

The classical theory of organizations vs communicative organization model



There are three theories of organization emerged in the early part of the twentieth century and still permeate certain sectors of organizational life today: Frederick Taylor's theory of scientific management, Henri Fayol's administrative theory, and Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy.

The Communicative Organization model is based on the assumption that organizational structure is created and recreated through social interaction and that talk is a form of action.

Many approaches to the study of organizational communication are possible, each of which depend on a set of assumptions about human nature, the nature of work, and the relations which do or should pertain between individual workers and groups.(Galvin, M 1992)

Both of the two theories play a significant part in organizational communication, they are not mutually exclusive. But mainly current organizational theories offer principles and practices that are in opposition to classical theories.

This essay discusses in two parts, firstly I'm going to compare and contrast the two different theories and secondly I'll find out how they innovative influence communication.

Compare and contrast

Classical theory

Hierarchy and its ramifications such as unity of command are at the heart of classical theory, the main part of their work was concerned with what the

manager or the administrator should know and do, Foyal wrote all about the functions of the administrator, Taylor's theory of scientific management outlined how managers could maximize profits, and Miller more focused on what management needs to accomplish. They were not really unawareness of the " managed" part of the organization.

There is a clear emphasis too in classical theory on the superior-subordinate relationship, in the principle of unity of command,

The Communicative Organization Model

1. Members are cognizant of the fact that misunderstandings occur as a nature part of organized activity and should be anticipated;
2. Certain characteristics of social interaction are encouraged and supported;
3. Dependence on behavioural flexibility for successful communication and effective organizational structuring is critical;
4. Strategic communication planning is commonplace

The CO model provides a practical and analytical tool for confronting life in organizations, both as a member and as a critic. (Modaff, 2002) It revealed the problems that encounter in both managers and employees, and all kind of relationships within an organization.

Remnants of classical theory still exist to greater or lesser extent (depending on the industry) in managerial practices today, several principles of classical theories seem to make inherent sense.

Similarities

Although classic theories and communicative organization model are totally different two concepts they still have something in common.

Both of them are theories which are developed for organizational management.

".. a model of core principles to guide and influence the way people function in organizations. We call this model the communicative organization(CO)."

" These three theories of organization emerged in the early part of the twentieth century and still permeate certain sectors of organizational life today." (Modaff, 2002)

Both of them addressed that misunderstandings seem to characterize communication in organizations.

" members are cognizant of the fact that misunderstandings occur as a natural part of organized activity and should be anticipated.."

".. classical theories were essentially attempting to minimize the occurrences of misunderstandings.."(Modaff, 2002)

Differences

Purpose

Classical theories are developed for newly emerging organizations to have efficient and affective means of managing their modes of production after the Industrial Revolution.

Communicative Organization model is aimed at all organizational members(not just management) and accomplishes two interrelated purpose:

1. It highlights the prevalence of misunderstandings in organizational activity, and 2. it illustrates how the communication behaviour of organizational members create and recreate organizational structures that can assist in promoting or combating misunderstandings.

Misunderstanding

The CO model is a practical model of communication in organizations as well as a theoretical guide. It is the theoretical in that it proposes that the essence of organizational life is communication and, as such, is fraught with misunderstandings.(Modaff, 2002)

It offers specific communication skills as being central to effective organizational involvement and provides alternatives for addressing unavoidable misunderstandings.

The CO model addresses “ members are cognizant of the fact that misunderstandings occur as nature part of organized activity and should be anticipated”. In other words, in the communicative organization, misunderstandings are expected and considered normal. No one should be surprised by them, instead people assume misunderstandings can lead to <https://assignbuster.com/the-classical-theory-of-organizations-vs-communicative-organization-model/>

alternative task structures and roles, help them consider new ways of acting, and in creative problem solving.

In opposition, by promoting the principles of specialization, standardization, and predictability in organizations, classical theories were essentially attempting to minimize the occurrences of misunderstandings.

Classical theories hypothesized that problems in organizations occurred when tasks were not directed and workers were left relatively unregulated, that is, free to experiment with work styles and procedures and able to communicate with anyone about anything at any time. Strictly regulating how work was accomplished, who could speak to whom and when, and managing through fear are all instruments for reducing misunderstandings in classical theories.(Modaff, 2002)

In Taylor's scientific management theory, the first element " the scientific design of every aspect of every task" and the fourth element " Equal division of work and responsibility between worker and manager" which sought to eliminate every aspect which could lead misunderstandings within the workplace.

In Fayol's administrative theory, elements such as " Division of work", " Authority and responsibility", " Unity of command", " Unity of direction", " Centralization", " Scalar Chain" were all mechanisms intended to simplify the communication process such that misunderstandings caused by multiple supervisors and free-flowing communication would be eliminated.

Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy have some of the same element as those by Taylor and Fayol, " Rules" are the essence of bureaucracy, with a rule for every possible contingency, members of a bureaucracy are able to act predictably and consistently in any situation with which they are confronted. " Everything written down" is perhaps the second tenant of bureaucracy is another way to eliminate misunderstandings.

Social Interaction and Behavioral Flexibility vs The Metaphor of the Machine

In the communicative organization certain characteristics of social interaction are encouraged and supported, each person must be prepared to adapt to changes in the environment or context of our communicative activity, changes in relationship itself, patterns of interaction, and the dialectical tensions in those relationship.

But classical theories approach to organizations is characterized by the metaphor of a machine. In other words, from this perspective, organizations are viewed as if they are machines; managerial principles, models of operation, treatment of workers, and communication in the organization are considered in the light of this metaphor. (Modaff, 2002)

A machine rarely deviates from the norm unless some part of ceases functioning properly or stops completely. There're no such things like " teamwork" and communication exist in classical theory.

Planning

As Fayol described the element of “ planning”, he talked about it as a unidirectional phenomenon where the managers plan the activities, goals and objectives of the workers.

In CO model, strategic communication planning embraces the notion of planning strategies to address the misunderstandings that the organization knows will occur. Strategic communication planning consists of four interrelated strategies: recognise, contain, cope, and construct. Compare to Fayol's: “ unity, continuity, flexibility, precision”, we can see that now the planning is often done in conjunction with the workers in a participatory fashion.

Classical theory and CO model in Organizational communication

How the classical theories influence communication

As I discussed above how the three different classical theories were seeking to minimize misunderstandings, at the same time, new forms of misunderstandings created by these theories as unintentional by-products.

Attempts of classical theories to increase predictability by demanding that everyone follow exact rules for behaviour led to workers whose creativity and intelligence were industrialized, which in turn increased their dissatisfaction, lowered motivation, and decreased commitment to the task and the organization. Regulating communication by emphasizing messages that flowed mainly in one direction, from supervisor to subordinate, minimized instances of arguments and increased efficiency but decreased

communication effectiveness by generating more miscommunication and decreased levels of satisfaction.

Taylor's principles present in the modern workplace in some aspect. Several of Taylor's principles still permeate many modern organizations. Workers must perform tasks in regulated ways in order for the system to operate efficiently. And the system of remuneration Taylor proposed is still present in various forms like salespeople, customer-support personnel, and even corporate recruiters. The presence of these ideas is not always seen as positive. As Percy Barevik stated in April 19, 1998, issue of the Guardian: "I would say that we in the Western industrialized countries still are 'prisoners of Taylorism.' Workers are regarded as a commodity, seen as some sort of machine specialized in certain functions-maybe using 10 percent of their capacity" (Modaff, 2002)

Fayol's elements of "planning", "Organizing" are still remain in the modern workplace but their meaning has changed.

Fayol's famous Scalar Chain is the communication plan for Fayol's theory. Communication, according to Fayol, should follow the Scalar Chain.

Classical theories turned to the two principal organizations of the time, the military and the Catholic Church, as models for modern industrial management (Mc Gregor [1960] 1985). Strict control of workers, absolute chains of command, predictability of behaviour, and unidirectional downward influence (among others) were characteristics of these two successful organizations that made their way into modern organizational theory. The

resulting organizational theories are referred to here as the classical approaches to organizations and communication within them.(Modaff, 2002)

These theories still exist to greater or lesser extent in different industries in managerial practices today.

How the CO model influences communication

The CO model is practical that it offers specific communication skills as being central to effective organizational involvement and provides alternatives for addressing unavoidable misunderstandings.

According to Modaff, communication is central to the existence of the organization; it creates and recreates the structure that constitutes the organization. That structure, in turn, affects the nature and flow of communication within it. Things can go wrong at any and every point in the communication process. The concept of misunderstandings, as addressed in CO model, involves more than ineffective communication between members of an organization. It is an umbrella term used to connote the problematic nature of interaction in organizational settings. Misunderstandings characterize communication in organizations. In the communicative organization, misunderstandings are not “ removed” but instead are anticipated. In CO model, misunderstandings are seemed to lead to new ways of structuring tasks and roles, help people to consider alternative ways of acting, lead to creative problem solving.

In CO model, one of the most important characteristics of immediacy is active listening. Listening is a vitally important skill. Why is listening so

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important? One major reason is time: listening is the most frequent and, arguably the most important type of on the job communication. Adler (1999) states that, studies conducted over 60 years ago indicated that adults spent an average of 29.5 percent of their waking hours listening. Personnel at all levels including top, middle and lower level managers as well as workers with no managerial responsibilities, were asked to note the time they spent engaged in various types of communication during a typical week. The results were interesting: Listening ranked number one with 32.7 percent, Speaking was 25.8 percent, Writing was 22.6 percent and Reading was 18.8 percent.

It is said that there is a correlation between the amount of time spent listening and salaries. I read that executives spend even more time listening than other employees. Researchers have found that executives spend between 65 and 90 percent of the working day listening to someone. I believe that successful upper managers know what questions to ask their subordinates and can apply effective listening techniques to absorb the answers.

In order to address the misunderstandings that the organization knows will occur, strategic communication planning embraces the notion of planning strategies. Strategic communication planning consists of four interrelated strategies, or practices: recognize, contain, cope, and construct.

CO model addressed that planning is an essential management tool, and chances are you'll see them using a strategic plan and a tactical or operational plan. Tactical and operational plans both deal with how to get

the job done, whereas strategic planning is concerned with what shall be done. Communicators can learn a great deal from “ classical” strategic planning. The process and its techniques, language, and methods of measuring success, all combine to help the organizational communicator learn to think strategically and manage communication in a strategic manner. Your organization’s strategic plan is an excellent source of information for use in writing your communication plan. After all, the organization’s strategic plan is a list of significant actions that need communication support.

The heart of strategic communication management is the communication plan.

It reconciles communication activity with the organization’s mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics in a measurable way. In other words, strategically.

A communication plan is a written statement of what communication actions you will engage in to support the accomplishment of specific organizational goals, the time frame for carrying out the plan, the budget, and how you will measure the results.(Lester, 2002)

For years, organizations have used classical strategic planning techniques to get where they want to go. Communication plans serve the same purpose. They guide the communicator to those right actions that will help the organization achieve its goals using strategic communication as a management tool. Strategic plans, marketing plans, and business plans are all similar. It follows, then, that to be considered “ strategic,” communication <https://assignbuster.com/the-classical-theory-of-organizations-vs-communicative-organization-model/>

plans must be structured in a similar way. As we've discussed, the typical strategic plan usually consists of four major sections, and each section may have as many as ten sub-sections. The rationale for a strategic communication plan is similar, but the plan is structured somewhat differently. with a specific or single issue. It works well for an integrated communication plan treating internal, external, and other communication components, such as advertising or community relations.

The planning model works equally well for internal communication only. In the reality of day-to-day use, you will probably use many of these steps in combination, without using the complete model step for step. That's okay. The beauty of strategic thinking is just that - you think strategically. You know the purpose of your organization, you examine the environments in which your organization operates, the issues it faces, and through this systematic analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, you develop a plan of strategic communication actions to help the organization achieve its mission.