

Post fordism system



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Post Fordism is an industrial model that replaced the Fordism model in 1970. It is a production model which is closely associated with the socioeconomic system used in most industrialized countries. Unlike Fordism, which was used by Henry Ford's plant where workers worked in a production line with each person performing a specialized task in a repetitive manner, Post-Fordism is characterized by the use of new information technology with the coming of the globalized financial market. From this model, I have learned that production should be tailored to the needs of the customers and should be driven by market demand. This means that labor has to be managed according to the production process utilizing the current technology in the market. I have also learned that the production process should be more aimed at the consumers and their demands.

Flexible organization is an approach which believes that production should not be aimed at the mass but it should be flexible enough in order to target a certain group of consumers. Firms no longer need to invest so much of their money in creating production lines for mass production but they should rather embrace the modern technology which requires them to use intelligent labor and machine systems in order to respond to the market needs quickly. One example of such flexible organization or flexible specialization is just-in-time manufacturing. This concept of just-in-time production embraces producing what the consumers want and when it is needed, taking into consideration the quantity that is needed. This ensures that there is no overproduction of goods and there is minimal wastage of resources. Just-in-time production has been described as a pull system of production in which the actual order signals the real product to be

manufacturers. This is a demand pull which enables an organization to produce only what the market requires and in the correct quantity and at the needed time. This is a concept to minimize the cost of house ware since the levels of raw material, component the labor and end product are kept to the minimum. It means only the needed labor will be kept in the organization.

The concept also requires that use of horizontal chains of authority. This means that unlike in the earlier model where authority came from the top, post-Fordism ensures that authority in the management of labor in an organization flows in a horizontal manner. It gives more authority to the line managers to make decision without relying on the decision from the top management. One of the concepts that support horizontal chains of authority is the concept of decentralized decision making. This means that there is more decision making power that is delegated to the junior and middle staff in an organization. It helps line supervisors and manager and even the individual employees to make their own decision and not wait for decision to come from above. Decentralize to decision making allows the labor force to have more space to make their own decision concerning their work.

(Womack 2003, p. 45)

Having a creative labor is advantageous to the organization. It helps the organization to create a competitive advantage in the market. To manage creative labor, the concept of post-Fordism applies in that the labor force must be given space and time to be innovative. This will help them to make the decision that they have to make in their work which increases their production.

Basic critiques on post-Fordism argue on its structuralism, functionalism and evolutionism. Structuralism view change in terms of tensions, contradictions and dysfunction of structures not as a result of voluntary action of social agents. Functionalism continue despite opening of alternatives and faced with structures actors must make a choice. It has also been criticised on the idea of selecting a single central factor as the impetus for change.

From the topic I have learned that labor should be managed in order to be in line with the production needs of the organization which is dictated by the needs for the market. From what I have from the concept of post-Fordism it will help me in my future management practice since I have knowledge of labor management following the characteristics of post-Fordism. This will help me to manage labor specialization and feminism in the work place. It will help me manage labor to match the production needs of the customers.

“ Enron - the smartest guys in the room”

The above phrases come from a movie that was screened describing the collapse of the collapse of Enron Corporation. This resulted in criminal trails involving several top executive of the company. The film describes how the Enron trades were involved in the California Electricity crisis. This film gives an insight into the corporate cultures and the inherent problem that comes with its. It describes some mechanism which motivate a vast immoral and profit oriented corporate culture. It describes how the organization misused the employees in a bid to make higher profits. It also tried to describe how an individual can take an order before they question the reason why they are

taking the order. It is a general review of how companies use immoral means to make high profits

From the case, we can relate the idea of organization complexity in how and organization is made of different people and of diverse characters. The film illustrated how Enron was made up of different people of different character and in the whole portrayed a picture of the complexity of the organization both in the making and in its operation. From the above I learned how the organization functions as a complex entity that needs a clear leadership in order to harmonize all the characteristics to function as one. The complexity in the operation of the organization comes out in the strategy that the company uses to hike price only to return electricity later in order to make more profit. However this movie has been criticized on the ground that while it gave so much on what can happen on peoples lives which were ruined by Enron, it did not give them a real human face.

It also illustrates the concept of how an organization functions as a system. In this film, the management creates an unhealthy competition that creates animosity on the workers. They start engaging in an unhealthy competition in a bid to outperform the other. This is because employees doing worst in an area were to be fired. The concept of organization as system means that the organization functions together as a system made of different interdependence parts. This means the management and the workers must work together to achieve the goals of the organization. But in this case the management uses the workers in order to make more profit. From this I have learned that the management should create a cordial working condition with the employees rather than creating competition between them.

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From this example we can see how the organization uses a fraud means in order to make more profit. Enron shifts power in order to create power shortage and raise price and later bring back power in order to reap the high profits. This happens in the full view of the managers. I have learnt that as a manager I am given the sole responsibility of deciding for the organization and I should use my power to prevent an organization from committing such fraud. I have learned that it is fraudulent to use the employees in order to make higher profit rather than protecting them.

Once the Manager in the Enron knew that it was collapsing they started selling their shares and encourages the employees to retain theirs. In the movie there is the milligram experiment that is performed in order to understand how a worker can take order from a person without questioning such an order. A person is given an order to raise the voltage and push the button until he stops pushing the button on a moral ground. This showed a factor of leadership. This experiment was meant to show that there is a high probability that the one who is given an order to carry out questions it. From this I have learned that as a manager I should provide real leadership to those under me and not just issue order. Every one has the right to question why they have been told to carry out that order. In the future I will be able to provide real leaderships to the workers and explain to them the orders that I issue and at the same time allow them to enquire about the orders.

Production chains and coffee industry: “ Black Gold”

“ Black Gold” was a documentary that was made as a film depicting the struggle African farmers in Ethiopians undergoes despite producing one of the most important primary commodity in the world. This film was made to

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illustrate how the western consumers fails to get in reality with the plight of those African farmers who toil day in day out to produce coffee for them. It also features the World Trade Organization which was just an illustration of how production chains exploit the farmers in Ethiopia who are faced with famine. This documentary showed how the complexity of the production chain continues to hamper the prosperity of business. It gives an idea of how reducing the production chain can benefit the primary producer like the farmer in Ethiopian Highland. However the documentary has been critcized on the ground that while it highlighted the plight of the Ethiopian Coffee farmers, it did not give any solution on what can be done to improve the distribution chain.

One of the most important highlight of this documentary is the need to reduce production chains. It shows how the chain from producer, middlemen exporter, importer, roaster, retailers and consumers pushes the price of the end product and at the same time reduces the price of the primary producer. Although we can accept the idea of chain production, a lengthy chain leads to exploitation. From this documentary I have learned that the longer the production chain, the higher the operation cost and the higher the price of the end product. Hence in my future management, I will be striving to shorten the production chain in order to make effectful use of the labor and reduce the production cost.

This documentary also brings an important aspect of business ethics. Business ethics is an integral part of any business operation. It is the moral values that form the backbone of operation of any business. Business code of ethics is an important tool that should guide any strategy that is taken by

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management. In this documentary, it was clearly evident how the middlemen continue to exploit the Ethiopian farmer and how the western consumer rushes to give food aid to the Ethiopian farmer who is faced with hunger without taking into consideration how much they take from that farmer. I have learnt that as a manager we should conduct our business following a code of ethics. This is important since it helps us to operate with a clean conscious. It is also important since it avoids the exploitation of the consumer. In my future management work, I will strive to ensure that I keep to the business code of ethics. I will try to position the operation of the company with the need of other people in regard to the needs of the consumers and the need of the employees. I will strive towards implementing strategies for the company which reduces chances of exploitation.

The paradox that comes from the movie is that while the farmers are exploited, they are not aware of what they produce. They toil in their fields but they are not aware of the value to their products. They are not aware of the price their products fetch in the market. At the same time the western consumers are not aware of what the Ethiopian farmers goes through in the field as they struggle to produce sweet for them. I have learnt that informing the consumers of what we are producing is very important since they become aware of the source of that product. It is important to inform the consumers about the product right from the starting of the production chain up to when it reached them. In this regard as a manager I will ensure that all products from the company bears clear information on the label and carry out advertisement to inform the consumers on the product. It is important

for them to realize that what they are consuming and where it has come from.

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