

A Case Study: Analyzing DAE University Academic Partnership; a Success or a Failure?

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Abstract. Partnership is a strategic decision to aim the common objectives. This article will review strategic decisions and the used tactics by the DAE University in cooperation with the other universities especially, partnership with a virtual university. This case study is focused on the campus that is the international branch of a big university, which has worked more than eight years in Dubai. The DAE partnership analysis is the core result of a comprehensive research on SWOT of the current universities located in United Arab Emirates.

Keywords: Academic Partnership, Cooperation, Mutual Value, SWOT, Compatibility.

1. Introduction

In the current era, the classic definition of company is not only the partnership of some people in a unique legal identity to achieve common goals [1]. The partnership of companies becomes wider than just the internal contribution among the stockholders and staff and all of the other parties. Numerous topics have overshadowed by partnership between the companies, including information security and identity, conflict of interests and goals, especially competition [2].

Carr [3] stated 'In assessing potential partnerships or outsourcing opportunities, managers must be careful to keep their own companies' interests foremost.' Therefore, a successful partnership is a win-win partnership. Lack of attention to the principles of successful partnerships may increase direct costs, indirect costs, opportunity costs and hiding and integrity costs in a way that their overhead will be more than their performance.

2. DAE University Partnership

DAE University in Dubai due to new hub of civilization has many facilities. Large auditoriums, with dozens of neighborhood branch of reputable universities, with tens airlines that fly daily from Dubai to hundreds of points connected to the world and hotels which are available at affordable prices, along with security and electronics infrastructure; all the aforementioned facilities can provide improvement and growth. DAE University was eager to share the mentioned potentials with the other universities and mutually use their capabilities in order to accelerate its academic improvement trend. This article will review strategic decisions and the used tactics by the DAE University in cooperation with the other universities. As it is mentioned the studied campus is the real branch of a big university, which has worked more than eight years in Dubai. Analysis is a part of the comprehensive academic research on SWOT of the current universities located in United Arab Emirates.

3. A partnership with a Virtual University - a Failure

On 2006, DAE University has an unsuccessful partnership with V-University as a virtual university. The partnership holds on an oral agreement to make less commitment for them. In that partnership V-University used the DAE University places, Internet, communication infrastructure and other resources to register the fresh students. Because V-University was a virtual enterprise and DAE University did not have any distance learning program or course, there was no conflict in company interest. In other words, none of partners had a common customer. Figure 1 summarizes the commitments of the aforementioned two partners.

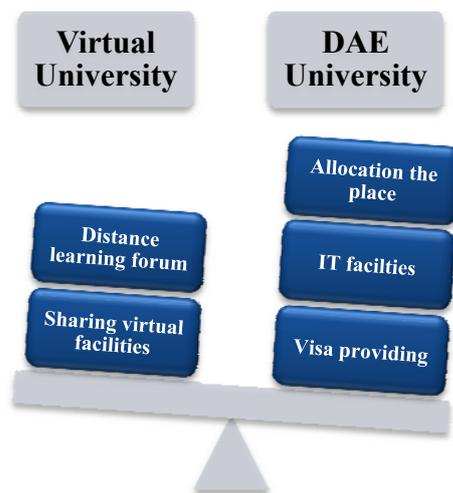


Fig 1. A comparison of the commitments of V-University and DAE University

The first problem revealed when V-University asked the DAE University to assign a physical place to register the student. Presence and attendance of student of the V-University in DAE University was not tolerable for DAE university managers and employees. Middle level and employee of DAE University looked at V-University as a competitor. On the other hand, getting entrance visa for the students' registration and exams time was not possible. The V-University asked its partner to apply for the students' visas but this was possible just for the DAE University internal students. Also the entrance visa of DAE University had a condition for students that not allowed being out Dubai more than six months. Both parties held some meetings and DAE University accepted to get visa for the V-University students as a part of their primary contract and had to accept all of the consequences of this abnormal issue from legal point of view.

Despite Visa agreement, the other issues aimed that the V-University did not have the basic infrastructure for virtual program and the DAE University did not consider the qualifications of V-University for partnership. After occurrence of this problem for V-University, the reputation of DAE University was overshadowed. The mentioned problem clarified that DAE University cannot do separation between itself and V-University. Space allocation and facilities for another institute constitutes an implicit confirmation for that institute and even some clients explicitly said they had seen facilities and office space and had confidence in DAE university academic programs more than V-University itself.

4. The strategic partnership with I-University - a Success

I-University located in an I-Country with tens of thousands of students and dozens of majors including social sciences, engineering, medical and dental had high quality potential for partnership. Therefore, DAE University to launch a new major chooses I-University for the partnership on its agenda. In this partnership contract, I-university was responsible to get the accreditation for DAE university and mutually DAE university was responsible to facilitate the international seminars for u-university which was incapable to held because of political and social problems inside the country. Although the partnership of these two universities did not have enough strength technically and legally, but I-University accelerated adding law major in bachelor and masters level in DAE university and on the other hand, DAE university helped to held dental conferences and seminars in its auditoriums in an acceptable way.

Despite the efforts of both parties for a successful active mutual partnership, some problems and hindrances occurred, because their commitments were not enough transparent and were not in the form of a legal contract. For example the dentistry major as the major goal of the partnership was never held in DAE University and also there was not any scheduling for both sides, so some the seminars were not done properly and on time. Figure 2 is a pictorial presentation of two partners' commitments.

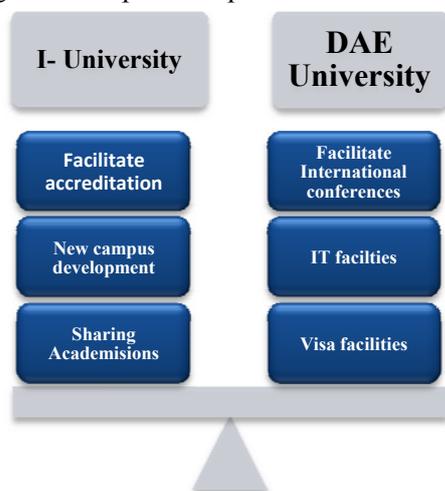


Fig 2 . Major Commitments of DAE University and I-university

5. Academic Partnership Analysis of DAE University

Kaplan and Hurd [5] clarified that most strong, effective and successful partnership plan should be considered the following specific key principles: 1) Define the purpose of the partnership. 2) Establish a formal alliance management process. 3) Nurture the evolution of the alliance actively and deliberately. Kaplan and Hurd [5] emphasized that to achieve a clarified definition of partnership, it is necessary that both side of partners have same interpretation and make a matching between their treatments. In other words the conflict between private master plan of each partner and the partnership contract contents should b distinguished and solved. It seems that there is no an adequate definition of partnership in the first partnership and both partners even one of them (DAE University) just shared some of their (its) resources and services.

The second principle that is establishing the management process for partnership is not considered nor obeyed. On the other side, partners follow a critical management approach [6]. There was no organization or planning, only when a problem arises or difficulty happens, partners arrange a meeting and make some common decisions to solve it. The third principle ignored totally.

Ettlie & Pavlou [7] declare some considerations for develop a new product. Using advanced technologies together with sharing core information are recommended by Ettlie. Likely, adding a new major in at the university is like developing a new product in the company. Therefore, any partnership for developing a new major has to obey the phases of new product development. In second partnership of DAE University new product development phases somehow considered.

Colombo [8] states "If reliable information were available as to the objectives of alliances and the amount of relation-specific investments necessary to pursue such objectives, one could shed new light on the explanatory power of alternative theories as to the determinants of alliance form." At least two studied cases show that there is no awareness and enough related information before partnership. None of the partners did a long-term perspective in partnership vice versa a short-term perspective to getting some services and facilities to get are targeted and there is a significant conflict with the true concept of partnership.

Exactly vice versa the Das and Teng [1] statement: "Strategic alliances are voluntary cooperative inter-firm agreements aimed at achieving competitive advantage for the partners.", the first partnership did not have any competitive advantage for DAE University. From another point of view each partnership has potentials and dangers that all partners' leaders have responsibility to find and address them. Partners have to share their core knowledge and capacities to decrease the risk probabilities and consequences [9]. Focusing

on the DAE University partnership journey shows that V-University did not share its knowledge or capabilities and only used its capabilities to keep its private benefits.

6. Conclusion

Partnership is a strategic decision to aim the common objectives. Partnership is not decorative and amusing and a small laches will bring an irreparable consequence. In a boundary of a company any behavior control plans and activities or even changing the current rules is possible to compensate the failures, but in an inter-company partnership changing the pre-agreed decisions is not easy. Therefore, in case that the company's interests facing to dangers the behavior of other partner is not predictable.

Managerial leadership in partnering relationships needs paying enough attention to many considerations especially, continuously assessing states of the organization and deciding when and how to terminate a partnership. It seems that DAE University besides its powerful academic potentials, starts its partnership with vague stage, continue in unstable state and it does not have a clear termination. The partnership contract has more importance compare any other contracts such as production or service contract because even with short-term commitment, long-term consequences could be happened. A partnership agreement before a final partnership contract is useful. A draft agreement provides the relax atmosphere for both partners. Therefore, in such a situation, partners can concentrate on concept, context, and content of a legal partnership contract that satisfy all aspects of their benefit.

7. References

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