

How vision and mission drive corporate strategic choices: A case study of the smartphone industry

Lung-Tan Lu

Department of Management, Fo Guang University, Taiwan

Abstract

Vision, mission and core values collectively constitute an organisation's strategic intent, forming the logical starting-point for the entire strategic-management process as well as the benchmark against which strategic outcomes are evaluated. Nonetheless, in pedagogical contexts and corporate practice, vision and mission are frequently reduced to brand-building slogans, while their substantive driving effects on corporate decision-making logic, resource allocation and organisational behaviour have long been overlooked. Adopting a qualitative multiple-case-study approach, this research draws on four leading global smartphone manufacturers—Apple, vivo, OPPO and Xiaomi—as analytical samples. A three-tier analytical framework encompassing “content-function-consistency” is constructed to investigate how vision and mission shape corporate strategic choices and organisational actions. It is found that, first, vision and mission are not rhetorical embellishments achieved post-hoc corporate success; instead, they operate as pre-existing constraints for strategic decision-making and function analogously to “decision-making filters”. Second, cross-case comparison identifies four vision-mission archetypes: inspirational, pragmatic, value-centred and inclusive-access. Distinct archetypes correspond to divergent product positioning, R&D investment tendencies and market-expansion rhythms. Third, misalignment between espoused organisational ideals and operational practice primarily stems from overly abstract textual formulations, lack of differentiated design, and the absence of institutional linkages between decision-making, performance-measurement mechanisms and stated organisational principles. This study advances scholarly dialogue on vision-mission scholarship beyond debates over correlations between textual content and financial performance towards process-oriented explanations of how espoused ideals translate into organisational action via consistency-maintenance mechanisms. It can serve as case-teaching material for strategic-management curricula and deliver an operational diagnostic toolkit for consumer-electronics firms seeking to implement vision-mission frameworks.

Keywords: Strategic intent; vision; mission; case study; smartphone industry; stakeholders

Introduction

Introductory modules in strategic-management curricula commonly cover vision, mission and core values. This set of constructs forms the logical foundation for subsequent workflows including external environmental analysis, internal resource-and-capability appraisal, strategic selection and strategic implementation (David, 2011; Johnson *et al.*, 2017) ^[12, 22]. Nevertheless, a pervasive misconception persists among students and industry practitioners alike. Many managers and learners equate vision-mission statements with promotional copy displayed on corporate websites or meeting-room walls, treating such statements merely as instruments for corporate-culture branding and underestimating their constraining power over real-world operational decision-making (Babnik *et al.*, 2014; Braun *et al.*, 2012) ^[3, 8]. Three inter-related structural symptoms characterise this practical misconception, herein labelled “sloganisation of perceptions”, “textual homogenisation” and “practice-disconnect”.

Sloganisation of perceptions occurs when organisational members—especially senior- and middle-tier managers—categorise vision-mission frameworks as public-relations or human-resources-led communication outputs rather than evaluative benchmarks for operational decision-making. Bart (1997) ^[4] observes that numerous mission statements are replete with ornate rhetoric, giving rise to systematic discrepancies between values communicated externally and internal operational realities. Textual homogenisation describes the widespread adoption of template phrasing from industry leaders when drafting vision-mission documents, resulting in highly homogenous mission

statements across competing firms within a single sector. Generic phrases such as “pursue excellence”, “foster innovation” and “achieve sustainable operation” may be transplanted unmodified across disparate industries. Given that differentiation underpins strategic competition (Porter, 1980) ^[31], undifferentiated high-level organisational principles inevitably hamper differentiated resource allocation and strategic decision-making. Practice-disconnect refers to scenarios where substantial resources are consumed to develop polished mission-statement texts, yet operational activities prioritise chasing short-term profit driven by market fads. Severe disjuncture emerges between rhetorical claims and tangible corporate conduct (Bartkus *et al.*, 2000; Mantere & Sillince, 2007) ^[6, 25].

These three symptoms point towards a core theoretical and practical question that remains insufficiently addressed: under what conditions can vision-mission frameworks evolve from written texts into tangible forces driving corporate strategic behaviour? Empirical scholarship yields conflicting findings on this subject. Certain studies document positive associations between mission statements and corporate performance (Pearce & David, 1987; Bart & Baetz, 1998) ^[5, 30]. By contrast, a meta-analysis covering two decades of research conducted by Desmidt *et al.* (2011) ^[13] demonstrates that mission-statement effects on performance remain limited and heavily context-dependent. Sidhu (2003) ^[34] even advocates for the “shelving” of mission statements altogether. Such divergences suggest that scholarly inquiry ought to move beyond debating whether mission statements generate impact, and instead

examine whether mediating mechanisms relating to content quality, functional execution and rhetorical-behavioural consistency are properly established. Existing literature prioritises investigations linking mission-statement content to performance outcomes; process-oriented explanations concerning functional execution and consistency-building mechanisms remain comparatively underdeveloped, and constitute the point of departure for the present research.

The global smartphone industry is selected as the empirical setting for three reasons. First, the sector features rapid technological iteration, intense competitive pressure and extensive globalisation. Leading original-equipment manufacturers capture dominant market shares within a comparatively well-defined industrial landscape, furnishing favourable conditions for cross-case comparative analysis. Second, the setting approximates a natural experiment: leading firms operate within highly comparable macro-industrial environments encompassing supply-chain architectures, technological trajectories, regulatory frameworks and consumer trends, yet exhibit marked divergence in product positioning, R&D resource allocation and rhythms of overseas-market expansion. This configuration, characterised by homogeneous external conditions alongside heterogeneous firm-level strategic behaviour, facilitates examination of whether high-level corporate vision and mission constitute critical antecedent variables explaining strategic divergence. Third, ample publicly accessible material exists for sampled firms, including official vision-mission texts, annual reports, keynote addresses delivered by founders and senior executives, product-launch documentation and authoritative third-party industry datasets, enabling multi-source triangulation of evidence. Against this backdrop, four core research questions are formulated: (1) What constitutes the substance of vision, mission and core values, and how do the three constructs jointly shape corporate strategic intent? (2) What compositional attributes define high-quality mission statements, and how may such statements be aligned with stakeholder theory? (3) Which vision-mission archetypes can be derived from smartphone-industry case material, and what market-positioning and strategic logics correspond to each archetype? (4) What practical barriers hinder the translation of vision-mission statements from written documents into organisational action, and what institutionalised remedies are available?

From a theoretical perspective, a process-driven lens is introduced to mission-statement scholarship. Prior research predominantly adopts content-analysis or survey-based methodologies to test statistical associations between mission-statement texts and performance, with limited tracking of causal chains whereby espoused ideals translate into operational conduct. The three-tier “content-function-consistency” framework developed herein expands the unit of analysis beyond textual documents *per se* to encompass functional-execution mechanisms and practical rhetorical-behavioural alignment. This framework contributes towards reconciling long-standing scholarly disagreements concerning the efficacy of mission statements. Practically, an operational diagnostic toolkit is delivered for corporate practitioners. Firms may sequentially evaluate whether textual vision-mission formulations are lucid and concrete, whether espoused ideals are embedded within decision-making workflows and resource-allocation procedures, and whether rhetorical claims match operational

realities, thereby identifying bottlenecks obstructing practical implementation.

A qualitative multiple-case-study methodology is deployed. Empirical evidence is drawn from seminal strategic-management literature, official corporate documentation released by the four sampled firms, public speeches delivered by senior corporate representatives and third-party industry datasets. The three-tier “content-function-consistency” framework guides data coding and analysis. The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews relevant literature and identifies existing research gaps. Section 3 elaborates the research design. Section 4 presents in-depth case analyses of the four selected firms. Section 5 undertakes cross-case comparison and archetype identification. Section 6 discusses prevalent implementation challenges and transformation pathways for translating espoused ideals into practice. Section 7 outlines theoretical contributions and practical implications. Section 8 concludes the study by summarising key findings, acknowledging research limitations and proposing avenues for future inquiry.

Four advancements relative to existing scholarship are delivered. First, an integrated analytical framework is innovated. Three discrete scholarly streams—mission-statement content analysis, strategic-intent theory and organisational-consistency literature—are synthesised into the three-tier “content-function-consistency” analytical construct with clear operational definitions and observable indicators. The framework is rendered suitable for pedagogical training and corporate self-diagnosis. Second, an apt empirical setting is selected. The smartphone industry exhibits high external environmental homogeneity paired with substantial divergence in firm-level strategic conduct. Natural-experiment-style reasoning strengthens causal inference regarding high-level ideals as drivers of strategic decision-making. Third, practically applicable archetypes are distilled. Four vision-mission archetypes (inspirational, pragmatic, value-centred and inclusive-access) alongside their respective contextual suitability are derived to furnish reference benchmarks for corporate positioning. Fourth, process-oriented mechanistic explanations are advanced. A four-link causal mechanism consisting of sense-making, decision-making filtering, resource weighting and action anchoring is proposed. Vision-mission research is thereby advanced beyond static textual analysis towards dynamic process-based interpretation, furnishing theoretical foundations for subsequent quantitative empirical testing.

Literature Review

1. Vision, Mission, Core Values and Strategic Intent

Scholarly inquiry into vision and mission originates with Drucker’s (1954) ^[15] seminal questions: “What is our business? What should it be?” This problem formulation establishes the intellectual foundations for treating mission statements as starting-points for strategic deliberation. Subsequent work by Bennis and Nanus (1985) ^[7] places vision at the heart of leadership theory, arguing that effective leaders generate compelling, shareable depictions of desired future organisational states for their collectives. Building upon these insights, Hamel and Prahalad (1989) ^[19] introduce the canonical construct of strategic intent. These authors criticise conventional strategic-planning approaches for excessive constraint imposed by an organisation’s existing resource endowments, and argue that organisations

ought to pursue aspirational long-term objectives characterised by strategic tension. Strategic intent comprises three interrelated components: vision, mission and core values arranged within a hierarchical structure. Values occupy the foundational stratum and establish behavioural boundaries for the organisation. Mission sits at the intermediate level and defines the organisation's present-day existential purpose. Vision forms the apex and portrays the desired long-term future state of the organisation (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) ^[20].

Specifically, vision denotes an aspired-to future organisational condition, marked by long-range orientation, idealism and high temporal stability, typically spanning ten years or longer. Short-term quantitative operational targets are not supplied. Its core function lies in furnishing directional guidance, motivating organisational participants to pursue long-term objectives and mitigating excessive fixation on short-term performance metrics (Quigley, 1994) ^[32]. Mission answers fundamental questions concerning an organisation's *raison d'être*. Unlike the future-oriented nature of vision, mission focuses on present-day operations, delineating business boundaries, target stakeholders and modes of value creation, and furnishing evaluative criteria for routine organisational decision-making (Ireland & Hitt, 1992) ^[21]. Values represent collectively accepted behavioural norms and decision-making benchmarks that articulate organisational priorities and boundaries. Campbell and Yeung (1991) ^[10] emphasise that vision and mission can exert practical influence only when aligned with value-based identification held by organisational members to generate a genuine "sense of mission". Without complementary values constraining conduct, even eloquent vision-mission statements risk degenerating into empty rhetoric incapable of permeating departmental workflows and individual employee action (Mantere & Sillince, 2007) ^[25].

Notably, the conceptualisation of strategic intent distinguishes two fundamentally divergent modes of strategic reasoning. The first constitutes opportunity-driven, outside-in strategic thinking, whereby investment decisions follow perceived external market opportunities. The second represents inside-in, ideal-driven strategic reasoning. Under this framework, operational principles evolve from foundational organisational values; vision and mission are subsequently established following assessment of internal and external conditions, prior to the formulation of actionable operational plans. This distinction carries critical significance for the present study. If strategy is genuinely generated through inside-in logics, examination of high-level organisational ideals ought to explain systematic divergence in firm-level strategic conduct (Lu, 2019).

2. Compositional Content of Mission Statements and Stakeholder Theory

Within scholarly strategic-management discourse, complete mission statements are widely understood to incorporate three key components: overarching vision description, articulation of value-based philosophy, and concrete objectives (David, 2011) ^[12]. Overarching vision descriptions capture long-run developmental trajectories to mitigate short-term utilitarian bias. Value-philosophy statements articulate corporate operational beliefs and criteria for value-based trade-offs. Concrete objectives demarcate business scope, target beneficiary groups and

value-delivery modalities to secure operational feasibility. Ireland and Hitt (1992) ^[21] further derive practical recommendations for developing high-quality mission statements, including broad-based participatory input from organisational members, balancing breadth with focus, and emphasising distinctive organisational attributes. A well-established tradition of quantitative content-analysis exists within mission-statement scholarship. Pearce and David (1987) ^[30] propose a nine-element framework for mission-statement composition. Subsequent research by Klemm *et al.* (1991), Bart (1997) and Bartkus *et al.* (2000) ^[4, 6, 24] conducts content analyses of mission statements across nations and industries, identifying widespread heterogeneity in completeness and textual quality. From a chief-executive-officer perspective, Analoui and Karami (2002) ^[2] argue that meaningful mission statements must authentically reflect unique organisational identities rather than being template-driven outputs produced by external consultants.

At the theoretical level, stakeholder theory developed by Freeman (1984) ^[18] challenges traditional shareholder-primacy frameworks. It posits that corporate operations ought to address legitimate claims advanced by diverse social groups rather than prioritising shareholder interests exclusively. Internal stakeholders include shareholders, managers and employees; external stakeholders encompass customers, suppliers, governments and local communities (Freeman, 1984) ^[18]. Donaldson and Preston (1995) ^[14] differentiate descriptive, instrumental and normative applications of stakeholder theory. Normative interpretations assert intrinsic worth for stakeholder interests, furnishing theoretical underpinnings for mission statements as documents articulating corporate value commitments. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) ^[27] develop the stakeholder-salience model, demonstrating how managerial actors prioritise stakeholder groups according to three attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. Reviewing the evolution of stakeholder-theory scholarship, Parmar *et al.* (2010) ^[29] note that the core proposition of stakeholder theory frames firms as platforms for value creation among multiple stakeholders. Accordingly, high-quality mission statements represent public value-based commitments directed towards diverse stakeholder collectives. Mission texts facilitate reconciliation of competing interests and secure access to resources required for organisational survival and growth.

3. Strategic Functions of Vision and Mission and the Strategic-Management Process

Ireland and Hitt (1992) ^[21] identify three core strategic functions fulfilled by vision and mission. First, vision and mission communicate organisational purpose and direction across hierarchical levels to foster collective consensus. Second, they deliver evaluative benchmarks for decision-making and resource allocation. Third, they compel managerial actors to continuously reassess operational realities and drive organisational improvement. Standard strategic-management workflows consist of four phases: vision-mission definition, environmental analysis, strategic selection and strategic implementation (Johnson *et al.*, 2017) ^[22]. Vision and mission serve not only as the point of origin for the full workflow but also as benchmarks for evaluating strategic effectiveness. Assessment of strategic success cannot rely exclusively on short-term financial

metrics such as revenue and market share; strategic outcomes must also be evaluated against progress towards stated vision and fulfilment of value-creation commitments articulated within mission statements (Bryson, 2018) ^[9].

An enduring intrinsic tension within strategic management exists between “present-day requirements” and “future-oriented imperatives”. Present-day requirements correspond to short-term survival pressures including annual profit targets, cash-flow constraints and departmental performance indicators. Future-oriented imperatives relate to long-term developmental priorities such as frontier R&D, talent development and brand-asset accumulation. These two sets of priorities inherently compete for limited organisational resources. Vision and mission operate as weighting mechanisms in this context. On one hand, excessive managerial fixation on short-term performance is mitigated to sustain investment in long-range priorities. On the other hand, complete detachment from practical survival constraints and unrealistic pursuit of distant aspirations are prevented. Research by Collins and Porras (1996) ^[11] examining visionary organisations identifies high stability in core organisational principles alongside continuous adaptation of operational practices and targets. This dual structure—stable core principles paired with dynamically adjusted surface-level strategies—epitomises the weighting function performed by vision and mission. Strategic managers are therefore tasked with dual responsibilities: maximising value extraction from existing resources to deliver present-day performance, and “seeding for the future” through sustained investment in long-run competitive advantage. From a dynamic processual perspective, Kantabutra and Avery (2010) ^[23] highlight a frequently overlooked insight concerning vision-statement effectiveness: vision must “resonate”, engaging both rational deliberation and affective identification among organisational participants. A vision statement that is rationally sound yet emotionally hollow cannot drive behavioural change. This finding informs the present analytical framework. Evaluation at the content level ought to assess not merely completeness of constituent elements but also rhetorical force and narrative capacity embedded within textual formulations.

4. Empirical Evidence on Mission-Statement Effectiveness and Research Gaps

Empirical literature generates contradictory conclusions regarding whether mission statements produce practical effects. Pearce and David (1987) ^[30] observe that mission statements associated with high-performing firms incorporate a greater number of predefined compositional elements. Exploratory work by Bart and Baetz (1998) ^[5] documents positive correlations between mission-statement quality and selected performance indicators. Klemm *et al.* (1991) ^[24] note internal-marketing functions exercised by mission statements among employees. Conversely, Bartkus *et al.* (2000) ^[6] cast doubt on mission-statement practical utility under the title “Smoke and Mirrors”. Sidhu (2003) ^[34] argues that many mission statements degenerate into empty rhetoric and ought to be set aside. A meta-analysis conducted by Desmidt *et al.* (2011) ^[13] systematically reviews twenty years of prior research, finding that overall mission-statement effects on organisational performance remain limited and conditional upon moderating factors including employee internalisation and practical integration

with operational workflows. Literature assessments compiled by Braun *et al.* (2012) ^[8] similarly indicate that scholarship on mission-statement effectiveness must shift from correlation-oriented inquiry towards mechanism-focused investigation addressing *when, how and why* mission statements exert influence. A systematic literature review by Alegre *et al.* (2018) ^[1] further confirms that key knowledge gaps within mission-statement research centre on transformation processes bridging espoused ideals and tangible action.

Three interconnected research gaps are therefore identifiable within existing scholarship. First, a content-oriented gap exists. Content-analysis traditions examine *what* mission statements articulate, yet insufficiently investigate whether textual formulations embody genuine value-based trade-offs. Second, a functional gap persists. Conceptual strategic-function literature confirms that vision and mission ought to guide decision-making and resource allocation, yet process-based empirical observation of *how* ideals permeate real-world decision-making workflows remains scarce. Third, a consistency-related gap remains unaddressed. Mantere and Sillince (2007) ^[25] conceptualise strategic intent as a rhetorical device and highlight risks of disjuncture between espoused ideals and practice. Nevertheless, conditions and mechanisms sustaining rhetorical-behavioural consistency receive limited scholarly attention. The three-tier “content-function-consistency” analytical framework developed in this study responds to these identified gaps. The smartphone industry, which exhibits high external-environment homogeneity alongside divergent firm-level strategic conduct, serves as the empirical setting to advance scholarly dialogue from correlation-based disputes towards mechanistic explanation.

5. Vision-Mission, Organisational Culture and Leadership Identification

For vision and mission to exert practical influence, espoused principles must ultimately be accepted and internalised by organisational actors. Organisational culture and leadership accordingly constitute critical links bridging textual documents and operational conduct. Drawing on organisational-culture perspectives, Babnik *et al.* (2014) ^[3] deploy mixed-method analysis to examine mission statements across 222 Slovenian firms. Mission statements are found to embody core components of organisational culture, with modes of communication varying according to firm size. Bidirectional constitutive relationships between mission statements and organisational culture are confirmed. Klemm *et al.* (1991) ^[24] identify an “internal marketing” function performed by mission statements directed at employees, whereby corporate values are communicated to organisational participants in analogous fashion to consumer-targeted product marketing. Campbell and Yeung (1991) ^[10] argue that translation of vision into action follows an internalisation chain: values → behavioural norms → sense of mission. Quigley (1994) ^[32] further stresses that core leadership responsibilities include developing, disseminating and sustaining organisational vision. The vitality of vision depends upon consistent communication and behavioural modelling undertaken by leaders. This body of literature indicates that case-study analysis cannot merely compare textual claims against observable conduct. Attention must also be paid to the roles played by founders and senior executives in disseminating organisational ideals,

alongside cultural mechanisms that sediment principles into organisational routines.

Research Design

A qualitative multiple-case-study methodology is adopted. Case-study methods are appropriate for addressing “how” and “why” research questions centred on processes whereby vision-mission frameworks shape strategic choice, rather than estimating net effects among discrete variables. Furthermore, processes translating espoused ideals into action are embedded within corporate historical and organisational contexts. Preservation of contextual richness is required to generate valid interpretations (Yin, 2018) [35]. Multiple-case rather than single-case design is implemented to enhance validity and generalisability of conclusions through replication logic. Systematic correspondence between divergent vision-mission profiles and heterogeneous strategic behaviour across sampled firms furnishes robust support for the proposition that high-level organisational ideals drive strategic-choice formation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) [16, 17].

Purposive sampling is deployed. Sample firms are restricted to Apple, vivo, OPPO and Xiaomi, all of which consistently rank among global leaders in smartphone shipment volumes. Three considerations underpin sample selection. First, cases exhibit typicality and extremity. While occupying the same top industry tier in shipment scale, the four firms differ substantially in founding backgrounds, governance structures, brand positioning and business models. Major strategic prototypes observable within the smartphone sector are covered, satisfying maximum-variation sampling principles for case-study research. Second, cases enable comparability. All four organisations operate within highly comparable external technological, supply-chain and global-market environments. Confounding internal variance is relatively contained, facilitating retrospective attribution of strategic divergence to firm-level ideological differences. Third, evidence accessibility is guaranteed. Comprehensive public-disclosure systems are maintained by each sampled firm. Vision-mission texts, senior-executive speeches, annual reports and product-related documentation are retrievable and traceable, satisfying multi-source triangulation requirements.

Four categories of data are assembled for this study. First-hand vision-mission textual materials constitute the first data category, including vision-mission-value formulations published on corporate websites, within annual reports and sustainability reports, alongside speeches and interviews delivered by founders, chairpersons and chief-executive officers in public forums such as product-launch events, investor communications and industry conferences. Behavioural evidence forms the second data category, covering product-line portfolios, pricing strategies, R&D-investment priorities, patent-issuance records and trajectories of overseas-market expansion. Such material enables empirical testing of whether espoused ideals translate into consistent organisational conduct. Third, seminal and cutting-edge strategic-management literature supplies foundations for theoretical dialogue. Fourth, authoritative third-party industry datasets corroborate corporate market positioning and characterise sector-wide environmental conditions. The data-collection time window encompasses publication and

revision dates for vision-mission texts alongside subsequent strategic actions. Temporal sequencing is captured to mitigate threats posed by reverse-causality inference.

The three-tier “content-function-consistency” analytical framework (Babnik *et al.*, 2014) [3] guides data coding and analysis. At the content tier, vision-mission textual formulations are scrutinised. Clarity, concreteness and inspirational quality are assessed. Evidence of excessive abstraction, generic boilerplate phrasing and insufficient differentiation is identified. Completeness is evaluated against established compositional criteria for mission statements. At the function tier, practical strategic performance of vision-mission frameworks is examined. Investigation establishes whether high-level principles genuinely inform strategic decision-making and resource allocation rather than remaining confined to written documentation. Observable indicators include product-portfolio trade-off logics, R&D-resource prioritisation, pricing and channel strategies, and market-entry timelines traceable back to high-level organisational ideals. At the consistency tier, alignment between corporate rhetoric and operational conduct is evaluated. Congruence between tangible product-development, R&D and market-expansion activities and espoused vision-mission frameworks is examined. Manifestations of rhetorical-behavioural disjuncture are identified. Two researchers independently conduct three-tier coding across textual and behavioural datasets for all four sampled firms. Discrepant items are iteratively discussed until consensus is achieved. Triangulation across literature sources, corporate public documentation and third-party datasets enhances coding reliability. Four measures are implemented to safeguard research quality. For construct validity, multi-source data triangulation is enforced. Judgements regarding corporate ideals or operational conduct are incorporated into coded outputs only when corroborated by at least two independent evidence sources. For internal validity, temporal sequencing is rigorously verified. Causal linkages are posited exclusively where publication or revision of vision-mission texts temporally precedes corresponding strategic actions. Evidence for which chronological ordering cannot be confirmed is deployed solely to describe consistency conditions rather than to establish causal mechanisms. For reliability, independent coding is undertaken by two researchers, with inter-coder agreement calculated. Discrepant entries are discussed item-by-item, and a coding manual is archived to mitigate subjective interpretive bias originating from individual researchers. Concerning research ethics, all data are sourced from publicly disclosed corporate materials or published academic literature; no confidential internal information is accessed. Evaluations of sampled firms are confined to academic-analysis purposes, and recommendations for improvement are presented in constructive tone.

Case Analysis

1. Apple

Founded in 1976, Apple’s enduring ethos is encapsulated in the slogan “Think Different”. Core values emphasise “the intersection of technology and liberal arts”. Under Tim Cook’s chief-executorship, the corporate mission states: “We strive to create products that make a meaningful impact on people’s lives”. This ideological system is deeply

embedded within corporate history. Steve Jobs, the firm's co-founder, early articulated the notion that personal computing ought to act as "a bicycle for the mind". Technology, in this perspective, must serve human creativity and lived experience rather than requiring humans to adapt to technological constraints. From the content-tier perspective, Apple's vision-mission formulations avoid verbose jargon yet articulate distinct normative stances. "Think Different" communicates a spirit of challenging conventional wisdom and imagining alternative possibilities. "The intersection of technology and liberal arts" specifies corporate value philosophy, establishing that technology constitutes not an end in itself but a tool serving lived user experience, aesthetic standards and practical use-cases. The mission statement defines concrete objectives by converging evaluative criteria for all product-development activities onto the question of whether tangible improvements are delivered to end-user lives. Textual formulations are lucid and highly differentiated, eschewing generic industry boilerplate such as "pursue excellence" or "promote innovation". All three required components of mission-statement construction—vision depiction, value-philosophy articulation and concrete objectives—are fully covered.

At the function tier, the stated ideological framework materially shapes product strategy and ecosystem construction. Whereas numerous smartphone-industry competitors engage in hardware-specification rivalry prioritising processor benchmark performance, camera-sensor megapixel counts and fast-charging wattage, Apple does not pursue absolute maxima for discrete hardware parameters. Priority is instead assigned to integrated hardware-software performance, holistic user experience, aesthetic design and privacy-protection safeguards. Concerning resource allocation, substantial investment is sustained in operating-system development and cross-device ecosystem construction to deliver seamless interoperability across iPhone, Mac, iPad, Apple Watch and AirPods product lines. Long-term high-cost ecosystem-building initiatives that deliver no immediate sales-performance uplift nevertheless receive prioritised resource allocation. Vision-mission frameworks operate as "decision-making filters" in this context. When confronting contested strategic questions such as market entry into new domains or potential launch of low-priced product lines, evaluative judgements return to the benchmark: *does this product deliver meaningful improvements to end-user lives?* This directly instantiates the second strategic function of mission statements identified by Ireland and Hitt (1992)^[21]: furnishing evaluative benchmarks for resource allocation. Notably, the inspirational ideological profile of Apple leaves traces within human-resource and organisational practice. Long-standing recruitment cultures prioritise meticulous attention to product detail and interdisciplinary talent integration. Engineering personnel are expected to appreciate design considerations, while design practitioners are required to understand boundaries of technical feasibility. This instantiates the "intersection of technology and liberal arts" value proposition within hiring criteria. Furthermore, privacy protection is elevated beyond compliance obligations to become a core pillar of product differentiation. Multiple operating-system-level functions implementing data-minimisation principles for end-user information are rolled out, furnishing concrete instantiations

of the "meaningful impact on people's lives" mission within ethically contested technology domains. Such practices demonstrate that implementation of the inspirational vision-mission archetype manifests not merely within product strategy but also within selective construction of organisational capabilities.

Consistency-tier assessment reveals broad alignment between decades-long product iteration, ecosystem development and service-launch activities against espoused vision-mission frameworks. Conventional industry fads are not pursued indiscriminately. A user-experience-first orientation is maintained, supporting sustained leadership in global smartphone revenue and profit capture. Partial discrepancies between practical realities and espoused principles are nevertheless observable. Public debate has repeatedly emerged regarding product-repair rights, repair-cost levels and supply-chain labour conditions. Achieving full alignment with stated ideals represents a dynamic process of continuous improvement rather than a static accomplished state. From market-outcome perspectives, strategic trade-offs and returns associated with Apple's archetype are clearly observable. Abstention from low-price competition implies surrender of substantial potential market-share volume. Nevertheless, ecosystem stickiness generates service-revenue streams and user-retention effects, enabling sustained capture of the largest share of industry profit pools. The logic of "trading vision for premium pricing and ecosystem for user retention" represents financial realisation of the inspirational vision-mission archetype. It furnishes a vivid mechanistic case for scholarly debates concerning vision-mission-performance linkages: espoused ideals do not directly generate superior performance but indirectly support performance by shaping sustainable differentiated positioning. Synthesising three-tier analysis, Apple exemplifies the inspirational vision-mission archetype. Core tenets centre on challenging convention and imagining alternative futures. Market positioning corresponds to premium flagship product portfolios, industry-defining status and substantial brand-premium capacity. The archetype suits leading-edge firms possessing robust R&D and brand foundations seeking to reshape industry rules.

2. Vivo

vivo's vision states: "To become a healthier, longer-lived world-class enterprise". Its full mission articulation reads: "To create great products for users; to foster a joyful and progressive atmosphere for employees; to build a platform of mutual trust and shared gains for partners; and to deliver stable long-term returns for shareholders". Shen Wei, the firm's founder, repeatedly articulates the operational philosophy that "corporate culture constitutes the base of a bucket, while strategy and technology represent merely its planks". The volume of water held by a bucket depends upon the integrity of its base. Cultural and value-based foundations accordingly underpin corporate operations. This philosophy underpins relatively restrained expansion rhythms maintained by vivo amid periods of intense industry volatility. At the content tier, vivo's mission statement constitutes a canonical illustration of stakeholder-framework application. Value-based commitments are explicitly articulated for four distinct groups: users, employees, partners and shareholders. Close alignment is observable with theoretical propositions advanced by Freeman (1984)

^[18] and the value-co-creation perspective outlined by Parmar *et al.* (2010) ^[29]. The vision “healthier, longer-lived” eschews scale-oriented slogans such as “become industry leader”. Corporate operational robustness and long-term survival are prioritised as core objectives. Underpinning value philosophy emphasises principled restraint, stability and mutual benefit. Textual formulations exhibit high firm-specific distinctiveness, and all three compositional elements of mission statements are fully covered.

At the function tier, espoused vision materially shapes product strategy and market-expansion rhythms. The objective of “healthier, longer-lived” discourages pursuit of explosive short-term market-share growth. Destructive industry-wide price-war dynamics are deliberately avoided. Product-line iteration proceeds incrementally. Priority is assigned to refining user-perceptible value drivers including portrait-imaging performance, industrial design and system stability. Overseas-market expansion follows a steady, ground-building pattern. Priority is given to establishing mutually beneficial channel-partner mechanisms rather than pursuing rapid volume growth through short-term bulk product deployment. Concerning resource allocation, vision-mission frameworks constrain decisions preventing sacrifice of employee welfare or supply-chain-partner interests for short-run profit. Balanced consideration of multiple stakeholder interests is embedded within operational judgements. This exemplifies practical application of the stakeholder-salience model proposed by Mitchell *et al.* (1997) ^[27]. Stakeholder prioritisation at *vivo* is not determined exclusively according to power and urgency attributes. Employees and partners are actively assigned priority levels comparable to those afforded to shareholders.

The *vivo* case further illustrates practical instantiation of pragmatic-archetype principles within supply-chain governance. Amid industrial commoditisation pressures, cost burdens are not mechanically passed upstream to component suppliers. Long-term stable collaborative relationships with core partners are preferred. Commitments towards “mutual trust and shared-gain platforms” are exchanged for sustained supplier investment in quality assurance and delivery reliability. Short-run procurement-cost flexibility may be partially sacrificed, yet risk-mitigation logic aligns with the “healthier, longer-lived” vision. During periods of industry turbulence, robust partner networks furnish critical buffers mitigating risks of supply disruption and quality-control failures. In addition, internal emphasis on “joyful and progressive” employee atmospheres supports retention of core teams amid fierce talent-market competition. Risks associated with loss of critical technical expertise and accumulated organisational knowledge are reduced. This represents human-resource-dimension implementation of the “longer-lived” vision.

Consistency-tier assessment indicates sustained relatively restrained expansion rhythms amid intense industry commoditisation. Priority is assigned to win-win channel-partner arrangements and internal organisational stability. Broad alignment is maintained between espoused principles and practical conduct. The “bucket-theory” cultural framing encourages restraint amid market fads. Indiscriminate diversification driven by industry hot-topics is avoided. From market-outcome perspectives, performance signatures associated with the pragmatic archetype are

characterised by “resilience amid volatility”. Although *vivo*’s market-share ranking fluctuates across product cycles, no strategic missteps have materialised amid major industrial disruptions including channel-structure transformation, technological transitions and regulatory adjustments. Core internal teams and distribution networks remain highly stable. This corroborates the practical substance of the “healthier, longer-lived” vision. Success is not defined by attaining market-share leadership at discrete time-points but by capacity to survive and evolve across multiple industrial cycles. Synthesising analytical results, *vivo* exemplifies the pragmatic vision-mission archetype. Core tenets emphasise operational health, longevity and multi-party mutual benefit. Market positioning corresponds to stable mid-to-high-end product portfolios, balanced full-segment coverage and risk-averse operations. The archetype suits mature firms operating within highly volatile industries prioritising survival across industrial cycles.

3. OPPO

OPPO’s mission states: “Technology for people, benevolence for the world”. Core principles articulate that “technology is merely a means; people constitute the end-goal”. Commitments are made to deliver exquisite technology to consumers worldwide. This formulation places “benevolence” at the heart of corporate value systems, establishing a distinct normative stance within a smartphone industry saturated with hardware-specification competition. At the content tier, benevolence and human-centredness constitute core value-philosophy pillars. Clear conceptual distinction is drawn between means and ends: technology does not represent an ultimate objective. Serving human needs and contributing to societal well-being form ultimate goals. Concrete objectives target delivery of aesthetically pleasing, functional products for global consumers. Distinct normative positions are articulated, avoiding boilerplate phrasing oriented towards hardware-specification rivalry. Interpreted through stakeholder-theory lenses, customers occupy the centre of value commitments, while the phrase “for the world” encompasses broader external stakeholders including communities and environmental systems. Normative stakeholder-theory principles valuing pluralistic interests are reflected (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) ^[14].

At the function tier, value-philosophical commitments centred on “benevolence” translate into concrete product-design and technology-investment decisions. Concerning product design, priority is assigned to universal accessibility, usability and long-term usage experience. Functionality including simplified interfaces for elderly users, battery-health-protection safeguards and extended system-maintenance support are developed. Concerning R&D-resource allocation, priority investment targets imaging performance, battery life, system fluidity, privacy security and eco-friendly materials delivering direct benefits for end-users and societal sustainability. Technological concepts generating marketing attention yet delivering limited tangible user value are not subject to large-scale investment despite high market popularity. Such trade-offs demonstrate decision-filtering functions exercised by the mission statement. Resource allocation is guided by whether tangible benefits accrue to human stakeholders rather than by capacity to generate marketing publicity.

Within the OPPO case, “benevolence”-oriented principles are also observable within technological-narrative choices. Long-standing investment priorities including fast-charging technology, imaging capabilities and system-fluidity optimisation correspond to “high-frequency-perception” innovation categories. Such developments may not attract maximum publicity during product-launch events yet cumulatively enhance end-user satisfaction across day-to-day usage. This “slow-variable”-oriented investment strategy contrasts sharply with practices prioritising concept-driven marketing hype. It illustrates deep-shaping effects exerted by the value-centred vision-mission archetype upon R&D portfolios. Innovation evaluation benchmarks are defined not by media-topic-generation capacity but by tangible benefit delivered to end-users. Furthermore, development of age-adaptive and accessibility-oriented features for elderly user groups transforms the abstract principle “technology for people” into verifiable product specifications, furnishing concrete observable indicators for consistency-testing. Consistency-tier assessment shows sustained focus on core consumer-electronics business segments. Competitive priority is assigned to product quality and end-user experience. Malicious price-war dynamics are largely avoided. Broad alignment is maintained between espoused principles and practical conduct. From market-outcome perspectives, competitive advantages associated with the value-centred archetype gradually materialise within saturated-market conditions. As industry dynamics shift from volume-driven expansion towards replacement-cycle-driven competition, weighting assigned to brand trust, system smoothness and after-sales experience increases. Long-term investment anchored in “benevolence-oriented” principles translates progressively into user-retention performance and brand-equity premiums. Performance realisation for the value-centred vision-mission archetype exhibits marked time-lag characteristics. Returns are not immediately reflected within contemporaneous financial reports but accumulate within long-term brand-asset variables. In summary, OPPO exemplifies the value-centred vision-mission archetype. Core tenets comprise “technology for people, benevolence for the world”. Market positioning prioritises experience-driven quality and societal-recognition objectives. The archetype suits consumer-goods firms for which brand trust constitutes an important source of competitive advantage.

4. Xiaomi

Xiaomi’s mission states: “Let everyone enjoy the good life brought by technology, every moment” (earlier formulation: “Let everyone enjoy the fun of technology”). Core positioning centres on inclusive-access technology, supported by high-value-for-money strategies alongside deployment of an AIoT (Artificial Intelligence of Things) ecosystem-chain framework. Lei Jun, the firm’s founder, summarises this ethos as “touching hearts, priced with integrity”. Service targets are explicitly defined as broad segments of ordinary consumers. At the content tier, mission-statement objectives are sharply defined: popularise technological access so that high-quality technological products become accessible to mass consumer groups. Underpinning value philosophy revolves around inclusivity, affordability and open ecosystems. Target beneficiaries (“everyone”) and value outputs (“technologically enabled

good life or enjoyment”) alongside delivery modalities (“affordable pricing”) are explicitly articulated. Textual formulations exhibit strong firm-specific distinctiveness.

At the function tier, the inclusive-access-technology positioning profoundly shapes Xiaomi’s business model. A ceiling is imposed on aggregate hardware net-profit margins. High hardware-product premiums are forgone. Revenue generation relies upon large-scale user bases, new-retail operations and internet-service offerings. Ecosystem-chain expansion constitutes not merely commercial diversification but a vehicle for realising inclusive-access principles. Diverse smart-home products are delivered to consumers at accessible price-points. Integrated online-and-offline new-retail architectures are developed to compress channel-cost structures and sustain inclusive-access positioning. R&D, channel-development and ecosystem-chain investment priorities converge upon the core objective of expanding technological accessibility. Notably, this business model generates distinctive tensions. Trade-offs emerge between aspirations for brand advancement into premium-market segments and foundational inclusive-access positioning. These represent practical tests of the weighting function performed by vision-mission frameworks (Collins & Porras, 1996) ^[11].

The Xiaomi case illustrates extreme institutionalisation of inclusive-access principles. Rhetorical commitments to “priced with integrity” are converted into quantifiable, auditable pledges via public disclosure of aggregate hardware net-profit-margin ceilings. Abstract inclusive-access values are transformed into tangible financial constraints verifiable by consumers, investors and internal teams. Alignment benchmarks for “rhetoric-practice consistency” become publicly observable. Concerning ecosystem-chain operations, inclusive-access principles are extended across expanded product categories through investment and capability-building support for ecosystem-chain partner firms, forming a network for popularising technology through point-to-spillover dynamics. Structural tensions inherent within the inclusive-access archetype remain. Pursuit of premium-segment positioning to enhance profitability demands careful management of perceived brand-identity drift away from “priced with integrity” commitments. Xiaomi’s adoption of a dual-brand strategy in recent years responds to such tensions, illustrating boundary-setting effects exerted by vision-mission frameworks during critical strategic adjustments.

Consistency-tier assessment reveals sustained adherence to high-value-for-money core orientations. Flagship-grade technologies are cascaded downwards towards mid- and low-price-point device portfolios. Ecosystem-chain expansion proceeds continuously. Broad alignment is achieved between espoused principles and practical conduct. From market-outcome perspectives, scale-related commitments associated with the inclusive-access archetype are largely fulfilled. Xiaomi consistently ranks among global leaders in smartphone shipment volumes. The scale of connected devices hosted upon its AIoT platform generates network-asset advantages difficult for competitors to replicate. Within emerging-market contexts, high-value-for-money positioning facilitates rapid user-base establishment. Nevertheless, scale-prioritised strategies are accompanied by structural constraints relating to low profit-margin levels. This represents an enduring challenge

for the inclusive-access archetype: achieving dynamic balance between delivering technological access for broad populations and generating returns for shareholders demands sophisticated business-model design. Synthesising analytical findings, Xiaomi exemplifies the inclusive-access vision-mission archetype. Core tenets state that technological goods ought to be accessible for all. Market positioning targets mass-market full-segment coverage and large-scale ecosystem development. The archetype suits firms operating within large-volume markets characterised by diverse consumption tiers and substantial emerging-market growth potential seeking scale expansion via business-model innovation.

Clear internal structures emerge across the four sampled firms when evaluated under the three-tier framework. At the content tier, all four organisations deploy differentiated, complete vision-mission textual formulations. At the function tier, observable substantive constraints exerted by high-level organisational principles upon product-development, R&D, pricing and market-entry decision-making are identifiable. At the consistency tier, broad rhetorical-behavioural alignment is maintained across cases. Observed partial discrepancies mark domains requiring continuous improvement. This shared characteristic contrasts with pessimistic scholarly assessments documenting widespread hollowing-out of mission statements within industry (Bart, 1997; Sidhu, 2003) [4, 34]. Substantial firm-level heterogeneity exists regarding mission-statement practical effectiveness, justifying further investigation via cross-case comparison.

Cross-Case Comparison

1. Comparative Overview of Four Vision-Mission Archetypes

Analysis of Apple, vivo, OPPO and Xiaomi within the three-tier framework yields four representative vision-mission archetypes observable within the smartphone industry.

2. Inspirational archetype

Core ethos centres on challenging convention and imagining alternative futures. Representative firm: Apple. Market positioning corresponds to premium flagship portfolios and industry-defining status. Strategic style prioritises market leadership, demand creation and high-risk-high-return trade-offs. Suitability applies to mature saturated industries where firms possess robust R&D and brand-equity foundations and pursue reshaping of industry rules.

2.1 Pragmatic archetype: Core ethos emphasises operational health, longevity and multi-party mutual benefit. Representative firm: vivo. Market positioning corresponds to stable mid-to-high-end balanced portfolios. Strategic style prioritises incremental iteration, risk aversion and multi-stakeholder balance. Suitability applies to industries characterised by rapid technological change and high environmental uncertainty, where priority is assigned to organisational survival across industrial cycles.

2.2 Value-centred archetype: Core ethos states “technology for people, benevolence for the world”. Representative firm: OPPO. Market positioning prioritises experience-driven quality. Strategic style

prioritises human-centred design and long-run value for users and society. Suitability applies to saturated competitive markets where brand trust and end-user experience constitute core sources of competitive advantage.

2.3 Inclusive-access archetype: Core ethos advocates universal access to technological benefits. Representative firm: Xiaomi. Market positioning targets mass-market segments and large-scale ecosystem development. Strategic style prioritises scale expansion, business-model innovation and democratisation of technology. Suitability applies to large-volume markets with diverse consumption tiers and substantial emerging-market-growth potential.

Within a single industry setting, four leading firms exposed to comparable macro-environmental conditions pursue fundamentally divergent product, pricing, R&D and overseas-expansion strategies due to differing value orientations embedded within high-level vision-mission frameworks. This finding supports core propositions derived from strategic-intent theory: strategy does not constitute passive reaction to external opportunities but actively generated choice originating from foundational organisational values (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989)^[19]. It must be emphasised that no archetype holds absolute superiority. Fitness depends upon firm-specific resource endowments and industrial-cycle contexts. The inspirational archetype demands formidable R&D and brand-building capacity enabling industry-definition. The pragmatic archetype sacrifices explosive-growth potential in exchange for cycle-survival resilience. The value-centred archetype builds brand trust through sustained investment in user value. The inclusive-access archetype accepts low hardware-premium levels to build user bases and unlock network-effect advantages. Evaluation of vision-mission quality therefore cannot proceed via decontextualised judgements. Process-oriented explanations are thereby furnished for the context-dependent effectiveness of mission-statement performance documented within Desmidt *et al.*'s (2011)^[13] meta-analysis.

3. Rhetoric-Practice Alignment

Cross-case comparison identifies one shared attribute among leading global smartphone manufacturers: broad maintenance of alignment between espoused vision-mission frameworks and tangible operational conduct. By contrast, certain second-tier industry participants produce polished textual vision-mission outputs yet fail to activate practical functional performance, generating rhetoric-practice disjuncture. This contrast carries important theoretical implications. Mission-statement effectiveness is not randomly distributed; it depends upon institutional arrangements sustaining rhetorical-behavioural consistency. The consistency tier therefore represents an in-depth evaluative indicator within case-study analysis. Analytical emphasis falls upon critical decision-making junctures characterised by conflicting interests. Investigations establish whether judgements revert to vision-mission benchmarks or prioritise short-term profit and market-fad chasing (Mantere & Sillince, 2007)^[25]. Within sampled cases, Apple's restraint amid temptations of low-price-segment entry, vivo's moderation amid extreme

price-war pressures, OPPO's deliberate restraint regarding marketing-driven technological fads, and Xiaomi's defence of value-for-money core orientations amid premium-segment aspirations collectively furnish evidence demonstrating constraining effects of espoused ideals during high-stakes decision-making.

4. Causal Mechanisms Linking Vision-Mission Frameworks to Strategic Conduct

Synthesis of case-study evidence yields a four-link causal mechanism explaining how vision-mission frameworks shape strategic conduct. First, sense-making: vision-mission frameworks furnish unified interpretive schemas for organisations, answering foundational questions concerning organisational identity, existential purpose and desired future trajectories. Co-ordination costs for cross-hierarchical decision-making are reduced. Second, Decision-making filtering: high-level organisational principles operate as evaluative criteria embedded within investment and product-development workflows. Strategic options inconsistent with espoused ideals are filtered out prior to commitment of organisational resources. Third, Resource weighting: espoused ideals determine resource-allocation weights between long-range investment priorities and short-term performance imperatives. Magnitude and directional priorities for "seeding for the future" are established (Collins & Porras, 1996) ^[11]. Fourth, Action anchoring: espoused ideals furnish traceable reference-points for organisational conduct. Strategic coherence is preserved amid market-fad volatility and competitive pressure. Interdependencies exist across the four links. Breakdown at any single link may trigger rhetoric-practice disjuncture. Conversely, fully functional four-link mechanisms transform mission statements from "smoke and mirrors" into genuine drivers of strategic conduct (Bartkus *et al.*, 2000) ^[6].

5. Dynamic Combinations and Contextual Transitions among Archetypes

The four archetypes are not static mutually exclusive categories. In practice, firms may exhibit combined or transition-oriented characteristics across distinct business divisions or developmental phases. For instance, Xiaomi's smartphone-core business adheres to the inclusive-access archetype, while ecosystem-chain investment and premium-product-line development partially incorporate value-centred and inspirational-archetype elements. A configuration emerges whereby core-archetype commitments remain stable while peripheral operations draw upon alternative archetypal logics. Similarly, Apple's sustained expansion of service-business offerings may be interpreted as attempts to integrate inclusive-access-archetype features upon an inspirational-archetype core, enabling broader user access to premium-grade services via affordable subscription-fee structures. Such combinatorial phenomena suggest that archetype categorisations ought to be interpreted as dominant ideological tendencies rather than exclusive labels. Strategic consistency is ultimately determined by capacity to return to dominant ideological priorities amid resource-competition scenarios. Furthermore, fundamental industrial-phase transitions—for example, shifts from volume-driven expansion to saturated-market conditions—necessitate reassessment of fit between existing archetypes

and altered contextual realities. Under such conditions, dynamic-adjustment mechanisms characterised by "stable core principles and iterable surface-level practices" assume heightened importance (Bryson, 2018) ^[9].

Common Implementation Pitfalls and Transformation Pathways

Comparison between theoretical strategic-management curricula and industry case-study evidence identifies three pervasive pitfalls obstructing translation of written vision-mission statements into organisational conduct. The first pitfall is excessive abstraction and vagueness. Many corporate vision-mission documents deploy generic phrasing such as "pursue excellence", "achieve sustainable operation" or "foster innovation". Such statements are transferable across sectors without modification. No industry-specific attributes or actionable trade-off criteria are articulated. Employees cannot derive actionable guidance for distinguishing permissible versus impermissible courses of action. Mission statements degenerate into decorative slogans (Rarick & Vitton, 1995) ^[33]. This represents failure at the content tier. The second pitfall consists of insufficient differentiation. Template mission-statement formulations are copied directly from industry-leading competitors, generating high textual homogeneity among competing firms within a sector. Since differentiation underpins strategic competition (Porter, 1980) ^[31], undifferentiated high-level organisational principles inevitably impede differentiated resource allocation and strategic decision-making, trapping firms within homogeneous competitive dynamics. The third pitfall is rhetoric-practice disjuncture. Firms publicly proclaim commitments to innovation and user priority yet compress R&D investment and chase short-term market fads in practice. Vision-mission frameworks are deployed exclusively for public-relations purposes and excluded from real-world decision-making workflows (Braun *et al.*, 2012; Mantere & Sillince, 2007) ^[8, 25]. This represents concurrent failure at both function and consistency tiers.

Drawing upon case-study evidence and scholarly recommendations, five practical transformation steps are proposed to mitigate these pitfalls. Step 1: Refine ideological textual formulations. Generic boilerplate language is eliminated. Distinctive vision-mission statements are developed grounded in firm-specific resource endowments and industrial attributes, establishing robust foundations at the content tier (Ireland & Hitt, 1992) ^[21]. Step 2: Contextual decomposition. Abstract vision-mission principles are disaggregated across functional departments including R&D, product development, marketing, human resources and finance. Translatable operational benchmarks are generated for front-line teams to mitigate disjuncture between high-level ideals and day-to-day workflows. Step 3: Organisational communication. Reliance upon posters and printed handbooks is avoided. Case-based instructional formats and guided interpretive sessions led by supervisory personnel foster understanding among employees regarding connections between individual-role responsibilities and corporate vision-mission frameworks. Organisational consensus is built (Babnik *et al.*, 2014; Klemm *et al.*, 1991) ^[3, 24]. Step 4: Institutional linkage with performance-evaluation and decision-making mechanisms. Value-based dimensions derived from vision-mission frameworks are appropriately integrated within

performance-assessment architectures. A formal review checkpoint is introduced for major new-business initiatives and large-scale resource-allocation decisions to evaluate alignment with corporate vision-mission principles. Institutional safeguards ensure that espoused ideals shape tangible resource allocation and deliver practical function-tier implementation. Step 5: Dynamic-adjustment mechanisms. Core values, vision and mission constitute organisational genetic material requiring high stability against short-term market volatility. Product strategies, technological trajectories and operational models may iteratively adapt to external environmental shifts. Revision of vision-mission textual formulations is appropriate exclusively under scenarios of fundamental industry extinction or qualitative redefinition of corporate positioning. Excessively frequent revisions generate confusion within organisational cognition (Bryson, 2018; Collins & Porras, 1996) ^[9, 11].

Digital-era contexts furnish new leverage points alongside novel risks for vision-mission implementation. On one hand, corporate digital platforms embed vision-mission principles within routine workflows. Alignment-assessment fields may be incorporated within new-product-project-initiation systems. Value-based behavioural indicators may be configured within performance-management platforms. Internal case libraries accumulate real-world narratives illustrating how vision-mission principles guide decision-making. Abstract value propositions thereby acquire frequent, concrete points of organisational engagement. On the other hand, social-media environments amplify costs associated with rhetoric-practice disjuncture. Consumers and employees can rapidly compare corporate public claims against observable conduct. Material inconsistencies may escalate rapidly into brand-reputation crises or employer-brand-image damage. Consistency-maintenance is therefore no longer an optional supplementary objective but foundational infrastructure for corporate-reputation governance within digital contexts. Accordingly, the five transformation steps retain full relevance within digital-era settings. Requirements for implementation frequency and transparency are heightened. Institutional design for vision-mission implementation must operate under the assumption that all public corporate claims will be subject to external scrutiny.

Discussion and Conclusions

Three major theoretical contributions are delivered. First, scholarly dialogue within mission-statement research is advanced beyond correlation-oriented disputes towards mechanistic explanation. Prior scholarship repeatedly tests statistical associations between mission-statement textual content and financial-performance outcomes, yielding divergent and weakly valid conclusions (Bart & Baetz, 1998; Desmidt *et al.*, 2011) ^[5, 13]. This study demonstrates that such divergence originates from systematic firm-level heterogeneity across three dimensions: content quality, functional performance and rhetoric-practice consistency. Firms possessing formal mission statements may occupy drastically different states of practical activation. Analysis must expand beyond textual documents to encompass mechanistic processes to explain why mission-statement effects materialise in certain contexts yet remain absent in others. Second, constructive responses are furnished to rhetorical-critique perspectives advanced by Mantere and

Sillince (2007) ^[25]. Those scholars conceptualise strategic intent as a rhetorical device and highlight risks of rhetoric-practice disjuncture. This study identifies conditions sustaining rhetorical-behavioural consistency: differentiated textual formulation, functional institutionalisation and linkage with decision-making workflows. Disjuncture is reframed from an inevitable fate to a diagnosable and remediable managerial challenge. Third, the four-link causal mechanism (sense-making, decision-making filtering, resource weighting and action anchoring) explaining vision-mission-driven strategic conduct is distilled. Operationalised conceptual building-blocks are provided for future quantitative research. Subsequent empirical work may develop measurement scales to test differential effects of mechanism strength upon corporate performance and strategic coherence (Lu, 2019). Findings generated within this study resonate with and extend canonical scholarly propositions. Results corroborate Collins and Porras's (1996) ^[11] proposition of "stable core principles paired with iterable surface-level strategies". All four sampled firms exhibit long-run stability in core values and vision, while product and market strategies undergo continuous adaptation. Nevertheless, case-study evidence demonstrates that such stability is not spontaneously achieved. It requires sustained maintenance via decision-making-process linkages and performance-management institutions. Concerning dialogue with stakeholder theory, *vivo*'s multi-constituent mission statement illustrates that normative stakeholder-oriented commitments (Donaldson & Preston, 1995) ^[14] may be instantiated within concrete textual commitments and resource-allocation practices rather than remaining confined to abstract ethical rhetoric. Concerning dialogue with competitive-strategy scholarship, four vision-mission archetypes correspond to four differentiated competitive-positioning logics (Porter, 1980) ^[31]. This suggests that high-level organisational ideals constitute deep-seated sources of differentiation. The fundamental question "what kind of organisation do we aspire to become" precedes decisions concerning "where shall we compete".

Three implications emerge for corporate managers. First, vision-mission formulation constitutes strategic work rather than communication-department activity. Text drafting ought to be led by operational managers possessing deep understanding of firm-specific resource endowments and industrial structures. Production of ornate rhetorical outputs ought not to be outsourced to branding consultants (Analoui and Karami, 2002) ^[2]. Second, practical implementation hinges upon institutional linkage. Without integration within investment-decision checkpoints, performance appraisal and promotion criteria, vision-mission frameworks inevitably degenerate into wall-mounted slogans. Leading sampled firms in this study achieve varying degrees of embedding between espoused ideals and decision-making workflows. Third, periodic consistency audits ought to be conducted. Firms may deploy the three-tier framework developed herein for cyclical evaluation of alignment across three dimensions: espoused organisational principles, resource-allocation priorities and observable market-oriented conduct. Identified discrepancies are incorporated within operational-improvement agendas (Ireland & Hitt, 1992) ^[21]. For small-and-medium-sized industry participants, the four archetypes furnish reference

benchmarks for strategic positioning. When pursuing differentiated competitive pathways, reflection ought first to address the question “what kind of organisation do we aim to become”. Product and market strategies may subsequently be designed accordingly, rather than engaging in reactive benchmark-chasing within hardware-specification rivalry (Lu, 2019). From educational perspectives, this study validates the suitability of the three-tier “content-function-consistency” framework for case-teaching within strategic-management curricula. The framework guides learners beyond superficial learning outcomes limited to theoretical memorisation and descriptive firm-case narration. Analytical thinking is trained to progress sequentially from textual-content evaluation to functional-performance verification and finally to consistency-testing. Subjective evaluative judgements are discouraged. Within case-study assignments and group-report assessments, students may be instructed first to collect official corporate vision-mission textual evidence (content tier). Evidence concerning corporate product-development, R&D and market-conduct activities is subsequently assembled (function and consistency tiers). Judgements are then formulated regarding applicable vision-mission archetypes and rhetorical-behavioural-consistency status. This training strengthens theory-practice linkages and cultivates evidence-based managerial-judgement capacities rather than impression-based reasoning (OpenAI, 2026) ^[28]. Drawing upon three-tier “content-function-consistency” analysis of four leading global smartphone-manufacturer case studies, four core conclusions are derived. First, vision, mission and core values collectively constitute corporate strategic intent. They form the logical starting-point for the full strategic-management workflow alongside benchmarks for evaluating strategic effectiveness. An enduring core tension within strategic management concerns balancing “present-day requirements” (short-term survival imperatives) and “future-oriented imperatives” (long-run developmental priorities). Vision and mission fulfil critical weighting-mechanism functions in this context. Strategic managers are thereby tasked with dual responsibilities: maximising value extraction from existing resources to deliver present-day performance, alongside “seeding for the future” via sustained investment in long-term competitive advantage (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; Collins & Porras, 1996) ^[11, 19]. Second, complete mission statements incorporate three components: overarching vision description, value-philosophy articulation and concrete objectives. Consideration must be extended to diverse stakeholder groups including shareholders, managers, employees, customers, suppliers, governments and local communities to achieve multi-party interest balance rather than exclusive focus upon short-term shareholder profit maximisation (Freeman, 1984; Parmar *et al.*, 2010) ^[18, 29]. Third, four vision-mission archetypes—namely inspirational, pragmatic, value-centred and inclusive-access—are distilled from smartphone-industry case material. Distinct archetypes correspond to divergent market-positioning logics, resource-allocation priorities and risk preferences. Under conditions of comparable external industrial environments, divergence in high-level organisational ideals significantly shapes downstream strategic-choice configurations. Fourth, the primary practical risk associated with vision-mission frameworks is

degeneration into empty rhetoric. Prevalent pitfalls include excessive abstraction, lack of differentiation and rhetoric-practice disjuncture. Practical remedies encompass ideological refinement, contextual decomposition, organisational communication, institutional linkage with decision-making and performance-evaluation workflows, alongside dynamic-adjustment mechanisms implementing “stable core principles and iterable surface-level practices” to mitigate implementation failure. Overarching practical take-aways for corporate practitioners may be summarised as follows. Construction of vision-mission frameworks ought not to be treated as rhetorical copy-writing tasks for public-relations purposes. Instead, vision-mission development represents the point of origin for integrated decision-making and resource-allocation mechanisms. Textual formulation constitutes merely the initial step. Substantive challenges reside within subsequent contextual decomposition, communication and institutional embedding to enable vision-mission frameworks to operate as filters for corporate operational decision-making. Practitioners may periodically undertake self-assessment guided by three diagnostic questions. Are textual formulations lucid and differentiated from peer-firm rhetoric (content)? Are investment and product-development judgements genuinely informed by espoused organisational ideals (function)? Can critical-juncture trade-offs withstand public scrutiny against stated principles (consistency)? Hesitation in answering any of the three questions identifies priority domains for subsequent improvement in vision-mission implementation.

References

1. Alegre I, Berbegal-Mirabent J, Guerrero A. The real mission of the mission statement: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 2018;24(4):456-473. doi:10.1017/jmo.2017.82
2. Analoui F, Karami A. CEOs and development of the meaningful mission statement. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 2002;2(3):13-20. doi:10.1108/14720700210440044
3. Babnik K, Breznik K, Dermol V, Trunk Širca N. The mission statement: Organisational culture perspective. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 2014;114(4):612-627. doi:10.1108/IMDS-10-2013-0455
4. Bart CK. Sex, lies and mission statements. *Business Horizons*, 1997;40(6):9-18. doi:10.1016/S0007-6813(97)90062-8
5. Bart CK, Baetz MC. The relationship between mission statements and firm performance: An exploratory study. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1998;35(6):823-853. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00121
6. Bartkus B, Glassman M, McAfee B. Mission statements: Are they smoke and mirrors? *Business Horizons*, 2000;43(6):23-28. doi:10.1016/S0007-6813(00)80018-X
7. Bennis WG, Nanus B. *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. Harper & Row, 1985.
8. Braun S, Wesche JS, Frey D, Weisweiler S, Peus C. Effectiveness of mission statements in organisations—A review. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 2012;18(4):430-444. doi:10.1017/jmo.2012.24

9. Bryson JM. Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organisations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organisational achievement. 5th ed. Jossey-Bass, 2018.
10. Campbell A, Yeung S. Creating a sense of mission. *Long Range Planning*,1991;24(4):10-20. doi:10.1016/0024-6301(91)90003-8
11. Collins JC, Porras JI. Building your company's vision. *Harvard Business Review*,1996;74(5):65-77.
12. David FR. Strategic management: Concepts and cases. 13th ed. Prentice Hall, 2011.
13. Desmidt S, Prinzie A, Decramer A. Looking for the value of mission statements: A meta-analysis of 20 years of research. *Management Decision*,2011;49(3):468-483. doi:10.1108/00251741111120806
14. Donaldson T, Preston LE. The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*,1995;20(1):65-91. doi:10.5465/amr.1995.9503271992
15. Drucker PF. The practice of management. Harper & Row, 1954.
16. Eisenhardt KM. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*,1989;14(4):532-548. doi:10.5465/amr.1989.4308385
17. Eisenhardt KM, Graebner ME. Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*,2007;50(1):25-32. doi:10.5465/amj.2007.24160888
18. Freeman RE. Strategic management: A stakeholder approach. Pitman, 1984.
19. Hamel G, Prahalad CK. Strategic intent. *Harvard Business Review*,1989;67(3):63-76.
20. Hamel G, Prahalad CK. Competing for the future. Harvard Business School Press, 1994.
21. Ireland RD, Hitt MA. Mission statements: Importance, challenge, and recommendations for development. *Business Horizons*,1992;35(3):34-42. doi:10.1016/0007-6813(92)90064-3
22. Johnson G, Whittington R, Scholes K, Angwin D, Regnér P. Exploring strategy: Text and cases. 11th ed. Pearson, 2017.
23. Kantabutra S, Avery GC. The power of vision: Statements that resonate. *Journal of Business Strategy*,2010;31(1):37-45. doi:10.1108/02756661011012769
24. Klemm M, Sanderson S, Luffman G. Mission statements: Selling corporate values to employees. *Long Range Planning*,1991;24(3):73-78. doi:10.1016/0024-6301(91)90035-N
25. Mantere S, Sillince JAA. Strategic intent as a rhetorical device. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*,2007;23(4):406-423. doi:10.1016/j.scaman.2007.03.002
26. Lu L. Handbook of strategic planning. Google Books, 2019. Available from: <https://books.google.com>
27. Mitchell RK, Agle BR, Wood DJ. Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *Academy of Management Review*,1997;22(4):853-886. doi:10.5465/amr.1997.9711022105
28. OpenAI. ChatGPT (GPT-5.6) [Large language model], 2026. Available from: <https://chatgpt.com/>
29. Parmar BL, Freeman RE, Harrison JS, Wicks AC, de Colle S, Purnell L. Stakeholder theory: The state of the art. *The Academy of Management Annals*,2010;4(1):403-445. doi:10.1080/19416520.2010.495581
30. Pearce JA, David F. Corporate mission statements: The bottom line. *Academy of Management Executive*,1987;1(2):109-116. doi:10.5465/ame.1987.4275814
31. Porter ME. Competitive strategy: Techniques for analysing industries and competitors. Free Press, 1980.
32. Quigley JV. Vision: How leaders develop it, share it, and sustain it. *Business Horizons*,1994;37(5):37-41. doi:10.1016/0007-6813(94)90072-8
33. Rarick CA, Vitton J. Mission statements make cents. *Journal of Business Strategy*,1995;16(1):11-12. doi:10.1108/eb039686
34. Sidhu J. Mission statements: Is it time to shelve them? *European Management Journal*,2003;21(4):439-446. doi:10.1016/S0263-2373(03)00073-2
35. Yin RK. Case study research and applications: Design and methods. 6th ed. Sage, 2018.