

Taylorism and human relations school of thought essay sample

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Since the end of the 19th century, when factory manufacturing became widespread and the size of organisations increased, people have been looking for ways to motivate employees and improve productivity. Classical schools of management thought was built up at that time by Frederick. W. Taylor. After that, management became a true science. However, in 1930s, practical problems caused by Taylorism led to its replacement by the human relations school of thought. In this stage, theory built up with the diffusing of labour movement in capitalism countries.

This essay will focus on two of the earliest management approaches of Taylorism (scientific management) and the Human Relations School of thought. First the writer would like to compare and contrast of the two theories. This is followed by the central tenets of both models and finally giving examples of how they are still applied in contemporary society. Compare and Contrast Management articles usually consider Mayo as the founder of the Human Relations Movement. It is true, but his kind of thought looks like human relations and Taylorism are opposed. In writer's opinion, human relations did not replace Taylorism but that both approaches are rather complementary: Taylorism determining the actual organisation of the work process and human relations helping to adapt the workers to the new procedures.

Now we compare and contrast this two approaches in several different angles.

Comparison: First of all, Taylorism and Human Relations school of thought had similar goal. They looking for ways to motivate workers to increase

efficiency. In order to achieve this goal they try to identify workers' needs, which would then allow managers to "manipulate or influence these needs, making it easier for employees to improve their performance". Basically, two approaches are try to use different methods to achieve the same thing.

Besides, this two theories are similar in its transactional approach to motivate workers with an incentive, but not through the actual tasks on the job. Each model focuses on one type of human needs, either economic or social ones, and its satisfaction. However, the implementation of financial incentives emphasized by Taylor does not contradict the satisfaction of employee's social needs highlighted by the Human Relations School. Both models therefore rather complement one another than compete against each other.

Next, Taylor and Mayo both recognize the antagonistic between management and subordinate throughout the industrial world, aslo consider managers should have more liability on it. So called "mental revolution" was advocated by Taylor, "its very foundation the firm conviction that the true interests of the two are one and the same; that prosperity for the employer cannot exist through a long term of years unless it is accompanied by prosperity for the employee and vice versa; and that it is possible to give the workman what he most wants-high wages-and the employer what he wants-a low labor cost-for his manufactures". Mayo tried to achieve management and labour peace throught cooperation between official organization and informal work group.

Follow by that, the Human Relations School is similar to Taylorism in both are under the practical experiments. A series of practical illustration was made by Taylor in Bethlehem Steel Company and Midvale Steel Company, one of the experiments—the cutting steel experiments, even carried on 26 years. Mayo's theory also based on practical illustration, like the most well-known Hawthorne Studies.

Contrast: Generally saying, Taylorism and the Human Relations School pursue two different motivational models, the former being “homo economics”, as opposed to the latter's “homo gregarious”. Taylor sees workers merely as interchangeable machine parts, while the Human Relations School drawing the attention to the human being social needs. This is the biggest different between the two approaches.

Secondly, Scientific Management focus on individual workman, rather than a group of labour. In this thought, every single workman is different and should be treat specific. As Taylor describe “since each workman has his own special abilities and limitations, and since we are not dealing with men in masses, but are trying to develop each individual man to his highest state of efficiency and prosperity.” Mayo's study concentrated on group. He claim that “individual workers cannot be treated, in isolation, but must be seen as members of a group.” In every firms, beside the official organization, informal or unofficial group have a strong influence on the behavior of those workers in a group.

Thirdly, Taylor was not calculate the relationship in his theory. He believe that if the system of management has been change, the interests of the

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workman and the management should become the same. In fact, Taylor was cognizant of human relation problem in his study process, he wrote "no one who has not had this experience can have an idea of the bitterness which is gradually developed in such a struggle", but he was not study on the problem further.

On the contrary, Mayo point out that human relations is the most important element to influence efficiency. In the Hawthorne Studies, he discovered that monetary incentives and good working condition are less important to the individual than the need to belong to a group. Managers must be aware of these 'social needs' and cater for them to ensure that employees collaborate with the official organization rather than work against it.

Beside that, in Taylorism, workman can only be motivated with the help of financial incentives reflecting his concept of the economic man. As Taylor described "these two elements, the task and the bonus, constitute two of the most important elements of the mechanism of scientific management." In other words, efficiency depends on work system, working conditions and bonus. However, human relation school of thought claim that "work satisfaction depended to a large extent on the informal social pattern of the work group. Where norms of cooperation and higher output were established because of a feeling of importance. Physical conditions or financial incentives had little motivational value." This two ideas are absolute opposite.

Further more, Scientific Management suppose workman as "Economic man", people try to achieve maximum prosperity. Based on the paradigm of "Economic man", Taylorism aim to connect efficiency and wage, in order to

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maximum productivity and labour's property in the same time. While Mayo's thought is based on the paradigm of "Social man", rather than "Economic man". He concluded that people's work performance is dependent on both social issue and job content. People have social need, need to belong to a group rather than individual. Good relations is more important than money.

The central tenets Taylorism Taylorism is a management approach initiated by Frederick W. Taylor (1856-1915). Taylor was concerned with inefficiency in manufacturing operations, in particular with the phenomena of "loafing" and "systematic soldiering". He believed that the way to achieve higher efficiency would follow from detailed control of the work process by management and the decomposition of work into routine and predictable tasks. After experiments which focus to determine optimal work methods, Taylor created four principles of scientific management: 1. Development of a true science 2. Scientific selection of the worker 3. Scientific education and development of the worker 4. Intimate and friendly cooperation between management and workers.

These principles were implemented in many factories, often increasing productivity by a factor of three or more. Henry Ford applied Taylor's principles in his automobile factories, and families even began to perform their household tasks based on the results of time and motion studies.

Human Relations As Taylorism is associated with the name of Frederick W. Taylor, so is the Human Relations School of thought with the name of Elton Mayo (1880-1949), a psychologist, sociologist and organization theorist.

In the famous Hawthorne studies, the surprising result was that workers' productivity was not responding to variations in the physical conditions of work. Further experiments revealed the existence of informal work groups, which exercise a strong influence over attitudes and performance of their members. Mayo concluded that productivity was much less related to work conditions than to the social situation of the workers. Specifically, interpersonal relationships, within the work group and between workers and their supervisors, were found to be more significant than wage incentives and the physical conditions of work. Mayo introduced the theory of the social man, which assumes that workers are motivated both by their economic and social needs.

In conclusion, people are not rational with classical theorists but they assume social interaction is more important. People will be work well and feel satisfy if they enjoy interaction each other which can make them feel valued.

applied in contemporary societyScientific management and Human Relations school of thought both have long history. With time moves, some ideas in their approach seems out-dated. However, some of the methods and opinions still valuable for our modern organizations.

TaylorismWriter strongly believe that theory could be behind the times, while method lives forever. Taylor was the first person who used practical illustrations to study management issue in the history. Rather than staid in the the office, he came into machine shop, factory and company, a series of

experiments was made. For example, handling pig iron illustration, shovelling illustration, cutting steel illustration, and so on.

Taylor also was the first person who used scientific method instead of rule of thumb. As he said, "the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation." In his series of illustrations, he invited physiologists to study the endurance of the human animal, engineers to determine what fraction of a horse-power a manpower was, even handed over accumulated facts to a mathematician to develop the law from it. After that, people recognize how important and necessary to involve scientific methods in a management study.

What is more, Taylor, an advocate of using science substitute for the individual judgment of the workman. A standardizing work is an important part of Scientific management, each process should work out a standard rule to calculate efficiency and quality. Nowadays, with global standardization, a lot of standard systems such as ISO, GMP, are follow Taylor's thought.

Human relations school of thoughtBased on the Hawthorne Studies of the 1930s, Mayo found that work satisfaction depended to a large extent on the informal social pattern of the work group and interpersonal relationships. Where norms of cooperation and higher output were established because of a feeling of importance, therefore Mayo emphasized on employees's feeling and advocating a more participative and employee-centred managerial style which has been widely used all around the world in last two decades.

In Mayo's view, managers must be aware of informal groups and ensure that employees collaborate with the official organization rather than work against it. Writer consider this idea is the foundation of employees welfare and corporation culture because firms need to cater for employees.

Further more, terms like teamwork dominate organizational life today have their origins in the Human Relations movement. Firms suggest labours to cooperate as a team attempts to reduce the alienative and anomic effects of job and satisfy their social needed.

Conclusion" There is much truth in the saying every living practitioner is prisoner to the idea of dead theorist. Immunized by their daily confrontation with ' real world' corporate managers typically exhibit a healthy distrust of theory that, has in general, served them well" Clarke, K (Mulleins " Management and organizational behaviour" 2002, Prentice Hall.)The writer believe that even managers do assign or move towards new management approach, they still use some of the traditional management approach as a guideline or backbone in new management approach. Taylorism and Human Relations gave a great contribution to management thoery and although some industries have moved away from it, this two apporach still applied today. Taylorism remain effective particular for routine, low-skilled and low-involvement working environments and Human Relations School of thought attract knowledge workers for esteeming and teamworking.

The ideas of Taylorism and the Human Relations School are not mutually exclusive. However, both models are simplified in their assumptions and fail to consider that every individual is motivated by a different and

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complex set of interrelated factors that include besides money and social interaction a challenging, varied and meaningful job. The basic concepts of Taylorism and the Human Relations School, that proved effective in the past, are still useful today, but need to be complemented by newer ideas and imbedded in a more complex Human Resource strategy.

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