

University of Wales Trinity St. David

The Structure and Culture of Ysgol Crug Glas

Heather Jackson

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This essay will look at the organisational structure and culture of Ysgol Crug Glas a school for children with disabilities in the Swansea area. First, it will outline what culture within an organisation, then using both Schein's model and Johnson, Scholes and Whittington's model will look at the effects and importance culture has on an organisation. Continuing onto the structure, both the type of structure and the type of hierarchical system Ysgol Crug Glas support will be looked at, why they are used, if and how these benefits the school. It will also be discussed how structure and culture can impact upon each other.

A definition of culture. "The Ideas, Customs, and social behaviours of a particular people or society." (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017) However, this definition of culture is not directly applicable to an organisation. Mullins (2010, pg.829) definition of organisational culture is "The collection of traditional values, policies, beliefs, and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do and think in our organisation." Mullins further explains a metaphor for organisational culture, organisations are made up of a system of beliefs, values, rituals, and characteristic of their own set of ideology. Mullins also says that variation amongst organisation can be accounted for by paying attention to particular areas of social development. Cooke and Rosseau (1988) note that many unresolved issues surrounding culture and its effect on an organisation have risen since the concept emerged. They go on to explain that while culture has been widely accepted as a key role in an organisations productivity, there are still debates surrounding the issue.

Schein's (2010) model says that there are three levels of culture within an organisation, artefacts, beliefs and values, and underlying beliefs. This structure will be used to establish the culture within Ysgol Crug Glas.

In terms of Artefacts at Ysgol Crug Glas, the first noticeable artefact when you walk into the school is a zebra that the children at the school made. This Zebra allows the belief that the school is a fun inclusive and warm organisation to be a part of. The corridors at Ysgol Crug Glas are filled with art work from the students and photographs of the students participating in several events, this can also create the impression of inclusion, freedom, and engagement in learning these children wouldn't have in mainstream education.

However, further through the school, it becomes increasingly noticeable the isolation some of these children live in. The first noticeable artefacts that ilude this isolation are the wheelchairs and mobility aids that line the corridors. This feeling of isolation increases as you leave the school through the controlled exit system. The school has in order to stop children from leaving without supervision and or permission.

Although a somewhat detached environment is present in the school, the enthusiasm for engaging the students in learning is clearly shown through the artwork, photographs, and teachers at the school makes Ysgol Crug Glas a fun engaging environment. This is important as, according to Carpenter et al. (2015), a key factor for successful learning is strong engagement skills, that children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities need to be taught, and engaged with in both a way they are capable of and in a way that meets their needs.

The message of inclusion is carried through into Ysgol Crug Glas's values and beliefs (Ysgol Crug Glas, 2017). The school wants each student to know that they are valued, their challenges, as well as their

potential, will be recognised, to allow their own personal achievement. The school values the children on an individual level, the way and their ability to communicate will be respected and responded to. The importance of treating children as individuals is highlighted by psychologist Dr. Mavis Hines (cited in McKay, 1998, para. 3) who states "Since all children are different, we have to treat them differently." Ysgol Crug Glas, (2017) Also value the importance of treating children with dignity and acknowledging not only their age but also their needs, this allows for the school to recognise the student's individual achievements and celebrate those achievements.

The main underlying assumption at Ysgol Crug Glas would be the importance of inclusion in education. The school's values as above make it very clear that inclusion and the celebration of individuality is very important to the faculty at Ysgol Crug Glas. However, they do not directly state the importance of an academic education. The assumption is made that the school considers the education of their students to be crucial. They try to provide this through inclusive methods of teaching such as going to the shop and counting change to develop the students' numerical skills. The assumption of the importance of inclusion and education is made through the enthusiasm the teachers have during their classes and the patience they demonstrate when explaining new topics to the students.

The effect culture has on an organisation is highlighted by Mullins (2010): most aspects of an organisation are impacted by culture, who makes decisions, and how those decisions are made. Employees attitude towards work, and work ethic can be impacted by the culture within an organisation. This effects job satisfaction, how rewards are distributed and inevitably organisational success. Mullins (2010) continues to say that the value of culture within an organisation is undermined by its anthropological background and lack of clarity. The culture of an organisation can influence whether the organisation runs under a mechanistic or organic structure, there is significant overlap between structure and culture within an organisation. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (cited in Mullins, 2010) demonstrate a cultural web which analyses different aspects of organisational culture. This cultural web pays particular attention to the symbols, rituals and routines, and stories of an organisation, similar to Schein's model. However, Johnson, Scholes and Whittington's model continues to say that power cultures, control systems, and organisational structure are part of and are impacted on by the culture of an organisation.

Johnsons, Scholes and Whittington's model (cited in Mullins, 2010) refers to rituals and routines playing a crucial role in the culture of an organisation, Ysgol Crug Glas have multiple rituals and routines they follow daily. This can be seen in the form of the students having toast every Friday, or performing morning exercises. These routines may seem insignificant, but they play a significant role in the happiness and engagement of the children and then, in turn, the happiness and the engagement of the staff. Ysgol Crug Glas also take a register every morning and have breaks such as lunch at the same time every day, the school functions on large quantities of rituals and routines that keep it running smoothly. The power cultures, control systems and organisational structure portion of their model reinforces that organisational structure can influence the culture of an organisation, as those three factors are major contributors to the structure of an organisation.

Mullins's (2010, pg. 829) definition of organisational structure is "structure is the pattern of relationships among positions in the organisation and among members of the organisation. It defines tasks and responsibilities, work roles and relationships and channels of communications." Child (cited in Mullins, 2010) emphasises that good organisational structure makes effective management possible, the structure of an organisation can affect job satisfaction and morale of employees and that value is transported back into society by the form of the structure an organisation uses, this reflects on how the organisation treats people. The Essence of structure is the division of work between members of an organisation, and the allocation of jobs.

Most organisations follow either a 'flat' hierarchical structure or a 'tall' hierarchical structure. Mullins's (2010, pg.825) definition of a flat hierarchical structure is "an organisation that has broad spans of control and few levels of control". Meaning that there is one person responsible for a high volume of other people. This structure is cost effective and therefore most charities and social enterprises support this hierarchical structure. Even though Ysgol Crug Glas is a registered charity due to its bureaucratic nature it operates under a tall hierarchical structure. Mullins's (2010, pg.833) definition of a tall hierarchical structure states that "An organisation that has narrow spans of control and a relatively large number of levels of authority". Meaning that one person oversees fewer people, and that decision making is split over more levels.

Mullins (2010) states that bureaucracy has grown due to the size and complexity increase of organisations. He goes on to note that bureaucracy is formed on a hierarchical structure that is clear and formal. According to van der Voet (2014), the higher level of bureaucracy an organisation has, the higher level of planning that needs to go into change within that organisation. Argyris (cited in Woodman 2017) claims that bureaucratic organisations can be restrictive of self-fulfilment- and individual growth. This could be seen to then hinder the organisational success of Ysgol Crug Glas and the school's overall development.

The bureaucratic nature of Ysgol Crug Glas also forces the school to employ a mechanistic structure, a mechanistic structure is a rigid structure that cannot deal adequately with change. Mullins (2010, pg. 828) definition of a mechanistic system is "A rigid system of management practice and structure which is characterised by clear hierarchical structure, specialisation of tasks, defined duties and responsibilities, and knowledge centred at the top of the hierarchy."

The hierarchical structure of Ysgol Crug Glas (see appendix A) starts with the local government as the highest point in the school's hierarchical system. This means they have the highest level of authority. However, due to the bureaucratic nature of public education, the local government still have procedures in place to help make decisions, not all the control lies with them. Ysgol crug glas (2017) states the school has a board of governors that oversee decision making within the school. Responsibility is then distributed down through the hierarchical structure to the school's head teacher, then deputy head and then to the senior leadership teacher. The next level in their structure consists of ten teachers who are each responsible for one class, and oversee the seven teaching assistants. The school also has a range of external professionals, such as speech and language, and physio therapists, that work with the students at Ysgol Crug Glas. These professionals will be employed by the local government and will work with the head teacher in assisting the development of the children at the school. Each level in the school's hierarchy has clear responsibilities this is typical of a mechanistic structure.

Mihm et al. (2010) state no individual is capable of understanding all aspects of a decision, and that this makes it very difficult particularly in large organisations for one person to make all the decisions, such as in a flat structure. High Quality solutions can only be found for a problem or task once decisions have been delegated and tasks assigned, making good communication essential, continues Mihm et al. (2010). This is reinforced by Otto and Bolle, (2013) who say the only way to effectively deal with problems is through delegation. A strong hierarchical structure could be considered imperative to any organisation, particularly large organisations in the public sector such as public education, Ysgol Crug Glas's strong, clear Hierarchical structure means efficient decision making can be optimised.

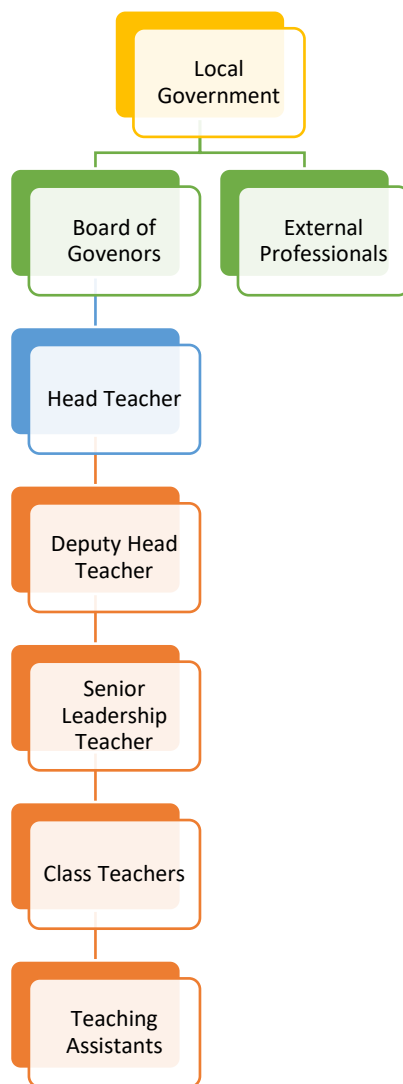
Ysgol Crug Glas's culture as an organisation is inclusive, fun and engaging despite the isolated nature of the school. Schenes model creates a clear measurable method of explaining this. Although the school still operates under a mechanistic structure due to its bureaucratic nature, following rules,

regulations and routines, the cultural influence on the organisational structure allows these routines to be used and enforced in a fun and inclusive way. This can be seen to set Ysgol Crug Glas, and arguably public education apart from most of the public sector, and its general structure while maintaining most of its core elements.

This essay has explored how the structure and culture of Ysgol Crug Glas as an organisation are interconnected. Johnson, Scholes and Whittington's model also highlights the dependence structure and culture have on each other. This is important to understand in order for allowances to be made for the nature of the school, outside of the structure of public educations. Due to the limited scope of this essay, it was difficult to see the full depth of both the school's structure and culture. Further research could look at whether the school adapting a more organic structure would allow the culture to be less restricted.

Appendices

Appendix A



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