

**RESEARCH PAPER****Transforming Vision and Mission of a University into Practice:
Strategies and Challenges****¹Ummara Sethi* ²Dr. Zahida Aziz Sial and ³ Dr. Ijaz Ahmad Tatlah**

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In this paper, the researcher discussed the importance of vision and mission statements for universities and how they can be transformed into practices. For this purpose interpretivist paradigm was adopted. An Exploratory Study was administered and data were collected from the heads of different universities. Researcher explore the benefits of a well-crafted vision and mission statement for an organization, including providing direction, purpose, and a sense of accountability among employees and stakeholders. Additionally, study highlights the role of vision and mission statements in achieving the required output by providing a framework for setting goals, making decisions, and aligning efforts towards a common purpose. Finally, it was evident that vision and mission statements can create a path and give direction for action by setting goals, defining strategies and tactics, and providing a framework for decision-making which results in improving employee's performance as well as enhance the repute of organization.

Keywords: Challenges, Mission, Prospects, Strategies, Vision, Performance**Introduction**

In the study, focused was on different area of vision and mission of universities. Certain indicators were selected and counter checked with the responses given by the heads of the different universities. In those areas vision and mission statement was gauged to provide direction, purposive for inspiration and motivation, differentiated from competitors and take it as a guide for decision making. Mission statement was taken to figure out how it creates a sense of accountability, clarifies purpose and direction, promotes unity and alignment, provides a basis for strategy development and enhances brand identity and reputation.

A vision (the desired future state) of an institution helps to develop a comprehensive strategic planning including short term and long term goals, objectives and actionable steps. It ensures strong leadership at all levels that supports and drives the vision forward. Empower leaders to inspire and guide faculty, staff and students toward the vision.

To get the vision, investment in continuous professional development programs in order to enhance the skills and knowledge of educators, administrators and staff is required. Along with this focus on student needs, learning outcomes, and holistic development also plays an important role.

Vision statement provides direction and purpose. A clear vision statement outlines the organization's long term goals, values, and guiding principles, providing a roadmap for the future and helping to align the organization's activities and resources towards achieving a common goal. Vision statement inspires and motivates, guides decision making and

creates a sense of accountability and it also differentiates from competitors. A well-formulated vision statement can differentiate an organization from its competitors by highlighting its unique strengths and value proposition, helping to build trust. We can say that a clear and compelling vision is essential for guiding an organization's strategic planning process, inspiring and motivating employees, and ensuring that all activities are aligned towards achieving a common goal.

A mission (the purpose and reason for existence) statement is a brief, clear, and concise statement that outlines an organization's purpose, values, and goals. It defines the organization's reason for existence, identifies its primary stakeholders, and communicates its overall strategy. A clear mission statement clarifies purpose and direction. No doubt it promotes unity and alignment, provides a base for strategy development, enhances brand identity and reputation and engages stakeholders.

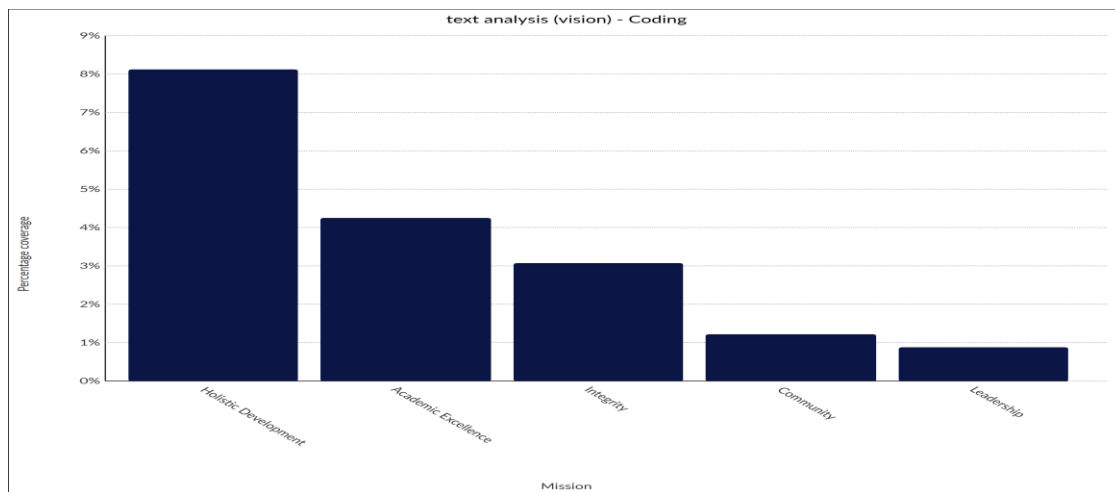


Figure 1: Percentage analysis of guiding principles (Vision + Mission)

Literature Review

A vision is accurate, trustworthy and attractive future for an organization. (Nanus, 1997). For Thornberry vision is something that is not real but imaging. Its all about what an organization should look like. Initial studies on mission statements found in early 1970s. Mission and vision statements now have a key role not only in literature but also in strategic planning for organizations.

According to Lynch (2000), there is a need to develop a vision statement for developing the future of any organization. Hussey (1998) also explained that the value of organization lies in its vision statement and its linked to the progress of organization.

Ozden(2014) suggested that vision is the point which explains what is the expected level which an organizations wants to be in future. A strong vision helps all the personnel involved that what is expected and it will become easy for them to plan strategically to achieve their goals. Clear vision and mission statement also help to boost the employee efficiency (Powers 2012).

Vision and mission both are talked side by side and it is even not more important that which comes first. The important thing is that these both are interrelated and one without other is nothing. Most commonly vision is being put first because vision is viewed as wider than mission. The order doesn't matter a lot as their contents.

A Study by Rigby (1994) proposed that the mission holds greater significance compared to other components writing the strategic management process since it

delineates the primary reasons for an organization's existence, forming a pathway that progressively gains clarity from the overarching vision. Consequently, the mission stems directly from the vision, initiating the process of crystallizing specific details.

According to David and David (2003) a well demarcated mission statement can improve the employee's motivation level that can help to enhance the performance of the organization. Main purpose of the statement is to inspire the all involved which improves the credibility of the organization.

Literature suggests that the objective of any organization is to motivate the effective utilization and benchmarking of organizational resources and to set a prevailing atmosphere which encourage performance and they can take the ownership of the results.

According to Oghojafor (2006) overall and organization lacking a concise mission statement often finds its short-term plans having conflict with its long-term objectives. It must be ought to meticulously crafted and remain open to revision or change to adapt significant environmental changes, ensuring its endurance over time.

Material and Methods

A qualitative research methodology was used to explore the fact through purpose convenient sampling technique. Data was collected by heads of different universities and thematic analysis was done for data analysis. Multiple coder reliability technique was used to ensure the reliability. The codes were developed manually as well as using NVIVO.

Instrument

A semi structured interview questionnaire was developed and validated through expert opinion.

Results and Discussion

Thematic analysis is a valuable qualitative research method that offers a flexible and in-depth exploration of data. When conducted rigorously, thematic analysis can provide valuable insights into complex phenomena and contribute to theoretical development. For the said purpose thematic analysis was adopted.

It was found that a vision and mission statement are critical elements of any organization's strategic planning process to provide direction, purpose and a sense of accountability. It must be so concise, memorable, exciting and inspiring, articulating that it can show a clear and powerful image of where the organization is led.

In this paper, researcher discussed the importance of vision and mission of universities and how they can be transformed into practices, highlight the challenges universities may face during this process that may can be form the changes demanded by the community or due to the rapid demand of era. The most repeated words used were evident from the data are students, research, academic community, integrity, leadership, values, innovation and learning.

It is evident in the study that vision and mission both have great potential to improve the overall structure of any organization. As it provides a complete roadmap to the organization as well as to all the involved personnel. Employees performance improves as they have clear directions of where one is heading and this is why their work become quite easier for them too. And it end up in improving a positive image of an organization.

Academics

Academics act as key drivers in transforming the vision and mission of a university into practical reality by infusing these core values into every aspect of teaching, research, innovation, continuous improvements, and freedom to speech, community engagement, and institutional governance. Their commitment and efforts shape the institution's identity and impact on society to achieve the highest standards and professionalism.

Academics impart knowledge and skills to students, incorporating the university's values and objectives into their teaching methodologies. They inspire and guide students to understand and contribute to the mission through their learning experiences. Through expertise, academics engage with the communities, industries and stakeholders, fostering partnerships and collaborations that reflect the university's vision. This engagement often leads to real world applications of the university's mission.

Academic's achievement plays a pivotal role in assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of a program and initiatives in fulfilling the university's mission. It provides feedback and contribute to enhancing strategies for better alignment with the vision. Academics helps a person to be an active part in all the aspects of life.

Academics also give the power to speech, confident and freedom to speech. As far as knowledge gets better, people get the confidence to speak in front of everyone. And this confidence ends up in growth and to achieve the highest standards and position in the universe. Effective mechanisms for ongoing assessment, evaluation and feedback to identify areas for improvement and adapt strategies also plays a crucial role to achieve vision.

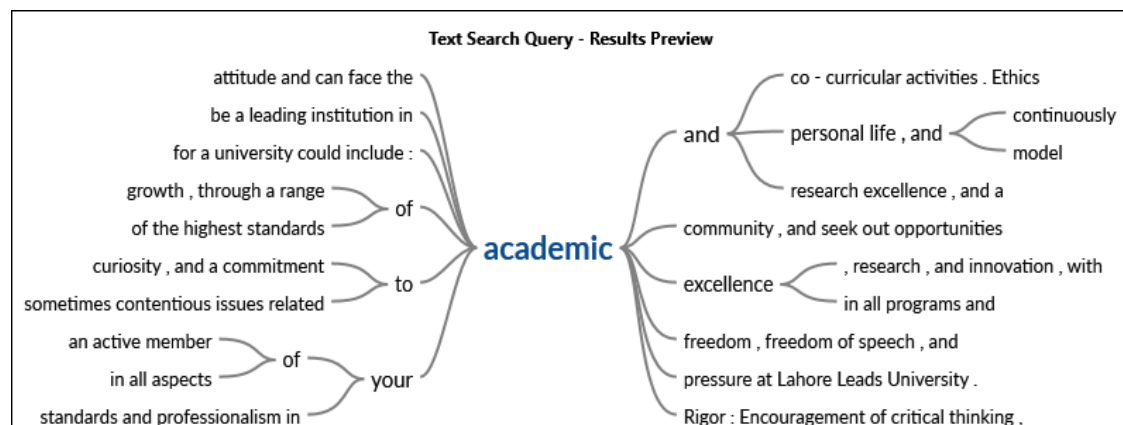


Figure 4: Contemplation on Academics

Leadership

A vision about development of empowered and responsible leadership was also evident which can be achieve through holistic development of individuals. Effective leadership is evident as essential for steering a university towards realizing its vision and mission. It involves inspiring, guiding, and aligning diverse stakeholders towards a common goal, fostering an environment conducive to success and continuous progress. It includes holistic development, which includes the cultivation of knowledge and skills across various domains.

Being a head/Leader of university, they articulate a compelling vision and mission. They outline clear objectives, allocate resources and oversee the execution of initiatives to achieve these objectives. It also helps in shaping the culture of innovation, collaboration, inclusivity and excellence. Being leaders, it's their practice to ensure that the culture reflects the values embedded in the mission and vision. Furthermore, as it often involves change, so

the leaders empower their faculty, staff and students to contribute to the realization of the mission.

It's their practice to provide support, mentorship and opportunities for not only growth but also fostering sense of ownership as well as accountability among all the team members for the holistic development of all the individuals. As the role which an empowered team can play cannot be played by un-empowered employees.



Figure 5: Meditation on Leadership

Integrity

During analysis “Integrity” is found as fundamental pillar in transforming the vision and mission of a university into practice. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the implementation of these ideals is carried out with honesty, ethical conduct includes respect tolerance, and principled actions such as teaching and learning, professionalism and creativity.

Upholding integrity ensures that the execution of the university’s vision and mission remains consistent with its core values. It prevents any compromises that might dilute the values or divert from the intended ethical path.

It was also evident that integrity fosters trust among stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, donors and the community. When the university operates with integrity, it builds credibility, enhancing its reputation and attracting support for its mission. It also helps in transparency and encourages the culture of accountability.

Integrity promotes transparent communication about the university’s goal, strategies and performance. Openness ensures that all stakeholders are informed. It involves adhering to legal and regulatory standards. It ensures that the university operates within the boundaries of the law and compliance frameworks while upholding ethical principles.



Figure 6: Cognizance on Integrity

Research

This is evident that research plays a significant role to overcome the challenges and to improve the practices. As research serves as a cornerstone in translating the vision and mission of a university into practice. It provides the necessary tools, knowledge, and solutions to address challenges, advance knowledge, and make a tangible impact consistent with the institution's overarching goals. It helps to make decision in society as well as community building.

Research also plays a significant role in skill development of not only the students but of faculty members too. It's evident that it plays a significant role in faculty recruitment too. This research often shapes policies, practices and solutions that address societal needs, thus embodying the mission of the university. To align the university's vision, they conduct research, which is contributing new knowledge and innovations.

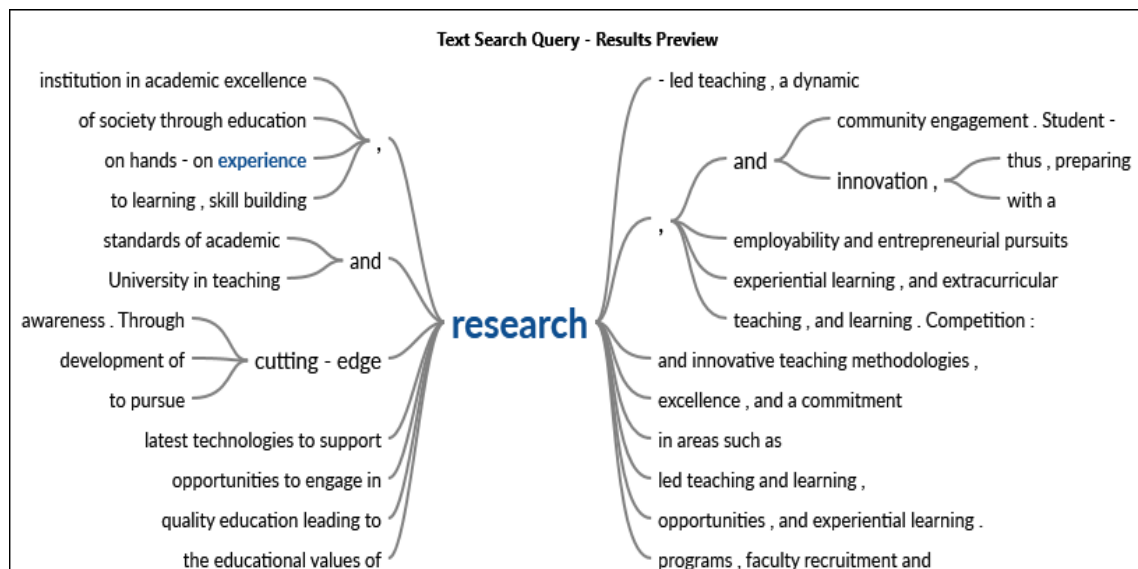


Figure 7: Perception on research

Community

It's evident that community involvement plays a pivotal role in transforming mission and vision of university. Engaging with the community allows the university to understand the local needs, challenges and aspirations. This insight helps in aligning the university's mission to address these specific needs effectively. Integrating service-learning programs into the curriculum allows students to apply their knowledge and skills to real community issues. Engaging with the community enriches the university experience by exposing students and faculty to diverse cultures, traditions and perspectives. Hosting events, workshops, seminars and community outreach programs can disseminate knowledge and expertise from the university to the broader community. Collaborating with the community on sustainability projects promotes environmental awareness and action.

Engaging with community also enables universities to measure the impact of its initiatives and adjust strategies accordingly. This feedback loop ensures that the university's efforts are effectively aligned with its mission and are making a meaningful difference.

Practices of community involvement helps to provide the solution to complex and societal problems as well as it allows to advocated for policies that align with its mission. This involvement in local governance and policy-making reflects the commitment to societal welfare. It promotes economic development, where universities can contribute to local

economic development by supporting entrepreneurship, providing expertise and fostering innovation. This aligns with a mission that aims to enhance the economic prosperity of the community.

Conducting research projects in collaboration with the community generates practical solutions. This applied research aligns with the mission of addressing societal problems and promotes community development.

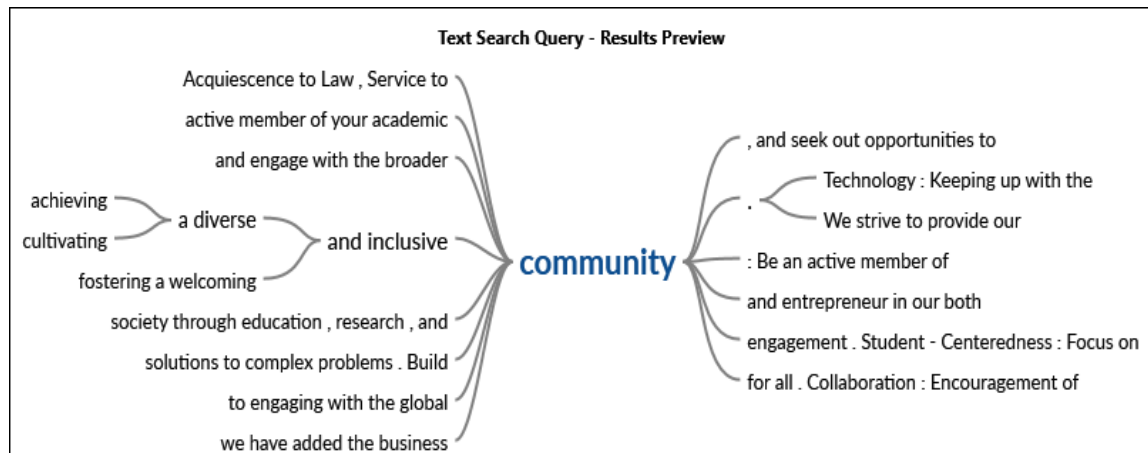


Figure 8: Role of Community

Responsible

The research evident that it is the practic3 of the head of university to modelling the habit of responsibility, so they can have better impact on students. It may include to produce more responsible and empowered personnel/global citizens and leaders for the society.

Being responsible is integral to transforming the vision and mission of the university into practice for its students. It plays a crucial role in alignment of every action, decision and initiative within the university with its vision and mission. All the individuals as well as the departments take ownership of their roles in fulfilling these overarching goals. Not only has this but it also held all the individuals accountable for their contributions to achieving the common goals as per the vision of their university.

It involves a commitment to the welfare and holistic development of students. It ensures that programs, services and activities are designed to fulfil the university’s promises to its student body. This often requires innovation and flexibility in approaches to education, research and student support. In order to get this sense of responsibility also ensures a commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement. It involves assessing outcomes, learning from successes and failures and making necessary adjustments to better align practices with the university’s mission as well as vision.

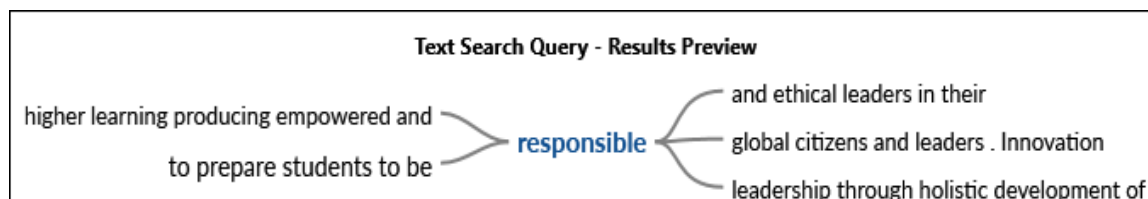


Figure 8: Protagonist of Responsibility

35% participant prioritizes diversity and inclusivity, suggesting a commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for individuals from various

backgrounds. This indicates a desire to promote equal opportunities and foster a diverse community within the university.

42% of the participants focuses more explicitly on the goal of achieving international recognition and acclaim. It highlights the importance of establishing a strong reputation in teaching and research to gain global recognition as a top-tier institution.

One more key area was found in the interviews that vision and mission contribute in finding the track and gap by providing a clear understanding of the desired outcomes and identifying areas where the organization may need to improve. Overall, the common points focus on holistic education, personal development, and academic excellence, while the different points highlight the specific efforts to bridge the gap between academia and the job market through employer involvement and market-driven education as far as the steps has been taken by the universities and to overcome the challenges. In data analysis researcher found that whatever they are doing in their universities is guided by their vision and mission statement.

The research evident that vision and mission statements offer a structured framework to assess performance and pinpoint areas necessitating adjustments within an organization. Moreover, these statements foster a culture of continuous improvement by providing a distinct sense of purpose and direction. They also facilitate the identification of areas where the organization can advance towards its goals.

Advocating vision can face various challenges including people with the university resistance to change due to comfort with existing practices or fear of the unknown. Communicating the vision effectively to diverse stakeholders. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, can be challenging especially if there are language, cultural or generational differences as it requires their support, understanding and commitment to making changes. One more challenge which can be faced is that parents might have set expectations or perceptions about the university which could clash with the new vision, causing resistance or skepticism.

To overcome the challenges, heads of universities ensures strong leadership, effective communication strategies, stakeholder involvement, phased implementation plans and a willingness to adapt and address concerns. It requires a collaborative effort and a clear roadmap to navigate these obstacles successfully.

Conclusion

Transforming vision and mission into practice involves a strategic and systematic approach to aligning the goals and aspirations of an organization with its day to day operations. Following steps are evident to effectively translate vision and mission into actionable practices:

1. Understanding the vision and mission. It ensures that everyone within the university comprehends the vision i.e. the desired future state and mission i.e. the purpose and reason for existence clearly. These serve as guiding principles for decision making and actions.
2. Develop Clear Goals and Objectives: Breaking down the vision and mission into (SMART) goals and objectives which align with the broader vision and mission while being actionable and understandable by all the stakeholders.
3. Communicate and Cascade: It ensures that every team member understands how their work contributes to achieving these overarching objectives. And they feel that they are playing an important role in achieving the university's vision.

4. **Integrate into Curriculum and Research:** Aligned academic programs with the vision and mission infuse core values and desired skills into the curriculum. Encourage research that resonates with institutional goals.
5. **Empower Leadership and Decision Making:** Empowered employees can contribute with their ideas and take ownership of the tasks that contribute to the vision and mission. Creating environment where innovation and creativity can be valued. Modify or create new processes where necessary to support the intended direction.
6. **Resources and Support:** Allocation of necessary resources and support in all form either financial, human or technological helpful in initiatives aligned with the vision and mission. Moreover, training and professional development opportunities also enhance the skills and capabilities of not only of employee but of the students as well.
7. **Measure and evaluate progress and Adjust:** Establishing the key performance indicators known as (KPIs) to monitor progress towards the goals. Regularly assessing and measuring outcomes against these KPI's are essential. This data can be used to make informed decisions and also helpful in adjusting strategies where ever needed.
8. **Celebrate Achievements, cultivate a supportive Culture:** Accountability at all levels encourages the culture. Acknowledge and celebrate successes and give rewards behaviors that align with these principles. Acknowledge milestones and successes achieved through the implementation of the vision and mission. This fosters motivation and reinforces commitment.
9. **Accepting Feedback:** Learning from failures or setbacks to continuously improvement. Accept and encourage feedback also helps.
10. **Continuously Reinforcement:** Continuous hammering plays an important role in practicing vision and mission. Incorporating them into meetings, strategic planning sessions and communications to reinforce their importance.
11. **Adapt to change:** Stay flexible and agile in responding to changes in the internal and external environment.

Recommendations

By integrating the vision and mission into the fabric of an organization and consistently applying these principles, it becomes an intrinsic part of the institution's identity, guiding its growth and impact. Further studies can be furnished on the school level to identify that either the vision and mission statements are equally important for that level too. Vision and mission statements are crucial for effective management and enhanced organizational performance. It's recommended that senior management develop these statements by considering the current environmental factors and when feasible involve input from the employees across all the level and even involvement of community also plays an important role. Ultimately, vision and mission statements serve as the initial steps in the strategic management process and their effectiveness relies on the successful implementation of subsequent strategic stages.

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