



Contemporary Management Practices Entrenched in Ancient Civilization and Classical Organisational Theories

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Abstract:

Management principles, practices and ideas in use in contemporary management had been in existence and can be traced back to the ancient civilization and scientific management era and beyond. These principles, practices and ideas from the ancient civilization and scientific era though not in use in their original forms in modern organizations are deeply rooted in all modern day organizations, their core concepts can still be seen and are still applicable in contemporary management. The principles and practices of coordinating, planning, selection, training, span of control, efficiency, wages, incentives, had been used in various ways with appreciable results in places like Ancient Sumer, Egypt and china. The scientific era brought in principles that encouraged skilled labour to maximize productivity, informed decision making based on scientifically proven methods.

Keywords: Contemporary management, ancient civilization, scientific management, management practices.

1. Introduction

Management has been part of the human society right from the ancient times there had been various forms of management ideas that has facilitated the activities of humans. Several forms of management were identified right from the stone-age. Hussein, Haque and Baloch (2019) states that (p.2) the root of management is entrenched in the previous management theories. They are critical tools in handling the contemporary management disputes. This work will be looking at some of the ancient contributors to management and their contributions to management – the Sumerians, ancient Chinese, ancient Egypt, the Greeks, Romans King Hammurabi and King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the classical management era namely scientific, administrative and bureaucratic.

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2. Management in Ancient Civilization

2.1 Sumerians

The Early Origins of Management are traced to Sumer, situated in the present day southern Iraq. It is identified to be the first urban-based civilization and the beginning of management. Sumer was a thriving commercial society where goods such as grains, livestock, perfumes, and pottery were traded. The ancient Sumerians accomplished this trading by paying for goods and services with clay coins instead of trade by barter that was commonly used in that period. The sizes and shapes of coins determined the diverse amounts of currency it represented and indicated the kind of goods and services they could be used for. Wren and Bedeian (2009) opined that trading was made possible as writing was developed and made keeping of track of various trades achievable by the merchants. He further stated that the introduction of a basic form of coins turned around the trading positively since people no longer had to look for persons who needed the goods or services they could provide but get what they wanted by paying with the coins. Organizing the activities of the buyers and sellers involved coordination, a crucial role of a manager in contemporary management (Wren & Bedeian, 2009).

2.2 Ancient Chinese

Fairbank (1991), stated that the Chinese commenced the development of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy commenced in the early dynasties but only became fully in use during the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). Scholars were trained in Confucian teachings and were taught to use those teachings making decisions which are at the discretion of the scholars themselves as opposed to contemporary bureaucracy that is formally written down and followed by those in decision making positions. Selection for and then promotion within the bureaucracy was hinged on merit based on a test of Confucian teaching.

2.3 Ancient Egyptians

The ancient Egyptians were known for building of the great pyramids with which they gained grand recognition. They were outstanding in the building of canals, irrigation projects, and the pyramids (Wren & Bedeian, 2009). Although it is not clear about how these constructions were done, it is worthy to note that these processes entailed quite a large number of laborers involved in various activities such as stonecutting; pushing and pulling of gigantic stone blocks of various sizes; some others greased the stones to lessen resistance. These processes depict management principles of division of labor, coordination, and specialization. The workers were supervised by someone who was in charge of the various activities. The ancient Egyptians also initiated the notion of span of control in the process of embarking on these constructions determining the number of workers that a manager can control directly and effectively as ten. It became an acceptable practice among the Ancient Egyptians for a supervisor to be in charge of ten labourers with different administrators been responsible to ensure that these labourers were actually producing to capacity (Saatci, 2014).

2.4 Greeks and Romans

The Greeks from 800 BC to 400 BC and Romans from 500 BC to 476 AD made several significant inputs in the advancement of management. The Greeks and the Romans embarked on several industrial projects, such as roads and aqueducts, and established an assortment of guilds and societies that promoted trade though they were not tilted towards business activities. Plato's recognition of human diversity propelled the Greeks to improve on division of labour while the great Greek philosopher Socrates emphasized on the promotion of managerial skills of establishing an atmosphere of information sharing and analysis. The Romans' contribution to management was standardization. To be able to administer effectively throughout the Roman Empire, the Romans required standardization of measures, weights, and coins. Corporation was birthed in the Roman Empire; companies sold stocks to the public.

2.5 Hammurabi – King of Babylon (1810 BC – 1750 BC)

Another contributor to the early development of management was from the Middle East. The brain behind the written laws and commands came from the Babylonian king Hammurabi within the period of 1810 BC to 1750 BC. Wren and Bedeian (2009), opined that the Code of Hammurabi consisted of a listing of 282 laws that controlled an extensive array of behaviors, including business dealings, personal behavior, interpersonal relations, and punishments. Law 104 is noted as one of the first instances of accounting and of the need for formal rules for managers and owners. Hammurabi's code was used to set wages for doctors, bricklayers, stonemasons, boatmen, herdsman, and other laborers. The code did not include the concept of incentive wages because it set wages at a specified amount.

2.6 Nebuchadnezzar (605 BC – 562 BC)

The concept of incentives was from another, Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar within the period of 605 BC to 562 BC, Wren and Bedeian (2009), stated in the evolution of management thought that King Nebuchadnezzar gave incentives to cloth weavers for work done. The weavers were paid with food, they were given food according to the quantity of work done.

3. Classical Organisational Theories

3.1 Scientific Theories

The industrial revolution in the 18th century led to the changes of the methods of production, organization of labour and methods of raising capital and use of tools and equipment. It had so much impact on management that employers had to use resources available to them efficiently. Traditional or conventional ideas of management were solely given up, giving way to scientific management (Tumbaach 2021). The theories emerged in the early 1900s and they were interested in the work process mainly concerned with increasing productivity, creating skills, and analyzing workflows to improve economic efficiency. Brian (1989) opined that prior to the works of Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, there were challenges such as troubled labour, management relations and rapidly changing business dynamics. Their effort to observe and publicize themselves as humane scientist and their principles and methods to improve efficiency and harmony in the workplace was a great feat. He further stated that it was a testimony for their strategies and techniques to survive and prosper, though there was aggravated pressure in the midst of workers and managers they were thought to bring together and also pressure from within the scientific managers. According to Kathleen (2010) The assumptions of the Taylorism are as follows: Workers were not intelligent and educated and have to be trained and instructed to do the task assigned to them. Workers are seen as being naturally lazy and lack perception in terms of judgment; thus workers performance should be measured and monitored by experts. Workers are said to be induced when given financial incentives. Taylor believed that workers would work at the slowest pace not minding the way they worked or the organizations performance except they are given financial incentive, stating that experts should guide the affairs of workers.

3.1.1 Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911) was an American manufacturing manager, mechanical engineer and also a management consultant later in his life. The scientific management theory became one of the significant theories in his time. Taylor was an engineer who was interested in the way employees did their jobs, and from observation he came to understand that managers knew little about the activities that occurred in the factories. He assumed that the working condition might possibly be better. (Robert 2019) According to Alireza Nadrifa, Esmat Bandani and Hakimeh Shahryari (2013), Taylor assumed scientific management could be the answer to business challenges and was convinced that if certain efforts are put in place to modify the management system, it could help in redirecting the interests of workers to align with the management's interest. Taylor carried out an experiment in the positioning and movement of the shovel and came up with a more efficient way of handling the shovel. This reduced the number of yard workers from 500 to 140 and increased shovel efficiency from 16 to 59 tons per day (Alireza et al, 2013). Taylor's scientific management is based on

the following principles; (1) Identifying scientifically the one best way to perform a job, rather than the "rule of thumb" method that was previously used. Using the rule of thumb method, the workers were to devise their own way of accomplishing the job. (2) To have specific tasks and responsibilities assigned to the right employees and train them to work for maximum efficiency. (3) To monitor and cooperate with employees and encourage them to work in line with the laid down principles. (4) Management and employees should be given responsibilities. Management's duty is to plan and train employees and employees are to execute the responsibilities assigned to them giving rise to efficiency. He is recognized as the father of scientific management.

3.1.2 Frank and Lillian Gilbreth were also contributors to the scientific management theory. Their contribution was based on the analysis of work motions. They carried out experiment in this area by filming the details of workers activities and taking into consideration the time it took to accomplish the tasks. The essence of the filming was to have a visual record of how the task was done and completed to point out areas of improvement. The filming was also used as a tool for training workers in the best way to carry out their task. They were able to come up with the best practice for work methods through the studies of time and motion. Their work was focused on reducing the motions involved in carrying out task more efficiently. Their focus was in the regulation and consistency in the workplace, that there is "one best way to get any job done", and the exact method, when known, be reproduced through the manufacturing process, removing individual steps thereby generating results that are proficient (Sammi, 2018). Frank and Lillian Gilbreth's management theory was based on 3 core ideas; (1) Decrease the amount of motions in any given task - They came up with the expression "therbligs" or elemental motions needed for the accomplishment of these elemental motions. These elements were used for scrutiny. To check how tasks were finished from looking for an object with eyes or hands, grasping the object with the hands and taking together and putting apart of parts. This enabled them to identify which motions were needed and which ones were not needed. (2) Focus of incremental study of motions and time. Scientific approach was used to determine the most efficient method to finish a given task by measuring time and motion to 1/2000 of a second. Their engineering background made them to use physical science in their studies. (3) Increase efficiency to increase profit and worker satisfaction – With the use of motion studies they were able to save time, increase profits and also bring about workers satisfaction. As statistical methods progressed, quality assurance and quality control began within the period of 1920s and 1930s. scientific management developed to operations management, operations research and management cybernetics in 1940s and 1950s.

3.1.3 Henry Gantt was a mechanical engineer during the early 1900s he was focused on using scientific analysis to work and developed the Gantt chart within 1910 – 1915. He became notable for contributing to classical management theory: the Gantt chart and the task bonus system were his main contributions. The Gantt chart is a graphical representation of what will be done in course of carrying out a project. Gantt developed this chart while spending time examining the process of the work with the overall objective of setting up and carrying out a work distribution format. (Hartzell, 2021). His focus was on producing a graphical illustration of the work process that demonstrated scheduling and monitoring projections (Hartzell 2021). According to Ramachandran and Karthick (2019), the chart was first divided into the required tasks that must be completed and these activities were further divided into weeks and days also stating which activities that can run simultaneously to save time. Gantt was able to point out terminal elements which needed to be accomplished as a component of a bigger assignment. The related terminal elements together created what he called the summary element. The advantages of Gantt chart are; Tasks can be broken down into specific elements, Project monitoring within timelines is made possible and it shows tasks that can be completed at any time and those that are dependent on the completion of other tasks or elements. Gantt's second contribution to task and bonus plan was a modification of Taylors "a fair day pay for a fair day's work". It is also known as the progressive rate system. Employees get bonus of up to 20% more when work is finished before the time and additional work is done, but in a situation where work

is not been accomplished within approved time the pay is withheld. Gantt's ideas are still in use in contemporary project management.

3.1.4 Harrington Emerson (1853 – 1931) was a lead Industrial engineer in America. He made his contribution in the area of systems efficiency focus of industrial management contained in his book *Twelve Principles of Efficiency*. Emerson's main outstanding consulting project was the reorganization of the machine and locomotive repair shops of sprawling Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad. "Harrington Emerson introduced repair scheduling techniques in the locomotive shops of the Santa Fe. Scheduling revolutionized repair....the system that focused on material flows, and introduced batch production techniques to car and locomotive repair" (Aldrich 2010). Emerson's 12 principles are as follows: (1) Clearly defined ideals – there should be clearly defined ideals that regulate employees and direct their performance in every organization. Objective, goal, mission, purpose, value are used in place of term ideal used by Emerson. (2) Common sense -leaders in management cadre are to possess higher level of understanding to encourage efficiency. (3) Competent counsel - need for specialist to expand the competence role in the organization because it is a specialized area. (4) Discipline-following organizational plans accordingly (5) The fair deal – fairness should be apparent to all in the organization. (6) Reliable, immediate and adequate records – consistent reports are necessary for high-quality plans as well as high quality proficiency plans. (7) Dispatching - work laid out to be done by every machine should be put in place by planning department and communicated to the workman accordingly. (8) Standards and schedules - there should be set out agenda for every machine and operator in the organization according to mapped out customer deliveries within the stated period. Standard time for carrying out various operations should be developed to help in building up schedules. (9) Standardized conditions - the organization should ensure that all amenities and environmental conditions in the organization should be planned. (10) Standardized operations the movement of machine apparatus, actions of operators, transportation and materials management should be designed to match particular objectives. (11) Written standard -practice instructions -all concerned persons in the organization should be aware of standardized operations and conditions. Following these written standards and putting them into practice will bring about efficiency. (12) Efficiency reward- proceeds of efficiency should be received by all involved in the organization.

3.2 Administrative Process

Principles of management have so much impact in every organization. The principles adopted in any organization and functions of managers viz a viz is expected to help in achieving its vision and mission. Hamid, Shah, Rahman and Badlishah (2020), stated that leadership is a vital feature in influencing the achievement of organizations, managers, and employees in various capacities in and around the globe. Every organizations success is hinged on the ability of the leader to strengthen and advance individual employee performance (Hamid et al., 2020).

3.2.1 Henri Fayol developed and proposed principles and functions of management which is widely accepted and practiced universally. Poperwi (2018) stated that Henri Fayol articulated the fourteen principles of management for optimal organizational performance. Henri Fayol's functions of management: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, and Controlling. (1) Planning demands determination of objectives and goals for the future and establishing appropriate strategies to use in accomplishing these goals. According to Koontz and Donnel (1968) "Planning is deciding in advance, what to do, when to do and how to do it. It bridges the gap from where we are to where we are meant to be." Planning entails deciding what to do and how it should be done. (2) Organizing requires putting all resources manpower, material, etc together for the attainment of objectives put together by an organization. (3) Staffing is bringing in manpower to fit the organizational structure via appropriate and efficient selection, evaluation and development of staff to fill the positions intended for the laid down structure. – Koontz and Donnell (1968) (4) Directing involves activating and energizing the employees of the organization to work effectively and efficiently to attain the organizations goals. It involves supervision, motivation, leadership and communication. (5) Controlling

is checking to make sure that all is in agreement with the standards and set objectives of the organizational goals. It also includes establishing of level of performance that needs to be attained, evaluation of actual performance, contrasting of actual performance with laid down standards/checking for departure and putting them in order if any.

3.2.2 Henri Fayols 14 Principles of Management Henri Fayol is described as the “father of modern management theory”. The Fayol theory is geared towards helping managers to organize and regulate the actions carried out within an organization. The theory is aimed at accomplishing managerial efficiency. Henry Fayol created 14 principles of management given below. (1) Division of work this is based on workers been assigned specific roles. This he stated would increase output, competence, accuracy and pace at which the workers carry out their jobs. This principle is applicable to all workforce, managerial inclusive. (2) Authority and Responsibility looks at managerial authority which he said is necessary to ensure that managerial commands are adhered to in organizations. The authority is to be used responsibly and ethically and been responsible for actions taken under their leadership or guidance. (3) Discipline : one of the core values in any organization should be discipline without which not much will be accomplished. Discipline should be embedded in the culture of every organization for it to run effectively. It helps in building employees behavior. (4) Unity of command, a clear chain of command where employees have a boss to take instructions from. Where this is not done it creates conflict of interest which can lead to confusion. (5) Unity of direction all employees in an organization should be working towards achieving the same goal. (6) Subordination of individual interest: every individual interest is subject to the interest of the organization. Working as a team should be encouraged. (7) Remuneration- to be fair to employees and to motivate them, they should be monetary and non-monetary to motivate employees. Fayol says pay should be fair, and reward “well-directed effort.”(8) Decision making should be centralized from the managerial level to the employees, the decision-making process balanced and neutral, there should be a balance between hierarchy and division of labour. (9) The principle of a clear chain of communication should be respected, except in cases where speedy communication is needed. (10) There should be defined order in the way every available resource is put in use this brings positivity which brings about positive productivity. (11) Every employee should be treated fairly; employees should be treated equally and respectfully (12) This has to do with tenure of personnel; it is advisable to have a low staff turnover this happens when employees feel secure in their job. (13) In every organization employees should be encouraged to take initiatives; this increases their zeal and interest in the organization. (14) It is expected that management would promote team spirit which will promote positive outcome and work environment.

3.3 Bureaucratic Organisation- Max Weber As organisations began to grow in size managing the day to day activities became more complex, the need for better and smoother operations became necessary which led to the bureaucratic approach. Max Weber developed his groundbreaking Principles of bureaucracy. Weber was convinced that any organization where authority is given to the most qualified and competent people, there would be efficiency which he sees as a type of rational organization. Robert (2019) stated that Webers hierarchical systems encouraged informed decision making. Weber’s theory of bureaucracy is characterized with six rules viz (1) Management should be structured in hierarchical order where each level is controlled by the next higher level to it, while it controls the level below it. Organizational responsibilities and authority is clearly spelt out for each position. (2) Division of Labour clearly defined tasks making employees become skilled as they carry out a particular job over time. (3) Prescribed selection procedure. Selection and promotion is hinged on knowledge, skill and technical qualification. (4) Career Orientation- managers are career staffs, therefore management is detached from possession. (5) Rules and regulations are documented to guide employee behaviour, managers are also guided by organizational rules in terms of employee relations. (6) There is uniformity in the application of rules and regulations. All employees are treated in the same way. Hussain et al (2019) p 158 stated that the best part of this theory is that it avoids

wastage and gains efficiency because it eliminates the disagreement of overlapping responsibilities as it presents understandable path to all employees and managers.

4. Conclusion

Management principle of coordination can be traced to the Ancient Sumerians. This is one of the main functions of managers in contemporary management. Bureaucracy and merit selection can be traced to the Ancient Chinese who developed the idea during the Han Dynasty. These methods are still in use today in contemporary management. Other distinct management principles such as concept of span of control, principle of division of labor, coordination, and specialization are traced to the Ancient Egyptians who had long ago found the perfect size of workforce for a supervisor to be ten. They had in place what is now known as human resources management in practice in that era where each division had a specific name, featuring a specific phyle and categorized under a particular gang in order to account for individual workmen, to check if they were in attendance or not, and to alternate them separately or together (Ezzemel 2004). The Greeks and Romans are also contributors to contemporary management in the area of standardization and information sharing. Babylonian kings Hammurabi and Nebudcadnezer contributed in the area of wages and incentives. Scientific management theory is still in use today in organizations not exactly the way it was used then but with some modifications. Efficiency is being maximized by regulating the tools and methods for accomplishing tasks concerned with a particular job. Tasks are split into the least motion then interpreted in a precise process that must be adhered to in completing such task. It aids to predict and is consistent thereby minimizing mistakes. Gull (2017) noted that scientific management can be seen in today's contemporary organizations such as car industries, manufacturing plants and even hospitals. The application of Taylors time and motion study by managers standardized processes are used in the world's leading fast food chains such as McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Burger King to make Burger and Chicken wherever their branches are situated showing that the principle of one best way of doing a task is still very much practicable and is wide spread across the world. Turan (2015) pointed out that Taylors scientific management has contributed to human resources management and is the foundation for staff selection and is one of the main functions of personnel management despite the criticisms of using humans as machines. His ideas have been the foundation of human resources and they are still in use though techniques may have changed over time. Another area where scientific management is generally seen in contemporary management is total quality and quality improvement. Turan 2015, noted that pure scientific management of analysing and workplace processes with the goal of making them more efficient may not be seen in today's, organizations but they are deeply rooted in all modern day organizations though not in use in its original form, the core concept of scientific management can still be seen.

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