

Effective Mission Implementation: The Three Dimensions of the Mission

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Abstract

Several authors have shown that there is a certain “gap” in mission theory, which in practice explains the lack of actual effectiveness in mission implementation. In many cases, this loss is due to members of the organization being insufficiently motivated by the mission. This conceptual article aims to bridge the gap by analysing the relationship between the mission of a company and its members’ motivation. It entails an extension of mission and motivation theory, in which three dimensions of mission development are analysed: formal, operational and motivational. At the same time, the role of prosocial motivation in effective mission development is highlighted, as, other than extrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it is oriented to satisfying the needs of others. In addition to identifying the various dimensions of mission implementation, the relationship and the possible forms of coherence and incoherence between them is analysed, which explain the success or failure of the effective implementation of corporate missions.

Keywords: mission, mission statement, organization, motivation, authenticity.

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1. Introduction

The mission, from the Latin *missio*, is a concept that has existed since the beginning of mankind. Possibly one of the first mission statements was recorded in Genesis, with a mandate to “*be fruitful and multiply...*” (Abrahams, 1999). In management literature, frequent use of the term appears in the 70’s of last century, although there are several examples of what is understood as mission, commonly presented under other terms. The importance of having a defined mission that is shared by all members of a company has been advocated by several authors and ratified by various management experts. The mission includes the definition and deployment of what Barnard referred to as the “*purpose*” of an organization (Barnard, 1938), Simon referred to as the “*organizational goal*” (1964, 1976) and Drucker (1974) and Mintzberg (1979) referred to as the organization’s mission. The mission is commonly understood as the “*why*”, the *raison d’être* of an organization (Bart, 1997), and it is presented by many management authors as fundamental to the development and welfare of any organization. The question of the mission lies at a contributory level, as it consists of “*external results*” which “*are the people’s needs that an organization meets or intends to meet* (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Barktus & Glassman, 2007)”.

Defining a company mission is equivalent to the process in which an individual raises questions about his own existence and what moves (motivates) him in his activity (Campbell & Nash, 1992). Some authors have, however, shown the absence of a clear theory that would explain the relationship between the mission and the motivation of an organization’s members (Campbell & Nash, 1992, 52-54).

The purpose of this article is to contribute to bridging this gap by providing a more precise analysis of the concept of mission and its relationship with motivation. Based on a systemic approach of the classical theories of institutionalism (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1976; Argandoña, 2008; Rosanas, 2008), a conceptual model of mission is presented that explains the relationship between mission and motivation, by identifying (prosocial) motivation as an integral part of the concept mission. This article intends to broaden the field of study of the corporate mission, by adding the motivational and operational dimensions to its formal dimension (mission statement). This will contribute towards solving the issue of personal involvement in company missions, and to define a model to promote its effective development in practice.

2. Mission: Overview of the literature

The main contributions and developments regarding the corporate mission were made during the decades of the 70's, 80's, and 90's, through different approaches. Most of them complemented each other, albeit with some differences both in substance and contents. In these approaches, the mission is commonly referred to as the "why" of a company, although we find two different ways of understanding this concept:

- The first defines the mission as a *statement* that answers the question: *What is our business?* in terms of the value that the company brings to its customers. Or with a broader conception: the company's contribution to the various stakeholders, such as shareholders, employees and society.
- The second sees the mission as a *practice*, where in addition to the mission *statement*, other questions, such as values, standards of conduct, objectives and strategy are included.

Really, these two ways of understanding the company mission complement each other. The first establishes the core concept of mission, and the second expands its contents. Below we will study in more detail these two ways of understanding the mission, and highlight some of the main open discussions.

2.1. The mission as a Statement

The first understanding of the concept mission defines it as the essence of a business -what primarily characterizes its identity - which often goes beyond making a specific product or providing a specific service. A company that manufactures glasses, for example, could find its mission in dimensions such as 'eye health' and 'improving people's visual ability'. A company that produces cosmetics products could have the mission 'to promote the beauty of women' or 'to contribute to building people's self-esteem'. A milk producer could define its mission as 'enabling people to lead a healthy diet'. From this perspective, a mission is a formal expression, usually in the form of a short phrase, of the scope of a company's activity in terms of the value brought to its customers. Ultimately it comes down to answering the question: "What is our business?" (Drucker, 1974).

According to Drucker, the importance of the mission lies in the guidance it provides to a company in aspects such as defining strategies, objectives, and choosing which products to produce or discontinue (Drucker, 1974). When a company does not have a defined mission, or the mission is inadequate, it is at high risk of failure. Defining the mission should be the first priority of senior management and leads to reflections that are fundamental for the welfare of a company. Only if the mission and purpose of a business have been clearly

defined, can one establish clear and realistic business objectives. Defining the mission is, however, not a simple task, as it requires overcoming 'internal discrepancies' and conflicts that, on this issue, may be present at management level (Drucker, 1974). Similar to Drucker's definition of mission, is that presented by Henry Mintzberg in the late 70's in his book "The structuring of organizations" (1979). According to Mintzberg, the mission is the combination of basic products and services a company performs, and it is up to senior managers to find the most effective ways to carry out business or make the necessary changes. Along these lines, we can find other proposals that regard the mission as the answer to the question "What is the true nature of our business?" (McGowan, 1986; Vasconcellos e Sá, 2011).

Within this understanding of mission, is the position that advocates that the mission must include other stakeholders, in addition to the value brought to the client, such as employees, shareholders, suppliers, the community, etc. (Freeman & Reed, 1983). The mission is the 'why' of a company; the essence of an organization's activities, but the answer to this question should be extended, considering other social actors, besides the customers. Under this broader understanding of the concept mission, it is no longer expressed in a short phrase, but, generally, has a number of phrases or statements, dedicated specifically to each of the stakeholders that have been identified by the company as key to its success.

The recommendation to take the various stakeholders into consideration when defining a mission can already be seen in the early 80's. Pearce (1982) states that the mission, seen as a "solid statement of the purpose that distinguishes it from similar companies", should include the company's relationship with what he calls internal and external 'claimants' of the organization. The internal 'claimants' would be the shareholders and the employees. And with external he refers to the customers, suppliers, government, competition and the general public. When determining the mission, those responsible for its implementation must (1) identify the main 'claimants' that determine the success of the company, (2) understand vis-à-vis demands, (3) prioritize needs, and (4) coordinate with other elements of the mission. This understanding of the mission as a *statement* that includes the company's contribution to specific stakeholders – and not only the client-, can be seen in numerous authors, such as Want (1986), David (1989), Senge (1998) and, currently, we could say that it best represents what is commonly understood as the corporate mission (Bartkus & Glassman, 2008).

2.2. The mission as a Practice

The second understanding of the concept mission reflects this perspective, but, additionally, considers certain aspects related to its implementation, as part of the mission. Several authors defend this understanding of mission, which in general, regards the mission as the essence of the business and contribution to certain stakeholders, but also includes other elements, such as 'values', 'the technology applied', 'the strategy', policies and objectives, products and services, and standards of conduct.

Along these lines, Pearce (1982), who we previously mentioned as the driving force behind including the contribution to certain stakeholders in the concept mission, also states that a mission may consist of five key elements:

- Products or services, market and technology
- Objectives of endurance, growth and profitability
- The company philosophy
- The company's self-concept
- The desired public image (or social image)

Another contribution of the same decade, which follows a similar vein, was presented by Want (1986, 50), who also points out the need to consider the mission's contribution to certain social agents – clients, employees, competitors, regulatory agents and the general public- and, in turn, proposes structuring the mission around five key elements:

- Purpose or *raison d'être*
- Corporate identity
- Primary objectives
- Values
- Company policies

Alongside these definitions by Pearce and Want, there are other authors from the same period who, to greater or lesser extent, follow a similar line, highlighting some of the elements mentioned above, or adding new elements such as 'vision' or 'social policies' (David, 1989). Under this second perspective, which considers the mission as a wide range of elements, one of the major developments of the early 90's, is the Ashridge model, or "The Ashridge Mission

Model” by Campbell and Nash (1992), which came to be widely distributed. According to these authors a mission consists of four elements:

- Purpose: contributing to society and certain stakeholders
- Strategy: the competitive position and distinctive competence
- Values: the beliefs of the company
- Standards and behaviors: policies and behavioral patterns that underpin the distinctive competence and value system

The Ashridge model is represented in the shape of a diamond, placing the ‘purpose’ as the main element and the ‘standards and behaviors’ as the foundation that supports the other two elements, strategy and values (see Figure 2). This model includes some of the elements defined by Pearce and Want, but introduces a new one: ‘strategy’, as part of the mission. This proposal can also be seen in other authors of their time, such as Klem et a. (1991) and Ireland and Hitt (1992).

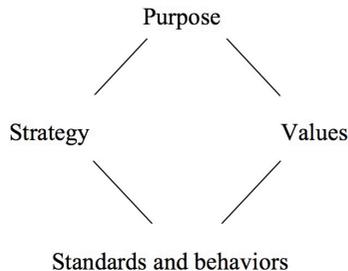


Figure 1. The Ashridge Mission Model

In the same vein, a more recent concept of mission is the *mission scorecard* (Cardona & Rey, 2008). The *mission scorecard* includes the formal mission statement, but incorporates measurement indicators, showing the degree of practical realization of each of the mission’s elements. Similar to the way in which the formal dimension of the mission is made explicit by the mission statement (Hirota et al., 2010) the mission scorecard makes the mission’s operational development explicit, through monitoring indicators.

This second understanding of the mission –as a practice- provides a different approach to the concept mission in terms of its nature. In the first perspective,

the mission is considered something that is declared formally, in the form of a “mission statement”. In the second perspective, however, the mission is more dynamic. Under this approach it is not only a formal declaration of the purpose of the company, but also of the way in which the company carries out its purpose. We could say that while in the first approach the nature of the mission is formal and static– focused on its own mission statement in the form of phrases or statements-, under this second perspective the mission becomes operational.

The literature on mission contains numerous references that indicate that the mission is not just something that is written, but is also something that is put into practice. This can be seen, for example, in the concept “mission fulfillment” by Suh et al. (2010). It refers to a dynamic dimension of the mission, in which the mission can have different degrees of development. This same way of understanding the mission, not just as a statement, but as a practical reality, is contemplated by several authors, such as Bartkus and Glassman (2008) when saying that the ‘mission is an accurate indicator of the organization’s priorities and actions’ (Wang, 2011), ‘aligning organizational processes with mission’ (Crotts, et al., 2005) and ‘mission achievement’ (Davis et al., 2007). Thus, some authors distinguish between “mission prescription” and “mission practice” (Bart, 1997) as two different dimensions of the mission, where “mission practice” is responsible for “bringing the mission to life” (Leuthesser & Kholi, 1997).

This second perspective of mission shows that the meaning and significance of mission is not limited by the boundaries of the mission statement. The organization can reinforce the mission once written (Davies et al., 2007), but the mission is a wider concept than the mission statement. Similar to the way in which we traditionally differentiate between strategy formulation and strategy implementation (Mitzberg et al., 1998), we can also say that there is a formulation and an implementation of the mission, which shows that there are two different, but interrelated, dimensions of the concept mission. In fact, as some say, the mission statement is simply an intellectual exercise, but you need the discipline of formal systems and procedures to bring it to life” (Bart, 1997). What matters in this understanding of the mission is not just the mission statement, but the degree or extent in which the company is doing what it says in its mission statement (Bart, 1997; Bartkus & Glassman, 2008; Suh et al., 2011). This approach is in line with several authors’ proposals to use the mission to evaluate the performance of the company (Drucker, 1974), to translate the purpose of the organization into parameters of assessment and control (King and Cleland, 1979), to develop company planning based on the mission (Pearce, 1982), to use the mission as an essential criterion to assess performance (Bart, 1997), to use the mission as a control mechanism (Bartkus et al., 2004), to express the mission in terms of specific results (Crotts et al., 2005) and to integrate the mission in management (Cardona & Rey, 2006).

2.3. The mission as motivation

In the previous sections we have analyzed the different ways of understanding the mission in the literature. We have seen that it is regarded as a *statement* or a formal declaration, and as a *practice* in its operational dimension. The presented developments, however, leave unanswered questions with regards to the personal involvement in the mission -the relationship between mission and motivation-, which, in turn is needed to ensure its operational implementation. It is what some call a 'gap' in the literature (Campbell & Nash, 1992).

The motivation of employees is one of the main reasons why companies define declarations of commitment to stakeholders in the forms of Credos, beliefs, values or mission statements (David, 1989; Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Klemm et al., 1991; Baetz & Bart, 1996; Anderson, 1997; Bart et al., 2001). Companies offer their members motives to conduct operations and processes in order to fulfill the mission. The mission has also a motivational dimension, which is the motivation of the organization's members that is needed to carry out the formal mission. And this motivation, precisely because it is aimed at satisfying the needs of 'others', is a special type of motivation that differs from "extrinsic motivation" (generated by economic compensation and incentives) and "intrinsic motivation" (generated by internal and personal needs). It is similar to the type of motivation that has been treated and referred to in the literature as *prosocial motivation* (Batson, 1987; Batson & Shaw, 1991; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Grant, 2008b, 2009, 2011).

There are studies on the effect of prosocial motivation in for example enterprises of the public sector (Wright, 2007; Naegelen and Mougeot, 2011; Polidori and Teobaldelli, D., 2013), in the non-profit sector (Rose-Ackerman, 1996; Kirk & Nolan, 2010), in caregiving (Finkenauer & Meeus, 2000), and in a company's salespeople (Agnihotri et al., 2012) and job design (Grant, 2007, 2008a). As prosocial motivations involve different levels of autonomy and differ from extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in terms of goal directedness, they can be regarded as a different motivation (Grant, 2008b). In the context of an organization, prosocial motivation is considered a big source of motivation that drives employees to expend an effort to benefit other's needs. Therefore, this kind of motivation may also play a significant role in business companies when it is addressed to the stakeholders considered in their mission statements (Cardona & Rey, 2008; Wang, 2011).

The motivational mission reflects the development of the motivation (prosocial) of the organization's members linked to the fulfillment of its formal mission; it is the development of motivations that go beyond economic incentives and self-satisfaction, and are aimed at meeting the needs of others (Stakeholders) expressed in the mission. Naturally, in the first place, the development of these motivations is sought among employees (Bart et al., 2001; Ireland & Hitt, 1992;

Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Klemm et al., 1991), but it may also be found in other agents, such as customers, shareholders and suppliers, who in this case would act as ‘active agents’ contributing to the fulfillment of the external mission. An example of the development of the *motivational mission* among other agents in addition to employees can be found in the efforts that some companies make to commit their customers, suppliers or shareholders to issues such as quality improvement, environmental care or responsible consumption.

3. Three Dimensions of the Mission: Formal Mission, Operating Mission and Motivational Mission

In order to ensure the effective mission’s implementation, we must find an answer to questions such as: To what extent is the mission of the organization also the mission of individuals who belong to the organization? What is the relationship between the company mission and the personal mission of its members? What conditions are necessary for the mission to be effective in practice? The answers to these questions can be obtained showing the interdependence between the formal mission of an organization, the practical implementation of the mission and the motivation –personal mission- of its members. It enables the proposal of a concept of mission that is extended beyond the existing framework, providing a more complete, and integrated, picture, of what is understood by mission and its actual development within an organization (see Figure 2).

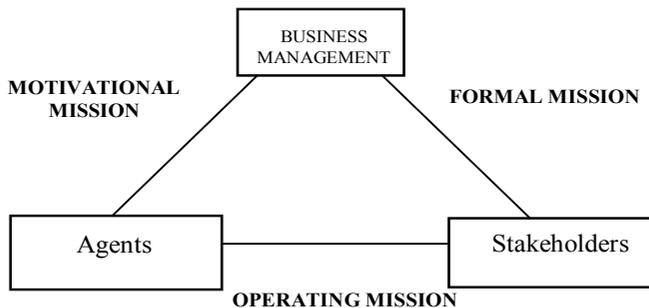


Figure 2. The three dimensions of the mission’s development

The literature revision above allows us to see that the “actual” development of the mission in an organization is structured in three dimensions. We can speak of a formal, an operating and a motivational mission. The two ways of understanding the mission that we have seen before – the mission as a

statement and the mission as a practice- are respectively related to the dimension of organization's purpose (which we call *formal mission*) and the operational dimension (which we call *operating mission*). And in the motivational dimension we can find the development of what we discover here as the third dimension of the mission: the *motivational mission*.

Companies have and define an *external or formal mission* expressing the stakeholders' needs that the organization intends to meet (by motivating its members to conduct certain operations). This is the aspect reflected in the majority of *mission statements*. The *formal mission* is generally an explicit declaration of the mission. It represents the *knowledge* that members of an organization have about their own mission. This dimension is at the focal point of the existing literature on corporate missions, and consists in defining and communicating the essence of the "why", the *raison d'être* of the organization, by means of a *mission statement*. Most research and developments in literature focus on the formal mission. In fact, this "part" of the mission has been treated by the main contributions, research and methodologies on mission, to which we have referred previously. Naturally, the first needs an organization generally seeks to meet are those of the customers, but it may also intend to meet the needs of other stakeholders, such as shareholders, employees, suppliers and society in general.

The *operating mission* reflects the degree of the formal mission's actual fulfillment; how it is carried out in practice. It is the "why" of the company expressed in terms of the operational processes and procedures that the company conducts. This dimension can be seen in the mission proposals mentioned above, that consider the mission as a set of 'practices' (Pearce, 1982; Want, 1986; David, 1989; Campbell and Yeung, 1991; Klem et al., 1991; Ireland and Hitt 1992). And, in turn, it reflects the proposals of several authors who consider the practical fulfillment of the mission as a measure to assess the performance of the company and establish objectives (Drucker, 1974, 74; King & Cleland, 1979; Pearce, 1982, 15; Bart, 1997, 16; Bartkus et al. , 2004, 394; Crotts, 2005; Cardona & Rey, 2006).

The operating mission has two basic expressions: mission *assessment* and *planning*. The assessment of the mission corresponds to what we might call *past dynamism* of the mission, which refers to the degree in which a company is fulfilling its mission. Ultimately, it answers the question: How are we conducting our mission? The second basic expression of the operating mission, mission planning, corresponds to its *future dynamism*, which involves defining strategies and objectives that express the mission in terms of concrete results that must be achieved. In this regard, as discussed above, expressing the formal mission in concrete actions and results –products and services- is also part of the mission itself. What matters in the operating mission is therefore to which extent, or in

which way, the company fulfills and intends to fulfill its formal mission. It is what the company – the internal agents- ‘have done and intend to do’.

What is commonly understood by mission in the literature is related to the *formal* or to the *operating* mission. The *motivational mission*, in terms of motivation development linked to the external mission, has not been contemplated in theories or models on mission. However, the motivational mission – motivation linked to the formal mission – is also essential part of the concept of mission. Without it we could say that, in reality, the mission does not exist, or at least, that it is not performed in practice. Motivation linked to the mission is what makes a mission authentic and brings it to life. It is what causes matters that may be part of a mission, such as ‘customer satisfaction’, ‘stakeholder remuneration’ and ‘employee development’, to become something truly sought after by members of an organization, instead of simply being formal statements. It can therefore also be called *personal mission*. We could say that the “why” of the work and efforts of members of an organization –their motivation to meet the needs of others-, is what ultimately defines whether an organization has a mission and what it actually is. In other words, to understand the “why” of an organization (formal mission) we must consider “why” its members act (motivational mission), that is, their personal motives.

Referring to the mission solely from the perspective of the “formal” mission means the concept of mission is simplified. In practice, the mission to “meet the customer’s needs” -a phrase that can be found in many corporate mission statements, (Abrahams, 1999)- implicitly carries the associated mission “to ensure that employees are personally motivated to meet the customer’s needs”. For a company to satisfy customer needs to a certain degree –a necessary condition to stay in the market- does not make it their true mission, however much they advertise and communicate it to their stakeholders. It will only ‘truly’ be their mission if the members of the organization have real motivation to meet those needs. However noble the activity of a company, as would be the case of a pharmaceutical company that seeks the health of its customers, if the members of the organization – the ‘active agents’ only have the motivation to make money, we can hardly say that the health of its customers is the company’s true mission.

Now that we have presented the three dimensions of mission implementation, it is time to make three clarifications. The first is that we are not dealing with three different missions, but with three inseparable dimensions of the same mission. That is, each dimension represents a different aspect of mission development. This means that it is possible to analyze or develop the mission in only one or two of its dimensions, while still referring to the mission itself. Studying the best words to formulate a mission focusses on the formal dimension of the mission, while still referring to the mission of the company. Similarly, behind the operational dimension of the mission –operations and

processes- there is what might be called an implicit formal mission. Hence, by looking at what a company does, one can infer its formal mission, even if it has not been defined and stated as such. And something similar can be said about the motivational dimension of the mission, since the objectives of a company largely shape the motivation of its employees. The second consideration is that the three dimensions are necessary to understand the mission as a whole. We may say that you can only have true knowledge of what a mission is when you consider the complete “model”. This explains why studies that limit themselves to the formal dimension of the mission –that which appears on the website- often provide conflicting results, at times showing that the mission has a positive effect on performance, and other times showing the opposite. This is because they perform an incomplete study of the actual mission, by keeping it superficial, without going into the motivational and operational dimensions. That is, they consider only what the company formally “states” in its mission, without analyzing whether the mission motivates the employees or if the company is actually conducting that mission. Among the empirical studies that present this limitation, we can highlight, for example, Pearce and David (1987), David (1989), Leuthesser and Kholi (1997), Sufi and Lyons (2003), Barktuss and Glassman (2006-2007) Nimwegen and Bollen (2008), and King and Case (2010). Similarly, this limitation can be seen in various practical methods for mission development, such as Want (1986), Cochran and David (1985), Jones and Kahaner (1995) o Abrahams (1999). The final consideration is that, although the three dimensions are inseparable in practice, the existence or development of one of them does not necessarily imply the existence or development of the other two. Having a stated and communicated mission, for example, does not mean that the employees are going to commit to it, just for that reason. The dimensions support each other, but the effective development of each dimension depends on mechanisms and actions that are specific for each dimension.

4. Coherence of mission’s development

The unitary, yet at the same time three-dimensional nature of the mission raises the question of the “fit” or coherence that must exist between the various dimensions: between the formal and motivational dimensions, between the motivational and operating dimensions, and between the operating and formal dimensions. The “fit” or coherence between the various elements of an organization is a central theme of organization theory (Soda, 2014). The coherence between the three mission dimensions has, however, barely been studied, while it can provide an explanation for many cases of mission development failure in practice. Just like there are three forms of coherence, there can be three forms of incoherence. It is hard to find an unambiguous term for the different forms of coherence and incoherence, but they can be

distinguished by their relationship with the three different aspects of mission development: *authenticity*, *integrity* and *consistency*, (Figure 3).

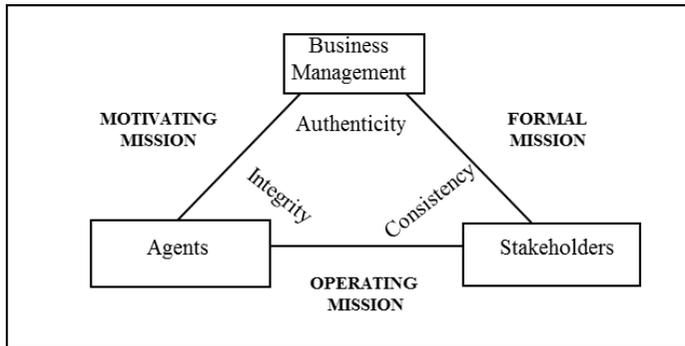


Figure 3. The three dimensions and characteristics of the mission

The first form of coherence (or incoherence) is that between the formal and motivational mission, i.e. the coherence between what the company states as its mission (the formal mission) and what really motivates its members (the motivational mission). This form of coherence expresses the fit between what the company “says” it wants and what its members “truly” want. In this sense, we may say that it determines the ‘authenticity’ of the mission. It expresses the degree in which the formal statement is actually internalized by members of the company. ‘Authenticity’ can have different meanings, and in the literature on management it has been studied in relation to the product, brand or leadership (Bishop, 2013). By origin, ‘authenticity’ means “being true to oneself” (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Mazutis, 2015). And in this sense, the mission of a company can also be authentic or inauthentic. We can speak of an *authentic* mission, when it is “real” in the sense that it is “truly” lived by the individuals. And that depends on the alignment between the expressed intentions (formal mission) and the true intentions of individuals (motivational mission). Earlier, we mentioned the case of the mission that is published on the website, but not internalized by the people. This would be a merely formal, but not “authentic”, mission. Bart (1997), for example, referred to authenticity when, whilst analyzing a sample of companies, he encountered a high percentage of mission failure, because the people did not feel personally identified by it. Lencioni (2002) also refers to the empty and inauthentic nature of many *values statements*. The coherence between the formal and motivational mission is also related to organizational identification and organizational commitment, which, while not exactly the same (Ashforth, 2008), both refer to the ‘fit’ between an organization’s objectives and the goals of individuals (Pratt, 2000).

Coherence between the motivational and operating dimensions of the mission depends on the degree of fit between what truly motivates people –personal values- and what they actually do in their daily practice (operations and processes). This form of coherence gives the mission “integrity”. ‘Integrity’ does not have a single unambiguous meaning, and can have many nuances (Beebe, 2005; Audi, 2006; Palanski et al., 2015), but it always expresses the “comprehensive and integrated” nature of personal values and behavior (Killinger, 2010, 12). In the organizational context it represents the alignment between people’s motivation – their values- and the decision-making systems and operating procedures of the company (Paine, 1994). If we apply this to the mission, integrity expresses the “integration” of the desired mission and the mission in practice. It represents the coherence between the motivational and operating mission. The integrity of the mission can be broken by two main reasons: either because of a lack of motivation for the mission, or because an individual is forced to do what does not motivate him. The first is the case of the salesman who satisfies the customer, but, in reality, is only interested in “getting rid of” the product. In the second case the salesman is motivated to sell and satisfy the customer’s needs, but spends all day having to fill out forms and making reports, or is forced by bosses or objectives to sell products that do not suit the customer. Following this example, a mission is therefore integrated, when the salesman meets the customer’s needs because he is truly interested in his wellbeing. This relationship of integrity, the fit between the motivational and operating mission, has hardly been considered in literature on mission, and yet, it conceals what frequently becomes a cause of mission failure.

Finally, the relationship between the operating and the formal mission defines the *consistency* of the mission, that is, the degree of alignment between what is done in practice (operating mission) and what they claim (formal mission). The formal coherence in mission development has been discussed in some research. Bartkus and Glassman (2008) analyze, for example, if “firms practice what they preach”, and attribute mission failure to the lack of a meaningful relationship between what is formally stated in the mission and what is done in practice. It is what some call *mission fulfillment* (Suh et al. (2010). If the formal mission and processes and operations point in different directions, however much the mission motivates people, this motivation does not translate into the organizational activities and processes, thus mission and practice become inconsistent.

5. Conclusion

The mission is understood as the “why”, the *raison d’être*, of an organization. Some authors have referred to a ‘gap in the theory’ on mission and the absence of a theory in the literature that would explain the relationship between the

mission, employee motivation and business practice. In practice, this gap explains the loss of effectiveness in the actual implementation of the mission that many companies have experienced.

This gap can be bridged by providing an extension to the theory, which contributes to solving a practical problem in implementing the mission in companies. The literature has studied certain mission dimensions, for example the formal and operating dimensions, but has left out other dimensions, such as the mission's relationship with motivation. Moreover, these dimensions have not been integrated. The proposed model fills the theoretical and practical gap, by identifying three different dimensions to consider in the mission. Along with the formal and operating dimensions, already discussed in the literature, the motivational dimension of the mission is discovered, which, conversely, is distinct to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, as it is oriented to satisfying the needs of others. For this reason, it can be considered a form of *prosocial motivation*, which is what generates mission internalization. Prosocial motivations are those that internalize the formal mission in people and, in turn, provide operational effectiveness to the company's formal mission. And finally, this model has allowed us to study the relationship between the three dimensions of the mission and identify the different forms of coherence and incoherence that may arise between them: authenticity, integrity and consistency.

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