

# **What defines a good leader?**

## **A qualitative study on successful leadership strategies of female leaders inside museums**

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### Abstract

Even though women are strongly represented in the cultural and creative field, the sector is far from offering equal opportunities for women and men. Similarly to other sectors, the great barriers found are the limited participation of women in decision-making positions, the common segregation into certain roles, or the lower employment conditions and payment rate. Promoting gender equality and generating greater dynamism in the cultural and creative sector is therefore a fundamental goal to achieve. As assessed by UNESCO (2015), one of the solutions to solve this inequality is to raise awareness on this specific issue. The present research aims indeed to contribute to this goal, through the identification of successful leadership strategies of female leaders inside museums. The identification of successful strategies inside non-profits institutions is a particularly challenging process, for the presence of a wide-ranging number of goals and stakeholders. Moreover, the importance of considering different types of performance indicators is particularly relevant for cultural and non-profits organizations, where the main purposes express in the mission and the vision are non-financial. However, only during the 1990s, many researchers started to question the use of solely financial indicators. In particular, two professors from Harvard, Dr. Kaplan and Dr. Norton developed the so-called Balanced Scorecard (BSC), a framework to link multidimensional performance measures to the organization's strategies and daily activities (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Given the extensive use of this framework also in recent times, and its great flexibility and adaptability to different sectors and situations, an adaptation of the BSC to non-profit organisations, is chosen to analyse and define successful leadership strategies of female leaders inside museums. Indeed, the BSC allows considering different aspects of female strategies: not only financial data but also strategies related to the learning and growth of the organization, to the internal processes and the costumers and stakeholders perspectives. Therefore, eleven interviews have been conducted to either directors or heads of departments of five museums in Leiden and Rotterdam. Through their responses, and trough a content analysis of the museums' annual reports, it was possible to answer the main research question: what define successful leadership strategies inside museums organisations? The main aggregated results are summarised in an own elaborated Balanced Scorecard, with the main and most commonly adopted strategies by female leaders. Furthermore, given that the interviews were

conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, the strategies to deal with this crisis were analysed and summarized in another BSC framework. It indeed emerged as a main finding that numerous strategies and approaches are common between the interviewed female leaders. These strategies are generally creative and innovative. Even though financial data are not always positively related, all the implemented strategies are in line with the female leaders' ideas of success. Therefore, in line with other researches, to define successful leadership strategies, a multi-dimensional approach is essential to provide an exhaustive representation of the museums' functioning, which consider financial aspects, but mostly the cultural and social values related to the museums' idea of success.

Keywords: successful leadership strategies, female leaders, museums, Balanced Scorecard, Covid-19.

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## 1. Introduction

As stated in the 2019 *Report on Equality Between Women and Men in the EU*, “even though employment rates have reached historically high levels in the EU and more women than ever are in positions of power, a lot remains to be done for equality between women and men” (European Commission, 2019, p. 5). Employment rates in the EU continue to grow and it reached the highest rate ever in 2017 (72.2% for people aged 20 to 64). Nevertheless, gender inequality persists on the labour market: the employment rate for men is at 77.9%, while the one for women is at 66.4% in 2017, leaving a gender employment gap of 11.5% points (European Commission, 2019). Therefore, the European Commission continues to support one of its fundamental values that is the equality between women and men. The main goal of such policy is to promote equal payment (women’s average pay is about 16 % lower than that of men) and the same possibility to reach high management positions (women are holding only 6.3 % of CEO positions in major publicly listed companies in the EU). There are many solutions in order to reach these goals, such as the establishment of gender quotas, the introduction of new policy rules, or the raise of awareness on the topic. But how is the situation in the cultural sector? Is it in line with other fields?

According to the CAE (Culture Action Europe, 2016), although women are strongly represented in the cultural and creative sector, the sector is far from offering equal opportunities for women and men. The barriers found in the creative sector for women are not different from those observed in other economic sectors. Therefore, despite common perception, culture, and the arts are not immune to gender inequality. As stated in the UNESCO report *Gender equality, heritage and creativity* of 2015, “gender equality and culture can be mutually reinforcing and serve to achieve positive social transformations with benefits for everyone” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 134). Culture is a driver and an enabler of sustainable development. Therefore, it is fundamental to achieve different strategies that ensure that both women and men have equal rights and opportunities to fully and actively participate in all spheres of cultural life. Indeed, gender inequality’s issues in the cultural and creative sector, are similar to other areas of socio-economic life: the participation of women in decision-making positions is limited; women are normally segregated into certain activities and have restricted opportunities for ongoing training; the employment conditions and payment are poorer and lower; and so on. For instance, top management roles in the cultural sector for women range from 20% in Germany and Spain to 33% in France (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). Therefore, one of the UNESCO’s aim is to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment through culture in order to foster female skills and to generate greater dynamism and inclusion in the cultural and creative sector. International cooperation and awareness-raising programmes are therefore necessary; and any

policy action related to gender equality and culture must be part of a more comprehensive gender equality strategy (UNESCO, Gender Equality Heritage and Creativity, 2015).

Even if the focus of this research will not be on the policy implications of gender inequality, this general introduction can be useful in order to give an overview of what is going on in the field. Indeed, it is now clear that gender inequality is an issue that still needs to be solved and acknowledged, in every socio-economic sector, including the cultural and creative one. There are several solutions that can be implemented to solve gender inequality in the cultural sector, among which raising awareness is one the most relevant, as highlighted by the UNESCO's report. Raising awareness refers to the act of enlightening the beneficial and successful characteristics and strategies that women could bring inside cultural institutions.

Indeed, given that women in top management roles in the European cultural sector are only between 20 and 33% (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016), raising awareness on the successful leadership strategies of female leaders in the museum sector is of particular interest. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, this issue has not been adequately investigated so far: it is challenging to find female leadership researches in the museum field and therefore it would be beneficial to expand the existing literature while raising the awareness on the successful leadership strategies of museums' female leaders.

Starting from these motivations and from personal interests, this research focuses on the definition and identification of successful leadership strategies inside museums. Consequently the aim is to answer the following research question:

*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*

The use of performance measures is quite widespread nowadays also in the cultural and creative sector (Pignataro, 2011) as a way to evaluate how well an organization operates. Traditionally the focus was mostly on financial and economic measures. However, in the 1990s an increasing number of researchers started to question the use of solely financial indicators and include also non-financial measures, to better evaluate long-term strategies and leadership effort (Turbide & Laurin, 2009). In particular, non-financial measures are fundamental to capture a multiple dimension of performance measures for non-profit organizations, such as museums, and to comprehend indicators related to the cultural, artistic, or social values and objectives. In 1992, two professors from Harvard, Dr. Kaplan and Dr. Norton developed the so-called Balanced Scorecard (BSC), as a way to link multidimensional performance measures to the organization's strategies and daily activities (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). This framework is also applicable for non-profit organizations and is

therefore found to be the best solution to properly answer the main research question. By considering both financial and non-financial perspectives, the success of female leadership strategies inside museums can be defined and measured.

The structure of this thesis is organized as follows. After the present introduction, the theoretical framework and literature review is presented in the second chapter, and will be key to proceed in the analysis. First, the importance of performance measures is highlighted, especially in relation to cultural institutions. Second, attention is given to the definition and characteristics of museum, and to their primary performance measures, related to both the efficiency and effectiveness of these organizations. The third section emphasizes the role of the Balanced Scorecard, and specifically how it can be modified and adapted to the non-profit sector supported by a literature review on the recent application of the BSC to assess the potential of this framework still today. The last section presents the peculiarities of strategic and female leadership, with a chief focus on the relationship between top and middle managers. The third chapter presents the methodology of the research. A qualitative method was chosen for the comparative nature of this thesis. Eleven interviews were conducted with female directors and heads of departments in five different museums located in either Leiden or Rotterdam. A content analysis of the museums' annual report was also employed to triangulate findings and develop the financial perspective. Lastly, the ethics and trustworthiness of the analysis is presented. The fourth chapter exhibits the gathered results of the research, through a coding process and content analysis. The results are enriched and connected with the previously presented literature and theories. The analysis, after a first section on the definition of success by each leader, follows the structure of the four perspectives of Balanced Scorecard. Furthermore, given the peculiarity that the interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, the last section focuses on the implications and adopted strategies to deal with this unexpected crisis. In the last chapter, the conclusions are reported, to answer the main research question and six sub-questions. The main strategies used by female leaders, regarding all the four areas of the Balanced Scorecard, are reported and summarized in a self-developed framework. Moreover, the strategies adopted to deal with the Covid-19 crisis are separately summarized and discussed. Limitations, suggestions for further research, and policy implications of the present research serve to close this thesis.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to collect and show the theoretical background of this research. The first section highlights the importance of monitoring and measuring the performance of an organization, with a specific focus on performance indicators as a tool to measure success. Later, the theory will specifically concentrate on museums, to highlight its characteristics and peculiarities as an economic agent. Moreover, attention will be given also to the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness, as well as again on specific performance indicators, to state how a museum can evaluate successful strategies. Central to the theoretical background is the section about the Balanced Scorecard framework of Kaplan and Norton (1992). This framework is chosen because, firstly it provides a holistic model to study and interpret museums' success and performance, and secondly because it links effectively the performance of an organization to its strategy, considering not only financial indicators. Some recent academic literature that used the Balanced Scorecard will be analysed and summarized, to state why this framework is relevant still today. In particular, this literature review will emphasize how this model can be linked to successful leadership strategies for females. Indeed, the succeeding section introduces the concept of leadership and successful leadership strategies, considering the specific peculiarities of female leaders inside museums. Afterward, the differences between top and middle leaders inside a museum is highlighted. Finally, a summary of the main remarkable concepts concludes this chapter.

### 2.1. Performance indicators as a tool to measure successful strategies

One of the goals of an organization is normally to be successful. And successful firms always need successful leadership strategies. However, in order to achieve that, it is previously fundamental to define what success is and how to measure it. Measuring organizational success and performance is a constant challenge for both managers and researchers. Generally, organizational performance includes real results or outputs compared with intended results or outputs. It normally comprehends three areas of outcomes: financial performance, product market performance and shareholders return (Richard, Devinney, & Yip, 2009). These areas are therefore linked with specific performance indicators (PIs). Performances indicators are tools to measure, monitor or compare activities, to support and evaluate the decision-making process of an organization. They are useful particularly in relation to concepts, which are not always measurable, in order to compare and monitor desired goals. It is then crucial for an organization to choose which indicators are better to analyse (Navarrete Hernández, 2020). Performance measurements are traditionally focused on financial measures, such as sales, profits or investments. However, in the 1990s researchers start to realize the importance to include also non-financial indicators, which are more representative of a long-term strategy and the

managerial and leadership effort. Therefore, a performance measurement system, which encompasses both financial and non-financial indicators, can provide synthetic information about the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization, supporting a comparison with transparent, simplified and standardized valuations (Basso, Casarin, & Furnari, 2018).

## 2.2. Museum and performance evaluation

Measuring the organizational performance and success has become rapidly an important requirement also in arts and culture field: from the 1980s, an increasing pressure arose on cultural organizations requiring them to show managerial practices and performance measures, similarly to profit organization, in order to be more accountable for their actions (Zorloni, 2016). The importance of considering different types of performance indicators is particularly relevant for cultural and non-profits organizations, where the main purpose express in the mission and the vision is non-financial. This research will specifically focus on successful leadership strategies inside museums.

### 2.2.1. Definition and characteristics of museums

Firstly, it is of great importance to give a specific definition of a museum and to delineate the main characteristics that incorporate each museum into a definite category. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has the task to provide a definition of museum. The current definition is still the one adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria on 25 August 2007. It states that: “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment” (ICOM, 2007, p. 2). However, a more current definition is under discussion, to include all the dissimilar conditions, values and practices of museums in diverse and rapidly changing societies (ICOM, 2020). Furthermore museums can be classified through many different criteria. For instance, Frey and Meier (2006, p. 1019), identify four different criteria: the content (art, historical, scientific, etc.); the size (small, medium, large); the age (old or new); and the institutional form (public, private, mixed forms, depending on donors, etc.).

Museums are often considered as hybrid organizations, meaning that they have dual and seemingly contradictory objectives: on one hand, there are all the cultural, artistic and social purposes, which are the primary activities and mission of the organization; on the other hand, a museum needs also to consider financial and business objectives (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). Therefore, to measure their performance and to avoid an imbalance between the two identities, it is fundamental to consider different categories of indicators, both financial and not.

To conclude, it is essential to specify the definition and the main characteristics and categories of the organizations under analysis. Indeed, in this way, it is possible to choose and analyse the best indicators for each museum. Moreover, a comparison between each museum will be easier and more effective; otherwise, the results could be biased from the intrinsic differences between each of them.

### 2.2.2. Museums as an economic agent

Given this hybrid identity, researchers often see and consider museums as economic agents or units (Fernandez-Blanco & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2020 ) (Frey & Meier, 2006). In this respect, museums are organizations that seek to maximize different kinds of objects, such as attendance or profits, throughout an efficient management and leadership. Therefore, using an economic point of view, can help researchers to analyse the main inputs and outputs of museums, in order to show the relationship between these two factors and to evaluate the museum's performance. Following the analysis of Blanco & Prieto (2020 ), the main inputs are labour and capital; while the outputs can be grouped into three broad categories that are collection, exhibitions, and other services. Moreover, also the most relevant externalities that a museum can generate are highlighted and considered as important outputs. Examples are the change in a city's appeal or image, the possibilities to attract tourists or the economic impact. Consequently, applying an economic approach to evaluate a museum's performance, involve an analysis of both the demand and the supply side of the museum. Concerning the demand side, it includes private and public features. The private demand is based on an individual utility maximization process, which comprehends price, income and time constraints (Fernandez-Blanco & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2020 ). Other determinants are the quality of the exhibitions and of the collection, the attractiveness of the building and the level of additional services. Public demand is therefore built across social valuation and demand. It includes externalities and the effects on markets, which see museums as a local and economic developer. On the other hand, the supply side is analysed considering cost structures and the nature of the ownership. The former considers the peculiarities of the cost structure in museums, such as the high fixed costs, the marginal costs close to zero and the small variable costs. The firm structure, instead, comprehends private and public ownership: public museums rely exclusively on public grants and do not have the incentive to generate additional income; conversely, private museums rely mostly on admission prices and sales of ancillary goods. Another possible firm structure is the museums depending on donations (Frey & Meier, 2006). In conclusion, all these components are part of a museum's performance, and the manager or leader should adapt his or her behaviour according to them (Fernandez-Blanco & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2020 ).

### 2.2.3. Efficiency, effectiveness and performance measures for museums

When evaluating a museum's performance, it is important to consider both its efficiency and effectiveness. As stated by Basso and Furnari, “efficiency represents the ability to maximize the amount of output given the input available or to use smaller quantities of input to achieve the same amount of output” (2004, p. 197). Many indicators define efficiency inside a museum, such as productivity, sales income, marketing, shop or fundraising efficiency. More generally, efficiency measurement can consider both inputs (resources available) and outputs (services provided) of the organization, in order to understand if the outputs have been maximized, giving the available inputs. This method has been used by Basso and Furnari (2004), throughout the DEA methodology, which builds a global efficiency index, to compare and evaluate the relative technical efficiency of museums. Measuring efficiency is indeed a useful way to evaluate the performance of an organization, considering quantitative and financial measures. There are several types of efficiency, such as allocative, productive, technical, dynamic and social efficiency. Therefore, it is important for an organization to understand the differences between these types of efficiencies and to know how to improve and increase them. Generally, efficiency can be increased by lowering inputs or increasing outputs, but also through gaining new skills and abilities. For example, an organization could embrace wisely the use of new technologies, but could also adopt new strategies of communication, or overall management.

On the other hand, the concept of effectiveness is closer to the one of performance. According to the Business Dictionary, effectiveness is defined as “the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2020 ). Contrary to efficiency, effectiveness is a measuring tool that can be used to evaluate different elements, which are also non-quantitative. Effectiveness is a complex concept because every stakeholder can consider different objectives and therefore different indicators. For this reason, it is fundamental to consider a multidimensional concept of effectiveness, which permits to consider different types of stakeholders (Turbide & Laurin, 2009). Every organization (museums, in this case), has specific goals to achieve and will consider different ways to increase effectiveness. Hence, it is very hard to benchmark or compare effectiveness measures of different museums, because their goals and objectives would be different (e.g. increase visitors, enrich the collection, or develop quality public programs).

Performance measures, as well as the level of effectiveness and efficiency, are essential tools for both profit and non-profit organizations. Indeed, these measures can help the organization to control the status quo of the organization, providing relevant information on both the areas that are working well and those that are performing under expectations (Behn, 2003). Performance measures

are consequently an essential form of assessment and part of a leadership strategy for museums, necessary to “evaluate, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn and improve” (Behn, 2003, p. 588). Each of these goals requires a specific approach, and, as a consequence, leaders should always be aware of which of them they are looking for. However, while in the business world performance is relatively easy to quantify, using quantitative and comparable measures, museums and non-profits organization require more subjective and value-based measures (Zorloni, 2016). Indeed, the cultural field does not present performance standards indicators, which are objective outcome measures derived from the past of similar organizations with common standards and expectations. Consequently, for this lack of standardized measures and giving the diversity of pursued goals among different institutions, leaders in museums should consider multi-dimensional performance measures (Turbide & Laurin, 2009).

Given the aim of this thesis, to identify and evaluate female successful leadership strategies, it is fundamental to take into consideration many different performance indicators and not only quantitative and financial measures in order to understand the decision-making process of a museum and consider different stakeholders, while respecting the multi-dimensionality of pursued goals. Indeed, as stated by Navarrete Hernández “PIs should not be prescriptive in their interpretation; instead, they should serve as tools for further reflection on the quality of the service or the ability to reach a policy goal” (2020, p. 413). A successful museum should be able to produce positive outcomes for its audience and community, through the conservation of its collection for future generation and the establishment of beneficial changes for its stakeholders (Zorloni, 2016). A multi-dimensional approach is, therefore, necessary to generate success, in terms of social, political or economic values.

### 2.3. The Balanced Scorecard

One of the most widely used frameworks to establish performance measures in a holistic way and to achieve strategic success is the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a strategic planning and management system, developed in 1992 by Kaplan and Norton, two professors at Harvard University (1992). It is a framework used to link the performance of an organization to its strategy, considering not only financial indicators. It has been intensively used both from profit and non-profit organizations. The aim is to develop a framework useful to evaluate and measure groups of performance indicators, even for organizations such as museums, where financial indicators are not sufficient. Indeed, especially for museums, the real strength of the BSC is that it can place the mission and strategy of the organization at the heart of performance measures, bringing together not only quantitative measures but also goals, indicators, and results (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). The

system has evolved over the years into a fully integrated strategic management system, rather than a measurement tool (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2020). Therefore, the Balanced Scorecard emphasizes the relation between strategies, actions, and results, intending to measure and evaluate the organization's performance on four perspectives: financial measures, learning & growth, internal business processes, and customers & stakeholders.

- Financial data is the first perspective, which aims to answer the question of how does the organization looks to shareholders. This dimension refers to indicators such as sales, expenditures, and income, to evaluate the financial performance and effective use of resources, in terms of profitability. It, therefore, comprehends the reduction of wastes and the ways to survive, succeed and prosper, with a focus on the economic value, which can be reached through revenue growth or productivity.
- Customers & Stakeholders is a perspective that denotes all the indicators related to customer value, satisfaction, loyalty and/or retention, as well as on market perception. It questions how customers and stakeholders see the organization. With the support of these indicators, the organization can accomplish its vision and mission and can differentiate itself from the competitors. It is also related to an improvement in the organization's awareness and accessibility, with the aim to identify the non-costumers and understand how to attract them.
- Internal Business Processes comprehend indicators of internal efficiency and quality. The aim is to reach the expectation of the shareholders, in order to analyse and solve any issues related to the product, services or other key business processes. It aims to answer the question "How does the organization organize their work? And are they working effectively and efficiently?" A shared organizational culture and efficient communication and confidence with the employees are two valuable advantages. Guidelines and policies need to be implemented, as well as the efficiency of operations management, to reach determined goals and strategies.
- Learning & Growth (or Organizational Capacity) is the last perspective, which identifies different indicators, answering mainly two questions: How does the organization improve, create value and innovate? And what are the emerging opportunities and challenges? It refers to human capital, infrastructure, technology and culture measures. It defines on one hand, how employees and managers learn new information, knowledge and skills, and on the other, how effectively they use them to gain a competitive advantage over other organizations, in the short and long-term. This perspective allows the organization to adapt to change, as well to grow and improve. Effectiveness is, therefore, a key performance indicator, which refers to employees, managers, as well as to skills and knowledge.

By analysing these four areas, an organization can try to realizing new objectives and strategies achieving a “balanced” view of performance both in the short and in the long-term. An organization needs to implement these four areas into daily strategic objectives that can actually translate abstract concepts, such as the mission and vision, into feasible actions (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2020). However, the Balanced Scorecard was initially developed for the private sector. It created indeed a system of critical variables of success, through an analysis of economic and financial data combined with a wide-ranging analysis of the organizational environment, both inside (i.e. internal business processes perspective) and outside the organization (i.e. customers & stakeholders perspective). Everything is then related to the vision, the values, and the people inside the institution (i.e. learning & growth perspective), in order to align the organizational strategy to its day-to-day activities and objectives (Basso, Casarin, & Furnari, 2018). These four perspectives are connected in the framework by a cause and effect relationship, where the learning & growth is at the bottom of the scorecard, influencing the internal processes, which in returns influence the external customers and stakeholders of the organization. Finally, a positive relationship between these three perspectives leads to successful financial data, which are positioned at the top of the framework (Basso, Casarin, & Furnari, 2018). However, application of the BSC to non-profit organizations requires a few adjustments to provide a holistic framework for the organization, where the relevant measurement indicators are related to the social and cultural values intrinsic in their missions, and where a wide range of activities and objectives can be reflected (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

### 2.3.1. Modified BSC for non-profit organizations

The BSC by Kaplan and Norton (1992) was initially proposed for the evaluation of business and profit oriented organizations. However, the application of the Balanced Scorecard to non-profit organizations, and therefore to museums, requires some adjustments, to highlight the importance of social and cultural purposes (Basso, Casarin, & Furnari, 2018). Kaplan and Norton drew attention to this discrepancy and specified that the BSC should be adapted if applied to non-profit organizations (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). The original hierarchy of the framework is challenging and may be changed due to the multiple nature of their stakeholders and to the importance of social and cultural values. Kaplan in particular (2001), in a research named “Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in non-profit organizations”, suggests two main variations of the BSC for non-profit organizations. Firstly, he recommends putting at the top of the framework an overarching purpose, which represents the mission of the non-profit organization. It will orient all the four perspectives in the long-term, and the financial perspective will not be longer placed at the top of the hierarchy since it is not the primary objective of these organizations. Secondly, he redefines the concept of customers, highlighting the difference between donors, who provide the financial resources, and visitors who

receive the services. Consequently, the donor perspective and the recipient perspective are placed in parallel, at the top of the scorecard. As a result, these two parallel perspectives are representative of the financial and customer perspectives (view *Figure 1*). In the case of the museum, the financial perspective can further include indicators such as return on investment, cash flow, sales growth or financial results; on the other hand, the customer perspective normally comprehends indicators regarding customer satisfaction, number of visitors and interaction/dialogue, positive experience of visitors (both offline and online) or good information services. At the bottom of the scorecard, the internal business process and the learning & growth perspectives are found. The former for a museum can comprehend the measure of increased process efficiency; lower cycle time; quality of the primary process; improved communication and cooperation skills. On the other hand, the learning & growth of a museum is representative of indicators such as an effective use of technologies and social media; a development of critical skills and knowledge for managers and employees, employee growth, turnover, and satisfaction. Through these indicators and perspectives, non-profit organizations can create a solid relationship between their mission, strategy statements and daily operational actions (Kaplan R. S., 2001).

A strategic and management control system, through balanced performance measures and indicators, is essential to control the effective success of the implemented strategy (Atkinson, 2006). By putting the objectives and the mission of the organization at the center, the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) can provide a strategic map that facilitates a clear direction, understanding, and coordination across the organization. However, in order to do so, the scorecard needs to be implemented participative and shared by the entire organization, through the cascading process. Cascading the BSC means to translate the corporate-wide scorecard down to departments or business units and then to teams or individuals (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2020). Through the cascade process, coordinated scorecards will be established for the entire organization and communicated properly. Every member will thus directly focus on the operational strategy, including middle managers, who have a pivotal role in the implementation of it (Atkinson, 2006).

With this respect, the four indicators of the Balanced Scorecard are found to be more suitable and comprehensive for the aim of the thesis. Indeed, these four areas of analysis (learning & growth, internal business processes, customers & stakeholders, and financial data) will be appropriate to have a “balanced” view of the performance of museums, both in the short and in the long-term, but also to comprehend the real contribution of female leadership strategies. Indeed, the “Balanced Scorecard” framework is also advantageous to emphasize the relation between strategies, actions, and results in order to implement a qualitative analysis on the contribution of female leadership performances.



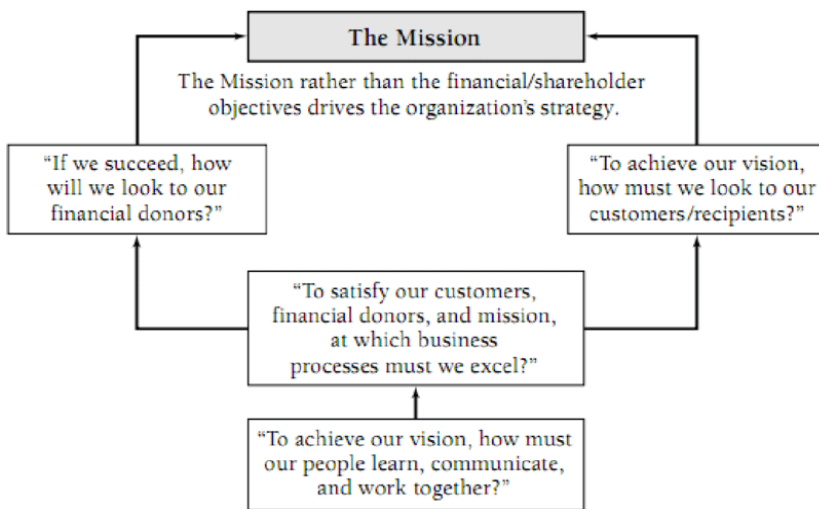


Figure 1. Adapting the Balanced Scorecard Framework to Non-profit Organizations (Kaplan R. S., 2001, p. 361).

### 2.3.3. Recent application of the Balanced Scorecard

In order to state the relevance of the Balanced Scorecard at our present day, a literature review of some recent application of this framework is provided. Special attention will be given to the application of the Balanced Scorecard on leadership strategies and on non-profit and cultural organizations, where an adaption of the framework is always found to be necessary.

In a research on the Journal of Strategy & Performance Management, Hasan and Chyi, focus on a literature review to prove the positive practicability of the Balanced Scorecard (Hasan & Chyi, 2017 ). This article is chosen since it provides a basis for the development of a general BSC framework in different fields. The authors, in the introduction, describe performance management and measurement as fundamental elements to assess organizational success. Performance management (PM) is defined as a continuous process of recognizing, measuring and developing strategies that align with organizations' mission and vision. Thanks to it, an organization can improve the overall performance, through beneficial strategies and key indicators. The authors list different performance frameworks and discovered the Balanced Scorecard as the most frequently used and cited, due to its qualitative and holistic view of organizational performance. After a brief description of the four perspectives of the BSC, the methodology is described as the explicit one, through searching and reviewing of research papers, with two main keywords: Performance Management and BSC. The findings suggest that the Balanced Scorecard has been widely used in different industries, and the most four recent researchers are evaluated and analysed by the authors. These four fields are the higher education, plantation industry, machine industry, and healthcare. Even though arts and cultural fields are not considered, this research shows that the results are favourable in many different

fields. Indeed, it is found that all the four industries improved their performance and strategic planning by using the BSC framework. Moreover, the authors highlight that BSC has wide and holistic applicability, which can fit different organization's features to measure and enhance strategic success.

Zorloni (2016), in an already previously cited article, investigates the use of the Balanced Scorecard to design a performance framework for museum activities. After a brief introduction and literature review on the peculiarities of museums' performance measures, she defined the BSC as a strategic planning and management system to align business activities with the vision and strategy of the organization, in a successful way for many different organizations around the world. The slightly modified BSC by Kaplan for non-profit organizations can help museums to become successful, for three different reasons: it can help the museum to better identify performance measures, to demonstrate accountability and clearly communicated values, and to focus museums' staff on the importance to achieve organizational goals (Zorloni, 2016). The author later defines a specific and adapted BSC for museums, designing four new dimensions based on the interview responses of 41 museum executives from 16 different institutions. The interviews aimed to identify the relevant factors for the success of visual arts museums. Firstly, the interviews made clear that museum executives have the desire for standard and comparable measures of success. Zorloni proposed an adapted Balanced Scorecard with four dimensions of value to measure performance: artistic contribution, public benefit, learning and growth, and finance and governance. This framework has the advantage that it can be implemented relatively easily and inexpensively. To prove it, the author examines the application of it to the Benaki museums, the oldest private museum in Greece. Several benefits were found, such as the realization by the employees of the importance of strategic planning, or the greater focus on performance measures. Generally, it helped the museum to change how they deliver their values, aligning the personnel's effort with the museum's mission. Consequently, the employees' satisfaction was increased, and financial sustainability enhanced. Even though Benaki has still many future challenges to face, the application of the Balanced Scorecard was a first step to provide greater transparency, accountability, as well as entrepreneurial and creative initiatives.

Another relevant article, named "Balanced Scorecard in SMEs: effects on innovation and financial performance" (Malagueno, Lopez-Valeiras, & Gomez-Conde, 2018), intends to fill the lack of quantitative empirical researches on the application of the BSC on Small Medium Enterprises. The aim emphasizes the impact of the BSC for feedforward control on financial performance and innovation. The results, based on a survey of 201 SMEs in Spain, showed better financial performance on the sales of SMEs over 2 or 3 years and a higher level of incremental innovation and organizational capabilities. In particular, it has been found by the authors that more established SMEs achieved

higher levels of financial performance. Therefore, this article is chosen because it highlights the relevant role of the Balanced Scorecard also in SMEs, which can also comprehend museums and non-profit organizations.

A more specific research from 2018 (Masseghem, Bakkali, Sammut, & Swjali, 2018), attempts to measure how well non-profit incubator are performing, through an adapted Balanced Scorecard approach. The number of incubators in the world is nowadays increasingly rising, with many regional non-profit incubators. Given the lack of performance measures to define their success, the authors choose the BSC as a holistic and multidimensional framework, to link the performance of non-profits incubators with their strategies and mission. The relevant performance perspectives were retrieved from a review of the literature and the results of 121 surveys and 10 hours of interviews with managers and founders of different non-profit incubators. Exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis were provided to ensure the reliability and validity of the research. As a result, 32 indicators were found and grouped in four incubators performance measures: local development performance, incubatee satisfaction, incubation process, and learning.

An adaptation of the Balanced Scorecard has been used also to measure the success of museum social media strategies (Villaespesa, 2015 ), based on different case studies to evaluate the social media activities of the Tate museum. The BSC is chosen for its flexibility to adapt to different fields, including the museum one. An adaptation of it is provided to show all the potential measures for each of the objectives identified (learning & growth, internal business processes, and public & funders). Therefore, the BSC proved to be a useful tool to gather strategic information and build a strategic framework to evaluate the success of Tate's social media. Afterward, an insight on how to put it in practice is provided, focusing on one of the sections that consider how to measure the interactions and conversations created while using social media. Clear benefits of implementing a performance measurement system are found, but also implications in terms of financial investments and alterations to internal processes.

Finally, two articles are chosen to highlight the relevance and impact of linking the Balanced Scorecard to leadership strategies and styles. "Balancing Strategic Leadership" (Najmaei, Quazi, & Behnia, 2017), is a research, which attempts to answer the question "How do strategic choices made by leaders affect the performance of the firm?" considering three different theories. The first one is developed by Porter, who argues that the essence of strategy is to build competitive barriers, through the so-called five force model of competition. The second view considered is the Balanced Scorecard, seen as a strategy-mapping tool. The third and last theory is the strategic leadership theory (SLT), which looks at the behaviours of leaders and their subjective strategy perceptions of markets, to assess

the organizational performance success. The authors consider these theories as complementary rather than competitive views of strategic performance. They consequently propose a multiple models, which integrates the SLT and the BSC, to assess how behavioural characteristics of strategic leaders affect how they translate vision and strategies into the four areas of the BSC. Therefore, with this model, the strategic leadership and decision-making process is viewed in a systematic way, that integrated the BSC theory, with leaders' features, such as age, gender, experience and occupation.

The last analysed article (Miloloža, 2016), explores the extent to which leadership styles affect the success of the organization, through the Balanced Scorecard approach. As empirical evidence, a survey and the Leadership Style Questionnaire on a sample of Croatian firms were conducted. The results showed how the autocratic leadership style has mostly a negative impact on the successful performance of the four perspectives of the BSC, while the democratic leadership has mostly positive impact and laissez-faire has less impact than the other two styles. However, the main conclusion is that companies should accept that different leadership styles have various impacts on business performance and that each style could be more appropriate in different situations.

This literature reviewed revealed how the Balanced Scorecard can still be considered a successful framework to evaluate organizational performance. In particular, the attention is been given to research that focuses on the non-profit and SMEs field, to assess the relevance of the BSC also in the museum sector, through an adaptation of the scorecard. Moreover, a positive link is also found between the relation of the BSC and the application of successful leadership strategies.

In conclusion, the Balanced Scorecard is a useful framework, which can explicitly translate strategic objectives into managerial actions and operational goals; it can also identify clear performance targets and measures, and engage every employees in the implementation of the strategic process (Atkinson, 2006). However, to implement a successful strategy, a BSC is not sufficient. The organization should have a defined and positive strategic leadership, that will address in the first place the goals and objectives that the organization is trying to achieve. When it is clear, where the organization is now and where it wants to be in the future, the Balanced Scorecard can provide a useful vehicle to drive the firm to the desired location (Atkinson, 2006).

#### 2.4. Implementation of successful leadership strategies

The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992), can thus be considered as a valuable framework to assess if female leadership strategies are successful or not. In addition, it can also be used for non-profit and cultural organizations. However, it is first important to describe what defines a successful leadership strategy and what the specific characteristics of female leadership are. Given

the focus of this research on successful leadership strategies of females in apical positions inside museums, with two levels of analysis (director and head of departments) attention will be given on how the top and middle managers in museums can implement successful strategy processes.

#### 2.4.1 Leadership and strategic leadership

First of all, leadership and strategic leadership need to be defined. According to Yukl, leadership can be described as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (Yukl, 2006, p. 8). It is nowadays commonly known that leadership is a fundamental and key factor for an organization’s performance (Zhu, Chew, & Spangler, 2005). The definition of leadership has evolved over the last decades and many different styles and theories have been researched. A leader is an individual who can influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). The concept of leadership has evolved and extended beyond influence, to include motivation and enabling of others to help achieve organizational goals. However, when can leadership be defined as strategic? And what defines a successful leadership strategy? Strategic leadership is specifically described as the leadership at the top of organizations, in contrast with leadership, that refers to leaders at any level of the organization. Moreover, strategic leadership embraces a strategic and relational activity between leaders and their immediate followers. Thus, the focus is specifically on executive work, as a strategic and symbolic activity, conversely to mere leadership where any interactions and relations among leaders, followers, and the organizational context are considered (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

While studying the strategic process of an organization, the peculiarities and influence of the context should not be forgotten (Gabrielsson, Khlif, & Yamak, 2019 ). Organizations are nowadays part of a globalized, uncertain and fast-moving environment and in this respect, the board of directors has a crucial strategic leadership role. They are an elected group of individuals that represents the shareholders’ and management’s interests, with a collective responsibility (Chen, 2019). In non-profit organizations, they have normally the duty to provide the necessary amount of resources to advance the organizational mission, develop long-term strategies and improve performance. In this respect, the board strictly collaborate with the management team, by founding common solutions and supporting the strategic leadership decisions. Moreover, many researches highlight how a great diversity inside the museum’s board, given by the presence of women or generally of minorities, can lead to higher performances and a better representation of the community’s values and needs (Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003).

#### 2.4.2. The role of top and middle managers in strategic leadership

Strategic leadership is used to designate leadership at the top of the organization, which can, therefore, include both top and middle managers. Top management includes the highest-ranking executives, with titles as chair-man or women, chief executive officer, president or managing director, who are responsible for the entire organization (Business Dictionary, 2020). However, what often remains unclear is where middle management stops and top management begins (Castañer & Yu, 2017). Top management is associated with the upper echelons of an organization, while middle managers are those who are not top managers but who have the responsibility of supervising lower-level managers. Yet, these definitions can change based on the organizational perspective, scope and structural complexity (Castañer & Yu, 2017).

It is fundamental to understand the relationship between the top management team (TMT) and the middle managers (MMs), and their role in the strategic leadership process. The concept of sensemaking can be used to explain how the TMT understands and acts on its leadership role and how they implement actual leadership actions, towards MMs to influence organizational performance (Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2007). Top managers need indeed to coordinate and align their ideas and actions to develop a common understanding of their leadership approach. Sensemaking about leadership is, therefore, a social process strictly linked to actions, which enables shared understandings, decision implementation and organizational performance between TMT and MMs (Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2007). In another article, Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, and Roe (2011), further explain the relationship between top and middle managers, focusing on how the former can have an impact on organizational performance through middle managers. Two key mechanisms are found to strongly shape the interaction between TMT and MMS: information exchange and mutual influence. To achieve success organizational performance, the influence needs to be mutually balanced, the information exchange open and the key roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

Therefore, this coordinated and respectful relationship between top and middle managers is the first step to formulate and implement a successful strategy. Afterward, three key elements are found to be essential (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002). Firstly, to implement successful strategies, strategic communication is fundamental: every organization needs to communicate its strategy in an open and comprehensive way so that every member can understand why and how to act to implement it. Secondly, strategic actors need to be identified and supported by the managers. Middle managers with great skills and motivation have normally a crucial role in communicating the strategy to the organization, and top managers should recognize them. Finally, it is essential that the organizational structure and system are aligned with the implemented strategy: the specific goals and mission of the

organization should be clear to all the employees and in line with an explicit and recognized representation of the strategy process (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002).

Middle managers are thus key strategic actors, with a pivotal role in strategic communication (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002). However, it is also important to remember all the scenarios and situations where the TMT has an essential role, far beyond the selection and setting of structural and strategic context (Castañer & Yu, 2017). One of the specific circumstances where top managers need to directly intervene in the strategic process is when the organization is under crisis situations. The role of the TMT is then to set new goals and reconstructing initiatives, to regain the confidence of external stakeholders and shareholders. Besides, when top managers note organizational complacency, they should implement new top-down initiatives, to avoid a possible mission-drift. Top managers are indeed motivated by their responsibility to fulfil the organizational mission, far more than middle managers who do not have formal responsibility for it. Another circumstance refers to when new, radical, or exploratory activities need to be integrated at the core of the organizations. High resistance can often arise, but top managers should quickly intervene to support this change and respond to any concerns, which are normally from MMs (Castañer & Yu, 2017). However, middle managers still have a very relevant role. It is just important to define the circumstances when the top and middle managers should collaborate or act separately.

#### 2.4.3. Female leadership and non-profit sector

Historically, leadership has carried the notion of masculinity and the idea that men make better leaders than women. However, in the past decades, the idea that also women are effective leaders has arisen, and the increasing number of females in leadership positions can prove it. Moreover, this growth has also been accompanied by changes in policy, theories and researches addressing both leadership and gender-related topics (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Nowadays, a common trend of many researches specifies that gender advantages are incorrect and equivocal and that no claim of superiority exists between male and female leaders. As effective leaders, both men and women, can be successful and support the organizational performance (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). Difference attitudes, results or leadership styles between male and female leaders, can be highly susceptible to context and bias. Organizational strategy and culture, groups' dynamics, leadership behaviours, and generally the broader societal context, are all environmental factors, which strongly influenced leaders' decision-making processes and that should be taken into consideration when studying leadership and gender differences. Therefore, leadership styles should be examined from different perspectives: many studies found that leadership behaviours change according to

leaders' particular reactions to circumstances depending not only on gender, but also on relationships, knowledge, communication, technical skills, experiences and so on.

However, gender inequality is still an issue in every socio-economic sector, including the cultural and creative one. According to the CAE (Culture Action Europe, 2016), although women are strongly represented in the cultural and creative field, the sector is far from offering equal opportunities. Indeed, the participation of women in decision-making positions is limited; women are normally segregated into certain activities and have restricted opportunities for ongoing training; the employment conditions and payment are poorer and lower; and so on. For instance, top management women in the cultural sector range from 20% in Germany and Spain to 33% in France (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). Therefore, one of the UNESCO's aim is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through culture to generate greater dynamism and inclusion in the cultural and creative sector. Hence, it is important also for researchers to raise awareness on the effectiveness of female leadership and to acknowledge and solved the many ongoing challenges that women face to reach leadership positions (Caust, 2018). Women's participation, and generally gender diversity, encourage greater creativity and innovation on board of directors or inside an organization (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018 ).

For this and other reasons, an increase in the roles of women in society and organizations worldwide are underway, with major efforts to empower female leaders. In particular, different authors specified that women are more likely to hold leadership positions within non-profit organizations, rather than for-profits ones (Claus, Callahan, & Sandlin, 2013, p. 339). Indeed, a positive relation is found between women's empowerment and the non-profit sector's development, showing how non-profit sectors can actually benefit from women's leadership (Themudo, 2009) (Evans, Mayo, & Quijada, 2018). Non-profit organizations have normally a value-based mission and vision and are more likely to employ women in upper-level leadership, as a consequence of their soft nature skills normally categorized as feminine. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to remember that soft skills are not representative of all female leaders, and that, at the same time, hard skills can be relevant also in the non-profit sector and are not undoubtedly related to male leaders (Claus, Callahan, & Sandlin, 2013). In fact, the aim of this research will be to identify successful female leadership strategies inside museums, in order to contribute and amplified the existing literature on female leadership in arts organizations, and further develop the positive correlation between women leadership and the non-profit sector's development.



## 2.4. Conclusion and summary of concepts

Performance indicators are essential tools to assess if the leadership strategies of an organization are successful. Measuring organizational success and performance is a constant challenge for managers, especially of cultural or non-profit organizations. Indeed, in these types of institutions, there is a lack of standardized and comparable measures, mostly because these measures are more subjective and value-based. However, measuring organizational performance and success has become rapidly an important requirement also in the arts and culture field, to be more accountable for their actions and to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, as well as performance measures. Thus, giving the diversity of pursued goals leaders in museums should consider multi-dimensional performance measures, which are both financial and non-financial. The Balanced Scorecard is found to be an advantageous and beneficial framework, not only in business organizations but also in cultural and non-profit ones. Nevertheless, an adaptation of the scorecard is necessary, due to the multiple nature of their stakeholders and to the importance of social and cultural values. Indeed, in recent literature, the adapted BSC is found to be a positive framework to measure the performance of non-profit organizations and to assess whether a strategic leadership approach is successful or not. To implement a successful strategy, however, a female strategic leadership approach needs to be defined, focusing in particular on the different roles and the relationship between top managers, and middle managers. In the following sections, the Balanced Scorecard will be used as a framework to define if the female leadership strategies of different museums are successful and if they lead to successful organizational performance.

### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology used in this research is outlined. This study aims at understanding how leadership strategies can lead to organizational success inside museums through the application of the Balanced Scorecard framework and with a particular focus on the current Covid-19 crisis. The first section will provide a deeper outlook on the research questions and objectives. Section 3.3 examines the research design and strategy in order to explain and justify the decision of using a qualitative research method, through semi-structured interviews. The sample of this research will be presented in section 3.4. Section 3.5 describes the process of analysis followed by an overview of ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the research in sections 3.6 and 3.7.

#### 3.1. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research is to comprehend which kind of successful leadership strategies have been adopted by female leaders inside museums to achieve organizational success. Through the Balanced Scorecard framework, this research aim to understand if the museums' performance objectives and mission are achieved. Consequently, the main research question has been defined:

*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*

To answer this research question and provide a deeper understanding of the subject, six sub-questions were developed, according to the chosen framework of the adapted Balanced Scorecard for non-profit museums.

1. How do museums define success?
2. What strategies of learning and growth do museums' female leaders adopt to achieve their mission, values, and objectives?
3. What internal processes do female leaders improve and value to achieve successful strategies inside museums?
4. What kind of strategies do female leaders adopt to successfully reaching their costumers and stakeholders inside museums?
5. Are the financial data positively related to successful leadership strategies inside museums?

Furthermore, given the current Covid-19 crisis, culminated in a national Dutch lockdown in March 2020, an additional sub-question was developed

6. What strategies are female leaders adopting inside museums to deal with the Covid-19 crisis?

### 3.2. Research strategy & design

Qualitative strategy is found as the most appropriate research strategy to fulfil the aim of this thesis. It enables indeed to describe, interpret, contextualize, and gain in-depth insights into a specific subject, emphasizing words rather than quantifiable data (Bryman, 2012). The previously defined sub-questions are formulated to understand and answer the main research question: “*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*” Quantifiable data might not give a truthful representation of the strategies and decisions surrounding the museums, while an in-depth qualitative investigation of the organizational strategies is found to be the most suitable approach.

The decision of using a qualitative strategy enabled to conduct semi-structured interviews to 11 managers in 5 different museums, and then to conduct a qualitative document analysis of the museums’ annual report. Semi-structured interviews are chosen as the main research method because they allow the researcher to start from a common subject (i.e. identification of successful leadership strategies), but then to some degree to be guided by the respondent answers. A spontaneous conversation is therefore encouraged allowing interviewees to give their own account on the topic (Bryman, 2012). In order to understand successful leadership strategies, it is not sufficient to ask leaders close-ended questions on their course of action. The context, their previous plan, as well as their subsequent evaluation of the strategy, are fundamental elements to identify a successful leadership strategy. Indeed, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to keep more an open and flexible mind about the contours of what he or she needs to know about (Bryman, 2012). Museum leaders can consequently express more freely their ideas and thoughts in their own way. Moreover, this type of interview allows the researcher to compare the different results given by the participants. As a research design, the comparative design is chosen, because it entails studying different Dutch museums using an identical method, through the logic of comparing strategies. Consequently, through a multiple-case study approach, it can help to seek explanations for similarities or differences and gaining greater awareness on the different adopted strategies (Bryman, 2012).

The present research is based on 11 semi-structured interviews with leaders of five Dutch museums, with two levels of analysis: director, and head of departments. The researcher had an interview guide that consisted of approximately 20 questions (view Appendix A: Interview Guide and consent form). The questions were divided into three main sections, retrieved from the Balanced Scorecard framework of Kaplan and Norton (1992): the learning & growth of the organizations, the internal business process, and the customers & stakeholders. The fourth perspective of the scorecard, named financial data have been investigated separately through a qualitative content analysis on museums’ annual reports (view Appendix C: Overview of Annual Report)

The combination of semi-structured interviews and of a qualitative content analysis ensures that the BSC framework is entirely completed and validated. The two sources of information are indeed complementing each other, reinforcing the results obtained in the analysis, and giving a full overview of the museums' successful leadership strategies. On one hand, the semi-structured interviews, as the main source of data, allow targeting the research on a particular and relevant sample and give a personal and representative point of view on the respondents' opinions. On the other hand, the content analysis of the museums' annual reports provides a more objective and quantifiable point of view, to extract general information on the museums' economic and financial background. More details will be given in the subsequent section. In particular, the Data Collection part will give a deep explanation and clarification on the selected ways of analysis, starting with the criteria followed in the interviewees' selection and moving to the criteria for choosing the annual reports' content analysis.

### 3.3. Data Sampling & Collection

The initial chosen sampling approach to collect data was the purposive sampling, through a specific case study on the museums' leaders of the city of Leiden. Consequently, the selected sample was strategically relevant to answer the research questions, giving three specific criteria of inclusion or exclusion of units of analysis (Bryman, 2012): (1) female; (2) museum located in Leiden; (3) director, board members, or head of department position. The city of Leiden was chosen because it is known as the Museum town of the Netherlands, given its greatest density of museums per capita in the country. Therefore, the choice of the city of Leiden as a case study was appropriate to compare straightforwardly the leadership strategies of the different museums, within the same environment and context. However, given the current novel Corona Virus crisis, the time of many leaders was even more precious than usual, and therefore they could not accept the invitation for the interview. Consequently, the initial sample addressed exclusively to the city of Leiden was no longer feasible. In order to have a relevant sample size, the research sampling was enlarged to the museums of another city in the Netherlands: Rotterdam. This city is chosen mainly for two reasons: firstly, because different female leaders of the most famous museums of Rotterdam agreed to take part in the study; and secondly because, by living in this city for more than 8 months, I have a better knowledge of Rotterdam's characteristics and museums' nature. Hence, the chosen sampling approach was shifted to a convenience sample, based on simply available respondents by chance to the researcher (Bryman, 2012). The criteria of inclusion or exclusion of units of analysis are therefore changed in this way: (1) female; (2) museum located in either Leiden or Rotterdam; (3) director, or head of department.

#### 3.3.1. Interviews

The present research is based on 11 semi-structured interviews with leaders of Dutch museums, with two levels of analysis: director, and head of departments. Every participant has been contacted

previously by e-mail, explaining the purpose of the research and why their contribution would have been important for the final analysis. In the Appendix B (Interview request e-mail), it is possible to consult the guide used to contact and inform the interviewees about the research; moreover, a consent form about their agreement on the recording of the interview and on their choice to anonymized or not their participation was attached (view Appendix A). However, given the current Covid-19 pandemic, culminated with lockdown measures also in the Netherlands, the interviews took place online, through different platforms: Skype, Microsoft Team, and Google Hangouts.

The researcher had an interview guide that consisted of approximately 20 questions, divided into three main sections (view Appendix A: Interview Guide and consent form). These sections were constructed starting from the theoretical framework and in particular, were retrieved from the Balanced Scorecard framework of Kaplan and Norton (1992). As already specified in the theoretical framework, the BSC is chosen because it provides a holistic model to study and interpret museums' leadership strategies, linking effectively the performance of an organization to its strategy. This framework is divided into 4 perspectives: learning & growth, internal business processes, customers & stakeholders, and financial data. The first three perspectives were used to divide and focus the interviews' questionnaire on non-quantitative indicators. Consequently, given this division, the three related sub-questions can be answered and analysed.

The data have been collected between April 2020 and May 2020 reaching a total of 10 hours of interviews – each one of approximately 35-70 minutes. The following table, *Table 1*, shows in chronological order further information on who participated in this research. The interviewees who decided to remain anonymized are reported as “Respondent + Number”.

Table 1. List of interviewees in chronological order

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Museum</b>	<b>City</b>
<b><u>Marielle Pals</u></b>	Head of Public Programmes	Volkenkunde Museum	Leiden
<b><u>Meta Knol</u></b>	Director	Lakenhal Museum	Leiden
<b><u>Caroline Breunese</u></b>	Head of Exhibitions	Naturalis Biodiversity Center	Leiden
<b><u>Cindy Zalm</u></b>	Head of Collection	Volkenkunde Museum	Leiden
<b><u>Astrid Jacobs</u></b>	Head of Audience	Lakenhal Museum	Leiden
<b><u>Marina Otero</u></b>	Head of Research	Het Nieuwe Instituut	Rotterdam
<b><u>Respondent 7</u></b>	Head of Department	Volkenkunde Museum	Leiden
<b><u>Josien Paulides</u></b>	Business Director	Het Nieuwe Instituut	Rotterdam
<b><u>Respondent 9</u></b>	Head of Department	Boijmans Museum	Rotterdam
<b><u>Sandra Kisters</u></b>	Head of Collection and Research	Boijmans Museum	Rotterdam
<b><u>Christel van Hess</u></b>	Head of Conservation and Restoration	Boijmans Museum	Rotterdam

After this schematic table, a brief overview of the analysed museums and interviewees is provided to contextualize the analysis and to explain the main differences between the organizations. In particular, this overview is divided between the two cities (Leiden and Rotterdam), the analysed museums of those cities, and the respondents of each museum.

### 1. Leiden

Leiden is a city and municipality in the province of South Holland, Netherlands. It is known as the Museum city of the Netherlands, for the greatest density of museums per capita in the country. It has indeed 13 outstanding museums all in walking distance of one another. The analysed museums and related directors or head of departments interviewed, are:

- *Museum Volkenkunde* has merged in 2014 with the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam and the Africa Museum in Berg en Dal. Together, with also the collaborative partnership of the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam since 2017, they form the National Museum of World Cultures (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020 ). The collective collection contains nearly 1 million objects, photographic images, and documentary footage. The common mission aims to inspire an open view of the world and contribute to global citizenship. The NMVW organization presents a management team of 10 persons, with a male managing director, that consequently has not been contacted.

- Marielle Pals: She is the Head of Public Programmes and a member of the management team at the National Museum of World Cultures since 2014. Her main task is to realize with her team different programs for public and education. Her focus is on creating original forms of museum experience, public engagement and interaction with a special interest in aspects of cultural diversity and inclusion.
- Cindy Zalm: She is the Head of Collection Management of the National Museum of World Cultures since 2017. She has a background in art history and museology. Her main task concerns the development, storage, and preservation of the collective collection of the museums
- Respondent 7: She is Head of Department at National Museum of World Cultures since 2017
- Museum De Lakenhal is the museum of visual art, crafts, and history of the city of Leiden. It is an elegant and classical museum, found in 1874, on the way to becoming a contemporary, adventurous museum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Museum de Lakenhal, 2020 ). It is inspired by the adventurous, scientific, and visual quality of exhibitions, collection presentations, and special projects, in order to inspire, connect, and innovate, though a collection of 24.000 objects. The organization structure is composed by a female director, and three main departments (programs & collections, public affairs and business affairs), who together forms the management team.
- Meta Knol: Since 2009, she is the director of this museum. Mrs. Knol values honesty, loves art, enjoys nature, and is fascinated by change. She is also a curious, analytical thinker – content-driven and value-based. As a leader, she is inspirational, strategic, and adventurous, as well as results-oriented, transparent, and reliable. She brought the museum through a renovation process that lasted more than 10 years.
- Astrid Jacobs: She is the Head of Audience, since 5 months (January 2020). She operates where arts, branding, and design intersect, within a holistic approach. She was previously working at a design agency for cultural clients in the Netherlands and UK. Given her different background, she is able to give a different leadership point of view to the museum's strategies, and to her team.
- Naturalis Biodiversity Centre is the largest natural history museum in the Netherlands, with a unique collection of scientific and cultural values, which has grown constantly since it was started in 1820 (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, 2020). Through their collection of 42 million plants, animals, fossils and rocks, and through their knowledge, and data, they aim to record all life on Earth. Naturalis researches nature to preserve biodiversity, contributing to solutions for major, global issues, involving climate, living environment, food supply, and medicine. Around 800 employee composes the organizations size. A male director and seven heads of departments, (research & education, collection, public & marketing, general affairs & ICT, financial, exhibitions, and communications) form the management team.

- Caroline Breunese: She is the head of Exhibitions since 2011. She is a creative and goal-oriented leader with a great passion for museums, in order to contribute with ambition and courage to making art and culture accessible to a wide audience.

## 2. Rotterdam

Rotterdam has a high concentration of excellent museums and galleries within the city. Many of these museums feature items drawn from Rotterdam's fascinating history or preserve other invaluable objects related to international culture or science.

- Het Nieuwe Instituut: is a museum of Architecture, Design, and Digital Culture (Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2020). The museum looks at the designed world and its constant changes due to new technologies, ideas, and shifting social priorities. Innovation is a key aspect, connected to movements of the future, the present, and the past. The management team consists of two managers (a male artistic director and a female business director), and the heads of agency, business development, heritage, program, research, finance and HR departments.
- Marina Otero Verzier: she is the Director of Research department since 2015, with a background in architecture. At the Instituut, she leads research initiatives, focusing on emerging architectures of automated labour and squatting as spatial practice.
- Josien Paulides: she is the business Director of the Instituut since March 2019. In this position, she is responsible for the business, financial, and organizational aspects of the institute. Together with the artistic director, she forms the Board of Directors.
- Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: is a multifaceted museum, which offers a comprehensive survey of Western art from Middle Ages to the present days (Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2020). The museum contains about 150.000 objects of old master paintings and sculpture, modern and contemporary art, pre-industrial and industrial design. In 2019, a program of renovation started. In the main time, the collection will be seen around Rotterdam and in some world's top museums. In 2021, the first art storage facility in the world, named the Depot, will open to the public. The Management Team consists of two directors (a man and a women), the financial controller, the heads of collections and research, presentations, development, marketing, and education.
- Respondent 9: She is a Head of Department at the Boijmans Van Beuningen since 2017
- Sandra Kisters: She is the Head of Collection and Research department at the Boijmans Van Beuningen since 2015. In this position, she is responsible for looking after the entire collection of the museum, which concerns tasks as loan traffic, conservation, restorations, storage, or new-acquisitions. Currently, she is involved in the development and design of the Depot.



- Christel van Hees: She is the Head of Conservation and Restauration at the Boijmans Van Beuningen since 2012. Her department is a small section of the collection and research department, together with the heads of documentation and registrations.

### 3.3.2. Museum annual reports

The data collection of this thesis is mostly based on the interviews, but it has also included the content analysis of museums' annual reports as well (view Appendix C: Overview of Annual Report). These documents are chosen in particular to analyse the fourth and last perspective of the Balanced Scorecard framework, named financial data. Consequently, the fifth sub-question can be answered: "Are the financial data positively related to successful leadership strategies inside museums?" This combination approach ensures that interview data is cross-checked and that the interview results can be potentially enlarged and supported, where needed (Bryman, 2012). A content analysis of museums' annual reports is chosen because they encompass Scott's (1990) four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Firstly, as the annual reports are downloaded from the museums' website, the documents are certainly authentic and meaningful, in the sense that they are original and understandable by the researcher (Bryman, 2012, p. 551). Moreover, since the law requires certain information and standards inside every company's annual report, these documents are also satisfying the criteria of credibility and representativeness. Indeed, because they are legally checked, they should be free from error and representative of the museums' results and performance.

### 3.4. Data analysis

All interviews were recorded and then fully transcribed verbatim, with the knowledge of the respondents. The process of transcribing contributes to the familiarization with the research material. Afterward, data are analysed, interpreted, and verified through thematic analysis, establishing codes and themes to answer the research questions of how leadership strategies can lead to organizational success inside museums. Indeed, a qualitative data analysis (QDA) provides tools to move from a descriptive to an analytic interpretation of qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). As a part of thematic analysis, a hybrid coding method is found as the most appropriate, because it combines deductive and inductive thematic analysis. Firstly, a deductive coding, through a directed approach to content analysis, starts with relevant theories and literature, as guidance to determine initial codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Specifically, in the present research, the modified Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) is used as a framework to ensure that all aspects of performance are investigated and extended. Afterward, open coding is used to analyse interviews, identify relevant sentences and paragraphs, and define inductive codes. Later, through a selective process, a large number of codes are compared and categorized. The researcher searches for recurrences and links between codes, to interpret and make sense of the data within the research questions and the most relevant theoretical

concepts. Finally, through a process of conceptualization, the selected codes are grouped into categories according to relevant themes. Therefore, initial deductive and inductive codes are combined into groups to create a higher level of analysis (Bryman, 2012). In the Appendix D, it is possible to review the thematic coding guide used to analyse the data. Secondary data, which precisely are museums' annual reports, are then consulted through content analysis to compare the interviews with objective data and complete the financial perspective of the Balanced Scorecard framework. Consequently, the analysis and observations on the data are reported on the chapter 5. Direct quotes from the interviews are transcribed to give a better insight on the subject and are reported with the interviewee's name and the related page number of the interviews' transcript, which can be consulted on request.

Overall, all this data analysis has allowed to analyse the data collected and categorized them properly (view Appendix D: Thematic Coding). The aim is therefore to have an in-depth overview, to define paths of differences or similarities between different museums' strategies, but also between female leaders inside the same cultural organization. As a result, the main research question, and the six sub-questions (one general, four related to the Balanced Scorecard perspectives, and one related to the Covid-19 crisis) can be answered and analysed in the next Results' chapter.

### 3.5. Ethics and Confidentiality

As can be seen in Appendix B, all the respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and the reason why they had been contacted. A consent form was also attached, to inform them that the interviews would be recorded, transcribed and analysed, solely for research purposes. The researcher started the interview only after the participants verbally agreed to these conditions. Moreover, the participants were also asked whether they wanted their participation to be anonymized or identifiable. Some of them agreed to be mentioned, others accepted, with the condition to see the analysis, before it was archived in the Erasmus University repository. Lastly, 2 out of 11 between them, asked to remain anonymous.

### 3.6. Trustworthiness

According to Guba and Lincoln (Bryman, 2012), during qualitative research, trustworthiness can be used to assess the appropriateness of the analysis. It consists of four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this research, to assess if leadership strategies were successful inside museums in Leiden and Rotterdam, 11 different semi-structured interviews were conducted to either director or head of departments. These leaders are indeed found as the most appropriate to assess the credibility and the actual success of the strategies. Moreover, triangulation of the research, through the analysis of annual reports, is considered to increase and confirm the credibility of the findings (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the transferability criterion refers to the

possibility to apply the same research to other contexts, without an excessive generalization. Indeed, this thesis uses a representative sample and a precise framework (i.e. the Balanced Scorecard), that can be replaced by other researchers to other situations, for instance, other cities or countries. Thirdly, dependability is achieved by making sure that the findings are applicable also to other times. This criterion is obtained in the research by assuring that the interviews are all conducted at the same time, and by making all the transcripts and the interview guide available. As the last and fourth criterion, confirmability requires that the results are obtained objectively, avoiding the influence of personal values. Even though the analysis is of course based on the cognitive capabilities of the researcher, personal biases were avoided by showing complete results and direct quotes from the interviewees. Moreover, once again, the use of secondary data, through the content analysis of annual reports, brings grater confirmability to the previous findings.

## 4. Results

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a framework to implement and monitor the organizational strategy that uses a combination of financial and non-financial measures (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). It has been chosen to investigate the most successful female leadership strategy of different museums located either in Leiden or in Rotterdam, due to its qualitative and holistic view of strategic performance (Hasan & Chyi, 2017 ). Especially for non-profit organizations, such as museums, measuring organizational success is a constant challenge (Richard, Devinney, & Yip, 2009). The Balanced Scorecard can help to translate the mission and goals of the organization into feasible and successful strategies and measures, across four balanced perspectives: learning and growth; internal business processes, costumers and stakeholders and financial data (Kaplan R. S., 2001). Moreover, in the adapted BSC for non-profit organizations an over-arching purpose, which represents the organizational mission, is placed at the top of the framework, since it orients all the other perspectives. To put it briefly, the Balanced Scorecard can help to link the performance of a non-profit organization to its strategies and mission (Masseghem, Bakkali, Sammut, & Swhali, 2018), gathering strategic information and building a beneficial framework of evaluation (Villaespesa, 2015 ).

The present chapter contains the analysis of the results, though a personal investigation and a series of direct quotes from the interviewees, to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Each direct citation is reported with quotation marks, and between brackets is provided the name of the respondent and the page number of the interviews' transcript. Consequently, it has been possible to answers the main research question:

*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*

The results are divided into six different subchapters to answer all the sub-questions explained previously in the methodology part: after a first general section on the definition of success by each leader, the first four sections are related to the BSC perspective, while the last one focuses on the strategies to deal with the Covid-19 crisis.

### 4.1. Museums' definition of success

The definition of success can be generally understood as the achievement of desired goals or results. However, how can success be defined when there a multitude of goals to pursue or stakeholders to reach? Museum organizations present indeed this kind of characteristics and therefore, as was already analysed in the theoretical framework, there is no single qualitative or quantitative indicator against which performance can be evaluated (Zorloni, 2016). Moreover, in the non-profit sector there are not even standard outcome measures to compare the performance of different

institutions. Consequently, when considering the success of museums, it is important to consider the singular peculiarities of each institution. Indeed, the present analysis focuses on the definition of success given by every interviewed female leader, with the aim to answer the first sub-question: “How do museums define success?”

At the National Museum of World Culture, it is important to have a shared mission between the four museums: to inspire an open attitude to the world and contribute to global citizenship (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020 ). According to Marielle Pals, “Objects and stories are the key to a world in which we are all linked to each other. By actively involving our visitors and stakeholders in collecting, interpreting and sharing these testimonies, we increase the understanding of these mutual bonds. [...] inclusion, diversity and openness are fundamental values to achieve if you want to be successful” (Marielle Pals, page 4). She is indeed the Head of Public, and therefore for her success is given by reaching a diverse audience in an inclusive way. Conversely, for the Head of Collection, Cindy Zalm, “it’s important to make the collections as accessible as possible” (page 56). The collection is made of over 1 million pieces, and therefore to be successful inside the museum is essential to display the collection to the public as much as they can, both offline and online. Therefore, for the NMVW success is defined by being a museum about people, who through inclusion shares different stories and objects of people around the world, with the aim to make visitors understand that apart from cultural differences we are all the same: humans (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020 ).

At the Lakenhal Museum of Leiden, as affirmed by the Director Meta Knol success is achieved when “what we do is content driven and people driven. We are not driven towards quantity but we share values like quality, meaning and empathy. [...] So our mission is to make it possible for as many different people as we can imagine [...] give them a new perspective in which we connect the past with the present and possibly even with the future” (page 14). In addition, according to the Head of Audience, Astrid Jacobs the Lakenhal can be defined successful “when we are able to build long-term relationships with the majority of our audience” (page 53). Therefore, at the Lakenhal success is obtained when a diverse and loyal audience is reached, through quality contents and a focus on the collection and public programs, instead of temporary and blockbusters exhibitions.

At the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, according to the Head of exhibitions, to be successful “we are focusing on innovation [...] we're thinking about what are the stories that we want to tell, what do we think is important to bring to the visitors and where can we use exhibitions as a medium to tell those stories” (page 33). The mission of Naturalis is to describe and preserve biodiversity (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, 2020). Therefore, to be successful they have to keep research nature

and contribute to major, global issues, but also to offer immersive and innovative exhibitions of seeing and doing to the museum's public.

At the Het Nieuwe Instituut, the main mission is to increase the cultural and social appreciation of architecture, design, and digital culture and to strengthen the interaction between them (Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2020). Indeed the Business Director Josien Paulides affirms, "To be successful, I think we must be very innovative, so always think about future scenarios, but at the same time, we also must be very clear about the archive perspective" (page 106). Moreover, she later highlights the importance of having a cross disciplinary approach to connect disciplines and challenge the public "to think about their own position in the world and how do they affect the people around them" (page 111). According to Marina Otero, Head of Research, "I personally see that success is when, for instance, I received many emails where people asked to collaborate with us. [...] Then I said, oh, well, it means that somehow, what we do, means something to people" (page 84). Therefore, at the Het Nieuwe success is achieved by creating innovative and provocative content, which can be challenging but also meaningful for the public.

Finally, at the Boijmans museum, a dynamic and progressive approach to programming is search, with the collection as the starting point and the public as the goal. (Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2020). Indeed, Sandra Kisters, head of Conservation and Research, pointed out that the starting point of Boijmans' success is their collection, who should always be enriched and strengthened, through well researched exhibitions and an international perspective (page 137). According to another head of department, to be successful is important to have a "more lasting impact on the art history of the Netherlands from our collection as a standing point" (Respondent 9, page 119).

#### *Conclusion sub-question 1:*

In conclusion, to answer the first sub-question "How do museums define success?" it is possible to affirm that every museum and leader, depending on the specific position, define success in different ways. However, some common points can be highlighted, such as to be inclusive, innovative, attract as many people as possible, and enrich and value the collection, to have a long lasting impact. These findings are in line with Weil view's (Weil, 2002), who suggests that successful museums are the one who produces a positive outcome for their community, in terms of preservation of the collection or changes for the society they serve, through programs offered.

In the next sections, divided according to the Balanced Scorecard framework, the main strategies adopted by female leaders inside museums will be underlined. These strategies should be

the vehicle through which the organization can become successful, not only in financial terms but also by achieving the organizational values and objectives.

## 4.2. Learning and Growth

This section will focus on the first perspective of the adapted BSC to non-profit organizations: the learning and growth perspective, with the aim to understand the main difference and similarities between museums and leaders and to answer the second sub-question: “What strategies of learning and growth do museums’ female leaders adopt to achieve their mission, values, and objectives?” It has been therefore investigated how female leaders, improve, create value, and innovate for their organization. In order to do so, different questions have been asked regarding their main leadership strategies, skills and competencies to achieve their mission and objectives (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). In particular, museums are mission-driven organizations, who often have trouble to connect their daily strategies with their mission. Therefore, this perspective can help non-profit organizations to create a solid relationship between their mission, values and strategies or daily operational actions (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

### 4.1.1. Shared mission, values, and goals

A first and recurrent aspect, which interestingly arose in most of the interviews with both directors and heads of departments, is the importance of having a shared mission, values, and goals. Even if the respondents expressed the concept in different ways, the majority of them agreed that a shared mission, values, and goals between the team and the entire organization, it is the first fundamental step to improve and make the organization grow.

For instance, the Volkenkunde Museum is part of the National Museum of World Culture. Therefore, after the merge in 2014, with the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, the Africa Museum in Berg en Dal, and the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam, had to “reconsider our mission and vision, as well as our core values that could be shared and practiced between all four museums. [...] The challenge was to find a mission that could be effective for all the different museums. We then arrived at a common conclusion: that we want to have social relevance; we want to inspire an open view of the world and contribute to global citizenship” (Marielle Pals, page 3-4). So certainly, this is true for a foundation of museums, where it is essential to have an aligned mission to achieve the same objectives and performance. However, having common values and mission is a concept that has emerged also from leaders of a single institution. Indeed, museums are mission-driven organizations, with cultural, artistic, and social purposes as their primary activities (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). It is the task of the leader to contribute and facilitate individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2006).

The Lakenhal museum went through a 10 years process of renovation and transformation in all levels of the organization, to restore and rebuild their mission and values. “The whole transformation of the museum took 10 years. You know, it was an evolutionary process of change. And now that it's finished, we even know better who we are. We're even closer to who we want to be and to our values. [...] A key strategy is to make it something we do together, to have the same values. So it's my strategy to make it a real team effort” (Meta Knol, page 15-16). As Mrs. Knol makes it clear, it is a task of the leader, and in this case, of the museum director, to create certain values and a clear mission, which then can be shared and agreed by all the organization's members. Once this process have been completed in June 2019, they could expand their circle and communicate these renovate values to the entire public. “Change is a slow movement in which you define your values together and then start changing things according to that value, and if you don't believe in those values, then actions are always useless. It will never lead to a sustainable change. [...] there is no change without disturbance” (page 15). Of the same idea, it is also the Head of Public Astrid Jacobs “as the first thing to improve and growth is fundamental to have shared goals and values. You need to be value-driven, always have in mind your purpose and share it with your team and with the whole organization. As soon as everyone has the same objective, it is easy to achieve it and learn as a team” (page 47). Moreover, according to Mrs. Jacobs, it is fundamental to see the goals in a holistic way.

Similarly, to the holistic approach, the Respondents 9 mentions a strategic attitude at the Boijmans Museum, the so-called helicopter view, which comprehends the necessity to have clarity of purposes and see the organization as a whole. It is therefore clear that the management team should have a collective responsibility, with the aim to collaborate with the board of directors and found common and share values (Chen, 2019). Consequently, non-profit organizations, such as museums, can achieve their objective and mission, transforming the community in which they operate (Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003). Therefore, the process of having a shared mission or values is a process of collaboration between leaders. Indeed, Marina Otero, Head of Research Department at the Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, agreed with this idea: “My job is to contribute with a general vision for the Instituut in terms of values, content and the strategies in collaboration with the artistic director and the management team” (page 71).

To conclude, to have a shared mission, values, and goals, top managers need to coordinate and align their ideas and actions to develop a common understanding within the organization (Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2007). That is how leaders can establish a collective learning process and be aligned in their values inside the teams: “What kind of team we want to be? What sort of values do



we want to have? [...] we talk about the aims that Naturalis has as an Institute. [...] It's kind of a learning process as a team and not so much as individuals" (Caroline Breunesse, page 32).

#### 4.1.2. Openness, listening, and empathy

Another concept that most of the respondents pointed out, in relation to either the strategy or the capabilities and skills to add value and improve inside the museum, is the necessity to be open. On one hand, this concept certainly refers to the necessity to be open to every kind of public, as remembered in the definition of museums by the International Council of Museum (ICOM, 2007). However, on the other hand, openness refers to the idea of being open-minded and inclusive, as a strategy to accept different ideas and opinions.

Many leaders of the considered museums indeed refer to this concept. For instance, the Volkenkunde Museum assesses in its mission that they "want to inspire an open view of the world" (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020 ). Cindy Zalm, the Head of Collection, mentions as one of her main skills to improve and create value "to be really open-minded because there are so many techniques around us being developed that could be very fruitful for a lot of sectors. And it's not always easy to understand how you can apply them to the museum world" (page 59). Caroline Breunesse, Head of Exhibitions at Naturalis Biodiversity Center, adds that even though she affirms not to be a very open person herself, and that is a challenge for her to share thoughts or ideas that she does not like, she reminds the importance of being open-minded. "We have to be open to new ideas. So that also means that we have to be open to each other and have to really listen to the things that we want or need or can do or cannot do" (Caroline Breunesse, page 34). Finally, Marina Otero, Head of Research at the Het Nieuwe Instituut, interestingly, indicated that generally institutions, not only cultural ones, are quite a close environment and restrictive in many ways, even though they named to be open (page 72). Therefore, Mrs. Otero sees openness as a challenge, mostly because non-profit organizations depend on public funding from the government.

Being representatives for a majority of people in the society is thus challenging, but at the same time, is seen as a responsibility and a necessity for an institution, such as the Het Nieuwe (Marina Otero, page 72). It is, therefore, possible to conclude that, even though 2 out of 11 respondents see openness as a difficult skill to acquire, the majority of interviewed leaders understand the importance and relevance of having an open mind, to embrace new solutions, ideas and perspectives. Especially for non-profit organizations, being open can be beneficial and useful to embrace and satisfy different interests and needs of many stakeholders, as well as the purposes expressed in their mission: an open mind-set may, therefore, more effectively and efficiently support these unique need and characteristics of non-profits cultural organizations (Jung & Vakharia, 2019).

How can a museum leader be open? In this respect, the respondents gave different answers and approaches. For instance, Caroline Breunesse (page 34) affirms that in order to be open, it is important to really listen to each other and understand what is better to do or not to do, or what the organization truly needs. Be able to listen is considered an essential leadership skill also from other respondents. Especially, the Director of the Lakenhal museum, Meta Knol, on one hand, she mentions the relevance to listen to the public and community (which will be analysed in the 4.3. section). On the other hand, she highlights the concept of empathy, as the capacity to really listen to your organization's need, not just occasionally. Mrs. Knol is aware of the difficulty of this task, stating that there are many cultural leaders who are bad listeners, and she occasionally includes herself too (page 17). Nevertheless, one of the Lakenhal's "goals for the upcoming years, is to become a truly emphatic museum" (page 14), which cannot be developed as an individual skill, but only as a team learning process. It is possible to affirm that to be an emphatic museum, you need to listen carefully, and to that, you need to be open to different ideas and perspectives. Empathy was mentioned also by two other respondents. On one hand, Marina Otero values the importance of empathy especially in this difficult time of the Covid-19 crisis (page 74). On the other hand, Respondent 7, mentions empathy as one of her core competencies as a head of department at the NMVW (page 89).

Finally, another way to be open is given by Sandra Kisters, Head of Conservation and Research at Boijmans Museum: "So you sort of try to follow what's going on in the field and see where you connect with Boijmans collection [...] the strategies is, on the one hand, to be connected to several organizations [...] is people's network" (page 130). Establish several relationships and connections can, therefore, be considered as a strategy to be open and listen to new ideas, perspectives, and opinions.

#### 4.1.3. Be critical and questioning

Always related to the learning and growth of the organization, the majority of respondents have mentioned the importance of being critical. "We have to be critical, I think. So we have to ask, or always ask, why are we doing this? Are we doing the best we can?" are the words of Caroline Breunesse (page 34) concerning the necessity to not only be open to new ideas but also be critical about them. Of the same opinion is Marina Otero, who affirms that in her team they try to "share knowledge to others and be extremely critical. Openly, in a nice way, but aware of our limitations" (page 75). Hence, cultural leaders normally try to embrace new opportunities and perspectives, but as leaders, they should also question those opportunities and understand if they are suitable for their institution. This is strictly related to the importance of always questioning what you are doing, as can be seen in many responses. For instance, the Head of Collection at the Volkenkunde museum affirms,

“Within the museum is really important to question people all the time about why you want to do this” (Cindy Zalm, page 68). Besides, one of the Head of Department, answering the question of how you improve inside your organization, confirms the thought of her colleague, saying, “So in my view, what you do is you work together with your colleagues to push the organization to improve and develop. And, how do you do that? You reassess what you're doing, why you're doing it, and the impact of what you're doing and its resources. [...] you are looking at where you fit in the sector” (Respondent 7, page 87). Moving to another museum, also the Lakenhal Director is of the same idea: “What I try to do is always referring to the question of why? Why are we doing it? Why is it important? So then you're back to identity, values, and content, you know? And yes, of course, sometimes I think, oh, well, this is not good. We should not do this. We should stop it.” (Meta Knol, page 28). Finally, also at the Boijmans, the head of conservation and restoration, Christel van Hees, agrees that “an important thing is always to ask yourself, why are we doing it the way we doing it? And is this the best way we are doing it? [...] Every year you get questions about anything. So every year you got to improve yourself” (page 144).

To put it briefly, as the majority of managers made clear, it is necessary to be open to new ideas and perspectives, but at the same time, also to be critical and always understand if what you are doing is relevant and coherent with your organizations' values and objectives.

#### 4.1.4. Innovation and technology

The learning and growth perspective is also strictly linked to the capacity of organizations to innovate and improve (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) (Malagueno, Lopez-Valeiras, & Gomez-Conde, 2018). In particular, increasing the knowledge and capabilities of the organization, through innovative and creative approaches, is essential for cultural organizations, such as museums, to succeed and be pioneering in the current knowledge era. Therefore, even if the values and mission are shared in the organization, and the leaders have an open-minded approach, it is important to keep innovate and be creative for the museum, in order to gain competitive advantage and to grow both externally and internally (Kaplan R. S., 2001).

Caroline Breunese affirms that in order to achieve the organizational goals and values, they are mainly focusing on innovation. “We need to work on new projects because there are so many things that we think we need to do with biodiversity, climate change, etc. [...] and of course we want to do that in, in an innovative way (page 33). In addition, Marina Otero assesses that their role as a public institution is “to look at innovation from the point of view of design. But, we always think that innovation is always connected to conflicts. This is because precisely to break with a status quo, we always entail certain form, of you know, resistance” (page 72). As the head of Research at the Het

Nieuwe Instituut, Mrs. Otero wants to “be innovative about what it means to do research”, in order to break certain notions, improve and make the organization grow. Aligned with this idea, is also the Business Director of the institute, Josien Paulides, who believes that “To be successful, we must be very innovative, so always think about future scenarios”, and as the Director points out, in order to do so, the Research Department should have a primary position (page 104-105). Finally, at Boijmans Museum, due to a large renovation process, innovation is even more valued at this moment, with the aim to have “a more lasting impact on the art history of the Netherlands through their collection as a standing point” (Respondent 9, page 118). As was already highlighted, innovation is of particular relevance for museums’ research. Indeed, Sandra Kisters, as the Head of Conservation and Research, affirms, “I try to be involved in large projects [...] I (as in the museum) try to be involved in large innovative research projects.” (page 130), and later on “I bring this awareness of how your task as a museum is to facilitate research” (page 132).

One of the main strategies to innovate and improve inside the organization is the use of technological skills and techniques. Technology is indeed one of the main components of the learning and growth perspective of the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). If it is used effectively, it allows to gain competitive advantages over other organizations, both in the short and in the long-term (Kaplan R. S., 2001). Technologies and digital tools are thus a way to achieve organizational effectiveness, but also to increase efficiency, by lowering inputs or increasing outputs (Basso & Furnari, 2004). As will be analysed in the 4.5 sub-chapter, about the recent Covid-19 crisis, technological and digital tools are widely used by museums. However, they need to be considered as relevant not only during the current pandemic but in everyday strategy. Every museum presents technological devices inside their institutions to make the exhibitions more interactive or innovative, and they all have digital tools to present their digital content. “It’s a twofold strategy, process and techniques [...] we identified a few new techniques that could help us adding content to all these data in a faster way [...] crowdsourcing, artificial intelligence and image recognition” with the aim to achieve their mission of “making the collection as accessible as possible both online and offline” (Cindy Zalm, page 56). In addition, for the conservation and restorations, at the Boijmans “technology is very important in my department, because, um, there are a lot of new research methods to do research on our works of arts. It's getting very detailed. And this is not always a technology we have in our own, home. But, we try to find partners to do this with” (Christel van Heed, page 145).

Nevertheless, in the present interviews, technology is never mentioned as the main strategy to improve, innovate or create value. The focus on people or contents comes always first, and then technology is often mentioned as a consequence of it. “I think technology is a challenge partly

because, uh, public organizations are not well funded to innovate in a technological sense or in a sense to upgrade their technology. So technical, technological upgrading is extremely resource intensive. And so, I would say museums tend to be behind the curve” (Respondent 7, page 88).

To sum up, technology is certainly a challenge for cultural institutions, but it is increasingly used and seen as an opportunity, especially to deal with the current pandemic.

#### 4.1.5. Evaluation

Evaluation is a key process to assess a museum’s performance, considering both the demand and the supply side (Fernandez-Blanco & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2020 ), as well as its efficiency and effectiveness (Basso & Furnari, 2004). Performance indicators are essential tools of evaluation and part of the leadership strategy of many museums (Behn, 2003), to measure and evaluate the decision-making process of the organization, particularly in relation to concepts which are not always measurable (Navarrete Hernández, 2020). In particular, the Balanced Scorecard can be considered as a framework to evaluate and measure groups of performance indicators, especially for organizations such as museums where financial indicators are not sufficient (Kaplan R. S., Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations, 2001). Consequently, also, the learning and growth of museums’ can be evaluated, considering in particular the concept of effectiveness that measures the degree to which a strategy achieves desired outputs. However, effectiveness is a quite complicated concept, for the variety of stakeholders and actors, who will consider different indicators or objectives. Indeed, a multidimensional perspective is a necessary requirement for museums, to consider different strategies and ways to increase effectiveness.

But how do these museums evaluate their strategies? Firstly, all of the respondents understand the importance of evaluation. “Another fundamental value to improve and innovate is the relevance that we give to evaluation. Our projects and programs need to be evaluated: what went well, what can we do better or different etc. [...] Well, we can say that we work with what is called the Deming circle or control cycle. Do you know it? It is a management method, divided into four steps: plan, do, check, and act” (Marielle Pals, page 4). Similarly, a Head of Department of the same museum, even without specifically referring to the Deming circle, agrees that “You evaluate the nature of, uh, both the process and the nature of the product. And that would be the way you would increase the quality and the impact of what you're doing” (Respondent 7, page 93). Nevertheless, the other head of department of the NMVW, Cindy Zalm, has not mentioned this process of evaluation.

Moving to the Lakenhal Museum, according to the Head of Audience, Astrid Jacobs “We are developing a scorecard defining these criteria. For each exhibition beforehand, the criteria will be set

and afterward evaluated. Still work in progress” (page 54). Akin to that, the Director Meta Knol affirms that “Because we are value-driven, content-driven, people-driven. We were already, you know, re-evaluating our policies prior to the Covid crisis, which means that we want to focus on the collection as a museum, more than on exhibitions” (Meta Knol, page 22). It is therefore clear, that the evaluation process remains a big challenge for cultural institutions, due to the many different objectives and stakeholders to consider. However, developing an effective and functional framework of performance indicators is still considered as a critical necessity, to learn from any mistakes and be accountable for the organization’s activities. “So all the projects are evaluated, and then we discuss the evaluation and we take insights to understand what went well, what did not work, and then learn from the next” (Marina Otero, page 78). In the Het Nieuwe Instituut, as stated by the Business Director, the evaluation is a re-current process, both with the ministry of culture (twice a year), through the annual reports and internally every quarter of the year (page 105). Furthermore, according to one of the head of departments of the Boijmans Museum, evaluation is a team process, with other leaders, in order to learn from each other’s perspectives (Respondent 9. page 119). Alternatively, in the conservation and restoration department, “I don't use kind of matrix or something, to be honest. We got a project organization. So if you work on a project, it has a start and an end. So a project position includes evaluation because it has an end”. (Christel van Hees, page 149).

In summary, evaluation, even though it is often a challenging process, is considered essential to be accountable and understand both the areas that are working and those that are performing under expectation.

#### *Conclusion sub-question 2:*

In conclusion of this section, to answer the sub-question “What strategies of learning and growth do museums’ leaders adopt to achieve their mission, values, and objectives?” is it possible to number different strategies that female leaders adopt. Firstly, a common strategy is to share the values and the mission with all the organizational members. Afterward is found to be important to have an open mind and an empathy approach, in order to embrace different ideas and perspectives, but also to a critical approach, to always question and understand why something is valuable. Furthermore, the role of innovation, technology, and creativity has certainly a primary position in leaders’ strategies, to maintain the museums’ relevance. Lastly, evaluation, even though it is often a difficult process, is considered essential to be accountable and understand both the areas that are working and those that are performing under expectation.

### 4.3. Internal Business Processes

This section investigates the second perspective of the Balanced Scorecard, named internal business processes. It mainly explores how does the organization organize their work and if the organizational members are working efficiently and effectively (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). In the non-profit sector, this perspective comprehends the measures to understand if the departments or the management teams are increasing the museum's primary process and quality. A shared organizational culture and efficient communication and collaboration are found to be valuable advantages (Kaplan R. S., 2001). Generally, through this perspective, the aim is to answer the second sub question "Which internal processes do female leaders improve to achieve successful strategies inside museums?" It is indeed the role of the leader to motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

#### 4.3.1 Independent team and role of the experts

A topic that recurs among the majority of the respondents is the value that leaders give to experts in their team. All of the interviewees were responsible for a team of between 5 and 30 persons. Workers in cultural organizations are normally highly motivated and passionate about their job, and they want to achieve their cultural, artistic or social purposes (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). They are indeed normally real experts in their specific field, even if they do not cover a leadership or managerial position. It was therefore interesting to see how leaders in museums extremely value their job and expertise. "I am surrounded by expert people, I learn from them, as well as value them and point their talent, so that everybody can come within the organization and feel valuable. [...] They are all experts, all of them with a different background and experiences, skills, knowledge" (Astrid Jacobs, Page 48). I'm a great believer in expertise [...] you need to prove why it is that you have expertise and what expertise gives, uh, to the organization overall. (Respondent 7, page 91). They all have their own expertise. [...] I don't have the knowledge as they have. So, uh, I trust in their expertise (Respondent 9, page 126). It is, therefore, clear that cultural leaders, value each team's members as individual experts and trust his or her personal competencies and skills. The head of Collection, Cindy Zalm, even specifies that "Because they're [the team experts] so passionate about what they're doing, they usually want to do everything the best way possible. So sometimes, you have to lower their expectations (Cindy Zalm, page 59).

However, generally, given the expertise and professionalism of the team's members, the majority of interviewed leaders pointed out that they can give considerable independence to them. For instance, for the NMVW, Marielle Pals initially states that "Employees can be independent, and not supervised all the time, with the result that they are more productive when they are directly

involved” (page 6). Later in the interviews, she specifies that “sometimes they are really independent, sometimes not that much, and they need me as a leader to inspire and stimulate, or get them more focused on goals or context” (page 9). Akin to this opinion is her colleagues, who affirm, “They're working kind of independently and then they're getting back to report. So that's why we have regular meetings or they meet me just when they are concerned or worried or want to update me (Respondent 7, page97). Hence, even though the level of independence can change according to the specific situation or needs of the people, team members are generally self-reliant and can bring to the organization valuable knowledge and interests. “As the manager of the department, I also want to give a space for individual obsessions and interests, even if they are very niche, or maybe that means that some become the biggest projects in the organisation and maybe it's an event or it's a little thing. But I think it's important to cultivate also certain, uh, obsessions or interests, particularly of people in the team” (Marina Otero, page 78). Akin to this, Sandra Kisters explains that, given her background as assistant professor, she “always try coach people, instead of telling them what to do. So that they can find their own solution. [...] I really depend on my team’s independence” (page 132).

Lastly, the Lakenhal Director Meta Knol explained an interesting and explicative story. At the opening of the museum Lakenhal, she told her secretary to clear completely her agenda: “Should I feel guilty? Or is this a good thing? And I think it was a good thing because it means that whenever there would be something I would be available to help them out. [...] I was like super relaxed. And that was because the team was doing the work in a great way”. She, thus, explained that she decided to choose trust over control for her team, and therefore to leave the museum’ expertise independent

In summary, in museums organizations the role of the employees as experts in their own job is of great relevance. Consequently, leaders can leave them with particular independence, and can, on one hand, learn from them and, on the other, be approachable and present when they need.

#### 4.3.2. Collaboration

According to Kaplan (2001), one of the fundamental strategies for non-profit organizations to improve their internal process is to have and create a relationship of cooperation. Top managers need to collaborate and coordinate their ideas and actions to develop a common understanding of their leadership approach and strategy (Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2007). Indeed, it has been found that all 11 respondents give value to collaboration, both internally and externally. Leaders in cultural organizations should, therefore, have a collaborative attitude to find shared solutions and ideas inside the organization and to build new and deep relationships with external parties.



At the National Museum of World Culture, collaboration is a fundamental strategy to connect the four museums: “collaboration is a very important tool for our museum and we tend to take decisions always together. [...] The role of the director is of course fundamental and we always rely on it, but however, we also value the single positions and ideas” (Marielle Pals, page 3). Similarly, another Head of departments explains that the collaboration between departments is a strong necessity at different levels: “we write strategies together, or we work on particular projects together. [...] Each project requires a particular kind of affiliation and certain members of staff to work with. And so you build up your network through those means” (Respondent 7, page 92). Lastly, also the Head of Collection, Cindy Zalm, agrees that: “we have ten managers in the MT, under the director, so that's quite a big group. And I work most closely with the head of curators as the head of the museum center. [...] I think it is quite flat because, underneath those managers, there are no other managers. So I have no managers within the 30 people. So it's a very co-operative structure” (page 62).

Likewise, the Business Director of the Het Nieuwe Instituut, Josien Paulides highlights the relevance of collaboration “I think you have to make all the decisions together because you can't say, this is a finance part, I decided that one. Because it's always affecting the content side, the artistic side. So it really should be in synergy with each other” (page 110). Specifically for her role as Business Director, she explains how collaboration is essential, in order to “make a bridge between the more organizational aspects like finances or HR, and the artistic side. [...] It's really a must to be very good with each other because otherwise, it's impossible for your organization to survive”.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that hierarchy is certainly present inside these organizations, but of course, it does not mean that the different organizational levels are not connected: “So I believe that hierarchies have a function, but I don't really, that function is to avoid speaking to other people” (Respondent 7, page 92). “Everyone is very approachable. Despite, of course, you need a hierarchy, some kind of higher view. Um, because in the end, when some decisions have to be made, there is always one person over you that is responsible. But, um, yeah, it's just, um, um, it's just a nice place to discuss, um, issues that you have” (Respondent 9, page 123). Besides, according to the head of conservation at Boijmans “It's really a hierarchy with the directors. But with my own head of the department and my colleagues Hanna on the other department that feels more like cooperation” (Christel van Hees, page 147). Therefore, collaboration or hierarchy can be found at different levels of the organization structure.

However, cooperation as a value not only internally, both also with external stakeholders: “Collaboration is fundamental with both the public and cultural, social and commercial partners. [...] Due to the cross-border nature of our work, cooperation with external parties is one of the established

and innate parts of our organizational culture. However, we choose partners and stakeholders that can relate to our mission and vision” (Marielle Pals, Page 4). Therefore, establishing external partnerships and collaboration is a fundamental asset for museums. Yet, it needs to be considered that museums are mission-driven organizations and, thus, these collaborations should be made according to the organization’s values and aim, as mentioned also by Marina Otero: “it's very much about collaboration, but also responsibilities. You need a very critical perspective and say, okay, then, what do you need to collaborate with me? What will be the reasons why you will collaborate? [...] We want to make this collaboration efficient, not based on quality time; we really want to engage with people in a meaningful way” (Page 83).

To sum up, even though a hierarchy structure is present in all the five considered museums, each leader gives a strong value to collaboration, as a strategy to improve the internal process and grow as an organization. Moreover, collaboration is an important asset both internally between employees, but also with external parties, that share similar values and objectives.

#### 4.3.3. Value of communication and two-way feedback

It was clear during the interviews that another fundamental strategy to improve the internal processes of the museums is to establish good communication. Indeed, efficient communication and confidence with employees is a valuable advantage to increase the organizational internal efficiency and quality, both for-profit and non-profit organizations (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) (Kaplan R. S., 2001). Moreover, as found by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002), one of the three key elements to implement successful strategies is to have a clear strategic communication: leaders should communicate their strategies in an open and comprehensive way. In particular, middle managers are considered as a key strategic actor to communicate the strategies to the organization (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002). Therefore, clear and comprehensive communication is important between top managers and middle managers, but also with every employee. As a consequence, they can share the organizational values and strategies, and they can express their opinion and ideas about it (Raes, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2011). “Another fundamental value for me and generally for the museum is the capacity to stimulate debate and communication. This is a particularly important tool since the museum is dislocated in 4 different venues. [...] and as head of department, I really value the communication inside my team, so that I can be sure that all the values and goals are shared and common. [...] If there is a problem, then we can talk about it, or find what lies underneath. Of course, sometimes they need me to ‘fix’ something, but in the end, professionals want to have a clear goal and want to work independently. Communication is fundamental, and it needs to be clear and direct communication (Marielle Pals, page 9).

Moreover, a clear strategic communication is also important so that the team can be on one hand independent (because it is explicit for them what they have to do), but on the other hand, they can straightforwardly ask any doubts or feedback to the leader. “They can always tell me and then we can address it. [...] If they want to address a topic on the agenda, that really needs me, um, it's okay. And if I'm there, they can also ask questions about what's happening in other areas of themes too or the department or whatever doubt or feedback they have” (Cindy Zalm, page 64). Always at the NMVW, in another department, Respondent 7 assesses that they work with a feedback way of working “that's why we have regular meetings or they meet me when they are concerned or worried or want to update me” (Respondent 7, page 97). Both these heads of departments have respectively 30 and 26 people in their team, which are of course then grouped in different teams based on projects or job tasks. “Twice a month we have meetings of 25 people, but each one of those people is in other meetings, that I don't share or that I don't necessarily lead. And they have to do that work independently and report back to me. So that's the way it sort of works. It's more like a kind of atomic model” (Respondent 7, page 96). Therefore, comprehensive communication is important to make clear singular responsibilities and tasks. However, the team needs to be independent and communicate with the leader only when they really need it. Conversely, in smaller teams, the situation can be different. For instance, Marina Otero supervises a team of 7 persons and can, therefore, adopt a different strategy: “So many managers, for instance, like to have only personal conversations with all the team. I tend a lot to have conversations in-group. So we all share what we are doing and we give two-way feedbacks” (Marina Otero, page 80). Furthermore, as stated by Sandra Kisters, “if you have a leadership function then you always have to relate between your, team, but also the policy of the museum or the boards (page 136). In addition, at Boijmans, according to Christel van Hees, “there are a lot of discussions always, there's a lot of freedom to have an opinion about everything. [...] It's important to have the pleasure in your work. But also to get the trust of people you work with or work for. You are doing well and in case of not doing well, you have the safe environment to talk about things. And not be scared to ask. [...] It's very important to get the space to make a mistake and learn from that, together, instead of getting punished. [...]” (page 147-148).

To sum up, communication is a fundamental strategy to improve internal processes, and generally to make clear internal responsibilities and to share organizational values and objectives. Consequently, an environment of trust, safeness and of two-way feedback can be built. However, the amount of communication between leaders and employees can vary greatly, based on the dimension of the team or of a specific project. “Most of the time with the smaller things, I could just discuss it with my team. But if it's a really large project, which costs a lot of money, then I first would discuss

it with my director. And, uh, when I think he and I are on the same page, then I can share with my team” (Caroline Breunese, page 33).

#### 4.3.4. Multidisciplinary works

It is clear that the analysed museums really value the role of their expertise, and they try to establish a clear strategic communication and as many relations as possible of collaboration. How does each museum actually organize their work? Each institution has certainly its own peculiarities, and so does each department. However, it is part of the internal processes perspective to understand how to improve the efficiency and quality of each process (Kaplan R. S., *Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations*, 2001). In particular, non-profit organizations are mission-driven institutions. Every museum, indeed, has specific goals and a multitude of cultural, artistic and social purposes. For this reason, it is fundamental to consider multidimensional performance measures, which permits to consider different types of stakeholders and objectives (Turbide & Laurin, 2009). Consequently, the main internal goals and purposes of each one of the five considered museums will be highlighted, though the own words of the respondents, to give a deeper perspective of each institution.

The National Museum of World Cultures aims to be a museum about people. “We really value communication and a stimulating debate. This is fundamental to grow internally and to create a sense of belonging” (Marielle Pals, page 6). Furthermore, according to the Head of Collection Cindy Zalm, there is a twofold strategy, made of processes and techniques, to achieve organizational goals and to grow internally: “We started this journey last year and we identified for the next few years different processes that we would like to investigate, through different techniques, such as artificial intelligence and image recognition. So that is the main new technique that we try to investigate how we can use them or how can they benefit us” (page 57). Lastly, the other had of department refers to three main strategies: marketing, research, and communication, which are explained in this consideration “We need to understand how to work with other people, how to deliver their own research and understand how to negotiate intellectual content with others” (Respondent 7, page 91). Therefore, each leader emphasized different strategies, but briefly, it is possible to summarize that marketing, research and communication are key processes, which can be supported by new digital techniques.

At the Lakenhal Museum, the Director Meta Knol makes it clear that they are a content, people and value driven museum: “Identity is really key to defining a good strategy. And then you have the values that you want to work accordingly and that you embrace. And then all of that is very much defined by content-driven attitudes. It's not about quantity. It's not about numbers. And then you need to be people driven as an organization and as a leader. If your internal culture is empathic, then the

hospitality towards your visitors will improve drastically” (page 21). The Head of Audience Astrid Jacobs has the same opinion, but in addition, given her background in the design field she wants to bring a new perspective: “I aim to take projects to a higher level creating new connections. I am used to operate where arts, branding and design intersect, and I like to pass this perspective also to my team, and maybe to the all organization of Lakenhal. (Astrid Jacobs, page 47). Therefore, at the Lakenhal, the focus on contents, people, and values is primary and it could be broadened with a new design perspective.

The Het Nieuwe Instituut aims to increase the cultural significance of architecture, design, and digital cultures. As explained by Josien Paulides, they indeed mainly engage a cross-disciplinary approach and strategy to always connecting these disciplines with each other (page 111). In particular, as a Business Director, she wants to make a bridge between her work and the one of the Artistic Director: “He's really good in the ‘What’ and I am better in the ‘How’” (page 109). Moreover, she emphasised as a star process, the HR department, which recently makes big steps, as a strategy to transform the museum in a people organization. Moreover, the Head of Research, Marina Otero emphasized also, “the institution itself has to be representative of the society”.

Similarly, also at the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, they give value to multidisciplinary strategy: “So we like to work multi-disciplinary.[...] So, it's, um knowing your audience, knowing what story you want to tell and how, and then, of course, the decision about the designing. But this, I mean, there's so much more to tell about it. [...] We wanted to make the exhibition a bit more spectacular and less traditional because we wanted to attract new audiences” (Caroline Breunese, page 37-38).

Lastly, the Boijmans stands for freedom and expression, offering visual art and design form the past and present lively. From 2019, the museum closed for a long process of renovation that will last around 7 years. In the main time, the Depot will open to the public in 2021. However, in each moment “the starting point is always the collection that makes us stand out in the Dutch context, but maybe also internationally. [...] We try also to improve the brand Boijmans in a broader field. Because museum colleagues may know the collection [...] the general public may not know the museum Boijmans as well as they know the Rijksmuseum. We always try to make very well researched exhibitions. So not just, easy overviews with no depths. We always try to provide several layers into the products we make” (Sandra Kisters, page 137)

To sum up, each of the considered institutions presents different values and objectives as a consequence of the intrinsic peculiarities of each museum or department. Indeed, museums are

organizations that seek to maximize different objectives and values throughout efficient management and leadership (Frey & Meier, 2006). However, a common strategy is to have a multi or cross-disciplinary approach in order to reach a wide-ranging number of values and purposes.

#### *Conclusion sub-question 3:*

The present section aimed to answer the third sub-question “What internal processes do leaders improve to achieve successful strategies inside museums?” As emerged, by the interview, although each museum and each leader have different values and goals to achieve internally, some processes were similar and of common relevance. Firstly, all the respondents agreed that they strongly value the role of their personnel, as experts in their own field. Consequently, they can leave them with significant independence, but they can always be approachable for any doubt or problem. Indeed, a clear strategic communication, as well as two-way feedback, are strategies that each leader want to improve to grow internally. Moreover, collaboration is found to be an essential process by the majority of the respondents, both internally with employees and managers, but also with external partners who share similar values.

#### 4.4. Costumers and Stakeholders

The third investigated perspective of the Balanced Scorecard, aims at answering the research sub-questions “Which kind of strategies do leaders adopt to successfully reaching their costumers and stakeholders inside museums?” Generally, this perspective denotes all the indicators related to customer value, satisfaction, loyalty, and/or retention, as well as on market perception (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). Through this perspective, the organization can understand how to increase costumers and improve their relationship with its stakeholders. Specifically, in the cultural sector, costumers' satisfaction, positive experience of visitors (offline and online), as well as good information services are relevant performance measures (Kaplan R. S., *Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations*, 2001).

In line with Gabrielsson et al. research (Gabrielsson, Khlif, & Yamak, 2019 ), a context-sensitivity is found to be fundamental. Leaders need to be aware of the context in which the organization lives, considering internal and external factors, as well as a multiple context and actor perspective. As a result, leaders can arrive at the heart of the community and building a trustworthy relationship, where interests and needs are satisfied. Moreover, a greater diversity inside the museum is found to have a positive relationship with the possibility to represent better the community's values and needs (Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003).

#### 4.4.1. Know and listen to your public

A successful museum should be able to produce positive outcomes for its audience and community (Zorloni, 2016). However, how can leaders achieve the expectation of their costumers and stakeholders? A common strategy that arose during the interviews is to know your public in a deep and meaningful way. “It is very important to know your public, especially for us that we have four dislocated museums. Every city is different. You need to go out and listen to the inhabitants of the city, listen to children, young urban, activists or special needs visitors and understand their needs” (Marielle Pals, page 7). Indeed, having a positive interaction and dialogue with the museum’s visitors is found to be one of the main strategies to increase customer satisfaction (Kaplan R. S., *Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations*, 2001).

The strategy is therefore not simply to know your audience, in terms of understanding your main targets and segments. You need to truly listen to them and understand their needs and desires, in order to base your costumers’ strategies on these findings. “Well, what's really important is to know your audience. We spent a lot of time, thinking about who our target audience will be, and then we wanted to get to know them well. So we also used companies who did a lot of visitors surveys, and we spoke a lot to our visitors and also potential visitors (Caroline Breunesse, page 37). Of a similar opinion is the Boijmans’ head of Conservation and Research Sandra Kisters, who really values the feedback and in particular, the complaints that they receive from the visitors: “We also collect information people have after they visit us. So if they have complaints, we try to see what can we do about it? A lot of these complaints were about, for instance, the rooting in the museum. [...] So that's something we really want to improve. So we tried to listen to, what the audience says” (Sandra Kisters, page 140). Nevertheless, the museums’ public is also made of many other stakeholders, such as companies, lawyers, or the government. However, the main strategy once again is to “try to listen to their point of view” (Respondent 9, page 126). Indeed, also for Christel van Hees, that has as a main stakeholder the head of Conservation and Research Sandra Kisters, as well as many specialists of conservation and restoration, affirms that “clarity about what you are asking and clarity about what you, offer is very important. And this kind of two way direction is important. If you ask people, you also have to be there if they ask you something formal or informal” (page 150).

Furthermore, another strategy that emerged in the interviews is to particularly listen and pay attention to all the people that do not normally come to the museum, to understand their reasons. “I think that the best strategy is to start listening to the people that are not coming, that you would like to come, and ask them why they do not come and whether they would be interested. And what we should change is in order to facilitate that. So we should start talking to them and asking them what

their need is and whether they would instead come if we change something, (Meta Knol, page 24). Marina Otero has a similar vision about it. She explains that they recently participate in a workshop, where a human sociologist asked the Het Nieuwe members who they work for: “And you will be surprised. Many people did not know how to respond, it seems evident, but then you are like, okay for people, but which people. So for me was, I worked for the weird ones, the people who do not fit. They feel uncomfortable because they don't feel recognized in the institution, in the culture. I'm interested because these people can bring new thinking about the world. [...] And that helps me also to take a new perspective on what I do, a very critical perspective (Marina Otero, page 82-83). Likewise, Sandra Kisters affirms, “at the Boijmans museum we also try to include people that normally do not come to the museum. So we, for the next few years, we try to focus on a bigger group of people in Rotterdam, such as people who live in Rotterdam South, who did not often consider a museum. So we try to do projects to involve them” (page 139).

To sum up, according to the majority of leaders, to implement successful strategies is fundamental to know your main visitors' targets and listen to their needs and desires.

#### 4.4.2. Build a community

Once you have clear your target audience and you have listened to their needs and desires (especially of the ones that are less interested in your organization), the second fundamental step that has been highlighted in the interviews is the necessity to build a community. Not a simple occasional audience of tourists, but a community of loyal and trustworthy visitors. In this respect, an organization can increase its visitors' attendance, as well as their satisfaction and retention, in order to differentiate itself from the competitors (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).

Explicatively, Meta Knol assesses that “Instead of attracting tourists, we decided to make sure that we are embedded within local community. So if you're embedded in local communities and you have a long term vision, then you're less vulnerable in a crisis like this. I often said before the crisis I'd rather have one person from Leiden who visits our museum three times a year because he/she is really a fan, then having three tourists coming in by plane to see an exhibition that is gone after 12 weeks. [...]. And if you focus on temporary exhibitions and blockbusters all the time, you can hardly be sustainable” (Meta Knol, page 22). For the Lakenhal museum, the role of the community is therefore essential, as also emphasised by the Head of Audience: “[success is] when we are able to build a long-term relationship with the majority of our audiences. [...] As a ‘city museum’ we value our relationship with the local community highly, so we aim to have the majority of our visitors ‘locally” (Astrid Jacobs, page 53/54).



However, the Lakenhal is not the only museum with this vision. It is indeed well acknowledged that having a loyal community is certainly more profitable than having some occasional tourists: “We want to be in the heart of the society for all the four cities [of the NMVW]. For us is important to communicate an inclusive message. We want to foster curiosity and include truly interested persons. We want to touch head *and* heart, stimulate knowledge *and* empathy. This is the only way to increase the number of visitors, not just for one time, but to have a loyal audience” (Marielle Pals, page 8). Similarly, at the Naturalis “What we did different from before, is that we focused a lot on emotion. So, we, our strategy is that we wanted to touch the hearts of the audiences by showing them beautiful connections and, displays, and then afterward telling them more about details, content, process, and science. What I've seen now is that people are often really moved by what they see. Sometimes they even cry. And, and so that's for me that is the proof that we really touch their hearts and, we were able to make an immersive and emotional exhibition (Caroline Breunese, page 38).

#### 4.4.3. Increase visitor numbers

Naturally, one of the main objectives of every museum is to increase their visitor numbers (Basso, Casarin, & Furnari, 2018). However, different strategies can be exploited to achieve this goal. As was emphasized in the previous chapters, museums leaders should deeply know their audience, ask them feedback, and try to build a loyal and not-occasional community. However, what are the feasible actions that museums implemented? On which specific target do museums leaders focus on to increase visitors' numbers? The main target consumer is individuals who are not normally interested in the museum world. However, this is not the only strategy.

For instance, the Lakenhal wanted to be truly embedded in the local community and decided “not only to develop long term vision and strategy but also to be sustainable as a museum. We want to make sure that we put more attention into collections that are permanent. [...] We have collections and exhibitions and we have a public program. And I think the public program is the thing that makes you want to come back. It's very important for us to invest time and money and, vision in this public program” (Meta Knol, page 22 and 26).

On the other hand, the National Museum of World Culture focused on the specific audience of each of the four cities, highlighting the differences between Amsterdam and Leiden, for instance. In order to increase visitor numbers they “tend to use public programming and interactive exhibitions” (Respondent 7, page 100). In particular, for ethnographic exhibitions, they rely on experts and people with specific backgrounds. “When we organized Sabi Suriname, an exhibit on the diverse culture of Surinam, my biggest concern was how to realize an inclusive working method to realize this expo.

Not through external partners, but rather internally. So we planned our project not with inside expertise only, but also by adding a new team-member with Surinam background, experience, and inner knowledge. Not to reflect on our work, but to create together, in a decision making way.” (Marielle Pals, page 7). Otherwise, to attract younger people, Cindy Zalm explained that they aim at “having exhibitions that are focused on this group as well. Like the Gender exhibition in Amsterdam, where the design, the storyline, and the research people we use, they are all from that background. So, uh, all the people do understand what is going on within this group of people” (page 67).

At the Het Nieuwe Instituut, conversely, they focus on “people who are very interested in the Institute that are design students, professionals in the design field, and visitors of the Museum Cards. who are really looking for more than only the aesthetic experiences” (Josien Paulides, page 115); and particularly they would like to increase the numbers of the last groups because they are truly engaged museum’ visitors. In order to do so, they focus on marketing and communication strategies, but also they apply specific strategies to each exhibition. For instance, similarly to the NMVW, they engage with experts of the exhibition’s field: We always work with a special marketing and communication Bureau who are in, for example, for the Hoodie who are, very good in fashion, and also who has an international network in fashion” (Josien Paulides, page 115). In addition, according to the Head of Conservation and Research, the Boijmans Museum focuses both on the general public and on museums professional and researchers. Consequently, they “try to make information about the collection available for as many people as possible. Um, but, uh, I personally also find it important to publish academic publications online, for instance, to make digital collection catalogues available” (page 139). Moreover, they try to be more inclusive in a broad sense: “it’s something you do on a lot of levels. So you do it on a marketing level, but also on an educational level. [...] So you really need to do it over your whole organization” (page 139).

#### *Conclusion sub-question 4:*

This section aimed to answer the sub-question “What strategies do leaders adopt to successfully reaching their costumers and stakeholders inside museums?” Firstly, it has emerged that leaders consider a beneficial strategy to truly know your public and listen to their necessities and desires. Only in this respect, leaders are able to build a loyal and trustworthy community of visitors, who do not come just sporadically but support the museum in an emphatic way. Consequently, it is possible to increase visitor numbers and concentrate any strategic effort on a particular target audience, such as people that do not feel recognized in the museum’s environment.

#### 4.5. Financial data

As already explained in the Methodology chapter, the financial data perspective is investigated through a content analysis of the museums' annual report (view Appendix: C). Generally, this perspective aims to answer how the organization looks to shareholders, evaluating financial performances and profitability. Typical metrics for cultural organizations include the balance between income and expenses, the ability to meet fundraising targets, or the operating budget through diversified sources such as admission, shop and restaurant sales, and special events. The aim of this is to answer the research sub-question "Are the financial data positively related to successful leadership strategies inside museums?"

Through annual and financial reports, it is possible to understand how profitable is a museum, and which categories of the budget are prioritized. Moreover, a cultural organization should use its resources effectively and profitably, with the aim to achieve the trust of its public, be transparent and accountable for every action (Zorloni, 2016). In order to understand if the financial data expressed in the museums' annual report are positively related to the leadership strategies that emerged in the 11 interviews, different indicators will be considered and summarized in the following *Table 2*. However, it is important to highlight that the last available annual reports are either from 2018 or 2019 (view Appendix C) and therefore they cannot give an accurate overview of the present situation. Indeed, to have a representative and visible idea of how the strategic leadership changed and influenced the organizational performance in the long-term, the following *Table 2* considers four indicators, compared with the precedent five years, when available online. The first indicator takes into account the number of visitors over the past five years. It is important to highlight that these numbers consider not only the visitors of the museums itself but also visitors of related international exhibitions. The second indicator considers the total budget, given by the differences between the yearly incomes and the expenses, and confronted with the precedent five years. Finally, Full Time Employees and collection size are reported and compared with the precedent five years, available online. Moreover, a column with the notes is added to underline the specificities of each institution, mainly in terms of periods of closure and restoration, which influence the considered indicators.

Table 2 Museum Financial Data <sup>1</sup>

	<i>Visitor numbers</i>	<i>Total budget</i>	<i>FTEs</i>	<i>Size of collection</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>National Museum of World Culture</i>	<u>2018</u> : 424.075 <u>2017</u> : 452.284 <u>2016</u> : 420.693 <u>2015</u> : 397.157 <u>2014</u> : 378.243	<u>2018</u> : +100.924 € <u>2017</u> : + 334.069 € <u>2016</u> : -1.317.407€ <u>2015</u> :+2.915.786€ <u>2014</u> :+1.579.116€	<u>2018</u> : 142 <u>2017</u> : 130 <u>2016</u> : 121 <u>2015</u> : 124 <u>2014</u> : 114	<u>2018</u> : 802.889 <u>2017</u> : 800.908 <u>2016</u> : 796.937 <u>2015</u> : 607.094 <u>2014</u> : 606.393	The NMVW since 2014 comprehends Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Volkenkunde in Leiden, Africa Museum in Bergen Dal and from 2017 a partnership with the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam.
<i>Lakenhal Museum</i>	<u>2018</u> : / <u>2017</u> : 60.058 <u>2016</u> : 26.743 <u>2015</u> : 58.767 <u>2014</u> : 111.753 <u>2013</u> : 81.800	<u>2018</u> : -61.057 € <u>2017</u> : -15.390 € <u>2016</u> : -56.951 € <u>2015</u> : -141.675 € <u>2014</u> : +115.460€	<u>2018</u> 30 FTEs at the end of 2018  (24 in 2017)	<u>2018</u> More than 22.000 objects (+ 18 new acquisitions in 2018)	The Lakenhal in 2009 started a process of restoration and expansion, which bring to close down the museum to the public from 2016 to 2019
<i>Naturalis Biodiversity Center</i>	<u>2019</u> : 281.596 <u>2018</u> : 90.682 <u>2017</u> : 214.354 <u>2016</u> : 410.476 <u>2015</u> : 339.551	<u>2019</u> : -7.750.674€ <u>2018</u> :+1.727.705€ <u>2017</u> :+1.028.548€ <u>2016</u> : -5.973.405€ <u>2015</u> : -4.304.967€	<u>2019</u> : 215 <u>2018</u> : 213 <u>2017</u> : 230 <u>2016</u> : 277	<u>2019</u> : 42.419.429 <u>2018</u> : 42.413.548 <u>2017</u> : 41.300.000 <u>2016</u> : 41.300.000 <u>2015</u> : 37.000.000  1° size in the NL	In 2019, the Naturalis was re-opened after a one-year expansion process, which bring a new building, almost doubling the size of the institute. Part of the museums was anyway still open during 2018
<i>Het Nieuwe Instituut</i>	<u>2019</u> : 551.521 <u>2018</u> : 656.833 <u>2017</u> : 377.567 <u>2016</u> : 712.446 <u>2015</u> : 284.049	<u>2019</u> :+4.065.145€ <u>2018</u> :+5.343.953€ <u>2017</u> :+327.640 <u>2016</u> : -438.699 <u>2015</u> : -4.304.967€	<u>2019</u> : 109 <u>2018</u> : 100 <u>2017</u> : 89 <u>2016</u> : 90 <u>2015</u> : 79	<u>2019</u> 1.7 million of drawings, photos, models and books (+750 books in 2019)  2° size in the NL	The Het Nieuwe also manages the adjacent museum house Huis Sonneveld and it is responsible for the Dutch entries in the architecture biennales during even years:2016-18
<i>Boijmans van Beuningen Museum</i>	<u>2019</u> : 143.000 <u>2018</u> : 284.000 <u>2017</u> : 314.000 <u>2016</u> : 280.000 <u>2015</u> : 270.000	<u>2019</u> : +296.000€ <u>2018</u> : +260.000€ <u>2017</u> : +441.000 € <u>2016</u> : +166.000€ <u>2015</u> : -10.000	<u>2019</u> : 98 <u>2018</u> : 129 <u>2017</u> : 118 <u>2016</u> : 120 <u>2015</u> : 105	<u>2019</u> Over 150.000 objects (351 new acquisitions in 2019)	The museum closed on May 2019 for a renovation and renewal of 7 years. From 2021 the adjacent Depot, first art storage facility in the world, will open to the public and show the Boijmans' collection

As highlighted in the previous table, every museum has a different story in terms of financial data, as a consequence of the peculiarities of the museum, the position, and mainly of the renovation

<sup>1</sup> In the total budget column, the plus sign indicates a yearly positive operating result, while the minus sign, indicates a negative operating result

or renewal processes. Therefore, to understand if the financial data are positively related to the leadership strategies of the interviewed leaders, it is important to analyse each case separately.

At the National Museum of World Culture, the visitor numbers are slightly decreasing in 2018, compared to the precedent year, which is explained in the annual report by a reduced number of visitors at the Leiden Museum. However, an upward trend is present in all the other considered years, and 2018 was for the NMVW the second-best year so far. Therefore, this positive trend can be associated with the successful leadership strategies, previously explained, to include a wider audience, and consequently with the positive total operating results. Moreover, a five-year upward trend is also present in the FTEs indicator and in the size collection. The enriched collection is visible both on-site and online, which indicated that the leadership strategies to make the collection as accessible as possible are successful and positively related to these data.

For Museum De Lakenhal 2018 was all about the restoration and the expansion of a new building of over 2.500mq<sup>2</sup>. After 10 years of restorations, and 2 years of closure to the public, in 2018 the re-opening date was announced for mid-June 2019. For this reason, even though the museum received different subsidies (mainly from Leiden's municipality), the longer closing period created a € 140.000 of disadvantage, which caused a total negative operating result. The negative budget is actually a constant since 2015, the year precedent to the museum's closure. However, many public programs and events have been organized and therefore, the museum was successful in maintaining contact with its public, though long-term relationships and an enriched collection. Moreover, according to the Lakenhal director, success is achieved not towards quantity, but towards values, and meanings, to attract as many different people as possible. Therefore, only in the future, it will be possible to understand if these goals are achieved through successful leadership strategies.

The official re-opening of Naturals was in August 2019. However, thanks to the big opening, some public programs, and events, the museum reached more than three times the visitor numbers of the precedent year, even if they are still half of the numbers before the start of the renovation. Moreover, despite an 8 million of own income and a 31 million of subsidies, the heavy expenses (largely 20 million for material and project costs) contribute to the total negative operating results of almost 8 million euros. In addition, the FTEs were strongly reduced in the past five years. Nevertheless, in line with the idea of success of the museum, the collection was strongly enriched (first size in the Netherlands) and the research projects upgraded, showing that some leadership strategies have been undertaken with the aim to describe and preserve biodiversity, and consequently be successful as a museum.

At the Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2019 was a positive financial year, with over half a million visitors (200.000 more than expected in the budget). It is important to remember that these numbers are significantly lower than 2018 or 2016 because the Institute only in these years participates in the Venice Biennale of Architecture. A great number of international visitors (313.421) is present also in 2019, for the involvement in the Milan Triennial. A positive operating result of over 4 million euro is generated, through mainly a 16 million euro of subsidies, and a 1.5 million of own income. The increasing numbers of FTEs show another positive trend from 2015 onwards. However, success is defined by female leaders of the Het Nieuwe as the achievement of innovative ideas, and meaningful content for the public. Exhibitions such as *Nehaus* or *I see that I see what you don't see*, are examples of successful projects that, for its innovative and cross-disciplinary approach, are in line with the idea of the success of the institute, together with the presence of a constantly growing collection.

Lastly, at the Boijmans van Beuningen, 2019 was the year of the closure of the museum, and the start of seven years of renovation and challenging projects. Given the closure of Boijmans in May 2019, the total visitor numbers were almost half of the previous year. However, different public programs and new projects collaborate in achieving a dynamic and progressive approach to programming. In 2019, there was a positive operating result of 296.000 euro (in line with the previous year), given by over 13 million subsidies from the Rotterdam municipality and over 5 million of yields, to overcome the significant expenses. A negative trend is thus present in the FTEs, which are reduced as a consequence of the start of the museum's closure. Nevertheless, the main component of success for the Boijmans museum is given by its collection. Therefore, the 351 new acquisitions are in line with the strategies to enrich and cherish the collection of the museum.

#### *Conclusion sub-question 5:*

In conclusion of this section, to answer the fifth sub-question “Are the financial data positively related to successful leadership strategies inside museums?” it is possible to underline that each museum presents its specific peculiarities, in terms of financial data. On one hand, there are some institutions with an upward trend in the visitor numbers or with a positive operating result, which are indicators of financial stability and profitability. On the other hand, some museums present negative trends and operating results. However, if looked carefully, these negative indicators are mostly a consequence of renovation and expansion programs, which always bring important expenses and losses for the organization. Therefore, it is not correct to state that these numbers are indicative of negative strategic leadership, but neither that the positive financial data of other museums are certainly related to successful leadership strategies. Indeed, as emerged in the theoretical framework, museums are complex institutions, which, to achieve success, should consider multi-dimensional

measures of performance (Turbide & Laurin, 2009). A combination of both financial and non-financial indicators can thus give a comprehensive image of the effective success of implemented strategies (Atkinson, 2006). Annual visitors and general budget are certainly important indicators, but they are not exclusively emblematic of successful strategies inside museums. As emerged in section 4.1., each institution has a different idea of what defines success, in line with its goals and objectives. What cultural leaders consider as successful is not linked necessarily and exclusively with financial stability or increased visitor numbers. Therefore, other indicators are important and sought for by cultural leaders. However, the metric performance indicators of success are different for each institution, and mostly they are often not visible from the financial data.

It is, therefore, possible to conclude, that the present *Table 2* is somehow incomplete because it is not representative of all the relevant metrics for each institution. However, the considered four indicators are important and basic metrics, to have a general idea on the financial stability and profitability of the institutions, and to complete the Balance Scorecard with the financial data perspective. Moreover, the present table shows how renovation and expansion processes, which recently or presently affected three out of five museums, have a great impact on all the considered data. Other more representative indicators, in line with the idea of success by each leader, should consider, for instance, the greater availability of the collection, the presence of particular exhibitions, or of a specific diverse audience. However, these concepts have been already analysed in terms of strategies in the other perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard.

#### 4.5. Covid-19 crisis

*“At a time when billions of people around the world are separated from one another, museums can bring us together”*

Ernesto Ottone, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture (UNESCO, 2020)

The interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore, some of the questions were necessarily addressed to this situation. Indeed, this unexpected and overwhelming situation can be seen as a test bench, to observe how museum leaders react and which strategies they adopt to deal with an emergency, such as the current pandemic. Moreover, since the sample of interviewees is composed of either museum directors or heads of department, the situation is extremely critical for them. Indeed, one of the specific circumstances where top managers need to directly intervene in the strategic process is when the organization is under crisis (Castañer & Yu, 2017). It is their role to set new goals, build new initiatives and regain the confidence of external stakeholders and shareholders. The aim of this chapter is indeed to answer the sixth sub-question “What strategies are leaders adopting inside museums to deal with the Covid-19 crisis?”

The current COVID-19 crisis is especially critical for organizations such as museums where on-site visitors, events, and the collaboration with the public are the main determinants to be successful and financially stable. Generally, the novel Coronavirus has created a state of emergency for museums and the community they serve, as populations are requested to stay at home and museums institutions have had to close their doors (UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, culture is now in the condition of not being able to pursue its primary purpose of dissemination and interaction. A necessary closure that puts the whole sector in front of the need to redefine all its ways of contact and communication, using a "lateral thinking" to keep the relationship alive with citizens and the audience. Therefore, as stated by the UNESCO report, even though museums are facing several challenges, such as protecting their collection, ensuring staffs safety and health, dealing with financial issues, and staying engaged with their public, they need to find creative and innovative solutions and ideas to keep inspiring everyone in this difficult and uncertain times (UNESCO, 2020).

In this respect, according to the Network of European Museum Organisations' survey to map the impact of the global Coronavirus crisis on the museum's sector (NEMO, 2020), this crisis has encouraged museums to explore more online alternatives to the traditional on-site experiences. Therefore, digitalization and all the opportunities offered by technologies are today not only a possibility but also a necessity. Indeed, as emerged by the NEMO's survey, 4 out of 5 museums have increased their digital services to reach their audiences, often by having employees embrace new tasks to deal with the current situation (NEMO, 2020). The preservation of the relationship with the public is, therefore, necessary and digitalization should be seen as a new form of dissemination and inclusion of a larger audience, through innovative ideas that can temporarily replace the live events. The situation is critical and unpredictable and cultural organizations should found in digital technologies the solution to preserve their strategies and values. Hence, museums are trying to maintain their purposes of innovation, collaboration, and learning. Only in the future, we will understand if the effort was sufficient and the strategy adequate.

However, interestingly, digitalization, and online content are only one of the concepts that emerged during the interviews when discussing the customer and stakeholder's perspective. Besides, two other strategies emerged concerning both the learning & growth and the internal business processes perspectives. The former concerns the necessity to see this crisis as an opportunity to think about future strategies and solutions, while the latter refers to the changed relationship between leaders and their teams.

Moreover, as it will be highlighted in the next sub-chapters, some timing differences are found. The first interviews took place at the beginning of April, when the situation was still very



uncertain and chaotic, while the last interviews conducted in May, when it was already clear that the museums in the Netherlands were going to re-open on 1 June 2020 (Pascoe, 2020)

#### 4.6.1. Crisis as an opportunity to find new strategies

Of particular interest was the finding that, for all the respondents, this Covid-19 crisis could be seen as a moment to find new opportunities and strategies for the future. Certainly, this crisis will have a huge negative impact, mostly a financial one, and many decisions were heartbreakers for museum members, such as the closing of exhibitions or events planned for many months. However, it can be a beneficial strategy to try to find the positive side of the crisis, and think of new solutions.

As highlighted by the Lakenhal's director, despite all the difficulties and resentments, each leader had clear in mind that the only solution was to close down the institutions. "It was hard to close the museum down because we just reopened it, and museums should be open as public institutions. And so that's always a heartbreaker. But of course, it's people first. So health first. So it was difficult, but at the same time, it was not because it was so clear that we should" (Meta Knol, page 18).

Once the museums were closed, each leader had to think about new solutions, strategies, related to their team and the whole organization. As emerged in the majority of the interviews, the first thought and decision were related to the health of people (both physical and mental): "In the first weeks, the main concern was about people and their wellbeing and health. So we were reassuring that everyone was fine, that the families where fine. So I was always asking how are you? How are you dealing with the situation?" (Astrid Jacob, page 50). Afterward, new solutions and strategies came up to deal with the situation. Akin also for Marina Otero, "I think we just had to acknowledge that this is not a normal situation. [...] let's be honest with each other and not be ashamed. Are you able to focus? [...] you can have moments in which you cannot focus. That was hard, but it was like learning, but important learning right now that I think probably has to stay longer" (page 76)

Regarding the learning and growth perspective, so in terms of values and improvement of the organization, all the leaders agreed on the importance to think of long-term strategies, and to see this moment as an opportunity to understand what can be changed or improved inside the museum, or to learn new competencies and skills. Moreover, in line with Castañer and Yu's theory (2017), each leader translated and communicated these ideas to their own team, with the aim change the status quo and solve the crisis. Therefore, on one hand, the majority of leaders asked their team to think about not only short terms strategies (in terms of online content and solutions), but also about long-term ones: "Everything is unpredictable and chaotic. So I told my team to use this time to relax, see it as an opportunity to reflect and understand what can be improved or changed [...] for the long term.

How to improve internal processes. We need to find some strategies and guidelines for the next 4 years (Marielle Pals, page 9). On the other hand, according to Respondent 7, long-term solutions are a task of the management team, while team members should think about feasible and present strategies: “Asking them about the future of the institution, it would not be appropriate. [...] We can ask them to assist. But I think, that's your point as a senior manager is that you should know, or you should have an ability to see what the implications are. Yeah. That's why you were in their role. So it would seem to me quite strange to ask people what they thought on that basis. It is the role of the museum's management team” (page 98).

Nevertheless, in any case, the main outcome is the same: find new solutions for the future and embrace this crisis as an opportunity to rethink processes and strategies. “It's about also thinking long-term project. So now we are, thinking about, what will be the institutions? What will be important for the future that we want as a society? So, we are reformulating all these questions right now” (Marina Otero, page 82). Moreover, given the uncertainty of the situation, it is also clear that a single strategy for the future it is not enough: “So we are now talking about visitors of June, visitors of September and visitors of January” (Cindy Zalm, page 69). “I think we're all going to be in a scenario where we test things. [...] You have to plan for two or three different scenarios” (Respondent 7, page 101). “So that's what we're trying to do, think out different scenarios for the future” (Sandra Kisters, page 138).

Furthermore, reasonably, many of the strategies are related to the re-opening of the organizations and what it can be a social distance museum. In particular, this was more evident in the interviews conducted in May, when the national opening of museums was already planned by the Dutch government for the 1<sup>st</sup> of June (Pascoe, 2020). “Now they're reopening in June. We're making protocols in order to open safely. [...] We are thinking about physics, routes where people can block one direction through the museum. We've made the selection of artwork smaller so that it will not be crowded.” (Sandra Kisters, page 133). “And for us, it's very important that the visitors who are coming to the several exhibitions in the context of Boijmans nextdoor in Rotterdam and to “This is Surrealism” in the Cobra Museum in Amstelveen, they are feeling safe with us. And also feeling very welcomed in a social way” (Josien Paulides, page 116). Therefore, apart from precautions measures, it is important to make feel safe the visitors: “We have to make people feel comfortable being in a family, because that's hard. It cannot be just by providing hand sanitizer or one and a half meters distance, because that doesn't create connectivity or collective thinking. So we're going to try to figure out what is the choreography? Even if we have to take a bit of distance, but it's still we are here together. That is what we are trying to accomplish now” (Marina Otero, page 84). Therefore, this is

in line with the NEMO's report, who affirms that museums are re-opening to the public by following strict rules, but are finding innovative and creative ideas to do it (NEMO, 2020).

In summary, at the beginning of the pandemic, the attention was mainly on the health and wellbeing of all the employees. Afterward, the majority of leaders agreed that this moment of lockdown could be seen as an opportunity to think about new strategies and solutions for the future.

#### 4.6.2. Role of the leader and of the team

With regards to the perspective of internal processes, the current Covid-19 crisis and the subsequent national lockdown had forced everyone to work from home and, therefore, it had drastically changed the interactions between organizations' members. How did the interactions between members change? Which strategies did leaders adopt to keep improving the internal processes? How did the relation and communication between leaders and followers change? From what emerged in the interviews, the interactions, even if online, had to be intensified and in particular, the leader had the role of reassuring employees and gave them a purpose.

Firstly, leaders had to take important decisions regarding the closure of the museums, and the tasks of the employees. "Sometimes it is important to slow down and to think, but sometimes it is also really important to take quick decisions and to act, to benefit the organization. In a moment of panic and uncertainty, for a leader is important to take decisions in a decided way, without hesitating and also expressing them with clarity" (Marielle Pals, page 6). Therefore, once again, clear and direct strategic communication is found to be an essential strategy for museum leaders. "We had our team prepared on situations where we would have a crisis team, a calamity. [...] I'm so proud of my team, how we did that together. It was really smooth, precise and communicative" (Meta Knol, page 18). In particular, some of the leaders highlighted the necessity of having even more interactions than usual. "The communication with the staff is so much more different. [...] I have a lot of one to one contact, with the people in my staff, but that's most of the time, more about, our personal things. So how do you feel? [...] I think it's, about maybe 10 or 15% extra to, to communicate. [...] Normally I would leave them totally independent. I feel that they all need to be connected more than they usually are. So we are working a lot together on strategies and on solving problems" (Caroline Breunesse, page 35 and 42). "You have to intensify you need to communicate with people. And give them a structure. Create a structure of communication. (Josien Paulides, page 113). Therefore, leaders are founding new strategies to keep the contact, through online platforms, with their employees, both individually and in a team. "You miss the normal information of the body language. It's really different. And we need to be aware of it. So to be maybe even more present than normally" (Christel van Hees, page 147).

However, working from home can generate quite a lot of stress and frustration, mostly for people that cannot perform their job at home, because their work is related to the physical building, such as restorers or conservators, or freelancers who do not have a permanent contract, as highlighted by one of Boijmans' heads of department. "We put a lot of effort as well, in making tasks for people who didn't have so much to do. [...] for example the library collection. But together we find solutions. So we always try to have the colleagues feel valued in what they do (Respondent 9, page 122). Similarly, also the Business Director of the Het Nieuwe Instituut, "We all have to work from home and for maybe, for 70% of the people, that's okay, but for 30%, that's really a problem because their work is really related to the physical building of the institute. So that's also difficult for their mental health being" (Josien Paulides, page 107). However, the majority of leaders already defined new solutions for them, such as taking care of all the jobs that there was no time to develop before. "For the people who were normally really busy with all kinds of hands on activities, we for them looked for other works at home. We also looked at all kinds of things that we had to do that we never did" (Christel van Hees, page 146). Consequently, creative solutions to work from home and experiments on new ideas or projects took place that could not be developed before.

However, as explained by different managers, while some employees react positively to the situation, for others was more difficult because maybe they felt more lost or they had personal issues. In both situations, it is the role of the leader to motivate staff and to give them a purpose, to work with enthusiasm and productively. "It is my role to make them comfort that it is normal reaction not be 100% focused. Everything is different; it might seems that everything is falling apart. It helps if you can offer perspective. We need to revalue how to maintain our relevance for our audience" (Astrid Jacobs, page 51). "Management of the institution are transparent at one level, and clear about what they need. So it's important that projects are well run, that goals are shared, and that strategies are clear. [...] We need to re-orientate people". (Respondent 7, page 97).

To summarise, the Covid-19 crisis has certainly changed the relationship between leaders and their team members. For instance, all the managers agreed that communication had to be intensified, in order to be aware of both personal and working-related problems. Therefore, given the unpredictable and chaotic situation, the team's members are now less independent than normal. However, it is the role of the leader to reassure them and give them a new purpose or work if they cannot perform their usual job from home.

#### 4.6.3. New online contents and activities

The current situation is certainly chaotic, uncertain, and frustrating. Museums' leaders are though finding new solutions to keep improving and creating value internally, through for instance a

vision on future strategies and extra communication with the team. However, how can they keep the attention of their visitors in the short-term, during the pandemic? Clearly, digital and online contents are the best and easiest solutions related to the costumers and stakeholders perspective. The aim could be to both keep the attention of the audience and also to attract new ones. However, which specific strategies do leaders adopt? How can they subsequently maintain the physical presence of the audience? Each leader and each institution developed similar solutions and strategies; for instance, all the museums have their own virtual tours or online collection. However, the real online contents to keep the interests of the audience are more peculiar and different from one to the other museum.

For instance, at the National Museum of World Cultures, “Now we bring online every week a new online activity: this can be creative cultural activities for children at home, or complete lessons for online teaching on diverse themes. So, through the website, we keep the attention of our audience. From this desire, we developed some home school programs on different topics, which can be used by the teacher for the classroom, or simply by the parents for the kids (Marielle Pals, page 8)”. Akin, according to the Head of Collection, “we try to have new stories online, like three stories a week. [...] We said we don't love to do very pasty stuff, that also disappears when Covid is going away. So we want to create the new stories that are in line with exhibitions that are coming up”.

Some simple online contents are not enough for museums leaders, who want to engage with the public in a significant way. Indeed, also at the Lakenhal, they want to find meaningful activities. “What can we do to add meaning and value to this corona crisis? We commissioned a young artist collective in Leiden to work with us. So they are earning some money, and at the same time, they are showing us how the corona crisis looks through their eyes. We asked everyone to think about a Corona collection. What kind of things, stories, objects should we acquire for the collection in order to make future generations remember this in a good way?” (Meta Knol, page 19).

Besides, at the Het Nieuwe Instituut, they are thinking to develop a new platform: “So many people are now having an explosion of creativity and interest. So how can we get visibility to all those proposals? What are the things that are common? To see trends, see commonalities, and maybe have to implement some of these proposals. So we're now in the trying to develop that platform in a way. [...] Then we are doing some newsletters every week, and we thought we focused on one topic that is connected to the coronavirus, but not necessarily immediate connection (Marina Otero, page 82).

Therefore, to sum up, each leader is trying to stimulate the development of new online contents, which are not simply and purely entertaining, but that can be critical and relevant to visitors

in many different ways. Consequently, they should be able not only to attract visitors online, but also to maintain their physical presence when the museum will re-open.

#### *Conclusion sub-question 6*

This results' section aimed to answer the sixth and last sub-question "What strategies are leaders adopting inside museums to deal with the current Covid-19 crisis?" From what has emerged in the interviews, each museum and leader are primarily trying to think of new strategies for the future. The aim is to accept this crisis as an opportunity, to be extremely critical and relevant both in the short and in the long-term. In order to do so, each organizations' member needs to embrace this vision and try to reinvent him or herself. Moreover, leaders, in line with Castañer and Yu vision (2017), have to adopt strategic communication to disseminate new values and give purposes to the employees, with a particular eye to the most fragile or the one that cannot work from home. Online and digital contents are obviously present in each of the institutions, but they are not trivial or simplistic: they have the aim to either add value to the crisis or attract new audience trough relevant and critical contents.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to comprehend which kind of leadership strategies are being adopted by female leaders inside museums, and how to understand if these strategies are successful for the performance of the organization. Consequently, the main research question was formulated:

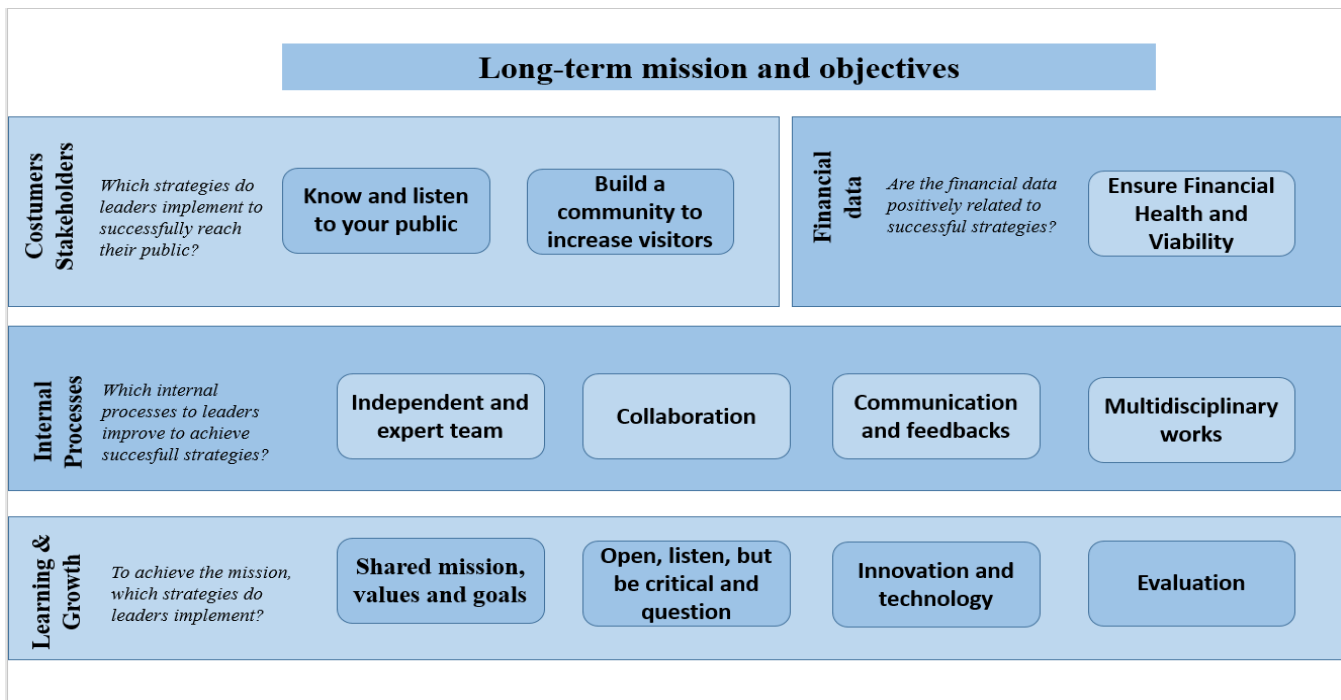
*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*

Given a lack of researches on female strategies inside museums, and given that gender inequality is still an issue also in the cultural and creative sector (Culture Action Europe, 2016), this thesis focused, particularly, on female leaders. However, the structure of the analysis, as well as of the interviews, does not refer to any claim of gender superiority or differences between male and female leadership. The leading aim was simply to identify what are the typical strategies of female leaders inside museums, contributing to fulfilling this lacuna by answering the main research question.

To answer this question, the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) was found as the most appropriate framework, because it provides a holistic model to identify museum's successful activities, and also because it links effectively the performance of an organization to its strategy and daily activities, considering both financial and non-financial indicators (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2020). Indeed, four of the research sub-questions, were structured following the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard: learning & growth, internal processes, costumers & stakeholders, and financial data. However, firstly, it was found important to understand how each institution defines success, and therefore witch main goals they aim to achieve, to understand if their strategies were truly successful for the organization. Furthermore, given the present Covid-19 pandemic, a new sub-question and section of analysis were elaborated, to understand how the museum's leaders are dealing with the current crisis. Consequently, each sub-question can be answered and enriched with the use of literature and theories.

The following *Figure 2*, summarized the main strategies that female leaders inside museums implemented, regarding the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard, which will be further explored in the subsequent sections.

Figure 2: Museum Balanced Scorecard - own elaboration



### 5.1. Learning & growth and strategic leadership

To answer the second sub-question “What strategies of learning and growth do museums’ leaders adopt to achieve their mission, values, and objectives?” it is possible to name different strategies that female leaders adopt in the analysed museums.

- Share the values and the mission with all the organizational members
- Have open-mind and an empathic approach in order to embrace different ideas and perspectives
- Embrace a critical approach to always question and understand why something is valuable for the organisation.
- Innovation, technology, and creativity are primary strategies to maintain the museums’ relevance.
- Evaluation, even though it is often a difficult process, is considered essential to be accountable and understand both the areas that are working and those that are performing under expectation.

To successfully implement this perspective, and therefore to improve, innovate, and create value inside a museum organisation, strategic leadership, plays a fundamental role. Indeed, at is has been emphasized in the interviews’ analysis, both directors and heads of departments embrace a deeply strategic and relational activity with their immediate followers (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Every head of departments established a close strategic relationship with the immediate team, to share with values and objectives, but also to critically listening to their ideas and perspective. Similarly, the museum’s director, build a similar connection with both the other director (if present) and the management team.



A clear distinction between the responsibilities of the director and the ones of the middle managers is always essential to divide the tasks in an efficient way and improve the leadership strategies.

## 5.2. Internal processes strategies and relationship between top and middle managers

The present section aimed to answer the third sub-question “What internal processes do leaders improve to achieve successful strategies inside museums?” As emerged in the interviews, each museum and each leader have different values and goals to achieve internally, though some processes were similar and of common relevance across museums and leaders.

- Strongly value the role of the personnel, as experts in their own field
- Leave the employees with significant independence, but be always approachable for any doubt or problem
- Have a clear strategic communication, as well as two-way feedback
- Collaboration is an essential strategy both internally (between leaders and staff, but also between the management team), and externally, with partners that share similar values
- Have a multi or cross-disciplinary approach, in order to reach a wide-ranging number of values, purposes, and stakeholders

To realize this perspective, and thus to grow internally, the relationship, as well as the differences, between the top and middle managers are certainly fundamental. The term middle managers denote in this case all the heads of departments, positioned at one organizational layer below the artistic and business directors. Directors depend greatly on the pivotal role of middle managers for achieving organizational goals and implementing a strategic communication with employees (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002) (Atkinson, 2006). It indeed emerged from the analysis that directors are more focused on shared values and objectives and on having a holistic view. Conversely, heads of departments strongly emphasize the value of clear communication and the independence and expertise of their team members. However, a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the director and the ones of the middle managers is always essential to divide the tasks in an efficient way and improve the leadership strategies.

## 5.3. Context-sensitivity for costumer’s & stakeholder’s strategies

The costumer and stakeholder’s perspective aims to answer the fourth sub-question “Which kind of strategies do leaders adopt to successfully reach their costumers and stakeholders inside museums?”

- Truly know your public and listen to their necessities and desires

- Build a loyal and trustworthy community of visitors, who do not come just sporadically but support the museum in an emphatic way.
- Focus on public programming and on interactive exhibitions, to maintain the public's interest.
- Concentrate strategic effort on a particular target audience, such as people that do not feel recognized in the museum's environment or on cultural diversity.
- Be as more inclusive as possible
- When considering other stakeholders, such as the government, the municipality, or other partners, listen to their needs and opinions and establish a relationship of trust and collaboration.

Leaders need to be aware of the context in which the organization lives, considering internal and external factors, as well as a multiple context and actor perspective, to truly know their context and public. As a result, leaders can arrive at the heart of the community and building a trustworthy relationship, where interests and needs are satisfied.

#### 5.4. Annual report and financial data

To answer the fifth sub-question “Are the financial data positively related to successful leadership strategies inside museums?” a content analysis of the museums' annual reports has been conducted. The aim was to identify and summarize in *Table 2*, some main indicators, compared with the last available five years: visitor numbers, total budget, FTEs, and collection size. The main emerged findings are that:

- 2 out of 5 museums present a negative operating result. However, these museums recently coped with intensive processes of renovation and expansion, which influenced the yearly expenses.
- 2 out of 5 museums increased the number of visitors during the past 5 years (available online). These two museums are thus the ones, which did not recently go through some renewal processes, with a consequent closure of some spaces.
- 4 out of 5 museums increased their FTEs number during the last year (available online), meaning that they are growing internally. Only the Boijmans experienced a decrease in the FTEs number, as a consequence of the definitive closure of the organization for a renewal process of 7 years.
- All five museums increased their collection size through new acquisitions in the past years. This is in line with a common strategy to enrich the collection and continue to be relevant to the public, with new and innovative content. However, the collection sizes of each museum are rather different, and therefore the size of the yearly new acquisitions are in line with that and with the characteristics of each piece.

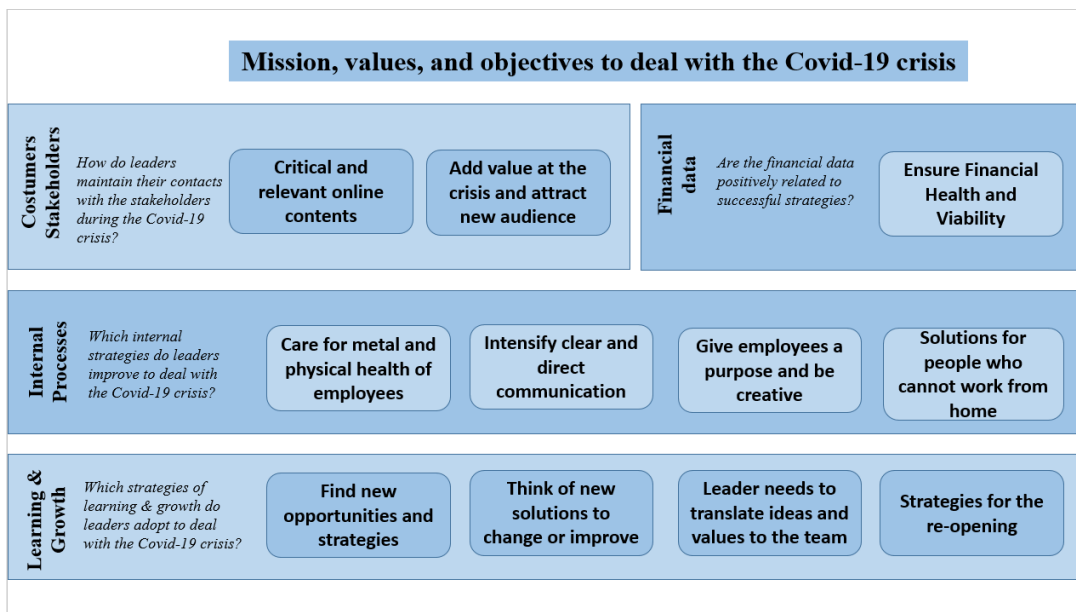
The consider indicators are not exhaustive of the complete financial situation of all the museums. To understand if financial data are positively related to leadership strategies, each institution should consider specific indicators in relation to their idea of success. For the considered museums, such metrics should be for instance: inclusiveness of a wider and diverse audience, greater availability of the collection both online and on-site, presence of challenging and innovative projects or researches, or international recognition. However, it remains important to have a multi-dimensional approach to performance measures, where different indicators and metrics are considered.

### 5.5. Covid-19 strategies

This section aimed to answer the sixth sub-question “What strategies are leaders adopting inside museums to deal with the current Covid-19 crisis?”

Given the peculiarity and extraordinariness of the situation, a different table (Figure 3) of the main strategies implemented by female leaders in museums to deal with the Covid-19 crisis was developed.

Figure 3: Balanced Scorecard to deal with Covid-19 crisis – own elaboration



We are currently living in a chaotic and unpredictable moment of history, and cultural institutions, have to deal with it, trying to develop new and critical solutions. From what has emerged in the interviews some common strategies have been adopted by female leaders.

- Accept this crisis as an opportunity, to be extremely critical and relevant both in the short and in the long-term
- Try to think of new strategies and ideas for the future: what can be changed? What can be improved? What are the strategies for the re-opening?
- Each organizations' member needs to embrace this vision and try to reinvent their selves.
- Intensifying strategic communication to disseminate new values and be clear
- Have a particular eye to the most fragile personnel or the one that cannot work from home
- Digital and online contents to add value to the crisis and attract a new audience
- Not merely entertainment digital contents, but critical and relevant ones

All these strategies can benefit the organizations and help them to deal with the subsequent financial crisis and budget cuts, which will have a huge impact on the financial perspective. Therefore, especially in a moment of emergency and crisis, the role of the top and middle managers is found essential to maintain the relevance of the institution and to communicate new values and purposes, both to the employees and to the external stakeholders. In line with Aaltonen and Ikavalko view (2002), also in a chaotic and unpredictable situation such as the current Corona crisis, strategic communication and identification of actors, and a system of strategies aligned with the organizational values and mission, are essential leadership strategies. Moreover, as explained by Castaner and Yu (2017) and as arisen from the interviews, it is the role of the top management to instil a sense of urgency and formulate drastic reconstructing strategies, but also to inspire confidence in the recovery of organizational performance and effectiveness.

#### 5.6. Female leaders and successful strategies: a positive relation?

The aim of this thesis was never to claim superiority or differences between male and female leadership, but to identify the leadership strategies of female leaders inside museums, with two main purposes. Firstly, to fill a lack of researches on the subject, and secondly to raise awareness on the potential success of female leadership strategies inside the cultural and creative sector.

As emerged in the analysis, the 11 interviewed leaders have certainly different leadership styles and personalities. However, some common traits and strategies have been highlighted and analysed. In line with other researchers' theories, both men and women can implement successful strategies and support organisational performance (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017 ). However, a great cultural diversity in leadership strategies (not only in terms of gender), can encourage great creativity and innovation, an effective problem solving, and decision-making process (Carter, Simkins, & Simpson, 2003) (Carvalho & Diogo, 2018 ). Indeed, as emerged during the interviews and in the qualitative analysis, each of the female leader has clear in mind their idea of

success and implement consequently some leadership strategies to achieve specific goals and objectives, which are non-financial, but related to cultural or social values. In line with different theories, the interviewed female leaders are able to implement successful strategies and encourage creative and innovative processes, which are shared with all the employees. Therefore, in this respect, leadership strategies are the ones that allow achieving the organizational idea of success. Thus, it is important to evaluate each case individually, according to specific ideas of success, and considering all the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard.

- Many implemented strategies are found to be quite common among the interviewed female leaders. These strategies have been summarized in both *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*. However, each museum and each manager, have a slightly different vision on how to define success.
- The NMVW aims to be an inclusive and culturally diverse museum, who shows the collection to as many people as possible. Indeed, as explained in the 2018 Annual report, the museum has committed itself to increase its cultural diversity in every way, by subscribing to a Cultural Diversity Code. Moreover, the size of the collection and the display of pieces, offline and online, are increasing every year. Therefore, we can conclude that NMVW is implementing successful leadership strategies, which are also mirrored in a positive operating result. Nevertheless, visitor numbers are slightly decreasing, and therefore some future successful strategies should be implemented in relation to the costumers and stakeholders perspective.
- For Museum de Lakenhal success is achieved when each activity is content driven and people driven, to share meaningful and empathic values, and to create a long-term and loyal relationship with the audience. The total operating result of 2018 was though negative, and there were no visitors due to the closure of the museum. However, these negative results should be seen in light of the renovation process, and therefore they are not demonstrative of the long-term changes that the museum is recently handling. For instance, the decision of focusing on the collection, and public programs, rather than on temporary and blockbusters exhibitions, is far more significant of the successful leadership strategies than the financial data.
- At the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, success is achieved towards innovation, as a way to preserve and describe biodiversity. Naturalis re-opened in 2019 after an expansion process, which influenced the negative operating result of the year. However, innovation, and consequently success, is realized through different immersive, interactive, and original exhibitions or public programs. Moreover, research is a fundamental part of Naturalis' strategy, which every year is advanced and facilitated. For instance, 185 scientific publications appeared in 2019, and 3.200 citations, which show the relevance of this researches.

- The Het Nieuwe Instituut, to be successful, aims to have a cross-disciplinary approach to strengthen the appreciation and interaction between architecture, design, and digital culture. To do so, they create challenging, but meaningful contents for the public and their stakeholders. These successful strategies are reflected in a positive operating result and in visitor numbers, which is approximately 36% higher than expected. However, the successful strategies are not only reflected in positive numbers, but mostly in new exhibitions and public programs, which are positively rated by the audience as stimulating and innovative.
- At the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, success is defined as a progressive approach to programming, where the collection is the starting point and the public is the goal. Moreover, a national and international lasting impact on the art history of the Netherlands is sought. However, in May 2019 the museum closed down to the public, for a seven-year renovation project, which explains the low number of visitors during the year. Nonetheless, a positive operating result is still present, which is the result of significant subsidies and different programs. For instance, Boijmans in the Classroom or the development of the new Depot are projects in line with the idea of having a long-lasting impact to be successful and to have the collection as their main asset of the museum, which is indeed enriched year by year.
- A lacking theme in all the five considered institutions is the presence of a strong evaluation framework. Evaluation strategies should be improved in all the four perspectives of the BSC. Museums should find the right metrics, performance targets, and strictly monitor results (Zorloni, 2016). The Balanced Scorecard, or any other similar frameworks, should be implemented, to give a balanced and comprehensive approach to performance and leadership strategies, in every aspect of the organizations.
- Digitalization is another aspect, which surprisingly is never mentioned as a leading strategy for the interviewed leaders. Certainly, technology is often considered as a driving force but should be further implemented as a continuous opportunity to maintain and increase the relevance of the institutions. In this respect, the Covid-19 crisis will possibly be an important opportunity to see the great potential of digitalization.
- The Covid-19 pandemic, and the consequent lockdown, forced all the leaders and the museums to develop new strategies, using innovative and critical thinking. Interestingly, many strategies (summarized in *Figure 3*), are commonly shared by the interviewees. In particular, is found essential to see this crisis as an opportunity and to find new solutions for the future. Moreover, in such a chaotic and unpredictable emergency, the role of the director is fundamental to inspire confidence, and build new values, through relevant and critic strategies, mostly related with digital contents.

## 5.7. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, it is possible to answer the main research question:

*What defines successful leadership strategies inside a museum organisation?*

The Balanced Scorecard is found to be a beneficial and convenient framework to measure and define successful leadership strategies inside museums. Indeed, by providing a balanced view of performance, the effective success of implemented strategies can be controlled and analysed (Atkinson, 2006). Moreover, it allows for great flexibility and adaptability, thanks to which it was possible to develop an own Balanced Scorecard with the main aggregated results, based on the interviews' responses and on the annual reports' content analysis.

Interestingly, even though the museums as well as the roles of the leaders were all different, many strategies are found to be common and successful for every interviewed woman. This could be in line with the positive relation found by many researchers between women's empowerment and the no-profit sector development (Themudo, 2009) (Evans, Mayo, & Quijada, 2018). In particular, some patterns of associations are found in the strategies to deal with the Covid-19 crisis, meaning that during emergencies, female leaders are able to implement similar and creative strategies to deal with the situation in a critical and innovative way. However, it will be a task of future researches to evaluate them, see if they were successful and linked specifically with female leadership. Generally, in line with other researches and theories, it is possible to gauge that all the interviews female leaders implemented innovative strategies, to solve problems creatively and to create a positive and stimulating environment for their employees. However, most of the interviewed leaders still have to put some effort on some strategies, which in the present research are found to be mostly linked with the evaluation frameworks and digitalization strategies and tools.

To finally answering the main research question, successful leadership strategies are defined by a combination of aspects, which are explicative of both the short and long-term changes. A multi-dimensional approach, such as the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard, is essential to provide an exhaustive representation of the museums' functioning, which consider financial aspects, but mostly cultural and social values. Indeed, even though financial data are not always positively related, it is clear that starting with the personal idea of organizational success by each female leader, museums are reaching their objectives, or at least they are on the path to achieving them. Indeed, quantitative performance indicators cannot be representative of the complex and multidimensional context in which museums live, and they are not indicative of the important long-term changes and strategies.

## 5.8. Limitations and future researches

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. Firstly, the sample of female leaders used in the qualitative semi-structured interviews is limited to directors and heads of departments in museums of Leiden and Rotterdam. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized for the whole area of the Netherlands, and neither specifically for the entire two cities, because not all the museums are considered. Indeed, the initial idea of having a complete sample of all the museums in Leiden, with also some board of directors' members, to give a wide-ranging perspective, was not anymore possible for the Covid-19 crisis, which represents in this thesis another important limitation. Indeed the Covid-19 pandemic was the main reason why many female leaders could not take part in the research, and why the interviews took place later than expected. Moreover, all the 11 interviews, as already explained in the methodology, were conducted online, which can be seen as a limitation, because it can miss the social and physical interaction between interviewee and interviewer. Furthermore, other limitations are found in relation to the chosen qualitative method. Firstly, as explained by Bryman (2012), repeatability is a difficult criterion to achieve in qualitative research, since it is impossible to replicate the same social setting and circumstances. Secondly, in qualitative research, there is always the risk of personal bias, even though the researcher has made an important effort to avoid influencing participants with personal opinions and prejudices. Lastly, and probably more importantly, it was hard to specifically linking the implemented strategies with financial data. Indeed, the lack of standardised and objective metrics on museums' performance is found to be a main limitation to this study. In particular, this is true for the Covid-19 strategies, where financial and numerical data on how leaders are dealing with the present pandemic are still not available.

However, the flexibility of qualitative research leaves space for numerous future researches on the subject. Especially the use of the BSC framework could leave space for many other similar researchers, following the same analysis' structure. For instance, the analysis could focus on male leaders inside museums and could be also compared with the present thesis to assess the main differences and similarities between the two samples. Moreover, it would also be interesting to compare the results with a sample of museums in other countries or of different cultural non-profit institutions, such as theatres. Do the leadership strategies found in this research apply to other institutions or other contexts? Moreover, future researches on the same considered institutions could analyse how other members of these museums perceive the leadership strategies, given the close relationship between leaders and their employees.

Lastly, it could be worthwhile to research the policy implications, with the aim to understand what policymakers could do to raise awareness on the successful leadership strategies of female



leaders inside museums. Consequently, the participation of women in apical positions could be raised and balanced with the one of men. Similarly, also museums should raise their awareness on the potential successful strategies of female leaders, which can bring great creativity and innovation, also during chaotic and unpredictable situations, such as the Covid-19 crisis. Moreover, also the use of the Balanced Scorecard should be recommended, with the aim to evaluate the leadership strategies, in a comprehensive and balanced way.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide and consent form

This interview guide was developed by Giulia Rozzi, currently enrolled in the Master program of “Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship” at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, for use in her thesis on the contribution of female leaders inside museums that will identify the strategies that characterize successful leadership styles.

The interview will take place online in approximately 60 minutes and will be recorded for data analysis purposes using online platform. Please note that this recording will only be available to the interviewer and the thesis supervisor of the Erasmus University, and will not be used other than for the analysis of this research. In the resulting thesis, your participation will be anonymized, unless you specifically make mention that this is not necessary. In that case, I will ask your permission to use one or more direct quotes. The findings will be used to form part of my thesis, which are archived on the Erasmus University repository.

- Interview Consent Form

By agreeing to be interviewed, you give consent to:

- The interview will be recorded for data analysis purposes
- Your responses will be used exclusively for this thesis
- To have your participation anonymized \_\_\_\_\_
- OR
- To identify your identity when reporting your answers \_\_\_\_\_

The questions of the interview will follow the structure of the Balance Scorecard, a framework developed in 1992 by Kaplan and Norton. In particular, the questions will focus on the three first perspectives of the framework: learning & growth, internal business processes and customers & stakeholders. Conversely, the fourth perspective, named financial data, will be investigated separately through a document analysis, which includes the annual report stating the budget of the museum.

Due to the current unexpected and extraordinary situation, I would like to ask you to consider some of the following questions in light of decisions you have had to make in the recent past.

1. Learning & Growth

- How do you improve, create value and innovate for your organization?
- On which main strategies do you focus? (E.g. technology, people, CSR, cost efficiency, marketing, communication...). When can a museum be defined as successful?
- Which core competencies and skills are fundamental to build and improve the chosen strategy?
- As a leader of a non-profit arts and culture institution, what are some of the unique challenges you face?
- What is your strategy to deal with ‘emergency situations’? In particular, with the current situation of Covid-19, what has been the most challenging decision you have had to take? And what decision are you most proud of having taken?

- How can you describe your leadership style?

## 2. Internal Business Processes

- Which internal processes do you believe are the most relevant to gain competitive advantages? Which are your star processes? (E.g. marketing, HR, research, communication...)
- How do you assess the potential success of a particular exhibition, given the need to balance artistic direction and business development?
- Do you think there are some processes that you should improve, regarding the effectiveness, but also the efficacy and quality? (E.g. minimize the waste, improve some connections, etc.)
- According to your experience as a museum director, what are the most important factors affecting a museum's excellence?
- Given the current situation, what is your strategy to improve your internal processes? And how do you gain competitive advantage?

## 3. Customer & stakeholders

- Which are your main stakeholders? Which kind of relationship have you built with them? (E.g. formal, informal, advice, legal...)
- Do you use any KPI (key performance indicators) to monitor your costumers and stakeholders' satisfaction? If yes, which ones?
- How do you increase the number of your visitors?
- In terms of measuring success and not just in terms of counting visitors, what other indicators or metrics do you use to measure how well you are performing?
- How do you improve the experience of your visitors? (E.g. inside the building, online, with new interaction and dialogue, with good information services...)
- Given the current situation, what is your strategy to keep the attention and interest of your audience? Are you interesting in attracting new audience, through the online content? If yes, how will you maintain their presence offline?
  
- Is there something else that you wish to add?

Thank you for having taking part in this interview and to have made the time to speak with me.

Giulia Rozzi

## Appendix B: Interview request e-mail

Dear Mrs. X,

I am Giulia Rozzi, a student enrolled in the Master program of “Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship” at Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

I am currently writing a thesis on successful female leadership strategies inside museums, with two levels of analysis: director, and head of department. Previous research shows that gender inequality is still an issue in the arts and cultural field. Therefore, my thesis aims to identify the strategies that characterize successful female leadership styles inside museums, through a qualitative analysis with structured interviews.

As the current Director/Head of Departments of the Museum X, I would be most grateful if you would grant me maximum one hour of your time for a Skype interview sometime in the next two weeks. I would like to learn about your leadership style and business approach, particularly during difficult situation such as the current pandemic.

In the attached file, you will find the list of questions that will be possibly asked during the interview. The interview guide includes a consent form, regarding the possibility to record the interview and to use the obtained and analysed data.

After the completion of my study, I will be happy to send you a copy of the thesis, where you will see the analysis of the results obtained.

I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Sincerely,

Giulia Rozzi.



## Appendix C: Overview of annual reports

<b>Museum</b>	<b>Document name</b>	<b>Release date</b>	<b>Source-URL</b>
Lakenhal Museum	<i>Lakenhal Annual Report</i>	2018	<a href="https://storage.googleapis.com/production-attachments/d02abc937f02131259d31564e1ce5433b8fd0e75.pdf?1586950680">https://storage.googleapis.com/production-attachments/d02abc937f02131259d31564e1ce5433b8fd0e75.pdf?1586950680</a>
Volkenkunde Museum	<i>Foundation NMVW</i>	2018	<a href="https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/sites/default/files/2020-02/Jaarverantwoording%202018.pdf">https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/sites/default/files/2020-02/Jaarverantwoording%202018.pdf</a>
Naturalis Biodiversity Center	<i>Naturalis Financial Report</i>	2019	<a href="https://www.naturalis.nl/system/files/inline/Verantwoording%202019%20v2.pdf">https://www.naturalis.nl/system/files/inline/Verantwoording%202019%20v2.pdf</a>
Het Nieuwe Instituut	<i>Het Nieuwe Instituut Annual Report</i>	2019	<a href="https://hetnieuweinstituut.nl/sites/default/files/hetnieuweinstituut_jaarverslag2019_2.pdf">https://hetnieuweinstituut.nl/sites/default/files/hetnieuweinstituut_jaarverslag2019_2.pdf</a>
Boijmans Van Beuningen	<i>Annual Report</i>	2019	<a href="https://storage.boijmans.nl/uploads/2020/05/05/YhwBRdPI0W6Cy7HGWgbzhd0PxrJu2LvXOH4DWq4Y.pdf">https://storage.boijmans.nl/uploads/2020/05/05/YhwBRdPI0W6Cy7HGWgbzhd0PxrJu2LvXOH4DWq4Y.pdf</a>

## Appendix D: Thematic Coding

	Learning & Growth	Internal Business Processes	Costumers & Stakeholders
<b>1) Marielle Pals</b> <i>Head of Public Programmes at Volkenkunde Museum</i> <u>Leiden</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared mission, core values and goals</li> <li>- Openness, inclusion</li> <li>- Evaluation (Deming cycle)</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: quick changes, and clear decisions by leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Horizontal structure</li> <li>- Communication and debate</li> <li>- Sense of belonging</li> <li>- Job satisfaction and feedback</li> <li>- Independent team</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i> new strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Know your public</li> <li>- Build a sense of community</li> <li>- Foster curiosity, engagement and inclusion by participation strategies</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: weekly online activities / home schooling, but real strategy on the re-opening</li> </ul>
<b>2) Meta Knol</b> <i>Director of Lakenhal Museum</i> <u>Leiden</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Content, people and value driven, not quantity</li> <li>- Share values, cooperation</li> <li>- Sustainable change</li> <li>- Leadership of control and freedom</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: prepared team, add values at the crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identity is key</li> <li>- Emphatic internal culture</li> <li>- Flexibility, responsibilities</li> <li>- Long term planning</li> <li>- Collection, exhibitions and public programs</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: health first, intensifying interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable exhibitions to attract loyal community</li> <li>- People from Leiden,</li> <li>- More students, diversity</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: young artists, Corona collection, home-schooling</li> </ul>
<b>3) Caroline Breunese</b> <i>Head of Exhibitions at Naturalis</i> <u>Leiden</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning process as a team</li> <li>- Innovation and creativity</li> <li>- Be open, listen, ask why</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: extra communication, rethinking of exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team of independent experts</li> <li>- Learn and discuss</li> <li>- Multi-disciplinary work</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: find new solutions and strategies, now less independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Know your audience</li> <li>- Be at the heart of the community</li> <li>- Attract not-museums people</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: different digital tools</li> </ul>
<b>4) Astrid Jacob</b> <i>Head of Audience at Lakenhal Museum</i> <u>Leiden</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See the goals in a holistic way, be open</li> <li>- People driven: different skills, but be critical and innovative</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: act quickly and the think slowly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn from the team</li> <li>- Combine art branding, design</li> <li>- Change analytic approach</li> <li>- Different leadership style</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19 crisis</i>: greater communication, budget restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Know your audience, mainly local community</li> <li>- Attract more students and cultural diversity</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: few online contents, strategies for the future, sustain artists</li> </ul>

<p><b>5) Cindy Zalm</b></p> <p><i>Head of Collection Management Volkenkunde Museum</i></p> <p><u>Leiden</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible collection</li> <li>- Collaboration</li> <li>- Be open, listen and ask</li> <li>- Measure trends</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: long-term strategy, budget cuts, learn new competences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passionate team</li> <li>- Twofold strategy: process and new techniques</li> <li>- Efficiency and logistic</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: independent team; more directive leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of the government</li> <li>- Know your audience and create a community</li> <li>- Different contents for general interests + research</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: contents online, find opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>6) Marina Otero</b></p> <p><i>Head of Research at Het Nieuwe Instituut</i></p> <p><u>Rotterdam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribute vision</li> <li>- Innovation and conflicts</li> <li>- Rethinking, questioning</li> <li>- Lead with examples and learn new practices</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: empathy, well-being, look further</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collective learning process</li> <li>- Be open and critic</li> <li>- Collaborate + evaluate</li> <li>- Cultivate individual interests</li> <li>- Important for the society</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: be aware, long-term strategy, good platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on passionate, interested people = success</li> <li>- Weird people that don't fit</li> <li>- Less collaborations but quality profound time</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: critical contents; people comfortable</li> </ul>
<p><b>7) Respondent</b></p> <p><i>Head of Department Volkenkunde Museum</i></p> <p><u>Leiden</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change the culture</li> <li>- Professionalism, quality and experimentation</li> <li>- Relevance of technology</li> <li>- Risk and empathy</li> <li>- Adapt and learn</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: find a purpose for people, shared goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of expertise, point talent</li> <li>- Moving disciplines forward</li> <li>- Collaborate in different ways</li> <li>- Evaluate process + products</li> <li>- Atomic structure: important to be transparent and clear</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: inform people, , long-term strategies of MT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitors + national and international stakeholders</li> <li>- Public program and interactivity</li> <li>- Reputational, visitors, fundraising success index</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: plan for different scenario</li> </ul>
<p><b>8) Josien Paulides</b></p> <p><i>Business Director at Het Nieuwe Instituut</i></p> <p><u>Rotterdam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stimulate design, architecture, digital culture</li> <li>- Value research to innovate</li> <li>- Always collaborate</li> <li>- Constant evaluation</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: be clear, give a structure to people, intensifying contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of HR to be a people organization</li> <li>- Improve purchasing process</li> <li>- Bridge between artistic (what) and business (how)</li> <li>- Cross-disciplinary approach</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: people who cannot work, different strategies with designers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of culture, designers, Museum card</li> <li>- Challenge the public and learn from them (niche)</li> <li>- Rich public programs</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: make visitors feel welcome and safe, digital programs, international perspective</li> </ul>

<p><b>9)</b> <b>Respondent</b>  <i>Head of Department at Boijmans Museum</i>  <u>Rotterdam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trust and be approachable</li> <li>- Innovation and rethinking: knowledge center + lasting impact for the Netherlands</li> <li>- Helicopter view</li> <li>- Team evaluation to learn</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: care for people, give values, solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team responsibility and value</li> <li>- Ask, collaborate and discuss</li> <li>- Lack of money: threat, but also make you focus</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: intensifying contact, both individual and in team, find solutions for who can't work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different stakeholders, depending of the project (lawyer, companies...)</li> <li>- Always listen to the point of view of the stakeholders</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: online contents, TMS system to work online</li> </ul>
<p><b>10) Sandra Kisters</b>  <i>Head of Conservation and Research at Boijmans Museum</i>  <u>Rotterdam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Value of innovations</li> <li>- Be connected</li> <li>- Find money is a challenge</li> <li>- Achievement indicators for evaluation of success</li> <li>- Facilitate research</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: protocols, online contents, but difficult to evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration and discuss with board and MT</li> <li>- Independent expert team</li> <li>- Leader relate between team and museums' policy/board</li> <li>- Improve logistic and the brand</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: already closed, think future scenarios, jobs that didn't have time before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General public, but also academic world (research)</li> <li>- Be inclusive and listen to</li> <li>- Online contents (academic) and devices in exhibitions</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: use specific media for different stakeholders, magazine, precautions measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>11) Christel van Hees</b>  <i>Head of Conservation and restoration at Boijmans Museum</i>  <u>Rotterdam</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get more professional and give space to people to learn and growth</li> <li>- Always questioning, and be aware of problems</li> <li>- Technology for research</li> <li>- Cooperation</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: gives people work to do, be more present than normally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lots of discussion and freedom + experts</li> <li>- Hierarchy with directors, but cooperation with department</li> <li>- Improve planning</li> <li>- Have the pleasure in work</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: be aware, stay busy, but take your time. Be clear about rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with conservators, restorers and specialists to share information</li> <li>- Be clear about what you're asking and offering</li> <li>- Formal and informal relationships</li> <li>- <i>Covid-19</i>: keep contacts, be kind and clear</li> </ul>