



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRATEGIC LEADERS' FORESIGHT  
AND STRATEGIC THINKING COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYEE LINE  
OF SIGHT TO THE MISSION AND THE VISION IN FAITH-BASED NOT-  
FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS**

A Thesis submitted by

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For Archie, Oscar, and Aria.

## **ABSTRACT**

Like any other organisation, not for profit organisations recognise the critical importance of having engaged employees to achieve their mission and vision. Employees make decisions every day that can affect the success of the organisation in fulfilling their mission and the vision. This study explored the idea that employees' engagement with the mission and vision is displayed through discretionary effort and an ability to link their tasks to the mission and vision. When employees can make a connection between what they do every day, and the organisation's mission and vision there is a greater likelihood of success. Therefore, to create their desired future state, those who formulate strategy have the responsibility to develop and communicate strategy in a way that provides a clear line of sight for employees to the mission and vision which is critical to an organisation.

This study focused on not for profit faith-based organisation leaders. It specifically explored the relationship between the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of leaders who have mid to high influence in formulating strategy and how these competencies impacted their employees' line of sight to the mission and vision.

The results demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between strategic leadership's foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employee line of sight to the mission and the vision.

## **CERTIFICATION OF THESIS**

This Thesis is entirely the work of Gillian Cheyne except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Luke van der Laan

Associate Supervisor: Dr Sophia Imran

Student and Supervisors signatures of endorsement are held at university.

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

As a Human Resources professional with strategic leadership experience in both the corporate and not for profit (NFP) sectors, the area of how an organisation's mission and its vision is understood by employees and their engagement with it, has been of long-term interest to the researcher. Of particular interest is, whether employees have a deep understanding of why they do what they do every day.

To explore this area, the researcher enrolled in a postgraduate degree program which provided a credible framework for research. The current thesis is a result of research undertaken as a practitioner researcher in the Doctor of Professional Studies (DPRS) program at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Australia. Of particular interest was to explore a Canadian NFP faith-based organisation with offshore beneficiaries.

In the researcher's professional practice and more particularly within the not-for-profit sector, there was an observable disconnect at times between the mission and the vision that strategic leadership communicated, and employee engagement with that mission and vision. The researcher witnessed both the frustration of strategic leaders with employee's apparent disengagement from the true meaning of the mission and the vision, even when the syntax of the message on the mission and vision was repeatedly and clearly articulated. What the researcher then questioned was whether employees had a clear 'line of sight' to the mission and vision. Where 'line of sight' can describe the nature of employees' understanding of the mission and the vision as communicated by the organisation; if they felt supported to achieve the mission and vision; and if they understood that what they did every day contributed to the mission and vision.

If there is not a clear line of sight and understanding of the organisation's mission and vision, it is of significant concern for the NFP sector. The sector relies greatly on

income from donors and supporters who demand accountability on whether the mission and the vision of the organisation is being achieved. If there is a perception amongst donors and supporters that the NFP organisation is not functioning in line with its mission, it may negatively affect income, and their trust in the organisation.

This is different in the for-profit sector where income is generally acquired from those who have received something tangible in return (goods or services) and where meeting the mission and the vision is measured in financial sustainability.

Strategic leaders formulate strategy and are the primary source of communication of the mission and the vision to employees. Understanding that the strategy these leaders formulate is not just about the present, but the future, the researcher determined to explore the foresight and strategic thinking competence of leaders. This was to better understand the complex relationships between strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking and employees' line of sight to the mission and vision, and the impact on employees engagement.

For the purpose of the study mission, vision, strategy, strategic leadership, and employee engagement is understood as follows:

- a) Mission - the organisation's purpose and reason for existing (Ireland & Hitt 1992)
- b) Vision - a preferred future, something to be pursued, a guide, a road map to fulfil the mission (Bryson 2018)
- c) Strategy - a plan on how to move the organisation into the desired future state to fulfil the mission and the vision (Phillips 2011)
- d) Strategic Leadership - those within the organisation who have moderate to high level of influence on strategy formulation (Ferguson 2019a)
- e) Employee Engagement - employee enthusiasm for the organisation and their job beyond what might normally be expected (Arrowsmith & Parker 2013).

Although there is significant research on employee engagement, there is a gap in the academic literature that specifically addresses the line of sight of employees to the mission and the vision of the organisation, and how they engage with and



deliver the strategy. The researcher believed that further research was necessary to understand how strategy level leaders can ensure that the mission and the vision is clearly understood by employees as a prerequisite for employee engagement to help guide practice through the formulation and communication of informed strategies.

The overarching objective was to improve the researcher's own professional practice, as a scholarly professional in the Human Resource and organisational leadership profession while making an original knowledge contribution to supporting the NFP sector in recognising and understanding the importance of leadership and how leader capabilities associated with strategy are linked to employees' engagement with the key elements thereof. As such, the study sought to address the gaps in the literature and practice knowledge as they relate to the overarching question of "What is the nature of relationship between strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employees' engagement with the organisations' mission and vision in a faith-based NFP?"

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

The study of organisations, and specifically strategic leaders' competencies within organisations has generated an extensive body of literature. The notion that the strategic leaders' competencies of foresight and strategic thinking influence organisational outcomes is grounded in strategic leadership theory as described by Finkelstein, Cannella and Hambrick (2009).

The study of employee engagement is also extensive. A Google Scholar search of "employee engagement" produces about 1,400,000 results. However, research on how strategic leaders, mission and vision and employee engagement interact, particularly within the NFP sector is rare.

As an HR professional, the researcher is very aware of the discourse around employee engagement. In addition, there is ever-increasing financial investment by organisations in external consultants and consulting firms to complete employee surveys to determine whether organisations are meeting their intrinsic needs. As an

example, Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) suggest three approaches to understanding employee engagement: i) what motivates employees (support, recognition, feedback) ii) are they committed and performing over and above the requirements of the job; and iii) do employees have a feeling of wellbeing at work. Regardless of the type of enquiry, employee engagement surveys are seen as an opportunity for employees to provide feedback and share their concerns, which the organisation can then choose to action.

Very few employee engagement surveys explore the question of whether employees understand the mission and the vision of their organisation. Nor do they measure the employee's willingness to deliver on the strategy as communicated by leadership. Academic literature more often addresses leadership styles as they relate to employee engagement, rather than leadership competencies and how they impact the employees' understanding of the mission and the vision.

NFP organisations are often under resourced. The demand for their services is ever increasing, and employees (as in the organisation in this study) are geographically removed from the individuals or communities they are supporting. It can be difficult for employees to see and understand how their work connects to the mission and adds value to the lives of those they serve. In addition, this lack of knowledge may also influence their ability to effectively deliver on the vision and organisation strategy.

Consequently, this research investigated the link if any, between leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employees' 'line of sight' to the mission and vision of the organisation.

Of note is that at the time of the research, the organisation participating in this research had been recognised year over year among high-profile organisations who measure employee engagement. It was certified as best in class for consistently high employee engagement scores focussed mainly on how employees felt about their workplace, their benefits, and the organisation in general. The researcher believed that the organisation was well positioned to take part in the study to measure something unique that was not previously researched.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The formalised learning environment of the DPRS program provided the opportunity to explore new ideas. It enhanced the researcher's credibility as a trusted scholarly professional in the HR and organisational leadership space particularly within faith-based NFPs. The researcher's participation in the program provided the opportunity within the NFP sector to make a difference and contribute to positive change. Particularly, applying the research findings and learning within the context of smaller NFP organisations provide further insight and contributed to their ongoing success.

Integral to completing the DPRS was the completion of the Reflective Practice Tool (USQ). It was a valuable and insightful tool to formally engage and to "interrogate the researcher's professional career within its various contexts, identifying the emergence, development and demonstration of major professional capabilities" Doncaster and Thorne (2000, p. 395). The Reflective Practice tool provided opportunity for a detailed evaluation and reflection of prior learning and valuable direction in establishing the learning objectives of the researcher.

The researcher's primary areas of professional competency were identified as being workplace methods and process logic, collaboration, and cultural intelligence. This involved evaluating and delineating objective information from the subjective information, collaboration with and influencing decision makers and key stakeholders within an organisation. All fundamental daily tasks for any HR professional. The researcher's high emotional intelligence capabilities, cultural intelligence and critical judgment were identified. These were noted as equally valuable when working with employees, influencing, participating in and delivering decisions and recommendations that may be life changing events for them.

The tool highlighted the researcher's desire to improve their knowledge on strategic management within a NFP organisation operating in a global context; a desire to have an increased ability to manage complexity; contribute to enhancing employee engagement and the employee's line of sight to the organisation's mission and vision.

#### **1.4 PROFESSIONAL WORK-BASED RESEARCH**

The DPRS program provided the researcher the opportunity to engage with issues identified in the area of professional practice within the workplace. Also, to apply doctoral level research to develop original knowledge that was relevant to this profession. Likewise, the DPRS experience provided an opportunity for professional development particularly in the area of cognitive skills, critical thinking, and communication. The DPRS also made an original knowledge contribution, based on rigorous research, to professional practice.

The research applied an explanatory approach to examining the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of strategy level leaders within a NFP organisation; the relationship between their communication of the mission and the vision and employee engagement; and how their employees understood and executed that mission and vision. This research was conceptually based on Strategic Leadership theory (Finkelstein et al. 2009).

The research started with a review of the literature on NFP's, strategic leadership, mission and vision, foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employee engagement.

The researcher developed an online survey using a valid and reliable foresight and strategic thinking competence measure (Van der Laan 2010). The purpose was to investigate the strategic leaders' competencies of foresight and strategic thinking as they relate to the formulation and communication of the organisation's mission and vision in a NFP organisation. Further, the study sought to investigate the nature of employees' engagement with organisation's mission and vision. The researcher formulated the employee online survey questions for the purpose of this study. These questions were grounded in the idea of discretionary effort, and current literature on line of sight and employee engagement.

## **1.5 SCOPE**

The research was completed within a faith-based Canadian NFP organisation delivering international programs in the developing world. The goal was to conduct rigorous research with a view to identifying opportunities for enhancing discretionary effort and mission and vision mindedness amongst employees. The study developed a framework to assist in developing recommendations and solutions for strategy level leaders in NFP organisations to better deliver on their mission and vision in a changing world, by ensuring employees have a clear line of sight to the mission and the vision.

Volunteers are an important group in many NFP, with many organisations depending on them for critical tasks (Garner & Garner 2011). Tasks that assist in delivering the mission of the organisation and achieving the vision. This importance of volunteers is acknowledged. Similarly, members too are an important group within NFPs. However due to the limited scope of a doctoral study and the intention of the researcher to focus on employee engagement, it was decided to exclude the volunteer/member group from the study.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

To achieve the aim of the work-based research the methodology of this project was underpinned by a post-positivism paradigm. A post positivism approach demands that the research problem remains central. How the research and data is collected is determined by its ability to provide insight and solutions to the research questions. The post-positivism approach allows for theories, background knowledge and the values of the researcher to influence what is observed. Post-positivists pursue objectivity by recognizing the possible effects of biases (Creswell 2014).

The study was explanatory and primarily quantitative. This provides opportunity to test theory, describe relationships between variables based on objective, unbiased statistical analysis. As such the research design provided a breadth of meaning that helped to better understand the organisational context, and the organisations' leaderships' critical competencies. It also explained how these competencies

interacted with and influenced employee engagement and the realisation of the organisation's mission and vision.

An analysis of the extant literature provided the theoretical foundation for the development of the study's conceptual model and research questions.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH THESIS STRUCTURE**

This thesis is presented with five content chapters, references, and appendices. Each chapter is set out according to the higher degree by research presentation schedule. Each chapter provides an introduction and conclusion to guide the reader. The chapters are presented in order of the work-based research process. Starting with the Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Survey findings, culminating in the Discussion and Conclusion of the study.

## **1.8 SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 provided statement of the research problem, and an overview and introduction of the area of the study and research. By completing the study, the intention was to make an original knowledge contribution to professional practice, academia, and the researcher's own professional development as a research practitioner. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature on NFP organisations; the constructs of mission and vision particularly within NFPs; strategic leadership theory; leadership competencies; employee engagement; and the concept of line of sight.

## 2 Literature Review

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an introduction and overview of the topic of the study which was explored in this research. It also provided information as to what the anticipated contribution the thesis makes to the literature and area of professional practice.

The contributions included contributing to the literature on the NFP sector; extending the understanding and application of strategic leadership theory in a practice context; developing further the concept of line of sight and the idea that although employee engagement is important, evidence suggests that the employee line of sight to the organisation's mission and vision is necessary in delivering organisational objectives. Furthermore, the study contributed to an enhanced understanding of foresight and strategic thinking as valid leader competencies within organisations; and to theory and method by demonstrating the link between strategic leadership theory as it relates to employee engagement.

In order to provide a foundation for the study this chapter reviewed the literature on NFP organisations. It examined the constructs of mission, vision, and the relationship between the competencies of an organisation's strategic leaders and how they impact the engagement of employees within the organisation, based on the employee's line of sight of the mission and the vision.

There are numerous critical leader competencies identified in the literature. For the purpose of this study, the competencies which will be explored are those of strategic thinking, foresight competency and strategic decision making approach as outlined by Van der Laan (Van der Laan 2010; Van der Laan & Erwee 2012; Van der Laan & Erwee 2013; Van der Laan & Yap 2016)

Strategic leadership theory suggests that organisations develop and assimilate into the future based on the abilities and characteristics of their leaders (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996). Therefore, the research examined how the strategic leaders' strategic thinking, foresight competency and strategic decision making approach predict employee engagement levels and the employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision in the execution of strategy.

The concepts of both mission and vision were examined to understand their critical importance to organisational strategy and employees as executors of that strategy. A review of the literature explored the correlation between mission, vision, and employee engagement.

The idea of 'line of sight' was developed further, building on the limited literature on the topic of 'line of sight' between employees and organisational strategy (Boswell 2006).

The initial concept of employee engagement came from the idea that employees were demanding more of their workplace, to provide "meaning and identity" (Buckingham & Coffman 2014, p. 268). Employee engagement as a term was made popular initially by the Gallup Organisation in the late 1990's (Little & Little 2006). The focus at that time was on employee engagement being something measured through employee retention, productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability (Buckingham & Coffman 1999). Gallup, along with others, for example Schaufeli (2006) broadened the idea of drivers of engagement beyond the initial concept. For example, they inferred that employee engagement is more about metrics that define involvement, commitment and enthusiasm (Mann & Harter 2016), or that uncover organisational issues that impact engagement.

Albrecht (2010) supported Saks' (2006) view that there was a shortage of academic research on employee engagement, and most writing was from the practitioner's perspective. Albrecht notes that in subsequent years there has been a significant increase in employee engagement being addressed by academia.



Similarly, there is little documented research or literature in the context of faith-based NFP's as related to this study which explored whether an employee's line of sight to the mission and the vision impacted their engagement. This question is of particular interest in the NFP sector where the organisation's mission is often the primary motivator for employees. Where identification with the mission and its alignment to their personal values consequently plays an important role in employees' engagement and the success of the organisation (Patel et al. 2015; Desmidt 2016). The mission can help "establish norms and values that impact on the way in which people perform in order to achieve the purpose" of the organisation (Alegre, Inés et al. 2018, p. 464). The mission also contributes to holding the organisation together (Ireland & Hitt 1992; Palmer & Short 2008). Kirk and Nolan (2010) note that the mission, particularly in a NFP, is an important tool in helping to define a culture that is attractive and motivating for employees.

The organisation in this study is global in mandate and scope. Their core beliefs and values are deeply rooted in the Christian faith (Bykov 2015). The organisations' core purpose, and its mission is to meet the needs of those they serve through meeting their spiritual, physical, social and economic needs (Slauenwhite 2018).

## **2.2 NOT FOR PROFITS (NFP)**

The term not for profit was essentially conceived to describe and classify the financial status of charitable organisations who existed to help others rather than make profit (Hall 2016). Why these organisations exist is a varied and more complex question. Charitable NFP's span many sectors. For example, health care, religious groups, education, animal welfare, addressing community and overseas issues (Hall 2016) to name a few. Each of these have their roots within a specific and clearly defined values-based belief.

To be registered as a charity an organisation must demonstrate that they do not operate for personal gain or profit (ACNC ; Emmett 2015). Hence, and for the purpose of this study the organisation will be referred to as a NFP organisation.

With the passing of time, more and more NFP organisations emerged across western society. Many were promoted by the political and social reformation in the late 1800's and early 1900's (Elson July 1, 2007). As time moved on and cultural expectations shifted, the sector became highly regulated. One of the major contributing factors to their considerable growth is believed to be the tax-exempt status of NFPs as determined by their respective jurisdictions.

The statutory and regulatory governance of NFPs was officially put in place in the 1930's in Canada and have been enhanced and consolidated over time (Elson July 1, 2007).

### **2.2.1 NFP's and Influence on Society**

NFP's in our communities play a vital role in providing services, contributing to healthy communities and the wellbeing of individuals (Camper 2016a). In addition, they provide significant contribution to local economies through providing employment, opportunities for volunteering and generally contributing positively to social capacity building (Simpson et al. 2003). They play a major role in society in general, and perpetually face major challenges as they respond to the growing needs of their clients and the shifting expectations of their stakeholders.

For many NFP's who provide services to the developing world, the current globalisation of today's world has become a valuable tool. Having a global mindset and operating globally is not new to them, as many were already engaged globally, influencing cultures, and performing acts of charity in a global context for hundreds of years (Taylor 1894; O'Sullivan 1984; Murdoch 1994). When considering the global influence of NFP's, it is not only the high demand for the service they offer that should be considered, but the value they bring to their clients (Emmett 2015).

Within the context of globalisation, NFP's have been the avenue to provide individuals from within their local home communities opportunity to interact with other cultures that would not have previously happened. The growing global mindset for and desire to add value while you travel, has opened the door to new concepts now given trendy terms like voluntourism, give back getaways (Ahmed et

al. 2017; Kasriel-Alexander 2017) and the rise in popularity of students taking a gap year to travel overseas and work for a not for profit in order to gain knowledge, new skills and help others less fortunate (Snee 2014).

Some argue that these activities are merely feel good activities making offshore recipients feel inadequate rather than an opportunity for participants to learn and to serve (Van Engen 2000). However, this type of global engagement and connecting with offshore NFP's has the potential to shape even the local communities where the NFP is operating from (Camper 2016b)

Many not for profit organisations involved in such programs believe that it is not enough to become an ethical global citizen (Hermann et al. 2017). Hermann suggests that their hope is that there will be a compelling urge for participants to return and partner with the organisation they served with to help change lives in the place they have visited. These organisations are often recognized as those who are innovative, supporters of inclusiveness and diversity, contributing positively to the social awareness and social cohesion of communities locally and overseas. DiMaggio and Anheier (1990; Marquis et al. 2013) suggest that they influence the communities they are operating in by bringing more breadth to the community's social awareness far beyond their immediate local community.

### **2.2.2 Culture Within NFPs**

Much of the literature describes culture within organisations as the values, beliefs, assumptions, ways of interacting, and how these happen as contributing to the organisation's uniqueness. Seel (2000, p. 2) states that "organisation culture is the emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and proprieties between the members of that Organisation and with its environment." Culture is foundational to why organisations exist, and consequently what they can achieve. Culture has implications on the development of organisational mission and vision.

The culture within any organisation influences whether or not it has the ability to fulfil its mission and vision (Teegarden et al. 2010). Teegarden et.al suggest that

constantly revisiting and checking on culture is essential to keep on track and focused on the day to day and the formulation of strategy. A culture that is aligned to the mission of the organisation is vital to ensure a deep sense of connection and emotional bond in employees, enriching the employee experience (Schein 2010; Cam et al. 2011; Babnik et al. 2014; Parent & Lovelace 2018). Martins and Terblanche (2003) propose that to formulate good strategy, there is a need for creativity and innovation. They suggest that creativity and innovation are influenced by the organisations' values and beliefs (its culture), and that "creativity and innovation will flourish only under the right circumstances in an organisation" (2003, p. 73).

Many people decide to work for a NFP because they want to do something meaningful, idealistic, and/or change the lives of others for good (Imas 2014). Often to do that the individual accepts a reduction of wages and benefits (Parkes & Langford 2006). Many NFP are often under resourced, and can struggle to retain talent (Brewster et al. 2017); have a high turnover of talented and much needed professionals, or there are tensions between governance board and leadership (Golden-Biddle & Hayagreeva 1997).

Consequently NFP organisations whether large or small cannot exist without a pervasive sense of mission (Parkes & Langford 2006). Mission is a significant driver of employee engagement within NFP organisations (Tippet & Kluvers 2009). It is a source of motivation for employees particularly when aligned with their personal values (De Cooman et al. 2011). A mission statement that is well formulated and properly used can accomplish the goal of motivating employees and shaping the identity of the organisation (Alegre, Ines et al. 2018). It is critical for NFP organisations to demonstrate the link to their mission when they engage in strategic thinking and foresight to make informed decisions about the future (Hines 2006).

Even so, faith-based NFP's still face challenges with respect to governance and leadership (Wiltshire et al. 2017) . Faith-Based NFPs

Thaut (2009), Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013) recognize that there is a lack of scholarship on the role of faith-based organisations in society, and the role of faith within them. Clarke, Jennings and Shaw (Clarke 2006; 2007) have defined faith-based organisations as being inspired and guided by the principles of the faith in which it has its roots. Harris, Halfpenny and Rochester (2003) go further categorising faith-based organisations as organisations who are shaped or grounded in a faith tradition but do not generally involve explicitly religious activities, like evangelism or proselytising. Activities are focused on providing aid, advocacy, and services (Jochum et al. 2007).

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, UK (Jochum et al. 2007) propose that the characteristics of faith-based organisations are that, they have a connection with a faith heritage or affiliation; they acknowledge the role of faith in identifying board members and staff; their main source of income is from donors of like faith; they integrate faith practices into the organisation, and there will be some extent to which a religious or spiritual experience is a desired social outcome.

Faith and religious organisations have led the way in humanitarian aid (Davis 2019). Thaut (2009) suggests that the formalisation of faith-based organisations started in colonial times, and that Christian missionaries during those times were the precursor for humanitarian Christian organisations. They too support the idea that humanitarian Christian organisations endeavour to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their audience (2009, p. 322). Of interest to this study is their taxonomy of Christian faith-based humanitarianism, that describes evangelistic humanitarianism as : humanitarianism for the sake of evangelism; spiritual transformation; justify their work in explicitly religious language; Christian faith a likely requirement of staff; funding appeals directed to Christian base and churches (2009, p. 331). Based on this description, the organisation in the study can be described as being an evangelistic humanitarian organisation.

The World Bank Group (2014) in 2014 joined with and recognised faith-based organisations as doing essential work to combat extreme poverty, protecting the vulnerable, delivering essential services and alleviating suffering. The World Bank

are a global organisation of 189 member countries who are “working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries” (2014).

### **2.2.3 Faith based Not-For-Profits**

Clarke (2006a) proposes that faith based organisations have unique characteristics when measured against secular organisations. Particularly, they “draw on elaborate spiritual and moral values” that are distinctly different from those of secular organisations and are openly practised as a demonstration of their faith. Clarke continues that faith based organisations are often well networked locally and globally, and because of faith being grounded in their mission, they have a significant ability to “mobilise adherents” (2006b, p. 845) particularly those who are disgruntled with secular organisations.

For many years, faith based NFPs have been major global contributors to health, education and social welfare projects (Dann 2018). Faith based organisations openly state, and demonstrate by their actions, that they are concerned for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of those they serve and “are associated with a fervent form of missionary zeal, to win converts to the faith” Clarke (2006a, p. 846).

A well-known global organisation which exemplifies concern for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of others (through serving) and unashamedly and openly declares their mission to share the gospel is the Salvation Army. Over 150 years ago William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army, was burdened to reach the underprivileged and poor of London with the gospel; and within 2 years the work developed into offering basic education, soup kitchens, and relief and aid to the destitute (Murdoch 1994).

Some faith based NFP’s have concerns over being known for evangelising or seeking converts amongst those they serve, and so moderate their religious identity (Tomalin 2012). Others are reluctant to describe themselves as faith based, or religious as it may hinder or place obstacles in their way when applying for

government funding (Berger 2003). This funding usually has restrictive controls on how it can be used, and often funds cannot be used for religious/faith activities. These organisations are increasingly casting themselves as social justice entities, rather than faith based organisations. This can lead to organisations framing their mission as what they do for others, when they are subconsciously desiring to convert or evangelise others; or moving away from their mission and core faith based values to take on a new persona, as a secular organisation (Glenn & Berger 2002). They highlight the prolific government funding to faith based development/community service organisations. They believe that receiving government funding may place restrictions on faith based organisations, which in turn may restrict their ability to deliver on their mission, as they lose autonomy over how that funding is spent. In effect, their core mission which is intrinsically linked to their faith roots, and strategy, now highly influenced by government become disconnected.

The faith based NFP organisation under review in this study, openly and without justification boldly states that they do what they do because of their faith, and that there is no imposition of religious obligation or conversion requirement on those they serve. They state that they will share the good news of how the faith they are operating from can change the lives of those they serve. They believe as does Clarke (2006, p. 846) that “faith matters” when bringing social development and transformation.

#### **2.2.4 Governance and Governance Board**

To thrive and remain viable into the future it is imperative that the NFP has a robust system of governance, with clearly delineated lines of responsibility and accountability. For this research, governance refers to, ‘the processes and structures used to direct and manage an organisation’s operations and activities. It defines the division of power and establishes mechanisms to achieve accountability among stakeholders, the board of directors and management’ (Rassart & Miller 2013, p. 6)

A Governance Board is there to provide a platform for overseeing risk management and the strategic direction of the organisation. In addition to fulfilling government legislation and compliance requirements (Steane & Christie 2001; Chait et al. 2011; ACNC 2020). The organisation in this study operates under the oversight of a Governance Board, so the literature for this style of Board and governance was reviewed. Even though the Boards of NFP's appear to have a degree of autonomy (Glaeser 2002) society demands that they must be transparent and be seen to be consistently well governed and managed (Candler & Dumont 2010). In the NFP organisation the delineation of roles and responsibilities of the Board may be more obscured than in other organisations. Usually this is more evident in those organisations that have started out small, where Board members may have started by directing or assisting in certain areas due to lack of resources or knowledge within the organisation itself, or where they had specific expertise (Block 2004).

Within the NFP sector funding received is mostly from private and organisational donors. The idea of governance is primarily to be accountable while ensuring the objectives of the Organisation are met. Also, that resources are utilized in an effective way and in the best interests of the organisation's beneficiaries. Governance Boards are required to prioritise ensuring that the organisation is staying within its mission, and performing a generative role of "reinterpreting the mission in light of current trends and changing circumstances" (Ebrahim et al. 2014, p. 85). Furthermore, never has the role of those who govern NFPs been so open to scrutiny, so controlled by legislation and so accountable to stakeholders and government entities as it is today (Cornforth 2003). Success in NFPs is defined as satisfying the mission and the quality or impact of the services they provide (Tweedie 2016), instead of focussing on financial performance for their stakeholders, as is the case for other organisations.

Some organisations are founded by a charismatic leader who set the mission and the vision relevant for that point in time. However, that original mission and vision may be too static, and may not necessarily have evolved at the same pace as the current and future demands of clients and the ever changing operating environment (Alegre, Inés et al. 2018). Organisations in these situations are unable



to pull the organisation into the future without revising their mission statement, and may be observed as struggling with allowing new members to accomplish important tasks (English & Peters 2011). Many successful NFP organisations today only exist because of the dedication and passion of a few individuals (often the founders) who kept the organisation and mission alive despite the lack of resources and funding (Block, 2004). Block and Rosenberg (2002, p. 353) state that “Founders deserve special recognition because they have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to translate their visionary ideas into organisational realities for the good of a community.” They suggest that founders may limit the capacity of the organisation, as they are not always good managers, are less likely to meet with their Boards as they are “entrepreneurs, people with ideas and vision” (2002, p. 365) and may be less interested in the direction of others.

Problems can exist for smaller organisations who must rely solely on the board members who might be passionate about the mission, but yet have no experience governing or managing an organisation. Their lack of expertise often creates situations where they are unable to provide objective decision making and/or fulfil their obligations as a governance board member (Frady 2009). Most organisations need individuals on their board who are passionate about sharing their gifts for the purpose of fulfilling the mission and the vision of the organisation (Weisman 2003). The complex and competitive environments NFPs operate in demand that board members have a breadth of high level competencies to navigate the future work together effectively and cohesively (Mollenhauer 2017).

In some NFP organisations, the board members hold some management functions. Generally, the Board’s role is to manage risk, and ensure the mission remains intact and there is no deviation from their core values while ensuring compliance and accountability (Leblanc & Fraser 2016). It is imperative that the Board has a clearly defined mandate of their role, not only for them to function as needed, but to provide them a benchmark to annually measure their efficacy. Some Boards oversee process, while others are active in the process itself and this can vary from organisation to organisation. When reference is made to “the Board” it is usually referring to an entity, charged with the responsibility and authority that comes from

the group corporately. For the organisation in this study, the board's role is to ensure alignment with local governing bodies, compliance, fiduciary responsibilities toward stakeholders and endorse the strategy.

In the NFP sector often the Board Chair is seen "as being relatively less powerful and more ceremonial and symbolic than the CEO position" (Harrison et al. 1988, p. 214). However, in some cases this is not the case. Otto (2003) noted, the role of the NFP Board chair is often one in which there is ambiguity. Often there are conflicting expectations about the role between the chair, other board members, members of management and external stakeholders - since it is often not defined in a clear and formal manner (Harrison et al., 2013). Creating complexity and at times frustration amongst strategic leaders and employees. Regardless of individual roles and responsibilities within the Board as an entity, it is not individuals who have authority but the Board (Carver, 2001). Rather, the board, employees, supporters and beneficiaries are regarded cumulatively as 'stakeholders,' each critical to the feasibility and future of NFPs (Candler & Dumont 2010).

### **2.2.5 Stakeholders, Emerging Trends, and External Influences**

Knox and Gruar (2007) note that organisations are a coalition of stakeholders. That it is essential for organisations to understand who their stakeholders are, and why they matter. Essentially, the literature identifies stakeholders as beneficiaries, donors, influencers, partner organisations, employees, Board of Governance and sector regulators (Gurd & Palmer 2010). Gallagher and Weinberg (1991) believe that many of the stakeholders in NFPs are so deeply involved in helping to fulfil the organisation's mission, that they carry more importance than stakeholders in for profit organisations. That combined with the commonly held belief of society to hold NFP to a higher moral standard, and greater social accountability, makes managing stakeholder relationships even more crucial. This is further reinforced by the fact that those who fund the services provided by the NFP do not receive any benefit from the organisation, as they would if paying for a product or service for which they received something in return.

Mollenhauer (2017) proposes that stakeholders require evidence from NFPs of mission effectiveness. He goes on to suggest that NFPs that remain successful demonstrate their impact is effective and contribute not just to their clients but the system as a whole.

The social, political, economic, regulatory environments, culture and trends also greatly impact the ability of NFPs to succeed. For example, a recent report by the University of British Columbia suggests that the primary challenges for NFPs are funding, employees becoming more stressed while demand for their services increases; and the inability of NFP's to retain or attract the skilled employees they need to survive in the challenging economic environment (UBC 2017).

Mollenhauer (2017) suggests that advances in technology, economic shifts during a time of increased demand for NFP services and generational differences about work, volunteering and philanthropy will greatly impact the NFP sector in the immediate future. When it comes to the demographic of donors, younger donors are giving less and expect more back from the organisation in return, by way of experiential engagement. It is widely understood that donors today prefer a flexible way to engage with the organisation and want more flexibility and control in how and when they give. They want to be involved with something bigger than themselves and feel that they are part of a community of supporters (McCrinkle 2017).

Blumberg (2017) reported that in Canada in 2015 there were 84,442 registered charities, of which 76,039 were active. Of those, 5185, conducted activities outside of Canada, spending over \$4 billion Canadian on their programs. Charity Data Canada (Blumberg 2021) provides a summary of the organisations in this study. Their revenue and total expenditures in 2020 were both just under \$70 Million CAN.

Literature suggests that with the trending rise in the cost of living, donors are finding it more difficult to give, and less likely to give regularly (McCrinkle 2017; *The Giving Report* 2018). The organisation in this study relies heavily on regular, dependable, and long-term giving. As such, McCrinkle (2017) suggests that opportunity is created for organisations to identify new types of donors who

respond specifically to the brand and the mission, and who respond when opportunity presents itself.

Rassart (Rassart & Miller 2013) emphasise that NFP organisation boards need to be aware of the trends. They reference Yuri Fulmer, Chair United Way, stating that donors are not well understood by the boards of NFPs and that without significant change, boards will be unable to ensure continued financial viability, nor can they assume that the level of philanthropic giving will continue.

To address the effectiveness of foreign aid and the critical importance of understanding how the global and the local interact to increase aid efficacy and develop more culturally astute ways of managing, NFPs, over the last 10-15 years increased their emphasis on sound strategic leadership and good management as a core capability. (Claeyé 2014). Claeyé emphasizes the challenge of NFPs becoming more professional and needing to operate like a business in order to serve the demands of the communities they serve well.

### **2.2.6 NFPs Contribution to Economy**

Aside from the benefit provided to the NFPs beneficiaries there is a significant contribution made to the local economies where the NFP is located. Canada's charitable and nonprofit sector is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the world; the Netherlands is the largest; the United States is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest. Over half of the NFP organisations in Canada (54%) are run entirely by volunteers and 2 million people are employed by these organisations representing 11.1% of the economically active population. The sector represents \$106 billion or 8.1% of the GDP (Cynthia Hagggar-Guenette 2007).

Hagggar-Guenette goes on to provide context that these GDP figures are larger than the retail trade industry and close to the value of the mining, oil and gas extraction industry. Smaller Canadian provinces have a higher number of NFP organisations relative to their population and the top 1% of organisations command 60% of all revenues (Canada 2016). Statistics Canada's report on Volunteering and Charitable Giving in Canada (*Volunteering and Charitable Giving in Canada* 2015) reports that the NFP sector in Canada each year depends on 12.7 million volunteers. They

estimated that the hours these volunteers worked was the equivalent of about 1 million full time jobs.

The Imagine Canada report (Canada 2016) found that most charities operate on a small surplus, and most do not have a large liquid asset base to cope with unanticipated increases in costs or decreases in revenue. Which supports the idea of the importance within the sector to engage agile funding models and strategies to continue functioning.

### **2.2.7 Funding and Giving**

Over the history of NFP organisations, survival has only occurred when there has been appropriate responses by their leadership to the economic and social shifts brought about by globalisation. When the impact of global events touches the hearts of NFP leaders and stakeholders, their response often stretches them and their already limited resources beyond their ability to bring effective relief and change the lives of those they serve (Hansen-Turton 2014).

Some time ago, the Government of Canada recognized the value of financial contributions to NFP organisations by permitting certain qualified donations to be deducted from taxable income (Watson). According to Statistics Canada, 2015 total donations reported by Canadian tax filers rose to \$9.1 billion in 2015, up 3.8% over 2014. Participation in giving has dropped. in 2007 24% of Canadians made charitable donations, by 2017 that number decreased to 19%, with those over the age of 55 giving almost twice as much as Canadians aged 25-54 (*The Giving Report* 2018).

## **2.3 MISSION AND VISION: THE ESSENCE OF NOT FOR PROFITS**

### **2.3.1 What is Mission?**

For the purpose of this study the term mission will be used in the context of and as it relates to the formalized and defined mission statement of an organisation. The mission statement describes the organisation's unique reason for existing (Ireland & Hitt 1992). It is inspirational and a statement which firmly guides actions and decisions, while clearly outlining the organisation's purpose (Alegre, Ines et al.

2018). Williams (2008) defines mission as a statement that declares the purpose and focus of an organisation and displays elements of the organisation's past, present and future. He advocates that the mission should clearly state who the organisation serves and communicate an intended direction. The mission statement as described by Scott (1993) is the reason the organisation exists and should be clear, concise and inspiring and is distinctly different to a vision statement.

Becoming popular in the 1980's , today most organisations have a mission statement in some form or another (Alegre, Inés et al. 2018). Drucker puts it very clearly by saying that "a business is not defined by its name, statutes or articles of incorporation but defined by its mission" (Drucker 1974, p. 57). Only a clear mission statement can define the ultimate objective of the organisation.

Wallace proposes that the mission statement should also be easily said as well as read and be an effective communication tool to deliver a "clear, brief, and dynamic message" (Wallace 2004, p. 4) about the desired outcomes of the organisation.

The mission statement is intended to guide day to day organisational behaviour and is a useful strategic tool to influence performance (Mullane 2002). However, "like any tool, a mission statement can be misused and thus appear outdated, inefficient, or even foolish. But in the hands of executives who understand its use it can unify an Organisation and establish internal clarity of purpose and direction" (Mullane 2002, p. 454).

This purpose and direction embedded within the mission statement can be eroded when operational and management decisions and strategies are developed that are not in line with the organisation's mission. Ultimately leading to failure or distract away from the desired strategic and future state. Hence the central premise of this study was that the value of a mission statement is strategic. Over time, the mission statement consolidates shared expectations and provides clear intent and a shared commitment as it connects to multiple audiences and stakeholders (Williams 2008).

The difference between many for profit organisations and NFPs is that the NFP starts with its mission of becoming a service without financial reward (Drucker

1989). Characteristically NFP organisations attract those employees who want to make a difference, leave a legacy, and are inspired by helping to address the desperate needs of others, communities, the environment and society (Slatten et al. 2021).

Although this commitment and passion is critical, it will not in itself move an organisation forward. Rather, once the mission is embedded in hearts and minds, it in turn can become a strategic tool toward the organisation's success (Pearce II 1987). Based on the mission, the vision can then be articulated in order to provide a statement which describes the desired future outcomes consequent to the mission. In turn, a strategy can be developed to achieve the vision of the organisation to ensure that the mission is core.

### **2.3.2 What is Vision?**

The vision is a description of the future state of the organisation and not be confused with the mission. The vision is something that is proactive rather than reactive (Olcott 2020). Much has been written regarding organisational mission and vision statements. For some the terms are interchangeable, or one and the same (Oghojafor et al., 2011). However, the two, as defined in this research perform diverse functions, yet are fundamentally linked as core essentials of an organisation's public statements to identify who they are and where they are going.

When the mission and the vision of organisations remain constant, research shows that organisations enjoy enduring success even when their processes and strategy making evolves and adapts to a changing world (Collins and Porras, 1996). They suggest that it appears that organisations know what should never change and what can.

The vision within the context of this study is defined as something to be pursued, a guide, a road map to choosing the current and future actions of the organisation in order to accomplish the mission. If the mission of an organisation is the glue that holds the organisation together, and is the reason why it exists (Lattuch & Dankert 2018), the vision should state what the organisation wants to be like in the future

(Bryson 2018). Bryson also proposes that the vision statement is a guide to fulfilling the mission while the mission provides a sense of purpose. The vision reveals how success can be achieved and is equally important in strategy formulation as the mission of the organisation is.

Bryson (2018) states that the vision is what the organisation should look like when it is functioning well, and how it should behave in fulfilling its mission. Hence, a well thought through vision statement should envision a future by using a “vivid description that is vibrant, engaging and specific” (Collins & Porras 1996, p. 73). It is essential that the vision uses language that is aspirational, emotive, and filled with conviction. Ultimately, the vision must be written and translated in a way that will “advance the mission, and position the organisation for the future” (Silverman & Kilpatrick 2005, p. 24). In doing so it will tell the story of what it will look like to achieve the mission and provide clarity. Silverman and Kilpatrick propose that a good vision statement will “comprise a compelling, easy to understand description of how the NFP would like the world to change, what role the organisation will play in that change and how it will be measured” (2005, p. 25).

### **2.3.3 How do Mission and Vision Happen?**

When the mission and the vision are clearly defined, compelling and purposeful, their synergy ensures that they are both invaluable to the organisation. Both the mission and the vision can have a positive influence on organisational performance (Mullane 2002). However, Bryson (2014) suggests that although helpful, they are not as important as the agreement on the strategy. Regardless of corporate statements, if employees do not know and understand why the organisation exists, where the organisation is going, and how it will get there, the organisation is likely to fail to achieve their purpose and aspirations.

Consequently, the core assumption of the study was that an effective mission and vision can fundamentally make a positive contribution to employee engagement by inspiring them and engendering a sense of purpose, if employees are not just aware of the mission and vision statements but have understood and fully comprehended its intent (Cole et al. 2006).



When the mission and the vision are not only articulated by leaders, but are clearly defined and articulated by employees, there is higher levels of employee engagement, organisational commitment, and lower levels of turnover intentions, and role ambiguity (Cole et al. 2006). Collins and Porras (1996) recommend that leaders need to, “translate the vision from words to pictures with a vivid description of what it will be like to achieve the goal” (1996, p. 74).

Jensen (2018) recommends that organisations should “carefully consider how they communicate the vision if intended to encourage employees to be more attracted to the organisations’ purpose” (2018, p. 351). His research found that when leadership communicated the vision through regular face to face interactions their employee’s relationship with the mission was also strengthened.

Ultimately, if leaders manage their mission and enable vision in a way that employees “feel the heat” and have a “sense of mission” (Bart et al. 2001, p. 33) it will impact on their employees’ delivery of strategy through their engagement.

As noted previously, NFPs often attract those who want to make a difference in the world and in the lives of others. When they connect with the mission and an achievable and aspirational vision, the hope of creating a better future for others becomes a significant driver of employee engagement. When this happens, employees often express a sense of calling and their job becomes a vocation (Palmer 1999). Vocation, as described by Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427) refers to, “a sense of purpose or direction that leads an individual toward some kind of personally fulfilling and/or socially significant engagement within the work role.” They propose that employees when engaged in work that is meaningful, encounter the deepest forms of satisfaction or psychological success. Consequently, not only is there high commitment to the mission, and engagement with the organisation, but there is higher levels of discretionary effort displayed by employees (Bryson, 2018).

## **2.4 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN ORGANISATIONS**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Strategic leadership as described by Yukl (2012, p. 1) is, “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.” He continues that leadership is a process that influences others, happens within a group of people, and involves goal setting that is shared by the leaders and the group they are leading.

Finkelstein and Hambrick (Finkelstein & Hambrick 1996) describe strategic leadership within organisations that engages in significant decision making and has responsibility for the overall organisation and its success.

Leadership has been defined by Kaiser, Hogan and Craig (2008) as a group who bring people together to combine their efforts to promote success and survival. They propose that individuals can be influenced by leadership to contribute to the good of the group; and that the leaders guide and co-ordinate the group to achieve desired outcomes.

### **2.4.2 Types of Leadership**

The strategy level leaders’ competencies have been extensively examined (Bolden & Gosling 2006; Hollenbeck et al. 2006; Carroll et al. 2008). Many stress the need for certain key characteristics to be displayed which have led to archetypes of leadership described as transformational, ethical, servant and spiritual leaderships (Ghosh 2015). Ghosh claims that these types of leadership are especially important in NFP organisations given their ethical and social engagement. Also, that NFP strategy level leaders have a high potential to drive a strong work ethic that translates into meaningful engagement by employees. He believes that leaders in NFPs should be setting the standard for other organisations as they invest in the welfare of others both inside and external to the organisation. Recognising that “when this occurs the actualisation of the NFP organisation’s vision and mission statements, and organisational success and operational effectiveness would depend

to a large extent on the quality mindset and welfare attitude of the organisational insiders in associating themselves and rendering services to the groups of relevant social stakeholders” Ghosh (2015, p. 607).

However, other research on the topic of strategic leadership suggests that leadership theory struggles to define what leadership truly is (MacKie 2016). Mackie proposes that leadership theory often tries to explain the different aspects of leadership procedures and functions, rather than individual leader competencies. Furthermore, early leadership theories focused on leaders’ skills as being natural to the individual, rather than acquired. Schriesheim and Neider (1989) state that in later years however this changed and there was a move toward theories where leaders qualities could be learned and developed. Then followed the behavioural and situational theorists who added the complexity of the follower and context as being significant to how strategic leaders perform (Blickle et al. 2013).

Nevertheless, this study is exploring the distinct personal competencies of strategy level leaders. Finkelstein and Hambrick (2009) particularly propose that organisations assimilate the abilities and characteristics of the leader/s and as such Finkelstein and Hambrick’s theory of strategic leadership is used as the foundational leadership theory for this study.

## **2.5 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP THEORY**

Strategic leadership theory, as described by Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996) suggests that organisations are reflections of top managers’ cognitions and values and can determine to some extent what the organisation will become. Particularly, they identify these as the strategy level leaders’ traits of personality, age, position, gender, education, values, and experience, which influence organisational outcomes. What is less studied is to how leaders’ cognitive capabilities may suggest what an organisation can become. Therefore, the cognitive abilities of leaders are especially important in formulating strategy. Particularly when making decisions, even when the cognitions are difficult to measure. These cognitive abilities are often referred to as the black box of strategy formulation (Chowhan 2016; Van der Laan & Yap 2016). How strategic leaders make decisions, formulate strategy, and

think about the past, present and future cannot be ignored as key indicators of decisions that shape the future of an organisation.

Van der Laan and Yap (2016) imply that strategy and particularly strategic thinking is primarily cognitive because as humans we have an ability to travel mentally in time. They remind the reader that strategy is not just about thinking about the future, as the future is already present as the present becomes the past. Therefore, strategy needs to be flexible and able to respond to the current and future environments.

Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996) propose that the values and decision making of strategic leaders is shaped by how they think and what their values and beliefs are, ultimately impacts organisational outcomes. Furthermore, if strategic leaders are inherently different as individuals, they in turn will vary greatly in their choices and behaviours. Van der Laan and Yap (2016) believe that leaders' competencies are determined depending on the individual's background, experience and values. As such these can serve as "proxy indicators to predict the likelihood of the strategic decisions that leaders make and their predicted effectiveness" in shaping the future of an organisation (Van der Laan & Yap 2016, p. 91).

Strategic leaders are defined as being at the strategy formulation level of organisations. As suggested, these could be at the board, executive managers, senior and even middle management levels. For the purposes of this study strategic leaders are defined as those strategy level leaders who exert a moderate to high influence on the formulation of strategy. These could be limited to a small number of senior leaders but can be inclusive of a broader cross section of the organisation.

Acknowledging that there are many competencies and characteristics as a predictor of what the organisation will look like in the future, as proposed by Finkelstein and Hambrick's strategic leadership theory, this study incorporates the assumption that employee engagement also reflects the cognitive abilities of its leaders.

## 2.6 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP WITHIN NFP

The strategic leadership of not for profits include multiple individuals, and as organisations they are dependent very much on the quality of those leaders (Powell & Steinberg 1987). The NFP organisation in this study is governed by a Governance Board, which comprise the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is accountable to the Board, and subsequently leads an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Business Unit Heads (also referred to as Vice Presidents, VP's , Department Heads, Directors or Senior Managers). This structure within contemporary organisations are within the scope of strategic leadership as described by Finkelstein et al. (2009).

Consequently, the term strategic leadership team includes the Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Department Heads and Senior Managers of the study organisation.

A Governance Board, although responsible for reviewing major decisions and ensuring the organisation is successful generally focuses on the big picture, monitors management, sets policy and influences the organisation's strategic choices (Finkelstein & Hambrick 1996). They have ultimate authority, decision making and accountability (Fishel 2014). Particularly, they approve the strategy and to a lesser extent they make contribution to strategy formulation and are generally knowledgeable about the operating environment.

At times Governance Boards cross the line into the operations area and become engaged in projects and other operational areas which are not part of their remit (Block 2004). For example, when some of the Board members are also employees within the organisation. Consequently it is imperative that the Board have a clearly defined mandate and understand their responsibilities and legal obligations (Rassart & Miller 2013).

For board members to have an emotional connection and passion for the organisation's mission is commendable. However, Weisman maintains that it is more productive to "have a board room full of people who are passionate about sharing their gifts on behalf of your mission" (Weisman 2003, p. 27).

Ultimately, it is the strategic leadership of the organisation that deliberately and effectively communicates the mission and the vision, and consequently purposefully influences the strategic direction of the organisation (Hughes et al. 2014).

## **2.7 STRATEGY**

### **2.7.1 What is Strategy?**

The word strategy in organisations has become a much used and misunderstood term. According to Van der Laan and Yap (2016) the word 'strategy' is often placed in front of or after a process or function to reinforce its importance in reflecting decisions about the future direction of the entity. For example, Financial Strategy, Media Engagement Strategy, Marketing Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy being explored in this study is particularly as it relates to thinking about, formulating, and communicating a whole of organisation strategy to achieve a desired future state.

Hatten (1982, p. 92) suggests "all organisations have strategies, either formally expressed in some corporate document or unexpressed but apparent observation of the organisation's actions and decision patterns." Ferguson (2019b, p. 278) reminds the reader that it was in the 1950s and 1960s that organisations, "further to a period of stability and economic growth post World War II, had opportunity to plan for expansion and increase in market share". Also, that from the 1980s due to slower economic growth, innovation began to take precedence over market share.

For some, strategy, particularly in less recent times was nothing more than a planning process. One that was completed by executive leadership teams who felt obliged to formulate statements related to organisation objectives and key priorities; and based on perceived strengths and weaknesses that had no real connection to the mission or vision of the organisation (Phillips 2011). Strategy formulated like this was often never referred to until the next round of strategy making. However, by the 1980's Phillips (2011) argues that leadership saw the need for a connection between the organisation's strategy and its mission. Phillips notes that some of the organisations he worked with during this period "seemed to be

busy trying to do things right that they had not considered whether or not they were doing the right things in the first place” and that simply put, strategy is “about what and why, not how or by when”(2011, pp. 926 - 7 ). One of the major elements of strategy formulation he proposes is understanding where the organisation is now, while understanding where the organisation wishes to be in the future.

Nutt and Backoff (1995) claim that strategy also needs to be aligned to the environment in which the organisation operates in. When speaking of environment within the context of strategy, it refers to competitors, technology, need for services and ambiguities (Elbanna & Naguib 2009). Mintzberg (1978, p. 938) considers that with hindsight, often strategies are “deliberate plans conceived in advance of making specific decisions”(1978, p. 934). He also proposes that some strategies are intended to do what they say, and others are accomplished and have evolved regardless of any intent. He refers to these as intended and realised strategies. Mintzberg (1987, 1994) further suggests that those who formulate strategy should know their organisation, the market and environment they operate in, and be closely involved in or have an understanding of the day to day operations. He speaks of considering the future and keeping in touch with those external factors that may influence the organisation.

Rumelt (2011, p. 11) believes that many organisations instead of having good strategy have “multiple goals and initiatives that symbolise progress”. He implies that they have no real plan or logical approach other than putting in more effort and spending more money. He argues that strategy without action is counterproductive and is the cause of negativity toward strategy and strategy formulation. Ultimately, “ strategy that fails to define a variety of plausible and feasible immediate actions is missing a critical component”(Rumelt 2011, p. 6). He argues that strategy is not about setting goals but moving the organisation into the future.

Within the NFP organisations, the goals may not be as apparent as those of other organisations. This is due to the belief that profit, and financial returns are not a priority. However, no NFP can operate without sufficient funding and resources to

do what they need to do (Hatten 1982). Hatten argues that for some NFPs the goal is minimal operating performance, determined by maintaining their tax-exempt status. Acknowledging, nevertheless that the goal of meeting the needs of those the NFP serves and whether the organisation is achieving its mission are not as easily quantified. Hatten does however suggest that in NFP organisations the evaluation of their present reality and current functional strategy, the environment they operate in, resources needed, and values can predict what strategy is needed for future success.

Daniell (2006) provides added awareness into formulating strategy when strategy formulators rely too heavily on what the organisation looks like at the time when strategy is being formulated. He suggests that focussing on the present state often leads to failure. Also, by taking advantage of future opportunities, and reducing risk, organisations are better positioned to address the ongoing and perpetual changing nature of external trends suggesting that foresight competencies are vital when formulating strategy.

### **2.7.2 Strategy formulation as it relates to the cognitive abilities of strategy level leaders.**

Within any organisation, those who formulate strategy have two key functions: i) To respond appropriately and competently to the task of strategic thinking and ii) to envision and consider future possibilities and test those against feasibility while sustaining a balanced awareness of the past.

Those who formulate strategy work together to translate the organisation's mission and the vision into a strategic plan. This plan should clearly identify strategic objectives as well as the allocation of resources (financial, human and physical). When strategy is effective it is generally aspirational in nature. It has been worked out and determined to be feasible, with its core purpose to generate new value for the organisation. This value creation is dependent on the engagement of employees with delivering the strategy, as inspired by the mission and the vision.

Andrews, Boyne, Law and Walker (2009, p. 3) speak of strategy formulation falling into two main models, 'rational planning' and 'logical incrementalism.' Where there



is an absence of any process being apparent, that is “strategy absence”, they suggest that rational planning that comprises analytical, formal and logical processes in examining the internal and external setting. This model of rational planning he states operates within a bounded rationality framework. Bounded rationality describes the decision makers cognitive limits, the quality of information available regarding alternatives, the time constraints they are under in making decisions and the limitations of their thinking capacity (Spiegler 2011).

On the other hand logical incrementalism occurs when strategic decisions are made in a disorganized way and added to the strategic plan (Grundy, Tony 2003). Andrews, Boyne, Lloyd and Walker (2009) explain logical incrementalism as strategy being formulated through multiple small decisions over time.

If strategy is to move the organisation from its current state to where the organisation wants to be in the future then its strategic leadership should empower and direct the organisation to achieve that (Grundy, Tony. 2003). Consequently organisational leaders must develop long range objectives based on the organisation’s desired future state as aligned with its mission (Tschirhart 2012).

Research has underscored four dominant approaches to strategy. These are classical, evolutionary, processual and systemic approaches (Van der Laan & Yap 2016).

### ***Classical approach to strategy formulation***

The classical approach, as the name suggests has been one of the earliest to be documented. In short the aim of the classical approach to strategy is through rational planning to ensure profitability (Whittington 2001). It is grounded in the theory of a central figure who is the key decision maker with an ability to act with perfect judgment (Van der Laan & Yap 2016). There is also a belief that senior managers within the organisation have this ability to fulfil this brief.

### ***Evolutionary approach to strategy formulation***

The evolutionary approach to strategy is one that deems that the market alone determines the success of the organisation, rather than the decisions made by

leadership (Barnett & Burgelman 1996). Also as the environment is so unpredictable, planning is considered irrelevant (Van der Laan & Yap 2016).

### ***Processual approach to strategy formulation***

The processual approach to creating strategy is one that is emergent rather than a set of rational decisions and planning (Van der Laan & Yap (2016). This approach is influenced by the previously mentioned theory of bounded rationality. Supporters of the processual approach to strategy believe that strategy making is a continuous adaptive process. One in which there is a high understanding of context and how the organisation functions (Ezzamel & Willmott 2004).

### ***Systemic approach to strategy formulation***

The systemic approach to strategy is grounded in operations, systems and the environment in which the organisation operates. Flexibility and responsiveness are key attributes of organisations within this approach, and it requires significant dependence on analytical planning based on extensive data and past trends. Van der Laan and Yap (2016) suggest that this approach can restrict an openness to new opportunities and innovation.

### **2.7.3 Leadership's role in strategy formulation**

Understanding that strategy level leaders control the strategy making process, another construct within organisational leadership theory is the idea of a dominant coalition (Pearce 1995; Bowler 2006). Its members are described by Pearce (1995) as being the most influential group in setting goals and objectives. This group must reach a consensus of organisational identity (Young 2001). Pearce (1995) suggests that dominant coalition members differ from others within the organisation. They are strongly orientated toward internal organisational factors and the internal power structure that influences behavior within the organisation (Bowler 2006). Bowler goes on to say that organisational dynamics describe the dominant coalition as influencing organisational processes through their cognitive and relational orientations. They advocate that the dominant coalition occupies a position of power within the organisations and so have more impact than others on the

mission and the vision (2006). Van der Laan (2021) suggests that the vision of the dominant coalition is an additional consideration decision makers need to be aware of when formulating strategy.

Tschirhart (2012) identifies some of the differences between NFPs and for-profits as it relates to strategic planning, and consequently the role of strategic leaders. Specifically, strategic leaders' service in NFPs may be hard to measure as, customer influence may be weak, under resourced, employees may be committed to a cause, and constraints on reward or performance management. In addition, Tschirhart maintains that given the large number of stakeholders and their varied interests, the strategic leaders need strong people skills to ensure good relationships both now and for the future. Hess and Bacigalupo (2013) suggest, NFP leaders who can foresee how those effected by strategic decisions will respond, are better equipped to manage the decision making process when formulating strategy, and any conflict those decisions may cause.

The literature suggests that leader behavior influences group and organisational behaviour (O'Reilly et al. 2010). However, strategic leaders do not operate individually but are part of a team. One designated or perceived leader cannot achieve the organisation's objectives in isolation, rather there are multiple layers of leaders within an organisation. How a leader acts is generally translated by lower-level leaders and consequently impacts their leadership style and strategic thinking.

Strategic leaders must critically evaluate their operating environment, resources and partnerships, values and then determine how they will best achieve their mission in light of those (Ferguson 2019b).

Many strategic plans are ineffective, and it is estimated that 72% of strategic plans fail (Van der Laan & Yap 2016). As organizations formulate strategy the ability of strategic leaders to engage in divergent and generative thinking is critical. Strategic thinking then becomes a decision-making process.

Although strategic planning, implementation and execution of strategy are critical topics for organisations to understand, this study is more concerned with examining

strategy level leader's competencies as they relate to strategy formulation. It is specifically interested in foresight and strategic thinking, their approach to decision making and the relationship between employee engagement with strategy and their line of sight to the mission and vision.

## **2.8 LEADER COMPETENCIES**

A competency is the knowledge, behaviour or skill needed to perform a particular role effectively and ensure the organisation meets its objectives (Emiliani 2003). Leaders direct and envision the organisation, formulate, and communicate strategy. This is different to management that focuses on process, resourcing and the methodical day to day operational tasks (Lawn 2013). An important part of the strategic leader's role is to inspire and "generate enthusiasm, loyalty and respect" (Lawn 2013, p. 1).

The concept of leader competencies seeks to identify the skills and knowledge that are required to fulfil the tasks required of strategic leaders and how these can be developed to function in diverse situations and contexts (Maxwell 1993, p. 1).

There are many leader competencies identified in the literature. For the purpose of this study, we will explore the following competencies as defined by Van der Laan and Erwee (2012) and more importantly as they relate to how employees see the mission and vision as communicated by strategic leaders, and their engagement with and connection to that mission and vision: Strategic Thinking, Foresight and decision making approach.

### **2.8.1 Strategic Thinking Styles**

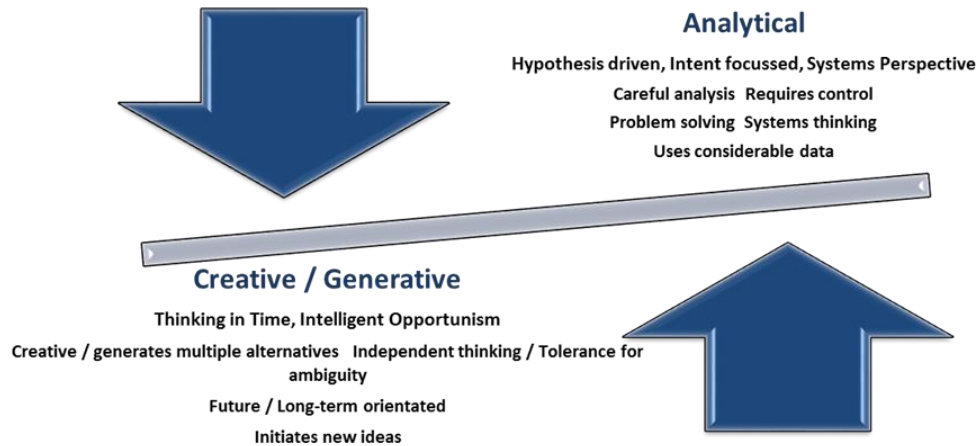
Many organisations claim to be foresightful and strategic but more often these are misunderstood and empty statements, intuition or recipes from past success that are not sufficient in meeting the demands of ever changing environments (Joern Henning & Jeanne 2018). Strategic thinking and foresight allows the leader to anticipate ways of doing, that help find a way beyond language and cultural diversity (Van der Laan & Yap 2016). Strategic thinking should not be confused with strategy. Strategy can be best described as knowing where we are now, where we

want to be, and how we want to get there (Grundy 2014). Van der Laan and Yap (2016) define strategic thinking as a combination of rational and generative thought process which seek to determine the future direction of the organisation. Mintzberg (1994) states that strategic thinking gives direction to the strategic plan, which in turn operationalises the strategic outcomes. Strategic thinking is how leaders think when setting strategy within the organisation. Mintzberg emphasises that it is a task, a cognitive function that precedes strategy formulation and that its purpose is to provide organisational direction, and the action steps to achieve a desired future.

Strategy formulation starts with the competence of people (Sveiby 2001) and should find its energy between recent reality and the intended future (Van der Laan & Yap 2016). However, many organisations spend so much time on preserving the past that they do not have enough energy to create the future (Prahalad 1994).

Van der Laan and Yap propose that with the extensive volumes of data and corresponding analysis, organisation's boards and leadership teams are overwhelmed with information and are increasingly experiencing disruption and so are forced to become more short term orientated. The key to good strategy is to have a balance between generative thinking and analytical thinking processes, whether it is for the short term, or long term and should include an equal measure of analytical and creative input (Van der Laan & Yap 2016).

They propose that for strategic thinking to be effective, there should be a balance of analytical and creative thinking and be informed by views of how the future may unfold. Where analytical thinking is for example, the extensive review of data, systems and processes, and applying a style of problem and solving it is methodical and systematic. Strategic thinking involves creative/generative thinking that leans toward a tolerance for ambiguity. It is analytical generating multiple alternatives and is future and long term orientated. They suggest that the ideal strategic thinking profile would be a balance between the two, as demonstrated in Figure 2:1 below.



**Figure 2:1 Strategic Thinking Styles**

**Source: Van der Laan and Yap**

### 2.8.2 Foresight Competence

Definitions of foresight are varied but are all concerned with perceiving how the future could develop and what the implications are to the organisation (Hines 2006). Considering the future is an essential component of determining strategy that will be effective and meaningful. Narayan, Zane and Kemmerer (2011) suggest that the future, which has not yet occurred, is something that can be imagined or speculated upon based on what we already know. As such they refer to it as a cognitive construct (2011). The researcher believes that foresight is essential to inform strategic thinking in order to ensure strategic decisions are relevant and forward oriented.

Van Der Laan and Yap (2016, p. 97) describe foresight competence as “A human ability to creatively envision possible futures, understand the complexity and ambiguity of systems and provide input for the taking of provident care in detecting and avoiding hazards while envisioning desired futures.”

They define foresight as an innate human cognitive ability. Specifically, how leadership uses it will depend on whatever their dominant predisposition is (Tester, Framer, Reactor, Adapter) – of how they imagine the future unfolding. Fundamental to this is creativity, the product of deep insight and understanding. Figure 2:2 provides a model of foresight styles and ways of engaging the future (Van der Laan

& Yap 2016). The model is developed on the understanding that humans have an inherent ability to think about strategy, detect threats and opportunities, and consider and think about how the future may unfold. It is innovative, creative and have the ability to judge or assess risks and what the best alternative may be.

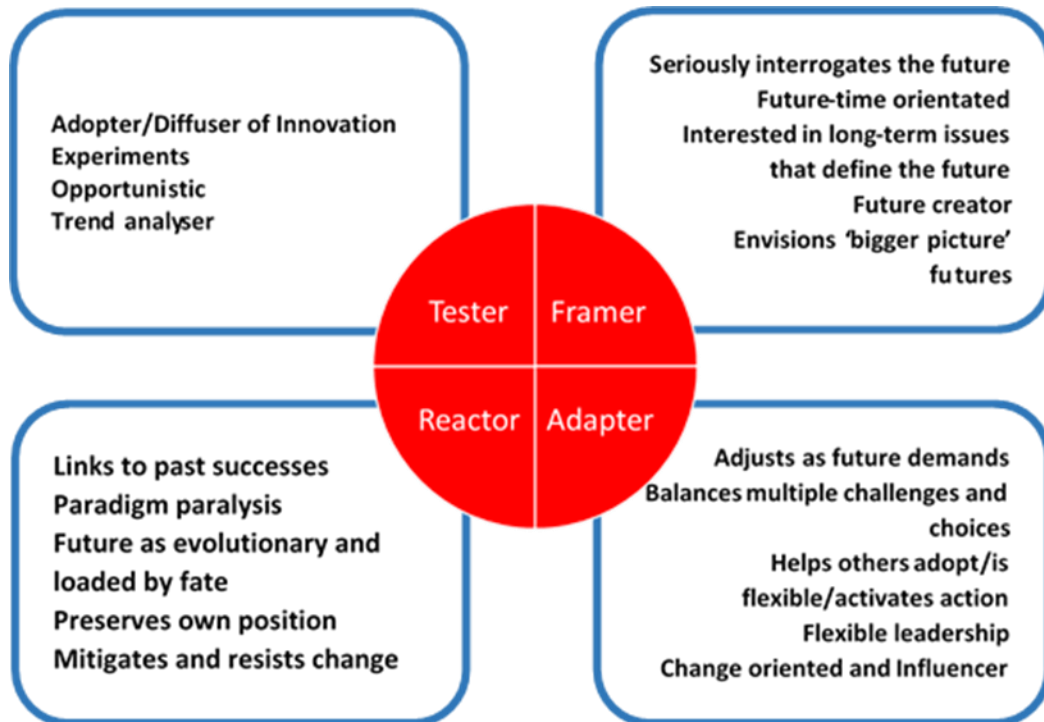


Figure 2:2 Foresight Styles of Engaging the Future (Van der Laan & Yap 2016)

### ***Tester Style***

Van der Laan and Yap's model proposes that leadership that displays the 'tester' style of envisioning the future is more likely to analyse trends in the sector it finds itself in; be open to experimenting with new ideas, and opportunistic in its approach to strategy formulation. Being opportunistic requires reflective inquiry on what the organisation is currently doing and the courage to be open to new possibilities (Daniel 1987). Testers are more likely to test the possibility of preferable alternative futures (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012).

### ***Framer Style***

Framers generally are more oriented in their thinking toward the future and are inherently interested in the issues that define the future. In addition, they believe that there is an ability to create what the organisations' future may look like, while

envisioning bigger picture futures. Overall, framers are future focussed and vigilant in terms of provident care (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012)

### ***Reactor Style***

When those who are tasked with strategy formulation favour the reactor style, what is often seen is an environment where there are constant and strong links made back to the organisation's previous successes. Not that this is wrong, but it can produce an environment where the organisation's identity is only found in past achievements, rather than their perpetual and ongoing mission and desired future state. When the reactor style is the dominant competence, often observers see a resistance to change, and a culture where the future is loaded by fate. However, it implies that the reactor style may not be an acceptable definition of foresight (competence) in individuals but rather a method of foresight response (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012).

### ***Adapter style***

Adapters on the other hand are more likely to adjust to the future demands, have the ability to balance multiple challenges and operational demands, are more inclined to be highly adept, influence others and are flexible in their leadership style (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012).

## **2.8.3 Leaders and How they Relate to Time**

Understanding what the future may look like, and how it may change is imperative for organisational leaders to consider. In fact, many researchers have identified foresight as a critical competency (Van der Laan & Yap 2016).

How leaders relate to time in the organisational context is critical. Research suggests that if there is little or no regard for the past relative to the present, and where the organisation needs to be in the future, then strategy may not be developed in a balanced and foresightful way. For example, if the strategic leadership team of an organisation is primarily focussed on the present, then generally speaking, their efforts will be dedicated to the current moment in time which may result in reactionary behaviours. Similarly, it can be argued that if there



is little or no reflection on the past (by reflecting on and learning from past experience and organisational memory) the balance of strategic decision making as it relates to time is skewed. A balance between all three, past, present and future, is indicative of a strategic leadership team whose decision making approach benefits from hindsight, current conditions, and the anticipation of the future (Costanzo & MacKay 2009).

The ideal profiles of a strong leadership team would be equally orientated toward past and present thinking, with a slightly increased orientation to the future. As Table 2.1 suggests, an individual's orientation to time – what they do with their past experiences and knowledge - greatly influences an individual's decision making about the future.

For example, Table 2:1 suggests that a strong emphasis toward past thinking that critically evaluate past experiences to make strategic decisions for the future could produce decisions that are risk reductive, and contemplative. An orientation toward present thinking displays characteristics of getting things done, displays highly organised thinking and looks equally to both the past and future to develop actions and allocated resources and efficiently apply them. Individuals with a focus on future thinking are inclined to present with the characteristics of imaginative, big picture thinking and have an ability to see gaps in knowledge, patterns, and trends.

**Table 2:1 Orientation to Time (Van der Laan & Yap 2016)**

Thinking perspective	Abilities	Characteristics
Past thinking	<p>Retrieval of past experience and knowledge by reflection</p> <p>To reconstruct, analyse and critical evaluate information in order to reduce risks associated with current events</p>	<p>Dominantly risk reductive.</p> <p>Contemplative thinking.</p> <p>Accesses past experiences and knowledge.</p>
Present thinking	<p>Organised thinking based on current observations that integrate Past and Future perspectives in order to develop actions, allocate resources and efficiently apply them.</p>	<p>Dominantly orientated toward 'getting things done'</p> <p>Organised thinking.</p> <p>Mentally 'stepping out of time'.</p>
Future thinking	<p>Creative Imagineering / Infinite future possibilities</p> <p>Foresees environmental changes.</p> <p>Generative process of creative problem solving and divergent thinking in order to detect gaps in knowledge, patterns, and trends.</p>	<p>'Big picture thinking'</p> <p>Imaginative thinking.</p> <p>Ability to see gaps in knowledge, patterns and trends that diverge.</p>

Within NFP organisations in particular, the board is tasked with ensuring that foundational aspects of the past are sustained within the context of good governance and their purpose (Hudson & Rogan 2009). For example, culture and what the organisation's core values are, ensuring compliance with government agencies and regulations, all typify their focus, making sure that the core values of the organisation and its original defined mission and vision are preserved and continue into the future is a high priority (Rassart & Miller 2013).

This is often in contrast to those who are placed in active, operational leadership roles and employed by the organisation to outwork the strategy to achieve the vision (Block 2004). These leaders tend to be more inclined to be present thinking (having ownership for the day-to-day operations and outcomes) and may be forced to be more future orientated in their thinking. Presuming that they are highly engaged in creating strategy, as problem solvers and aware of the trends and gaps within the Organisation and external factors.

For all strategic leaders, effective, intentional, and consistent decision making is regarded as fundamental to good leadership. Not only is every single decision by leadership vital in determining a plan for the future state of the organisation, and in strategically working out that plan, but to thrive, those decisions need to be intentional (Lencioni 2012).

Equally important is how leaders think about strategy and how they make decisions. The literature suggests that decision making attributes come from habitual and learned response through which the decision maker filters the process (Driver et al. 1998). Yet others, like Rowe and Mason (1987) propose that decision making is a purely a cognitive process, based on the individual's different perceptions about the situation at hand.

Central to this research is the connection between the strategic leaders' competencies and the organisation's employee engagement levels and line of sight to the mission and vision. The next section will explore what employee engagement is and the interface with mission and vision. This notion is supported by Zenoff (2013) who believes that an employee's line of sight to the organisation's mission

and future (the vision) is demonstrated through them applying discretionary effort in their commitment to the organisation's success (2013).

## **2.9 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.9.1 Introduction and Theory**

The literature strongly supports the position that organisations thrive and are more productive when they have highly engaged employees who are committed to the mission of the organisation (MacLeod et al. 2009). Fairlie (2011) proposes that when employees engage in work that is meaningful to them, they are benefiting from an inherent need within them. Mackey and Sisodia as cited in Whittington et al. (2017, p. 13) suggests that the workplace and the value of work extends to "creating value for others in the service of a higher purpose." Employees will be more likely to become absorbed in their work, and demonstrate dedication and vigour (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Consequently, those employees are more highly engaged and focus on their performance (Whittington et al. 2017). Doing meaningful work has also been associated with employee engagement, and their need to grow and learn, make a difference and achieve personal goals (Fairlie 2011). When employees are well informed and have a clear understanding that what they do every day is connected to the organisation's mission they will work harder, and feel part of contributing to the success of the organisation (Cowan (2014).

Zenoff (2013) describes Gallup's Employee Engagement Index which delineates employee engagement into categories – those who are actively engaged in their jobs, those who are engaged, and those who are actively disengaged. The Blessing and White Employee Engagement Report (2011) suggests that there is a difference in the mindset of those employees who are engaged and disengaged. Particularly, they advise that those employees who are highly engaged intend to stay with the organisation because the employee has determined what they can contribute, while disengaged employees stay because of what they get from the organisation. This is aligned with the definition of employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al. 2006; Salanova & Schaufeli 2008; Schaufeli 2013, 2017).

Employees with vigour exhibit not only levels of high energy at work, but a willingness to invest additional effort into their work (Ouweneel et al. 2012). These employees repeatedly display significant mental resilience and persistence in times of challenge (Bakker & Leiter 2010). Vigour is demonstrated by enthusiasm and pride in doing a good job, along with a sense that they remain inspired and motivated by what they are doing – demonstrated through discretionary effort (Shirom 2011).

Absorption is displayed by employees who are happily engrossed in what they are doing and do not notice time passing, they find it difficult to detach themselves from their task. While Schaufeli and Bakker (2002; 2004) suggest dedication is generally displayed when employees are enthusiastic about the organisation, and why it exists. They have internalised the importance of what they do and that it is making a difference to the organisations' ability to deliver on its mission.

More specifically the literature suggests that for employees who work within the NFP sector employee engagement is often heightened. Their motivation increases due to the meaning they get from the inspiring nature of the organisation (Zenoff 2013). Zenoff continues by saying that for these employees, providing significant benefit to those they provide services to generates a sense of pride, energy, and satisfaction. This leads to a high level of employee engagement due to the sense of meaningful work and because of a deep connection with the organisation's mission.

How employees engage with and respond to organisational policies and culture, also affects how engaged they are, and as such engagement does not happen in isolation (Bakker 2010). There is evidence that leadership contributes to employee engagement and to employees' belief that they are fulfilling meaningful work (Nikolova, Schaufeli & Notelaers (2019).

### **2.9.2 Employee Ownership of the Mission and the Vision**

Mission and vision is of critical importance and mission and vision statements have become part of almost every organisation and are the most widely used management tool (Darbi 2012). Mullane (2002) proposes that the mission and the

vision statements are useful for the fulfilment of the day to day operations. They influence behaviours in a positive way (Collins & Porras 1996; Lattuch & Dankert 2018). Although the mission and the vision statements can impact positively on desired outcomes, research has reported that almost 40% of employees do not know or understand their organisation's mission or vision. Mission statements are the foundation that identify organisational objectives (why they exist), and out of which strategy and vision can take shape. If only 60% understand their organisation's mission and vision, then this deserves further exploration (Darbi (2012).

Some researchers support the view that many mission statements have not provided an accurate description of why the organisation exists or what it does, nor are they inspirational in nature. Leaving a lack of understanding by employees as to why they do what they do. As a result, the mission statements do not bring clarity, inspire, or drive employee engagement (Lencioni 2012). For employees to align with the mission and the vision and although there is responsibility on leadership to ensure mission and vision are understood, and how employees understand it, there also needs to be some responsibility taken by employees to understand and share their leaders ideas (Kopaneva (2019).

### **2.9.3 Participation and Commitment**

Baetz and Bart (1996) identified The top five reasons why mission statements are used. There were: to assist in strategic planning; to define the scope of the business; to define a common purpose and expectations for employees; to build strong corporate culture and to guide leadership styles. Of particular interest is that when they asked employees whether their organisation's mission statement promoted common expectations, 32% said it did not. The top reasons given for their responses were that it did not reflect what they did on a day-to-day basis, and it was ambiguous, uninspiring, and not passionate enough.

It is vital that one of the main dimensions of a mission statement should be to perpetuate "meaningful work" (Rey & Bastons 2018, p. 580). Rey and Bastons suggest that an organisation's mission statement has three dimensions - formal,

dynamic, and motivational. Of particular interest to this study is the idea of the motivational element. Rey and Baston believe that things like contributing to the wellbeing of others will help employees to not just engage with the mission but own it.

In addition, how the mission and vision are communicated impacts employees. Bart, Bontis and Taggar (2001, p. 33) state that “only when employees feel the heat of the mission or have a sense of mission, are in a position to execute and implement it with profound passion and resolve - two ingredients which cannot be bought, but which every employee possesses and can unleash.” They add that when strategy and operations are aligned with the mission and vision of the organisation it creates “powerful, positive, and most pervasive relationships with performance” (2001, p. 22).

Wright and Pandey (2011) suggest that mission is one of the most neglected ways to emotionally engage employees with the organisation’s core purpose. They also propose that once an employee feels empowered, by fully understanding the impact of their day-to-day contributions, as aligned with the mission their operational functions are in their mind worth the extra effort. If employees do not understand the vision, it is detrimental to them seeing the significance of their contribution to achieve it (Kopaneva (2019).

Additionally, Wright and Pandey (2011) propose that when the vision is achievable, employees will also invest significant effort to succeed in their work. Therefore, this ownership, passion and resolve will be displayed in enhanced employee engagement and through discretionary effort (Woodruffe 2006).

#### **2.9.4 Discretionary Effort**

Discretionary effort as a concept is a relatively common theme in employee engagement research. Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1984, p. 1) describe it as “the difference between the maximum amount of effort and care an individual could bring to his or her job and the minimum amount of effort required to avoid being

fired or penalized; in short, the portion of one's effort over which a job holder has the greatest control."

Employee engagement occurs where there is campaigning for employees' hearts and minds, and a belief that how management "implement, enact, enable and control have a significant effect on employee commitment, motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn affects how willingly employees release their discretionary effort and produce high-performance outcomes" (Holbeche 2012, p. np).

Clark (2012) proposes that when it comes to engaging hearts and minds, there is an exchanging of emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual values. When hearts and minds are engaged employees spontaneously and instinctively are motivated to invest more than is expected – discretionary effort. When employees are motivated to impulsively go above and beyond, and invest additional time and effort into their jobs that discretionary effort may be intrinsically linked to employee engagement (Morris (2009). If employee behaviour is impacted by doing meaningful work, and they exert higher levels of engagement, it is plausible that organisations could possibly seek to unlock that additional effort of employees to achieve higher levels of performance (Woods 2013).

The literature suggests that leaders' behaviours and competencies have a strong influence on how willingly employees engage in discretionary effort. Also, whether the employees have absorbed the meaning of and are motivated to deliver the mission and vision (Schaufeli 2013). Some literature also suggests that organisation can win over the employee's hearts and minds (Fernandez 2007; Storey et al. 2009; Jindal et al. 2017). When these occur, there will be a rational and emotional commitment which leads to extraordinary effort (Storey et al. 2009). This translates into active engagement, whereby the employee's agency is strongly associated with strategy outcomes, and whether the mission and the vision of the organisation is achieved.

It is important to note that in every organisation there is likely to be employees who remain merely compliant, or who have become cynical toward the organisation (Cartwright & Holmes 2006). Compliant employees are employees who do what is



asked of them and nothing more. They tend to lack intrinsic motivation toward the success of the organisation's mission and vision regardless of how proficiently and how often these are communicated to them by leaders. Their engagement and outputs will be impacted as a result and likely may impact the delivery of strategy to some extent. That said the ability of leaders to inspire at least a critical mass of employees to engage with the mission and the vision is necessary in delivering strategy.

To understand employee motivation and to deliver on the mission and the vision, this study examined discretionary effort as a positive response. Where discretionary effort is a willingness to perform above and beyond their job description to better enable the mission and vision of the organisation (Yankelovich & Immerwahr 1984).

## **2.10 LINE OF SIGHT**

It is widely believed that organisational commitment, mission statements and performance are intrinsically linked (Macedo et al. 2016). It is also generally agreed that the strategy level leaders ability to communicate the mission, vision and strategy of the organisation is critical to the organisation's success (Conger 1991). The way in which that communication happens, how it is received and understood, and how much employees have the ability to translate it, could be translated as the employees' 'line of sight' (Boswell, 2006). Boswell suggests that to have the ability to deliver strategic goals, there needs to be among employees a clearly defined 'line of sight' about what the strategy is and most importantly how they can contribute to that strategy. Boswell also suggests that the clarity of an employee's view to strategy is connected to a clear level of understanding of the vision and how best they can contribute to achieving that vision.

Buller and McEvoy (Buller & McEvoy 2012, p. 44) describe 'line of sight' as "the alignment of organisational capabilities and culture, group competencies and norms, and individual knowledge, skills and abilities, motivation and opportunity with one another and within the organisation's strategy" (2012, p. 44) . A key premise of the study is that the line of sight to the mission and vision is critical to the organisation's delivery of strategy.

The concept of leader competencies seeks to identify the skills that are required to fulfil the tasks required of leaders (Van der Laan & Yap 2016). This study examined the leader competencies of foresight and strategic thinking. It determined the link between these competencies, and employees' understanding of the mission and the vision.

## 2.11 SUMMARY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter provided an overview of the literature on NFP organisations, the definition of mission, vision, strategic leadership, strategy and the strategy level leadership competencies of foresight and strategic thinking. In addition, employee engagement theory and how clearly employees understand and demonstrate their understanding of the mission and vision of the organisation through the line of sight.

What emerged was the idea that the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of strategic level leadership influence employee engagement through the leader's approach to and communication of strategy. Thus, impacting the employee's line of sight to the mission and the vision. The diagram below (Figure 2:3) provides a visual representation of the Conceptual Model used to guide this study.

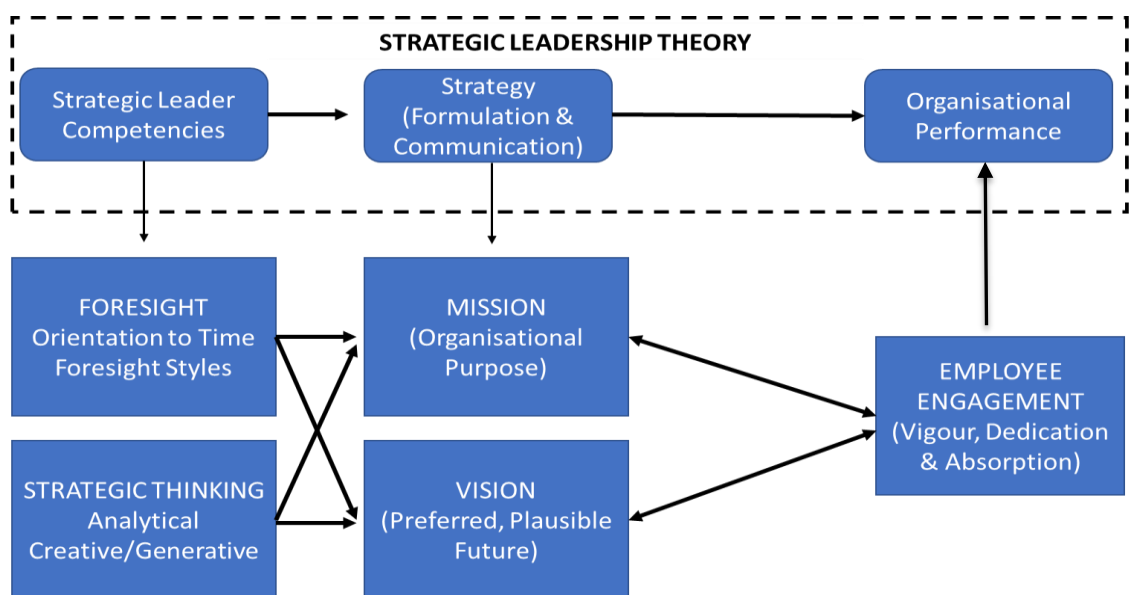


Figure 2:3 Conceptual Model

In order to substantiate this idea, the researcher proposed the following research questions:

**RQ 1:** What is the nature of relationship between strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employees' engagement with the organisations' mission and vision in a faith-based NFP?

**RQ 1.1** What are the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of strategic leaders in a Canadian NFP?

**RQ 1.2** What are the employees' understanding of the mission and the vision of a Canadian NFP?

**RQ 1.3** What is the relationship between the organisations' mission and its vision as communicated by strategic leaders, and employee engagement within a Canadian NFP?

**RQ 2** How is employees' line of sight to mission and vision related to: a) Leaders' foresight competencies; b) Employees' understanding of and engagement with a faith-based organisations mission and vision?

In order to explain how the research questions will be answered, Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology, design, research questions and proposed analysis of the data.

## 3 Methodology

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature on NFPs, the mission and the vision of organisations and how they are created. Employee engagement and the idea that the employee's line of sight to the organisation's mission and its' vision is critical for success and is influenced by leader competencies.

The study builds on previous research that suggests that the competencies of foresight and strategic thinking have predictive value as to employee engagement and the achievement of the organisations' mission and vision.

The literature review identified and summarised the current literature on the concepts under investigation, and to guide and support the crafting of the research questions (Rowley & Slack 2004).

The literature review demonstrated that although much research has been done on strategic leadership within organisations and on employee engagement, there were gaps in the available resources related to strategic leaders' competencies and employee line of sight to the mission and vision.

The purpose of this Chapter is to present the study's research methodology and provide an overview of the relevant stages of enquiry within the context of the research design in rigorously responding to the research questions.

### 3.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary purpose of the research was to explore how the competencies of the organisation's strategic level leaders influence the mission and vision of the organisation and employee engagement. The research questions were presented at the end of Chapter 2 (Section 2:11). The main assumptions related to the research questions include:

- a) The study is concerned with strategic leadership theory which suggests that organisations reflect the characteristics and abilities of its strategic leaders.
- b) The Strategic Leadership Theory is extended to suggest that the leader competencies of foresight and strategic thinking reflect in the engagement of employees with the mission and the vision.
- c) The nature of the relationship between the leader competencies and engagement with the mission and the vision is of interest within the context of the notion of 'line of sight'.

### 3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND STRATEGY OF ENQUIRY

Creswell (2014) recommends that researchers clearly identify the framework for their research. This should include their own personal philosophical worldview. By doing this the researcher is better able to explain their approach to the research, why the research has been designed as it has, and the reason for the research methodology used (see Figure 3:1). This section explains the philosophical worldview that underpins this current research, its design, the research approach, and the research methods as they were applied to the exploration of strategic leaders' competencies, the mission and the vision, and employee line of sight and engagement within a NFP organisation.

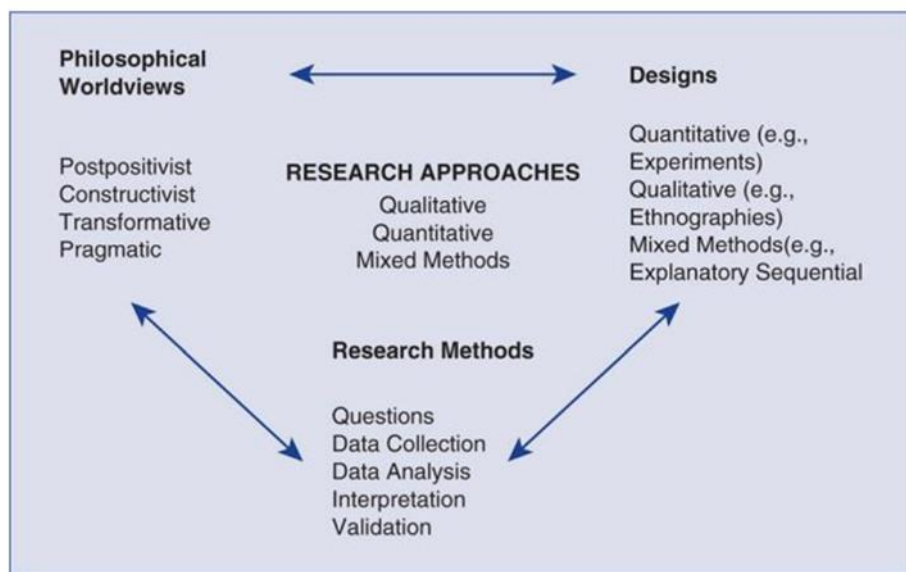


Figure 3:1 A Framework for Research (Creswell 2014, p. 35)

### **3.3.1 Research Design**

Determining clarity as to the goals of the research is fundamental to its success (Romeu 2006). In addition to achieving these goals it is vital to clearly identify the research design, strategy of enquiry and the tools and techniques that were used (Creswell 2003).

The conceptual framework which detailed the proposed variables was developed in Chapter 2. Having defined the conceptual terms and to better understand and explain the results of a quantitative investigation of a case study, there was a need to identify the most appropriate method to collect the data.

In order to collect quantitative data two surveys were completed from which descriptive statistics, profiling and factor analysis was completed.

Survey 1 was designed to answer Research Question 1.1 which explored the organisations' strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies. Survey 2, was designed to answer Research Questions 1.2, 1.3 and RQ 2, which examined the relationship between employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision, and their levels of engagement related to the leaders' competencies within a faith based Canadian NFP. In order to frame the study and align it with the research questions, the research paradigm served as a framework within which the methodology was chosen.

### **3.3.2 Research Paradigm**

Creswell (2014) not only suggests that research should include clearly defined methods and procedures, but researchers should make explicit the worldview they advocate. This is best done at the outset of designing the research methodology. He suggests stating what guides the researcher's thinking, beliefs, and assumptions about society and how we see ourselves. These guide how problems are solved. In addition, stating the researcher's worldview, brings clarity around any knowledge claims made further to the study and when stating how the research should be executed. For example, through stating the ontology (the nature of reality);

epistemology (the way in which we obtain valid knowledge) and methodology (the tools that were used to conduct the research).

Creswell (2014) also believes that worldviews have several influencers. Specifically, the discipline of the study, past research experience and the personal influence from oneself and academic supervisors. There are four widely discussed worldviews in the literature. These include post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. In determining an appropriate research paradigm to underpin the current project, the post-positivism paradigm was adopted. This was because this paradigm suggests that outcomes are influenced by relationships (Creswell 2014) and that “we cannot be positive about our claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour and action of humans” (Creswell 2003, p. 7). Creswell suggests that the “knowledge that develops through a postpositivist lens is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists out there in the world (p. 7).”

Using the post positivism approach allowed the researcher to begin with a theory, the proposed variables and collect the data to determine if there were relationships potentially influencing outcomes, and if the data supported the theory (Creswell 2003). Creswell suggests that post-positivism position has some key assumptions: evidence established in research is imperfect and absolute truth cannot be found; research is the process of rejecting or accepting claims; data, evidence, and rational considerations shape knowledge; the research seeks to explain situations or describe casual relationships; and objectivity is critical (Creswell 2009). This study’s postpositivist perspective was appropriate to describe the relationships embedded in the research questions.

### **3.3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Approaches**

#### ***Quantitative Research Approach***

A quantitative approach to research has the capacity to provide a method to explore not just the characteristics of an organisation, but the attributes of individuals within that organisation and how they interrelate (Creswell 2014). The variables – independent (foresight and strategic thinking competencies), dependant (employee engagement with the mission and the vision), mediating (line of sight) – were explored. A quantitative approach attempts to explain and describe relationships between variables. The current research was explanatory using statistical analysis techniques. As such the use of survey methods within this approach was appropriate as a common strategy of enquiry that relied on statistical analysis. The quantitative approach provided the ability to complete a numerical analysis of and provide a valid and reliable explanation of the particular phenomenon as described in the conceptual model, Section 2.11 (Babbie 2010).

#### ***Qualitative Research Approach***

Qualitative research, relies on text and image data (Creswell 2014). It also provides opportunity for a deeper understanding of a specific organisation or event and identify patterns of behaviour and consequences among a group of individuals. It is an approach where the researcher plays a more prominent role as the key instrument to gather the data. However qualitative findings are more difficult to validate or generalise. On the other hand, quantitative approach allows for greater generalisation and avoids subjectivity in the analysis of the data.

The nature of the study's research questions, scope of the study and available resources limited the researcher in broadening the enquiry to include a qualitative study despite the added depth that it would provide.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In order to answer the research questions, the research design was based on the examination of the relationship between variables using statistical data. The study explained and understood the interaction between strategic leaders' critical



competencies of foresight and strategic thinking and how these influenced employee engagement and the understanding of the organisations' mission and vision.

The desired outcome of the current research was to explain the phenomenon and describe it so as to i) contribute to professional practice and ii) provide a basis for further research by gaining a greater depth of understanding of the phenomenon.

In addressing the research aims and questions, quantitative data was collected using two surveys. Creswell (2014) suggests that a case study provides opportunity to collect a variety of data to provide an in-depth analysis of a situation within a group of people. In the case of this research the data collected in the Survey 1, was to understand how strategic leaders interact with and communicate the mission and vision of the organisation through strategy. Survey 1 also explored the foresight and strategic thinking competencies and strategic decision-making approach of the strategic leaders within the organisation.

Survey 2 examined employee's engagement with, and their understanding of the mission and the vision of the organisation; and their awareness of how to achieve the mission and vision through the strategy.

#### **3.4.1 Case Study Approach**

Gillham (2000) states that a case study is the study of human activity within a real world environment, which can only be understood within the context of that real world environment. In situations where little is known about what is going on, case studies are deemed to be invaluable (Gillham 2000). Gillham states "If you want to understand people in real life, you have to study them in their context and in the way they operate"(2000, p. 23).

The single case study approach was deemed an appropriate research strategy for this study as it focusses on understanding the dynamics within single settings (Eisenhardt 1989). This approach provided opportunity to investigate, explain, and gain a greater depth of understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Evans & Gruba 2002), in order to produce a firsthand description and understanding of the

people and events within the phenomenon (Yin 2004). The case study is also valuable when trying to find answers to explanatory or descriptive questions (Eisenhardt 1989).

Although the literature suggests that a case study provides little basis for scientific generalisation (Yin 2009), the desired outcome of the current research was to seek to explain the phenomenon and describe it so as to i) contribute to professional practise and ii) as a basis for further research by gaining a greater depth of understanding.

The Canadian faith based organisation was identified as a critical case and represented similar organisations with shared mission the case. Apart from the Canadian faith based organisation being identified as an exemplary case, screening criteria for a single case were applied to further ensure the suitability for this case study. These criteria included the willingness of key persons to participated in the study, and confirmation of the richness of the evidence suggestive of the phenomena to be studied.

The exploratory case study method can have some limitations. For example, the interpretation of findings can be subjective, and as Huberman and Miles (2002) propose, small sample results cannot be projected to a wider population (Huberman & Miles 2002). Yin (2013) shares further concern regarding lack of rigour, being difficult to conduct and the potential for biased views influencing conclusions.

### **3.5 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review sought to establish a theoretical foundation and conceptual clarity underpinning the study. As Creswell (2014) suggests, the literature review began with a broad review of the literature. The literature review supported the identification of the areas of research and identified the research already completed within those areas. In doing so, the literature review also identified the contribution to the body of research (Webster & Watson 2002; Perry 2013). The literature review, identified and organise the concepts associated with leadership in

NFP organisations and their delivery of the mission and the vision to employees to warrant a clear line of sight and engagement with the organisations' strategic plan (Rowley & Slack 2004).

The current research conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on not for profit organisations, strategic leadership, leaders' competencies of foresight and strategic thinking, employee engagement and line of sight. In addition, the concepts of mission and vision were also explored.

### **3.6 OVERVIEW – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

Quantitative Data was collected using two online surveys to:

- a) Gain a profile of the strategic leader's foresight and strategic thinking competencies.
- b) Explore whether leaders successfully communicate the mission and vision in ways that employees understand, are inspired and internalise the organisation's objectives to help the organisation succeed.
- c) Examine if employees understood the mission and vision of the organisation.
- d) Examine if employees understood how what they do every day impacts the delivery of the mission.
- e) Explore whether employees set explicit personal and team goals aligned to the mission and vision.

The current research examined the concepts of leader competencies of foresight and strategic thinking (as proxys of strategic leadership), and whether the strength of these competencies impacted on the employees' ability to engage with and understand the mission and the vision of the organisation. As such the study employed a quantitative cross-sectional approach to the research and the use of surveys as a valid form of enquiry (Creswell 2014).

An additional objective was to examine the line of sight between the strategic leaders' communication of its mission and vision, and its employees who fulfil the day to day tasks (actions) that make the strategy (what needs to be done to achieve success) come to life. The research examined whether the employees not just understood but enacted through engagement with the mission and vision of the organisation. The study's line of enquiry, therefore, was to investigate what the employee's understanding of the mission and the vision was and whether the communication of that mission and vision was understood in a way the employees could contribute to it. Further, whether employees understand the link between what they do every day and the success of the organisation. Based on strategic leadership theory a key assumption of the study was that strategic leader's foresight and strategic thinking competencies would be related to the extent to which employees engage with the mission and the vision.

### **3.6.1 Sample Population**

To administer the two surveys, the Canadian NFP's Board, Chief Executive Officer, Vice Presidents and Senior Managers participated in the Leader's Survey. All employees of Manager level and below were selected to participate in the Employee Survey. In total, 102 participants were invited to complete the surveys.

Participants in Survey 1 (Leaders' Survey) were all of the organisations' 17 strategic level leaders. They included: 7 Board Members, 3 Executive Leadership Team members (ELT) and 7 Senior Managers. The criteria for inclusion was based on the understanding that the Board, ELT and Senior Managers exerted a moderate to high influence on strategy. Survey 2 (Employee Survey) investigated the organisations' employees' engagement with the mission and the vision. The survey was administered to 85 employees.

The intention was to employ the surveys on the organisation's strategic leadership team and all employees to gain a quantitative and numeric description of tendencies and beliefs. The quantitative data allowed for an analysis of the relationship between variables and was central to answering the research question (2014).

### **3.6.2 Leader and Employee Surveys**

Surveys provide a relatively low-cost tool to glean independent responses from participants without any interaction with the researcher (Neuman 2011). The Leader's Survey and the Employee Survey was administered online using Questionpro™ (www.questionpro.com). Questionpro™ provided the researcher the ability to develop, build and host the online survey in one destination. With the various locations of the survey participants cross Canada and in international locations, an online survey helped to increase response rates.

### **3.7 LEADER'S SURVEY DESIGN**

The purpose of the leaders' survey was to measure the strategy level leader's dominant and back up styles for engaging with matters related to anticipating the future (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012, p. 56), and the impact of that on their strategic thinking in formulating strategy. The survey examined their foresight and their strategic thinking competencies as necessary inputs in successfully creating strategy and in particular articulating and communicating the mission and the vision.

The following areas were examined as they relate to the organisation's leaders:

- I. How leaders relate to time in the organisational context
- II. How leaders relate to the future and orient their behaviour, especially with regards to anticipating future possibilities
- III. Leader's strategic thinking as a necessary input to strategy making in an organisational context

#### **3.7.1 Instrument Validity and Reliability**

The study used the previously validated and reliable instrument developed by Van der Laan (Van der Laan 2010) and reported by Van der Laan, Yap and Erwee (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012; Van der Laan & Yap 2016).

The constructs and measurement validity and reliability are reported in Table 3.1.

**Table 3:1 Validity/Reliability Statistics**

Construct	Instrument	Cronbach Alpha	KMO sampling adequacy	Variance Explained	Goodness of Fit – Confirmation Factor Analysis
Foresight Competence	FSA (multi-factor) (Dian & Framtidsbygget 2009; Gary 2009)	0.82	0.91	63.3	Good
	TSI (multi-factor)(Fortunato & Furey 2010)	.88, .91, .84	0.892	61	Good
Strategic Thinking (Analytical)	DSI (one-factor cogeneric) (Rowe et al. 1984)	0.702	0.758	45.9	Good
Strategic Thinking (Conceptual)	DSI (one-factor cogeneric)(Rowe et al. 1984)	0.793	0.83	54.83	Good

The FSA (Dian & Framtidsbygget 2009; Gary 2009) and TSI (Fortunato & Furey 2010) were tested for model fit as a latent variable reflecting foresight competence. The results of the study suggested that the data fit the model well and supported the hypothesis that the FSA and TSI validly measured foresight competence as a latent variable.

The strategic thinking latent variable was hypothesised to be made up of two one-factor cogeneric decision models of conceptual and analytical styles (Rowe et al. 1984). For the Analytical Style - the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy was 0.758 with the items explaining 45.9% of the variance. Conceptual Style had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.793. The KMO sampling adequacy was 0.830 with the items explaining 54.83% of the variance. Both dimensions had fit the model well

(goodness of fit) in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis by Van der Laan (Van der Laan 2010)

### **3.7.2 Leader's Survey Administration**

Participants were provided the survey link via email which was distributed in house by the organisation. Responses to the survey were anonymous and unidentifiable, and automatically coded. Data was easily exported from Questionpro™ to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis. Participation in the Leader's Survey was 100%, with all identified leaders completing the survey.

### **3.7.3 Data Analysis and Discussion.**

In order to determine the validity and reliability of the survey in this study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. The statistical analysis software, SPSS, was used to analyse the data. The following section describes the process of data extraction, preparation, and analysis.

## **3.8 EMPLOYEE SURVEY DESIGN**

The Employee Survey explored the extent to which employees understand, have internalised, and act on the strategic objectives of the organisation. In addition, the Employee Survey examined whether the employees have exhibited discretionary effort in relation to their engagement with strategy.

In doing so it was important to understand if the employee's knowledge and understanding of the mission and vision was reflected in their engagement. If they understand what they do and how they do it each day impacts their clients and if so, this would be reflected in them setting personal and team-oriented goals to achieve the organisation's mission and vision. Ultimately leading to a display of some evidence of discretionary effort in their efforts to achieve the goals.

The employee survey was administered to all of the organisations' 85 employees. It examined:

- If the strategic leaders had communicated the mission and vision?

- Was there employee understanding that what they do impacts the delivery of the mission and vision?
- Had employees engaged with the organisational mission, vision and strategy?
- Had employees felt skilled and enabled to achieve the mission and vision?
- Had employees set explicit personal and department objectives aligned to the achievement of the mission, the vision, and strategy?
- Had employees linked their tasks to the mission of the organisation?
- Were employees motivated and likely to enact discretionary effort?
- Were employees committed to the organisation's mission and vision?

To explore the employee's understanding of and engagement with the mission and the vision the researcher understood that it was critical to provide definitions at the start of each section of questions that related to each topic. For example, "the mission and the vision" were explained and quoted to survey participants as described by the organisation.

### **3.8.1 Employee Survey Administration**

All Managers and their direct reports within the organisation were invited to participate in the Employee Survey. Participants were provided the survey link via email which was distributed in house by the organisation. Responses to the survey were automatically coded and the data stored by Questionpro™. The reporting functions within Questionpro™ allowed for detailed understanding of responses through providing an indication of how many viewed the survey, how many dropped out while completing the survey, and how many fully completed the survey. Responses were exported to SPSS for analysis.

## **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Throughout the research journey it is extremely important that the researcher considers and anticipates ethical issues while conducting the research (Creswell 2014). Critical to preserving the integrity of the process, those who participate and the researcher is a commitment to ethical conduct (Neuman 2011).



In support of this is the accountability that is in place around ethical behaviour by the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). Before any research can be conducted, researchers are required to have ethics approval granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Human Ethics Research Approval was applied for and the researcher advised that the proposal met the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) on 3 December 2015. The HREC also requires the submission of Ethics Progress Reports at regular intervals which happened during the research.

The researcher is a Certified Member of The Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI), the professional body for Human Resources in Australia. AHRI sets the industry standard for HR practitioners in Australia. Professional membership with AHRI ensures that HR practitioners adhere to a robust professional code of conduct that is supported by governance requirements and disciplinary procedures. All members are bound by the AHRI constitution, the code of ethics and professional conduct, and all by-laws, notices, and directives of AHRI.

Still, the research requires anticipation of any relevant ethical dimensions (Creswell 2009). Possible ethical dilemmas and hurdles for the current research are addressed in Table 3:2.

**Figure 3:2 Ethical considerations**

<b>Ethical consideration</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Applied to the Survey Method</b>
Requirement for USQ Ethics Approval	Granting of ethics approval	Human Research Ethics Approval received.
Right to Autonomy and Informed consent	Benefits, rights, and risks of participation	Participants in survey emailed information in regard to the survey which included the endorsement of their Board, CEO, and the leadership. Participants given the name and contact details of the researcher and encouraged to make contact should they have any questions in regard to their participation, confidentiality or purpose/how data was be used. Participants clearly advised that their participation was not compulsory, nor would it impact their relationship with their employer.

		<p>Participants could withdraw from the survey at any point.</p> <p>The contact details of the researcher, supervisor, and ethics committee was also made available to all participants.</p> <p>Online survey did not commence until the recipient indicated they had read and understood the voluntary nature of their participation.</p> <p>Once endorsed the survey began and the consent was tacit.</p>
Freedom of choice	Participant's freedom to discontinue participation	After commencing the survey, participants were able to discontinue at any time prior to submitting their final response.
Accessibility	Ability to contact the researcher	<p>Details of the primary researcher, the supervisory team, and the ethics committee were available on the survey and in the introductory email.</p> <p>No concerns were received throughout the duration of the project.</p>
Anonymity and Confidentiality	Concealing the identity of participants (Shariff 2015)	<p>In the survey the participants were completely anonymous to the researcher</p> <p>Data gathered during the course of the research was stored on the password protected and secure lap top computer of researcher. Research data was password protected for increased security. Any hard copies of confidential information was stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office before being converted to electronic copies then shredded.</p> <p>Electronic files were backed up to an external storage device which was password protected and locked in cabinet in researcher's home office for additional security when not in use.</p> <p>Once data collection is complete, the external storage device was kept in a locked safe at the researcher's home office for the requisite period (according to USQ guidelines) of 5 years.</p>
Recruitment of participants	How participants were chosen for participation	Participation in the study was voluntary.
Research conducted outside Australia	National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007. Ch 4:8 People in Other Countries	<p>The research was conducted amongst adult employees and adult volunteers of a registered Canadian NFP organisation.</p> <p>Participation was voluntary and confidential. An experienced academic support in the person of Dr S Candy at OCAD University in Canada was established to provide support if needed during the data collection phase</p>

Information security and Cyber security	The protection of Information from unauthorised use or accidental modification, loss or release (University of Southern Queensland 2014)	To protect research data/information from improper access, IT measures such as appropriate firewalls and software controls were in place.
Disclosure	Release of information	Data was be kept for the university minimum time of five years following completion of the research.

### 3.10 CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research paradigm, and research design for the current study. By providing details of the research methodology, data collection, and methods of statistical analysis the methodology was established. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussion of the analysis of data acquired from the leader and employee surveys.

## 4 Results and Discussion

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Those who formulate and communicate strategy play a critical role in ensuring that employees can see the link between what they do every day and the organisations' mission and vision. This study's perspective is that an employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision is necessary for employee engagement with strategy. The clarity of that line of sight is reflected by the strategic leaders' competencies of foresight and strategic thinking as suggested by strategic leadership theory.

For many organisations where the focus is on providing aid to offshore beneficiaries, it can be challenging for employees to recognise the impact of their day-to-day work and how they add value to delivering on the mission and the vision. This can influence not just employee engagement but goes deeper into the domain of whether employees display some level of discretionary effort. The term discretionary effort describes how employees spend their additional time and effort in engaging with their role (Lloyd 2008). Over time employee engagement and discretionary effort impact the success of the organisation and whether it can adequately fulfil its mission.

This Chapter presents the survey results of a Canadian NFP faith-based organisation where the researcher explored the competencies of the strategic level leaders as they relate to employee engagement with the mission and the vision. Of particular interest in the case are the profiles of the leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies. They serve as indicators of what the organisation becomes.

This Chapter presents the results of two online surveys completed during the research:

- Survey 1, the Leaders' Survey which examined the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of the organisation's strategic leaders.
- Survey 2, an Employee Survey which explored whether employees had a clear line of sight between what they do on a day-to-day basis and the mission and vision of the organisation as formulated and communicated by the strategic leadership.

#### **4.2 SURVEY ONE: LEADER SURVEY**

Four groups were invited to participate in the Leaders Survey. The Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team (ELT) which includes the President/Chief Executive Officer, Vice Presidents (VP's) who are department heads, and Senior Managers. Apart from the Board, all are involved in the operations of the organisation on a day-to-day basis.

The purpose of surveying the strategic leadership team was to measure the strategy level leaders' dominant and back up styles for engaging with matters related to anticipating the future (Laan & Erwee 2012) and their impact on creating strategy. This provided insight into their foresight competence and strategic thinking competence as necessary inputs in successfully creating and executing strategy. The aim was that strategy exists to define and bring to fruition a preferable future position that is aspirational. Secondly, to profile their competencies as they relate to the formulation and communication of strategy.

Although participants completed the survey as individuals, the report was analysed in aggregate as representative of those with strategic oversight of the organisation. Specifically, the following areas were examined as they relate to this leadership team:

- I. How leaders relate to time in the organisational context - how leaders relate to the future and orient their behaviour, especially with regards to anticipating future possibilities. This represents their foresight competence.

- II. Leaders’ Foresight Styles – how leaders approach the future and respond to matters related to the future. This represents their foresight competence.
- III. Leaders’ strategic thinking as a necessary input to strategy making in an organisational context – these represent their inclination to favour analytical, conceptual or a balanced approach to formulating strategy.

#### 4.2.1 Leaders’ Survey Descriptive Statistics

The organisation’s strategic leadership team were invited to complete the Leaders’ Survey and strongly encouraged to do so by the CEO, with the full endorsement of the Board of Directors. Participants were provided a link to the survey in an email inviting their participation. The email also provided an explanation of why they had been selected to complete the survey.

#### 4.2.2 Demographics

The demographics of the sample included the age, gender, education and positions of leaders. Table 4:1 provides a summary of the demographics of the Leader Survey participants.

**Table 4:1 Demographics Results – Leaders’ Survey**

<b>What is your gender?</b>		
Male	13	76.47%
Female	4	23.53%
Total	17	
<b>What is your age?</b>		
Under 24	0	0.00%
25–34	0	0.00%
35–44	3	17.65%
45–59	7	41.18%
60+	4	23.53%
Prefer not to answer	3	17.65%
Total	17	
<b>What is your last completed level of education?</b>		
Elementary	0	0.00%
Middle School	0	0.00%
High School	0	0.00%
Diploma	3	17.65%
Bachelor’s Degree	3	17.65%

Postgraduate Degree	9	52.94%
Prefer not to answer	2	11.76%
Total	17	
<b>What position do you hold in your organisation?</b>		
Executive Leadership Team (CEO or VP)	3	17.65%
Senior Manager	7	41.18%
Board Member	7	41.18%
Total	17	

Majority of the participants were male (76%); and almost 65% identified as being over 45 years old. There were no participants identified as being under 35 years old. The majority of the participants, 82% identified as being Board Members or Senior Managers.

#### **4.2.3 Leaders' Orientation to Time in the Organisational Context (Foresight Competence Construct).**

The first group of questions examined how leaders related to time and how they orientated their behaviour, especially with regard to anticipating future possibilities. At the outset an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, and the instrument was found to be valid and reliable. See Table 3:1. The orientation to time was measured using the Timestyle Inventory See Appendix A.

A summary of the results of the Timestyle Inventory are presented in Table 4:2

**Table 4:2 Timestyle Inventory Results**

	FUTURE	PRESENT	PAST	Mean
ALL	0.77	0.84	0.50	0.70
Var from mean	0.07	0.13	-0.20	
ELT	0.81	0.93	0.62	0.79
Var from mean	0.02	0.14	-0.17	
SNR MANAGER	0.78	0.80	0.52	0.70
Var from mean	0.08	0.10	-0.18	
BOARD	0.75	0.84	0.43	0.67
Var from mean	0.08	0.17	-0.24	

As was suggested in the literature (see Section 2:1) the profiles of a strong leadership team would be equally orientated toward past and present thinking, with a slightly increased orientation to the future. The results above show that

overall, the strategic leaders have a primary orientation toward the present and future, with little regard to the past. No individual group within the team have any balance between the past and present. The Board has the least orientation toward the past, and the ELT the group most orientated to the future and the present.

**Appendix A** presents the responses to the Timestyle Inventory questions.

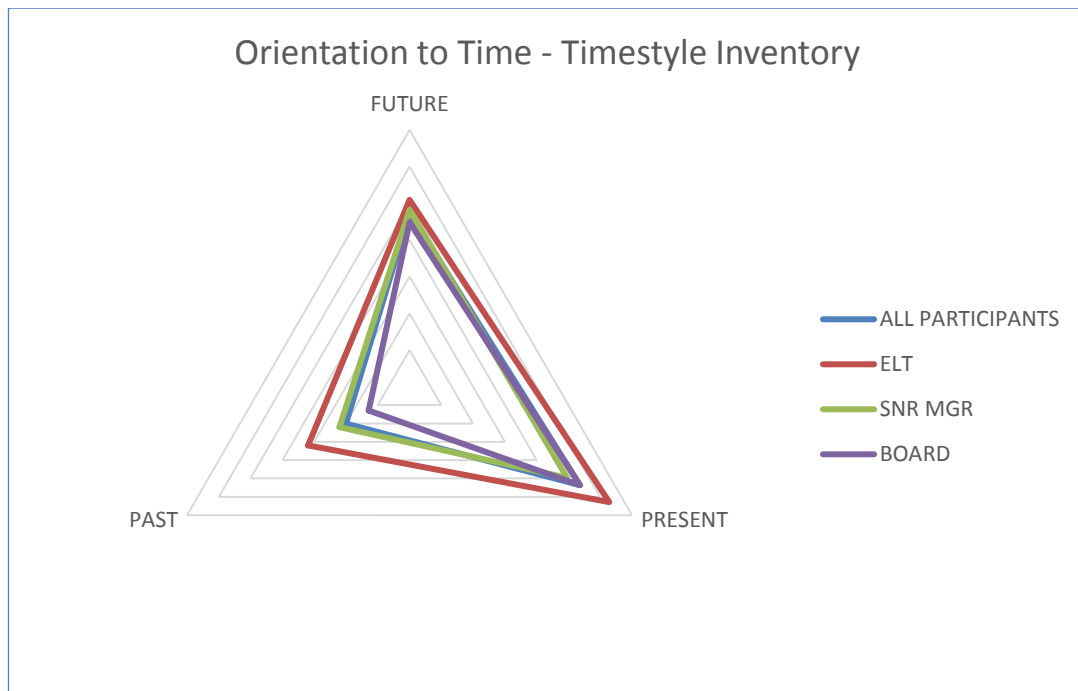
The survey results showed that within the organisational context, 59% said they often think about past decisions, while 17% said they tend to dwell on what was. Whereas 94% said that people think of them as being organised, 100% of the respondents identified that being organised was important to them. 88% said that others think of them as being structured, and the same percentage, that people think of them as being best at planning and organising within the organisational context.

When asked about if they were known for generating ideas, 88% said they were, 76% that people think of them as visionary, and 82% that they are known for invention/innovation. It has been reported (Van der Laan & Yap 2016) that an element of response bias may influence the results.

#### **4.2.4 Orientation to Time**

From the results presented above, Figure 4:1 illustrates the strategic leadership team's orientation to time further to their responses within the Leaders' Survey.





**Figure 4:1 Leaders Orientation to Time**

Orientation to time is critical to foresight and strategic thinking. The results represented in the Figure suggest that the strategic leadership team has a dominant orientation to the present and are to some extent, orientated to the future. This is typical of leadership within organisations where their focus is about getting things done in a fast paced and ever-changing environment. This emphasis on the present is further reinforced by their responses around how they are perceived by others – as being highly skilled in planning and organising.

However, the importance of past thinking, and organisational memory, cannot be underestimated in defining the organisations future strategic positioning. The results in Table 4:2 demonstrate that the team think about past decisions, but do not dwell on the past. This may not necessarily mean that they do not learn from the past, but could reveal some level of response bias, where participants may have felt that it was not something positive to identify as dwelling on the past.

It may also suggest that there is lack of opportunity given to reflect on past decisions in order to explore ideas and assumptions about the future or inform decisions about the present.

When past thinking is not balanced with future thinking it can produce consequences where the organisation continues to propagate old behaviours, never learn from past decisions, and forget the original mission of the organisation. Or present successes are measured in terms of past achievements and used as internal benchmarks of success (Mann 2015). The results may suggest this is the case and that there is lack of opportunity for the team to explore ideas and assumptions about the future in light of the patterns of the past.

The results regarding their orientation to the future suggests they have some opportunity to engage in imaginative, big picture thinking.

The results of the individual groups within the survey, indicate that the Board are very focussed on the present, moderately orientated to the future but have not much regard to the past. This may suggest that the Board are not as concerned with where the organisation came from, or its founding mission.

It can also mean that they may not be critically evaluating past decisions to learn from them, or regularly reminding themselves of the mission to better inform their decision making for the present and future. They are the group least orientated toward the future state of the organisation, yet they are expected to endorse the strategy.

Given the ELT have a much greater orientation toward the future (81%) than the Board (75%), the Board could potentially become a weight for the ELT in forging ahead in their planning for a fit for future organisation and on delivering an aspirational vision and effective strategy.

#### **4.2.5 Leaders' Foresight Styles Assessment (Foresight Competence Construct)**

The next section of the survey explored the leaders' cognitive foresight styles. Specifically, how individuals prepare for strategy making in an organisational context. How individuals relate to the future, orient their behaviour to the future, and anticipate the future. The questions explored how participants respond to

trends and new products, how they view change, are they flexible and what are their dominant behaviours when thinking about the future.

As was suggested in the literature the foresight styles represent four styles of engaging with the future (See Section 2.8.2). It should be noted that everyone inherently has a spread of all these approaches and inclinations to adopt a dominant, back-up and least preferred style. The four key styles are identified by Van der Laan and Yap as Tester, Framer, Reactor and Adapter. At the outset, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted, and the instrument was found to be valid and reliable (See Table 3:1).

The following profile scores were recorded in the aggregate based on the responses to the instrument item (See **Appendix B**). Table 4:3 presents the aggregate scores.

**Table 4:3 Foresight Styles Assessment**

	REACTOR	ADAPTER	TESTER	FRAMER
ALL	32.35	67.32	59.31	67.89
ELT	36.11	72.22	68.06	73.61
SNR MANAGER	31.55	65.87	58.93	69.64
BOARD	31.55	66.67	55.95	63.69
mean	32.89	68.02	60.56	68.71
ALL VAR	-0.54	-0.70	-1.25	-0.82
ELT VAR	3.22	4.20	7.49	4.90
SNR MANAGER VAR	-1.34	-2.15	-1.63	0.93
BOARD VAR	-1.34	-1.35	-4.61	-5.02

From the results in the aggregate, the foresight style leaders preferred was Framer (67.89%), with a backup style of Adapter (67.32%) and then Tester (59.3%). The least preferred of the group was Reactor (32.35%). When broken down by groups the foresight style the ELT and Senior Manager's preferred was Framer. The Board's preferred foresight style was Adapter. The least preferred for all the groups was Reactor.

The group were asked what best describes them regarding testing new products and trends early, just over 53% said this described them well. However, 46% said it only 'describes me a little bit.' There was 100% positive response to the questions if they were conscious of big trends in society; if they consider how trends interact

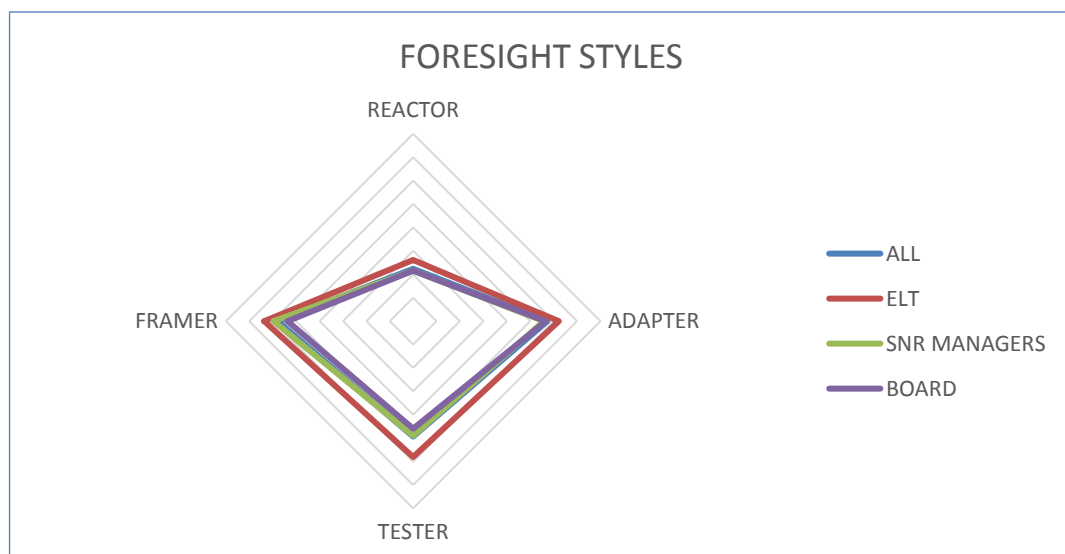
with one another and if they take advantage of trends that pop up. Although all responded positively to taking advantage of trends that pop up, almost 24% identified that this described them a little. When asked to describe whether they focus on future questions, 100% said they did to some extent. Further, there was a 100% response to whether they focussed on greater future questions and are interested in future question. When asked if they felt they were flexible, 100% responded in the positive. A similar outcome was found when participants were asked if they quickly adjusted to new situations (see **Appendix B**).

Nonetheless, the results show that when the change is imposed on them 62 % said that their behaviour could be described as ‘holding the line.’ More than 60% said that when change directly impacts them it makes them feel threatened to some extent.

Over 94% said that when the future demands it, they make things happen. 94% were of the view that they are interested in future questions, and 88% said that they focus on greater future questions.

#### 4.2.6 Discussion: Foresight Styles

Based on the results the leaders’ foresight styles are illustrated in the profile presented in Figure 4:2



**Figure 4:2 Leaders’ Survey – Leaders Foresight Styles**

Overall, the results show a well-balanced profile in the areas of Framer and Adapter and to a slightly lesser extent, Tester. The group displayed an inclination toward interrogating the future, envisioning bigger picture futures, adjusting to demands, and being adaptive in their thinking and behaviour related to the future and understanding trends. They were willing to experiment and adopt new innovations.

The results also indicated that they may acknowledge that change will happen and is inevitable. In addition, with the above supported by a well-balanced capacity toward framing, the leaders' cognitive styles were strong and well positioned for developing good strategy. The slight inclination toward being a reactor is normal, with most leaders being somewhat reactive when engaging with the future.

Overall, the foresight styles of the sample are all strongly leaning toward the Framer style, with the ELT group having the most propensity toward that style of foresight thinking. This suggests that they are the most likely group to be analysing trends and are opportunistic and experimental in their approach to the future.

They also have the ability to identify gaps in their current knowledge, patterns and trends. The results show that they are very aware of the need for future thinking, and to foresee change. They acknowledged the need for innovation and creativity, monitor trends and said that they are perceived to be known as innovators in their field.

A significant proportion of the cohort said that they believe they respond quickly to change when it happens. However, 24% of were reluctant to change and would hold the line when change was imposed upon them. Disruptive change is outside the locus of control of any organisation, but one that will inevitably impact them. As such how strategic leaders see the disruptive change (as opportunity or threat) will determine their response to it. Over half (53%) of the participants indicated that they do not like disruptive change. Although 12% do not want too much change, they all perceive themselves as being flexible (100%) and 94% said that they make things happen when the future demands it.

The leadership team's foresight profiles (Table 4:3) suggest that they have strong competencies and cognitive abilities to interrogate the future, are future orientated in their thinking and have the ability to envision 'big picture' concepts.

They also display cognitive abilities in helping others adapt and the ability to be flexible in their leadership styles. These results demonstrate that the team have the potential to be highly competent in leading change and display strong influencer characteristics. However, results show that the leadership team have the potential to dislike and challenge disruptive change. Consequently, their status within the organisation may negatively influence the success of any significant change if they see it as imposed. However, the results indicate that if they feel involved to some extent in the decision-making process, they could be more likely to take on the role of a positive influencer.

Overall, the organisations' leaders have high foresight competence. Over half of them are involved in operations and so the group reflect a high orientation toward the present. They know that they need to be future orientated in their thinking, understand the need to be aware of trends and to be flexible. From the leaders' perspective, their acceptance of any strategy will be to ensure that they feel they have contributed to it, and that it is not imposed upon them.

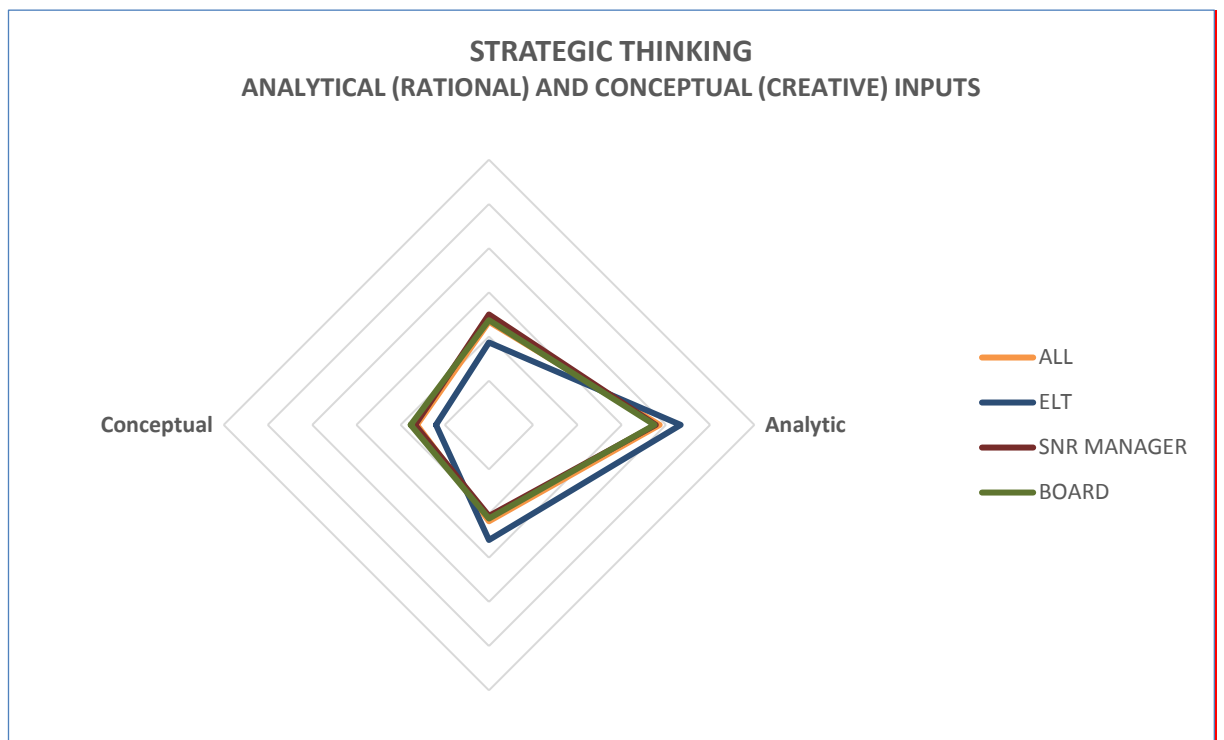
#### **4.2.7 Strategic Thinking**

The final section of the Leaders' Survey explored the leaders' strategic thinking as a necessary input and immediately preceding strategy formulation and decision making in an organisational context.

Specifically, the survey indicated how the leadership team are likely to act when formulating strategy within the organisation. Their strategic thinking styles do not necessarily reflect their foresight competence. This is because organisational culture and their operational focus may deter their foresight competence from translating into strategic thinking.

The ideal profile for strategic thinking is to have a balance between creative generative thinking and analytical thinking processes (See Section 2.8.1). Strategic thinking should be creative and generative, whether it is for the short term, or long term. It should also include an even measure of analytical input.

Figure 4:3 illustrates the aggregate scores of the leaders' strategic thinking styles.



**Figure 4:3 Leaders' Strategic Thinking Styles**

**Appendix C** provides a summary of the results on leaders' decision making approach.

Table 4:4 provides a summary of the results as they relate to the leaders' decision making approach questions.

**Table 4:4 Decision Making Approach**

Style	Intensity			
	Least preferred	Back-up	Dominant	Very Dominant
Directive	<68	68-82	83-90	>90
Analytic	<83	83-97	98-104	>104

	Analytic	Conceptual
ALL	88.59	66.29
ELT	93.33	62.00
SEN MGR	87.71	66.71
BOARD	87.43	67.71

Overall, the results showed a strong reliance on analytical modes of thinking as it relates to strategy (88.59%). Based on the questions within the survey instrument, this suggests that the leaders have a strong focus on systems, are hypothesis driven and a focus on processes. There appears to also be a tendency for the leaders to act rationally and as such analytical approaches are preferred.

The conceptual (creative) thinking was strongest amongst the Board and Senior Managers (67.71% and 66.71% respectively). Additional questions were added to the leaders' survey which sought to derive descriptive data that determined who they believed formulates strategy in the organisation.

**Appendix D** provides the results of questions indicating the leaders' interaction with strategy.

76% of the leadership team believed that they had a clearly defined vision of the services they provided and the clients they served. Similarly, 76% believed that managers are critical in converting the vision into operational strategies.

Respondents also indicated that employee initiative and innovation were key capabilities of the organisation, with 65% responding positively to that question.

When asked about who formulates strategy and whether the strategic leadership team believed that the strategy was formulated by their Global Office, as opposed to them, 17% agreed. When asked if the local CEO formulated strategy in



partnership with the global office, over 26% believed that to be the case. When asked whether strategy was set primarily by the CEO, 35% agreed, and just over 64% were either undecided or disagreed.

When asked if the strategy was set by the ELT (which the CEO is part of) and the Board, 43% disagreed, 29% were undecided and 29% agreed or strongly agreed that it was. There was a clearly defined response to whether strategy was set by the Board of Directors. With 46% of respondents strongly disagreeing with that. Interestingly 40% believed that strategy in the organisation is primarily set by the CEO and a few of his direct subordinates.

Of the participants, 67%, suggested that strategy is developed on a continual basis among the ELT, Managers, and employees. Also 59% said that strategy is not static but adjusted based on feedback received from their financial supporters.

Table 4:5 provides the results of the leaders influence on strategy formulation. While 47% indicated that their influence was minimal, 53% rated their influence as medium to high.

**Table 4:5 Leadership Team’s Influence on Strategy Formulation**

	High	Medium	Minimal	None	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Rate your influence on the strategy formulation of your organisation? (select one)	5	4	8	0	17	2.18	0.88	0.78
	29.41%	23.53%	47.06%	0.00%				

The Leaders’ Survey participants were asked to respond to the statement “innovation is” by choosing from a list of 5 options. Table 4:6 provides their responses.

**Table 4:6 Innovation Is?**

<b>Innovation is:</b>		
What we know, who we are and how we create new solutions	5	29.41%
A new application of a solution for a completely different purpose from which it was originally used or intended	2	11.76%
Building or restructuring operations to profitably bring new products and services to market	2	11.76%
The invention of completely new products or services	3	17.65%
New significant change	5	29.41%
Total	17	
Mean	3.06	
Standard Dev.	1.68	
Variance	2.81	

Two statements were selected by 29% as their responses to the items – what we know, who we are and how we create new solutions and new significant change.

When the strategic leaders were asked what best described the purpose of their organisation, just over 43% said ‘child development;’ almost 19%, ‘religious organisation’ and 12.5% a fundraising organisation. See Table 4:7

**Table 4:7 Purpose of Organisation**

	Religious Organisation	Child Sponsorship	Child Development	Charity	Marketing Organisation	Fundraising Organisation	Other	Total	Mean	Std Dev.	Variance
Which best describes the purpose of your organisation?	6	3	14	2	2	4	1	32	3.22	1.68	2.82
	18.75%	9.38%	43.75%	6.25%	6.25%	12.50%	3.13%				

Participants were asked to provide feedback on how they perceived those who formulated strategy and who the main communicators of strategy were. The results are provided in Tables 4:8 and 4:9.

**Table 4:8 Strategy Formulation and Who Formulate Strategy**

	The main actors understand strategy same way	There is conflict between the main actors	it is very much top / down	It is a ' team effort' by all employees	There is no clear strategy formulation	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
In terms of strategy formulation in my organisation; (You may select more than one option)	12	3	2	6	3	26	2.42	1.55	2.41
	46.15%	11.54%	7.69%	23.08%	11.54%				

**Table 4:9 Main Communicators of Strategy**

	The Global Office	Organisation CEO	VP' s	Board	Managers	Employees	There is no clear communication how to achieve the	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
In terms of strategy communication in my organisation the main communicators of strategy are: (Select all that apply)	5	11	11	1	10	1	4	3.4 4	1.8 0	3.2 5
	11.63%	25.58 %	25.58 %	2.33%	23.26 %	2.33%	9.30%			

Approximately 46% indicated that the main actors understand strategy in the same way; almost 12% said there was conflict between the main actors; and almost 8% said that the strategy formulation was 'top-down.' Although almost 12 % felt there was no clear strategy formulation process, 23% believe it to be a team effort by all employees.

In terms of strategy communication, the primary communicator identified by the leadership team was equally the CEO and VP's, followed closely by Managers and Board. Still, 9% felt there was no clear communication of how to achieve the strategy.

#### **4.2.8 Discussion: Strategic Thinking**

The results show that the leaders have a strong bias toward analytical modes of thinking. Potentially this may be as a result of a high percentage of them being highly engaged with the organisations' operations. This demands that they need to make measured and defensible decisions daily. However, it may cause the strategy, especially the vision and scope of possibilities, to be limiting the future opportunities for the organisation.

Although creative thinking appears healthier among the Board and Senior Managers, they too have a strong predisposition toward analytical thinking. Analytical thinking is largely based on historical data suggesting linearity when considering strategy. This could be restrictive to creative thinking and imagining.

Although the degree of creativity was not measured, the leadership team previously stated that others in the organisation see them as creative, visionary, and innovative. Yet half of them said they did not generate new ideas. Two thirds, that they had no influence over innovation. Their view was that the organisation is innovative and a leader in their field. This may suggest that they frequently reflect on and celebrate their past successes which then influence their present beliefs about who they are as an organisation.

The results showed that they are willing to experiment and adopt new innovations and trends. Given the leadership team see their employees as a key capability for the organisation to engage in innovation and creativity, it may suggest that their multi-level innovation teams are functioning well.

The results demonstrate that there may be confusion amongst the leadership team as to who formulates strategy, with just over one third of the team believing that

strategy is formulated elsewhere. The lack of clarity around who formulates strategy may be as a result of a practice common in many NFPs where strategy formulation is highly consultative. It was unanimity however within the group that the Board were not solely responsible for formulating strategy.

The strategic profiles of the group displayed an inclination toward being opportunistic, adaptive in their thinking and strategy setting. Their profiles clearly showed that they have the capacity and cognitive styles needed and are well positioned to develop good strategy to innovate and support change.

Given the visionary nature of their roles and the expectations of others, they may be more willing to make significant change, but this is unlikely. Particularly as it relates to their involvement in formulating strategy and being supportive of even incremental strategic changes.

It appears that within the strategic leadership team there is a lack of unity, and confusion as to the of purpose of the organisation. This may be why, when they were asked what their primary leadership function was, 'that determining how the vision will be achieved,' and 'determining what the vision is' was the least selected items. Yet 76% believed that the vision is clearly defined and critical to operational effectiveness. This finding is of major significance as the vision is intrinsically linked to formulating strategy.

In addition, although the leadership believed the vision is clearly communicated to employees by them, they saw managers as playing a critical role in translating the vision into operational effectiveness.

#### **4.2.9 Leaders' Survey – Summary**

From the discussions above the following were concluded:

- The leadership team was somewhat disengaged with the importance of considering the past and the future together, which can lead to poorly informed decisions about the present, and no clarity on a preferred or possible future.

- Leaders had strong competencies and cognitive abilities to interrogate the future and had the ability to envision 'big picture' concepts, be flexible, and highly competent in planning and leading change if given the opportunity.
- Leaders were opportunistic, adaptive in their thinking and strategy setting - their profiles indicated that they had the capacity and cognitive styles needed of foresight competence and were well positioned to develop good strategy to innovate and support change. However, they were hindered by their strong analytical orientation to strategic thinking giving precedence to managing operations.
- Leaders did not see their primary role as communicating the mission and vision, nor were they unified on the purpose of the organisation – this may be because some believed that the strategy is formulated by their global office.

#### **4.3 SURVEY TWO: EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

The mission statements of NFP organisations are known to be driven by a set of core values, norms and motivations (Macedo et al. 2016). Mission statements are considered powerful drivers of motivation and success for employees. The vision, describing the desired future state which is realised through strategy and intrinsically linked to one another.

The way in which the mission and the vision is communicated, and how it is received and understood by employees is critical. Also, the clarity of an employees' view to the strategy is linked to a clear level of understanding of the vision and how they can best contribute to that vision. This is referred to as the 'line of sight' (Buller & McEvoy 2012).

Primarily the purpose of surveying the employees and their line managers (from now referred to collectively as employees) was to understand employee engagement with the organisation's mission and vision as communicated by strategic leadership. Also, to explore the line of sight to the mission and the vision.

This is demonstrated by seeing the link between what they do every day and the mission and vision. If employees understand that what they do every day impacts the organisations' success. It was also important to understand if they perceived the vision as realistic, achievable, and measurable. To help understand if employees are engaged in discretionary effort, the survey examined if they regularly complete tasks beyond their job description and have a desire to work differently. Although the participants completed the survey as individuals, the report was analysed in the aggregate and represents all respondents.

The organisation has three separate departments. Line managers and employees from each participated in the survey. The departments were identified as Marketing and Strategy, Engagement, and Business Services. To ensure consistency and clarity of understanding, the mission and the vision statements of the organisation were transcribed directly into the survey whenever either was referenced. Also provided was a definition of strategy whenever referenced, as being 'what needs to be done to achieve the organisation's vision.'

#### **4.3.1 Employee Survey Statistics**

In addition to reviewing the descriptive statistical analysis, the researcher conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using IBM SPSS® statistical analysis software (IBM SPSS® software). A Cronbach's alpha measure of internal consistency was completed across all the Likert scale items in the employee survey. Table 4:10 summarises the results. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.824 suggesting that the items have a relatively high internal consistency. The correlation results are included in each relevant section of the descriptive statistics.

**Table 4:10 SPSS Reliability Statistics Output**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.824	0.824	40

### **4.3.2 Employee Survey Descriptive Statistics**

#### **4.3.2.1 Employee Survey Demographics**

Table 4:11 provides a summary of the demographics of those who completed the employee survey.



**Table 4:11 Demographics – Employee Survey**

	M	F						Total	Mean	St Dev	Var
What is your gender?	15	34						49	1.69	0.47	0.22
	30.61%	69.39%									
	< 24	25–34	35–44	45–59	60+	Prefer not to answer		Total	Mean	St Dev	Var
What is your age?	0	18	9	13	4	4		48	3.31	1.29	1.67
	0.00%	37.50%	18.75%	27.08%	8.33%	8.33%					
What is your last completed level of education?	Elem.	MS	HS	Dip	BachDe g	PGradD	Prefer not to ans.	Total	Mean	St Dev	Var
	0	0	5	16	19	3	5	48	4.73	1.09	1.18
	0.00%	0.00%	10.42%	33.33%	39.58%	6.25%	10.42%				
	Engagement	Business Services	Marketing & Strategy					Total	Mean	St Dev	Var
Which department within the organisation do you work in?	21	5	22					48	2.02	0.96	0.91
	43.75%	10.42%	45.83%								
	< 1Yr	1 - 5 yrs	6 - 10 yrs	11 - 15 yrs	16 - 20 yrs	>20 yrs		Total	Mean	St Dev	Var
How long have you been working within this organisation?	4	16	21	4	1	0		46	2.61	0.86	0.73
	8.70%	34.78%	45.65%	8.70%	2.17%	0.00%					

The results show that 83% of employees were over the age of 25 yrs old. More than 56% of employees had been working in the organisation for 6 years or more. The same percentage, 56% had completed formal education of bachelor’s degree or above. Participation percentages of overall participants was highest from the Marketing and Strategy Department (46%), followed closely by the Engagement Department (44%). The lowest percentage of employees to participate were from the Business Services Group, which is made up of the Finance and IT Departments. This group represented 10% of the survey respondents.

**4.3.2.2 Engagement with Mission and Vision**

Table 4:12 provides a summary of the responses regarding questions on the communication of mission and vision during hiring and onboarding process.

**Table 4:12 Communication pre-employment and onboarding**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
The organisation’s mission and vision was clearly and repeatedly outlined to me during the hiring process, my orientation and on boarding experience	0	2	1	24	25	52	4.38	0.72	0.52
	0.00%	3.85%	1.92%	46.15%	48.08%				
I understand why my organisation exists - its mission/purpose	1	0	0	8	45	54	4.78	0.63	0.40
	1.85%	0.00%	0.00%	14.81%	83.33%				

When asked if the organisation’s mission and vision was clearly and repeatedly outlined during the hiring process, orientation and onboarding experience 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was. Additionally, over 98% said that they understood why the organisation exists – its mission/purpose.

*Mission Engagement*

Table 4:13 provides a summary of responses when participants were asked what best describes the organisations’ purpose.

**Table 4:13 What best describes the purpose of the organisation?**

Which best describes the purpose of the organisation	Religious Organisation	Child Sponsorship	Child Development	Charity	Marketing Organisation	Fundraising Organisation	Other	Total	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance
	4	6	42	6	4	5	4	71	3.44	1.41	1.99
	5.63%	8.45%	59.15%	8.45%	5.63%	7.04%	5.63%				

Majority of the participants, 65%, identified that they would describe the organisation’s purpose as Child Development, or selected “other” and input similar terms all using child development.

Tables 4:14, 4:15 and 4:16 provide a summary of responses to participants related to who formulates strategy, who communicates strategy and if they had a role in formulating strategy.

**Table 4:14 Who formulates strategy?**

When strategy is formulated in the organisation who do you believe it is generally done by? (Select all that apply)	CEO	CEO & ELT	Board	CEO & Board	VPs	Managers	All Employees	Sponsors	Global Office	There is no clear strategy formulation	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
	1	32	9	6	17	27	3	0	13	4	112	4.83	2.49	6.21
	0.89%	28.57%	8.04%	5.36%	15.18%	24.11%	2.68%	0.00%	11.61%	3.57%				

**Table 4:15 Who communicates strategy?**

The main communicators of strategy are: (Select all that apply)	Global Office	CEO	VPs	Board	Managers	My Peers	There is no clear communication in how to achieve the strategy	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
	15	24	28	1	20	2	11	101	3.37	1.86	3.45
	14.85%	23.76%	27.72%	0.99%	19.80%	1.98%	10.89%				

**Table 4:16 Employee influence on strategy formulation**

What is your role in influencing strategy formulation?	I am influential	I am consulted by management	I am a member of an employee strategy group	I contribute informally through my manager	None	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
	5	2	2	22	15	46	3.87	1.24	1.54
	10.87%	4.35%	4.35%	47.83%	32.61%				

The results show that 29% of employees selected the CEO and ELT as being the group who formulate strategy. There were 24% who said strategy was formulated by Managers and 15% said VP's. Of respondents, almost 12% said strategy was formulated by their Global Office.

The VPs were identified by 27% as being the primary communicators of strategy, followed by the CEO, with 23%. Almost 20% said that strategy is primarily communicated by managers. On the other hand, 11% said there is no clear communication of strategy.

When asked what the employees saw as their role in formulating strategy, 48% said they contributed informally through their manager; 11% said they were influential, and 33% that they had no influence on strategy formulation.

Table 4:17 provides the data from questions asked to understand whether employees see that what they do impacts the delivery of the mission.

**Table 4:17 Mission: Understanding, and impact of what employees do, and tools needed.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I understand my organisation's mission	1	0	0	8	45	54	4.78	0.63	0.40
	1.85%	0.00%	0.00%	14.81%	83.33%				
I am fully committed to realizing the mission	1	0	0	13	40	54	4.69	0.67	0.45
	1.85%	0.00%	0.00%	24.07%	74.07%				
The mission of my organisation is reflected in our day to day operations	0	1	1	21	31	54	4.52	0.64	0.41
	0.00%	1.85%	1.85%	38.89%	57.41%				
I know what I have to do in my job to help accomplish the mission of the organisation	0	0	1	24	29	54	4.52	0.54	0.29
	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%	44.44%	53.70%				
I believe that I have the relevant competencies I need to contribute to helping the organisation fulfil its mission	0	0	1	29	24	54	4.43	0.54	0.29
	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%	53.70%	44.44%				
I have the tools and environment to do my work effectively and efficiently	1	2	5	29	15	52	4.06	0.85	0.72
	1.92%	3.85%	9.62%	55.77%	28.85%				

When asked if they understood the mission of the organisation, and if they were fully committed to realising the mission over 98% agreed or strongly agreed. Just over 96% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the mission is reflected in their day-to-day operations. These scores were echoed when asked if they knew what they had to do in their job to help accomplish the mission of the organisation, with 98% selecting agree or strongly agree. Similarly, 98% believe that they have the relevant competencies they need to contribute to helping the organisation fulfil its mission. While 84% said that they had the tools and environment to do their work effectively and efficiently.

Table 4:18 provides a summary of responses about whether employees’ managers help them see the link between daily tasks and the mission.

**Table 4:18 Manager’s role in linking daily tasks to mission**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
My manager helps me see the link between what I do every day and the organisation’s mission	0	1	10	28	15	54	4.06	0.74	0.54
	0.00%	1.85%	18.52%	51.85%	27.78%				
I am aware of the unique needs of our clients and how what I do every day in my job impacts them	0	0	4	32	18	54	4.26	0.59	0.35
	0.00%	0.00%	7.41%	59.26%	33.33%				
My intentions are good but I do not understand how what I do impacts our clients	23	26	3	2	0	54	1.70	0.74	0.55
	42.59%	48.15%	5.56%	3.70%	0.00%				

When asked whether their manager helps them see the link between their day-to-day tasks and the mission, almost 80% agreed or strongly agreed. They also displayed a strong understanding, 93% that what they do every day impacts their clients. When given the statement ‘my intentions are good but I do not understand how what I do impacts our clients’ 91% disagreed.

Mission Correlations

A correlation analysis was completed on the data to explore further the relationship between employees and the mission. A Pearson correlation of statistical significance at the 0.95 (\*) and 0.99 (\*\*) confidence levels was used. Table 4:19 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant positive correlation (0.818\*\*) between employees saying they understood the mission and being fully committed to realizing the mission.

The statistically significant relationships relate to the relationships between the questions of the survey.

Table 4:19 Understanding of and commitment to the mission.

	I am fully committed to realizing the mission of my organisation
I understand why my organisation exists - mission	.818**

Table 4:20 demonstrates that there was a statistically moderate negative correlation (- 0.532\*\*) between the employee’s intentions and understanding of how what they do impacts their clients, and the direction given to them as to how they can achieve the organisation’s mission. This suggests that the more employees understand that what they do every day impacts their clients, the more aware they are of the need for clear direction to be given to them on how to achieve the mission.



Table 4:20 Intentions versus clear direction on achieving mission.

	I have been given clear direction as to how I can help the Organisation achieve its mission
My intentions are good, but I do not understand how what I do impacts our clients	-.532**

### *Vision Engagement*

Appendix D provides a summary of responses for when questions were asked about employees' understanding of the organisation's vision.

When asked if they understood the vision of the organisation, 67% agreed or strongly agreed. Over 40% believed that the vision is not specific, measurable and achievable. Further, 31% of participants identified as not understanding the link between what they do every day and the vision. With 39% they do not know what they need to do to make the vision happen. Almost 71% did not believe or were undecided that they need to work differently to help achieve the vision. The participants were asked if they needed a different set of skills and/or competencies, and 55% felt they did not.

When asked about the link between what they do on a day to day basis, and if their manager helped them see that link, 61% responded as unsure or disagree. A further 44% were undecided or disagreed that their manager, through their actions and words endorses the vision.

The majority indicated that they were aware of the link between their personal (59%) and department (78%) goals and the vision.

### *Vision Correlations*

The researcher's objective was to determine if the leadership had successfully communicated the vision in ways that employees understand, are inspired and have internalised the organisation's values and objectives so that they want to help the organisation succeed.

Table 4:21 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant correlation between the questions asked regarding managers helping employees to see the link between what the employee does every day and the vision in terms of their personal goals (0.595\*\*); their department’s goals (0.523\*\*); and whether their manager consistently by their actions and words endorsed the organisations’ vision (0.733\*\*).

**Table 4:21 Correlation between goals and vision**

	My manager helps me see the link between what I do every day and the organisation’s vision
I understand the link between my personal goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	.595**
I understand the link between my department’s goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	.523**
My manager consistently by their actions and words endorses the organisation’s vision	.733**

Table 4:22 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between employees’ feeling that their intentions are good, but they do not understand how what they do contributes to the organisations’ vision; and them needing to better understand the link between what they do and the organisation’s vision (- 0.622\*\*). This suggests that although well intentioned, the more employees understand what they do every day contributes to the organisations’ vision; the more they realise that they do not understand the link, and how they contribute to the organisations’ vision.

There was a statistically significant negative correlation between employees’ feeling that although well intentioned they do not understand how what they do contributes to the organisations’ vision and their personal goals (-0.699\*\*). This suggests that the more employees understand how what they do contributes to the organisations’ vision, they are more conscious that their personal goals may not be linked to enabling the organisation to achieve its vision.

There was a medium statistically significant negative correlation between employees' feeling that although well intentioned they do not understand how what they do contributes to the organisations' vision, and their departments' success (- 0.488\*\*). This may suggest that the more employees set goals to contribute to the success of their department, the less they see the link between goals and the organisations' vision. Also, it may indicate that at a department level the gap between the employees' day to day activities and the organisations' vision is greater than when measured against their personal goals as linked to the organisations' vision. Potentially indicating that employees are focussed on working toward department success, rather than the organisations' success.

**Table 4:22 Correlation between success and vision**

	My intentions are good, but I do not understand how what I do contributes to the organisation's vision
I need to better understand the link between what I do and the organisation's vision	-.622**
I understand the link between my personal goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	-.699**
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of my department	-.488**

Table 4:23 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant correlation between repeated communication to them on how they can help the organisation reach its vision, and their understanding of the link between what they do every day and the organisations' vision. Suggesting that for employee's communication and direction is important.

**Table 4:23 Communication**

	How I can help the organisation reach its vision is clearly and repeatedly communicated to me
I understand the link between what I do every day and the organisation's vision	.553**

Table 4:24 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between employees not understanding how what they do contributes to the organisations’ vision and them understanding the link between what they do every day and the organisations’ vision (- 0.675\*\*). This suggests that when employees do not understand the link between what they do every day and the organisations’ vision, the more they understand that what they do contributes to the organisations’ vision.

**Table 4:24 Understanding the link to the vision**

	My intentions are good but I do not understand how what I do contributes to the organisation’s vision
I understand the link between what I do every day and the organisation’s vision	-.675**

Table 4:25 demonstrates by comparison that there was a small statistical correlation between the questions on whether employees understood how what they do impacts their clients, and the link to being given clear direction as to how they can help the Organisation achieve its vision (- 0.296\*). This suggests that the more they understand that what they do every day impacts their clients, the more they realise they have not been given clear direction on how to help the Organisation achieve its vision – the delivery of their services to their clients. This may suggest that the vision and how to make the vision happen through the strategy is not being communicated clearly, nor is it directive enough.

**Table 4:25 Intentions and Direction**

	I have been given clear direction as to how I can help the Organisation achieve its vision
My intentions are good but I do not understand how what I do impacts our clients	-.296*

### Line of Sight Correlations

Table 4:26 demonstrates there were statistical correlations between the questions on line of sight to the vision. Particularly, the employees' need to better understand the link between what they do, and the clients' needs overseas; and the employees' understanding of the organisations' vision; what they need to do to help the organisation succeed; if the purpose is reflected in day to day operations; and the impact of their day to day actions on children overseas.

The correlations suggest a strong negative statistical correlation between employees needing to better understand the link between what they do, and the clients need overseas, and them understanding the link between what they do every day and the organisations' vision. The results indicate that the less that employees understand the link between what they do every day and the organisations' vision, the more they feel they do not need to better understand the link between what they do, and the client's needs overseas (- 0.509\*\*).

The correlations also suggest a moderate significant negative correlation between employees needing to better understand the link between what they do, and the clients' need overseas, and knowing what they need to do to help achieve the organisations' vision (- 0.384\*\*). Indicating that when employees do not know how to help the Organisation achieve its vision, they feel they do not need to know how what they do links to their clients overseas.

The correlations suggest a moderate negative correlation between employees needing to better understand the link between what they do, and the clients' needs overseas, and whether they saw the purpose of the organisation reflected in day to day operations (- 0.360\*). The results appear to indicate that if employees do not see the purpose of the organisation reflected in their day to day operations, they do not see the need to better understand the link with what they do and their clients overseas. Further, the results suggest that even if employees feel they need to better understand the link between what they do and the clients' needs overseas,

they may not believe that what they do impacts the lives of children in other countries.

**Table 4:26 Line of Sight**

	I understand the link between what I do every day and the organisation’s vision	I know what I need to do to help my Organisation Be successful to achieve the organisation’s vision	The purpose of my organisation is reflected in our day-to-day operations	I believe that what I do every day impacts the lives of children in other countries
I need to better understand the link between what I do and the client’s needs overseas	-.509**	-.384**	-.360*	-.442**

Table 4:27 demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between how they can help the organisation reach its vision is clearly and repeatedly communicated to them; and if they believe the organisations’ vision is specific and measurable; and if they need to better understand the link between what they do every day and the organisations’ vision.

The results suggest that when vision is communicated clearly and repeatedly to employees and how they can help the Organisation achieve its vision there is a strong belief that the vision is specific and measurable (0.655\*\*). Also, that the clear and repeated communication of the vision appears to make employees feel that they need to better understand the link between what they do every day and the vision (0.622\*\*).

This suggests that the communication of vision is critical to employees working to achieve it because they believe it to be measurable and specific. When that is the case, the vision will connect to employees having a better understanding about what their contribution to making it happen is. Potentially more engagement with the vision.

Table 4:27 Is the vision realistic and achievable?

	I believe that the organisation's vision is specific and measurable	I need to better understand the link between what I do and the organisation vision
How I can help the organisation reach its vision is clearly and repeatedly communicated to me	.655**	.622**

#### 4.3.2.3 Discussion: Engagement with Mission and Vision and line of sight

The results suggest that the organisation has clearly and repeatedly communicated the syntax of the mission and vision throughout the hiring and onboarding process. Yet not all employees appear to be in unity as to the purpose of the organisation. Child development was the purpose provided to describe the organisation by the strategic leadership team prior to the survey being deployed. However, this option was selected by only 65% of respondents.

The data indicates that over half of the employees had been with the organisation more than 6 years, which may account for the apparent lack of unity in describing the organisation's purpose. Given the dynamic operating environment of the organisation, being part of change during their employment would have been highly likely. Also, most would likely have been working for the organisation during their informative years. Possibly, they may have also experienced new vocabulary and/or shifts in organisation priorities.

It appears from the results that employees are a highly engaged workforce in general and may well have a clear line of sight to the mission. The results suggest that they believe that they understand and are fully committed to the mission. However, some feel that they are not given a lot of direction on how to specifically contribute to the organisation achieving the mission or vision.

The results indicate that the employees' perception is that some managers appear to be unsupportive of the vision. Yet employees are still strongly committed to the success of the organisation, and their part in it. The results around being given clear

direction, and the employees' responses suggest that the strategy may not be communicated clearly, nor is it directive enough. Employees do not appear to know the meaning and how to make the vision happen.

#### **4.3.2.4 Summary of Correlations – Mission, Vision and Line of Sight**

##### *Mission*

The correlations suggest that employees have a strong commitment to and understanding of the organisations' mission. Employees are very aware of the nature of the organisation through its mission statement but may struggle to translate the mission into day-to-day activities. This is supported by the strong correlations between clear communication of the mission and linking the impact on clients to what employees do on a day-to-day basis. The results also suggest that the more employees understand what they do every day impacts their clients, the more aware they are of the need for clear direction on how to achieve the mission.

##### *Vision*

It appears that managers play an important role in the communication of vision to employees. Also, they help employees understand the vision and the link from vision to what employees do on a day to day basis. For employees, what managers do and say (words and actions) and their endorsement of the vision appears to help them better understand the link in their day to day activities to the vision.

It appears that the more employees understand how what they do contributes to the organisations' vision, they may be more conscious that their personal goals may not be directly linked to the organisation achieving its vision. The results also indicate that employees may be primarily focussed on the personal goals they have set for their department to be successful, over those goals they have set to achieve the organisations' vision. Suggesting that the vision, and how to make it happen through strategy in not being communicated clearly, nor is it directive enough.

##### *Line of Sight*



The data suggest that the syntax of the mission and vision is clearly communicated. However, there appears to be some confusion as to how the vision relates to the employee understanding of the link between what they do every day and the vision being successful and consequently the future state of the organisation.

It appears from the data that seeing the link to the mission is much clearer than to the vision. This may mean that the vision is poorly developed, under communicated or not regarded as feasible or attainable by employees. The results show that almost half of the employees feel the vision is unrealistic and unattainable.

A high percentage of employees indicated that they do not need to work differently to achieve the vision or were undecided. This may indicate that there is no clarity in where they need to go and how to get there. This may be a result of managers who appear to not be helping employees see the link between what they do every day and the vision. The data also suggests that not all managers are seen to consistently by their actions and words endorse the organisation's vision.

Yet in contrast, almost all employees have a strong understanding of how they help the organisation achieve its mission through what they do every day. Also, that managers play a significant part in that. This may suggest that the employees are inspired by the mission, and it has captured their hearts and minds. The tenure of so many employees may also contribute to this. The organisation strongly encourages and helps employees visit an offshore program at least once within the first two years of service, to meet clients face to face and travel with organisation supporters.

A recurring theme about mission or vision was that employees know that what they do day-to-day impacts the lives of their clients.

Since the orientation and onboarding process, the direction on achieving the vision appears to have reduced significantly. Employees it seems do not understand how to engage with the vision. This suggests that the strategy to achieve the vision is not

clearly understood by employees. This may not be helped by the perception of employees of their managers engagement with the vision.

The correlations indicate that unless employees understand what it takes to make vision happen there may be less desire for them to see the need to link what they do every day and the organisations' vision. Likewise, they may be less likely to see the need to connect their actions to impact on their overseas clients. This may directly impact employee engagement with and their line of sight to the vision.

When employees believe the vision is specific and measurable it will likely help them to better understand how their contributions make the vision happen. This may lead to more engagement with the vision and a clearer line of sight to it.

#### **4.3.3 Discretionary Effort**

In order to determine whether employees were likely to enact discretionary effort, the researcher explored how employees felt skilled and enabled and if they felt the environment was collegial. A collegial environment may increase the likelihood of them enacting extra effort to achieve the mission and vision. Further, if employees can link their tasks to the organisation's clients it will likely motivate them to enact discretionary effort. The following section provides the results and discussion.

**Appendix F** provides a summary of the survey results on questions as to whether employees feel skilled and enabled as indicators of their likelihood to enact discretionary effort.

Over 98% of participants believed that they have the relevant competencies they needed to do their job. 93% were aware of the unique needs of clients and that how they did their job impacted them. Just over 70% indicated that that they did not need to work differently.

In order to further understand employee commitment, they were asked if they have set explicit personal and department objectives that are aligned to achieving the organisation's objectives.

A summary of results on the nature of the employees' commitment to their work environment is shown in Table 4:28

**Table 4:28 What is the nature of the employees' commitment to their work environment?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I enjoy my work	1	0	1	23	27	52	4.44	0.73	0.53
	1.92%	0.00%	1.92%	44.23%	51.92%				
My work environment is mostly collegial	0	1	4	33	12	50	4.12	0.63	0.39
	0.00%	2.00%	8.00%	66.00%	24.00%				
I am aware that NFP organisations cannot pay high salaries	3	4	6	32	5	50	3.64	0.98	0.97
	6.00%	8.00%	12.00%	64.00%	10.00%				

96% of survey respondents agreed that they enjoyed their work. With 90% indicating that the work environment was mostly collegial. Regarding the NFP ability to pay high salaries, 74% said they were aware of that.

Additional questions were asked to explore further how employees are engaged with their work environment. A summary of results is shown in Table 4:29

**Table 4:29 What is the nature of employees' engagement with their work environment?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I enjoy my work	1	0	1	23	27	52	4.44	0.73	0.53
	1.92%	0.00%	1.92%	44.23%	51.92%				
My work environment is mostly collegial	0	1	4	33	12	50	4.12	0.63	0.39
	0.00%	2.00%	8.00%	66.00%	24.00%				
I am aware that NFP organisations cannot pay high salaries	3	4	6	32	5	50	3.64	0.98	0.97
	6.00%	8.00%	12.00%	64.00%	10.00%				

Over 96% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they enjoyed their work. 90% said that the work environment was mostly collegial, while 74% agreed or strongly agreed that NFPs cannot pay high salaries.

Table 4:30 provides a summary of the results on whether employees have set personal and/department goals.

**Table 4:30 Have employees set goals to achieve organisation objectives?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of the organisations vision	3	9	17	18	7	54	3.31	1.08	1.16
	5.56%	16.67%	31.48%	33.33%	12.96%				

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of my department	1	1	4	30	18	54	4.17	0.80	0.63
	1.85%	1.85%	7.41%	55.56%	33.33%				
I understand the link between my department's goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	1	4	7	30	12	54	3.89	0.90	0.82
	1.85%	7.41%	12.96%	55.56%	22.22%				
I understand the link between my personal goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	3	6	14	30	3	56	3.43	0.95	0.90
	5.36%	10.71%	25.00%	53.57%	5.36%				

The data shows that 46% had set personal goals in order to contribute to the organisations' success. While 88% said they set personal goals to contribute to the success of the department.

Table 4:31 provides a summary of results on whether employees are motivated to enact discretionary effort, their belief in what the organisations' purpose is, and the impact they have on clients and how to respond.

**Table 4:31 Motivation and discretionary effort**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I believe that what I do every day impacts the lives of children in other countries	0	1	0	22	29	52	4.52	0.61	0.37
	0.00%	1.92%	0.00%	42.31%	55.77%				
I need to better understand the link between what I do and the client's needs overseas	15	24	4	8	1	52	2.15	1.07	1.15
	28.85%	46.15%	7.69%	15.38%	1.92%				
I am fully committed to realizing the purpose of my organisation	1	0	0	13	40	54	4.69	0.67	0.45
	1.85%	0.00%	0.00%	24.07%	74.07%				
The purpose of my organisation is reflected in our day to day operations	0	1	1	21	31	54	4.52	0.64	0.41
	0.00%	1.85%	1.85%	38.89%	57.41%				
I know what I have to do in my job to help accomplish the purpose of the organisation	0	0	1	24	29	54	4.52	0.54	0.29
	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%	44.44%	53.70%				
I regularly do tasks beyond my job description because I know it will make a difference to my organisation's success	1	4	8	26	13	52	3.88	0.94	0.89
	1.92%	7.69%	15.38%	50.00%	25.00%				

Over 98% indicated that they believed that what they do every day impacts the lives of children overseas. Yet 25%, which includes those who were undecided, felt they needed to better understand the link between they do every day and their overseas clients. In addition, 98% felt they knew what to do to help the organisation succeed.

Of the participants, 75% said that they regularly did tasks beyond their job description, because they knew it would make a difference to the organisation's success. Overall, the significantly high levels of agree and strongly agree responses to the questions on being fully committed to the purpose of the organisation, and that the purpose is reflected in day to day operations and employees regularly do tasks beyond their job description indicated a very high level of extra effort.

#### *Correlations – Discretionary Effort*

Table 4:32 demonstrates that there was a moderate statistically significant correlation between employees' responses to questions about regularly doing tasks beyond their job description and whether they have the relevant competencies (0.470\*\*). They indicated that doing tasks beyond their job description made a difference to the organisation's success.

A low statistical correlation was observed between the question about regularly doing tasks beyond their job description and whether employees feel they need to work differently (0.345\*). The correlation suggests that there is a link between employees engaging in discretionary effort and their belief that they have the competencies to contribute to the organisations' success. Also, the results may suggest that they feel they need to work differently to help the organisation succeed.

**Table 4:32 Discretionary effort**

	I feel I need to work differently than I am today to help my organisation achieve the vision	I believe that I have the relevant competencies I need to contribute to helping the organisation fulfil its purpose
I regularly do tasks beyond my job description because I know it will make a difference to my organisation's success in fulfilling its purpose and vision	.345*	.470**

Performance and setting personal goals is another key indicator of discretionary effort. Table 4:33 demonstrates that there was a moderate negative statistically significant correlation between employees' intentions and understanding of the vision and whether they believe themselves to have the relevant competencies to contribute to the organisation success.

The correlations suggest that when employees understand how what they do contributes to the organisations' vision, they may feel it is necessary to have more relevant competencies to contribute to helping the organisation succeed (-0.375\*\*). Also, it appears that when employees set personal goals that focus on their department's success, they may gain more understanding of how what they do can contribute to the organisations' vision (- 0.488\*\*).

**Table 4:33 Contribution to future state**

	My intentions are good, but I do not understand how what I do contributes to the organisation's vision
I believe that I have the relevant competencies I need to contribute to helping the organisation fulfil its purpose	-.375**
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of my department	-.488**

Table 4:34 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant correlation between the future state of the organisation as delivered through its vision, and what the employee does every day (0.511\*\*). The result suggests that the repeated



and clear communication to employees of how to help the organisation achieve its vision is directly correlated to their understanding of what they do every day, and how they do it has an impact on the organisations' success.

**Table 4:34 Contribution to future state - communication**

	I understand how what I do every day, and how well I do it can impact the organisation achieving its vision
How I can help the organisation reach its vision is clearly and repeatedly communicated to me	.511**

**4.3.3.1 Discussion: Discretionary effort - how have employees engaged with the organisational mission, vision and strategy.**

There is a very strong indication within the data that employees who knew the tasks they did every day had the potential to impact the organisation's clients overseas. Also, that they knew what tasks to perform on a day-to-day basis. However, it appears that their managers were not linking daily operational tasks to achieving the desired outcomes – the vision. In fact, it seems that not all managers were articulating that they were supportive of the vision, this was reflected in employees not being encouraged to set personal goals or develop new skills.

The results demonstrate that employees were motivated and engaged by their work environment which is collegial and an enjoyable place to be. They felt competent and enabled to do their work. Even though employees indicated their awareness that NFP salaries may not be as high as in other industries, they still put in additional effort. This is likely due to the nature of the organisation and its mission and their commitment to the organisations' mission.

The results also indicate that employees did not fully understanding the vision or the desired future state of the organisation. Suggesting that their managers are modelling a highly operational focus on the day-to-day successes.

#### **4.3.3.2 Summary of Correlations – Discretionary Effort**

The discretionary effort correlations suggest that there is a link between employees engaging in discretionary effort and their belief that they have the competencies to contribute to the organisations' success. Also, the results may also suggest that they feel they need to work differently to help the organisation succeed and that they regularly do tasks beyond their job descriptions.

The results suggest that the repeated and clear communication to employees of how to help the organisation achieve its vision is directly correlated to their understanding of what they do every day, and how they do it has an impact on the organisation achieving its vision.

It appears that when employees see a need for them to have more relevant competencies, then they will better understand how what they do contributes to the organisations' vision. When they understand how what they do contributes to the organisations' vision then they are more likely to prioritise setting and achieving goals that contribute to the success of the organisation.

#### **4.3.4 Employee Survey – Summary**

Based on the result and discussion of the Employee Survey it appears that leaders regularly communicated the syntax of the mission and vision to employees.

Employees were almost unanimous in stating that they were fully committed to and understood the mission and what they needed to do to achieve it. They see their managers as the ones who help them see that link.

Although their engagement with the mission was strong compared to the vision and strategy, nothing suggests that this was due only to the communication of the mission by strategic leaders. The employees' strong engagement with the mission could also be attributed to other factors. For example, employees' knowledge of the organisation through its reputation within their faith communities, and/or the organisations' onboarding program that enabled all new employees to visit overseas projects and meet beneficiaries within the first year of employment. The

results also suggest their employees' line managers were perceived as significant communicators of the mission.

When asked the same questions about the organisations' vision, it appears that almost half perceived the vision as not clear, and unattainable. Nor does it seem that employees' saw a clear link between their day to day tasks and the vision. By their responses, it also appears that not all managers understood or had engaged fully with the vision. Based on the theoretical assumption that employee motivation is causally associated with their engagement with strategy, these results may suggest that the vision is operational and interpreted in terms of outcomes. The vision and strategy may also appear to be unattainable.

Employees appeared to understand that their goals should link directly to the vision, yet the results suggest that their primary focus was on reaching department goals, rather than the broader organisations' vision.

For employees, communication and direction on how to engage with the strategy was critical in achieving the vision and the strategy. The leader's survey indicated that the strategic leaders primarily expected managers to communicate the vision and strategy to employees. This is reflected in the results of the employee survey. Yet managers did not appear to be providing clear direction to employees to help them understand that what they did everyday linked to the strategy and delivery of the vision.

The employee survey highlights that the vision is not aspirational, and the future state is not a significant driver of behavior for employees. This also suggests that the motivation behind any level of discretionary effort may be mission driven, rather than employees aspiring to achieve the vision. Communicating a vision that is measurable and achievable will help employees have a better understanding of how their contribution makes it happen.

Overall, there appeared to be a relatively high level of employee engagement with their designated role, their departments, and the mission as they perceived it. There was no clear line of sight to the mission and vision as embedded within the strategy.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION**

##### **4.4.1 What is the relationship between the leaders' orientation to time, employee engagement and employee line of sight to the mission and vision?**

The results suggest that the leaders had a dominant orientation to the present, and to some extent to the future. The ELT appeared to have strong competencies to interrogate the future and to be future orientated in their thinking, but this does not translate into their strategic thinking and generative thought processes. They particularly displayed strong cognitive abilities toward planning and operational decision making and demonstrated the ability to be adaptable and influential in their leadership, and to help others adapt to change.

As a group the leadership may have disengaged with the importance of considering the past and the future in the context of their dominant focus on the present. This is likely due to performance and success being measured against their operational goals rather than their future aspirations. They may also lack the time and opportunity to envision possible alternative futures to guide present decision making.

The employees' results suggests that a) they engaged with what the organisation was perceived to stand for, b) that they were doing what they do based on previous operational successes ('the way we do things').

Evidently, employees felt equipped for the present, but not the future. This may be because the desired future state as expressed in the vision was not presented in a way that was meaningful and aspirational to them. Nor can they see the link between what they did and the vision.

Employees' lack of a clear line of sight to the vision, and their apparent lack of engagement with it may be because the leadership was highly focussed on the operational needs of the present, and the vision lacked aspirational themes that were perceived as feasible. The present focus may also be contributing to employees not considering the future, and not seeing the need to learn new skills and /or work differently. Not fully understanding the vision can also lead to employees' believing there was no need to learn new skills or work differently. Although they were evidently committed to supporting the vision of the organisation, they struggle to see how to make that happen.

#### **4.4.2 What is the relationship between the leaders' foresight styles, employee engagement and employee line of sight to the mission and vision?**

As a group, the results showed that the leaders' foresight styles appeared to be balanced closely between Framer and Adapter, and to a lesser extent Tester style. The styles of Framer and Adapter are representative of leaders who may be inclined to have a futures outlook and are highly engaged with the day to day operations of an organisation. The need to adjust quickly to demands, think differently, and to understand trends is likely to be perceived as their modus operandi. However, when observed by employees over time, it may result in employees interpreting day to day operations as the most important impetus to their work. When this occurs day to day operations may become the organisations' identity ('why we exist and who we are'), rather than the mission being the identity and informing strategy.

The employee's ability to deliver on the strategy may be influenced by how they personally perceive the organisations' mission through the lens of their personal faith. How the actual mission statement is stated, understood and communicated by strategic leaders, may also influence the employee's delivery of strategy.

This was demonstrated in the leaders' survey, where the publicly stated mission of the organisation was not selected by all participants. Rather, 'how' they make the purpose happen.

This may also lead to employees feeling that change which leads to a different future state is an encumbrance to them achieving their current operational goals. The results showed a disconnect with the future as employees did not see the link between what they did every day and the organisation's vision or how to engage with the vision.

Although the leader's results show that they appeared to accept change as inevitable, and adjust quickly to changing demands, there are indications that they may be averse to change if they feel it is imposed upon them. This, along with their skill to be highly influential and their ability to help others adapt has the potential to positively influence employee engagement and the employee's line of sight to the vision, as long as the leaders do not display resistance to the change. However, the results showed that some employee's perceived that their line manager was unsupportive of the vision and strategy, nor did their manager see any need for them to learn new skills to achieve the vision. This may influence the employees' line of sight to the vision as it related to what they do every day.

#### **4.4.3 What is the relationship between leaders' strategic thinking competencies, employee engagement and employee line of sight to the mission and the vision?**

The leaders' strategic thinking competencies were predominantly analytical. Their assumptions were more likely to be based on linear extensions of the past and present. In an irregular or rapidly changing environment, the ability to anticipate future alternatives and possibilities is critical and cannot be extrapolated from the past or present. This is especially the case in contemporary discontinuous change and is broadly accepted as the norm. This could be why there seemed to be no enthusiasm amongst leadership for employees to learn new skills. In addition, the employees' results showed that employees did not see a need to learn new skills in order to prepare for alternative approaches. Rather, it appears that their tasks were based on leaderships' operational priorities or as an extension of the past.

Most of the strategic leaders believed they are innovative and were seen as creative. They indicated that there was an expectation from others for them to be

visionary leaders. Yet almost half of them said they did not generate new ideas or had a moderate to high influence on strategy. They may feel constrained in their innovation as stakeholder expectations, particularly in NFP's may see too much innovation as high risk. This was reflected in the leaders' low manifestations of generative thinking in strategy formulation as evidenced in the data. It appears the leaders were aware of expectations (for example to be innovative, strategic) but were unable to enact this.

The leader's strong analytical approach to strategic thinking when formulating strategy may contribute to prioritising present operations. It may also result in a strategy that has a vision that is devoid of aspirational themes. Potentially, this jeopardises the longer-term positioning and success of the organisation. This was demonstrated in the employees' survey results where employees could not see the link between what they did every day and the vision.

The results provide evidence that there was a significant group of the strategic leaders (ELT and Board) who displayed some level of confusion as to who owns the strategy formulation. It does not appear that there was an ongoing dialogue between them, managers, and employees about the strategy. This suggests that strategy may have become a static plan, rather than a flexible response to the ever-changing environment the organisation operates in locally and globally. It seems that the setting of an overarching strategy by the global office may have resulted in some leaders believing that it may not be their responsibility to formulate strategy.

The leaders' high tendency toward analytical strategic thinking may also impact the employees' level of discretionary effort. An employee will only be carried forward by the mission, or their perception of the mission for so long, if their line of sight to the vision is unclear.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY FINDINGS**

This chapter described the results from the data analysis undertaken in the research study and presented a discussion on the findings.

Firstly, the results from the leaders' survey were presented. The leaders' foresight and strategic thinking profiles and the frequencies related to strategy formulation were provided. The results provided insight into how the leaders related to time within the organisational context; how they related to and responded to matters concerning the future; and what their strategic thinking styles were as a necessary input to strategy making in an organisational context.

The employee survey results were presented to better understand if leaders had communicated the mission and vision; did employees understand that what they did impacted the delivery of the mission and the vision – did they feel skilled and enabled, and did they enact discretionary effort. The employee's engagement with, and line of sight to the mission and the vision was presented by way of examining the statistically significant correlations between questions.

Having assimilated the results and discussions presented in Section 4.2 and 4.3 the following summary findings were drawn and are illustrated in Figure 4:4 below.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion to the research questions and summary findings. The Interpretation, implications, and limitations of the results are also discussed. In addition, the study's contribution to professional practice knowledge, theory, the practitioners' reflections and recommendations for future research are presented.



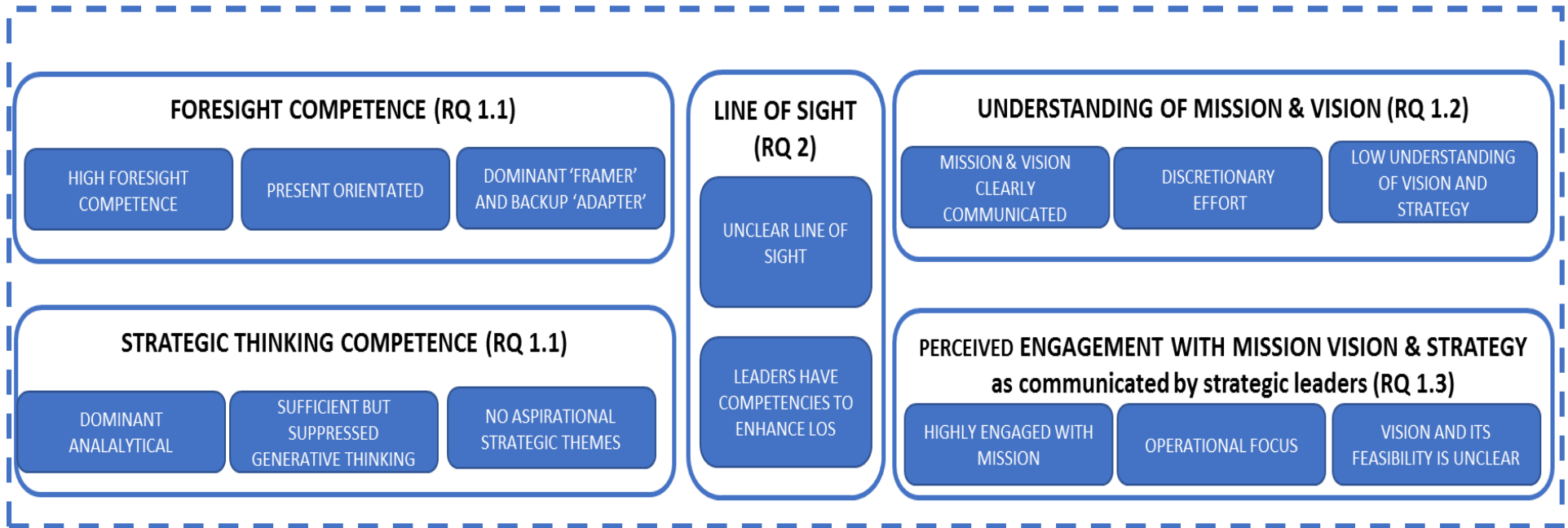
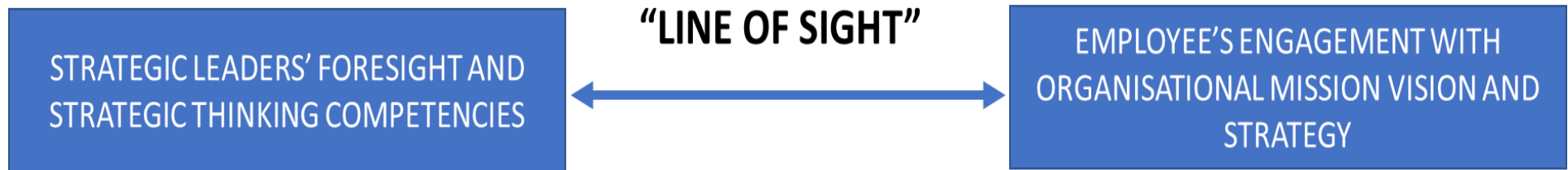


Figure 4:4 Summary Findings

# 5 Conclusion

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study was to investigate the strategic leader competencies of foresight and strategic thinking as they relate to the formulation and communication of the organisation's mission and vision. Further, the study sought to investigate how employees engage with the faith-based organisation's mission and vision in terms of i) their level of understanding, ii) their feeling supported to achieve them, and iii) aligning the functions of their skills and role to achieving them. This is referred to in the study as the 'line of sight' employees have with the mission and vision in order to contribute to achieving them. The sector of interest was the faith-based not-for-profit sector in Canada. The purpose of the study was to consider the nature of the relationship between these critical strategic leadership competencies (foresight and strategic thinking) and the nature of employees' engagement with the organisation's mission and vision in terms of their 'line of sight'. A core assumption of the study was that if the 'line of sight' can be established, the more likely the organisation will achieve its strategic intent. Further that according to strategic leadership theory, the competencies of foresight and strategic thinking will reflect the quality of the 'line of sight' and levels of engagement.

The thesis started in Chapter 1 by presenting the research problem and context, the researcher as practitioner and providing an outline and overview of the research. The background and motivation for completing the research was provided, along with the scope and anticipated contributions to professional practice knowledge, the contribution to theory, and the personal development of the researcher.

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature that explored the state of knowledge as to current research on NFP's, strategic leadership theory, foresight and strategic thinking competencies as necessary inputs for strategy formulation, organisation mission and vision, and employee engagement. The review of the extant literature provided the theoretical foundation and conceptual model for the study.

Chapter 3 outlined the research design adopted by the study and detailed the methodology used. The methodology was underpinned by the postpositivist paradigm and used quantitative survey methods to gather the data. The aim was to gather data from both the organisations' strategic level leaders and their employees. This was to explore the foresight and strategic thinking profiles of those within the organisation who had a moderate to high influence on strategy. The study used the previously validated and reliable survey instrument developed by Van der Laan (Van der Laan 2010) and reported by Van der Laan, Yap and Erwee (Van der Laan & Erwee 2012; Van der Laan & Yap 2016). The leader survey provided a greater understanding of the leaders' profiles as they relate to strategy setting, and the communication of the mission and the vision. It also provided further validation to the instrument.

The study developed a quantitative employee survey. This explored whether or not employees believed that they understood the mission and the vision as communicated by leaders, and if they saw a link between their day to day tasks and the mission and the vision as stated in the strategy. Based on strategic leadership theory, a key assumption of the study was that the strategic leader's foresight and strategic thinking competencies would be related to how employees engage with the mission and the vision.

Chapter 4 provided the data analysis and interpretation of both survey results. The foresight and strategic thinking profiles of the organisations' leaders were presented. The foresight construct was also tested for validity and reliability using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's Alpha. Also, a correlation analysis on questions relating to the employee's line of sight to the mission and the vision.

Descriptive statistics and frequencies were also presented. This resulted in the presentation of the summary of findings.

Chapter 5 reports on the summary of findings that emerged through the research process. This chapter explores the conclusions that have been reached with regard to the research questions. In addition, the contributions to professional practice, theory, practitioner reflections are presented. Finally, the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

## **5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS - CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results and discussions presented in Chapter 4, it was possible to draw conclusions relevant to the research questions. These conclusions are presented below. By answering the sub-research questions first, their conclusions are assimilated to inform the answer to the overarching research question.

### **5.2.1 Sub-Questions**

#### **RQ 1.1 - What are the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of strategic leaders in a Canadian NFP?**

Overall, the strategic leaders in the organisation had strong foresight and strategic thinking competencies. They demonstrated an ability to interrogate the future; to envision 'big picture' concepts; were flexible; and highly competent in planning and leading change. Their profiles indicated that they had the capacity and cognitive styles needed for foresight competence and were well positioned to develop good strategy. The leaders had the potential to be opportunistic, and adaptive in their thinking and strategy formulation.

The organisations' Board, were the group least focussed on the past and the future. This suggests that even though they are not primarily responsible for day to day operations, their present focus suggests that they feel they are. Also, the Board was accountable to ensure the organisation remained grounded in its mission (why it exists). However, this low regard for the past may lead to the mission being misinterpreted in favour of current operational goals being perceived as the mission

of the organisation. The Board was the group least oriented to the future. The implications of this is that the Board's fiduciary responsibility to oversee the strategy and direction of the organisation may lack a future outlook and anticipation of possible alternatives. Nor may the Board be learning from past decisions and experiences. Unlike the other groups within the strategic leadership team, the Boards' predominant foresight style in engaging the future was that of Adapter, with the backup style of Framer. These suggest that they are less future orientated than the other leaders whose dominant foresight styles was Framer. As with the other leaders their strategic thinking style was not balanced between conceptual and analytical thinking, but they did have the most orientation toward being conceptual in their approach.

The ELT were the group who were most focussed on the present, and to a lesser extent the future. They were also the group that had the highest orientation to the past suggesting they may be more likely to learn from past decisions, and to inform present and future decisions than other leaders. Their present focus is not unusual given their responsibilities for overseeing day to day operations. They were cognisant of the future and aware of trends and external influences which will impact the organisations' success. Yet how they related to time in anticipating the future, did not reflect the ideal profile. The ideal profile as the literature suggests, is equally oriented toward past and present thinking, with a slight increased orientation to the future. This may mean that their present focus may hinder opportunities to explore ideas about the future. However, given the ELT's dominant style of engaging with the future and as the primary Framers in the leadership group, their cognitive styles were strong and well positioned for developing good strategy. The implications of this is that time and opportunity must be given to leadership to engage in futures thinking.

The organisations' Senior Managers were more future and past orientated than the Board, yet less present orientated. The Senior Managers' dominant style when relating to the future and anticipating the future was Framer, with a backup style of Adapter. Although not as future orientated as the ELT, their profiles suggest that

they were aware of the need for future thinking. The Senior Managers also displayed similar results to the Board in their approach to strategic thinking and decision making. Suggesting that they relied strongly on analytical modes of thinking and so, likely had a strong focus on systems and processes –subsequent to their day to day roles and meeting department and organisational goals.

As a group, the strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies showed that they had strong cognitive abilities to interrogate the future and envision big picture concepts.

Theory suggests that operational leaders are best positioned to explore new ideas and assumptions about the future in light of past decisions and present challenges. However, the leaders being highly focussed on the present, with low regard for the past, suggests that they had somewhat disengaged with the importance of considering the past and future together. This may lead to lack of clarity in strategy formulation.

The leaders may be hindered by their strong analytical orientation to strategic thinking. Nevertheless, the results suggest that they had the cognitive style and capacity to develop good strategy that is innovative, supports change, and is aspirational. Although their primary orientation was analytical, they demonstrated an ability to engage in conceptual and creative/generative thinking.

Summary of findings:

- Leaders had high foresight competence, and as Framers had strong cognitive abilities to interrogate the future and envision big picture concepts.
- Leaders had a strong orientation to the present suggesting their engagement with envisioning possible alternate futures and making decisions in light of past decisions may be limited.

- Leaders' backup style of Adapter demonstrated their ability to adjust as the future demands, remain orientated toward change and have a high capacity to influence others.
- Leaders' strategic thinking and decision making approach was highly analytical, rather than the preferred balance between analytical and conceptual – which may result in strategy that lacks aspirational themes.

### **RQ 1.2 - What are the employees' understanding of the mission and the vision of a Canadian NFP?**

Although the employees of the organisation reported that the strategic leaders regularly communicated the syntax of the mission and vision, their understanding of the mission and the vision came primarily from their line managers. They said they understood and were highly engaged with the mission of the organisation, yet there was no consistency in their interpretation thereof. Of interest is that their interpretations of the meaning of the mission were similar to those selected by the strategic leadership team in the leaders' survey.

It appears that the nature of the organisation is inspiring a 'sense of mission' amongst employees, rather than them understanding the mission statement as embedded within the strategy.

The study suggests that employees did not have a clear understanding of the vision. The employees said that they knew that what they did impacted their clients, but that they could not see a link between what they did every day and the stated vision of the organisation. Suggesting that the vision as presented to employees by their line managers may have been interpreted in terms of department outcomes, rather than something that is contributing to the organisation as a whole as described by the corporate vision and communicated by the strategic leaders. This may be because the leaders evidently did not see themselves as communicators of the mission or vision. Instead, they delegated the communication of vision and

strategy to line managers. Employees also reported that not all line managers appeared to be supportive of the vision and strategy. This too may have contributed to their lack of understanding.

Employees were engaging in discretionary effort. However, likely due to the focus on operational goals as defined by their department managers rather than the wider organisational vision and strategy.

Another indicator that their understanding of the vision was not high is that they felt they did not need to work differently to achieve the vision. Nor did they feel a need to gain new skills. These results seem to confirm that their focus was on present success and doing what they have always done well. Performing day-to-day operations well seemed to be the measure and benchmark of achieving the organisations' level of success.

Summary of findings:

- Employees' understanding of the mission and the vision was solely dependent upon the communication of the syntax of the mission and vision by their line managers; with no evidence of the understanding of the mission and vision being communicated directly to employees by strategic leaders.
- Employees appeared to be inspired by a 'sense of mission' possibly due to the nature of the organisation and the connection to their faith values and beliefs, rather than them understanding the mission as communicated by strategic leaders.
- Employees had no clear understanding of the vision as stated by strategic leaders or how to interact with the organisations' strategy.
- Employees engaged in high levels of discretionary effort, possibly to meet operational goals for their department as set by their managers, rather than to support the delivery of the vision and strategy and further to their 'sense of mission.'



- Employees' low understanding of mission and vision was further demonstrated in their belief that they did not need to learn new skills or work differently to deliver the strategy.

**RQ 1.3 - What is the relationship between the organisations' mission and its vision as communicated by strategic leaders, and employee engagement within a Canadian NFP?**

The results demonstrated that employees were in general a highly engaged workforce who believe they understand and are fully committed to and engaged with the mission. This level of understanding and commitment was likely attributed to what they perceived the organisation to stand for and how the organisational outcomes (sponsoring at risk children in foreign countries) are perceived to have impact.

The study results showed that they are engaged to a lesser extent with the vision. There was no evidence that their level of engagement with the vision or the mission was as a result of the communication by strategic leaders.

Their low understanding and engagement with the vision and strategy may be because the vision was perceived as unattainable and nebulous. Also, how their skills and work activity linked to implementing the strategy were unclear.

Employees perceived that some managers were not fully supportive of the strategy and may have resulted in employees being unable to link their skills and role to the achievement of strategy and lacking managerial support in understanding and achieving the strategy.

It appears that the vision was not a significant driver of engagement behavior for employees. Rather, their focus was on fulfilling current operational requirements and achieving tasks associated with the present. Although the employees demonstrated discretionary effort, the motivation behind that may be to achieve department goals, and/or the perceived mission. There was no indication that employees' discretionary effort was linked to aspiring to achieve the vision.

Employees perceived the nature of the organisation and its outcomes as aspirational and motivating for them rather than in terms of the stated mission encapsulated in the strategy. It can be concluded that their engagement was unlikely due to the engagement dimension of Absorption. Absorption requires that the employee understands the stated mission and links it to their skills and work activities. The results show that the interpretation of the mission differed across the organisation suggesting that the strategy mission statement was unlikely to be the source of engagement. Rather, the evident engagement with the mission was likely informed by the perceived nature of the organisation, and an alignment with personal values and the hope of creating a better future for others.

This alignment of their perception of the organisations' mission to their personal values are likely to also be the source of discretionary effort, further to the employee engagement dimension of dedication. Their enthusiasm (Vigour engagement dimension) for the mission, and pride in doing what they do was demonstrated in that they were aware that what they do impacts their clients.

Overall, there appears to be a relatively high level of employee engagement with their designated role, their departments, and the mission as they perceive it. However, the level of Absorption of the stated mission embedded in the strategy is low indicating limited line of sight.

**Summary of findings:**

The results demonstrated that there is a relationship between the organisations' mission and its vision as communicated by strategic leaders, and employee engagement within a faith-based NFP. The strategic leaders relied on their employees' managers to communicate the mission and the vision to employees.

- Employee understanding of the mission and the vision was negatively impacted by the strategic leaders not communicating the mission and vision directly to employees. The strategic leaders had a unique relationship with the meaning of the mission and vision, and as mid to high influencers in

formulating strategy could have provided deeper understanding to employees.

- The leadership team had the competencies to influence others and help them adapt yet this was not leveraged to communicate the mission and the vision to either their direct reports or employees.
- Vigor as a characteristic of employee engagement was demonstrated through the employees' discretionary effort and their awareness that what they do every day impacts their clients. As employees do not understand how what they do every day contributes to achieving the vision, their discretionary effort is likely also due to the focus on the present and meeting operational goals for their department, rather than discretionary effort emerging from their personal aspiration to achieve the organisations' vision.
- Dedication as a characteristic of employee engagement was demonstrated through the employees' commitment to, and enthusiasm about the organisation as they perceived it. Having a sense of making a difference, will result in employees working harder, but their efforts may be being directed toward activities outside the scope of the vision as embedded within the strategy, as they do not understand the vision or how to enact strategy.
- Absorption requires that the employee understand the stated mission and links it to their skills and work activities to do their job in the best possible way. The level of absorption of the stated mission embedded in the strategy is low, reflected also in the employees' belief that they did not need to learn new skills or work differently.
- The strategic leaders had the competencies to communicate the vision and strategy to employees in a way that would help employees see the future

implications for the organisation, and its feasibility. Had this happened employees would have demonstrated higher engagement through their desire to learn new skills, and acknowledgement that they need to work differently.

**RQ 2 - How are employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision related to: a) Leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and; b) Employees understanding of and engagement with a faith based organisations' mission and vision.**

- a) The employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision were related to the leaders' foresight competency profile. The study demonstrated that the leaders were highly focussed on the present, particularly on day-to-day operational demands. They would regularly engage in problem solving and systems thinking however opportunity to engage with the future was limited by the high orientation to the present. Even though leaders had the foresight competencies related to being future-oriented that are essential to inform their strategic thinking, the dominant present focus dictated a predominantly analytical approach to making strategic decisions.

The study demonstrated that when employees are focussed on the present, they do not see any need to engage in personal development, to learn new skills, or to work differently toward achieving the organisation's strategic aspirations. Success then becomes measured against the organisation's past successes, and operational targets assume the position of the goal – rather than delivering on the mission and the vision. This was evidenced in the study by the lack of consistency among the leaders as a group and the employees as to what the purpose of the organisation was.

Literature notes (see Chapter 2) that formulating good strategy requires leaders to consider viable alternative future possibilities and then balance generative and analytical thinking processes in developing an aspirational, feasible and compelling future direction for the organisation. The leaders in

the study displayed a predisposition toward a dominant orientation toward the present which translates into a dominant analytical approach when considering the future direction of the organisation. The failure to include past learnings, prioritise framing future solutions and conceptualising new ideas and differentiated services, can lead to the strategy being devoid of aspirational goals that inspire employee engagement with the mission and vision.

The results of the study suggest evidence for the conclusion that due to the dominant orientation to the present, leaders' cognitive abilities to formulate future solutions, be innovative and facilitate the emergence of new strategic opportunities is suppressed.

The mission and vision, as it is currently communicated fails to establish a clear 'line of sight' for employees to the vision. This is due to the vision lacking aspirational themes and not being differentiated enough from current operational activities; and the stated mission not being understood, but rather employees engaging with their perception of the nature of the organisation. As a result, engagement with the stated mission and vision is sub-optimal.

- b) Overall, employees understood the mission as stated by the organisations' mission statement but interpreted it in terms of their perceptions of and values alignment with the organisation and its outcomes. This was evidenced by the variability of responses as to what understanding they attributed to the mission which differed significantly. There was no consensus or consistency in respondents' understanding of the mission which ranged from being faith-based to general philanthropy.

As such, employee engagement with the mission as embedded in the strategy was not achieved. The 'line of sight' was unclear, and employees failed to link their understanding of the stated mission to the stated vision and strategy of the organisation as formulated by the leaders. Further, it seemed that the dominant present orientation and operations focus of the executive leaders were interpreted by the Board and middle managers of 'strategic' importance rather than being differentiated from the strategy. This behaviour was then linked by employees to their skills and work activities. It can therefore be concluded that employee's engagement with the stated mission and vision in the strategy was low with almost no Absorption, low dedication yet high vigour spurred on by their interpretation of the strategy being to optimise operational efficacy and efficiency.

Leaders displayed the foresight competencies to engage in effective strategic thinking that would allow aspirational and feasible strategy to emerge. It is likely that the employee 'line of sight' would be enhanced and inspire better engagement with the organisational mission and vision especially as it relates to a shared understanding thereof. In order to achieve this, leaders would have to prioritise being futures orientated and more creative in their strategic decision making while balancing this with their emphasis on operational efficacy and compliance.

That said, the study suggests that the opportunity to formulate new and aspirational strategy was largely limited by the global strategy developed by the organisational headquarters in the United States and that the opportunity to exercise initiative was constrained.

#### Summary of findings:

- The employees' 'line of sight' is related to leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies. Leaders' orientation to time, their cognitive abilities to formulate strategy and whether they have the ability to formulate future solutions will impact their ability to establish a clear

'line of sight' for employees to the mission and the vision. The 'line of sight' is impacted due to strategy lacking aspirational themes, not being understood by employees and not being differentiated enough from current operational activities.

- Employee understanding of and engagement with a faith-based organisations' mission and vision is linked to their 'line of sight' to the mission and the vision. Employees can understand the mission as stated by the organisations' mission statement but may interpret it in terms of their perceptions of and values alignment with the organisation and its outcomes. Therefore, clarity of understanding, and communication of mission and vision by strategic leadership is critical. This will ensure that the intended message of the mission and vision are not diluted or subjected to interpretation or misunderstanding.

### **5.2.2 Overarching Research Question**

**ORQ - What is the nature of the relationship between strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employees' engagement with the organisations' mission and vision in a faith based NFP?**

The summary of findings from the sub-research questions suggest that there is a relationship between strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employees' engagement with the organisations' mission and vision.

Even though the leaders' profiles indicated that they had the capacity for high foresight and strategic thinking, they were present focussed. This is likely due to the operational nature of the majority of their roles and potentially the lack of time being given to proactively engage with envisioning the future. This may, along with their strong analytical approach to strategic thinking be why there appears to be a vision and strategy that is devoid of aspirational themes.

The employee survey demonstrated that employees were also present focused, and do not see the strategic leadership as communicators of the mission and vision. They look to their line managers for their understanding of mission and vision, yet they indicated that not all managers are supportive of the mission and vision as expressed in the strategy, nor do their managers help them understand how to enable the vision. Employees did not appear to have clarity on the purpose. Suggesting that leaders not proactively and purposefully communicating the mission and the vision direct to employees has created a situation where the aspirational elements may have become diluted. Relying on employees' connection to the mission through their mutual understanding of faith, will not guaranteed alignment with the organisations' mission. The communication of the mission and vision must be understandable, relevant, inspiring, and able to be aligned with employees' roles and what they do every day in order to be absorbed into their hearts and minds. Otherwise, there is a risk that they default to unrelated tasks which may even be working against the strategy.

Faith-based organisations, have to deliver meaningful value laden outcomes. Not engaging with the mission and vision with strategic intent has severe consequences to their sustainability and identity.

The study builds on previous research that suggested that the competencies of foresight and strategic thinking have predictive value as to employee engagement and the achievement of the organisations' mission and vision. The researcher believes that this is demonstrated in the results. Also, that strategic leadership theory can be extended to the engagement of employees with the mission and vision as elements of organisational strategy.

### **5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS**

The researcher's participation in the DPRS program and completion of the research ensured a high level of competence with forming new perspectives in the area of practice. The program allowed making an original knowledge contribution to theory and professional practice as well as provided opportunity for self-development (Van



der Laan & Neary 2016). Completing the study also contributed to the researcher's self-awareness and intellectual independence.

### **5.3.1 Contribution to Professional Practice Knowledge**

As presented previously, the current thesis is a result of research undertaken as a practitioner researcher. One of the aims of the study was the development of professional knowledge to inform practice. First, to help those with moderate to high level influence on strategy understand how their competencies of foresight and strategic thinking influence employee engagement with the mission and vision. Secondly, provide evidence of the concept of how employee engagement with, and their 'line of sight' to the mission and the vision is influenced by the strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies. Further that the 'line of sight' and engagement determines employee understanding of how their skills and roles can contribute to achieving the mission and the vision. Higher understanding is likely to be associated with higher discretionary effort. Thirdly, illustrate the implication to professional practice of line of sight to mission and vision in the context of NFP organisations.

The following observations are noted:

- a) The mission within faith-based organisations is often where the organisations' unique faith identity and purpose can be found – therefore it is critical that strategic leaders escalate the importance for them to communicate the mission and the vision above everything else and test the saturation of the meaning of the mission and the vision and employees understanding of it regularly.
  
- b) When the mission and vision is escalated above its present position by strategic leaders, they will shift from being operationally focussed to identifying and seeing bold new opportunities emerge. Applying their foresight and strategic thinking competencies would then become routine.

- c) When employees understand the mission and vision, they will have no doubt about the link between what they do every day and the mission and vision. This will influence whether employees experience the three dimensions of employee engagement - rigor, dedication, and absorption.
- d) Strategic leaders may have the competence of foresight and strategic thinking but may not have the right perspective or world view to lead and inspire others.
- e) Employees may have similar skills as each other, yet very different perspectives on why they do what they do.
- f) When the mission and the vision are not understood across every level of the organisation or proactively linked to day to day tasks, the aspirational nature of the mission and the vision can become diluted. For employees having a vision and strategy that is attainable is motivating, and they are more likely to engage in discretionary effort.
- g) If there is a lack of clarity amongst leadership or lack of unity as to what the mission and the vision is, and how to enable the vision through the strategy, employees too will have the same lack of clarity and the lack of unity will influence them.
- h) An assumption of strategic leaders in faith-based NFPs can be that their organisations' mission is closely related to the faith-based values and beliefs of their employees. Hence, that it will be instinctively understood. The study showed this is not the case but further reason for strategic leaders to escalate their responsibility to communicate and test the mission and the vision to ensure it cascades through all levels of the organisation.

- i) Reflecting on the past is not a negative activity, but it is important to learn from past decisions while considering the future – when combined with future thinking, present decisions will also be better informed.
- j) A bias toward analytical thinking when approaching strategy formulation may lead to assumptions being made based on a linear extension of the past and present; low generative thinking will lead to less innovation and fewer creative solutions.
- k) Leaders within faith-based NFP organisations often are highly focussed on the present due to the nature of their operations, and lack of resources. When this happens, organisations can start to believe that operational effectiveness is the reason they exist. Consequently, rather than the mission and the vision informing operational decisions, the day-to-day operations become the mission - why they exist gets forgotten. This stalls the organisation and frustrates those strategic leaders who are proactively envisioning possible alternate futures.
- l) If employees are not engaged in professional development, it is an indicator that they are disengaged from, or do not have a clear line of sight to the vision.
- m) Where there is a global office the nature of their relationship and responsibilities must be clarified and communicated regularly to all employees and strategic leaders – otherwise strategic leaders will become disempowered if the global offices' mandate overrides their decisions about operations and strategy delivery.
- n) It would be beneficial before appointing strategic leadership, including Board members, that their foresight and strategic thinking competencies are considered. Particularly in faith-based organisations where Board members

are often appointed without consideration being given to what competencies they have, to contribute to the organisations' strategic outcomes.

- o) As employees in faith-based organisations generally are from similar faith backgrounds, and have similar values and cultural norms, and the workplaces mostly collegial, employee engagement surveys may not provide a true picture of how clear employees' line of sight to the mission and vision is; nor measure their engagement with the mission and vision.

### **5.3.2 Contribution to Scholarship**

By undertaking the current study, a tentative contribution to theory has been achieved. It was clear from the literature review that there were limited contributions to the study of employee engagement as it relates to their understanding of mission and vision.

The study has made the following contribution to scholarship:

- Literature gap (context & population): A study within the NFP sector
- Literature gap (context & population): A study within the NFP sector
- Literature gap (context & population): Extending the understanding and application of strategic leadership theory in a practice context as it relates to the strategic leader competencies of foresight and strategic thinking.
- Literature gap (conceptual): Further development of the concept of line of sight. The idea that although employee engagement is important, a necessary precondition is the employee's line of sight to the organisation's mission and vision in delivering organisational objectives is not well researched.
- Literature gap (conceptual): Within the context of strategic leadership theory an enhanced understanding of strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies as predictors of what an organisation will become.

- Literature gap (conceptual): An enhanced understanding of foresight and strategic thinking as valid leadership competencies within organisations and their relationship to employee engagement with the organisations' mission and vision.
- Methodological contribution (theory & method): Applying strategic leadership theory to employee engagement.
- Developing further the concept of line of sight and the idea that although employee engagement is important, evidence suggests that the employee line of sight to the organisation's mission and vision is necessary to delivering organisational objectives.

*i. The notion of line of sight has been referred to in the literature review, but it has not been defined. The results suggest that employees need to: a) understand the communication by leaders and content of the mission and the vision; b) be able to associate their understanding with the outcomes/outputs of their role; c) feel enabled by the organisation and their managers to aspire to achieve the mission and vision; d) and link the extent to which they exert discretionary effort in aspiring to achieve the mission and the vision.*

### **5.3.3 Contribution to Personal Development**

The following contributions to the researchers' personal development are noted:

- Increased knowledge: Enhanced knowledge of how leader competencies within NFP organisations influence employee engagement.
- Increased Knowledge: Greater awareness of the importance of the mission and the vision in faith-based NFP's and its communication by leadership to employees
- Personal potential: Improved understanding of how to influence employee line of sight to the mission and the vision in NFP organisations.
- Tolerance for Ambiguity: Increased ability to remain open and neutral to ambiguities and differing issues in order to manage complexity.

#### **5.3.4 Practitioner Reflections**

Foundational to the DPRS program, is the researchers' focus on a real-world, immediate workplace challenges. The 'practitioner as researcher perspective' is an important additional layer to the outcomes and as such is included here. To this point the research has been conducted as a post-positivist study which has generated statistical results. However, these results can benefit through the interpretations of the researcher as an expert in the field of practice. As such, according to the work-based learning approach embedded in the DPRS programme, the usefulness of the study is in transforming the theoretical and research findings into practical, useful applications within faith based NFP organisations.

This study explored the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of leaders who had a mid to high influence on formulating strategy within a faith-based NFP organisation and how these impact their employees' line of sight to the mission and the vision. The results demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between strategic leadership's foresight and strategic thinking competencies and employee line of sight to the mission and vision.

When leaders have strong foresight and strategic thinking competencies, they are highly capable in planning and leading change and are well positioned to develop good strategy. If their understanding of the mission and the vision is not communicated effectively and does not achieve a shared understanding, it diminishes their efforts, and the strategy will fail to gain traction. Of critical importance is that strategic leaders fully understand the organisations' mission, have a vivid and feasible understanding of the vision, and communicate it through the dimensions of line of sight in order to gain engagement through "absorption" into the hearts and minds of their employees. Their communication of the mission and vision needs to be tested to ensure understanding and consistency throughout the organisation.

Essential to effective employee engagement with the mission and vision as stated by the organisation, is that the mission and vision are aspirational and feasible. The

study demonstrated that leaders who are highly engaged in operations tend to be highly analytical in their approach to strategy making, and strategy lacks aspirational themes.

When the organisation's leaders are highly focussed on present operations, that culture can detract from employees working toward a better future for the organisation even though they have a stated vision and strategy to get there. However, when leaders proactively shift from prioritising and responding to present operational needs, and view those needs as emerging opportunities, living out their foresight and strategic thinking competencies becomes a routine matter. However, in this case it was illustrated that employees did not fully engage (Absorb) the strategy's mission and vision. Rather, they perceived the mission in terms of their understanding of the organisation's identity informed largely by its nature (philanthropy for children and as a Christian organisation). Further, while they could remember the stated strategy mission and vision, the culture and behaviour of the leader were more short-term orientated focusing on operational requirements. This was then interpreted as the organisational priority.

When employees understand the mission and vision as stated by the organisation, they can visualise the link between what they do every day and the mission and vision. They understand how what they do influences strategic outcomes. Given they are the ones who deliver the strategy this insight towards a common goal ensures that everyone is working toward the same vision. Overall, their engagement with the mission and vision is influenced by rigour, dedication and absorption as demonstrated in the three dimensions of employee engagement –.

The dimensions of 'line of sight' with the mission and vision could be defined as: quality of communication of the mission and vision; leaders' ability to inspire others; a shared understanding; skill/role alignment in hearts and minds of employees, and organisational enablement.

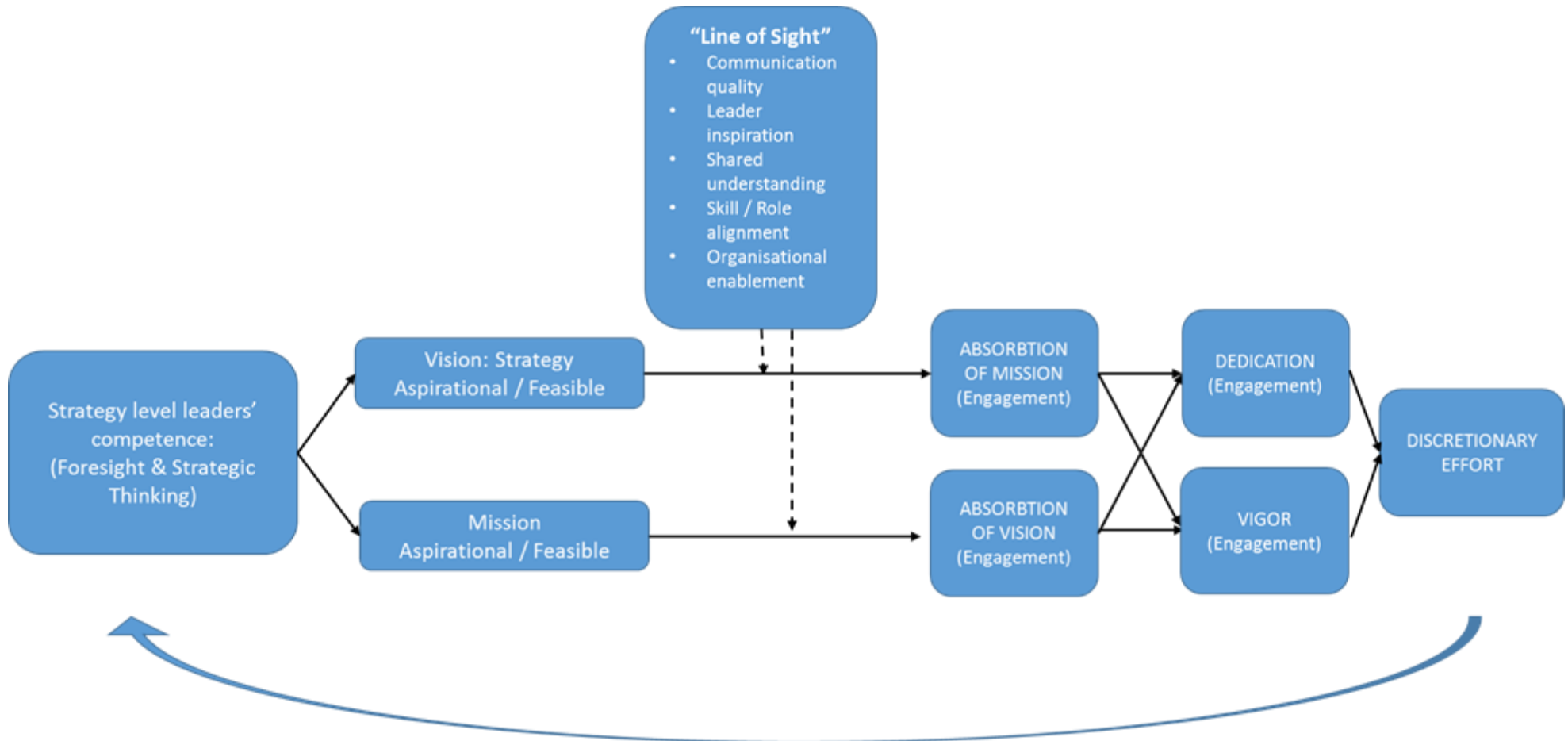
When there is a clear line of sight to the mission and vision, the employees' active engagement with the mission and vision is further demonstrated in their ability and

knowledge to enact the strategy. Organisation leaders need to focus on reducing the ambiguity in individuals related to the tasks they do on a day to day basis. This can result in employees displaying high levels of discretionary effort to support the delivery of the mission and vision as stated by the organisation.

Within faith-based organisations the clear and absolute understanding of their mission is even more critical. The study provided evidence that for some the mission, or their 'sense of mission' assisted them in aligning their personal faith with the fundamental principles of the faith the organisation had its roots in. Rather than their faith helping them align to the mission as defined by the organisation. It is critical for strategic leadership in faith-based organisations to understand, that the differentials between how employees perceive the mission through the lens of their personal faith, values and beliefs, and the actual mission as stated and understood by organisational leadership, may impact employees' ability to deliver the strategy.



Figure 5:1 Employee Line of Sight Dimensions



Based on the research findings the following practice implications have been drawn:

1. Strategic leaders must i) share the same understanding as to the purpose (mission) and preferred future (vision) of their organisation.
2. Communicate the mission and vision in a way that all employees absorb its meaning, and that it is relevant and understandable: critical in faith-based organisations is a need to recognise that employees who relate to the same faith values and beliefs as the organisation may feel that they understand the mission due to a shared alignment in syntax to their faith principles. It is equally important to communicate the mission and vision to those employees who do not have a shared alignment to the faith values and beliefs of the organisation, so they absorb its meaning, and that it is relevant and understandable to the same extent.
3. Organisations cannot rely on the syntax of their mission and vision, or the idea that everyone understands why they exist. In faith based organisations, adapting to external conditions can mean that over time the unique characteristics that define them as 'faith' based organisations may decline (Chambre 2001) – this further supports the notion that leadership must continuously consider the past to recall and understand why they exist, and how strategy aligns with their mission.
4. The reality of focusing on operations can become entrenched within the organisation and leaders are deprived of opportunity to consider and develop better alternate futures, even when they may have strong foresight and strategic thinking competencies – this creates a culture of “what we have done in the past worked and so we will continue to do that but a little bit better.”

5. Organisations need to make space for leaders to be more creative and generative in formulating a strategy that meets the demands of the future through leaders understanding and exploring alternatives for the organisation.
6. Employee engagement levels as demonstrated through absorption of both the mission and vision, with dedication and vigour is enhanced by clarity of line of sight to the mission and vision as stated by the organisation.
7. There is a need for faith based NFP organisations with oversight from a Global Head Office to clearly understand and articulate who sets the mission, the vision or formulates the strategy. Otherwise, confusion and divided loyalty may result.

Reflecting on the organisation which participated in the study, since their leaders were presented with this research report, they have made significant amendments to their mission and vision statements. The mission statement has been simplified. In addition, they have divided their vision statement into two parts – one now called their “Core Strategy” which describes more definitively who they are and who partners with them to achieve the vision. The second, their “Strategic Intent” which, compared to the previous vision statement would be more likely understood by employees as being achievable.

The findings also are significant when consideration is given to organisations whose strategic leadership team has high foresight and strategic thinking competencies as compared to their board members. In these instances, the Board may become a weight to those who are more future orientated.

When the line of sight is not clear to the mission and vision it can create confusion and inconsistency and employees are left to decide how best they can contribute to the strategy. Organisation vision should be tested for feasibility to link the

envisioned future position of the organisation with the actions in the present. Leaders can assist in motivating and inspiring managers to help employees in connecting their tasks and accomplishments to the organisation's goals, and hence keeping the line of sight to the mission and vision in focus.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

The researcher ensured that the current study met both the necessary methodological rigour, statistical requirements, and practicality. The Research Questions remained central to the investigation. This is in line with the post positivism approach to the research, where the researcher's objective was to extract insight. Research provides new knowledge and a practical contribution to professional practice.

**Limitations to the study include** sample size, time, survey instrument validity and the sole use of quantitative methods.

The sample size of the study was restricted to the number of participants in the organisation under review and to those who voluntarily chose to complete the surveys. All of the leadership team participated in the leaders' survey. Participation rates in the employee survey were lower than expected due to the organisations' IT staff addressing unexpected issues impacting their donors and supporters. Although the completion deadline was extended, it did not increase their participation rate. Consequently, their department represented only 10% of the total participants.

Time limitations meant that the research could not extend into other faith-based NFP organisations.

There is a common concern regarding the validity of survey instruments and their reliance on self-report data. It is accepted that participants may provide a biased answer, influenced by various factors they feel they need to respond in a particular way (Stewart & Grant-Vallone 2002). To address this within the current study, the survey outcomes were correlated to establish a greater validity of the findings.

There were limitations further to the methodology, particularly the use of only quantitative methods, as in some instances the data was not robust enough to explain more complex issues. A more robust methodology which included gathering qualitative data, for example conducting focus groups, might address the research questions more effectively in a future study.

The current study was designed to address a considerable limitation in the extant literature on strategic leaders' competencies and employee engagement in the context of line of sight to the mission and the vision, particularly within the NFP sector. The research aims were to identify the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of the leaders. Further insight could have been gathered on what the strategic leaders saw their role to be, and if their commitment to day to day operations could have been measured.

It would have been helpful to understand why strategic leaders did not communicate the mission and vision direct to employees; and why the Board appeared to be highly present focussed and if there was any impact of that on leaders who had operational responsibilities. The researcher was able to observe the present orientation and high focus on operations but was not able to answer why.

The current study could have benefitted from more in depth questions to better measure employee engagement in terms of the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. In addition, it would have been helpful to understand how the employees' faith influenced their understanding of the mission.

There were limitations further to the line of site concept, which is complex and affected by numerous organisational variables. For example, the effectiveness of Staff Development, HR policies and procedures, organisation structure, management frameworks. Rather, the study focussed on the main source of strategy development and therefore the line of site concept.

## 5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of recommendations for future research are given below.

Further research should explore how culture influences the development of mission and vision within faith based not for profits, and their employee's understanding of that mission and vision.

Line of sight has not been articulated as a theory. Based on the tentative findings of the study, future research should investigate the tentative definition and dimensions of line of sight as proposed in this study.

Future research should also build on the connection between strategic leadership theory and the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of leaders as reflective of what an organisation will look like in the future.

Future research should build on the idea that employee engagement with the mission and vision is a critical driver of organisational outcomes with a focus on faith based NFP organisations; along with the dimensions of employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) as they interact with employee line of sight to mission and vision.

Further research should explore the extent to which employees within a faith-based organisation are influenced by their own personal faith experience, values and beliefs to understand the organisations mission and deliver the vision.

A comparative study would be helpful to explore whether employees in a faith-based NFP organisation have higher engagement as demonstrated by vigor, dedication, and absorption than those in a for profit organisation of similar size and why.

It will be important that future research investigate the relationship between Board members involvement in operations and whether that involvement has an impact on the efficacy of strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies as demonstrated in strategy formulation.

In addition, the completion of comparative research within other faith-based NFP organisations would be beneficial. Particularly to explore the strategic leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies and the influence on employee line of sight to the mission and vision.

Of interest would be to examine if strategic leaders in faith-based NFP's who are involved in day to day operations feel constrained in envisioning better alternative futures and formulating strategy because of feeling disempowered by their organisations' Board, or a global office and what impact that has on the organisation achieving its mission and vision.

## **5.6 SUMMARY**

This study was developed further to a professional interest to understand how employees within a faith-based NFP organisation can better comprehend the mission and the vision of the organisation in order to deliver the organisations' strategic intent. Faith based organisations were identified as the subject of the study. This was because the researcher had experience as a strategic leader within faith based organisations who had particular concern for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of those they serve, in addition to providing help and hope to those in need.

The dimensions of employee engagement – absorption, vigor and dedication – were applied to the results to determine whether they were present, resulting in high levels of discretionary effort. The idea was that if these were evident, the employees had a clear line of sight to the mission and vision.

In line with strategic leadership theory, which suggests that leader competencies are predictors of what the organisation will become, the foresight and strategic thinking competencies of leaders with mid to high influence on strategy formulation were examined. The foresight and strategic thinking competencies were also proxy indicators to predict the likelihood of the strategic decisions that leaders make

when engaging with strategy formulation. These competencies were considered in light of the employee engagement with mission and vision.

The study concludes that the leaders' foresight and strategic thinking competencies influence the employees' line of sight to the mission and vision and as such are critical competencies to be built on and developed. For example, leaders had the foresight and strategic thinking competencies related to being future oriented. They would regularly engage in problem solving and systems thinking, however opportunity to engage with the future was limited by their present orientation to operational needs which in turn limited opportunity to engage with future thinking.

This lack of future focus influenced employee line of sight to the vision as they too were highly focused on the present and yet did not know how to interact with the strategy. This was further evidenced by them placing low importance on learning new skills or engaging in personal development.

In addition, the leadership team had the competencies to influence others and help them adapt, yet this was not leveraged to communicate their understanding of the mission and the vision. Rather the communication of those were delegated to people managers. This resulted in a line of sight to the 'sense of mission' rather than the organisation mission as understood by strategic leaders.

Although the study did not include the organisations' volunteers or members, it is feasible that the findings of the study may also apply to them - their line of sight to the mission and vision, and their extent of engagement to the mission and vision.

When leaders engage in envisioning possible alternate futures, there should be an understanding that there are no right and wrong answers. Yet, without a deliberate and proactive engagement with foresight thinking, what was reasonable in the past and the present is unlikely to be beneficial when the organisation is facing the unknown. In the case of this study, but also in the broader observations of the researcher in other contexts, a lack of shared understanding among leaders of the organisation's future leads to following a trajectory that later proves to be



problematic and leadership revert to a more managerial approach to the organisation without the 'pull' of an aspirational future.

Fundamental to strategic leaders should be to understand that if they fail to escalate their current emphasis to communicate the mission and vision above its current value and test the penetration of the mission and vision regularly, then the organisation and those who work within it will fail to realise their full potential and any strategy will fail.

Employees, cannot rely on their perception of what the mission and the vision of the organisation is. In time they will be unable to see the link between their day to day tasks and the mission and vision. This was demonstrated in the study, where employees said they could not see a clear link between their day to day tasks and the vision. Neither did they feel that their managers understood or fully engaged fully with the vision. Suggesting that the vision was operational and perceived by employees as unattainable. At first this decline is likely to be imperceptible, particularly as team and operational goals are being met. However an emotional commitment to the organisation's mission statement, as seen in the study, or a 'sense of mission' (Kopaneva 2019) will only carry employees forward so far - a clear, attainable, and understood vision is needed to pull them into the future.

Undertaking the Doctor of Professional Studies has provided opportunity for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the areas for example, of strategic leadership, and the importance of mission and vision in NFP organisations. In addition, the researcher has increased their awareness of, and knowledge in the area of foresight and strategic thinking competencies, and how they influence the delivery of mission and vision.

Beyond the academic and contribution to practice, the research has demonstrated that if organisation strategic leaders give proactive consideration to their foresight and strategic thinking competencies, they will be more equipped to envision a better alternate future for the organisation. Consequently, they will be more likely to thrive as an organisation and be sustained farther into the future.

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## Appendix A – Timestyle Inventory

	Strongly disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I am known for generating ideas.	0	0	1	1	4	7	4	17	5.71	1.10	1.22
	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	5.88%	23.53%	41.18%	23.53%				
Being organized is important to me.	0	0	0	0	1	5	11	17	6.59	0.62	0.38
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	29.41%	64.71%				
People think of me as a visionary	0	0	2	2	4	5	4	17	5.41	1.33	1.76
	0.00%	0.00%	11.76%	11.76%	23.53%	29.41%	23.53%				
People think of me as organized.	0	0	0	1	4	6	6	17	6.00	0.94	0.88
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	23.53%	35.29%	35.29%				
I tend to dwell on “what was”	5	3	4	2	3	0	0	17	2.71	1.49	2.22
	29.41%	17.65%	23.53%	11.76%	17.65%	0.00%	0.00%				
People think of me as structured.	0	0	2	0	5	8	2	17	5.47	1.12	1.26
	0.00%	0.00%	11.76%	0.00%	29.41%	47.06%	11.76%				
I am known for invention/innovation.	0	0	1	2	5	8	1	17	5.35	1.00	0.99
	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	11.76%	29.41%	47.06%	5.88%				
People think I am best at planning organisation.	0	0	1	1	6	7	2	17	5.47	1.01	1.01
	0.00%	0.00%	5.88%	5.88%	35.29%	41.18%	11.76%				
I often think about past decisions	0	3	1	3	7	3	0	17	4.35	1.37	1.87
	0.00%	17.65%	5.88%	17.65%	41.18%	17.65%	0.00%				

Appendix B - How individuals relate to the future and orient their behaviour, especially with regards to their organisational function.

	Does not describe me	Describes me a little bit	Describes me	Describes me very well	Describes me extremely well	Described me perfectly!	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Test new products/trends very early	0	8	2	2	5	0	17	3.24	1.35	1.82
	0.00%	47.06%	11.76%	11.76%	29.41%	0.00%				
Don't like changes that disrupt opportunity	3	5	5	3	0	1	17	2.71	1.31	1.72
	17.65%	29.41%	29.41%	17.65%	0.00%	5.88%				
Quickly adjust to new situations	0	0	7	5	4	1	17	3.94	0.97	0.93
	0.00%	0.00%	41.18%	29.41%	23.53%	5.88%				
Hold the line when new plans are imposed	6	7	3	1	0	0	17	1.94	0.90	0.81
	35.29%	41.18%	17.65%	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%				
Don't want too much change	7	8	2	0	0	0	17	1.71	0.69	0.47
	41.18%	47.06%	11.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				
Consider how trends interact	0	1	4	7	4	1	17	4.00	1.00	1.00
	0.00%	5.88%	23.53%	41.18%	23.53%	5.88%				
Against changes that threaten one's position	10	7	0	0	0	0	17	1.41	0.51	0.26
	58.82%	41.18%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				
Focus on future questions	0	4	1	5	5	2	17	4.00	1.37	1.88
	0.00%	23.53%	5.88%	29.41%	29.41%	11.76%				
Conscious of big trends in society	0	1	5	2	6	3	17	4.29	1.26	1.60

	Does not describe me	Describes me a little bit	Describes me	Describes me very well	Describes me extremely well	Described me perfectly!	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
	0.00%	5.88%	29.41%	11.76%	35.29%	17.65%				
Go along when new trends come	1	3	5	7	1	0	17	3.24	1.03	1.07
	5.88%	17.65%	29.41%	41.18%	5.88%	0.00%				
Interested in future questions	0	1	6	2	4	4	17	4.24	1.35	1.82
	0.00%	5.88%	35.29%	11.76%	23.53%	23.53%				
Focus on greater future questions	0	2	5	2	6	2	17	4.06	1.30	1.68
	0.00%	11.76%	29.41%	11.76%	35.29%	11.76%				
Make things happen when future demands it	0	1	2	9	3	2	17	4.18	1.01	1.03
	0.00%	5.88%	11.76%	52.94%	17.65%	11.76%				
Take advantage of trends that pop up	0	4	4	7	1	1	17	3.47	1.12	1.26
	0.00%	23.53%	23.53%	41.18%	5.88%	5.88%				
Flexible person	0	0	7	4	5	1	17	4.00	1.00	1.00
	0.00%	0.00%	41.18%	23.53%	29.41%	5.88%				

## Appendix C – Decision making approach.

	LEAST		SLIGHTLY		MODERATELY		MOSTLY	
<b>My prime objective is to:</b>								
Have a position with status	9	52.94%	5	29.41%	0	0.00%	3	17.65%
Be the best in my field	1	5.88%	3	17.65%	3	17.65%	10	58.82%
Achieve recognition for my work	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%	1	5.88%
Feel secure in my job/role or volunteer position within this organisation	3	17.65%	3	17.65%	8	47.06%	3	17.65%
<b>I enjoy jobs that:</b>								
Are technical and well defined	6	35.29%	3	17.65%	0	0.00%	8	47.06%
Have considerable variety	2	11.76%	6	35.29%	5	29.41%	4	23.53%
Allow independent action	2	11.76%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%	3	17.65%
Involve people	7	41.18%	2	11.76%	6	35.29%	2	11.76%
<b>I expect people working for me to be:</b>								
Productive and fast	7	41.18%	7	41.18%	2	11.76%	1	5.88%
Highly capable	5	29.41%	1	5.88%	5	29.41%	6	35.29%
Committed and responsive	1	5.88%	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	7	41.18%
Receptive to suggestions	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	4	23.53%	3	17.65%
<b>In my role within the organisation, I look for:</b>								
Practical results	6	35.29%	3	17.65%	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
The best solutions	2	11.76%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	7	41.18%
New approaches or ideas	1	5.88%	7	41.18%	4	23.53%	5	29.41%
Good working environment	8	47.06%	4	23.53%	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
<b>I communicate best with others:</b>								
In a direct one-to-one basis	1	5.88%	3	17.65%	4	23.53%	9	52.94%
In writing	4	23.53%	5	29.41%	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
By having group discussions	2	11.76%	7	41.18%	7	41.18%	1	5.88%

	LEAST		SLIGHTLY		MODERATELY		MOSTLY	
In a formal meeting	10	58.82%	2	11.76%	2	11.76%	3	17.65%
<b>In my planning I emphasise:</b>								
Current problems	2	11.76%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%	3	17.65%
Meeting objectives	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	6	35.29%	3	17.65%
Future goals	2	11.76%	4	23.53%	3	17.65%	8	47.06%
Developing people's careers	10	58.82%	2	11.76%	2	11.76%	3	17.65%
<b>When faced with solving a problem, I:</b>								
Rely on proven approaches	3	17.65%	8	47.06%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%
Apply careful analysis	2	11.76%	2	11.76%	5	29.41%	8	47.06%
Look for creative approaches	1	5.88%	5	29.41%	5	29.41%	6	35.29%
Rely on my feelings	11	64.71%	2	11.76%	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
<b>When using information, I prefer:</b>								
Specific facts	3	17.65%	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	5	29.41%
Accurate and complete data	1	5.88%	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%
Broad coverage of many options	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	3	17.65%	4	23.53%
Limited data which is easily understood	9	52.94%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%	2	11.76%
<b>When I am not sure about what to do, I:</b>								
Rely on intuition	8	47.06%	1	5.88%	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
Search for facts	3	17.65%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%	8	47.06%
Look for a possible compromise	1	5.88%	7	41.18%	7	41.18%	2	11.76%
Wait before making a decision	5	29.41%	5	29.41%	4	23.53%	3	17.65%
<b>Whenever possible, I avoid:</b>								
Long debates	2	11.76%	5	29.41%	5	29.41%	5	29.41%
Incomplete work	3	17.65%	3	17.65%	2	11.76%	9	52.94%
Using numbers or formulas	8	47.06%	4	23.53%	5	29.41%	0	0.00%
Conflict with others	4	23.53%	5	29.41%	5	29.41%	3	17.65%
<b>I am especially good at:</b>								
Remembering dates & facts	6	35.29%	5	29.41%	2	11.76%	4	23.53%
Solving difficult problems	3	17.65%	2	11.76%	9	52.94%	3	17.65%

	LEAST		SLIGHTLY		MODERATELY		MOSTLY	
Seeing many possibilities	1	5.88%	8	47.06%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%
Interacting with others	7	41.18%	2	11.76%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%
<b>When time is important I:</b>								
Decide and act quickly	8	47.06%	1	5.88%	2	11.76%	6	35.29%
Follow plans and priorities	0	0.00%	6	35.29%	8	47.06%	3	17.65%
Refuse to be pressured	5	29.41%	7	41.18%	1	5.88%	4	23.53%
Seek guidance or support	4	23.53%	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	4	23.53%
<b>In social settings I generally:</b>								
Speak with others	8	47.06%	1	5.88%	1	5.88%	7	41.18%
Think about what is being said	2	11.76%	7	41.18%	5	29.41%	3	17.65%
Observe what is going on	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%	1	5.88%
Listen to what is going on	3	17.65%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	6	35.29%
<b>I am good at remembering:</b>								
People's names	10	58.82%	1	5.88%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%
Places we met	2	11.76%	3	17.65%	9	52.94%	3	17.65%
People's faces	2	11.76%	7	41.18%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%
People's personality	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	1	5.88%	7	41.18%
<b>The work I for the organisation provides me:</b>								
The power to influence others	5	29.41%	0	0.00%	4	23.53%	8	47.06%
Challenging assignments	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	3	17.65%	6	35.29%
Achieving my personal goals	5	29.41%	6	35.29%	5	29.41%	1	5.88%
Acceptance by the group	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	5	29.41%	2	11.76%
<b>I work well with those who are:</b>								
Energetic and ambitious	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	6	35.29%	1	5.88%
Self-confident	3	17.65%	7	41.18%	3	17.65%	4	23.53%
Open minded	4	23.53%	1	5.88%	4	23.53%	8	47.06%
Polite and trusting	6	35.29%	3	17.65%	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
<b>When under stress, I:</b>								
Become anxious	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	7	41.18%	1	5.88%



	LEAST		SLIGHTLY		MODERATELY		MOSTLY	
Concentrate on the problem	1	5.88%	3	17.65%	1	5.88%	12	70.59%
Become frustrated	3	17.65%	5	29.41%	8	47.06%	1	5.88%
Am forgetful	10	58.82%	3	17.65%	1	5.88%	3	17.65%
<b>Others consider me:</b>								
Aggressive	8	47.06%	4	23.53%	1	5.88%	4	23.53%
Disciplined	2	11.76%	2	11.76%	5	29.41%	8	47.06%
Imaginative	3	17.65%	9	52.94%	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
Supportive	4	23.53%	2	11.76%	7	41.18%	4	23.53%
<b>My decisions typically are:</b>								
Realistic and direct	0	0.00%	5	29.41%	4	23.53%	8	47.06%
Systematic or abstract	11	64.71%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%	5	29.41%
Broad and flexible	1	5.88%	10	58.82%	3	17.65%	3	17.65%
Sensitive to the needs of others	5	29.41%	2	11.76%	9	52.94%	1	5.88%
<b>I dislike:</b>								
Losing control	2	11.76%	4	23.53%	10	58.82%	1	5.88%
Boring work	3	17.65%	6	35.29%	3	17.65%	5	29.41%
Following rules	8	47.06%	3	17.65%	2	11.76%	4	23.53%
Being rejected	4	23.53%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%	7	41.18%

## Appendix D - Leaders' Interaction with Strategy

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Strategy, in the organisation is primarily formulated by the Global Office	6	7	1	2	1	2.12	1.22	1.49
	35.29%	41.18%	5.88%	11.76%	5.88%			
Strategy, in your organisation is primarily formulated by the CEO and the Global Office	5	8	2	3	1	2.32	1.20	1.45
	26.32%	42.11%	10.53%	15.79%	5.26%			
Strategy, in your organisation is primarily formulated by the CEO	3	8	2	5	0	2.50	1.10	1.21
	16.67%	44.44%	11.11%	27.78%	0.00%			
Strategy in your organisation is primarily formulated by the Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors	3	7	4	3	1	2.56	1.15	1.32
	16.67%	38.89%	22.22%	16.67%	5.56%			
Strategy in your organisation is primarily formulated by the Executive Leadership Team	1	3	1	8	4	3.65	1.22	1.49
	5.88%	17.65%	5.88%	47.06%	23.53%			
Strategy is primarily formulated by the Board of Directors	9	8	0	0	0	1.47	0.51	0.26
	52.94%	47.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%			
Based on feedback from our sponsors and donors, our organisation continually adjusts its strategy	2	3	2	9	1	3.24	1.20	1.44
	11.76%	17.65%	11.76%	52.94%	5.88%			

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Strategy, in the organisation, is primarily formulated by the CEO and a few direct subordinates	3	6	2	4	2	2.76	1.35	1.82
	17.65%	35.29%	11.76%	23.53%	11.76%			
Strategy is developed on a continual basis, involving managers, staff and ELT in an ongoing dialogue	0	3	3	11	1	3.56	0.86	0.73
	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	61.11%	5.56%			
Business planning in our organisation is ongoing, involving everyone in the process to some degree	2	3	3	7	2	3.24	1.25	1.57
	11.76%	17.65%	17.65%	41.18%	11.76%			
Our managers play a critical role in converting vision into specific operational strategies	1	0	3	9	4	3.88	0.99	0.99
	5.88%	0.00%	17.65%	52.94%	23.53%			
Most people in the organisation have input into the decisions that affect them	1	0	4	11	1	3.65	0.86	0.74
	5.88%	0.00%	23.53%	64.71%	5.88%			
Strategic planning in the organisation is a formal procedure occurring on a regular cycle	2	3	1	8	3	3.41	1.33	1.76
	11.76%	17.65%	5.88%	47.06%	17.65%			
We have a clearly defined vision of the services we provide and the clients we serve – our mission	0	1	3	2	11	4.35	1.00	0.99
	0.00%	5.88%	17.65%	11.76%	64.71%			
This organisation has a well-defined niche in the market-place	0	1	1	3	12	4.53	0.87	0.76
	0.00%	5.88%	5.88%	17.65%	70.59%			
There is a clear set of values in the organisation that governs the way we do business	0	0	0	5	12	4.71	0.47	0.22
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	29.41%	70.59%			

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
Employee initiative and innovation are a key capability of our firm	0	3	3	9	2	3.59	0.94	0.88
	0.00%	17.65%	17.65%	52.94%	11.76%			
The strategy for the organisation emerges upward from the 'front line' rather than downward from the top	1	5	7	2	2	2.94	1.09	1.18
	5.88%	29.41%	41.18%	11.76%	11.76%			
We spend a lot of time with stakeholders, listening to what they have to say about our organisation	0	3	3	9	2	3.59	0.94	0.88
	0.00%	17.65%	17.65%	52.94%	11.76%			
Most people in your organisation have input into the decisions that affect how they do their work	0	1	6	9	1	3.59	0.71	0.51
	0.00%	5.88%	35.29%	52.94%	5.88%			
The organisations' strategy is communicated clearly and consistently to employees	2	2	2	6	5	3.59	1.37	1.88
	11.76%	11.76%	11.76%	35.29%	29.41%			

Appendix E - Understanding of impact of what employees do and tools needed to deliver the vision.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I have a clear understanding of what the organisation wants to achieve through its vision	9	7	7	32	15	70	3.53	1.29	1.67
	12.86%	10.00%	10.00%	45.71%	21.43%				
I believe that the organisation's vision is specific and measurable	1	5	14	34	11	65	3.75	0.88	0.78
	1.54%	7.69%	21.54%	52.31%	16.92%				
I believe that the organisation's vision is realistic and achievable	6	8	15	28	3	60	3.23	1.08	1.16
	10.00%	13.33%	25.00%	46.67%	5.00%				
I understand the link between what I do every day and the organisation's vision	2	3	14	31	11	61	3.75	0.92	0.86
	3.28%	4.92%	22.95%	50.82%	18.03%				
I know what I need to do to help my Organisation Be successful to achieve the organisation's Vision	2	10	11	24	12	59	3.58	1.10	1.21
	3.39%	16.95%	18.64%	40.68%	20.34%				

I feel I need to work differently than I am today to help my Organisation achieve the vision	3	20	18	12	5	58	2.93	1.06	1.12
	5.17%	34.48%	31.03%	20.69%	8.62%				
My manager helps me see the link between what I do every day and the organisation's vision	3	15	17	18	4	57	3.09	1.04	1.08
	5.26%	26.32%	29.82%	31.58%	7.02%				
I understand the link between my personal goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	3	6	14	30	3	56	3.43	0.95	0.90
	5.36%	10.71%	25.00%	53.57%	5.36%				
I understand the link between my department's goals and the success of my Organisation achieving its vision	1	4	7	30	12	54	3.89	0.90	0.82
	1.85%	7.41%	12.96%	55.56%	22.22%				
My manager consistently by their actions and words endorses the organisation's vision	3	9	12	26	4	54	3.35	1.03	1.06
	5.56%	16.67%	22.22%	48.15%	7.41%				
I am aware of the unique needs of our clients and how what I do every day in my job impacts them	0	0	4	32	18	54	4.26	0.59	0.35
	0.00%	0.00%	7.41%	59.26%	33.33%				

My intentions are good, but I do not understand how what I do impacts our clients	23	26	3	2	0	54	1.70	0.74	0.55
	42.59%	48.15%	5.56%	3.70%	0.00%				
I understand how what I do every day, and how well I do it can impact the Organisation achieving its vision	1	2	6	34	11	54	3.96	0.80	0.64
	1.85%	3.70%	11.11%	62.96%	20.37%				
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of the organisation's achieving the vision	3	9	17	18	7	54	3.31	1.08	1.16
	5.56%	16.67%	31.48%	33.33%	12.96%				
I have set myself personal goals to help me contribute to the success of my department	1	1	4	30	18	54	4.17	0.80	0.63
	1.85%	1.85%	7.41%	55.56%	33.33%				
My intentions are good but I do not understand how what I do contributes to the organisation's vision	13	21	12	5	2	53	2.28	1.06	1.13
	24.53%	39.62%	22.64%	9.43%	3.77%				

Appendix F - Do employees feel skilled and enabled to fulfil the mission.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Dev.	Variance
I believe that I have the relevant competencies I need to contribute to helping the organisation fulfil its purpose	0	0	1	29	24	54	4.43	0.54	0.29
	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%	53.70%	44.44%				
I am aware of the unique needs of our clients and how what I do every day in my job impacts them	0	0	4	32	18	54	4.26	0.59	0.35
	0.00%	0.00%	7.41%	59.26%	33.33%				
I feel I need to work differently than I am today to help my Organisation achieve the vision	3	20	18	12	5	58	2.93	1.06	1.12
	5.17%	34.48%	31.03%	20.69%	8.62%				
I feel I need a different set of skills and/or competencies to help my Organisation achieve its vision	9	23	18	6	2	58	2.47	0.99	0.99
	15.52%	39.66%	31.03%	10.34%	3.45%				



