



## Identifying Factors Affecting the Realization of the Mission Statement of the Organization; The Study of three main Universities of Iran

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### **Abstract:**

In most strategic management models, mission statement is mentioned as the first step and one of the main stages of strategic planning procedure. Mission statement is a document which distinguishes an organization from similar ones acting in a field. The issue of the effect of developing mission statement on the procedure of strategy development has a long history. Mission statement is mostly considered as an important factor affecting business success. However, the nature of the factors influencing the development and realization of mission statement and its relation with organizational performance has not been explained clearly. In fact, the intangible effect of mission statement on organization performance has decreased the managers' and other stakeholder' in high, middle, and operational levels trust in the effectiveness of this strategic document. The present study intends to identify the factors affecting the development of mission statement and its complete realization in the organizations. The findings of this study are based on the data collected from the informants and strategic planners of three Iranian major universities. The results obtained through basic conceptualization methodology showed the factors affecting realization of mission statements can be categorized into two area of development of mission statement and implementation of mission statement. Besides, participation of organization's human resources and commitment to mission statement play a major role in its realization.

**Keywords:** Mission statement, Organization, Vision, Mission, Core Values, University.



## Introduction

The mission of every organization is to meet the goals set by top level managers of the organization (Daft, 1998: 123). In fact, managers of every organization define a set of basic goals and preferences for their organization from the outset. If guiding the organization members toward these goals is possible in a calm environment, it would not be that easy in a changing one. One of the main tools of managers for guiding the organization in a changing environment is strategic management system. On the other hand, the increasing competition in global arena accompanied by rapid economic, social, and technological changes has directed managers' attention to the process of strategic management. In most models of strategic management, mission statement is considered as the first step and one of the main stages of strategic planning process (David, 1984: 195; Staples and Black, 1984: 33). Presence of a clear mission statement seems necessary for effectively defining goals, developing strategies and operational objectives, and implementing strategies and policies, optimal allocation of resources, and finally as a factor for motivating personnel. However, it must be stated that what helps the organizations survive in today's changing environment is moving toward the goals and mission of the organization. In this respect, operationalizing the goals defined by the top management of the organization is very important and sufficing to merely stating the mission and goals of the organization or being aware of them without commitment would not lead to the progress of the organization toward its general and operational goals.

So far, different definitions of mission statement have been offered. Some regard it as reflecting the goal of the organization and the ways of realizing it (Bart and Tabone, 1998: 55; Rigby, 1998: 56; Drohane, 1999: 117). In another definition, mission statement offers the final goal of the organization, so that it provides a united way for the managers, common expectation for the personnel, and a definite planning for customers in relation to the type of products (Pearce, 1982: 15). Some others consider mission statement as a response to the questions that where is organization? Where it goes? And how? (Calfree, 1993:54). Kotler and Morphi (1981) define it as the basic goal of the organization or what the organization tries to do. On the other hand, Eyeland and Hit (1992) and Cumming and Davis (1994) define mission statement as the philosophy of existence of an organization which is a basic guide for future actions of the organization and realization of its goals. Vaget (1994) and David (1997) argue that



mission statement includes distinguishing features of an organization. On the other hand, Morden (1993) defines mission statement in relation to the environment of the organization and argues that it indicates the position of the organization in the environment. In sum, it can be said that mission statement is a document distinguishing an organization from similar ones (David, 1997: 34).

Mission statement is not useful only for for-profit organizations; rather, it is effective in non-for-profit sector. At present, organizations, whether for-profit or non-for-profit emphasize on mission statement due to the vast range of its advantages for organizational development and realization of the operational goals of the organization (Graham and Havlick, 1994). Naught, Burger, and Gray (1991) argue that the key for the success of non-for-profit organizations is presence of an accurate and detailed mission statement followed by development of clear and operational goals. In non-for-profit sector, achievement of organizational mission is the same as earning profit in private sector. According to Naught, some non-for-profit organizations pay little attention to mission which causes them to face many difficulties. However, some of others spend great time and energy for developing an effective mission statement to prepare the ground for their own success (Romuald, 1996: 31).

The main question addressed in this study is "which factors affect the operationalization of mission statement of the organization"? In addition, the present study identifies the barriers of complete realization of mission statement in the organization together with extracting the factors affecting realization of the mission statement. That is, if the managers do not pay due attention to each of the extracted factors, they would emerge as a barrier for successful implementation of mission statement in the organizations. In other words, the factors affecting realization of mission statement in organization and the barriers of complete realization of the mission statement at organization level are complementary.

Discussions on the positive effect of developing mission statement and the performance and position of this statement in the process of strategy development have a long history (Sidhu, 1998). Also, mission statement is vastly considered as an important factor for the success of businesses (Bartkus, Glassman and McAfee, 1995). However, very little is known about the nature and the relationship between mission statement and organizational performance. Besides, there is no experimental study confirming the positive effect of mission statement on organizational performance. He studies



conducted in this area provide conflicting results. It can be argued that individuals in the organization lack an empirical and operational insight into mission statement (Heene, Desmidt and Prinzie, 1990). These problems and intangibility of mission statement in organizational performance, in general, have considerably reduced the trust of managers in mission statement in recent years. Thus, the present study intends to identify the factors guaranteeing realization of mission statement and making individuals of the organization committed to it.

The present perspective about mission statement is rooted in the comments put forward by Peter Drucker in 1970s. Some decades ago, he wrote about organization mission: "at present, perhaps the main reason of companies' failures is little attention to the mission and aim of their business" (Ducker, 1974). Of course, it is evident today that clearly developing and completely implementing mission statement results in a broader competitive margin for the company. In this regard, Hamel and Parahalad (1994) write: "in the business, like art, what distinguishes the pioneers from the followers and the bests from the averages is the ability in understanding favorable points they are trying to achieve" (Hamel and Parahalad, 1994). A mission statement determines what the organization is trying to realize, as well as the way and why it is realized. Drucker argues that: "defining the organizational goal and mission is a difficult, expensive, and risky task. But only through it the organization would be able to determine its goals and strategies and to allocate its resources. Only through mission statement, the organizational performance can be managed" (Drucker, 1974:94).

Pearce and David conducted the first studies on the direct relation between the comprehensiveness of mission statement and higher performance of the organization. According to their studies, presence of some specific factors does not suffice for the improvement of organizational performance; rather, comprehensiveness of the components of mission statement is a determining factor for the improvement of organization performance (Pearce and David, 1987: 90). Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that there are many ambiguities about the relationship between mission statement and organizational performance. Studies in this area have produced different and sometimes conflicting results. Achieving a clear result requires more studies and investigations (Sheafer, Landau and Drori, 2008: 55).

The main advantage of developing mission statement in higher education institutes and universities is that, using the mission statement as a strategic document emphasized by



the managers at all levels, the institute or university would be able to develop the basics of its strategic plans to be more effective in the path of higher education development (Quinley, 1991; Stacey, 1994). Employing such a tool significantly helps the university to succeed and improve the plans, services (Christ and Hynes, 1997). However, it must be mentioned that the value of this strategic tools has not yet been as fully understood in higher education institutes as businesses (Foley, 1995). This makes the necessity of research on the realization of mission statement of the organizations, and particularly universities, becomes clearer. Therefore, the conflict existing in this area is related to effectively applying mission statement in managerial processes of the organizations (Thompson and Strickland, 1996).

### **The components of mission statement**

The content and components of mission statement are important because they guide the organization in achieving effective performance. In general, there are different views about the components of mission statement. Every scholar has introduced a set of components and considered them as necessary for mission statement. Except for organizational mission, organizational values and rules, organizational vision, and strategies developed as guidelines for realizing organizational mission are other components of mission statement (Abrahams, 1995; Jones and Kahaner, 1995).

Table 1. Necessary components of mission statement from the perspective of David, Pearce, Robinson, and Bilo

Components of mission statement	
From the perspective of David	customers – products or services- markets – attention to survival, growth, and profit-making – philosophy of existence – unique feature – respect to people's imagination of the organization – attention to personnel
From the perspective of Pearce and Robinson	customer/ market - products / services – geographical area – technology – attention to survival philosophy of existence – self-image - respect to people's imagination of the organization



From the perspective of  
Bilo

Industry - products / services – the goals and objectives – distinguishing feature – customers – market – distribution channel – changes from the past – economical considerations of the organization – philosophical future issues of the company – relations with stakeholders

Missions of the organizations differ in terms of the volume, content, form, and addressing the details. However, one must keep in mind that mission statement of an organization acts as a guiding mechanism at the macro organizational level, so it must comprehensively and sufficiently answer the questions of the organization. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a more accurate and comprehensive classification of the components of mission statement. This classification is offered within the framework of the components of mission statement. The mission statement of every organization is composed of three major parts.

1. Vision: stating what the company or institute is desiring to achieve (what we want to be?).
2. Mission: stating what the company is doing and realizing now (what do we do?).
3. Core values: beliefs and values in different working and social areas dominating the organization (what rules we must observe?).

With respect to difference between mission and vision, it must be stated that vision is totally different from the mission of the organization. Organizational mission puts stress on the stable and distinctive goals of the organization rooted in the past of the organization (Bart and Baetz, 1998), whereas, vision embarks on depicting favorable horizons for the organization.

### **The process of developing mission statement**

Developing mission statement is considered as one of the evident stages in strategic management process. Also, mission statement must involve some basic components and characteristics. Besides, it must effectively communicate with the personnel and persuade them. In fact, the way mission statement is developed is the main source of success of most organizations. We see organizations that have revised their mission statements for times. A well-developed mission statement can lead to integrity and



encouragement of all organizational stakeholders (Cochran, David and Gibson, 1998). In order to primarily develop mission statement, the strategic team of developing organization's strategic plan must be employed. But if the organization and therefore the strategic team are too large, this task can be delegated to a committee called "mission statement committee" which is a subset of this team. Table 2 presents the major stages of developing mission statement from the perspective of some scholars.

Table 2. The process of developing mission statement, source (Cochran, David and Gibson, 1998)

The stages of developing effective mission statement	
1) Determining orientations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating strategic planning groups</li> <li>• Reviewing strategic planning processes</li> <li>• Reviewing the importance and position of mission statement in strategic planning</li> <li>• Reviewing the processes of mission statement development</li> </ul>	
2) Analyzing components	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining favorable components in mission statement</li> <li>• Preparing the draft of mission statement including components and sub-components</li> </ul>	
3) Analyzing relations	
A)	Analyzing understandability
•	Accurately and clearly writing the mission statement
•	Checking for ambiguous indices and criteria
•	Rewriting, if necessary
B)	Implicit analysis
•	Determining the implicit and favorable feelings resulting from the mission statement
•	Developing and implementing the questionnaire among stake-holders
•	Rewriting implicit and favorable



The stages of developing effective mission statement
feelings, if necessary
4) Analyzing applicability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defining probable occasions when using mission statements</li><li>• Evaluating the degree of realization of mission statement in determined cases through the users of each case</li><li>• Estimating the applicability of mission statement in the whole organization</li></ul>

### **The place of mission statement in the organizations**

In a university, regardless of its responsibilities, what is important is institutionalizing the aims of university through its mission statement (Foley, 1995; Quinley, 1991). An effective mission statement is a document with hyper-active approach which appropriately and exactly reflects the goals, philosophy of existence, and values of the university or the higher education institute (Blanchard and Christ, 1993; David, 1989). All current activities and actions of the university, such as education, research, and even recreational activities, must be extracted from mission statement (Foley, 1995; peeke, 1994). The main advantage of developing mission statement in higher education institutes and universities is that the university or institute would be able to develop its strategic plans for achieving effectiveness n the path of developing higher education by the help of mission statement as a strategic plan focused by the managers at all levels (Quinley, 1991; Stacey, 1994). Employing such a tool significantly helps the university to succeed and improve the plans, services (Christ and Hynes, 1997). The broad application of mission statement in organizations and businesses as a main tool in strategic management process reflects its position in the organizations (Peeke, 1994). However, it must be mentioned that the value of this strategic tools has not yet been as fully understood in higher education institutes as businesses (Foley, 1995).

Mission statement of higher education institutes is in fact their most basic instruction for achieving their goals (David, 1997). In this statement, it is necessary to consider the views of different related sectors, such as students, faculties, administrative sectors, graduates, faculty members, and more importantly, policy-makers of the university (Shirely, 1983). Emphasis on strategic planning in the management of higher education institutes and universities is one outcome of mission statement. In general, the mission statement of a university must form the environment and culture of that university





(Whitt, 1991). Mission statement, while considered as the source of basic changes in the organization, prepares the ground for stability of that organization, as well (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).

According to studies, most universities and higher education institutes pay little attention to mission statement and do not consider it when analyzing the effectiveness of their institute or university, as well as managerial processes, for they view mission statement as nothing more than a collection of terminology developed for the case of luxury (Foley, 1995). Most universities act hastily when developing their mission statement and overlook the participation of majority of their members; therefore, the mission statement exerts little influence upon university management (Peeke, 1994). These issues necessitate conducting research on mission statement of organizations and universities more than ever before. Thus, the conflict existing in this area is related to effectively applying mission statement in managerial processes of the organization.

The general framework of studies on mission statement is based on two basic concepts in strategic management. One of them is strategic planning and the other is strategic thinking (Thompson and Strickland, 1996) which form the theoretical framework of research. If the management is looking for a valid and meaningful mission statement, attention to "strategic thinking" at mission statement development stage, and considering "strategic planning process" at implementation stage are necessary. Matching these two concepts would result in the realization of mission statement. Figure 1 presents the schematic figure of theoretical framework of the study. The concepts of strategic thinking and strategic planning will be addressed in continuation.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study, Factors Affecting Realization of Mission Statement



### Strategic thinking in relation to mission statement

The concept of strategic thinking refers to a specific type of thinking with specific features (Liedtka, 1998). According to Takli and Laton (2005), there is no consensus on the clear definition of strategic thinking in the literature; rather, different descriptions



and characteristics have been proposed. This lack of consensus about the concept of strategic thinking has been the source of many misconceptions (Tourest, 2001).

According to cognitive psychology, thinking involves stages from concept formation to problem solving. The match between these stages and those proposed by Mintzberg (1994), Ohmi (1982), Porter (1980, 1985, 1990), and Petigro and Whipe (1993) indicates that strategic thinking is composed of two main parts of process factors and content factors. Also, strategic thinking at organizational level is affected by background and environmental factors which influence the content and the process of strategic thinking.

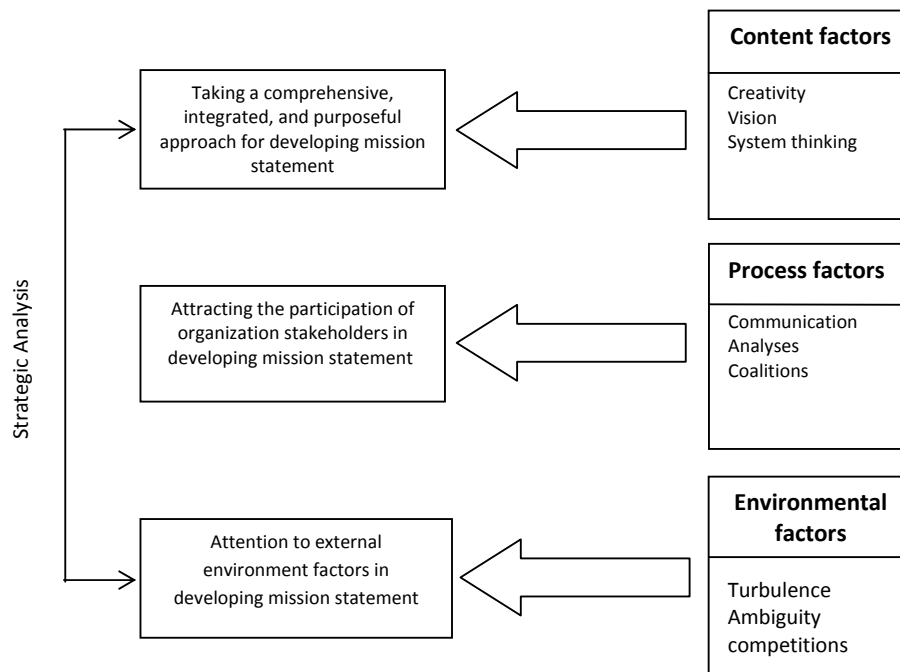
Different scholars have addressed the features of strategic thinking which constitute the content of strategic thinking (e.g. Ohmi, 1982, Mintzberg, 1994). Focusing on these features, it can be concluded that the important features of strategic thinking include creativity, vision, and system thinking. Scholars like Lidtka (1998) have referred to the characteristics related to process factors of strategic thinking, and others e.g. Tourst (2001) and Tavakkoli and Laton (2005) have emphasized on the importance of process factors in strategic thinking. The main process factors in strategic thinking include strategic communications, strategic analysis, and political behaviors. In addition, some studies have been conducted on the effect of external environment on the internal environment of the organization. According to Petiger and Whipe (1993), the external environment of the organization is one of the factors affecting strategic change (Rahmanseresht, 2005). The most determining environmental characteristics affecting organizational strategic thinking are degree of competition in external environment, level of turbulence, and level of ambiguity outside the organization (Porter, 1979). These factors are very critical and affect the strategic thinking in organizational approach.

In general, it can be argued that the focal point of the content factors of strategic thinking is the organization as a general system each section of which acting purposefully and in an integrated manner in relation to the whole system. All of these section work in line with a general and pre-determined purpose. Such perception of strategic thinking can be considered as one output of strategic analysis process. In this process, the internal environment is investigated to identify the weaknesses and strength of the organization and to evaluate the external environment for detecting opportunities and threats facing the organization (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Thus, the content



factors of strategic thinking must be considered in developing mission statement through strategic analysis approach. Besides, the strategic analysis approach for developing mission statement involves the above-mentioned environmental factors in strategic thinking, because a large part of strategic analysis approach concentrates on external factors. Attention to the process of communications and using the insights and ideas in a regular manner as participatory patterns are stressed in the process factors of strategic thinking. According to Lidtka (1998), the most valuable role of this process is legitimizing developmental dialogue about strategic issues and its result is developing a better strategy for the organization and better development of strategic thinking capabilities in members. Hill and Jones recommend that both in development stage of mission statement and in its implementation stage, all stakeholders must participate thereby attracting the commitment of all organization stakeholders to mission statement (Hill and Jones, 1989). Hence, attempts to implement mission statement without reaching a consensus would be in vain. Lack of consensus among stakeholders about the mission statement would lead to its distortion, destruction, and finally would prevent it from being fully realized. The most effective way to reach consensus about mission statement is encouraging the stakeholders to participate (Graham and Havilik, 1994). The role of major factors of strategic thinking in relation to development of mission statement can be summarized in the following diagram.

Figure 2. Major Factors of Strategic Thinking in Relation to Development of Mission Statement





### **Strategic planning in relation to mission statement**

According to Nagel, strategic planning is a regular way which supports and confirms the process of strategic management and involves all activities leading to definition of goals and determination of appropriate strategies for achieving those goals in the whole organization (Monavarian, 1993:30). In Fifer's view, strategic planning is the process of creating and developing necessary operations for reaching the future. He distinguishes between long-term planning which is reactive, and strategic planning which allows the organization to create its future. Using the views of Alsen and Aidy, strategic planning can be defined as a systematic and organized effort for taking fundamental decisions and basic actions specifying what an organization, or any other entity, is and does (Ahangaran, 2003: 16) and forming the orientation of the activities of an organization in relation to other institutions in legal framework. These decisions address the commitment, mission, and level of products and services of an organization and combine the expenses, financial issues, management, or organizational plan (Monavarian, 1993: 108).

A review of the works of pioneering scholars in the field of strategic management indicates that defining mission statement of the organization is considered as the first stage of strategic planning process (Thompson and Strickland, 1996; Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Mission statement is also regarded as one of strategic tools in the process of strategic planning and for evaluating the degree of realization of organizational goals (Streans and Borna, 1998). The main role of strategic planning in the process of implementing organization plans is summarized in line with organizational mission statement (Lebaron and Markuson, 1991). Therefore, mission statement, as the first circle of implementing strategic plans of the organization, must always be considered by top management.

So far different models have been proposed for strategic planning. In fact, there are numerous methods for developing strategic plans of the organization, but it must be held in mind that these models have their roots in different schools of strategic management. However, the stages of a traditional model of strategic planning include: developing mission statement, developing macro and operational goals, analyzing internal and external environment, and developing and implementing strategies. Such a process involves three main stages of collecting and analyzing the data, planning, and implementation (Rea and Kerzner, 1997). Finally, the stage of measuring the



performance or the operational strategy is added to these three stages (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).

### **Research methodology**

The present study is conducted using grounded theory. Grounded theory is a kind of research strategy which seeks to develop a theory or model and is rooted in conceptual data gathered in a systematic manner (Danaeifard, Alvani and Azar, 2004: 19). This strategy, through inductive approach, attempts to simultaneously conceptualize, collect and analyze the data so that the model is directly derived from the data. The aim of grounded theory is obtaining a theory from analysis of the data related to real characteristics of the research issue. For this reason, in this study, the key informants involved with the problem are referred to and it is tried to investigate the internal structure of their values, attitudes, and experiences related to the study using qualitative approach and by conducting in-depth, active, and exploratory interviews (Price, 2010:409). The founders and their followers have proposed various definitions for this research strategy, some of which are mentioned below:

- A) Straus and Korbin (1990), the founders of grounded theory, define it as "a qualitative strategy which employs a systematic set of approaches developing a theory about a phenomenon in an inductive manner" (Danaeifard, Alvani and Azar, 2004: 130).
- B) Martin and Turner (1986) and Fernandez (2004) state that: "grounded theory is an inductive theory-generation methodology which allows the researcher to create a theoretical report from the general features of the problem, and at the same time, ground it on experimental observation data".
- C) Creswell (2005) argues that "grounded theory is a systematic and qualitative approach for generating a theory which explains a process, action, or interaction about a real micro issue at a conceptual level".

In general, this strategy changes the data obtained from information sources into a set of codes, the common codes into concepts, and the concepts into a kind of category, and finally the categories into theory (Danaeifard, 2005: 58) (refer to the following diagram).

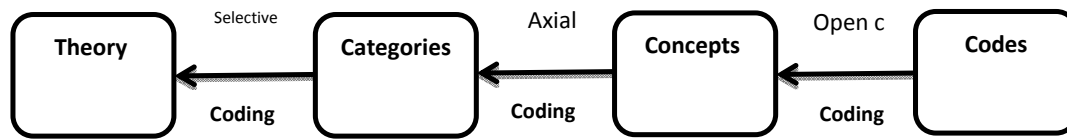


Diagram 1. From codes to research theory

In grounded theory, the researcher does not deal with testing the relationship among variables on the basis of a pre-specified theory; rather, he tries to find the categories and understand the relationships among them. The aim of this approach is exploration, rather than description or explanation. Data analysis in this approach is coding which is conducted in a three-stage process including (Price, 2010:418-420):

1. Open coding: the starting point where extraction and naming of key issues from among the data to be discussed for generating the concepts commences.
2. Axial coding: forming the concepts and making relations among them for generating categories and research theory.
3. Selective coding: forming the categories and making relations among them and propositions for generating theories.

These stages are not mechanically separate from each other; rather, they are described as three separate stages for better explaining the process. Perhaps, it can be argued that the researcher mainly deals with concepts in open coding. As the focal point of axial coding is categories, and the theorems get clear in selective coding, these theorems reflect the relations generalized among categories (Farasatkah, 2009). Indeed, a category is formed by putting together some concepts, and finally, by stating the relations generalized between a category and its concepts, and classifying the relationship of these elements in the ground and process of that phenomenon, the conceptual model of the phenomenon emerges (Danaeifard, 2005: 47)



## Findings

Since the research methodology is grounded theory and the study is exploratory in nature, the top, middle, and operational managers of some large universities<sup>1</sup> were interviewed to meet the objectives of the study. The sample was expanded to reach the data saturation level of grounded theory. Finally 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with different levels of managers at three universities of Tarbiat Modarres, Tehran, and Ferdowsi. In this regard, three interviews were conducted with top management (the presidents and vice-presidents), four with middle managers (faculty deans and managers), and four with operational managers (head of departments) in those three universities.

As it is observed in diagram 2, in sum, 120 key points as 20 initial conceptual propositions at open coding stage, and 4 categorical propositions at axial coding stage were obtained from the interviews. Finally, at selective coding stage, the theorems reflecting relation among categories were clarified and the final model of the study on the basis of grounded theory was formed.

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<sup>1</sup> By large universities of the country, it is meant the list of universities published by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology in 2009. This list includes 12 universities. According to the data collected from these universities, half of them lack a developed mission statement.

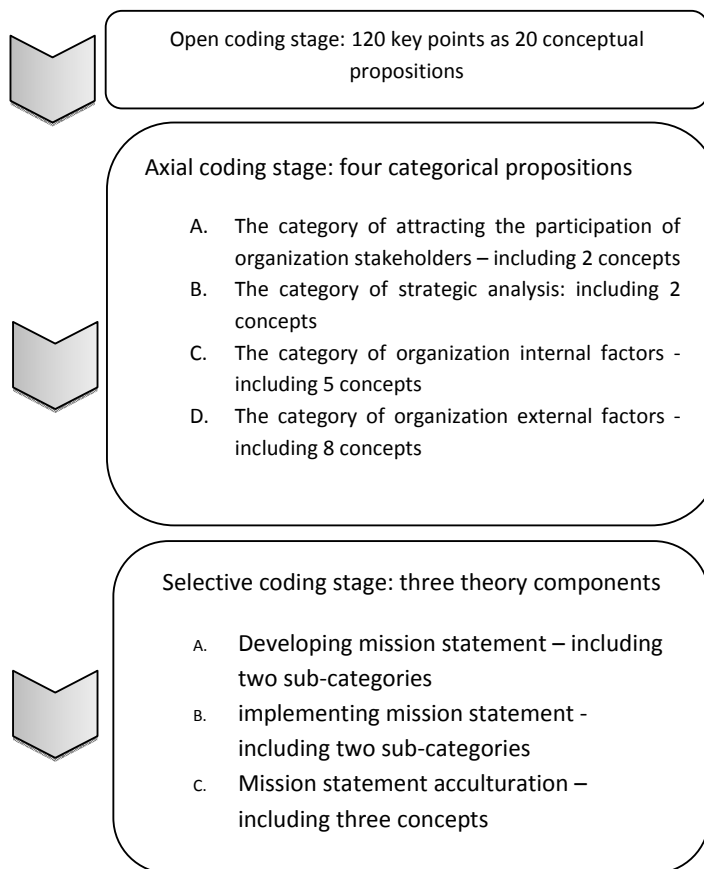


Diagram 2. The Trend of Data Reduction and Transfer from Information to Theory at Three Stages of Coding Grounded Theory

In grounded theory methodology, reaching data saturation indicates the sufficiency level in interviews or reviewing the research references. The criterion of stopping theoretical sampling is data saturation of categories or theories. Glaser and Straus, by data saturation, refer to a state "where no additional data can be collected so that the researcher can promote the features of the category. When the researcher observes similar data for several times, he makes sure that a category has been saturated. ... When a category is saturated, nothing remains, except for a new group of the data that the researcher attempts at saturating them".

Since continuous data analysis is the key part of grounded theory approach, it is possible to define a borderline for the end of data collection stage. Data saturation is the level where the collected and coded data do not end in novel concepts and theories through comparison, and the key points obtained from previous data (text or interview) repeat the issues obtained previously (Price, 2010: 416).





Therefore, in grounded theory, sampling is continued by new concepts, not by research plan, and is limited by data saturation rather than research plan (Danaeifard and emami, 2008). Reaching this stage is determined according to repetition of concepts and categories obtained from the first study or interview. In this regard, the following table presents the trend of concepts obtained from the interviews.

Table 4. Repetition of concepts from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> interviews

Concepts	Repetition to data saturation level	Concepts	Repetition to data saturation level
Organizational structure	10	Management and leadership	11
Financial resources	6	Informing	6
Political factors	5	Communications	8
Technological factors	2	Commitment	5
Social factors	3	Attracting the participation of internal stakeholders	6
Economic factors	2	Attracting the participation of external stakeholders	3
The ministry of science, research, and technology	10	Investigation of internal environment	8
The high council of cultural revolution	6	Investigation of external environment	11
Education	1	Human resources	9
Other universities	6	Organizational culture	7

After formation of concepts, and throughout the process of axial coding, the obtained concepts are classified under more general categories (including sub- and major (axial) categories). The results of axial coding in this study are formation of 4 sub-categories and 3 major (axial) categories presented in the following table.



Table 5. Formation of Sub-Categories from the Concepts

Sub-categories	Concepts
Strategic analysis	1. External environment 2. Internal environment
Attracting the participation of all organization stakeholders	1. External stakeholders 2. Internal stakeholders
Organization internal factors	1. Management and leadership 2. Organization culture 3. Human resources 4. Organizational structure 5. Financial resources
Organization external factors	1. Ministry of education 2. Ministry of science, research, and technology 3. The high council of cultural revolution 4. Other universities 5. Technological factors 6. Social factors 7. Economic factors 8. Political factors

The above table involves 17 concepts from 20 concepts obtained from the analysis of open coding of the interviews. Three remaining concepts, that is, "informing", "communication", and "commitment" lack sub-categories are directly defined under the major category of "acculturating" mission statement. The relationships among four sub-categories and three major categories of the study are presented in the following table:

Table 6. The Relationship among sub-categories and Major Categories

Axial category	Sub-category
Developing mission statement	1. Strategic analysis 2. Attracting the participation of all stakeholders
implementing mission statement	1. Organization internal factors 2. Organization external factors
Acculturation	Without sub-category



As it is shown, the axial category of "acculturating mission statement" lack sub-categories and is directly related to the concepts of "informing", "communication", and "commitment".

### **Theory formation**

According to the stages mentioned for grounded theory in diagram 1, the last circle of this methodology is the "theory" obtained from the research. In other words, by linking the categories and investigating the links among concepts, the research theory is formed. According to studies conducted in the large Iranian universities, the grounded theory of the components affecting the realization of mission statement in the organization is as following:

"Realization of mission statement has its roots in two stages of developing and implementing mission statement. At development stage, attracting the participation of organization stakeholders and strategic analysis, and at implementation stage, attention to organization internal and external factors is influential. Informing, communications, and commitment toward mission statement continuously affect realization of mission statement throughout both stages of development and implementation”.

The relations among concepts, sub-categories and categories are explained in the next section. These relations which are extracted from research theory are reflected in the final model of the study.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

Considering the key points, concepts, and categories extracted from previous stages, here the theorem or final model of the study is discussed. As mentioned above, the factors affecting realization of mission statement can be investigated in two areas of developing mission statement and a implementing it. These two areas in fact confirm the axial categories extracted, and therefore confirm the analysis of the interview. The main factors affecting development of mission statement are related to two concepts of strategic analysis and attracting the participation of all stakeholders. That is to say, the reason of incomplete realization of mission statement in development are relates to



faults in analyzing external and internal environment of the organization<sup>2</sup> or weakness in attracting the participation of internal and external stakeholders. The deficiencies in the area of developing mission statement originate from disregarding content, process, and environmental factors around the concept of strategic thinking.

Nonetheless, a large part of factors affecting realization of mission statement is related to the implementation stage and applying mission statement. These factors can be sought in various stages of strategic planning. One of the basic prerequisites of success in implementing mission statement is provision of organization internal and external factors in relation to axes predicted in the mission statement. Based on the findings from interviews, the main internal factors affecting operationalization trend of universities' mission statement are university management and leadership, organizational culture, human resources, organizational structures, and financial resources of the university. However, part of weaknesses in the area of implementing mission statement is rooted in external environment factors. Due to the vast nature of these factors, they can be classified in two groups of effective factors of macro environment of the organization and effective factors of the micro or specific environment of the organization. According to the results of the study, factors affecting operationalization of the mission statement in the specific environment of the organization include: ministry of science, research and technology, ministry of education, the high council of Cultural Revolution, and other universities.

The main suggestion of the present study, mentioned for times in most interviews, is related to the axial category of acculturation of mission statement. Concepts like “distribution of mission statement in the organization”, “holding meetings related to mission statement”, “using information tools for promulgation of mission statement among stakeholders”, “requiring the participation of all levels of the organization in line with the mission statement”, “requiring the commitment top management or the body of the organization for implementing mission statement” were repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees.

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<sup>2</sup> It must be mentioned that since the present study is related to “mission statement” of the organizations and especially, universities, analyzing internal and external environment, here, is related to the development stage of mission statement; rather than strategy implementation stage. This issue can be worked on in other studies, because, according to the process of strategic planning, changing missions to strategy, and finally “implementing the strategies” is the only channel of operationalizing mission statement.



This axial category is directly linked to three sub-categories of “informing”, “communications”, and “commitment”. Observing these concepts is the key to acculturation of mission statement. In the first step, the top management of the organization must inform the body of the organization about the process of developing mission statement. The next step is communicating with key internal and external stakeholders. This connection can be defined as the connections, links, or relations of the organization with its stakeholders. It can originate from perceptions or feelings. In order to institutionalize mission statement among universities’ internal and external stakeholders, effective communications with stakeholders aiming at creating commitment toward mission statement is recommended. In this regard, holding meetings, and attracting organization stakeholders at development stage would be useful. The important point, here, is prioritizing organization stakeholders, because, in any case, the views and interests of all stakeholders are not the same and may sometimes oppose each other. Hence, the following points seem necessary:

1. Accurately defining each interested group and individual;
2. Understanding the expectations of each stakeholder;
3. Accepting and prioritizing stakeholders; and
4. Harmonizing different expectations and other components of mission statement according to priorities.

Finally, two stages of “informing” stakeholders about mission statement and continuous “communications” in line with institutionalization of mission statement lead to commitment of internal and external stakeholders about mission statement. In fact, it must be mentioned that attention to these three stages, i.e. informing, communications, and commitments throughout all stages of developing and implementing mission statement prepared the ground for successfully implementing it. Therefore, top managers of the universities must pay special attention to these three concepts, categorized under the umbrella term of “acculturation” of mission statement, as the factors contributing to realization of mission statement.

According to the above discussion and results obtained from interview analyses using grounded theory, the final research model for identifying factors affecting full realization of mission statement include:

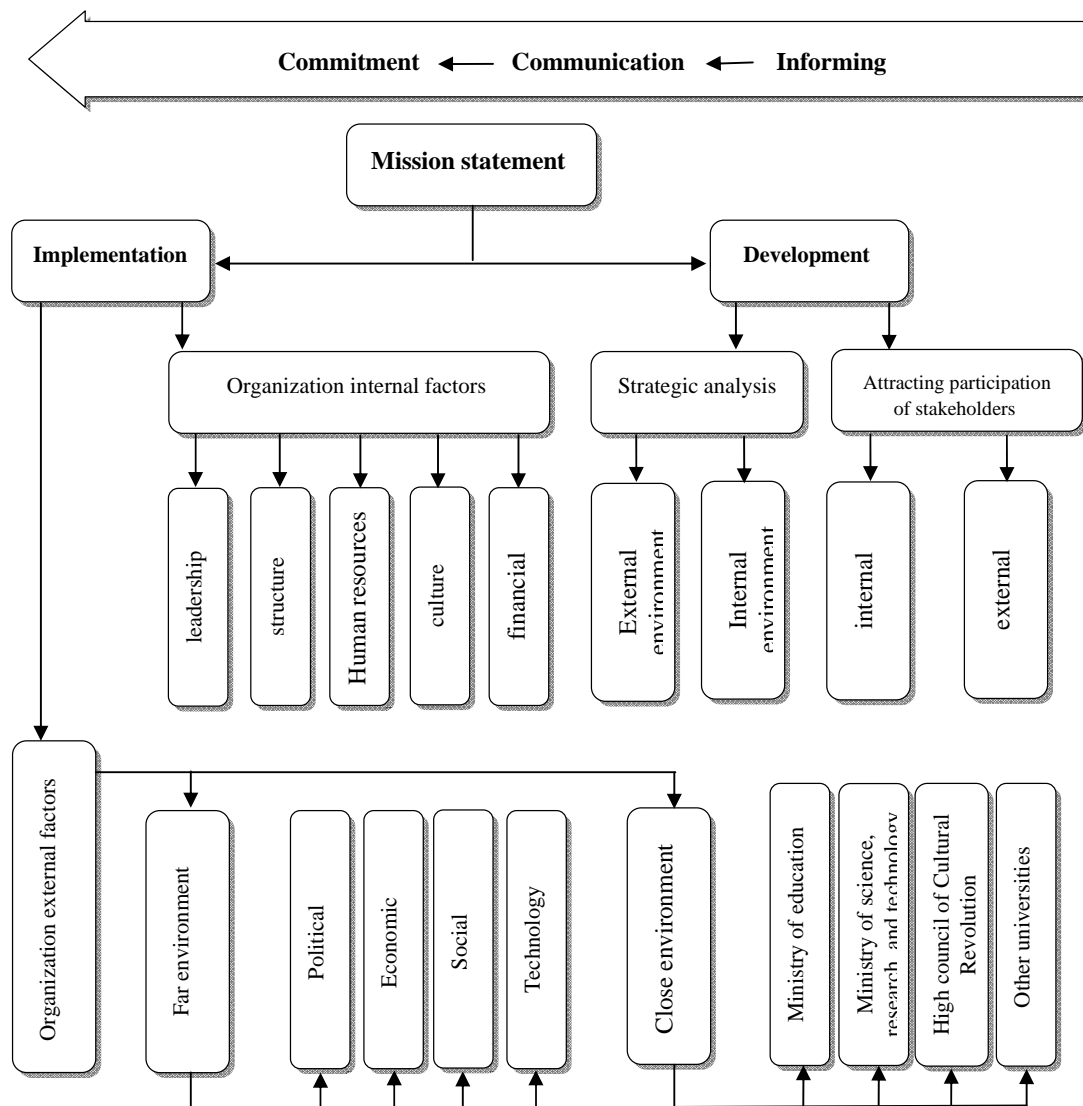


Figure 3. The Final Model: Factors Affecting Full Realization of Mission Statement in Organizations: The Case Study of Universities



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