THE MANAGEMENT OF ARCHITECTS WITHIN ARCHITECTURAL BUSINESSES: A CASE STUDY

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The management of architects within architectural businesses has been identified as an issue which will influence the future behaviour of architectural practices. A previous paper Thompson *et al.* (2001) outlined previous research into the area and went on to develop a qualitative model (based on systems theory) which enables deeper research into architects businesses. The paper went on to develop a model of goals within a firm at strategic management and individual levels in the form of a Social Efficiency Map.

This paper develops that model and explains why at individual level this model is based on the fulfilment model (founded in personality theory) which explains personality as based on a single force toward growth and actualization shapes our behaviour (Maslow 1943). The paper develops existing models of firms at management and strategic levels and describes their incorporation into the Social Efficiency Map. The paper then identifies the independent variables identified between firms and the rigorous selection process of firms included in the series of case studies, which enables a process of contrast comparison and replication between the firms by the research. The paper then reports on some of the findings in a recent case study of a traditional firm which forms part of the research. The paper concludes by comparing the results of the social efficiency map by a process of triangulation with questionnaires and the technique of participant as observer using the snowball method of opportunistic sampling (Fielding, and Fielding 1983).

If the model proves effective the process will then be used to capture the 'worldview' (Wilson 1990) of architects within traditional, multidisciplinary, commercial and named design firms based on propositions developed from the RIBA study (1991).

Keywords: architect, personal strategy, corporate strategy, congruence, social efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, management within architectural practice has been conceived as the administration of contracts and offices, rather than the management of projects and practices. Research into the strategic management of architectural practice (Winch and Schneider, 1993) identified survival and the search for a distinctive competence have become the key issues facing architectural practices at the start of the nineties.

It would be simple to assume that business's goals and the individual architect's goals are complimentary, and in the wider sense this was the assumption of classical economic theory and most traditional management theories. Individual architects have many needs and aspirations that cannot easily be met in purely economic terms. Also, architectural businesses have many goals, not just making profits. These needs and aspirations have been modelled in the previous research paper (Thompson *et al.* 2001).

Thompson, R F and McDermott, P (2001) The management of architects within architectural businesses: a case study. *In:* Akintoye, A (Ed.), *17th Annual ARCOM Conference*, 5-7 September 2001, University of Salford. Association of Researchers in Construction Management, Vol. 1, 713-22.

The purpose of this paper is therefore four- fold;

to identify an established framework for the strategic and management goals presently facing architectural practices and the process by these firms of goal setting at strategic and management levels within the firm.
the interpretation of these goals by individuals within the firm and explore the needs process of individual goal seeking by architects within architectural businesses and the effect of secondary goals within the firm.
develop a model, which incorporates strategic management and individual level goals.
to justify the model by triangulation of the results by participant observation technique.

These needs and aspirations have been modelled in the previous research paper reported in the CIB World Building Congress 2001 and draws on the work of the Royal Institution of British Architects Strategic Study of the Profession (RIBA 1993). The case study reported here explores in part the various strategies found within architectural businesses used by individuals and the firm to fulfil these needs and aspirations.

THE FRAMWORK

Establish a framework by examining previous models of the firm, and established models of individual personality, five aspects of which will be identified.

Models of personality
Individual needs
Modelling individual goals
Models of firms goals
Modelling firms goals

Models of personality; the research has identified three models of personality

Freud's conflict model
Maslow / Rogers fulfilment model
McCelland / Kelly's consistency model

This research is examining the view of architects (RIBA) beliefs as a 'world view'. The research captures individual feelings, interests and attitudes of architects. Other researchers have avoided this approach, typically Lorch (1973) and Porter and Lawler (1968) preferring to use the consistency model.

The approach of this research along the fulfilment model path is based on the view that architects are as a group of similar capability and understanding of what architecture entails.

The fulfilment model assumes that a single force toward growth and actualization shapes human behaviour. McGregor (1960) developed his theory Y assumptions based on Maslow's (1943) version of the fulfilment model.

Individual needs
Personality has energy and the energy is located in the need systems. The amount of energy in every need system differs, the deeper a need in a individuals personality, the more potential energy it has to release. Psychologically healthy people usually have

certain goals of self-actualization or enhancement, which means that they are willing to accept temporary frustration if it will help them in the long run.

Modelling individual needs
When a need is fairly well satisfied the next pre-potent (higher) need emerges in turn to dominate the conscious, since gratified needs are not active motivators. Thus, man is a perpetually wanting animal.

Vrooms (1964) theory has therefore been used to model this behaviour. "Peoples behaviour results from choices among alternatives and these choices are systematically related to psychological processes particularly perception and the formation of beliefs and attitudes", this is known as Vroom's expectancy theory

Shapero (1990) has described an individual work motivation in terms of an expectations-motivation-performance-expectations-comparisons -expectations cycle, and points out the highest motivation cannot overcome an individuals technical incompetence, this factor is overcome as all the individuals in this research are architects (RIBA) qualified.

Modelling firms goals
Goals may be found in a firm at individual management and corporate levels and are not always purely economic. Drucker (1958) proposed survival as the central purpose of the firm. This research has used Barnard (1981), Kast and Rosenzwieg (1985) and Maslow (1943) to identify the typical goals at each level in the firm.

Modelling individual firms goals
The RIBA strategic Study of the profession identified a number of strategies based on the work of Coxe *et al.* (1980). Two types of firms were identified; practice centred businesses and business centred practices. The firms in the study emphasized one of the following strategies;

Strong delivery
Strong service
Strong ideas

But not in combination, it is this emphasis on a single strategy, which makes the difference between the firm of interest.

It may be expected the 'world view' of the practice centred businesses will be different to that of the business centred practices, and the 'world view' of the architects working for these firms will differ too. The careful selection and categorization of the firms included in the series of case studies, minimizes the effect of the independent variables between the firms. The prediction and explanation of the difference in dependent variables between the firms chosen means that they become non-equivalent dependent variables but for predictable reasons. This process will enable the contrast and comparison between the different firm in the series of case studies and the 'world view' captured in the firms and explained.

The interpretation of the firm's goals by the individual architects within the firm
This is achieved by following a rigorous research methodology, which comprises two stages; first, semi structured interview with a representative of the firm to identify the goals of the firm, second semi structured interview with the architects in the firm, to establish, first, are the goals of the firm possible, second, do the architects prefer these

goals, and third if the firm's goals affect any individual goals of the architects interviewed.

The semi-structured interview is carried out based around the questions identified in figure 1. The interview is tape recorded and the questions based around the standard questions 1-28 which identify the goals at corporate management and individual levels in the firms. All the questions must be asked in a positive way by the researcher. The questions are deliberately framed in a relaxed and chatty manner so as to put the interviewee at ease. The researcher deliberately avoids any academic words or phrases, which may be interpreted by the interviewee as a test requiring a right or wrong answer. The researcher presents the image of having less knowledge about the construction industry than the interviewee has and a passive manner in the semi structured interview allowing the interviewee to dominate the conversation.

Develop the model to incorporate the results of the semi-structured interview into the social efficiency map

The researcher based on Vroom's work carries out an interpretation process. Answers collected from the interview's can be positive or negative. The correct interpretation is vital in getting the correct view of the answers given by the interviewee's. The answers are plotted on the social efficiency map figure 1 the grey plots are maintenance goals and the black plots are the motivator goals. The a, b, c, d, e are the interviewee's. Where a line appears across the map this is indicative of congruence in the firm about a goal.

Justification of the model by the validation of the results by established research methods

This process is carried out in two ways:

Questionnaires: the questionnaires used in this research are standard personality type (Friedman and Rosenman, 1978), locus of control (Rotter, 1954), creativity (Raudsepp, 1978), leadership style and leadership effectiveness tests (Vecchio, 1978).

Observer as participant: the language of those studied was collected and defined. The opportunistic or 'snowball' sample method (Fielding and Fielding, 1983) was used to identify the meaning where common language was used by interviewee's to describe particular views in the firm and identify hidden meanings. The commonly used expressions or phrases used by all the interviewee's indicated strongly held views in the firm. The researcher collected these views by writing down the interviewee's tape-recorded conversations and tabulating the number of times these expressions or phrases were used by the interviewee's

Some of the findings of a case study

The line on the social efficiency map figure 2 indicated goal 12 develop employees potential was of interest.

The interview with the firms representative regarding goal 12 Develop Employee's potential identified this goal "the firm is cautious about too much training it has experienced individuals leaving following the completion of training most of the skills of the firm are retained at partner associate level". *The firm believed in training to be a goal but was not committed to training its entire staff.* Analysis of the interview's followed the three-stage process as follows:

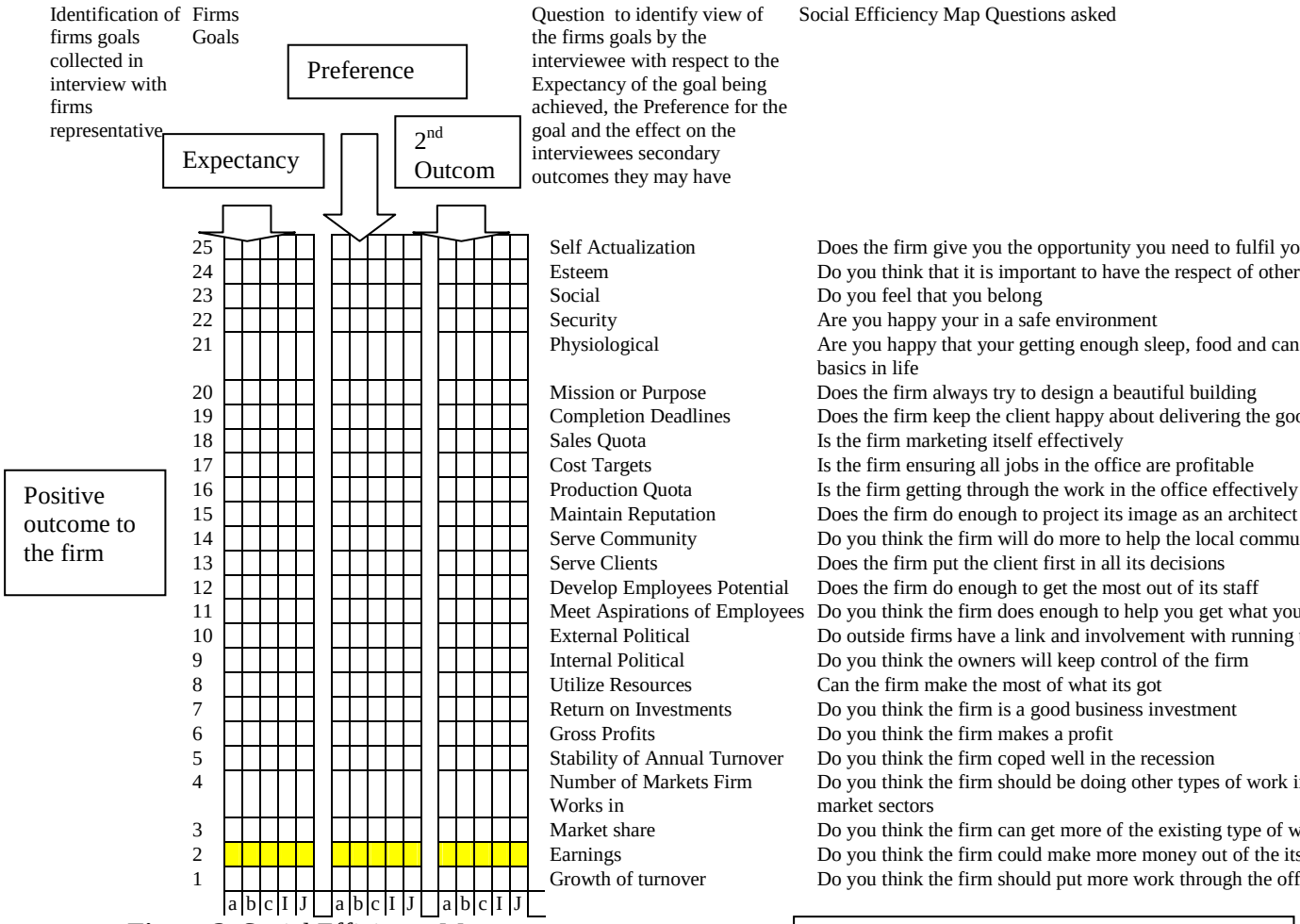

Figure 2: Social Efficiency Map

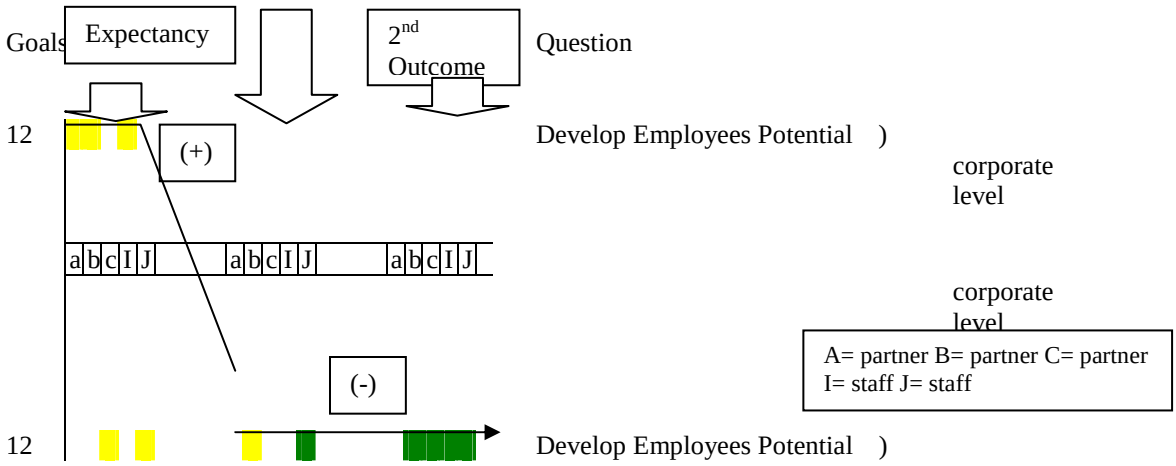

Figure 2: Social Efficiency Map identifies the strength of perception by employees of the firm goals, the preference for these goals and the effect of any 2nd outcomes by employees

Interviewee's perception, the interviewee's confirmed this interpretation of the goal of the firm was understood by all the interviewee's in the firm

Interviewee's preference, the partners agreed with training except (c') who was not happy as he did all the training and found it stressful. Architect (i) was happy with his development at this time but was a newly qualified architect. Architect (j) felt training was a waste of time.

Interviewee's secondary outcome, the partners agreed the firm was providing training and this gave them feelings of satisfaction apart from partner (c') who was stressed as he was giving the training. The architect (i) was building his CV and would leave the firm once he had gained more experience. Architect (j) had a sense of failure because he was not allowed to get more experience in management and design.

ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL EFFICIENCY MAP

The positive goal of the firm towards providing training was turning into a negative preference by partner (c') and the architect (j) as they were frustrated and architect (i) who was benefiting was planning to leave the firm once he had all the training he could get. The secondary outcomes of stress and feelings of failure compounded the situation. The goal of providing training was positive but the restrictions placed on who was trained and the lack of reward / recognition for training successfully completed was leading to a negative secondary outcome of people leaving the firm.

Personality type

The questionnaire identified the interviewee (a),(b),(i) and (g) to be a type A personality. This is indicative of an impatient competitive individual who feels they are constantly under time pressure. They also tend to be aggressive and try to accomplish several things at once and have difficulty in relaxing. Interestingly interviewee (c) indicated a B+ type personality this is indicative of a relaxed and patent attitude, mild mannered, in less of a hurry far less competitive and has a better perspective on running large organizations.

Creativity

The questionnaire identified all the interviewee's to be non-creative. The frequency of creative productivity tends to decrease with age. The interviewee's varied in age from

early 30s to about 60. A study of professionals in various fields found that most individuals tended to be most creative between the ages of 30-40.

Triangulation

Table 1: Personnel questionnaire survey of RIBA qualified members of the firm

Questionnaires	ID	Personality		Locus		Creativity					Leadership style				Effectiveness
		A	B	Int	exc	Vc	+c	c	-c	nc	1	2	3	4	
Partners															
RIBA yes	a	A			X					X		X			Effective (4)
" yes	b	A			X					X		X			Effective (8)
" yes	c		+B	X						X		X			Effective (13)
" yes	d														
" yes	e														
" Yes	f														
Associates															
RIBA yes	g														
" yes	h														
Architects															
RIBA yes	i	A			X					X		X			Effective (12)
" yes	j	A			X					X		X			Effective (10)
Staff															
RIBA no															

Locus of Control

All the interviewee's results indicated (a), (b),(i)and (g) an external locus of control but again interviewee's (c) indicated an internal locus of control. Externally oriented individuals tend to believe forces beyond their control are responsible for success tend to prefer such extrinsic rewards as increased pay and job security. Internally oriented individuals are less likely to respond to group pressures or persuasive communications. Internally oriented individuals usually prefer intrinsic (self-supplied) rewards such as feelings of accomplishment and a sense of achievement.

Leadership style profile

The interviewee's all scored as effective leaders on the management style profile, interestingly the financial manager partner who was the mediator figure in the firm (a) scored 4 on the effectiveness scale for leadership. This represents a very low effective profile, the remainder scored reasonably well noticeably the architects had a better score than the Partners. The results for all interviewee's all demonstrated a leadership style of high relationship high task and does not indicate a balanced management style.

Case study description participant observation, observer as participant in the firm

Method of collecting information ; The language of those studied was collected and defined. The researcher was aware of the effect of his intrusion into the firm and the effect of the formal semi-structured interview. The researcher was prepared to withdraw should any feelings of being threatened by the group were encountered by the researcher. The researcher was aware that in this universe of discourse within the firm there was not enough time to master the subtle meanings of some language used in the office. The language used by the interviewee's was written down after the meeting and is included as notes. Of interest were phrases that occurred in the conversations with individuals and the commonly used expressions are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Table indicating the most common phrases used in the interview

Individual	(a)	(b)	(c')	(i)	(j)
Language used by interviewees					
Proud to be an architect		x	x	x	x
Firm a way of life		x			
Normal to subsidize jobs		x	x		x
Design has to be right		x	x	x	x
Cost nothing to do with me		x	x	x	x
Better not to know	x	x	x	x	x

Problems to be studied

Language used by the interviewee's

Table 2 illustrates pride in being an architect, a belief that the design has to be right, and its better not to know being universal amongst the architects in the firm. What do these phrases mean in the context of the research? All the architects had a strong belief that the design had to be right. This seemed to imply a test of each architects design abilities by the other architects in the firm. Architects would work overtime in order to pass this test without pay or other incentives. A design being right was the sign that the architect design had passed the test set by the other architects and so the status of the architect was undiminished. Areas such as cost, overtime working were dismissed as better not to know.

Environment organization operates in

All the architects work in an open plan environment and move freely about the office, forming small groups chatting and drinking coffee in a free and open manner. The partners form part of the group, but are the leaders. The firm does not have a formal day with the architects free to work all hours and can ware what they like to the office no dress code and very few rules about the behaviour in the office.

Phenomena in the firm

It was a feature in the firm that new employees did not remain with the firm but moved on to other firms after gaining experience in architecture.

Phenomena based in Social Theory

The research is studying the question 'why does A give great weight to the information provided by B about his preferences, and his facts?' Maital and Meltz (1980). In this case B are the Partners in the firm, and A are the architects (i) and (j). What power do the Partners exercise over the architects in the firm. In organizational research there are two streams of research into power and influence, interpersonal and organizational; Interpersonal, reward (1), punishment (2), referent (3), expert (4) and legitimate (5). Organizational, sub unit B will have more power than the other sub units to the extent that sub unit B has the capacity to fulfil the requirements of the other sub units and monopolizes this ability. Interpersonal power can be identified in terms of the personality of the individuals in the organization. Three models of personality have been identified by Maddie as follows:

Model	Features	Observations	Comments
Conflict (Freud)	Reduction of tension involved in inner conflicts	No tensions observed in (I) and (j)	
Fulfilment (Maslow)	Human needs hierarchy	Need to improve as a architect very strong (i) and (j)	(4)

Consistency (McCelland)	To be superior to others needs, and affiliation needs	Need to be associated with architects in (i)	(3)

The key factors in the power influencing the architect's (i) and (j) came from the need for the architects to gain experience as architects. The architects felt affiliation with the partner's, as they would like to be in that position in a few years time, once they had gained experience. The other interpersonal categories were excluded for the following reasons; reward, pay was not an issue, punishment the firm did not have any strict regime, legitimate power was not exercised by the partners.

CONCLUSION

The effect identified by Shapero (1990) expectations - motivation - performance - expectations - comparisons - expectations cycle is seen here, working in reverse. Individuals are experiencing reduced expectations due to a comparison of actual performance and expected performance. Once the architects begin to gain experience in the firm the bar on gaining more management skills and design skills leads to a reduction in expectations and the consequent development of negative goals by the architects. The partners / associates have a monopoly on 'design is right' and architects design skills are not encouraged or developed beyond the point where they may challenge the views of the Partners. Partner (c') is a mismatch with the others in the firm. The different type of personality and a different locus of control and a high relationship high task management style single him out as different in the firm. The influence of partner (c') in the training process within the firm is having a negative effect on those receiving the training with partner (c') not being effected by group pressure and relaxed attitude to work isolates him from those he is responsible for training.

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