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## Mission Statements of Top Ranked International Airlines Companies : Are They Really Market-oriented ?

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### **Abstract:**

*The most important role of a mission statement is to communicate the strategic orientation of the organization to stakeholders in order to guide strategic planning. The purpose of this study is to examine if the mission statements of the high-performance airline companies in the world deliver a clear direction and if they are Market-oriented. A random sample of fifty firms with online mission statements and ranked as the world's top 100 airlines companies in 2015 were selected. First, a content analysis is used to explore the form and the components of their mission statements. Second, the study checks the conformity of the mission statements selected to effective ones as recommended by literature. Finally, to explore the extent to which those mission statement is market-oriented another deductive content analysis was realized. The results showed that the majority of mission statements selected were well-designed and effective . Indeed, those mission statements are market-oriented with a high focus on customer-orientation, competitor-orientation and interfunctional coordination. Inspired from the findings, the study will provide recommendations to examine, create and modify a well-designed and a market-oriented mission statement.*

**Keywords:** Mission statement ,market orientation , content analysis, airlines companies

### **1. Introduction**

A brilliant strategy must be founded on a solid basis which clarifies the most important goal for the company to achieve in order to focus energy, decisions and skills toward that goal. The mission statement provides this basis of strategic planning and provides a focal point (Tofty & Chatterjee, 2004)

Inspired from the vision (The dream) and the actual realities, the mission statement illuminates the present and the Future of the company (Matejka et al., 1993). The mission acts like "magnets" attracting the company's energy to the destination desired by leaders.

Widely considered as the first step in strategic planning (Abell, 1980), the mission statement have become an important and popular tool for strategic planning and strategy deployment (Palmer & Short, 2008). This popularity is reflected by the growing number of companies that declare and publish their mission statement. In addition , empirical researches around the world , revealed that most companies had a mission statement and assert that mission statements have become a new trend in recent years (Pearce & David ,1987;Baetz & Bart ,1996 ; Bart ,2001).

Despite its importance highlighted in the strategic planning, the mission statement has received much less attention in the marketing literature (Meredith et al., 2014). The marketing literature vacuum is especially surprising given mission statement could be used to formulate and implement the marketing strategy (Meredith et al., 2014).

Even though all marketing activities and efforts may be improved once based on a basic mission statement (Amato & Amato, 2002), few marketing research has focused on the relation between the mission statement and the marketing strategy or marketing activities. However, the importance of developing and communicating a clear mission for strategic planning and marketing strategy was emphasized several times (Meredith et al., 2014) by simple confirmations researchers without relying on empirical research.

Well, a major objective of this paper is to remedy this apparent neglect of mission statement in marketing literature. This study will focus on the content of mission statements of the World's Top 100 airlines companies in 2015 and examine if those mission statements deliver a clear sense of direction and if they are specifically Market-oriented. The sample included 50 airlines companies from the world's top ranked ones having communicated their mission statements on the internet. Then, a content analysis of mission statements was used to explore the extent to which they are market-oriented; and the conformity to effective mission statement as recommended by literature.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *The Mission Statement and the Future Thinking*

For years, the literature has offered multiple definitions of the mission statement. It's possible to distinguish two approaches concerning mission statements conceptualization (Babnik et al. 2014): the strategic one and the cultural one (Campbell et al., 2001).

The first approach views mission principally as a strategic tool, a declaration which defines a company's logic, target market and reason of being. Thus, it relate mission statement to business objectives and recognizes its role in the process of strategic planning (King et al., 2012).

Drucker's (1973), was the pioneer researcher accentuating the importance of mission in business. According to him, a mission statement is the "foundation for priorities, strategies, plans, and work assignments" (Drucker, 1974). Thompson and Strickland (1996, p.4) reinforced Drucker's idea and state that mission "defines a company's business and provide a clear view of what the company is trying to accomplish to its customers". Pearce (1982), from his part defined mission statement as the vital DNA of the company, at the same time specific and durable, which distinguishes the company and determine the scope of its operations in product and market terms (Pearce, 1982; David, 1989).

Klemm et al. (1991) and Campbell (1997) suggested that the mission statement serve to control the future and serve as a basis for "future thinking". Bart and Tabone (1998) present the mission as a business strategic device which defines the target market and business logic and affects the organizational practices.

Boosting the same idea, Braun et al.(2012) suggested that the mission statement reflect the firm distinctiveness, the competencies elements and its exclusive strengths and traits by conveying its unique set of objectives, values, and future actions. So, the primary purposes of mission statements is to guide decision making in order to satisfy target market by predicting the future focus.

### 2.2. *The Mission Statement and Organizational Culture*

The second stream of the literature does not contradict the first one but apprehended mission statement as a "credo", "philosophy" or company's "core values". Campbell and Yeung (1991) summed up the view of this approach: "A mission is the cultural glue which enables an organization to function as a collective unity. This cultural glue consists of strong norms and values that influence the way in which people behave, how they work together and how they pursue the goals of the organization" (Campbell and Yeung, 1991 , p.15).

In line with this perspective, Pearce and Robinson (1994, p. 31) who says that mission statement: "embodies the business philosophy of the firm's strategic decision makers, implies the image the firm seeks to project, reflects the firm's self-concept, and indicates the firm's principal product or service areas and the primary customer needs that the firm will attempt to satisfy "(Pearce and Robinson, 1994, p. 31). In the same context, Ireland and Hitt (1992, p.35) state that "the mission statement indicates what the organization intends to accomplish, identifies the market(s) in which the organization intends to operate, and reflect the philosophical premises that are to guide actions".

It becomes apparent when evaluating those last definitions; that cultural perspective considers the mission as a philosophical, behavioral and ethical asset and refers to the predominant culture in the organization (Babnik et al. 2014; Bartkus and Glassman, 2008). Philip Kotler explains this by assimilating the mission statement to invisible hand that enhance the cooperation of employees as a team for attainment of organizational goals (Kotler, 2006). Campbell and Yeung (1991), affirm that a mission statement is mutually culture and strategy. According to Campbell and Yeung (1991), an organization can only have an effective mission statement if its culture fits with its strategy.

In this regard, mission statement can be seen as an important tool to reflect market orientation as a major philosophy or culture wish must be shared by all companies' members.

### 2.3. *The Mission Statement Form*

What's the recommended form or the best visual appearance of the mission statement according to literature review? A mission statement must be short or long statement?

The first step in defining mission statement form and component was taken by Peter Drucker, who emphasized that the mission statement must convey the most important activities of the company precisely and concisely. Drucker (1973) recommended that the mission statement must be around three sentences long and introduce four themes including who we are? What we do? What we stand for? And why we do it? . It was also recommended by prior research that a mission statement is most effective when it is contain 100 word in length, and when it didn't contain monetary amounts, numbers, percentages ratios and objectives (Meridith & al. , 2014).

From his part, Steiner (1979) think that a mission statement should be abstract and succinct. He argues that a high level of abstraction can provide more flexibility in environmental turbulence, and stressed that surplus of details could be counterproductive.

#### 2.4. The Mission Statement Components

Many authors accentuated the importance of a well written mission statement. McKee(2012), for example, believes that the firm will lose its focus if the mission statement is not well defined and developed. For Oghojafor et al. (2011; p.1073) "an organization without a clear mission statement tends to have its short-term actions counter-productive to its long-run purpose".

Given the importance of the mission statement, many researchers focused on detecting the proper composition of the last one. Hence, the literature review is full of recommendations on how to develop a clever and effective mission statement. Firstly, it's clear according to anterior researches that the mission statement is regarded as a multidimensional concept by all authors (Sidhu, 2003). However, there is a little empirical evidence supporting the prescriptions made. In addition, there is no consensus and certain vagueness on the essential dimensions of mission statements.

Pearce (1982) recognizes eight constituents for an effective and comprehensive mission statement: customers, products or services, markets, technology, concern for survival, growth, and profitability philosophy, self-concept and concern for public image. In 1987, David and Pearce studied the mission statement of 75 manufacturing and service firms, and have highlighted a list of eight essential components that higher performing for-profit firms tend to have: Target customers and markets, Principal products /services, Geographical domain, Core technologies, Prioritized commitments (growth, profits, survival), Philosophy, Organizational self- image and Desired public image.

While other studies have shown that mission statement includes nine components: (consumers-products and services- Contracts- the technology-the concern for survival, growth and profit- Philosophy-public-employee image and distinctive competencies (David, 1989, 2007).

David and David (2003) presented from their part nine components including : customers, products or services, geographic markets, technology, concern for survival /growth/profits, philosophy/values/beliefs, public image, employees and distinctive competence.

Researchers have tried also to find evidence of the relations between mission statements components and organizational outcomes to justify the choice of mission statement components. And confirmatory evidence was obtained in international contexts.

#### 2.5. The Market Orientation

In general, the concept of market orientation was always seen as derivative or embedded in a broader sense: that of the organizational culture (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Deshpande et al 1993; Day . 1990; Reukert , 1992). The cultural perspective conceives market orientation as a philosophy, values and organizational attitudes that put customers at the center of attention of all organizational members (Deshpande and Webster, 1989).

Thus, the market orientation seems to be the axiological references, the dominant logic, or even the global organizational culture (Day, 1994; Slater & Narver 1990; Slater & Narver 1994a;1998;2000) that implies to be proactive to the market.

Narver and Slater (1990, p.21) describe the market orientation as the organizational culture that produce the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior customer value and continuous superior performance for the business with the most effective and efficient manner.

Day (1999), in a more indulgent definition, defines the market orientation as a clever combination of three elements. Firstly, it's an organizational culture focused on the creation of a customer value greater than that offered by competitors. Second, it represents the distinctive qualities in marketing strategy. Then, it's an organizational configuration that promotes the satisfaction of customer requirements (Day, 1999, pp.6-7).

From their part, Narver & Slater (1990) conceive three behavioral components for market orientation: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination. Thus, to be market oriented every company should have a strategy and objectives driven by customer satisfaction which require a market –oriented mission statement that develop the necessary values to be proactive with the market.

Despite of the importance of the market orientation for enterprises acting in different context, the market orientation level has been rarely investigated in the mission statement of airlines companies.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design and Instrument for Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the mission statements of the best airline companies contain the nine components recommended by Pearce and David's (1987) for an effective mission statement and if they are Market-oriented.

To achieve the previous purposes, a content analysis of mission statements of the World's Top ranked airlines companies was realized.

The population of our study is the Top 100 airline companies in the list of The SKYTRAX World Airline Awards 2015 often described as "the Oscars of the aviation industry". The best 100 ones were selected according to the largest international passenger satisfaction survey conducted by The SKYTRAX in 2015.

Starting with this list, the existence of the mission statements was checked firstly in the company's website. Once the mission statements are missing in the web page, other electronic documents (Prezzi, slideshares...) related to the companies were examined to verify their mission statement. A non-random sample of 50 firms ranked as the best ones in the world and having an online mission statement were selected (See Appendix 1).

Then, a qualitative research methodology, specially a deductive content analysis of mission statements was used to explore the extent to which they contain the nine components recommended by Pearce and David's (1987): customers, products or services, location, Technology, concern for survival and growth, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employee. The mission statements were displayed and analyzed. The analysis focused on detecting the nine components of Pearce and David's (1987) or words/expressions reflecting them on each mission statement. The analysis focused on both manifest and latent content. The manifest content is that which is easily visible and apparent. The latent content is which emphasize the meaning of the apparent content ((Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999)). The assessment of the latent content was important because if we limit ourselves on manifest content analysis, the results will not be interesting and limited. To operationalize the nine components, a coding using a 1 or 0 was assigned to the statement for each component where 1=the component is present and 0=the component is absent.

To assess intra-rater reliability, five colleagues were asking to determine individually whether the different components were included or not in each mission statement. A check of the of component's rating was realized by the five colleagues, there was a significant level of agreement between the different colleagues rating in the majority of the nine components, if there is a doubt about a component rating, the more approved rating was chosen.

On the other hand, a second content analysis was realized to explore the extent to which the best ranked companies' mission statement are market-orientated, the analysis were done by using the variables of Narver and Slater (1990). For each mission statement, a content analysis were used to explore the extent to which they contain the items related to Market Orientation. The different items were inspired from the Narver and Slater market orientation's measure scale MKTOR and the work of Aykan & Ali Erhan (2013) (see appendix 5).

### 3.2. Findings

Most of today's successful airlines companies were publishing and communicating their mission statement online. From the world's top 80 airlines companies, 50 were published their mission statement on the net while 30 of those companies seems to prefer not announce it via the global network.

An evaluation of the form of the mission statements of the selected airlines enterprises appears in (Table 1).

More details about the length and the number of words of each mission statement appears in (appendix 2). 46 of the mission statement (92%) contain less than 100 word in length, among them 35 mission statement (70%) are short and contain less than 50 words, while only 4 mission statement (8%) contain more than 100 words.

Table 2 reveal the results of the content analysis and the number of the company's missions which featured each number of components of Pearce and David's (1987).

According to table 2, 36 mission statements (72%) includes between 4 and 9 of the components recommended by Pearce and David's (1987) while 14 mission statements (28%) contain less than 4 components. Most of the mission statements analyzed dismiss some of the nine principal components. only one mission statement among our sample which include the totality of those 9 components (Air Canada, World Rank=27) and does so in a medium length with only 75 words.

Table 3 shows the frequencies of each components in the Mission statements provided. this last table revealed that the most widespread component in the mission statements analyzed is Philosophy (94%). The second prevalent component is the Self-Concept which featured in 80% of the mission statement of our sample. The third most frequent component is the product and services which is present in 66% of the missions of our study. The table 3 revealed also, that there is a high presence of the customers item which featured in (58%) of the mission statements selected. Regarding location or market item, it is also an important components Given that is present in 54% of the mission statements analysed. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of mission statements comprises the items reflecting technology (only 8%), concern for employees (34%), concern for Survival, Growth & Profitability (36%) and concern for public image (44%). The mean score of each mission statement (1987) is more detailed in appendix 3 and it indicate the extent to which every mission statement of our sample contains the 9 components of Pearce and David's (1987).

Table 4 shows the frequencies and percentage of firms which included items of market orientation in their mission statement. The findings shows that among the 5 items of customer orientation, 4 are predominant and featured in the majority of mission statements: Creating Customer Value (90%), Customer Satisfaction Objectives (82%), Commitment and orientation to serving customers' needs (82%), Understanding Customer Needs for competitive advantage (64%). However, the items related to after sale service is featured in 26 % of the mission statements studied. Also, the measure of customer satisfaction is too scarce and featured only in 6% of the mission statements selected.

Table 4 indicate also the high presence of only one item related to competitor orientation in the mission statements selected. The finding shows that creating a competitive advantage featured on 74% of the mission statements selected. On the other hand the items related to gathering information about Competitors' Strategies is too scarce and featured on only 6% % of the mission statements.

Table 4 shows also the frequencies and percentage of firms which included items of interfunctional coordination. The team spirit and work integration item is present in more than one half of the mission statement analyzed (percentage =54%), while participative management is present in only 28 % and the intra company communication is present in only 14% of the mission statements. The mean score indicating the presence of items related to market orientation of each company is detailed in appendix 4.

### 3.3. Discussion of Findings

The result of our study revealed that the majority of the top performing airlines companies prefer to share their mission statement by net to ensure that everyone understand the company's logic, target market and reason of being. Communicating the mission statement between the company and its staff, customers and others stakeholders via Internet can play an integral role in the success of the organization. It will serve as a reminder of the focus and the reminder of the "future thinking" of the organization.

#### 3.3.1. The Form and the Components of the Mission Statements

The majority of the best airlines companies have choose a brief and concise mission statement, conformed to most effective and appropriate form of a mission statement recommended in the literature (Drucker, 1973; Steiner, 1979; Meridith & al., 2014). Concision in style, precision in thought, decision in life (Victor Hugo, 1901) is better than talking too much to say too little. The funding prove that the mission statements of the highest ranked airlines companies are short enough to be clear, memorable and conveyed the most important priorities of the company which means that the excess of details could be worthless.

A larger part of the world best airlines companies include four items or more among the nine components. This results attest that there is a large extent to which these airlines mission obeyed to the commonly accepted view of the appropriate type of a mission statement content. The results of the content analysis indicate that there is five key components that presented in more than half of the mission statements. Those components are respectively: Philosophy, Self-Concept, product and services, customers and location or market.

While a greater part of the mission statement of the high-performance airline companies are centered on philosophy (the dominant logic), the self-concept (the self-strengths), product and services, customers and market or location; a small part of them ignored those components and don't identify neither explicitly nor implicitly their customers, or their market or their products or their self-concept. Thus, these last companies must review their mission statements to be more effective, because a rich literature review confirmed that mission statements are best when they comprise a big part of those nine components or all of them.

#### 3.3.2. The Items of Market Orientation in the Mission Statements

##### 3.3.2.1. Customer Orientation Items

The results shows an intensive customer focus with a high presence of items reflecting customer orientation. Furthermore, creating Customer Value is featured in 90% of the mission statement and appears as the first priority of the majority of the top performing airlines companies. The majority of the best airlines companies, focused on their mission statement on customer value to evoke one of the main forces of attraction and differentiation of their company. The rising emphasis of this notion is not merely a coincidence, it is rather a choice motivated by the consequences of this notion on the profits of the company. According to Meridith et al.(2014) a customer-centered mission statement may enable companies to enhance their profit and their customer satisfaction.

This finding prove that the mean purpose of the best airlines companies is currently delivering of a global customer value. Day (1990), Narver and Slater (1990) emphasize the importance of leading the strategy towards the continuous delivery of greater value to customers. So, mission statement is used by the top ranked airlines companies as a tool to reflect this priority and to direct the organizational strategic interests to customer value. It is essential to understand that value has become a requirement, or even a condition of the organization's sustainability in the new market conditions of airlines companies. It should be noted at this level that the delivery of a customer value was expressed differently.

Some examples of customer value items in missions analyzed are explicit: "The Mission of Silk Air International LLC. Is: to create value for customers ..." (Silk Air) and sometimes it's conveyed with several facets, such as, for example: differentiation of the products offered like "providing air transportation services of the highest quality" (Singapore Airlines); "We provide outstanding products and services"(Cathay Pacific Airways); "We exist to deliver the world's best in-flight experience the world's best in-flight experience" (Emirates Airlines); " provide our customers with safe, good value, point to point air services" (EasyJet). On the other hand, customer value can be the proposal of cheaper prices relative to competition like: "To attain the lowest cost so that everyone can fly with AirAsia" (AirAsia), "offer low fares to enable more people to fly to more places, more often." (Jet star). Or a combination of product differentiation and costs like: "Providing "low fares, on-time flights and a hassle-free experience" to our passengers." (Indigo); "by providing safe and reliable passenger and cargo air transport, Aviation Training, Flight Catering, MRO and Ground Services whose quality and price "value proposition" is always better than its competitors" (Ethiopian Airlines).

The results show also that customer satisfaction objectives item and Commitment and orientation to serving customers' needs are two of the most frequent and important priorities of the high performing airlines.

This pondering interest allowed to the customer satisfaction was expressed differently from mission to another, example: "we strive to be one of the top five airlines in the world as measured through key metrics such as on-time performance, safety, profitability and guest satisfaction." (WestJet); "To become the best in its class by winning customers' acclaim as a true leader in the global market" (SilkAir); "Excellence in Flight: operational excellence, innovative excellence, service excellence" (Korean Air); "At Oman Air we are committed to exceed the expectations of our valuable guests and stake holders by building a "First Choice Airline" (Oman Air).

Whether it was apparent, or latent item in the mission statements, the customer satisfaction appears as a supreme and paramount aim of majority of the world's best airlines companies. Which prove that the mission's statement of our study is customer-oriented such mission statements makes it possible to guide the efforts and projects of all employees towards meeting the needs and requirements of passengers

Concerning the understanding of customer needs for competitive advantage was present in more than half of mission statements selected, which prove its importance for airlines companies. Some example is there: "Develop loyalty in our clients, and be distinguished by the quality of our customer service" (LAN Airlines); "To travel our passengers with safety, continuously providing services of high standards across all travel stages, through an extensive network of destinations" (Aegean Airlines).

In contrast, the majority of mission statements selected tended to neglect the discussion of items related to after sale service and the measure of customer satisfaction. The term after sale services wasn't present in any mission statement , but was conveyed latently , for example : " continuously providing services of high standards across all travel stages " "(Aegean Airlines) ; " We provide outstanding products and services We consistently deliver Service Straight from the Heart" (Cathay Pacific Airways); "delivering professional air travel services " (Garuda Indonesia).

In addition, the measure of customer satisfaction was scarce and featured only in 6% of the mission statements selected. An example of mission statement talking about measure of customer satisfaction : "By 2016, we strive to be one of the top five airlines in the world as measured through key metrics such as on-time performance, safety, profitability and guest satisfaction" (WestJet).

Those results are not surprising because the mission statement focus on value and strategic goals more than behavioral aspect like delivering after sale services and the measure of customer satisfaction. However, the focus on customer value creation and customer satisfaction objectives item and Commitment and orientation to serving customers' needs prove that the missions studied are customer-oriented.

According to Meridith et al.(2014) a customer-centred mission statement may allow marketers to enhance their profit and their customer satisfaction.

### 3.3.2.2. Competitor Orientation Items

The results shows that creating a competitive advantage is a big priority for the high- performing airlines companies and it was emphasize in the majority of their mission statements. The competitive advantage was expressed differently from one company to another. In general airline missions focus on highest quality, reliability , safety ,punctuality , comfortability , example : "To become the preferred leading European air carrier with a global network of coverage thanks to its strict compliance with flight safety, reliability, product line, service quality and competitiveness" (Turkish airlines) ; "We exist to deliver the world's best in-flight experience"( Emirates Airlines) ; "Singapore Airlines is a global company dedicated to providing air transportation services of the highest quality"( Singapore Airlines). "To become the leading Aviation group in Africa by providing safe and reliable passenger and cargo air transport, Aviation Training, Flight Catering, MRO and Ground Services whose quality and price "value proposition" is always better than its competitors" (Ethiopian Airlines). On other discounter airlines mission statement accentuated and reflected a low cost competitive advantage, example: "Jetstar's mission is to offer low fares to enable more people to fly to more places, more often".

Other time creating a competitive advantage seems to be a combination between low cost and quality example" To attain the lowest cost so that everyone can fly with AirAsia. Maintain the highest quality product, embracing technology to reduce cost and enhance service levels" (AIR ASIA); or "we offer quality flights at a low fare based on operational excellence and helpful, friendly service." (Norwegian).

Concerning other items related to competitor orientation like Information about Competitors' Strategies, Competitor sensing and Responsiveness to competitors were scarce in the majority of the mission statements. Articulated in expressions like "To supervise the business according to international standard" (Thai Airways International Public Co), superior knowledge of rivals seems to be not stressed in the majority of the mission statement studied maybe because the mission statement cannot contain all those operational details.

Those results prove that the mission statement was used by the brilliant airlines to communicate the competitive advantage and to make it a corporate culture. So, we can suggest that they are competitor oriented.

### 3.3.2.3. Interfunctional Coordination Items

According to the results, the item reflecting team spirit, team work and integration was present in more than half of the missions statements analyzed which reveal its importance for the top ranked airlines companies. Sometimes, companies articulated this items in expressions like "employees are treated as part of a big family" (AirAsia) or "Our employees are our most important asset. They define who we are and are the soul of our airline. Through the use of industry best practices in human resource management and development, we strive to have not only highly motivated staff but also the best and most productive employees in the industry" (Bangkok Airways) or "with accumulate organization relationship with its employees to bring the best out of all workforce." (Thai Airways International) ...

However, the items reflecting participative management and intra company communication were scarce in the majority of mission statement analyzed. In a short mission statement it's not recommended to give more details or behaviors details that why the majority of missions' statement emphasize the interfunctional coordination by the item of teamwork and integration.

Although the results of this study are important, some limits must be highlighted .At this study, a deductive content analysis was used. Based on the literature background and a manual coding , subjective interpretations was used to verify the content of the mission statements . However future researches can use an inductive content analysis and an automatic coding by using Nvivo software or combine between deductive and inductive analysis for a better reliability and validity. Indeed, future research can make a comparison between the mission statement of the high ranked companies and the last ranked or not ranked ones in the aviation industry. This limits can inspire researchers to make new efforts to more explore and describe the relation between mission statement, market orientation and organizational performance .

## 4. Conclusion

This study conducted in fifty mission statements of the world's best ranked airlines companies reveals that the majority of the analyzed mission statements were well-designed, brief and clear and contain the components recommended in literature by Pearce and David's (1987). So, for an ideal mission statement we recommend to avoid the surplus of details which can be inopportune and to try to be brief and combine between the rhetoric art and the literature recommendations .

Indeed, the findings of the content analysis indicate that there is five key components presented in more than half of the mission statements of our sample. Those components are respectively: Philosophy, Self-Concept, product and services ,customers and location or market. So, we recommend for a most effective mission statement to make those components as priorities .

On the other hand, for those best airlines companies, the mission statement represent a mirror for their future thinking and their orientation. In our study, the majority of the best airlines companies emphasize the creation of customer value which reflecttheir customer orientation. Indeed, a greater part of mission statement of the high ranked airlines companies focused on the creation of competitive advantage which reflect their competitor orientation.

In addition, the results of the analysis prove that the mission statements of best airlines companies accentuated the team work spirit and the interfunctional Coordination which ensure a better staff coordination. So, the managers of the best airlines companies can use those mission statement as a strong tool to unleash employees 'commitment and to increase their coordination and synergy effect.

This study reveals that the high performing airlines companies in the world selected from Skytrax on the basis of customer satisfaction and customer feedback opted a Market-oriented mission statements . The mission's statement of the top ranked airlines companies focus simultaneously on customer orientation, competitor orientation and interfunctional coordination.

This results means that mission statement must be market-oriented more than a product or a customer –centered mission to more perform and to more satisfy customer .Once product-oriented, profit-oriented or employee-oriented the mission statement reflects a myopic vision of the company and omit many key elements.

Recently a study of Meridith et al. (2014) has accentuated the importance of defining a mission from a customer perspective to perform better and to better satisfy the customer. However, this study proved that the best airlines companies expressed a strong market orientation in their mission statement rather than a customer orientation. A customer oriented mission statement can reflect a myopia and ignore the competitor and the importance of the team. However, a market-oriented mission allows the company to perform and to better satisfy its customers. The mission statement is the starting point of each strategy. Once it is well designed and market-oriented, it can lead so far, to a targeted destination.

## 5. Figures and Tables

Mission Statement Form				Total
short: 1 to 50 words	medium:> 50 words	long: between 100-200 words	very long: > 200	
35	11	2	2	50

Figure 1: The form of the mission statements (N=50)

Number of components	Number of companies	Name of companies and their world rank
9 (mean score=1)	1	Air Canada (Rank 27)
8 (mean score=0.88)	5	Thai Airways (Rank 19), Bangkok Airways (Rank 23), AirAsia (Rank 25), LAN Airlines (Rank 32), Ethiopian Airlines (Rank 77)
7 (mean score=0.77)	3	Austrian (Rank 13), KLM (Rank 28), SriLankan Airlines (Rank 73)
6 (mean score=0.66)	9	Singapore Airlines (Rank 2), Cathay Pacific Airways (Rank 3), Turkish Airlines (4), Asiana Airlines (11), Air New Zealand (17), Dragonair (18), EasyJet Airline (39), AirAsia (43), WestJet (47),
5 (mean score=0.55)	7	Emirates (5), Garuda Indonesia (8), Aegean Airlines (29), Oman Air (35), China Southern (36), SilkAir (42), Jet Airways (76)
4 (mean score=0.44)	11	Qatar Airways (1), Etihad Airways (6), Lufthansa (12), British Airways (20), Japan Airlines Airlines (21), Finnair (31), Norwegian (33), Indigo (44), Aeroflot (46), Air Seychelles (63), Alaska Airlines (65)
3 (mean score=0.33)	7	Malaysia Airlines (24), Virgin America (26), South African Airways (34), Korean Air (38), Air Astana (40), Jetstar Airways (41), Southwest Airlines (67)
2 (mean score=0.22)	6	ANA All Nippon Airways (7), EVA Air (9), AirFrance (15), Avianca (49), JetBlue (50), BRUSSELS AIRLINES (54),
1 (mean score=0.11)	1	Virgin Atlantic (37)
Total	50	

Figure 2: Number of components in mission statements

Component	Priority	Frequency of firms including component	Percentage of firms including component	Percentage of firms which not including component
Philosophy	1st	47	94%	6%
Self-Concept	2nd	40	80%	20%
Products/ Services	3rd	33	66%	34%
Customers	4th	29	58%	42%
Location/ Market	5th	27	54%	46%
Concern for Public Image	6th	22	44%	56%
Concern for Survival, Growth & Profitability	7th	18	36%	64%
Concern for employee	8th	17	34%	66%
Technology	9th	4	8%	92%

Figure 3: Analysis of the components frequencies of the Mission statements selected (N=50)

Component	Frequency of mission statement which included the item	Percentage mission statement which included the item
Customer Satisfaction Objectives	41	82%
Commitment and orientation to serving customers' needs	41	82%
Understanding Customer Needs for competitive advantage	32	64%
Creating Customer Value	45	90%
Measure customer satisfaction	3	6%
After Sales Service	13	26%
Information about Competitors' Strategies	3	6%
Responsiveness to competitors	8	16%
Creating Competitive Advantage	14	74%
Competitor sensing	7	14%
Participative Management	14	28%
Intra Company Communication	7	14%
Team Spirit/Work and Integration	27	54%

Figure 4: Analysis of the market orientation items included on the Mission statements selected N=50



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