“Who We Are Is What We Brew”
Organizational Identity (OI), Coordination & Communication

Marco Morelli MSc  Supervisor: Kai Lamertz PhD

Abstract
This case study offers an in-depth investigation of the organizational identity construct from a shared mental model perspective. The notion of organizational identity refers to the way people feel and think about ‘who they are as an organization’. It consists of those attributes that are central, enduring, and distinctive in defining the character of a firm (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Specifically, the study explored the links between shared organizational identity and members’ perceptions of coordination and communication in a Canadian microbrewery. It was hypothesized that the more members see and understand organizational identity in a similar way the more they are likely to have similar perceptions of favorable task coordination and organizational communication.

Six semi-structured interviews with members of the management team in different departments were used to define the identity of the microbrewery. Five identity dimensions were elicited: Quality producer, Influence of the founder, Involvement in the local community and social events, Geographic attachment, and Family/team. Building upon those findings, quantitative survey data were gathered from 35 organizational members located in different departments to test the relationships between shared perceived organizational identity and perceptions of coordination and communication behaviors. Departmental affiliation was also tested for moderating effects. The data were analyzed at the dyadic level with the social network analysis software UCINET VI (Borgatti, Everett, and Freeman, 2002). The findings suggest some evidence of associations between members’ agreement in dyads about organizational identity and their perceptions of group processes thus providing partial support to the hypothesized relationships. The moderating role of departmental membership was not supported.

Context
1. Explore members’ collective understandings about OI in one specific organization.
2. Investigate the associations between shared OI beliefs and perceptions of coordination and communication.

Qualitative methods
- 6 semi-structured interviews with top management
- Text analysis of the transcripts (158 identity statements)
- 5 ID dimensions:
  1. Quality producer
  2. Family/team
  3. Influence of the founder
  4. Made in Montréal
  5. Involvement in local community & social events

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Agreement</th>
<th>H1 (Coordination)</th>
<th>H2 (Communication)</th>
<th>H3 (Coordination)</th>
<th>H4 (Communication)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Quality producer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Made in Montréal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Involvement in local community</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Influence of the founder</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family/team</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practical Contributions
- Training programs (transmit OI to new employees)
- Organizational messages that reinforce collective ID
- Strategic Implications: “Who are we?” & “What are we doing?”