

Scientific management and human relations movement



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“ Compare and contrast the attitudes of the Scientific School of Management thought (Taylor et al) with those of the Human Relations Movement (Mayo et al) with regard to people at work” “ Getting things done through people”, according to Mary Parker Follet (1941) is management.

Management is said to have no fixed definition, but different authorities on management have different views on it. There are many theories on management. The Classical Theory comprising Scientific Management of Taylor, Administrative Management of Fayol, Bureaucratic Organization of Weber. The Neo-Classical Theory includes the Human Relations Movement of Mayo along with others like Roethsilberger and Dickson and the Behavioural Schools of Maslow, McGregor, Herzberg, Argyris, etc. There also exists another theory known as the Modern Management Theory.

The aim of this essay is to bring out the differences and similarities between the theories of the Scientific School of Management Thought (Taylor et al – classical) and the Human Relations Movement (Mayo et al – neo-classical). The basis of contrast and comparison will be ‘ the worker’ and the views of these schools of thought on handling and controlling the workforce as well as the workplace and the different ways in which they ‘ get things done through people’. Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856 – 1915, Philadelphia) was a trained engineer who advocated the concept of Industrial Efficiency. Taylor is known as the Father of Scientific Management and is regarded as one of the first most successful Management Consultants.

He is most famous for his ‘ Time and Motion Study’ and the ‘ Piece Rate’ system that he introduced. Elton Mayo (1880 – 1949, Australia) was the

Director of the Department of Industrial Research at Harvard University (Donnelly. R, 2000) He is known as the founder of the Human Relations Movement. Mayo's involvement in the most famous 'Hawthorne Studies' led to an altogether different school of thought on management known as the Human Relations Movement.

According to Taylor, the working practices of his day proved to be barriers to increased output instead of facilitating the same. The 'Rule of Thumb' method of quantifying work, failure of management in directing the workers to full efficiency, and workers' restriction of output in order to protect their interests ('systematic soldiering')(Pugh. D, 1996) were seen by Taylor as the main obstacles to maximum productivity. The principal object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for each employee (Donnelly. R, 2008) Taylor believed that management could be improved if it came to be seen as a science (Donnelly. R, 2000) Therefore, he came up with certain principles of management which would help the employers as well as the employees to attain maximum prosperity and productivity if used: 1.

Each worker's job should be broken down into pieces and the way of doing each piece of that work should be determined after 'scientific investigation'.

2. Scientific selection of the worker. 3.

The scientific training and development of the worker. 4. Division of work into i. e.

managers should handle the designing, directing and supervision of the work, and the workers should perform the given work as instructed while <https://assignbuster.com/scientific-management-and-human-relations-movement/>

maintaining intimate and friendly co-operation between the management and the workforce. The human relations school of management was developed as a result of the findings of the Hawthorne experiments (Agarwal. R, 2002) in the experiment, Mayo explained that: " what actually happened was that six individuals became a team and the team gave itself wholeheartedly and spontaneously to cooperation in the experiment. " " The consequence was that they felt themselves to be participating freely and without afterthought, and were happy in the knowledge that they were working without coercion from above or limitation from below" (web, 2008) According to Mayo, to achieve its goals, the organization must attempt to understand and respect the emotions, sense of recognition and satisfaction of non-monetary needs of the workers. The Human Relations Movement held that

- Individuals are motivated by social needs and good on-the-job relationships and respond better to work-group pressure than to management control activities (web, 2008)
- Organizations are co-operative social systems (Graham.

R, 2008)

- Satisfaction of psychological needs should be the primary concern of the management (Sridhar. M. S, 2008)
- Informal work groups can have a substantial effect on productivity (Donnelly. R, 2008)
- The workers' main concern - satisfaction of their needs other than those of monetary nature

Hardly a competent workman can be found who does not devote a considerable amount of time to studying just how slowly he can work and still convince his employer that he is going at a good pace.

" (web, 2008) Taylor believed that the sole motivator for the workers to do their job was money. He believed that increasing the financial reward of the <https://assignbuster.com/scientific-management-and-human-relations-movement/>

workers would help increase productivity and maintain job satisfaction.

According to Taylorism, •Workers are lazy and they would develop their own ways to reduce the amount of work assigned to them as much as they can and the sole best motivator to their work is economic incentive. There is 'one best way' and it's the manager's job to find it (Graham.

R, 2008) •Work should be divided in such a manner that the designing and planning of the job must be done by the management and its execution must be carried out by the workers without further thought or questioning. With this view, Taylor devised a system known as the 'differential system' which he said 'not only pulls the man up from the top, but pushes him equally hard from the bottom' (Donnelly. R, 2000) This means that the workman would not only be rewarded for accomplishing his tasks, but would also be punished for failing to do so. This meant that the job of the worker had to be analyzed, objectives and targets had to be set in terms of what was to be done and how it was to be done and a standard reward had to be fixed for the amount of work done within a certain time-scale by the manager and it was the worker's duty to complete the assigned task. The above process also illustrates the division of work and the separation between the management and the workforce. (Note that most of the principles of scientific management are applied) Mayo believed that financial reward was not the only motivation for the workers.

The results of the Hawthorne Experiments showed that "social bonds within working groups were so strong that group interests were sometimes placed above individual financial rewards." (web, 2008) "These groups can become powerful driving forces in accomplishing organizational goals if they see their <https://assignbuster.com/scientific-management-and-human-relations-movement/>

own goals as satisfied by working for organizational goals. ” (Hersey. P, 2001) The above inferences led to the demise of the ‘ economic man’ shown by Taylor as being lazy and responding to only monetary incentives and rise of the ‘ social man’ with a desire to be continuously associated with people. Human Relations Movement held that the output was determined by the informal group where, if a worker valued the esteem of others and his/her acceptance in the group and knew that extraordinary output would risk his existence in the group, he would, but naturally follow the pre-conceived group norm of production and produce only as much as the other members of the group produced. Therefore, the organization was to be developed around the workers and had to take into consideration human feelings and attitudes.

“ If you treat people as they are, they will stay as they are. But if you treat them as they ought to be, they will become bigger and better persons” (Goethe) Both the schools of management thought had their own ideas, principles and views. The above information provides evidence of how different they were. Some of the prominent points of differences are discussed as follows; The scientific management movement emphasized a concern for task (output) (Hersey.

P, 2001) i. e. it considered the individual worker to be the basic unit of organization. While the Human Relations Movement stressed a concern for relationships (people) (Hersey. P, 2001) i.

e. the informal group was now the basis of organization. The function of the leader under scientific management was to set work criteria and enforce

them on the workers and was to be seen as the figure of high authority.

While under the human relations movement, the function of the leader was to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the employees while providing assistance and opportunities for their ' personal growth and development' and was to be seen as " an agent for intra and inter group communication". (Donnelly. R, 2008) Taylorism avoided ' informal groups', but the human relations movement supported their existence.

The reason was that scientific management portrayed the worker as mechanical, passive and a being that worked only for monetary rewards and ' the one best way' to achieve organizational goals was to maintain as much rationality as possible. But the human relations movement believed that the existence of such informal groups would facilitate the communication and cooperation among members and would help achieve organizational goals. Scientific management aimed at the growth of the organization but paid little attention to the worker's individual growth by exercising external control over the worker's performance, while the human relations movement aimed at organizational growth, yet maintaining the dedication to the individual growth of the worker. According to Taylor, the sole motivator for a worker was ' monetary incentive'. Therefore, the worker under scientific management was an ' economic man'. According to Mayo, satisfaction of social wants of the workers like communication and the sense of acceptance was the driving force of the organization.

Therefore, the worker under the human relations movement was a ' social man'. Scientific management treated the worker as a ' human machine' and used the ' differential system' for motivation. While, the human relations
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movement held that the satisfaction of the worker was its main objective.

According to the human relations movement, “ satisfied workers are motivated workers and therefore effective workers”. (Adair.

J, 1998) Even though both the schools of management thought were so different from each other in their approach, they shared common ground at one point - ‘ increased productivity’, which was the ultimate goal. “ SM believed that planning should be separated from doing, HR believed in a far wider participation when it came to decision-making” (Donnelly. R. D, 2000). Whereas, Reshef. Y says in his web publication that “ The Human Relations movement emphasized emotional aspects in human behavior, yet still maintained the division of labor between those who planned and those who executed.

(web, 2008). While both mean the same, there is a slight difference in the two statements. So, it can be concluded that even though both aim towards one common goal, their ways of approach can be different. The scientific management theory and the human relations movement theory both aim at organizational excellence through increased efficiency. This excellence can be achieved if either of the two theories is applied or both. In light of the modern management scenario, a good manager is one who applies a blend of well proportioned management theories into practice.

Thus, SM and HR can be seen as two wheels of the same cart and none is superior to the other. Bibliography: 1. Donnelly. R- Schools of Management Thought, Pitman Publishing, Scotland, 2000 2. Donnelly.

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