Morgan's Images of Organizations Analysis

Menidin Nicholas Digha
Doctoral Student, College of Management Technology, Department of Management
Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Abstract:
This research paper focuses on the analysis of the "Morgan's Images of Organizations", Morgan's eight metaphors of the "Images of Organizations were discussed where their limitations, the relevant and assistance of these images to managers understanding of modern organizations, the consequences of these images on stakeholder relations and the most compatible image with a stakeholder view of organizations in an environment of sustainability consciousness were critically analyzed. However, the utility of Morgan's work, its major advantages and pitfalls were discussed, then summary / conclusion drawn.

1. Introduction

In an attempt to theories about organizational studies, judging from the fact that attention were drawn and devoted to the understanding of the assumptions surrounding the investigation of organizational behavior by social and management scientists in recent times, Morgan introduces a new concept to organization's theory. He proposed "Imagination" of thoughts as a way of organizing. He wrote and put forward a book "Images of Organization". In his book, Morgan introduces the idea of the use of metaphor for the understanding and handling of business and solving of organization's problems (Morgan, 2006).The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the "images of organizations" as put forward by Morgan. It is a descriptive analysis of the images of organizations and the eight basic metaphors that were stated in Morgan's book, its implications for management, how these imagesmight help oneunderstanding as a manager andthe consequences of these images on stakeholder relationship with the organization.

2. Images of Organizations

Morgan initiates the idea of the use of metaphors for the understanding and handling of organization's problems. However, the lists of these metaphors are not restricted to specific set of organization's metaphor, the list are not exhaustible and can be used singularly or combined with others to guide one to understanding of organizations and its problems. Basically, "it explores ways of understanding business organizations by imagining and understanding them through multiple theories instead of positioning one". The main purpose of Morganidea is to open new perspectives to organization and management, were idea of the use of metaphor is central to one's imaginative thought (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). TheMorgan's eight metaphors for use in understanding and solving organization's problems are;

- "Machine
- Organisms
- Brains
- Cultures
- Political systems
- Psychic prisons
- Flux and transformation, and
- Instruments of domination".

2.1. The Metaphor of Organization as Machine

The organization as machine metaphor bears it root and foundation from the Taylor's principles of management. This is a situation where organizations are ruined comparatively like machines. The metaphor adopted the Max Weber's organizational bureaucracy concepts, and Fayol's principles of management of "precision, speed, clarity, regularity, reliability; efficiency is achieved through a fixed division of tasks, hierarchy, supervision, detailed rules, and regulations" (Jones & George, 2006; Nwanchuku, 2004). Morgan (1998) noted that "the basic thrust of their thinking is captured in the idea that management is a process of planning, organization, command, coordination, and control" (pp. 24). It is an organization were efficiency is guaranteed, wastages are minimized to the barest minimum, there were proper maintenance culture, work were performed in an orderly manner with a regulated and precise

clockwork, a well-tailored programs with inputs and outputs and standardized production. A well laid down design with measurement and control. I work in the public service and the public service is noted for itsbureaucratic nature, a well established procedures, rules and regulations.

Limitations:

Organizations that apply Machine metaphor's approach create organizational forms that are difficult to adapt to changes. It creates an undemocratic and unquestionable bureaucracy, with readymade responses, a short sighted approach (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; &Visser, 2010).

2.2. The Metaphor of Organization as Organism

This is an idea that relates organizations to living organisms that seek to adapt and survive in a dynamic environment. Organization is a living system, with certain environmental conditions, and a life cycles that evolves in an environment that individual struggles to survive in a situation of the survival of the fittest. Morgan (1998) noted that "organizations, like organisms, are "open" to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive" (pp. 40). The metaphor will assist managers that are ready for their organizations to flow with change to understand that organizations are clusters of interconnectivity and required interrelated human, business, and technical needs. However, it encourages managers to be conversant with the art of corporate survival, and urges them to develop vibrant organic systems that are open to challenges (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). This also works in the public service as every administration comes with new policies and programs. The life span of every administration is stipulated by the constitution; therefore managers of public service will limit their approach to issues in accordance with the prevailing circumstance. They should be prepared to flow well with every administration that comes on board.

Limitations:

The metaphor presumes that organizations are organisms which are not and their environments are far by less concrete. It overstated the degree of functional unity and internal cohesion mostly found in modern organizations (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.3. The Metaphor of Organization as Brain

Organization as brain, the source of information and theoretical ways of understanding cannot be over emphasize, especially in a knowledge-based economy, a situation where information, knowledge, and learning are key resources, that inspire living and the learning brain provides a powerful image for creating organizations ideals suited for the current digital age.

The brain is seen as having the capacity for intelligence and control, the center of distribution enterprising thoughts, and it enable the system to self-organize and evolve along with the emerging challenges. It involves knowledge, learning, information processing, distribution and control as networks of activities (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). The brain is the center every human activity, it oversee and coordinate every part and functions of the human body. Business organization is likened to the human brain with component of parts and department, however, the manager and his team of management is saddled with the responsibility of effectively and efficiently ruining of the organization to achieve the organizational objectives. In the public service, the brain is the livewire of any public organization and the organization functions like the human brain. The chief executive is at center, where it coordinates and controls the entire functional department.

Limitations:

Conflict may exist between organizational learning with realities of power and control. Learning without purpose can become just an ideology (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.4. The Metaphor of Organization as Culture

The view of organizations as cultures refers to organizations as mini-societies, with their own distinctive values, rituals, ideologies and beliefs. It is a process of construction in actual and real terms, where it allows people and individuals to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, comments and situations in a different or distinctive ways. It is the understanding of society's, values, beliefs, laws, ideology, rituals, traditions, history, and organization's shared vision and mission in a diverse context(Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). In the public service where I am working, the images of culture is seen in existence within the organization. There are various professional groups and trade union with distinctive cultures such as Nigerian institute of management and Nigerian labor congress within the public service.

Limitations:

The metaphor can only be used to support ideological manipulation and control, as it is really difficult to managed culture. Also, important cultural dimensions are invisible, and seen aspect is relatively unimportant. More often than not culture has a deep political dimension, which makes it impossible to grasp the true importance of culture though the culture (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.5. The Metaphor of Organization as Political System

An organization is seen as a political system as result of the patterns of competing interests, conflicts, and power plays that surround the organizational scene.The political activities involves interests, rights and power, hidden agendas and back room deals, authority, alliances, party-line, censorship, leadership and conflict management. The understanding of organization's political terms will enable one to realize that politics is an inevitable feature of corporate life (Lawley, 2001;Morgan, 2006;Visser, 2010; Vigoda-Gadot,

Vinarski-Peretz& Ben-Zion, 2003). The entire public service is political scene. The day to day activities of the public service is related to taken decisions, and implementing political decision and policies.
Limitations:
Politics in organization may nurture more politics. Although, quite important for the organization, the political metaphor seem to be unfriendly as it's underplays gross inequalities that exist in power and influence (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.6. The Metaphor of Organization as Psychic Prison
Organization as Psychic Prison views organizations as systems that are entangled in their own thoughts and actions. Obsessions, mind traps, latent sexuality, narcissism, fear of death, strong emotions, illusions of control andanxieties, where defense mechanisms become the focus of attention. It involvesconscious & unconscious processes, repression & regression, ego, denial, projection, coping & defense mechanisms, pain & pleasure principle, dysfunction and workaholics (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). The public service in its self is a psychic prison. Employees live in constant fear of the unknown, because in public service, anything is possible.
Limitations:
When we give unnecessary attention to unconscious processes, it can deflect focus from other forces of control and the metaphor underrates the power of vested interests in retaining the status quo. There is a potential danger that the metaphor can be used to exploit the unconscious for organizational gain (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.7. The Metaphor of Organization as System of Change and Flux
This metaphor relates to a process of ongoing change. It is an expression of organizations as a reflection of a deeper process of transformation and change. It involves constant changes in a dynamic equilibrium flow of self-organization, systemic wisdom, attractors, chaos, complexity, butterfly effect, emergent properties, dialectics, and paradox (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). Although the metaphor exist in the public service, however, it is not well pronounce because every administration comes with it policies and program. Sometimes previous administration programs and were abandoned and new once initiated. The public service itself is dynamic and it is constantly changing in form and in its operations. It is a system that is regarded as being in a state of dynamic flux.
Limitations:
Its power is powerless and it offers powerless power, therefore no control for managers (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

2.8. The Metaphor Organization as Instrument of Domination
This metaphor view organizations as systems that exploit their employees, the natural environment, and the global economy for their own selfish end and personal gains. It exposes the ethical and social dimensions of organization as important points of focus. It is cohesive, exploitative and discrimination in nature in its approach. Generally, it involves alienation and repression of imposing values, compliance, charisma, maintenance of power, force, exploitation, divide and rule, discrimination and corporate interest (Lawley, 2001; Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010). In the public service, this is the order of the day. The organizations denies her employees certain rights and privileges but were forced to give their best to their organization. Generally, staffs of public service are under paid in Nigeria.
Limitations:
The metaphor can cause more polarization between social groups if the objectives are not well interpreted to employees. It may bring blames to decision makers instead of seeing it as the logic of the whole system that needs to be addressed. More often than not, it can overlook opportunities for creating non-dominating forms of organization as a result of the patterns of dominations, and in some situations, it is viewed as being too far to the extreme (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

3. The Assistance of the Understanding of These Images to Managers
The understanding of these images will help managersto achieve greater effectiveness,managers will see organization images in different perspective and will become skillful at reading organizations from multiple angles, and develop an action strategies that are consistent with the insights they glean. Managers who develop the skilled of the art of reading organizational life have a capacity to remain open and flexible, suspending immediate judgments until a more comprehensive view of the situation emerges. These images of organizations will also assistmanagers that are ready for their organizations to flow with change to understand that organizations are clusters of interconnectivity and required interrelated human, business, and technical needs (Morgan, 2006; &Visser, 2010). These images of organization will assist managers to understand the human nature of her employees, and that as human employees requires certain needs that management will have satisfy for them to function happily. In support of this Morgan (1998) stated that "developing the idea that employees are people with complex needs that must be satisfied if they are to lead full and healthy lives and to perform effectively in the workplace" (pp. 37). Generally, these images of organization will assist the understanding of managers because Morgan elaborately discussed how to shape our outlook and the ways we view the organization as an entity and how to act. They expose managers to analyze organization from different perspectives and different point of views such as from philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, biology and organizational examples. In specific terms, the views likened of organization to a brain, to a social reality, to a source of cultural diversity and to an arena for power struggles will shape what will occurs within the organization. The images of organization clarify the dynamics of an organizational life (Morgan, 2006).

4. The Consequences of These Images on Stakeholder Relations

Stakeholders are all those groups that the impact of the organizational activities would affect and/or could be affected in way or the other, the organization's activities are, products or services that are associated to performance. This does not necessarily include all those that may have knowledge of or views about the organization. Organizations will have many stakeholders, each with distinct types and levels of involvement, and often with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and concerns.The corporate image or reputation of any organization gives a pointer to the kind of organization and its level of performance to various stakeholders of the organization, therefore, many organizations consider their greatest asset to be their good name or reputation In support of this, Harrison (n.d.) stated that "Corporate reputation is a 'soft' concept. It is the overall estimation in which an organization is held by its internal and external stakeholders based on its past actions and probability of its future behavior. The organization may have a slightly different reputation with each stakeholder according to their experiences in dealing with the organization or in what they have heard about it from others". The organizations images have great consequenceson stakeholder relations. Studies reveal that it has both the historical dimensions that influence images, and the potential interaction of images held by multiple stakeholders (Svendsen, 1998). Svendsen (1998) stated that the "relationships between the organization and its stakeholders are two ways, evolving, and mutually defined. The manager is not separate from the stakeholder relationship but is part of it. Thus the idea of managing relationships, which is the traditional approach to stakeholder relations, is not only untenable but counterproductive in the long run for both the corporation and its stakeholders." Stakeholders will develop their opinions about the organization and reassess their views of the firm on the basis of how the organization has performed in real terms, either creditably well or poorly.

5. The Most Compatible Image with a Stakeholder View of Organizations in an Environment of Sustainability Consciousness

Organization as an organism is the most compatible image with a stakeholder view of organizations in an environment of sustainability consciousness. This is because it is an idea that relates organizations to living organisms that seek to adapt and survive in a dynamic environment. Organization is living systems, with certain environmental conditions, and life cycles that evolve within an environment of the survival of the fittest. Morgan (1998) emphasized that "organizations, like organisms, are "open" to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive" (pp. 40). Generally, the metaphor attached great premium to environmental sustainability. However, the importance of corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability consciousness to stake holders cannot be overstressed. The issue of corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability consciousness has emerge such a high profile issue that each and every stakeholder requires information patterning to its treatment in the organizations, especially, as it relates to the image or the reputation of the organization (Mbare, 2007). The metaphor helps managers that are ready for their organizations to flow with change to understand that organizations are clusters of interconnections of human, business, and technical needs. However, it encourages managers to be conversant with the art of corporate survival, and urges them to develop vibrant organic systems that are open to challenges (Morgan, 2006; Visser, 2010).

6. The Utility of Morgan's Work, Its Major Advantages and Pitfalls

Morgan's images of organization provide detailed comprehensive resources of multiple perspectives for analyzing and exploring the complex nature of modern organizations. The analysis is drawn from both local and international organizations by translating major management's contemporary theories into leading-edge practice. Its utility is found in every sphere of modern organizational management. It is very insightful and must read book for every manager of modern organization (Morgan, 2006). The advantages of the images of organization were that the metaphors will help organizations to create and describe shared reality. Also, they will provide an ample of opportunities for organizations and organizational theorists to assist managers and practitioners, as well as change agents to identify, and efficiently and effectively manage unconscious factors that affect organizations (Morgan, 2006; Renz, 2009).

Thepotential pitfalls of the images of organization were that the metaphors cannot be taken too serious literally or they may lose their value (Renz, 2009). However, the Morgan's metaphors may shape and can be shaped by various realities individually. As a result of this factor, they are not objective because their interpretation rest on individual reality (Morgan, 2006). Finally, the power of illustration of the metaphors hinges on the ability for one to frame complex thinking as well as innovative and challenging reasoning (Morgan, 2006).

7. Summary / Conclusion

We analyzed the images of organization and it was found that the understanding of these images will help managersto achieve greater effectiveness,managers will see organization images in different perspective and will become skillful at reading organizations from different perspectives, and develop an action strategies that are more often than not are consistent with the insightful information they gathered and learn from it (Morgan, 2006).Visser, (2010) stated that **"**managers who develop the skilled of the art of reading organizational life have a capacity to remain open and flexible, suspending immediate judgments until a more comprehensive view of the situation emerges." It was also observed that the organizations images have great consequenceson stakeholder relations. Studies reveal that it has both the historical dimensions that influence images, and the potential interaction of images held by multiple stakeholders (Svendsen, 1998). However, the author is of opinion that the organization as an organism is the most compatible image with a stakeholder view of organizations in an environment of sustainability consciousness.

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