



Conference Paper

An Analysis of the Management Practice Using Organizational Metaphor Theory

Linus Kali Palindangan¹, Maria Francisca Lies Ambarwati^{2*}, Nawan Katarina Hatiningsih³

¹Communication Science, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komunikasi dan Sekretari Tarakanita, Jakarta, Indonesia

ORCID

Maria Francisca Lies Ambarwati: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5264-8915

Abstract.

Analysis of the organization becomes necessary when the organization shows certain phenomena such as performance decreasing or increasing sharply, organizations structural changes, organizational climate is not conducive, the number of employee changes, and so on. This study explores the implementation of Morgan's Organizational Metaphor Theory in the management practice within a private higher education institution in Jakarta. This study helps to interpret the advancements and barriers in the current management practice. This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Some analyses were made based on the eight metaphors about organizations according to Morgan, namely the metaphor of the organization 1) as a machine, 2) as an organism, 3) as the brain, 4) as culture, 5) as a political system, 6) as a physical prison, 7) as a dynamic and transforming reality, and 8) as an instrument of domination. The results show that the institutions should strive to make some important changes in their management practice, especially by applying the recent management practices, including treating lecturers and staff as partners. This study implies that the implementation of modern management must be accompanied by the leadership.

Keywords: organizational metaphor theory, modern management, leadership commitment

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Corresponding Author: Maria
Francisca Lies Ambarwati; email:

maria.ambarwati@gmail.com

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Maria Francisca Lies

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1. Background

In an organization, leadership is something that must be carried out optimally, which has a very large impact on the survival of the organization. Some leadership practices have failed but many have succeeded. Success and failure are not solely due to the wrong leadership style or not in accordance with the organization being led. There are many factors in the organizational environment that affect both internal and external factors. Internal factors such as company culture, type of company, company size, leader character, and others. External factors such as economic, political, legal, geographical, demographic and socio-cultural conditions of the community can also be a determining

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²Secretary, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komunikasi dan Sekretari Tarakanita, Jakarta, Indonesia

³Psychology, Persada Indonesia University, YAI, Jakarta, Indonesia



factor for the success of implementing leadership in an organization [1,2]. From those points what is certain is the importance of leadership commitment in leading the organization [3–5]. In order to understand the causes of failure and success, it is necessary to analyze so that it can be a lesson in the future.

Analysis is a term that is found in various literatures, with various meanings, for various purposes, in various fields of science. Based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary, analysis is defined as an investigation of an event as an effort to find out the actual situation, especially related to the cause or situation and condition of an event or case [6]. According to Cresswell [7], Kamasak et al. [8] and Wilhelmy and Kohler [9] analysis is defined as an activity carried out inductively to look for certain patterns related to systematic testing of something by filtering and retesting, to get the essence of the question. In this paper, analysis is defined as an attempt to diagnose and evaluate something in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding.

Analysis in the organizational context becomes important and urgent when an organization concretely shows certain phenomena. According to Le and Le [10] phenomena in organizations can be in the form of decreased performance, increased performance, changed organizational structure, changed organizational management, unconducive organizational climate, drastically changed the number of employees or changes in the organization's external environment, occur suddenly and so on. Such a phenomenon is a sign that the organization needs to be studied as a consequence of efforts to develop or maintain the sustainability of the organization which requires an objective and comprehensive picture. This study aims to analyze the organization of High School X by using Morgan's eight metaphors. The analysis begins by identifying the symptoms that exist in the organization of High School X. The next step is to describe the theory that will be used as an analytical knife for the organization. In this case, the analytical knife used is the eight organizational metaphors from Morgan [11]. The novelty in this study relies on the unit analysis chosen to be analyzed. In most studies, Morgan's eight metaphors are used in companies and government institutions. In this study, it is used for a private higher education institutions that has got a certain belief and values. This study implies that the implementation of modern management must be accompanied by the leadership.



2. Literature Review

Tohidian and Rahimian [12] stated that metaphor is often considered as a tool to beautify discourse, and the use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a perspective that includes how individuals understand the working world.

According to Morgan [11] metaphors are used when individuals attempt to understand one element in terms of another. An interesting aspect of metaphor lies in the fact that it always offers insight from one point of view. The individual's ability to gain a comprehensive understanding of reality depends on how he or she is able to perceive each of the different aspects being together in a complementary or even contradictory state. Such a perspective is relevant in understanding the organization because organization is a complex and paradoxical reality, it is possible to look at it from many different angles [11,13].

In his book Gareth Morgan [11] explained about Eight Metaphors about organizations which are summaries as follows:

2.1. Organization as a machine

This means that organizations which in each part tend to reflect certain clear functions and roles. This type of organization has a high formalization with a good technological environment and a stable market.

2.2. Organization as an organism

That is to view the organization as an open system. There is an interrelationship between the organization and its environment. This interconnectedness can be seen in place where the organization operates, competitors, technological challenges, human resources, laws and regulations, demands for changes in balance with the environment.

2.3. Organization as brain

That is a concept that views the organization as a complex system that searches, collects, stores, processes, transforms and utilizes information in decision making and organizational design efforts.



2.4. Organization as culture

Morgan views the organization as a pattern of group formation that reflects a social system involving knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and daily life procedures. This fact is seen, for example, in the behaviour of members of an organization wearing uniforms, spending a lot of time going and doing a certain job in a place far from where they live on a regular basis five days a week, struggling to live according to a certain value that is believed.

2.5. Organization as a political system

This is to view the organization as a group with members divided into leaders/managers and workers. This is due to the existence of authority/authority, power and the relationship between the ruler and the party being controlled. In a country with the most democratic society, for example, a person may say that he is free to have an opinion, is free to make decisions, must be treated equally with others.

2.6. Organization as a physical prison

Morgan views the organization as a construction of social reality that has existence and power for itself that allows it to regulate and control even those who make it. The organization's members are caught up in organizational processes of which they are not even aware. They think that this is the real reality or even consider it to be the best reality. The hallmark of this type of organization is its tendency to be closed to the possibility of being aware of the reality outside the organization. This reality can be even more complicated if members of the organization trust their organization's vision and mission too much, thus encouraging them to act in accordance with the organization's vision and mission without thinking about the possibility of different perspectives and actions.

2.7. Organization as a dynamic and transforming reality

Morgan views the organization as being in a state of continuous change. Organizations are in endless uncertainty. This condition is created as a consequence of both positive and negative feedback from the cyclical process of the influence of trends and pressures on the organization in an effort to renew itself.



2.8. Organization as an instrument of domination.

The organization functions as a tool for mastering not only socially (human relations) but also in human relations with all kinds of profitable resources to master. What is unique is that such domination is carried out, legally accepted, and practiced even by those who are dominated. This condition is born from an asymmetrical relationship; those are organizational leaders with subordinates in the organization, humans with their environment and so on.

3. Methods

This study uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. The data in this study were obtained from two sources, namely primary data obtained through: (1) observations made directly on daily activities in the X Higher Education Institution 's environment; (2) interviews with 10 informants who have been determined according to the needs of this research and carried out with the snowball technique on informants consisting of educators and education staff. (3) a review of existing documents related to X Higher Education Institution.

Data were analyzed based on data analysis steps from Creswell [7] The steps in analyzing data according to Creswell:

- Processing data and interpreting data for analysis. This step involves transcribing interviews, scanning materials, understanding field data or sorting and organizing the data into different types depending on the source of information.
- 2. Read the entire data. In this stage, write special notes or general ideas about the data obtained
- 3. Analyze in more detail by coding the data.
- Apply a coding process to describe the settings, people, categories, and themes to be analyzed
- 5. Show how these descriptions and themes will be restated in a narrative or qualitative report
- 6. Interpret or interpret the data.

The collected data is then reduced, then a critical diagnosis and evaluation is carried out on the X Higher Education Institution, and finally draws conclusions and offers suggestions.



Quality standards and data verification are carried out through triangulation. Triangulation is a technique of checking the validity and validity of the data. Triangulation is done by combining various methods used to examine phenomena from different perspectives and perspectives. The triangulation technique used in this study is taken from according to Denzin [14]. The technique was carried out follows:

- 1. Triangulation Method (interview and observation method)
- 2. Triangulation of Data Sources (excavating the truth of information through various methods and sources of data acquisition).

4. Results and Discussion

This section is divided into two folds, those are the Diagnostic Reading and the Critical Evaluation of X Higher Education Institution based on Morgan's eight Metaphors.

Diagnostic reading (Diagnosing X Higher Education Institution based on Morgan's 8 Metaphors)

- 1. The metaphor of the organization as a machine. The metaphor of the organization as a machine is very clear in the administrative process in the X Higher Education Institution, with the characteristic: the same work is done over and over again. Decision making tends to be centralized, so the organization has a high dependence on the leadership. The administrative process related to services to students is quite bureaucratic. There are norms, rules and regulations in the organization. There are Standard Operating Procedures in the organization and have been in effect for a long time, but have not been evaluated and updated, regularly and periodically so that some of them are not in accordance with the real situation of the organization. The creations and innovations of lecturers in carrying out the tri dharma of higher education have a wide enough space. Although the budget for research and community service has had its ups and downs.
- 2. Metaphor of organization as an organism. The X Higher Education Institution as an organic organization faces the demands of internal change and the demands of external changes where the organization has sufficiently followed the regulatory demands from the government at the normative conceptual level but has not been adaptive to changes in the external environment such as technological challenges, human resources, prospective new students, the business environment, future demands. In addition, the organization of Higher Education Institution also does not have enough skilled workforce with clinical ability to assess changes.



- 3. Metaphor of the organization as the brain. Since the last 20 years, many activities have been carried out, both involving all members of the organization and involving several people, to repair and build X Higher Education Institution . for lecturers and employees as well as for students. In addition to these things, there are several things that need to be resolved, such as making the most of all technological capabilities. Coordination and harmonization between members, between units, between organizations and foundations still needs to be improved in order to improve organizational processes including policy making for the development of the X Higher Education Institution in a precise and fast and efficient manner.
- 4. Metaphor of the organization as culture. The vision and mission of the X Higher Education Institution have been evaluated and revised several times, with the aim of the Institution is being able to follow the developments of the higher education world quickly and precisely, unfortunately most of these efforts have only reached the level of the normative concept. There are also values that have been championed by the X Higher Education Institution, since it is still operating and carrying out activities as one of the prominent higher education institutions in Jakarta. These values were initially only in the form of living examples, verbal to written form. These values are now commonly known by continuing to be fought for as a guide for organizations to behave. The leadership of the X Higher Education Institution is sometimes dropped or suddenly transferred.
- 5. Metaphor of organization as a political system. Power, ownership, authority and control take place quite firmly in the organization. Because organizational decision-making tends to be centralized, leadership characteristics therefore influence the overall organizational processes. Conflicts between individuals regarding power, ownership, authority and control seem to linger in the organization, both latent and superficial, even when the conflict has broken out. There are various interests of stakeholders that are not always synergized. There are several organizational processes that are directly determined by parties outside the X Higher Education Institution.
- 6. Metaphor of the organization as a physical prison. The X Higher Education Institution has held several discussions and done a SWOT analysis related to the Institution development. The discussions involved some senior lecturers and staff and invited some experts from other organizations. X Higher Education Institution also conducted comparative studies several times involving leaders of organizations outside and within the country. All these efforts were made to find out



the reality that occurred both within the X Higher Education Institution and what happened outside the organization. However, it seems that both individually and as an organization still think that X Higher Education Institution is number one. As a result, policy making tends to use past data and or is oriented towards the past.

- 7. Organizational metaphor as a dynamic and transforming reality. X Higher Education Institution on the one hand is quite static in terms of maintaining its core values, slow to take steps to develop the organization. On the other hand, it is quite sweet in following the development of government regulations although this is still more of a normative concept curriculum, and teaching support facilities.
- 8. Organizational metaphor as an instrument of domination. In various organizational processes of X High School, metaphors of dominance occur, for example, it can be seen in obedience to superior orders, to rules, to daily habits carried out in X Higher Education Institution is especially with regard to matters of principle. However, this dominance does not occur in all organizational processes. Because it turns out that there are many organizational processes where lecturers and employees still have room to choose.

Critical evaluation of X Higher Education Institution based on Morgan's 8 metaphors.

- 1. The metaphor of the organization as a machine. College X has many normative documents that regulate almost all organizational processes, but not all of these normative documents are operationalized consistently in organizational processes. Whereas according to Tampubolon [15] change will not occur just because there are good ideas, good concepts in documents. However, these normative documents will be useful after being implemented and practiced consistently [15].
- 2. The metaphor of the organization as an organism. The main values of College X are very difficult to change even though internal demands and external demands for change encourage them to change. Tend to be slow in adapting to changes in the external environment such as technological challenges, human resources, prospective new students, business environment, future demands. Even though one of the values it strives for is reading the signs of the times, in reality Higher Education X seems very difficult to read the signs of the times and adapt. Tampubolon [15] emphasizes that an organization's ability to adapt can actually be realized through the organization's adjustment to the changes that are taking place.
- 3. The metaphor of the organization as the brain. One of the things that is quite difficult to implement is in evaluating and criticizing its own main values for the sake of



organizational development. Likewise, the maximum utilization of all technological capabilities is very difficult for PT X in the organizational process. Meanwhile, there is no formal internal organizational system that could monitor and control leaders in evaluating, criticizing, and developing themselves. According to Tampubolon [15], through an organizational diagnosis the members of the organization concerned can understand more about themselves as well as their divisions, about other sections, about the organizational environment and about the interrelationships of processes that take place within the organization [15]. Through the interview process conducted, members of the organization can become more aware of the causal relationships of the problems that exist within their organization and therefore feel better able to overcome these problems.

- 4. Organizational metaphor as the culture. X Higher Education Institution has a strong organizational culture. This actually becomes an obstacle in making changes necessary for the development and continuity of the organization. This opinion is supported by finding of researches conducted by Kenny [16], Walker [17], and Aranki [18] that is organizational culture can actually be an inhibiting factor in organizational life. Failure, mergers and acquisitions, privatization and decreased organizational performance, are not impossible because the organization has a very strong culture. A culture that is too strong can lead to egocentrism as if the organization is the best among competitors. They are less aware that the external environment of the organization is constantly changing [16–18].
- 5. The metaphor of the organization as a political system. Several organizational processes at the institution take place subjectively, so that the relationship between superiors and subordinates does not create a relationship of mutual trust and respect, but instead keeps latent conflicts. Meanwhile, the two-way communication channels to reduce tensions in relations experienced ups and downs following the leadership's policies. According to Tampubolon [15] an organizational diagnosis is important because it is from this process that it is hoped that an action plan will emerge, both for solving organizational problems and for organizational development. In addition, it is believed that the action plan can be executed effectively because the action decision is based on complete and accurate information regarding the internal and external conditions of the organization.
- 6. The metaphor of the organization as a physical prison. X Higher Education Institution has not yet had an adequate system that can be implemented continuously and consistently to increase the awareness of all members of the organization.



Therefore, the members do not have the sufficient knowledge either about the internal reality of the organization or the external reality of the organization.

- 7. The metaphor of the organization as a dynamic and transforming reality. X Higher Education Institution is very strong in maintaining the core values of the organization. The logical consequence is that it is not easy to keep up with changes in organizational development efforts.
- 8. The metaphor of the organization as an instrument of domination. The owner shows a strong dominance controlling certain processes in the organization down to the lowest level.

After conducting an analysis of the X Higher Education Institution with the help of Morgan's eight organizational metaphors, the following conclusions and suggestions are worthy of consideration for the X Higher Education Institution in preparing an organizational development plan.

- 1. The metaphor of the organization as a machine. Organizational processes that take place according to standards and procedures need to be maintained and/or improved while subjective organizational management needs to be reduced.
- 2. The metaphor of an organization as an organism needs greater attention, especially with regard to adaptation to the demands of internal change and the demands of changes in the external environment of the organization, especially regarding technology, human resources, prospective new students, the business environment and the demands of organizational sustainability. In short, the X Higher Education Institution must be able to read the signs of the times and adapt to it if it wants to develop.
- 3. Metaphor of the organization as the brain. X Higher Education Institution needs to raise its courage to evaluate and critique their own core values for the sake of organizational development. For example, by boldly accepting male students, allowing Muslim students to wear hijab, opening other study programs, such as S1 Office Administration, Master Program in Communication Studies, or even open a completely new and future-oriented study program.
- 4. Metaphor of the organization as culture. X Higher Education Institution needs to strive so that organizational values are really easy to operationalize and their implementation is easily measured in all organizational processes. In addition, the organizational culture should be strived to accommodate the demands of



internal changes and the demands of changes in the external environment of the organization.

- 5. Metaphor of organization as a political system. The relationship between superiors and subordinates needs to be built on a relationship of mutual respect and trust. For this reason, the implementation of the X Higher Education Institution's management process should take place professionally based on established procedures and standards. In addition, it is necessary to create a two-way communication channel between leaders and subordinates that is carried out regularly, continuously and consistently.
- 6. Metaphor of the organization as a physical prison. Because it is very strong in terms of organizational metaphor as a physical prison, the X Higher Education Institution needs to have an adequate system that can be carried out regularly and continuously and consistently to increase awareness of all members of the organization about the internal reality of the organization and the external reality of the organization, for example creating a skills development program. lecturers and employees regularly and thoroughly both nationally and internationally. Organizational evaluation program that involves all components of the organization and is carried out regularly and continuously.
- 7. Organizational metaphor as a dynamic and transforming reality. X Higher Education Institution needs to improve and strengthen themselves in the organizational metaphor as something that undergoes continuous change and transformation, so that it is easier to follow changes in both the internal environment and especially the external environment in organizational development efforts. For this purpose, the X Higher Education Institution needs to have a skilled workforce with clinical capabilities to assess changes both internally and externally as a basis for making organizational development plans.
- 8. Organizational metaphor as an instrument of domination. X Higher Education Institution on organizational metaphor as an instrument of dominance needs to be reduced, so as to create organizational well-being. Healthy organizational well-being in turn will have a positive effect on the academic community as well as on job performance and organizational commitment of lecturers and employees.



5. Conclusion

A healthy organization should strive to follow the changes in its environment, but at the same time it is still maintaining its organizational culture. In order to manage the effects of these changes, an appropriate management system followed by good Leadership are strongly needed. This study implies that the implementation of modern management must be accompanied by the leadership. The limitation in this study is in the number of informants. The suggestions for the next studies are to increase the number of informants and broaden the scope of discussions.

6. Authors' Contributions

Linus kali Palindangan: concept (major), analysis.

Maria Francisca Lies Ambarwati: concept (minor), analysis, editing, proofreading.

Nawan Katarina Hatiningsih: editing, proofreading.

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