Surveying the Strategic Planning Landscape at US Business Schools: A Comparison of

Traditional and 'Agile-Infused' Approaches

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This study explored the strategic planning processes of the top schools of business located in the United States as ranked by US News and World Report in March 2018. The study also examined the greatest internal and external pressures that business schools face, their current processes for strategic planning, and the relationship between the strategic planning process of a school and the perceived pressures as described by persons with responsibility for graduate programs within schools of business. Furthermore, the study identified the extent to which each school's strategic planning process is traditional vs. agile-infused.

In order to facilitate this exploration, the researcher designed and deployed a 48-question survey to administrators in the top US MBA programs. The survey instrument was comprised of three sections: Participant & School Demographics, Pressures on Schools, and Strategic Planning. The study and subsequent analysis led to the creation and testing of a scoring system to evaluate the planning processes of schools on five dimensions of comparison between traditional and more agile-infused strategic planning. This scoring system provides scores for each dimension as well as a Planning Process Dimension Score (PPDS).

At the conclusion of the study, readers should have a better appreciation for the pressures having the greatest impact on business schools. In addition, readers will have exposure to both traditional and agile-infused strategic planning processes, and see where some schools fall on this

spectrum. Finally, readers can use the pilot assessment and PPDS scoring system to evaluate their

own planning processes and identify potential areas of enhancement.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Preface

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Jennifer, and my children Abigail and Andrew, without whom this would not be possible. I am eternally grateful for the love, support, and patience you have demonstrated over the past several years, and especially the past several months as I finished this journey.

To my parents, you instilled in me a passion for lifelong learning. You always encouraged me to question the status quo, be creative, and never give up. This process has been the ultimate test of perseverance. If I have not said it enough, let me say it again, thank you.

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To my committee, Dr. Ferketish, Dr. Tananis, and Dr. Siegel, thank you for your incredible mentorship and timeliness of feedback on every draft and question I had. Your insights and suggestions were always on point, and my study was for the better with you as a part of it. I will be forever grateful for your participation.

Finally, to my dissertation chair, Dr. Jill A. Perry. I came to you after wandering through the dissertation process for close to 10 years, and two advisors later. You had never met me and you certainly did not have to take me on as an advisee. You helped me see the forest through the trees and finally find direction with my topic. I cannot thank you enough for your guidance and advocacy over these past several years. Without you, I would still be wandering the endless path of A.B.D. There are no words to describe my gratitude, so I will simply offer "Namaste."

1.0 Introduction

This study explores the strategic planning processes of the top schools of business based in the United States as ranked by US News and World Report. It explores the greatest internal and external pressures that the schools face, their current processes for strategy planning, and examines the relationship between the strategic planning process of a school and the perceived pressures as described by persons with responsibility for graduate programs within schools of business. Furthermore, the study will identify the extent to which each school's strategic planning process is traditional vs. agile-infused - a more contemporary view on strategy development. Agile strategy is defined as a strategy philosophy that enables organizations to sustain strategic momentum while frequently deploying and refining strategic initiatives. Gates (2018) stated, "Effective agile strategy processes provide just enough planning to launch executable initiatives early, focusing less on exhaustive long-term planning and more on early execution in the form of action planning, measuring, and reevaluating approaches as a matter of regular business" (para 9).

"Management education is at a crossroads" (Carlile, Davidson, Freeman, Thomas, & Venkatraman, 2016, p. 17) and around every corner, individuals raise the alarm regarding the challenges that schools of business, particularly graduate management programs, face, and will continue to face, in the years to come. Some of these critics come from within the industry itself. In a 2014 interview with Business Week, dean of the Haas School of Business at UC-Berkeley Rich Lyons, boldly predicted "Half of the business schools in this country could be out of business in 10 years—or five" (Clark, 2014). In 2018, Martin Parker, a professor of business in the United Kingdom, wrote the book *Shut Down the Business School*, which argues against management education at the collegiate level.

Teaching innovation is common in schools of business; however, they themselves are often slow to meet the challenges of a dynamic market. Schools have relied on approaches that have seen little change in over 50 years. One set of authors describe the business education industry as "an industry that, if not actually in crisis, is certainly suffering from a bad case of existential angst" (Thomas, Lorange, & Sheth, 2013, p. viii).

Over time, business schools have made marginal enhancements: diversified course offerings; more flexibility in delivery formats, especially in MBA programs; length of programs are shorter and more intensive; a new market of specialized master's programs has emerged; and the use of technology inside the classroom and to deliver programs has begun. With that said, these rather benign enhancements have merely been a reiteration of long-held practices and approaches to business education. Truly innovative changes in business education continue to be an exception.

Due to the slow nature of innovation, those with the greatest stake in, "business education - students, employers, governments, expert commentators, funding agencies, and potential donors – now seriously question its value and impact," (Carlile et al., 2016, p. 1). In 2011, a journalist for the *Financial Times* pointed out that very few individuals focus on the research coming from business schools related to management as it lacks relevance and is out of touch with current practices within industry (Skapinker, 2011).

The industrial world continues to innovate at a rapid pace in almost all facets of our lives, while business education continues to ride the wave of previous success. Failing to recognize that the wave is changing could ultimately lead to the demise of business education. So why is it that business schools are not stemming the tide and innovating with purpose? One might suggest that how schools plan is outdated and does not allow for rapid change. This study will show via the

review of relevant literature, that to meet and overcome the new challenges that business education faces, business schools should consider deploying new models for strategic planning, similar to those in highly innovative and competitive markets.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Strategic planning first emerged out of business in 1981 as a potential management tool for institutions of higher education. "If colleges and universities are to survive in the troubled years ahead, a strong emphasis on planning is essential," (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 47) and the basis to their claim is the revolutionary impact that strategic planning had on private industry. While they place an emphasis on the impact strategic planning may have on the survival of the modern university, they also acknowledge that colleges and universities lack the strategic planning mindset and retain organizational structures and processes prohibitive of strategic planning. Marshall (2004) writes that today's colleges and universities predicate their survival on strategic planning, "Yet colleges that fail to respond – to emerging areas of knowledge, to demographic and technological change, to the urgent need for accessibility and affordability, and a host of other societal expectations – may endanger their future" (p. 11). Needless to say, higher education, and more specifically the business education landscape, has changed since 1981.

Gadzinski (2018) stated that "this modern world is moving so fast we can't keep up, and competition can come from anywhere at any time" (, para. 9). He went on to say that it is no longer justifiable to undertake an annual strategic planning process that takes half of a year to develop and "requires significant time and effort to pivot to new opportunities and challenges" (Gadzinski,

2018para. 5). He further argued that organizations that matured during, "slower, more stable times need to adopt a more agile," philosophy for management (Gadzinski, 2018, p. 10).

Agile theory was born out of the software development industry (Alliance, 2001). More recently, organizations have adapted agile theory, and thereby the practices, to strategy development (Gates, 2018). Agile practices are business focused and use shorter cycles of planning and implementation more suited to the ebbs and flows of business. Furthermore, Gates (2018) stated that "organizations utilizing agile strategy should focus on strategy development and execution practices that:

- reduce the time to tangible value and expected results achieved,

- help the organization maintain momentum on the execution of long-range strategic plans through shorter, iterative implementation cycles, meeting both immediate and long-term needs, and

- enable the ability to pivot or adjust course proactively and reactively to adapt to frequent changes in both internal and external environments." (para. 8)

What remains unclear is whether the integration of agile theory and practices with strategic planning is relevant or adaptable to higher education, more specifically schools of business. Furthermore, might schools of business be able to more widely adopt such a strategy philosophy to respond more quickly to market demands and to overcome the challenges they face. After a review of the relevant literature related to the history of business education in the United States, the challenges the business education market faces, traditional strategic planning, and agile theory and practices, this study will address the following research questions:

1. To what extent are market pressures in the graduate business education industry impacting US business schools?
2. What are some of the prevailing characteristics of strategic plans and planning

processes in US business schools?

3. Where do the strategic planning processes of US business schools fall on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum?

4. To what extent do certain market pressures or US business school characteristics appear to influence the strategic planning process?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges that schools of business currently face in an increasingly competitive environment. In addition, this study examines the current strategic planning processes used by schools of business to maintain competitiveness. The study investigates the characteristics of the current strategic planning process within the business school in order to categorize the school's process on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum. Furthermore, the study will examine any relationships among the level of pressure on various metrics that a school faces, the characteristics of the school, and the strategic planning processes they use.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

The environment in which business schools, and specifically MBA programs, operate is more complex than ever and seems to change rapidly. As previously mentioned, Richard Lyons, dean of the Haas School of Business at the University of California Berkeley dramatically forecasted that a significant amount of business schools in the U.S. could fold within the decade (Clark, 2014). Business school administrators continuously receive requests to meet and exceed the demands of myriad constituents including students, parents, faculty, legislators, alumni, boards

of trustees, employers, and offers information for a number of others. In addition, administrators are continuously facing challenges to improve educational quality, enhance programs, increase institutional reputation, and to promote the mission, vision, and values of their institution all while increasing operational revenue and cutting expenditures. This necessity to survive or succeed in such an environment provides a convincing motive for more effective and agile strategic planning and execution. This study discusses an overview of both traditional and agile strategic planning.

The literature review, provides the reader with the historical and current context of the competitive landscape of business schools. In addition, the review of relevant literature will expose the reader to a brief history of strategic planning and the use of traditional strategic planning as a strategy development tool in universities. Furthermore, the chapter addresses agile theory, as well as ways in which business schools may deploy one of the more popular agile strategy frameworks to maintain competitiveness and responsiveness to market demands.

The analysis of the survey instrument provides the reader with data related to the current pressures that business schools continue to face and the impact those pressures have on the schools. In addition, the analysis will outline the current strategic planning processes used by business schools and the extent to which the real or perceived level of pressure a school faces, impacts the particular planning process used by the school. Furthermore, the study identifies whether the school's planning process is more traditional or agile-infused.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will help to educate graduate business school administrators on the challenges that the graduate business education market faces, the importance of strategic planning, and the

current strategic planning processes administrators are employing. Far too often administrators participate in elaborate and school-wide strategic planning processes to do nothing else but tuck the plan away until the next accreditation or strategic planning initiative. More than any other reason, strategic planning efforts fail due to the lack of an implementation plan (Alfred, 2006). Agile strategy development focuses on the short-term implementation and execution, while taking into account the long-term strategy of the organization. This study will bring light to these benefits thereby providing university administrators with a better understanding of various strategic planning processes used by schools. Finally, the study provides the reader with a tool to assess their own strategic planning process to determine where it sits on the traditional vs. agile continuum and helps to identify potential areas of enhancement for their planning process.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

One clear limitation of this study is that it focused solely on business schools within the United States. While business education is a global industry, introducing market challenges and strategic planning processes from non-U.S. institutions added an unnecessary layer of complexity to the study at this point. Furthermore, the study is limited to U.S. based business schools that have at least one MBA program and ranked by U.S. News and World Report. This in and of itself limited the potential pool for respondents as the ranking published in 2018 only ranked 99 schools. This limited pool presented challenges in securing enough participants to conduct measures of association, as discussed later in chapter four. In addition, while this study does discuss the history of business education and the challenges that business education faces at both the undergraduate and graduate level, the primary focus of the study itself and the examination of strategic planning

processes is graduate business education. Due to these limiting factors, the generalizability of conclusions may be constrained.

2.0 Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a foundation for the examination of the challenges facing US business schools and the strategic planning processes of US business schools. There are three overarching themes that help organize the review of the literature: the graduate management education landscape, traditional strategic planning, and agile strategy.

The literature review begins with an examination of the graduate management education landscape. This section provides the reader with important historical context by discussing the history of business education. This history provides a foundation to better understand the challenges that graduate business programs have felt over the past decade and to identify the root causes to some of these challenges. This section also discusses the impact of accreditation, external rankings, competition, and industry skepticism of business schools.

The literature review then progresses to a review of the literature related to more traditional methods of strategic planning. The review briefly examines the history of these topics and how a more strategic mindset entered higher education administration. From there, the review examines literature related to the various traditional processes for strategic planning that have manifested in higher education administration and the upside and downside benefits of these processes.

The literature review concludes with an examination of agile strategy. This section provides a foundational understanding of the creation of agile methodologies. The review then discusses how agile methods migrated from a software design process to organizational strategy and how they may apply to strategic planning in higher education.

2.1 Graduate Management Education in the US

Management education has a century plus old history in the United States. This section of the literature review illustrates the history and evolution of management education. From the discussion of the evolution of management education, one can gain a better appreciation for the challenges that business schools face, including changing enrollment trends, increased skepticism from industry, accreditation pressures, and the impact of rankings. This information provides a foundation to understand the sense of urgency surrounding the need to examine the strategic philosophy of business schools.

2.1.1 The Evolution of Management Education in the United States

In the late 19th century, wealthy industrialists Joseph Wharton and Amos Tuck sought to bring legitimacy to management activity as both reputable and significant activities (i.e., the notion of management as a profession combined with the development of a new industrial and socio-economic order) (Thomas et al., 2013). To achieve their aspirations, they encouraged the creation of university-based management education and funded the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and Tuck School at Dartmouth College. In 1881, Wharton enrolled its first class in a bachelor's program in business and 19 years later, Dartmouth enrolled the first students in a business master's degree. These schools pioneered management education to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. However, these schools faced two main challenges, first, the lack of an accepted and standard management curriculum (i.e., core knowledge base) and second, challenges from other academic departments on campus regarding the validity of management education as a collegiate subject.

Kuhrana's (2007) book is one of the more thorough examinations of the history of business education in the United States. He notes the challenges the early adopters of business education faced,

> The logic of professionalism that underlay the university-based business school in its formative phase was replaced first by a managerialist logic that emphasized professional knowledge rather than professional ideals, and ultimately by a market logic that, taken to its conclusion, subverts the logic of professionalism altogether. (p. 7)

Kuhrana (2007) continues on to argue that American business schools have lived through three phases of evolution: the professionalization phase, the managerialist phase, and the marketization/commercialist phase.

During the professionalization phase, the manager role was conceptualized. This framework saw the manager as having altruistic objectives, including the development of norms and values. These norms and values encouraged the balance between personal profit and a duty to society through social responsibility and ethical behavior. The professional manager was viewed as a steward of all of the firm's resources.

Some authors labeled this phase the "trade school" era (Thomas et al., 2013, p. 10). It was more vocational in its priorities and schools mainly operated at the undergraduate level as teaching schools. At this point, very few faculty produced any type of research related to the field of management. This vocational phase of business schools dominated the management education landscape until World War II. During the first half of the 20th century, many new schools of business were created utilizing the Wharton, Tuck, and by then, Harvard Business School – where the first Masters of Business Administration or MBA was launched in 1908 – model as inspiration (Thomas, Lee, Thomas, & Wilson, 2014). In 1916, during the boom of business schools, the

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, or AACSB, was founded to promote business and business education (Thomas et al., 2013). The subject of management never realized any lasting validity or legitimacy within the academy and therefore the professionalization phase suffered.

After World War II, more scientific approaches emerged in the field of management education. For example, research related to operations management began to evolve as discipline. This was the dawn of what Khurana (2007) called the managerialist phase. During this phase, "managers were no longer fiduciaries or custodians of the corporation and its values. Instead, they were hired hands" (Khurana, 2007, p. 325). The Ford and Carnegie Foundations commissioned two reports, the Gordon and Howell (1959) and Pierson (1959) reports. These reports made several recommendations including the creation of a thoughtful and wide-ranged curriculum for business schools. They recommended that the curriculum integrate tangential university disciplines like economics, psychology, sociology, and statistics, along with courses in management studies (Gordon & Howell, 1959, pp. 147-209). This was the first time that both a core of foundational arts and sciences courses and a core of foundational management courses was explicitly prescribed.

These two ground-breaking reports also stressed the need for greater research in the field of management. During this managerialist phase schools placed an emphasis on more scientifically-based studies in the field of management and organizations. This phase saw the dawn of higher quality research journals: *Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Finance, and Journal of Marketing.* These journals reinforced the notion of the science of management and business schools encouraged faculty to produce research more academic in nature. In business

schools, the practical application of management became overshadowed by a more academic research orientation.

In the marketization/commercialist phase (Khurana, 2007), share-holder capitalism became the prevailing drive of business schools. Schools stressed efficient markets and economic and financial fundamentals. In addition, schools focused on market insights, the impact of competition, and financial growth through business expansion. Jensen and Meckling (1976), who treated managers as agents, minimalized managerial autonomy, thereby "subverting the logic of professionalism altogether" (Khurana, 2007, p. 7). Questions were raised as to whether the whole notion of the professionalization phase would have ever survived and what the ultimate purpose of business schools were.

There is no question, that the Gordon and Howell (1959) and Pierson (1959) reports completely disrupted the vocational nature of management education models and set business schools on a path for a more scientific and analytic business school framework. This would become the prevailing design for schools in the second half of the 20th century.

Spender (2008) raises a few questions with regard to the findings in Khurana's book. Spender questions the omission in the analysis regarding the role of the university in the development of the business school. "History shows that the universities themselves, and their presidents, used commercialisation [sic] and marketisation [sic] tactics and funded a significant proportion of university budgets from the growth of their business schools" (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 14). This move to commercialize the business schools led to the abandonment of business education as a professionalization program – akin to lawyers or doctors – and the beginning of the use of business education as a cash cow, a program that leads to steady stream of income to fund other areas of the university. This section provided a chronological approach to understanding the

rise of business education in the United States. The section that follows provides an alternative framework for examining the evolution of business education in the U.S.

2.1.2 Evolution of Business Schools and Education as a Social Construct

Howard Thomas, one of the foremost researchers on business education, and his colleagues described the evolution of business education in his book as a social construction process (Thomas et al., 2013). The use of this approach as a framework helps to better understand the creation of business schools and the evolution of business education as an "industry". They are argued that industries are nothing more than "cognitive communities" – "social constructions that emerge from the interplay of cognition and action over time" (Porac & Thomas, 2002, p. 174). As social interactions multiply and coalesce within the business school community common vocabulary norms evolve to capture the belief systems of the industry. These belief systems guide and mold the thoughts, strategies, and activities of the community affiliates.

The various models of business education shared amongst the community become increasingly important to the beliefs of the industry. Once they become more widely shared, imitation of other organizations provides these norms with legitimacy. This social construction model has three core elements or levels to further articulate the evolution of the business school (Thomas et al., 2013):

- The first of these elements posits the existence of early beliefs related to the limitations of markets and competitive engagement. For example, early models emerged with differing frames such as business schools being trade schools or a school of commerce.
- The second element centers around the points of origin of certain industry norms.

- The final element or level considers the reputational status that develop as the social and intellectual capital of a business school emerges. In addition, performance differences within and across varying organizations manifest. (p. 17-22)

Utilizing these elements of social construction allows us to approach the development of business schools through a longitudinal social process lens that enhances the reputation of the school. By applying this lens to the business school industry, Thomas and his co-authors (2013) were able to identify five generations of the evolution.

During the first generation – covering the nineteenth century to early twentieth century – business schools or commerce schools set out to legitimize management as a discipline by creating unique product positions. By creating and sharing ideas and visions among the schools, they established early frames of reference and beliefs about the their schools (Thomas et al., 2013).

From the early twentieth century to the 1970s, the second generation dominated the business school industry evolution. During this generation, the industry beliefs adopted by earlier schools in the first generation became more widely adopted. The US-style business school model, a model that centered around the MBA, became the standard in the industry. This model became the dominant industry model and was the crucial key to success. Also, during this generation, schools that had been more locally defined, adapted to the norms of others and made changes to embrace the more national norms. While not explicitly relevant to this study, it is important to note that at this time, the US-style business school model began to spread throughout the global market, as well (Thomas et al., 2013).

As the business school industry evolved from the 1970s to 1990s, the third generation saw reputational elites take center stage in the industry. Both national and regional champions emerged with distinctive identities in the marketplace. In addition, during this time consumerism pervaded

the market. AACSB established a strong accreditation process for business schools. Furthermore, reputational and status rankings produced by news and other organizations emerge and enhance the national and global standings of schools in a strong social recognition of the values of these various schools. "In essence, the reputational rankings that emerge over time develop from the social codings and interpretation of business school differences in performance" (Thomas et al., 2013, p. 24).

Throughout the fourth and fifth generation of the social construction model, that spans the 1990s to present day, different models of business schools emerged. During this time, criticism grew of the US-style model and new European and Asian models emerged. These models focused more on the respective futures of their regions and developed graduates that were able to work within the economic and governmental contexts of these regions (Thomas et al., 2013). The rankings that had established the US-based schools during the third generation, now recognized the performance enhancement and reputational growth of European and Asian schools reducing the global position of the United States as the center of business education. However, the growth of these schools were not the only sources of pressure on US business school MBA enrollments.

2.1.3 Pressures Emerge on US Business Schools and MBA Programs

According to Howard Thomas et al. (2014), "in many aspects business schools are perfect proof of what you get when universities are doing what they are supposed to do and doing it well. They are fit for purpose because they are serving the specific needs of the communities they relate to" (p. 9). Not all observers find validity with this assertion. Since the 2008 financial crisis, a crisis often cited as the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, observers continue to criticize management education at length. Some authors have gone as far as to state they were complicit in

16

the events that led to the financial crisis due to the strong focus on financial engineering and casino capitalism – high-risk, high-reward behavior (Locke & Spender, 2011). Other commentators believe that business schools also share in some responsibility for the failure to place emphasis on teaching of moral or ethical leadership and decision-making contributing to the large-scale ethical failures involved in the collapse of major companies such as ENRON and WorldCom (Gregg & Stoner, 2008) and contributed to the issues recently seen in Volkswagen and Wells Fargo.

In a 2009 *New York Times* article (Holland, 2009), the reporter articulated a number of the criticisms of business education that led to the economic collapse. One criticism stemmed from the Ford (Gordon & Howell, 1959) and Carnegie (Pierson, 1959) reports that explicitly stated the need for management education to become more scientific. Holland (2009) stated, however, that schools became too technical and detached from real-world issues, ultimately leading to quick decisions to complex problems. Warren Bennis, professor of management at the University of Southern California was quoted as saying that schools suffer from "an overemphasis on the rigor and an underemphasis on relevance," and that "business schools have forgotten that they are a professional school" (Holland, 2009, para. 14).

Another criticism of business education has often been the perceived gap between the faculty of business schools and industry. Current CEO of Apple University and former dean at Yale School of Management, Joel Podolny (1990) offered his thoughts on these concerns. From his perspective, academics in business schools have little interest in the problems of organizations. He also notes that the faculty tend to have an absence of curiosity about the true goings-on in business and government and many have little to no experience in the sphere on which they may teach or research. He further argues the preference of faculty to develop theoretical frameworks

that potentially do little to help industry understand their organizations more fully or improve the practice of management.

In a 2011 article, researchers (Datar, Garvin, & Cullen, 2011) identified the gap between theory and practice as one of two areas of concern with regard to the health of the MBA. Their research defined this as a two cultures problem and questioned the "relevance of business school research to business practice" (Datar et al., 2011, p. 455). They, too, argue that the influence of the Ford (Gordon & Howell, 1959) and Carnegie (Pierson, 1959) led to a stark rise in analytical research and courses, but moved further away from the issues facing practitioners.

This attitude or perceived gap can be dangerous for business schools. It has the potential to perpetuate certain beliefs among critical stakeholders in business and government that schools are divorced from practice and are not valuable sources of training or policy advice. In fact, a number of companies are creating in-house educational divisions to offer on-the-job training and continuing education such as Apple University and Deloitte University (Holland, 2009; Podolny, 1990).

Yet another pressure facing business schools is the decline of student enrollments in MBA programs. In a study of MBA enrollments from 2000-2008, Datar, Garvin, and Cullen (2011) found that full-time two-year MBA enrollments in the top twenty business schools were relatively flat; however, over the same time the enrollments of similar programs at the next 16 schools decreased by 16%. Overall during this time, the enrollments were declining only slightly, but under the surface a larger systemic issue may be occurring.

The Graduate Management Admissions Council, or GMAC, is the organization that administers the most notable admissions exam for graduate management education, the Graduate Management Admissions Test, or GMAT. They also are data clearing house for admissions trends

in the area of graduate management education. In October 2018, GMAC released its annual application admissions trends report. The report (GMAC, 2018) showed waning interest in US MBA programs by a 6.6% drop in applications. One can attribute some of this decline to the natural ebbs and flows of the economy, i.e. in good economic times, fewer people leave the job market to return to school. Due to the greater competition for MBA candidates, schools are doling out financial scholarships at a record pace (Byrne, 2014).

The potential causes for the decline are numerous. One such cause has been the potential devaluation of the MBA degree by employers of graduates. "Many are actively discouraging their best young people from leaving lower-level positions for business school. At the same time, financial services and consulting firms are increasingly recruiting non-MBA graduates. Taken together, the above trends suggest challenges to the MBA degree as a vehicle for both career acceleration and career switching, particularly in financial services and consulting" (Datar et al., 2011, p. 455).

As the graduate management education world continues to evolve, business schools will need to continue to develop strategies to overcome the challenges of the market. Specifically, an industry that relied heavily on the reputation and demand of the MBA degree will need to evaluate ways in which to innovate in the degree, or plan for innovation in other areas. In the sections that follow, the literature review will explore traditional strategic planning, as well as more contemporary strategic planning processes.

2.2 Strategic Planning: From Industry to Higher Ed

As a management practice, strategic planning is still moderately new (Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2002). Between 1950 and 1970 strategic planning emerged and the authors noted that during those 20 years, it was a "boom period" for planning (Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2002, p. 6). After World War II, changes in the industrial environment rendered long-range planning far less effective (Eadie, 1983). Strategic planning emerged from these environmental changes. As more companies and industries realized the importance of a different methodology in planning, a more robust definition of strategic planning emerged. Mintzberg (1994) described strategic planning calling it, "a formalized procedure to produce an articulated result, in the form of an integrated system of decisions" (p. 12). He further explains the key to conceptualizing strategic planning is to understand the notion of formalization of decisions (Mintzberg, 1994). Others added their own definitions defining it as a process, "used to position an organization, through prioritizing its use of resources according to identified goals, in an effort to guide its direction" (Wilkinson & Monkhouse, 1994, p. 16) and "a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson, 2004, p. 6).

2.2.1 Strategic Planning in Private Industry and Public Organizations

Although strategic planning emerged between the 1950s and 1970s in private industry, the 1980's experienced the expansion of strategic planning from private to public organizations (Berry, 1994). However, opinions differ with regard to the reasons public organizations adopted private sector strategic planning. A reasonable explanation for the reliance of strategic planning in

such organizations is the varied economic and societal challenges that public organizations regularly face (Bryson, 2004). Like the recessions of the early 1980's and 1990's (Berry, 1994). During these hard-economic times, leaders of government and other public organizations were desperate to find solutions and looked to private enterprise for help. They found it in managerial concepts such as outsourcing, private-public coalitions, and strategic planning. According to Berry (1994), during the 11-year period between 1980 and 1991, over 250 governmental agencies initiated strategic planning programs. During the 1980s, the explosion of planning in the public sector could be attributed to a "planning vacuum" (Eadie and Steinbacher, 1985, p. 424). This vacuum was a major criticism of the existing planning processes in public organizations as it caused plans to be too internally focused. They (Eadie & Steinbacher, 1985) also noted that the resulting plans were merely extensions of operational plans and rarely addressed the environmental changes that typically influenced strategic decisions. Public organizations acknowledged these short-comings and turned to the private sector to evaluate and reform their processes.

The pressures of "resource scarcity and service demands," (Eadie, 1983, p. 447) were critical motivators to examining new planning processes. Increasing external pressures were also causes for the higher education industry to consider adoption of strategic planning, according to Birnbaum (2000). Efficiency and effectiveness are two of the greatest pressures that institutions in higher education face in the 21st century. Birnbaum (2000) wrote that many colleges and universities had, "Attempted (either voluntarily or under mandate) to adopt new management systems and processes that were originally designed to meet the needs of (presumably) more efficient business and governmental organizations" (p. 1).

Another reason public organizations turned to strategic planning, as noted by Wilkinson and Monkhouse (1994), were the continued efforts by such organizations to increase productivity

and be more conscientious with their spending, a theme commonly heard among higher education. For years, institutions of higher education have been forced to improve quality of outputs (e.g. graduates, research, etc.) while reducing costs and stretching their available monetary resources. These increasing pressures forced higher education to evaluate a variety of managerial tools and ultimately adopt strategic planning.

Birnbaum (2000) advanced the conversation regarding strategic planning when he provided a historical context for the life cycle of this and other management fads. New sectors and industries began to hear of the successes private industry had with strategic planning. With hopes of replicating similar successes as those in private industry, organizations in a myriad of sectors adopted the new strategy tool. Birnbaum (2000) cited individuals as playing a key role in the transplantation of management practices from one sector to the next; he described the individuals as spanning across industry and stated that these individuals could include industry representatives on boards of trustees, university administrators or faculty serving on external boards, or even consultants that work with both education and non-education clients (p. 9).

Although increasingly popular, a debate continues with regard to the appropriateness and applicability of the private-industry form of strategic planning to public organizations like higher education. Eadie (1983) noted that public organizations need to tailor the planning process to be successful and that, "A boilerplate approach, in short, is likely to prove inadequate, if not fatal," (p. 447). Bloom (1986) stoked this debate as he wrote, "the differences between the public and private sectors are significant enough that any strategic approach to public sector planning requires extensive adaptation" (p. 256). This is in part due to the "political environment and organizational complexity of public decision making" (Bloom, 1986, p. 256). Specific to higher education, the unique principle of shared governance provides a challenge. Bryson and Roering (1988) later

added that as stakeholders increase, "The conflicting criteria they often use to judge governmental performance, the pressures for public accountability, and the idea that the public sector is meant to do what the private sector cannot or will not do," hinder holding the strategic planning processes of government accountable to the standards held by private industry (p. 1002).

One set of authors wrote about the impact that independence within organizations has on the planning process of organizations of any type (Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996). This structural autonomy provides organizations with strategic agility allowing them to implement successful change when necessary. The level and existence of organizational autonomy influences the planning process. This presents some differences between public and private strategic planning. Organizational autonomy is less prevalent in public organizations as the powers of public sector administrators are often constrained by statutory and financial constraints, thus presenting challenges to public sector planning initiatives (Wilkinson & Monkhouse, 1994). This impact is felt at a greater level in higher education due to the notion of shared governance that can be more limiting on organizational autonomy. This restricted autonomy coupled with widespread involvement in the processes and decisions, presents many challenges for strategic planning in higher education.

Streib (1992) stressed the leadership role in the planning process, but questioned whether the level and type of leadership required to champion a successful strategic planning initiative exists within the public sector. Due to the very nature of leadership in public organizations, as Streib (1992) points out, maintaining a shared vision is extremely difficult among individuals elected or appointed. Stability in leadership can help to maintain a steady vision throughout the planning process and subsequent implementation. However, one must consider individual

leadership styles and methods, as well as individual capacity. The authors generalize leadership and do not consider these individual characteristics.

As strategic planning became increasingly popular among public organizations in the early 1980s, researchers stressed the challenges of public sector adoption of private sector management tools. They urged public organizations to adapt these private tools to their needs due to the clear differences between the sectors including the politics of the public-sector, the lack of autonomy, and the stakeholders involved with public organizations. Without considering these differences, adopting private sector tools may present considerable challenges to public organizations, like universities.

2.2.2 Strategic Planning in Higher Education

In addressing strategic planning in colleges and universities, George Keller (1983) wrote, "any organization with competitors, with aspirations to greatness, or with threats of decline has come to feel the need for a strategy, a plan to overcome" (p.75). Even decades ago, Keller understood that colleges and universities would face unparalleled competition, with more schools offering post-secondary education and decreasing freshmen admissions. More recently, Ward (2003) offered his thoughts in support of colleges and universities utilizing strategic planning when he stated, "the key to innovation and change, particularly for higher education institutions, is research-driven strategic planning" (p. 19). While he is quite persuasive with his support for strategic planning, Ward (2003) warned, "[Strategic planning is still] an alien concept to many colleges and universities" (p. 19).

On campuses, the very mention of strategic planning can often yield a collective "groan" (Sevier, 2003, p.18). Undoubtedly, the pressure on the time that it takes to develop a strategic plan

is at the root of this response. The notion that the time that managers take to strategically plan their work directly correlates to less time to guide the routine work, is a concept identified early by a number of authors (Mintzberg, 1973; Richardson & Gardner, 1983). However, each go on to support the need to balance between the two pressures. Several authors articulated this important link when they stated "a strong emphasis on planning is essential" (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 470) and they "must reassess the value of clarifying their own institution's goals" (McKelvie, 1986, p. 162) if universities were to endure the challenges of the future,.

Kotler and Murphy (1981) go on to argue that universities have grown successful in their operations and have been able to develop efficiencies through daily repetition of certain jobs and actions. However, these "patterns of operation were traditionally established to meet the environmental conditions and opportunities [certain to change]" (p. 470). This presents quite a problem. Regardless of the changes within the environment, universities have continued to perform the same operations and with little adaptation to the changing world around them. This leads to a purely reactive approach to managing goals, strategies, and organizational systems (Kotler & Murphy, 1981).

Utilizing similar characteristics as more general strategic planning initiatives, Kotler and Murphy (1981) defined a strategic planning process for higher education administrators that that placed emphasis on, "environmental analysis, resource analysis, goal formulation, strategy formulation, organization design, and systems design" (p. 472). Planners are encouraged to identify the institution's threats and opportunities via the environmental analysis, including the analysis of internal dynamics, market competition, and greater economic forces. The resource analysis focuses on identifying the institution's internal strengths and weaknesses with regard to, "people, money, and facilities" (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 476). The results of the environmental

25

and resource analyses provide a foundation for the next component of the planning process, strategy formulation, that includes the articulation of the mission of the institution, as well as the goals and objectives on which to focus. Kotler and Murphy (1981) identified academic portfolio strategy and product market opportunity strategy as two components of strategy formulation for institutions. In order to successfully implement the strategic plan, institutions may need to make critical changes to the organizational structure – governance, people, culture; these changes are considered during the organization design phase. The final step in this recommended process is systems design. This analysis identifies potential improvements to the institution's systems for communication, planning, and measuring progress of the plan implementation.

Later, Watson (1995) augmented the strategic planning process with an "organizational plan and a human resources plan" (p. 189). These researchers recognized the nuanced difference between private sector and higher education and offered enhancements to the process to address them. For example, because higher education offers a less rigid and hierarchical organizational structure, the process to develop the organization plan should define both organizational structure and roles.

For many institutions, the mission of the organization serves as a foundation for the strategic planning efforts. The mission statement articulates the purpose of the institution and the strategic plan helps to define a path to reach the institution's aspirations. While studying linkages between strategic planning and assessment, Aloi (2005) identified a key element in the planning process, "maintaining a mission focus" (p. 4) throughout. During her research, Aloi (2005) found one institution where university stakeholders "believed that using the university's mission as a guideline enables the institution to allocate its limited resources to accomplish annual and long-term goals" (p.4).

The strategic plan identifies the actions that the institution should take to achieve its aspirations. Well defined goals tie the plan to the mission. One researcher stated, "a successful strategic plan – a plan that guides action – is built on clear goals that are themselves built on solid data" (Sevier, 2003, p. 19). A plan with no action is ineffective at best. Drucker (1974) discussed this much earlier when he presented the idea that plans are merely intentions until they turn into action. Goals ensure intentions turn to work.

When institutions face pressures, both in the greater market or financial in nature, McKelvie (1986) pressed upon the need for institutions to articulate clearly defined goals. "Strategy involves outlining the institution's goals, their plans for achieving these goals, and the deployment of resources to attain these goals" (McKelvie, 1986, p. 155). Furthermore, the institution's mission clarifies the institution's long-range goals, identifies the courses of action, and deploys the resources necessary to achieve these goals (McKelvie, 1986, p. 155).

Fincher (1972) stressed the importance of goals in the early 1970s. He suggested that higher education institutions move toward a planning process driven by objectives rather than the more simplistic model with which higher education started, planning based on "past trends and anticipating their outcomes" (Fincher, 1972, p. 754). Fincher stated, "there is the further implication that unless planning is conducted in terms of objectives that have been systematically formulated, the planning process will necessarily fall back on projected trends that cannot easily continue" (p.757). He continued with regard to the objectives of planning by writing, "It would seem, therefore, that the sophistication of planning is limited by the adequacy of planning goals. It is not enough to know how we plan; it is necessary to know what we are planning for" (Fincher, 1972, p. 757).

The expectations felt by higher education institutions from the public are the basis of Fincher's (1972) discussion on goals. He believed that the public holds an expectation that higher education institutions operate effectively and be better stewards of the institution's resources and facilities. "Change must address the need to become more efficient, and it should shift the focus of the department from internal to external focus, to the customers and competing universities" (Watson, 1995, p. 188). Birnbaum (2000) also agreed with Fincher's ideas demonstrated through his proclamation "Institutions of higher education are always under pressure to become more efficient and effective" (p. 1).

Private sector organizations also feel pressures from the public, however, the profits gained by meeting customer needs and expectations is often the motivator. Higher education is an industry that relies a great deal on human capital. Academic programs, educating students, and the production of research rely on the intellectual capital of faculty and staff than process. A change in the workload, workforce allocation, or benefits within the institution is often the outcome of efforts to gain organizational efficiency and reducing expenditures. However, as one author observed, "more efficient use of resources" scratches only the surface of operational efficiency and effectiveness (Fincher, 1972, p. 760). Fincher (1972) wrote, "not only should we plan for more efficiently operated programs, organizations, and institutions, we should plan for more effective academic courses, programs, and curricula" (p. 767), goals only achieved through systematic efforts for strategic planning. This improved efficacy leads to "the behaviors, skills, competencies, values, outlooks, and perspectives that we have long professed to be developing in higher education" (Fincher, 1972, p. 767).

Kotler and Murphy (1981) offered that departments throughout the university should use strategic planning. They believed that success in strategic planning requires engagement at all of

the major levels of the institution from the president's office to the academic departments. With regard to information dissemination, the authors wrote, "The strategic planning process is a sequential one where the goals and broad assumptions go from the top down, but the detailed plans come from the bottom up" (p. 472). Lockwood (1972) supported the idea of planning at all levels a decade before and offered that planning should be participative. Lockwood went on to recommend that the planning initiative should involve most members of the university community. He posited that the effectiveness of the planning process is improved by participation that increases the diversity of experiences and ideas.

The environment in which higher education institutions operate, as well as their unique organizational structures, often make strategic planning difficult. Paris (2004) identified several issues that can be categorized into three broad factors that impede strategic planning in higher education: organizational structures, entrepreneurial culture, and the historical rejection of private industry influence. With regard to organizational structures, Paris (2004) outlined that university structures tend to be more decentralized and loosely coupled structures providing for little standardization of strategic planning across campus. In addition, departmental specialties lead to siloed operations within and across departments. The entrepreneurial culture that exists in higher education also presents challenges (Paris, 2004). Faculty are encouraged to produce research that can be disseminated to a wide population and will influence a field of study. The environment that results is one where a number of autonomous individuals advance self-interests and for whom university strategy is a secondary concern (Paris, 2004). Finally, historically, higher education has resisted the influence of private industry. Failing to embrace the process or adopt some of the common language may impede the strategic planning process (Paris, 2004).

During an effort to deploy a traditional private sector process for planning at one institution, Chiarellot, Reed, and Russell (1991) described three takeaways from the experience. One, "Watch Your Language," (Chiarellot et al., 1991, p. 36) reminded planning leaders that traditional corporate language does not always translate well to university stakeholders. They received substantial resistance against the strategic plan; however, upon a closer examination of the sentiments by the faculty and staff, showed that the resistance focused mainly on the language as opposed to the actual strategy.

The second takeaway was to "Anticipate Undesirable Side Effects" (Chiarellot et al., 1991, p. 37). The authors discussed the challenges of a process that was overly participatory and inclusive. Broad participation abated the approval process and delayed progress toward the implementation phase, all while helping to build consensus on the plan objectives. "In employing a broad-based decision-making process, we traded substance and credibility for consensus. Had we anticipated these side effects, we might have been less reluctant to risk using a management-oriented approach" (Chiarellot et al., 1991, p. 38).

The third takeaway was "Create a Need to Know" (Chiarellot et al., 1991, p. 38). Driven by a motive to make profit, urgency is an intrinsic value within private organizations. This motive is lacking in higher education institutions, leaving planners to create the sense of urgency to engage people in the long-term planning of the organization. Absent a sense of urgency, institutions may not consider the time and effort of strategic planning worthwhile. Articulating an urgency around the need for a plan helps build momentum for the process and ultimately encourages members of the institution to adopt the plan.

Adjustments to the traditional process for planning are essential given the unique characteristics of colleges and universities and the dynamic market in which they operate. When

strategic planning is adapted appropriately to higher education, institutions must "undertake a more market-oriented and systematic approach to long-range planning" (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 488). Doing so makes the threats facing higher education more surmountable.

2.2.3 AACSB and Strategic Planning

The view of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, or AACSB, on strategic planning is embedded in its standards for strategic management. A careful analysis of the standards shows that the AACSB is mission-centric on its views of strategic management. The introduction to the strategic management standard states, "The school articulates a clear and distinctive mission, the expected outcomes this mission implies, and strategies outlining how these outcomes will be achieved. The school has a history of achievement and improvement and specifies future actions for continuous improvement and innovation consistent with this mission, expected outcomes, and strategies," (AACSB, 2018, p. 16). The narrative continues to explicitly state that schools must use their mission statement to focus during decision-making.

While the AACSB (2018) provides some direction for schools in creating their mission statements, they provide little guidance in the strategic planning process. They acknowledge that schools may conduct their strategic management activities in various ways, which may include strategic planning as a tool. The AACSB (2018) goes on to state that schools must identify the strategic management and planning methods that are appropriate for the school. This philosophy matches much of the research on strategic planning and is discussed later in this literature review.

It is clear from the standards that the AACSB wanted to provide schools with a conceptual framework for strategic management. However, it is also quite clear that the AACSB wanted

schools to retain their autonomy in deciding the processes and tools they deem appropriate to use to carry out their strategic management initiatives.

2.3 The Traditional Strategic Planning Process

This section focuses on the process to create a strategic planning document. The literature review explores a few of the more common traditional strategic planning processes. In addition to outlining overall processes, this section also discusses in more detail a few key components of the strategic planning process as well as traditional methods for implementing strategic plans.

2.3.1 The Strategic Planning Process

In 1983, George Keller wrote about his vision for academic strategic planning. His approach to academic strategy identified the need for both an internal and external review of the institution. Internally, Keller (1983) stated that the university needed to consider the following:

1. Traditions, values and aspirations of the university

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the university both academically and financially

3. Abilities and priorities of the leadership (p. 152)

Externally, Keller (1983) stated that the university needed to review the following:

4. Environmental trends for threats and opportunities

5. Market preferences, perceptions, and directions

6. The competitive situation for threats and opportunities (p. 152)

One criticism of Keller's (1983) work, however, was the lack of a clear process by which universities could follow and conduct their own strategic plans.

One researcher described a strategic planning process that consists of five core steps: "(a) environmental scanning, (b) resource audit to assess strengths and weaknesses, (c) setting strategic objectives, (d) strategy formulation, and (e) allocation of resources and implementation" (Eadie, 1983, p. 448). Later as researchers began to more clearly define the planning process, Streib (1992) offered his own 5-step process that included:

1. A mission statement that establishes goals and objectives

2. An environmental scan

3. An organizational scan to determine strengths and weaknesses

4. Strategic objectives and implementation

5. Implementation and monitoring (Streib, 1992, p. 341)

More recently, literature on strategic planning is a deluge of information focusing on the strategic planning process in a systematic way resulting in a final plan. In 1988, Bryson and Roering identified another key step in the processes previously described, the "initial agreement or 'plan for planning'" (p. 995). The "plan for planning" outlines key information before the planning process begins and includes who will be involved, the scope of the planning initiative, expected deliverables, timetable for planning, and other details that need clarified before the commencement of the strategic planning exercise. Bryson (2004) includes this crucial first step in in his 10-step "strategy change cycle", which is one of the more clearly defined processes, that also includes the following steps:

1. Initiate and agree on a strategic planning process.

2. Identify organizational mandates.

3. Clarify organizational mission and values.

4. Assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

5. Identify the strategic issues facing the organization.

6. Formulate strategies to manage issues.

7. Review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan.

8. Establish an effective organizational vision.

9. Develop an effective implementation process.

10. Reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process. (p. 32)

While these processes informed professionals there is a downside to clearly defined steps. Organizations are often tempted to adopt planning processes as prescribed. The notion that a tailored strategic planning approach increases the efficacy of the process was identified by Lorange and Vancil (1976). Bryson (2004) also cautioned against adoption without adaption and encouraged institutional planners to be mindful of the strategy change cycle and to customize the planning process to fit the unique context of the institution in order to maximize effectiveness. In addition, due to the fact that higher education institutions, "are complex civic institutions with singular identities," (Marshall, 2004, p. 11) generalized processes seldom work.

There seems to be general consensus throughout the literature that in order to be effective strategic planning should begin with a defined process. Furthermore, that process, "strongly influences how fully [the strategic plan] is implemented" (Paris, 2004, p. 122). In addition, there is general agreement among most of the authors that analyzing the environment is a necessary first step in the process.

2.3.1.1 Environmental Scanning and Benchmarking

While opinions vary on a single agreed upon planning process, the literature clearly supports the use of environmental scanning as a crucial first step. This scan allows the institution to identify key issues in their environment and measure the impact these issues may have on the institution. Lorange and Vancil (1976) stated that one of the roles of any planning system was to aid the organization in the identification of ways to adapt to a changing environment. Another author later stated, "[strategic planning] involves an assessment of an organization's position and condition with respect to its environment," (Bloom, 1986, p. 254). Sevier (2003) offered that at its core, the primary outcome of strategic planning is a reconciliation of the daily work of the institution and the environment in which it exists (p.18). In 2004, Trainer wrote, "Environmental scanning is crucial at the beginning of any planning process" (p. 133).

The "interplay" among three fundamental forces is the impetus for the formulation of strategy in any organization according to Mintzberg (1978):

- Environment – presenting constant and unbalanced change with variances in the rate of change.

- Bureaucracy – the operating system of the organization that despite dynamics of the environment, works to be a stabilizing influence.

- Leadership - which works to preserve a balance between maintaining the organizational operating system and adjustment to the changing environment. (p. 941)

Leaders must acknowledge these forces to ensure an effective planning system (Vinzant and Vinzant, 1996).

To begin the environmental analysis, Ruocco and Proctor (1994) recommended that organizations conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. The

SWOT analysis allows the organization to see the internal strengths and weakness juxtaposed with the external opportunities and threats. Trainer (2004) also endorsed the use of the SWOT analysis in the planning process. According to Vinzant and Vinzant (1996), the analysis of external opportunities and threats is to acknowledge that external forces have an impact on the organization and must be accounted for in the process. A thoughtful planning process allows organizations to clarify their strengths and weaknesses to be in a better position to seize the opportunities and overcome the threats of the external market. Leveraging these strengths and weaknesses is important to secure the future of an organization and ensure the sustainability of the organization.

Benchmarking is another useful and often talked about tool to perform an external environmental analysis. The private sector has been using benchmarking as a continuous improvement tool for a number of years. It is a helpful tool in determining how well the organization or a particular unit within the organization is performing as compared to other similar organizations. Its use expanded to assist organizations in identifying best practices for a particular process, service, or product. Alstete (1995) defined benchmarking as "analyzing performance, practices, and processes within and between organizations and industries, to obtain information for self-improvement" (p. 20). A review of the literature on benchmarking revealed four major approaches to benchmarking (Alstete, 1995; Camp, 1989; Rush, 1994):

1. Internal

2. Competitive

3. Functional/Industry

4. Generic

Each of these types of benchmarking presents advantages to assisting the external environment analysis.

36

In the private sector, internal benchmarking consists of comparing processes among various divisions or subsidiaries (Watson, 1993). In higher education, one might compare particular processes among various departments across the campus, or within a school. For example, a graduate business program might compare its admissions process to that of other graduate professional programs at the institution. Internal benchmarking can produce data helpful to making process improvements because it does not require the cooperation of organizations outside of the university. It can also help the organization identify issues to be examined and identify areas for future external review (Alstete, 1995). While internal benchmarking can provide useful information to improve quality, it has a significantly low probability of guiding "significant breakthroughs" (Alstete, 1995, p. 29) due to the fact that within a university, policies tend to dictate processes.

One of the more frequently used types of benchmarking is competitive benchmarking consisting of the examination of competitor product designs, process capabilities, and/or administrative methods (Watson, 1993). A challenge of competitive benchmarking, however, is the difficulty in acquiring the necessary data to conduct the benchmarking exercise. Much like private industry, colleges and universities like to maintain a competitive advantage over their peers. Nevertheless, there exist several third-party benchmarking projects to assist college and university benchmarking initiatives. Several professional organizations such as the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), the Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE), or private consulting organizations like Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI), are a few of the more popular organizations with which colleges and universities may become associated for the purposes of benchmark data collection. The difficulties in collecting data should not discourage organizations from performing

competitive benchmarking; as competitive benchmarking can be one of the strongest forms of benchmarking and should be pursued (Alstete, 1995)

Functional or industry benchmarking, while similar to competitive benchmarking, uses a larger and more broadly defined comparison pool (Rush, 1994). Robert Camp (1995) defined functional benchmarking as "a comparison of methods to companies with similar processes in the same function outside one's industry" (p.15). Functional benchmarking provides stronger opportunities to develop breakthrough results by analyzing strong performing processes and learning the process leaders from industry-wide organizations and not necessarily the organization's direct competitors (Watson, 1993). For example, in higher education, a university might compare themselves against an institution from another region, with a different primary funding source, or research classification. Alstete (1995) stated that "looking within a narrowly-defined competitive group of organizations has obvious limitations in a rapidly changing world" (p. 31). It is for this reason that functional benchmarking can be one the highest yield benchmarking types and one the most cost-effective types.

Generic benchmarking, or "best-in-class," uses the most far-reaching data collection from various types of organizations and industries to identify model processes or products (Camp, 1995). Rush (1994) stated that generic benchmarking:

> Seeks out those organizations with the best practices regardless of the industry. The basic criterion is: Who performs this activity best? As a result, a college or university might compare itself to an airline's purchasing process, a credit card company's billing process, or a manufacturer's facilities maintenance operation. (p.90)

The advantage of generic benchmarking is that competitive or industry restrictions do not exist for the organization, rather the organization can look internally for processes of importance and compare corresponding processes in other organizations (G. H. Watson, 1993). The primary

purpose of generic benchmarking is to find the "best-of-the-best" with regard to a particular process or service. However, one hurdle to generic benchmarking is the notion that the organization must be able to understand how processes translate across industries. This suggests that generic benchmarking, while having the highest probability for long-term return on investment, is the most difficult of the benchmarking types to perform.

Benchmarking's close affiliation with quality management and strategic planning becomes quite evident as the process is defined. The process used to benchmark can be compared to the four-step approach: Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) popularized in the 1950s by management and total quality management expert, W. Edwards Deming.

The first step of the process starts with planning. For colleges and universities, this means selecting what administrative or academic function to study, and then deciding which organizations to benchmark. The second step of the process uses primary and/or secondary research methods to gather data. Secondary research can involve finding publicly available information about the target colleges and universities, information found through third-party associations, library research, or online research. Primary research can involve direct communications, personal visits, or interviews with personal contacts at the institutions. The third step in the process calls for analyzing the data found. "This is the critical point in the study where the differences, or gaps, between the participants performance are identified, and from which the 'process enablers' are derived" (Alstete, 1995, p. 22). Comprehending and applying these enablers is the principle of the process. Adapting the enablers to improve the organization's performance is the fourth and final step of the benchmarking process. However, "for benchmarking to be truly effective, the process should be never ending" (Alstete, 1995, p. 22).

Bogan and English (1994) also layout for the reader a typical model or process for benchmarking:

1. Scope Definition- identify the purpose of the benchmarking initiative;

2. Choose Benchmark Partner(s)- identify the set of organizations to be benchmarked;

3. Determine the Measurement Methods, Indicators, and Data Collection Method- identification of what is to be measured and how it will be measured;

4. Data Collection- completion of the data collection process as prescribed;

5. Analysis- review of the data collected to identify gaps in performance or best practices as compared to benchmark partners;

6. Present Results- a discussion on the implications of the data, identification of improvement areas and goals;

7. Improvement Plans- develop plans for improving performance, creating new services, adjusting processes, etc.; and

8. Measurement- monitoring the progress of the improvement plans and planning ongoing benchmarking. (pp. 81-86)

Benchmarking is not without its critics. Despite the varied benefits of benchmarking mentioned previously, some have questioned its applicability to higher education. One criticism is that benchmarking is solely based on current data and may not provide the opportunity to look to the future (Wolverton, 1994). Hammer and Champy (1993) added:

The problem with benchmarking is it can restrict the Reengineering team's thinking to the framework of what is already being done in its company's own industry. By aspiring only to be as good as the best in its industry, the [Reengineering] team sets a cap on its own ambitions. Used this way, benchmarking is just a tool for catching up, not for jumping way ahead. (p. 132)

This statement can be entirely true if an institution chooses not to employ functional or generic-type benchmarking. Other critics have cited that benchmarking is merely a euphemism for copying. However, as previously mentioned regarding the dangers of copying strategic planning processes without adaptation, institutions must analyze benchmarks and adapt, when appropriate, new ideas for their own institutions. Despite the critics, benchmarking continues to be used in higher education and has proven to be an exceptional tool, when done correctly, to aid in the external environmental scan.

2.3.1.2 Annual Planning as a Tactical Approach for Plan Implementation

Higher education administrators often overlook the importance of establishing a defined implementation plan; however, institutions have been utilizing myriad approaches to strategic management for years. It just so happens that many of these approaches are still viable as tools for executing the strategic plan, if deliberately linked to the plan.

To reiterate the research previously discussed, the strategic plan is forward thinking. It establishes key areas that organizations will focus on in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market place. Moving the organization toward success, calls for tools to manage the daily operations of the organization at a departmental level. One such tool is the annual planning process. This process is also known as the operational plan or the action plan (Alfred, 2006).

In higher education, annual planning often connotes the annual budgeting process. Over the years, institutions, and the departments within, have used the annual planning process as means to determine which items to include in the annual budget. Unfortunately, over time as the annual planning process became more a budget planning process, the looser the links became among the strategic plan, the annual plan, and the budget (Chaffee, 1985; Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Schmidtlein & Milton, 1990). For annual planning to be successful in implementing the strategic

plan, institutions must tighten these links or separate the annual planning process from the budgeting process all together.

The strategic plan outlines the overall direction of an institution or department. It may even outline the outcome measures. It does not necessarily outline the actions by which to achieve this direction. The annual plan "turns the strategic objectives into operative key values, whose achievement leads gradually to strategic objective achievement," (Victoria & Jenica, 2008). They further state that the annual planning process controls the strategic plan through managed actions designed to achieve regular outcome measures.

These actions are more effective when developed organically within the departments (Alfred, 2006). The departments must work to reduce down the strategic plan to manageable goals, outcome measures, and action steps on annual basis. Without such an annual plan, individuals in the department continue to work toward a nebulous result, that which is the strategic plan. In addition, when upper administrators develop action plans with disregard to the departments and the front-line staff members, administrators often make decisions without correct information or full understanding, which often disrupts the implementation (Alfred, 2006). Throughout the 1970s, industry viewed General Electric (GE) as the gold standard for planning (Mintzberg, 1994). The approach GE took was a top-down approach to planning. At its peak, GE had close to 200 corporate planners tasked with trying to understand the market, understand the business, predict trends, and develop strategies for business unit managers to implement. While strategic planning was widespread throughout GE, during this time GE's stock price saw little change (Mintzberg, 1994).

In the early 1980s, Jack Welch took over as President and CEO of GE. Welch, Mintzberg (1994) described, having come from a business manager position, knew the downfalls of a centralized planning process. As one of his first major initiatives in GE, Welch redesigned the

42

planning process and cut the corporate planners down to 33 (Mintzberg, 1994). Welch returned ownership of the planning process to the business managers most familiar with their units. On an annual basis, Welch would gather the managers and the executives to host an annual planning retreat. During this retreat, units would provide updates on the year's accomplishments and set goals for the coming year. In addition, massive brainstorming sessions would provide opportunities for people to offer ideas as to what units could do to accomplish the goals. Welch also used these annual meetings to determine whether long-term goals in the strategic plan were still on target or if the goals needed adjustments (Mintzberg, 1994). Another change that Welch implemented at GE was quarterly planning meetings. GE used these quarterly planning meetings to evaluate progress on the annual goals and projects and to assess necessary changes to the goals (Mintzberg, 1994). During this time of reinvented planning, GE experienced some of its best growth.

The GE case is a relevant one as it shows the advantages of the annual planning process. It also demonstrates the success organizations can experience when the strategic plan becomes part of the culture and provides strategic direction for the operations. Institutions and the departments within can use the GE model as a foundation for a philosophical shift. The following sections offer research related to tools commonly used in the annual planning process.

2.3.1.3 Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Several tools that can be extremely useful in guiding the work of the organization toward strategic plan implementation are the identification of goals, objectives, and action planning. Goal setting grows from individual's emotion of motivation (Locke & Latham, 2002; Shalley, 1995). These authors believe that strategy achievement requires creativity and free flow of ideas to solve problems. "Intrinsic motivation is inner-directed interest in a task. In order to be creative,

individuals have to be both interested in the issue or problem to be addressed and motivated to find a solution," (Shalley, 1995, p. 484). Locke and Latham (2002) found the higher and more difficult the goals in an organization the better the effort and performance. They also found that providing specific goals, regardless of the level of difficulty, resulted in the highest performance as compared to just asking individuals to do one's best. Locke and Latham (2002) identified four mechanisms by which goals affect performance:

- Directive Function – The attention of individuals and the organization focuses on goal-relevant actions and away from goal-irrelevant actions.

- Energizing Function – More challenging goals lead to greater performance and achievement than less challenging goals.

- Affect on Persistence – Hard goals prolong effort when individuals can control the time they spend on a task.

- Affect on Action – Goals can lead to stimulation, discovery, and/or use of relevant knowledge and strategies. Where previous knowledge does not exist, individuals are more likely to discover new knowledge when goals are set. (pp. 706-707)

While the positive impact on goal setting is well established, it relies on the establishment of challenging, yet appropriate goals.

In 1981, George Doran published an article regarding goals and objectives. While Doran (1981) admits that many managers use the terms goals and objectives interchangeably, he describes goals as the "unique executive beliefs and philosophies. They are usually of a form that is continuous and long-term," (Doran, 1981, p. 35). He further clarifies that objectives "give quantitative support and expression to the management's beliefs," (Doran, 1981, p. 35). In general, objectives are short-term aims for achievement. Doran (1981) stresses the importance of writing

effective objectives. Without effectively written objectives, organizations cannot realize the benefits of setting such objectives as mentioned previously in this section. Doran (1981) developed a technique for writing effective objectives known as "S.M.A.R.T." (p. 35). He defines S.M.A.R.T. as:

- Specific – Organizational management must target a specific area of improvement.

- Measurable – When possible measure the objective and at the very least, identify an indicator of progress.

- Assignable – Individual or individuals must be able to own the objective and oversee its progress.

- Realistic – The objective should be challenging yet reasonably attainable given the resources allocated to the project.

- Timed – The objective should specify the accomplishment date for the desired result. (Doran, 1981, p. 36)

He further reminds readers that every objective will not have all five criteria, however, "the closer we get to the SMART criteria as a guideline, the smarter our objectives will be," (Doran, 1981, p. 36).

Once goals are set and objectives identified, individuals can begin to plan the daily work to achieve the objectives. Achieving the objectives should assist in achieving the goals, which ultimately leads to an effective implementation of the strategic plan. However, to achieve the objectives individuals must have a feedback loop that informs them of progress (Locke & Latham, 2002). Without a regular feedback loop for progress, effort control is difficult. Regular feedback loops that are readily available to individuals assigned to tasks, allows for better self-regulation of effort and performance.

2.4 Challenges of Traditional Strategic Planning

As previously stated, strategic planning is still moderately new as a discipline, especially in higher education. Over the years, the favorable view of strategic planning by managers has ebbed and flowed as a "result of evolving perspectives in management theory" (Cervone, 2014). The sections that follow outline some of the critiques of traditional strategic planning and offer insight into why business schools may want to consider more contemporary strategy methods.

2.4.1 Strategic Planning and the Organization

Chandler (1962) defined strategic planning as "the determination of the long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (p. 13). Aside from these core principles of strategic planning, there are few points of parity among the detailed processes for planning. This is why one might find a myriad of strategic planning processes across institutions, schools, and departments within schools. These different approaches can cause confusion and ultimately lead to "apathy toward strategic planning efforts" (Cervone, 2014, p. 156) in a multitude of organizations as the end goals of the planning exercise are not made clear to all constituents.

In addition, strategic planning is framed by the theory of rational design that emerged in the late 1960s (Wolf & Floyd, 2017) that posits that while people may not agree with a particular decision, they will acquiesce to the collective because people think in logical ways (Williamson, 1975). Theorists, such as Simon (1979), used this principle to assert that given this behavior, organizations would likely deploy logical "mechanisms" (p. 510) and that deploying such

"mechanisms" would be more likely to produce strategies that would be optimal for the organization.

The theory of rational design served as a foundational framework for much of the literature related to management in the 20th century. Nonetheless, management theorists seriously question rational design. For example, Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) criticized academia for assuming decision-making is a rational process. They demonstrated that universities often act "on the basis of a variety of inconsistent and ill-defined preferences" (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 1). This notion opened the door to other management theorists to question the on-going use of a purely rational model as people on unable to avoid irrational decision making, and in fact it is to be expected, and may be a crucial contributor to long-term organizational success (Brunsson, 1982).

In response to these concerns, management theorists developed complexity theory. Complexity theory explored the issues of irrational decision making and theorizes that most institutions are complicated to the point that operating in a linear manner is simply illogical and administrators must explore and deploy new approaches to strategic planning (Anderson, 1999). Considering that academic institutions, and for the purposes of this study business schools, identify more as ideological organizations (Mintzberg, 1989), those motivated more by mission and purpose, it should surprise few that rational models have not been as effective and may actually lead to demotivation and cynical thinking and behavior (Westley, 1979).

Yet another concern for planning leaders, is that strategic planning can be overvalued at times and sold as the "magic bullet" for advancing an organization. As Mintzberg (1994) acutely states:

When strategic planning arrived on the scene in the mid-1960s, corporate leaders embraced it as 'the one best way' to devise and implement strategies that would enhance the competitiveness of each business unit. True to the scientific

47

management pioneered by Frederick Taylor, this one best way involved separating thinking from doing. (p. 107)

Another author warned that overvaluing the strategic planning process "may backfire and prevent more modest but nevertheless important attempts to improve decision making and management" (Halachmi, 1986, p. 35).

2.4.2 Balancing Short-Term Processes, Daily Operations, and Strategy

As the research shows, strategic planning is a management tool that provides institutions with an opportunity to examine current and future environmental challenges and develop solutions to meet those challenges over the subsequent years. One of the challenges that administrators and other personnel face during the strategic planning and implementation processes is achieving balance between the long-term nature – not to be confused with long-term planning – of strategic planning and the short-term nature of institutional operations. As Mintzberg (1978) observed, managers move from a strategic orientation in favor of more tactical tasks as required in their daily work as an administrator. This notion becomes apparent in higher education as the institutional processes prove to be counter-intuitive to the strategic planning model.

A closer examination of these processes and concerns stresses this point. Two processes that may appear in strategic plans but take on more of a yearly focus are exampled below:

1. Admissions - a strategic plan that addresses admissions issues may examine future trends in high school graduates (e.g. demographics, SAT scores, preparation); however, due to the nature of the college recruiting cycle, admissions offices operate on a yearly

basis with their primary concern on the incoming class, and possibly one class after based on interest.

2. Budgeting – strategic plans have a great impact on resource budgeting, however, in many cases budgets are finalized on a yearly basis, as institutions must wait for government appropriations or grant funding. Although, administrators can forecast their budgets over several years, actual allocations are made yearly.

In addition to managers, front-line staffers responsible to implement certain aspects of the strategic plan struggle to balance their responsibilities to the strategic plan and their daily job tasks. When faced with the challenge, most staffers will ere on the side of their daily job responsibilities, as these are directly related to their job performance evaluation (Alfred, 2006). Alfred calls for the implementation of informal networks. These informal networks are "personal connections that leaders and staff maintain with functions and work groups throughout the institution. Through such channels, dialogue can occur more easily, decisions made and communicated more rapidly, and barriers addressed and resolved" (Alfred, 2006, p. 238). These networks allow managers to place emphasis on focusing on the strategic plan implementation continually. Alfred also underscores that planners and managers should work with staff to create the link between daily operational tasks and strategy achievement. This includes creating incentives and offering rewards to keep staff focused on the strategic plan.

Many of the processes in place seem to push against strategic planning. In addition, as staffers are faced with the dilemma of choosing between daily operational work and strategic planning, the staffer will revert to keeping the university machine running by addressing their immediate tasks. One theme that exists in each of these challenges is the notion of the human factor.

2.4.3 Impact of Widespread Participation on the Planning Process

A number of researchers, identify people as critical to both the development and implementation of a strategic plan. Streib (1992) identified four management functions "critical" to the effectiveness strategic planning initiatives as, "leadership, human resources, managerial skills, and external support," (p. 342-343). As three of the four functions address the roles of individuals in the planning process, one can conclude this to be of great importance to the planning process. Eadie (1983) described the people element as something that not only influences strategic plan implementation, but also impacts the selection of the actual approaches to take. According to Hosmer (1982), "[strategic management] requires an integrated effort by all members of the organization for successful completion" (p. 55). Another observed, "failure to involve interested parties in the planning process can reduce the chances for implementation," (Bloom, 1986, p. 254) as involving them creates increased accountability. Furthermore, "a strategic plan can be effective only when key individuals truly understand the nature of strategic planning and do not allow day-to-day demands to take precedence over actions required to carry out the plan" (Chiarellot et al., 1991, p. 38).

The role of the corporate planner is discussed by Lorange and Vancil (1976) who suggested that planning must be done by those ultimately responsible for the implementation. However, the authors conceded the need for a singular individual or small team to guide the process. Twelve years earlier, Bryson and Roering (1988) stressed the importance of a similar that they named a "process champion" (p. 1000). Paris (2004), studied strategic planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, described the role of "point people" (p. 124) charged with oversight over plan priorities. These individuals are deployed as communication vehicles across the university. The point person's responsibility is to develop the overall strategy including the coordination of the

process, articulating roles, creating links across the organization, and keeping stakeholders apprised of progress (Paris, 2004, p.124).

Leadership has been identified by numerous authors as a linchpin to the strategic planning process as their unique perspective on the internal and external pressures impacting the organization is important in framing the process (Keller, 1983; Mintzberg, 1978; Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996). Greater support for implementation of the plan can be built through an active and supportive leader (Bloom, 1986). Whether a leader or a participant, people play a crucial role in the process for strategic planning.

The more involved people are in the development of the plan the more accountable they will be (Chiarellot et al., 1991); however, this presents a challenge. While this may make sense intuitively, it is much more difficult to implement. For example, that strong process champion, may also be a leader reluctant to surrender oversight (Bloom, 1986). Naturally, inclusiveness in the process may result in implementation challenges due to the needs of strong leadership and widespread participation being in potential conflict (Alfred, 2006). Despite this potential for conflict, the literature is clear that successful implementation is predicated on the involvement of individuals across the organization and in varying roles (Bloom, 1986; Eadie, 1983; Sevier, 2003; Streib, 1992; Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996).

2.4.4 Other Oppositions and Challenges to Strategic Planning

While strategic planning continued to gain strength as a management tool, the criticism with regard to planning began permeate throughout the management community. Ironically, the critical analysis focused on the very core of the argument for strategic planning, the process. In 2002, Dooris observed that strategic planning processes were criticized for their formality and

51

structure, an over reliance on hard data, creating large amounts of artifacts, ignoring the institution's ethos, and "discouraging creative, positive change" (p. 27). Some critics also continue to argue against the notion that any type of clearly defined strategies and objectives are derived from a process that can be overly complicated and convoluted and that involves such a variety of individuals from the university.

Strategic planning is not a standardized set of procedures that assures optimal results for all that undertake a strategic planning initiative. Academic administrators who view strategic planning in such a way are destined for sub-optimal results. Administrators must carefully engage the strategic planning process as their success and the success of the process, "Will depend at least in part on how they tailor the process to their situations" (Bryson, 2004, p. 13). Simply asking managers to identify goals, take an inventory of the organization's strengths and weakness, derive clearly defined strategies, and to adhere to a planning schedule is a simplistic view of the planning process and ignores the necessary steps for organizations to acknowledge changes in the environment and develop solutions to overcome them (Mintzberg, 1978). In 1978, Henry Mintzberg examined strategy formation in various types of organizations. He found significant discrepancies in managers' definitions of strategy. He noted that the various definitions of strategy believed it to be, " (a) explicit, (b) developed consciously and purposefully, and (c) made in advance of the specific decisions to which it applies," in other words, "a strategy is a plan" (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935). From his study he also posited that strategies may develop over time and might not be as intentional as one wants to believe (Mintzberg, 1978). Throughout the planning process and through daily operations strategies develop as managers make individual decisions. This nuance becomes important because many authors throughout the literature treat strategic

planning as explicit and deliberate and overlook the idea that strategies may emerge from daily operational accomplishments.

The notion of emergent strategies finds support from Bryson (2004) who encourages organizations to continue to be receptive of unforeseen opportunities for action throughout the strategic planning process. He wrote, "Too much attention to strategic planning and reverence for strategic plans can blind organizations to unplanned and unexpected – yet incredibly useful – sources of information, insight, and action" (p. 16).

Over time, strategic planning has evolved into an extremely process-oriented management tool. So much so, organizations find themselves ignoring the very opportunities identified through the strategic plan. Earlier it was discussed that a part of the motive behind the emergence of strategic planning was the acknowledgment of the need for organizations, in this case academic institutions, to look beyond their walls to the external environment so that they may identify opportunities and threats and adapt accordingly. As the demand increases for a more explicit model and a "magic pill" formula for success, strategic planning is on a path to suffer from a myriad of issues that served as a foundation for the creation of strategic planning at the onset.

2.5 Infusing Agile Methods in the Strategic Planning Process

From the presented literature it should be evident that failing to develop and implement the strategy for the organization effectively, may have the potential to lead to dysfunction and hinder its overall success with its constituents. However, it should also be clear by the criticism of traditional strategic planning that new approaches may have a greater impact and effectiveness for the organization.

In 1978, Mintzberg recognized that the traditional methods for strategic planning were counter-intuitive and offered that it is more likely that the conception of strategic ideas and initiatives occur in unstructured ways and in real-time. This acknowledgement is consistent with Beinhocker and Kaplan's (2002) study that posits strategic planning should foster two intentional objectives. The first is to develop "prepared minds," ensuring "that decision makers have a solid understanding of the business, its strategy, and the assumptions behind that strategy, thereby making it possible for executives to respond swiftly to challenges and opportunities as they occur in real time" (Beinhocker & Kaplan, 2002, para. 6). The second, is enhancing the overall "innovativeness of a company's strategies" (Beinhocker & Kaplan, 2002, para. 7). More recently, Lublin and Mattioli (2010) expressed that in order to stay competitive organizations must speed up the decision-making process to more easily adapt to the changing environment. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), one cannot force creativity; however, it is quite possible, and encouraged, to develop work environments that support and foster creativity. This is where agile methods are of benefit.

As previously stated, agile methods were born out of a desire to meet the challenges related to more traditional methodologies of software development. One such issue, a common critique of traditional strategic planning as well, is the amount of organization resources that planning uses (Cervone, 2014; Streib, 1992). This drain on resources can be so severe that very little energy remains to implement the plan due to planning exhaustion. "Additionally, creating the plan is often so labor intensive and protracted that the plan is already out of date before most of the initiatives have even started" (Cervone, 2014, p. 162). Agile methods aim to reduce the strain on institutional resources and create a more flexible, proactive, and responsive organization.

2.5.1 Overview of Agile Theory

The first formal mention of agile methods appeared in an article by Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986). Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber made the theory popular during their presentation in 1995 at an annual convention for software developers (Sutherland, Patel, Casanave, Hollowell, & Miller, 1995). It was evident to them that the mainstream and traditional methods of developing software were no longer effective in an environment, and within organizations, that were growing more dynamic. Traditional software development methods were too long, sought to release only the perfect product to the consumer, and encouraged siloed work teams.

In the years that followed, many variations on agile methods implementation have emerged. While there are many different tools for applying agile methodology, the most popular of them all is Scrum and is the tool that most individuals are referring to when they talk about deploying agile methods (Moran, 2015, p. 14). Scrum, as well as the other popular tools, uses the framework of the "Manifesto for Agile Software Development" (Alliance, 2001), that outlines the four values of agile:

- Individuals and interactions over processes and tools.
- Working software over comprehensive documentation.
- Customer collaboration over contract negotiation.
- Responding to change over following a plan. (para. 2)

To this day, these four values remain strongly engrained in agile theory; and, over the years the principles have evolved and gained traction in other organizational contexts aside from software development, such as strategic planning.

2.5.2 Infusing Agile Methodology into Strategic Planning Using Scrum

Two components of agile theory play an important role in overcoming the shortcomings of traditional strategic planning (Cervone, 2014). The first is derived from "working software over comprehensive documentation" (Alliance, 2001, para. 2). When translated for application in strategic planning, this calls for organizations to both develop the various components of the strategic plan and implement the strategic plan's goals and objectives by using quick iterative bursts as opposed to the long and often arduous traditional planning process and supporting projects. These short bursts produce a minimum viable product to put in the customer's or stakeholder's hands for review and consumption (e.g., small teams assigned to specific tasks work with focus to complete the plan component).

The second component, derived from "Individuals and interactions over processes and tools" (Alliance, 2001, para. 2) places emphasis on communicating directly with stakeholders throughout the process. In traditional approaches, a planning team might hold listening sessions at the start of the planning process to collect ideas from stakeholders, but then never return to the stakeholders until the plan is final. Agile calls for frequent sharing of early drafts with stakeholders to get feedback before finalizing the component. According to Cervone (2014), "The reason for emphasizing these two concepts is simple: both help an organization adapt quickly to the unpredictable and rapidly changing environment most organizations face" (p. 163).

The most widely adopted tool for organizational strategic planning that uses the agile framework is Scrum (Cervone, 2014). Due to this reason, this study uses the Scrum methodology as a framework for discussing agile infusion in strategic planning. In 1986, authors Takeuchi and Nonaka, first talked about the need for new thinking in developing large scale products. Up to this point, products were developed sequentially in what is commonly known as a "waterfall"

approach. Each team working on a phase of the project completes their phase and the next team picks up the project to complete their phase. This process continues until the product is completed. Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986) observed that this method "conflict[ed] with the goals of maximum speed and flexibility," and went on to say, "a holistic or "rugby" approach – where a team tries to go the distance as a unit, passing the ball back and forth" (para. 5) might be a better approach to meet the demands of a dynamic market. The notion of the "rugby" approach eventually evolved and was introduced as Scrum, a term from rugby where the players are close together to gain control of the ball, by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber (Sutherland et al., 1995).

Roles, processes, and artifacts are the three foundational principles of the Scrum model (Craddock, 2013). This section of the literature review examines each of these principles. In addition, the potential application to strategic planning is explored.

The first foundational principle to explore are the roles within Scrum. There are three standard roles that comprise the *Scrum team*:

1. *Product Owner* – the individual or individuals accountable for creating maximum value for the product by managing and expressing the expectations of the business and the particular functional expectations of the Scrum team;

2. *Scrum Master* – the individual responsible for guiding the development team and the entire Scrum process, as well as creating an environment that supports the process; and

3. *Development Team* – a group of individuals, 5-10, with the responsibility to manage, organize, and complete all development work necessary to release an iteration. (Deemer, Benefield, Larman, & Vodde, 2010; Scrum.org)

Naturally, these standardized roles are defined from a software development perspective. However, they are easily translated to the strategic planning process, for example, if one applied this to a business school strategic planning process:

1. *Product Owner* – This might be the dean of the school. As the leader of the school, the dean has the appropriate context, expertise, and background to confirm the work of the team will meet the needs of the business school. While the dean is not overseeing the process, he or she must be engaged in the process to affirm the direction of the group;

2. *Scrum Master* – This might be a staff member within the business school that is charged with guiding the planning process, supporting the team, and reducing barriers to completing tasks by communicating with the necessary individuals in order to gather information to meet the needs of the team. This individual is not responsible for writing the plan but rather provides consistency throughout the process; and the

3. *Development Team* – This is a cross-functional team of 5 to 10 individuals (faculty, staff, students, and external experts) working to keep the forward momentum of the planning process going by completing specific components of the strategic plan. The leadership and composition of the team may change depending on the specific task or goal within an iteration of the planning cycle.

Now that the roles have been defined, one can explore how incorporate Scrum into the planning process itself, the second of the foundational principles of Scrum.

The Scrum functions as an iterative model in developing the strategic plan as depicted in Figure 1. The strategic plan is the all-encompassing Scrum. A Scrum is then created for each item of the strategic plan and within each plan component Scrum there exists an even smaller Scrum to focus on individual subitems (Cervone, 2014).
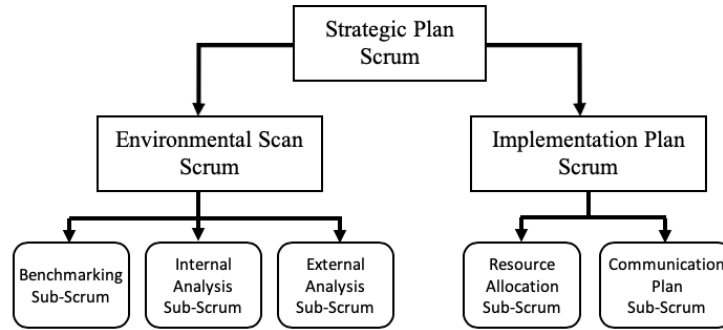
Figure 1. Sample of a Scrum Model for Strategic Planning

There are five standard and significant activities within each individual Scrum (Cervone, 2014; Deemer et al., 2010; Scrum.org):

1. *Kickoff* – This is a meeting of the entire Scrum team – which consists of the product owner, the Scrum master, and the development team – during which high-level discussions take place around the top-level goals and objectives related to a particular strategic plan item.

2. *Sprint Planning Meeting* – While this meeting in theory is similar to the kickoff, they happen a number of times throughout a particular Scrum. This meeting of the Scrum team, engages in two critical activities during each iteration, also known as a *sprint*. The team defines the *backlog*, which was noted earlier as a list of specific goals and objectives that still have not been defined, clarified, or completed. Then the team articulates the specific *sprint goal*, the goal or objective that must be defined or completed by the end of the iteration, or sprint.

3. *Sprint* – After the sprint planning meeting, the sprint can commence. Throughout each sprint the development team works to define and clarify the appropriate goals and objectives. The team may choose to briefly engage other constituents through periodic

engagements. However, duration limits should be set for each sprint. As it applies to strategic planning, sprints would ideally last between two weeks and one month.

4. *Daily Scrum* – In some planning processes, each individual sprint may use a Daily Scrum meeting. During these short, 15-minute or less, meetings, each member of the development team reports in and answers three questions: (1) what did you do since the last daily meeting, (2) what are you doing until the next daily meeting, and (3) what stands in the way of making progress on your task? Daily Scrums may be difficult to use in many organizations; therefore, a regular schedule of periodic Daily Scrum-like meetings should be scheduled in order to stay focused on the sprint goals. However, if Daily Scrum meetings are used it is important to remember that it is not a meeting to identify who or what is behind but rather to track progress and to ensure team members make work commitments so that the work of the sprint can proceed.

5. *Sprint Review Meeting* – At the conclusion of each sprint, this meeting is held to review and celebrate the accomplished work. This informal meeting is not used to discuss the work yet unfinished.

This process continues through each iteration and through each item of the plan until complete. Figure 2 demonstrates this process flow using the internal analysis sub-scrum from Figure 1.
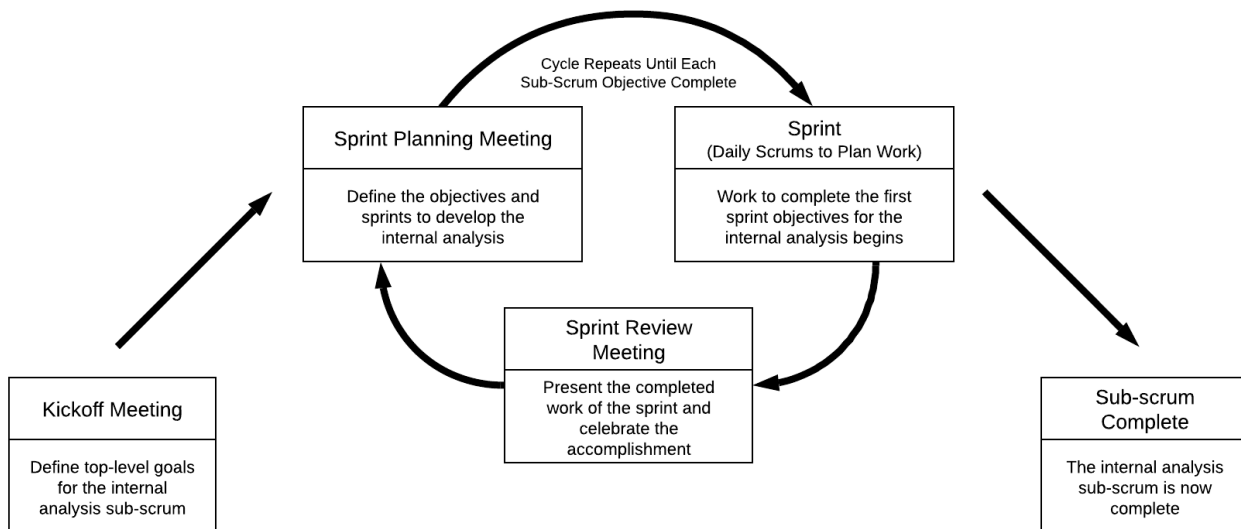
Figure 2. Sample Scrum Flow For Internal Analysis

The final foundational principle of Scrum are the standard artifacts (Cervone, 2014; Deemer et al., 2010), that include the following when translated to strategic planning:

- Product (Plan) Backlog – This is a list maintained by the product owner, in the previous example this is the dean, and outlines the broad level features that should appear in the strategic plan and the effort, measured as time and complexity, it takes to complete them (i.e., the major sections of the plan like the environmental scan);

- Sprint Backlog – This is a list maintained by the development team or sub-teams. Similar to the product backlog, this list outlines the work, as wells as effort for completion, of the development team in order to complete the goals of a sprint.

- Burn Down Charts –Scrum focuses on the work to be done. The burn down chart, as shown in the sample in Figure 3, depicts the work remaining (Y-axis), measured in work hours, against days (X-axis). This allows the team to see progress toward the goal of zero effort remaining. The burn down chart is used by each of the development teams.

61
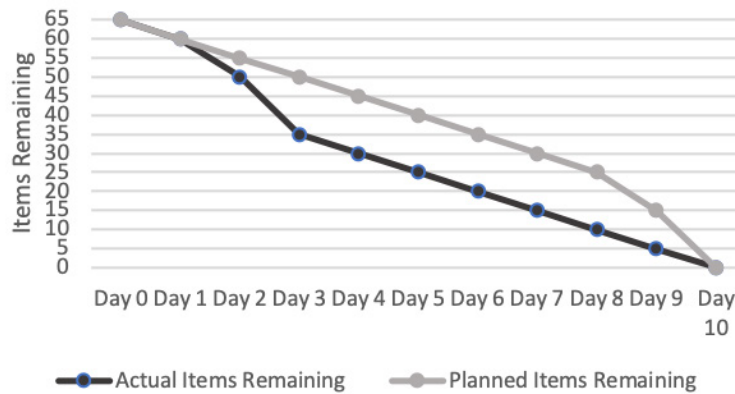
Figure 3. Sample Burndown Chart

For those used to more traditional methods of strategic planning, the benefits of using an agile approach may not be as clear. Simplicity is one of the clear benefits for the use of agile in strategic planning. Roles are clearly defined, short iterations allow you to develop and improve goals and objectives, and because each individual on the team is responsible to their contributions both accountability and ownership is enhanced and more broadly attributed. With all that said, extensive communication within the team and externally to constituents is critical to the success of agile methods.

2.5.3 Strengths and Limitations of Agile-Infused Strategic Planning

All too often, strategic planning processes are conducted in a vacuum. While many processes do a fine job of holding listening sessions with internal stakeholders on the input side, there is little follow-up with these groups as the process moves forward until the plan is revealed. "Communication and feedback loops are inadequate or non-existent, thereby making course adjustments ineffective or impossible" (Gates, 2018). And as for external constituents, they are often forgotten altogether (Chen, 2015).

In agile Scrum, during each iteration the product owner, or plan owner, is responsible for the management of the work yet to be done and confirming the background and details needed to complete the work. This includes ensuring that stakeholder feedback and insights are incorporated throughout the process. Each sprint produces a minimum viable product or testable draft, that may be used to solicit stakeholder feedback. This frequent feedback allows the product owner to absorb the necessary data to compile user stories, that in turn allow the product owner to establish a priority listing of the work within the backlog and communicate the needs for the next iterations (Chen, 2015).

One may be able to see how this frequent communication could have a positive impact on the planning process. As the development team clarifies the objectives in each subitem of the plan, they can test the assumptions with stakeholder groups early and often to ensure buy-in. "When we take this approach, we invariably invalidate many early assumptions in the first few sprints. This can feel terrible. But it's far more wasteful if we don't invalidate these foundational assumptions early on" (Chen, 2015).

It the team embraces the data that comes back from the stakeholder conversations, over a few weeks, the team should be able to center on a strategy that will work. This allows the next development team to move toward implementation using the same iterative process.

Scrum, however, is not without its own criticisms. One such criticism is that Scrum relies on the fact that you can effectively predict time to completion on the various tasks (Gray, 2015). This comes in to play as the work of each sprint is planned to appropriately create the necessary artifacts to track work. To overcome this challenge, the team must account for hidden complexities, inconsistencies, and the impact that various distractions may have on the team.

Another criticism of Scrum is that there may be an overemphasis on meetings, thereby taking away from the work itself (Brzezińska & Grajcar, 2017). While Scrum does indeed call for regular meetings, these meetings are intended to be short in duration and focused on agenda. The regular meetings provide opportunities to identify potential roadblocks, barriers to progress, recalibrate expectations, and celebrate successes (Deemer et al., 2010). All said, the potential benefits that agile Scrum can offer the strategic planning process far outweigh the downside risks.

2.6 Literature Review Summary

Business education has a century plus year old history. During that relatively short time, management education and business schools have experienced a significant transformation. This spans from the early days as a vocational education program to the more research focused discipline it is today. During that time, business schools saw increased enrollments and the MBA became one of the more highly sought-after graduate degrees and was a must for aspirational leaders.

However, since the mid-2000s business schools have faced growing pressures. These pressures have come from a variety of angles including declining MBA enrollments, jaded industry professionals questioning the value of management research, rapid expansion of online degrees, and employers questioning the value of the MBA. These pressures have forced business schools to think of strategies to address these challenges.

Over time, business schools have made marginal enhancements: diversified course offerings; more flexibility in delivery formats, especially in MBA programs; length of programs are shorter and more intensive; a new market of specialized master's program has emerged; and

the use of technology inside the classroom and to deliver programs has begun. In addition, business schools have tried to create stronger links between their research and industry. With that said, these rather benign enhancements have merely been a reiteration of long held practices and approaches to business education. Truly innovative changes in business education continue to be an exception. These issues lead to a greater need for business schools to think more strategically and to potentially deploy new ways of developing strategy.

Over the years, the management of day-to-day operations has been a highly regarded achievement of many higher education institutions, but has presented challenges for planning efforts. To ensure an effective strategic planning effort, administrators must acknowledge that the environment is changing and that planning may provide crucial insights that allow for greater success. Universities could benefit from a more strategic approach that helps leverage anticipated opportunities and overcome potential threats in the environment. Due to the changing nature of the environment, higher education turned to private industry and embraced strategic planning.

By utilizing strategic planning, higher education institutions were able to move past the dependency on operational strength by moving toward more goal focused planning. When goals and objectives are the foundation of an institution's strategic plan, the organization are forced to focus on aspirational outcomes. Communication of these goals and objectives come from the institutional leaders and offer the direction to move the organization.

Participation at all levels within the organization, in addition to a strong champion, is important to enhance the effectiveness of traditional strategic planning in universities. Input from all levels generates new and diverse ideas. In addition, as colleges and universities operate in a shared governance environment, broader participation in the process helps university stakeholders grasp the strategic vision, ultimately guiding individual and departmental decision making

(Richardson & Gardner, 1983). "A planning process is a roadmap for change and improvement, and like any map, does not provide the vehicle," C. Watson (1995) continued, " Building public trust and enhancing higher education is not suited to a 'one size fits all' solution – each institution must decide the vehicle and the destination" (p. 190). In addition, wide spread participation fosters a culture that leads to more effective implementation.

While there are as many processes outlined as authors, a consistent theme exists that the development of a strategic plan is greatly aided by an articulated process. The literature review outlined several process considerations. However, it is important to acknowledge the shortcomings of traditional strategic planning. "Traditional strategic planning has become cumbersome and ineffective" (Gates, 2018). As the literature points out, there are challenges with traditional strategic planning and organizational dynamics. Myriad approaches and lack of communication can create apathy or disenchantment with the organizations. In addition, traditional strategic planning is rooted in the traditions of rational decision making. Organizations today are far too complex and people are too unpredictable to have rational decision making as the foundation of any planning process.

Furthermore, we also know that there are many other factors that stand in the way of traditional strategic planning success. These include the need for individuals within the organization to balance their daily roles with strategy implementation. If strategic plans are lengthy, indigestible documents it is far too easy for the non-leadership of an organization to follow the plan and implement on a daily basis. In addition, the research that critiques traditional strategic planning also acknowledges the dangers of leaders not willing to give up ownership of the plan through widespread participation in the process. All of these challenges, should lead organizational leaders to consider new ways to advance their strategic planning efforts.

Agile methods in the strategic planning process may provide organizations with a strategic plan that remains useful and relevant. Agile allows organizations to shorten the process and incorporate regular internal and external feedback in order to develop a plan that meets the needs of a dynamic environment. "A yearly strategic planning approach that takes six months to develop and requires significant time and effort to pivot to new opportunities and challenges is no longer tenable" (Gadzinski, 2018).

The implementation of agile methods in the strategic planning process is still new and may take some time for widespread use, especially for organizations firmly planted in the traditional frameworks such as academic institutions. As organizations move toward adopting agile methods, it will be important for them to remember a few of the more effective practices in early implementation:

- Welcome incremental changes and do not become disheartened when issues related to agile implementation emerge;

- Encourage the use of agile terms and methods in various contexts throughout the organization, not just strategic planning. For example, as faculty develop a new major, use Scrum for the development process. This has a clearly defined goal and may get people more familiar with the process. However, find the language best for the organization;

- Feedback is critical to the process therefore, collect it regularly. The Daily Scrum Meeting and Sprint Review Meeting are the best places to do this;

- You can gain trust in the process by showing the value of the process at the end of each iteration; and

- Continue to track the progress of the process, goals, and objectives using sound metrics and utilizing the tools of agile. Make them highly public, but not obtrusive (Cervone, 2014).

Remembering these best practices can help organizations make a smooth and effective transition to agile in the strategic planning process and beyond. Table 1 shows a summary of how the two processes, traditional and agile-infused, compare among key dimensions of strategic planning processes. It is important to remember that while the processes may differ, the components of the strategic plan (e.g. environmental analysis, goals, objectives, etc.), as described earlier in the literature review, remain the same regardless of process. This comparison provides the basis for the analysis and proper assessment of the findings in order to place the planning processes of participant schools on the traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum.

Table 1 Comparison of Strategic Planning Processes Across Key Dimensions

Comparison Dimension	Traditional	Agile-Infused (Using Scrum)
Process Leadership	A process champion initiates the planning process and approves the final plan from the committee. Upon completion, will give voice to the plan to disseminate the plan and implementation strategy. Process leader chairs and is a member of the planning team. Responsible for guiding the team's work and also is a contributor to the work of the team.	This is the plan owner that works closely with the plan development team to ensure work completed is meeting institutional goals. While not a part of the development team, the plan owner has regular engagement with the team. In addition, a separate individual may be identified to lead the process only. This individual does not provide input on the content of the plan, nor the work of the team. Supports the development team by moving the process along, documenting the work completed, and removing institutional barriers.
Work Teams	The planning team is typically comprised of 10-20 individuals representing internal university stakeholders (faculty, staff, students) across colleges and departments. The team gathers information and input from all stakeholder groups. The team then conducts the work to write the strategic plan and gain approval from the various decision-makers and ultimately the plan champion. Meeting frequency may be once per week, or more likely, monthly.	The development team is a cross-functional group of 5 to 10 individuals (faculty, staff, students, and external experts) working to keep the forward momentum of the planning process going by completing specific components of the strategic plan. The leadership and composition of the team may change depending on the specific task or goal within an iteration of the planning cycle. In addition, the development team may deploy smaller teams to work on very specific tasks related to the plan. Meeting frequency is once per week at a minimum, or more likely, several times a week.
Documentation of Process	The planning team may use a project plan of all the tasks in a carefully calculated step-by-step "waterfall" approach that focuses on the work completed.	The development team develops the plan and sprint backlogs that outline the key components of the plan and the work to be done to complete each measured in time and complexity. The team may not necessarily complete each component in order, therefore the documents focus more on the work to be completed rather than what's been completed. In addition, the teams maintain burndown charts to provide a visual for the team to depict work remaining until zero effort remains.

Table 1 (continued)

Engagement of Stakeholders	Stakeholders engaged early in the process and, in some processes, again at the end. Engagement is typically restricted to opportunities to provide information on the current status of the organization through their particular lens. Some process may ask stakeholders to also provide ideas for future goals. In processes that engage stakeholders at the end of the process, it is to 1) gain approval and or 2) disseminate the plan.	Representatives of the various stakeholder groups are engaged throughout the process. They provide insight on the current status of the organization through their particular lens, provide ideas for future goals, review drafts of plan components throughout the process to offer feedback and support during the course of the process, provide approval, and champion the plan throughout their stakeholder group during the implementation.
Duration of Process	The planning process may take from 9-24 months depending on the level of the plan and complexity. On average, the duration of the planning process is 12-18 months. This seemingly long time is partially due to a single team carrying the burden to gather all of the information, write the plan, and gain the necessary support.	The planning process is often half the time of a traditional process, 3-12 months. This accelerated process is partially due to creating multiple teams with particular expertise to work on various components of the plan. In addition, because stakeholders are engaged throughout the process, the length of time typically needed to gain buy-in and approval is reduced as the stakeholders have been a part of the process and have seen drafts of the plan components at various stages of the process.

The body of literature regarding the history of business education, the emergence of strategic planning in higher education, and the comparison between traditional and agile approaches to strategic planning, provide the background necessary to more fully understand this study.

3.0 Research Methodology

During the course of the literature review, it became clear that there is a lack of research on business school strategic planning processes and even less research about the infusion of agile methods into such processes. As a result, the use of an exploratory research design is most appropriate for this study.

An exploratory research design seeks to further inform the literature about questions that have not been fully studied (Stebbins, 2001). The intention of exploratory research is not to determine a final or generalizable outcome but rather to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or topic. In addition, exploratory research can provide data that helps the researcher to develop hypotheses for future research. Using this study as an example, this researcher has observed, during several strategic planning efforts, a purely traditional approach. This led to the hypothesis that business schools may not have infused agile methods into their strategic planning efforts and that an opportunity exists to develop a new planning process model for business schools in future research. However, it is important to confirm, or not, this intuition prior to expanding the research in the future. Hence, this study will engage the exploratory research design (Stebbins, 2001).

As a reminder to the reader, the goal of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are market pressures in the graduate business education industry impacting US business schools?
2. What are some of the prevailing characteristics of strategic plans and planning processes in US business schools?
3. Where do the strategic planning processes of US business schools fall on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum?

71

4. To what extent do certain market pressures or US business school characteristics appear to influence the strategic planning process?

Exploring the answers to these questions provided crucial information related to the current landscape of strategic planning in US business schools. To address these research questions, this exploratory study used a quantitative research methodology with both descriptive and correlational design via a survey.

3.1 Selection of Participants

Based on the review of the literature, graduate management education, specifically the MBA, is under the greatest threat (e.g., enrollment challenges, rising financial scholarships, devaluing of degree by employers) in the business education industry. To this end, the potential survey population consisted of the US MBA schools that were ranked in the US News and World Report ranking published in March of 2018 (USNWR, 2018). While only 99 schools were ranked, this population represented a diverse range of business schools based on: size of school, private vs. public, geographic location, program length, admission quality, and graduate employment success.

From there, the researcher used the Street Level Bureaucracy Theory, or SLBT, to determine the appropriate recipient of the survey. Michael Lipsky originally coined the phrase "street-level bureaucrat" in 1969 and later published his theory in his 1980 book, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service,* that he updated in 2010 for its 30th anniversary (Lipsky, 2010). This theory identified the gap that can often exist between the administrator, bureaucrat, or policy-maker and those individuals doing the work each day and

directly enforcing policies or dealing with processes, i.e., at the street-level. As higher education and planning processes are not immune to such disconnects, for this study it was important to measure the perceptions and experiences of street-level administrators. However, it was important to balance between the highest-level bureaucrat in the business school, the dean, and the lowest-level administrators in order to have first-hand knowledge of the pressures faced and the processes deployed.

To that end, the researcher attempted to identify the associate dean, or equivalent-level position, who had oversight over graduate programs writ large, or the MBA program at a minimum if such a position did not exist, within each of the top 99 MBA programs. After pinpointing the organizational structures at each of the schools, as well as contacting schools to identify the appropriate contact, the researcher identified 96 appropriate school administrators, including email addresses – two schools were going through a leadership transition and the appropriate position for this study was vacant, and one school does not make email addresses public and attempts to communicate with the individual via other means (e.g., phone, LinkedIn messaging) failed. These 96 business school administrators made up the study's participant pool.

3.2 Survey Instrument

In order to gain the broadest insight into the greatest pressures faced by graduate schools of business and their strategic planning processes, the researcher developed a survey instrument. The survey, found in appendix A, is a self-designed instrument with the questions linked to the review of the literature and directly to the research questions as shown in Table 2. The researcher piloted the self-designed study with seven individuals with varying job roles, understanding of the

subject matter, and survey-design experience in order to refine the survey for readability, usability, question comprehension, and potential data output. These individuals included a former MBA program director, an associate dean involved with program development and accreditation, an individual with oversight over program assessment and assurance of learning, two marketing research faculty, and two administrative staff members. The researcher received valuable feedback to inform the final version of the survey instrument. The final 48-question survey used a mix of question types and display logic for a better participant experience.

Table 2 Survey Questions Linked to Research Questions

Research Question #	Research Question	Linked Survey Questions
1	To what extent are market pressures in the graduate business education industry impacting US business schools?	3.2, 3.3
2	What are some of the prevailing characteristics of strategic plans and planning processes in US business schools?	2.2, 2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.31, 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35, 4.36, 4.37, 4.38
3	Where do the strategic planning processes of US business schools fall on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum?	4.8, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.32, 4.33, 4.34
4	To what extent do certain market pressures or US business school characteristics appear to influence the strategic planning process?	2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 3.2

Section one of the survey instrument contained an introduction to the study and the consent section. While the study did not collect any identifiable information, the consent outlined the study, provided information related to the participant's rights to terminate their participation at any time,

and affirmed that the participant would receive no direct benefit or compensation for participating. Participants had to select that they agreed to the consent before the survey continued, otherwise the survey terminated.

Section two of the survey consisted of 10 questions and collected non-identifiable information on the participant and the participant's school. The participant was asked to identify the scope of responsibility for their role, as well as their familiarity with the school's strategic planning process measured on a 5-point scale. The participant was then asked to classify the school as public or private, rural or urban, identify the region of the United States that the business school's primary campus is located, whether they would describe their university as a research institution, and where the participant's school fell on the 2019 US News and World Report Top MBA ranking published in March of 2018 (USNWR, 2018). From there, the participant was asked a series of questions about the full-time MBA programs offered at the participant's business school and the enrollments in those programs.

Section three of the survey consisted of two questions and collected information regarding the pressures faced by the graduate business education industry. The first question in this section asked the participant to rate the extent to which their school is affected by particular pre-identified pressures currently impacting the business education industry as identified in the literature review. The rating scale was a five-point scale, from *(1) Not at All* to *(5) A Great Deal*. This section also included an open-ended question that asked the participant to identify the greatest pressure facing his or her school.

The fourth, and final, section of the survey consisted of up to 37 questions depending on certain responses from the participant and collected data on the strategic planning process at the participant's school. The participant was first asked to identify whether or not a strategic plan

existed for the business school. If the participant selected *No,* the participant was then asked if the school had another type of documented strategy. This follow-up question was asked in order to compensate for local nomenclature (i.e., a school may not call their plan a strategic plan, yet it may have the same characteristics). If the participant answered *No* to both of these questions, the survey terminated. If the participant answered yes to one these questions, a series of questions were displayed to gather information on the participant school's strategic plan and planning process. These questions used a variety of question types to gather particulars on the plan such as when the plan was created, the span of time the plan covered, the motivations behind producing the plan, and who was involved in the planning process.

In addition, this section included several questions that were designed based on the five traditional vs. agile comparative dimensions discussed in Table 1. As a reminder to the reader, these five dimensions were *process leadership, work teams, engagement of stakeholders, documentation of process,* and *duration of process.* For example, questions asked the participant to rate his or her agreement with statements about the role of the leader of the planning process, rate the frequency of communication of plan drafts with constituents, or the extent to which literature review-based characteristics of traditional or agile-infused planning were a part of their school's process. These particular questions allowed the researcher to develop the scoring system used in the analysis of the data to determine where participant schools landed on the planning process spectrum.

3.3 Data Collection

Before the data collection phase of this study began, the researcher submitted the research design and instrument for review and approval by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher received final approval of the research study from the IRB on February 22, 2019. As part of this study, measures were taken to secure all collected data and ensure all data were treated confidentially. All participants were made aware of the intentions of the study and their rights to confidentiality via the survey introduction and consent. In addition, the researcher provided the participants with the contact information for the researcher, the researcher's advisor, and the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board. To ensure the protection of security and confidentiality, data collected and analyzed were stored on a two-factor authenticated, password-protected, cloud-based drive. Furthermore, the researcher did not collect identifiable information for the schools or participants. Upon completion of the study, the researcher ensured that only anonymous data remained.

To begin the data collection, the survey instrument was developed in the Qualtrics® Research Suite online survey software tool. The researcher used this tool to administer and collect the responses for the survey. The researcher then created a survey panel in the system comprised of the 96 participants described in section 3.1 of this study. The researcher used the online tool to create a unique link for each participant in order to conduct follow-up to non-respondents during the open period of the survey.

The unique survey link was included in an introductory letter (Appendix B), approved by the IRB. This introductory letter outlined the purpose of the study, who had been selected to participate, and the contact information for the researcher, the researcher's advisor, and the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board. The introductory letter and survey were first

sent to participants on February 22, 2019. The researcher sent reminders (Appendix C) on February 27th and March 5th. After receiving no additional responses from the March 5th reminder, one final call for responses was sent on March 8th. Responses had ceased to a point that the survey was closed on March 11th after an 18-day collection period.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher began the analysis by importing all survey responses into the SPSS® statistics software. The data were then organized to provide a series of descriptive statistics. These statistics include the response rate, demographics of the participants, and characteristics of the participant business schools.

The data were then analyzed to provide descriptive statistics on the extent to which participants believed their schools were impacted by certain pre-defined pressures. The analysis included the measurement of the frequency distributions for each of the pressures, as well as a top two and bottom two box analysis in order to identify the top five pressures most impacting business schools. Similarly, the data were analyzed through the use of frequency distributions to provide descriptive statistics on the characteristics of the strategic planning process at the participants' schools.

The analysis of data then proceeded to the evaluation of the planning processes at each participant school in order to be able to place the school's process on a traditional to agile-infused scale. To evaluate the planning process type, the researcher designed a point-based scoring system called the Planning Process Dimension Score (PPDS) to allocate points to answers of questions that were designed for this comparison and are based on the key comparison dimensions from

Table 1, *process leadership, work teams, documentation of process, engagement of stakeholders,* and *duration of process.* With that said, it is important to emphasize that the comparison and scoring is based on key dimensions of the strategic planning process and not the plan itself. Regardless of process, the elements of the strategic plan are largely the same; for example, the mission, vision, environmental scan, goals, objectives, measures, etc., would appear in a plan developed either traditionally or with agile methods infused into the process.

The PPDS measures the extent to which a school's strategic planning process is infused with agile methodology based on these five dimensions. For the purposes of this research study, the dimensions were not weighted. Each key dimension consists of different questions from the survey, see Appendix A, as follows in Table 3.

Table 3 Questions Mapped to Key Dimensions

Dimension	Mapped Questions
Dimension 1 Process Leadership	Q4.30 Was an individual identified to lead the strategic planning process?
	Q4.32 With regard to the leader of the strategic planning process, select the statement(s) below that best describe the role the leader played (check all that apply).
Dimension 2 Work Teams	Q4.20 Was a committee created to develop the strategic plan?
	Q4.21 How often did the planning committee meet?
	Q4.24 Were multiple smaller teams created to complete various parts of the plan?
	Q4.25 How often did the smaller teams meet?
	Q4.26 Which of the following stakeholder groups were a part of these smaller teams (select all that apply)?
	Q4.27 To what extent did the small teams work in short iterations to complete a specific task for the plan?

79

Table 3 (continued)

	Q4.33 To what extent did all individuals in the planning process come together at the completion of specific planning process tasks to review what was completed, as well as celebrate the success?
Dimension 3 Documentation of Process	Q4.22 How important was it for the planning committee to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?
	Q4.28 How important was it for the smaller teams to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?
	Q4.34 To what extent were charts used to track the expected vs. actually completed tasks over time?
Dimension 4 Engagement of Stakeholders	Q4.8 Please select the ways in which the school engaged the following stakeholder groups in the strategic planning process
	Q4.23 For each of the following stakeholders, rate how often the committee circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing a component of the plan?
	Q4.29 For each of the following stakeholders, rate how often the smaller teams circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing their specific task?
Dimension 5 Duration of Process	Q4.19 Approximately how long (in months) did it take to develop your school's strategic plan?

Each question was scored in a manner appropriate for the question-type and magnitude of the measure for an agile-infused process. Each dimension, while unweighted, has a different minimum and maximum score. This provided the researcher with a score for each dimension and in practice, this would allow each school to see the dimensions on which process enhancements may be warranted. Table 4 outlines the PPDS scoring system rubric that was applied to the survey instrument and used to evaluate the participant responses.

Table 4 PPDS Scoring System Point Allocation Rubric

Dimension	Dimension Score Range	Question	Point Allocation			Question Score Range
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	
			Continuous Measure Not Easily Assigned to a Process Type			
Dimension 1: Process Leadership	0 - 5	Q4.30	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.32	(1) point per selection			0 - 4
Dimension 2: Work Teams	0 - 26	Q4.20	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.21	Monthly (1), Once a week (2)	2-3 times a week (3)	4-6 times a week (4), Daily (5)	0 - 5
		Q4.24	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.25	Monthly (1), Once a week (2)	2-3 times a week (3)	4-6 times a week (4), Daily (5)	0 - 5
		Q4.26	(1) point per selection			0 - 6
		Q4.27	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Considerably (3), A great deal (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.33	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Considerably (3), A great deal (4)	0 - 4
Dimension 3: Documentation of Process	0 - 12	Q4.22	Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.28	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.34	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
Dimension 4: Engagement of Stakeholders	0 - 154	Q4.8	(1) point per stakeholder +Sum of [Feedback early (1), Offer opportunities (2), Committee (3), and/or Feedback throughout (4)]			0 - 84
		Q4.23	If stakeholder Never (0), else (1) point per stakeholder + [Very rarely (1), rarely (2), Occasionally (3), or Very often (4)]			0 - 35
		Q4.29	If stakeholder Never (0), else (1) point per stakeholder + [Very rarely (1), rarely (2), Occasionally (3), or Very often (4)]			0 - 35
Dimension 5: Duration of Process	0 - 3	Q4.19	> 18 months (0), 13-18 months (1)	7-12 months (2)	<= 6 months (3)	0 - 3

Once the scores of each dimension were calculated for the individual school, they were aggregated to provide the researcher with an overall PPDS score of 0-200 for that participant school. The calculated overall PPDS score allowed the researcher to analyze the spectrum of planning processes, and provided a key metric to further analyze the relationship between multiple variables and the planning processes at business schools. The PPDS score range was divided into three scoring groups to establish planning process type bands, *more traditional, mixed, and more agile*. Initially, the bands were distributed equally into thirds. However, this created a situation in which no schools fell into the *more agile category*. Upon further review, the equal banding by thirds did not place enough emphasis on Dimension 4: Engagement of Stakeholders, a key component of an agile-infused process. Higher scores in this category should indicate a more agile-infused process and therefore, for the purposes of this initial piloting of the PPDS scoring system and this research study, the bands were adjusted to the following: *more traditional* (a score of 0-60), *mixed* (a score of 61-100), and *more agile* (a score of 101-200).

After this categorization was complete, the researcher attempted to perform a series of statistical analyses (e.g., regression, chi square, Kendall's tau beta) to test for association between

the demographic data or perceived pressures on the participant schools, compared to the classification of the participant schools' planning processes (i.e., traditional, mixed, or agile-infused). However, due to a low response rate and question types, the normal measures of association produced problematic results. An alternative method of analysis, using cross-tabulations, was employed to identify potential associations. The detailed results of the research study analysis follow in the next chapter.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected through the survey instrument and the findings. This chapter is organized to first present the response rate and descriptive statistics for the participants and participants' schools. Then, subsequent sub-sections address each research question separately. Though this chapter presents the data and analysis of those data, it is not intended to draw any conclusions for the research questions. Conclusions and observations follow in the next chapter.

4.1 Response Type, Participant, and School Descriptives

This section provides analysis on the survey response rate. In addition, the section provides descriptive statistics for the participants and the participants' schools. The primary method for statistical analysis was the use of frequency distributions.

4.1.1 Response Types

In total, 96 business school administrators that fit the criteria for inclusion (noted in section 3.1), received the survey. Of the 96 that received the survey, 3 or 3.1% opted out of completing the survey and indicated they did not want to receive further communications. Of the 96 that received the survey, a total of 33 responses were received for an overall survey response rate of 34.4%. Of the 33 responses, 23 were fully complete, representing a 24.0% response rate. The

remaining 10 responses were partially complete, representing a 10.4% response rate. Table 5 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 5 Summary of Response Types

Response Type	f	%
Complete	23	24.0
Partial	10	10.4
Opt-out	3	3.1
No Response	60	62.5
Total ($N = 96$)	96	100.0

4.1.2 Participant Descriptive Statistics

The participants were asked to describe themselves on two dimensions. The first dimension was related to their program oversight responsibilities within the business school. Participants selected whether they had responsibility over *all graduate programs including the MBA*, *only the MBA*, *all programs undergraduate and graduate*, or *other*. For this dimension, 33 participants responded. Of the 33 participants, 19 or 57.6% had responsibility over all graduate programs, 9 or 27.3% had responsibility over the MBA programs only, 4 or 12.1% had responsibility over all undergraduate and graduate programs, and 1 or 3.0% described their responsibilities as other. Table 6 provides a summary of the participant program oversight.

Table 6 Summary of Participant Program Oversight

Program Oversight	f	%
All graduate programs	19	57.6
MBA programs only	9	27.3
All undergraduate and graduate programs	4	12.1
Other	1	3.0
Total ($n = 33$)	33	100.0

The second dimension that participants were asked to use to describe themselves was how well they knew their school's strategic planning process on a scale from *(1) Not well at all* to *(5) Extremely well*. For this dimension, 33 participants provided a response. Of the 33 responses, 26 or 78.8%, rated their knowledge of their school's planning process in the top two choices, *(4) Very well* or *(5) Extremely well.* Table 7 provides a summary of the responses related to how well the participants know their school's strategic planning process.

Table 7 Summary of Participant Planning Process Knowledge

Rating of Knowledge	f	%
Not well at all	0	0.0
Slightly well	1	3.0
Moderately well	6	18.2
Very well	12	36.4
Extremely well	14	42.4
Totals ($n = 33$)	33	100.0

4.1.3 Participant School Descriptive Statistics

Each participant was asked to provide information on their business school, as well as their MBA programs. With regard to the participant's business school, each was asked to describe the setting of their business school's primary campus as urban or rural; select the region of the US where the primary campus resides; identify the school as public or private; identify their full-time MBA program's rank in the most recent US News and World Report ranking; and identify whether their university is considered a research institution. Table 8 provides a summary of the results for these characteristics of the participants' schools.

Table 8 Summary of Participant School Characteristics

School Characteristics	f	%
Campus Setting		
Urban	25	75.8
Rural	8	24.2
Total ($n = 33$)	33	100.0
Region of the US		
Northeast [a]	14	42.4
Midwest [b]	5	15.2
South [c]	11	33.3
West [d]	3	9.1
Total ($n = 33$)	33	100.0

[a] CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
[b] IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI
[c] AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
[d] AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

School Characteristics	f	%
Institution Type		
Public	18	54.6
Private	15	45.5

Table 8 (continued)

Total (*n* = 33)	33	100.0
FT MBA Ranking		
Top Third (1-33)	9	27.3
Middle Third (34-66)	13	39.4
Bottom Third (67-100)	11	33.3
Total (*n* = 33)	33	100.0
Research Institution		
Yes	29	87.8
No	4	12.1
Total (*n* = 33)	33	100.0

In addition to the characteristics of the school, participants were asked to identify the type of full-time MBA programs their school offered. They were asked whether their school offered a full-time two-year MBA, a full-time 12-18-month MBA, or both. A total of 33 participants answered this question. Of the 33 responses, 18 or 54.6% offered a two-year MBA only, 8 or 24.2% offered a 12-18-month MBA only, and 7 or 21.2% offer both types of full-time MBA programs. Participants were then asked to select the size of the entering class for their MBA program or programs. Table 9 provides a summary of the entering class enrollments by program.

Table 9 Summary of Entering Class Enrollments by Program

Program and Enrollment	*f*	%
Two-Year MBA		
Less than 50	5	20.0
50-100	9	36.0
100-150	4	16.0
More than 150	6	24.0
Unknown	1	4.0

Table 9 (continued)

Total	25	100.0
12-18 Month MBA		
Less than 50	8	53.3
50-100	5	33.3
100-150	1	6.7
More than 150	0	0.0
Unknown	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

4.1.4 Summary

This section provided data on the overall response rate and descriptive statistics via frequency distributions to highlight the characteristics of the participants, the participants' schools, and their MBA programs. While the overall response rate was 34.4%, a diverse group of participants, schools, and programs were represented with each characteristic receiving responses. The sections that follow will address each research question separately.

4.2 Research Question 1 – Impact of Pressures on Schools

The first research question asked *to what extent are market pressures in the graduate business education industry impacting US business schools*? In order to answer this research question, participants were asked two separate questions. The first question was a matrix-type question that asked the participant to rate the extent to which their school was feeling pre-identified pressures facing the business education industry on a scale of *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal.* Of

the overall 33 survey participants, 31 participants completed this question. Table 10 provides a summary of the responses collected for each pressure and the extent to which the participant perceives the school was feeling that pressure.

Table 10 Frequency Distribution of Responses for Perceived Impact of Pressures on Schools

Pressure	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal	Total
Declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants	1	5	11	7	7	31
Declining full-time MBA applications from International applicants	0	6	12	8	5	31
A growing call to engage professionals from industry in the design of new degree programs	2	12	10	6	1	31
Soliciting input of industry professionals in updating existing curricula	3	9	10	7	2	31
Finding ways to better understand the skills employers desire from your MBA graduates.	2	10	9	10	0	31
Encouraging faculty to focus on conducting research that is more relevant to industry	4	11	12	1	3	31
The growth of online graduate degree programs offered by reputable business schools negatively impacting on-campus enrollments	4	10	8	6	3	31
Employers no longer valuing the MBA degree	8	8	12	3	0	31
Domestic graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	9	13	7	2	0	31

Table 10 (continued)

International graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	2	5	7	8	9	31
The average financial scholarship awarded to admitted students is increasing at an unsustainable rate due to the competition to enroll MBA candidates	3	4	6	10	8	31
Specialty master's programs in business cannibalizing MBA enrollments	5	10	9	5	2	31

In order to more effectively identify the pressures most impacting schools based on the participants' perceptions, the researcher applied a top two and bottom two box analysis to the data. A top two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the top two categories, in this case *(4) Considerably* and *(5) A great deal*. A bottom two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the bottom two categories, in this case *(1) Not at all* and *(2) Slightly*. The top two box analysis revealed that the five pressures most impacting participants' schools according to the participants were (1) sustainability of financial scholarships with 58.1%, (2) ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need with 54.8%, (3) international MBA graduates not able to find MBA-level jobs with 54.8%, (4) declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants with 45.2%, and (5) declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants with 41.9%. Table 11 provides a summary of the top two and bottom two box analysis sorted in descending order by top two box percentage.

Table 11 Top and Bottom Two Box Analysis for Pressures Impacting Schools

Pressure	Bottom 2 Box %	Top 2 Box %
The average financial scholarship awarded to admitted students is increasing at an unsustainable rate due to the competition to enroll MBA candidates	22.6	58.1
Ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need through your school's curriculum	19.4	54.8
International graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	22.6	54.8
Declining full-time MBA applications from U.S. applicants	19.4	45.2
Declining full-time MBA applications from International applicants	19.4	41.9
Finding ways to better understand the skills employers desire from your MBA graduates.	38.7	32.3
Soliciting input of industry professionals in updating existing curricula	38.7	29.0
The growth of online graduate degree programs offered by reputable business schools negatively impacting on-campus enrollments	45.2	29.0
A growing call to engage professionals from industry in the design of new degree programs	45.2	22.6
Specialty master's programs in business cannibalizing MBA enrollments	48.4	22.6
Encouraging faculty to focus on conducting research that is more relevant to industry	48.4	12.9
Employers no longer valuing the MBA degree	51.6	9.7
Domestic graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	71.0	6.5

In addition to rating the extent to which pre-identified pressures were impacting the participants' schools, participants were also asked to provide a response to the open-ended question, *in a few words, what is the greatest challenge that your business school is facing right*

now? Of the overall 33 participants in the survey, 28 participants provided responses to this open-ended question, 5 of which provided more than one challenge. In total 34 challenges were identified as the greatest challenge facing the participants' schools. The researcher made a first pass over the short answers to identify specific themes mentioned within the free responses. This provided the researcher with five clear categorical responses with multiple responses in each and three single response categories. These three single response categories were related to faculty issues and as such, they were consolidated into a single category. The six broad categories of challenges were identified as: (1) physical resource constraints (e.g., building, space limitations), (2) financial constraints (e.g., financial scholarship sustainability, dwindling operating budgets, lack of fundraising), (3) faculty concerns (e.g., lack of high impact applied research, lack of faculty to teach, faculty bench strength, complacent faculty), (4) enrollment concerns (e.g., declining applications, lack of qualified applications, increased pressures to increase enrollments in a declining market), (5) leadership issues (e.g., lack of experience of senior leadership), and (6) changing program portfolio (e.g., declining value of the MBA, offering relevant degrees for the employer market, threat of substitutes). An analysis of the frequency distribution of comments in these categories revealed that enrollment concerns (35.3%), changing program portfolio (23.5%), and financial constraints (20.6%) were the top three challenge areas. These results are consistent with the results of the top two box analysis of the pre-identified pressures. Table 12 provides the frequency distribution of the responses by challenge category sorted in descending order by percentage of responses.

Table 12 Distribution of Responses by Challenge Category

Challenge Category	*f*	%
Enrollment concerns	12	35.3
Changing program portfolio	8	23.5
Financial constraints	7	20.6
Faculty concerns	5	14.7
Leadership issues	1	2.9
Physical resource constraints	1	2.9
Total (*n* = 34)	34	100.0

4.3 Research Question 2 – Strategic Planning Characteristics

The second research question asked *what are some of the prevailing characteristics of strategic plans and planning processes in US business schools?* In order to answer this research question, participants were asked to answer a series of questions in the strategic planning section of the survey related to their school's strategic plan and strategic planning process. This section used branching to present follow-up questions to the participant based on certain answers.

The first question in this section asked *does your school of business currently have a strategic plan?* Of the overall 33 participants for the survey, 30 participants answered this question. Of the 30 responses 27 or 90.0% answered in the affirmative. In an effort to adjust for potential school-based nomenclature, the 3 participants that responded with a *no* were asked the follow-up question *does your school have a document strategy of another type?* All 3 or 100.0% responded

in the affirmative. Unless the participant answered *no* to both of these questions, participants advanced to more detailed questions about their school's strategic plan and planning process.

The first questions asked the participant *when was your school's strategic plan developed*? For this question, 25 participants provided a response. Of the 25 responses, 9 or 36% responded that their school's plan was developed in the *last year*. Table 13 provides a summary.

Table 13 Time Since School's Plan Developed

When was your school's strategic plan developed?	*f*	%
Last year	9	36.0
2 years ago	2	8.0
3 years ago	5	20.0
4 years ago	4	16.0
5 years ago	2	8.0
More than 5 years ago	3	12.0
Total (*n* = 25)	25	100.0

Participants were then asked to identify the period of time that their school's current strategic plan covers. For this question, 25 participants provided a response. Of the 25 responses, the majority, 16 or 64%, stated that their school's current strategic plan covered a *5-year* period of time. Only 2 or 8% of the participants stated that their school's plan covered a period of time of *2 years or less*, and interestingly, 3 or 12% of the participants stated that their school's plan covered a time of *more than 5-years*. Table 14 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 14 Period of Time Covered by Current Plan

What period of time does your school's current strategic plan cover?	f	%
1 year	1	4.0
2 years	1	4.0
3 years	4	16.0
4 years	0	0.0
5 years	16	64.0
More than 5 years	3	12.0
Total ($n = 25$)	25	100.0

Participants were then asked to identify the frequency with which their school updated its strategic plan. A total of 25 participants provided a response to this question, with 4 or 16% stating that they were *unsure* of the frequency. While a majority of participants (64%) stated that their school's plan covered a period of 5-years in the previous question, only 7 or 28% of the participants stated that their school updated its plan *every 5 years.* While this was the most frequent response, *annually* was close behind with 6 or 24% of responses. Table 15 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 15 Frequency of Strategic Plan Updates

How often does your school update the strategic plan?	f	%
Annually	6	24.0
Every 2 years	2	8.0
Every 3 years	2	8.0

Table 15 (continued)

Every 4 years	2	8.0
Every 5 years	7	28.0
More than 5 years	2	8.0
Unsure	4	16.0
Total (*n* = 25)	25	100.0

The question that followed, asked participants to select from different choices the various ways certain stakeholder groups were involved in their school's strategic planning process. The pre-identified roles were: *provided feedback early in the process on the current state of the school* (feedback early), *asked to offer ideas for new opportunities for the school* (new opportunities), *served on the committee developing the plan* (committee), and *provided feedback on plan elements throughout the process* (feedback throughout). Participants were permitted to select multiple ways or not applicable for each of the stakeholder groups. These stakeholder groups were: *faculty, students, alumni, staff, recruiters,* and *non-recruiting industry experts*. In total, 25 participants provided responses to this question. Each stakeholder group was identified by at least one participant as having been involved in the strategic planning process in some capacity. The only stakeholder group identified by all of the participants as having been involved in the strategic planning process in some capacity was *faculty*. Table 16 provides a frequency summary of the number of participants that mentioned a particular stakeholder group in at least one capacity of involvement.

Table 16 Stakeholder Involvement in at Least One Capacity

Stakeholder Group	*f* (Involvement in at Least One Capacity)	% of n (*n* = 25)
Faculty	25	100.0
Staff	24	96.0
Alumni	23	92.0
Students	22	88.0
Recruiters	17	68.0
Non-recruiting industry experts	13	52.0

Table 17 provides a summary of the total number of selections per stakeholder group by level of involvement.

Table 17 Total Stakeholder Involvement by Involvement Type

	Provided feedback early in the process on the current state of the school	Asked to offer ideas for new opportunities for the school	Served on the committee developing the plan	Provided feedback on plan elements throughout the process	Total Mentions
Stakeholder Group	*f*	*f*	*f*	*f*	*f*
Faculty	18	18	18	21	75
Staff	18	17	10	15	60
Students	13	14	5	9	41
Alumni	15	16	3	7	41
Recruiters	7	9	3	3	22
Non-recruiting Industry Experts	8	9	1	2	20

The data show that faculty had the broadest involvement of the stakeholder groups in the strategic planning processes, as faculty had the most mentions in each of the involvement categories. The data also show that when reviewed together as a de facto external stakeholders label, *recruiters* and *non-recruiting industry experts*, were least involved in the strategic planning processes of participants' schools with 22 and 20 total mentions, respectively. In fact, only one school used non-recruiting industry experts on the strategic planning committee.

The next three questions to explore the characteristics of the schools' plans and planning processes asked participants to rate how important it was to update their school's mission statement, vision, and values during the strategic planning process. Participants selected the level of importance on a scale of *(1) Not at all important* to *(5) Extremely important.*

During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's mission statement? There were 25 responses for this question, and of those responses, only 1 or 4% stated that it was *not at all important* to update the school's mission statement during the planning process. As Table 18 shows, the remaining participants rated the importance of updating the mission statement at levels evenly distributed over the remaining choices.

Table 18 Importance of Updating Mission Statement During the Planning Process

Level of Importance	*f*	%
Not at all important	1	4.0
Slightly important	7	28.0
Moderately important	5	20.0
Very important	7	28.0

Table 18 (continued)

Extremely important	5	20.0
Total (*n* = 25)	25	100.0

During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's vision? There were 25 responses for this question, and of those responses, 2 or 8% stated that it was *not at all important* to update the school's vision during the planning process. As Table 19 shows, the remaining participants rated the importance of updating the school's vision at higher levels of importance with 13 or 52% responding with *very important* or *extremely important*.

Table 19 Importance of Updating Vision During the Planning Process

Level of Importance	*f*	%
Not at all important	2	8.0
Slightly important	4	16.0
Moderately important	6	24.0
Very important	8	32.0
Extremely important	5	20.0
Total (*n* = 25)	25	100.0

During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's values? Of the 25 responses, 4 or 16% rated this at the highest level of importance. As Table 20 shows, the majority of participants, 17 or 68%, rated the importance level of updating the school's values at *moderately important* or less.

Table 20 Importance of Updating Values in the Planning Process

Level of Importance	*f*	%
Not at all important	4	16.0
Slightly important	7	28.0
Moderately important	6	24.0
Very important	4	16.0
Extremely important	4	16.0
Total (*n* = 25)	25	100.0

The next series of questions focused on the articulation, measurement, and review of goals in the strategic plan and planning process. Participants were first asked a dichotomous question, *does your school's strategic plan articulate goals for the school?* The researcher used this question to branch follow-up questions related to the goals. For this question, 24 participants provided a response, of which 20 or 83.3% answered in the affirmative. These 20 participants were asked two follow-up questions.

The first follow-up question asked, h*ow clearly defined are the measures used to gauge progress toward the goals?* Participants rated their response on a scale from *(1) Extremely unclear* to *(5) Extremely clear.* All 20 participants provided a response to this question. The majority of participants responding to this question, 14 or 70%, stated that the clarity of the measures defined by the school to gauge progress toward the goals were *somewhat* to *extremely clear.* Table 21 provides a summary of the responses on the clarity of measures.

Table 21 Clarity of Measures to Gauge Progress Toward Goals

Level of Clarity	f	%
Extremely unclear	0	0.0
Somewhat unclear	3	15.0
Neither clear nor unclear	3	15.0
Somewhat clear	8	40.0
Extremely clear	6	30.0
Total ($n = 20$)	20	100.0

The second follow-up question asked, *how often does the school leadership review progress toward the goals?* Participants were asked to select from *weekly, monthly, quarterly, semesterly, annually,* or *never.* This question received 20 participant responses. Each frequency of review choice was represented by at least one participant response. The frequency of review choice that received the largest number of participant responses was *annually* with 8 responses or 40%. There were 2 participants, representing 10% of the responses to this question, that stated their school reviewed progress toward goals on a *weekly* basis. Table 22 provides a summary of the frequency of review toward goal progress results.

Table 22 Frequency of Progress Review Toward Goals

Frequency of Review	f	%
Never	1	5.0
Weekly	2	10.0
Monthly	4	20.0

Table 22 (continued)

Quarterly	2	10.0
Semesterly	3	15.0
Annually	8	40.0
Total (*n* = 20)	20	100.0

The next set of four questions were asked of all participants. These questions asked the participant to identify the extent to which their school conducted each of the four primary components of a strategic plan's environmental scan. Participants rated their response on a scale from *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal.* Participants were also given the choice of responding with *don't know.*

The first question in this series asked, *to what extent did your school conduct an internal analysis during the planning process in order to identify your school's strengths?* Twenty-four participants provided a response to this question, of which 1 or 4.2% did not know the answer to the question. All of the remaining 23 participants indicated that their school had completed an internal analysis to identify strengths to some extent. As Table 23 shows, the majority of the participants, 16 or 66.7%, rated the extent to which their school completed an internal analysis to identify strengths in the top two choices, *considerably* or *a great deal.*

Table 23 Extent That the School Conducted an Internal Analysis for Strengths

Extent of Internal Analysis	*f*	%
Not at all	0	0.0
Slightly	1	4.2
Moderately	6	25.0
Considerably	8	33.3
A great deal	8	33.3
Don't know	1	4.2
Total (*n* = 24)	24	100.00

The second question in this series asked, *to what extent did your school conduct an internal analysis during the planning process in order to identify your school's weaknesses?* Twenty-four participants provided a response to this question, of which 1 or 4.2% did not know the answer to the question. The remaining 23 participants indicated that their school had completed an internal analysis to identify weaknesses to some extent. As Table 24 shows, the majority of the participants, 17 or 70.8%, rated the extent to which their school completed an internal analysis to identify weaknesses in the top two choices, *considerably* or *a great deal.*

Table 24 Extent That the School Conducted an Internal Analysis for Weaknesses

Extent of Internal Analysis	*f*	%
Not at all	0	0.0
Slightly	2	8.3
Moderately	4	16.7
Considerably	11	45.8
A great deal	6	25.0

Table 24 (continued)

Don't know	1	4.2
Total (*n* = 24)	24	100.00

The third question asked, *to what extent did your school conduct an external analysis of the environment during the planning process to identify your school's opportunities?* Twenty-four participants provided a response to this question, of which 1 or 4.2% did not know the answer to the question, and 1 or 4.2% participant's school did not conduct an external analysis to identify opportunities. The remaining 22 responses indicated that their school had completed an external analysis to identify opportunities to some extent. As Table 25 shows, the majority of the participants, 14 or 58.3%, rated the extent to which their school completed an external analysis to identify opportunities in the top two choices, *considerably* or *a great deal.*

Table 25 Extent That the School Conducted an External Analysis for Opportunities

Extent of External Analysis	*f*	%
Not at all	1	4.2
Slightly	2	8.3
Moderately	6	25.0
Considerably	8	33.3
A great deal	6	25.0
Don't know	1	4.2
Total (*n* = 24)	24	100.0

The fourth question asked, *to what extent did your school conduct an external analysis of the environment during the planning process to identify your school's threats?* Twenty-four participants provided a response to this question, of which 1 or 4.2% did not know the answer to the question, and 1 or 4.2% participant's school did not conduct an external analysis to identify threats. The remaining 22 responses indicated that their school had completed an external analysis to identify threats to some extent. Identical to the previous question, Table 26 shows the majority of the participants, 14 or 58.3%, rated the extent to which their school completed an external analysis to identify opportunities in the top two choices, *considerably* or *a great deal.*

Table 26 Extent That the School Conducted an External Analysis for Threats

Extent of External Analysis	*f*	%
Not at all	1	4.2
Slightly	2	8.3
Moderately	6	25.0
Considerably	8	33.3
A great deal	6	25.0
Don't know	1	4.2
Total (*n* = 24)	24	100.0

The next question, *approximately how long (in months) did it take to develop your school's strategic plan,* was asked of all participants. Twenty-three participants provided a response to this question. Measures of central tendency were calculated in order to summarize the data about the time used to complete the strategic planning process. In addition, the researcher calculated measures of dispersion to better understand the variability in responses. The results showed 11.9

months as the mean time to completion, with the median time to completion as 12 months. However, a standard deviation of 8.1 suggests that the time to complete the strategic planning process was quite varied. Table 27 provides a summary of the measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Table 27 Statistics for Planning Process Completion Time (in Months)

n = 23	
Mean	11.9
Median	12.0
Mode	6.0[a]
Std. Deviation	8.1
Minimum	3.0
Maximum	36.0

[a] Multiple modes exist. Smallest value shown

To better understand the proportionality of responses for a given time or less, the researcher applied a cumulative frequency distribution analysis to the data. This analysis revealed that for nearly half of the participants, 47.8%, it took less than 9-months to complete the strategic planning process. This finding suggests that several outliers may be skewing the mean time to completion. Figure 4 provides the cumulative frequency distribution percentage chart.
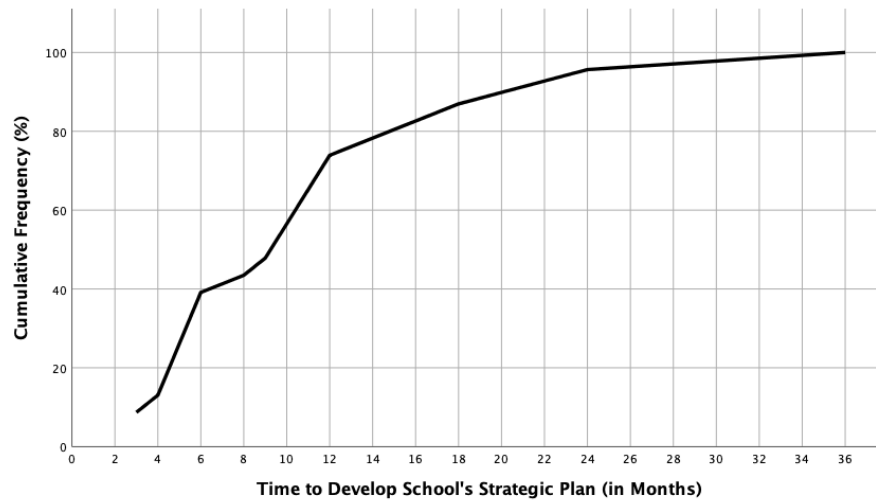
Figure 4 Cumulative Frequency Percentage for Planning Process Completion Time

The next series of questions focused on the strategic planning committee. Participants were first asked a dichotomous question, *was a committee created to develop the strategic plan?* The researcher used this question to branch follow-up questions related to the planning committee. For this question, 24 participants provided a response of which 22 or 91.7% answered in the affirmative. These 22 participants were asked three follow-up questions.

The first of these follow-up questions asked, *how often did the planning committee meet?* Participants selected from the following frequency of meetings choices: *daily, 4-6 times a week, 2-3 times a week, once a week,* or *monthly.* There were 22 responses to this question of which the majority, 14 or 63.6%, indicated that the planning committee met monthly. Table 28 provides a summary of the participants' responses regarding the frequency of meetings for the planning committee.

Table 28 Frequency of Meetings for the Planning Committee

Frequency of Meetings	f	%
Daily	0	0.0
4-6 times a week	0	0.0
2-3 times a week	1	4.6
Once a week	7	31.8
Monthly	14	63.6
Total ($n = 22$)	22	100.0

The second of these follow-up questions asked, *how important was it for the planning committee to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?* Participants selected the importance on a scale from *(1) Not at all important* to *(5) Extremely important.* There were 22 responses to this question of which a top two box analysis revealed the majority of participants, 13 or 59.1%, identified it as *very important* to *extremely important* for the committee to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed. Table 29 provides a summary of the participants' responses regarding the importance of the planning committee's documentation of work to be completed.

Table 29 Importance of Committee Documentation of Work to be Completed

Rating of Importance	f	%
Not at all important	0	0.0
Slightly important	1	4.6
Moderately important	8	36.4

Table 29 (continued)

Very important	11	50.0
Extremely important	2	9.1
Total (*n* = 22)	22	100.0

The third of these follow-up questions asked participants to *rate how often the committee circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing a component of the plan* to various stakeholder groups. The stakeholder groups were *faculty, staff, students, alumni, recruiters, industry experts,* and *advisory board.* Participants rated the frequency of draft circulation on a scale from *(1) Never* to *(5) Very often.* There were 21 responses to this question. Table 30 provides a summary of the responses for each stakeholder group and the frequency with which the committee circulated drafts of unfinished work.

Table 30 Circulation Frequency of Drafts of Committee Work by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Very Often	Total
	f	*f*	*f*	*f*	*f*	
Faculty	0	0	2	13	6	21
Staff	1	1	4	11	4	21
Students	1	2	13	5	0	21
Alumni	2	4	9	6	0	21
Recruiters	6	4	6	5	0	21
Industry Experts	6	4	5	6	0	21
Advisory Board	1	2	4	12	2	21

To more fully understand which of the stakeholder groups the committee solicited feedback on drafts of unfinished components of the strategic plan from the most, a top two and bottom two box analysis was applied to the data. A top two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the top two categories, in this case *(4) Occasionally* and *(5) Very often*. A bottom two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the bottom two categories, in this case *(1) Never* and *(2) Very rarely*. The top two box analysis revealed that the three stakeholder groups that were engaged the most to solicit feedback on unfinished components of the plan were (1) faculty with 90.5%, (2) staff with 71.4%, and (3) the school's advisory board with 66.7%. Recruiters and students, both with 23.8%, were tied as the stakeholder group with which the committee engaged the least for feedback on unfinished components of the plan. Table 31 provides a summary of the top two and bottom two box analysis sorted in descending order by top two box percentage.

Table 31 Top and Bottom Two Box Regularity of Stakeholder Feedback on Committee Work

Stakeholder Group	Bottom 2 Box %	Top 2 Box %
Faculty	0.0	90.5
Staff	9.5	71.4
Advisory Board	14.3	66.7
Industry Experts	47.6	28.6
Alumni	28.6	28.6
Recruiters	47.6	23.8
Students	14.3	23.8

The next series of questions focused on the use of smaller teams in the strategic planning process. Participants were first asked a dichotomous question, *were multiple smaller teams created to complete various parts of the plan?* The researcher used this question to branch follow-up questions related to the planning committee. For this question, 24 participants provided a response, of which 15 or 62.5% answered in the affirmative. These 15 participants were asked five additional follow-up questions.

The first follow-up question asked *how often did the smaller teams meet?* There were 15 participant responses to this question. Of the 15 responses, the majority, 9 or 60%, responded that the smaller teams met on a monthly basis. Table 32 provides a summary of the responses regarding the frequency of meetings for the smaller teams.

Table 32 Regularity of Small Team Meetings

Regularity of Meetings	f	%
Daily	0	0.0
4-6 times a week	0	0.0
2-3 times a week	1	6.7
Once a week	5	33.3
Monthly	9	60.0
Total ($n = 15$)	15	100.0

The second follow-up question asked *which of the following stakeholder groups were a part of these smaller teams?* Participants were asked to select each of the following stakeholder groups that applied: *faculty, students, alumni, staff, recruiters,* and *non-recruiting industry experts.* There were 15 responses for this question. All 15 participants stated that *faculty* were a part of the

smaller teams. Each stakeholder group was represented by at least 3 participant schools' responses, with *staff* as the only other stakeholder group to be mentioned by a majority of the schools at 13. Table 33 provides a summary of the participant schools' involvement of various stakeholder groups in the smaller work teams.

Table 33 School Involvement of Stakeholder Groups in Small Work Teams

Stakeholder Group	f (Number of Schools)	% of n (n = 15)
Faculty	15	100.0
Staff	13	86.7
Students	6	40.0
Alumni	6	40.0
Non-recruiting industry experts	6	40.0
Recruiters	3	20.0

The third follow-up question asked *to what extent did the small teams work in short iterations to complete a specific task for the plan?* Participants rated the extent on a scale from *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal.* Participants were also provided a choice of *don't know.* There were 15 responses recorded for this question, of which 2 or 13.3% stated that they did not know the extent to which the small teams worked in short iterations. The remaining participants identified that the small work teams worked in short iterations in some at some level with the majority, 8 or 53.3%, answering *considerably.* Table 34 provides a summary of the responses regarding the extent to which the small teams worked in short iterations to complete a specific task for the plan.

Table 34 Extent That Small Teams Worked in Short Iterations

Extent of Short Iterations	f	%
Not at all	0	0.0
Slightly	2	13.3
Moderately	3	20.0
Considerably	8	53.3
A great deal	0	0.0
Don't know	2	13.3
Total ($n = 15$)	15	100.00

The fourth of these follow-up questions asked, *how important was it for the smaller teams to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?* Participants selected the importance on a scale from *(1) Not at all important* to *(5) Extremely important.* Participants were also provided the choice of *don't know.* There were 15 responses to this question of which 2 or 13.3% responded with *don't know.* The remaining participants, responded that the maintaining of documents to track the work to be completed was important to the smaller teams at some level with *very important* receiving the most responses with 6 or 40.0%. Table 35 provides a summary of the level of importance for the smaller teams to maintain work tracking documents.

Table 35 Importance of Maintaining Work Tracking Documents by Smaller Teams

Rating of Importance	f	%
Not at all important	0	0.0
Slightly important	2	13.3
Moderately important	5	33.3

Table 35 (continued)

Very important	6	40.0
Extremely important	2	9.1
Don't know	2	13.3
Total (*n* = 15)	15	100.0

The fifth of these follow-up questions asked participants to *rate how often the smaller teams circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing a component their specific task* to various stakeholder groups. The stakeholder groups were *faculty, staff, students, alumni, recruiters, industry experts,* and *advisory board.* Participants rated the frequency of draft circulation on a scale from *(1) Never* to *(5) Very often.* There were 14 responses to this question. Table 36 provides a summary of the responses for each stakeholder group and the frequency with which the committee circulated drafts of unfinished work.

Table 36 Circulation Frequency of Drafts of Smaller Team Work by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Very Often	Total
	f	*f*	*f*	*f*	*f*	
Faculty	0	2	2	10	0	14
Staff	2	2	2	6	2	14
Students	4	4	4	1	1	14
Alumni	5	3	5	1	0	14
Recruiters	8	3	2	1	0	14
Industry Experts	6	2	3	3	0	14
Advisory Board	4	1	2	6	1	14

To more fully understand which of the stakeholder groups the smaller teams solicited feedback on drafts of work prior to completing their specific task from the most, a top two and bottom two box analysis was applied to the data. A top two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the top two categories, in this case *(4) Occasionally* and *(5) Very often*. A bottom two box analysis calculates the cumulative percentage of responses in the bottom two categories, in this case *(1) Never* and *(2) Very rarely*. The top two box analysis revealed that the three stakeholder groups that were engaged the most to solicit feedback on drafts of work for the specific task of the small team were (1) faculty with 71.4%, (2) staff with 57.1%, and (3) the advisory board with 57.1%. Alumni with 7.1% and recruiters with 7.1% were engaged by the smaller teams the least for feedback on drafts of work prior to completing the specific task of the small team. Table 37 provides a summary of the top two and bottom two box analysis sorted in descending order by top two box percentage.

Table 37 Top and Bottom Two Box Regularity of Stakeholder Feedback on Small Teams

Stakeholder Group	Bottom 2 Box %	Top 2 Box %
Faculty	14.3	71.4
Staff	28.6	57.1
Advisory Board	35.7	57.1
Industry Experts	57.1	21.4
Students	57.1	14.3
Alumni	57.1	7.1
Recruiters	78.6	7.1

The next series of questions focused on the leadership of the strategic planning process. Participants were first asked a dichotomous question, *was an individual identified to lead the strategic planning process?* The researcher used this question to branch follow-up questions related to the planning committee. For this question, 24 participants provided a response, of which 19 or 79.2% answered in the affirmative. The 19 participants were asked two additional follow-up questions.

The first of the follow-up questions asked the participant to choose the role that best described the process leader's role within the school. There were 19 responses to this question, with 9 or 47.4% identifying the leader of the strategic planning process as the *dean of the school*. A *senior staff leader* received 5 or 26.3% of the responses. There was 1 or 5.3% participant answered with *other* and stated in the free response box that his or her school used a hired consultant and internal staff member to lead the strategic planning process. Table 38 summarizes the strategic planning process leader's role within the business school.

Table 38 Planning Process Leader Roles Within the Business School

Role	f	%
Dean of the school	9	47.4
Senior leader – staff	5	26.3
Senior leader – faculty	3	15.8
Faculty (Tenured Track)	1	5.3
Faculty (Non-tenured Track)	0	0.0
Other staff member	0	0.0
Other	1	5.3
Total ($n = 19$)	19	100.0

The second follow-up question asked the participant to select *statements that best describe the role the leader played* in the strategic planning process. There were 19 responses to this question. Of the 19 responses, 10 or 52.6% of the participants described the leader's role in the strategic planning process as *accountable for ensuring that the details of the work being completed met the school's needs.* There were 4 participants or 21.1% that described the planning process leader's role was in part to *maintain a master list of work to be completed related to the overall planning process.* Table 39 summarizes the responses that the participants selected to describe the role of the strategic planning process leader.

Table 39 Leader's Role in the Strategic Planning Process

Role of Leader in Process	f (Number of Schools)	% of n (n = 19)
Was accountable for ensuring that the details of the work being completed met the school's needs	10	52.6
Provided the vision for the strategic plan, but let the committee carry out the planning process	9	47.4
Was responsible for overseeing the planning process only	8	42.1
Maintained a master list of work to be completed related to the overall planning process	4	21.1

The next question, *to what extent did all individuals in the planning process come together at the completion of specific planning process tasks to review what was completed, as well as celebrate the success?* was asked of all participants. Participants rated their responses on a scale of *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal* and were provided the opportunity to respond with *don't know.*

There were 23 participant responses, of which three or 13.0% responded that they didn't know and one or 4.4% responded with *not at all.* As Table 40 shows, the majority of participants, 12 or 52.2%, responded in the top two categories, *considerably* or *a great deal.*

Table 40 Extent Individuals in the Process Reviewed and Celebrated Completed Work

Extent of Coming Together	*f*	%
Not at all	1	4.4
Slightly	1	4.4
Moderately	6	26.1
Considerably	9	39.1
A great deal	3	13.0
Don't know	3	13.0
Total (*n* = 23)	23	100.0

The next question asked participants *to what extent were charts used to track the expected vs. actually completed tasks over time?* Participants rated their response on a scale of *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal* and were provided the opportunity to respond with *don't know.* There were 23 participant responses, of which 5 or 21.7% responded with *don't know.* There were 6 or 26.1% that responded with *not at all.* The choice that received the most participant responses was *moderately* with 8 or 34.8% responses. As Table 41 shows, there was one participant, representing 4.4%, that responded that to *a great deal* they used charts to track expected vs. completed tasks over time.

Table 41 Charts Used to Track Expected vs. Completed Tasks Over Time

Extent of Chart Usage	f	%
Not at all	6	26.1
Slightly	3	13.0
Moderately	8	34.8
Considerably	0	0.0
A great deal	1	4.4
Don't know	5	21.7
Total ($n = 23$)	23	100.0

The next question asked participants to identify *the primary motivator for your school to develop a strategic plan?* Participants were asked to select from the following list of motivators: *new dean, accreditation requirement, university requirement, government agency requirement, challenges facing the school call for a strategy,* or *other* that allowed for a free response. There were 23 participant responses for this question. The majority of participants, 12 or 52.2%, stated that a *new dean* was the primary motivator for the school to develop a strategic plan. As Table 42 shows, there were two participants, representing 8.7%, that responded with *other* citing "good practice" and "to identify new initiatives" as the motivators for developing a strategic plan.

Table 42 Primary Motivator for Developing a Strategic Plan

Motivator	*f*	%
New dean	12	52.2
Accreditation requirement	4	17.4
Challenges facing the school call for a strategy	3	13.0
University requirement	2	8.7
Other		
"Good practice"	1	4.4
"Identify new initiatives"	1	4.4
Government agency requirement	0	0.0
Total (*n* = 23)	23	100.0

The next question asked participants if their schools' *strategic plan is available to the public?* There were 23 responses to this question. Of those 23 responses, 12 or 52.2% responded *no* and 11 or 47.8% responded *yes,* their schools' strategic plans are available to the public.

The next question asked participants to *rate the frequency at which you reference your school's strategic plan to advise your decision-making?* Participants responded on a scale from *(1) Far too little* to *(5) Far too much.* There were 23 participant responses for this question. As Table 43 shows, the majority of the participants, 17 or 73.9%, responded that they referenced their school's strategic plan *neither too much nor too little* to advise their decision-making.

Table 43 Frequency Strategic Plan Referenced to Advise Decision-Making

Frequency of Reference	*f*	%
Far too little	2	8.7
Too little	3	13.0
Neither too much nor too little	17	73.9
Too much	1	4.4
Far too much	0	0.0
Total (*n* = 23)	23	100.0

The final question in the strategic plan and planning process section of the survey asked participants *how would you rate the overall effectiveness of your school's strategic planning process?* Participants responded on a scale from *(1) Not effective at all* to *(5) Extremely effective.* There were 23 participant responses to this question. The choice that received the most responses was *moderately effective* with as rated by 10 or 43.5% of the participants. There were six participants or 26.1% that their schools' planning processes were *slightly effective*, this was the lowest effectiveness rating to receive a response. Table 44 provides a summary of the effectiveness of the participant schools' planning processes.

Table 44 Effectiveness of Strategic Planning Processes

Effectiveness	*f*	%
Not effective at all	0	0.0
Slightly effective	6	26.1
Moderately effective	10	43.5

Table 44 (continued)

Very effective	4	17.4
Extremely effective	3	13.0
Total (*n* = 23)	23	100.0

4.4 Research Question 3 – Traditional vs. Agile-Infused Planning

Research question three asked *where do the strategic planning processes of US business schools fall on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum?* In order to answer this question, the Planning Process Dimension Score (PPDS) discussed earlier was applied to the participant results. It is important to remind the reader that due to the small sample, this study serves as an initial test of the application of the scoring system. The system placed the school on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum based on the five key dimensions – *process leadership, work teams, engagement of stakeholders, documentation of process,* and *duration of process* discussed earlier in Table 1. The scoring system point allocation rubric is repeated in Table 45.

Table 45 PPDS Scoring System Point Allocation Rubric

Dimension	Dimension Score Range	Question	Point Allocation			Question Score Range
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	
			Continuous Measure Not Easily Assigned to a Process Type			
Dimension 1: Process Leadership	0 - 5	Q4.30	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.32	(1) point per selection			0 - 4
Dimension 2: Work Teams	0 - 26	Q4.20	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.21	Monthly (1), Once a week (2)	2-3 times a week (3)	4-6 times a week (4), Daily (5)	0 - 5
		Q4.24	No (0) , Yes (1)			0 - 1
		Q4.25	Monthly (1), Once a week (2)	2-3 times a week (3)	4-6 times a week (4), Daily (5)	0 - 5
		Q4.26	(1) point per selection			0 - 6
		Q4.27	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Considerably (3), A great deal (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.33	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Considerably (3), A great deal (4)	0 - 4
Dimension 3: Documentation of Process	0 - 12	Q4.22	Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.28	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
		Q4.34	Don't Know (0), Not at all (0), Slightly (1)	Moderately (2)	Very (3), Extremely (4)	0 - 4
Dimension 4: Engagement of Stakeholders	0 - 154	Q4.8	(1) point per stakeholder +Sum of [Feedback early (1), Offer opportunities (2), Committee (3), and/or Feedback throughout (4)]			0 - 84
		Q4.23	If stakeholder Never (0), else (1) point per stakeholder + [Very rarely (1), rarely (2), Occasionally (3), or Very often (4)]			0 - 35
		Q4.29	If stakeholder Never (0), else (1) point per stakeholder + [Very rarely (1), rarely (2), Occasionally (3), or Very often (4)]			0 - 35
Dimension 5: Duration of Process	0 - 3	Q4.19	> 18 months (0), 13-18 months (1)	7-12 months (2)	<= 6 months (3)	0 - 3

4.4.1 Applying the Project Planning Dimension Score

Each question and variable were coded with the corresponding score in the Qualtrics system and assigned by dimension to a scoring group. By using the native scoring feature within Qualtrics, the researcher was able to reduce human coding error. As part of the data output, Qualtrics calculated each dimension score. The data were then imported to SPSS for calculation of the overall Project Planning Dimension Score (PPDS).

In order to conduct a more controlled and consistent test of the PPDS, the scoring system was applied to the 23 fully completed survey responses. Within these 23 surveys, various conditions were encountered (e.g., unanswered questions due to branching, variety in answers, and diverse participants) allowing for a more realistic application of the scoring system. Table 46 shows a few of the characteristics of the 23 participants on which the scoring system was applied.

Table 46 Characteristics of Schools Analyzed by PPDS

School Characteristics	f	%
Campus Setting		
Urban	17	73.9
Rural	8	26.1
Total ($n = 23$)	23	100.0
Region of the US		
Northeast [a]	10	43.5
Midwest [b]	2	8.7
South [c]	8	34.8
West [d]	3	13.0
Total ($n = 23$)	23	100.0

[a] CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
[b] IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI
[c] AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
[d] AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

Table 46 (continued)

Institution Type		
Public	12	52.2
Private	11	47.8
Total ($n = 23$)	23	100.0
FT MBA Ranking		
Top Third (1-33)	6	26.1
Middle Third (34-66)	9	39.1
Bottom Third (67-100)	8	34.8
Total ($n = 23$)	23	100.0
Research Institution		
Yes	20	87.0
No	3	13.0
Total ($n = 33$)	33	100.0

When the scoring system was applied to the 23 participants, the PPDS scores ranged from the lowest score 22 to the highest score at 138. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were computed to summarize the data and better understand the variability in scores for the PPDS scores. These tests revealed that of the 23 calculated scores, the mean score was 83.2, with a standard deviation of 28.6, and a median score of 84. Table 47 provides details of the measures of central tendency and dispersion for each of the key comparison dimensions, as well as the overall PPDS score.

Table 47 Statistics for Dimension and Overall PPDS Scores

	Dimension 1 Process Leadership	Dimension 2 Work Teams	Dimension 3 Documentation of Process	Dimension 4 Engagement with Stakeholders	Dimension 5 Duration of Process	PPDS Score
N	23	23	23	23	23	23
Mean	2.2	9.6	4.5	65.0	2.0	83.2
Median	2.0	10.0	5.0	64.0	2.0	84.0
Mode	2	4	2[a]	70[a]	3	67[a]
Std. Deviation	1.4	5.2	2.4	23.0	1.1	28.6
Minimum	0	2	0	16	0	22
Maximum	5	18	8	110	3	138

[a] Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The data from Table 47 also show that with a standard deviation of 23.0, participants had the greatest variability in responses for Dimension 4. This dimension is most likely contributing to the high variability in the overall PPDS scores, as well. Appendix D provides a summary of each participant school's scores for each dimension, as well as the total PPDS score.

As the reader will recall, the PPDS score is on a scale from 0-200. Also, for the purposes of this study and discussed earlier in chapter three, the overall PPDS score was divided into three process type bands as an indicator of a *more traditional* (scores 0-60)*, mixed* (scores 61-100)*, or more agile* (scores 101-200) process. As Figure 5 shows, under these conditions, six schools fell in the *more agile* band, while five schools fell in the *more traditional* band. The remaining 12 schools fell in the *mixed* process type band.
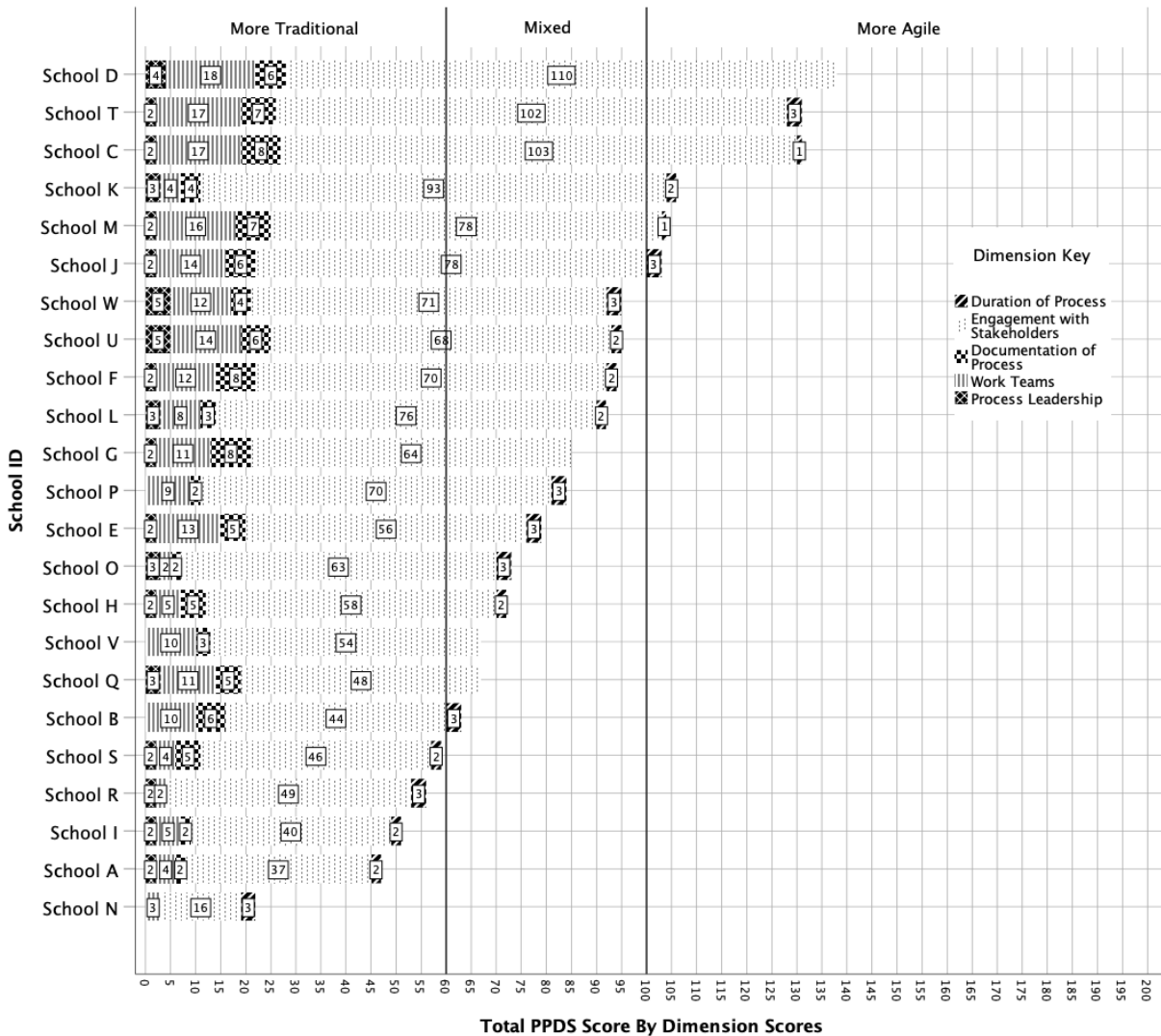
Figure 5 Total PPDS Score with Dimension Scores

4.5 Research Question 4 – Factors Contributing to Process Type

The fourth and final research question of this study asked, *to what extent do certain market pressures or US business school characteristics appear to influence the strategic planning process?* In order to answer this question, the researcher examined several variables related to market pressures and school characteristics against the participant schools' Planning Process

Dimension Score (PPDS). Since the analysis of potential relationships or trends among the variables relies on the PPDS, the researcher restricted the analysis to the 23 participants that fully completed the survey. These 23 participants provided answers for the school characteristics, the pressures their schools face, and the characteristics of the planning process on which the PPDS was scored. As a reminder to the reader, 5 schools were classified as *more traditional,* 12 schools were classified as *mixed,* and 6 schools were classified as *more agile.*

To begin the analysis the researcher attempted several measures of correlation (e.g. regression, chi square, Kendall's Tau). Results of these initial tests were inconclusive, problematic, and potentially misleading due to the small sample size and variable types. In order to compensate for this issue, the researcher opted to compile a series of cross tabulations to identify the potential for relationships or associations among the numerous variables and the PPDS score type band. This section is organized in two subsections, the first consists of the cross tabulations for school characteristics, while the second consists of the cross tabulations with the market pressures.

4.5.1 Influence of School Characteristics on Planning Process Type

As discussed earlier in this chapter, participants were asked a series of questions about their business school. This section looks at several of those characteristics compared to the PPDS process type band. Each characteristic question is explored below within the PPDS process type band for an examination of potential relationships.

4.5.1.1 Campus Setting

Which of the following best describes the setting of the primary campus of your business school? Participants selected from *urban* or *rural.* Campus setting can play a key role for a

business school with regard to the educational experience, research opportunities, or potential for corporate partnerships. Table 48 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 48 Business School Campus Setting Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Which of the following best describes the setting of the primary campus of your business school?	Urban	Count	4	8	5	17
		% within setting	23.5	47.1	29.4	100.0
		% within band	80.0	66.7	83.3	73.9
		% of total	17.4	34.8	21.7	73.9
	Rural	Count	1	4	1	6
		% within setting	16.7	66.7	16.7	100.0
		% within band	20.0	33.3	16.7	26.1
		% of total	4.4	17.4	4.4	26.1
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within setting	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participants identifying their schools' setting as *urban*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 47.1% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' setting as *rural*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 66.7% of the responses. The overall association receiving the greatest percentage of responses were *urban schools identified as mixed process type*, with 34.8% of the total responses for this question.

4.5.1.2 School Location Within Region of the US

Please select the region of the US where the primary campus of your graduate school of business resides? Participants selected from the following regions: *Northeast or NE* (CT, ME MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT), *Midwest or MW* (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI), *South or S* (AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV), or *West or W* (AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT,NM,NV, OR, UT, WA, WY). Different regions of the US offer opportunities, as well as challenges, for business schools and may impact school strategy. Table 49 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 49 Region of US Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Please select the region of the US where the primary campus of your graduate school of business resides	NE	Count	3	5	2	10
		% within region	30.0	50.0	20.0	100.0
		% within band	60.0	41.7	33.3	43.5
		% of total	13.0	21.7	8.7	43.5
	MW	Count	0	1	1	2
		% within setting	0.0	50.0	50.0	10.0
		% within band	0.0	8.3	16.7	8.7
		% of total	0.0	4.4	4.4	8.7
	S	Count	2	4	2	8
		% within setting	25.0	50.0	25.0	100.0

Table 49 (continued)

		% within band	40.0	33.3	33.3	34.8
		% of total	8.7	17.4	8.7	34.8
	W	Count	0	2	1	3
		% within setting	0.0	66.7	33.3	100.0
		% within band	0.0	16.7	16.7	13.0
		% of total	0.0	8.7	4.4	13.0
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within setting	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participants identifying their schools' location as in the *Northeast*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 50.0% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' location as in the *Midwest*, participants were evenly distributed over *mixed* and *more agile*, with each having 50.0% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' location as in the *South*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 50.0% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' location as in the *West*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 66.7% of the responses. The overall association receiving the greatest percentage of responses were *Northeast schools identified as mixed process type*, with 21.7% of the total responses for this question.

4.5.1.3 MBA Program Ranking

In the most recent US News and World Report ranking of full-time MBA programs (reported March 2018), where did your school's program rank? Participants were given the choices of *top third (1-33), middle third (34-66),* and *bottom third (67-100).* A school's ranking can have an impact on strategy for the school depending on the areas of emphasis of the particular ranking. Table 50 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 50 US News Rank Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
In the most recent US News and World Report ranking of full-time MBA programs (reported March 2018), where did your school's program rank?	Top Third	Count	2	4	0	6
		% within rank	33.3	66.7	0.0	100.0
		% within band	40.0	33.3	0.0	26.1
		% of total	8.7	17.4	0.0	26.1
	Middle Third	Count	3	2	4	9
		% within rank	33.3	22.2	44.4	100.0
		% within band	60.0	16.7	66.7	39.1
		% of total	13.0	8.7	17.4	39.1
	Bottom Third	Count	0	6	2	8
		% within rank	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	26.1	8.7	34.8
		% of total	0.0	26.1	8.7	34.8
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within setting	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participants identifying their schools' ranking in the *top third*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 66.7% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' ranking in the *middle third*, participants were more likely to be in the *more agile* process type band, with 44.4% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their schools' ranking in the *bottom third*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 75% of the responses. The overall association receiving the greatest percentage of responses were *schools ranked in the bottom third as mixed process type*, with 26.1% of the total responses for this question. It should also be noted that of those participant schools' planning processes identified as *more agile*, 66.7% were ranked in the *middle third.*

4.5.1.4 Research School Classification

Would you consider your university to be a research institution (R1 or R2 Carnegie Classification®)? This question was a dichotomous question-type, that had participants select *yes* or *no* to whether their schools were a research institution. A school's research focus has implications on strategies, goals for the school, as well involvement of stakeholders in the planning process. Table 51 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 51 Research Institution Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Would you consider your university to be a research institution (R1 or R2 Carnegie Classification®)?	Yes	Count	5	11	4	20
		% within response	25.0	55.0	20.0	100.0
		% within band	100.0	91.7	66.7	87.0
		% of total	21.7	47.8	17.4	87.0
	No	Count	0	1	2	3

Table 51 (continued)

	% within response	0.0	33.3	66.7	100.0
	% within band	0.0	8.3	33.3	13.0
	% of total	0.0	4.4	8.7	13.0
Total	Count	5	12	6	23
	% within setting	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
	% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participants identifying their school as a *research institution*, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 55% of the responses. Of those participants identifying their school as a *non-research institution*, participants were more likely to be in the *more agile* process type band, with 66.7% of the responses. The overall association receiving the greatest percentage of responses were *research schools identified as mixed process type*, with 47.8% of the total responses for this question. Additionally, for schools identified as *more traditional*, 100% of participants were *research institutions.*

4.5.1.5 Program Size

What is the approximate size of the entering class in your full-time, two-year program? And, what is the approximate size of the entering class in your full-time, 12-18 month program? For the purposes of this study, the researcher was looking to explore the relationship between the MBA program enrollment and the planning process type. Having the participant identify the type of MBA program was a way to acknowledge the two primary types of full-time non-executive MBA programs in order to be more inclusive for respondents. For the purposes of this cross

tabulation, the selections the participants made for their enrollment for each program were combined into a total estimated enrollment of MBA students. The researcher then categorized the participant schools into three categories of enrollment size by consolidating the original question's two middle enrollment selections of *50-100* and *100-150*. The newly created enrollment size categories were *small (less than 50), medium (50-150), and large (more than 150).* Table 52 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 52 MBA Program Size Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
What is the approximate size of the entering class in your full-time, two year program, and full-time, 12-18 month program?	Small (less than 50)	Count	1	5	3	9
		% within size	11.1	55.6	33.3	100.0
		% within band	20.0	45.5	50.0	40.9
		% of total	4.6	22.7	13.6	40.9
	Medium (50-150)	Count	4	3	2	9
		% within size	44.4	33.3	22.2	100.0
		% within band	80.0	27.3	33.3	40.9
		% of total	18.2	13.6	9.1	40.9
	Large (more than 150)	Count	0	3	1	4
		% within size	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	27.7	16.7	18.2
		% of total	0.0	13.6	4.55	18.18
Total		Count	5	11[a]	6	22
		% within setting	22.7	50.0	27.3	100.0

Table 52 (continued)

% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% of total	22.7	50.0	27.3	100.0

[a] One participant in the *mixed* type band did not provide approximate enrollment

Of those participants identified as having *small* enrollment, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 55.6% of the responses. Of those participants identified as having *medium* enrollment size, participants were more likely to be in the *more traditional* process type band, with 44.4% of the responses, although responses were fairly evenly distributed. Of those participants identified as having *large* enrollment size, participants were more likely to be in the *mixed* process type band, with 75% of the responses. The overall association receiving the greatest percentage of responses were *small enrollment schools identified as mixed process type*, with 22.7% of the total responses for this question. However, the reader should note that distributions across this variable were fairly disbursed which may signal weak potential of association.

4.5.2 Influence of Market Pressures on Planning Process Type

In addition, as discussed earlier in this chapter, participants were asked to rate the extent to which their school faced certain pre-identified pressures that are currently having an impact on the graduate business education and school industry. Participants provided a response on a scale of *(1) Not at all* to *(5) A great deal.* In section, 4.2 of this study, the researcher analyzed the pressures faced by the schools via a top and bottom two box analysis. This analysis, found in Table 9, identified the top five pressures having the greatest impact on participant schools as (1)

sustainability of financial scholarships, (2) ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need, (3) international MBA graduates not able to find MBA-level jobs, (4) declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants, and (5) declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants.

This section looks at these five greatest pressures compared to the PPDS process type band. There were 31 total participants that provided a response to the question about pressures. This larger response rate for this question, provided greater insight into the pressures most having an impact and were clearly perceived to be based on each receiving over 40% response in the top two boxes *considerably* and *a great deal*. Each pressure is explored below within the PPDS process type band for an examination of potential relationships.

4.5.2.1 Sustainability of Financial Scholarships

The average financial scholarship awarded to admitted students is increasing at an unsustainable rate due to the competition to enroll MBA candidates. This particular pressure received a top two box score of 58.1% as found in Table 9. Table 53 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 53 Financial Scholarship Sustainability Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
The average financial scholarship awarded to admitted students is increasing at an unsustainable rate due to the competition to enroll MBA candidates	Not at all	Count	0	2	0	2
		% within extent	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	16.7	0.0	8.7
		% of total	0.0	8.7	0.0	8.7
	Slightly	Count	1	3	0	4
		% within extent	25.0	75.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	20.0	25.0	0.0	17.4
		% of total	4.4	13.0	0.0	17.4
	Moderately	Count	0	3	1	4
		% within extent	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	25.0	16.7	17.4
		% of total	0.0	13.0	4.4	17.4
	Considerably	Count	1	2	4	7
		% within extent	14.3	28.6	57.1	100.0
		% within band	20.0	16.7	66.7	30.4
		% of total	4.4	8.7	17.4	30.4
	A great deal	Count	3	2	1	6
		% within extent	50.0	33.3	16.7	100.0
		% within band	60.0	16.7	16.7	26.1
		% of total	13.0	8.7	4.4	26.1
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within extent	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.00	1000	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participant schools identified as having a *more agile* planning process, 83.3%

rated the extent to which this pressure had impacted their school in the top two boxes, *considerably*

or *a great deal.* Of the 13 participants that stated that the financial scholarship pressure has had an

impact on their school *considerably* or *a great deal,* 61.5% had a more *traditional* or *mixed* process

type band.

4.5.2.2 Ensuring Graduates Have Skills Employers Need

Ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need through your

school's curriculum. This particular pressure received a top two box score of 54.8% as found in

Table 9. This statement rates the extent to which participants are feeling this pressure from

industry. Table 54 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 54 Ensuring Graduates Possess Skills Employers Need Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need through your school's curriculum	Not at all	Count	0	1	1	2
		% within extent	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	8.3	16.7	8.7
		% of total	0.0	4.4	4.4	8.7
	Slightly	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within extent	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	8.3	0.0	4.4
		% of total	0.0	4.4	0.0	4.4
	Moderately	Count	1	3	1	5
		% within extent	20.0	60.0	20.0	100.0

Table 54 (continued)

		% within band	20.0	25.0	16.7	21.7
		% of total	4.4	13.0	4.4	21.7
	Considerably	Count	3	7	4	14
		% within extent	21.4	50.0	28.6	100.0
		% within band	60.0	58.3	66.7	60.9
		% of total	13.0	30.4	17.4	30.4
	A great deal	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within extent	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	20.0	0.0	0.0	4.4
		% of total	4.4	0.0	0.0	4.4
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within extent	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participant schools identified as having a *more agile* planning process, 66.7% rated the extent to which this pressure had impacted their school in the top two boxes, *considerably* or *a great deal.* Of the 15 participants that stated that the pressure to ensure that MBA graduates leave school with the skills employers need has had an impact on their school *considerably* or *a great deal 73.3%* had a *mixed to more agile* process type band indicating a potential association between this pressure and planning process type.

4.5.2.3 International MBA Graduates Able to Find Employment

International graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school. This pressure also scored a 54.8% top box score in the analysis found in Table 9. Table 55 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 55 International MBA Graduate Employability Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
International graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	Not at all	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within extent	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	8.3	0.0	4.4
		% of total	0.0	4.4	0.0	4.4
	Slightly	Count	1	2	1	4
		% within extent	25.0	50.0	25.0	100.0
		% within band	20.0	16.7	16.7	17.4
		% of total	4.4	8.7	4.4	17.4
	Moderately	Count	1	4	1	6
		% within extent	16.7	66.7	16.7	100.0
		% within band	20.0	33.3	16.7	26.1
		% of total	4.4	17.4	4.4	26.1
	Considerably	Count	1	2	1	4
		% within extent	25.0	50.0	25.0	100.0
		% within band	20.0	16.7	16.7	17.34
		% of total	8.7	13.0	13.0	34.8
	A great deal	Count	2	3	3	8
		% within extent	25.0	37.5	37.5	100.0

Table 55 (continued)

		40.0	25.0	50.0	34.8
	% within band				
	% of total	8.7	13.0	13.0	34.8
Total	Count	5	12	6	23
	% within extent	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
	% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participant schools identified as having a *more agile* planning process, 66.7% rated the extent to which this pressure had impacted their school in the top two boxes, *considerably* or *a great deal.* In addition, one participant, or 25% of those identified as having a *more agile* process, had rated this pressure at *slightly.* Of the 12 participants that stated that the pressure related to international student employability has had an impact on their school *considerably* or *a great deal 75%* had a *mixed to more agile* process type band indicating a potential association between this pressure and planning process type.

4.5.2.4 Decline in MBA Applicants from US

Declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants. This pressure scored a 45.2% in the top two box analysis from Table 9. Table 56 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 56 Decline in MBA Applicants from US Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants.	Not at all	Count	0	0	0	0
		% within extent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		% within band	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		% of total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Slightly	Count	0	4	0	4
		% within extent	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	33.3	0.0	17.4
		% of total	0.0	17.4	0.0	17.4
	Moderately	Count	2	2	2	6
		% within extent	33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0
		% within band	40.0	16.7	33.3	26.1
		% of total	8.7	8.7	8.7	26.1
	Considerably	Count	1	3	2	6
		% within extent	16.7	50.0	33.3	100.0
		% within band	20.0	25.0	33.3	26.1
		% of total	4.4	13.0	8.7	26.1
	A great deal	Count	2	3	2	7
		% within extent	28.6	42.9	28.6	100.0
		% within band	40.0	25.0	33.3	30.4
		% of total	8.7	13.0	8.7	30.4
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within extent	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participant schools identified as having a *more agile* planning process, 66.7%

rated the extent to which this pressure had impacted their school in the top two boxes, *considerably*

or *a great deal.* Of the 13 participants that stated that the decline in MBA applicants from the US

has had an impact on their school *considerably* or *a great deal,* 76.9% had a *mixed* or *more agile*

process type band indicating a potential association between this pressure and planning process

type.

4.5.2.5 Decline in MBA Applicants from Outside of US

Declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants. This pressure scored

a 41.9% in the top two box analysis from Table 9. As stated previously, applications to MBA

programs continue to decline. Table 57 provides the cross tabulation for this variable.

Table 57 Decline in MBA Applications from International Applicants Cross Tabulation

			PPDS Process Type Band			
			More Traditional	Mixed	More Agile	Total
Declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants.	Not at all	Count	0	0	0	0
		% within extent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		% within band	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		% of total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Slightly	Count	0	4	0	4
		% within extent	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	0.0	33.3	0.0	17.4
		% of total	0.0	17.4	0.0	17.4
	Moderately	Count	3	3	2	8

Table 57 (continued)

			37.5	37.5	25.0	100.0
		% within extent	37.5	37.5	25.0	100.0
		% within band	60.0	25.0	33.3	34.8
		% of total	13.0	13.0	8.7	34.8
	Considerably	Count	1	1	4	6
		% within extent	16.7	16.7	66.7	100.0
		% within band	20.0	8.3	66.7	26.1
		% of total	4.4	4.4	17.4	26.1
	A great deal	Count	1	4	0	5
		% within extent	20.0	80.0	0.0	100.0
		% within band	20.0	33.3	0.0	21.7
		% of total	4.4	17.4	0.0	21.7
Total		Count	5	12	6	23
		% within extent	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0
		% within band	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		% of total	21.7	52.2	26.1	100.0

Of those participant schools identified as having a *more agile* planning process, 66.7% rated the extent to which this pressure had impacted their school in the top two boxes, *considerably* or *a great deal.* Of the 11 participants that stated that the decline in MBA applications from international applicants has had an impact on their school *considerably* or *a great deal,* 81.8% had a *mixed* or *more agile* process type band indicating a potential association between this pressure and planning process type.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the data collected from the self-designed survey. Through the presentation of the data, the reader was exposed to the demographics of the participants and the characteristics of their schools. From there, an analysis was performed to identify the top pressures having the greatest impact on participant schools. Next, the researcher presented the reader with the characteristics of both the strategic plans and planning processes of the participant business schools. From this data, the researcher identified several questions in order to create the Planning Process Dimension Score (PPDS) allowing the reader to see where the various participant schools fell on a process type spectrum ranging from more traditional to more agile. Finally, the researcher presented a series of cross tabulations to identify any potential associations between school characteristics, as well as pressures felt by the schools, and planning process type.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify the pressures having the greatest impact on US business schools offering graduate education, explore the characteristics of the strategic plans and strategic planning processes of those schools, ascertain whether the planning processes were more traditional or agile-infused – a contemporary view of the strategic planning process – in nature, and examine to what extent school characteristics or pressures felt influence the planning process type. Chapter four presented the data collected in order to address the purpose of this study. This chapter discusses the key findings of the study with relation to the research questions, identifies implications of these findings for business school administrators, suggests recommendations for further research, and offers conclusions. While the limited number of responses impacted the generalizability of the conclusions, the participant responses offered valuable data to advance this body of research and begin to refine the survey instrument, and ultimately, refine the self-assessment and planning process spectrum.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

Chapter four presented the reader with each of the data collected, as well as an analysis of the various data points. This section provides interpretation of key findings and discusses the conclusions drawn via the exploratory study. It is organized by research question to provide the reader with a better understanding of the placement of the conclusions in the context of the study.

5.1.1 Research Question 1

To what extent are market pressures in the graduate business education industry impacting US business schools?

The results from the rating of statements revealed that only one of the pressures, *declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants*, had an impact on each of the schools. The remaining pressures had at least one school that had not been impacted at all by the pressure and for those that had been impacted, the level at which they were impacted varied. These included pressures to solicit input from industry professionals on program design, encouraging faculty to conduct more relevant research, and employers no longer valuing the MBA degree.

A top two box analysis revealed that the five pressures impacting participants' schools the most according to the participants were (1) sustainability of financial scholarships (58.1%), (2) ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need (54.8%), (3) international MBA graduates not able to find MBA-level jobs (54.8%), (4) declining full-time MBA applications from US applicants (45.2%), and (5) declining full-time MBA applications from international applicants (41.9%). In addition, the results from the analysis of the free responses confirmed these pressures, but also revealed the changing program portfolio as a concern that is top of mind with 23.5% of the free responses.

Conversely, a bottom two box analysis was applied to identify the pressures having the least impact on the participant schools. These pressures and bottom two box scores included: the growth of online programs negatively impacting on-campus enrollments (45.2%), engaging industry in the design of new programs (45.2%), specialty master's programs cannibalizing the MBA (48.4%), faculty focusing on conducting more relevant research (48.4%), employers no longer valuing the MBA (51.6%), and domestic graduate employability for MBA-level jobs (71%).

These results were surprising based on the mainstream media coverage of business education. More specifically, industry continues to talk about the fact that they feel a disconnect with business schools and feel that they aren't teaching skills that are relevant, and the research that comes from schools is not advancing the profession (Holland, 2009). In addition, the literature discussed employers devaluing the MBA (Datar et al., 2011). These two examples point to a potential disconnect between the feedback from industry and the reception or acknowledgement of these concerns by business schools. This suggests one of several situations, (1) that these schools understand these as issues but are not feeling pressured to address them, (2) they are no longer feeling the pressure as they have identified solutions to address them, or (3) there is a disconnect between the individual and understanding the potential pressure.

5.1.2 Research Question 2

What are some of the prevailing characteristics of strategic plans and planning processes in US business schools?

First for the strategic plan itself, there were a number of questions that gathered information about elements of the plan that were consistently identified in the literature review as important. These included mission, vision, values, goals, internal analysis, and an external analysis. Updating the mission statement appeared to be an important aspect of the participant schools' strategic plans with 68% rating the importance at *moderately important* to *extremely important.* In addition, 76% of participants rated the importance of updating their school's vision as *moderately* to *extremely important.* Unsurprisingly, only 56% of participant's stated that it was *moderately* to *extremely important* to update their school's values during the planning process. Each of these results are consistent with the recommendations for strategic plans as outlined in the literature review.

Including the updating of *values,* as values are typically seen as long-standing positions of the organization, these are updated with relatively less frequency. Contrast this with an organization's mission and vision, both of which may update, and rightly so, as the organization grows and adapts to change.

As for the inclusion of goals, it was interesting to see that 16.7% of participants answering the question, stated that their school's strategic plan did not include the articulation of goals. This is a key component of the strategic plan and establishes the commonly accepted destination of the path forward. In a follow-up about the goals, for those that responded their school articulated goals, 15% stated that the measures to gauge progress toward the goals were somewhat unclear. As the literature review clearly stated, goals and the measures by which progress will be gauged, must be clear throughout the organization.

The next element of the plan that was explored was the inclusion of an environmental scan. As the literature review revealed, the environmental scan is vital to the strategic plan as it includes an internal analysis, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and an external analysis, to identify opportunities and threats for the organization. The results of the analysis showed that schools were extremely diligent about conducting an internal analysis in order to assess the school's strengths (91.7% of participants rating the extent to which this was done *moderately* up to *a great deal*), as well as the weaknesses (87.5% of participants rating the extent to which this was done *moderately* up to *a great deal*). No participants rated the extent to which the internal analysis was conducted as *not at all.* As for the external analysis, participants also made sure to conduct an external analysis to identify opportunities (83.3% of participants rating the extent to which this was done *moderately* up to *a great deal*), as well as threats (83.3% of participants rating the extent to which this was done *moderately* up to *a great deal*). However,

there was one participant, or 4.2% of responses, that stated their school did not conduct an external analysis at all, and two participants, or 8.3% of responses, that stated their schools conducted an external analysis only *slightly.*

The questions then turned to the strategic planning process. These questions asked participants about the time span that the plans cover, the frequency at which the school updates the plan, how long the planning process took, stakeholder involvement in the process, leadership of the process, and the work of teams on the process. The data revealed a wide range of planning processes, with some consistencies with traditional planning process expectations.

As was expected based on the literature review, the majority of participants (76%) stated that their school's strategic plan covered a time of five-years or more. However, surprisingly, when the question turned to how often the school updates the strategic plan, 24% responded that their school updates their strategic plan on an annual basis. This is surprising as only one school stated that their plan covered a time span of one-year. This finding suggests that schools have strategic plans that cover more time than a year, but are updating those plans on an annual basis. This result was encouraging to see. When asked about the time it took to complete the strategic planning process, the average time was 11.9 months. This was quite consistent with the research from the literature review. However, one surprising result of this question was one participant that stated their school's process took 36 months to complete. This is an unusual duration for a school's process, especially as many university planning processes take approximately 24 months.

The survey also addressed the involvement of stakeholder groups in the process. The survey provided four different ways a stakeholder group may have been involved in the process. Participants were able to select each way a stakeholder group was involved. As was expected, faculty were engaged the most in the schools' processes with 75 total mentions (number of schools

using faculty, across the various ways of use). While unexpected, but not surprising, external stakeholder groups unaffiliated with the university (recruiters and non-recruiting industry experts) were engaged the least in the process, especially when it came to serving on the committee and providing feedback on plan elements throughout the process.

The next sets of questions asked about the ways in which the school's implemented the work of the planning process. The responses showed that 91.7% of the schools created a committee to develop the strategic plan. This finding is consistent with the literature. The majority of the schools (63.6%) stated that the committee met on a monthly basis. This timing is consistent with traditional strategic planning processes. Consistent with agile-infused planning processes, a majority of schools (95.5%) expressed that it was *moderately* to *extremely important* to maintain documents that outlined the work completed. Finally, the data provided insight into the frequency with which stakeholder groups were solicited for feedback on unfinished plan elements. A top two box analysis revealed that faculty, staff, and the school's advisory board were communicated with the most throughout the process to gather feedback on drafts of committee work.

In addition to a planning committee, an agile-infused planning process would see the use of smaller work teams to work on very specific tasks of the planning process. Only 62.5% of participants stated that their schools used smaller work teams, with 53.3% stating that these teams worked in short iterations to complete a specific task consistent with an agile-infused process. However, consistent with a more traditional approach, 60% of those school's that used smaller teams, stated that these smaller teams met on a monthly-basis. It was important to a lesser extent for the small teams to document the completed work. When it came to engaging stakeholders in the feedback process of drafts of incomplete work, once again as expected, faculty, staff, and the

school's advisory board were communicated with most frequently. Of note, in both the committee and smaller work teams, students saw drafts of work the least out of the stakeholder groups.

As for the leader of the strategic planning process, 47.4% of participants identified the dean of the school as the planning process leader. This finding was consistent with literature on traditional strategic planning processes. The majority of participants (52.6%) expressed that the planning process leader was accountable for ensuring that the details of the work being completed met the school's needs. This finding is consistent with planning process champion found in both traditional and agile-infused processes. More consistent with an agile-infused process, 42.1% mentioned that the leader oversaw the process only and 21.1% stated that the leader maintained a master list of work to be completed, both roles consistent with a Scrum master, as discussed in the literature review.

Some additional observations from the strategic planning questions revealed that individuals involved in the process did not come together with regularity to review and celebrate the completion of strategic plan components. It also revealed that the majority of school's did not maintain burndown chart-like documents to visualize the work to be completed over time. In addition, the top motivator (52.2% of participants responding to the question) for creating a strategic plan was the hiring of a new dean, compared to just 13% who responded that it was due to challenges the school faced that called for a new strategy. Two final observations, 73.9% of participants answering the question stated that they felt they referenced the school's strategic plan in decision-making neither too little nor too much, this was encouraging as the plan should be consistently referenced in decision-making. Finally, a bit more interesting, 69.6% of participants answering the question, rated the effectiveness of their school's strategic planning process as *moderately effective* or less.

5.1.3 Research Question 3

Where do the strategic planning processes of US business schools fall on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum?

Schools received a score on five dimensions that were identified as potential areas of difference between a traditional and agile-infused strategic planning process. These five dimensions were *process leadership, work teams, documentation of process, engagement with stakeholders,* and *duration of process.* These scores were then combined into a total score named the Planning Process Dimension Score (PPDS).

In total, 23 schools completed the survey which was enough to be evaluated using this scoring system. Based on the PPDS scores, the participant schools' scores ranged from 22 to 138. The mean score of the 23 participants was an 83.2 with a standard deviation of 28.6 indicating a great deal of variance in the scores. Upon further examination two dimensions contributed the most to the variance in the overall PPDS scores. These two dimensions were work teams and engagement of stakeholders. With regard to work teams, while organizations have typically deployed planning committees, traditionally organizations have not deployed smaller teams to work on various components of the strategic plan (e.g., a team specifically assigned to complete the external analysis). The use of such work teams is a characteristic of more agile-infused processes.

The second dimension contributing to the variance in overall PPDS scores was engagement with stakeholders, with a score range of 16 to 110. Agile-infused strategic planning processes rely heavily on frequent feedback on iterations of work by the committee or smaller work teams. Not only does the feedback need to be frequent it needs to be solicited from all stakeholder groups. For the participant schools in this study, while a small number of stakeholder groups were solicited for

feedback with a high level of frequency, many of the schools failed to engage all stakeholder groups. As is consistent with a more traditional approach, internal stakeholders (faculty, staff, and advisory boards) were consulted frequently while external stakeholders were rarely consulted.

While the overall PPDS score is on a scale of 0-200, for the purposes of this study and as discussed in chapter three, the PPDS was divided into three process type bands to categorize the processes as *more traditional* (scores 0-60)*, mixed* (scores 61-100)*, or more agile* (scores 101-200). When this banding was applied, 26.1% if schools were identified as *more agile*, 52.2% as *mixed,* and 21.7% as *more traditional*.

The development and application of the scoring system provided an objective approach to placing the schools on a spectrum of traditional vs. agile-infused approach. While there are certainly opportunities to infuse more agile principles, it appears as though schools are finding a balance in their approaches. It may just be that a balanced approach is the most effective. While, effectiveness of the planning processes was not an area that this study sought to explore, a cross tabulation analysis comparing PPDS type band against participant rating of overall effectiveness of their school's planning process shows that of the seven participants that rated the effectiveness of their school's planning process as *very* or *extremely effective,* 85.7% were identified as having a *mixed* or *more agile process*.

5.1.4 Research Question 4

To what extent do certain market pressures or US business school characteristics appear to influence the strategic planning process?

Due to the small sample size and variable types, typical measures of correlation and relationship were not appropriate and could have produced misleading conclusions. Instead the

researcher opted to compile a series of cross tabulations to identify the potential for associations among the numerous variables and the PPDS score type band.

Beginning with the school characteristics, the researcher did not observe many potential associations. However, there were a few that could warrant further investigation in future research. For example, those schools who identified their most recent MBA ranking in the middle third, were more likely to use a more agile-infused approach to their strategic planning. In addition, while the number of non-research school participants was small, each of them were more likely to deploy a *mixed* or *more agile* process. Finally, participants that were identified as having small program enrollments, were more likely (88.9%) to deploy a *mixed* or *more agile* approach.

With regard to the extent to which certain pressures have had an impact on schools and how these pressures influence planning processes, the results on the whole were slightly more informative as the researcher observed several potential associations consistent with what one would reasonably expect. For example, for those participants that identified the extent to which their school was impacted by the pressure to *ensure MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need through your school's curriculum* as *considerably* or *a great deal*, they were more likely (73.3%) to have deployed a *mixed* or *more agile*. This has the potential for association as these schools tended to have higher *engagement with stakeholders* dimension scores. This means that schools for whom this pressure is strongly felt, one could reasonably deduce that they would engage external stakeholders more.

Another example is related to the declining applications from both US and international applicants. In both cases, of those schools identifying the extent to which they've felt this pressure as *considerable* to *a great deal,* were far more likely to deploy a mixed or more agile planning process type, 76.9% for US applicant pressure and 81.8% for international applicant pressure.

To answer the research question, on the whole there does not appear to be a prima facie association between school characteristics and a school's planning process, aside from those mentioned above. However, there does appear to be the potential for several prima facie associations between the pressures experienced by a school and the strategic planning process deployed.

5.1.5 Limitations of the Research

The greatest limitation to the research was the small sample size. Due to the fact that the study was limited to US business schools with MBA programs ranked by US News and World Report, the overall potential participant pool was quite limited. A smaller potential pool combined with a low response rate led to lower than expected sample size. With that said, the schools that did participate provided valuable data to begin the research and further pilot the instrument and subsequent PPDS scoring system. Furthermore, while the small sample size restricted the extent to which concrete observations of association could be made between the school's characteristics or the impact pressures were felt had on the type of planning process, the diversity in the participant's demographics, program sizes, rankings, and institution types still allowed the researcher to gain reasonable insights into the pressures felt, the strategic plans, and the planning processes.

5.2 Implications for Practice

This study revealed several pragmatic implications for practice. First, the literature review discussed at great length the various aspects of strategic plans and the traditional strategic planning process. This review exposed the reader to some of the shortcomings of a traditional strategic planning process. Such shortcomings offered an opportunity to introduce the notion of agile philosophy and the infusion of agile philosophy into the strategic planning process through the use of the mostly widely used agile framework, Scrum.

Second, the reader was introduced to a new survey instrument and scoring system to assess their school's planning process to identify where their school's process falls on a traditional to agile-infused spectrum. With further refinement, practitioners could have the ability to assess their strategic planning process and see areas of strength and improvement by better understanding the scores in the key dimensions. Armed with this assessment and the Scrum strategic planning process examples introduced in the literature review, practitioners might have a foundational framework with which to begin to assess current process and potentially identify enhancements.

In addition to revealing information around strategic plans, the planning process, and agile-infused planning, practitioners in schools of business received greater insight into the pressures currently facing business schools and graduate business education. This information may help to better understand these challenges and draw attention to new challenges that may not have been previously considered. Furthermore, practitioners now have a comparative set of schools, based on school characteristics, to gain a greater appreciation of the challenges faced by both peer and aspirant schools.

Finally, the researcher will carry forward new information for use in his own profession. As a senior administrator in a school of business, the insights learned about the pressures that other

schools face was valuable. In addition, while an implication for further research, better understanding the characteristics of the schools impacted by certain pressures could help to better understand the researcher's own school's opportunities. Furthermore, the extent to which some participants engaged in agile-infused planning was inspiring. For example, the level to which some school's engaged external constituents is certainly area of interest and potential enhancement to the researcher's own planning process. In addition, as the researcher's school embarks on several new program design initiatives, program enhancements, and strategic planning effort, a number of the Scrum practices are being implemented across these efforts to broaden the involvement of stakeholders in the process, gain buy-in along the way, and work on key components in short iterations to innovate rapidly.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study provided a reasonable foundation to better understand some of the challenges impacting business schools the most. In addition, the findings of the participants in this study provided important data regarding their strategic planning processes. Based on those participants for whom complete data were available and for whom the PPDS scoring system was applied, it was interesting from this researcher's perspective to see the number of schools that do indeed deploy a more mixed or agile-infused approach to their planning. Due to the low sample size, though, it is hard to make any generalizable conclusions, nor, was this study designed to do so. Based on the results, however, there are a number of recommendations for further research.

To begin, there is an obvious opportunity to continue studying the topic of planning processes, especially in order to acquire more responses. In addition, there is an opportunity to

expand the potential survey pool to beyond just programs ranked by US News and World Report. One might hypothesize that unranked schools feel greater pressures and must be more innovative calling for a more non-traditional approach to planning.

In addition, there is an opportunity to continue to refine and validate the Planning Process Dimension Score system to serve as a self-assessment tool for organizations. For instance, this study weighted the comparison dimensions evenly. Further research might suggest weighing particular dimension categories differently to account for over scoring in certain areas. This further refinement and development could be especially helpful to organizations looking to see where improvements to their planning processes may lie. In addition, the instrument and scoring system could be adopted to include other contemporary philosophies that organizations are deploying in their planning process, such as design thinking. This study did not set out to create a self-assessment instrument, however, upon the development of the PPDS, this potential for future research presented itself. The self-assessment and PPDS score have the potential to expand beyond business schools and be used by other higher education organizations after further refinement and validation.

Finally, there are opportunities to advance this research through a mixed methods approach that incorporates qualitative methods. The survey results revealed several areas of potential association, as well as other potentially interesting conclusions. Interviews with administrators could reveal more nuanced understanding of processes to determine future assessment questions with more precision. In addition, it would be valuable to compare the planning experiences of those engaged in the process, with those leading the process.

5.4 Conclusions

Business schools in the US continue to face a variety of pressures that are having an impact on the entire management education industry, and more specifically graduate management education. This study showed that schools are indeed experiencing these pressures at various levels; however, the sustainability of financial scholarships, the efforts to ensure MBA graduates possess the skills needed by industry, the employability of international MBA students, and the decline in both US and international MBA applications are the challenges having the greatest impact on schools of business.

Furthermore, strategic planning continues to be a valuable management tool for schools of business. This study showed that largely, the strategic plans of business schools include many of the components historically found in strategic plans (e.g., mission statement, vision, goals, environmental analysis, etc.). As for the planning processes themselves, business schools are varied in their approaches and process types, with the majority of school's participating in the study incorporating some elements of a more agile-infused process. This study does not place judgement on one particular type of process or another, rather to inform the reader of where schools fell on a traditional vs. agile-infused spectrum and offer insights into areas of opportunity to enhance their planning processes.

This study only tells the story of those participating. While the study was inconclusive in identifying definitive associations between a school's planning process compared to school characteristics or the pressures facing business schools, with further research greater insights may be gained. With all this said, it is important for the reader to remember one key take-away that was repeated throughout the review of literature, each school must customize their planning process to fit the needs and capabilities of their school. This study provided both traditional and agile-infused

planning process frameworks and adopting school appropriate elements of both process-types will

allow business schools to address the challenges they currently, and will continue to, face.

Q1.1

Section 1. Introduction and Consent

The survey that follows is designed to gain information about the strategic planning processes used by schools of business with graduate programs. I am conducting this research study as part of my dissertation for my Ed.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. My dissertation seeks to better understand the pressures that business schools face and the processes used by business schools to develop their strategic plans.

You have been specifically identified for my study due to your role within your school. I kindly ask that you answer each question to the best of your ability. The entire survey should **take no more than 15 - 20 minutes.**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. In addition, you will not receive compensation of any kind for participation in this study. However, your answers will support a larger understanding that will benefit all graduate business schools.

This is an anonymous questionnaire, and so your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential, and results will be kept under lock and key or in password-protected files.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the following:

Principal Investigator:
J.P. Matychak, jpmatychak@pitt.edu, or 617-366-6601

Dissertation Advisor:
Jill A. Perry, jperry@pitt.edu, 412-624-7272

University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board:
irb.reliance@pitt.edu

Q1.2 By selecting "I Agree," you are consenting to the conditions described above.

○ I Agree

○ I Disagree

Skip To: End of Survey If Q1.2 != I Agree
End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: School Demographics

Q2.1 **Section 2. Participant and School Information**
 This section of the survey collects information related to you and your school of business.

Q2.2 Which of the following best describes your role in the school of business?

○ I have responsibility over all graduate programs including the MBA

○ I have responsibility over the MBA programs only

○ I have responsibility over all programs undergraduate and graduate

○ Other _____

Q2.3 How well do you know your school's strategic planning process?

○ Not well at all

○ Slightly well

○ Moderately well

○ Very well

○ Extremely well

Q2.4 Which of the following best describes the setting of the primary campus of your business school?

○ Urban

○ Rural

Q2.5 Please select the region of the U.S. where the primary campus of your graduate school of business resides.

○ Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)

○ Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)

○ South (AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV)

○ West (AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)

Q2.6 Which of the following best describes your business school?

○ Public

○ Private

Q2.7 In the most recent US News and World Report ranking of Full-time MBA programs, where did your school's program rank?

○ Top Third (1-33)

○ Middle Third (34-66)

○ Bottom Third (67-100)

Q2.8 Would you consider your university to be a research institution (R1 or R2 Carnegie Classification®)

○ Yes

○ No

Q2.9 Please select the type of full-time MBA program(s) your school offers.

☐ Full-Time Two Year

☐ Full-Time 12-18 month

Display This Question:
If Q2.9 = Full-Time Two Year

Q2.10 What is the approximate size of the **entering class** in your full-time, two-year program?

○ Less than 50

○ 50-100

○ 100-150

○ More than 150

Display This Question:
If Q2.9 = Full-Time 12-18 month

Q2.11 Approximate size of the **entering class** in the MBA (Full-time, 12-18 month) program

○ Less than 50

○ 50-100

○ 100-150

○ More than 150

End of Block: School Demographics

Start of Block: Pressures on Schools

Q3.1 **Section 3. Pressures on the Graduate Business Education Industry**
This section of the survey solicits your insights on challenges that exist in the graduate business education industry.

Q3.2 Please indicate the extent to which **your school is feeling the following pressures** impacting the graduate business education industry.

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Declining full-time MBA applications from **U.S. applicants**	○	○	○	○	○
Declining full-time MBA applications from **International applicants**	○	○	○	○	○
A growing call to engage professionals from industry in the design of new degree programs	○	○	○	○	○
Soliciting input of industry professionals in updating existing curricula	○	○	○	○	○
Ensuring MBA graduates enter the workforce with the skills employers need through your school's curriculum	○	○	○	○	○

Finding ways to better understand the skills employers desire from your MBA graduates.	○	○	○	○	○
Encouraging faculty to focus on conducting research that is more relevant to industry	○	○	○	○	○
The growth of online graduate degree programs offered by reputable business schools negatively impacting on-campus enrollments	○	○	○	○	○
Employers no longer valuing the MBA degree	○	○	○	○	○
Domestic graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	○	○	○	○	○
International graduates from MBA programs not able to find MBA-level jobs right out of school	○	○	○	○	○

The average financial scholarship awarded to admitted students is increasing at an unsustainable rate due to the competition to enroll MBA candidates	○	○	○	○	○
Specialty master's programs in business cannibalizing MBA enrollments	○	○	○	○	○

Q3.3 In a few words, what is the **greatest** challenge that your business school is facing right now?

_____

End of Block: Pressures on Schools

Start of Block: Strategic Planning

Q4.1 **Section 4. Strategic Planning in Business Schools**
This section collects information related to your school's process for strategic and annual planning. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Q4.2 Does your school of business currently have a strategic plan?

○ Yes

○ No

Display This Question:
If Q4.2 = No

Q4.3 You answered that your school does not have a strategic plan.

Does your school have a documented strategy of another type (e.g. articulated goals, action plan, annual plan, etc.)?

○ Yes

○ No

Skip To: End of Survey If Q4.3 = No

Display This Question:

Q4.4 PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU CONTINUE The questions that follow ask about your school's strategic plan and the planning process. However, you stated that your school has another type of documented strategy. Please answer the following with that strategy and process in mind.

Q4.5 When was your school's strategic plan developed?

◯ Last Year

◯ 2 years ago

◯ 3 years ago

◯ 4 years ago

◯ 5 years ago

◯ More than 5 years ago

Q4.6 What period of time does your school's current strategic plan cover?

◯ 1 year

◯ 2 years

◯ 3 years

◯ 4 years

◯ 5 years

◯ More than 5 years

Q4.7 How often does your school update the strategic plan?

◯ Annually

◯ Every 2 years

◯ Every 3 years

◯ Every 4 years

◯ Every 5 years

◯ More than 5 years

◯ Unsure

Q4.8 Please select the ways in which the school engaged the following stakeholder groups in the strategic planning process. Select N/A if a particular stakeholder group was not involved in the process.

	Provided feedback early in the process on the current state of the school	Asked to offer ideas for new opportunities for the school	Served on the committee developing the plan	Provided feedback on plan elements throughout the process	N/A
Faculty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Alumni	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recruiters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Non-recruiting Industry Experts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4.9 During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's **mission statement**?

○ Not at all important

○ Slightly important

○ Moderately important

○ Very important

○ Extremely important

Q4.10 During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's **vision**?

○ Not at all important

○ Slightly important

○ Moderately important

○ Very important

○ Extremely important

Q4.11 During the strategic planning process, how important was it to update the business school's **values**?

〇 Not at all important

〇 Slightly important

〇 Moderately important

〇 Very important

〇 Extremely important

Q4.12 Does your school's strategic plan articulate goals for the school?

〇 Yes

〇 No

Display This Question:
If Q4.12 = Yes

Q4.13 How clearly defined are the measures used to gauge progress toward the goals?

〇 Extremely unclear

〇 Somewhat unclear

〇 Neither clear nor unclear

〇 Somewhat clear

〇 Extremely clear

Display This Question:
If Q4.12 = Yes

Q4.14 How often does the school leadership review progress toward the goals?

〇 Weekly

〇 Monthly

〇 Quarterly

〇 Semesterly

〇 Annually

〇 Never

Q4.15 To what extent did your school conduct an **internal analysis** during the planning process in order to identify your school's **strengths?**

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.16 To what extent did your school conduct an **internal analysis** during the planning process in order to identify your school's **weaknesses?**

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.17 To what extent did your school conduct an **external analysis** of the environment during the planning process to identify your school's **opportunities?**

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.18 To what extent did your school conduct an **external analysis** of the environment during the planning process to identify your school's **threats?**

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.19 Approximately how long (**IN MONTHS**) did it take to develop your school's strategic plan?

_____

Q4.20 Was a committee created to develop the strategic plan?

○ Yes

○ No

Display This Question:
If Q4.20 = Yes

Q4.21 How often did the planning committee meet?

○ Daily

○ 4-6 times a week

○ 2-3 times a week

○ Once a week

○ Monthly

Display This Question:
If Q4.20 = Yes

Q4.22 How important was it for the planning committee to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?

○ Not at all important

○ Slightly important

○ Moderately important

○ Very important

○ Extremely important

Q4.23 For each of the following stakeholders, rate how often the committee circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing a component of the plan?

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Very Often
Faculty	○	○	○	○	○
Staff	○	○	○	○	○
Students	○	○	○	○	○
Alumni	○	○	○	○	○
Recruiters	○	○	○	○	○
Industry Experts	○	○	○	○	○
Advisory Board	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.24 Were multiple smaller teams created to complete various parts of the plan?

○ Yes

○ No

Q4.25 How often did the smaller teams meet?

○ Daily

○ 4-6 times a week

○ 2-3 times a week

○ Once a week

○ Monthly

Q4.26 Which of the following stakeholder groups were a part of these smaller teams? *Select all that apply*

☐ Faculty

☐ Students

☐ Alumni

☐ Staff

☐ Recruiters

☐ Non-recruiting Industry Experts

Display This Question:
If Q4.24 = Yes

Q4.27 To what extent did the small teams work in short iterations to complete a specific task for the plan.

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Display This Question:
If Q4.24 = Yes

Q4.28 How important was it for the smaller teams to maintain documents to track the work yet to be completed?

○ Not at all important

○ Slightly important

○ Moderately important

○ Very important

○ Extremely important

○ Don't Know

Display This Question:
If Q4.24 = Yes

Q4.29 For each of the following stakeholders, rate how often the smaller teams circulated drafts of their work to solicit feedback prior to completing their specific task?

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Very Often
Faculty	○	○	○	○	○
Staff	○	○	○	○	○
Students	○	○	○	○	○
Alumni	○	○	○	○	○
Recruiters	○	○	○	○	○
Industry Experts	○	○	○	○	○
Advisory Board	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.30 Was an individual identified to lead the strategic planning process?

○ Yes

○ No

Display This Question:
If Q4.30 = Yes

Q4.31 Choose the best response below that describes the strategic planning process leader's role in your school

○ Dean of the School

○ Senior Staff Leader (Assoc. Dean, Assistant Dean)

○ Senior Faculty Leader (Assoc. Dean, Assistant Dean, Dept. Chair)

○ Faculty (Tenured Track)

○ Faculty (Non-tenured Track)

○ Other Staff Member

○ Other _____

Display This Question:
If Q4.30 = Yes

Q4.32 With regard to the leader of the strategic planning process, select the statement(s) below that best describe the role the leader played. Check all that apply.

☐ Was responsible for overseeing the planning process only

☐ Was accountable for ensuring that the details of the work being completed met the school's needs

☐ Maintained a master list of work to be completed related to the overall planning process

☐ Provided the vision for the strategic plan, but let the committee carry out the planning process

Q4.33 To what extent did all individuals in the planning process come together at the completion of specific planning process tasks to review what was completed, as well as celebrate the success?

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.34 To what extent were charts used to track the expected vs. actually completed tasks over time?

○ Not at All

○ Slightly

○ Moderately

○ Considerably

○ A Great Deal

○ Don't Know

Q4.35 Which of the following was the primary motivator for your school to develop a strategic plan?

○ New Dean

○ Accreditation Requirement

○ University Requirement

○ Government Agency Requirement

○ Challenges Facing the School Call for a Strategy

○ Other _____

Q4.36 Is your school's strategic plan available to the public?

○ Yes

○ No

Q4.37 How would you rate the frequency at which you reference your school's strategic plan to advise your decision-making?

○ Far too much

○ Too much

○ Neither too much nor too little

○ Too little

○ Far too little

Q4.38 How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your school's strategic planning process?

○ Extremely effective

○ Very effective

○ Moderately effective

○ Slightly effective

○ Not effective at all

Appendix B Survey Invitation Letter

Dear <<Name>>,

I am writing to ask your help in completing a brief survey about your business school's strategic planning process. This research study is a part of my dissertation for my Ed.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. My dissertation topic is related to strategic planning in US business schools with graduate programs.

While I am a student completing my dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh, in my professional life I serve as the Associate Dean for Student Experience and Services at the Boston University Questrom School of Business and work with faculty on issues related to program development. It has been hard to ignore the news recently about graduate business education and the pressures we all face as business schools. My dissertation research is focused on strategic planning and the planning processes business schools are using to develop their plans to overcome some of the challenges they face.

Due to the nature of my research study, you have been specifically identified as the individual at your school to receive and complete the survey, as you either oversee all graduate programs, or at a minimum, oversee the full-time MBA program. Your response to this 15-minute survey will provide valuable insight into the pressures impacting your school of business and the strategic planning process for your school. I kindly ask that you provide an answer to each question. The entire survey should take no more than 15 minutes. I would be incredibly grateful for your participation.

To complete the survey, please use the following link:
<<insert unique link>>

Additional Information on the Study

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. In addition, you will not receive compensation of any kind for participation in this study.

This is an anonymous questionnaire, and so your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential, and results will be kept under lock and key or in password-protected files.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time. The survey is completely anonymous and no individual or school names are collected. I would be grateful for your response and I am happy to share my findings at the conclusion of my study.

Should you have any questions regarding this survey please feel free to contact me at jpmatychak@pitt.edu, or 617-366-6601. In addition, you may contact my dissertation advisor, Jill A. Perry at jperry@pitt.edu, or 412-624-7272.

Sincerely,

J.P. Matychak
Doctoral Candidate, University of Pittsburgh School of Education

Appendix C Follow-Up Invitation Letter

Dear <<Name>>,

A week ago, I wrote to ask for your help in participating in a brief survey. I have copied that invitation below again for your convenience. If you have already completed the survey, thank you. If not, I am greatly appreciative of your potential participation.

As you will recall, I am writing to ask your help in completing a brief survey about your business school's strategic planning process. This research study is a part of my dissertation for my Ed.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. My dissertation topic is related to strategic planning in US business schools with graduate programs.

While I am a student completing my dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh, in my professional life I serve as the Associate Dean for Student Experience and Services at the Boston University Questrom School of Business and work with faculty on issues related to program development. It has been hard to ignore the news recently about graduate business education and the pressures we all face as business schools. My dissertation research is focused on strategic planning and the planning processes business schools are using to develop their plans to overcome some of the challenges they face.

Due to the nature of my research study, you have been specifically identified as the individual at your school to receive and complete the survey, as you either oversee all graduate programs, or at a minimum, oversee the full-time MBA program. Your response to this 15-minute survey will provide valuable insight into the pressures impacting your school of business and the strategic planning process for your school. I kindly ask that you provide an answer to each question. The entire survey should take no more than 15 minutes. I would be incredibly grateful for your participation.

To complete the survey, please use the following link:
<<insert unique link>>

Additional Information on the Study

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. In addition, you will not receive compensation of any kind for participation in this study.

This is an anonymous questionnaire, and so your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential, and results will be kept under lock and key or in password-protected files.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time. The survey is completely anonymous and no individual or school names are collected. I would be grateful for your response and I am happy to share my findings at the conclusion of my study.

Should you have any questions regarding this survey please feel free to contact me at jpmatychak@pitt.edu, or 617-366-6601. In addition, you may contact my dissertation advisor, Jill A. Perry at jperry@pitt.edu, or 412-624-7272.

Sincerely,
J.P. Matychak
Doctoral Candidate, University of Pittsburgh School of Education

Appendix D PPDS Scores

School ID	Dimension 1: Process Leadership	Dimension 2: Work Teams	Dimension 3: Documentation of Process	Dimension 4: Engagement with Stakeholders	Dimension 5: Duration of Process	Total PPDS Score
School D	4	18	6	110	0	138
School T	2	17	7	102	3	131
School C	2	17	8	103	1	131
School K	3	4	4	93	2	106
School M	2	16	7	78	1	104
School J	2	14	6	78	3	103
School U	5	14	6	68	2	95
School W	5	12	4	71	3	95
School F	2	12	8	70	2	94
School L	3	8	3	76	2	92
School G	2	11	8	64	0	85
School P	0	9	2	70	3	84
School E	2	13	5	56	3	79
School O	3	2	2	63	3	73
School H	2	5	5	58	2	72
School V	0	10	3	54	0	67
School Q	3	11	5	48	0	67
School B	0	10	6	44	3	63
School S	2	4	5	46	2	59
School R	2	2	0	49	3	56
School I	2	5	2	40	2	51
School A	2	4	2	37	2	47
School N	0	3	0	16	3	22

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