

Metaphor of a Developing Child: The hoshiZora Foundation

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Understanding the organizational structure of an organization is a significant step in leading the organization effectively. Morgan (1997) elaborated images of organization in various metaphors. Metaphors allow human imagination to see the similarities between an organization and the metaphor (Morgan, 1997) in order to better understand how the organization functions. In this paper, I explore the organizational structure of the hoshiZora Foundation, an organization that provides scholarships for underprivileged children in Indonesia through the foster siblings program.

I describe the organizational structure of the hoshiZora Foundation using the metaphor of a developing child. In this vein, I elucidate different stages of child development from different theorists and apply the metaphor to describe the five-year old hoshiZora Foundation. I draw on different child development theories in this paper such as Erik Erikson's stages of development, Hoffman's development of empathy, Selman's development of perspective-taking, Eisenberg's development of pro-social moral reasoning, Livesley and Bromley's development of person perception, Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment theories and a theory on child physical growth. Furthermore, I also describe different functions within the organization. Lastly, I propose suggestions for improvement of the organization.

The hoshiZora Foundation

The hoshiZora Foundation was first co-founded in Japan in 2006 as a student based volunteer organization that promotes the well-being of underprivileged children in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. Indonesian students studying in Japan came up with an idea that with a meal worth of money, one child in Indonesia could be funded to attend school. As a result, the organization's main program is the foster siblings program. This program provides scholarships for children to attend public schools, primary through high school. \$10 per month can cover

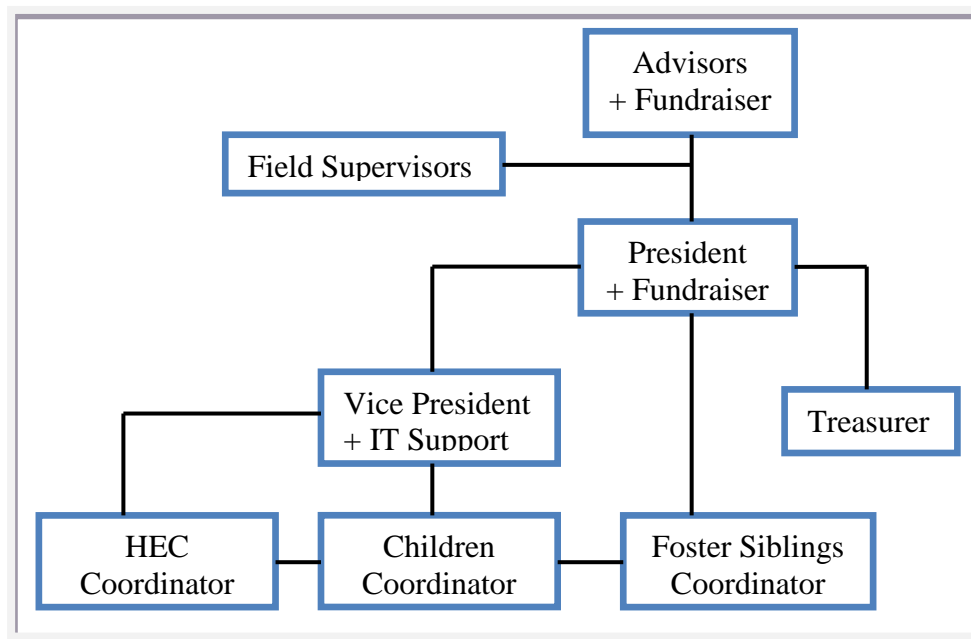
school fees, books, and also a uniform and shoes for one child. The hoshiZora Foundation supported 14 children in the first year.

I am a part of the organization as I was one of the co-founders, a leader at that time, a fundraiser, and currently serve as one of the advisors. In the first year of the program my colleagues and I realized that financial aid does not guarantee that those children will be committed to attending school. Most of them work to earn money and have low learning motivation. The hoshiZora Foundation rebuilt the system and strengthened the communication between children and the foster siblings (sponsors) (the hoshiZora Foundation, 2011). I witnessed that the monthly communication via airmail between the children and the foster siblings became the engine that generates motivation and strong will in those children. Five years later, 250 children are supported by and in communication with 140 foster siblings from different countries around the world.

In 2010, the hoshiZora Foundation officially registered as a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) in Indonesia and shifted the management style from a student based organization into an organization with a professional management team. Not only are there more children supported by the foster siblings program, but the hoshiZora Foundation is now being acknowledged and recognized by the community in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. In the first year of its professional management, the hoshiZora Foundation received ample financial support from philanthropic organizations in Japan. Within the first year, we also received targeted funding to build the hoshiZora Education Center. The hoshiZora Education Center (HEC) is designed to provide classes to equip the hoshiZora Foundation scholarship recipients and low income children in the area with more skills. The HEC offers English and Japanese Language classes, computer classes (basic Microsoft, Java script Programming), dance classes and sewing classes. In addition, we also facilitate communication forums and bonding activities where all

the children and foster siblings can meet. As a young organization that is growing rapidly and managing many different programs, the hoshiZora Foundation faces great challenges especially in managing human resources within the limits of the budget. Therefore the organizational structure is not centered on a bureaucratic approach (top-down) (Owens, 2000). There are four permanent staff, three part time staff, four advisors (unpaid position), two supervisors (unpaid position), and student volunteers from universities in Indonesia and Japan (described in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Organizational Structure



Metaphor: A Developing Child

The metaphor I use to explore the hoshiZora Foundation is that of a developing child. I choose this metaphor because the hoshiZora Foundation is a growing organization and there are many physical and psychological developmental similarities with a five-year old child's development.

Similarities between the Developing Child Metaphor and the hoshiZora Foundation

I review the similarities between a developing child and the organization based on

developmental theories that are mostly focused on social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Erik Erikson's stage of development

Erik Erikson's stage of development describes that a five year-old child wants to undertake or imitate adult like activities, and sometimes without yet understanding the limit of their actions (Eccles, 1999). At this stage, the hoshiZora Foundation is working toward perfecting the management system. In the process of figuring out the best management system for the organization, we often review and research big organizations' management system and try to adapt it. We sometimes cross the line and try to adapt management systems that are not in our league; therefore it is a trial and error process. As Erik Erikson described, the next stage of development is that a five year-old child learns to be more competent (mastery) (Eccles, 1999). We also aim to understand our field better and become more competent as an educational organization.

Hoffman's development of empathy

Hoffman's theory of empathy development is that at the age of five, children develop empathy or experience the emotions that somebody else is feeling (Hoffman, 2000). The hoshiZora Foundation, in perfecting the management system, is often in this stage of empathy development. We often have empathy for our surroundings, relate to the situations faced by the members within the organization or even members of the community who are involved with our organization, for example the poverty around the area where the organization is located. (However, the empathy is not as deep as understanding the condition beyond our immediate situation such as poverty in different areas in the country or issues of child trafficking). This is because the energy we have is focused inward, toward building a strong foundation in our management system. The next stage in child development is to develop empathy for someone else's condition beyond the child's immediate situation (Hoffman, 2000). As the hoshiZora

Foundation grows stronger, we aim to increase our capacity to develop empathy for the staff members within the organization and surroundings beyond our immediate situations.

Selman's development of perspective-taking

Selman and Byrne (1974) argued that a five year old is in the first level of the development of perspective-taking. In this level, a child is collecting information from their surroundings and starting to understand that different people have different perspectives. The child collects different information, but does not have the full ability to maintain their own perspective. The similarity with the hoshiZora Foundation at this stage is that we try to collect as much information as possible to equip us with knowledge regarding managing a non-governmental organization. We are able to see the different perspectives amongst other organizations. However, we are still finding our way and trying to hold on to our own vision of an ideal non-governmental organization. Within the organization itself, the staff members understand that each staff member has their own role. However, sometimes it is difficult for the staff members to be self-reflective, able to reflect on their own behaviour and motivations from other member's perspectives (Selman & Byrne, 1974). This is the next stage that a five-year old child and the hoshiZora Foundation ought to achieve.

Eisenberg's development of moral reasoning

At the age of five, a child is predicted to be oriented towards actions that benefit himself (Eisenberg, Miller, Shell, McNalley, & Shea, 1991). Furthermore, the next stage is to be able to identify the needs of others (physical or psychological) more than the hedonistic orientation (Eisenberg et al., 1991). The decision making process in the hoshiZora Foundation is often focused on what benefits the organization and what can help the organization to be able to survive. The dynamic of the teams in the professional management shows that each team is still developing a good system within the team; therefore, their actions are often focused on what they

need to do to fulfill their individual responsibilities, not so much yet considering or supporting the needs of other teams.

Livesley and Bromely's development of person perception

The development of person perception at the age of five focuses on external features such as appearances before focusing more on internal states (Livesley & Bromley, 1973, as cited in Barenboim, 1981). Part of this metaphor represents the hoshiZora Foundation in that the organization invests in building the office and equips the staff members with computers and necessary tools to run the organization. Slowly after the physical needs of the organization are fulfilled, there is more effort being put into improving the management system of the organization.

Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment

Kohlberg (1971) introduced the stages of moral development. At the age of five, children tend to do right things as obedience to authority and to avoid punishment. As an advisor, I learned that some of the staff members follow the rules in the organization to avoid punishment or simply to show obedience. Some of the rules the organization adapted are from Japanese companies as the president of the organization, the co-founders and advisors had experiences working in Japanese companies. The Japanese based rules are implemented towards a positive and disciplined working atmosphere. The staff members often question why certain rules are being implemented in the organization. I also learned that it takes time to explain and to guide the staff members that the reason they follow the rules is to build professional management which will benefit them, not simply to avoid punishment. This process is described well with metaphor of Kohlberg's development of moral judgment.

Motor development

Children age five are described as having the skill to ride a tricycle with speed and

skillful steering (Wikipedia, 2011). As a metaphor, staff members in the hoshiZora Foundation are capable of working in a team with good coordination to run the organization. However, sometimes the balance is not perfect yet. Better collaboration, practice in working as a team, and an improved management system are needed in order for staff members to ride a bicycle together at full speed.

Organizational Structure

Owens (2000) elaborated how the internal factors that shape the organizational structure are the people, the task, and also the technology used within the organization. In the metaphor of a five year-old developing child, the brain represents the presidents and advisors. The president of the hoshiZora Foundation serves as the cerebrum, brainstem, and cerebellum of the brain responsible for the basic functioning of the organization, controls cognition (make decisions) and emotions (responses of situations), and keeps the balance (Fine, 2008). The president communicates with and reports to the advisors regarding the functioning of the organization. The advisors also function as the thinker in the organization to help figure out the future direction of the organization (such as future funding, potential collaboration and partnership with other organizations). In other words, the advisors support the president and function as a reticular activating system (RAS) that is concerned with consciousness and alertness (Fine, 2008).

The eyes of the organization are the president and the supervisor. The president supervises the functioning of the organization and in the same time also monitors directly the treasurer and the foster siblings (sponsor) coordinator. The supervisors monitor the activities in the organization, including the functioning of the president and communicate it with advisors. The hands are represented by the vice president, IT support, treasurer, and the hoshiZora Education Center manager. The vice president also monitors directly the work done by the

children coordinator. The legs in this organization are the children and foster siblings coordinators and volunteers who are directly in communication with the children and sponsors, deliver the scholarship directly to children, and report the progress of the children directly to the foster siblings. The heart in this metaphor represents the co-founders of the organization who from the first time the organization was established until this day still share the passion, vision and mission with all the staff members and volunteers. Owens (2000) described that in the concept of loose coupling, the glue holds together the self-functioning subsystem. In this metaphor, the passion and the mission to support children is the nervous system and blood stream that connects parts of the body.

Organizational Environment

Considering the metaphor of a developing child and learning from Morgan's (1997) images of organizations as organisms, the hoshiZora Foundation can be described as an open system. The hoshiZora Foundation constantly connects with the environment and tries to achieve appropriate relationships with the environment (community and society where the education center is located). As a developing child (a living organism) the organization also shows effort to maintain self-regulation and a steady state even though there is push back or negative feedback from the environment by continuing to perfect the management system (system evolution).

The organizational environment for the hoshiZora Foundation is mostly determined by the socio-economic status of the area where the organization is located. The first initiative of foster siblings program and other programs designed in the hoshiZora Foundation is driven from the fact that children in the area are poor and need education that can change their futures. The Indonesian economy is rapidly growing and as a side effect, people with financial resources demand better education manifested in the profit based sector (good private schools) (Stromquist,

2002). Parents with low socio-economic status do not have the choice to send their children either to public or private schools (public schools also require tuition). The hoshiZora Foundation helps those children to attend public school. In order for those children to be able to compete with children attending better schools, the hoshiZora Foundation intends to equip them with life skills through the after school programs offered in the education center. The education center acknowledged that introducing technology and the skills to use technology (such as computer programming skills) is important for these children (Stromquist, 2002). Driven by the needs of the children in the environment, the hoshiZora Foundation tailored its programs to answer their needs.

Furthermore, the private versus public status of the organization is an important issue to discuss in order to understand the organizational environment and the interaction process between the organization and the environment (Bidwell & Dreeben, 2003). The status of the hoshiZora Foundation falls under the private service category because of independence from the government (Bidwell & Dreeben, 2003). As a private sector organization, it has less bureaucratic standardization compared to the public sector (Bidwell & Dreeben, 2003). The hoshiZora Foundation has more liberty in the process of hiring the staff and building the design and curriculum for the programs.

Functions within the Organization

The communication amongst the staff members in the organization can be described as effective. Staff members have a daily log in and daily goals to be shared in the beginning of the day and a progress report at the end of the day. The communication philosophy in the organization is adapted from a Japanese concept called the rule of *Ho-Ren-So*. This is the abbreviation of *hokoku* (reporting), *renraku* (communicating), and *sodan* (consulting). Staff members have open communication where volunteers and program coordinators are able to

communicate and consult directly with the vice president and presidents. However the report has to be shared with the person monitoring their work directly (freedom within the structure).

Motivating the staff members in the organization is as challenging as building a good system. Morgan (1997) argued that good motivation at work stimulates self-control (discipline) and promotes creativity. In order to motivate staff members, the president of the hoshiZora Foundation holds monthly meetings where all the staff members are able to voice their opinions and set their own goals for the following month based on their evaluation of the previous month. Building the organization and personal goals gives ownership to the staff members making the staff members more motivated to achieve their goals. The leadership in the organization can be described as strong in that the president gives liberty and freedom for the staff members in fulfilling their duties. However the president keeps everything on track and is assertive in giving directions. This strategy works well since the staff members are expressing their creativity in how to achieve their goals and stay on schedule. From a human resource development view, this strategy also stimulates individual thinking to build a strong commitment by the staff members toward the organization (Owens, 2000).

Conclusion

Using this metaphor, I was able to analyze the strengths and the weaknesses of the hoshiZora Foundation. As a new organization, the hoshiZora Foundation is able to support 250 children in poor areas in Indonesia. I strongly believe that the vision and mission of the organization has been shared with many people with a similar passion and this has made it possible for the organization to connect sponsors with the children. I also believe that the organization has a good start in terms of the management system. However, as a five year old organization that started recently with a professional management system, the hoshiZora

Foundation has many challenges in perfecting the system that fits the best with the environment and can manage the programs and human resources within the budget.

In the metaphor of a developing child, I consider positive development can be achieved through fulfillment of basic needs, healthy living habits, and good interactions between the child and the environment. In my opinion, the hoshiZora Foundation can keep growing and amplify the good impacts it gives to the society if it fulfills those three conditions. One of the basic needs is knowledge and financial support (food and water). I believe that the hoshiZora Foundation has always been eager to learn new knowledge. However it needs to be balanced with great effort in becoming a financially independent organization. Currently, the organization is still functioning with mostly financial support from philanthropic organizations and corporate social responsibility funding. I hope in the future the hoshiZora Foundation also can work with private schools on after-school programs. This may allow children from low economic status families to join programs in the hoshiZora Education Center for free and charge some amount of fees to children from upper middle class families (a subsidy system).

I believe that healthy living habits for an organization involves creating a positive working atmosphere, discipline and building the intrinsic motivation of the staff members. I think it is crucial to always keep sharing the passion of the co-founders and create a working atmosphere where the staff members can take ownership of the organization. Lastly, I strongly believe that it is very important to keep connected with the environment to understand the needs of the children that are supported by the organization. I believe that it is essential to build good communication and interactions with people in the community as they are the reason why the organization existed in the first place.

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