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# Assessing the internalization of the mission

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Many companies have a mission statement that they disseminate through corporate communication to stakeholders and particularly to employees. However, the communication action alone does not ensure that employees take true “ownership” of the mission. Having a mission and internalizing that mission are quite different. The purpose of this paper is to provide a scale to assess the internalization of the mission (IM). Additionally, the authors explore the relationship between IM and organizational alignment.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Based on previous research on mission internalization, the authors test the conditions necessary for reaching true mission internalization. A first sample of 132 managers from two companies was used for an exploratory analysis: thereafter, a second universal sample of 400 people was used to confirm the scale. Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the dimensions deployed in the latent IM construct. This construct has been examined as a second-order factor. A multi-group analysis across these two companies provides nomological validation of the IM scale.

**Findings** – A scale of 18 items gathered under five dimensions is proposed. Accordingly, the findings are that IM comprises five dimensions: leadership, importance, knowledge, co-workers’ engagement and implication. The five dimensions count equally for the IM.

**Practical implications** – This study provides a useful measure to assess the IM. To achieve a good degree of internalization across employees, the employees must feel that the mission is worthy of engagement and that it is aligned with their personal values.

**Originality/value** – The paper addresses gaps in the current literature on mission statements regarding the effective implementation of the corporate mission. The results can serve as criteria for managers to obtain better IM for all employees.

**Keywords** Leadership, Mission statement, Co-workers’ engagement, Mission internalization, Organizational alignment

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Mission statements, which are commonly defined under headings such as mission, vision, values, credo, and philosophy (Abrahams, 1999; Leuthesser and Kohli, 1997; Blair-Loy *et al.*, 2011), capture the “reason of being” and identity of an organization (Wang, 2011). These statements are of great relevance to a company because they facilitate consistency in the definition and implementation of the company’s strategy (Drucker, 1974; Pearce, 1982; McGowan 1986; Ireland and Hitt, 1992; E Sá *et al.*, 2011), they serve as a source of motivation and emotional security for employees (Kanter, 2009), and they have a significant impact on company performance (Bart *et al.*, 2001; Desmidt *et al.*, 2011).

In recent decades, several authors have submitted proposals on how to define a company’s mission (Lundberg, 1984; Cochran *et al.*, 2008; Jones and Kahaner, 1995; Collins and Porras, 1994; Abrahams, 1999; Levin, 2000) and how to ensure alignment between the mission and the company’s processes and systems (Bart *et al.*, 2001; Crotts *et al.*, 2005; Cardona and Rey, 2008). This stream of literature shows that for a mission to



be effective, it should be present in all company decisions and internal policies – goals, compensation, recruitment, evaluation, etc. – and in the way in which the company develops relationships with clients and other stakeholders.

However, defining a mission and communicating it to employees is one thing, but getting employees to truly internalize these principles is quite another (Campbell and Nash, 1992; Bart, 1997; Bart and Baetz, 1998; Wright, 2002; Bartkus and Glassman, 2008). For a mission to be truly effective, it is necessary not only “to walk the talk”, but, in turn, “to internalize the talk you walk.”

This paper provides a conceptualization of the internalization of the mission (IM) and develops a multidimensional scale to measure it and assess its psychometric properties. Thus, the main aim of the paper is to design and validate a scale that measures the IM.

The paper is structured as follows: after this introduction, a literature review is provided in Section 2. In the third section, extended explanations of the dimensions that determine good internalization are presented. Section 4 describes the methodology. In the fifth section, the results are presented, and the last section provides the discussion and conclusions, including limitations and possible avenues for future research.

## 2. Literature review about mission internalization

Internalization is phenomenon in which people accept a certain external influence and integrate it into their personal beliefs and values (Kelman, 1974). Internalization goes beyond acceptance or identification and occurs when ideas or practices presented to an individual are intrinsically satisfactory and congruent with the individual’s own value system.

At an organizational level, internalization is transmitted gradually by members of an organization, starting with a few individuals and expanding throughout the organization in conjunction with various activities and types of knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). These activities and knowledge include, for example, hands-on experience, reflection, dialog, and the systematization or explicit application of the knowledge (Nonaka and Toyama, 2002).

In terms of the mission of a company, the IM refers to the way in which employees assume the mission as their own and allow it to become part of their personal beliefs and values. The aim is for employees to adopt the company’s mission as part of their personal mission in life (Covey, 1992). Internalization is what makes the mission of a company authentic, and it marks the difference between a mission that is truly “lived” and one that is merely a phrase published on the company website. Achieving mission internalization is one of the main objectives of a mission and is a necessary condition for it to have an impact on the behavior and performance of a company (Bart *et al.*, 2001; Wang 2011).

Although there is extensive literature on successful cases of mission implementation, including, for example, the study by Collins and Porras (1996), no study explains the conditions that must be met for employees to truly internalize a mission. The act of communication alone does not guarantee that employees will take true “ownership” of the mission. Such was the case, for example, in a multinational technology company in Europe, leader of ERP solutions. Despite having a good reputation in the market and being placed among the top companies in a “best place to work” ranking, poor results were obtained when measuring the degree of mission internalization among the company’s employees. Based upon these results, the

company embarked on an intense mission communication campaign using actions such as posters in the office, screensavers, videos, and articles in the internal magazine, reflection workshops and management speeches. After a period of two years, the level of mission internalization was measured again within the same group of employees, and the same poor results as in the first measurement were obtained.

### 3. Dimensions of mission internalization

A lack of mission internalization is not due to inadequate communication. Often, the actions carried out to communicate the mission – posters, videos, speeches, etc. – can be extremely helpful in encouraging employees to endorse the company's mission. Rather, the underlying issue is that the communication campaigns often fail to incorporate the necessary conditions to generate of internalization among employees.

This work is built on previous research that identified a total of seven dimensions that show that the IM is accomplished by employees (Cardona and Rey, 2008; Rey, 2012). We want to stress that this work is based on several studies carried out since 2003 on company missions and the way in which employees connect to the mission and adopt it as part of their life mission. During this time, the authors have analyzed several successful cases of mission-based management and collaborated in mission implantation at a strategic and organizational level with around 30 organizations of different sectors and sizes. So, the seven dimensions defined below are an output of an extensive research and experience in consultancy in different companies in order to assess the degree of internalization of its mission.

In the following sections, we describe these dimensions and specify the types of actions that promote their fulfillment. The seven dimensions are explained and justified using some studies in the literature, and they represent the starting point to validating a definitive scale based on the sample collected for this purpose.

#### 3.1 *Dimension 1: knowing the content of the mission*

The significance of this dimension is that, to expand knowledge of the mission and encourage its internalization throughout an organization, the employees must have explicit knowledge of the mission's content (Nonaka, 1994) to the extent that they are able to explain the mission in their own words (Wang, 2011). In fact, although implicit or tacit knowledge of the mission is an option (Nonaka and Tokoyama, 2002), several studies demonstrate the advisability of the mission being formally communicated by members of the organization (Hirota *et al.*, 2010).

If there is no explicit knowledge of the mission, or if its communication is poor, the general result will be a certain lack of awareness or ambiguous or contradictory messages.

#### 3.2 *Dimension 2: understanding the importance of the mission*

The mission must resonate with the personal values of the company's employees (Kelman, 1974) and be accepted as the correct way to think, act, and feel (Schein, 2010). This means making the mission appealing (Bart, 1997; Bart *et al.*, 2001) by letting it resonate with the personal values of the individual (Campbell and Yeung, 1991).

For this reason, it is necessary to clearly explain, using sound and easy to understand arguments, why the institutional principles are good for the company, the employees, and society in general. For a company's employees to understand the importance and need for the mission, the organization must use logical arguments that link the mission to socially accepted values (identity, survival, success, social value, happiness, etc.).

### 3.3 Dimension 3: visible commitment of the “bosses”

Of all of the dimensions, this one is probably the most significant because the credibility needed for employees to internalize the mission depends on this dimension. Its importance lies in the belief that the essence of mission implementation is not so much the appeal of the message but the testimony of the leaders (Selznick, 1984; Williams, 2008). In general, people tend to welcome and appreciate the mission, but to accept it as valid they need confirmation that their leaders are truly committed to the mission’s principles (Kelman, 1974). Mullane (2002) states that managers who see the mission statement as a tool that can influence the inner workings of their organization are likely to understand the mission’s utility. More recently, Babnik *et al.* (2014) explore the perceptions of managers of the role of the mission statement in guiding and directing employees’ behavior.

### 3.4 Dimension 4: visible commitment of co-workers

The significance of this dimension lies in the fact that the mission is a statement that defines the identity of an organization as a whole (Collins and Porras, 1994; Cardona and Rey, 2008; Hirota *et al.*, 2010). The mission represents shared principles, and for members of an organization to internalize them as such, they must be able to corroborate the commitment of other members of the organization, especially of those with whom they interact regularly (Schein, 2010; Mas-Machuca and Martinez, 2012).

If individuals do not see this commitment in their co-workers, it can lead to a sense that the mission is something that applies to the “bosses” but does not necessarily affect the employees personally. Thus, the company should ensure non-management testimony about the mission by providing employees with communication channels through which they can see their co-workers’ commitment to the mission and, in turn, show their commitment to other members of the company.

### 3.5 Dimension 5: perceived coherence between mission and practice

The significance of this dimension is that, for employees to commit to the mission, they need to perceive that the organization’s decisions and practice are aligned with the company’s mission (Bart, 2001; Cardona and Rey, 2008; Suh *et al.*, 2011). This aspect is especially relevant when a mission is put to the test, as may occur, for example, if a company faces the need for layoffs or a costly claim by a client (Jones and Kahaner, 1995). The way the company acts in these situations, and, more importantly, how this performance is perceived by the employees, is essential to the development of true mission internalization (Campbell and Yeung, 1991; Jones and Kahaner, 1995; Collins and Porras, 1994).

If employees do not perceive coherence between a company’s policy and its practice, the mission will gradually lose credibility. Such a credibility loss may occur due to lack of coherence or due to ignorance or poor communication, especially among those employees who have limited visibility and access to information about the general operations of the company.

### 3.6 Dimension 6: reflecting on the mission

Reflecting on the mission is important because the internalization to which we refer is based on personal values and beliefs (Kelman, 1958) and therefore must be supported by processes of reflection that generate and reinforce these values over time. In fact, several studies show that the mission has a greater impact in companies where employees reflect on the mission and do not merely receive it (Bart and Baetz, 1998).

Without such reflection, the employees' internalization becomes what we might call "apparent internalization" (or non-reflective), which occurs when the principles are merely incorporated due to processes of environmental influence and are not made personal. A lack of reflection can cause employees to "disengage" with the mission, thus limiting it to mere symbolic incorporation (Gondo and Amis, 2013). That is, they assimilate the mission as a formality, but they do not incorporate its meaning. It is therefore important to promote mission reflection not only by management but by all of the members of an organization by inviting employees to give careful thought to the principles of the company and express their opinions and feelings regarding them.

3.7 *Dimension 7: frequently recalling the mission*

Recalling the mission is significant because internalization is a process that requires the recurrent practice of knowledge management (Nonaka, 1994). Frequently recalling the mission by promoting it regularly in the internal dialog of the company can maintain employees' awareness of the mission (Campbell and Yeung, 1991). If a company's employees do not recall the mission frequently, there is a risk of it being "gradually forgotten." Therefore, a company must seize opportunities in the day-to-day business to practice mission evocation by reminding people of its existence. It is about recalling what is already known to create awareness. This mission evocation is also a source of employee satisfaction because when a mission is authentic and linked to personal values and beliefs, people welcome reminders of what "gives meaning" to their actions and efforts. In fact, this dimension could be considered implicitly within the other six dimensions.

To summarize the aforementioned dimensions, Table I shows the dimensions for internalization, the effects when are omitted and the actions that a company must take to satisfy each of the dimensions.

There are many who rightly argue that mission implementation is an "art" that requires great sensitivity and understanding of the environment. However, a certain dose of science should be added to this "art" to ensure that none of the seven dimensions defined are left unfulfilled.

4. **Methodology**

The data collection was conducted through two phases. The first one was addressed to the two companies which are working in mission statement process. The first company

**Table I.**  
Original dimensions of internalization, effects when omitted and actions to take to internalize the mission

Dimensions for mission internalization	Effects if omitted	Actions
1 Knowing the content of the mission	Ambiguity, contradictory messages	Understanding it and being able to communicate it
2 Understanding the importance of the mission	Lack of personal connection	Providing reasons about its importance
3 Visible commitment of the "bosses"	Lack of legitimacy	Managers' testimony
4 Visible commitment of co-workers	Perception of "it does not apply to us"	Colleagues' testimony
5 Perceived coherence between mission and practice	Lack of credibility	Demonstrative actions
6 Reflecting on the mission	Apparent internalization	Mission reflection
7 Frequently recalling the mission	Gradually "forgotten"	Mission evocation

is a market leader in spare auto part distribution that was established in Spain and that operates in Europe. The second company operates internationally in engineering construction activities, and its headquarters are located in South America. The sample provided by these two companies was used to conduct the entire analysis that resulted with the internalization scale. The survey was launched in January 2015, and 156 questionnaires were collected, from which only 132 were retained for our analysis (61 from the first company and 71 from the second company).

A series of meetings with managers of two companies was conducted to explain the aim of this study. Five managers agreed to participate in the definition of the questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was launched, some pilot managers completed it and suggested some changes to enhance understanding. Managing directors at different levels within the two target companies were targeted as respondents. According to Sidhu (2003), managing directors or business unit managers are normally seen as the most competent individuals to provide suitable answers to questions related to organization-level issues.

In order to provide greater robustness for the scale, the second phase was performed. A second sample ( $n=400$ ) was collected for this second phase in April 2015. This second sample was larger and with a wider profile (see Table II for demographic characteristic of this sample). The target was the entire Spanish population and it was pre-established a percentage of respondents for the categories of gender and age in order to avoid bias. A specialized company was required to conduct the survey. Note that this second sample was only used for a confirmatory analysis using the five dimensions established with the first sample from the two companies.

The first questionnaire included a section to collect 38 items to assess mission internalization. These items were gathered in the seven dimensions previously described. In the last section, the respondents' socio-demographic information was collected. Table III shows the questionnaire, in which all their items were presented as statements to which respondents indicated their agreement/disagreement on a five-point Likert-type scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The second questionnaire included only the 18 items that remained after the previous analysis of the first sample. A brief and simple definition of a company's mission was provided for the questionnaire. These 18 items encompass the proposed scale in the five dimensions.

Note that Table III shows the items borrowed from the literature and the items developed based on our experience, all of which are gathered under the dimensions. However, these dimensions had to be proven to be consistent. Therefore, to determine the dimensions or the latent constructs among these items, a factor analysis was conducted. First, the 38 "IM" items were analyzed using principal component analysis to explore the natural dimensions among them. The next section shows that this exploratory analysis yielded five dimensions instead of the seven that were initially proposed. Consequently, the dimensionality of each of the five dimensions was analyzed. We then proceed with a reliability analysis of these constructs to determine the internal consistency and the divergent validity. Once all of the dimensions showed the correct psychometric properties, a second-order CFA was performed on the IM construct.

## 5. Results

This section is composed of two subsections. The first proceeds with the exploratory analysis of the 38 items that measure internalization using the sample of 132 respondents from the two aforementioned companies and concludes with the definition of the five

IMDS		Number	(%)
116,1	<i>Gender</i>		
	Male	198	49.5
	Female	202	50.5
	Total	400	100
<b>176</b>	<i>Age</i>		
	Between 16 and 24 years	56	14.0
	Between 25 and 34 years	88	22.0
	Between 35 and 44 years	100	25.0
	Between 45 and 54 years	88	22.0
	Between 55 and 64 years	68	17.0
	Total	400	100
	<i>Working status</i>		
	Working full time	226	56.5
	Working part time	49	12.3
	Unemployed	63	15.8
	Retired/pensioner	27	6.8
	School and work	24	6.1
	Homemaker	11	2.8
	Total	400	100
	<i>Annual income (in euros)</i>		
	< 10,000	92	23.0
	Between 10,000 and 30,000	195	48.8
	Between 30,000 and 50,000	46	11.5
	Between 50,000 and 70,000	7	1.8
	> 70,000	60	15.0
	Total	400	100
	<i>Education</i>		
	Basic studies	30	7.6
	High school diploma	100	25.0
	Vocational qualification	89	22.3
	University degree	181	45.3
	Total	400	100

**Table II.**  
Demographic  
characteristics of the  
second sample

dimensions proposed for the scale. Next, the second subsection is devoted to reliability and validity analyses of the scales. Here, the analysis is expanded using a second, larger sample ( $n = 400$ ).

### 5.1 Exploratory analysis of the IM scale

The first step of this first phase was to perform a Principal Components Analysis of the 38 items from the previous seven dimensions of internalization. A Kaiser-Meier-Olkin statistic of 0.912 forecast a good result for this analysis. A Barlett test also provided the same conclusion ( $\chi^2 = 3,638.9$  and  $p$ -value = 0.000). These results confirmed a linear dependence between the variables and supported our view that the results were sound. Six factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1 (Kaiser criterion), which accounted for 66.8 percent of the variance in the sample. Table IV shows the suggested factors. Only loads above 0.350 are shown.

The scale was analyzed in accordance with very strict criteria, greater even than those used by Bernardo *et al.* (2012), who in turn used the criteria of Ladhari (2010) and



Code	Original dimension	Item	Reference <sup>a</sup>	
CON1_1	1 Knowing the mission	I think the mission is visible and accessible	New items	
CON1_2		I am able to explain the company's mission in my own words		
CON1_3		I believe that the company communicates the mission clearly and concretely		
CON1_4		I understand my company's mission		Wang (2011)
CON1_5		I am able to interpret the company's mission in my own words		
CON1_6		I could explain the company's mission to people outside the organization if I were asked to		
CON2_1	2 Understanding the importance of the mission	I think the mission is important to me	New item	
CON2_2		I believe the mission is important to the company		
CON2_3		I believe that the mission is important to society		
CON2_4		I feel that I identify with the company's mission		Wang (2011)
CON2_5		I consider the company's mission to be valuable to the extent that it helps me resolve difficulties at work		
CON2_6		I accept my company's mission because it is aligned with my individual values		
CON2_7		I think my company has the right mission		Bart <i>et al.</i> (2001)
CON2_8		I am pleased to know that my organization's mission is worth it		
CON3_1	3 Visible commitment of the "bosses"	The managers communicate the mission properly	New items	
CON3_2		The managers are committed to the mission		
CON3_3		The managers' behavior is consistent with the company's mission		
CON3_4		Through their example, the managers give visible signs of their commitment to the mission		
CON3_5		The managers encourage the development of the mission		Suh <i>et al.</i> (2011)
CON4_1	4 Visible commitment of co-workers	In general, my colleagues are committed to the mission	New items	
CON4_2		The mission is a principle that is shared by the members of the organization		
CON4_3		The behavior of my colleagues is consistent with the company's mission		
CON4_4		My colleagues push the development of the mission		
CON4_5		In general, the people who work with me are committed to the mission		Bart <i>et al.</i> (2001)
CON5_1	5 Perceived coherence between mission and practice	The mission is present in the values and culture of the company	Suh <i>et al.</i> (2011)	
CON5_2		The company's decisions are consistent with the mission		

(continued)

**Table III.**  
Questionnaire with  
its code items for IM,  
gathered from the  
original dimensions  
and references

IMDS  
116,1

178

Code	Original dimension	Item	Reference <sup>a</sup>
CON5_3		I work in a company that is focussed on its mission	
CON5_4		The mission marks the behavior of the people in the company	
CON5_5		The mission influences the behavior of the people in the organization	Bart <i>et al.</i> (2001)
CON5_6		In our company, the mission and values are more important than the economic benefit	New item
CON6_1	6 Reflecting on the mission	I have participated in the process of defining and reviewing the mission	New items
CON6_2		I'm in a working group at the company where we work on the mission	
CON6_3		During the year, I spend time reflecting on the company's mission	
CON6_4		I participate in activities where I can give my own opinion about the mission	
CON7_1	7 Frequently recalling the mission	The company communicates about the mission regularly	New items
CON7_2		I listen to the company's managers talk about the mission regularly	
CON7_3		I use the mission as a benchmark for my actions	
CON7_4		Usually, I bear the mission in mind when I carry out my work	

**Notes:** CONi\_j, CONi means "Construct i" and j for the correlative items in this construct. <sup>a</sup>"New items" means that they were proposed by the authors based on their experience

Table III.

Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003) to retain items. The criteria are that the items load at 0.60 or more on a factor; do not load at more than 0.50 on two factors; and have an item to total correlation of more than 0.40.

Accordingly, the first factor roughly suggested overlaps with the original dimensions "3 Visible commitment of the bosses" and "5 Perceived coherence between mission and practice." This factor accounts for the commitment of managers and also for the coherence to the mission in the way the company is run. Considering both dimensions, managing the company coherently is also a signal of the managers' commitment, hence, after examining each of these items, the label chosen for this dimension is "Leadership." This factor accounts for the 23.6 percent of the variance in the 38 items. In total 11 items show loads over 0.6. To keep the balance among the number of items in each dimension, a stricter criterion was applied for the new construct "1 Leadership," and only loads over 0.750 were considered. In fact, all of the quality models in the literature also include this construct as a pillar and consider it to be of paramount importance to achieving an organization's objectives. In Europe, the EFQM model promotes this construct as the first of the enablers' criteria (Heras *et al.*, 2012).

The second factor explains 10.1 percent of the variance and it is composed of three items that were originally included under "2 Understanding the importance of the mission." Thus, the same label is retained for this dimension: "Importance." The examination of these items enables us to obtain a sense of its importance.

The third factor includes four items, all of which are derived from the first original dimension "1 Knowing the mission." Thus, the label for the new dimension is "Knowledge".

	1	2	3	4	5	6
CON3_3	0.853					
CON3_2	0.845					
CON3_4	0.834					
CON3_5	0.829					
CON5_2	0.790					
CON3_1	0.724					
CON5_1	0.712					
CON5_3	0.680					
CON4_2	0.677					
CON5_4	0.649					
CON5_6	0.619					
CON5_5	0.558	0.443				
CON1_3	0.512					0.371
CON2_5	0.458	0.422			0.383	
CON2_8	0.450	0.378				
CON2_3		0.722				
CON2_6		0.713				
CON2_1		0.617				
CON2_7	0.416	0.584				
CON1_1	0.378	0.456				
CON2_2		0.437				
CON1_5			0.842			
CON1_2			0.837			
CON1_6			0.776			
CON1_4			0.734			
CON2_4		0.472	0.573			
CON4_3	0.403			0.796		
CON4_4	0.451			0.738		
CON4_5	0.372			0.713		
CON4_1	0.513			0.614		
CON6_2					0.853	
CON6_1					0.772	
CON6_3			0.350		0.688	
CON6_4					0.663	
CON7_1						0.703
CON7_2	0.504					0.660
CON7_3						0.610
CON7_4						0.498

**Table IV.**  
Matrix of the six components extracted using principal components analysis and the varimax rotation of the IM items using the first sample of 132 respondents

The next dimension overlaps with the original dimension “4 Visible commitment of co-workers.” Thus, it is now labeled “Co-workers engagement.” This dimension measures the degree of one’s colleagues’ commitment to the shared mission.

The last dimension suggested overlaps neatly with “6 Reflecting on the mission”; thus, it is now labeled “Implication.” This new label provides a better understanding of the construct. This dimension accounts for participation in the definition of the mission and updating it over time.

The last suggested factor is refused in our analysis. It only accounts for the 6.7 percent of the total variance, and the items load on some factors at the same time. Thus, its meaning does not clearly emerge.

Table V summarizes the comparative analysis of the original dimensions and the new dimensions suggested by the exploratory factor analysis.

IMDS  
116,1

Original seven dimensions of IM→  
Definitive five dimensions of IM ↓ (definitions)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

180

<p><i>1 Leadership</i> The extent to which the managers of the company are committed to the mission and make their decisions according to the mission and coherent with the mission, thus providing visibility of their engagement with the mission through their actions</p> <p><i>2 Importance</i> The extent to which the employee feels that the mission is important to fulfilling his/her vital contribution to society</p> <p><i>3 Knowledge</i> The extent to which the employee knows the mission and is capable of explaining it in his or her own words</p> <p><i>4 Co-workers engagement</i> The extent to which the employee feels that his or her colleagues are committed to the mission</p> <p><i>5 Implication</i> The extent to which the employee participates in conceptualizing the mission</p>	
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**Table V.**  
Overlap between original dimensions and definitive dimensions of IM

*5.2 Assessment of the scale of IM*

To examine the unidimensionality of these new five constructs five CFAs were conducted using EQS 6.2 software. The five analyses extracted only one factor each. Table VI shows the statistics for reliability and convergent validity of these five factors. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient and composite reliability in every case exceeded the threshold value of 0.7 for internal consistency. In addition, the variance extracted for each factor was greater

	1	2	3	4	5
	Leadership	Importance	Knowledge	Co-workers' engagement	Implication
CON3_2	0.833	CON2_1 0.646	CON1_2 0.880	CON4_3 0.903	CON6_1 0.738
CON3_3	0.883	CON2_3 0.658	CON1_4 0.744	CON4_4 0.836	CON6_2 0.848
CON3_4	0.873	CON2_6 0.767	CON1_5 0.854	CON4_5 0.760	CON6_3 0.685
CON3_5	0.850		CON1_6 0.740		CON6_4 0.751
CON5_2	0.810				
Range of correlations between items and total corrected scale	0.777-0.843	0.528-0.591	0.692-0.798	0.706-0.798	0.622-0.747
Range of Cronbach's $\alpha$ if one item is removed	0.906-0.919	0.584-0.668	0.820-0.862	0.777-0.860	0.752-0.815
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.928	0.726	0.878	0.871	0.835
Composite reliability	0.929	0.733	0.881	0.873	0.843
Average variance extracted	0.723	0.480	0.651	0.697	0.574

**Note:** All loads significant at  $p$ -value = 0.01

**Table VI.**  
Loads of the five CFAs and statistics for their reliability analyses

than 0.5, except for the “Importance”, which is on the edge of the recommended threshold. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  values do not improve when any of the items are removed from the scales of each dimension, and the correlations between each item and the total corrected scales are all far beyond 0.5. Convergent validity was confirmed for all of the factors where all of the items were shown to have significant loads ( $t > 2.58$ ).

Table VII provides the results for the analysis of discriminant validity, which was analyzed using linear correlations or standardized covariances between latent factors by examining whether the inter-factor correlations were less than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). Table VII shows that the square roots of each AVE were greater than the off-diagonal elements. Discriminant validity was confirmed.

The next step was to analyze these five dimensions of IM as dimensions of a second-order CFA while taking into account that the five dimensions reflect the same latent construct of IM.

The model was estimated using the robust maximum likelihood method from the asymptotic variance – covariance matrix. The fit indices obtained in the measurement model estimation showed that the variables converged toward the factors established in the CFA (see Table VIII).  $\chi^2$  Satorra-Bentler was 218.67, with 147 degrees of freedom and a  $p$ -value of 0.00012.  $\chi^2/df$  was 1.48, which was below the acceptable limit of 5, RMSEA was 0.061 and the CFI was 0.939. Taking the significance of the robust  $\chi^2$  statistic with caution and noting the global indicators, the global fit was acceptable.

Based on this analysis, some conclusions can be drawn. Note that the following three comments apply to this CFA, which was conducted on the special sample of 132 respondents from only two companies. Consequently these findings apply to these two companies and caution is required to extend these conclusions to a wider setting.

First, “Leadership” is the dimension that best reflects the IM (coefficient path of 0.850 and a  $t$ -value of 7.451). Without the engagement of the top managers, internalization is not possible at any level of an organization. Additionally, almost at the same level, the degree to which employees feel that their colleagues are committed to the mission is also important to reflecting internalization (path coefficient of 0.742). Taking these two aspects together, the model suggests that what is really important is that employees feel that everyone else in the organization is engaged with the mission, not only the managers and leaders but also one’s colleagues.

Second, the “Importance of the mission to the employee” is the next dimension that reflects internalization. This dimension accounts for the importance of the mission based on the employee’s personal principles. It provides coherence between one’s behavior at work and in own life in general.

Third, the remaining two factors reflect a weaker level of internalization. “Knowing the mission” (path of 0.413) and “Participating in defining and updating the mission” (path of 0.404) are not strong determinants of internalization.

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Leadership	0.850				
2 Importance	0.359	0.692			
3 Knowledge	0.251	0.446	0.807		
4 Co-workers’ engagement	0.617	0.272	0.170	0.835	
5 Implication	0.263	0.253	0.412	0.164	0.758

**Note:** Diagonal elements are the square roots of the average extracted (AVE)

**Table VII.**  
Correlation matrix  
of latent factors

Dimension	Items	CFA (first sample <i>n</i> = 132)			CFA (second sample <i>n</i> = 400)		
		Load	<i>t</i> -value	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	Load	<i>t</i> -value	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Leadership	CON3_3	0.873	12.114	0.762	0.872	–	0.760
	CON3_2	0.824	–	0.679	0.872	25.679	0.760
	CON3_4	0.877	10.981	0.769	0.875	25.085	0.766
	CON3_5	0.859	10.245	0.738	0.880	24.595	0.774
	CON5_2	0.815	–	0.664	0.814	22.145	0.663
Importance	CON2_3	0.619	5.832	0.383	0.739	–	0.547
	CON2_6	0.712	5.324	0.507	0.824	17.016	0.680
	CON2_1	0.728	–	0.530	0.835	19.109	0.698
Knowledge	CON1_5	0.852	11.795	0.726	–	–	–
	CON1_2	0.876	–	0.767	0.882	–	0.778
	CON1_6	0.737	10.132	0.543	0.794	17.085	0.631
	CON1_4	0.758	10.627	0.575	0.797	15.350	0.636
Co-workers' engagement	CON4_3	0.894	–	0.799	0.880	–	0.774
	CON4_4	0.839	14.207	0.704	0.857	25.934	0.735
	CON4_5	0.768	11.261	0.590	0.845	25.198	0.714
Implication	CON6_2	0.818	9.948	0.669	0.719	–	0.517
	CON6_1	0.712	–	0.507	0.733	14.876	0.538
	CON6_3	0.709	7.187	0.503	0.715	14.939	0.511
	CON6_4	0.779	8.142	0.607	0.809	17.014	0.654
Internalization of the mission	Leadership	0.850	7.451	0.723	0.777	16.666	0.604
	Importance	0.590	3.951	0.349	0.894	15.419	0.799
	Knowledge	0.413	3.142	0.171	0.749	12.896	0.561
	Co-workers	0.742	7.143	0.551	0.866	19.233	0.750
	Implication	0.404	3.873	0.164	0.842	13.711	0.709
<i>Goodness of fit summary</i>							
Satorra-Bentler scaled $\chi^2$		218.6724			241.6110		
Degrees of freedom		147			130		
<i>p</i> -value		0.00012			0.00000		
$\chi^2$ /df		1.488			1.854		
Comparative fit index (CFI)		0.929			0.973		
Root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA)		0.061			0.046		
90% confidence interval of RMSEA		(0.043, 0.077)			(0.037, 0.055)		

**Table VIII.**  
Second-order  
CFA for IM

Another adjustment was introduced at this point in the process. Noting that CON1\_2 and CON1\_5 were re-worded very similarly and therefore show a high correlation (0.7514), CON1\_5 was dropped from the definitive scale. The Appendix shows the definitive proposed scale for IM.

To set up the definitive scale, a second CFA was performed using a larger sample that was extracted from the general population. As we have stated before, total of 400 people were surveyed using a short questionnaire that consisted of the remaining 18 items after the scale debugging process. No bias is detected. Thus, this second sample collects opinions from all types of people without regard to his/her previous knowledge of the mission concept. Bear in mind that the first survey was addressed to people who were at that moment working for two companies that were involved in a particular process of defining their mission. Thus, a bias could have been introduced in the first CFA.

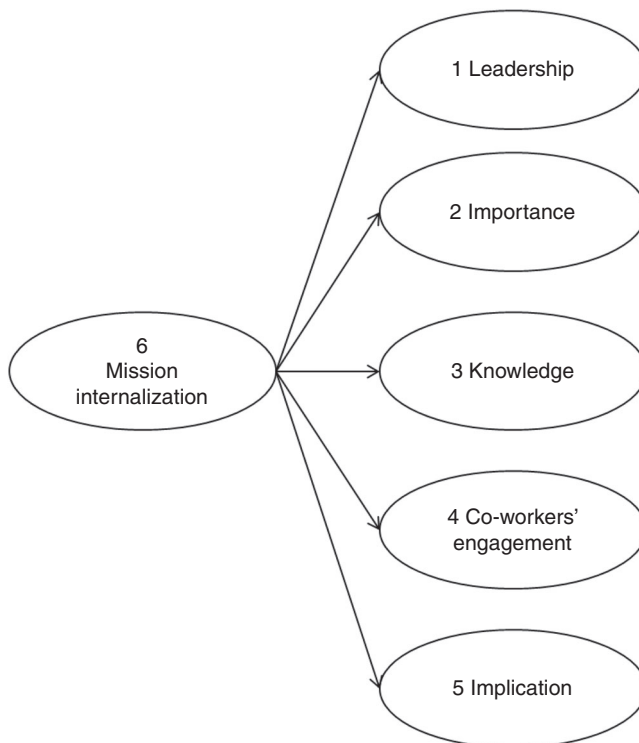
The second CFA using the larger and universal sample was performed similarly to the first. The results are presented in Table VIII. Based on this second CFA, the five dimensions load equivalently on the second-order factor “IM” (loads range from 0.749 and 0.894); in other words, the five dimensions reflect the degree of IM with the same intensity, although, of course, from different perspectives (Figure 1).

## 6. Conclusions and contribution

The first finding in this paper is that IM is a multifactor construct. It is measured using a scale of 18 items arranged in five dimensions. The five dimensions are leadership, co-workers’ engagement, importance, knowledge, and implication. Findings suggest that all of the dimensions must be met to achieve the IM, not just a few of them. Omitting one or several of these dimensions is could be the cause of failure in mission internalization.

The first analysis was based on a sample to 132 managers to explore the dimensions of IM. The scale was settled. After that, the second confirmatory analysis was conducted on a larger sample (400 employees) to assess the proposed IM scale of 18 items and five dimensions in a consistent way. The conclusions presented here refer to the results using the larger sample.

The dimension called “Importance”, which accounts for the extent to which an employee feels that the mission is important to fulfilling his/her vital contribution to society, has the highest coefficient path in the IM construct (the coefficient is 0.894 and its *t*-value 15.419). The most important way to obtain internalization is to ensure that the mission is aligned with the personal values of employees in such a way that they



**Figure 1.**  
Structural model  
of the second-order  
factor of IM

feel that working under this mission is worthwhile because it is aligned with the contribution that they personally want to make in society.

Similarly, “Co-workers’ engagement” also reflects internalization (path = 0.866 and  $t$ -value = 19.233). Feeling that one’s colleagues are engaged with the mission fuels one’s own internalization. This represents an original contribution that very few previous studies have considered. “Co-workers” engagement is an important driver of mission internalization. It was asserted by a manager of the company which have participated in the first study: “sometimes, to see the commitment to the mission in your peers, or even in your subordinates, reinforces your own commitment even more than the example of the boss”.

At the same level, the degree to which the opinions of employees are requested in the process of defining or updating the mission over time also affects internalization. This dimension is labeled “Implication.” This dimension is related to the degree to which organizational members are involved in the mission development process (Desmidt *et al.*, 2011).

Another sign of internalization is the feeling or sense that employees have about the engagement of managers with the mission (leadership dimension). This finding is consistent with the classical literature regarding quality management systems and models (Saraph *et al.*, 1989; Samson and Terziovski, 1999; Bart *et al.*, 2001, Heras *et al.*, 2011, 2012).

Another dimension that reflects internalization is related to the extent of employees’ knowledge about the mission. According to Bart (2001), one relevant aspect of mission internalization is the degree to which employees know and understand their company’s mission.

This study has several limitations that may lead to new directions for future research. The primary limitation is related to the data. The first sample is based on only two companies. Although the second sample is larger and is representative of the entire population, the scale should be examined using a wider range of activity sectors, different sized companies, different countries and different socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Another issue that should receive further attention is whether there is any temporal sequence in the manifestation of these dimensions. Are they all reflected at the same time in the IM? Or can some of them be observed before the others in the process of developing and implementing the mission? A dynamic study might shed light on which dimensions companies should focus on at different times in the process of mission implementation.

Although this paper provides an original contribution to the existing literature on mission statements, we hope that these findings encourage further research and that they can be applied to help achieve effective implementation and internalization of a corporate mission. Future research (both qualitative and quantitative) will benefit practicing managers in creating internal unity that can move organizations in the direction of achieving the companies’ mission.

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## Appendix

Dimension	Item
1 Leadership	1 The managers' behavior is consistent with the company's mission
	2 The managers are committed to the mission
	3 Through their example, the managers give visible signs of their commitment to the mission
	4 The managers encourage the development of the mission
	5 The decisions made by the company are consistent with the mission
2 Importance	6 I believe that the mission is important to society
	7 I accept my company's mission because it is aligned with my individual values
3 Knowledge	8 I think that the company's mission is important to me
	9 I am able to explain my company's mission in my own words
	10 I could explain my company's mission to people outside the organization if I were asked to
4 Co-workers' engagement	11 I understand my company's mission
	12 The behavior of my colleagues is consistent with the company's mission
5 Implication	13 My colleagues push the development of the mission
	14 In general, people who work with me are committed to the mission
	15 I am in a working group at the company where we work on the mission
	16 I have participated in the process of defining and reviewing the mission
	17 During the year, I spend time reflecting on the company's mission
	18 I participate in activities where I can give my own opinion about the mission

**Table AI.**  
Proposed scale for  
internalization of  
the mission

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