

Exploring the Role of Mission and Vision Statements in Maritime Transport: A Focus on Liner Shipping Companies

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Abstract

This study examines the strategic management of mission and vision statements of the top 100 liner shipping companies. By analyzing the content and components of these statements, this study assesses their effectiveness in guiding organizational behavior and aligning stakeholder expectations. Content analysis reveals that while self-concept and philosophy are emphasized, critical aspects like customer orientation and employee concerns are underrepresented. Vision statements prioritize clarity and stability but often lack the motivation required to motivate stakeholders. The findings suggest the need for a more balanced approach when crafting statements. This study offers recommendations for improving strategic communication practices in maritime companies, highlighting the importance of stakeholder involvement, regular updates and integration into daily operations. Enhanced mission and vision statements can significantly improve organizational alignment and performance.

Keywords: Mission statements, Vision statements, Liner shipping companies

1. Introduction

The maritime industry is a critical contributor to international trade and transportation. This involves various activities such as shipping, port operations, offshore energy, and marine tourism. Organizations strive to gain a competitive edge and meet their strategic goals in the maritime industry. In this rapidly evolving environment, maritime businesses must have a clear sense of purpose and direction to navigate the challenges that arise and seize opportunities. As businesses in this industry strive for long-term growth and a competitive advantage, developing clear mission and vision statements has become increasingly important. A crucial aspect of this process is the development and implementation of mission and vision statements [1,2]. These statements are guiding principles that shape an organization's direction, inform its decision-making, and inspire its stakeholders [2]. The mission and vision statements of an organization are essential strategic tools that communicate the organization's core values, beliefs, and long-term goals [3].

Mission and vision statements are vital for strategic planning, decision-making, resource allocation, and overall direction

within an organization [4]. By outlining the organization's goals, principles, and mission, mission statements help stakeholders understand who they are and where they fit in. The importance of mission and vision statements has been widely recognized, and many organizations invest significant time and resources into crafting and communicating these statements [5].

Mission statements set the values and guidelines for how an organization operates and engages with stakeholders, whereas vision statements focus on future goals and motivate stakeholders [6,7]. Studies have demonstrated that mission statements give organizations a sense of purpose, guide resource allocation, and turn goals into actionable plans [8]. Studies have revealed that mission statements outline the primary goals of an organization, the essential reason for its existence, and the distinctive value it hopes to offer to its stakeholders or clients [9]. Additionally, mission statements set forth an organization's values, giving workers a sense of purpose and direction while also directing their decision-making. These statements help to align the organization's activities and resources toward a common goal [1,10].



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Received: 19.09.2024

Last Revision Received: 02.01.2025

Accepted: 16.01.2025

Epub: 18.02.2025

To cite this article: G. Tuğdemir Kök, and T. T. Türkistanlı. "Exploring the role of mission and vision statements in maritime transport: a focus on liner shipping companies." *Journal of ETA Maritime Science*, [Epub Ahead of Print]



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On the other hand, vision statement explain what an organization intends to achieve in the future. Vision statements set forth the organization's long-term goals and desired state. These statements articulate long-term goals and guide future practices, assisting organizations in preparing for change and maintaining focus [11,12].

Mission and vision statements are essential for organizational identity and unity. They unite members, provide shared meaning systems, and direct organizational actions [13]. These statements also contribute to organizational performance by motivating employees, shaping behaviors, and fostering commitment [14]. According to Taouab and Issor [15], organizational performance measures how well a company uses its resources to create value and consequently profits, while meeting the varied needs of different stakeholder groups. Bresciani et al. [16] asserted that internal and external influences impact the effectiveness of an organization. When employees understand and internalize the organization's mission and vision, they are more likely to be motivated, focused, and aligned with its strategic objectives. Studies have shown that organizations with clearly communicated and collectively shared mission and vision statements perform better than those without [1,10]. In addition, effective mission statements have been associated with improved firm performance, highlighting the significance of well-crafted statements in strategic planning [17].

Overall, the literature shows that mission and vision statements are critical in guiding organizational behavior and performance. However, their effectiveness is contingent on factors such as stakeholder involvement, communication of brand personality attributes, and the company's adaptability to industry norms. Further research is needed to explore the role of mission and vision statements in specific maritime subsectors and to identify best practices for their development and implementation.

From a regulatory perspective, public policy and international shipping norms have historically shaped the competitive setting in liner shipping, influencing tariff structures, market entry, and strategic alliances [18]. Recently, environmental regulations-such as stricter sulfur emissions limits-have introduced further complexity, driving investment in alternative fuels, innovative propulsion systems, and more efficient voyage planning [19]. Consequently, the liner shipping sector exemplifies a constantly evolving ecosystem that reflects, ongoing technological changes, trade patterns and, legal requirements.

2. Role of Mission Statements and Vision Statements in Liner Shipping

Liner shipping, which primarily involves scheduled maritime transport for containerized cargo, plays a significant role in

global trade and supply chains. It is characterized by regularity, fixed services and the use of standardized container vessels [19]. This sector faces distinct operational and strategic dynamics compared to other maritime transport segments, such as bulk shipping or tanker operations, largely due to its high level of schedule reliability, port network integration, and strategic alliances among carriers [20]. Similarly, capacity management and vessel-sharing agreements have become common practices in liner shipping, allowing carriers to consolidate shipments, share resources, and reduce operating costs in highly competitive markets [21]. Port selection and terminal operations are critical for liner carriers' strategies, shaping global freight corridors and influencing regional economic development [20]. Regulations and international shipping policies also shape the liner shipping landscape, impacting pricing, service patterns, and entry barriers [18]. Overall, the liner shipping sector illustrates the interplay between technological advancement, global trade dynamics and, evolving regulatory pressures, making it a continuously adapting and strategically complex segment of maritime transport.

In the liner shipping sector, clear mission and vision statements serve as strategic cornerstones guiding organizational decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and long-term direction. In the liner shipping sector, mission statements are pivotal because they guide strategic decision-making, foster organizational unity, and communicate a carrier's core purpose to stakeholders. Furthermore, having a strong mission helps differentiate individual carriers and strengthens partnerships by signaling dedication to service quality, environmental responsibility, and consistent performance qualities that are increasingly valued in global maritime trade [18,21].

Recently, a growing body of research has the significance of mission and vision statements in several sectors, including the marine industry. A systematic review by Alegre et al. [22] compiled studies on mission statements, emphasizing the role that these statements play in establishing organizational culture and directing behavior. Bart [23] emphasized the complexity of mission statements, suggesting that they may consist of up to 25-component parts. Alolayan et al. [24] focused on key components of mission statements, including consumers, products, and services; market; technology; survival and growth commitment; philosophy; public image; employees; and distinctive competencies. Researchers have also investigated the impact of mission statement components on organizational performance [25]. The review of the literature in this area has revealed a lack of consensus on the components that a mission statement should contain. Abdalkrim [26] identified the mission statement as a key component of strategic planning activities,

along with implementation, internal and external analysis, and control and evaluation. Desmidt et al. [27] conducted a 20-year meta-analysis on mission statements, highlighting their critical role in organizational success. Research has explored the link between mission statements and organizational performance, with studies such as Duygulu et al. [28] examining this relationship in small and medium-sized organizations. Additionally, research indicates that an effective mission statement can benefit an organization in several ways, including fostering a sense of purpose, offering guidance, acting as a focal point, guaranteeing unity of purpose, and directing goals and tactics. Yadav and Sehgal [29] explored how high-performing organizations define their mission, emphasizing the importance of a clear and compelling goal in mission statements. The advantages of including corporate ethos, brand personality attributes, and mission statement components in mission and vision statements were covered by Fitzsimmons et al. [30]. Babnik et al. [3] highlighted the significance of products and services as important components of mission statements. Penco et al. [31] emphasized the critical role of mission statements in firms' sustainability and growth, positioning them as tools for the strategic management process. The analysis of mission statement components in various contexts, such as hospitals, social enterprises, and educational institutions, has provided valuable insights into the diverse applications and impacts of these strategic documents.

An analysis of the similarities and distinctions among sectors and businesses in Switzerland has demonstrated the significance of online brand personality characteristics in establishing a distinct company identity using mission and vision statements. The effectiveness of mission statements on corporate reputation was also highlighted as an important consideration for competitiveness in the global market [32]. A key theme emerging from the literature is the potential impact of these statements on corporate identity and reputation. Research suggests that mission statements can effectively communicate a company's underlying core character or brand personality, influencing stakeholder perceptions [32]. Organizations can distinguish themselves from competitors and build a favorable market position by highlighting distinctive traits and values. Research has shown that mission statements can communicate and strengthen the intended organizational culture [3,33]. The content and emphasis of these statements can shape employee behavior, values, and commitment to the organization's goals. Clear and measurable objectives offer direction and clarity, potentially boosting overall performance. The importance and usefulness of mission and vision statements is increased when stakeholders are involved in their creation [3].

3. Crafting Effective Mission and Vision Statements

The process of developing and communicating mission and vision statements is critical to their effectiveness. Crafting mission and vision statements for maritime businesses is a critical step in defining their purpose, values, and future aspirations. Drawing from the extensive literature on mission and vision statements in various sectors, it is evident that these statements play a pivotal role in guiding organizational strategies, communicating values, and inspiring stakeholders [34-36].

An effective mission statement should be concise, memorable, and encompass the organization's core purpose, values, and unique competencies [10,37]. An effective mission statement should clearly articulate the organization's core values, objectives, products and services, philosophy, and priorities. It is a unifying theme that motivates and focuses employees, guiding them in their daily activities and strategic initiatives [12,38]. A well-formulated mission statement serves the purpose of not only conveying the purpose of an organization's existence but also delineating its course, priorities, and values, thus setting it apart from its rivals [30,39].

A compelling vision statement should describe the organization's aspirations, inspire stakeholders, and guide strategic choices. Vision statements should be future-oriented and aspirational and should provide a clear direction for the organization to strive toward [40,41]. They are crucial in aligning efforts, motivating employees, and signaling the organization's long-term goals to external stakeholders [42]. Involving stakeholders in the process helps organizations create statements that connect with employees, customers, and the community, fostering a sense of purpose and direction [6,43].

Mission and vision statements should not exist in isolation but should be integrated into the organization's overall strategic planning and communication efforts. To ensure they continue to be significant, impactful, and in line with an organization's strategic priorities, they should be evaluated, updated, and shared regularly [11,38]. One way to reinforce these is by incorporating them into daily operations and decision-making processes.

For maritime businesses, a well-crafted mission statement should summarize the fundamental values, goals, and operational focus unique to the maritime sector. The document should outline the organization's commitment to maritime safety, environmental sustainability, efficient operations and, customer service excellence. By clearly articulating these aspects, a mission statement can serve as a compass for decision-making and resource allocation within

maritime businesses [30,44]. In parallel, the vision statement for a maritime business should project a forward-looking perspective that envisions the company's future position in the maritime sector. This should encompass goals related to innovation in maritime technology, expansion into new markets, sustainability initiatives, and leadership in maritime best practices. A compelling vision statement can inspire employees, attract much-needed workforce investors, and differentiate a business in a competitive industry [41,45]. Research suggests that mission and vision statements are not mere symbolic declarations but strategic tools that can significantly impact organizational performance. In the maritime business context, these statements can foster a culture of safety and excellence and position an organization for long-term success in the maritime industry [5,46].

3.1. Components of Mission and Vision Statements

The components of a mission statement have been extensively studied in the literature. Pearce and David [47] classified key components into, eight categories [22]. These components include target customers and markets, principal products and services, geographic domain, core technologies, commitment to survival, growth, profitability, key elements of company philosophy, self-concept, and desired public image. There are four essential components to mission statements: purpose, strategy, behavior, and company values [48]. These components focus on defining the fundamental reason for the organization's existence, outlining the strategic approach to achieving its goals, specifying the expected behavior and actions of the organization, and highlighting the core values that guide decision-making and operations. Mission statements commonly address questions about the organization's strategy and focus, such as "who we are" and "what businesses we are in" [49]. In addition, mission statements can outline target demographics, markets, geographical areas, fundamental technologies, and organizational philosophies to offer a full summary of the organization's identity and strategic objectives [28].

Vision statements within an organization provide several benefits, including ensuring that the organization's interests are embraced by all employees, facilitating activities, allowing for comparisons between activities, and focusing on the effectiveness of organizational change and transformation. It is emphasized that vision statements should be concise, embodying components such as conciseness, clarity, future orientation, stability, challenge, abstraction, desirability, and the ability to inspire as a whole [50-52].

4. Methodology

This research aims to systematically analyze the mission and vision statements published by liner shipping companies

on their corporate websites in the context of the strategic management process. In this context, the websites of the top 100 liner shipping companies, as listed by Alphaliner, were analyzed, and the companies that included mission and vision statements were assessed based on the academic literature's effective mission and vision components.

According to the nine elements of a comprehensive mission statement identified by Pearce and David [47], content analysis was performed on the mission statements of liner shipping companies with mission and vision statements on their corporate websites. Furthermore, content analysis was conducted to assess the seven elements of a comprehensive vision statement identified by Kantabutra [50]. The MAXQDA 2024 program was used to code the mission and vision statements of the businesses as part of their content analysis. The vision and mission statements were coded using the hierarchical code and sub-code model of MAXMaps, a visual tool developed by MAXQDA 2024.

The Alphaliner company's top 100 companies, released on May 4, 2024, served as the sample. Considering the fleets of nearly all container operators globally, the Alphaliner top 100 offers a continuously updated rating of the 100 biggest container/liner operators and global capacity numbers. After analyzing the corporate websites of 100 companies, 47 of them had mission and/or vision statements. Thirty-five vision statements and 37 missions were looked at in the study. Table 1 lists the companies that comprise the research sample.

5. Findings

Forty-seven organizations with mission and vision statements on their corporate websites were examined individually as part of the content analysis of the mission and vision statements of the liner shipping companies. The elements that each mission and vision statement contained were identified.

The results pertaining to the mission statements of the 37 companies in the sample are presented in Figure 1 and Table 2. Table 2 shows that no company has all nine mission components active simultaneously. Four businesses utilized 78% of the components in their mission statement, four businesses used 67%, eleven businesses used 56%, nine businesses used 45%, four businesses used 33%, and five businesses used 22% of the components in their mission statement, according to the research. The company has made a decision. Based on this research, it appears that company mission statements typically consist of five or four elements.

The organization's internal rules and procedures, designed to direct management and staff, are based on mission statements. Furthermore, upon examination of the nine components, it is noted that the "self-concept" component, included in

Table 1. List of sampled companies

Code	Company	Vision	Mission
S1	Mediterranean Shipping Company	✓	
S2	Maersk	✓	
S3	CMA CGM Group		✓
S4	Hapag-Lloyd		✓
S5	Evergreen Line		✓
S6	Yang Ming Marine Transport Corporation	✓	
S7	PIL (Pacific Int. Line)		✓
S8	KMTC	✓	
S9	X-Press Feeders		✓
S10	Zhonggu Logistics Corp.		✓
S11	UniFeeder	✓	✓
S12	Sea Lead Shipping	✓	✓
S13	Sinokor	✓	
S14	TS Lines		✓
S15	Regional Container L. (RCL)	✓	✓
S16	SM Line Corp.	✓	✓
S17	Emirates Shipping Line, the shipping company		✓
S18	Matson	✓	✓
S19	Ningbo Ocean Shg Co	✓	
S20	Arkas Line (EMES)	✓	
S21	Grimaldi (Napoli)		✓
S22	Sino Trans	✓	✓
S23	China United Lines (CULines)	✓	✓
S24	FESCO	✓	✓
S25	Samudera	✓	✓
S26	Tanto Intim Line	✓	✓
S27	Seaboard Marine		✓
S28	Namsung Shipping	✓	✓
S29	ASYAD Line, L.L.C.	✓	✓
S30	Temas Line	✓	✓
S31	Akkon Lines	✓	✓
S32	Turkon Line	✓	✓
S33	Transworld Group, Singapore	✓	✓
S34	Crowley Liner Services		✓
S35	Qatar Navigation (Milaha)	✓	✓
S36	MTT Shipping	✓	
S37	Boluda Lines	✓	✓
S38	HR Lines	✓	
S39	Eimskip	✓	✓
S40	Samskip	✓	✓

Table 1. Continued

Code	Company	Vision	Mission
S41	Pan-continental Shg		✓
S42	Shipping Corp. of India	✓	✓
S43	Philippine Span Asia Carrier Corp.	✓	✓
S44	Medkon Lines	✓	✓
S45	Rifline	✓	
S46	VASI Shipping	✓	✓
S47	Shin Yang Shipping Sdn Bhd	✓	✓

33 mission statements (89%), is the most prevalent. The “philosophy” component, present in 29 mission statements (79%), appears to be the other significant component. This component is followed by the following: “product/services” (73%), “sustainability, growth, profitability goals” (49%), “customer” (43%), “public image” (41%), “market” (33%), and finally, “responsibility toward employees” (19%).

The following are examples of each mission statement component:

Customers: “Who are the customers of the company?”

- “.....all our business partners and stakeholders.” (VASI Shipping, S46).
- “To customize Solutions for all Ship Owners.....” (Shin Yang Shipping Sdn Bhd, S47).
- “..... to support our customers’ feeding needs.” (X-Press Feeders Group, S9).
- “..... with satisfied customers,” [Regional Container L. (RCL), S15].
- “..... to serve our customer best,” (SM Line Corp, S16).
- “.....provides customers with world class services,” (Emirates Shipping Line, S17).
- “..... growing together with our customers for a better future.....” (Tanto Intim Line, S26).
- “..... by offering customized solutions to our customers” (Akkon Lines, S31).

Upon examination of the aforementioned mission statements, it becomes evident that the term “customer” encompasses a broad spectrum of parties associated with maritime transportation, and 43% of organizations incorporate these expressions in their missions. The customer-focused approach maximizes customer pleasure while allowing target consumer groups to form close relationships with the company [53].

Products and services: “Which are the main offerings of the company?”

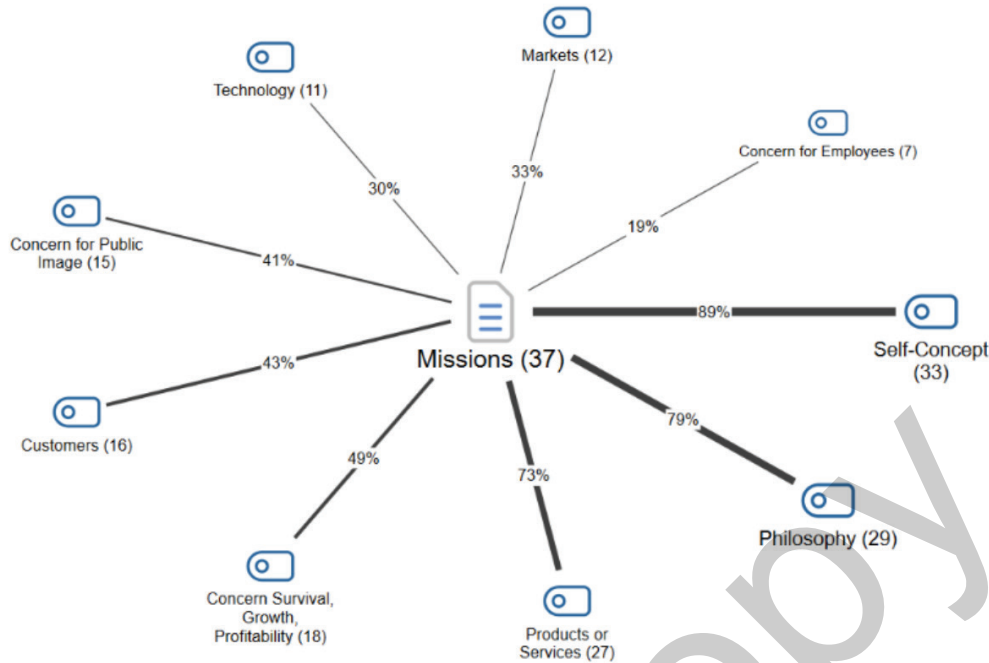


Figure 1. Numbers and percentages of mission statement components

Table 2. Numbers and percentages of mission statement components

Mission statements	Total	%
Customers	16	43
Products and services	27	73
Markets	12	33
Technology	11	30
Survival, growth, and profitability	18	49
Philosophy	29	79
Self-concept	33	89
Concerns regarding public image	15	41
Concerns for employees	7	19

- “..... easy customer experience in interisland cargo logistics.....” (Philippine Span Asia Carrier Corp., S43).
- “..... to accelerate our fleet renewal program, introducing ever more eco-friendly container ships.” (Evergreen Line, S5).
- “..... reliable shipping and related services.”[PIL, (Pacific Int. Line), S7].
- “..... high-quality services for the sea transport of passengers and freight, ” [Grimaldi (Napoli), S21].
- “..... providing transportation services” (Samudera, S25).
- “Respond and attend to the needs of the maritime transport and the harbor logistics” (Boluda Lines, S37).

Upon closer inspection of the aforementioned instances, it becomes evident that companies explain in their mission statements the industry to which they cater and the services they offer. Seventy-three percent of companies include these statements in their mission statements. Businesses can set themselves apart from their rivals by providing various services. The development, application, and assessment of business plans heavily rely on services [54].

Markets: “Where does the company compete?”

- “To create the most successful regional Multi-modal container logistics system ..” (Samskip, S40).
- “To create the best logistics solutions in Russia and Eurasia.....” (Fesco, S24).
- “..... to be a leader in ocean transportation and logistics” (Seaboard Marine, S27).
- “To propel the development of Oman as a global logistics hub..... (ASYAD Line L.L.C., S29).

When the mission statements above are examined, it is noteworthy that the name of a country or the sector in which it operates is explained in the market/location dimension. Companies include these statements in their missions at a rate of 33%. In mission statements, companies should disclose to the public the markets they serve or, in other words, the facts about their target market [54].

Technology: “Does the organization prioritize technology?”

- “..... in providing Comprehensive, Innovative and efficient Quality services.....” (Shin Yang Shipping Sdn Bhd, S47).

- “.....basedoninternetbigdata,.....” (Zhonggu Logistics Corp, S10).

- “To innovate and improve as a trade facilitator.....” (Sea Lead Shipping, S12).

- “..... to deliver efficient, reliable, innovative and high-quality services for the sea transport of passengers and freight,.....” (Grimaldi (Napoli), S21).

“Technology” describes innovation, big data, and technological advances in the aforementioned cases. It is evident that companies place high value on keeping up with technical advancements that are unique to their industry, and this is reflected in their goals. Thirty percent of companies have been observed to include these statements in their missions. Businesses attach greater importance to researching technological changes and developing technology because of increased competition and rapid differences in customer demands [55]. Digitalization, which is essential for companies to achieve their goals, is a significant issue in the maritime industry in terms of its competitive advantages and regulatory compliance.

Concern survival, growth, profitability: “Is the organization receptive to environmental, social, and community issues?”

- “..... by the most economical & timely means as a professional freight forwarder.....” (Pan Continental Shg, S41).

- “....., evolving reliable and cost-effective business models to exploit emerging opportunities.....” (Shipping Corp. of India, S42).

- “..... to build efficient e-commerce platforms” (Evergreen Line, S5).

- “.....thereby contributing to the global economic development” (SM Line Corp, S16).

Sustainability, growth, and profitability targets are employed in mission statements to indicate growth, development, success, and profit, as seen in the examples above. Companies are found to include these statements in their missions 49% of the time. Businesses currently place a high value on profitability targets for growth to be sustainable because, the growth idea gives them a sustainable feature [56].

Philosophy: “What are the fundamental principles, ideals, goals, and philosophical priorities of the company?”

- “..... to be “The Global Common Carrier” of choice,” (X-Press Feeders Group, S9).

- “..... to build on our leading market position and expand the market share in our existing territories, enlarge the contents of our products and grow into new geographies.” (UniFeeder, S11).

- “To be a fully integrated shipping enterprise.....” (Emirates Shipping Line, S17).

These examples demonstrate how the goals of maritime corporations are reflected in their ambition to supply integrated services, increase their market share, and cater to a vast population. These assertions are part of the missions of 79% of the companies. Businesses’ values and beliefs regarding their interactions with all their stakeholders, including employees, clients, suppliers, and the government, should be reflected in their mission statements [57].

Self-concept: “What is the primary competitive advantage or area of unique competence for the organization?”

- “With its strong organization and cultural structure;” (Medkon Lines, S44).

- “To uphold our position as a leading freight and logistics service provider,.....” (VASI Shipping, S46).

- “....., we are “connecting the world across oceans”.” (Hapag Lloyd, S4).

In their mission statements, the companies listed on the above list have highlighted their fundamental competencies, which include strong organizational and cultural structures as well as leadership positions. Eighty-nine percent of the companies have these statements in their missions. Customers’ perceptions of the quality of a product or service should be improved by adopting the core competency approach, which should also be implemented in a way that makes it difficult for rivals to copy [58].

Concerns regarding public image: “Does the organization respond to environmental, social, and community concerns?”

- “....., achieving excellence in Quality, Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management Systems.” (Shipping Corp. of India, S42).

- “.....while respecting the integrity of all men and women and the planet.” (CMA CGM Group, S3).

- “.....create more values to benefit the society.” [China United Lines (CULines), S23].

By examining the examples given above, it can be seen that companies have included language about their quality, health, safety, social responsibility, and environmental duties in their mission statements, reflecting the desired public image dimension. It was observed that 41% of companies had these statements in their missions. The targeted public image dimension, one of the mission components, is the perception of the company’s social, societal, and environmental sensitivities [59].

Concern for employees: “Do workers see themselves as an organization’s most valuable asset?”

- “.....which are proficient, professional and perfectly suited to all our business partners and stakeholders.” (VASI Shipping, S46).
- “.....dedicated Employees and benefits for our Shareholders”. [Regional Container L. (RCL), S15].
- “Actively participating in creating employment and, developing human capital, (Samudera, S25).

The aforementioned examples illustrate the different ways in which organizations define their human resources, demonstrating how important the aspect of employee accountability is in their mission statements. Companies incorporate these statements into their missions at a 19% rate.

Successful businesses share a clear vision, purpose, and goal and the flexibility to modify tactics in response to shifting internal and external environmental conditions. Examining the achievements of people, cultures, nations, and organizations reveal that they all have a vision [60]. The vision statements of the 35 companies in the sample are presented in Figure 2 and Table 3. Table 3 shows that three businesses are simultaneously operating with seven vision components. Twelve companies have six components in their vision statement, seven have five, nine have four, two have three, and one has two components and one component, according to the researcher’s findings. The liner shipping companies in the sample consist of 6 and 4 parts, respectively.

Additionally, when businesses were analyzed using the seven vision statement components, it was discovered that the “clarity” and “stability” components were the most frequently used (86%) components. The vision must be clear and straightforward enough to remain relevant even in the face of technological or market changes if it is to be embraced by all stakeholders and has their support for its overarching goals [61]. According to research, 86% of businesses have vision statements that follow the dimension of clarity. Surprisingly, 86% of businesses prioritize stability in their vision statements.

The words “abstractness” (80%), “future-oriented” (66%), “conciseness” (63%), “challenge” (57%), and “the ability to be desired and inspire” (49%) were highlighted in the vision statements.

The vision should offer a long-term, wide-ranging direction that maintains its value throughout time rather than being

Table 3. Numbers and percentages of vision statement components

Vision statements	Total	%
Conciseness	22	63
Clarity	31	86
Future orientation	24	66
Stability	31	86
Challenge	20	57
Abstractness	28	80
Desirability or ability to inspire	17	49

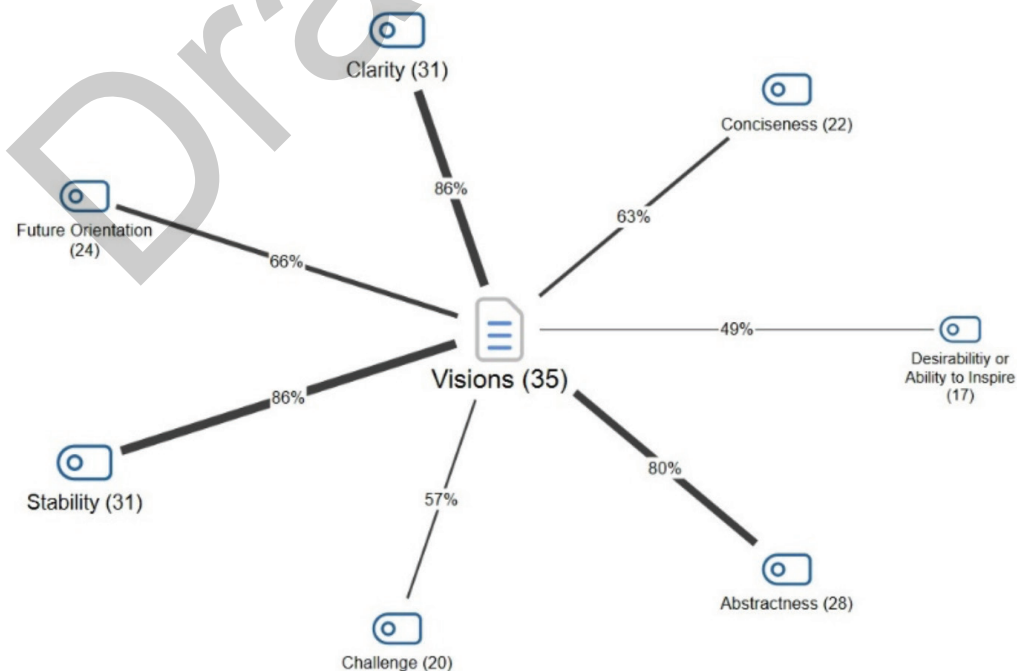


Figure 2. Numbers and percentages of vision statement components

a specific, one-time goal [61]. It was observed that vision statements that address an abstract subject are present in 80% of businesses.

The vision should focus on the long-term direction of the organization, offering guidance in response to future challenges and opportunities in its environment [61]. It is observed that vision statements with a future theme are present in 66% of the businesses.

A vision should be brief and to the point; however, this brevity must not hinder the clear communication of the organization's goals and objectives [61]. Vision statements suitable for conciseness were used by 63% of the sampled organizations. A vision statement should be between 11 and 22 words long to be effective and succinct [54]. Twenty two vision statements were between two and twenty-four words long.

A well-crafted vision should inspire individuals to strive toward challenging yet achievable goals and encourage them to give their best effort [61]. It is observed that 57% of companies have vision statements with a challenge theme.

The vision should represent an ideal that inspires followers and is worth pursuing. If it fails to resonate with followers, then securing their commitment will be difficult [61]. Vision statements concerning being inspiring and desirable are present in 49% of businesses.

Compelling visions that have a big influence on employee and customer satisfaction the bottom line of any company-have the following characteristics: challenge, abstractness, clarity, conciseness, future orientation, stability, desirability, or the capacity to motivate [52]. All three sampled businesses cover every aspect of their vision statements. These are ASYAD Line L.L.C., HR Lines, and Shipping Corp. of India.

- “We aspire to be among the top ten global integrated logistics service providers.” (ASYAD Line L.L.C., S29).
- “Our vision is to be a premier container vessel operator in the region, flying the Bangladesh flag.” (HR Lines, S38).
- “To emerge as a team of inspired performers in the field of maritime logistics, Offshore, Port and Terminal Management, serving Indian and global trade.” (Shipping Corp. of India, S42).

According to Kessler and Chakrabarti [62], organizations that lack a clear vision-that is, have unclear project concepts-promote mistrust and disagreement among team members over what should be produced, which can lead to lengthy readjustments and arguments.

6. Discussion

The content analysis of mission statements from the top 100 liner shipping companies revealed notable trends and gaps. None of the companies included all nine components

identified by Pearce and David [47], reflecting the variability in how these companies articulate their missions. The most frequently included components were “self-concept” (89%) and “philosophy” (79%). These components help define an organization's core identity and values, aligning with Kopaneva and Sias [13], who emphasized that a clear self-concept and philosophy are fundamental for guiding decision-making and aligning organizational activities with strategic goals.

However, the analysis also revealed a significant drop in the inclusion of customer orientation (43%) and public image (41%), suggesting a potential gap in the engagement of external stakeholders. This is critical in the maritime industry, where customer relationships and public perception significantly impact business success [63]. The limited focus on customer orientation contrasts with the findings of Bartkus et al. [64], who highlighted that mission statements should clearly communicate an organization's commitment to its customers to foster loyalty and trust.

The low inclusion of the “concern for employees” component (19%) is particularly concerning. The maritime industry relies heavily on skilled labor, and neglecting employee concerns could impact employee engagement and retention, which are crucial for operational efficiency and safety [65]. This finding contrasts with Kenneth and Bart Baetz [8] study, which stressed the importance of incorporating employee well-being into mission statements to enhance motivation and performance.

Vision statements showed a high frequency of “clarity” (86%) and “stability” (86%), emphasizing the need for a clear and consistent strategic direction. These components are essential for long-term planning and help stakeholders understand the company's future trajectory [42]. However, the “desirability or ability to inspire” component was included in only 49% of the statements, suggesting that although companies are clear about their future goals, they may not effectively inspire their stakeholders. Inspirational vision statements motivate employees and other stakeholders to align their efforts with the company's long-term goals to enhance, overall organizational performance [52].

The high inclusion of “abstractness” (80%) aligns with Kirkpatrick [12], who noted that abstract vision statements help guide broad strategic initiatives and inspire innovation. However, [66] the lower emphasis on “challenge” (57%) suggests that companies may not be sufficiently emphasizing the ambitious aspects of their vision, which can drive innovation and continuous improvement [67].

The comparison of mission and vision statements reveals distinct strategic focuses. Mission statements primarily define the organization's current identity, values, and

operational focus, providing a foundation for daily decision-making and resource allocation [66]. In contrast, vision statements articulate long-term aspirations and goals, providing a company with a future-oriented roadmap. This distinction is critical for aligning short-term actions with long-term strategic objectives.

The variability in the comprehensiveness of these statements among top-liner shipping companies indicates differences in strategic communication maturity. Companies with more comprehensive statements are likely better positioned to convey their strategic intentions clearly, align stakeholder expectations, and achieve better organizational outcomes [64,68]. However, the overall lack of focus on certain components, such as employee concerns and inspirational elements, suggests that even leading companies have room for improvement in their strategic communication practices.

The gaps identified in maritime mission and vision statements, particularly regarding customer orientation (43% inclusion) and employee concerns (19% inclusion), align with broader trends observed across other industries. For instance, Desmidt and Prinzie [69] found that although retail organizations often use mission statements to enhance customer orientation and organizational sensemaking, inconsistencies remain in fully addressing diverse stakeholder needs. Similarly, Bart and Tabone [70] highlighted that healthcare mission statements frequently emphasize employee well-being and organizational alignment, demonstrating a commitment that contrasts with the maritime sector's limited focus on employee concerns. Kemp and Dwyer [71], in their analysis of airline mission statements, noted a strong emphasis on customer-centric language, illustrating a potential avenue for maritime organizations to adopt customer-focused strategies and strengthen stakeholder relationships. Additionally, Sufi and Lyons [72] critique of mission statements in the hospitality sector underscores the necessity of balancing internal priorities, such as employee engagement, with external priorities like customer satisfaction. These comparisons suggest that the gaps identified in maritime mission and vision statements reflect broader trends in strategic communication across various sectors.

7. Results

The content analysis of mission and vision statements from the top 100 liner shipping companies provides insightful observations on strategic communication in the maritime industry. The findings underscore the importance of components such as self-concept, philosophy, clarity, and stability. However, the relatively low emphasis on customer orientation, employee concerns, and inspirational elements points to areas for potential enhancement.

To maximize the effectiveness of mission and vision statements, maritime companies should strive for a balanced inclusion of all critical components. This comprehensive approach ensures that these strategic documents not only define organizational identity and future aspirations but also address all stakeholders' needs and expectations. By doing so, companies can enhance stakeholder alignment, foster a unified organizational culture, and drive better performance outcomes.

Enhanced stakeholder involvement: This step actively involves employees, customers, and other stakeholders in developing mission and vision statements. This inclusion can ensure that the statements resonate with all parties and align with their expectations, fostering greater buy-in and commitment [73,74].

Regular updates and reviews: Periodically review and update mission and vision statements to reflect changing market conditions, technological advancements, and evolving stakeholder expectations. This practice ensures that the statements remain relevant and effectively guide strategic decision-making effectively [75]. However, data such as user-generated content are much more accessible [76] due to social networking platforms, which companies can use to adapt and update their strategies to respond to stakeholder wishes.

Integration into daily operations: This step embeds mission and vision statements into daily operations and decision-making processes. This integration can help ensure that organizational activities are consistently aligned with strategic goals, enhancing coherence and focus across the company [77].

Focus on inspirational elements: Enhance the inspirational aspects of vision statements to motivate and engage employees and other stakeholders. An inspiring vision can drive innovation, encourage commitment, and differentiate a company in a competitive industry [50,51]

Comprehensive Employee Orientation: Ensure that mission statements address employee concerns comprehensively. This focus can foster a supportive work environment, enhance employee satisfaction, and improve retention, all contributing to overall organizational success [8].

By adopting these recommendations, maritime companies can strengthen their strategic communication practices, align organizational efforts with strategic goals, and enhance their competitive position in the global maritime industry.

Only 47 of the top 100 organizations that were examined in the study had mission and vision statements available. This restriction limits the applicability of the findings to the whole marine industry. This could be addressed in future studies by examining mission and vision statements from more businesses and using a larger sample. Further

research is required to explore the impact of mission and vision statements on specific organizational outcomes in the maritime industry. Investigating how these statements influence factors such as employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and financial performance can provide deeper insights into their effectiveness.

Additionally, examining best practices for crafting and communicating mission and vision statements across different maritime subsectors can help identify strategies for optimizing their impact.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, mission and vision statements are not merely symbolic declarations but strategic tools that can significantly influence organizational behavior and performance. By addressing the identified gaps and leveraging the strengths highlighted in this analysis, maritime companies can enhance their strategic communication, foster stakeholder alignment, and achieve long-term success in the competitive maritime industry.

Footnotes

Authorship Contributions

Concept design: G. Tuğdemir Kök, and T. T. Türkistanlı, Data Collection or Processing: G. Tuğdemir Kök, Analysis or Interpretation: G. Tuğdemir Kök, and T. T. Türkistanlı, Literature Review: T. T. Türkistanlı, Writing, Reviewing and Editing: G. Tuğdemir Kök, and T. T. Türkistanlı.

Funding: The authors did not receive any financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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