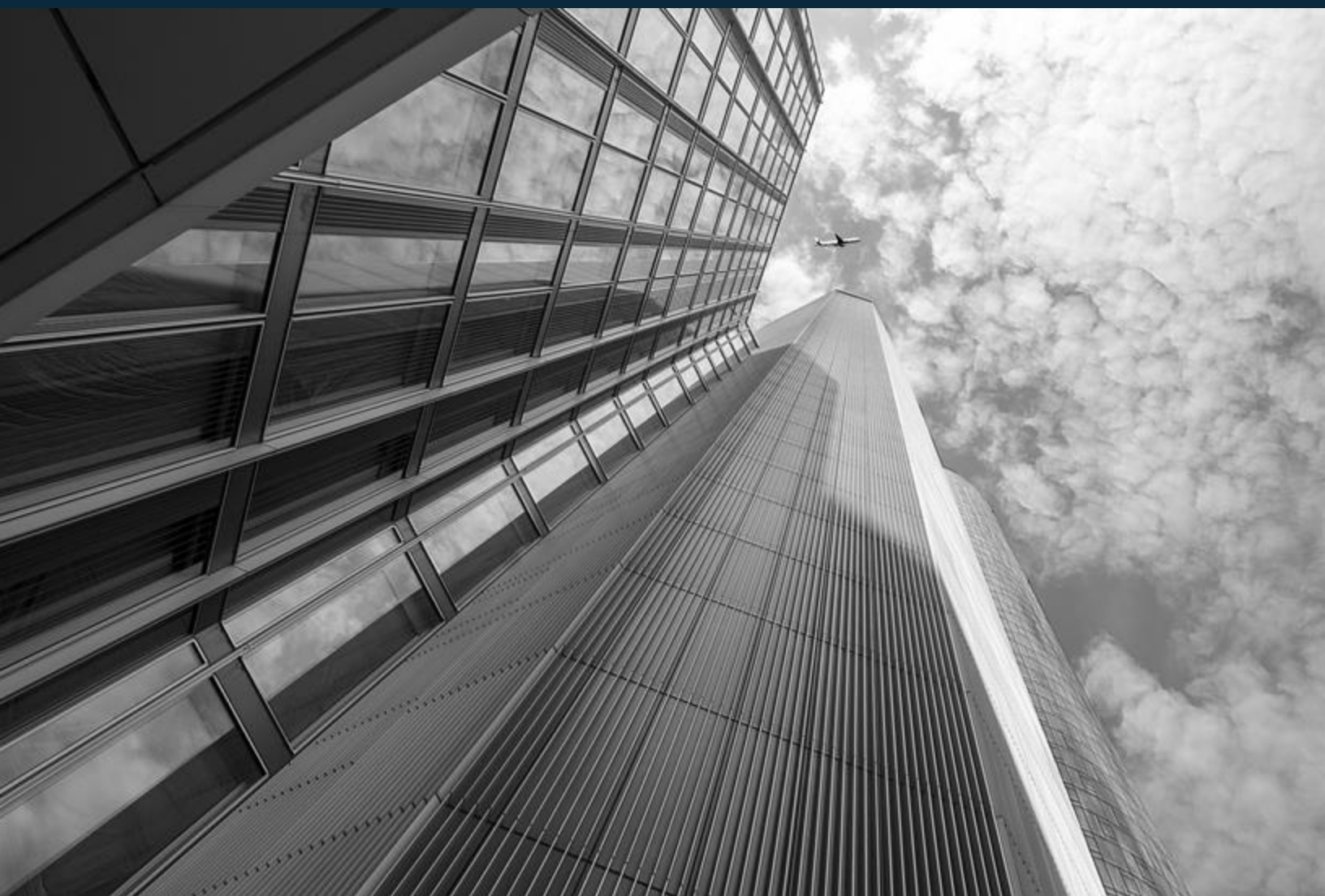


PURPOSE TRENDS REPORT

A selection of what has been published about Purpose in April 2025



April 2025

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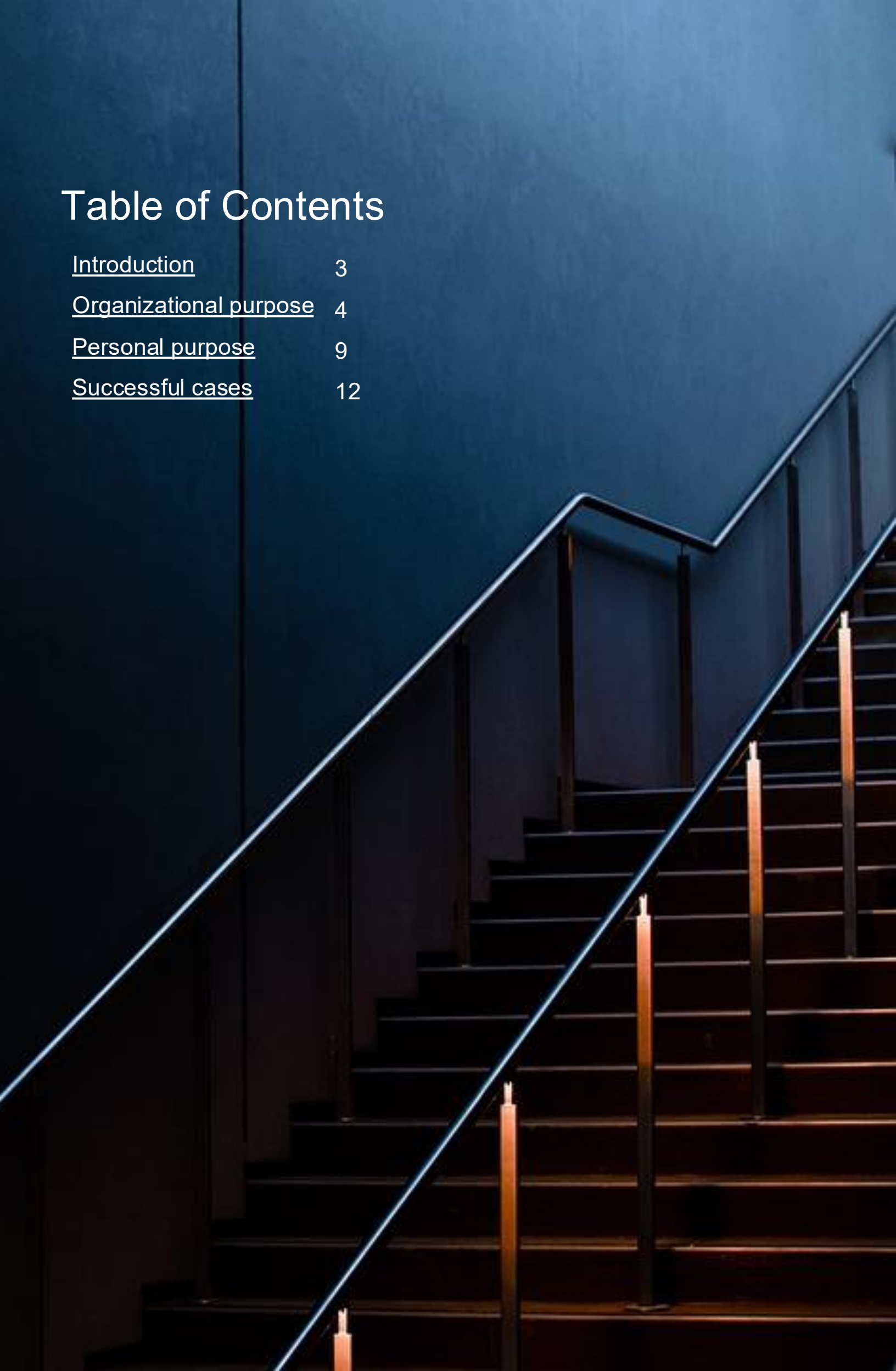
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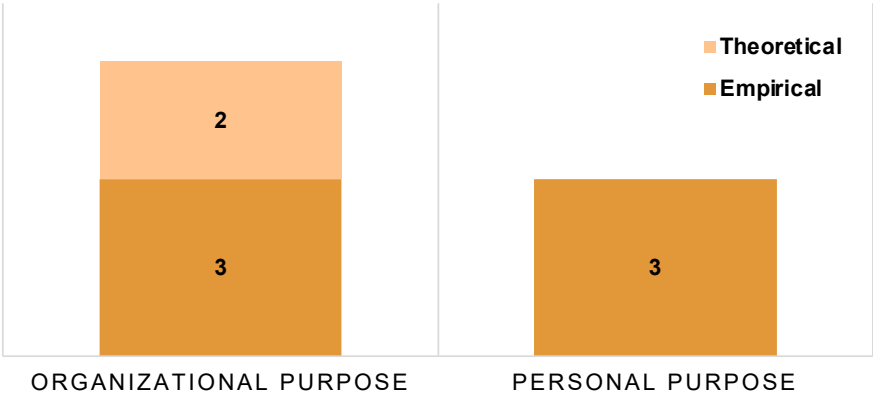
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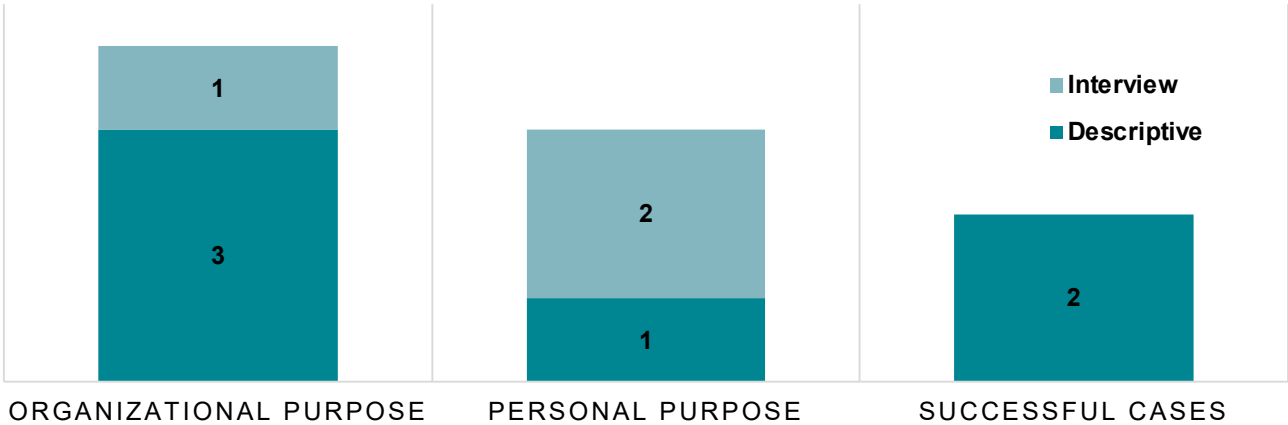
INTRODUCTION

In this report, we want to synthesize the most relevant about corporate purpose published in April 2025. For this aim, we did a content search (using selected keywords) in Scopus and Google Scholar for academic publications; and diffusion magazines and other trusted sites for articles and reports. We selected relevant publications about organizational purpose and personal purpose. Also, we include successful cases that show how corporate purpose has been implemented. Bellow, we present statistics about the selected literature.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS - APRIL 2025



ARTICLES AND REPORTS - APRIL 2025



Recent academic work emphasizes the need to redefine organizational purpose through frameworks like Economia Aziendale, strategic leadership, and stakeholder engagement, particularly in achieving SDGs. This aligns with articles highlighting how authentic purpose, embedded in mission and values, guides strategic decisions and fosters trust. As businesses face societal and geopolitical pressures, purpose becomes a unifying force that drives resilience, with public relations, education, and governance adapting to integrate sustainability and ethics into corporate identity and direction.

Studies on meaningful work, calling, and religious faith reveal that purpose at the individual level stems from alignment between values, support systems, and life goals. These findings connect to articles showing how leaders can shape meaningful environments and how Gen Z's prioritization of ethical alignment and well-being is transforming workplaces. Storytelling emerges as a vital leadership tool to communicate purpose effectively, reinforcing the idea that meaningful work enhances engagement, persistence, and personal growth across diverse contexts.

Finally, real-world examples like TOMS Shoes and Trade Lenda illustrate how businesses that integrate social impact into their core models can achieve both growth and purpose. These cases embody the academic principles of purpose-driven innovation and stakeholder-oriented leadership, showing that profitability and positive societal change are not mutually exclusive. They offer concrete evidence that purpose-led strategies—when implemented authentically—can create scalable, sustainable solutions that resonate deeply with communities and redefine success in business.

Academic publications (5)

How organizational shared purpose and communication enhance the good health and wellbeing in ageing societies: Toward a typology of public relations’ role in the SDGs

Public Relations Review, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: This article reports the results of in-depth interviews on how an organisation involves SDGs for developing organizational purpose that directs the organization's operations. It explores the role of public relations in the process in engaging and communicating WITH the organization's stakeholders in establishing a shared purpose for improving social issues. We studied a New Zealand-based retirement village and rest home operator with New Zealand and Australia villages. The literature and 20 interviews suggest a typology of public relations roles in helping organizations and networks accomplish the SDGs via the fulfillment of shared purpose.

“Purpose and profit”: Economia Aziendale as a paradigm of sustainable business

Critical Perspectives on Accounting, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: This article reflects on the role of Economia Aziendale in the current debate on corporate sustainability, emphasizing the relevance of purpose and the need of a systemic theory of the firm. Traditionally, the Anglo-Saxon neoclassical paradigm has prioritized profit maximization to satisfy the shareholders. However, recent events—the financial crisis, the pandemic, geopolitical instability, and the ongoing environmental emergency—have sparked an international discussion about the fundamental reasons for the establishment of businesses. The article aims to highlight the contributions of Italian Economia Aziendale and its scholars in this context, by exploring how this discipline can provide relevant insights nowadays. To facilitate a multi-perspective reflection, the article draws from various frameworks and incorporates viewpoints from a diverse range of stakeholders, including academics, scientists, corporate leaders, professionals, and institutional representatives. This engagement took place through eight focus groups and a series of working group's meetings held from October 2021 to November 2023. Through these contributions, the article introduces three key elements to reflect on Economia Aziendale in the current landscape: i) the emphasis on the centrality of human beings, ii) the necessity of employing Economia Aziendale as a systemic theory in economics, iii) the implications of Economia Aziendale for defining corporate sustainability as a focal value that can fully address human needs.

“ The systemic perspective suggests that a firm is not merely a collection of separate functions or elements but it is an integrated system, working towards a common purpose ”

Latent Profile Patterns of Teachers' Organisational Identity Perception in Educational Settings

European Journal of Education, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: Organisational identity is crucial in fostering a reliable working environment within educational settings. Therefore, this study focused on examining latent profiles of teachers' organisational identity perceptions. Latent profile analysis was utilised to uncover distinct profiles and their characteristics as assessed by the Teacher Organizational Identity Perception Scale's three dimensions (support, belonging, and communication). The data was collected from 578 in-service teachers working in different grades from preschool to high school. The results identified four distinct teacher profiles: lack of support ($n = 59$), belonging deficiency ($n = 101$), engagement ($n = 276$) and commitment ($n = 142$). Nearly half of the teachers were in the engagement profile, indicating medium-level organisational identity perception. Covariance analysis revealed that male teachers were significantly more likely to be in the engagement profile rather than the lack of support ($OR = 0.59$), suggesting that male teachers exhibit higher organisational identity perceptions. This study provides valuable insights into comprehending the nature of teachers' organisational identity perceptions and advocates for future studies to consider these latent profile characteristics in efforts to cultivate a robust school climate.

Toward an updated corporate governance framework: Fundamentals, disruptions, and future research

BRQ Business Research Quarterly, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: This essay explores the evolving landscape of corporate governance amid global disruptions and changing stakeholder demands. We argue that traditional governance models are unable to effectively address contemporary challenges such as technological advancements, sustainability pressures, and geopolitical conflicts. While corporate governance has traditionally prioritized financial metrics and majority shareholders, there is a growing shift toward incorporating broader societal and environmental considerations. As a result, we highlight the need for a new corporate governance framework that supports the evolving nature of organizations and their corporate governance practices. We argue that the future of corporate governance must integrate ethical leadership, transparency, and a commitment to sustainability to remain relevant in a rapidly changing global marketplace. We conclude by suggesting research areas that require deeper exploration to build robust corporate governance systems.



Setting the strategic direction: the role of the mission, vision, values statements and strategic leadership

Journal of Strategy and Management, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: Purpose: Not having an informed – set strategic direction – exposes organisations to the potential risk of going and arriving at a destination in future that might be undesirable; the study provides an understanding of how organisations set their strategic direction taking into consideration the role of the mission, vision and values statements as well as the role of strategic leadership. Design/methodology/approach: A systematic literature review as it relates to organisational mission statements, vision statements, values statements and strategic leadership was conducted. A Scopus search was conducted for the period 2001 to 2023 to identify the respective publications with “mission statement”, “vision statement”, “values statement” and “strategic leadership” in their article titles for this period. The top 15 publications with the highest citations under each of the four statements were selected, thus 60 publications in total were reviewed for this study under this selection criteria. Beyond the insight gained from the identified publications, further insight was gained from content analysis of 10 C-suite interview articles identified that were written by Abby Ghobadian and Nicholas O'Regan. Findings: The review established that the mission, vision and values statements are critical in capturing and communicating the set strategic direction of the organisation. They also act as an anchor in the setting and review of the strategy as well as performance assessments, especially in this era of vast technological advancements. Strategic leadership is a key enabler in setting the strategic direction and ensuring that the right resources are marshalled to inform the setting and communication of the strategic direction. Originality/value: The review contributes to the body of knowledge by providing (1) an understanding of how organisations set their strategic direction; (2) an assessment of the role of the mission, vision and values statements; (3) the positioning of the role of strategic leadership in setting the organisational strategic direction; and (4) provision of a theoretical framework on how to set the strategic direction, which also highlights the importance of organisational leadership to have a good “organisational situation awareness”, as well as the ability to inform and address contemporary organisational challenges such as digital transformation, sustainability and corporate social responsibility.



Corporate Purpose: Driving Business Value

CECP [see online](#)

Against an ever-shifting backdrop of geopolitical, societal, and economic trends, Corporate Purpose: Driving Business Value analyzes data, highlights case studies, and provides actionable insights that corporate purpose leaders need to inform their companies’ long-term, sustainable, value creation strategies. Corporate purpose refers to a company’s fundamental reason for existing beyond profit generation. It defines the broader impact a company hopes to have on the world as it builds long-term sustainable value. Stakeholders expect companies to have an authentic statement of corporate purpose and to act in accordance with their mission, vision, and corporate values. A well-defined corporate purpose aligns a company’s values, strategy, and actions with long-term goals that serve both economic and social interests. At purpose-driven companies, corporate purpose is embedded across the organization, serves as its North Star in strategic decision making, and helps leaders navigate uncertainty.

How brands can help people become their authentic selves

Iñigo Gallo, IESE Insight [see online](#)

The article explores how brands can assist individuals in expressing their true identities. It argues that brands with a clear purpose resonate more deeply with consumers, fostering stronger emotional connections. The article explains that when brands align their values with those of their customers, they enable individuals to see their personal beliefs reflected in the brand's mission. It states that this alignment not only enhances customer loyalty but also empowers consumers to live more authentically. Ultimately, the article defends the idea that purposeful branding is a powerful tool for both business success and personal fulfillment.

“ A strong purpose remains consistent even as the brand evolves, giving employees and consumers a clear sense of direction and trust in its values. ”

Business schools must change course to adapt to stark new realities

Andrew J. Hoffman, IMD [see online](#)

The article argues that business schools need to undergo significant transformations to remain relevant in today's rapidly evolving world. It explains that traditional curricula, which often emphasize shareholder primacy and profit maximization, are insufficient for addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and technological disruption. The article states that integrating sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility into core business education is essential. It defends the idea that by embracing interdisciplinary approaches and fostering critical thinking, business schools can better prepare leaders to navigate complex global issues.

The Purpose Pivot: 7 Ways Impact Can Evolve In The Age Of Polarization

Afdhel Aziz, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that, despite political backlash against corporate social initiatives, purpose remains essential for business relevance and resilience. It explains that many companies have retreated from impact programs due to legal risks and perceptions of ineffectiveness. However, it states that 69% of Americans still expect businesses to address societal issues. The article defends a reimagined approach to purpose—one that starts internally with employee well-being, focuses on unifying "purple" issues, and uses inclusive language. It argues that storytelling and strategic alignment can rebuild trust and drive sustainable growth.

“

Purpose is a company's higher-order reason to exist in service of society. It should sit at the strategic center, powered by the twin engines of Growth and Impact.

”



Academic publications (3)

Fostering calling in the leader–member exchange: individual and team-level effects

Career Development International, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: Purpose: Career calling is an individual orientation that leads people to see work as central to their identity, as a source of passion and as a way to find purpose in life. This study’s aim is to examine antecedents of calling and how organizations can foster it. Doing so is important as those who feel called toward a job transcend themselves, which results in a number of desirable outcomes for both individuals and organizations. Design/methodology/approach: We collected online data in a sample of 157 leaders and 656 employees working for Italian organizations and analyzed it using multilevel structural equation modeling. Findings: We found multilevel evidence that employees’ calling is fostered by their leaders’ calling through the means of supervisor support and high-quality leader–member exchange. Research limitations/implications: A cross-sectional design limits the interpretation of mediation effects. Future longitudinal studies should explore the role of group dynamics in the emergence of calling and its positive and negative outcomes. Originality/value: This study is among the first to demonstrate the role of leaders in developing employees’ calling and the only study currently available that finds support for the existence of calling in group dynamics.

“ Employees report stronger callings when their leaders feel a strong sense of calling, provide support and maintain high-quality relationships. This suggests that leader-related aspects significantly affect employees’ sense of calling. ”

Psychological perspectives on faith-driven persistence in self-employment: The mediating role of mental health and well-being

Journal of Small Business Management, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: This study builds on research at the intersection of religion and entrepreneurship by examining the psychological underpinnings of how religious faith promotes goal persistence among self-employed individuals. Applying random-effects and structural equation modeling on a sample of 725 self-employed individuals in the United States drawn from two time periods, we examine the effects of religious coping on the mental health and well-being and goal persistence of the self-employed. We introduce a fully mediated psychological model of faith-driven persistence highlighting the influential role of three dimensions of mental health and well-being (purpose in life, personal growth, environmental mastery) in linking religious faith to goal persistence. We reveal that religious affiliation alone is not enough but that individuals must hold and use religious faith to experience this psychological effect. Altogether, this study contributes to the limited research on the psychological aspects of religion in entrepreneurial well-being and entrepreneurial persistence literature.

Multidimensional scale of meaningful work: construction and validation

Frontiers in Psychology, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: Meaningful work allows individuals to align their jobs with their personal values and passions, resulting in greater fulfillment and commitment. When work is meaningful, employees develop resiliency during challenging times, viewing challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. However, there is no unified definition of meaningful work as different fields attribute different dimensions to the concept. Therefore, the evaluation and measure of meaningful work dimensions is important and should evolve in response to modern trends. The purpose of this paper is to introduce and validate the Multidimensional Scale for Meaningful Work. Following a structured scientific search on the acknowledged components of meaningful work, three studies were conducted on Content Validity, Response Process Validity, and Internal Structure Validity. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, qualitative and quantitative data aided in the development and validation of this scale. The combined results of the studies showcase a unified measure assessing the five dimensions of Meaningful Work: Job Design/Environment, Meaningful Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Work and Life Balance, and Social Impact. Lastly, 80 items for all dimensions have been indicated and persevered throughout the rigorous analysis procedures. The scale provides a transformation of a subjective phenomenological concept onto quantitative measurable dimensions. Institutions that use the scale can more deeply understand their own organizational climate and intervene depending on which dimension is lacking. The scale has been designed to measure both the individual experience of the dimensions and the organizational experience.

“ Digital technologies make work more meaningful by reducing tedious, repetitive tasks and creating more time for employee leisure ”



Articles (3)

Meaningful Work Shows The Power Of Purpose

Rodger Dean Duncan, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that meaningful work is a fundamental driver of both individual fulfillment and organizational success. It explains that researchers Wes Adams and Tamara Myles identify three core elements—Community, Contribution, and Challenge—as essential to cultivating meaningful work. The article states that meaningful work enhances job satisfaction, well-being, and engagement, while also boosting productivity and innovation. It defends the idea that leaders play a pivotal role, with about half of workplace meaning influenced by their actions. It argues that leaders can foster meaning by authentically engaging with employees, modeling organizational values, and providing growth opportunities. The article also clarifies that meaningful work isn't exclusive to traditionally altruistic professions; individuals in any role can find purpose through connection, impact, and personal development.

Making meaning matter: A conversation with David Pearl

Noorain Nadim, McKinsey & Company [see online](#)

The article explores the pivotal role of storytelling in leadership. It argues that in today's complex business environment, facts and data alone are insufficient to inspire and lead effectively. David Pearl explains that people are more influenced by compelling narratives than by raw data, emphasizing that leaders must understand the "story weather"—the prevailing narratives shaping opinions and decisions—to effectively communicate and lead. He distinguishes between 'story' and 'storytelling,' stating that while storytelling is about delivery, the essence lies in crafting a well-structured story. Pearl defends the idea that storytelling is not merely a soft skill but a fundamental leadership competency that enables leaders to connect deeply with their audiences and drive meaningful action. He argues that even those who aren't naturally charismatic can tell persuasive stories if they focus on building the right narrative structure. Ultimately, the article underscores that storytelling is an essential tool for leaders to navigate and influence the abstract aspects of business, such as trust and vision.

“ In a world of overwhelming inputs and uncertainty, the best leaders create meaning. When people hear them speak, they gain perspective and direction. ”

Gen-Z's Are Redefining The Way They Want To Work

Jack Kelly, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that Generation Z is fundamentally transforming workplace dynamics. It explains that Gen Z prioritizes purpose, ethical alignment, and mental well-being over traditional incentives like salary. The article states that 86% of Gen Zers consider a sense of purpose crucial for job satisfaction, with 44% willing to reject employers misaligned with their ethics. It defends the idea that Gen Z's demand for flexibility, including hybrid or remote work, is reshaping workplace norms. Furthermore, it argues that their emphasis on mental health and work-life balance is prompting organizations to reevaluate their cultures and policies. Ultimately, the article suggests that Gen Z's values-driven approach is not a passing trend but a significant shift influencing the future of work.

Articles (2)

What Is Social Entrepreneurship? 5 Examples of Businesses with a Purpose

Danielle Fallon-O'Leary, CO— [see online](#)

The article explains that social entrepreneurship combines business acumen with a mission to address societal challenges such as poverty, education gaps, and environmental issues. It states that, unlike traditional nonprofits, social enterprises generate revenue while pursuing social impact, allowing them to scale solutions sustainably. The article defends the idea that success in business can be measured not only by profit but also by positive societal change. It argues that social entrepreneurs view problems as opportunities for innovation and meaningful impact. This perspective is exemplified by successful social enterprises like TOMS Shoes, which donates a pair of shoes for every pair sold. These case demonstrates how aligning business strategies with social missions can lead to both financial sustainability and significant community benefits.



From Personal Experience to Purpose-Driven Innovation: The Story of Trade Lenda

UNDP Nigeria [see online](#)

The article explains how Adeshina's entrepreneurial journey began at the age of seven, inspired by his mother's success as a wholesaler for Fan Milk. It states that despite her achievements, she struggled to access financing, a challenge that motivated Adeshina to address the financing gap faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It argues that through the timbuktoo Fintech Accelerator Programme, Trade Lenda established key credit lines and built partnerships across Africa, positioning itself as a go-to platform for inclusive SME financing. It defends the idea that Trade Lenda's impact is evident, having tracked over 10,000 new jobs from various engagements. It also highlights the company's goal to support SMEs and underserved segments with inclusive financing across Africa and other emerging markets.



