

Theories of frederick taylor and adam smith public administration assignment

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In public administration and as well as other entities, organizational success largely depends on its structure. Over the years many theories have been developed regarding the structure of organizations. In this paper, I will be focusing on Fredrick Taylor, Adam Smith, Henri Fayol, Luther Gulick, Max Weber and Gilbreth. These “ structuralists” provide with different models of organizational structural theories. Frederick Taylor was the father of modern efficiency model. Around early 1900’s, he formalized the principles of Scientific Management and developed a set of ideas designed focusing on the individual to help maximize efficiency.

His main idea was that every job could be done in a scientific method which maximizes profit, he also believed that workers are inherently lazy and their rational thought made them maximize their own utility. Taylor states that Management (not workers) are to develop a science for every job, which replaces the old rule of thumb method. In order to do that, workers should be scientifically selected, trained, and placed in jobs for which they are mentally and physically suited. This scientific training is one of the most important principles of Taylor’s Scientific Management.

The job to be done should also be analyzed scientifically to determine the best way to do that job and standard times for jobs and work processes are to be established. Incentives should be offered so that workers behave in accordance with principles of the scientific management that have been developed. Also, management must support workers by carefully planning and helping implement their work. Taylor stated that there are “ misfortunes of industry” which hinders the progress of improving work. Taylor referred to

one of these misfortunes as the “ soldiering” of the worker; which means that the worker is not working at its full potential.

Taylor states that “ this loafing or soldiering proceeds from two causes. First, from the natural instinct and tendency of men to take it easy, which may be called natural soldiering. Second, from more intricate second thought and reasoning caused by their relations with other men, which may be called systematic soldiering” (Taylor 38). Taylor assumes that it is the nature of the man to work at a slower easygoing pace and also that the worker is a rational human being; he “ tries to balance the worries about job security versus the expectations of productivity” (Montemurro, 2008).

Taylor states that the worker is not to blame for soldiering since, even if given the opportunity to work harder with greater output, the effect on the labor market is such that rate of pay is cut. What incentive does management have to pay a man more wages, even for greater output, when another man will accept less for, although with less output. Taylor believes that scientific management of work will alleviate the common work problems of inefficiency, slow rate of work, and decreased productivity. Logically, according to Taylor’s view, soldiering would disappear as workers’ productivity and security improved.

Taylor’s theory relies heavily on a highly centralized authority and a strict dichotomy between management and the worker. His theory has come under some criticisms. First, When dealing with managing a complex organization, political and interest group power is almost guaranteed to be expected in the decision making process and could cause disorder,

disagreements and struggles for positions. These effects of political and special interest powers in a complex organization are unacceptable and unthinkable in a rational model presented by Taylor. Secondly, there is no “one best way” to complete a task.

Having the worker do same repetitive works could lead to serious lack of motivation and thus limiting productivity. Finally, his belief that man is a rational being and that he made decisions based on the amount of monetary reward led Taylor to “devise payment systems that closely related the kind of effort he sought with the level of reward offered” (Montemurro, 2008). Thus, there was strong criticism of this theory that treats human beings like machines and assumes that workers are satisfied by money alone. The second theorists that I will focus on is Adam Smith.

Adam Smith is considered the father of division of labor. Smith believed that the standard of living could rise only if the productivity of labor would rise. For Smith, the most important force leading to a rising standard of living was division of labor. Adam Smith also championed the idea of the “invisible hand;” the idea that free market would determine its own course without any external pressures with the delicate balance of supply and demand. In his theory of Division of Labor, Smith argues that increasing the division of labor increases productivity.

Smith illustrates this tendency by a description of work in a pin factory: he argues that the factory with the workers who are devised into separate tasks of pin making such as “One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head; to make the

head requires two or three distinct operations; to put it on, is a particular business, to whiten the pins is another” makes a significantly larger amounts of pins when compared to the factory where one worker carries out all these steps.

The above example shows hoe the division of labor in turn translates into a increased productivity. Smith’s division of labor heavily relies on the corporation between the workers. In the pin factory, each worker is taking a different part of the work, and in doing his part he is working along with the other workers in the pin factory. Fayol was a key figure in the turn-of-the-century Classical School of management theory. Fayol emphasized putting more weight on the human element of organizational planning.