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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWEAN MISSION STATEMENTS: HOW USEFUL  
IS THE ASHRIDGE MISSION MODEL?

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**ABSTRACT**

Campbell and Yeung's Ashridge mission model is a seminal corporate mission statement analysis framework. It hypothesizes that a strong mission exists when four elements of mission – i.e. purpose, strategy, behaviour standards and values – link tightly together, resonating and reinforcing each other. Nonetheless, there is a paucity of published literature on the practical relevance of the model to organisations in developing countries especially those in Africa. The objective of this paper is to measure the extent to which mission statements of organisations in Zimbabwe are compliant with the Ashridge mission model. This goal is achieved by content analysing 54 mission statements drawn from a systematic random sample of organisations which offer internships to university students pursuing business degrees. The study reveals that mission statements of service firms and large enterprises in the sample comply with the four components of the Ashridge mission model albeit to varying degrees. Despite the findings' exploratory nature, their tentative empirical inference is that managers in Zimbabwe can analyse and write corporate mission statements drawing from the hypothesis of the Ashridge mission model.

*Keywords:* Ashridge Mission Model, Zimbabwe.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

MANY organisations – small, big, for-profit and non-profit – display their mission statements in areas of company premises that are accessible to the public such as company receptions or waiting rooms. They also usually put their mission statements on corporate websites and in company annual reports, company profiles, brochures, and some even on business cards. This practice demonstrates the significance of mission statements otherwise why would organisations expend such huge effort in publicising them?

A mission statement assists in positioning an organisation. Ideally, it should differentiate the organisation. One of the four characteristics of successful mission statements is uniqueness (Drummond, Ensor and Ashford, 2001). The mission has to relate to the particular organisation and should not be a statement that could be generically applied to a range of other organisations (*ibid*).

Without a clear mission, goals and plans may be developed haphazardly and not take the organisation in the direction it needs to go (Daft, 2000). Mission statements have a potentially valuable role to play in clarifying what an organisation stands for (its singular purpose) but far too many of them have proved to be bland and meaningless (Gilligan and Wilson, 2003). Corporate mission is one of the enduring set of fundamental principles guiding strategic decision making in firms today (Muzondo, 2012). A well-designed mission statement is essential for formulating, implementing, and evaluating business strategy (Kemp and Dwyer, 2003). A mission statement provides the basis for development of all subsequent goals and plans (Daft, 2000) and plays a vital direction-establishing role that facilitates strategy formulation (Sidhu, 2003; Reading, 2002).

Given that “the environment within which business operates, society presents certain constraints on the operations of business” (Maphosa, 1997:181), it follows that mission statements are a vehicle through which organisations can project and configure themselves as socially responsible corporate citizens. Perhaps it is out of this realisation that organisational mission is considered by the general public in society and social scientists from many disciplines such as economics, political science, sociology, ethics, philosophy (de Wit and Meyer, 1998), marketing (Gilligan and Wilson, 2003; Kotler *et al.*, 2002; McDonald, 2002; Kotler, 2000; Drummond, Ensor and Ashford, 2001; Doyle, 2002; Piercy, 1997; Kotler and Keller, 2009), strategic management (Johnson and Scholes, 2002; Thompson and Strickland, 2003; de Wit and Meyer, 1998; Haberberg and Rieple, 2001; Reading, 2002; Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2007; Wheelen and Hunger, 2002), marketing communications (Fill, 2002), corporate identity and image management (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Check-Teck and Lowe, 1999; Abratt, 1989; Stuart, 1999), and public relations (Smith, 2005).

Despite the professed importance of mission statements de Wit and Meyer (1998) argue that the literature gives the topic cursory attention. The two are even self critical as they acknowledge that “nine chapters [of their book entitled *Strategy: Process, Content, Context*] are spent looking at strategy from many angles but relatively little explicit attention is paid to the fundamental issue of organisational purpose” (de Wit and Meyer, 1998:805). They also speculate why there is lack of serious attention to organisational purpose: (i) it may in part be due to the assumption by many that it is obvious why organisations exist, and (ii) others may avoid the topic because it is highly value-laden and somehow outside the realm of strategic management. A scan of conceptual strategic management and marketing literature published in the 2000s (e.g. Thompson and Strickland, 2003; Daft, 2000; Haberberg and Rieple, 2001; Reading, 2002; Kotler *et al.*, 2002; McDonald, 2002; Kottler and Keller, 2009; McDonald, 2008; Kotler, 2000) shows that mission statement analysis is still being treated superficially because the textbooks allot barely half a page to a few pages to this important aspect. Drummond, Ensor and Ashford (2001) are an exception, just like de Wit and Meyer (1998), as they dedicate a chapter to this important aspect in their book on strategic marketing.

The issue of developing mission statements as a management tool for focusing attention on organisational goals and purposes has been given renewed attention in recent years (Piercy and Morgan, 1994). Way back in 1973 Peter Drucker observed that business purpose and business mission were so rarely given adequate thought was perhaps the most important cause of business frustration and failure (Drucker, 1973). Yet even as recent as the early 1990s, Campbell and Yeung (1991) observed that many managers misunderstand the nature and importance of mission, while others fail to consider it at all. Coming up with a mission

statement is not as simple as it might seem (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). And yet there is a certain degree of ambiguity in the literature with regards the core components of a mission statement such that different writers have emphasised different albeit related elements (Sidhu, 2003). The prescriptions as to the content of mission statements are many and varied and “the prescriptive literature...appears to offer a high degree of idealised simplification” (Piercy and Morgan, 1994:1). There is greater consensus in the literature regarding the necessity of mission analysis than there is clear evidence as to the issues that should be analysed (*ibid*).

Nonetheless, extant literature acknowledges that mission statements can be bland (McDonald, 2002; Drummond, Ensor and Ashford, 2001). Commentators agree that most mission statements are bland and say much the same things, so that it can be difficult to tell one firm’s statement from another’s (Haberberg and Rieple, 2001). For managers that want a quick analysis of their mission statement and care little about producing a mission that will make a difference in their company Piercy (1997) suggests an ‘Instant corporate mission kit’. This kit has statements such as... a market leader, ... a total quality supplier, ... a socially responsible producer, ... a green/environmentally friendly firm, ... a caring employer, ... a safeguarder of shareholder interests, ... a global player, ... a provider of service, ... a good corporate citizen, ... a customer-oriented organisation, ... a responsible partner with distributors, and ... a builder of human dignity, etc which a manager simply has to tick as necessary in order to interpret what the mission statement reflects or ought to reflect. Piercy admits that he has been driven to suggest to some companies, whose version of mission analysis is pure, non-operational motherhood, that he is prepared to provide them with the ‘Instant mission kit’. “This kit is guaranteed to produce a mission statement of bland, non-operational motherhood, with which no-one will disagree, but which will not change a single thing in the business and its service to the customer – but at least it is quicker than the usual weeks of heart-searching, so you will not waste as much time!” (Piercy, 1997).

McDonald (2002) suggests that it is feasible to have two mission statements in one organisation i.e. (i) statement of *motherhood* which is of no practical use beyond *stroking* shareholders and (ii) the real thing, useful and unique to the organisation, which impact on the behaviour of the executives at all levels. Obviously, the practice of having two mission statements in one organisation gives executives a double job. Therefore, in the absence of empirical evidence the applicability and usefulness of mission statement frameworks remain questionable. There is greater consensus in the literature regarding the necessity of mission analysis than there is clear evidence as to the issues that should be analysed (Piercy and Morgan, 1994).

Apart from Piercy’s (1997) ‘Instant corporate mission kit’ reviewed above and the Ashridge mission model, critiqued in the next section, there is a substantial number of mission statement analysis frameworks (e.g. Kotler *et al.*, 2002; Abell, 1980; Piercy and Morgan, 1994; Sidhu, 2003; Campbell and Yeung, 1991; McDonald, 2002). Many of these frameworks were designed in the context of developed countries hence there is hardly any research literature relating to their applicability in developing nations such as Zimbabwe (Muzondo, 2012).

Considering the debate on mission statement analysis and the lack of agreement on the components of an ideal corporate mission statement, the objective of this paper is to test the managerial applicability of one of the leading mission analysis methodologies, the Ashridge mission model, to Zimbabwean corporate mission statements. The paper contributes to knowledge on mission statement analysis in general and the academic and managerial relevance of the Ashridge mission model in a developing country—Zimbabwe in particular. While the model has been recommended to students and managers in Zimbabwe by the researchers in their work as academicians and management or marketing consultants, empirical evidence on the usefulness of the model in Zimbabwe is scarce. In fact, one of the researchers, Muzondo (2012), even went on to design an Ashridge mission model compliance scale and guide matrix,

described in the methodology section of this paper, to enable managers to operationalise the Ashridge mission model but did not test drive it to ascertain managerial applicability. To deal with this limitation, future studies must test the relevance of the scale-matrix using real corporate mission statements drawn from a cross section of small, medium size and large organisations in different industries—manufacturing, engineering, education, tourism and hospitality, agriculture, mining, public sector, and non-profit making (Muzondo, 2012) hence this paper.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: THE ASHRIDGE MISSION MODEL

Campbell and Yeung's (1991) definition of mission includes four elements—purpose, strategy, behaviour standards and values. A strong mission exists when the four elements of mission link tightly together, resonating and reinforcing each other (*ibid*).

### 2.1 PURPOSE

Purpose answers the critical question why the company exists. Campbell and Yeung admit that many companies do not even attempt to reach a conclusion about the nature of their overall purpose. However, where there does appear to be an overall idea of purpose, companies fall into three categories (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). First, there is the company that claims to exist for the benefit of the shareholders. For these companies the purpose is to maximize wealth for the shareholders. Thomson and Strickland (2003:33) state that a company that says its mission is to make a profit begs the question: "What will we do to make a profit?" To understand a company business purpose, management's real answer to that question must be known (*ibid*). Therefore, most managers do not believe that the company's only purpose is to create wealth for shareholders (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). They acknowledge the claims of other stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, and the community. "Faced with the question: 'Is your company in business to make money for shareholders, make products for customers, or provide rewarding jobs for employees?' they will answer 'yes' to all three" (Campbell and Yeung, 1991:876). The second type of company, therefore, is one that exists to satisfy all its stakeholders. In order to articulate this broader idea of purpose these companies have written down their responsibilities to each stakeholder group.

Managers in the third type of company are dissatisfied by a purpose solely aimed at satisfying stakeholder needs (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). They have sought to identify a purpose that is greater than the combined needs of the stakeholders, something to which all stakeholders can feel proud of contributing (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). In short, they aim toward a higher ideal. Campbell and Yeung believe that leaders will find it easier to create employees with commitment and enthusiasm if they choose a purpose aimed at a higher ideal e.g. being socially responsible. On paper, this makes it easier to bind the organisation together but in practice such a purpose may be difficult to live. A study of companies listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange found that their mission statements emphasize customer interests and the maximization of returns for shareholders, while corporate reports give more attention to financial than to social issues (Maphosa, 1997). This might indicate that social responsibility is still a peripheral concern in most Zimbabwean corporate life (*ibid*). De Wit and Meyer (1998) agree that an organisation can pursue three purposes i.e. stockholder value, stakeholder value and higher ideal e.g. social responsibility. There are also commentators who believe that an organisation exist solely to fulfill the objectives of stockholders (e.g. Rappaport, 1986) and others that believe in a balance between stockholder value and stakeholder value (e.g. Freeman and Reed, 1993; Yoshimori, 1995).

## 2.2 STRATEGY

To achieve purpose in competition with other organisations, there is need for strategy. Strategy provides the commercial logic for the company (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). For example, if the purpose is to be the best there must be a strategy explaining the principles around which the company will become the best. Strategy will define the business that the company is going to compete in, the position that the company plans to hold in that business and the distinctive competence or competitive advantage that the company has or plans to create.

The strategy component of mission is also acknowledged in a number of other mission statement analysis frameworks (e.g. Sidhu, 2003; Wheelen and Hunger, 2002; Piercy and Morgan, 1994; Abell, 1980). Notwithstanding the variations in conceptualisation and the specific words used, it is possible to identify four distinct elements that appear [in mission statements] with a good degree of regularity two of which relate to strategy—the organisation’s business domain and competencies (Sidhu, 2003). Abell (1980) argues that a strategically revealing mission statement should incorporate three elements one of which is the company’s activities, technologies, and competencies, or *how* the enterprise goes about creating and delivering value to customers and satisfying their needs. “A well-conceived mission statement defines the fundamental, unique purpose that sets the company apart from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of the company’s operations in terms of products (including services) offered and the markets served” (Wheelen and Hunger, 2002:10). Piercy and Morgan (1994) reviewed the literature and concluded that one of four major areas of development to be reflected in a holistic mission statement is the specification of the *product-market domain* or scope of the organisation. The product-market domain appears to concur with Ansoff’s matrix as it suggests that markets and products are the two major variables to consider when designing strategy. In addition, Drummond, Ensor and Ashford (2001) submit that mission statement analysis is highly insightful because it can predict what competitors will do in relation to their goals, values and generic strategies.

## 2.3 BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS

Purpose and strategy are empty intellectual thoughts unless they can be converted into action, into the policy and *behaviour [standards or] guidelines* that help people to decide what to do on a day-to-day basis (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). For example, teamwork or cooperation can be behaviour standards promoted in a corporation. The standards should be ingrained in the culture rather than written in tablets of stone. Campbell and Yeung acknowledge that the logic for cooperation is commercial logic. To capture the emotional energy of an organisation the mission needs to provide some philosophical or moral rationale for behaviour that run alongside the commercial rationale (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). The importance of behavior to organisations is also acknowledged in corporate identity and corporate image management literature (e.g. Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006; Check-Teck and Lowe, 1999; Abratt, 1989; Stuart, 1999). This brings us to the last element of the Ashridge mission model, values.

## 2.4 VALUES

“Corporate objectives ... might be ... *philosophical*: perhaps a mission statement expressing the core values of the organization” (Blythe, 2005:264). Values are beliefs and moral principles that lie behind the company’s culture (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). Values give meaning to the norms and behaviour standards in the company that act as the ‘right brain’

of the organisation (*ibid*). A firm's people may believe in cooperative behaviour or teamwork because they feel it is 'right'. For example, a group of consultants may avoid high pressure selling because they feel that it is ethical to leave customers to make their own decisions about purchasing consulting services. There is a commercial rationale for this behaviour but the moral rationale is stronger (Campbell and Yeung, 1991).

The literature suggests that values can provide a rationale for behaviour that is just as strong as strategy hence Campbell and Yeung (1991) admit that it is for this reason that their Ashridge mission model is diamond-shaped. There are two rationales that link purpose with behaviour. The commercial rationale is about strategy and what sort of behaviour will help the company to outperform its competitors in the market. The emotional, moral, and ethical rationales are about values and what sort of behaviour is ethical: the right way to treat people, the right way to behave in society, et cetera (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). Values regularly appear in organisational mission (Sidhu, 2003) but they are also associated with blandness (McDonald, 2002; Drummond, Ensor and Ashford, 2001; Piercy, 1997).

### 3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

#### 3.1 POPULATION, SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The study's population comprised the 350+ organisations which provided 12-month internship to third-year undergraduate students in the Department of Business Studies, Faculty of Commerce, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), from August 2004 to August 2006. In part fulfillment of third-year assessment requirements, students write and submit individual reports towards the end of their industrial attachment period detailing what they will have learnt. Each report begins with a summary background of the organisation that would have offered them internship i.e. history, vision statement, mission statement and, if available, values and behaviour standards. After being marked, the industrial attachment reports are archived in the department for at least eight years hence they are a rich source of secondary data for researchers.

Following the general rule of thumb that a minimum sample should be about 30 respondents (Barnes and Lewin, 2005), the researchers collected 54 corporate mission statements and, where available, statements of values from a systematic random sample of students' internship reports. Some organisations have a habit of stating their values immediately after their mission statements, and where these were available the researchers noted them. Where the same mission statement had already been recorded from a previous student's report, as some organisations provided internship to more than one student at a time, the researchers ignored the second report and picked the next *n*'th report until the 54 mission statements were collected.

#### 3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The 54 mission statements in the sample were content analysed using Muzondo's (2012) Ashridge mission model compliance scale and guide matrix, Table 1 above. Muzondo designed this methodology to operationalise Campbell and Yeung's (1991) Ashridge mission model as a theoretical framework for analysing the quality and adequacy of corporate mission statements. The methodology consists of the *Measure of Compliance* and the *Mission Statement Elements Score and Comment Index*. The *Measure of Compliance* gauges the consistence of a mission statement with each of the four elements of the Ashridge mission model—purpose, strategy, behaviour standards and values. The *Mission Statement Elements Score and Comment Index* records the score per element i.e. 'Yes is 1' and 'No is zero (0)' and

the overall comment per mission statement. For practical purposes, a person or planning team carrying out mission statement audit may collapse the compliance scale and guide matrix to a simple mission analysis tool shown in Table 2 below. The tool replica can be drawn on a computer spreadsheet and then printed out or simply drawn on a piece of blank sheet of paper by hand. The person(s) involved in the analysis record the conclusion per element under ‘Yes’ if the mission statement reflects the component or ‘No’ if it does not. Where a planning team is involved, the individual members may be asked to do the analysis individually and then the results will be aggregated at the end of the process to form the overall conclusion for the team. Team members would have to discuss and agree the overall outcome before they take it back to the Ashridge mission model compliance scale and guide matrix for overall interpretation in terms of the excellent vis-a-vis poor continuum.

Table 1: Ashridge Mission Model Compliance Scale And Guide Matrix

	MISSION STATEMENT ELEMENTS				SCORE AND COMMENT INDEX		
	Purpose	Strategy	Behaviour Standards	Values	Mission Score	Interim Comment (Tick Suitable)	Overall Comment (Tick Suitable)
MEASURE OF COMPLIANCE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Excellent	Excellent
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3	Very Good	Good
	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	3	Very Good	
	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	Very Good	
	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3	Very Good	
	Yes	Yes	No	No	2	Good	Average
	Yes	No	Yes	No	2	Average	
	Yes	No	No	Yes	2	Average	
	No	Yes	Yes	No	2	Average	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	2	Average	
	Yes	No	No	No	1	Somewhat Average	
	No	Yes	No	No	1	Somewhat Average	
	No	No	Yes	Yes	2	Poor	
	No	No	Yes	No	1	Poor	
	No	No	No	Yes	1	Poor	
	No	No	No	No	0	Very Poor	Very Poor
						Use space on the left	

Source: Muzondo, N. (2012) “Mission analysis and the Ashridge mission model: An operational conceptual framework”, *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 57-68.

Table 2 - Mission Elements Compliance Matrix

Ashridge Mission Model Element	Measure Of Compliance (Tick Appropriate)	
	Yes	No
Purpose		
Strategy		
Behaviour Standards		
Values		

The conclusion on whether a mission statement is compliant or not with a given element depends on the skills and intuition of the person or team doing the analysis (Muzondo, 2012). You cannot arrive at a mission by analysis or by following a process of management meetings and workshops (Piercy and Morgan, 1994) and yet the compliance scale and guide matrix precisely does that. In fact, the scale-matrix’s usefulness depends on the intuition and the clarity on the meaning of each component of the Ashridge mission model (Muzondo, 2012). Managers with insufficient basic knowledge of planning or strategy terms could face challenges in applying the Ashridge mission model compliance scale and guide matrix to analyse mission statements hence may conclude that the Ashridge mission model somewhat impractical.

As already stated, for each element with which a mission statement complies, it earns a score of '1' and where it does not comply it earns 'zero'. As each of the four components of the Ashridge mission model is worth 1 score, all mission statements subjected to the scale have an equal chance to earn the total 4 scores. Assuming that the 54 sample mission statements are excellent, i.e. each complies with all four elements of the Ashridge mission model—i.e. purpose, strategy, behavior standards and values, the total score should be 216, which is derived using the following formula:

$$n(x)=216$$

Where 'n' is the 54 mission statements in the sample and 'x' is the 4 elements of the Ashridge mission model. Therefore,  $54 \times 4 = 216$ . The total score per mission statement depicts the quality of the content of a firm's mission statement with reference to compliance with the Ashridge mission model. As already stated, assuming that an organisational mission statement complies with all four elements of the model, hence regarded as excellent, then it should earn 4 scores in all. Thus the formula above can be adapted to a single corporate mission statement as follows:

$$n(x)=4$$

Where 'n' is 1 corporate mission statement and 'x' is the 4 elements of the Ashridge mission model. Hence  $1 \times 4 = 4$ . After scoring the mission statement on each of the four elements, the result should then be taken to the compliance scale and guide matrix for interpretation. In theory, the scale-matrix operates on the principle that the higher the score the better the quality and adequacy of a mission statement, provided that at least one hardware component is included. The assumption is that of the four elements in the Ashridge mission model, strategy and purpose are the hardware elements while behaviour standards and values constitute the software components. The author also assumes that the hardware elements have symbolically more weight than the software elements, although each element is worth 1.

### 3.3 PROPOSITIONS

The Muzondo Ashridge mission model compliance scale and guide matrix has 16 possible outcomes and any mission statement has to match one of the 16. The 16 probable scenarios are collapsed to just 5 mission statement outcomes in the Final Comment Index i.e. *Excellent, Good, Average, Poor* and *Very Poor* in Table 1 above for the sake of manageability and simplicity. The five outcomes underpin the five propositions of the scale-matrix hence those of this study as stated below:

- P<sub>1</sub>: A mission statement is excellent if it complies with all four elements of the Ashridge mission model. It is unlikely that there are more than half such mission statements in the sample.
- P<sub>2</sub>: A mission statement is good if it is consistent with all two hardware elements of the Ashridge mission model i.e. strategy and purpose only or the hardware elements and one software component. It is likely that there are more than half such mission statements in the sample.
- P<sub>3</sub>: A mission statement which conforms to three components of the Ashridge mission model i.e. either strategy or purpose and both values and behaviour standards or one hardware element plus one software element is average. It is likely that there are more than half such mission statements in the sample.



- P<sub>4</sub>: A mission statement is poor if it is consistent with one or both of the software elements only of the Ashridge mission model i.e. values and/or behaviour standards. It is unlikely that there are more than half such mission statements in the sample.
- P<sub>5</sub>: A mission statement which complies with none of the four elements of the Ashridge mission model is very poor and, in fact, no mission at all. It is unlikely that there are more than half such mission statements in the sample.

Table 1 below displays the outcome of the analysis for the individual 54 mission statements in the sample in terms of compliance with the original four Ashridge mission model elements and an added component—the statement of values. The statement of values was added because some organisations provide a statement of values after their mission statements in corporate documents such as brochures, annual reports, strategic plans, and on corporate websites. Thus if the study had strictly considered values directly embedded in mission statements only without considering those stated in organisational statements of values, as recorded in students' reports, the last column in Table 1 would not have been necessary.

### 3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The study generated numerical data in Table 3 below, which is analysed and presented in two sections of the results component of this empirical paper. The first section analyses the demographic characteristics of the 54 organisations in the sample. The second section presents results in terms of the study's objective—to test the managerial applicability of the Ashridge mission model to Zimbabwean mission statements.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISATION

Only 11 of 54 organisations in the sample belonged in the manufacturing sector while 43 belonged in the service industry (see Tables 3 and 4 below). Thus the sample was dominated by mission statements belonging to firms in the services sector. The table also indicates that 30 of the 54 organisations in the sample were large enterprises, 22 were small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), and only two were non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Hence the sample was dominated by mission statements of large corporations followed by SMEs.

Table 5 below indicates that only seven of the 54 corporate mission statements in the sample were consistent with all four elements of the Ashridge mission model – purpose, strategy, behaviour standards, and values – and 47 were not. This means that the seven mission statements account for only 28 scores out of the possible total of 216. Therefore, the first proposition (P<sub>1</sub>) of the study is accepted because 47 of the 54 sample mission statements are not compliant with all four elements of the model.

The results of the content analysis as given in Table 5 confirm the study's second proposition (P<sub>2</sub>) in terms of the 51 mission statements that comply with both the strategy and purpose components of the Campbell and Yeung's (1991) Ashridge mission model. However, P<sub>2</sub> is rejected in terms mission statements that are consistent with both hardware elements and at least one software component i.e. either values or behavior standards. As shown in the table, of the 54 mission statements only two complied with purpose, strategy, and behaviour standards and only five were consistent with purpose, strategy and values. Overall, nonetheless, we accept P<sub>2</sub> on the basis that the majority of organisational mission statements in the sample were good at least in terms of conformity to the hardware elements of the model.

Table 3 – Ashridge Mission Model Compliance Scale Results (N=54)

SECTOR			ORGANISATION TYPE			ASHRIDGE MISSION COMPONENTS					STATEMENT OF VALUES
MST	MAN	SER	SME	LE	NGOs	PUR	STR	BSTA	VAL	TSC	
1.	1		1			1	1			2	1
2.		1		1		1	1			2	1
3.	1			1		1	1			2	
4.		1		1		1	1		1	3	
5.		1		1		1	1			2	
6.		1		1		1	1	1	1	4	
7.		1		1		1	1	1		3	
8.	1			1		1	1			2	
9.		1		1		1	1			2	
10.		1	1			1	1			2	
11.		1	1			1	1			2	1
12.		1		1		1	1			2	
13.		1	1			1	1			2	1
14.		1	1			1	1			2	
15.		1		1		1	1		1	3	1
16.	1			1		1	1			2	
17.		1	1			1	1			2	1
18.		1		1		1				1	
19.	1		1			1	1	1	1	4	1
20.	1		1			1	1		1	3	1
21.		1	1			1	1			3	1
22.		1		1		1	1	1	1	4	1
23.		1		1		1	1			2	1
24.		1		1		1	1		1	3	1
25.		1	1			1	1			2	1
26.		1	1			1	1			2	
27.		1		1		1	1	1	1	4	
28.		1		1		1	1			2	1
29.		1	1			1	1			2	1
30.		1	1			1	1	1	1	4	
31.		1	1			1	1			2	1
32.		1		1		1	1			2	1
33.		1		1		1	1			2	1
34.		1	1			1	1	1	1	4	
35.		1		1		1	1			2	1
36.	1			1		1	1			2	1
37.		1		1		1	1			2	1
38.		1	1				1		1	2	1
39.		1		1		1	1	1		3	1
40.		1		1		1	1	1	1	4	1
41.		1		1		1	1			2	1
42.	1			1		1	1			2	1
43.		1	1			1	1			2	1
44.		1	1			1	1			2	1
45.		1			1	1	1	1		3	
46.	1			1		1	1			2	
47.		1			1	1	1			2	1
48.		1	1			1	1			2	1
49.	1		1			1	1			2	
50.		1		1		1	1			2	1
51.		1		1		1				1	
52.		1		1		1	1		1	3	1
53.	1		1			1	1			2	
54.		1	1			1	1			2	1
Total	11	43	22	30	2	53	52	10	13	129	33
Total Possible Scores						54	54	54	54	216	54

Legend: MST (Mission Statement), MAN (Manufacturing), SER (Service), SME (Small-to-Medium Enterprises), LE (Large Enterprises), NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), PUR (Purpose), STR (Strategy), BSTA (Behaviour Standards), VAL (Values), TSC (Total Scores)

Table 4 – Demographics Of Organisation In Sample (N=54)

Analysis by organisation type	Manufacturing	11
	Services	43
Analysis by Sector	Small-to-Medium-size Enterprises	22
	Non-Governmental Organisations	2
	Large Enterprises	30

Zimbabwean corporate mission statements’ compliance with the Campbell and Yeung’s Ashridge mission model

It is notable from Table 5 that 25 of the organisations from which the 54 sample mission statements were drawn had statements of values stated after their corporate missions. Among those organisations, 33 had values reflected in the mission and statements of values written after their mission statements, 14 of them had both hardware components of the Ashridge mission model reflected in the mission statements as well as statement of values after the corporate missions. Only three of the organisations in the sample had statements of values written after their mission statements and both hardware and software elements reflected in the corporate statements.

Table 5 – Zimbabwean Corporate Mission Statements Compliance With Ashridge Mission Model (n=54)

TOTAL SCORES	NO. OF ORGS.	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS COMPLYING WITH SHOWN ASHRIDGE MISSION MODEL ELEMENTS																						
		PUR, STR, BEH & STA VAL	PUR, STR & BEH STA	PUR, STR & VAL	PUR, BEH & VAL	STR, BEH & STA VAL	STR, BEH & VAL	PUR & BEH STA	PUR & VAL	STR & BEH STA	STR & VAL	BEH & STA VAL	PUR & STR	PUR	STR	BEH STA	VAL	COMP- VAL	STA VAL	STA VAL & VAL	PUR, STR & STA VAL	PUR, STR, BEH STA, VAL & STA VAL		
4	7	7																						
3	9		2	P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>2</sub>	0																		
2	36						10	12	10	11		51												
1	2										1		53	52	10	5								
5																								
Totals	54	7	2	5	0	0	10	12	10	11	1	51	53	52	10	5	0	25	33	14	3			
Variance not complying	(Orgs.)	47	52	49	54	54	44	42	44	43	53	3	1	2	44	49								
Proposition(s) accepted		P <sub>1</sub>										P <sub>4</sub>	P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>4</sub>	P <sub>4</sub>	P <sub>5</sub>						
Proposition(s) rejected			P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>3</sub>														

Legend: PUR (Purpose), STR (Strategy), BEH STA (Behaviour Standards), VAL (Values), and STA VAL (Statement of Values), COMP- (None Compliance with all Elements)

The study’s third proposition (P<sub>3</sub>) is confirmed in respect of corporate mission statements that comply with either purpose alone (53 mission statements) or strategy only (52 mission statements). However, P<sub>3</sub> is outright rejected in respect of mission statements complying with three components i.e. one hardware element plus all software components or mission statements consistent with two elements being one hardware element and one software element. Thus on the basis of the number of mission statements that complied with either purpose or strategy singly, P<sub>3</sub> is accepted overall in terms of mission statements in the sample.

Table 5 shows that only 10 organisational mission statements in the sample were compliant with behaviour standards alone while only 5 missions were consistent with the values element alone. On the basis of this evidence, the fourth proposition of the study (P<sub>4</sub>) is thus accepted as less than half of mission statements in the sample qualify to be categorised as poor.

There are no mission statements in the sample that can be regarded as very poor because all have complied with at least one of the Ashridge mission model elements. This means that the fifth proposition of the study (P<sub>5</sub>) is accepted.

## 5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to test the managerial applicability of the Ashridge mission model on Zimbabwean corporate mission statements. According to the Ashridge mission model, a mission should have four elements—purpose, strategy, behaviour standards and values. A strong mission exists when the four elements of mission link tightly together, resonating and reinforcing each other (Campbell and Yeung, 1991).

While there are very few corporate mission statements in the sample which can be regarded as excellent on the basis of their compliance with all four elements of the Ashridge mission model, an overwhelming majority of mission statements were found to be good because they complied with both purpose and strategy components of mission. Muzondo (2012) regarded these two as the hardware elements of mission statements hence at least one of them should always be reflected in a mission statement for a mission to be regarded as average and acceptable. This is consistent not just with the two elements as discussed in Campbell and Yeung's (1991) Ashridge mission model but also in other mission analysis frameworks (e.g. Thomson and Strickland, 2003; De Wit and Meyer, 1998; Sidhu, 2003; Wheelen and Hunger, 2002; Piercy and Morgan, 1994; Abell, 1980; Drummond, Ensor and Ashford, 2001; Piercy and Morgan, 1994).

However, only one fifth of the sample mission statements reflected the behaviour standards element and less than one fifth reflected the values component. This finding on the behavior standards element alone somewhat agrees with Maphosa (1997) who concluded that social responsibility was not a priority in listed firms in Zimbabwe. However, the fact that 33 of the organisations whose mission statements were included in the sample had both values directly reflected in mission statements (5 organisations) and statements of values clearly stated after their mission statements somewhat contradicts Maphosa's findings. The sample organisations appear to appreciate the crucial role values play in organisational strategy.

Only three out of the four elements of the Ashridge mission model – i.e. purpose, strategy, and values – were reflected in mission statements of service firms than manufacturing firms and NGOs and in large enterprises than SMEs and NGOs. Therefore, following the rule of thumb that the minimum sample size for large samples is 30 elements, the demographic composition suggests that the validity of the study's results is more positively skewed towards service organisations than manufacturing entities and large enterprises than SMEs and NGOs. This means that, while they may not be conscious of it, managers in service organisations and large enterprises in Zimbabwe are, in fact, applying the Ashridge mission model to design corporate mission statements.

Considering that the study's results are not conclusive on the applicability of the Ashridge mission model to manufacturing firms, SMEs and NGOs, further studies on the relevance of the model in Zimbabwe could be carried out focusing on organisations in these three sectors. Secondly, given the qualitative nature of mission statements and the fact that the study relied on content analysis of extant corporate mission statements done by the researchers, the results may vary if managers in the organisations whose mission statements were included in the sample were, or another team of researchers was, to analyse the corporate missions for compliance with the Ashridge mission model. This is because many people avoid mission statements because they are highly value-laden (de Wit and Meyer, 1998). In addition, words such as 'purpose' and 'strategy' drawn on as codes for analysing mission statements have no single agreed meanings.

Therefore, future studies on the relevance of the Ashridge mission model should be designed in such a manner that respondents in the sample organisations rather than academics analyse their own mission statements using Muzondo's (2012) Ashridge mission model scale-matrix. In addition, even with the further analysis of the data in Table 3, it appears that the data in Table 1 can still be quantitatively analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences to see if the same results and conclusions would be drawn as those drawn in this paper.

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