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Higher Education is one of the areas that has attracted increasing attention in the context of economic and social development in Saudi Arabia. Development in the higher education sector can be seen in two major areas, namely, the expansion of higher education institutes and the overseas education mission known as the King's Scholarship program.

In the global context, business schools and business education have been the focus of an increasing number of research projects in the last two decades looking at areas such as legitimacy (Mintzberg, 2004) performance (Pfeffer and Fong, 2002) social contribution (Morsing and Sauquet Rovira, 2011) ranking (Gioia and Corley, 2002) and accreditation (Julian and Ofori-Dankwa, 2006). In a parallel stream, corporate reputation is also acquiring increased attention and is an area of worthwhile debate and discussion in the context of business schools. There are a number of studies that have looked at the reputation of business schools from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Theoretically, Cornelissen and Thorpe (2002), Barnett et al. (2006), Gioia and Corley (2002), and Vidaver-Cohen (2007) , provide frameworks of and suggestions about how to study and research business schools' reputation from different perspectives.

Empirically, Rindova et al. (2005), Boyd et al. (2009), and Safón (2009) use different approaches to quantitatively assess business schools' reputation from a positivist point of view. Rindova et al. (2005) propose that "(1) stakeholders' perceptions of an organization as able to produce quality goods and (2) organizations' prominence in the minds of stakeholders" are the two dominant dimensions of reputation which they used to relate to the premium price of U.S. business schools. Boyd et al. (2009) used the same data set as Rindova et al. (2005) with a different approach aiming to increase the understanding of reputation-performance link.

Alternatively, Corley and Gioia (2000) used interviews with one stakeholder group concerning the ranking, image, and reputation of business schools and how they interrelate, influence, and place pressures on the activities of both business schools and ranking institutes.

In contrast with previous studies on business school reputation, this study tries to understand how the reputation of business schools in Saudi Arabia is constructed among different stakeholders from a social constructionist point of view. And then how reputation may affect their decision in interacting with business schools.

This research is taking a different approach, looking at the discussions of reputation itself as a construct, using two recent studies (Lange et al., 2011, Rindova and Martins, 2012) both of which analysed a number of publications in corporate reputation and offered an updated and comprehensive conceptualization of the reputation construct. Lange et al. (2011) studied a wide range of literature in the management field to support the claim of uncertainty in

defining organizational reputation. Their review revealed three main dimensions that most definitions of reputation focus upon, namely, being known, being known for something, and generalized favourability. The dimensions as appeared in different definitions are not mutually exclusive. The study of different dimensions revealed the need for a comprehensive multidimensional approach. Rindova and Martins (2012) went beyond the dimensions in which reputation is defined and studied the literature to assess how reputation is conceptualised from different perspectives in the literature. They categorized several theoretical perspectives in conceptualizing reputation, namely, reputation as signal, reputation as collective perspective, and reputation as a position in a reputational rank.

This study is informed by a social constructionist perspective in inquiring about business school reputation. Semi-structured interviews were executed with five stakeholder groups, namely, students, academics, employers, families, and policy makers. Interviews were analysed using template analysis, an updated form of thematic analysis offered by King (2012). The use of template analysis offers the chance to use a priori themes in coding, allowed parallel coding and integrative themes.

The preliminary findings of the research reveal a range of different views both across stakeholders groups and within each group. These results indicate to those researching the phenomenon of business school reputation the need to acknowledge the differences in perceiving the concept of reputation. These differences extend our understanding of reputation as a construct in the light of different conceptualizations presented previous research and examine how multiple perspectives can contribute to the same concept. Practically, the research aims to provide insights to policy and decision makers in business schools in Saudi Arabia and to draw their attention to reputation building and reputation management as a significant component in their strategy.

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