

Defining the Social Mission: A Social Enterprises Perspective

ZENEDIUS KAKOMO

Department of Business Management: Gideon Robert University

ABSTRACT:

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to create a meaningful definition of a social mission of an organization. The complexity of the environment in which a social enterprise operates takes effect on understanding the social mission. The social missions, value proposition and organizational motivations cause effect on the definition of the social mission.

Design / Methodology: Semi -Structured interviews were used to develop a descriptive phenomenological interpretation of the data. Case study of Women Impact Trust in Marondera was purposefully selected due to its works. These were supported by document research of the organization, in which all organization documents were collected and analyzed.

Findings: Through the lenses of investigations, observations and analysis, the case study research showed that the social mission was vaguely reflected. It was discovered that it wasn't specific and lack of specifications means lack of sustainability. The document research of the organization lacked clarity between social mission and purpose.

Acknowledgement: Special thank you to Ms Sakina for her actively participation during the research. Acknowledgement goes to Woman Impact as an organization for giving the researcher an opportunity to study their organization.

Mr Stanford Chabayanzara, the facilitator at Gideon Robert University for his unwavering support.

The Depart of Business Studies Staff at Gideon Robert University for all the support and guidance they gave the researcher.

Keywords: social vision, social missions social impact mission value proposition, shared values.

1. INTRODUCTION

The consciousness of social impact globally suggests the increasing important sole of impact definitions. A loosely defined social mission will cause the organization to drift from what its core activities are and how they can be measured. Corporate Social Responsibility has been practiced by corporate organizations and its upgrade is the social impact mission to widen the scope of community involvement. Pure social enterprises, like their corporate counterparts must understand the need of a social mission.

Kramer M.R and M Porter (2011) came with the shared value concept urging corporates to share their success with their environment in which they operate. This meant providing health, education and environment protection in the community. They argued that this will leverage their success. The pure social enterprise social

mission is the reason for its existence. Implying a clearly stated social mission can sustain its existence. Keprapakorn N. J., & Kanthbutia, S (2019) a socially driven mission must drive for creating revenue which is reinvested in the community. This clearly defined social mission or social impact mission will lead to a clearly interpreted social mission which will guide the activities and performance of the social enterprise and ensure value creation and sustainability. The social transformation process should have an impact once the social mission is clearly defined.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the case study was to identify their understanding of the meaning of social mission.

Does the case study have a social mission transforming society which is sustainable and meeting the definition?

How was the existing social mission developed consciously or unconsciously?

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The literature has focused more on the social impact or social mission of corporate enterprises practicing social enterprises Lelner and Kausikas (2013), Anderson and Self (2015). The social mission must start from the overall vision of the social enterprise and the corporate. The what of the social enterprise. Dembek, K. York, J Rodriguez L. and Sheth, U (2017). The what: vision of the social enterprise will embrace the Low: the mission.

Dees (2001) the social mission to change the world revolves around the mission without linking it to the social vision. Peter Drucker (1973) came up with the Theory of shared value. The authors view that successful organization must create successful operating environment. Reflecting on this is that they must create social transformations in their environment. Subsequent authors and researchers Millier T.L and Wesley C.L (2010).

Mas Machuma M, Ba Ballestros – Sola, M & Guerrero, A. (2017) Kramer M, R , & Porter, M. (2011). The researcher's efforts were upgrading corporate social responsibilities to social impacts. However, Ramis, T. & Vaccaro, A. (2017) seemed to suggest the drift on the authors assertion due to lack of clear definition of social impact missions and lack of impact visions. While Young D.R. & Kim, C. (2015) turned to a mission that can sustain the social enterprises, it remains unattached to social impact mission.

The complexity of business and social environment in which social enterprises operates poses a challenge. Carter, M & Carter, C. (2000). The link between the organization motivation and value propositions support the lack of clarity between social visions and social missions. Osberg S.R, and Martin, R. L, (2015) believes that the transformations of people's lives can only be successful through adjusting existing socio-economic equilibrium.

The gap between social visions and social missions in socially oriented enterprises poses challenges in creating a sustainable organization.

The lack of this link leads to a loosely value proposition of value creations and wealth creation in society.

Meaning a clearly defined social mission must address:

- Social ideologies that creates access to services, health, education and societal wealth and values.
- Economic ideology that must create inclusive employment and trading opportunities.
- Environmental ideology that create and manage natural resources, climate change and better life in society.
- Cultural ideology that catalyzes the way society live and how can the transformation be sustained.

3. DATA COLLECTION

The literature reviews used to guide the research on the type of data which would be useful. The initial data collected were company records, memos and publications. These would tell the social vision of the enterprise and its social mission in delivering its goals.

Documents collected were on previous work of the organization, plans of the organization, the type of the community and its environment it works with. Relationships with the social stakeholders and community inclusivity in the program documents. Internal memos minutes of meetings and field reports.

The next stage of data collection was an interview at participants premises using unstructured questions enabling for a free flow discussion. The researcher bracketed out from any misconceptions or judgement about the institution, but seeking information about the organizations vision and mission. The questions were tailormade to answer the research questions.

- Why was this organization formed.
- How did you come -up with the idea of this organization.
- What are the possible social problems which you want to solve?
- Who did you involve from the inception of the idea?
- What input came from the community or stakeholders?
- Did you incorporate the stake holders inputs into the organization.
- How did stakeholder input change your dream of the organization.
- Since operating your organization how often do you go back to the stakeholders for further inputs.

The why was meant to establish the purpose of establishing of the enterprise which will translate to the vision.

The hows and whats were meant to establish the activities to deliver the vision which is the mission.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Documents Analysis

The data collected from documents were analyzed and coded to create general themes of the social mission of the organization. These themes emerged as follows:

- Empowerment of women
- Empowerment of youths
- Empowerment of communities
- Indigenous knowledge
- Preserving heritage
- Preserving culture
- Orphans
- Environment
- Gender discrimination and inequality.

These were clearly articulated on the purpose of the enterprise. The researcher analysis was to establish whether purpose, vision or social mission means the same. General meaning of purpose “the reason for which something is done or created or exists. Wharton Online” a social mission is a cause that benefits society, the economy and or the environment in various ways.” The documents analysis reflect that the purpose and social mission are bundled together in which case may affect the achievement of both.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW NOTES

The story telling and responses from the interviews were decoded in order to carry the search for common views. The most repeated themes were :-

- Orphanage assistance
- Family background
- Promoting indigenous nutrition
- Women’s living challenges
- Youths skill development
- Purpose

The response on the social mission and purpose of the organization lacked differences in meanings but rather one and the same.

5. FINDINGS

The research question was to identify a clearly mission definition that can help to scale up social enterprises' performances. The purpose and social mission were combined together indicating a lack of definition of the two. The interview and storytelling reflected the same mindset. The activities being pursued are many implying that the social mission is drifted along many activities. Such a drift creates unsustainable performances and social solutions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The sustainability of a social enterprises is embedded in a clearly defined social mission. This allows each social goal to be clearly followed and measured. The areas that need improvement can have the gaps identified and corrective action taken. The social impact must enable the social value creation and sustainability of the organization. Future research can continue in further refining the social mission definition.

7. REFERENCES

1. Carter, M. & Carter, C (2020). The Creative Business Model Canvas. *Social Enterprises Journal* V (16) Issue 2.
2. Keprapakorn, N. & Kantabutra, S. (2019). Sustainable Social Enterprise Model: Relationships and Consequences *Sustainability* 11(14).
3. Kramer, M, R., and Porter, M (2011). Creating shared Value.
4. Mas – Machua, M, Ballestros – Sela, M & Guerrero, A. (2017). Unveiling the mission statements in social enterprises: a comparative content analysis of US Vs Spanish based Organization. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*. 8 (2), 156 -200:
5. Miller, T. L, & Wesley C. L. (2010) Assessing mission and resources for social change: An organizational identity perspective on social ventures capitalist & decision dilemma. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practices* (34) 4. 705-733.
6. Osbery S.R. & Martin, R. L. (2015). Two Keys to Sustainable Social Enterprises. *Burners and Society*. Harvard Business Review.
7. Ramis, T. & Vaccaro, A (2017). Stakeholders Matter: How social enterprises address mission drift *Journal of Burness Ethics*, 143 (2) 307 -322.
8. Sterens. R, Moray, N. & Bruenell, J. (2015). The social and economic mission of social enterprises: Dimensions measurement, validation. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*. 39 (5), 1051-1082.
9. Young, D.R., & Kim, C. (2015). Can social Enterprises remain sustainable & mission focused? Apply resiliency theory. *Social Enterprises Journal*. 11 (3), 233-259.

INFO

Corresponding Author: ZENEDIUS KAKOMO, Department of Business Management: Gideon Robert University

How to cite this article: ZENEDIUS KAKOMO, "Defining the Social Mission: A Social Enterprises Perspective", *Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.*2023; 5(3): 125-128.