, which demonstrates a commitment about respect of nature and society.

The Organization BC leaders established legal requirements for global accreditation in the bylaws. Unlike in the United States, many countries’ education systems are governments’ dependent. Initiating global accreditation means to the organization’s accrediting team seeking evidence from the respective government that a specific school has a government license or authorization for granting higher education degrees. The process shows a commitment to ensure legal compliance and to prevent from possible involvement in fraudulent behavior of other parties.

The Risk assessment and management process is the critical organization’s process for addressing all types of risks, including those associated with offerings and operations. The bylaws of the Organization BC are the primary tool enabling monitoring of ethical behavior in the governance structure. The process of signing the conflict of interest and nondisclosure form helps leaders ensure ethical behavior throughout the organization, as well as while interacting with members, partners, suppliers, and other stakeholders. A process for monitoring unethical behavior involves the regular reviews of institutions and programs and other organizations’ websites for inaccurate representations of the Organization BC membership and accreditation. In case of a breach of ethical behavior, the persons in charge at the Organization BC contact the individuals and address an official reminder of ethical behavior. Additional monitoring mechanisms are the bylaws dispositions, the accreditation evaluators' feedback form, and the evaluation report from the site visits. Depending on the weight of the breach, the Organization BC people in charge may decide to either conduct a supplemental training or eliminate the option of collaboration with the respective individuals.

The Organization BC leaders stimulate quarterly volunteering activities for community service from all team members. The leaders offer every employee the option to benefit from three paid days for volunteering activities per year. The leaders identified colleges, schools, the city and location of the headquarters, as the key communities, and offer training, workshops, conferences, and meetings leveraging the organization's core competencies.

Strategy

The leaders of Organization BC engage in ensuring the guidance of strategy. Effective processes combined with an organizational culture of excellence and respect enable the leaders to ensure active foresight contribution. The leaders also exercise caution about ensuring the consistency between strategy and mission.

Strategy development. The possible changes in the regulatory environment showed the need for Organization BC leaders to consider a risk-based approach in the strategy development process. The leaders ensure gathering all relevant input from a variety of sources to strengthen foresight and envisioning. The combination of effective processes and trustful organizational culture help the leaders ensure innovation capacity.

Strategic planning process. The Organization BC leaders decided to replace the strategic planning process with the risk assessment and management process to better fit the competitive context, adapt the organization's needs, and improve. The leaders initiate the process by organizing a teleconference, and face to face meetings with the risk assessment and management committee members. The committee members schedule the meetings in a way to be able to produce a complete report and present it at the Board of Directors' meeting for endorsing future actions. The most critical participants in the risk assessment and management committee are staff members, volunteers, and public members of the Board of Directors. The committee members categorize the level of urgency for tackling the identified risks from 1- to 3-year period, easily detectable from an appropriately designed table.

Through the risk assessment and management process, the leaders address the need for changes in four areas, finance, operations, accreditation, and legal. Organization BC leaders ensure considering the contextual challenges in the data collection process in diversifying the data collection approaches to address regional, national, and global initiatives. Rich exchanges with experts who also serve other organizations are part of the data gathering and analysis processes which is in line with Maccoby's (2015) recommendation about developing foresight as part of the strategic intelligence approach. The risk assessment and management processes comprise formal and informal holistic risk-oriented environmental scanning-like approach with elements of opportunities and threats, and strengths and weaknesses assessment as part of the risk's identification process. These approaches are part of the most popular and well-established in the literature foresight methods and tools.

Organization BC leaders ensured that a systems approach is embedded into the process in connecting all functional areas of the organization**,** which aligns with the visioning with systems thinking component of Maccoby's (2015) strategic intelligence. The leaders achieve foresight effectiveness through the regularity of the process as risks reviews are on-going, as well as through the transparency and regularity of the results' communication. Within the vision implementation component of strategic intelligence Maccoby (2015) highlighted the significance of continuity of interactive planning. Organization BC leaders' foresight effectiveness approach exemplifies continuity.

The leaders achieve several other facets of foresight effectiveness. Organization BC leaders prod broad involvement of members' input helpful to achieve a variety of perspectives and stimulate the use of performance data. The data gathering and analysis process is decentralized and interactive, allowing for a variety of viewpoints helpful to detect and evaluate strategic opportunities, as well as global trends. These facets relate to Maccoby's interactive planning as part of the visioning component, as well as to the foresight, engaging and motivating, and partnering elements. Through encouraging members' willingness to participate, the leaders also ensure strategic planning effectiveness. The collective approach is dominant in the analyses' execution. The leaders ensure the quality of information through the breadth and depth of data from large-base surveys. Additionally, the leaders seek accuracy of information through experts' evaluation of data gathering instruments. The participants in the process warrant accuracy of understanding through triangulation.

Innovation. Trustful organizational culture is at the heart of Maccoby's (2015) view about leadership philosophy. Maccoby established a direct link between leadership philosophy and innovation and cooperation, which becomes operational through organizational purpose, values, and aligned results measurements. All participants in the study referred to their trust in leadership, as well as to the role of the home office and the leaders for supplying global organizational data and establishing a climate of collaboration and respect. The participants expressed confidence in the role of leadership in setting the global organizational strategic direction and values-based culture in ensuring the quality of information and practice. Participant 3 defined the organizational culture as one of “inclusiveness.” Participant 7 expressed assurance in the role of leadership in leading organizational improvement and effectiveness.

Organization BC leaders and staff members detect strategic opportunities also through focused weekly Internet searches. Once the information gathered, the staff members, through discussions and consultations with members and experts, identify the opportunities of potential strategic interest and, depending on the type, operational or accreditation, present them to the executive committee members or the accreditation governance board respectively. A recent strategic opportunity which the staff members discerned and the executive committee members endorsed is accrediting certificates. At the time of writing, Organization BC is the unique accreditor to offer the new service of certificates’ accreditation. The innovation is also the result of the dominant culture of collaboration, respect, and focus on the members’ needs. The new service has the potential to appeal to a large segment of users and help position Organization BC as an industry leader in conveying a result of learning, continuous improvement, and excellence drive.

Strategy considerations. Strategic planning effectiveness depends on the leaders’ commitment and skills, but also on the participants’ type, expertise, and willingness to cooperate (Bryson, 2018; Chen, 2017). As the prolongation of the data gathering and analyses processes, Organization BC leaders centralized the strategic planning output within a small group of people with the required expertise and skills. The leaders practice an in-house process with a centralized output part, but balance with extensive involvement of members' perspectives in the data gathering and analyses stage, as well as targeted external sources' inclusion. Including external parties is part of an open intelligence approach.

The organization's leaders established the risk assessment and management initiative with the aim to reflect upon various types of organizational risks and leverage the ability to address strategic challenges. Among other topics, the leaders gather information about the potential upcoming significant changes in the regulatory environment of accreditation from the official news and announcements about the Higher Education Act and the negotiated rule-making process. By involving external sources, the leaders detect potential missing information of strategic importance. To balance the ability to execute the strategic plans, the leaders assign objectives to different people for developing the action plans.

The leaders may also need to initiate reflecting on the strategic advantages of the organization. In the context of the present organizational mission, the leaders may wish to attract more public attention to initiatives directly positively impacting society and some of the stakeholders. The leaders may develop additional or new communication and marketing strategy axes and start executing them from an eventual website overhaul combined with targeted social media campaigns, in line with the most recent innovation and its possible connection with some global social causes.

Work systems and core competencies. The leaders decide with a team of experts about which key processes the team will accomplish and which external suppliers and partners will provide. The members of the team of experts identify who will be working on the process, staff, volunteers, or suppliers. The leaders and experts use competencies assessment process to assist them in the decision.

Accreditation, administration, marketing, information systems, membership, accounting, and human resources are the critical organization's work systems. To strengthen the focus of the teams around the mission's accomplishment and to optimize resources, the leaders decided to externalize some of the functions. The leaders determine the needs for future organizational core competencies and work systems through the strategic planning/risk assessment and management process while considering growth and development targets.

Strategic objectives. Organization BC leaders' aligned the strategy-related processes with the organization's vision. The leaders placed a specific focus on dealing with the organization's risk-associated strategic challenges to reflect the changing operating environment and develop the strategic objectives. The leaders instilled a culture of inclusiveness based on human values and excellence, which enables them to balance the risk-related orientation with strong foresight effectiveness processes necessary for envisioning.

Key strategic objectives. The risk assessment and management plan contains the primary strategic objectives, as well as their priority in terms of impact and time. The leaders established a list of the most urgent/significant risks which the organization's teams' members need to address within 1 year. The introduction of the new offering, accrediting certificates, does not lead to accompanying changes in the current products, customers and markets, suppliers and partners, and operations.

***Strategic objective considerations*.** Using the four pillars of the risk assessment and management plan helps leaders achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially competing organizational needs while setting the strategic objectives. The leaders also use the risk assessment and management plan to balance short- and mid-term planning horizons, as well as consider the needs of some key stakeholders. The leaders may need to include the use of long-term opportunities and strategic advantages assessment.

Strategy implementation. Organization BC leaders ensure implementing the organizational strategy through the development of corresponding action plans. The leaders assign the tasks consistently and according to the workforce's and members' competencies and skills. The leaders engage with improving performance through performance measurement practices and a culture of excellence and respect.

Action plan development and deployment. The organization's short and longer-term action plans are under development at the time of writing the paper and the leaders will ensure reflecting the strategic objectives as per the risk management and assessment priorities. The leaders receive support for the development of the action plans by experts who have skills and knowledge to accomplish the breakdown.

The leaders deploy the action plans at the committee meetings and board meetings. The leaders deploy the action plans to the workforce at staff meetings, while to key suppliers and partner through signing appropriate agreements and contracts. The organization's philosophy about continuous process improvement is the tool for the leaders to ensure conserving the action plan achievements. The leaders use the annual budgeting process to ensure that financial and other resources are available both to support the achievement the action plans and meet current obligations. The annual budgeting process also shows support to the leaders to allocate the necessary resources to support the plans.

The leaders proceed to 2-phase workforce planning to support strategic objectives and action plans. The first phase the leaders dedicate to planning the staff and the second to plans related to the volunteers' involvement. The leaders deploy the plans through communication and training.

The leaders use key performance measures or indicators to track the achievement and effectiveness of action plans. Some of the metrics are the organization's budget, new members recruited and memberships dropped, programs accredited, website and social media analytics. The leaders communicate the key performance measures to support organizational alignment. Some of the performance projections include a growth target of 3% in the short-term and an increase in the number of cash flow streams in the long-term. The leaders have a strong will to continue the organization's growth and surpass their competitors in the long-run. In case leaders decide on the need of action plan's modification, they organize meetings and talk about the action plans and objectives, identify progress, then modify, deploy, and rework.

Customers

Voice of the customer. The Organization BC leaders use e-mail, telephone, surveys, and evaluations are the primary methods to listen to the customers. For accreditation, the evaluations are the most significant tool to gather structured input and differentiate the segments. The leaders use surveys to gather input from the members of conferences, and telephone and e-mail for all members on a regular basis. The boards' meeting minutes and face-to-face meetings are other tools to gather input.

The Organization BC leaders use social media and web-based technologies to listen to customers as well. The leaders designed a person whose primary task is to maintain a presence and interactive communication through Facebook, Twitter, the website, and blogs. Evaluations and surveys are the major tools and processes for gathering immediate and actionable feedback from customers on the quality of the offerings and membership support.

The leaders use e-mail to gather input and invite potential customers to attend one of the 13 conferences per year for free. Having the potential customers at the conferences is the occasion for the leaders to gather direct input. Former members fill in an exit survey which is a tool the leaders use to detect new services' opportunities or evolving customers' need. The differentiated methods the leaders use to gather segmented input also help them identify members' satisfaction. The leaders consider the measurement results from the gathered input to determine areas of improvement and potential to exceed members' expectations. As some of the Organization BC members have accreditations from competitors, the leaders benefit from direct comparative information sharing.

Customer engagement. The Organization BC leaders determine customer and market needs and requirements for product offerings and services through higher education industry research and professional organizations' activities like the ones of the National Association State Board of Accountancy (NASBA). NASBA leaders set up new rules of accounting programs accreditation. Following NASBA changes, the Organization BC leaders developed new accreditation procedures to meet the new rules for their members. A new offering which the leaders developed to meet the demand and exceed the expectations of the members and employers, is the accreditation of certificates starting in 2019. Both the accounting programs and the certificates accreditations are examples of the organization's capacity to enter new markets, attract new customers, and expand relationships with existing members.

The Organization BC leaders ensured the availability of online tools, like the online reporting portal, as well as the accessibility of all supporting documents and information to enable the members to prepare and enter the accreditation process. The leaders also provide mentoring process, training, workshops, and seminars to support members and exchange with them further. The leaders deliver differentiated support offering training designed to volunteers and training designed for members. Boards' members also benefit from specially tailored workshops.

The organization's leaders use higher education classifications to identify current and anticipate future customer groups and market segments. The classification includes such categories as (a) public, (b) private, (c) for-profit, (d) nonprofit, (e) state-based institutions, delivering (f) associate degree, and (g) baccalaureate degree.

Organization BC leaders use the same classification to identify competitors' customers and segments. The members' traveling and teaching experiences in various parts of the world are essential for gathering information about which customer or market segments to pursue for business growth. Although the classification perfectly aligns with the organization's current mission and focus on members, some additional different perspectives for segmenting may bring new growth opportunities. The leaders may work on using some leading employers' and students' perspectives, for instance.

The primary method for building relationships with the members is communication and face-to-face meetings during the 12 or 13 annual conferences. The leaders hired consultants to advise about image building, use social media, as well as encourage their members to use the logo appropriately, to build brand image.

To retain members, meet their requirements, and exceed expectations in each stage of the customer life cycle, the leaders use differentiated communications, members' feedback, and the annual surveys for candidacy from conferences. To enhance the members' engagement with the Organization BC, the leaders use promotional materials, information to volunteers about how to get involved, as well as leverage online presence through the website and social media. As the webpage is the leading brand communication tool, the leader may need to enhance the content in at least two directions. First, a more dynamic style with impactful immediate visual content may help provide latest technological alignment look. Also, the leaders should think about adding an appropriate emotionally engaging content, inspiring to students and other stakeholders, and energizing, as the first online impression. Next, the leaders need to transform the webpage in a way to leverage the organization's strategic strengths and advantages.

The Organization BC leaders have well-established processes, formal and informal, to manage complaints. The leaders also established two appeal processes allowing members to engage with them in cases of accreditation withdrawal. In case of a complaint, the leaders are ready and open-minded to learn from the complaint and try to prevent it happens in the future.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

Workforce

The leaders of Organization BC build a working environment enabling continuous improvement through articulating an organizational culture of excellence and human values. Various workforce-related performance measurement processes help the leaders apply smart motivation techniques. The leaders develop workforce policies and processes consistent with the mission’s execution.

Workforce environment. The Organization BC senior leaders established a resource planning process to assess the needed skills, competencies, certifications, and staffing levels. The resources planning process results in a document, and the deployment of the process is under the responsibility of a dedicated director and her team. An additional axis of permanent evaluation of the match between the needed skills and competencies is the tasks progress evaluation during the regular staff meetings.

Maintaining a constant level of diversity among permanent employees, board of directors, and volunteers is part of the Organization BC strategy. The directors of the board in the last few years, for instance, had French, Canadian, and Columbian nationalities. Volunteers from various parts of the worlds, like India and the Dominican Republic for example, where the leaders install operations, contribute to the accreditation processes. The senior leaders devote continuous efforts to protect the diversity balance they achieved at any moment, but especially at positions’ openings, as diversity may influence organizational performance.

To ensure adequacy between new workforce members and the organizational culture, the senior leaders established a process involving the use of such personality assessment tools as the dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness (DISC) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The senior leaders collaborate with a human resources consultant to ensure the accurate use of the instruments and to accomplish the hiring interviews process.

The Organization BC senior leaders faced situations of both workforce reductions and growth. To manage their employees and the impact of the necessary reductions, the leaders engage in team building activities. The preparation for workforce growth involves planning and engaging in training. The senior leaders discuss and announce organizational structure changes at team and board meetings. Specific communication and training are some additional means to prepare and share workforce reductions and growth.

As per the 2017-2018 Baldrige Framework, in certain situations, leaders may need to address changes in the external environment, culture, and strategy, implying workforce management and organization. The evaluation process, which involves verbal communication, monthly meetings, and written annual feedback, is helpful to the Organization BC senior leaders to organize and manage the workforce to accomplish the assigned tasks as per organization’s core competencies, strengthen members focus, and strive to exceed performance expectations.

Workforce climate. The Organization BC leaders ensure offering convenient, healthy, and secure workspace. All employees take safety training to maintain knowledge about required behavior in moments of risk. The senior leaders set goals for improving the workplace environment such as buying more space and building more offices aiming to support future growth. The related performance measures are consistent across different workplace environments.

The Organization BC leaders support their workforce by providing various benefits. The leaders allowed practicing flexible work schedules to meet the needs of a diverse workforce. To facilitate work engagement by various work groups, the leaders developed the policies and procedures handbook. The leaders offer such benefits to the employees as medical vacation, retirement savings, dental and eye insurance, and life insurance.

Workforce engagement. The Organization BC senior leaders maintain an environment of open communication and foster workforce diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking during team and management meetings. The leaders empower their employees through delegation and determine the key engagement drivers through communication during team meetings.

The leaders practice both formal and informal assessment methods to determine workforce engagement and satisfaction. The formal part involves the employee evaluation process starting with a self-survey of ten questions. Once the survey completed, the employee sends it to his/her superior for consideration. The next stage in the process is an open face-to-face discussion. Also, the leaders take the occasion of the monthly progress follow-up meetings to exchange with their teams and evaluate engagement and satisfaction openly. The Organization BC leaders privilege direct discussions with their team members to identify and fix timely any arising issues.

The Organization BC leaders share the understanding of the nonprofit nature of their activities as a laying foundation of the organization and exclude typical business incentives and related compensations as part of the workforce performance management system. To foster innovation, ensure intelligent risk-taking, members focus, and action plans execution the leaders deploy the risk assessment and management process.

Workforce and leader development. Through the formal and informal methods the Organization BC leaders employ for identifying employees' competency and training needs, the leaders address the organization's core competencies, strategic challenges, and action plans achievement. An example of an area of the action plan achievement is an employee's project management training, sharing of the acquired knowledge with persons from other departments, and deploying the use of a project management software for enhanced member service in the field of events organization and marketing.

Excellence and continuous improvement, innovation, and creativity are some of the organization's core values. During various team and board meetings, the participants focus on continuous process improvement. The leaders ensure that together with the participants, they maintain a working atmosphere supporting innovation and creativity.

Before volunteers engage in school evaluations, board members step into their duties, and employees start working, all of them commit and sign a conflict of interest and non-disclosure document. With this process of informing, training, and committing to ethical behavior, the leaders ensure ethically engaged workforce. All activities of the Organization BC are dedicated to quality and continuous improvement of the services the members receive. The Organization BC leaders established processes for regular member surveys. Additionally, the occasions of members evaluations, site visits, conferences, and meetings show multiple opportunities to the leaders for enhancing member focus.

The senior leaders formally consider the learning and development desires of workforce members through the evaluation process. Training is the primary method to make employees acquire new specific knowledge and skills. The leaders ensure that employees share newly acquired knowledge and skills with persons from other departments inside the organization. Career development and succession planning are part of the evaluation and risk assessment and management processes.

Operations

The leaders of Organization BC ensure excellence in accrediting operations through highly standardized criteria and processes. The leaders set for active feedback provision from members and stakeholders. The leaders also engage in transparent and active communication throughout the organization and reliable innovation management processes, which contributes to operational efficiency.

Work processes. The Organization BC operates with four boards. The boards' members and staff determine the key services and work process requirements. The key work processes relate to accreditation, marketing, administration, technology, and membership services and management. The key requirements for accreditation work processes involve using the policies and procedures as established within the organization to accredit business programs. For marketing, the key requirements relate to building and further enhancing the awareness about the significance of accreditation. The organization's leaders require accurate financial and human resources management, and proper hard and software maintenance. As excellence and continuous improvement are foundational for the organization's philosophy, in the area of membership services and management, the leaders established a culture of striving to exceed members' needs. The critical requirements of the related work process reflect the strategic imperative of excellence and continuous improvement.

The senior leaders design the organization's services and work processes to meet requirements during the risk assessment and management process. As part of the strategic planning or risk assessment and management effort, the leaders created the idea and initiated the implementation of the online reporting portal. The online portal was helpful to achieve improvement in membership services, but the leaders also use the technology to propel and share knowledge across the organization. The information from the online reporting portal applies to consider further improvements or share acquired knowledge at meetings, training sessions, conferences, and seminars.

A significant part of the organization's services involves strong communication with the members. The leaders maintain all types of communication active and invite for formal and informal feedback at all types of events, as well as at any other moment. The open and interactive relationship supported by new technology and the risk assessment and management process reflects the purposeful desire of the Organization BC leaders to incorporate organizational knowledge, product excellence, consideration of risk, and the potential need for agility into the organization's services and processes.

Process management and improvement. The Organization BC leaders use feedback evaluation forms to ensure the daily activities meet key process requirements. The feedback evaluation forms are useful to the leaders also as an indicator to improve work processes and introduce changes in operations.

The board members and staff determine the organization’s key support processes. The leaders consider part of the human resources and information technology processes as supporting. The leaders ensure the supporting processes meet the essential organizational requirements through actively soliciting feedback from the members and sharing improvement opportunities with the related suppliers. The leaders achieved a considerable database improvement in applying the feedback-opportunity approach.

The leaders improve work processes with the aim to improve services and performance, enhance core competencies, and reduce variability at the performance review and boards’ meetings. The performance review and board meetings take place annually.

Innovation management. The organization’s leaders set up processes for pursuing innovation opportunities. The boards’ members and staff are responsible for identifying opportunities for innovation. Once the opportunities identified and agreed, the team members develop and implement. A recent innovation which came out of this process is the implementation of certification accreditation. The new opportunity implementation started in July 2018. From January 2019, the leaders deployed another strategic opportunity, updated accreditation standards and criteria, which they evaluated as intelligent risk. Additionally, within and beyond already accredited programs, the leaders are implementing an accreditation plus program which will help differentiate among three accredited levels. The leaders use the annual budgeting process to ensure financial and other resources are available to pursue the new opportunities.

During performance reviews the leaders evaluate the contribution, status, and functioning of an identified and implemented opportunity. In case the opportunity's contribution is not in line with the expectations, beyond capacity, capability, and process adjustment, the leaders proceed to terminating its implementation. An implemented accelerated accreditation program showed constant underperformance for 3 years and the leaders decided to delist the offering from the services catalog.

Operational effectiveness. The Organization BC leaders control the overall costs of the operations through budget compliance. The leaders evaluate significant actions efficiency and effectiveness and look for improvements. With a recent implementation of a newly designed technological feature in the reporting database, and after multiple tests and upgrades, the leaders achieved 67% improvement of the time needed to generate and send a written communication to the program directors of programs undergoing accreditation.

Developing written communication to members is a significant part of the organization's team activities. The leaders deployed the use of specific editing tools to prevent from writing mistakes and reduce rework. The leaders established processes and procedures, detailed in the travel and reimbursement policy, to minimize site visit costs. The volunteers engage in program evaluations and site visits. With the aim to control costs, the leaders established a volunteers selection criterium related to the volunteer's geographical location, among other criteria. With the introduction of the geographic location criterium, the leaders can balance the need for cost control and the need for high-quality service of the members.

Management of information systems**.** To ensure the reliability of the organization's information systems, the leaders organized auditing procedures.

Triangulating the information the team members receive and process is an additional approach to enhance reliability. The leaders posited for an offsite information back-up to secure the working data availability and accessibility further.

The leaders ensure the security and cybersecurity of sensitive or privileged data and information through a virtual private network (VPN) and password access. Every person using the information system changes passwords periodically. People access the offices with an entry system code. The leaders also posited for offices protection with an alarm system requiring access with a code. Confidentiality and appropriate access to data and information are ensured with individual passwords and lock and key drawers.

A fulltime information technologies (IT) professional is part of the Organization BC team. Among his responsibilities is the duty to maintain awareness of emerging security and cybersecurity threats**.** The IT professional updates the system's firewalls, maintains the necessary security access, and ensures regular backups, with the aim to detect, respond, and ensure recovery from cybersecurity breaches.

Safety and emergency preparedness. The Organization BC leaders provide a safe operating environment by engaging the workforce about safety with the policy and procedures manual. The part of the manual dedicated to employees shows safety rules and behavior and is supportive of establishing a safe environment. Dedicated training and exercise are part of the safety requirements. The teams' members exercise fire and tornado drills, and the building is accessible through a secured system. To prevent accidents, the leaders ensure fire detectors and fire bottles inspections. The team members participate in accident prevention sessions and meetings. The leaders also developed emergency procedures and training to ensure the organization is prepared for a disaster or other emergencies.

The leaders look after involving the workforce in the disaster and emergency preparedness system. To prevent, the leaders ensure inspections, training, and exercise, as they consider that continuity of operations and recovery consist of having all persons safe and back-up data and information. Through the offsite back-up, the leaders ensure that information technology systems continue to be secure and available to serve members’ needs.

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Organization BC leaders established various processes to achieve a consistent and complete selection, gathering, analysis, and improvement of data, information, and knowledge. The evaluation and performance measurement processes enable the leaders to support continuous improvement. The organizational culture is helpful to learning.

Measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance. The Organization BC leaders organized data collection to track daily operations and overall organizational performance per segments. The team members track information for operations for membership, accreditation, finance, and so forth. For membership and membership services, for instance, the data and information the leaders decided to follow, combine financial figures from external and internal audits, marketing indicators gathered through the online reporting portal and conferences’ surveys, and online analytics for social media accounts and websites. The leaders considered specific indicators for accreditation coming from particular surveys and processed in various files, tables, and graphs.

Tracking progress on achieving strategic objectives and action plans happens through the risk assessment and management process. The process involves making phone calls on a regular basis, developing action plans with measurable achievements, and reporting the performance indicators.

The Organization BC leaders set various performance measures to track the development of the organization's major activity and benchmark with competitors. The leaders also set budget-related short-term financial performance measures, as well as longer-term financial measures related to increasing the reserve funds by 2020 with a precise amount. The leaders put on place a process book on financial management containing specific time-bound goals, as well as rules to ensure ethical auditing. The leaders track financial measures once per year.

The two major competitors of the Organization BC, although with almost equivalent services, show performance results ranging either far above or far below. The Organization BC leaders, however, track competitors on a regular basis and adjust strategy as necessary to enhance positioning and differentiation.

The leaders have categorized members in various segments and select voice-of-the-customer and market data accordingly. Through the Internet, conferences surveys, and the other formal and informal feedback and complaint processes, the leaders ensured organizing the information about higher education, colleges and universities, faculty, and higher education subscriptions. The leaders make decisions once the reliable data have processed and analyzed.

Performance analysis and review. The leaders use key organizational performance measures, as well as comparative and customer data, during the budget reviews and annual budgeting. The leaders decide about programs or other actions adjustments in cases where items are under or above budget. The adjustments happen at the programs or organizational level to ensure the global organizational balance.

A part of the feedback sources resides with the experience and reporting of volunteers during site visits. Site visits are a major opportunity for valuable exchanges between the Organization BC and the school program teams. The direct contact during site visits is an opportunity to build, convey, and defend image and reputation. Beyond programs assessment, the senior leaders consider the volunteers' behavior during site visits as critical to the organization's success. Volunteers execute approximately 300 site visits per year and report on the performance of other volunteers of their teams. The leaders consider the volunteers feedback for improvement purposes like plan training on various aspects of the assessment, ethical behavior, and communication. Also, the leaders reserve the right not to use the volunteers' services in the future in case of disrespect of the standards and procedures. The leaders follow volunteers' feedback on a regular basis and decide about necessary adjustments during performance reviews. Cross-referencing or verifying the information from other users is a method the leaders use to ensure the conclusions are valid.

The members of the board of directors review performance measurement data twice a year and evaluate progress in all organizational areas on achieving the strategic objectives and action plans. The board members communicate to the president/CEO their recommendations for changes, additions, improvements, delisting, and so forth. The president/CEO communicates the information from the board to the staff for implementation. In case of need to respond quickly to changes in the operating environment, the executive committee members have the responsibility to gather quickly. The executive committee members have the authority from the board of directors to decide and ensure the implementation of urgent changes.

Performance improvement. Houck (2017) emphasized the need for nonprofit leaders to orient the strategy towards performance. The leaders' capacity to use performance information is the result from self-efficacy, receptivity to feedback and valuing employees' input, as well as from the sensitivity to the external environment (Johansen et al., 2018). The participants of the study shared insights about the role of information related to expertise, experience, intuition, and social context in relation to the strategic planning initiatives. Also, the participants pointed at the practices of large base input gathering and the leaders' willingness to listen to feedback and collaborate. Organization BC leaders opted for implementing the Baldrige education version as a management system. The leaders ensure performance improvement through combining excellence framework with learning and maintaining a human dimension, which is in line with the findings and recommendations of Pirozzi and Ferulano (2016); and Vakharia et al. (2018).

The process involves the leaders using the findings from the performance reviews, competitive, and comparative data to plan for future activities, adjustments, or changes. Besides adjusting the strategic objectives, the leaders use the findings to project for membership growth, accreditations activities, to plan for the needed volunteers, and other organizational activities. In case of discrepancies between desired and projected objectives, the leaders use additional sources to cross-reference the data and communicate with functional experts, part of the members but external to staff.

The leaders also analyze the findings from the performance reviews to detect opportunities for improvement, growth potential, and innovation. The leaders decided upon, and the teams introduced a process improvement based on a technological innovation following a review of performance indicators of operational efficiency. The approach was lean-based and resulted in a drastic decrease in staff time waste.

To deploy the identified opportunities, the president/CEO communicates the information from the board of directors to the staff, the other boards, and to the committees. The organization operates with 10 to 12 committees, each dedicated to focusing on a specific aspect of the organizational activities, such as marketing, membership, and so forth. The president/CEO informs the respective committees about the decisions for implementation of the improvements. Once a quarter, the team members communicate via e-mail to the 13,000 individual members the ideas of innovation, changes, as well as data and information.

Information and knowledge management. Learning and knowledge are central to the success of nonprofit organizations (Baba, 2015; Pirozzi & Ferulano, 2016; Vakharia et al., 2018). The leaders of Organization BC ensured the establishment of organizational culture and processes helpful to convey learning. During the interviews, the participants shared insights about knowledge and learning processes and pointed to the organizational culture based on the value of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement is a concept which the Organization BC leaders integrated into the strategic planning process relying on the Baldrige excellence model. The leaders use the learning and the knowledge management outcomes to improve performance and address process and structural adjustments. Through a strategy of balance between knowledge exploration and knowledge exploitation embedded in strategic planning and decision-making efforts, the leaders achieve consistency in policies and structures. The study participants shared insights from their strategic planning experiences related to knowledge-centricity expressed as collecting, managing, and using the data strategically.

The leaders ensure the quality of organizational data and information through cross-referencing, evaluation, validation, and verification with other sources. Categorized information from Internet searches, verification, and analyses as part of the daily tasks of teams and regular interactions with members help leaders to manage electronic and other information, as well as to ensure validity, reliability, and currency. To ensure security, the leaders set for personalized and protected electronic accesses to the organizational system and information.

The organization's data and information are available in electronic format and hard copies. The leaders ensured that the latest user-friendly technological advancements are available for use across the organization. The leaders privilege the use of such electronic tools as e-mails, Dropbox, and GoToMeeting, to ensure sharing and accessibility of data and information promptly.

Organizational knowledge. To collect and transfer workforce knowledge, the leaders use the operations manuals, policies and procedures book, and standards and criteria manual. Blending data from research, members' information, and members' research is helpful for the leaders to ensure building new knowledge. The leaders facilitate sharing of new knowledge from and to members, partners, and workforce through electronic means and traditional communication.

Regular team meetings and minutes on performance measurement reviews help leaders generate and detect knowledge useful for innovation and strategic planning purposes. The mechanism the leaders use to transfer innovation and strategic planning knowledge is the process and procedure books, and standards and criteria books updates.

The members can share best practices on the Organization BC website. Through evaluations, monthly written and verbal communication, and awards winning activities, the leaders identify high-performing operations. At the annual conference, the boards of commissioners' members request presenting the best practices, which enables sharing of knowledge and improvement opportunities at large scale.

The 12 conferences per year, which the Organization BC leaders and staff organize, are the most learning-intense moments for both the organization's members and leaders. Each conference has what leaders call concurrent educational tracks or training sessions. At the sessions, the members can learn and share about best practices, organizational policies, procedures, and operations. The training process helps the leaders provide opportunities to embed learning into the members' operations.

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

Product and Process Results

The Organization BC results are mission-based, and the primary indicators of the performance of the mission-related core services are the ones related to the accredited members. The evolution of accredited members shows a positive trend, and the pool of programs to accredit is also growing (see Figures 4 and 5).

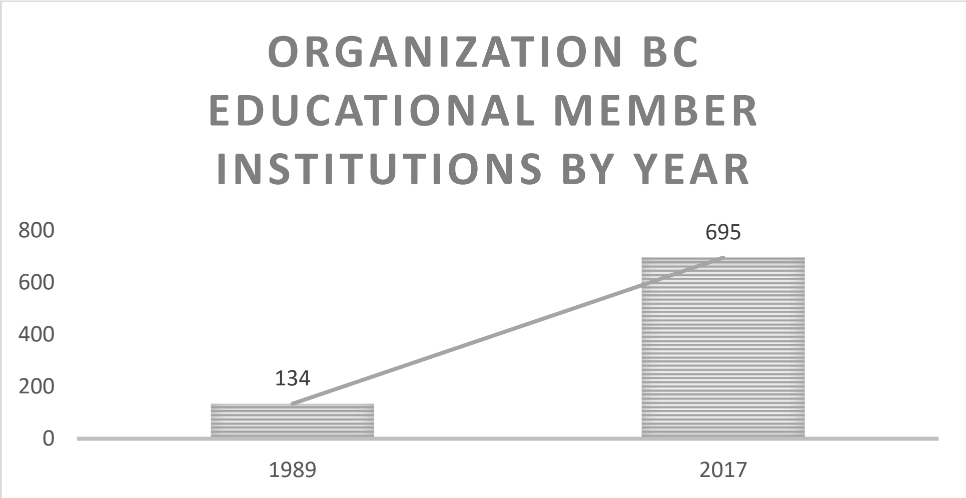

Figure 4. Evolution of accredited members. Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

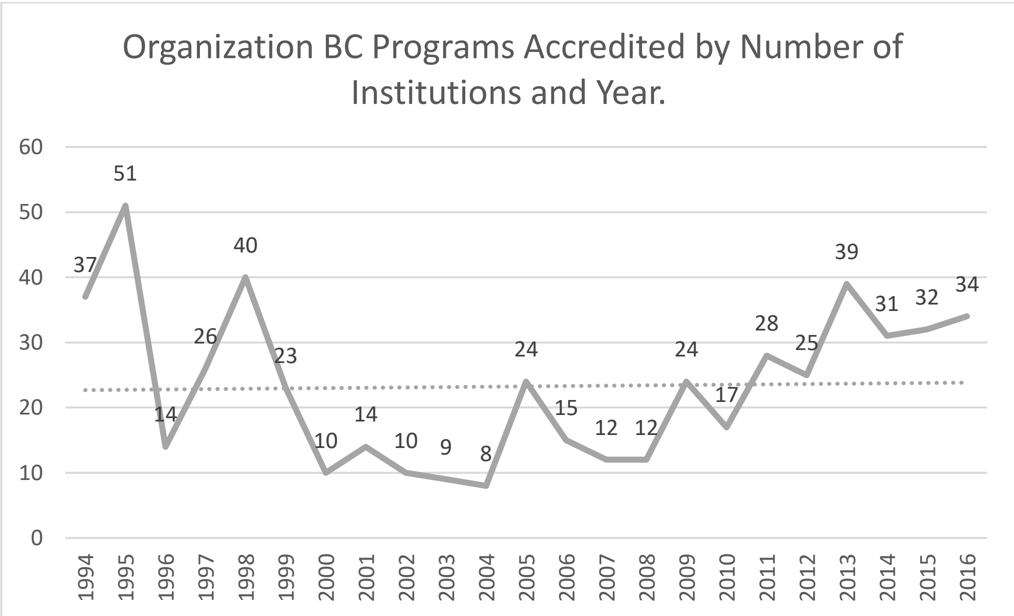

Figure 5. Evolution of accredited programs. Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

Although the size and scope of Competitor 1 are much larger, the Organization BC leaders compare and benchmark results against these of Competitor

1. As illustrated in Figure 6, the trend of both competitors regarding new educational members acquisition is comparable and favorable. The comparability of the trends between the two competitors is a signal for the effectiveness of Organization BC mission-related operational processes and the compelling services.

Figure 6. Comparison of new educational members acquisition. Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

Organization BC leaders measure the level of returning schools and compare it to the leading competitor. The results related to returning schools, or reaffirmation rate, are also positive, although Competitor 1 results show faster scaling. Figures 6 and 7 feature the indicators the leaders follow to measure process effectiveness as productivity and cycle time and to benchmark with competitors.

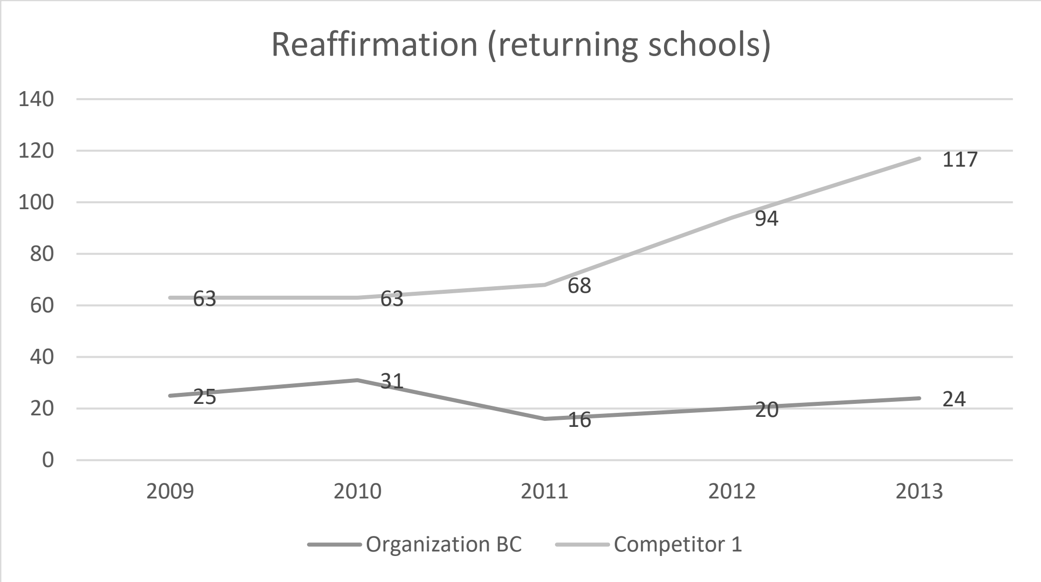

Figure 7. Comparison of returning schools. Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

Organization BC leaders follow safety and emergency preparedness indicators. The key measures of the effectiveness of the organization's safety system and its preparedness are the number of times of emergency preparedness training and exercise, and the level of the employees' preparedness. The leaders put in place the emergency preparedness training and exercise in 2011 and are ensuring it is taking place once per year. The results indicate that all employees have the necessary knowledge to react appropriately in case of emergency.

The leaders consider supply-chain management results as very positive as well. A primary supplier of the Organization BC, which services impact customer service, information gathering and storing, and work processes efficiency, is the database maintenance and service supplier. A key performance measure is the number of times the database is not accessible or operational. The results showed that a complete database breakdown happened only once, and very rarely was otherwise not operational. The results also indicate the reliability of the suppliers' selection process and the leaders and staff skills to engage, motivate, and partner with suppliers.

Customer Results

The Organization BC leaders track customer satisfaction at multiple levels and in different moments. Some of the measurement happens through the surveys the organization's team members send to the schools. The results show strong positive trends. One exception shows the strong organizational culture of continuous improvement: The leaders faced one situation of dissatisfaction in 2017 from the evaluation process which they processed into a learning occasion and immediately took actions to recover and improve the process. Another satisfaction indicator is the one resulting from conferences' surveys. Conferences attendees' have the opportunity to provide feedback and rate their satisfaction level from the overall conference execution and specific items like presentations' content and quality, and so forth.

Additionally, the leaders ensure the execution of the annual member survey, and the results show overall satisfaction levels from the membership and services. Members maintaining multiple accreditations provide feedback about the comparability of satisfaction indicators with competitors, and the leaders consider the results similar.

Customer engagement measures include participation in committees, boards, and site visits. The leaders also ensure providing the opportunity to involve the members in strategic planning initiatives, innovative accreditation services formulation, such as accrediting certificates, and approving new standards. The resulting innovation in certificates accreditation evidences the strength of the member's engagement process.

Workforce Results

At the time of the data gathering, the organization had two unfilled positions, which reduced workforce capability and capacity effectiveness. The fact that employees with different culture left adversely impacted the diversity level of the organization's staff. The leaders used to deploy an employee satisfaction survey providing them with workforce climate results. The temporary under-capacity could impede the measurement of the workforce climate, but the leaders intend to restart the survey as soon as possible.

The leaders deployed two other surveys on employees benefits and services in the last two years. Also, from marketing and accreditation-related surveys, the leaders gathered information about workforce engagement levels. The leaders started a new process designed for workforce development. The related key indicators are processed from the annual employee evaluation forms. The process resulted in training initiatives which led to internal learning and knowledge sharing, collaboration and relationships building. The outcome was improved project management across the organization with reduced waste of time.

Leadership and Governance Results

The senior leaders' use technology, established processes and tools, and informal approaches to communicate and engage with the workforce and members and deploy the organization's vision and values, encourage two-way communication, and create a focus on action. The results are effective and numerous communications on a daily basis, annual evaluations, and personal improvement plans in case of willingness to support someone's performance improvement. Communication type, intensity, and focus differ per organizational unit. Within team's communication happens face-to-face or via e-mails, while membership committees communicate at meetings, by phone, during conferences. The senior leaders also communicate with the 350 volunteers and maintain active communication between the groups.

The senior leaders' governance accountability indicators are primarily related to the area of finance. The senior leaders ensure gathering the data from the internal audit committee and the external audit. As the figures in Table 4 indicate, the trend in total revenue for Organization BC since 2012 is positive. The revenue from program services also shows positive figures and the trend is comparable to the market and competitors. The results related to budget targets show a slight negative trend in the last years. Also, the senior leaders undergo evaluations from the board of directors, and the personnel committee members provide the President and CEO with goals, input, and an annual evaluation.

The legal and regulatory results consist of meeting the nonprofit status of the organization, which is licensed in a midwestern state. The Organization BC leaders are also responsible for meeting the requirement necessary for the recognition from the CHEA, as well as to comply with each country legal system while operating internationally. The responsibilities are split between the president and CEO and board of directors, and the accreditation unit. Government and legal systems' compliance for international operations are part of the responsibilities of the accreditation unit.

The ethical policy of the organization involves signing a conflict of interest and nondisclosure document. The results of ethical behavior show one violation in 2018 and three violations in the previous three years. Depending on the severity of the breaches, the senior leaders decide to deliver additional formal and on-the-job training or discontinue. The process and results differ by organizational unit. The volunteers are peer-reviewed, and in case of an ethical issue, the chief accreditation officer and the three of the boards receive the information for review and decision. Different paths exist for the President and board of directors and for the staff members.

The leaders and staff enjoy the chance of providing services to the community within three paid days. The leaders and staff engage in various activities to give back to society individually and as a team.

During the years, the senior leaders developed various long-term strategic goals and documentation is available to show achievements. Some of the examples include the implementation of the online reporting portal in 2015, which resulted from a strategic goal set in 2005. Another example and result is the setting of the organization’s reserve fund at the level of 400,000 USD.

For building and strengthening core competencies a significant indicator is the number of accomplished training versus the planned ones. A recent result consists of the training of one employee on project management, who shared the acquired knowledge internally and deployed the use of the project management skills in other departments.

The senior leaders have a dedicated process for managing risk and taking intelligent risks. The risk assessment and management process results in a precise plan in consideration of the four major organizational pillars and actions to mitigate risks with different priority levels.

Financial and Market Results

The figures in Table 4 show the financial performance results of the organization in terms of revenue generation. Table 6 shows the financial results versus budgeted targets for the last 4 years. The internal and external audit committee participants segment the data further and provide results per segment of institution or member type.

Table 6

Financial Results Versus Budget

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Result versus budget in USD	-35,000	10,000	-66,000	-64,000

Note: Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

Table 7 shows some comparative market performance results. The figures indicate a comparable number of member institutions between the competitors. The level of Internationalization of Competitor 1 is stronger. Some additional market survey results indicate the slowest growth for the associate degree segment. Also, in the United States, the growth is slower than internationally.

Table 7

Comparison of Market Results for 2018

Member type	Organization BC	Competitor 1
Campuses	1,162	na
Member institutions	657	780
Internationalization (number of countries)	60	90
Associate degree members	148	na
Baccalaureate and graduate degree members	978	na

Note: Source: Organization BC. Reproduced with permission.

Key Themes

Process strengths. Organization BC leaders set for the establishment of mission-driven processes which are purposeful, regular, and repeatable, and help the leaders bring the actions of the different units of the organization together. The processes the leaders established integrate in a way that makes the entire organization act as one, despite the high level of membership diversity. The driving force of the processes' strengths is the leadership and organizational philosophy which articulates around excellence and human values, such as learning, continuous improvement, and respect of people. The Organization BC leaders leverage a combination of trustful organizational culture with profound knowledge expressed primarily as systems thinking, motivation, and knowledge creation. The leaders use such smart motivation techniques as assigning consistent responsibilities and recognizing efforts and achievements, as well as create an environment of fear eviction facilitating the process of learning from mistakes, engage personal development and relationships building which is helpful to foster engagement.

The strategic planning and risk assessment and management process showed a high level of foresight effectiveness achievement concerning the external and internal environments' evaluation. The leaders set processes which foster ensuring of the quality of information in terms of breadth, depth, and accuracy. The risk assessment and management processes include the possibility to track progress on both strategic and operational improvements in an integrated pattern covering all functional areas of the organization. The complete set of organizational processes showed continuity, consistency, interactivity, strong learning orientation, and innovation capacity.

Process opportunities. The Organization BC leaders can use the strength of the foresight effectiveness they achieved to address some envisioning needs which may arise in the future from the changes in the regulatory and competitive context. The leaders mid to long-term objective is to place the organization on a higher or leading competitive position. The leaders can step upon the solid foresight effectiveness foundations to start envisioning an idealized future organization. Some accompanying processes may include partnering with external stakeholders such as students, as well as acquiring the capacity to detect social character changes and use personality type knowledge to set the envisioning team.

Results strengths. The results presented and discussed in Category 7 evidence the consistency and strength of the processes in all areas. The excellence-driven culture of inclusiveness and respect combined with the foresight effectiveness help the leaders to maintain a compelling mission-led offering, as well as to achieve effective learning and continuous improvement outcomes through the mission-aligned performance measurement system. The growing revenues, members acquisition, and return rates, and positive results in workforce engagement, customer satisfaction, and governance outcomes show the effectiveness of the systems perspective Organization BC leaders practice in their management approach.

Results opportunities. Category 7 data showed highly compelling results indicating the significance of continuing to practice the systems approach embedded in the Baldrige framework. The leaders may wish to search for an opportunity to improve the slight slip of the financial results as compared to the budget targets. The leaders can address their financial endeavors through leveraging the innovations they bring to the market to raise mission and brand awareness. The leaders can develop processes designed to engage prompt actions in cases of innovation relying on engaging a more consistent and targeted set of social media features.

Project Summary

Nonprofit leaders need strategies to cope with increasing competition, lead change, and improve organizational performance. Strategic planning is a well-established and recognized tool helpful to formulate and develop strategy, assess alternatives, and achieve organizational success in the nonprofit sector (Rana et al., 2017; Wolf & Floyd, 2017). However, to benefit from the advantages of strategic planning, nonprofit leaders must establish well designed and functioning processes allowing for a systems perspective, stimulating continuous learning and improvement, and resting on solid organizational philosophy helpful to value respect for people and variety of input. In this single case study, I analyzed how leaders of a United States nonprofit organization located in the Midwest have used strategies to develop effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. Nonprofit leaders can use the data I have gathered in this case study to develop strategic plans designed to improve organizational performance.

Establishing a trustful organizational culture coupled with systems thinking, motivation, and knowledge creation processes are essential to set for effective strategic planning and leading change (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). An organizational philosophy resting on such values as excellence, learning, continuous improvement, and respect of people, is helpful for leaders willing to set clear decision-making and behavioral guidance (Maccoby, 2015). Leaders are well-equipped to maintain knowledge creation and foster employees’ engagement in assigning consistent responsibilities, recognizing efforts and achievements, and facilitating learning from mistakes (Maccoby & Scudder, 2011). An essential prerequisite of effective strategic planning is the ensuring of quality, quantity, and pertinence of the information (Drevon et al., 2018; Garcia-Alsina et al., 2016).

The participants in this study shared a considerable amount of information about the leaders’ efforts to develop effective plans for increasing organizational performance based on strategic intelligence. The findings from this study are significant for nonprofit leaders who face competitive pressures, changing regulations, and desire to improve performance. Organization BC leaders established on-going and transparent processes guaranteeing effective foresight development which comprise considering of the contextual challenges, variety of perspectives, holistic risk-oriented environmental scanning, and systems thinking helpful to detect and evaluate strategic opportunities consistent with the organization’s mission. The leaders ensured the functioning of the system through shared values and Baldrige-based organizational culture of learning, excellence, and respect.

The findings of this study indicate the primary role of ensuring the consistency among organizational mission, culture, philosophy, and a systems perspective to strive for continuous improvement. The participants shared information about the organization’s characteristics as established in the Baldrige framework, comprising such categories as leadership, strategy, customers, analysis and performance measurement, knowledge management, workforce, and operations. Nonprofit leaders reviewing the data in this study may gather insights into approaches to assess their organization and strategies to develop strategic intelligence-based plans for improving performance.

The implications for social change include the possibility for nonprofit leaders to consider approaches for guiding their organizations through rapidly changing environments, compete successfully, and sustain delivery of high impact to the public and communities that they serve. Technology, globalization, increased competition, changes in regulations and social characters are part of the primary challenges the leaders of nonprofit organizations face. Effective strategic intelligence-based plans are helpful to navigate through the challenges, lead change, and improve performance.

Contributions and Recommendations

The results of this study indicate the significance of leadership philosophy, consistency between mission, values, and processes, foresight effectiveness, learning and improvement, and the systems perspective for developing effective plans to cope with change and improve performance. After employing the Baldrige approach to the systematic analysis of my client organization, I presented to the client organization some elements for future considerations. Some primary components include preparing to redefine the mission shortly with a different focus on the end services user and structure the envisioning team, strengthening the brand positioning, including the development of social media use guidelines in the risk assessment and management process, and leveraging processes to maximize benefits from innovations.

Organization BC leaders set for a high level of effective consistency between mission, values, and organizational processes, and the results show continuous progress. The recent signals for changes in the accreditation regulations, as well as the changes in the social character and potential expectations of students and the public, lead to the need to think about redefining the mission of the organization. The leaders placed the students as the primary stakeholder in the current functioning of the organization and considered the members of the organization as their primary customers. It is my recommendation that the senior leaders explore demographic, psychographic, futurist and various other appropriate types of data internationally, to accumulate knowledge about the changing social characters and design strategic paths to connect with the students as a primary user of accreditation services.

Together with leveraging strategic intelligence techniques and processes which the leaders successfully implement, resetting the organization's mission and functioning in a new way comprises the designation of a team of people having the capacity to envision strategically. Organization BC leaders can rely on the exceptional foresight effectiveness they achieve regularly. Establishing some psychoanalytical approaches and tests can help complete detecting envisioning talent.

Brand awareness and clear differentiation are other elements the senior leaders need to address with the present and future missions and functioning. Reliance on unique organization's features, such as the adherence to the Baldrige framework is essential. The findings show that the leaders should establish the paths for developing the connections and the communication strategy in compelling and appealing ways to the new students' social character.

Webpages and social media presence and use are essential for various communication purposes, and strategic and brand positioning aims. Technology is fast developing and influences the nonprofit organizations' operations and image. Including emotionally impactful visual elements on dynamized webpage platforms with the latest available technologies in line with the desired organizational positioning and values are another set of components the leaders can consider. Organization BC teams actively use social media to communicate with members and stakeholders. However, some social media platforms have new and more powerful tools which the teams can leverage to build a larger online community and communicate impactfully. The leaders can include the development of social media policies and guidelines in the next risk assessment and management sessions to allow using social media tools more powerfully.

Organization BC is the first and for the moment the only accrediting body offering the possibility for the institutions to accredit certificates. Accrediting certificates is an industry innovation, and in introducing it, the leaders provide the opportunity to the organization to gain competitive advantage, market leadership, and brand image. However, the organization’s leaders need to address the creation of processes necessary to leverage the benefits of innovations. I recommend the leaders consider including these processes in specific brand manuals outlining branding and positioning policies.

Qualitative researchers exploring the development of effective strategic plans leading to improved performance in the nonprofit sector in the future may benefit from enlarging the population and conducting multiple case studies. In considering the findings, assumptions, and limitations of this study, other researchers may achieve similar or compatible conclusions with larger populations. I recommend researchers use the strategic intelligence system as the theoretical framework for conducting quantitative studies to fill the void of using strategic intelligence as a systems approach.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Date & Time:

Participant:

For this interview, I am using an interview protocol which begins now. My name is Iglika Kirilov, I am currently a doctoral candidate in Business Administration -Entrepreneurship, at Walden University. I am conducting research on strategies nonprofit leaders use to develop plans based on strategic intelligence for improving their organizations' performance, under the guidelines of the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Thank you very much for having accepted to take part in this research study, and for the time and consideration.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential, and you can change your decision to participate any time, even during our interview, by notifying me. In case there is a question you are not willing to answer, please just let me know. For confidentiality reasons, I will refer to you with a pseudonym which is Participant (number). Only you and me are aware of the person who stands behind the pseudonym.

This interview is audio-recorded for accuracy purposes. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available (via a process called member checking). Transcriptions of senior leader interviews will be analyzed as part of the case study, along with any archival data, reports, and documents that the organization's leadership deems fit to share. Copies of your interview recording and transcript are available from me upon request.

Now, if you are ready, we can start the interview.

The interview will begin with Question 1 and will follow through to the final question.

Question 1: How do you collect data for your strategic planning process?

Question 2: How do you analyze data for your strategic planning process?

Question 3: How do you determine if the data gathered and analyzed are relevant?

Question 4: How do you address your strategic challenges and advantages in the data collection and analysis process?

Question 5: How do you address potential risk elements you detected into the data gathering and analysis process such as changes in your regulatory and business environment?

Question 6: How do you ensure accuracy of your understanding of the competitive environment and the strategic challenges your organization faces?

Question 7: How do you assess and improve the effectiveness of your organization’s strategic planning process?

Question 8: What additional information can you provide about the strategies you use to develop a strategic plan based on strategic intelligence?

Our interview is over.

Thank you for having participated in this research.

For any follow-up questions and concerns, please contact me at (telephone number), or by e-mail at (e-mail address).

This is the end of the interview protocol.