

## Mission Statements:

### A Comparative Analysis of the U.S. and Japanese Non-Profit Organizations\*

Mana KITAZAWA

#### 1. Introduction

Many organizations and enterprises have their own mission statements. For example, “Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who makes the world a better place,” “We contribute to food, healthier and better lives in the global scale” and so forth. The former is the mission statement introduced by the Girl Scouts and the latter is what is suggested by Ajinomoto Co., Inc. In the business field, people have been familiar with mission statements for over the half centuries as one of the most valuable tools for management. Mission statements embody values, beliefs and the principles of behavior that managers envision in their management. They are headed for internal stakeholders including employers and partners as well as external ones such as shareholders and communities.

Much research contrasting English and Japanese mission statements has focused on general differences of targets and components such as companies’ policies and purposes. Additionally, the data has been limited to a certain kind of firm and commercial corporations. This paper would like to reveal the difference between the U.S. and Japanese mission statements by seeing more specifically how targets and components are described. Besides the analysis, this paper will focus on argument structures because related research has not handled it before. Moreover, instead of commercial corporations, this paper analyzes Non-Profit Organizations’ (NPO) mission statements since their participants can join the activity because of being attracted by mission rather than by financial benefits.

The research finally demonstrates that Japanese organizations tend to intensify harmony with people by using such elements as everyone, community, harmony, togetherness. Also, targets are more specifically referred with relative pronouns and adjectives. While they actively attempt to build relationship with those around their organizations, the U.S. organizations tend to put some distance between organizations and outsiders including receivers and partners.

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## 2. Previous Studies

### 2.1. Targets and Components

Most of the studies about mission statements have focused on what targets and components they include to reveal how the difference of countries influence on the elements. Bartkus *et al.* (2004) attempted to assess the quality of European, Japanese, and U.S. firms' mission statements by comparing the contents of the mission statements to the recommendations in the academic literature. They attempted to investigate the relationship between the specified stakeholder groups and the quality of mission statements. Namiki (2009) limited subjects of survey to chemical firms and analyzed the difference between the U.S. and Japanese mission statements. The classifications of targets and components both researchers used are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

**Table 1: Classifications of target groups used in previous studies**

<b>Bartkus <i>et al.</i> (2004)</b> <b>(adopted by the classifications of Bart 1997,</b> <b>Leuthesser and Kohli 1997)</b>	<b>Namiki (2009)</b>
1. customers	1. customers
2. employees	2. employees
3. investors	3. shareholders
4. supplier stakeholders	4. partners
5. stakeholder group society	5. environment
	6. community
	7. society

Both Bartkus *et al.* (2004) and Namiki (2009) set similar categories as targets such as customers, employees and investors. In addition, Namiki (2009) added “environment,” “community” and “society” to his classifications.

**Table 2: Classifications of components used in previous studies**

<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Components</b>
<b>Pearce (1982)</b>	concern for public image, philosophy, products or services, markets, technology, concern for survival and profitability, self-concepts

<b>Bartkus <i>et al.</i> (2004)</b>	motivational message (excellence), motivational message (harmony societal benefits), motivational message (excellence or societal benefits), values / philosophy, industry. geographic scope, a distinctive competency
<b>Namiki (2009)</b>	a goal of business, internationalization, definition of own company, definition of production, definition of its market, skill, their own skill, new production, a financial goal

Table 2 shows what components three researchers considered to be necessary to mission statements. Although there are somewhat differences among their typologies, most of them include “philosophy,” “products or services,” “technology or skill.” These elements will help show how corporations should be and what they do.

Bartkus *et al.* (2004) set the elements like “motivational message (excellence)” and “motivational message (harmony, societal benefits).” The former is the case a company maintains its own merit compared with other countries. On the other hand, the latter is applied when a company appreciate or respect for harmony such as cooperation and societal benefits instead of its own advantage.

## 2.2. Argumentation Schemes

The relation between clauses or discourse structures has not been treated before although mission statements have already been analyzed just from the point of view of individual elements such as targets and components. To compensate for the shortage, the study of Schellens and Jong (2004) can be useful. They investigate what types of the argumentation are used in persuasive brochures. Though the materials are not mission statements, they are similar to mission statements in the function that they have some impact on addressees. They applied the typology of argumentation schemes developed by Schellens (1985) for their research. He distributed the argumentation into seven schemes: 1) argumentation from cause to effect, 2) argumentation from effect to cause, 3) argumentation from rules, 4) argumentation from consequences, 5) argumentation from authority, 6) argumentation from example and 7) argumentation from analogy. The first and second schemes refer to the case that the statements encourage readers to do something by showing the effect gained from their behavior. The next “argumentation from rules” is related to the two schemes above in that it is based on some desirable or undesirable effects obtained by them. When such effects are intensified in other sentences or phrases, they are supposed to be distributed into “argumentation from rules.”

“Argumentation from consequences” makes it possible for the statements to become reliable by demonstrating consequences expected to be obtained. Similarly, “argumentation from authority,” “argumentation from example” and “argumentation from analogy” can give readers a sense of security by showing authority and using examples and analogy.

### 3. Methodology

The mission statements used in this study are adopted from the U.S. and Japanese NPOs because those who participate in NPOs are likely to be attracted with their policy depicted in mission statements. The materials in the U.S. were selected from the website, TOP 100 NONPROFITS ON THE WEB, in which organizations are ranked based on the number of followers and “Like” on Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, the half of the Japanese data consists of organizations which were chosen by the number of followers on Twitter. To make the number of NPOs the same as the U.S., the lack was supplemented by Non-Profit organizations granted from the government in the website.

#### 3.1. Analysis of Targets

Concerning the analysis of targets and components, this study slightly adjusted the categorizations of Namiki (2009) and Bartkus *et al.* (2004). Targets are divided into main five categories: A) receivers, B) employees, C) donors and co-operators, D) environment, E) local community, F) society. Also, to consider the data more specifically, this paper subdivided the categories A) receivers, C) donors and F) society into the following:

**Table 3: Classifications of targets used in this paper**

Targets	Specific Contents and Examples
A. receivers	a1. modification (noun + relative) e.g. people/those who~
	a2. attribute (occupation, community) e.g. LGBTQ, artist
	a3. comprehensive noun e.g. all people, humanity
	a4. individuality e.g. every, each, individual
	a5. specific noun e.g. family, children, girl
	a6. inanimate e.g. animal, ocean
	a7. demonstrative pronoun e.g. you
B. employees	e.g. its member
C. donors	c1. proper noun e.g. our founder Danny Thomas
	c2. everyone
	c3. volunteers e.g. volunteers, constituency
	c4. partners

D. environment	
E. local community	
F. society	f1. whole society
	f2. modification e.g. a society where
	f3. international society e.g. the world, universe
	f4. nation e.g. nation, our country

Some representative examples are cited as follows. This is one of the Japanese mission statements.

(1) ルーム・トゥ・リード

ルーム・トゥ・リードは、識字能力の育成と、教育における男女の格差是正に焦点を当てることにより、**a1) 開発途上国に住む何百万の子どもたちの人生を変えること**を目指しています。**E) 地域社会**や**c4) パートナー組織、政府機関**と協働して、初等教育での読み書き能力と読書習慣を育成するとともに、**a5) 少女たちが**将来自立するために必要なライフスキルを身につけ、中等教育を修了できるように支援しています。‘Room to Lead aims to change lives of millions of **a1) children living in developing countries** by focusing on reducing distribution between genders in the educational field. Cooperating with **E) local communities, c4) partners and governmental institution**, they help enable **a5) small girls** to acquire the necessary skill of life in order to become independent in their future and complete the education in the junior high school.’ (All translations are my own)

Loom to Lead is the NPO which attempts to support developed countries by providing education. First, this organization describes whom they try to support; this is annotated as a1) modification because receivers, “children” are modified by a participle phrase “living in developing countries.” Next, they refer to people and institutions that assist their activities such as E) community, c4) partners and governments. Considering that they cannot afford to maintain their activities without such others’ supports, these references may be important to show them respect. In the final part of the mission statement, it describes the receivers again.

The following mission statement belongs to the U.S. NPO “Conservation International Foundation.”

(2) Conservation International Foundation

Building upon a strong foundation of science, **c4) partnership** and field demonstration, Conservation International empowers **f3) societies** to responsibly

and sustainably care for **D) nature, our global biodiversity**, for the well-being of **a3) humanity**.

This mission statement in English also possesses some sorts of targets. Both statements (1) and (2) refer to not only receivers but also partnership and society. But, unlike (1) in Japanese, this example seems to express targets in more general form. For example, a3) humanity does not reveal exactly what kinds of people they mention.

### 3.2. Analysis of Components

Regarding components, this paper mostly relies on the assortment adopted from Bartkus *et al.* (2004). The category “financial objectives” was eliminated because they are not expected in NPOs. The classifications are as follows:

- (a) a motivational message(excellence)
- (b) a motivational message (harmony or societal benefits)
- (c) values and philosophy
- (d) geographic scope
- (e) distinctive competency
- (f) purpose
- (g) incentive
- (h) methods and content

The last three (f), (g), (h) are added in this paper because these frequently appear in NPOs’ mission statements. Consider the examples (3) and (4) below presented and annotated through this categorization.

#### (3) Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Human Rights Watch **(f) defends the rights of people worldwide**. We scrupulously **(h) investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power** to respect rights and secure **(c) justice**. Human Rights Watch is an **(c) independent, international** organization that works as a part of a vibrant movement **(f) to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all**.

In the beginning part, HRW’s aim and how they will realize the goal are written; these parts are annotated as (f) purpose and (h) method respectively. The second and third sentences

explain their own organizations such as their values and philosophies. In the last sentence, the purpose is paraphrased.

#### (4) セーブザチルドレン

セーブザチルドレンは、**(d)**世界中で、**(h)**子どもたちとの向き合い方に画期的な変化を起こし、**(f)**子どもたち生活に**(e)**迅速にかつ永続的な変化をもたらします。  
‘Save the Children **(f)** causes to change the lives of children **(e)** rapidly and permanently **(d)** all over the world **(h)** by changing the way to interact with children remarkably.’ (All translations are my own)

This mission statement contains both (h) method and (f) purpose as in the example (3). Additionally, (d) geographic scope and (e) distinctive competency are contained.

### 3.3. Analysis of Argumentation Schemes

Finally, argumentation schemes in mission statements are analyzed in this section by adopting the typology of Shcellen (1985) to reveal what types of argumentation schemes are particularly used in both the U.S. and Japanese mission statements.

In this research, when mission statements introduce their activity and then explain expected results, this type of mission statement is distributed into “argumentation from cause and effect.” “Argumentation from consequences” is the case that organizations affirm that what their own organizations are or what they have realized before. “Argumentation from examples” can be used on condition that the argumentation is supported by examples. These examples are usually related to how the organizations help people or achieve their aims. Some organizations specifically introduce what they do to realize their vision, and others vaguely express it in the form of “the activity related to something.” Therefore, the category is divided in two, specific examples or general examples. “Argumentation from rules” is used to justify the desirability or undesirability of the consequences gained from actions or behavior. The mission statements are regarded as the argumentation from rules if they refer to some desirable effects on receivers, which is reinforced by extra phrases. Mission statements using “argumentation from authority” refer to the structure which includes the name of partners, government, God, and some institutions as everybody knows.

The following examples are annotated based on the typology as described above and indicate how role each sentences and phrases play in the whole text.

## (5) かものはしプロジェクト

かものはしプロジェクトは、強制的に子どもが売られてしまう問題を防止する  
consequence 活動を、持続的かつ発展的に行い世界の子どもたちが未来への希望を持って  
生きられる rule よう活動しています。

‘Kamonohashi Project leads a constant and developing movement to improve the situation that children are treated as goods regardless of their thought and perform consequence in order children in the world to live with their hope in their future rule.’ (All translations are my own)

This statement adopts the argumentation from consequences to explain about what their project results in. What is more, the argumentation from rules is also seen. This scheme appears in the form of intensifying desirable effects already written in the argumentation from consequences. In the case of Kamonohashi project, after an explanation that their project aims to stop the children selling, it is mentioned that the desirable effect has the link to their lives filled with hope in the future.

## (6) Museum of Modern Art

The Museum of Modern Art is a place that fuels creativity, ignites minds, and provides inspiration consequence. With extraordinary exhibitions and the world's finest collection of modern and contemporary art, MoMA is dedicated to the conversation between the past and the present, the established and the experimental cause. Our mission is helping you understand and enjoy the art of our time effect.

Museum of Modern Art explains that their actions will lead to “fuel creativity, ignites minds, and provides inspiration.” This description is classified into the argumentation from consequences. In addition, this message explains how they achieve their purpose, for example, they indicate “with extraordinary exhibitions and the world’s finest collection of modern and contemporary art...” In the latter of this mission statement, it is written that their activity brings readers to the understanding of the contemporary art. Thus, this expression is regarded as the argumentation from cause and effect.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Targets**

First, this paper investigates what target groups tend to be written in mission statements. Table 4 indicates the results gained from the analysis of target groups based on the classification by Namiki (2009). Besides his classification, this paper divides each group into more detail categories. For example, when mission statements refer to a receiver, some mission statements write about the receiver specifically by using noun modifiers and others utilize demonstrative pronoun to describe the receiver.

Generally, mission statements of Japanese organizations include more targets than those of U.S. organizations because the Japanese numbers of targets in all classifications are larger than the U.S. Concerning receivers, the number of a1) modification and a5) specific noun Japanese organizations adopted is about twice as large as that of the U.S. Japanese mission statements, in the case of being written to “people,” tend to describe the targets in detail with modification and refer to donors and co-operators specifically by addressing their proper name. Table 4 also reveals that Japanese mission statements refer not only to detail address but also general targets such as “society.” The total number of F) society indicates that much more Japanese organizations adopt such elements related to society. Although the range F) society covered is large and general, the statements describe what society they want to make in detail by using modification.

On the other hand, the U.S. organizations seem to avoid describing the targets. Instead, they adopt the way in which they utilize more general terms such as “you,” “people,” and non-person. Among the subgroups of A) receivers, four classifications are more referred than in Japanese statements. They are a3) comprehensive noun, a4) individuality, a6) inanimate, and a7) demonstrative pronoun. None of them express clearly to what kind of receivers the organizations give their support.

**Table 4: Distribution of target groups in mission statements<sup>1</sup>**

Targets		Contents		The Number of NPOs			
				Japan		The U.S.	
				100		100	
A	receivers	a1	modification	51	Total 145 (116)	32	Total 118(88)
			e.g. people/those who	(46)		(24)	
		a2	attribute	15		11	
			e.g. LGBTQ, artist	(13)		(7)	
		a3	comprehensive noun	18		24	
			e.g. humanity	(15)		(19)	
		a4	individuality	1		7	
e.g. each, individual	(1)		(7)				
a5	specific noun	43	22				
	e.g. family, children, girl	(26)	(15)				
a6	inanimate	15	24				
	e.g. animal, ocean	(14)	(20)				
a7	demonstrative pronoun	2(1)	5(3)				
	e.g. you						
B	employees		e.g. its member	2(2)		5(4)	
C	donors, co-operators	c1	proper noun	14	Total 36(24)	6	Total 20(17)
			e.g. our founder Danny Thomas	(10)		(6)	
		c2	everyone	6		2	
			e.g. you	(4)		(1)	
c3	volunteers	3	2				
	e.g. volunteers	(2)	(2)				
c4	partners	13	10				
	e.g. partner	(8)	(8)				
D	environment		e.g. nature	9(8)		13 (10)	
E	local community		e.g. community	40 (33)		14 (14)	
F	society	f1	whole society	16	Total 69(54)	4	Total 26(24)
			e.g. society	(10)		(4)	
		f2	modification	31		1	
			e.g. a society where...	(26)		(1)	
		f3	International society	15		17	
			e.g. the world, universe	(13)		(15)	
f4	nation	7	4				
	e.g. nation, our country	(5)	(4)				

<sup>1</sup> Round brackets represent the number of organizations on the occasion that same targets are not counted. Even if a mission statement refers to same targets three times, for example, the number is counted one in the round bracket.

## 4.2. Components

Next, what components are included in mission statements is analyzed. Table 5 reflects the results obtained by the analysis of components in mission statements.

**Table 5: Distribution of components in mission statements**

	Components	The number of NPOs	
		Japan	The U.S.
		100	100
(a)	motivational message (excellence) e.g. finest, largest, deeper, leading	32	29
(b)	motivational message (harmony or societal benefits) e.g. working with~, friendly relations, peace	73	47
(c)	values / philosophy e.g. fairness, equality, integrity	26	20
(d)	geographic scope e.g. Africa, world	33	16
(e)	distinctive competency e.g. effective, creative, practical and lasting	40	24
(f)	objectives e.g. to conserve nature	95	99
(g)	Incentive e.g. so that ~, because	4	2
(h)	Method e.g. Through ~, by helping	87	58

First, Table 5 shows that every category except for (f) objectives is seen more frequently in Japanese than in the U.S. This means that each Japanese mission statement includes more kinds of components. First, mission statements in Japan eminently differ from those in the U.S. in that they have more contents such as “harmony”, “society” and the statements of “other organizations” which support organizations’ activities. These are counted as (b) motivational message (harmony or societal benefits). Secondly, in the U.S. mission statements, compared with Japanese statements, the rate of (d) geographic scope and (e) distinctive competency is also far lower as well as (b). In addition, unlike the previous studies which reveal the U.S. tends to refer to excellence, the number of U.S. mission statements that contain a motivational message (excellence) is a little less than that of Japan.

## 4.3. Argumentation Schemes

Table 6 displays the results of what types of argumentation schemes are preferred in mission statements.

**Table 6: Distribution of argumentation schemes in mission statements**

Argumentation Schemes		The Number of NPOs			
		Japan		The U.S.	
Cause and effect		5		8	
Consequences		86		98	
Examples	Specific	58	80	49	66
	General	22		17	
Rules		85		16	
Authority		11		15	

It is shown that there are similarities in the choice of argumentation schemes between the U.S. and Japanese organizations except for the argumentation from rules. Both countries include consequences such as what their actions bring to their targets. Moreover, they attempt to have the readers trust their organizations by way of showing many examples of their activities. There are no significant differences in the extent of how specifically the examples are written. The same thing can be true in the argumentation from cause and effect and the argumentation from authority. However, the difference of the rate of the argumentation from rules is outstanding between the U.S. and Japanese organizations. Mission statements of Japanese organizations have more statements and expressions which strengthen the desirable effects gained from consequences of their actions, for example, "...the society where people live comfortable..." and "the society where people can feel happy for their lives."

## 5. Discussion

In this paper, the U.S. and Japanese mission statements have been analyzed from three perspectives: targets, components and argumentation schemes. In terms of targets, Japanese organizations refer to targets more specifically than the U.S. This can mean that people in Japan seem to be attracted to specific expressions because they clarify what kind of people or organizations they will support and help. The more they understand the targets, the easier they imagine the poor situation around the targets and sympathize with them. Hence, in Japanese mission statements, whether the reader can imagine vividly the situation of the targets appears to be important. The U.S. mission statements, however, avoid such way of describing. They would regard it as good writing to show targets as general as possible, thus it is not accepted to interfere with others by writing targets specifically. Therefore, Japanese mission statements

prefer having a strong connection with each other by using detail addresses, while the U.S. readers do not think it to be favorable and they do not want others to interfere in their territory.

As for components, there are many descriptions about the importance of harmony with others in Japanese mission statements. In contrast, the expressions cannot be observed in the U.S. organizations. Additionally, the U.S. mission statements have a tendency that they do not include other components implying relationship with others such as “motivational message (excellence)” and “geographic scope.” The former component needs to compare with other organizations and the latter is used when it is required to clarify where its influence extends to. As the target analysis can be seen, Japanese mission statements are inclined to appreciate relationship with others while the U.S. mission statements are not.

Finally, the analysis of argumentation schemes shows that there is not much discrepancy between two countries in the argumentative structure of mission statements. Both mission statements describe the consequences caused by the activities of organizations by using many examples and showing the existence of authorities. Moreover, some mission statements maintain desirable consequences and call for the reader’s participation in the organizations. However, Japanese mission statements contain much more argumentation from rules to evaluate and intensify desirable effects, for example, “...the society where people live comfortable...” and “the society where people can feel happy for their lives.” Although most of the expressions are ungrounded and have no guarantee that what they convey can be realized, Japanese people are willing to accept such expressions. It seems to be essential for organizations to emphasize that they concern about not only targets but also society. On the other hand, these kinds of structures cannot be observed in the U.S. mission statements.

## **6. Conclusion**

This research has investigated the mission statements from three perspectives: target groups, components and argumentative elements. In previous studies, targets and components have already been examined in detail. Most of the related studies were implemented assuming that mission statements have some influence on the management of companies and attempted to reveal what elements of mission statements work effectively. To be sure, mission statements help corporate management partially, but it is difficult to affirm that there is a link between their mission statements and their achievements. Therefore, this study adopts the mission statements from NPOs. Cooperation and government gain their own fund from sale and tax respectively while NPOs acquire them mostly from endowments. In other words, mission statements for NPOs need to attract people and make them think that the mission statements

deserve to contribute money. In this mean, missions for NPOs can be the important medium to raise fund. Thus, it is reasonable to treat NPOs mission statements as objects in this research because the effect is expected to be seen more eminently.

The data was obtained from the website and just statements written under contents “mission statement” or “mission.” What NPOs are selected as data is based on the number of “Like” on Facebook and Twitter. It is supposed that the more “Like” they get, the more widespread the purpose of missions become and the more sympathy they gain from people.

This research has revealed that Japanese organizations prefer specifying targets and appreciate the harmony in the society. Moreover, they emphasize that organizations’ activities not only support the receivers but also make the situation surrounding readers better. On the other hand, the U.S. organizations try not to intervene in others including targets and partners by using general terms and exclude components having relation with others. Therefore, whether mission statements take a stance of interfering outsiders or not is a main difference between the two countries.

There are many possible limitations in this study. As for the data, this research is mainly based on the number of “Like” in Facebook and Twitter, but it is not enough to say that users and readers agree with the organizations and want to join them owing to their mission statements. Furthermore, it can be said that this research lacks the amount of data to prove general cultural tendency in mission statements. Therefore, if mission statements are collected depending on the amount of dedication, it will be able to see the effects of mission statements more clearly. In addition to the method to gain materials, it should be paid more attention to the difference of consciousness for NPOs between the U.S. and Japan because the scale of NPO in the U.S. is much larger than that of Japan.

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