

Is management science or art essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



‘ There is no universally accepted definition of management as an activity due to the variety of approaches to the theoretical background of the subject’.

(Echu, 2000, p. 3) Many people have defined management as they understand it or based on the perspective with which they view it. In order to have a good understanding of management one needs to examine the various definitions and the various schools of thought about management.

Obasanjo,(1994) defines management as ‘ the ability to harness and utilize available resources, both human and material, to achieve set goals’.

According to Henri Fayol (1916) ‘ to manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control. In the words of McFarland (1971), management is the process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposive organization through coordinated cooperative human effort. Ejiofor (1987), however defines management as the ‘ the art of working, particularly through people, for the achievement of the broad goals of an organization. ‘While we can go on and on with the different definitions of management by different authors as they see the subject at different times, there are a number of issues which are recurrent in the definitions. One of such is the fact that management entails process, planning as well as the orchestrated effort of people to achieve goals which must earlier have been set by the organization through its managers. The process of organizing people into teams, recognizing their different abilities and gifting may also involve a good knowledge of human personalities and human behaviour.

All these involve a good deal of observation, analyses, experimenting and making conclusions, which are still subject to review as one's knowledge increases. Moreover, without the improvement in the output of the people to achieve set goals, there cannot be said to have been effective management. So then, this is where management interfaces with science. While it is also difficult to give a hard and fast definition of science, one of the universally accepted facts is that scientists observe. They make inferences (called hypothesis or theory), put these inferences to test and make conclusions based on them.

In the same vein, a manager must make observation about the nature of the organization, the attributes, strength, weakness, and personality type of people working with him and make inferences which he may have to put to test and eventually make conclusions on what to do, when to do it and who it should be committed to in order to achieve maximum results. According to Tolstoy (1896), 'the activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. The receiver therefore has entered into a kind of relationship with the sender which ultimately influences him to experience what the sender is experiencing. In the same vein, management involves the manager being in a kind of relationship with the employee or staff as the case may be, so as to influence him to an emotional state that will inspire him to achieve the goals the organization have set. From the fore-going, it is therefore reasonable and pertinent to say that management is both art and science.