

Open organizational systems

[Business](#), [Organization](#)



Organizational system often exemplify patterns of organizational structure, decision-making, and motivational strategies that characterizes them as Rational, Natural, and Open organizations. The following discussion contrasts the patterns of organizational processes associated with Rational, Natural, and Open organizations employing real-world examples to illustrate practical examples of the various strategies corporations use to accommodate complexity, goal setting, and motivation within their environmental context.

Scott and Davis (2007) indicated Rational, Natural, and Open organizational systems provide systematic principles that align internal processes with their organizational methods. Additionally, organizational systems also adapt to the context of their environment exemplified through reflections regarding the progressive complexity organizations have had to accommodate throughout history (Scott, 1981). The following discussions expound upon the characteristics of Rational, Natural, and Open organization systems included real-world practical examples of the systems and processes employed to address organizational challenges that face entities seeking collectively to influence the behavior of a group individuals toward a collective goal.

Organizations consist of groups of individuals collectively working together to accomplish goals (Scott & Davis, 2007). Rational, Natural, and Open organizational systems provide various paradigmatic perspectives regarding key elements within the study of organizations, such as the structure of organizational systems, decision making, and motivational strategies (Scott & Davis, 2007). Historical reflections regarding the development of organizational theory provides context for its importance.

The industrial revolution popularized the rational epistemological approach with an emphasis toward positivistic epistemology indicating an optimal method for production is achievable via specialized roles and assignment execution. Natural organizational systems followed the period of the industrial revolution as the focus of specialization within organizations shifted from concepts based exclusively benefiting organizations toward considerations of the constituents working within them (March & Simon, 1958). Open organizational systems adapted to existing complexities of the 21st century global economy and influenced the development of concepts of flexible organization systems that adapt to internal and external variables appropriately to respond and react to contextual challenges presented during a period of extensive technological innovations.

Rational organizational systems characterize organizations employing systems emphasizing the achievement of specific goals via formal structures (Scott, 1981). The focus of rational systems is the purposeful establishment of structure within the organization exemplified within its hierarchical structure, rules, directives, and performance programs (Scott & Davis, p. 36). This formalized structured provides the foundation for other process developed within the organization and dictates the establishment of decision-making, motivational strategies, and goal setting.

Formalization characterizes the decision-making process within rational organizations systems. Hierarchies employed within rational systems facilitate a centralized authoritative approach that supports tight-coupling systems allowing for increased control of decision-making. These processes

also allow for the explicit connection between individuals, organizational structure, and defined goals. The interrelated nature of these attributes are undeniable; however, function independently reducing the emphasis of individuality within the system (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Taylor (1947) introduced Scientific Management and indicated the scientific method application to management theory could lead to solutions optimizing production. Taylor (1947) sought to specialize task and assignments, analyzing them with the intent to maximize output (production or performance) and reduce inputs (resources or energy). Taylor's (1947) approach applied to both management and hourly employees.

Henry Ford's adaptation of time reducing strategies that increased production with concepts as interchangeable parts, simplifying modes of assembly, and conveyor belts offers a practical example of how organizations employed rational systems that emphasized organizational goals and objectives as opposed to individuals performing tasks or assignments (Scott & Davis, p. 42). Proponents of the Scientific Management Theory highlight the increase in performance, production, and innovative engineering that identified simplified methods to accomplish tasks and reduce the exploitation of resources.

Opponents of Scientific Management Theory suggest that the tactics to assess and simplify tasks stifles individual creativity and dehumanizes individuals executing tasks reducing them to another resource within the system (Scott & Davis, 2007). Scott and Davis (2007) also indicated that unions and workers often resisted time study assessments and supervisors

often resented the notion that scientific discoveries should outweigh knowledge acquired from experience.

Another form of rational system consisted of Fayol's Administrative Theory that emphasized an approach that formalized structures produced administrative principles and guidelines directed rationalized systems of an organization (Scott & Davis, 2007). Coordination and specialization attributes describes key elements within administrative theory (Massie, 1965). Coordination principles of the formalized hierarchical organizational structure emphasize the relationship between authoritative control and influence processes emphasized by positional power and linear subordinate systems (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Specialization principles emphasize a rationalistic approach to the development of groups for optimizing performance and execution (Massie, 1965). Departmentalization formation results in a number of variables; however, achieving efficiency involves identifying the homogenous nature of the assignments and purposefully developing groups that specifically seek to achieve defined organizational goals (Massie, 1965).

Proponents of administrative theory suggest the formal approach to coordination and organizational structure optimizes group activities by providing the mechanism to align roles, streamline decision-making, and coordinate activities despite of any existing individuality (Mooney, 1937). Opponents of administrative theory counter this assertion by indicating that no single method of structure or decision-making process is universally appropriate (Gulick & Urwick, 1937).

Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy characterizes a rational system that emphasizes the uses of traditional and rational authority (Weber, 1946). Authoritative positions passed down from father to siblings within privately family-owned organizations exemplify traditional authority and rational authority characterizes the positional authority resulting from hierarchical systems in which position legitimizes power (Weber, 1946).

Weber's concept of bureaucracy consisted of an organizational system that included traditional and hierarchy of positional authoritative positions, clearly delineated roles and responsibilities as well as rules and guidelines that direct and influence behavior (Weber, 1946). According to Weber (1946), traditional and rational authority provide optimal context to promote stability for administrative systems (Weber, 1946).

Bureaucratic models provide reliable and sustainable structures for participants by clarifying roles and expectations for each individual (Weber, 1946). Proponents of Weber's Bureaucracy Theory indicated a formalized method to optimize structure and within organizations (Albrow, 1970). Scott and Davis (2007) suggested Weber's assertions of bureaucracy indicated, "technical proficiency positively correlated to an individual's position in hierarchy and their competence" (p. 51). Opponents of Weber's Bureaucracy Theory suggested his definition of authority and assertions regarding the influence of administrative structure via hierarchy fail adequately consistently to define their relationships between the systems and individuals (Gouldner, 1954).

An example of Weber's Bureaucracy Theory in action, as well as an adaptation of it, is demonstrated within Pfizer's reengineered hierarchy.

Pfizer is a global drug corporation that employs a bureaucratic system using hierarchical strategic processes to identify and develop new drugs within its research and development pipeline (Jones, 2010). The organization began to struggle with the competitive nature of the industry as the introduction of promising new drugs failed to deliver to expectations anticipated by the organization (Jones, 2010).

Pfizer's identified its drug idea and approval processes required several layers of administrative and bureaucratic committees to achieve support and these mechanisms effectively filtered out numerous opportunities to feed their development pipeline (Jones, 2010). A Pfizer manager recognized the effect of the bureaucracy and reengineered their hierarchical design by reducing the layers of senior managers who approved drug development and the scientist who developed them (Jones, 2010). Rules and bureaucratic principles remained a key component within Pfizer's organizational system; however, the reduction in layers served to encourage increased innovative creativity and reduced the number of bureaucratic rules that slowed the research and development process (Jones, 2010).