

Good essay on how
the quotation
highlights post-
colonialism as an
interpretive ap...

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MANAGEMENT PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction

Modern science contains significant range of different areas of knowledge that focus on people in the workplace and can potentially influence practice of organizations. Among these areas Hollway (1991) singles out scientific management, occupational industrial and social psychology, as well as human factors, human relations and organizational behavior (p. 4). Above-mentioned areas play a crucial role in management studies, because concepts and approaches that are used in these areas of knowledge can be used to affect people within the organization. Management psychology studies encompass most significant achievements of the areas of knowledge, discussed above. While previously management psychology studies were conducted with the help of cognitive and behavioral aspects, current management psychology is to great extent concerned with interpretive approaches.

For the purposes of this assignment I will refer to post-colonialism as an example of post-colonialism interpretive approach in the study of management psychology and discuss the relevance of this approach for management psychology studies.

The discussed quotation shows that in the work settings under study that the manager of Indian origin did not have any privileges beyond tea and towel. The reason for such situation was social isolation that was, by-turn, called forth by marginalization of the group to which the manager belonged. This marginalization has lots in common with racism as Parakash Tandon

explained that he was unable to tell that he is a manager, because he was not white, while only whites were employed as managers at that time (Tandon, 1971, p. 18). Tracing the example of the career of Parakash Tandon and its role in the formation of this person's manager's personality represents a clear example of the attempt to define the role of colonialism and racism on the formation of manager's personality. Such kind of study can also be important for considering the origins and effects of management policies, developed by managers, coming from marginalized groups in ex-colonial societies (Frenkel&Shenhav, 2006, p. 18)

As a second point let me refer to finding out what post-colonialism approach provides for. Post-colonialism is a broad theoretical approach that is aimed at examining the past and present impact of colonialism and racism on social, political and economic systems (Sherry, 2008). The peculiarity of post-colonial theory lies in the fact that it studies the experience of colonialism and its effects not only at the level of ex-colonial societies, but at the level of global developments as the aftereffects of empire (Quayson, 2000, p. 22). Using post-colonialism approach focuses on examining the ways particular people were exclude, marginalized and represented in ways that devalued them because of their race or ethnicity. Particular role of race-related studies in post-colonialism is determined by the fact that race is a profound determinant of one's political rights, one's location in the labour market and one's self-identity (Nkomo 1992, p. 487). Identity formation and development can be viewed as critical issues in post-colonial studies (Prasad&Prasad, 2003, pp. 116-117).

Above-mentioned facts related to post-colonialism allow me to consider the

quotation under study as an example of the narrative, typical for post-colonial studies as it is aimed at exploring the role of racism in the way the representative of a marginalized group learnt to become a manager.

Furthermore, the central role in the study belongs to the influence of racism on the manager's identity that is one of central concepts in management psychology.

Last point to be made refers to viewing post-colonialism as the example of interpretive approach to management psychology. Interpretive approaches emphasize processes that serve for creating and negotiating the meanings (Schwandt, 1994). One of its most important peculiarities lies in the fact that, because the world of intersubjectively created meanings does not have the counterpart in the physical reality of natural science, the methods of social sciences are inadequate to social sciences (Lee, 1991, p. 347). Recognizing the fact that identity is shaped not only by external, but an internal world of the person, interpretive approach focuses on the influences of many factors on the formation of identity in terms of management psychology. Among these factors the most wide spread ones are social-psychological aspects, power relations, cultural aspects and socio-historical influences.

Postcolonial studies are the ones that exert significant impact on the person's identity. The experiences of racism, marginalization and segregation make a person continuously rethink his/her place at society and the attitudes of others towards him/her. Exerting significant influence on the identity of the person, these experiences will inevitably influence the way this person learns management and his/her choice of managerial practices.

As the results of analysis proved that the quotation represents the example

of post-colonialism-related narrative and post-colonial studies are conducted under the umbrella of interpretive approaches, the quotation highlights post-colonialism as interpretive approach towards management psychology studies.

Why interpretive approaches are relevant in the field?

Deciding on the relevance of interpretive approaches for management psychology requires thorough analysis of the nature and objectives of the field, as well as the essence of interpretive approaches and the results that can be gained from using these approaches. Psychology plays an important role in management as it helps a manager elaborate on the practices of management that will be able to help him/her ensure proper performance. One of the main tasks of management psychology lies in studying the relationships between individual behavior and previous experiences of the person against the background of the study of organizations. As manager's main tasks are concerned with communicating with people (staff), it is crucial for manager to be able to take into account many psychology-related issues. They include understanding psychological background behind one's managerial practices and decisions, as well as the wide range of other issues, such as adjusting managerial practices to the personalities of employees, psychology of creativity and motivation at the workplace, and ideals and identities at work. Understanding management psychology and the relation between one's behavior and his/her experiences allows managers to elaborate on the managerial practices that will take into account psychological issues and ensure better performance.

The studies of management psychology have interdisciplinary nature; however, it can be also said that management psychology is the type of applied psychology. Psychology uses variety of both quantitative (e. g, questionnaires) and qualitative (observational methods, interviewing, diary method) methods of studying (Breakwell, Smith&Wright 2012, p. 9). Methods that are used for psychological research vary, dependently on the approach towards psychology that is preferred by the researcher. However, as management psychology represents the separate field of studies, a limited number of psychological methods and approaches are used. Cognitive approaches to management psychology emphasize studying internal mental processes, such as perception, attention, memory and problem-solving (Russell&Jarvis 2003, p. 28).

Understanding cognitive processes in humans in general and the peculiarities of cognitive processes of particular people is important for managing their work, however, it is not enough to be able to understand emotional side of the issue, as well as manage people's creativity and motivation.

The behaviorist approach is concerned with explaining people's normal and abnormal behavior by the ways one learnt, claiming that behavior is acquired through the processes of conditioning and learning (Glassman &Haddad, 2008, p. 421). Behaviorist approaches comes closer to studying people's experiences in terms of management psychological studies. However, it still provides managers with the opportunity to consider only external manifestations of one's personality without going beyond things that a person is capable of revealing by his/her behavior.

There is no single definition of either identity or personality. While cognitive theory of personality considers personality to result from the interplay of learned and innate styles of thinking, representatives of trait theory claim that all the differences between people can be reduced to a limited number of distinct behavioral styles or traits (Boyle, Matthews, Saklofsky, 2008, p. 15). Other views are presented by psychoanalytic, neo-psychoanalytic, humanistic and behavioral approaches offer different definitions of personality and views on the way it is formed.

There is a key difference between personality and identity. While the term “personality” is used to refer to one person and the way it differs from other people, the term “identity” can be used to characterize national, cultural and social groups. Particularly identity formation and the effects of identity on learning and management are of key importance for interpretive approaches to management psychology. Importance of this issue for management psychology is called forth by the fact that the field concentrates on revealing the influence of individual experience upon human actions and activities.

The usage of interpretive approaches in management psychology stems from phenomenological ideas in philosophy that consider human actions and activities to be to great extent determined by lived experiences (Smith&Osborne, 2003) (Sandberg, 2005, p. 42). The referral to identity formation issues in terms of interpretive approaches have provided variety of new means to investigate previously unexplored questions, enabling management and management psychology researchers to conduct research that leads to new forms of knowledge about organizations and management

(Sandberg, 2005, p. 42).

The key peculiarities of interpretive approaches lie in the fact that their advocates suggest not separating the subject and object. The object and subject are considered to be two independent entities that exist in themselves and later get to relate to each other, but the meaning of the subject implied the relationship to the object, while the object implies the relation to the subject (Giorgi 1992, p. 7).

Another important premise lies in claiming that reality is mediated not only through the live experiences of a particular person, but specific culture, historical time and language the person is situated within (Sandberg, 2005, p. 43). Basically, advocates of interpretive approach claim that it is impossible to produce objective knowledge, because each researcher perceives reality through the lens of his/her identity. Interpretive methods of research start from the position that each person's knowledge of reality, including the knowledge related to human actions, is a social construction that equally applies to research subjects and objects. In this regard what researchers might call their data are our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they do and other people are up (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Research paradigms inherently reflect researcher's beliefs about the world (Lather, 1986, p. 259).

However, such a claim calls forth significant controversy as the need appears to justify knowledge that is gained with the help of interpretive approaches (Conroy, 2003, p. 3). In this regard the concept of " independent reality" is used to correspond to the notion of truth and help researchers go beyond relativism (Hammersley, 1990, p. 62). Various criteria, such as

communicative, pragmatic and transgressive validity, as well as reliability as interpretative awareness are used by the advocates of interpretive research in order to justify the findings of their research.

Summarizing our knowledge about the field, we may suggest that management psychology can be viewed as the study at the crossroads of management, organizational studies and psychology or one of applied psychology's types. One of the main aims of management psychology lies in observing and studying the relationships between individual behavior and previous experiences of the person against the background of the study of organizations. In this regard it is important to understand that human behavior is to great extent determined by this person's identity. By turn, identity is formed as a result of simultaneous influence of person's own experiences and various external factors, such as historical time the person lives within, him/her belonging to a particular national, cultural and social group etc. Usage of interpretive approaches to knowledge that suggest that there is no objective reality, and there are lots of realities that are created by different people with regard to their own experiences and perceptions allows researchers study different people's perspectives in the context of organizational studies.

These studies are to great extent concerned with singling out and analyzing factors that influence a person's identity and its formation, using the concept of independent reality in order to go beyond relativism and develop management psychology knowledge that is practically applicable. Coming back to the key aim of management psychology, I may suggest that usage of interpretive approaches helps researchers to develop an in-depth

understanding of the relationship that exists between individual behavior (that is to great extent determined by person's identity) and person's previous experiences. Combination of various interpretive approaches allows researcher to take into account various experiences of a person and get a multifaceted understanding of the link between behavior and person's experiences.

Conclusion

The first research question of the assignment lied in studying the quotation from the article by Srinivas (2013) as the example of postcolonial studies as an interpretive approach to management psychology. The quotation described the impact of racism experiences on attitudes towards new Indian manager in Bombay branch of multinational corporation and his management identity formation. As postcolonial studies concentrate on studying the influence of colonialism on identity in the context of organizational studies, it was logical to suggest that the study of the impacts of colonialism in India by the example of particular person's career is the example of postcolonial study. The next step was to prove that postcolonial studies can be considered the type of interpretive studies. Postcolonial studies are the ones that fall within the scope of interpretive approach as they concentrate on studying previous experiences of a person as a cornerstone of identity formation and person's behavior in organizational context. Having proved that the study by Srinivas uses postcolonial studies approach and the fact that this approach is an interpretive one, I can claim that the quote under study is a manifestation of post-colonialism as

interpretive approach to management psychology studies.

Interpretive approaches are relevant for the field of management psychology due to the fact that their usage helps to reach the key aim of management psychology that lies in understanding the link between individual behavior and previous experiences of a person in the organizational context. Mutual aim of management psychology and interpretive approaches lies in studying the degree and essence of the impact of both internal and external factors on the person's identity formation. Combination of various interpretive approaches allows analyzing the whole complexity of influences of the person's experiences upon his/her personality formation.

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