

# Contributions of scientific and human relations management approaches



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Discuss the respective contributions of the scientific management approach and the human relations approach to managing people in organisations. Use examples to illustrate your arguments.

Notes:

You will need to show your understanding of the main ideas of the theories and briefly outline their contribution to managing people in organisations.

You should demonstrate such understanding by giving examples of ways in which companies use these approaches.

## **Introduction:**

The author Bratton et al (2007: 355) defines scientific management as a process of achieving maximum efficiency consists of normalizing tasks and methodically segregating work into its smallest foundations. The scientific management developed at the end of the 19th Century; its founder is commonly accepted to be Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1917) although some differences of the theory have been developed by Gantt and Gilbreth. The scientific management approach concept was to improve labour productivity by the evaluation of setting up workflow practices. Taylor was a

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Chief Engineer at the Midvale Steel Company, his forefront job experience had led Taylor to identify that labour productivity was based on the inefficacy of a workforce that operated by “rules of thumb” methods. In 1898 Taylor the Bethlehem Steel works Company recruited him as a consultant, where he applied his philosophies of scientific management through evaluating work in a scientific manner. Taylor gained this information with his “Time and Motion Study”.

### **Discussion:**

This essay relates and contrasts two popular management schools of thought, Scientific Management and the Human Relations Approach. Both methods are based upon the maximisation of true business potential design and development through better organisation, but their methods in the way they seek to achieve it differ completely. Scientific Management embodies an organisations balanced approach that is based on elevated technical methods and strict management to improve overall worker output. The Human Relations Approach focuses on achieving relationships, recognition and achievement for increased productivity through the workers themselves and suggests strong workers to obtain this method (Daft, 2006). This essay defines each management method and contemplates main contributors with the two different approaches in the schools of thoughts. It will evaluate several associated theories of Scientific Management or the Human Relations Approach through literature support and principle methods. Finally the essay will study the place of each management method in modern day business before suggesting a conclusion to what amount the Human Relations

Approach signifies an improvement over the mere principles of Scientific Management in organisational management.

Scientific Management is referred to as the application of scientific principles to factory or labour intensive work improving the volume of efficiency and productivity within the workforce. The 'science' can be demonstrated far back in history of management itself. The creation of worldwide renowned structures, hence the Egyptian Great Pyramid, the Great Wall of China; the Roman roads, aqueducts, and Hadrian's Wall all required accuracy of a scientific nature without the means of measuring equipment i. e. computers and calculators (Grimes, 2006). Historically this approach served the industry adequately and the science of management has been well-thought-out by several distinguished theorists who have influences upon this productivity. One theorist was Adam Smith, who in the 18th century, projected specialism for efficiency and documented the merits of dividing labour. His methods implanted separating out tasks and focused workers on these tasks (Grimes, 2006). Fredrick Winslow Taylor was the greatest influences on management theory during the 20th century by providing his book "Principles of Scientific Management" (1911) which promoted the scientific approach to such content that he achieved the upmost title father of scientific management (Daft, 2006).

Taylor performed intensive ground breaking research to help improve the methods of workplace productivity. By believing workers were simply incapable of managing themselves and productivity could only be achieved if a manager directed their every move. By indulging this method he removed all responsibility from the workers who only require producing the design and <https://assignbuster.com/contributions-of-scientific-and-human-relations-management-approaches/>

planning of work and placed it in the hands of the managers whose role was to support and motivate the maximum effort from the worker. Taylor believed managers placed too much attention to detailed processes by which the work was achieved, which ultimately led to wastage in human effort because of the amount of importance stressed upon productivity and not enough on the workers. Taylor discovered most efficient techniques by performing a series of studies inspecting workers. (Freedman, 1992).

Taylor investigated the efficiency of shovelling. In addition to worker technique, prime shovel loads were calculated and redesigned for each material. Workers maintain shifting greater workloads for longer durations with less fatigue. This ' Science of Shovelling' permitted for a theatrical reduction in factory staff whilst maintaining productivity (NetMBA. com, 2000). Productivity may have been increased, but as a result required financial expenditure in recruiting employees. In dissimilarity to the Human Relations Approach which had no regard particularly for the employees themselves. Taylor's principles of Scientific Management had replaced skilled labour with unskilled labour that were selected on strength, speed and rather than intelligence and creativity (Taylor, 1911). Human Relations approach encourages employee authorization; the scientific approach reduces the employee to a series of tedious tasks and strips them of any sense of worth (Taylor, 1911).

Management was more than adequate at the time it was introduced through Taylor's principle of scientific Management, eliminating the disrespect workers received. Large manufacturing businesses such as Ford and General Motors were experiencing rapid expansion among management methods <https://assignbuster.com/contributions-of-scientific-and-human-relations-management-approaches/>

optimising output as well as focusing the attention towards their workers. Many of Taylor's principles were accepted in factory production. Throughout the 20th century the application of scientific principles had an astonishing result on productivity. As a result of increased production, the overall standard of living improved and so did workers displeasure with the methods of principles being introduced. Union-management and a popular interest in the 'human factor' (by behavioural scientists) resulted in a productivity slowdown. This encouraged organisations to relocate their work force to developing countries with cheaper labour, a mirror of the original conditions that allowed scientific management to thrive in the west (Oman, 2000). Organisations were now looking to new management methods to satisfy the increasing needs of their workforce and regain productivity and many found it in the form of the Human Relations Approach (Wilson 1990).

The Human Relations Approach characterizes a significant withdrawal from the automated and degraded approach of Scientific Management. Where Scientific Management concentrates on technique and output, the Human Relations Approach focuses on the individual and organisational change through human interactions (Baldrige 1972). It challenges the concept of managers think and workers do and places teamwork and motivation at the heart of any productive organisation (Daft 2006).

An early theorist to Human-Relations principles is Mary Parker Follett who added a humanistic measurement to the study of organisations. Follet placed more value on people rather by believing that organisations had a social responsibility to their workers, far more than the technics required. Many of her ideas on conflict resolution, inclusivity and worker authorization are <https://assignbuster.com/contributions-of-scientific-and-human-relations-management-approaches/>

being used in modern management today (Tonn 2003). Another influence came from Chester Barnard whose theory involved believing organisations were systems of co-ordinated human activity. Barnard had another view to the Scientific Management perspective of a manager as someone who directs orders to staffs and working employees. Instead, Barnard believed managers had the responsibility of promoting workplace co-ordination and to ensure the workforce cooperated productively (Hoopes, 2002). The person most associated with the Human Relations Approach is Elton Mayo, a Harvard University professor. In the 1920s Mayo was performing a series of studies called the Hawthorn Studies. The results of these studies challenged the principles of Scientific Management and marked the beginning of the Human Relations Movement (from which we derive the Human Relations Approach) (Grimes 2006).

The Hawthorn research investigated a variety of working conditions and their effect on productivity. One of these studies, called the Relay Assembly Test Room, focused on a small group generally always consisting of workforce in this case the subjects being six women workers. The group's productivity was monitored under a multitude of changing conditions and the studies exposed that output generally increased whenever a variable was altered. This was nonetheless of whether the variable adjustment was positive or negative. It was concluded that the size of the group itself had played a factor in the improvement. It appeared the group had developed the ability to self-motivate (Anonymous, 2007: Section 3).

It was recommended that the study itself had contributed to the increase.

This phenomenon was titled 'Hawthorn Effect' where productivity improves  
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if a group or individual detects they are receiving interest from management (Daft, 2006). The Bank Wiring Observation Room Study, revealed that a normal working group consisting of fifteen people fabricated output records, opposed management change and purposely engaged in 'soldiering', inhibiting their production and output to avoid increased productivity targets (Anonymous, 2007: Section 3).

Modern management can no longer focus solely on the organisation.

Improvements in the standard of living and more plentiful job markets mean that employees are less concerned about job loss. If their needs are not met, they are more likely to change their job, leaving the organisation and taking their 'potential' with them. It is no longer enough to believe that motivation is dependent on the 'carrot' of performance-based salary incentives or that productivity is dependent on aggressive management and direction.

Employees are now seeking other levels of reward within their roles.

Achievement, advancement and responsibility represent core needs and elements of these must be built into the design of work and management.

Modern organisations, such as Starbucks, have proved these concepts to be true and demonstrate contented staff and happier customers.

Organisations now operate in a new Intangible Economy that relies on an entirely different set of production factors including worker knowledge, teamwork, positive input, innovation and speed to market (Wikipedia, 2007).

Google has dominated cyberspace by realising the importance of these fundamental concepts and implementing a workplace culture to support them. Taylor stated "...the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles..." (1911) but in today's business <https://assignbuster.com/contributions-of-scientific-and-human-relations-management-approaches/>



climate it is proved that a more humanistic approach can produce superior results.

## **Conclusion:**

There are many success stories where modern businesses have strategically implemented the Human Relations Approach to great advantage, but modern business is not the reason for its success. The Human Relations Approach is not reliant on social, political or economic climate; its roots are embedded in a clear understanding of the human psyche, what motivates us, compels us and satisfies our needs. The principles of Scientific Management had no reference to these needs and can therefore never satisfy or motivate the workforce to the same degree. From this we can conclude that the Human Relations Approach to the design of work and management of people represents a significant improvement over work designed and managed according to the principles of Scientific Management.