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INTRODUCING THE MODERN WORKPLACE –
RSPCA Organisation Structure and Culture

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ABSTRACT

The organisational world is flooded with talks about structure, culture and corporate performance. The relationship between organisational form and company performance has been subjected to extensive empirical testing from the late 1970s onwards. The future of achieving organisational goals is connecting the components of organisational structure with a thriving corporate culture, the leadership influence and performance management strategies. This paper aims to describe the structure and culture of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and how these factors contribute to overall organisational performance.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The ORGANISATION, in one form or another, has always been an integral part of human civilisation. The origins of modern organisations can be traced back thousands of years, and the constant and continuous evolution process has created the vast spectrum of today organisations.

Organisations are complex social systems that can be defined and studied in various ways. Morgan provides an essential approach in this broad perspective on the nature of organisations. Using metaphors, Morgan identifies eight different ways of viewing organisations – as "machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation and instruments of domination." (Mullins, Laurie J, and Christy, Gill, 2013, p. 8).

Involving both public and private sector, including charity and voluntary activities, organisations are an integral component of the society. Organisations come in all forms, shapes and sizes. Schneider (2003) notes in *Managing Across Cultures*, that cultural differences in countries can reflect different conceptions of what is an organisation.

DISCUSSION

The STRUCTURE is clearly crucial for any organisation, whatever its nature and type, size, aims and objectives, or purpose. According to Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990), a structure can be defined as the established patterns of relationships among the positions in the organisation and its members, making possible the application of the process of management: planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling. The structure distinguish the parts of an organisation and based on its objectives define tasks and responsibilities, roles and relationships between them and channels of communication.

The objectives of structure can be summarised as to provide for:

- the economical and efficient performance of the organisation and the level of resource utilisation
- monitoring the activities of the organisation
- accountability for areas of work undertaken by groups or individual within the organisation activities
- coordination of different segments and sectors of the organisation
- flexibility to respond to actual and future demands and developments; need to adapt to constant environmental changes
- the social satisfaction of members involved in the organisation

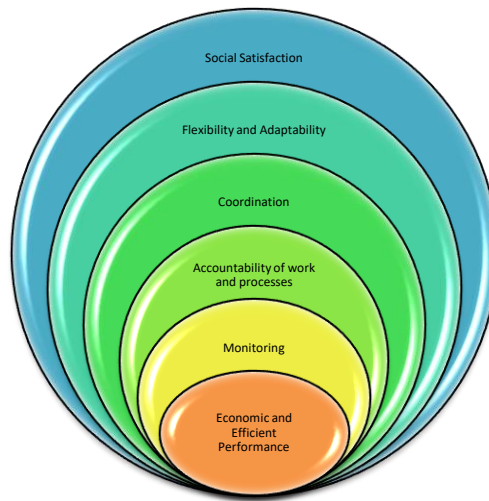


Figure 2 Objectives of structure adapted from Knight, K (1977)

These objectives provide criteria for structural effectiveness. A good structure design is essential for achieving organisation performance, but it is not enough. According to Drucker, it is the right design of the structure that is the most significant in determining organisational performance.

Good organisation structure does not by itself produce good performance. But a poor organisation structure makes good performance impossible, no matter how good the individual managers may be. To improve organisation structure...will therefore always improve performance. (Drucker, 1989, p. 223)

However, in smaller organisations, there are likely to have fewer problems related to structure. With increasing size, there is a greater need for a carefully designed and purposeful form of organisation. It is essential to have a "formal organisational structure" (Mullins, Laurie J, and Christy, Gill, 2013, p. 509). The purpose of the organisational structure is the division of work among members of the organisation and the coordination of their activities in order to achieve company goals and objectives.

Every organisation, from a sole trader to the largest multinational company, formal or informal organisation, is organised in a particular way. Fatehi (1996) divided the organisational structure among three basic models based on:

FUNCTIONS – PRODUCTS – GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

Some organisation might find using only one of the structure models to be inadequate for their purpose. Therefore, these organisation adopted to use a MIXED or MATRIX structure.

According to Morgan (2015), there are five types of organisational structures:

HIERARCHY – FLATTER – FLAT – FLATARCHIES - HOLOCRATIC

The FORMAL organisation can be differentiated from the INFORMAL organisation. An organisation chart and a clear span of control with a chain of command may give a representation of the formal structure (see figure 1). Schein (1988) defined a formal organisation as:

the planned coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common, explicit purpose or goal, through division of labour and junction, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility. (Schein, 1988, p. 15)

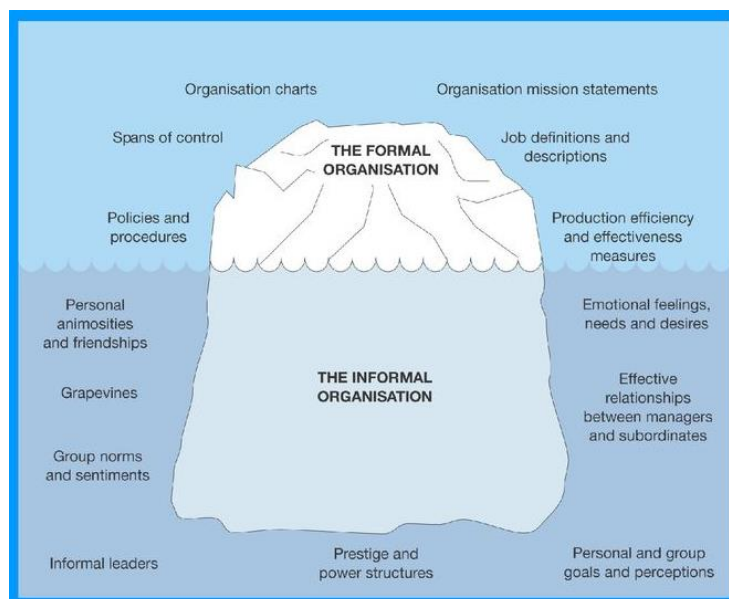


Figure 1 Formal and Informal organisations (Mullins, Laurie J, and Christy, Gill, 2013, p. 96)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) it is the oldest and largest animal welfare charity in the United Kingdom. The organisation was founded in London in 1824. By that time, it was the world's first animal welfare charity. It was named SPCA - Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Royal patronage followed in 1837, and Queen Victoria permitted to add the royal R in 1840, making the RSPCA organisation as it is known worldwide today. The RSPCA was incorporated by an Act of Parliament (the RSPCA Act) in 1932, is a Non-Governmental Organization and is a registered charity in England and Wales having Charity number 219099. Its charitable objects are to promote kindness and to prevent or suppress cruelty to animals and to do all such lawful acts as the society may consider being conducive or incidental to the attainment of those objects. (RSPCA, 2018)

It is a large organisation having 1795 employees and additional 2644 volunteers. According to RSPCA 2018 annual review report, volunteers are a critical part of the RSPCA family, and more than 60 per cent of our work supporting animals is carried out locally by volunteers.

According to the RSPCA 2017-2021 Strategy report, it was outlined the need of consulting members on a range of governance reforms with the creation of a modern, more transparent and efficient organisation. As a result, the RSPCA made significant changes to its national governance, reducing the size of its council. Adoptions of these strategic measures will exercise an impact on how the organisation will be structured in the future.

From the geographic and territorial perspective, society's rules and branch rules regulate the relationship between the organisation and the 153 separately registered RSPCA branches. Areas of operation of the organisation are through England and Wales (see figure 3).

Areas of operation

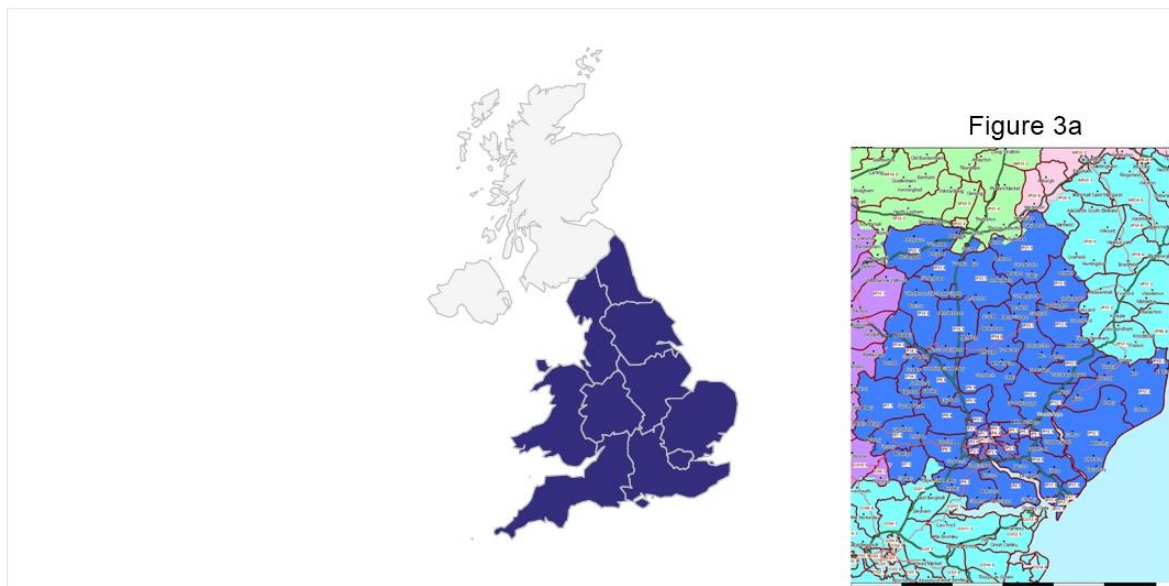


Figure 3 RSPCA areas of operation (Charity Commission, 2018)

Insert / Figure 3a – areas of operation for Suffolk East& Ipswich Branch

The typical branch structure uses a hierarchy diagram (see figure 4).

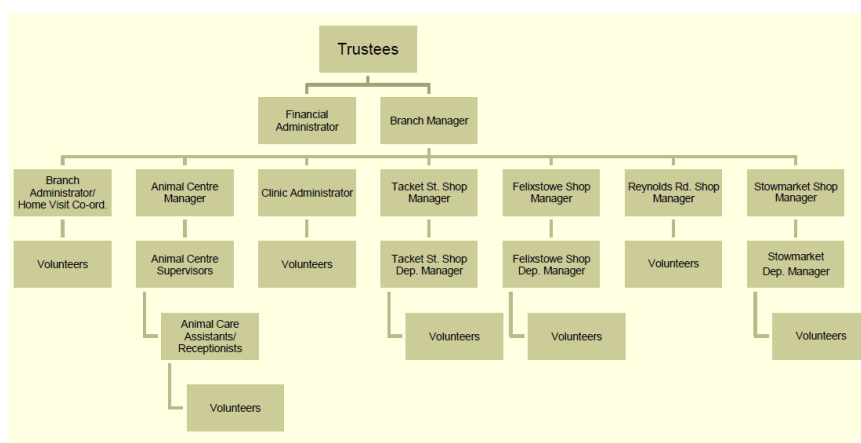


Figure 4 RSPCA Suffolk and Ipswich Branch structure

Many authors have emphasised the importance of structure following the organisation's strategy, and not only in supporting. Some other scholars suggest that the nature of this relationship, and whether structure follows strategy or strategy follows structure, is not clear.

A major debate has been taking place over the last 30 years regarding the relationship between the strategy and the structure of the organisation. In the past, it was considered that the strategy was decided first and the organisation structure then followed... Recent research has questioned this approach and taken the view that strategy and structure are interrelated... Although it may not be possible to define which comes first, there is a need to ensure that strategy and structure are consistent with each other. (Lynch, 2012, p. 459,462)

CULTURE is a powerful way to hold a company together (Goffee and Jones, 1996) during the constant waves of change. In the culture remains to bolster the company's identity as one organisation. Without culture, the organisation lacks values, direction and purpose. According to Buffet and Cunningham (2002), ...culture, more than rule books, determines how an organisation behaves. For example, one major challenge facing managers in the last decades arise from globalisation. There are clear implications for organisational behaviour in accommodating international dimensions of management and cultural differences.

The importance of people in business understanding cultural differences, as an individual and as a group, as illustrated by IBM report people's behaviour in large organisations and how they collaborated. This study was conducted by Geert Hofstede and was the ground-work of his theory on cultural dimension. Initially, Hofstede identified four dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity. Later on, two new dimensions were added: long-term/short-term orientation and self-restraint. Another significant contributor to the cross-cultural dimension of an organisation is Fons Trompenaars. His later work co-authored with Charles Hampden Turner concluded in a cultural communication framework with seven areas in which cultural differences may affect the aspect of the organisation (see figure 5).

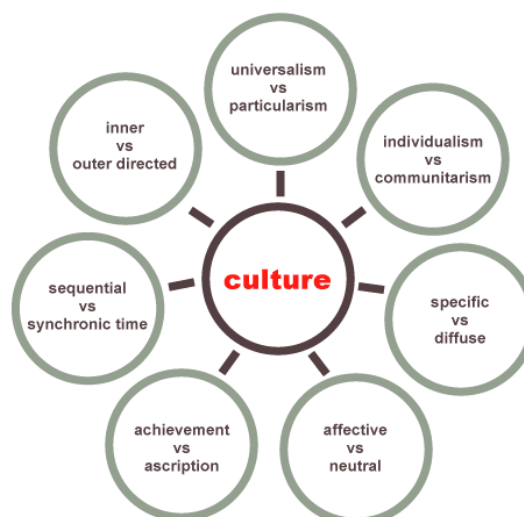


Figure 5 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner Cultural Dimensions

The author of this study didn't find much evidence of corporate culture inside RSPCA. However, according to Boden and Hawkins (2016), the organisation adopted a "culture of care", or simply putted, "this is how thing are done around here" (Mullins, Laurie J, and Christy, Gill, 2013, p. 696). As a registered volunteer with RSPCA Essex Havering & Harold Hill Branch, my personal opinion is that there is a strong connection between the managerial activities, such as mission, objectives, strategies and plans, and cultural dimension represented through values and principles. And it is a lot of fun working within the branch.

The culture and structure of an organisation develop over time. Like any other organisation nowadays, RSPCA faces increasing global competitiveness and complex demands. According to Chatman and Cha (2002), there are three main criteria needed to develop a suitable organisation culture:

-  it must be strategically relevant
-  it needs to be strong in order that people care about what is important
-  must have an intrinsic ability to adapt to changing circumstances

CONCLUSION

The main focus of this study was the relationship between organisational structure and corporate culture, and how these factors contribute to the organisation effectiveness. On the pressure of constant changes, the entity developed an organisational structure and corporate culture that is linked to the overall performance. The difference might happen at the organisation level or within a department. High performance within an organisation leads to the birth of a strong culture. Culture proves to be more than a product of an organisation, but also a critical element leading and contributing the organisational success.

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