

Bureaucracy theory of management essay sample

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Introduction

Through the 1900s a lot of work on management has been presented to the world. The work of writers in management can be categorised in four main approaches: classical, human relations, systems and contingency. Typical classical writers from the early 1900s, main emphases were on the formal organisation and structure. The classical approach can be divided into two subgroups: the bureaucracy and the scientific management. Max Weber is seen as the most important management thinker of bureaucracy within this field (Elizabeth, 2008 78-84). Taylor is seen as the father of scientific management thinking. The classical writers have been criticised for not looking at the employees as individuals with different personality and personal needs. However, their work is still relevant today in the UK. Their structural factors are still used in some organisations.

Discussion

During the 1920s the main emphasis was put on the social factors at work and on the behaviour of employees within an organisation. This is the human relations approach. In the period 1924-1932 researchers performed the famous Hawthorne experiments. These experiments investigated how different groups of workers reacted when they were influenced by different factors, such as light, longer breaks, commission payment and a personal interview programmes. They were not enough concerned about the environmental or the social factors (Elizabeth, 2008 78-84). On the other hand, the Hawthorne experiments did take management to another level.

Factors like motivation, job design and team work were now seen as more relevant within management thinking.

Max Weber and Charles Handy are two management thinkers who have had major impact on management thinking. Weber was one of the earliest writers in the 1900s. As earlier mentioned, he belongs to the classical approach. Handy, who is still alive, belongs to the more recent approach that is called the contingency. The aim of the following is to discuss whether Max Weber's and Charles Handy's thoughts are relevant today in the UK, and if one of them is more relevant than the other (Richard, 2009 pp 41-47).

Max Weber was concerned about power on one hand and authority on the other hand in organisational thinking. He divided the different sources of authority of legitimated power into three groups: the traditional, the charismatic and the legal-rational. The traditional organisation is divided into two types; the patrimonial form where the officials are servants depending on the boss to get paid. The second form within the traditional organisation is the feudal form, where the officials have rights and their own personal duties. The charismatic organisation is seen as with a superhuman leader with disciples who communicate between the leader and the mass (Richard, 2009 pp 41-47).

A bureaucracy is seen as the boss on top that sets all the rules and divides the tasks of the organisation down to each employee, which is a specialist in his or her area. They all are working in co-operation toward a common goal. The main responsibility of the employee is to follow the exact orders from the leader, and not to do what he or she thinks need to be done (Charles,

2009 pp 78-84). In the bureaucracy the employees are seen as different roles, not as individual persons.

One of the main factors that helped the bureaucracy on its way up is the fact that emotions and personal relationships are not accepted within the bureaucracy (Richard, 2009 pp 41-47). This prevented friendship and family feeling from getting in the way of accomplishing the organisation's goals. Weber's focus on the trend of rationalisation led him to concern himself with the operation and expansion of large-scale enterprises in both the public and private sectors of modern societies. Bureaucracy can be measured to be a special issue of explanation, or reason useful to individual institution (Charles, 2009 pp 78-84).

Characteristics of Bureaucracy Theory

Bureaucratic management of individual performance is the typical mark of contemporary communal organization. In order to study these organisations, both historically and in contemporary society, Weber developed the characteristics of an ideal-type bureaucracy:

Hierarchy of authority

Impersonality

Written rules of conduct

Promotion based on achievement

Specialized division of labour

Recording

A lot of administrative organisations, such as those paying welfare payments, recording vehicle licences, those which keep the banking system running, recording electricity and health & family support take their starting point from the work of Weber. Not-for-profit organisations elect their own management to take care of the party's tasks, for example political parties.

One of the main critiques of the bureaucracy is that it requires co-ordination from the manager, so all communications must go all the way up the chain and then down again. This creates a lot of problems on the way, because of the time consuming and complicated way of handling the communications (Richard, 2009 pp 41-47).

Weber's bureaucracy assumes that the employee's personality does not affect his or her performance. One can argue that in practice people's personalities are major parts of their role within the health & family support organisation. They want to socialise, have control and responsibility over their own work and develop their skills (Bessie, 2008 pp 214-222). If an authority ignores any of these factors it can be sure that it will meet resistance, and the employees would not work efficiently or with commitment.

Weber had a major influence on today's British health & family support organisations. He shows people how the bureaucracy still is used in some health & family support organisations. He also introduces people to more new and intelligent organisations that are able to change and adapt, which again suit for the year 2000. A major step towards organisational intelligence <https://assignbuster.com/bureaucracy-theory-of-management-essay-sample/>

is the decentralisation of power. The decentralisation is easiest to fulfil when the organisation can be divided into small independent business units as for example the task or person culture.

Weber regarded bureaucracy as the most efficient form of health & family support organisation. It was logical, self-perpetuating, and could resist external pressures of change. The practice of following existing norms and precedents meant that administrators could avoid having to exercise discretion, since relatively few unique problems would arise. However, bureaucracy is threatened by the large volumes of 'red tape' they generate, and the possibility that actual behaviour within the organisation might be influenced by charismatic leaders who are not part of the official hierarchy (Bessie, 2008 pp 214-222).

Advantages of Bureaucracy Theory

According to Max Weber, bureaucracy is the most efficient and most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings. Further it is reliable, precise and stable; these are all terms that are desired for large complex organisations that need to control all of employees (Bessie, 2008 pp 214-222). The organisation along the lines of Weber's model appears to bring the best results for the large-scale operation in a relatively stable environment. In addition, bureaucracy is based on legitimate authority, those that are being controlled by others; accept oppression as part of the work along. There are several characteristics that mould a particular organisation into following the bureaucracy model, such as, rules, hierarchy, salaried careers, recording (Charles, 2009 pp 78-84). If bureaucracy is working to its

full capacity within an organisation, there can be times when is no longer efficient to use alone. Bureaucracy is still used within health & family support organisations but usually in conjunction with an alternative (Bessie, 2008 pp 214-222).

Disadvantages of Bureaucracy

With the speed of environmental change increasing, Weber's views about the beneficial aspects of bureaucratic forms of organisation have been challenged. Perception of bureaucracy has a number of drawbacks and has been concern to cruel condemnation. The over-emphasis on regulations and actions, record keeping and official procedure can become more significant in its individual right than as a means to an end (Richard, 2009 pp 41-47).

The Modern View of Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic coordination of activities is the distinctive mark of the modern era. Bureaucracies are prearranged according to reasonable values. Offices are positioned in a hierarchical order and their processes are considered through uncongenial systems. Appointments are made according to specialized qualifications rather than ability criteria. Only through this organisational device has large- scale planning, both for the modern state and the modern economy, become possible. Only through it could heads of state mobilize and centralize resources of political power, which in feudal times, for example, had been dispersed in a variety of centres. Only with its aid could economic resources be mobilized, which lay fallow in pre-modern times.

According to Weber, Bureaucratic organisation is to Weber the privileged instrumentality that has shaped the modern polities, the modern economy, and the modern technology. Bureaucratic types of health & family support organisations are technically superior to all other forms of administration, much as machine production is superior to handicraft methods (Carolyn, 2009 pp 145-152).

Conclusion

In fact, bureaucracies did become enormously successful, easily out-competing other organisation forms such as family business and adhocracies. They also did much to introduce ideas of equality and fairness of chance into society, having a deep effect on the social organization of countries. However, bureaucracies are better for some responsibilities than others. In particular, bureaucracies are not well matched to corporations in which technology modifies quickly or are not yet well-understood.

Management must be aware of the participating aspects of bureaucracy which manage to consistency and competence in a difficult situation.

Though, management requires taking essential manners to support inspiration and individual improvement of staff, reconsider existing courses to make sure red-tape is decreased and to be additional reactive to the changing situation.

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