

Spring 3-2024

School Leaders' Understanding and Implementation of Their School District's Mission and Vision Statements: A Qualitative Study

Venice P. Daley
Nova Southeastern University, daleyvp@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Share Feedback About This Item

NSUWorks Citation

Venice P. Daley. 2024. *School Leaders' Understanding and Implementation of Their School District's Mission and Vision Statements: A Qualitative Study*. Doctoral dissertation. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. (489)
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_etd/489.

This Dissertation is brought to you by the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

School Leaders' Understanding and Implementation of
Their School District's Mission and Vision Statements: A Qualitative Study

by
Venice P. Daley

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2024

Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Venice P. Daley under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Roslyn Doctorow, EdD
Committee Chair

Shery Bennett, EdD
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD
Dean

Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's ideas by citing them in the required style.

Where another author's words have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this applied dissertation manuscript.

Venice P. Daley

Name

March 19, 2024

Date

Acknowledgments

There are many people to whom I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the role they played in this doctoral journey. First and foremost, I want to thank God for His Holy Spirit, and for His many blessings and love towards me. I dedicate and give honor and glory to God my Father and my Savior Jesus Christ for giving me the strength and for helping me to complete this dissertation.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Les, and my three wonderful children, Ronald, Joel, and Sarah. Thank you for believing in me and supporting me throughout the doctoral prospectus, proposal, and completion of the dissertation. To my three amazing children, Ronald, Joel, and Sarah, thank you for your patience and understanding. To my family members, thank you for your patience and understanding during my absence and lack of presence to family gatherings and social activities. To my Pastor, Dr. Carole Fernandez, thank you for your prayers and encouraging word. You are indeed a light and role model to many.

To my Nova Southeastern University instructors: Your intentional and constructive feedback have truly made a difference in the way I cite and proof my overall writing. To my dissertation completion project mentor, Dr. Hecht, thank you for your encouraging words, constructive feedback, and advice. Dr. Bennett, thank you for your constructive feedback and guidance. Dr. Reeves, your weekly reminders, and encouraging feedback gave me hope throughout the process. To Dr. Doctorow, my amazing dissertation chair, words cannot express my gratitude for all you mean to me.

Thanks to everyone who have been instrumental in my educational journey. You've all made a difference in my educational achievement.

Abstract

School Leaders' Understanding and Implementation of Their School District's Mission and Vision Statements: A Qualitative Study. Venice P. Daley, 2024: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: leadership, institutional mission, vision statements, qualitative research

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the perspectives of school leaders in a single public school district regarding their purpose in leadership, understanding, and implementation of their school district's mission and vision statements. Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice?
2. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders?
3. How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement?

It was important for the researcher to use a conceptual framework when using a qualitative analysis to describe and explore a specific phenomenon for research. The three research questions aligned with the conceptual framework of the study. This researcher used the Ashridge mission model. This qualitative exploratory case study highlighted the model by showing the relevance and usefulness of mission statement and leadership purpose. The data consisted of individual interviews and archival material, which was collected from nine participants employed at a single public school district in the southern region of South Florida. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis.

The findings of this study showed that experienced school leaders in the district were intentional about providing direction and understanding the effectiveness of school leaders and teachers using the district's vision and mission statements as a road map for school performance and student achievement.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Definition of Terms.....	5
Purpose of the Study	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
Introduction	9
Conceptual Framework	9
Strategic Plan	12
Background to the Problem	15
Organization’s Purpose	16
Mission Statement	17
Value Statement	26
Goals and Objectives	30
Leadership	32
School Leaders	33
Purpose in Leadership	36
Research Related to the Study	40
Research Questions	41
Summary	42
Chapter 3: Methodology	44
Aim of the Study	44
Qualitative Research Approach	44
Participants	46
Data Collection and Instruments	47
Procedures	48
Data Analysis	49
Ethical Considerations	50
Trustworthiness	51
Potential Research Bias	52
Chapter 4: Results	53
Introduction	53
Interview Process	53
Participants.....	54
Elements Questions	55
Senior Leadership Role Questions	59
Findings	63
Summary	64
Chapter 5: Discussion	66
Study Overview	66
Discussion of the Findings	66

Implications and Relevance of the Study	69
Limitations	70
Recommendations for Future Research	70
Conclusion	71
References	73
Appendices	
A Interview Protocol	86
B School District's Mission Statement and Vision Statement	89
Table	
Participant Demographics	55
Figure	
Ashridge Mission Model	10

Chapter 1: Introduction

Discussion was needed about educational leaders' knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the mission and vision statements of their school districts. Although there were studies on the alignment of mission and vision in corporations and other organizations (Braun et al., 2013), there was a void in the literature related to the exploration of educational leaders' knowledge, understanding, and implementation of a single public school district's mission and vision statements. The notion of mission and purpose is not new; however, the academic research into leadership purpose was scarce and was often told from the perspective of corporations (Ippensen, 2021). This qualitative exploratory case study explored educational leaders' knowledge and implementation of the mission and vision statements in a school district located in the southeastern United States. Further explored was how the leaders incorporated the district's mission statements into their purpose as leaders or their roles as educational leaders to impact student learning and school performance.

Statement of the Problem

Little was known about how school leaders of a single public school district implemented their school district's vision and mission statements and explained how they incorporated the vision and mission statements into their purpose in leadership or their roles as educational leaders to impact students learning and school performance. Exploration of the educational leaders' purpose, knowledge, and implementation of the public school district's vision and mission statements, as well as how the leaders incorporated the mission and vision statements into their purpose in leadership or their roles as educational leaders, highlighted this research and its findings. Despite extensive research on vision and mission statements and leadership, little research existed that

contributed to what school leaders knew and what school leaders did on a daily basis (Gurley et al., 2014) that may have impacted school performance, student learning, and teaching in the public school district. Although school vision has been noted as an essential requirement of effective school leadership, there were school leaders who did not have or did not follow a personal vision for education or lead their school community in the development and implementation of a vision that would guide the learning process (Mombourquette, 2017). Additionally, although there was extensive research on mission, vision, and value statements in the research literature (Keefe, 2021), implementation and mission awareness within an organization have only recently begun to be studied by researchers (Bebell et al., 2020). Further, although there is a vast body of literature that refers to one's sense of purpose, little attention has been given specifically to purpose in leadership (Russell & Underwood, 2016).

Phenomenon of Interest

Mission and vision statements are considered the roadmap to student success in school districts and individual schools. However, for student success and performance to occur in schools, it is important that school leaders have the knowledge and understanding of a school district's mission and vision statements, as well as ensure that the mission and vision statements are being implemented by the school leaders, leadership team, and teachers. Allen et al. (2018) reported that understanding the purpose established by schools, using vision and mission statements, helps administrators, teachers, and researchers understand how academic institutions can become better. Bringing forth an awareness and understanding of the importance of the school district's mission and vision statements was also an aim for this study.

Background and Justification

Effective school leaders should have a strong and clear vision, as well as a set of values for their school and a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school (Day et al., 2020). The superintendent, in collaboration with school cadres, and school leaders were responsible for making sure the purpose of the mission was fulfilled. District superintendents have a complex role, navigating both internal and external politically driven responsibilities, and they are often considered the most visible and influential figures within a school district (Henrickson, 2018). A key task for leadership is to influence student learning and achievement (Day et al., 2020). The implementation of the vision and mission statements is key to any organization's success (Bowen, 2017). The intent of mission statements is to establish organizational purpose, and, theoretically, once established, the practice of those within the organization is influenced by the mission (Lafavore, 2012). According to Kustigian (2013), more research is suggested in the areas of schools' mission statements and mission-driven district leadership to see if there is a connection with student achievement.

The history and research of mission and vision statements, as well as the support for the importance of a school's vision, are both addressed in educational leadership literature (Mombourquette, 2017). However, although there is a vast body of literature that refers to one's sense of purpose, little attention has been given specifically to purpose in leadership (Russell & Underwood, 2016) and alignment of a school district's mission statement. Purpose has been discussed at length in academic and business circles; however, the role it plays in how leaders define success has not been explored in depth to date (Russell & Underwood, 2016). Research shows that, although there exists a vast amount of literature on how to develop a mission statement (Piercy & Morgan, 1994),

more studies are needed in the area of mission statements and organizational leadership (Rough, 2008). Further addressing the literature relating to the content of public school districts' vision and mission statements, values, and purpose in leadership will add to existing literature and research as well as address the gap in literature.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

This study was undertaken in a public school district located in the southeastern United States. Understanding how the state's educational leaders implemented the mission and vision statements in the strategic plan and how public school leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statement into their purpose as leaders or their roles as educational leaders may add to the body of knowledge of educational leadership and mission and vision statements. Data from this research study could be used for professional development and revision of the school district's mission and vision statements in the strategic plan. Insights gained from the results of this research study may provide knowledge and information and may suggest further studies on public school leaders' purpose in leadership.

Audience

Understanding how the state's educational leaders implemented the mission and vision statements in the school district's strategic plan and how the state's public school district leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or their roles as educational leaders may add to the body of knowledge of educational leadership and mission and vision statements. This study will fill the gap and contribute to knowledge and understanding of educational leaders and administrators regarding their school districts' vision and mission statements, as well as increase the literature on school districts' and higher education institutions' mission statements.

Further, findings of this study will impact school district leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, shareholders, and the community. The research study has contributed to the field of educational leadership. Insights gained from the results of this research study provide additional knowledge and information and may suggest further studies on public school district leaders' purpose in leadership. Faculty, teachers, and staff members will also benefit from the findings of this study.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this applied dissertation, the following terms are defined.

Administrators

This term refers to leaders who are involved in the process of influencing others to be motivated to contribute to the achievement of a collective goal. School leaders, as the heads of schools, are central to school improvement, raising standards, and improving student outcomes (Day et al., 2020).

Assistant Principal

This term refers to the individual who is second in command under the principal. He/she works directly with the principal and must be prepared at all times to assume the lead in the absence of the principal. This individual must be prepared to operate at an executive level to administer and fulfill the daily operations of the school. For the purpose of this study, only the principal and assistant principals were noted as senior administrators. The assistant principal's leadership role is vital to the success of the school and the students (Morgan, 2018).

Instructional Leaders

This term refers to administrators, as well as educators, in a leadership role. Instructional leadership supports the development of teaching, student achievement, and

school performance. Leadership and learning in education relate to different levels of education as well as opportunities for teacher educators, education leaders and other stakeholders to learn and develop (Leightwood et al., 2019; McCauley et al., 1998; Townsend, 2019). For the purpose of this study, the instructional leaders were identified as literacy coaches.

Mission Statement

This term refers to a statement that declares an organization's purpose for being in existence (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Herman, 1989; Pearce & David, 1987). An educational institution mission statement declares the rationale and purpose of the campus; its vision of the students, the faculty, institutional excellence, as well as its responsibilities toward the students and the community (Meacham, 2008; Taylor & Morpew, 2010; Wong, 2020).

Perception

This term is frequently used in psychology. Definitions include (a) the act or ability to perceive, grasp, or understand and (b) awareness noted as means of the senses. Perception can also be defined as how an individual views the world or things around them. For the purpose of this study, perception is discussed as one's view and understanding of a subject. The explanation of the leader's views of the mission statement served as the focus.

Principal

This term refers to the first individual in leadership of a school. This individual is typically the visible representative of the school. The principal implements and supervises programs and services that advance the mission forward as established by the comprehensive strategic plan. The principal is the head school leader or prime

administrator (Day et al., 2020).

Purpose

This term describes the mission, provides a moral aspect, and creates a direction for the company (Mitchell, 2014). According to Drohan (1999), a mission statement is an organizational document declaring the purpose of an institution and its reason for existence.

Strategy and Strategic Planning

This term refers to an organization's core values, mission, and vision in a guiding document that sets the mission and goals, as well as the strategic focus and current and future plan. The foundation of any strategic plan is the institutional mission statement (Hinton, 2012). Fundamentally, a mission statement is the foundation upon which the strategic plans, mission, and the vision of an institution rest.

Value Statement

This term refers to the guiding principles that dictate what an organization stands for. The value statement of a school or school district states the organization's values, or that which the organization strives for and will not compromise. The education system values are the principles that drive the decisions, and behaviors of the leadership, staff, and students of the university. Examples of values may be integrity, educational excellence, respect, and punctuality.

Vision Statement

This term refers to the desired future states or images of a company, which are mostly focused on achievements accomplished by the organization (Cote, 2017; Mitchell, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose statement of a research study defines the intent and reason for the study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how school leaders explained their knowledge and implementation of their school district's mission statement.

Specifically, this study explored how the leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders to impact student learning and school performance. Ippensen (2021) stated that mission-driven school leadership is possible, and principals who choose to engage with the mission statement, management, and behavior will be driven by their purpose.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 2 of the study reviewed the literature related to the problem to be researched. The purpose of this study was to explore educational leaders' knowledge and implementation of the school district's mission and vision statements. The literature used in the study was retrieved by using the Nova Southeastern University library, ERIC, EBSCO, and ProQuest databases. Google Scholar was used to identify and retrieve the information for the literature review. The literature surveyed was retrieved mostly from qualitative studies. There were also a few quantitative studies that were reviewed and included. Due to the nature of the study, a focus on qualitative research studies related to mission statements and purpose in leadership was emphasized.

Conceptual Framework

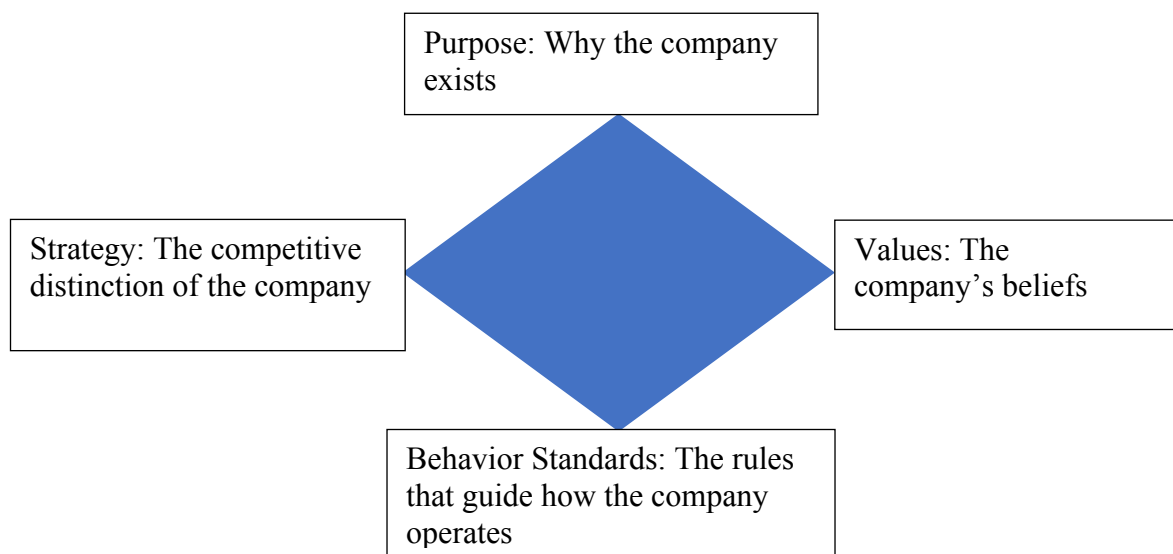
The conceptual framework for this study emerged during the process of this literature review. It is important for a researcher to use a conceptual framework when using a qualitative analysis to describe and explore a specific phenomenon for research (O'Donnell, 2013; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). This researcher used the Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Yeung, 1991). This qualitative exploratory case study highlighted the model by showing the relevance and usefulness of mission statements and understanding of organizational purpose. The Ashridge mission model aligned with the research questions and helped to guide the study as it relates to the research question, and interview questions. A modified version of Rough's (2008) interview instrument (see Appendix A) was used as the tool to acquire the answers for the open-ended questions.

The Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Yeung, 1991) is built on the premise that an effective mission statement should include four elements: purpose, strategy,

behavior, and value (see Figure). The Ashridge mission model was based on a research study conducted in 53 large companies by the Ashridge Strategic Management Center. Andrew Campbell was the founding director for the Ashridge Strategic Management Center, and Campbell and Yeung (1991) used their model of mission to focus on the development and implementation of corporate mission statements. Much of Andrew Campbell's professional career was spent studying organizational mission statements. According to Campbell and Yeung, the mission was a relatively neglected area of management, and there was no clear agreement on what it encompasses. The Ashridge Strategic Management Center conducted a 2-year research project designed to fill this gap. The research found that, if the mission was more clearly defined it could be managed better. A model of mission was developed that included four elements: purpose, strategy, behavior standards and values. Campbell's framework of four mission statement dimensions has come to be known as the Ashridge mission model.

Figure

Ashridge Mission Model



As noted by Muzondo (2012), some mission statement analysis models that have been published have not been operationalized to help students in thinking through the issues to be covered in organizational missions. Muzondo indicated the Ashridge mission model framework is an operationalizing model that appraises the quality and adequacy of mission statements. The following four components define the elements of the Ashridge mission model:

Purpose. Benefits of the purpose. The purpose can be broken down into three categories as follows:

1. For the benefit of the shareholders.
2. For the benefit of all its stakeholders.
3. For the benefit of a higher ideal, going beyond merely satisfying the needs of its stakeholders and shareholders.

Strategy. The commercial logic for the organization. Strategy links purpose to behavior in a commercial and rational way. The plan or path to take to reach or fulfill successful goals.

Values. The beliefs and moral principles that lie behind an organization's culture. A sense of mission occurs when employees find their personal values aligned with the organizational values. Values give meaning to the norms and behavioral standards in the organization. Values are strong motivators to act in the best interests of the purpose of the organization. They can provide a rationale for behavior that is just as strong as strategy. It is for this reason that the Ashridge framework has a diamond shape.

Policies and Behavioral Standards. Guidelines to help people to decide what to do on a day-to-day basis.

The framework of the Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Yeung, 1991) was

used to align the four elements of the strategic plan of the school district strategic plan: purpose, strategy, behavior (standards), and values. Campbell and Yeung (1991) asserted that many managers have a misunderstanding of the nature and importance of mission, while others fail to consider the importance of a mission statement. Matejka et al. (1993) noted that mission statements could induce desirable behaviors if those statements first clearly communicated and reinforced through the reward system.

The Ashridge mission model helped to develop the research questions by noting the components mentioned in the model. The Ashridge mission model components of strategy, purpose, values, and standard behavior align with the questions being asked. The component of purpose (i.e., why the company exists) reflects the mission and vision statement of the institution. An understanding of why the company exists can be derived from the questions: In selecting the phenomenon, the researcher gained a better understanding of if school leaders understand and implement their district's mission to lead and improve the school performance. Further, the researcher gained more insight to how the district's vision and mission are manifested in the district's strategic plan. Additionally, the study results will help school district administrators to gain an in-depth understanding of the goals and objectives to move towards excellence in school performance and student success in the target state's public school system. Further, the researcher will add to the vast literature on research geared towards an understanding of the perception of educational leaders regarding their school district's mission, and vision for change. This will also fill the gap in literature regarding the components of the mission and vision statements in the strategic plans of education institutions.

Strategic Plan

Aktan (2003) noted strategic planning consists of four components: vision,

mission, strategy, and action. Ozdem (2011) stated that one of the most important steps in strategic planning is the formulation of mission and vision statements. Hinton (2012) noted that the strategic plan is viewed as a tool to articulate the institution's mission and vision and help to prioritize and promote institutional goals. Slavik (2010) reported that the main task of strategic planning is to formalize the strategic process in an organization. Drucker (1992) noted the mission statement as a key component of an effective strategic planning process. Mission statements define the specific strategies needed to attain the crucial goals (Drucker, 1992). The mission statement creates a disciplined organization.

The mission and vision statements of any educational institution may be the most visible and public part of a strategic plan and can also prevent the most common degenerative disease of organizations, especially large ones, namely splintering always limited resources on things that are interesting or look profitable rather than concentrating on a very small number of productive efforts. Organizations need and rely on the mission statement to guide them to the next level. As such, steps should be taken to ensure statements are aligned and include all the essential components on the strategic plan. Simerson (2011) reported that strategic planning requires strategic thinking.

Gordan and Pop (2013) stated that the mission statement of the institution holds a significant role and represents an important component for higher education institutions. This role, as written in the mission statement, is to provide schools or universities with a course of action, and to guide them towards fulfilling their purpose within society. The mission statements or the strategic plans generally state the goals and objectives. The mission statements of educational institutions should reveal the overall purpose, mission, and vision of the educational institution, and they should be expanded to reflect programmatic progress, intent, and purpose on the strategic plan. According to Keeling

(2013), mission statements define the nature, purpose, and role of the organizations, as well as the organization's strategic planning. The public school system's mission is set up to improve student achievement needs.

To determine the effectiveness of the mission and vision statements, it is important to align the mission and vision statements on the strategic plan with all the components of the documents on the strategic plan. The components of Hinton's (2012) strategic plan guide support the framework of the Ashridge mission model, as well as Muzondo's (2012) updated support of Ashridge mission statement framework. Hinton's strategic plan guide was included as one of the conceptual frameworks for this study. There are three divisions to Hinton's strategic planning. The first division is the foundation, which includes the mission statement. The second division is the supporting components: the values, institutional goals, and vision. The third division is the strategic plan itself. The strategic plan section consists of the goals and objectives, and implementation of the plan. The mentioned components are key to the success of an organization's mission. These components are valuable to the success of strategic planning.

Strategic planning plays an important role in the fulfilment of the mission statement. Hinton (2012) noted that the foundation of any strategic plan is the mission statement, and everything contained in the strategic plan must be aligned with the mission. McHatton et al. (2011) stated, "Strategic planning has been shown to be beneficial in gaining stakeholder consensus for organizational objectives and future action" (p. 235). The mission statement is the foundation upon which the vision, goals and objectives rely. The strategic plan of any organization is where the mission, vision, goals, and objectives can be found for the projected venture and accomplishment for the

organization.

The components of Hinton's (2012) strategic planning guide and the Ashridge mission model are solid and can be applied to the effectiveness and alignment of the mission and vision statements in the strategic plan of the target state's public school districts. The researcher viewed the mission and the vision statements of the strategic plan to shed light on the purpose of the target public school district, as well as the educational leaders' purpose in leadership. The researcher also used the research questions in alignment with the framework to further gain an understanding of the educational leaders' knowledge of their school district's mission and vision statements and how the state's public school leaders incorporate the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders.

Background to the Problem

The topic of mission statements and educational leaders' knowledge of the mission and vision statements of schools or universities have been discussed over the years. The strategic role of mission and vision statements, their relevance to strategic planning, their importance, and the resultant impact on organizational performance and their leaders have been studied for centuries. However, further study to include teachers, students, parents, or community members may help in determining if principals utilize the school district's mission to lead, manage, and improve the school (Ippensen, 2021). With that said, little was known regarding the knowledge of state public school leaders knowledge and utilization of their school district's mission statement. A mission statement is an integral part of school planning and should be known and utilized by school leaders. Hinton (2012) stated that the foundation of any institution's strategic plan is the institutional mission statement. This statement delineates why the institution exists

and what its operations are intended to achieve. Further, Bisset (2014) stated the role of mission statements in strategic planning with all senior-level administrators in attendance might be helpful in making decision making more transparent and aligned with an institution's strategic values and objectives. Gordan and Pop (2013) noted that it has long been argued that mission statements represent the foundation upon which institutions build their strategic plans and that vision and mission statements should be the first steps any institution undertakes before designing its strategy.

Concise and well-written mission statements also play an integral role in strategic planning. Gurley et al. (2014) stated that articulating a clear and concise mission statement is imperative to solidify a shared understanding of what the primary purpose of the school is. Emery (1996) stated that a clear mission statement prevents employees in the organization from developing competing missions or using resources in ways that are contrary to the mission. Brown (1998) declared that the development of a mission statement is one of the most important decisions an organization will make. Long (2004) stated that a well-written mission statement is a clear starting point of successful strategy.

Anderson (2012) noted that a mission statement supports an institution's philosophical stance and societal objectives. Hinton (2012) declared that the institutional mission statement is the foundation of any strategic plan and helps to define the organization, as well as helps to guide the actions of the organization. Fayad and Yoshida (2014) declared mission statements should be bold and accurate, rather than ordinary to represent the institution. A mission statement serves as a guide for not only educational institutions, but also profit and nonprofit organizations, ministries, and individuals.

Organization's Purpose

Purpose is a term that is often used in relationship to one's purpose or an

organization's purpose or reason for existence. Russell and Underwood (2016) noted that, although the notion of purpose is not new and has been discussed at length in academic circles, the role it plays in how leaders define success has not been explored in depth to date. The Russell and Underwood study showed that a leader's sense of purpose is also much more likely to translate into success if certain barriers are overcome, which exist both internally and externally to the person. Gurley et al. (2014) declared the continued study of the purpose and power of clearly developed and shared school mission, vision, values, and goals statements is in order. The purpose of an organization and the leader's purpose in leadership are expected to be in alignment.

Mission Statement

The study of mission and vision statements has been a topic for discussion for decades. Researchers, theorists, and scholars have conducted studies regarding education institutions' purpose, and educational leadership, as well as published articles on organizations' mission statement, and vision statements in literature. However, despite widespread recognition and acknowledgement of the importance of mission and vision statements, very little empirical research has been conducted on strategy documents, particularly the mission or vision statements (Cady, 2011).

The researcher explored how public school district leaders utilize their district's mission and vision statements or how the state's public school district leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders. This research study filled the gap relating to the notion that more studies are needed in the area of mission statements and organizational leadership (Rough, 2008), specifically in one school district in the southeastern United States, by reviewing several topics related to organizational and educational institutions' mission

and vision statements. Further, the study supported the notion that little attention has been given specifically to purpose in leadership (Russell & Underwood, 2016). This researcher conducted the study using a qualitative exploratory case study.

The Use of Mission Statement

The term *mission* has been interpreted in many ways by many different scholars, researchers, and sectors. According to Abelman (2012), one definition for mission is “a pre-established and often self-imposed objective or purpose” (p. 83). The mission statement is one of the most important documents and set of principles that guide the strategic decision-making and mission focus in an organization. The mission statement helps to define the organization, states the purpose; the reason why the institution exists, and helps guide the actions of the organization.

A mission statement plays an important role in life, business, ministry, and education. A personal mission statement is the road map of one’s purpose for existence. Covey (2013) described a personal mission statement to be the basis for making daily decisions, amid the circumstances and major life-directing decisions. A church’s mission statement, or a ministry’s mission statement, defines and guides what the church or ministry does, with a great focus on leading one to Christ. In business, a mission statement declares an organization’s reason for being in existence (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; Pearce & David, 1987). This document also holds true for educational institutions.

The mission statement of an education institution declares the rationale and purpose of the campus, its vision of the students, the faculty, institutional excellence, as well as its responsibilities toward students and the community. Fayad and Yoshida, (2014) stated that mission statements serve as powerful marketing tools for schools to attract potential clients, parents and students, or potential employees. Zandstra (2012) and

Meacham (2008) declared that mission statements are intended to portray the objectives, focus, inclusion, identity, and purpose of an organization. The mission statement describes the compelling purpose of the school. As noted by Kosmutzky and Krucken (2015), mission statements rely heavily on institutional specificities, thus educational institutions rely on mission statements to portray their organization's mission, purpose, values, educational goals, as well as the vision on their strategic plan.

Mission statements are an important tool for strategy implementation (Rey & Bastons, 2017). The educational community declares the mission statement to be an action statement that is collaboratively developed by the different stakeholders (AdvancED, 2016, 2017). Mission statements of educational institutions, such as technical colleges, preparatory colleges, kindergarten to Grade 12 institutions, colleges, and universities, focus on school purpose, goals, and vision relating to school performance for students' academic success and career readiness. Mission is not about the presence of having mission statements; it is about a shared meaning and purpose (Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School, 2013; Cho, 2017).

Many organizations, as noted by Thomas (2012), have lost focus on the mission statements internally. Abrahams (1995) made two declarations concerning mission statements. First, a mission statement is an enduring statement of purpose for the organization that identifies the organization's scope of operation and reflects its values and priorities. Second, a mission statement helps a company integrate short-term objectives with longer term goals, enhance communication, make consistent decisions, motivate, and build an organizational unit. Angelica (2001), Calder (2002), and Humphries (2005) defined mission as that which an organization is all about, why the organization exists, and what the organization does.

An educational institution's purpose can be dictated by the mission and vision statement but not always in certain instances. After conducting a content analysis of 480 school district mission statements from Pennsylvania to understand the relationship between school and place and the articulated purposes of schooling, Schafft and Biddl (2013) discovered that (a) the mission statements of a school district may not be representative of locally articulated visions of school and (b) the influences of local context may be superseded by institutional discourses regarding the purpose of education and schooling.

The purpose of an organization is usually indicated in the mission statement. Zandstra (2012) stated that, because mission statements are intended to portray the focus, objectives, inclusion, identity, and purpose of an organization, researchers have been using mission statements as a data source to answer research questions. Hartley's (2016) research indicated academic communities benefit from a shared sense of purpose. A mission statement will often be connected to the following terms: purpose, vision statement, values, goals and objectives, and strategic planning. The mission statement should also portray the focus, identity, and purpose of an organization. Collins and Porras (1991) stated that a good purpose statement is fundamental and broad, and a person should be able to articulate the purpose of the organization in one or two sentences. Abrahams (1995) gave two declarations for a mission statement. The first definition states that a mission statement is an organization's statement of purpose. The second states that the mission statement is a statement of benefits.

The mission statement is key to the ongoing success of best practice for being awarded accreditation as well as for keeping or renewal of accreditation status. The general concept of mission statement is fairly well established in academic literature

(Mitchell, 2014). The role of the mission statement on the strategic plan is indicative of the message that is being portrayed to the accreditation agency. A nationally accredited school or university is a highly recognized institution of higher education, whereas a regionally accredited university is recognized only within its accredited body. Meeting an accreditation standard was thought to be a primary and significant step in conceiving how a school envisioned its educational program and its relationship with the community (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2016).

The mission statement of an educational organization should state what the organization is about, and the reason for institutional existence. Fayad and Yoshida (2014) declared mission statements should be bold and accurate rather than ordinary to represent the school. Bart and Bontis (2003) reported that a mission statement is designed to answer the most fundamental questions for an organization: Why do we exist? What are we here for? What is our purpose? In his study on mission statements, Drucker (1974) wrote the following: “To effectively manage current and future operations in an organization, an organization will need to develop a mission statement that answers the questions: ‘What is our business?’ and ‘What do we want to become?’” (p. 59).

The questions regarding “Why do we exist?” and “What do we want to become?” and “What is our business?” are key components to developing a clear mission statement. This statement reflects the purpose of the organization, which is reflected in the mission statement, as well as the vision for the organization as stated in the vision statement. Yilmaz (2013) declared that mission statements should include three groups of elements: stakeholders, components, and purposes. On the other hand, Campbell and Yeung (1991) declared that a mission statement should include purpose, strategy, behavior, and value. Hawthorn (2017) stated that the mission statement helps to measure whether the strategic

plan aligns with the overall goals of the organization. Although researchers vary on their declaration on the components of a strong mission statement, the varied components depend on the researchers' views of the mission and purpose of the organization.

Vision and Mission Statement

Both the institutional mission statement and vision statement are key to the public school's demonstration of excellence in school performance, and student success. According to DuFour and Eaker (1998), a vision statement answers the question of "What do we hope to become?" (p. 62), and the mission statement always answers the question of "Why do we exist?" (p. 69). The importance of having a vision statement and a plan for vision for the organization is often expressed or made mention of in the strategic plan. According to Khalifa (2012), the envisioned future is what an organization aspires to become, to achieve, or to create. The concepts of mission statement and vision statement are needed on the strategic document of any organization. The vision and mission statements can be said to be a driving force in an organization's activities (Hinton, 2012). An organization cannot fully achieve its reasons for existence without a proper definition of its vision and mission statements (Sotunde, 2012). Abelman (2014) stated that institutional vision is how a college or university's character and value are identified and communicated within the academic community and to outside constituents. Both the mission and vision statements are important to any organization.

The mission and vision statements of universities, colleges, technical colleges, or public school districts should generally portray the institution's mission and vision. Abelman (2014) noted that, until recently, a limited body of research had empirically analyzed the language or measured the linguistic components of institutional vision in higher education. A college, university, preparatory school, or public school district's

purpose can be dictated by the organization's mission and vision statements. Sotunde (2012) stated the role of a vision and mission statement in an organization has been observed to be central to the organization's direction. Khalifa (2012) noted the mission statement is one component among others which may include a statement of vision, a statement of values, a definition of business and its scope, and/or a statement of strategy. These statements determine the relevance of actions, expectations, and directions for the organization.

Some leaders may view the vision as also being the purpose, interchangeable with the mission. However, a vision is not the same as the mission, and the vision statement is different from the mission statement. The mission statement should tell what the institution plans or intends to do to fulfill the mission or achieve the vision, while the vision tells what the organization intends to attain. The vision statement tells where you plan or see your organization in the future, where as the mission tells the reason for which the organization was established or why the institution exist. The vision statement is the expression of the institution's aspirations, ultimate mission, and is based on the ultimate outcome of the institution's mission. Sotunde (2012) asserted that the vision of a company is as the leadership defines it because it was the leader's actual vision that guided choice and actions. According to Meacham (2008), the mission statement, in contrast, provides the overarching consensus, deeply rooted in an institution's history and identity, regarding what needs to be accomplished while the vision statement defines the ultimate desired or future outcome. On the other hand, the vision statement is the mission that shares the desired future state or image of the organization and is mostly focused on achievements solely by the organization. Hinton (2012) noted the vision statement represents the focus of the drive for the ultimate mission and purpose. The vision

statement is the goal to be fulfilled, or the ultimate and final objective.

An indepth understanding and knowledge of the mission statement as it relates to the vision of mission, as well as a well-developed strategic plan, will portray the vision of an organization's plan for success. The vision statement should tell where the public school districts, universities, colleges, kindergarten to Grade 12 preparatory colleges, or technical colleges want to be, as well as their goals and objectives for success. Ozdem (2011) noted that one of the most important steps in strategic planning is the formulation of the mission and vision statements. In his views of organizational change, Kotter (1996) encouraged leaders to influence their followers to unite towards a shared vision or purpose. A communicated and shared vision will help staff and leaders gain a better understanding of the organization's mission and vision for change.

The mission and vision statements can offer a proper course of action for the institution when faced with the need for change, and progress. Campbell and Yeung (1991), Long (2004), Peyrefitte and David (2006), and Wallace (2004) are among the many researchers who have viewed the mission and vision statements as being a key benefit in strategic planning. According to Phaniel (2012), mission and vision statements have been overwhelmingly accepted as an integral part of the strategic management process for organizations of all types. Crafting mission and vision statements will help managers, employees, and clients understand the core values of your business. These documents are used in public sector (e.g., private, not-for-profit, for-profit) as well as religious institutions.

Creating or developing a concise and clear mission and vision statement will help to address the organization's future challenges or obstacles. Senge (1990) noted that a coherent vision specifies the behavior, confirming the values and beliefs that will guide

the practice, as well as the policy within the institution. Kotter (1996) declared vision serves three important functions: (a) clarifies the general direction of organizational change, (b) helps to efficiently coordinate the actions of different individual, and (c) simplifies detailed decisions. According to Kenny (2014), values describe the desired culture, while mission describes what business the organization is in. The vision statement says what the organization wishes to do or be like in the coming years.

The definition of vision continues to vary throughout the literature review. Clark and Merabile (2004) defined vision as a compelling image or description of a desired and stated future while contrasting the mission as the core reason for the organization's existence. Sotunde's (2012) quantitative field study showed vision and mission statements to have positive effects upon organizational effectiveness. However, the full effect of vision and mission statement may not be experienced in a short time. The vision statement is indeed the driving force for any organization, taking the organization where it aims to be.

The exploration of the mission statements, as well as the vision statements, has been studied by many researchers. Findings of a research study conducted by Gurley et al. (2014) revealed that educational leadership students had limited ability to recall the content of key organizational statements of the organizations. Further, the respondents of the study reported that the key organizational statements had only minimal impact on their daily practice. Braun et al. (2013) concluded that the effectiveness of mission statements depends on the rationale underlying their development, the process of their development and implementation, their content and form, and, finally, the individual attitudes toward the mission statement. These conclusions can also be noted differently in other research.

In another study on mission statements, Abrahams (1995) stated that mission statements provide a strong sense of purpose for any organization and can communicate the extent of the enterprise and the core assumptions by which it operates. According to Gurley et al. (2014), the unity of purpose, or mission within an organization, can provide a means by which organizational members can work together toward a common goal. Gurley et al. also stated that implications are presented for university preparation programs designed to equip school leaders to effect meaningful school improvement and organizational change centered on development of shared mission and vision for improvement. In addition to vision and mission statements on the strategic plan, public school districts and institutions of higher education include the institutional values, goals, and objectives.

The function that vision and mission statements perform is important to success and development of the institution. According to Sotunde (2012), the role of vision and mission statements in an organization has been seen as central to the organization's direction because it determines the relevance of actions for such an organization. Ezekwe and Egwu (2016) stated that vision and mission statements have been considered as a vital instrument for strategic management process, especially in public and private organizations. Sotunde (2012) noted that an organization cannot fully achieve its reasons for existence without a proper definition of its vision and mission statements, hence the vision and mission statements can be said to be a catalyst or driving force in any organizational activities. With that said, it is believed that the vision and mission statements are key documents to an organization.

Value Statement

When the values are written as a statement, they are known as the value

statement. The value statement of an educational institution states the organization's values. According to Campbell and Yeung (1991), the values are the beliefs and moral principles that lie behind a company's or institution's culture. Values are strong motivators that act in the best interests of the purpose of the organization. Further, they can provide a rationale for behavior that is just as strong as strategy, but in another, emotional, moral, and ethical way. Calder (2014) noted that institutions and their leaders rely on the mission, vision, and value statements as foundational pillars by which to launch new programs and services, sustain their operations, and build future openings for change. The value statements will help to guide the institutional expectations and behavior.

The value statement is important to the mission and purpose of any organization. Values for a business are the same as for individuals in that they are enduring in challenging times. The value statement defines the core values, or the guiding principles that dictate what an organization stands for. However, according to Gurley et al. (2014), the value statements are perhaps the least understood and underimplemented of the four foundational statements. Blanchard and O'Connor (1997) wrote of the importance for organizations, including schools, to adopt key values, such as honesty, fairness, and integrity, to survive. Examples of a school's values may include integrity, students, safety, excellence, and leadership.

The mission statement is not the only statement that comprises the document for a strategic plan. According to Hinton (2012), in addition to the mission statement, a vision statement, institutional goals and objectives, and optional value statement comprise the supporting documents for a strategic plan. Calder (2013) concurred by stating values, vision, and mission statements are usually the result of several key process steps found in

strategic planning. However, despite their significance, educational leaders sometimes have a skeptical outlook about these statements while resisting their development, questioning their ability to unite stakeholders, and understanding how such statements might lead to progress in institutional change strategies.

The strategy used to promote the identity of an organization's values may vary depending on the organization and its mission. According to Abelman (2012), Catholic colleges and universities have made a conscientious effort to embed a declaration of religious identity and its defining values and guiding principles into their institutional mission and vision statements. Strategies and business practices will change in response to changing markets, while the foundational purpose and values remain consistent. Typically, the founders of the business have ingrained personal values and a purpose that the business then follows over time. The consistency of the purpose and values are key to the organization's progress.

The values describe the desired culture of the organization. Values that the leaders and staff embrace can significantly affect an organization. The institution's values are the standards that drive the decisions, actions or behaviors of those in leadership, as well as the staff, and school leaders. Knowing the core values and purpose will also guide an organization in making decisions to compete in an ever-changing marketplace. Calder (2013) stated institutions will sustain success if groups work together and respect each other's roles, understanding what their true values, vision, and mission are. Therefore, what the institution needs primarily is a strong and well-articulated vision and mission with robust value-based initiatives.

Values give meaning to norms and behavioral standards in an organization. Campbell and Yeung (1991) noted that a sense of mission occurs when employees find

their personal values aligned with the organizational values. Blodgett et al. (2011) stated the mission statement clarifies the essence of an organization's existence by defining the organization's core values, purpose, and goals. Calder (2014) noted that values determine just how the institution conducts its educational business, which, in turn, determines whether a fair return is produced for those who are connected to that institution, its students, employees, customers, stakeholders, partners, and community. The value statement signifies that which the institution strives for and will not compromise the values.

Institutional success relies on the upholding of the statements on the strategic plan which includes the value statement, as well as effective communication of the shared mission. Effective communication of the vision of an organization is important to unity and commitment of the staff. The lack of shared vision and values is the seed bed of almost all other problems (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Every organization needs to define its fundamental purpose, philosophy, and values. According to Calder (2014), institutional success relies on the upholding of its values, with commitment to the vision and mission even through the most demanding times. While value statements were found less frequently than vision or mission statements, value statements do represent one of the critical foundational pillars in higher education. Calder (2013) noted that, before setting out on the development of a vision statement and a mission statement, it is important to identify and clarify those things that are clearly important. To be effective, the mission and vision statements must be well developed, and will also need the commitment of all members involved in the implementation.

In addition to other factors, the commitment of the members to the mission is imperative to the success of the institution. According to Panda and Gupta (2003),

mission statements are effective only when the membership develop an emotional commitment for the culture created by the mission. The researchers interviewed 33 employees to understand and capture the lived experiences of each of the interviewees. Panda and Gupta conducted a qualitative phenomenological study of the emotional commitment of employees to mission statements, and the values they hold. The authors explored why an organization fails to elicit emotional commitment for its espoused mission statements. In the study on employees' emotional commitment to mission statement and values, the participants were selected randomly from all areas and levels of hierarchy satisfaction and emotional commitment of the individual to the company. The finding showed that cultural alignment between organizational and employee values had an impact on the mission of the organization.

The value statement of an organization should reflect what the organization stands for and the values the members of the organization should uphold. According to Sotunde (2012), visions are ideals that represent or reflect the shared values to which the organization should aspire. The Ezekw and Egwu (2016) study revealed that it is assumed that vision and mission statements of institutions are enduring statements of purpose that reveal product or service, markets, customers, the culture, and philosophy of the institution. Without the vision and mission statements, an organization will have no direction to success.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives indicate the what and when regarding how the mission will be accomplished, and they must align and complement the mission and the vision statement. Glasrud (2001) described the mission statement as a baseline from which to create goals. The objectives are the guide for the steps the organization will take to fulfill

the goal. DuFour and Eaker (1998) stated that statements of learning goals address the question, about “Which steps will we take first, and when?” (p. 100). The goals are usually subdivisions of the objectives, and they usually include numbers and dates that will enable the leaders to evaluate the different level of success.

Institutional goals provide the mechanism for evaluating progress toward the vision, and values statements describe the way the institution will work to achieve its goals. The objective clarifies the steps to take to reach the goal or fulfill the vision. Moeller et al. (2012) noted that the connection between effective goal setting, excellence in school performance, and student achievement has been clearly established among researchers. According to Gurley et al. (2014), the power of shared mission, vision, values, and goals among educators to shape teaching and learning (i.e., the core technology of schools) is difficult to overstate and certainly worthy of continued focus and reflection.

The goals and objectives are key to the success of the educational institution. In a study conducted by Bisset (2014), the researcher conducted a qualitative case study at a local university. The major focus of the study was to examine how administrators in senior level positions at the institution develop strategies designed to accomplish goals that were prioritized by the university, articulating the institution’s current strategic plan, to achieve specific mission-related goals outlined in the university’s strategic plan (Bisset, 2014). Another major focus of the study was to examine whether the administrators of the institution consciously used their awareness and knowledge of the university’s mission while attempting to accomplish departmental, divisional, and institutional goals.

It is important for school board members and employees to be adequately

informed about the shared mission and goals of the institution or organization. However, there are leaders and board members who might not have adequate information of the organization they work for, or even the mission and purpose their organization serves. Ezekwe and Egwu (2016) noted most employees are not adequately informed on the importance of organizational vision and mission statements, thus constituting a problem to achieve the documented purpose and goal of having such needed documents in the work environment. The lack of shared mission in an educational institution can be an issue for not just the organization but for the student population.

Leadership

The definition of leadership has evolved and been redefined over the years. As discussed in previous studies, it was assumed that, in the early 20th century, people became leaders by their personal characteristics. According to Williams and Lindsey (2011), defining what constitutes a leader is nearly impossible because not all leaders are the same, and leadership can be defined by using many terms. Bass and Bass (2008) defined leadership as the ability to influence and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. The success of an educational institution and the success in student performance also rely on the ability of the leadership to influence others to effectively contribute to the institution.

The definition of leadership is sometimes seen as influence or comparative. According to Northouse (2014), leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Peter Drucker (1992), the founder of modern management, noted that management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. Leaders have different strengths and weaknesses, different approaches and styles, and different ends in mind. Covey (2013) concurred by stating that leadership

is not management. Additionally, Covey defined leadership as affirming one's worth and potential so clearly that one is inspired to personally grasp the leadership concept. There is truly a difference between being a leader and being a manager. Leaders lead, while managers simply manage.

School Leaders

School leadership can be a powerful force in improving school performance. According to Northouse (2014), leadership has gained the attention of researchers worldwide, and is a highly sought after and valuable commodity. However, although leadership is a valuable and highly sought-after commodity (Northouse, 2014), there is a shortage of trained leaders in organizations and higher education institutions. Gelatt (2015) noted that additional studies could include participants from public, private, and non-evangelical faith-based schools. This will respond to the gap in research for the shortage of trained leaders, and leaders in the private schools' system.

To be an effective school leader, the individual must be well versed on educational topics, with the knowledge and strategy of how to take the public schools to the next level. Findings from the study conducted by Gurley et al. (2014) suggested that faculty involved in any school leadership programs would do well to clarify the meaning of organizational mission, vision, values, and goals statements, as well as explore the powerful impact that the articulation, widespread adoption, and alignment to such statements can have on the process of school improvement for students. The school leaders are key leaders of the institution and are responsible for the growth and development of the schools. Having such responsibilities will require articulation, knowledge and understanding of the school district's mission and vision statements.

School district leaders are composed of various staff members, such as

superintendents, assistant superintendents, cadre administrators, principal supervisors, and other instructional leaders. These leaders are key in the development of the policies, practices, and structures that ensure students succeed. If people within an organization are to fulfill a stated mission, their practice should be guided toward fulfillment by the leaders (Lafavore, 2012). According to Bebell and Stemler (2012), an important and fundamental task for educational leaders is to clearly articulate the purpose of schooling in their local educational community. Public school district leaders oversee the public schools, such as college preparatory schools (elementary, secondary public schools, and technical colleges), and are responsible for ensuring these schools serve their institutional purpose and fulfill educational goals with excellence.

In the higher education settings, the senior administrators or leaders (i.e., presidents and vice-presidents) are responsible for the development of the mission statements, visions, and goals, and ensuring that those goals for the university are achieved (Gayle et al., 2003). Just as the role of senior administrators within a university is a balancing act between faculty demands and public expectations (Dressel, 1987), the same is true for the superintendent, public school principal cadre, and principal.

According to Kustigian (2013), future studies on mission-driven leadership may benefit by incorporating improvement plans, self-assessment surveys, and short- and long-term goals into their research. The public school system is structured with a mission and vision to improve student achievement needs, as well as school performance.

Excellence and success in student achievement and school performance can be accomplished through mission-driven leadership, clear mission statement, shared vision, unity, quality instruction, and instructional leaders who believe in success of common practice for teaching (Kustigian, 2013).

Plough (2012) used a quantitative study to measure and compare school board members' perceptions of their behaviors and beliefs and examine the relationship of those behaviors and beliefs to high student achievement. This study revealed an awareness of school leadership knowledge of the leadership role, and the mission and vision statements. Lafavore (2012) suggested that further research into the use of mission statements as an influential factor in leadership and student practice should be conducted. Further findings also suggested implications regarding ways school administrators, teachers, central office administrators, school boards, and accreditation organizations can assist in the development and effective utilization of mission statements to influence practice. These suggestions can apply to how school leaders and school district leaders use the mission statement in their respective roles and leadership purpose.

School board members' concerns, awareness, and commitment to the school district mission may depend on the level of involvement in the organization. Bart and Bontis (2003) noted that mission awareness on the part of both the board and senior management is an important consideration and determination of the employees' commitment to the mission. The researchers also noted that the impact of board members and management involvement with the mission is not often identical. The results of the study, as stated by Bart and Bontis, emphasize the strong and important role that the board performs when it is actively engaged in the development of the organizational or institutional mission. Lovett (2017) stated that, whether individuals are politically appointed or elected trustees, they will hear concerns about the mission. Some concerns are regarding attendance or the institution's alleged failure to meet the staff needs.

School board members are also important to the growth and development of the school system. The role of the public school district's board members is as important as

the role of a board of trustees. In the study on the role of mission in strategic planning development, conducted by Bisset (2014), the findings offered insight into the influence of mission and its impact on strategic decision making at the university's most senior administrative levels. Bisset also addressed understanding how the board of trustees assisted in the establishment of strategic-planning goals and how board members perceived a connection between mission and strategic planning. School board members also have influence in the fulfillment of the school's district's mission statement.

Purpose in Leadership

In many organizations, the mission statement mainly focuses on the organization's purpose and not the leader's purpose in the organization. Personal leadership has to do with more than leading others or having followers. Millard (2012) stated that personal leadership provides not just individual focus but rather organizational focus for engaging others to enact or promote change. Howie (1968) noted that purpose is not simply about having an idea of what is purposeful, but it is also enacting a pursuit of that purpose. Abrahams (1995) declared that both a person and a company will flounder without a purpose or a mission. The organization's purpose and the leader's purpose should align. Purpose in leadership was a topic that was needed for discussion. Kempster et al. (2012) argued that purpose is a notion in leadership that is taken for granted. Russell and Underwood (2016) agreed that, although there is a vast body of literature that refers to one's sense of purpose, little attention has been given specifically to purpose in leadership. Gelatt (2015) showed a greater relationship to how a leader's sense of personal mission transforms individuals and organizations to develop a sense of organizational purpose.

Prior studies on leadership have shown that leadership has been defined and

understood as leadership as purpose, leadership as results, leadership as position, and leadership as process. Kempster et al. (2012) argued the notion of leadership on the list by asking the following question: Where is purpose in this list? Purpose is an integral function of leadership, yet it is often taken for granted (Kempster et al., 2012). In the study, exploring leadership as purpose, the authors explored the manifestation of purpose within everyday leadership practice. Muzondo (2012) noted purpose answers the question regarding why. Purpose is inherent in all beings, as stated by Aristotle.

The study of leadership and the purpose in leadership is an important factor for educational and business leaders. Eich's (2008) study posited two learning and developmental outcomes for students who engage in reflection activities. The study showed that, first, students learn more about themselves, gain a sense of purposefulness and develop future visions and goals, and become better able to make decisions aligned with their own goals, values, and identity. Second, the students developed a meaningful leadership philosophy to help them analyze their thoughts and actions, thus helping them to grow as leaders. This study is a testament that an understanding of purpose in leadership, or purpose for leadership, is significant to the role of educational leadership.

Scholars, researchers, and practitioners have identified a vast array of leadership theories and frameworks to help us identify, select, and train leaders (Russell & Underwood, 2016). Examples of the array of leadership theorists are the path goal theory, the servant leadership theory, the authentic leadership theory, the transformational leadership theory, the transactional leadership theory, and other leadership theories not mentioned. Many of the theorists of these leadership theories overlap in their belief of leadership.

The following questions have been asked many times: What is purpose? What is

purpose in leadership? What makes a great leader? Russell and Underwood (2016) explained the notion of leadership and what makes a great leader has long fascinated the academic and business world alike. Viktor Frankl (2004), a survivor of World War II, who was imprisoned in a concentration camp, identified purpose as finding meaning in life even during the most painful time in one's life. Drath (1998) emphasized the importance of meaning and purpose in life is that of being situated within ideas regarding distributed leadership. Covey (2013) noted that the Nazi death camps were where Viktor Frankl learned the importance of having a purpose and the meaning of purpose in life.

Purpose in life has been defined and described in various ways. Schluckebier (2013) noted purpose in life, as a construct, is associated with many positive attributes associated with life in general, as well as the college experience; however, it is also closely related to other concepts, such as meaning, spirituality, and vocation. According to Frankl (2004), purpose is central to a good human life. Frankl stated that happiness comes from fidelity to a worthy purpose. Schluckebier's study on how college students develop and articulate their purpose in life asserted that developing purpose in life is a continual skill-building process, rather than definable end goal or product.

An understanding of a leader's purpose and the role of purpose in leadership is important to being a mission-driven or purpose-driven leader. According to Millard (2012), life calling, or purpose of an individual, is more than a job or occupation and focuses on the "overriding purpose" (p. 1). Leaders need to understand who they are, and this understanding can be achieved in part by learning the significance of leaders' own life stories. Piercy and Morgan (1994) noted that the mission statements of an organization give leaders a purpose and is the central guide by which leaders could plan and organize their daily practice. Drath (1998) noted that leadership is more than a

person; it is a sense of purpose, or a force that gives people a common direction. This statement aligns with the concept that leadership as purpose is significant and should be viewed as a component of leadership.

As discussed in previous studies, it was assumed that, in the early 20th century, people became leaders by virtue of their personal characteristics. According to Williams and Lindsey (2011), defining what constitutes a leader is nearly impossible because not all leaders are the same. Leaders often have different leadership styles and a different perception of what their purpose is as a leader. Just as leaders are perceived differently, the perception of higher education leaders regarding their university mission statement can also vary. The difference in the perception of the mission statement is highly influenced by the type of communication used by leaders, gender differences in different cultures, and the level of concern given to university members.

Prior studies have shown little or no connection between the personal purpose of a leader and the organization's purpose. Gelatt (2015) showed there was no relationship between a leader's level of thought maturity on life calling and the level of organizational calling in the mission statement that the leader helped to create. However, some of the findings related to the literature on leaders and mission statements did shed some light on how leaders are able to influence the organization through a sense of calling or purpose, both individually and corporately. Purpose is associated with the following concepts: mission, vision, or ultimate aspirations (Rey & Bastons, 2017); it is also associated with leadership purpose.

Not all issues regarding school leadership, school purpose, mission, vision, and educational leaders' knowledge of their public school district, or technical colleges have been covered. Although a vast amount of literature exists on how to develop a mission

statement (Piercy & Morgan, 1994), there is a need for more research on senior administrators' perceptions of their organization's mission statement (Rough, 2008), as well as the mission and vision statements in the strategic plan. Chang (2014) noted that key stakeholders in the debate about the mission of higher education sometimes have conflicting perspectives, determined by what they perceive as the university's dominant function. In addition to the mission and vision statement, various research studies (Bass & Bass, 2008; Rough, 2008; Senge, 1990) have shown a variety of views and definitions of leadership and leadership purpose. This perception or view can also be applied to public school leaders and the district leaders.

Research Related to the Study

Previous research, closely related to this study, was conducted and included studies using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method methodologies. Bisset (2014) conducted a qualitative case study at a university to explore how administrators in senior-level positions develop strategies designed to accomplish goals prioritized by the university and how committed the senior administrators were to institutional mission in the undergraduate education program. The major focus of this study was to examine senior level administrators' ability to achieve specific mission-related goals outlined in the university's strategic plan. Thomas (2012) also used a qualitative study using an exploratory case study approach. His study explored the organization's ability to remain consistent to its mission. Furthermore, the focus of the case study was to explore the importance of mission-focus among the leaders within the organization. Rough (2008) also conducted a qualitative case study. The researcher used a content analysis to analyze the mission statements at a Christian school. His study also explored how the leaders use the mission statement in the role as an educational leader.

A prior study that was not qualitative involved a quantitative, descriptive, correlational dissertation conducted by Kustigian (2013). His study analyzed mission-driven school district leadership in a Massachusetts public school system and attempted to identify any relationship, or lack thereof, between district mission statements and student achievement. A quantitative method was chosen for the Kusigian study because the purpose was to examine school reform, leadership, and student achievement through a quantitative analysis of mission statements from kindergarten to Grade 12 public school districts in Massachusetts.

Other studies on mission statements and leadership perception were conducted using a mixed method. Plough (2012) conducted a study to determine if there was a difference between school board members' perceptions of their own behaviors and beliefs related to student achievement in California's high-performing poverty districts as opposed to such perceptions in low performing poverty districts. Plough's study utilized a mixed-methods procedure and linked both quantitative and qualitative to collect and analyze data. Schafft and Biddl (2013) also conducted a content analysis of 480 school district mission statements from Pennsylvania to understand the relationships between school and place and the locally articulated purposes of schooling. The focus of this mixed-method study was to understand the relationship between the placed local school district and seemingly placeless institutional forces that shape educational practice and leadership.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study were aligned with the topic explored. According to Yin (2017), the research questions dictated which methodology was used for the study. The following research questions were established to guide this applied

dissertation:

1. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice?

2. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders?

3. How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement?

Summary

The importance of having a well-defined mission and vision statements, and a plan for the vision for the organization, is often expressed or made mention of on the strategic plan, and has been studied by various researchers, scholars, and theologians. However, despite widespread recognition and acknowledgment of its importance, very little empirical research has been conducted on strategic plans, particularly the mission or vision statements (Cady, 2011). Further, although the continued study of the purpose and power of clearly developed and shared school mission, vision, values, and goals statements is in order (Gurley et al., 2014), little has been done to explore public schools' district's education leaders' purpose in leadership, and their perception of their public schools' district's vision and mission statements.

Ashridge Campbell's framework, known as the Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Yeung, 1991), shows four important mission statement components that include purpose, strategy, values, and behavioral standards. This framework shows that a mission statement should help the organization make decisions that are consistent with vision of the organization. Public school district mission statements, as well as the leadership in charge of making sure the mission is fulfilled, was a long overdue topic that

was needed for discussion. A mission statement should be based on an organization's distinctive competences, which also align with the Campbell and Yeung (1991) elements of mission statements and Hinton's (2012) components of strategic planning.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

This qualitative study explored public school leaders' knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the mission and vision statements of their public school district and how the school leaders incorporate their school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose in leadership or roles as educational leaders. Rough (2008) noted that more studies were needed in the area of mission statements and organizational leadership. Gurley et al. (2014) stated that further studies analyzing the actual content of school mission, vision, values, and goals statements in rural, suburban, and urban schools were also needed. Further, the authors stated that the continued study of the purpose and power of clearly developed and shared school mission, vision, values, and goals statements were in order.

Additionally, Russell and Underwood (2016) agreed that, although there is a vast body of literature that refers to one's sense of purpose, little attention has been given specifically to purpose in leadership. This study supported the notion and filled the gap in research which stated that more studies were needed regarding school district's mission statements. Furthermore, addressing the literature relating to the content of public school district's vision and mission statements, values, goals and objectives, and purpose in leadership addressed the gap in literature as well as added to existing literature and research.

Qualitative Research Approach

This research study used a qualitative approach, as this method was most appropriate to explore and describe the phenomenon. A qualitative method was chosen because qualitative methods allowed this researcher to gain detailed perspectives of the

educational leaders, as well as detailed information regarding the public school district's mission and vision statements (Erickson, 2012). Further, a qualitative research method allowed the researcher to better understand how school leaders of single public school district explained how they perceive and implement their district's mission and vision statements and how the school leaders incorporate the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders.

This researcher chose a qualitative method over a quantitative approach because a qualitative method provided the deep content needed to explore the phenomenon. Qualitative research method study is completed through verbal or written acts while providing an in-depth understanding of personal experiences (Yilmaz, 2013; Yin, 2017). Additionally, a qualitative study helped the researcher to fully understand the perspectives of the participants as well as identify the patterns in the experiences that exist among the participants (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). A qualitative research study allowed the researcher to deeply explore the chosen problem through the point of view of those who have experienced the problem (Baskarada, 2014). Finally, Creswell (2013) explained that qualitative research tells a story or explains the participants' experiences and perceptions of the problem, whereas one designs quantitative research with an experimental approach to solve or explore a problem. A quantitative method focuses on the numerical data. Although mentioned, this research did not focus on numerical data.

The qualitative exploratory case study method was used for the study. A case study provided an in-depth exploration of the research in a real-world setting (Baskarada 2014). Yin (2017) described a case study as the collection of data to investigate a contemporary phenomenon and explained that a case study allows the researcher to analyze specific cases that are unique to the research study topic and to improve the

quality of the research. A case study design is also defined as an indepth examination of a phenomenon within the contextual setting where it occurs (Yin, 2017).

Participants

The general population for this research study included educational leaders at the senior levels and instructional leaders. The targeted population consisted of public school leaders (i.e., principals, assistant principals, instructional specialists). The age, ethnicity, and gender of participants was not relevant to the section of the sample, although it was included in the survey. The selected district for this study was the sixth largest school district in the United States and the second largest in the state, which enrolled more than 271,500 students and approximately 175,000 adult students in 234 schools, centers, technical colleges and 93 charter schools.

The researcher used a convenience sample, specifically a snowball approach, to identify the participants in the study. By using snowball sampling, the researcher encouraged potential participants to inform other district leaders who may be interested in participating in the study. Snowball sampling was helpful because it allowed the researcher to use a natural referral network that already exists within a school district. Snowballing is effective because it can produce immediate results, as finding time to meet with each potential participant is not always feasible (Cleary et al., 2014; Creswell, 2013). Using a snowball sampling allowed the researcher to locate additional participants within the chosen school district who might have an interest in participating in the study. According to the requirements of Nova Southeastern University, a minimum of 10 participants is required for case study research. However, although the researcher pursued 20 participants through invitations and snowballing, the final sample of participants for this study was nine.

Data Collection and Instruments

The two sources of data used for this case study research were website artifacts and a questionnaire that contained an interview component (see Appendix A). The application of the questionnaire interview and the website provided the researcher with the information and understanding of the research topic (Sagoe, 2012), while the use of archival materials aligned with the information derived from interviews (Yin, 2017). An adapted version of Rough's (2008) instrument was used to gather interview data about the sample population.

Artifacts

The first source of data used in this research study involved the artifacts. The public school district's website was used to collect initial information of the vision and mission statements of the strategic plan of the state's public school districts. Artifacts can be described as everything in development that is not the source of code. The library that developers often reference, or a company logo or other pictures, or, in the case of this study, the organization's website, is considered an artifact. An example of the mission and vision statements in the district's strategic plan on the website was included (see Appendix B) after the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

Interview Protocol

The questionnaire process was the second source of data used for the study. The questionnaire included both closed-ended demographic questions and open-ended interview questions to elicit answers to the research questions. All participants were selected for a one-on-one interview. According to Venkatesh et al. (2013), the time frame for conducting personal interviews is 30 to 60 minutes. Yilmaz (2013) recommended that the use of face-to-face interviews will provide detailed and descriptive data, which will

help to deepen the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the topic to be explored. According to Baskarada (2014), interview questionnaires are the primary data source in qualitative studies. The questionnaire used provided the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, thus clarifying questions as needed. The questions used in this study were adapted from Rough's (2008) interview instrument.

Procedures

After school district and Nova Southeastern University approval, the researcher accessed the school district's vision and mission statements from the district website, which were used as part of the data collection and then communicated with potential participants who were known by the principal investigator, as well as names listed on the school district's website via email to secure the participants. In addition, snowball sampling was employed, whereby the participants who initially agreed to participate were asked to forward a letter of invitation that described the study to their fellow administrators. The letter included contact information so that the potential participant could contact the principal investigator via email or phone. Using a snowball sampling allowed the researcher to locate additional participants within the chosen school district who might have an interest in participating in the study. The researcher identified the nine participants who agreed to be part of the study.

Once administrators or instructional specialists were identified, the researcher emailed a consent form to each participant and asked the participant to select a date and time for their interview. Participants had 1 week to send back the signed consent form and identify the time and date for their interview. Participants who did not respond after 1 week were contacted by phone. To conduct the process, the researcher sent each participants a questionnaire. They were asked to complete the demographic questions and

the closed-ended interview questions. When they had completed their responses to both the closed-ended and open-ended questions on the questionnaire, the participants were asked to email the completed document to the researcher. Each participant was then contacted by phone by the interviewer at the selected time for the interview. Each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. At the follow-up phone interview, the researcher acknowledged receipt of the questionnaire and interviewed the participant using the open-ended questions on the questionnaire. The interview was used as a form of member checking, as the participants had already written their responses to these questions and were now reviewing their responses with the researcher.

Data Analysis

Little was known about how educational leaders of a single public school district implemented their school district's vision and mission statements and explained how they incorporate the vision and mission statements into their purpose in leadership or roles as educational leaders to impact students learning and school performance. The following research questions provided the framework for the data collection of this study:

1. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice?
2. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders?
3. How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement?

Yin (2017) noted that thematic analysis can be used to analyze qualitative information to gain knowledge about a group, individual, culture, or an organization. Saldana (2013) noted that qualitative researchers code their data during and after

collection as an analytic tactic for analysis. Thematic analysis can be used to collect data for a qualitative exploratory case study including observations, focus groups, in-depth interviews, archival records, artifacts, and documentary evidence. The data analysis approach for this study involved thematic analysis, with open coding process using free hand coding. A thematic analysis was the most appropriate approach to analyze the data for this study.

By using thematic analysis to distill data, researchers determine broad patterns that will allow them to conduct more granular research and analysis (Yin, 2017). The analysis consisted of identifying themes related to purpose, leadership, mission statement, vision statement, values, goals, and objectives. Saldana's (2013) approach for coding and Yin's (2017) approach for thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. According to Saldana, purposeful data collection should answer the research questions. The responses provided by the participants were transcribed and read thoroughly. The themes were then identified, and coding of the data was processed thematically. The themes were then sorted and categorized.

Ethical Considerations

Data retrieved from the public school district's websites, as well as the leadership responses regarding the mission and vision statement on the public school district's strategic plan, were not altered or used against the organization. In respect of the school district's and higher education institutions' sampling procedures, the study design, conceptual framework, and research questions were aligned with the Belmont Report of 1979. The purpose of the Belmont Report was to focus on the following basic principles: showing respect for human subjects, protecting human subjects, and providing justice and fairness for human subjects (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). In

keeping with the purpose of the Belmont Report, the confidentiality, respect, and rights of the nine participants were protected.

Any information gathered through this research study remained confidential. Proper approvals were obtained from Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board to protect the rights and welfare of the participants involved in this study. Participation in this study was voluntary, and the identity of each participant will remain confidential. Names were listed as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, and so forth. The location and names of the participants were not mentioned. Upon acceptance of the invitation to do research, a letter was sent to participants. The instruction letter provided the instructions for collecting the data and also ensured that participants understood that they could withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences. The letter outlined the purpose and scope of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is another way researchers can persuade themselves and their readers that the research findings are worthy of attention (Creswell, 2013). These trustworthiness criteria are pragmatic choices for researchers concerned about the acceptability and usefulness of their research for a variety of stakeholders (Yin, 2017). This researcher ensured trustworthiness through the four key elements in trustworthiness for qualitative studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as they apply to qualitative research. Credibility and transferability represent the qualitative version of validity, and dependability and confirmability represent the qualitative version of reliability (Yin, 2017). To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher ensured credibility or dependability of the study. Further, the researcher ensured the data collection method and instrument were valid.

Potential Research Bias

Yin (2017) noted that there can be bias in data collection which can affect the trustworthiness, or validity of qualitative research. It is important and rather critical that the researcher avoid any bias in data collection as well as in the analysis. Two types of bias that should be avoided are participant bias and researcher bias. Participants bias can occur if the participants are opinionated during the interview. On the other hand, researcher bias can exist if the researcher unknowingly asks questions that may affect or influence participant responses (Shah, 2019).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative exploratory case study aimed to explore school leaders' knowledge and implementation of their school district's mission and vision statements and how public school leaders incorporated the district's mission and vision statements into their purpose as leaders. Further explored were how school leaders implemented the mission and vision statements at their school to impact student achievement and school performance. High school leaders of Grades 9 to 12 of a single school district located in the southeastern United States were selected for the study. Participants varied in age, ethnicity, and educational background. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice?
2. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders?
3. How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement?

Interview Process

The instrument used in this process was a questionnaire that included both closed-ended demographic questions and open-ended interview questions to elicit answers to the research questions. The questionnaire was sent to participants after they completed the consent forms. They were asked to complete the demographic questions and the closed-ended interview questions. When they had completed responding to both the closed-ended and open-ended questions on the questionnaire, the participants were asked to

email the completed document to the researcher. Participants were informed that the researcher would contact them to set a date for a follow-up phone interview. Each participant was then contacted by phone by the interviewer at the selected time for the interview. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. At the follow-up phone interview, the researcher acknowledged receipt of the questionnaire as a form of member checking. The final phase of the research involved analysis of the responses on interview questionnaire. The researcher conducted a review of the responses of each participant for member checking. The responses were transcribed via Google forms; therefore, zoom transcription was not needed. The interviewer reviewed the responses to ensure that the participants' responses were the same as those in the live session.

Participants

This case study was composed of a small sample of nine participants from a single public school district located in the southeastern United States. The researcher invited 20 participants; however, only 14 responded to the invitation letter. Of the 14 participants who responded, only nine participants followed through on their response by completing the demographic questions and by participating in the interview. Every effort through snowballing, phone call follow-up, and email reminders was made to acquire additional participants. Of the nine participants who volunteered to be included in the study, five were female school leaders and four were male school leaders. Six participants were African American, two participants were other, and one participant was white. The ages of the participants also varied. Two participants were between the ages of 35 and 44, five participants were between the ages of 45 and 54, and two participants were between the ages of 55 and 64. In the education section, eight participants had master's degrees, and one had a doctoral degree. In addition to the demographic

responses, the interview included elements questions, followed by school leader's role section. The Table shows the demographics of the nine participants in the study.

Table

Participant Demographics

Item	No.
Gender	
Male	5
Female	4
Ethnicity	
White	1
Black	6
Hispanic	0
Other	2
Highest degree level	
Bachelor's	0
Master's	8
Doctorate	1

Elements Questions

The elements questions were used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. Research Question asked the following: How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice? Research Question 2 asked the following: How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's mission and vision statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders? The following elements questions were used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2:

1. As you evaluate the current mission statement of your school district, how would you describe its value to the day-to-day activities of your school? Six participants felt the mission statement was extremely important to the day-to-day

activity of the school, two participants believed it was somewhat important, and one believed it was unimportant. The participants were then asked to make a short comment on why they selected the rating they chose.

2. In what ways do you refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families? Further, in what ways do you refer to the mission statement in dealing with the faculty and staff? Each participant gave responses that were based on their knowledge of the mission and vision statements of the district and how they viewed or their perspective of the school district's mission and vision statements. The responses of each participant related to the elements questions can be found in the following paragraphs.

Participant 1

Participant 1 responded with confidence and expressed his conviction for the importance of the mission and vision statement: "Our mission statement is the road map that gives direction to accomplishing our organizational goals." When asked about the ways in which he refers to the mission statement in dealing with the faculty and staff, he responded by stating the following:

We refer to the mission statement in dealing with the faculty and staff when clarifying our organizational intent. We refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families when clarifying who we are, and our organizational goals.

Participant 2

Participant 2 stated the following:

I answer this question in the role of an administrator. It is my job to ensure our school is adhering to the goals and guardrails of the district. This is the first year I

have felt the district's mission and vision can be applicable. I refer to the mission statement in dealing with the faculty and staff. Students first always! I may not always refer to the mission statement. However, many of the goals and guardrails are referred to when meeting with teachers. I also feel it is important to provide expectations and continuous authentic feedback to ensure staff are working to their full potential. I refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families in reference to the districts goals and guardrails and are embedded in daily conversations I have with students. In speaking about security, safety, equity, and coursework. I feel it is important for the student to know the expectations as a student.

Participant 3

Participant 3 offered the following comment:

The mission is the road map that helps organizations stay focused with its purpose. The mission allows me to guide the faculty towards our organizational intent. The mission also allows me to provide all stakeholders with the intent and purpose of the organization.

Participant 4

Participant 4's response was very brief. Her response in relation to referring to the mission statement was as follows: "Educating our students is necessary component in helping our students reach their highest potential. I refer to the mission statement during staff meetings and during orientation for prospective students and families."

Participant 5

Participant 5 was also very brief and shared her lack of knowledge freely without hesitation. She stated the following:

Everyone does not know of the school's mission statement. It may be posted at the school, but teachers just walk by it. I only refer to a small group and try to include it before the norms. I really don't refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families.

Participant 6

Participant 6 noted that the mission statement aligns the objective of the school district: "It gives the instructional leaders the opportunity to set the expectations for the year. The mission statement gives faculty a clear expectation for teaching and learning. The mission statement also aligns goals for students and parents."

Participant 7

Participant 7, on the other hand, responded as follows:

I don't believe that we are working to our potential in the area of preparing our students, where the school's mission statement is concerned. I remind teachers that we are here for the students. I try to assure them that the staff will do what it takes to ensure student success.

Participant 8

Participant 8 explained as follows:

The district's mission statement is unimportant to me because I do not know what it is. I do not refer the district's mission statement. I am more concerned with my school's mission statement. I never do because I do not know it.

Participant 9

Participant 9 was confident in his response. He stated the following:

Since we service at-risk students our mission statement and day to day operations are critical. We remind the faculty and staff we must meet our students where

they are to ensure that we prepare them for post-secondary education or the workforce. I refer to the mission statement to help create a plan for our students and parents that will assist parents that will assist them in being academically successful here.

Senior Leadership Role Questions

The senior leadership interview questions were used to answer Research Question 3: How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement? The responses for the senior leadership role perspective of the district's mission and vision statements as it relates to implementation of the mission and vision statement varied. Of the nine school leaders who participated in the study, seven were knowledgeable and admitted having implemented the district's mission and vision statement in their daily operations. The questions that were used to answer the third research question were as follows:

1. In what other ways do you use the district's mission statement in your leadership?
2. What is the greatest benefit of the district's mission statement in your role as an educational leader?
3. In your opinion, how many of the teachers in your school know or implement the district's mission statement and vision statement in their daily practice?
4. In your opinion, what is the commitment level of the faculty to the school district's mission statement?

Participant 1

Participant 1 stated the following:

Our school's goals align with the district. We are working to provide students

with acceleration, career, and technical skills, so they are better equipped to transfer to a postsecondary institution or directly to the workforce. I also work to ensure the students are safe on the campus, students are held accountable for their own learning, and they are provided with supports to ensure they can achieve their goals.

When asked about the greatest benefit of the district's mission statement in his role as an educational leader, Participant 1 responded as follows:

The greatest benefit of the district's mission statement and vision statement are to provide direction when unclear of expectations. Some, but not all teachers are knowledgeable or have implemented the district's mission statement and vision statement. The commitment level of the faculty to the school district's mission and vision statement are not very high.

Participant 2

Participant 2's response was also stated with confidence. The mission allows me to stay focused and driven towards the organizations' goals and objectives. This is the first year I feel like I can align myself with the district's mission and vision. I have always been students first, that is what we are here for. The current goals and guardrails are more outcome focused, which lends itself to an easier implementation within a school. It would be my guess that little to none of our teachers are knowledgeable or implementing the district's mission or vision statement in their daily practice. I feel that the majority of staff are committed to helping students achieve, whether or not they know the district mission and vision. In my opinion, I do not think teachers are purposely aligning, but will naturally as the mission is now more outcome focused.

Participant 3

Participant 3 stated that she uses the mission statement in her leadership on a day-to-day basis when she disciplines students, provides teachers with feedback, and supports them so that they, in turn, may help students reach their highest potential. She stated, “The district mission provides the organizations intent to all stakeholders. Not very many teachers are knowledgeable of the school district’s mission or vision statements. The commitment level of staff to school district mission statement is not very much.”

Participant 4

Participant 4 stated the following:

I use the school district’s mission statement and vision statement in small groups as I work with my peers. The greatest benefit of the district’s mission statement in my role as an educational leader is seeing the students walk across the stage on graduation commencement ceremony. In my opinion, 90% of teachers are implementing the school district’s mission statement and vision statement. The commitment level is about 70%.

Participant 5

Participant 5’s response was very brief:

The district’s mission statement is very important for the principal. I use the mission statement as a working document. Not many teachers in my school are knowledgeable or implement the districts’ mission statement and vision statement in their daily practice. The commitment level is not that high of a commitment.

Participant 6

Participant 6 offered the following comment:

I use the mission statement as a working document. The mission statement

benefits my verbiage when speaking to school leaders and stakeholders. Over 90% at my school know the mission and are implementing the school district's mission statement and vision statement. Over 90% are committed to school district's mission statement.

Participant 7

Participant 7 stated the following:

Reintegrating the fact that we play a major part in student success is one way I use the school district's mission statement in my leadership. It serves a guide and a constant reminder of what we are here to do. 40% or less are knowledgeable and are implementing the school district's mission and vision statement. The commitment level of the staff is of Low/Medium commitment.

Participant 8

Participant 8 added the following:

I do not use the school district's mission statement. It has no bearing on my dedication to my students and their families. I am more concerned with fulfilling the mission of my school. We are dedicated to helping students earn scholarships to continue their educations at top tier schools. I do not ever hear them mention the district's mission statement. I know that their focus is on the school's mission. I do not think that anyone knows the district's mission statement.

Participant 9

Participant 9 stated the following:

I use the district's mission to also guide our school's mission and vision in preparing our at-risk students for the next phase of their life. The greatest benefit of the district's mission statement is that it provides us with the direction and

information needed to ensure that we are meeting the goals of the district and the state. Our teachers implement the district's mission statement. Our mission is aligned with the district's mission which keeps us on track to address students' academic and social needs. The majority of the faculty are committed to the district's mission statement due to the fact that our school's mission statement is aligned with the district's mission and expectations.

Findings

It was evident that, although the four male school leaders noted importance of the school district's mission and vision statements, only two of the five female school leaders saw value in the school district's mission and vision statements. Three school leaders did not perceive their school district's mission and vision statement to be of great importance to their daily school operations. Additionally, incorporating the school district's mission and vision statements was not of great priority to student achievement or their role as leaders. There was also a difference in the response of the most experienced leaders. The more experienced leaders were able to respond without hesitation, whereas the less experienced leaders paused and had to think before responding. The experienced leaders had the knowledge and understanding of the terms *mission statement* and *vision statement*. Further, they were able to share how they implemented the school district's mission and vision, they knew the importance of aligning the school's mission with the district's mission to impact student achievement. However, the less experienced school leaders shared their understanding of the district's mission and vision statements but did not express the importance of aligning the school and district mission and vision statements. Further noted in this study was that the more experienced leaders were male and were older than the less experienced school leaders.

Summary

The responses of the participants summarized their perceptions, knowledge, and understanding, and they explained how participants implemented their school district's mission and vision statements in response to the following research questions:

1. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate or implement the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice? The experienced school leaders incorporated or implemented the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice as a guide for direction and information needed to ensure they were meeting the goals of the district and the state. Whereas the experienced school leaders expressed an interest and knowledge of the district's mission and vision statements, the less experienced school leaders were unsure and uninterested in the school district's mission and vision statements.

2. How do Florida's public school leaders incorporate the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders? The experienced school leaders were supportive and aligned their school's mission and vision statements with the district's mission and vision to drive the school's goals and objectives. However, the less experienced school leaders were supportive of the students but did not express an interest in either the school's or the district's mission and vision statements.

3. How and in what ways do Florida's public school leaders describe the mission and vision statements' impact on student achievement? All of the school leaders expressed an interest in student achievement. However, although the experienced school leaders noted that aligning and implementing the school district's mission and vision statements with the school's mission and vision statements would impact student

achievement and school performance, the school leaders with less experience expressed that the mission and vision statements did not have any bearings or impact on student achievement.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Study Overview

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore educational leaders' perspective regarding their knowledge and implementation of the mission and vision statements in a public school district located in the southeastern United States. The researcher also investigated how the leaders incorporated the district's mission and vision statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as educational leaders to impact students learning and school performance. Permission to conduct the study was given by Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board and the target school district. The researcher recruited participants by sending invitation letters via email. Upon agreement of individuals to participate, the consent form was sent via email, followed by an interview questionnaire. Although it was the researcher's intent to recruit 20 participants for the study, only 14 participants responded and agreed to participate. However, of the 14 participants who agreed to participate, only nine participants followed through.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 explored Florida public school leaders' implementation of the school district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice. Participants shared their knowledge and understanding of the school district's mission and vision statements and the ways in which they implemented it in the school's daily practice. The responses of Participants 1 and 3 focused on the fact that a mission statement is the road map that gives direction to accomplishing the organizational goals. Further, the mission statement is the road map that helps the organizations stay focused with its purpose.

Whereas the experienced school leaders used the mission and vision statements as

a guide for direction in meeting the school district's goals, the less experienced school leaders were unsure as to how to implement the school district's mission and vision. The less experienced school leaders were not sure of what a good mission statement entailed or if it was valuable to school performance. As noted by Young (2023), most novice principals, as well as veteran principals who are newly assigned to their schools, must eventually support or profess the school's existing mission and vision statements or revisit the mission statement with the help of stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of the mission statement. The Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Yeung, 1991) is built on the premise that an effective mission statement should include four elements: purpose, strategy, behavior, and value. Exploring leaders' knowledge or understanding of the importance of having a mission statement and ensuring the mission statement is implemented served as the focus of this study.

The participants had their own views or perceptions of the effectiveness of the school's mission statement as well as the school district's mission statement. Participants 5 and 8 shared that their school district's mission statement has no bearing on their dedication to the students and the families they serve. Participant 8 was more concerned with fulfilling the mission of the school, rather than implementing the school district's mission and vision statements. Also noted by the participants was the fact that not many teachers in the school were knowledgeable of or implemented the district's mission and vision statements in their daily practice. The James Project International (2024) supported the claim that the school's mission and vision statements are often overlooked.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 focused on how Florida's public school leaders incorporated the school district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as

educational leaders. Experienced school leaders were supportive of the school district's mission and vision statements and used them to drive the school's goals and objectives. Participant 1 stated that he refers to the mission statement when dealing with the faculty and staff when clarifying the organization's intent. The mission statement is also referred to when dealing with current or prospective students and families when clarifying the organization's purpose or organizational goals.

The more experienced school leaders referred to the mission statement as it related to the school's goals and objectives. However, the novice or less experienced school leaders did not express an interest in the school's mission and goals or the school district's mission and vision statements. They did not have a deep understanding or knowledge of what a good mission and vision statement entailed or if the mission statement was driving student achievement. The Southern Regional Educational Board (2020) stated that both the principal and teacher leaders should engage the faculty and develop a vision for what is best for the school so as to graduate more students who are prepared for career and life.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 focused on how and in what ways Florida's public school leaders described the impact of the mission and vision statements on student achievement. There was a consensus among the school leaders as it related to interest in student achievement. However, whereas the experienced school leaders noted that aligning and implementing the district's mission and vision statements with the school's mission and vision statements impacted student achievement, the school leaders with less experience expressed that the mission and vision statements did not have any bearing or impact on student achievement. According to the Campbell Collaboration (2018), many

managers have a misunderstanding of the nature and importance of mission, and others fail to consider the importance of a mission statement. Matejka et al. (1993) noted that mission statements could induce desirable behaviors if those statements first clearly communicated and reinforced through the reward system. The current study showed that the inexperienced leaders did not consider the importance of their school district's mission statement. Participant 5's response reflected the lack of interest in the school's mission statement. She stated that everyone does not know of the school's mission statement. It may be posted at the school, but teachers just walk by it. She also stated that she did not refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families.

Implications and Relevance of the Study

As stated by Allen et al. (2018), using vision and mission statements can help administrators, teachers, and researchers understand how to create better academic institutions. The data collected in this study showed that the more seasoned educational leaders had a deeper understanding of the school district's mission and vision and the importance of aligning and implementing the district's mission and vision in the school's daily practice and operations to impact student achievement. Novice school leaders, on the other hand, did not have a deep understanding or implementation of their school district's mission and vision statements and the impact on student achievement. Further, there was a lack of understanding of the school district's mission and vision statements and how they are related to the goals and objectives of the school district. Participant 8's response was evident of her lack of interest or knowledge regarding the district's mission statement. She stated that the district's mission statement is unimportant because it is not known and explained that she is more concerned with her school's goals and objectives to

achieve positive student outcomes.

Limitations

There are limitations to every research study. One limitation of qualitative research is that results of data are subjective to the researcher (Baskarada, 2014; Rolfe, 2006). The limitations of this research study were related to time constraints and to the opinion that mission statements may not necessarily reflect all public schools in the southern region of the state. Further limitations of the study involved the use of a single school district from which to collect data and draw conclusions, as well as the size and demographics of the sample population. The fact that the study was limited to exploring the mission and vision statements of only a single public school district in the southern region of the state may not reflect the perceptions of all educational leaders. Finally, the research approach and methodology, the sample population, and the instrument used for data collection and analysis could also be a limitation and might not be inclusive.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study showed the importance of aligning the goals and objectives of the school district with the school's mission and vision. Young (2023) shared that new principals may struggle with understanding mission and vision statements. Also noted is that alignment of the school district's mission statement and the school's mission are key to the success of an educational institution. Understanding and implementing the mission and vision statements is important to being a great school leader. Cho (2017) noted that the mission statements of schools focus on the school's purpose, goals, and vision, and they are related to school performance for students' academic success and career readiness. Future research on school leaders' personal mission statements will add to the vast literature on mission statements. The current study could be replicated in charter

schools, private schools, and alternative schools to see if findings would be similar. The study could also be replicated in different regions of the state where the study took place as well as in other states. In addition, studies could be undertaken to determine whether superintendents in the school district undertake any professional development related to the importance and use of the vision and mission statement for new school leaders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the understanding, knowledge, and implementation of school leaders regarding their school district's mission and vision statements. The researcher was able to find a variety of responses to conclude how the public school's vision and mission statements aligned to the school district's mission and vision statements from the district's website. Further, the findings showed how the school leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statements into their purpose as leaders or roles as instructional leaders. Six participants felt the mission statement was extremely important to the day-to-day activity of the school, two participants believed it was somewhat important, and only one believed it was unimportant.

In relation to how school leaders incorporated the district's vision and mission statements into their roles as instructional leaders, the findings showed that, of the nine school leaders who participated, only four were implementing the school district's mission in their daily school operations and roles as school leaders. As a matter of fact, the four male school leaders, who were the most experienced, expressed more knowledge and interest in the district's mission and vision statement alignment with their school's mission and vision. The results can help school leaders and school districts realize how important it is to understand, implement, and align the district's mission and vision

statements with the school's mission and vision statements. Additionally, it is important that more professional development sessions be provided on aligning and implementing the school district's mission and vision statements. These trainings should be mandatory for new school or novice school leaders, as well as for more experienced school leaders.

References

- Abelman, R. (2012). The verbiage of vision: Mission and identity in theologically conservative Catholic colleges and universities. *Catholic Social Science Review*, 17(1), 83-108. <https://doi.org/10.5840/cssr2012178>
- Abelman, R. (2014). Reviewing and revising the institutional vision of U.S. higher education. *Review of Communication Research*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.12840/issn.2255-4165.2014.02.01.002>
- Abrahams, J. (1995). *The mission statement book: 301 corporate mission statements from America's top companies*. Ten Speed.
- Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School. (2013). *Mission statement*. <http://www.pacrim.org/mission.statement>
- AdvancED. (2016). *About us*. <http://www.advanc-ed.org/about>
- AdvancED. (2017). *Accreditation standards*. http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/standards/advanced.school_standards.pdf
- Aktan, C. (2003). *Management in the era of change*. System Publishing.
- Allen, K.-A., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., & Waters, L. (2018). Understanding the priorities of Australian secondary schools through an analysis of their mission and vision statements. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(2), 249-274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18758655>
- Anderson, L. D. (2012). *External factors affecting the mission statement of community colleges accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges*. Sage.
- Angelica, E. (2001). *Fieldstone Alliance nonprofit guide to crafting effective mission and vision statements*. <http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/productdetails.cfm>

- Bart, C., & Bontis, N. (2003). Distinguishing between the board and management in company mission: Implications for corporate governance. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 4(3), 81-83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14691930310487815>
- Baskarada, S. (2014). Qualitative case study guidelines. *Qualitative Report*, 19(24), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1008>
- Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. Free Press.
- Bebell, D., & Stemler, S. E. (2012). *The school mission statement: Values, goals, and identities in American education*. Eye on Education.
- Bebell, D., Stemler, S. E., & Heimler, D. (2020). An analysis of high school mission statements in Massachusetts from 2001 to 2019. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.30845/jesp.v7n2p1>
- Bisset, W. (2014). *The role of mission in strategic planning development and execution at a Lasallian Catholic University* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Setan Hall University.
- Blanchard, K., & O'Connor, R. (1997). *Managing by values*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Blodgett, M. S., Dumas, C., & Zanzi, A. (2011). Emerging trends in global ethics: A comparative study of U.S. and international family business values. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99(1), 29-38. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1164-7>
- Bowen, S. (2018). Mission and vision. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of strategic planning* (pp. 211-220). Oxford University Press.
- Braun, S., Wesche, J. S., Frey, D., Weisweiler, S., & Peus, C. (2013). Effectiveness of mission statements in organizations: A review. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 23(2), 213-230. <https://doi.org/10.5172/jmo.2012.18.4.430>

- Brown, M. G. (1998). Improving your organization's vision. *Journal of Quality and Participation, 21*(5), 18-21.
- Cady, S. H. (2011). *Mission, vision, and values: What do they say?* Wiley.
- Calder, W. B. (2002). Educational leadership with a mission. *Community College Enterprise, 2*(1), 51-57.
- Calder, W. B. (2013). Powerful VVM statements for embracing change. *Journal for Post-Secondary Leaders, 19*-21.
- Calder, W. B. (2014). Achieving an institution's values, vision, and mission (EJ1038728). *College Quarterly, 17*(2), 754-758. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1038728.pdf>
- Campbell, A., & Yeung, S. (1991). Creating a sense of mission. *Long Range Planning, 24*(4), 10-20. <http://marketingmixhub.com/ashridge-mission-model/>
- Campbell Collaboration. (2018). *Campbell's vision, mission, and principles*. <https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/about-campbell/vision-mission-and-principle.html>
- Chang, C. K. (2014). *The purpose of higher education in its own words: Reviewing the University of Washington mission statement through the lenses of Hans-Georg Gadamer and critical discourse analysis*. <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/26294>
- Cho, V. (2017). Vision, mission, and technology implementation: Going one-to-one in a Catholic school (EJ1138813). *Journal of Catholic Education, 20*(2), 177-198. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1138813.pdf>
- Clark, S., & Mirabile, R. (2004). Knowledge mapping: An application model for organizations. In M. Goldsmith, H. Morgan, & A. J. Ogg (Eds.), *Leading*

- organizational learning* (pp. 113-120). Jossey-Bass.
- Cleary, M., Horsfall, J., & Hayter, M. (2014). Data collection and sampling in qualitative research: Does size matter? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 70(3), 473-475. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12163>.
- Collins, J. C., & Porras, J. I. (1991). Organizational vision and visionary organizations. *California Management Review*, 34(1), 30-52. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41166682>
- Cote, R. (2017). *Vision of effective leadership*. Sage.
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation. (2016). *The national voice of accreditation*. <https://www.chea.org/chea-national-voice-accreditation>
- Covey, S. (2013). *Seven habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic*. Simon & Schuster.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among the five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., & Gorgen, K. (2020). *Successful school leaders*. Routledge.
- Drath, W. H. (1998). *Approaching the future of leadership development*. Sage.
- Dressel, P. L. (1987). Mission, organization, and leadership. *Journal of Higher Education*, 58, 101-109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1987.11778230>
- Drohan, W. M. (1999). Writing a mission statement. *Association Management*, 51(1), 117-118. <https://www.referenceforbusiness.com/small/Mail-Op/Mission-Statement.html>
- Drucker, P. (1974). *Management: Tasks, responsibilities, and practices*. Harper & Row.
- Drucker, P. (1992). *Managing for the future*. Truman Talley Books.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. National Education Service.

- Eich, D. (2008). A grounded theory of high-quality leadership programs: Perspectives from student leadership development programs in higher education. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 15*(2), 176-187. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051808324099>
- Emery, M. (1996). Mission control. *Training and Development Journal, 50*, 51-54.
- Erickson, F. (2012). Qualitative research methods for science education. In B. J. Fraser, K. G. & Tobin, & C. J. McRobbie (Eds.), *Second international handbook of science education* (pp. 1451-1469). Springer.
- Ezekwe, E. A., & Egwu, S. N. (2016). Creating awareness on vision and mission statements among employee of Ebonyi State University, Nigeria: A discourse. *Review of Publications in Administration Management, 4*, 192-193. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2315-7844.1000192>
- Fayad, J. D., & Yoshida, R. K. (2014). Making mission statements operational: Perceptions of principals. *Tri-Association School Journal of School Leadership, 24*, 336-356.
- Frankl, G. (2004). *Blueprint for a sane society*. Open Gate Press.
- Gayle, D. J., Tewarie, B., & White, A. Q. (2003). Governance in the twenty-first century university: Competing perspectives and expectations. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 30*(1), 49-71.
- Gelatt, P. D. (2015). *An analysis of leader life calling and organizational mission statements in CESA schools* (Publication No. 3716282) [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana Wesleyan University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Glasrud, B. (2001). Your mission statement has a mission. *Nonprofit World, 19*(5), 35-37.

- Gordan, C., & Pop, D. M. (2013). Mission statements in higher education: Context analysis and research propositions. *Annals of Faculty Economics, 1*(2), 653-663.
- Gurley, D. K., Peters, G. B., Collins, L., & Fifolt, M. (2014). Mission, vision, values, and goals: An exploration of key organizational statements and daily practice in schools (EJ1060128). *Journal of Educational Change, 16*(2), 217-242. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1060128.pdf>
- Hartley, M. (2016). *Call to purpose: Mission-centered change at three liberal arts colleges*. Routledge.
- Hawthorn, M. (2017). The purpose of mission and vision statements in strategic planning. *Small Business Chronicle*. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/purpose-mission-vision-statements-strategic-planning-13161.html>
- Henrickson, R. (2018). Superintendent evaluation frameworks for continuous improvement: Using evidence-based processes to promote the stance of improvement. *Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 15*(1), 11-20.
- Herman, J. (1989). Site-based management: Creating a vision and mission statement. *NASSP Bulletin, 73*(519), 79-83.
- Hinton, K. E. (2012). *A practical guide to strategic planning in higher education*. Sage.
- Howie, G. (1968). *Aristotle*. Collier-Macmillan Ltd.
- Humphries, C. (2005). Vision and mission: Seven suggestions why you need both. *AXI News*. http://www.axi.ca/tca/Jan2005/associate/article_1.shtml
- Ippensen, D. J. (2021). *Exploring the utilization of mission by Nebraska public school principals: How does mission drive practice* (Publication No. 28496605) [Doctoral dissertation, Doane University]? ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

- James Project International. (2024). *Mission statement: Our vision*. <http://www.jamesproject/international.org/Mission>
- Keefe, T. E. (2021). *The mission, vision, and values in higher education: A study of 39 colleges*. Research Gate.
- Keeling, M. (2013). Mission statements. *Knowledge Quest*, 34(1), 30-36.
- Kempster, S., Jackson, B., & Conroy, M. (2012). *Leadership as purpose: Exploring the role of purpose in leadership practice*. Wiley.
- Kenny, G. (2014). *Your company's purpose is not its vision, mission, or values*. Sage.
- Khalifa, A. S. (2012). Mission, purpose, and ambition: Redefining the mission statement. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.1108/175542512.11247553>
- Kosmutzky, A., & Krucken, G. (2015). Sameness and difference: Analyzing institutional and organizational specificities of universities through mission statements. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 45(2), 137-149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2015.1006013>
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Kustigian, B. M. (2013). *Mission driven educational leadership—Does it matter? Examining the correlations between district mission and student achievement* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Lafavore, T. (2012). *Purposeful words: An investigation of the influence of mission statements on principal leadership and teacher practice* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Maine.
- Leightwood, K., Sun, J., & McCullough, C. (2019). How school districts influence student achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 57(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00208825.2019.1644444>

org/10.1108/JEA-09-2018-0175

- Long, A. (2004). *Leadership tripod: A new model for effective leadership*. Power Press.
- Lovett, C. M. (2017). Trustees: Pay attention to the mission statement. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/trustees-pay-attention-to-the-mission-statement/>
- Matejka, K., Kurke, L. B. & Gregory, B. (1993). Mission impossible? Designing a great mission statement to ignite your plans. *Management Decision*, 31(4), 34-37.
- McCauley, C. D., Moxley, R. S., & Van Velsor, E. (Eds.). (1998). *Handbook of leadership development*. Jossey-Bass.
- McCusker, K., & Gunaydin, S. (2015). Research using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods and choice based on the research. *Perfusion*, 30(7), 537-542.
- McHatton, P. A., Bradshaw, W., Gallagher, P. A., & Reeves, R. (2011). Results from a strategic planning process: Benefits for a nonprofit organization. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 22(2), 233–249.
- Meacham, J. (2008). What's the use of a mission statement? *Academe*, 94(1), 21-24
- Millard, B. (2012). *Explorer's guide: Starting your college journey with a sense of purpose* (3rd ed.). Kendall Hunt.
- Mitchell, M. A. (2014). *Mission statement clarity and organizational behavior at an art-focused high school* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Walden University.
- Moeller, A. J., Theiler, J. M., & Wu, C. (2012). Goal setting and student achievement: A longitudinal study. *Modern Language Journal*, 96(2), 1-17.
- Mombourquette, C. (2017). The role of vision in effective school leadership. *Journal of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management*, 45(1). https://www.academia.edu/33468796/The_Role_of_Vision_in_Effective_

School_Leadership

- Morgan, T. (2018). Assistant principals' perceptions of the principalship (EJ1197918). *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 13(10). ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1197918.pdf>
- Muzondo, N. (2012). Mission analysis and the Ashridge mission model: An operational conceptual framework. *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 2(5), 57-68.
- Northouse, P. G. (2014). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (7th ed.). Sage.
- O'Donnell, M. P. (2013). *A conceptual framework to guide the development of effective health promotion programs: The awareness, motivation, skills, and opportunity framework and the face of wellness model*. American Health Promotion.
- Ozdem, G. (2011). An analysis of the mission and vision statements on the strategic plans of higher education institutions (EJ962679). *Educational Sciences*, 11(4), 1887-1894. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ962679.pdf>
- Panda, A., & Gupta, R. K. (2003). Mapping cultural diversity within India: A meta-analysis of some recent studies. *Global Business Review*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/097215090400500103>
- Pearce, J., & David, F. (1987). Corporate mission statements: The bottom line. *Academy of Management Executive*, 1(2), 109-115. <https://do.org/10.5465/AME.1987.4275821>
- Peyrefitte, J., & David, F. R. (2006). A content analysis of the mission statements of United States firms in four industries. *International Journal of Management*, 23(2), 296-301.
- Phanuel, W. K. (2012). Of mission and vision statements and their potential impact on

- employee behavior and attitudes: The case of a public but profit-oriented tertiary institution. *International Journal of Business and Science*, 3(14), 95-109.
- Piercy, N., & Morgan, N. A. (1994). Mission analysis: An operational approach. *Journal of General Management*, 19(3), 1-19.
- Plough, B. L. (2012). School board governance and student achievement: Board members' perceptions of their behaviors and beliefs (EJ1028871). *Educational Leadership and Administration*, 25, 41-53. ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1028871.pdf>
- Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason and rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Sage.
- Rey, C., & Bastons, M. (2017). Three dimensions of effective mission implementation. *Long Range Planning*, 51(4), 580-585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2017.07.002>
- Rolfe, G. (2006). *Validity, trustworthiness, and rigor: Quality and the idea of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Rough, N. (2008). *An analysis of the mission statements of K-12 Christian schools: Their components and the value they hold for the organizational leader* (Publication No. 3344674) [Doctoral dissertation]. Indiana Wesleyan University.
- Russell, E., & Underwood, C. (2016). Exploring the role of purpose in leadership. *HR Magazine*. <http://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/exploring-the-role-of-purpose-in-leadership>
- Sagoe, D. (2012). Precincts and prospects in the use of focus groups in social and behavioral science research (EJ974852). *Qualitative Report*, 17(29), 1-16. ERIC. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ974852.pdf>
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.

- Schafft, K., & Biddl, C. (2013). Place and purpose in public education: School district mission statements and educational (dis)embeddedness. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 55-76.
- Schluckebier, M. E. (2013). *Dreams worth pursuing: How college students develop and articulate their purpose in life* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Iowa.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.
- Shah, S. (2019). *7 biases to avoid in qualitative research*. Editage. <https://www.editage.com/insights/7-biases-to-avoid-in-qualitative-research>
- Simerson, B. K. (2011). *Strategic planning: A practical guide to strategy formulation and execution*. Bloomsbury.
- Slavik, S. (2010). Process and content analysis of strategic planning in enterprise in Slovakia. *Journal of Competitiveness, 12*(2), 125-148. <https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2020.02.08>
- Sotunde, A. O. (2012). Influence of vision and mission statement on organizational effectiveness: An appraisal of a private sector experience in Nigeria. *Pacific Journal of Science and Technology, 22*(1), 19-22.
- Southern Regional Educational Board. (2020). *The three essentials: Improving schools requires district vision, district and state support, and principal leadership*. <https://www.sreb.org/publication/three-essentials>
- Taylor, B. J., & Morpew, C. C. (2010). An analysis of baccalaureate college mission statements. *Research in Higher Education, 51*, 483-503. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-010-9162-7>

- Thomas L. R. (2012). *A mission-driven organization case study: The Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation* [Unpublished master's thesis]. School for International Training.
- Townsend, T. (Ed.). (2019). *Instructional leadership and leadership for learning in schools: Understanding theories of leading*. Springer.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1979). *The Belmont report*. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf
- Venkatesh, V., Brown, S., & Bala, H. (2013). Bridging the qualitative-quantitative divide: Guidelines for conducting mixed methods research in information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 37(1), 21-54.
- Wallace, L. K. (2004). *Libraries, mission and marketing: Writing mission statements that work*. American Library Association.
- Williams, L., & Lindsey, M. J. (2011). *Rural leaders and leadership development in Pennsylvania* (ED517588). ERIC. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED517588.pdf>
- Wong, G. (2020). *Mission statement values and school performance in public non-charter Title I schools* (Publication No. 27744473) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, 48(2), 311-325. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12014>
- Yin, R. (2017). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Young, P. G. (2023). *Finding your school's mission and vision: A former principal explains how mission and vision statements differ and why creating them is crucial to a school's success*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/forming->

schools-vision-mission-statements

Zandstra, A. M. (2012). Mission statements of Christian elementary schools in the United States and the Netherlands. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 21(2), 116-131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2012.698827>

Appendix A
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Date: _____ Time: _____

Name (Optional): _____

School Name: _____ (Elementary, Middle, High, 6-12, Center)

Role/Title _____.

Demographic survey questions

1. What is your age? (Broad range)
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65-above

2. Are you of Spanish or Latino origin?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't wish to say

3. What would best describe you?
 - African American
 - Asian
 - Native American
 - White
 - Others

4. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Do not wish to say

5. What is your highest education level?
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Educational Specialist
 - Doctorate

Elements

1. As you evaluate the current mission statement of your school district, how would you describe its value to the day-to-day activities of your school?

- a) Extremely Important
- b) Somewhat Important
- c) Somewhat Unimportant
- d) Unimportant

2. Would you please make a short comment on why you selected this rating?

3. In what ways do you refer to the mission statement in dealing with the faculty and staff?

4. In what ways do you refer to the mission statement in dealing with current or prospective students and families?

Senior Leadership Role

5. In what other ways do you use the district's mission statement in your leadership?

6. What is the greatest benefit of the district's mission statement in your role as educational leader?

7. In your opinion, how many of the teachers in your school know or implement the district's mission statement and vision statement in their daily practice?

8. In your opinion, what is the commitment level of the faculty to the school district's mission statement?

Appendix B

School District's Mission Statement and Vision Statement

School District's Mission Statement and Vision Statement

Mission Statement:

Committed to educating all students to reach their highest potential.

Vision Statement:

Educating today's students to succeed in tomorrow's world.