

Human Relations and Behavioural Approach to Management Thought

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ABSTRACT

Theories of management are the basic background for the study of management. The objective of this paper is to bring to light the application of human relations and behavioral science approaches to motivation in business organizations and lay a foundation for the understanding of these approaches to management. It also explored the relationship between motivation and employee performance in the organizations under study. The paper made use of both primary and secondary sources of data, through the use of researcher designed questionnaires and also books, journals and magazines on management. The paper found the use of incentive and bonus schemes in contemporary organizations and therefore recommends that despite many strides made since after the discovery of human relations/behavioral approaches which lead to the emergence of other theories, that the concept is still relevant and fashionable as such managers should embrace the idea of looking at the human/behavioral side of employees rather than concentrating on the mechanical aspects of the job alone. Through the use of psychology and sociology managers could despite the complex nature of human beings understand the behavior of their employees and try to stimulate greater productivity with the use of various motivational tools.

Keywords: *Human, relations, behavioral, motivation, dissatisfaction, classical, theorists, approaches.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Discussions on Management whether as a theory or as a discipline cannot take place without a proper foundation being laid down on its evolution. To understand management, one has to explore the various theories, which could rightly be said to have given birth to it and subsequently, its evolution in other words typical of how in the understanding of man one has to first follow his ancestry. These theories which includes the classical, neoclassical, general administrative, human relations, behavioral, contingency, bureaucratic, systems, chaotic etc. are the foundation for the understanding of the study of management, right from the works of Adam Smith who inspired the concept of specialization in his book the Wealth of Nations (1776) or the works of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) the man widely credited with the first scientific study on management and often referred to as the father of scientific management up to the present day scenarios.

The practice of management has evolved over the years from the period of the classical theorists, this is as a result of many factors such as the advent of technological tools which became important tools for managers in the discharge of their duties, enterprises have also evolved, production practices have changed greatly and today, contemporary approaches have emerged as a result of the aforementioned factors. Despite all these changes however, the challenges facing managers remain the same, which are improved productivity, optimum utilization of resources and greater profitability, and or achievement of organizational goals. That is why as societies evolved management theorists and practitioners continuously also search for ways to synchronize with the changing times.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Relations Approach to Management

Early management theories were built on the notion that if management could properly plan, organize and control jobs and organizations, productivity could increase. The early approaches emphasized technical aspects of the work, at the expense of the work's personal aspects. This aspect is clearly evident in the works of classical theorists such as Fredric W. Taylor, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth etc. Therefore, it is not surprising that theories were later developed that challenged some of the early fundamentals.

Two branches evolved during this period identified as the human relations and behavioral theorists even though to some degree many academics see them as belonging to the same orientation, being that they focus on the individual rather than the job.

Human relation approach became popular in the 1940's and early 1950's, it brought to managers attention the important role played by individuals in determining the success or failure of an organization (Plano eta l 1978).

Human relation is frequently used as a general term to describe the ways in which managers interact with their subordinates. When management and employees stimulates more and better work conditions we have good human relations in the organization. When morale and efficiency deteriorate, human relations in the organization are bad. To create good human relations, managers must know why employees act as they do and what social and psychological factors motivate them (Stoner, 1978).

The human relations approach made relationships between employees and supervisors the most silent aspect of management. It advocates the training of people in behavioral sciences, such as clinical and social psychology to emphasize building collaborative and cooperative relationships between supervisors and workers. Two key aspects of human relationships approach are employee motivation and leadership style.

One of the major contributors to the human relations approach was Elton Mayo (1880-1949). He together with his associates from Harvard University pioneered the use of scientific method in their studies of people in the work environment. Later researchers were more rigorously trained in the various social sciences (such as psychology, sociology and anthropology). They also tended to use more sophisticated research methods. Thus, these researchers became regarded as 'behavioral scientists' rather than members of the human relations school (Stoner, 1978).

Mayo and his associates introduced the "social man" motivated by a desire to form relationships with others.

Hampton (1986) summarized Mayo's work as follows: Mayo and his associates conducted the Hawthorne experiments 1927-1932. Mayo was called in by Western Electric when other researchers, who had been experimenting with work area lighting, reported some peculiar results. They had divided the employees into a 'test group' that was subject to deliberate changes in lightening and a 'control group' who's lightening remained constant throughout the experiment. When the test group's lightening conditions improved, productivity increased, just as expected. But what surprised the researchers was a similar jump in productivity when lightening was reduced. To compound the mystery, the control group's output kept rising with each alteration in test group's lightening conditions, even though the control groups experience no such changes. In his attempt to solve this puzzle, Mayo ushered in the new era of human relations.

In a new experiment, Mayo and his colleagues placed two groups of women, six in each group in two separate rooms. In one room, the conditions were varied and in the other they were not. A number of variables were tried; salaries were increased, coffee breaks of varying lengths were introduced, the workday and workweek were shortened, the researchers who acted as supervisors allowed the groups to choose their own rest periods and to have a say in other suggested changes.

Once again output went up in both the test and control rooms. The researchers felt that they could rule out financial incentives as a cause, since the control group was kept to the same payment schedule. Mayo concluded that a complex emotional chain reaction had touched off the productivity increases. Because the test and control groups had been single out for special attention, they developed a group pride that motivated them to improve their work performance. The sympathetic supervision they received had further reinforced their increased motivation.

The result of this experiment gave Mayor his first important discovery, which means that when special attention is given to workers by management, productivity is likely to increase regardless of the actual changes in working conditions. This phenomenon became known as the Hawthorne effect.

Another great contributor to Human relations thought was Miss Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933). It was Follett who originally defined management as 'getting work done through others'. She felt that managers were responsible for motivating employees to pursue organizational goals enthusiastically, not simply to obey orders. She rejected the notion that managers should be groomed to give orders, believing instead that they should be trained to work with employees toward the attainment of common objectives. Follett laid the foundations for studies in group dynamics, conflict management and political processes in organizations (Mescon Atal 1977).

Human relations scholars generally believe that if management showed more concern for their employees their satisfaction should increase which would lead to an increase in productivity. They recommended the use of human relation techniques such as more effective supervision, employee counseling and giving workers more opportunities to communicate on the job.

The Behavioral Approach to Management

The behavioral approach also sometimes called behavioral science approach emerged from research by behavioral scientists including sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists, who sought ways of improving organization effectiveness (Holt 1990).

Behavioral view point to management is a perspective that emphasizes the importance of attempting to understand the various factors that affect human behavior in organizations. (Kathryn et al 1998)

There are three distinct eras that are associated with the behavioral concepts:

- I.** The first was the 1920's when research inspired what we now call human relations approach movement
- II.** Then the post second world war a period when theorists focused on human needs and motivation.
- III.** The third era is occurring now as we search for integrative concepts that satisfy the dual necessities of meeting employee needs and improving productivity.

The behavioral school on the other hand can also be traced to the realization by managers that the classical school did not quite achieve complete production efficiency and workplace harmony. Managers still encountered difficulties and frustrations because people did not always follow predicted or rational patterns of behavior. (Stoner, 1978).

Thus, there was increase interest in helping managers to deal with the "people side" of their organizations. Several individuals tried to strengthen scientific management and organization theory with the insights of sociology and psychology.

Hugo Munsterberg (1863-1916) introduced the use of psychology to help meet the demands of scientific management for increased productivity. In his major work Psychology and Industrial Efficiency, he suggested that productivity could be increased in three ways:

- I.** Through finding the best possible man- The worker whose mental qualities single him/her out as best suited for the job.
- II.** Through creating the best possible work-the ideal psychological conditions for maximizing productivity.
- III.** Through the use of psychological influences. Munsterberg calls this the best possible effect to motivate employees.

In each area Munsterberg suggested the use of techniques taken from experimental psychology. For example:

- I.** Psychological testing could be used to help select qualified personnel.
- II.** Learning research could lead to improved training methods.
- III.** And the study of human behavior could help formulate psychological techniques for motivating workers to greater effort.
- IV.** The use of vocational guidance techniques to identify the skills needed on a job and to measure the skills of candidates for the job.

All these were offshoots of Munsterberg's studies.

The foundations of the behavioral school of thought

The behavioral scientists stressed the need to conduct systematic and controlled studies of workers and their attitudes and behaviors. They emphasized that empirical observation of the human side of organizations should take place through research techniques, such as field and laboratory experiment. Behavioral scientists considered both the classicists rational economic model and the social model espoused by human relations advocates to be incomplete representation of workers. Thus, they presented a model which suggested that employees have a strong need to grow, to develop and to maintain high level of self-regard.

There are many other great contributors to the behavioral approach the notable ones made by Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Douglas McGregor (1906-1964).

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970).

In 1943 psychologist Abraham Maslow advanced a theory of human motivation that was later adopted by many managers.

Maslow identified five sets of human needs arranged in a hierarchy of their importance to individuals. These are:

- I. Physiological
- II. Safety
- III. Social belonging
- IV. Esteem needs
- V. Self-actualization

Maslow based his theory on motivation, and hinged the theory on three viewpoints (Katherine et al 1998)

1. Human beings have needs that are never completely satisfied
2. Human action is aimed at fulfilling the needs that are unsatisfied, at a given point in time
3. Needs fit into a somewhat predictable hierarchy ranging from basic lower level need at the top

He focused on employee's personal needs and how they influenced performance. His theory on human behavior is that individuals work to satisfy unfulfilled needs, including simple physiological needs, such as food, and complex physiological needs, such as self-esteem. He suggested the hierarchy of needs, in which he observed that a fulfilled need did little to motivate an employee. For example, a person with an unfulfilled need could be persuaded to work to satisfy that need.

Thus, a person that is hungry might work quite hard for him to get food. He called this 'deficit principle' and suggested that managers must be alert for those needs that are unmet and create rewards to satisfy them. To satisfy a higher-level need like esteem for example, management can organize a reward system that would formally recognize the employee's efforts.

Maslow also formulated a progression principle, whereby higher-level needs are activated once lower level needs are met. In Maslow's view, lower level needs that go unfulfilled tend to take precedence in an employee's mind over higher-level needs. For example, a hungry person is more preoccupied with finding food than the need for self-respect.

However, in later years there have been criticisms of Maslow's theory simply because of the realization by managers that it is not for every individual that all needs are arranged hierarchically, there are many people who would jump a lower need and go in search of higher needs. Additionally, Maccabi (2003) has proved that after the self-actualization stage there also emerge a new set of need, that of maintaining what one has already achieved and not to fall back and he emphasized that this is more inherent in our African environment due to many peculiar factors, e.g. fear of poverty, extended family system which add more burden on successful members of the family etc.

Douglas McGregor (1906-1964).

McGregor was a contemporary of F.W. Taylor; he brought a fresh new perspective to management and challenged managers to think of subordinates as responsible, capable, and creative. He felt that for a long time, leaders/managers had treated subordinates as irresponsible and lazy. He called this approach to management as theory X. Managers under theory X tend to be autocratic, control oriented and distrustful.

On the other hand, McGregor identified a second perspective, theory Y, which reverses the earlier assumptions about human nature. Theory Y managers view subordinates optimistically as individuals who want to take challenges in their working environments, prefer self-control and are capable of responsible independent judgment.

Theory X Assumptions:

- I. The average human being has inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if possible.
- II. Because of his characteristic dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them put forth adequate effort towards the attainment of the organizational objectives.
- III. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

Theory Y Assumptions:

1. The average human being does not inherently dislike work. Depending upon controllable conditions, work may be in fact a source of satisfaction. (and will be voluntarily performed) or a source of punishment (and will be avoided if possible).
2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort towards organizational objectives. People will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service, or pursuit of objectives to which they are committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the reward associated with their achievement. The most significant of such rewards e.g. the satisfaction of ego and self-actualization need can be direct product of effort directed toward organizational objectives.

4. The average human being learns under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek Responsibility, lack of ambition, avoidance of responsibility and emphasis on security are generally consequences of experience not inherent human characteristic.

5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly distributed in population.

6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.

Theory Z Approach to Management

Professor William Ouchi (1981) Introduced theory Z, to describe the adaption of Japanese organizational behavior by American firms. He deliberately called it theory Z to show that it is an enhancement of McGregor's behavioral X and Y approach. His theory is based on comparison of management in Japanese organizations called J-type firms with management in American firms called A-type enterprises.

Holt (1990) Explained in details Ouchi's concept, postulating that it recognizes that cultural differences between the two nations prevent American managers from adopting Japanese techniques without modification. For example, Americans are highly mobile, who often seek opportunities, jobs and career advancement by changing employers. Japanese workers in contrast tend to make a lifetime commitment to their organization. Ouchi despite these differences still discovered similarities between practices in America's leading firms and Japanese organizational behavior.

Prof. Ouchi cited the example of Hewlett-Packard and International Business Machines (IBM), where long term employment has been the norm, even though it falls short of a lifetime commitment. Typical A-type firms rely on individual management decision making, and J-type firms endorse a collective decision making, but a number of excellent U.S. companies endorse a collaborative decision-making process closely approximating J-type behavior.

The most important element in Theory Z is its combination of human relations concepts with scientific management technique. Z type companies endorse collective responsibility a pervasive concern for employees, and a commitment to participative decision making. These organizations recognize individual and group needs, but simultaneously develop exceptional quality control techniques and scientific work methods. This style of management incorporates classical principles, behavioral tenets, and human relations concepts to emphasize quality and productivity.

III. CONCLUSION

This research paper within the framework which it was conducted, has explored the human relations/behavioral approaches to management, the paper concluded that the two approaches are still relevant in contemporary management and therefore call on and managers to not only focus on the job/task to be performed but also take cognizance of the employees' side of their organizations. This they can hopefully achieve through the use of psychology and sociology which are veritable tools for understanding the human behavior and thus selecting the appropriate motivational tools to get the job/tasks to be done and organizational goal/objectives achieved. The

researchers hereby recommend that: Managers should strive to adopt a human approach in dealing with their subordinates, Working environment is a critical factor in motivation as it enhances productivity and therefore managers should provide an ideal environment for workers to perform optimally, Incentive schemes are also highly popular with many employees and management should embrace them as motivational tools.

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