

Organizational Mission and the Phenomenon of Mission Drift/Creep:
A perspective from the Nonprofit sector

Organizational Mission and the Phenomenon of Mission Drift/Creep: A perspective from the
Nonprofit sector

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Abstract

Academics and practitioners alike have continually called for more research to provide a deeper understanding of the nonprofit sector in light of its growing importance in society. Drucker's (1989) seminal work suggested that there is much the business sector can learn from the nonprofit sector. Mission drift/creep as a phenomenon in strategic management has received little academic attention even though the practitioner journals are replete with references of its proliferation. The nonprofit sector in particular, a widely diverse group, linked by a Federal tax exemption to conduct business for almost any lawful purpose, seems particularly susceptible. In the absence of a profit motive, managers and stakeholders alike look to the organizations' mission for direction as well as measurements of success. Mission is generally the principal reason for being and therefore is held as a statement upon which public trust is built. Departure either in the form of drift or creep is widely discouraged. The notion that organizations learn, therefore challenges the fundamental premise that missions should remain static.

Extant practitioner literature documents the widespread nature of mission drift within the sector and decries its proliferation. This study attempts to elevate the discourse, bringing attention to the phenomenon of mission drift/creep by first defining it and putting it in proper contextual frame. The study also through research and scholarship attempts to identify the importance of mission in organizational strategy by using secondary studies to examine this role of mission and thereby provide a fuller explanation for the occurrence of mission drift/creep.

This paper utilized a systematic procedure and content analysis to explore the contingency, resource dependency, population ecology, as well as institutional theories, to find meaningful explanations for mission drift/creep's causation in nonprofit organizations and ultimately support or refute the notion that mission drift/creep should be discouraged.

Dedication

To my family, especially my wife Dr. Hazel, for the unconditional love and support. To my mother Grace Gooding, a lifelong educator, for instilling in me the value of an education.

Acknowledgements

Identifying my area of expertise and linking it to a subject matter that I am passionate about that has relevance to both the practitioner and academic community was indeed a challenge that would not have been as surmountable without the help of both Professors Andersen and Dent. Their guidance significantly influenced the direction and quality of this paper. Thank you to the faculty and staff of UMUC and to my cohort, Patrick Amadasun, Peter Aviles, Timothy Beidleman, Bob Bornhofen, Carmen Chambers, Ted Jeong, Thomas Owusu, and Paul Richardson during residency for challenging me, and to my family for understanding and support, thank you all.

Keywords:

Organizational mission; mission statement; for-profit; not-for-profit; nonprofit; mission drift; mission creep; organizational learning; strategic planning; strategic management.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Background of Study

The academic community's overwhelming focus within the last 20 years on stated mission or what is known as the "mission statement" of companies is in stark contrast to the paucity of work on the study of the practiced mission or the de facto actions of organizations.

There seems to be a willingness, in other words, to accept the stated mission without question. Rosenzweig (2007) described this phenomenon as the "halo effect". As public scandals raised awareness, however, practitioners and academics alike have become increasingly conscious of the disconnect between what companies do and what they say they do.

Additionally, it would appear that stated missions are relatively easier to measure and methodologies for the evaluation of the structure and content of mission statements have been well advanced (David & David, 2003; Pearce & David, 1987; Rhodes & Keogan, 2005).

This study's focus is on the nonprofit sector. However, mission statements are not unique to the nonprofit sector. It is nevertheless, a major factor in performance and strategic planning within the sector primarily due to the absence of the profit motive. Company performance is largely measured by its results in delivering and addressing its mission.

Before one examines the meaning and relevance of missions to nonprofits and the concept of "mission drift/creep" in particular, attention should be first given to the sector and its origins so that there can be proper contextual meaning and its significance established.

The nonprofit sector has evolved beyond its original charitable purposes and has over the years grown indistinguishable from for-profit enterprises. Organizations such as Harvard

University or the Chamber of Commerce are nonprofit organizations which may not typically come to mind when thinking of a nonprofit entity. Our perceptions still hearken back to the small charities with voluntary staff and boards.

The National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), a national repository of data on the industry established in 1982, reported that prior to 1969 there were approximately 44,462 U.S. entities with incomes in excess of \$25,000 per annum. Within the decade of the 1970s this statistic had increased by 37,626 and by the end of 2009 some 271,609 organizations had joined the ranks, outstripping all prior periods and demonstrating heightened competition within the sector.

Charitable nonprofit organizations including foundations and churches by 1984 represented 9.5 percent of employment in the United States and 5.6 percent of national income (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990, p.138). As of October 2009, NCCS reported that over 1.6 million registered nonprofit organizations existed in the United States.

The sector defies definition by purpose. To illustrate the foundation of the sector in the United States, Brody (1996) stated that the nonprofit sector is premised on the fundamental constitutional guarantees of rights to private property, liberty of contract, and freedom of worship and expression (p. 243). Nonprofits can be formed for any lawful purpose (p. 246).

A key distinction from any form of business structure, however, is the restriction associated with the distribution of stakeholders financial benefit. As Hansmann (1980) illustrated, this has become known as the “non-distribution constraint”, a concept that both explains the existence of the sector while simultaneously keeping it honest (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990, p. 140).

Hansmann (1980) and Weisbrod (1988) both offered explanations in economic theory for the existence of nonprofit organizations primarily based on third party payments for goods and services or price discrimination due to donations.

Outside the United States, the history and origins of the sector are not quite the same. In Britain for example, the Third Sector to which it is commonly referred, with government and private sectors being the first and second respectively, has its origins in 16th Century Elizabethan era dealing with the church and the poor (Etzioni, 1973).

Nonprofits are granted their tax exemption on the basis of their mission. An organization's mission is established at the outset, based on the founders' perceived need for the goods or services and is the basis on which the exemption is granted. Section 501 of the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code provides that assets of an entity cannot inure to the benefit of private stakeholder or individuals (Jackson & Fogarty, 2005, p.18). In exchange for the loss of property rights, Government grants a tax-exempt status to these entities. Brody (1996) also argues that the nonprofit status is often viewed as a symbol of trustworthiness, which has resulted in the "halo effect" (trusting regardless of merit).

Over the last decade this issue of trust has become a source of significant public concern due to the abuse by many boards and executive directors of the public's trust. Scandals associated with executive compensation packages as well as misuse of donations and agency resources have captured the public's imagination and dominated the discourse regarding nonprofit management. Coupled with the scandals at the United Way and the American Red Cross among others, legislators have been forced to promulgate regulatory reform which culminated in the Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act, passed in 2002 better known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX). SOX is widely viewed as the most

important piece of legislation affecting corporate governance, financial disclosure, and public accounting since the passage of the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Act of 1934 (Jackson & Fogarty, 2005, p. 18). Specifically, the act calls for nonprofits with revenues exceeding \$250,000 annually to file an annual report called a 990 or face the loss of their tax exemption status. In other words, donations to any organization that has lost its status will not be considered tax exempt. This report must be filed timely and includes detailed descriptions of the organizations' annual performance goals as established by its board of directors as well as measurements of meeting these goals along with material changes in operating activities and the corporate structure.

Jeavons' (2003) work focused on nonprofit management's ethics, values, and key practices and posited that "social capital" a concept centered on trust as the instrument of collective action for serving the public good. In exploring the construct he asked the question,

"Why would people want to give their money or time to an organization if they have reason to doubt that the organization is representing itself and the work it does honestly and is using the contributions it receives well for the purpose of fulfilling its stated mission?" (p. 179).

This question holds true for all stakeholders across the board as it pertains to "legitimization" and "selection processes" (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). Jeavons (2003) maintains that most charitable organizations (those that depend on contributions and donations) rely on their moral standing and consistency to sustain giving in order to survive and carry out their mission.

In further illustrating the case of the United Way, Jeavons (2003) explained that the executive leadership of this membership organization came to adopt “for-profit like thinking” and believed that its organizational growth was an end in itself worth pursuing which inherently served to undermine its core mission of serving its members. He concluded that this resulted in misuse of donations and a clear abuse of the public’s trust and ultimately an erosion of the spirit of giving and volunteerism. As Bigelow, Stone and Arndt (1996) suggested, “nonprofit organizations operate in environments characterized by institutional demands for legitimacy and argues that given this environment, corporate political strategy is critical to its ability to achieve its goals, access resources, and achieve a sustainable advantage” (p. 29-43).

Some believe that “nonprofit organizations exist because of market or governmental failure to provide services, or because clients are unable to accurately evaluate certain kinds of services and thus require organizational forms on which they can place trust” (Dart, 2004, p. 412). Dart further suggests, however, that nonprofits may have more broad and complex origins based on institutional theory, versus the narrow rational and functional explanations stemming from public sector funding and philanthropic resource constraints.

Focusing specifically on legitimacy and legitimization by stakeholders, as opposed to efficiency and effectiveness in meeting organizational goals as determinants of organizational success, Dart (2004) promoted the notion that nonprofit organizations’ existence can be better explained by their need for legitimization (p. 413). It is on the basis of this argument that this paper will look for more meaningful explanations for the phenomenon of mission drift/creep.

Statement of Problem

This study recognizes the contrast between what companies do and what companies say they do as a material fact of corporate life. The stated mission is the entities declaration to the world, both internally and externally, of among other things, who they are, what they do, and in some cases what they stand for. When the operations of the company are in perfect alignment with these statements then one can declare the company is true to its mission. However, when the company moves away from the stated mission, this is often frowned upon by both the practitioner and academic communities alike.

Very few academic studies have been found that address the topic of “mission drift” or “mission creep” in particular, even though it would appear that this phenomenon is more prevalent in the discourse of the practitioner community especially among micro-finance entities seeking to sustain their operations and strategic planners and consultants working to strengthen board governance and oversight.

Significance of Problem

Anheier (2005) contends that the nonprofit sector, a fairly recent development in the history of the social sciences, remains a sector “ill understood” due mainly to the superficial nature of our understanding. He insists that nonprofits are complex structures with various stakeholders, multiple funding streams, and diverse constituencies (Anheier, 2005, p.3).

Like Anheier, Leete (2001) had earlier underscored the paucity of information that exist in terms of studies on the sector despite the fact that the sector accounts for a significant and growing share of employment in the United States (p. 137). Drucker (1989) suggested that nonprofit organizations have much to offer the management profession in terms of lessons to be learnt from its practices. Arguably, since his time, technological innovation has even more so transformed business practice within nonprofits.

The review of literature of many practitioner journals demonstrates widespread belief that mission drift or creep should be resisted. Scholarly journals on the other hand, turn up very little on the subject. Even though this issue has received some attention, primarily due to the economic downturn in the United States economy, this author believes that there are more fundamental reasons underlying the issue than are currently being given credit.

Specifically within the last decade, where all sectors have been experiencing slower rates of growth and in some instances shrinking revenue, the pressure on those entities that operate as nonprofit have been even more so impacted based on reports generated by the NCCS. When practitioners and commentators refer to mission drift, it is often couched in language that invariably links it to the economic environment and resource dependency (e.g., Barad, Maw & Stone, 2005; Needleman, 2009). It is believed in some quarters that the heightened competition among members within this diverse sector, specifically for governmental and charitable funding, has pushed growing number of organizations to seek remedies that include among others, to question their operating premise, beliefs, and values, and to move away from their original core mission as a result, in essence mission drift.

Understanding what is “mission drift” or “mission creep” is critical to strategic planners and to both for-profit and nonprofit managers, since it is integral to stakeholder legitimization. Building confidence in the mission of an organization is a major part of the work of a nonprofit since there is no profit motive or measure. What an organization sets out to accomplish is largely captured in its mission statement, hence it stands to reason that perceptions of movement away from the intended mission will give rise to heightened concern or even distrust among stakeholders.

For many working in the public and nonprofit sectors, management processes and practices are often derived or borrowed from the for-profit sector (balanced scorecard, TQM etc.) and some authors have even commented on the push for a more “business like” approach within the nonprofit sector over the years, including the introduction of such concepts as “social enterprises” (Boschee, 2006; Dees, 1998; Noya, 1999;) and “social entrepreneurship”. Arthur Brooks (2002) in his paper, “Challenges and opportunities facing nonprofit organizations”, claimed that effective nonprofits should adhere to their mission and should be “nonprofit-like” not “business-like” (Brooks, 2002, p. 504).

Oster (1995) described mission statements as serving a “boundary function”, which acts to motivate both staff and donors and help the process of evaluation of the organization. She argues that consistency with the mission is in part substitute for profitability. Therefore, a clear mission statement resolves some of the boundary issues for the organization, especially in cases where there are competing stakeholders (Oster 1995, p. 23).

More and more, concepts from the for-profit sector seem to have seeped into the discussion of the nonprofit sector from business schools in furtherance of this push for greater “efficiency” and “effectiveness” which of late have been added to the “public trust” discourse. It may seem that as economic factors weigh in, and competition for limited resources increase, a push for greater efficiency, reduction of waste, and elimination of redundancy have become dominant themes in the sectors strategies and modus operandi.

The Federal Government, a large funder to the sector, is a major force behind this push and has promulgated new policies that have placed greater emphasis on efficiency. The purchase-of-service system (POS) as explained by Stone (1996, p. 61) was implemented whereby federal agencies contracted with nonprofits to supply services. To further illustrate this

point, the most recent example of the introduction of MEDICAID reimbursements for billable hours for specific forms of mental health treatment and care (clinical model) as opposed to block grants as the last available source of funding for non-clinical programs, thereby eliminating certain recreational programs and other forms of therapy, including peer-to-peer education and counseling, is but one example of how the “efficiency” theme is being introduced.

Without a greater understanding of the sector’s uniqueness and an acknowledgment of this as a material distinction that can influence the way an organization behaves, directors, managers and stakeholders alike would be misguided in their judgment of such behavior and may draw erroneous conclusions which can impact policy positions and lead to a further demise of the sector.

The nonprofit sector is under siege, a crisis of confidence. This crisis stems not from the financial or economic conditions that have impacted the global economy within the last three to five years, even though this may have served to amplify the issue, but a growing lack of trust and support for the continued need and justification for the tax exemption granted to this sector. Mission drift or creep it would appear is linked directly to this issue of trust.

Ultimately, if the doubts continue to persist and cogent arguments are not forthcoming to support the evolution of the sector and the changes that are apparent, then naysayers will continue to erode confidence and question continued support for the sector’s tax exempt status, which can ring the death-knell for thousands of organizations.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to explain organizational mission and the phenomenon of mission drift/creep in particular and to determine whether it should continue to be discouraged as is widely believed and practiced or encouraged as a process in organizational learning.

This research is an explanatory study within a sector that is admittedly very diverse in terms of organizational outputs, functions, and purposes. The only common denominator that binds these entities is the fact that they are governed by a common set of Federal and State laws and regulations which seek to ultimately maintain public trust.

Having established that there are variations within the sector in terms of structures, revenue sources, and charitable purposes, nonprofits are for the most part governed by voluntary boards of directors. Nevertheless, this study seeks to examine the macro theoretical links that may explain the phenomenon of mission drift or creep across the sector.

Additionally, this study does not seek a comparison with for-profits. Stone and Greer Brush (1996) in a comparative analysis of nonprofit and entrepreneurial firms identified some material distinctions that can influence the behavior of one rather than the other. For the nonprofit such factors include multiple conflicting constituencies and lack of control over resource flow as well as comparatively small operating sizes (p. 633-652). The basis for this narrowed focus also lies in the belief that the driving force behind a nonprofit is its mission as oppose to a for-profit whose decisions are primarily driven by profit motivation.

An inherent assumption of this paper is that nonprofits generally hold their mission above net revenues or profits and that mission is the fundamental driver of the organizations purpose and not the perpetuation of the organization itself. Mission therefore is central to the governance and performance measurement of most nonprofit organizations, hence this focus.

This paper seeks to build on the discussion commenced by Jaskyte, (2011); Zorn et al. (2011), exploring an integrated perspective to the behavior of the nonprofit organization as it pertains to organizational mission.

This study first and foremost is put forward to build on the work already commenced and make theoretical connections in explaining its causation beyond the practitioners' perspective which largely treats "mission drift/creep" as a factor of resource dependence.

The mission of an organization is often captured in its mission statement, but the intent of this paper is not to restrict the meaning of mission to this specific format but to capture the essence of an organization's existence that may be stated or unstated but that which is outwardly and inwardly perceived and understood as the de facto "raison d'être" of an organization.

A glaring gap in research has been studies that focus on the de facto mission of organizations and how movement away from their core mission in practice, a phenomenon known as "mission drift" or "mission creep", occurs. There has been a dearth of explanatory studies that focus on the phenomenon of "mission drift or "mission creep", how it occurs, and whether it can or should be avoided.

This paper argues that current theoretical perspectives viewed independently are insufficient in fully explaining the behaviors of nonprofit organizations, but when taken collectively within an open systems framework, provide a more comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon bringing the resource dependency and institutional theoretical arguments to fore.

This study is limited to a secondary review of empirical research and case studies and no primary research was conducted for this paper.

The Research Question

This paper attempts to answer three fundamental questions.

- Question 1: In what ways is mission essential to organizational strategy or in other words, is it even relevant?

- Question 2: What is the phenomenon of mission drift and its role in nonprofit organization success and failure? Secondly, the study attempts to explain the phenomenon of mission drift or mission creep, recognizing there are nuanced differences in the meaning of the two constructs. Nevertheless, is this a process of natural selection that is inherently unavoidable or are these conscious determinations of management to move away from stated mission.
- Question 3: Under what conditions should mission drift or mission creep be discouraged or encouraged as a process of organizational learning? The third question challenges the convention that mission drift or mission creep should be discouraged and seeks to establish whether it should be encouraged as a process in organizational learning.

Definition of Terms

Mission drift and mission creep – There are several interpretations of this construct.

“Mission drift” can be defined as a focus on profits to the detriment of the social good (Battilana, Lee, Walker & Dorsey, 2012). Drifting away from the mission to serve the original target clientele (Fidler, 1998).

Mission statement – “mission statements” can be defined in its broadest sense to include values statements; corporate creeds; philosophy; goals etc. which were viewed as important in forming a company’s identity, and presenting its purpose and direction to its stakeholders (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997, p. 59).

Nonprofit/Not-for-profit – Descriptions of the sector, place emphasis on their mission driven focus and the fact that they serve the public good and not individual gain. Outside the United States, the sector may vary. In Britain, in particular, it is referred to as the Third sector with the

Government and Business sectors being the first and second respectively. Nonprofits are also referred to as not-for-profits, however, there is no material distinction.

Summary

The Crisis facing the nonprofit sector is one of confidence in the continued justification for the nonprofit status. Organizational mission is the basis or justification for tax exemption, but as organizations become more “business-like” the argument for tax exemption becomes increasingly difficult to justify.

Organizational learning seems to be essential to organizational survival, hence, possibly changes may occur in the organization’s mission. The question may arise, has the mission been accomplished? Only if the answer is no, has an organization the right to go on. But rarely organizations’ missions are defined in terms that can be so accurately measured. Supporting the search for a cure for HIV/AIDs for example, has most recently dominated the mission of many social service organizations. When this cure is found, will these organizations dismantle? Most likely not, they will move the established infrastructure on to newer diseases and challenges. And so, the mission drifts, but do they (management) wait for that time to be upon them or do they plan well in advance (securing stakeholder buy-in) for the time when the cure would have been found? In answering these questions this study attempts to further an understanding of the phenomenon.

This chapter began with the identification of the background for this study on mission drift in nonprofit organizations. From there the statement and significance of the problem was discussed. The purpose of the study was then outlined, followed by the research questions, the definition of key terms, a summary of this chapter, and the organization of this dissertation.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters as identified in Figure 1. The first chapter introduces the topic of organizational mission, mission drift/creep as a phenomenon within the nonprofit sector. The second chapter contains the review of relevant literature, focusing on empirical work done within the last twenty-five years explaining the constructs of this study and outlining various theoretical propositions from key perspectives such as the contingency, resource dependency schools, environmental/ population ecology, and institutional theoretical perspectives.

Chapter 3 outlines the Conceptual Framework of the study. Chapter 4 sets out the methodology and selection criteria of studies to perform the content analysis. Chapter 5 presents the evaluation and synthesis, outlining a hybridized view and offering concrete support for the findings of this study. This will be followed by a conclusion and recommendations for further research in Chapter 6.

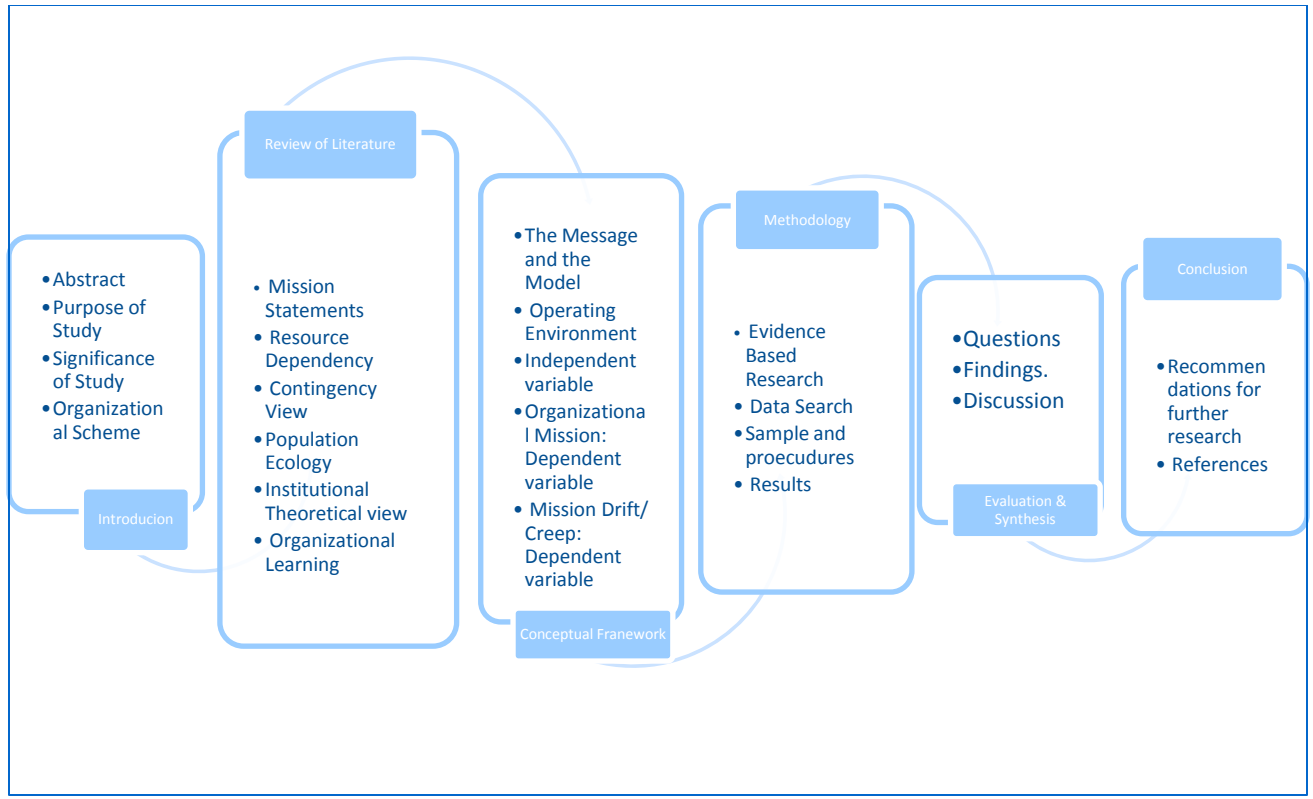


Figure 1. Organizational scheme of dissertation

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

Ever since Drucker (1974) reiterated the importance of “mission” in organizational strategy and management, many practitioners and academics have been focused on exploring the importance, role, and even the link between “mission statement” and organizational performance (Bart & Baetz, 1998; Hitt & Ireland, 1992; Pearce & David, 1987). It has been argued that the mere presence of a formal mission statement, however, does not result in better company performance nor symbolize company conformance. Many studies have been conducted on the validity of mission statements, examining their content, structure, and even establishing a statistical significant relationship between mission and performance.

The fundamental thrust of this paper is to examine a vaguely understood phenomenon within the context of existing theoretical frameworks beginning with those that are obvious such as resource dependency, contingency, and moving to those that are more grounded in population ecology and institutional theory to see if there may be more deep rooted explanations.

The review of relevant literature commences with theoretical perspectives on mission, highlighting its importance as a sense-making device and furthering the argument for its usefulness in management and nonprofit management in particular. Also, this segment recognizes the importance of organizational mission and practice alignment for a meaningful interpretation of “drift”.

Building on the theoretical relevance of mission, the second segment of this chapter examines the contingency and resource dependency perspectives in explaining the cause of “mission drift”. The third segment focuses on explanations based on the theory of population ecology which challenges the notion that drift is internally driven and is more a “process” vis-à-

vis a “content” change. An examination of three institutional theoretical constructs to explain mission drift or creep is presented. Finally, an examination of the concept of organizational learning (Senge, 1990) is elucidated to strengthen the nexus between “drift” and “learning” and provides a foundation for the argument that if organizations are to learn and survive, change in mission may be inevitable and ultimately unavoidable.

Theoretical Perspectives on Mission and Mission Creep/Drift.

Some publications have referred to the phenomenon as “mission drift” while others have referred to “mission creep”. Both concepts carry in large part the same meaning with some nuanced interpretations by some authors when needing to emphasize how it occurs. White (2007) in a review of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) conducted a historical assessment of the functions of these organizations and in so doing laid out his understanding of the concept of mission drift and creep. He stated that “mission drift” denotes a devolutionary process widely known by scholars who study the history of public institutions, one that slowly expands “gradually and mindlessly” even to the point where it can no longer perform its original function, while “mission creep” signifies a more “deliberate, sneaky, and nefarious form of devolutionary change, unintentional and randomized” (White, 2007, p. 548).

Moore (2000) in his article “Managing for value: Organizational strategy in for-profit, nonprofit and governmental organizations”, suggested that all organizations benefit from developing a strategy, however, due to the fact that nonprofits derive value from the achievement of social purposes rather than revenue, an alternate strategy model distinct from the for-profit sector is warranted, which ties the vision of the leadership of the organization with its mission and its activities (Moore, 2000, p.183). He further suggests that the countervailing movement to mission drift or creep is “mission stickiness,” a condition whereby an organization can stay

committed to its mission despite changes in its task environment (Moore, 2000, p. 192). The March of Dimes example where contributions continued to come in even after a cure for polio was found was cited as a clear example of how in an effort to avoid being accused of “mission drift” or “mission creep” an organization who felt their integrity rests with their original mission remained committed and focused on their original mission statement, for fear of being accused of being committed to their own survival rather than their founding cause.

Rhodes and Keogan (2005) conducted an empirical study of 25 nonprofit housing organizations in Ireland. This sample selected from a profiling exercise was based on an earlier study conducted by Mullins et al. (2003). Their findings suggested that there were two contingency views of how organizations formulated their strategy, one dependent on the environment and the second dependent on the strategy decision considered (p. 133). What is pertinent to this discussion, however, is their assertion that mission statements of non-profit organizations are defined at their inception to address a social need that founders believe they are in a position to address (Rhodes & Keogan, 2005, p. 128).

Over the years, mission statements’ purpose and its usefulness have evolved. As Hamel and Prahalad (1989) after conducting case studies of several global manufacturing companies argued that the concept of mission statements existed for a long time, but “strategic intent” a fairly new concept integrates the elements of the vision with the “how” or the operationalization of the objectives.

As Denton (2001) in a journal article explained, corporate mission expresses an organizations unique and enduring purpose. Mission statements and strategic objectives are often created in the hope that they can push the entity toward a desired end, but Denton (2001) contests the value of the mission statement as the means by which organizations can effectively

do so and charges that it is lifeless, static, and planned, and does not cater to the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of the operating environment (Denton, 2001, p. 2).

Oster (1995) a noted professor of management at Yale promoted the notion that mission statements serve a boundary function. In her view these statements act to motivate both staff and donor and help to create a backdrop whereby the organization's performance can be evaluated (Oster, 1995, p. 22). Consistency with the mission is a partial substitute for profitability in the management of nonprofits and as Oster (1995) explains, this is the reason for its augmented role.

Bradshaw (2003) citing Paton and Cornforth posits that "values" are considered to be one of the distinctive features of nonprofit organizations couched in its' mission which controls any interest in the organization's survival or strategies and regulates the conflict between maintaining the organization and pursuing its objectives, mission, and values.

Pearce and David (1987) suggested that "an effective mission statement defines the fundamental, unique purpose that sets a business apart from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of the business' operations in product and market terms" (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109). This study was one of the first works to recognize and acknowledge the variety of labels that can embody mission statements. Many authors have used their concept of mission statements defining the business purpose which sets it apart from others while identifying its scope in product and market terms.

Building on earlier work examining the content of mission statements, Pearce and David conducted a sample survey of 218 Fortune 500 companies. The actual date of data collection was not mentioned, however, utilizing both content and statistical analysis, the study had a 28 percent response rate generating both descriptive and analytical statistics to lend empirical support to the notion that companies with more comprehensive mission statements performed

better. Whatever the form in which it is presented, mission statements are also called creeds, statements of purpose, corporate philosophies, or “statements defining our business”. They essentially provide the basis for the priorities, strategies, plans, and work of the organization (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109). Pearce and David (1987) went on to suggest that mission statements should also create an organization’s identity. In other words it serves to rally the employees and the stakeholders in producing something worthwhile, help others, beat competition, and earn respect, and is often the most visible and public part of a strategic plan (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109). This can be said to be a foundational piece of work, often cited in many subsequent studies. Acknowledging the fact that developing a mission statement is a critical first step in strategic planning, Pearce and David’s study was clearly one of the earliest attempts utilizing a statistical approach to both study the content of mission and link it to performance (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109).

The value of Pearce and David’s research is that it sets some clear benchmarks by which mission statement development can be gauged. It established that at the time 40 percent of the responders did not have formal mission statements and raised the question why this was so. Pearce and David also raised the question whether organizations with differing profit motive, stakeholders, and geographic marketplaces would have varying components included in their mission statements and raised other important questions for future research including the link between mission statement and organizational performance as well as the ways mission statements differ in varying organizations and how closely associated are the public pronouncements and the in-house strategic documents (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 113). Clearly this study would be a critical foundational piece for this research study.

Analoui and Karami (2002) published a study from the perspective of the CEO in the development of a meaningful mission statement. This empirical research was conducted in the United Kingdom among 508 small and medium sized firms operating specifically in the for-profit electronic and electrical sectors. This study aimed to accomplish 3 things:

- Establish the existence and purpose within targeted firms;
- Identify their content; and
- Understand the relationship between mission statement and the company's performance.

Premised on the belief that mission statements promoted shared expectations and communicated its public image, the relevance of this study is captured in Analoui and Karami's proposed test of whether statements can increase a firm's legitimacy and enhance it in the eyes of old and new stakeholders.

A survey instrument was used with a 27 percent response rate. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were applied and both analytical and descriptive statistics were collected. A 5 point Likert scale was used to code response data from the CEOs of the small to medium sized firms (Analoui & Karami, 2002, p. 18). This contrasts directly with the findings of other earlier studies and fuels the debate which fosters the inconclusive nature of the discussion regarding statement content and performance. In fact, their study concluded that firms with higher performance results did not necessarily have better mission statement content than those that generated poorer results. A material distinction lies in the fact that this study was conducted in the for-profit sector where emphasis on stated mission may carry lesser importance. Nevertheless, this study has tremendous value to this research in that the findings may serve to validate the importance of the distinction between the for-profit and non-profit sectors in the meaning of mission to organizational strategy and performance.

Leuthesser and Kohli (1997) conducted a qualitative empirical study some 10 years later on the role of mission statements and corporate identity. They upheld the view that “mission statements” can be defined in its broadest sense to include values statements, corporate creeds, philosophy, goals, etc. which were viewed as important in forming a company’s identity, and presenting its purpose and direction to its stakeholders (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997, p. 59).

This study of 393 corporate annual reports (1988-94) were selected randomly from “Business Week 1000 List” of publicly owned US companies. Mission statements in its obvious formats were extracted from these reports to operationalize the study, categorizing them into four types. The mission statement types emphasize benefits, values, self-image, and company focus. The actual method of word association was not clearly outlined. This study’s method was a simple random sample using descriptive statistics to quantify response rate and survey results. A 16 percent response rate was reported from which the results of the study were drawn.

The weakness of this study was clearly its inability to logically link statement content and corporate identity formation via the variables measured. For example, the study suggests that shareholders were addressed in 60 percent of the mission statements. However, it failed to demonstrate how in return shareholders are actually influenced by these statements in identity formation. The absence or presence of word content in mission statements for example were used to conclude that only “lip service” was being paid to a constituent group (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997, p. 63). Taken at face value, this is a leap without any theoretical foundation supporting the assumed link between company behavior and its stated mission. The research findings were less than compelling but provoked the notion that strategists should rethink the view that mission statements were no more than internal communication devices but rather a unifying focal point and integral element of the corporate identity. This study has value to this

research in that it illustrates some of the strengths and weaknesses of research in organizational mission, demonstrating the gaps and need for further exploratory and explanatory research.

It now seems unquestionable the widespread use of mission statements in nonprofit organizations, however, as Kirk and Nolan (2010) suggests with their comment on the ubiquitous nature of mission statements in nonprofits, that there is a common assumption of a link between performance and a well designed statement since it can provide a framework for decisions and influence volunteer and staff motivation. The comment that grabbed this author's attention, however, is their claim of the influence this statement had on signaling organizational legitimacy to stakeholders, which underscores its ultimate value and highlights its overarching importance to an organization (Kirk & Nolan, 2010, p. 473).

An organization's mission is a guide for both the internal and external world to understand the work of the organization. Simply put, it is the resonance of an organization's mission that determines the level of stakeholder support. A central question of the Kirk and Nolan paper is, "should organizational learning, specifically, "double-loop learning" be encouraged to challenge core beliefs and operating principles which can ultimately lead to a departure from original mission or in other words "mission drift/creep". Double-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected after questioning the governing values and then changing the actions to suit (Argyris, 2002, p. 206).

Verma (2009) provided an excellent point of departure in his paper, "Mission statements – A study of intent and influence". Verma (2009) conducted a sample survey of 150 business school students in New Delhi, utilizing a 13 item structured instrument. With a response rate of 66 percent of which 80 percent were middle management and 20 percent were lower or higher management, the results captured a slice of internal stakeholders perception of the value of

mission statements. The value of this empirical research is a demonstration of the “coupling” or in other words internalization of “mission statements” by stakeholder groups, in this case, managers.

This study sought to establish whether there was a correlation between the values espoused by managers and those that serve to interpret or implement it.

Verma (2009) used the theory of reasoned action which proposes that people need reason for their action. As such, if a business wants people to give their best performance, they need to advance proper reasoning. He, like Desmidt and Prinzie, further suggests that vision and mission statements have gained recognition as tools of strategic importance and are important because of their influence on people behavior, resource allocation, focus, and a sense of meaning to the work (Verma, 2009, p. 155). Desmidt and Prinzie (2008) suggested that it is not only popular but also quite functional as a sense making device.

What was significant about Verma’s work to this study is the recognition of the distinction between what is stated or the intention and the actual behavior of the organization. This is critical in the assessment of “mission drift” since recognition of the alignment of the written and unwritten or the operationalized mission is critical to a successful understanding and evaluation of the changes that have occurred within an organization. Verma (2009) found that where there were inconsistencies between managerial actions and espoused values, missions fail. But where successfully aligned, these can become the “superstructure uniqueness” that can build competitive advantages. The study confirmed that the mission statement is no longer just “pretty words” but an active strategic tool that guide behavior and define working relationships (p. 160).

Bolon (2005) conducted an empirical study in Florida and Texas in 2002-2003 comparing the content of mission statements at for-profit and not-for-profit hospitals. This study adds to the body of knowledge in providing evidence to support or refute the notion that mission statement content differed based on ownership structure. It addresses the argument that there is a material difference in mission based on profit motive.

The Bolon (2005) study was built on previous research that suggested that mission was driven by stakeholder interest. A balanced sample of for-profit and nonprofit hospitals were identified after reviewing membership data from the Federation of American Hospitals (2003) website. Florida and Texas were chosen since they were deemed to have the greatest number of for-profit hospitals. The sample was restricted to hospitals between 200 and 400 beds to control for size differences. A total of 112 hospitals, of which 60 were investor-owned and 52 nonprofit owned, were selected across these two states having met specific sample selection criteria. A content analysis was performed on the remaining sample after eliminating those hospitals that did not display their mission statement on their website. Fifty-two hospitals remained in the sample. Using Weber's (1990) definition of content analysis, Bolon based his analysis on the existence and frequency of words, phrases, sentences, or concepts within the text of the mission statements. The findings of the study suggested that there is no compelling evidence in support of the argument that there is a distinct difference between For and Not-for-Profit hospitals in terms of mission statement content.

Acknowledging the limited external validity of the research findings, it however presents some key information in disputing the notion that stakeholder interest can materially impact the stated mission. As was previously recognized by Pearce and David (1987), the stated mission and the organizational behavior may not be aligned. This again brings to fore the glaring issue in

most of the research and that is the fixation with written statements and not the actions of the companies.

In conducting a meta-analysis of research on mission statements over a 20 year period, Desmidt, Prinzie and Decramer (2011) attempted to examine its value premised on the belief that its effects on organizational performance is still unclear (Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011, p. 468). Desmidt's et al. study was one of the clearest methodological approaches outlined and followed a systematic review of literature. They conducted a meta-analysis of all studies found that were previously conducted on the topic of mission statements, and financial performance. A systematic literature review procedure was designed to identify all relevant articles, and selection criteria were used. It is claimed to be the first to apply a meta-analytical approach to this type of study. A Boolean search was conducted using the keyword "mission statement" which generated 11,118 citations, which were then copied into a bibliographic software. This formed the basis for a more thorough title and abstract analysis. Of the articles reviewed 516 citations complied with the pre-specified criteria. These articles were coded to reflect whether they were empirical or non-empirical research. Only empirical research were selected based on this and other selection criteria which reduced the sample size to 20 suitable articles. This study ultimately found that a growing body of literature supports the notion that mission statements do matter in terms of their measurable association with an organizations' financial success and has a positive relationship even though this may be statistically miniscule (Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011). While the study found this small positive relation between mission statements and measures of organizational financial performance, it has also served to satisfy the positivists' perspective that there is a meaningful statistical relationship.

The value of this study is undoubtedly the call for a rethink in future research from studies that attempt to prove a link to performance to those that identify causal components and specifically determine “benefits associated with developing, implementing and communicating mission statements” (Desmidt, Prenzie & Decramer, 2011, p. 480).

Contingency and Resource Dependency Views

Because resource dependency seems to be the more prominent perspective, one can examine various studies that either support or refute this view. Hackler and Saxton (2007) conducted a comprehensive review of survey data gathered from Gifts in Kind International 2001 technology tracking study of nonprofit sector. The survey generated 1,572 unique responses from a cross section of nonprofit organizations (p. 474-476). The study’s findings presented a perspective that emanates from the contingency and resource dependency schools of thought. Specifically, they argue that as the operating environment became more challenging over the past 25 years due to government funding cutbacks, increased demand for services in conjunction with high-profiled scandals, demand for greater oversight, transparency, and accountability along with higher “professional quality” services has been spurred (p. 474).

Copstake (2007) studied micro-finance Institutions as antipoverty agents. He applied a theoretical framework (model), distinguishing between the social and financial performance preferences, to 22 micro finance institutions (MFI) ranging from direct providers to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and MFI networks to assess the implementation of their mission. He as a result defined “mission drift” as one which can most precisely be defined as retrospective changes in stated preferences to fit unplanned performance outcomes (Copstake, 2007, p. 25). His argument is that drift is caused by weaknesses in the management system in terms of goal setting and performance assessment and suggested that for some, the bigger

problem is mission lock-in rather than drift due to the fact that they may be unable to control or limit the process of commercialization once it is started. Copestake's suggestion to avoid "drift" came within the context of stretching too thin or expanding the work of the organization beyond its mandate which can serve to hurt an organization's image or dilute the entity's impact. This would be equivalent to Senge's (1990) "single-loop learning", where there is more a reactionary or adaptive response to the environment.

Comolli (2007) in a practitioner's journal called "Sustainability First," stated that "mission drift" means the risk of de-prioritizing or abandoning their social mission to focus on income-generating activities. The varying interpretations of the concept speak to the fact that its cause is really in question.

Resource reallocation has led to "mission drift/creep" as a consequence, argued such authors as Alexander (1998) Salamon and Anheier (1996). In an effort to enhance their public profile or image organizations spend more resources on marketing or grant writing, diverting critical resources intended to carryout mission related activities, this is considered mission creep/drift (Foster & Meinhard, 2002, p. 30).

Milliken (1990) conducted a sample survey of 148 private four year liberal arts colleges and universities. This sample was chosen and stratified to reflect the distribution of colleges by regions within the USA. In 1985, 589 top level administrators, Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Provosts were contacted from each of these colleges. A response rate of 36 percent was achieved with usable responses originating from 122 colleges.

Milliken's (1990) study straddles the Resource dependency and Environmental schools of thought arguing that organizations that are either very dependent on resources from a particular niche or have very little power over resource suppliers are especially vulnerable to shrinkage in a

pool of resources (Milliken, 1990, p. 46). The establishment of the reciprocal impact of the environment on the entity from a resource dependency perspective is clear, but some argue that it serves to support how these environmental changes will be interpreted by managers as opposed to whether it has an impact or will or will not be noticed.

Several authors have adopted a contingency view of “mission drift/ creep”. Foster and Meinhard (2002) who conducted a study of women led voluntary organizations in Canada, administered 645 telephone interviews (45 minute duration) by trained personnel in this method. In their article, “A contingency view of the responses of voluntary social sector organizations in Ontario to Government cutbacks”, surprisingly found that the options chosen by organizations in response to government funding cutbacks serve to protect the main mission (underlined for emphasis) of the organization while building awareness and marketing strength so that the organization reduces its susceptibility to environmental shifts (Foster & Meinhard, 2002, p. 27). In other words, “mission drift” was claimed not to have been found/evident in this study as a result of resource cutbacks. What was discovered was that the strategies of the organizations studied could be categorized into the following five areas:

1. Image enhancement;
2. Cost cutting;
3. Strategic planning and accountability;
4. Implement revenue generating strategies or enterprise initiatives; and
5. Restructure governance and management structures.

The theoretical premise of Foster & Meinhard (2002) is that organizations are often forced to undertake changes to survive in times of environmental turbulence (p. 28). In essence, this pressure originates externally in an institutional environment, which ultimately affects

survival (p. 29). As they further assert from the experience of the 1970s and 1980s when government support declined, there were significant increases in change initiatives and organizational deaths, particularly in the voluntary sector.

In an effort to further examine the theoretical basis for the phenomenon of “mission drift”, an exploration of the prominent theories has led to the works of other authors such as DiMaggio and Anheier (1990), Foster and Meinhard (2002), Froelich (1998), and Ruef (1997), among others.

Froelich (1999) conducting a broad review of literature focused her work on the diversification of funding streams as a key driver in strategy decisions which serve to influence the paths nonprofits take to either protect or expand their mission (Froelich, 1999, p. 198). She saw “drift” intrinsically linked to the search for funding and a result of resource constraints.

Sawhill and Williamson (2001) examined the leadership styles of thirty-one nonprofits in a comparative analysis to measure the effectiveness of mission in terms of impact, activity, and capacity. The study questioned the relevance and validity of mission statements and its role to the operating success of these entities. Sawhill and Williamson (2001) conducted in-person interviews of the leaders of 30 nonprofits from 1998 – 1999 while putting together a case study of the Nature Conservancy. Their study concluded that measurements were no substitute for a compelling mission, vision and goals that were strategically aligned.

Chetkovich and Frumkin (1999) in case studies of American nonprofits argue that competition which has intensified in recent years due to several reasons including the increase in the number of agencies, shifts in the priority of government funding, and the growing presence of for-profits in human service sector, has led to “mission drift”. This has resulted in the need for nonprofits to grapple with a dual challenge of financial success in an increasingly competitive

environment while serving mission, viewed as an even more demanding task, due to the inherent tension between serving mission and operating financially feasibly (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 1999, p. 565). Undoubtedly, the most apparent struggle for nonprofits is funding its operations, but the issue seems to be overplayed as the root cause of drift or creep.

A segment of the writing on this sector argues that a core challenge in the nonprofit sector is to improve financial and human resource efficiency in the accomplishment of mission. It is further suggested that any manager who is willing to sacrifice mission over margin will eventually lose support, since it can eventually lead to the alienation of stakeholders and those that oversee the organization (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 1999, p. 565).

Light's (1998) finding of successful outcomes when organizations adopted a more "entrepreneurial culture" needs further examination, since it speaks to the shift in the business model of the organization, which in and of itself is an argument to suggest "mission drift". The narrow interpretation of "mission" is believed to have led to such erroneous findings. One can argue that mission (as is defined by Verma et al.) goes beyond the "what" but includes the "how" and the delivery which may include a fee for service which in some cases may be considered a shift if not a full blown drift away from the original mission.

Brooks (2002) providing a clear contingent argument, suggested that "on the other hand an obsession with particular performance measures to build stakeholder confidence can lead to "mission drift" and the cherry-picking or selective identification and use of services and clients, such that performance looks best along just the dimension measured" (Brooks, 2002, p. 505). In his 2002 paper Brooks examined the work of three scholars, Salamon, (1996), Frumkin (1999), and Light (1998). This review of literature provided a summary of the findings of the three scholarly contributions to nonprofit management comparing and contrasting their findings.

Environmental Perspectives

In his article “What is Our Business?” Drucker (2001) stated that the first responsibility of leaders is to answer that question, “What is our business?” “Business purpose and mission are rarely given adequate thought but is the single most important cause of business frustration and failure” (Drucker, 2001, p. 3). Drucker’s primary argument in this article is that mission is defined by the customer and is externally driven. In another of his works, “What business can learn from nonprofits”, he suggests that a well defined mission serves as a constant reminder of the need to look outside the organization not only for customers but also for measures of success. The best nonprofits devote a significant effort and thought to their mission (Drucker, 1989, p. 89). Beyond establishing the value and relevance of mission statements, Drucker’s work presents the importance of the environmental aspects of the construct alluding to the need to look outside of the organization for measures of success. As a seminal author, his body of work presents a foundational base for this research paper and supports the building blocks of the conceptual framework of the study.

Hitt & Ireland (1992) presented one of the most comprehensive descriptions for an effective mission statement in their article “Mission Statements: Importance, challenge, and recommendations for development.” Apart from describing the firms’ unique purpose, mission statements should also indicate how a firm is unique in its scope of operations and its products or service offerings as well as what it intends to accomplish, and its market boundaries and philosophical premise guiding its conduct (Hitt & Ireland, 1992, p. 35).

In explaining the uniqueness of a firm, Hitt and Ireland (1992) defined a main aspect of an organizational defense when experiencing environmental turbulence is the uniqueness of an entity’s mission. They suggest that complex environments and turbulence create a need for

effective mission statements but often, organizations have not set out clear and effective statements (Hitt & Ireland, 1992 p. 36). It is this perspective that has pushed this author to look more closely at population ecology for explanation of the possible cause of “mission drift/creep”.

Other authors such as Singh, Tucker, & Meinhard (1988,1990) have also supported the notion that there is a correlation between environmental turbulence in the nonprofit sector and the propensity for change initiatives and even death. Their paper, however, furthers the argument that the change initiatives invariably lead to material movement away from core mission which Foster and Meinhard (2002) in the Ontario study contend did not occur. It is believed, however, that this finding is premised on a very narrow view of organizational mission. In fact, it is seen to restrict the understanding of an organization’s mission to the stated words and not the fuller interpretation based on their actions and ways of doing business, which indeed were found to have changed as a result

In strong support of the environmental approach the study by Tschirhart (1993) suggests that resource considerations as well as legitimacy along with organizational demographics affected whether the thirty-four arts related organizations she studied “mapped” or deflected environmental pressures. Her findings suggested that when resources were important to an organization, it was more likely to adapt to dictates or the demands of the actors controlling the resources. But when legitimacy issues were considered (pressures that compromised the organization’s mission or its artistic quality) the organization was likely to use strategies to deflect the pressure (Tschirhart, 1993, p. 282). She also found that organizational age and size affected strategy choice.

Distinguishing between process and content as ways to examine organizational change was found in the work of Ruef (1997). Ruef (1997) in his significant work on an empirical test

of the relative inertia thesis, studied the conditions that create an impetus for change based on Hannan and Freeman's (1984) theory of structural inertia which posits that due to selection processes at work, some organizations are favored over others due to the stable impression of their operations in terms of reliability and accountability which serve to reinforce inertia. Simply defined, inertia is the resistance to change (Hannan & Freeman, 1984).

Ruef (1997) suggests that ecological and adaptation views of organizational change theory are complimentary as opposed to conflicting in that the former focuses on the static nature of core organizational components while the latter focuses on "malleability" such as strategic alliances and joint ventures. His second conceptualization focused on the content of change and found that in his study of a sample of hospitals, "ecological drift" as oppose to "adaptation" occurred, meaning that under heightened competitive conditions the sampled hospitals moved to less crowded practice areas rather than adapt to compete (Ruef, 1997, p. 849). It is important to note that distinction being made between process and content changes and as Ruef (1997) suggested, are not mutually exclusive but can complement each other. In other words he saw a direct connection between the internal structures, processes, etc. and the operating environment's demand for such structures and processes which largely supports an argument for an environmental causation.

Meyer and Scott (1994) asserted that organizational structures reproduce environmental complexity, and this complexity can come from funder pressure or from institutional sources (Meyer & Scott, 1994, p. 142).

Alexander (1998) provides a simple argument in her work on environmental constraints and organization strategies, complexity, conflict, and coping in the nonprofit sector. Alexander and other researchers (DiMaggio, 1987; Kanter & Summers, 1987) have pointed out that

nonprofit organizations are characterized by complex goals, multiple constituencies, and fragmented environments, and suggest that under some circumstances, nonprofits open themselves to external complexity and their internal structures come to mirror the complexity in their environment. She concludes that organizations creatively enact and strategically manage their environments in attempts to preserve autonomy, legitimacy, and organizational viability, and try to modify the effects of external complexity in ways that will allow them to pursue the organizations goals as they see them (Alexander, 1998, p. 272). This perspective significantly contrasts with the view of the population ecologists who have held that organizations have little control over their external operating environment and that managements react to the changing environment either by adaption or learning.

An important aspect of environmental perspectives on the topic of mission and drift/creep can be found in the newest institutional theory in this area. “Institutional theory has focused on nonprofit organizations recently recognizing that organizations are embedded in larger cultural and political contexts” (Frumkin & Galaskiwicz, 2004). Frumkin and Galaskiwicz (2004) suggested that mimetic isomorphism plays a role in public sector organizational behavior which is intrinsically linked to the protocols and practices adopted by nonprofits which in large part are regulated and funded by them. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) further elucidated the construct of “mimetic isomorphism,” the achievement of conformity through imitation as an explanatory tool for organizational change. Mimetic isomorphism can be achieved through the efficient search for solutions without the cost of searching, trial and error, and uncertainty avoidance. Institutional actions to promote and adopt best practices, standardized practices, and procedures across sectors and subsectors can lead to mimetic pressure coercing institutions to conform or adopt new practices, products, or procedures (Zorn, Flanagin & Shoham, 2011).

“With its emphasis on legitimacy, satisfying behavior, structural decoupling, and symbols, new institutionalism departs from other theories such as population ecology or resource dependency explanations” (Frumkin & Galaskiwicz, 2004, p. 284). “Neo-institutional theory sees organizations pursuing practices that are not focused on improving efficiency and performance but seeks ways to accommodate pressures following external scrutiny and regulation” (p. 285). Frumkin and Galaskiwicz (2004) argue that “government licensing, inspections, and regulations are the levers that act on nonprofit and business organizations in their adopting organizational practices” (p. 285).

Leaning on the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) three forces were identified as driving institutionalization: “1. Coercive isomorphism from political influence and the need for legitimacy; 2. Mimetic isomorphism based on standardization of responses to uncertainty; and 3. Normative isomorphism derived from the need for professionalization and rationalization” (p. 285). By making mission statements a prerequisite, funding bodies and donors tend to reward those nonprofits that follow their mandates. Bennett and Savani’s (2011) empirical study of three charities in Britain to have experienced mission drift within the past decade are cases in point. This study was an evidence based research using “charity practitioner publications, leading national newspapers, and online BBC archives to select a sample” (p. 271-231). Fifteen organizations were finally selected to be approached. Three eventually agreed to participate in the study. Information from CEOs, and heads of fundraising, and finance, were obtained through face-to-face interviews. They were considered expert commentators with an average of nine years on-the-job experience and worked in charity sector for an average of 12 years (range from 6-30years). Data were also collected from the organization for an eight month period beginning January 2009. The data generated were coded following the guidelines suggested by Newman

(1997). The study found that these three charities accepted mission drift as “a fact of life, but were proactive in seeking to initiate, direct, control, and assume overall strategic responsibility for state-funded activities” (Bennett & Savani, 2011, p. 271).

Robinson (2004) conducted a case study on the attempted conversion of CareFirst, BlueCross BlueShield from a non-profit to a for-profit structure specifically addressing the concept of “mission drift”. This work is one of a handful of management case research studies that specifically address the phenomenon of “mission drift” exploring its origins and causes. In his outline of the phenomenon as it occurred at Carefirst Bluecross Blueshield, Robinson (2004) captioned this period “A taste for glamour projects”. Trends in the marketplace in a movement away from nonprofit structures seem to drive the motivation of the management of this organization. The next factors that were discovered to influence drift were the organizations relationship with its regulators as well as the political environment which was characterized as timid and trusting and enabled the organizations to escape its obligations of its preferred status. This case research in spite of its academic and methodological shortcomings, places in a proper contextual frame the phenomenon of “mission drift/creep” and is one of few peer reviewed studies conducted that specifically addresses this phenomenon in nonprofits.

Peyrefitte and David (2006) again focusing on the content of mission statements utilized a mixed method approach to study 57 large US firms. This study was premised on the assumption that mission statements provide direction and motivation but are also ways of communicating corporate identity to stakeholders. The study further contends that mission statement creation is not internally driven but may be a result of external institutional pressure (Peyrefitte & David, 2006, p. 296).

The value of this research study is enhanced because it goes beyond the mere descriptive elements of the research to challenge the notion that corporate strategic planners are simply designing these statements in an insular manner. This study utilizing data from a cross section of for-profit companies between 1995-1998 extracted nine themes by word association from the content of these firms' mission statement, ranging from customer focus, corporate philosophy, public image to the employees, among others. Even though this study may seem to have limited application/relevance to this paper, due to its focus on the for-profit sector, it lends a strong basis for the argument that there is a significant interplay between the operating environment and the organizations' management in the creation of the mission irrespective of ownership structure.

Organizational Learning

Seanor and Meaton (2008) conducted a study on social enterprises in the United Kingdom, examining the construct of trust in social enterprises with the expressed attempt to discern the learning that comes from failure. This is materially important to the study of "mission drift" in that literature invariably suggests that it is a form of failure and this study attempts to shed light on this subject. The method uses case studies to reflect the perceptions of key participants in social enterprise network in West Yorkshire, United Kingdom. Key to the argument that organizations learn and can engage in learning from past experience, Seanor and Meaton's (2008) work provides empirical evidence to support the fact that in social enterprises or nonprofits, the failure that occur can and do provide important lessons. The themes that emerged in this study are identity formation, operating environment, balancing intensions, and outcomes. These four broad constructs begin to assemble the pillars of a construct that will be further discussed in the next chapter of this paper.

To elucidate a key concept of this paper, Argyris (2002) presented a simple explanation for the notion of “double loop” as oppose to “single loop” learning in organizations which is the more desirable form of learning and is expressed as the correction of errors based on questioning the values, and a change in the actions as a result (Argyris, 2002, p. 206).

Argyris (2002) case study on “Double-loop learning, teaching and research” is foundational to this research paper since it provides the basis for the argument of organizational learning and specifically, the process of questioning the core values in rethinking organizational strategy. The construct of “theories-in-use” is of particular relevance to this paper in that it captures at the organizational level the notion that organizations engage in defensive strategies that are tied to the process of maintaining the status quo (Argyris, 2002, p. 213).

This concept builds on Daft and Weick’s (1984) theory of “learning” which are actions taken in response to external changes as oppose to the notion of adaptation. Adaptation according to Yukl and Lepsinger (2006) is described as changes made to cope with external threats and to exploit opportunities due to changes in technology, markets, and shifting needs and expectations of customers (Milliken, 1990, p. 44; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2006, p. 3).

While the focus of this paper is not to argue the point that organizations learn, as opposed to adapt, it depends primarily on this body of work to support the arguments put forth that learning occurs in organizations. In his work, “Does your organization have a learning disability?”, Senge (1990) argues that there is an abundance of evidence that suggest the primary threats to organizational survival comes from learning disabilities which are cumulative in effect and a slow and gradual process as opposed to sudden events. As he suggests, we learn how to protect ourselves from uncertainty and ignorance which largely inhibits our learning and prevents us from improving or organizations chances for long term survival (Senge, 1990, p. 17).

As a theoretical foundation, this paper leans heavily on the work of Madsen & Desai (2010) who build on organizational learning (OL) theory and support the notion that an organization's knowledge and learning (OL) as defined above, occurs as a result of its shared experiences (Madsen & Desai, 2010, p. 453).

“Organizational knowledge dictates what actions its members are capable of taking as well as how they coordinate and integrate their efforts” (Madsen & Desai, 2010, p. 452). An essential premise of this paper is that organizations learn. Similar to Seanor and Meatons, (2008) earlier work, Madsen and Desai, suggest that both past success and failures are learning moments that have differing rates of depreciation, with failure being more impactful over the long term than successes. While this argument is not essential to this paper, Madsen and Desai's most recent work serves to support the basic premise of this paper that there is a distinction between individual knowledge and that being at the organizational level, which is not lost with the departure of individuals.

In representing the thoughts of Cyert and March, Huber, Levitt and March, Madsen and Desai (2010) also reiterated the argument that OL is not static but is created, refined, altered, and discarded as organizational members experience reality and attempt to update their shared understanding of the lessons learned from their experiences (Madsen & Desai, 2010, p. 453).

Summary

Mission statements and mission in use are not one and the same as has been established in the review of literature. Mission can be captured in many forms and has utility in organizational strategy including setting the organizational operating boundaries, motivating stakeholders both from external and within, and more importantly as a tool for the evaluation of

organizational success. Several studies have been conducted to support the notion that there is a significant relationship between mission and performance.

The phenomenon of “mission drift” or “mission creep”, however, can be defined not simply as a change in stated mission but in the modus-operandi and operations of the organization that is materially different from its original way of conducting business. Additionally, “mission drift” or “mission creep” can only be accurately detected if there is alignment between stated mission and the “theories-in-use” to borrow a concept from Argyris (2002) who recognized that there may be material differences between the espoused values and the actions. For those organizations that do experience “drift”, “shift” or “creep”, in any of its forms as discussed, it can be process or content driven or both.

The cause of “mission drift” or “mission creep” nevertheless, finds overwhelming support in the resource dependency and contingency schools of thought, but convincing arguments also seem to find a sound basis in population ecology and the process of natural selection in particular. Learning therefore from either success or failure is arguably necessary for organizational survival.

Ultimately, a strong foundation has been laid by this review of literature to support the main thesis of this paper and to suggest that there is more than a simplistic argument for the cause of mission drift/creep and to justify the need for further case analysis.

This chapter on the review of the literature began with the meaning of “mission drift” and “mission creep” examining the interpretations by Moore, (2000), and White (2007). The various perspectives on the importance and relevance of mission and mission statements are then discussed with an examination of the work of Bradshaw (2003), Denton (2001), Hamel and Prahalad (1989), Oster (1995), and Rhodes and Keogan (2005).

Mission statements effectiveness was then discussed citing the work of Analoui and Karami (2002), Hitt and Ireland (1992), and Pearce and David (1987). Studies examining the role of mission statements were also reviewed commencing with the work of Leuthesser and Kohli (1997). Moving forward with the review, Desmidt and Prinzie (2008) Kirk and Nolan (2010), and Verma (2009) examined the link between performance and mission statement design.

Bolon's comparison of for and not-for profit mission, provided some evidence to accept or reject the notion that this is material to the accomplishment of mission. The work of Desmidt, Prinzie, and Decramer (2011) was also reviewed.

The third section of this chapter reviewed the Contingency and Resource Dependency perspectives, looking specifically at the work of Comolli (2007), Copestake (2007), Foster and Meinhard (2002), Hackler and Saxton (2007), and Milliken (1990).

The fourth section reviewed the various perspectives emanating from the Environmental School of thought, including the works of Alexander (1998), Hannan and Freeman (1984), Hitt and Ireland (1992), Peyrefitte and David (2006), Ruef (1997), Meyer and Scott (1994), and Tschirhart (1993).

Finally, the construct of organizational learning was reviewed utilizing the work of authors such as Argyris (2002), Daft and Weick (1984), Madsen and Desai (2010), Senge (1990), and Yukl and Lepsinger (2006).

The focus of chapter 3 is on the conceptual framework of the study, which provides the message content areas of the study emerging from the literature reviewed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This chapter outlines the building blocks that come together to create and explain the central construct of this study. First, an organizational scheme that identifies the message content areas in the literature review will be outlined before the building blocks of the framework are explained which will support the central argument of this paper. The conceptual framework is derived from a series of studies that have been presented in chapters 1 and 2. The background studies and research papers revealed a glaring gap in research that focused on the mission in use by organizations. This study shifts the discourse away from the overload of studies on mission statements, content analysis, and its relevance to performance to mission in use. This paper will then draw primarily from these empirical studies to build its argument and to support the claim that mission drift/creep is an integral process of organizational learning and should be embraced for sustainable organizational development.

The Message in the Literature Review: The Organizational Scheme

This study's organizational scheme which identifies literature areas for review is presented in Figure 2 and begins with an examination of the background of mission driven organizations which in large part were found to be within the nonprofit sector. Mission is arguably the basis for an organization's existence, but becomes more important when an entity depends on its mission to build support and legitimacy, and ultimately secure its tax exempt status. The paper therefore gathered studies that addressed directly or tangentially, mission, mission statements, nonprofit, and for-profit strategic planning to identify topics for further research.

The next step in the process was a systematic review of literature. This review basically provides an assessment of the studies to determine whether they are relevant to the topic, whether the study was conducted with the level of rigor that would justify inclusion in this study pursuant to a Personal Assessment Tool (PAT). The Personal Assessment Tool (PAT) was informed by the empirical research reviewed in chapter 2. Examples of EBRs were particularly helpful in setting up the parameters for this study. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed after the review of literature was conducted helping to guide this conceptual framework.

The next step following the review was a synthesis of the studies' findings to build support for the central questions of this paper. This was followed by a conclusion and suggestions for further research.

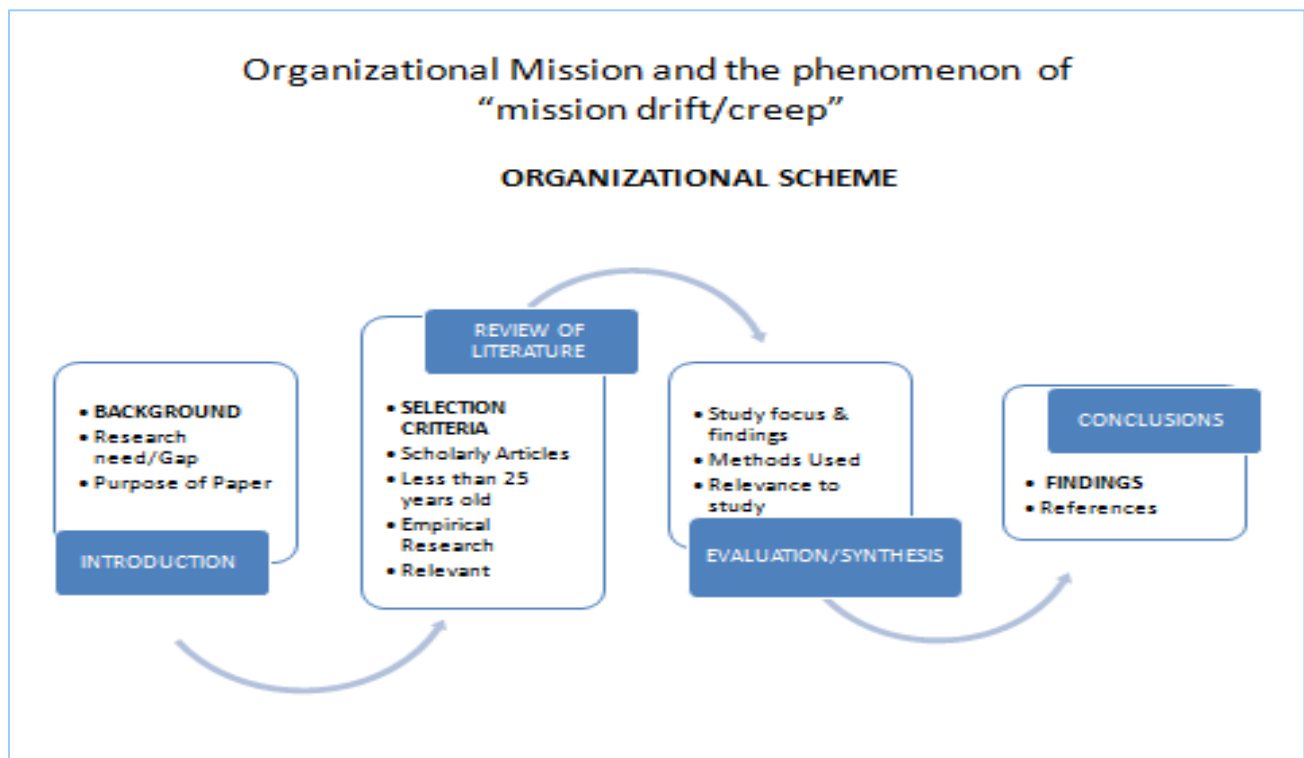


Figure 2. Organizational scheme of research study

Conceptual Framework: Message of the Model

Background

From the literature reviewed in chapters 1 and 2, the building blocks of this study were formed to identify findings within the inter relationship between organizational mission, drift/creep, and strategy.

The literature reviewed, suggest that the ideal circumstance occurs when there is an alignment of the stated mission and the “mission-in-use”, along with the demands of the internal and external operating environment which often pull and push organizations in directions driven by their own stakeholder interests. Mission-in-use is a concept adapted from the work of Chris Argyris (2002), who expounded the construct “theories in use” (Argyris, 2002, p. 213). Argyris’ construct promotes the view that organizations often engage in learning based on a defensive mode of reasoning termed theories-in-use and not “double loop learning” (Senge, 1990) a proactive learning process which questions core values and adjusts behaviors accordingly.

At the macro organizational level, the manifestation of an entity’s mission therefore lies in an understanding of its theories-in-use. It goes without saying that the theories of organizational behavior that support the notion that there is a “coupling” (Senge, 1990) of the individual and the collective behaviors in the formation of organizational behavior and learning is foundational to this paper and conceptual framework.

If one should commence this discussion from the premise that organizations that are mission driven are predominantly non-profit organizations, but not exclusively so, one will accept that the evidence to support the arguments of this paper can and will be drawn from both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. This paper makes this distinction, however, since it is more

apparent that without the profit motive, what you do, more than what you say you do, is largely the underpinning of your existence.

It is evident from the literature that organizations operate within several realms which must be navigated skillfully in order for the entity to succeed and survive over the long term. The struggle is also for consistency which builds stakeholder confidence and reinforces support and trust of the organization, critical elements for long-term reinvestment and success. Consistency is not necessarily the same as the concept of alignment. However, consistency has been named by various authors to be a critical ingredient in the process of legitimization. Legitimization is a process that Hannan and Freeman (1984) used to describe the trust building exercise between stakeholders and organizations which begins with the acceptance of the organization's mission, but involves also deeper understandings of the organization's, operations, methods, sources of funding, policies etc. Consistency and legitimization are beginning factors in a framework that relies on this process to explain the relationship between the organization and its external stakeholders and uses this process to explain organizational behavior.

There are various schools of thought, however, that have offered differing perspectives on the cause of this phenomenon referred to in this paper as "mission drift" or "mission creep". Authors have examined the cause of this movement from various perspectives including the dependence of the organization on resources and its chase for funds to maintain its existence and relevance. Some believe that the origins of the nonprofit sector stemmed from market failure or Government's outsourcing.

While it is not the focus of this paper to examine the origins of the sector per se, it is important to understand that in the resource dependence school, the beneficiaries of the supply

side are unable to afford to pay the full value of the good or service hence the need for donors or Governmental support.

The contingency perspective promotes the notion that drift or creep is largely due to circumstantial causes such as reactions to regulatory reforms and shifts in funding among others. The final thrust of this paper is to discern whether “mission drift” or “mission creep” may be desirable as a process of organizational learning. As such, the construct of “mission drift” or “mission creep” whether it is conceived as a construct of failure or not, is viewed within the context of organizational learning supported by the works of Seanor and Meaton’s, (2008), Madsen and Desai (2010), and Senge (1990). This chapter will present a graphic representation of a conceptual framework that illustrates the organizational mission as it is affected by and manages mission drift/creep.

Elements of the Conceptual Framework: Message of the Model

Organizational learning is a well established construct which is at the center of this conceptual framework. The interplay that occurs between the organization and its operating environment which may lead to drift or creep can be largely viewed as a process of learning which should be encouraged and embraced and not be resisted or frowned upon as is widely practiced.

The model consists of five dependent variables and one independent variable. The Operating Environment is considered independent of the other variables which are largely impacted by the operating environment. The dependent variables are the organization, the mission (including stated mission), legitimization, mission creep/drift, and organizational learning (OL).

Operating environment: Independent variable. The space in which an organization operates is considered its operation environment. This space is populated by other organizations which may or may not be competitors, and other parties which also may or may not act as stakeholders or have a vested interest in the entity. The operating environment can be dissected into the internal environment where the board, management, staff, and consumers interface, and the external environment where the competitors, regulators, donors, etc, lie.

Organizations: Dependent variable. For the purposes of this paper, the primary but not exclusive focus is on non-profit organizations which are entities enabled by government to provide goods and services which in return receive a tax exemption. The proceeds do not inure to the benefit of its members, vis-à-vis for-profits where a return on investment is at the fore of the organizational thrust and may push mission out of focus.

Organizational Mission: Dependent variable. As was outlined in previous chapters, mission statements are vital and are created by organizations for several reasons but the most dominant is to provide the reason for the work of the organization. This being widely held is not the only purpose of a mission statement. For the purposes of this framework, mission, stated or otherwise, is created and manifests itself in various forms. The stated mission or the mission statement, however, that which is overtly expressed by the organization, may not be that which is practiced or acted upon by the organization hence the notion that what an organization does and what it says it does may not be one and the same. Therefore, mission for the purposes of this paper manifests itself in the de facto work of the organization.

Legitimization: Dependent variable. Legitimizing is necessary and occurs in the trust building process between stakeholder and organization premised on a consensus on the mission of the organization and an alignment with the stakeholders interests.

Mission Drift/ Creep: Dependent variable. Movement away from intended mission in practice whether intended or unintended or the misalignment of the stated mission and the de facto mission of the organization is considered mission creep or drift.

Organizational Learning: Dependent variable. Organizational learning involves organizational questioning of core values and making proactive changes to re-align its mission with its outputs.

Description of Concept Diagram

In introducing the concept model, Figure 3.1 shows stage 1 with two interlocking spheres which were used to identify both the external and internal operating environments. It is conceivable that the internal environment is a smaller sphere of influence than the external one, hence the external environment overlaps and is much greater. Emerging out of these two spheres of influence are the organization's mission statement and its mission in use. The near perfect alignment of the stated and de facto mission of the organization demonstrated by upward pointed arrows shows an organization being true to its mission.



Figure 3.1. Stage 1, Mission statement and mission-in-use alignment.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the alignment of the Organization's stated mission with the mission in use. This is set within a backdrop of the interplay between the internal and external operating environment.

Figure 3.2 illustrates stage 2 of the process and demonstrates what happens as a result of the inter-play between the internal and external environment. The push-pull or the legitimization process at work leads to a mis-alignment of the stated mission and the de-facto mission of the organization. In other words, what the organization does and what it says it does are not in sync. This is in effect mission drift /creep.



Figure 3.2. Stage 2, Mission-in-use and mission statement mis-alignment.

Figure 3.2 further illustrates the movement of the mission in use, away from the stated mission and falling out of alignment with the operating environment. The next stage of the process is captured by Figure 3.3, which demonstrates that as a result of organizational learning it moves to realign its activities with its mission or vice versa.

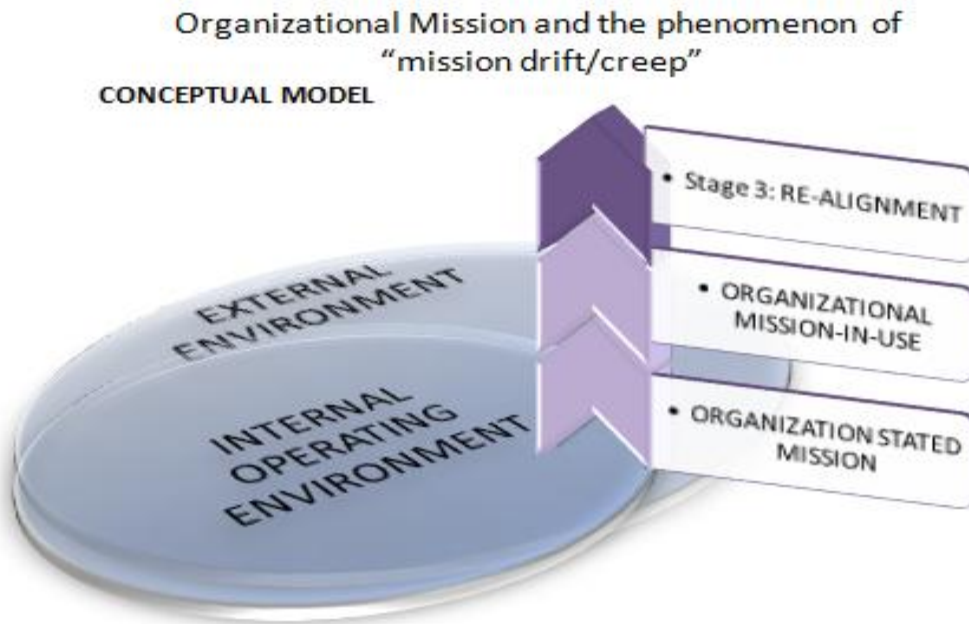


Figure 3.3. Stage 3, Mission in-use and mission statement re-alignment.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the stage that occurs after organizational learning occurs which shifts the mission in use back in alignment with the stated mission after the core values and mission is re-evaluated and changed to reflect the new mission.

Figure 3.4 demonstrates all three stages of the process. What is missing at this point is the learning that is necessary for the proper realignment to occur. Based on OL theory (Senge et al) organizations can realign without learning and that would be considered “single loop learning” as demonstrated in figure 3.4 below. This is not the most desirable form and could be equated to drift/creep. However, figure 3.5 illustrates the more desired form of OL (Double-loop Learning, Senge, 1990) in order for the realignment to be instructive and sustainable as opposed to simple drift/creep.

Conceptual Framework

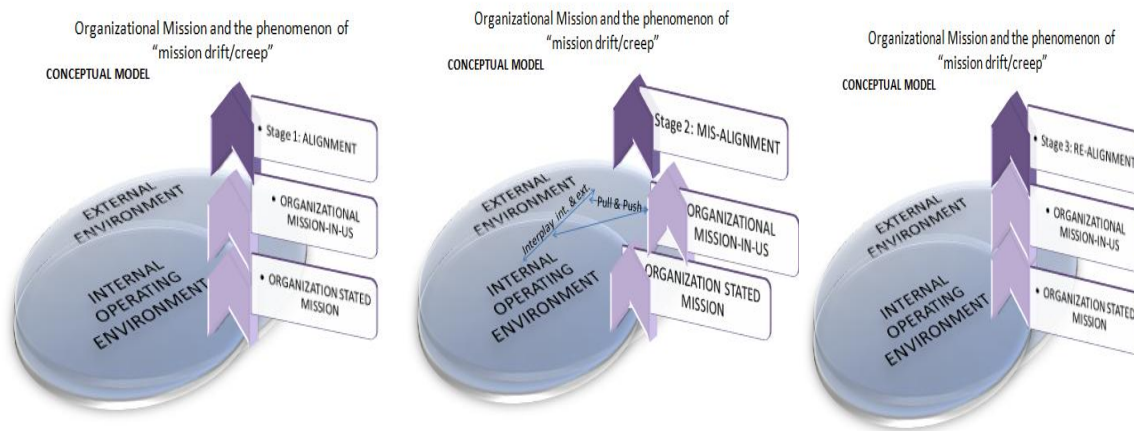


Figure 3.4. Drift/creep as a process without learning.

Figure 3.5 adds the important stage of organizational learning in the process. This stage begins with those studies that suggest that at the inception, organizations' actions and mission are in sync. This was considered Stage 1 for illustrative purposes. An overwhelming number of studies focused on stated mission accepting without question that what organizations do and what they say they do, are one and the same. Additionally, these early studies focused on mission statement content and relevance. A second stage was identified by those studies that demonstrate that as organizations navigate their operating environment, both internally and externally, they may fall out of sync with their mission. A third stage emerging from the literature was identified from those studies that argue that drift/creep occurs as a result. These studies emerged primarily out of the resource dependency and contingency schools of thought.

Varying explanatory studies have been put forth to explain the root cause of this phenomenon, including resource dependency, contingency and later on sought deeper meaning in the population ecology and institutional theoretical arguments, which will be further discussed later in this chapter. A fourth stage or a process of organizational learning and realignment were identified from the literature. Through OL, organizations re-evaluate their operating premise, question their values and purpose in a process of “double-loop” learning and realign their operations in sync with their mission or vice-versa.

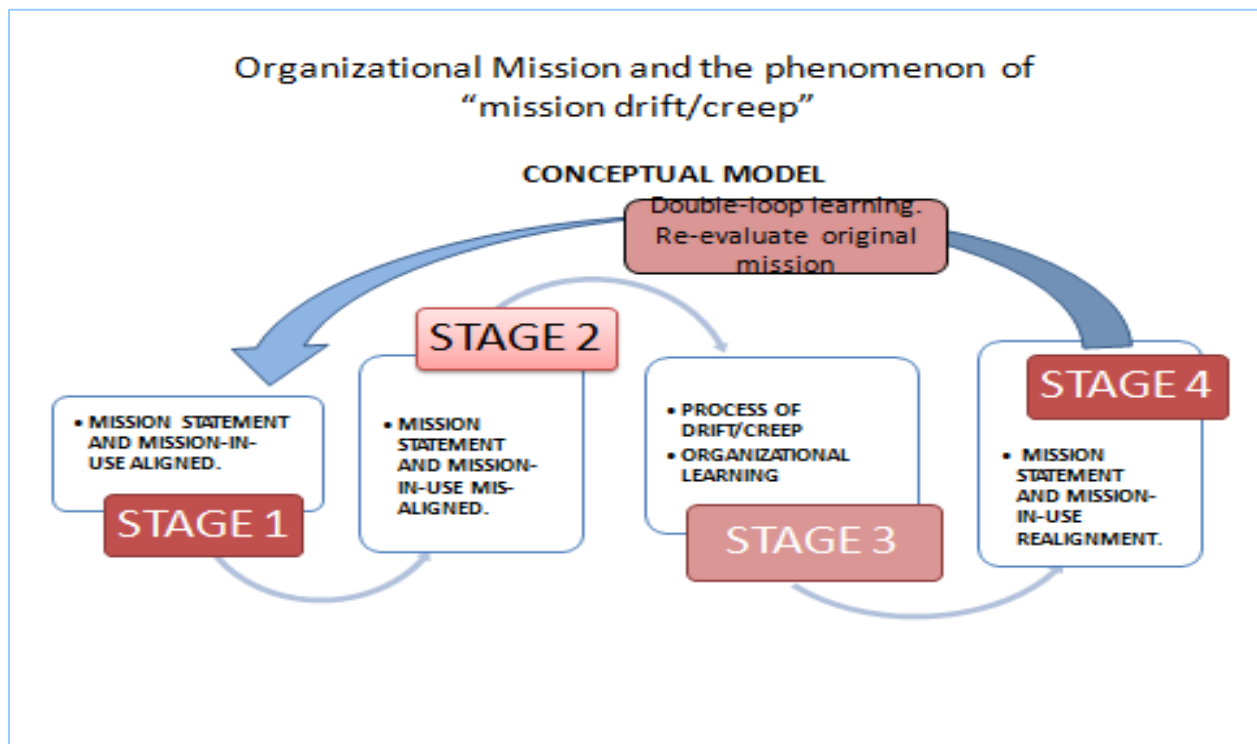


Figure 3.5. Drift/creep as a process of organizational learning.

Figure 3.5 demonstrates all four stages of the process adding the double loop learning that occur which demonstrate the re-evaluation of the original mission of the organization as it seeks to realign its mission in use with its stated mission.

Summary

The conceptual framework for this dissertation is built from a cross section of work conducted in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors that examine organizational mission. This chapter commenced with a brief introduction of this study which is based primarily on the findings of empirical studies, identifying the gap in research and shifting the focus from an examination of stated mission to missions in use. An identification of the paper's literature content areas and organizational scheme of those topics was then presented. This was followed by an outline of the conceptual framework, which is based on a synthesis of the literature. The elements of the construct were elucidated, followed by a graphic presentation of the construct illustrating the phenomenon of mission drift/creep. Finally, the concepts were assembled into a model that demonstrates the process of organizational learning (OL), integrating the constructs of drift or creep as a process within the OL cycle. This paper furthers the discourse by adding a new dimension challenging the conventional notion that the phenomenon of "mission drift/creep" a process whether viewed as failure or not should be embraced as a process of organizational learning.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of the paper specifically looking to Evidence Based Research as the principal method of this research study. This chapter will outline the protocols used in conducting this research as well as examine some of the limitations of this research method.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach of the paper, recounting the origins and merits of Evidence Based Research (EBR) and outlining the procedures followed in selecting and reviewing empirical studies to derive the findings of this paper.

Evidence Based Research has been growing in use among social science research and in management research in particular. Unlike the fields of natural sciences and medicine for example, the management profession is considered still in its infancy especially as it pertains to research methodology (Drucker as well as other authors). As such, research methods which have been largely borrowed from these fields have evolved considerably. The body of knowledge in the natural and medical sciences have grown vastly and research in those fields have moved to focus on the body of evidentiary work that exists to synthesize these studies and promote practice based on the best evidence available to support new policies, programs, treatments etc (Harden & Thomas, 2005; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Walshe & Rundall, 2001).

Those that view management as a young social science gaining traction within the last sixty years as a scientific pursuit, subscribe to the view that management research should be rigorous, systematic, and unbiased. Ketchen, Boyd and Bergh (2005) suggest that the advancement of any scientific field of inquiry is dependent on the soundness of the research methodologies employed by its members (Ketchen, Boyd & Bergh, 2005, p. 497).

A clarion call within the management profession to adopt like the natural sciences evidence based research has been rendered. Practitioners have time and again argued for practical research and for evidence based research that will inform management practice. As the field matures and the body of research expands, there will be sufficient depth to build studies on

secondary/empirical research. The University of Maryland University College, Doctor of Management program is responsive to this call and promotes as its requirement for the doctoral dissertation Evidence Based Research.

Evidence Based Research and Methodology

Suarez (2010) in his paper “Evaluating Qualitative Research Studies for Evidence Based Library and Information Practice” suggested that many primary research studies are qualitative in nature which is useful in solving professional practice questions. The challenge professionals often face, however, is in the assessment of the quality of these studies so they may accept or discard them accordingly. Building on prior research is critical to the management profession and EBR provides the methodology which raises the level of rigor by which to do so.

Since the 19th century, the medical practice in France has used practitioner best evidence along with evidence based research to formulate treatments and protocols. (Chalmers, Hedges, & Cooper, 2002). This some argue has been the origins of the methodology. Davies (2006) pointed to the disconnect between academic research and management practice. In essence, he puts forth the argument that managers pay little attention to the body of work in existing academic research, citing Susman and Everard’s (1978) work that claimed that there was a crisis emerging in the field where the methods and techniques were becoming more sophisticated but were viewed as less than useful in solving practical management problems. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) reiterated the call for “evidence-based management” drawing the parallel with evidence-based medicine. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) made a clear argument in support of EBR demonstrating how the existing body of careful studies by trained researchers, which are often routinely ignored, could be utilized to inform management decisions. Citing three examples of research whereby the results were helpful in promoting a better understanding of a phenomenon,

Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) demonstrated for example that contrary to popular belief after reviewing 220 studies, equity ownership by executives did not have a consistent effect on financial performance. Today, the management profession is looking to these methods to foster better management practices.

Understanding that there are millions of primary research studies published, practitioners can dedicate their time to more effectively utilizing these studies rather than conducting more insular primary research.

EBR therefore provides a structured approach to first, identifying all pertinent studies to the topic, then evaluating them to determine their level of rigor and worthiness to be included or discounted and then synthesizing the findings to emerge new knowledge on the subject.

The process of EBR involves the following steps:

1. Performing a search: Comprehensive process of scouring data sources;
2. Sorting the search results: Thematic and other tools under a rubric that would narrow the focus of the results.
3. Ranking the evidence in order of rigor and value;
4. Systematic process of inclusion or exclusion;
5. Synthesis of best evidence

Methodological Approach: Relevant Scholarly Evidence

For this research paper, a systematic review of literature was conducted. Systematic reviews are procedures that establish a series of protocols for the inclusion and or exclusion of studies based on a staple of predetermined criteria identified by the author, called a Personal Assessment Tool (PAT), to either build support for or against the four essential questions of this

paper. It is the quality of the evidence not necessarily the quantity of the evidence that drives this research method.

Data Search

The Systematic Review therefore requires a comprehensive search for existing work on any given topic so that all sides of the argument can be covered. For this research the following databases were searched for relevant articles including both academic and practitioner publications.

Databases:

1. ABI/INFORM Global;

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/login?COPT=REJTPTE3MjErMysxNmJjJINNRD00JklOVD0wJIZFUj0y&clientId=8724>

2. Academic Search Complete;

3. <http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaulddb=a9h>

4. Business Source Complete database;

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaulddb=bth>

5. Dissertations and Theses (Proquest);

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/login?COPT=REJTPTNiMGYmSU5UPTAmVkVSPTI=&clientId=8724>

6. Education Research Complete;

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaulddb=ehh>

7. Emerald Management Thinking;

http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://info.emeraldinsight.com/learning/management_thinking/index.htm

8. EBSCOhost

9. [ERIC](#)

10. [PsycINFO](#);

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.asp?profile=web&defaultdb=psyh>

11. Google scholar; <http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://scholar.google.com>

12. JSTOR; <http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://www.jstor.org/search/AdvancedSearch>

13. Sage Reference Online Collections; [http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://SAGE-](http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://SAGE-reference.com/)

[reference.com/](http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://SAGE-reference.com/)

Web of Science;

<http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://isiknowledge.com/?DestApp=WOS&editions=ALL>

The intent was to find as much of the relevant studies that exist. The comprehensiveness of the search is critical to a successful systematic review hence this process was ongoing and continued to be updated over the last year.

Search results using the key words “mission statements” generated 9,277 results which were then narrowed based on the PAT criteria. It is in the screening process and the selection criteria that one either included or eliminated work in building the literature review. The product of the systematic review is an evaluation and thematic synthesis of the work helping to support or

refute the claims of this paper. Systematic Reviews bring into focus the work already commenced and seeks to build on it.

Emerging Subject, Themes, and Categories

Following the comprehensive search, the articles were then perused to determine relevance to the topic. Those that were found to be relevant were placed into the topic categories outlined below:

AUTHOR/DISCIPLINE	PERIOD	KEY WORDS	SEMINAL WKS	ARGUMENT(S)	OTHER (PEER REVIEWED/ NAME OF PUBLICATION)

The order was established based on the year the article was published as opposed to alphabetical order of the authors' names, since this provided an understanding of how the relevant themes emerged along a timeline. The themes were identified under the caption of "Key Words". Not all articles included in the concept table were selected for use in this study. Based on further review, either for relevance or rigor, articles were screened out. The selected articles were then clustered based on these themes as is shown in Figure 4.1.

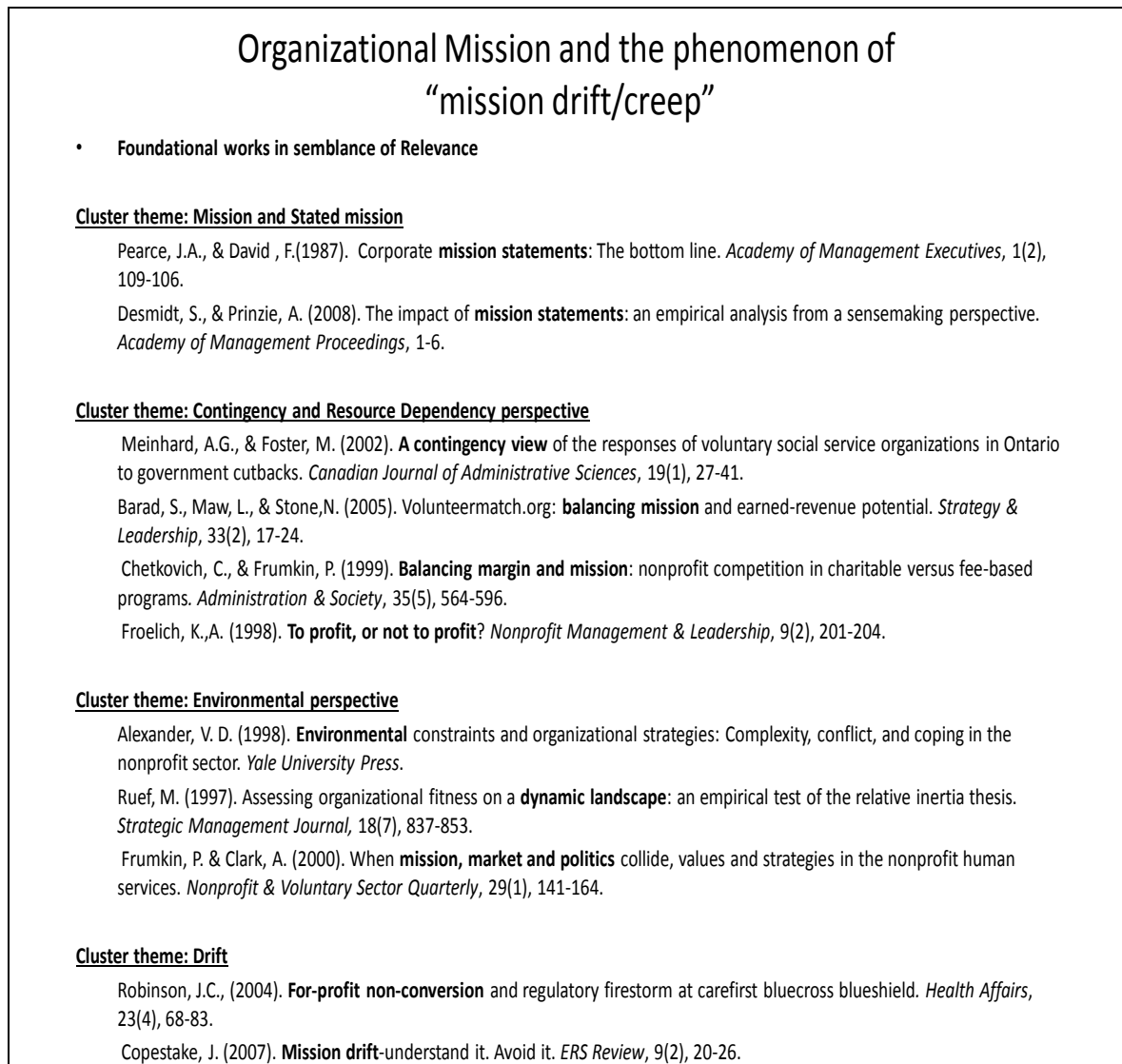


Figure 4.1. Slide of some of the major articles grouped by thematic focus.

Central Themes

following the comprehensive search, the process of clustering the articles around central themes yielded the following themes which were discussed in chapters 1 and 2:

1. Studies which focused on mission and/ mission statements content;
2. Mission statements as it relates to performance;
3. Explanations of mission drift/creep: contingency and resource dependency perspectives;
4. Explanations of mission drift/creep: environmental and neo institutional arguments;

5. Descriptive studies on mission drift/creep;
6. Organizational learning studies.

The studies that have been found to be of significant importance to this study begin with the seminal work of Senge (1990) who promoted the OL theory. This study leans heavily on this foundational work to support its arguments. Other authors that have promoted the construct of OL and are relevant to this study include Alexander (1998), Argyris (2002), Madsen and Desai (2010), Ruef (1997), and Seanor and Meaton (2008). Studies that generated early discussion on the value of mission statements, its meaning in terms of organizational performance which informs this study were conducted by Pearce and David (1987), Bart & Baetz (1998), Hitt and Ireland(1992), and Leuthesser and Kohli (1997). Later studies that were found relevant to this research include Analoui and Karami (2002).

Establishing the distinction between stated mission and corporate action were studies beginning with the work of Peyrefitte and David (2006) and later followed up by Desmidt and Prenzie (2008) and Verma (2009). Loic Comolli (2007) was selected as an excellent practitioner piece discussing the phenomenon of mission drift and bridges the academic and practitioner discourse.

Explanatory studies conducted by among others Froelich (1999), Sawhill and Williamson (2001) and Foster and Meinhard (2002), Chetkovich and Frumkin (1999) were all identified to support this study.

Finally, the studies that generated relevant discussion on the environmental perspective included Hannan and Freeman (1984) Hitt and Ireland(1992), Tschirhart (1993), and Ruef (1997).

Limitations of Method

The presumption of the systematic review is that there are sufficient publications on a given topic to provide solid grounds for satisfactory argument for or against a topic. Having said this, however, it is important to recognize the fact that gaps in research may not necessarily be best served by Evidence Based Research even though it may be discovered through this methodology. Systematic reviews therefore focus on existing research and avoid exhaustive use of resources required to conduct primary data collection. In the evaluation of the rigorousness of studies, works are selected that meet a minimum threshold for inclusion. It processes out substandard work that could skew the research results. The research topic of this paper has been sufficiently researched in the past to justify the use of this approach and provide sufficient documented evidence to warrant conclusive response to this paper's inquiry as identified in the purpose statement and research questions.

Another key criticism was leveled by Davies (2006) as a major weakness of this approach. Based on the premise that a vast majority of academic research in management is focused on explaining current phenomena, he argues that while the evidence may help managers in avoiding mistakes by telling them what practices do not work, they do not offer help in providing working solutions. The retrospective nature of this approach focusing on existing practice, Davies (2006) suggests offers little by way of solutions.

Personal Assessment Tool

A Personal Assessment Tool (PAT) is a concept that provides the framework for the selection of studies that will be used in this research. It in essence captures the important and relevant elements that must be considered in the selection of an article and forms the basis for the ranking of an article. The following is an outline of the PAT used in the selection of articles for this research.

1. SOURCE AND RELEVANCE (Inclusion/exclusion criteria)

- Key-word search terms “mission statement” “mission drift or mission creep” and “strategic planning” must be in the abstract/content;
- Database must be of scholarly, peer reviewed and published articles;
- Articles must be published within the last 25 years;
- Foreign language articles will be translated using internet service.
- Only empirical research will be selected. Non-empirical (conceptual) work will only be included if grounded in theory.
- Non-profit and for-profit research studies will be utilized. Credibility of publication and number of times cited will further determine inclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW FRAMEWORK (BROAD OVERVIEW)

- Title accurately reflecting study;
- Organizational scheme properly designed and laid-out:
 - i. Clarity of purpose;
 - ii. Research question clearly stated;
 - iii. Method outlined and Findings clearly stated;
 - iv. Author’s assumptions or biases identified;
- Relevance (to the field) of research question;

3. RESEARCH QUESTION EVALUATION

- Construct validity (assessment of linkages);
- Is the hypothesis flexible?
- Is the hypothesis open-ended?
- Is the research question properly operationalized?

- What are the Measurements used?
- Are the dependent and independent variables properly linked (internal validity)?
- Is it a fluffy or foundational construct?
- Is the argument compelling?

4. METHOD OF EVALUATION

- Qualitative/ Quantitative method;
- Appropriateness of method for study design;
- Triangulation of research strategy?
- Reliability of data and evidence provided (based on hierarchy of evidence)
- Appropriate Sample size and Effect size.
- Are the research instruments appropriate?
- Is the design and procedures appropriate for the study?
- Do I know enough to replicate the study?

5. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION ASSESSMENT

- Is there any form of bias as a result of the study design?
- Are the results clearly stated relative to the purpose of the study?
- Are future research questions emergent from the study?
- Are the conclusions warranted from the results?
- Is the conclusion robust?
- Is the study externally valid (generalizability)

6. OTHER CRITICAL APPRAISAL QUESTIONS

- How credible are the findings?
- How well does the evaluation address its original aim and purpose?

- How clear are the links between data, interpretation and conclusions?
- How clear and coherent is the reporting.
- How clear are the assumptions/theoretical perspectives/values that have shaped and framed the evaluation?
- How adequately has the research process been documented?

7. GROUPING OF STUDIES

- Order of study quality;
- Quality/design/setting;
- Publication and year;
- Explanatory/ Exploratory studies.
- Study themes and focus.

Key Notes on PAT

Based on the creation of the PAT there were several key points that were important to the evaluation process stage of this study. By listing the more important factors in the determination of what to include or exclude in the study, this provides a greater level of transparency to the evaluation process and the readers can understand the author's thought process in narrowing the focus. The following criteria and notes were used when evaluating studies.

1. Not all published peer reviewed studies are worthy of inclusion and may be irrelevant based on method or data source among others.
2. It is important to understand the author's biases inherent in the discussion, which may serve to skew the interpretation of the study's findings;
3. Drill down and seek latent meanings (toggle). Just don't accept the author's representation or intended meaning as the sole interpretation of the paper.

4. Understand the paper's "organizational scheme" and determine whether it has all relevant components and/or flows logically.
5. It is not always true that the study reflects the intended purpose, so it should be questioned.
6. The method used may not always be appropriate for the study's purpose.
7. Conclusions in published work may not always be supported in the study. (it is good to fact check when possible)
8. Critiques should not always be criticisms but balance of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.
9. There are several approaches to the synthesis of existing studies.

Evaluation Criteria

Author's assumptions are not always obviously stated but clues can be drawn from their biases demonstrated in such areas as the preferred method. For example, a positivist approach (statistical method) was used to demonstrate a correlation between "mission statements" and financial performance as oppose to a qualitative content analysis.

Support for the construct by previous research or foundational theories are other ways to evaluate the author's assumptions.

The logic of the argument linking the variables (dependent and independent) is important in validating the construct. For example, the existence of a company's 'mission statement' has no obvious connection to its annual performance except that previous studies have argued and demonstrated statistically that there is some positive correlation. It would be important to know how strong or weak the r^2 is for example that is being reported.

Sources of data can be evaluated using the “hierarchy of evidence”. A case study for “mission statements” and “strategic planning” would be the lowest ranked source of evidence vis-à-vis random sample survey with a representative sample size.

A meta-analysis would have much greater value for my research since it would be a review of several primary research papers using a statistical method.

Research questions should be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Relevance – Has the author made a compelling argument to support the research question(s). Statements why the study of “mission statements” and strategic planning are important?
2. Support from previous studies – Lit. Review should support the construct.
3. Is it knowledge creating?
4. Is this study relevant to my study of “mission statements” “mission in use” “mission drift/creep” and strategic planning?
5. Do the questions seek to “explain” or “explore”?

Worth of a construct can be evaluated by first assessing its theoretical foundation. Secondly, is it logical, since a statistically significant relationship does not necessarily mean a practical one.

There are several tools to evaluate a construct including an assessment of its internal validity (properly linked between variables), external validity (findings can be generalized back to the population), and statistical validity (for example a meaningful r^2).

The operationalization of a construct is important to the evaluation and this is demonstrated in the “Measurements” used. What are the dependent and the independent variables? More than

one dependent variable is important to triangulate the results. Whether or not an author triangulates his/her measurements is important to ascertaining the validity of the conclusions.

Conclusions need to be strongly tied back to the study's purpose and intent. Are the conclusions logically derived from the discussion and findings? Are new thoughts introduced in the conclusion or is it disconnected from the body of the report.

Evidence in support of the argument needs to be strong and convincing. The research design should support the purpose of the study. Statistical studies without a qualitative content analysis of "mission statements" seem to be weaker explanatory tools.

The evaluation's purpose is key to the foundation of a study. Evaluations are the basis for the inclusion or exclusion of prior research. The weaker the sources the less credible the study is. Beyond this, it helps to rationalize the previous work into an orderly semblance upon which the current study can build.

Typology of Systematic Reviews

There are various types of Systematic Reviews and the list below identifies the various focus that any systematic review can have. The more widely used are meta, thematic, and content analyses. The thematic analysis essentially means that the review will focus on the key themes and concepts of each study, grouping them around common concepts and constructs. A content analysis on the other hand would compare and contrast the studies method and message. A meta-analysis is a statistical approach that analyzes the studies. There are several other approaches listed which include both quantitative and qualitative systematic methods.

Approaches include the following:

- Thematic analysis;
- Content analysis;

- Meta-analysis;
- Grounded theory;
- Textual narrative synthesis;
- Meta study;
- Meta narrative;
- Critical interpretive synthesis;
- Ecological triangulation;
- Framework synthesis;
- Meta interpretation;
- Qualitative meta summary

Diagram of Organizational Scheme of Method

Following the multiple database search, the studies were then evaluated using the PAT tool. Following the PAT evaluation and selection, the studies were grouped around common themes and findings were synthesized. The results of the synthesis formed the basis for new research conclusions and findings. Figure 4.2 illustrates the process flow of the methodology.

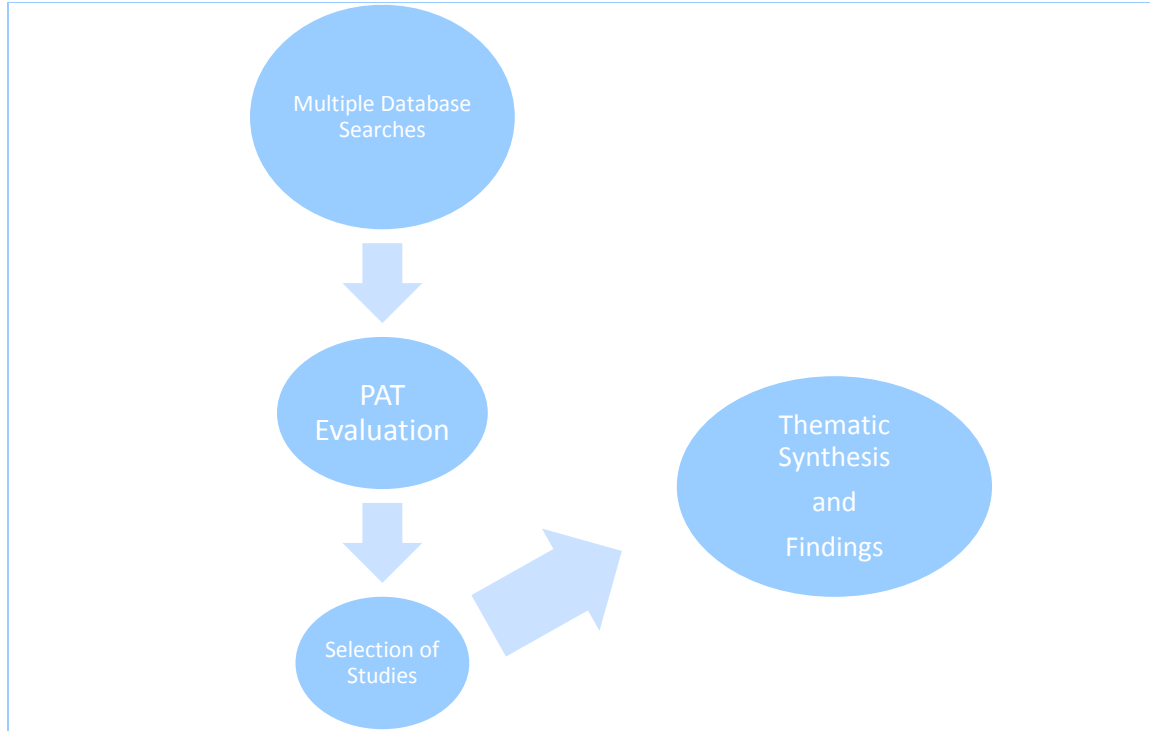


Figure 4.2. Diagram of Organization of Study Method.

Presentation and Discussion of the Expert Panel

As part of the Doctor of Management process, UMUC requires that each DM student provides the names of panelists who have either professional or academic background or a combination of both in the subject area and more specifically on the chosen topic to provide feedback and comment on the research chapters. After conferring with supporting professors, appropriate panel members were identified and invited to provide comments and feedback based on the first two chapters of the dissertation. A structured, open-ended questionnaire prepared by the DMGT program were provided to each Expert Panelist. Based on either their academic or practical experience or both, Expert Panelists were identified to critique the dissertation's first two chapters.

Identification of Panel Members

Two expert panel members agreed to participate in this dissertation, read and review the beginning two chapters, and provide comments, suggestions, and guidance. These panel members were Dr. Leann Mischel and Dr. Ajai Gaur:

Leann Mischel, *Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship, Susquehanna University.*

Leann Mischel received her PhD from the University of Illinois and is currently a professor of Management and Entrepreneurship at Susquehanna University located in central Pennsylvania. Prior to becoming a professor and starting the entrepreneurship program at Susquehanna, Dr. Mischel was involved in her own start-up company and held senior positions in Fortune 500 companies.

Dr. Mischel has served as Vice President of Business Engineering at JPMorgan Chase in Wilmington, Delaware. There, she was involved in corporate reengineering where, in her first year, made changes resulting in over \$23 million/year in savings for the company.

Dr. Mischel has also been Vice President of Operations and Customer Service at Priceline.com. There, she developed and implemented technological, structural, and policy changes to reduce operational costs and assessed new business opportunities for feasibility and profitability.

In 1997, Dr. Mischel co-founded Cara Plastics, which develops and manufactures bio-based polymers and composites from soyoil and natural fibers. The plastics have been used on John Deere tractors and

have received recognition from around the world. During the formative years of the company, she served as its Chief Operating Officer and then on its Board of Directors

Dr. Mischel currently serves on other Boards of Advisors and assists non-profits. She is a frequent conference speaker, presents papers internationally, and is widely published in academic and professional journals. Her work has been recognized in the Wall Street Journal, she has been quoted in Entrepreneur Magazine, The New York Times and USA Today (source: www.redprivet.com/mobile/board-member.php?id=Leann%20Mischel).

Ajai Gaur, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Management and Global Business at Rutgers Business School.

Dr. Gaur is working on understanding the strategic adaptation of emerging economy firms during institutional transition. This line of work focuses on the interplay between internal governance structure and external governance environment and its effects on firm strategies and performance.

Dr Gaur has also worked on issues related to institutional distance between different governance environments, MNCs' ownership strategies, staffing strategies, and entry mode choice in international investments. Empirically, he has examined firms based in Australia, China, Germany, India, Japan, UK, and USA. Some of his research has appeared in the Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, and

Management International Review (Source: business.rutgers.edu › [Faculty & Research](#) › [Faculty Directory](#)).

Once these panelists were determined to be sufficiently qualified by the course professor, a letter from Dr. Booth, Executive Director of the DM program, was sent to each panelist to request their consent to participate in the review process. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix A. Once the chapters were approved by the Course professor, they were sent to the panelist along with a structured questionnaire asking 9 questions. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Feedback from Expert Panel Members

Each panel member provided thoughtful and helpful insights to chapters 1 and 2. Their full Questionnaire responses are presented in Appendix B and C. A summary of their meaningful comments is presented below within the format of the Questionnaire categories. Following this summary a more complete listing of their comments is provided in Table 1.

Clarity of Study Topic. Specifically both Panelists shared the view that the study topic was clear. Additionally, Dr. Gaur suggested that it was “highly relevant” to the area of not-for-profit management.

Significance of Study. Dr. Mischel suggested that a few sentences in the summary outlining how the study will serve to fill the gaps in research. Dr. Gaur felt if the study is executed well will make a significant contribution.

Scope of Study. Panelists generally felt that the scope of the study was clear and the research topic was narrow enough to be completed in a timely manner.

Literature Properly Directing Study. There were varying opinions on this question. Dr. Mischel felt that a “great job” was done here. However, Dr. Gaur felt that this section needed work in better linking the identified theories with the problem of the research.

Conceptual Framework. Dr Gaur and Mischel expressed satisfaction with the emerging conceptual framework from chapters 1 and 2 and offered suggestions on strengthening the links between the theoretical perspectives and the research problem.

Writing Quality. Panelists were in agreement that the writing was clear, suggesting including setting up each section with a paragraph of what is to come.

Overall practical Value. Panelists opined that there is practical value of this research, however, Dr. Mischel felt that more of the dissertation is needed before generating a full assessment.

Overall strengths of study. Panelists confirmed it is an interesting niche and a good topic of study with clearly defined problem.

Overall weaknesses of study. Dr Gaur suggested that the theoretical contributions were not clear beyond the understanding of the phenomenon of mission drift and the methodological details were lacking.

Table 1

Summary Table of Panel Members Feedback

Question	Dr. Mischel	Dr. Gaur
1. Clarity of Study Topic:	<i>Observation</i> Yes, Great job here.	<i>Observation</i> Topic highly relevant to management of not-for-profit sector. You make a clear case to study the issue of mission drift.
2. Significance of Study:	A little more info. on what you are going to do in your study would be helpful... maybe just adding a few more sentences to your summary stating exactly where the holes are and your study would fill them.	I think if this study is executed well, will make a significant contribution.

3. Scope of this Study:	See above...	The scope of study is clear and well defined and is narrow enough to be completed in a reasonable time frame.
4. Lit. properly directing study:	Great job here.	Needs some work. Not clear how theories are linked to the problem. Review is disjointed. You do not make an effort to further examine why that is relevant to your line of inquiry.
5. Conceptual Framework clear:	Nice job.	Good case for the study. Did not see much of conceptual framework to comment on. Perhaps at the end of each section of literature review, you could summarize how the reviewed lit. is linked to your line of inquiry and how you contribute to a given literature stream.
6. Overall written Quality:	Very well written. Might want to preface all sections with a paragraph that sets up the reader with what is to come.	Writing is clear.
7. Overall practical value:	I think so, but would have to know more about what will actually be done.	This research should be of great relevance to nonprofit sector.
8. Strengths of study:	Is an interesting niche to investigate. Nice job.	A good topic of study with clearly defined problem.
9. Weaknesses of study:	None right now.	Not clear what the theoretical contributions of this study are beyond understanding the phenomenon of mission drift.

Not enough details on
methodology.

Reaction and Impact from Panel Member Comments

The Expert Panel comments were addressed specifically. However, it should be noted that each Panelist's comment should be understood within context and that they were not privy to subsequent chapters which would serve to address some of their stated concerns. Panel members comments were helpful in fine tuning the writing of chapters 1 and 2 and were used to strengthen the dissertation as well as to confirm the overall direction of the research. The Panelists feedback were overall very positive and encouraging. It signals that the topic is relevant and poignant and adds to the academic discourse.

Summary

This chapter sought to outline the dissertation's methodology, specifically illustrating the tools used and the justification for their use. The DM program of the UMUC is heeding the call for more practical research that would serve to build on the already commenced work which exists in the field of management. Evidence Based Research (EBR) has gained traction over the last few years in the field of management as the call for more practical research has been heeded. Building on empirical studies, EBR provides methodologies that enhance the rigor for the evaluation of qualitative studies. Following this discussion on Evidence Based Research as the basis for the methodology of this DMGT program, an identification and discussion of this study's relevant scholarly evidence was then presented. This study specifically uses a Personal Assessment Tool (PAT) to screen studies, and thematic and content analysis to analyze the studies. Additionally, the approach utilized a team of two Expert Panelists, both academic and

practitioner based, to provide an overview of the research in terms of its direction, quality, and scope in addition to validating the problem identified.

The focus of chapter five is on the identification, analysis, and discussion of this study's findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Introduction

This chapter's focus is primarily on identifying the findings of the study. chapter 5 also presents the analysis of the literature reviewed in chapters 1 and 2, synthesizing the concepts, and identifying the emergent themes and findings of the study. Following this introduction, the purpose of the study is revisited. The third section of this chapter discusses the findings in light of the research questions. The fourth section sets forth the conclusions. The penultimate section highlights alternative perspectives and the final section presents a summary of the chapter.

Purpose of Study Revisited

Before proceeding, it is imperative that the study's purpose be revisited in order to properly link it to the study's findings. Utilizing a systematic procedure, this study reviewed thirty-eight empirical studies on the subject of organizational mission, focusing on the phenomenon of mission drift/creep as it occurs specifically highlighting the nonprofit sector to further an understanding of the phenomenon and to determine whether it should be avoided as is widely believed or embraced as a process of organizational learning (OL). It should be remembered here that the nonprofit sector was focused on primarily due to the absence of profit motive but understanding that mission plays a role in both for and not-for profit sectors and studies from both sectors have been utilized in this research.

As a guide to this study, a Conceptual Framework was developed from a semblance of the reviewed studies into thematic clusters. The results were graphically depicted in the model set forth in Figure 3.5. The relevant studies reviewed focused on the following themes:

1. **Stated Mission**, examining its value, relevance, content, structure, and form;
2. **Mission-in-Use**, examining its role, and function;

3. **Mission alignment/misalignment** examining the difference between stated and practiced mission; and
4. **Mission failure/success and Organizational Learning.**

Figure 3.5 revisited from chapter 3 illustrates the four stages of the process of the conceptual model. It begins with Stage 1, with the stated mission in alignment with the mission-in-use. The second stage identifies its misalignment. The third stage identifies organizational learning and the fourth stage is the realignment of the mission with the mission-in-use, illustrating the “double-loop” learning in the process.

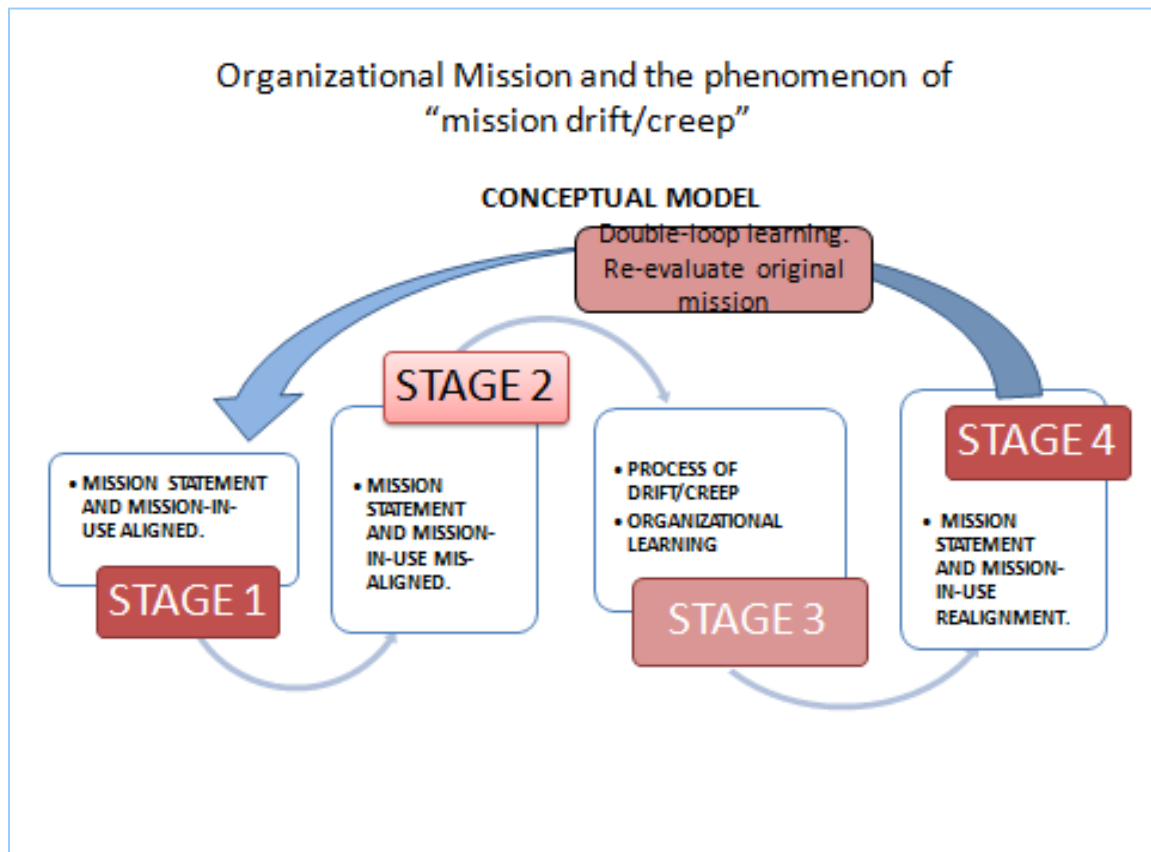


Figure 3.5. Drift/creep in a process of Organizational Learning.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

This paper attempted to answer three fundamental questions. First it asks what is organizational mission, its various forms, and inherently questioning its value. Secondly, the

question of what is the phenomenon of mission drift and its role in organizational success or failure is posed. Third, the question of how might mission drift/creep be embraced or discouraged is raised. As a result of the research study, and analysis, this section will present and summarize the study's findings.

This section begins by recapping the study's questions, presents the findings and discussion of the various studies in response to the questions.

Question 1. In what ways is mission essential to organizational strategy or in other words, is it even relevant?

Findings. Those studies that directly or tangentially address the question on the value of mission and the ways it may be relevant included the studies of (Pearce & David, 1987; Paton & Cornforth, 1992; Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997; Kirk & Nolan, 2010; Verma, 2009; Desmidt & Prenzie, 2008; Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011).

Many studies sought to establish the value of mission statements to organizational strategy and in doing so, either reinforced its value or discredited it as a tool in strategic management (Bradshaw, 2003; Denton, 2001; Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; Oster, 1995; Pearce & David, 1987; Rhodes & Keogan, 2005). The value of mission statements has been disputed in the literature and run the gambit of perspectives but overwhelmingly, the literature support the view that mission statements are relevant and important to organizational strategy.

Discussion. Beginning with the views of Pearce and David (1987) mission statements were viewed as critical and among other things create an organization's identity. Identity formation was directly connected to trust building and stakeholder legitimization. Several authors agree that this was critical to an organizations ability to navigate its operating environment and building its credibility with its stakeholders. Pearce and David (1987) one of the earliest work

on mission statements argue that when it is effective, it defines the uniqueness of the organization and sets it apart from the competition, helping to forge its identity. Their finding that comprehensive mission statements were positively associated with better performance was a ringing endorsement of mission statements' value and importance.

Paton and Cornforth (1992) study presented a convincing argument for the relevance of mission statements and supports the view of its importance. Their study suggests that organizational values are considered to be one of the distinctive features of nonprofit organizations couched in its' mission which controls any interest in the organization's survival or strategies and regulates the conflict between maintaining the organization and pursuing its objectives, mission and values (Paton & Cornforth, 1992).

Building on this line of study, Hitt and Ireland (1992) demonstrated that the uniqueness of mission statements is critical to surviving environmental turbulence and suggest that environmental turbulence requires strong and effective mission statements.

Oster (1995) supported the view that mission statements were invaluable in outlining to the stakeholders the operating parameters of the organization, something that was necessary if drift or creep were to be averted. Oster (1995) furthered the notion that mission statements serve a boundary function. These statements act to motivate both staff and donor and help to create an organizations identity.

Leuthesser and Kohli's (1997) study, in spite of its noted methodological weaknesses, reiterated the argument that mission is important in forming a company's identity, and presenting its purpose and direction to its stakeholders. Additionally, they pushed for a rethink of the view that mission statements were no more than internal communication devices but rather a unifying focal point and integral element of the corporate identity (Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997, p.63).

Other perspectives in support of the view that mission statements are relevant and important in various ways to organizational strategy include Desmidt and Prenzie's (2008) study that suggests it is quite functional as a sense making device.

Verma (2009) convincingly argued that mission statement is no longer just "pretty words" but an active strategic tool because of their influence on people behavior, resource allocation, focus, and give a sense of meaning to the work (Verma, 2009, p. 155).

Supporting this line of reasoning, Kirk and Nolan's (2010) study strongly advocates the view that organization's mission is a guide for both the internal and external world to understand the work of the organization (Kirk & Nolan, 2010, p. 473).

Bradshaw (2003) viewed organizational mission as important and mission statements in particular as instrumental in conveying the values of the organization.

Question 2. What is the phenomenon of mission drift and its role in nonprofit organization's success and failure?

Findings. What is mission drift/creep is in large part captured by its definition. The lack of consensus on its definition is reflective of the range of perspectives on how it is caused. There are several definitions put forth in various studies. Specific definitions of mission drift/creep were put forth by authors such as Comolli (2007), Copestake (2007), Froelich (1999), Moore (2000), and White (2007). These definitions highlight the fact that there are two emergent perspectives, the first being that drift/creep is a process and secondly, it also represents changes in the content of organizations' activities and behavior.

Having established the fact that there are two perspectives on mission drift or creep, one being a process of change and the other being content change, it is important to see how the studies have emerged around its role in the success or failure of nonprofit organizations.

Desmidt, Prinzie and Decramer (2011) captures the essence of those studies over the years that found that there is a positive relationship between good mission statement content and measures of organizational financial performance. Not all studies however agree that there is such a connection.

Discussion. Milliken (1990) conducted the earliest study suggesting that the lack of control over resource suppliers as the main contributing factor to mission drift. Froelich (1999) focusing on a different aspect of resource control contended that diversification of funding streams to protect or expand mission has led to mission drift. Salamon (1996) and Anheir (2005) on the other hand argued that internal resource allocation decisions may lead to mission drift. Following a similar line of argument, Chetkovich and Frumkin (1999) held the view that limited funding allocated via competitive means has led organizations to mission drift.

Comolli (2007) suggested that mission drift is the abandonment of social mission in the pursuit of income-generating activities. This interpretation suggests that income and mission pursuits were at odds and the pursuit of income were at the expense of mission. This perspective fits within the resource dependency schools of thought but is not necessarily a widely accepted argument and while contested in the literature, by authors that have been pushing for greater efficiency in the sector or those that are promoting social entrepreneurial activities finds support from others. Light (1998) suggested that the adoption of more entrepreneurial culture within the nonprofit sector while leading to greater success has caused mission drift.

Froelich (1999) also held a resource dependency perspective and identified mission drift with the search for funding as a result of resource constraints. This has been the most common interpretation found among practitioners but seems to have little academic research to support this proposition.

Copestake (2007) on the other hand suggested that mission drift was more a retrospective change in stated preferences to fit unplanned outcomes. This definition focused on program content in light of performance and also fits within the contingency schools of thought. Copestake's interpretation suggests management's weakness as being responsible for an intentional movement away from stated mission due in part to their lack of control over their performance outcomes.

Singh, Tucker, and Meinhard (1988, 1990) were the earliest studies to suggest that change initiatives lead to material movement away from mission when combating environmental turbulence. Meyer and Scott (1994) offered institutional and environmental explanations for mission drift/creep stating that organizational structures reproduce environmental complexity coming from funder pressures or institutional sources. Ruef (1997) in his study demonstrated that drift is caused by environmental pressure.

Tschirhart (1993) makes both a resource dependency argument and finds relevance in the environmental schools of thought, specifically stating that organizations adapted based on resource control. However, her study found that organizations resisted environmental pressure to preserve mission when the organizations' missions were attacked.

Frumkin and Galaskiwicz (2004) argue that government licensing, inspections and regulations are levers that act on nonprofits and business organizations in their adopting organizational practices and makes a clear case for institutional causes of mission drift/creep.

Zorn, Flanagan and Shoham (2011) makes a case for mimetic isomorphism in nonprofit behavior, suggesting that this is one way nonprofits adopt behaviors and practices without experiencing the pain or risk of searching for solutions.

White (2007) defined mission drift as a slow devolutionary process that could result in the abandonment of the original mandate of an organization and makes a nuanced distinction between drift and creep. Creep as opposed to drift signifies a deliberate change that has a negative impact on the organization's movement toward achieving its mission, while drift was considered more unintentional.

Verma (2009) revealed that missions fail when there is inconsistency between actions and espoused values. His study reintroduced the concept "alignment" to describe the phenomenon of coordination between corporate words and deeds. This he argues creates the support for building competitive advantages and demonstrates the coupling between organization and individual behaviors in internalizing organizational mission statements. Sawhill and Williamson (2001) previously asserted this view and calls for a strategic "alignment" of the organization's mission, vision and goals.

Mission statements do matter in terms of their measurable association with an organizations' financial success and has been found to have a positive relationship (Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011).

Question 3. Under what conditions should mission drift or mission creep be discouraged or encouraged as a process of organizational learning?

Findings. Seanor and Meaton's (2008) study supports the view that organizations learn from its failures. Madsen and Desai (2010) found that organizations learn from shared experiences. Past success and failures are viewed as learning moments with failure being more impactful than success over the long term. Denton (2001) supports the notion of "double-loop" learning in organizations. Building on this line of argument, Alexander (1998) held the view that mirroring

of the environmental complexity by internally controlling the reaction by adaption and learning may lead to drift/creep.

Essentially, some view the driver of mission drift/creep as being outside the control of the organization (Foster & Meinhard, 2002). On the other hand there are those perspectives that suggest how the resources were allocated within the organization, the adoption of entrepreneurial culture or decision to seek diversified funding sources are internal organizational decisions to drift (Hackler & Saxton, 2007).

Discussion. With the exception of the Madsen and Desai (2010) and Seanor and Meaton's (2008) studies, it would be safe to argue that none of the other studies reviewed, directly addressed the question in terms of recommendations under which mission drift/creep should be embraced or discouraged. Most of the studies have been descriptive. However, an emergent theme from the studies has been found to be the lack of organizational control. Be it control over resources, regulatory oversight, competition or other operating environmental factors. This section highlights the findings of one significant empirical research study by Seanor and Meaton (2008) which suggests in essence that organizations can seize this opportunity to learn new ways of doing business, surviving and evolving.

The Hackler and Saxton (2007) study provides an explanation of the environmental conditions which may lead to mission drift/creep but stays clear of suggesting whether it should be embraced. This study strongly argued that as the operating environment became more challenging over the past 25 years due to government funding cutbacks, increased demand for services in conjunction with high-profiled scandals, the demand for greater oversight, transparency, and accountability along with higher "professional quality" services have spurred mission drift/creep (Hackler & Saxton, 2007).

Bennett and Savani (2011) concludes this section, suggesting that organizations have accepted mission drift as a material fact of life but they should be proactive in seeking to initiate direct and control it.

Other Significant Findings

There is no compelling evidence in support of the argument that there is a distinct difference between for and not-for-profit hospitals in terms of mission statement content (Bolon, 2005).

The lack of control over resources and competition for funding have been put forth as organizational motivation to drift/creep. It is arguable that this proposition suggests that organizational survivability rests on its capacity to successfully drift/creep without losing stakeholder confidence.

Conclusions

The jury therefore is mixed on the relevance and importance of mission statements. However, this study recognizes a common thread emerging from the literature reviewed that even though there are arguments for and against mission statements, it is undisputable that organizational mission per se is important and relevant. The earlier studies' fixation on stated mission brought to light the willingness of researchers to be accepting without question of mission statements as the mission in use. This cast a light on the disconnect between what companies do and what they say they do as a material fact of corporate life and emphasized this gap in management research.

In summary, the control of resources either by external forces (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Milliken, 1990; Peyrefitte & David, 2006) or the organization itself (internal) seem to be at the core of most explanations of the cause of mission drift/creep.

The jury is somewhat mixed on the relevance and importance of mission statements even though an overwhelming number of studies support the view of its importance and relevance in organizational strategy. The value of organizational mission per se, however, is without question. This study recognizes a common thread emerging from the literature reviewed that even though there are arguments for and against the relevance and value of mission statements, it is undisputable that organizational mission per se, in whatever form is critical. .

Research studies on this phenomenon could be categorized broadly under four schools of thought. There are the Contingency and Resource Dependency schools, and those that fall under the Environmental and Institutional schools of thought. The four categories can be further broken down into two. One that suggests it is within the control of management and the other that suggests it is outside the control of management. The ultimate goal is organizational sustainability and therefore suggests that mission drift/creep should be embraced as a process of organizational learning resonates.

There were significant findings of this study leading to three broad conclusions. The first is the understanding that mission is important and relevant to organizational strategy and serves a variety of purposes including: identity formation; conveying organizations' values; presenting organizational purpose and direction; sets organizational operating boundaries; serves as a communication device and acts as a guide to both external and internal stakeholders (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2008; Desmidt, Prinzie & Decramer, 2011; Kirk & Nolan, 2010; Leuthesser & Kohli, 1997; Paton & Cornforth, 1992; Pearce & David, 1987; Verma, 2009).

Secondly, this study found that mission drift/creep is both a process of change as well as content change in the activities and behaviors of the organizations. Additionally, no one theoretical argument suffices to explain the cause of mission drift/creep. Collectively, however,

the array of explanatory studies ranging from resource dependency and contingency to population ecology and neo-institutional theory demonstrates the range and depth of understanding of this phenomenon examined through a variety of lenses. It therefore ultimately pushes the understanding beyond the widely held resource dependency arguments (Alexander, 1998; Bennett & Savani, 2011; Comolli, 2007; Copestake, 2007; Froelich, 1999; Frumkin & Galaskiwicz, 2004; Hitt & Ireland, 1992; Moore, 2000; Meyer & Scott, 1994; Tschirhart, 1993; White, 2007; Zorn, Flanagan & Shoham, 2011).

The third conclusion demonstrates that drift/creep whether considered a failing in mission presents an opportunity for organizational learning. In navigating their operating environment, organizations can realign its operations in sync with its mission (Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Ruef, 1997; Singh, Tucker, & Meinhard, 1988,1990; Seanor & Meaton, 2007; Madsen & Desai, 2010).

Alternative Perspectives

Denton (2001) questioned the value of mission statements. He believes it is a tool that should drive organizational direction but because it is lifeless and static ultimately does not cater to the dynamism of the operating environment. In a similar vein, Hamel and Prahalad (1989) suggested that strategic intent bore more importance than statements of mission in organizational strategy.

Following a similar line of reasoning Sawhill and Williamson (2001) questioned the value of mission statements, however, they concluded that there were no substitute for a strategic alignment of the mission, vision and goals of the organization.

Analoui and Karami (2002) in their analysis of mission statement content and performance found that higher performance results did not necessarily come from organizations with better mission statement content.

James Copestake (2007) discovered that contrary to drift/creep was what he coined “mission stickiness.” Organizations cleaved to their mission irrespective of their operating circumstances at great expense to them.

Summary

This chapter began with the identification of content topics to be presented. The first section revisited the purpose of the study. The second, presented the findings and discussion followed by other significant findings. The third section presented the study’s conclusions. The fourth section presented the alternative perspectives. The final section summarized the chapter. Chapter 6 which follows is the final chapter of this dissertation and focuses on general conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Study

Introduction

Chapter six is the final chapter of this dissertation. In this chapter the first section will be a brief introduction to the chapter followed by the overall conclusions of the dissertation. The third section presents Implications for the Management profession. The fourth section addresses the implications for trends followed by the penultimate section which reviews the limitations and areas for future research. The final section presents the Summary of the research study.

In partial fulfillment of the doctor of management degree is the completion of a dissertation that addresses a management problem that has relevance to both academic and practitioner community. For this study, the issue of organizational mission was addressed with a specific focus on the problem of mission drift/creep.

It has been discovered over the years that organizations have been wandering or intentionally moving away from their stated mission while navigating their day- to-day operating environment. This phenomenon has been identified as a serious problem in light of the recent high profile cases of corporate fraud. In fact, when corporations' words and deeds are not one and the same, the issue of trust is called into question.

Early research highlights the fact that authors accepted the stated mission at face value. It has been subsequently discovered that misalignment between corporate statements and actions can go unnoticed and/or may be unintentional. As several authors have argued, legitimization comes from a trust building exercise between the organization and its stakeholder community (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). What was unclear prior to this research, however, was whether there is a consensus on the relevance of organizational mission, what exactly is the phenomenon

of mission drift/creep, and whether it is an intentional act or an inevitable process of organizational change.

Overall Conclusions

This study casts a glaring light on the gap in literature and its focus on the stated mission relative to the mission-in-use. A significant proportion of the studies never questioned or recognized the fact that there could be a disconnect between what organizations do and what they say they do. While the value of mission statements per se has been in dispute, the value of the organizational mission has never been. Authors have argued for more effective mission statements, ways of enhancing its purpose and even outright discrediting it as a tool in strategic management. It should be understood nevertheless that this study acknowledges that the mission can be presented in various forms, written or unwritten, and that it is the mission in use rather than the mission statement that is the correct focus of study.

The organizational mission is widely viewed in the literature as necessary and relevant in organizational strategy for a broad variety of reasons presented including setting the direction and operating boundaries of the organization, building stakeholder trust and confidence, as well as establishing measures of organizational success. Mission statements' role as a legitimizing device, building stakeholder confidence in the organizations' work by establishing its purpose, values and unique identity, is viewed as very important (Bradshaw, 2003; Hitt & Ireland, 1992; Kirk & Nolan, 2010; Oster, 1995; Paton & Cornforth, 1992; Pearce & David, 1987; Verma, 2009).

There are varying perspectives on the cause and meaning of Mission drift/creep. Two essential perspectives emerged from this study. The first demonstrates that mission drift/creep is reflective in content change in organizational behavior and programming. In an examination of

this phenomenon early studies stress the search for funding or the lack of control over resources as the cause to drift/creep (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 1999; Comolli, 2007; Milliken, 1990; Tschirhart, 1993). When the organization's financial security is at risk, the search for funding outside the boundaries set by the stated mission is widely discouraged and is viewed as mission drift/creep. When organizations' performance is inconsistent with its stated goals and objectives, organizations may attempt to realign its mission to suit. This too is viewed as mission drift (Copestake, 2007).

On the other hand, there are studies which suggest that mission drift/creep is a process as opposed to just changes in the content or behavior of organizations. Some studies suggest that it is inevitable and cannot be averted as some might suggest as a process of organizational change (Bennett & Savani, 2011; Hackler & Saxton, 2007; Singh, Tucker, & Meinhard, 1988, 1990).

Bringing these perspectives together are the studies which suggest that whether it is viewed as a failure or not, it is an opportunity for organizational learning. Seanor and Meaton (2008) presented a valid argument (which receives significant support in the management literature, Daft & Weick, 1984; Denton, 2001; Madsen & Desai, 2010) that organizations can learn more from their failures than from their successes and that mission drift should be used to re-evaluate organizations operating premise and to move forward building on these past mistakes.

It stands to reason that if the theoretical assumptions of Bennett and Savani (2011) among others hold true, then organizations need to be more proactive in eliminating misalignment which feeds stakeholder mistrust. As they have suggested, organizations should get in front of the inevitable and initiate, control, and direct it. In other words, reaffirming the essential premise of

this paper, that with proper planning, stakeholders can be better engaged in understanding and accepting the organizations' movement away from its original mission.

Implications for Management

This study strongly affirms the perspective that organizational mission is critical to management strategy and bears importance and relevance in a variety of ways to an organization, including: successfully navigating its operating environment and sustaining turmoil; framing its values and identity; setting boundaries and operating direction; building stakeholder trust; and communicating internally and externally among others. Studies are becoming less concerned about the content of stated mission and connecting it to performance and shifting its focus more to the means by which mission can be more effectively operationalized.

Studies have more or less exhausted the debate on the stated mission and need to shift its focus on the mission in use, since it has been discovered that not too many studies have focused on this disconnect.

As trust becomes even more the focus of future management research, this disconnect (between stated and operationalized mission) as clearly articulated in the findings of this study can be a point of departure for conducting further analysis of institutional trustworthiness. Organizations should be held accountable for the claims they publicly make. More importantly, analysis of the de facto modus operandi of organizations will be the only way management scholars will truly understand which management practices work and which ones do not.

Implications of Trends

National and Global trends are demonstrating a growing number of organizations entering the Not-for-profit sector. Greater attention is being given to the well designed organizational mission and organizational strategic planning. There is growing recognition that

there is a connection between properly designed mission statements and organizational performance. With a positive rate of growth in the Not-for-profit sector, it is discernible that more organizations will struggle with the phenomenon of mission drift/creep as it seeks to survive or strive for organizational sustainability. The growth in the sector supports the trajectory of where the sector is heading in the future and the propensity for this phenomenon to occur.

Resistance to mission drift/creep without any notion of an alternative provides little by way of relief to those organizations that struggle with this issue. It therefore stands to reason that ideas which recognize that it should be used as a learning opportunity to the good of the organization should be embraced.

Government regulations of the Not-for-profit sector are in large part focused on financial propriety and adherence to the regulatory framework in terms of fiscal responsibility. As such, there are significant implications for regulatory reform and oversight of the sector. Government regulations ought to return to the founding premise, the tax-exemption was granted on in the first place and revisit the role and value it places on mission statements. More importantly, the Government ought to move away from stated mission and focus more specifically on missions-in-use.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This study has been limited to secondary research, and as a newer topic in practitioner and academic research has had a limited number of studies to support its direction. More studies are warranted to confirm whether embracing mission drift/creep is a valid supposition. Future studies examining how organizations have been effectuating this (OL) in combating drift/creep is essential in validating this argument.

Summary

This dissertation commenced with an introduction and background to the study in chapter one. This chapter laid the foundation for the research study, outlining the growing importance of the nonprofit sector and the role of the mission in organizational strategy. The statement and significance of the research problem was outlined. For this study, the contrasting difference between what companies do and what they say they do was brought into focus. This has direct bearing on public trust. The fact that within the last decade a number of high profile scandals have undermined public trust has also served to validate this study as being worthy to pursue. Chapter one outlined the study's purpose which was to explain the role of organizational mission and the phenomenon of mission drift/creep. This chapter presented the three research questions, defined key terms, and presented the organizational scheme of the dissertation.

Chapter two was essentially one of the more important chapters of this dissertation, capturing the relevant literature and reviewing content for rigor as well as the varying perspectives on the subject matter. Essentially, the synthesis of findings of these empirical studies reviewed formed the foundation for this dissertation. Following a section on the varying theoretical perspectives on the meaning of mission drift/creep, the explanatory studies on its causation were clustered and three broad categories were formed as follows:

1. Contingency and Resource Dependency Views;
2. Environmental and Institutional Perspectives; and
3. Organizational Learning (OL)

This was followed by a brief summary of the chapter.

Chapter three presented the conceptual framework of the paper. The conceptual framework emerged from the literature reviewed and served as a guide to the discussion, putting the

essential elements/concepts of the paper into a logical frame. Following the organizational scheme, this chapter outlined the message of the model in both verbal and diagrammatic form.

In essence, the model put forth suggests that organizations at inception are aligned with its mission. However, as they navigate their operating environment (both internal and external) they become misaligned, hence the occurrence of mission drift/creep. Over time, this process of mission drift/creep can be used to the benefit of the organization through “double-loop learning” (Senge, 1990). As such, instead of resisting mission drift/creep organizations may be encouraged to embrace it.

Following this conceptual framework, the methodology of the research study was set forth in chapter four. This chapter began with a brief introduction to the background of Evidence Based Research (EBR), highlighting the fact that it was founded in the natural sciences and has been adapted over the years to support social science research. The DM program at UMUC strongly advocates this protocol for dissertation research and honing this methodology as a rigorous method of secondary research. Chapter four also explained the steps and procedures followed in the selection and screening of the empirical studies used in this dissertation, listed the databases searched and the selection criteria established in the creation of a personal assessment tool (PAT). This tool (PAT) was created to outline the items considered in setting the inclusion or exclusion criteria of this study. The emergent themes and categories were identified and clustered based on the underlying theories. The presentation of the expert panel members, their background, and feedback comments followed. The practitioner/scholar feedback albeit limited to the first two chapters of the dissertation was invaluable in helping to clarify and frame the argument as well as to some extent confirming the relevance of the topic.

The penultimate chapter of this dissertation is chapter five, which could be considered along with chapters one and two the more important chapters. After revisiting the purpose and the conceptual framework, it addresses each of the three research questions, drawing on the synthesis of findings of empirical research to form the basis of new findings. Chapter five discussed the findings, and presented other significant findings outside the scope of the three research questions as well as alternative perspectives.

Chapter six, the final chapter of the dissertation, presented the conclusions, implications and recommendations for future study.

This study has emphasized the disconnect between what organizations do and what they say they do. Secondly, it pushes us to broaden our interpretation and understanding of organizational mission and mission statements in particular. Third, it offers an alternative view of mission drift/creep as a phenomenon that may be inevitable and should be embraced as a process of learning as opposed to being discouraged or averted.

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Appendix A



University of Maryland University College
Graduate School of Management & Technology

October 21, 2011]

Leanne Mischel
Assistant Professor of Management
Susquehanna University
514 University Ave
Selinsgrove, PA 17870-1164
United States

Re: Inviting your participation in an Expert Panel

Dear Professor Michel,

I am writing to invite your participation in the Doctor of Management Program at the University of Maryland University College. A key part of our six chapter dissertation outline/process (see attached) is the involvement of topic experts whom we ask to read and comment on a draft of the beginning sections of a student's dissertation. The Expert Panel, as it is called, is comprised of persons with either academic or practical experience on the topic (or both). The purpose of the Expert Panel is to obtain comments and advice from those who know the topic either from their own research or from their extensive experience.

Dissertations in the UMUC Doctoral program follow evidence based research. The evidence-based research (EBR) approach includes systematic reviews of research studies, case studies, quasi-grounded theory development, and analysis of data previously collected by others. The rationale for taking this approach is that the DM program is committed to developing practitioner-scholars who are competent consumers of management and educational administration research.

We are not asking for you to do an extensive critique of a dissertation in progress, but rather to respond to a set of questions (see attached) which focus on the draft of the first two chapters. Please respond to the student regarding your participation as a panel member through the email or residence address provided below. The title of the dissertation is also provided. If you are agreeable, you will receive the draft dissertation in the next several days. At that time it would be very helpful if you could return your evaluation within the following two to three weeks directly to the doctoral student.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan A. Booth".

Bryan A. Booth, PhD

Professor and Executive Director, Doctor of Management Programs

Claude Gooding
Student name
164 Sunset Drive, Hempstead, NY 11550
Student Address

Cgood89135@gmail.com

Student email

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND THE PHENOMENON OF "MISSION
DRIFT/CREEP":

AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE.

Title of Dissertation:

Dr. Andersen

Cc: 891 lead instructor

Annendix B

Subject matter Expert Evaluation & Feedback Form

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND THE PHENOMENON OF "MISSION DRIFT/CREEP":
AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE)

Feedback from: Dr. Leanne Mischel and Dr. Gaur

Please provide your insights and suggestions for each of these topic areas. Comments and suggestions under each topic are expected and very much appreciated.

Clarity of the Study Problem – Is the topic’s relationship to the field of management practice made clear and explained?

Your observations:

Significance of this Study – To what extent would this study contribute to the practice of management? How original is this study?

Your insights, including awareness of similar studies or research that would duplicate this study?

Scope of this Study – Is the scope of this study made clear? Is it focused on management issues that can be realistically investigated?

Your observations about its do-ability:

Literature informing this Study – Does the type and relevance of literature reviewed here provide the proper direction for this study?

Your observations and suggestions literature sources that would be helpful:

Conceptual Framework – Does the student present a clear picture of how key factors are related, and how those factors would be explained through research?

Your comments:

Overall Written Quality – Does this study present a clear line of reasoning consistent with other management research materials you are familiar with?

Your suggestions for overall improvements that can be made to this approach:

Overall Practical Value – Does this study offer a clear and recognizable opportunity to produce results that would impact a management practice?

Your comments:

Overall Strengths of this study

Your comments:

Overall weaknesses of this study

Your comments:

Reviewer's Signature / date

Appendix C

Subject matter Expert Evaluation & Feedback Form

For DMGT 891 student (insert name and proposed dissertation title)

Feedback from: (insert name of Subject Matter Expert)

Please provide your insights and suggestions for each of these topic areas. Comments and suggestions under each topic are expected and very much appreciated.

Clarity of the Study Problem – Is the topic’s relationship to the field of management practice made clear and explained?

Your observations: Yes. Great job here.

Significance of this Study – To what extent would this study contribute to the practice of management? How original is this study?

Your insights, including awareness of similar studies or research that would duplicate this study?

A little more info on what you are going to do in your study would be helpful...maybe just adding a few more sentences to your summary stating exactly where the holes are and how your study would fill them.

Scope of this Study – Is the scope of this study made clear? Is it focused on management issues that can be realistically investigated?

Your observations about its do-ability: See above...

Literature informing this Study – Does the type and relevance of literature reviewed here provide the proper direction for this study?

Your observations and suggestions literature sources that would be helpful: Great job here.

Conceptual Framework – Does the student present a clear picture of how key factors are related, and how those factors would be explained through research?

Your comments:

Yes. Nice job.

Overall Written Quality – Does this study present a clear line of reasoning consistent with other management research materials you are familiar with?

Your suggestions for overall improvements that can be made to this approach:

Very well written. Might want to preface all sections with a paragraph that sets up the reader with what is to come...

Overall Practical Value – Does this study offer a clear and recognizable opportunity to produce results that would impact a management practice?

Your comments:

I think so, but would have to know more about what will actually be done.

Overall Strengths of this study

Your comments:

Looks like an interesting niche to investigate. Nice job!

Overall weaknesses of this study

Your comments:

None right now!

Leann Mischel 1/12/12

Reviewer's Signature / date

Appendix D

Subject matter Expert Evaluation & Feedback Form

For DMGT 891 student (A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF “MISSION DRIFT” IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE)

Feedback from: (Ajai Gaur, Rutgers University)

Please provide your insights and suggestions for each of these topic areas. Comments and suggestions under each topic are expected and very much appreciated.

Clarity of the Study Problem – Is the topic’s relationship to the field of management practice made clear and explained?

Your observations:

The topic of this research is highly relevant to the management of not-for-profit sector. You make a clear case to study the issue of mission drift.

Significance of this Study – To what extent would this study contributes to the practice of management? How original is this study?

Your insights, including awareness of similar studies or research that would duplicate this study?

I am not aware of much work in scholarly journals in this field. Therefore, I think this study, if executed well, will make significant contributions.

Scope of this Study – Is the scope of this study made clear? Is it focused on management issues that can be realistically investigated?

Your observations about its do-ability:

The scope of the study is clear and well defined in four questions that you state at the end of chapter 1 (Page 17-18). I also think that the scope of this research is narrow enough to be completed in a reasonable time frame.

Literature informing this Study – Does the type and relevance of literature reviewed here provide the proper direction for this study?

Your observations and suggestions literature sources that would be helpful:

This section needs some work. The theoretical perspectives that you review do not present a coherent story to study the phenomenon of mission drift. For example, in the sub-section on contingency and resource dependence view, it is not clear to me how these theories are linked to the problems that you study in this research. The review you present is disjointed. In other words, you summarize what others have done, but do not make an effort to further examine why that is relevant to your line of inquiry. There are similar problems when you discuss environmental perspective and organizational learning.

Conceptual Framework – Does the student present a clear picture of how key factors are related, and how those factors would be explained through research?

Your comments:

You make a good case for the study in the introduction section. Beyond that I did not see much of conceptual framework to comment on. The literature review section, as I mentioned before, is somewhat disjointed. Perhaps at the end of each section of literature review, you could summarize how the reviewed literature is linked to your line of inquiry and how you contribute to a given literature stream.

Overall Written Quality – Does this study present a clear line of reasoning consistent with other management research materials you are familiar with?

Your suggestions for overall improvements that can be made to this approach:

Writing is very clear.

Overall Practical Value – Does this study offer a clear and recognizable opportunity to produce results that would impact a management practice?

Your comments:

This research should be of great relevance to nonprofit sector.

Overall Strengths of this study

Your comments:

A good topic of study with clearly defined problem.

Overall weaknesses of this study

Your comments:

1) Not clear what the theoretical contributions of this study are, beyond understanding the phenomenon of mission drift.

2) Not enough details on methodology.

Reviewer's Signature / date: Ajai Gaur (Oct 18, 2012).