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People, Management and Organisations: The Basic Rudiments of Management Thoughts

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Abstract:

The emergence of each successive theory has shaped the scope of management thoughts into a complex phenomenon but the theories can be decomposed into concerned for people, management and organisation. The study focused on the relationship between these elements and how they have shaped management thoughts overtime. The study explored the concepts of management thoughts through qualitative research design. Published materials including textbooks and journal articles were used. The finding revealed that management thoughts can be understood on the bases of concerns for people, management and organisations. These basic elements are interdependent but together they function to achieve one unified purpose of satisfying human's needs. It was recommended that people, organisation and management should be the focus of all management thoughts including organisational design, and should be tailored towards satisfying human's needs.

Keywords: People, management, organisation, management thoughts

1. Introduction

A management thought as it exists today is a complex dialectic in search of better approach to achieve optima satisfaction for people. The philosophy evolved from the perception that no one is self-suffice, and scarcity of resources makes it absolutely illusive for man to meet the superfluity of his desires without some forms of collaborations. This implies that solidarity is necessary to harness efforts to meet ends that cannot be achieved when people act alone (Gulzar, 2015). People derive benefits in integrating and cooperating with others, whether for economic, cultural, political, social or other ends. For this reason, various organisations sprang and the need for management emerged.

Aggregating people into different groups comes with challenges. It creates problems of interpersonal relationships, human efforts and material resources need to be directed and coordinated. These challenges require a set of skills that management provides. Abinitio, the search for better ways to satisfy human's needs led to the creation of organisations that invented management. This was characteristics of the era before industrial revolution (Witzel, 2012). These basic elements have been the bases for management thinking over the years, and may continue to direct management thoughts in the future.

Management theories were evolved in attempts to offer explanations to improve organisations and management to yield better benefits for people. Each theory focused on one aspect or all of these and successive theory tends to refine what had been postulated. For instance, Celik and Dogan (2011) analyses of the science of management implied that classical theorists were concerned with providing framework for efficient organisation, the neoclassical were interested in the human aspect of people and the contemporary scholars are interested in bridging the divide between people and organisation through effective management.

This paper x-rays management thoughts in terms of concerns for people, organisation and management. It seeks to establish interdependence between these basic bedrocks of management thoughts.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the relationship between people, organisation and management.
- To examine the influence of people, organisation and management on management thoughts.

3. Statement of the Problem

People have over the years learned to form themselves into groups in effort to achieve their goals. They realised that they cannot meet their individual ends by acting alone but by working together and achieving collective goals, groups create the platform for people to articulate and achieve their respective goals. Notwithstanding, group formation has unique problems that require skills to direct, coordinate and control. Consequently, people, groups and skills have become the pivot of group activities and reference of management discourses.

The idea of management thoughts was to help managers clearly understand the nature of people, organisation and management in order to improve on their functions. In which case, it is better for management thoughts to be distinguished as pro-people, pro-management and pro-organisation. Analysis of this kind could provide better understanding of the subject matter of management.

4. Conceptual Framework

Management thought is the melting point for the thinking about people (their perceptions and values), organisations (what they represent and how they are represented) and management (the process that activates organisational resources both human and materials to achieve set goals). These basic elements together with the influences of external environments form the nucleus of management thoughts.

The nature of relationship between these elements can be evaluated from the system perspective where each unit cooperates with each other in a dynamic state. Management interfaces with people and organisations, and influences their behaviours, in the process, management theories are generated. Organisations are dependent on people; therefore, all the three elements are people focused. Meanwhile, people are dynamic and unpredictable; they can create and destroy, hardworking and lazy, resourceful and wasteful, loyal and disloyal. This dual nature of people makes organisations vulnerable without management. Each element influences the other and all of them function together as management thoughts. Management thoughts therefore are reflections that have accumulated over the years on these elements along with influences of external environments. The figure below depicts the relationship between management thoughts and its elements.

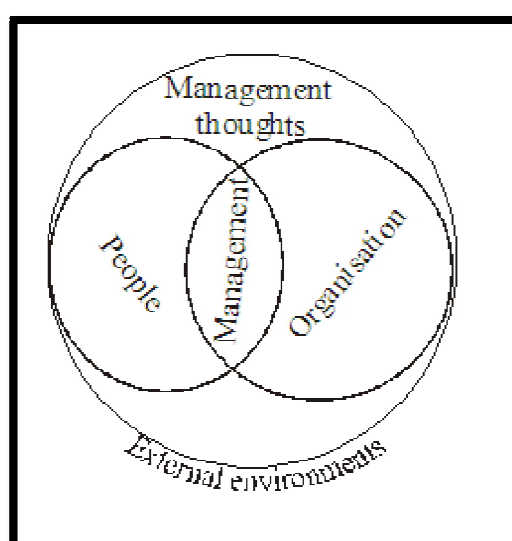


Figure 1: Relationship between Management thoughts and Its Basic Elements
Source: Author's Computation

5. Literature Review

Management and organisations are products of necessities. Management emerged from attempts to harmonise human efforts and resources towards meeting organisational goals. Scarcity of resources and hostility of the environment made it imperative for people to join groups to achieve specific goals which they would not have achieved working isolation (Gulzar, 2015). If not properly channelled, group efforts could lead to colossal waste, therefore the need to manage efforts.

People developed the art of managing long before management was invented (Olusoji & Ogunkoya, 2014). The basic philosophy of management is to achieve goals for people through people (Goshal, 2005). This philosophy has not been altered despite changing time and environments (Birkinshaw, 2010). Early management thoughts were hinged on people, groups and skills to manage group efforts (Olusoji & Ogunkoya, 2014). Today's management consists of growing streams of thoughts about basic tripartite elements of people, organisation and management.

People are the dynamic individuals with changing attitudes, perceptions and values (Ozcan & Barca, 2010). People are the nucleus of organisation and management; the whole ideas about management and organisation are centred on people. The human is basically the unit of analysis for the study of organisations and management (Wren & Bedeian, 2009). The extent of concern of managers for people has evoked plethora of discourses. Concern for people will translate to workers being treated humanely. Such concern will translate to respect and protection of rights of the workers.

Organisation consists of individuals with common interest bonded together to achieve a purpose. Organisation provides the structure for people to meet their goals. The concept x-rays people at work, group dynamics, tasks assignments, technology, pattern of communication and the entire arrangement of the organisation (Tiorean & Bratucu, 2009). Analysis of organisation will border on effectiveness of rules guiding interpersonal relations in the workplace, clearly defined tasks and their arrangements and the link between authority and control. An efficient organisation will be assessed on the basis of how the structure is tailored to satisfy the workers internally and supports for people to achieve their collective goals.

Management consists of people, process as well as the prerequisite skills to direct people and coordinate resources. Management is central to people and organisation. Its primary concern is to provide supports for people and organisation by leading, directing and controlling them to achieve their purposes. Concern for management will border on motivated and effective workforce and efficient organisation properly disposed to provide quality products and services to satisfy humans' needs. Management thoughts evolved in context of how people have struggled with matters of relationship between people, organisation and management. Thus, the whole superfluity of discourses that build up to management thought can be dissembled into three basic analyses – people, management and organisation.

6. People, Organisation and Management: An Enduring Relationship

Plato once opined that cities came into being because people acted together (Lloyd, 2012). The great wonders of the world would not have been if people acted individually. The creation of groups gives people the opportunity to share their potentials in attempts to achieve balanced life. There seems to be interdependence between people, management and organisation. Wren (2005) observed that people formed groups as means to satisfy their needs. Individually, people are limited by their capacity to satisfy their needs therefore they are attracted to join associations and use such groups as means to articulate and achieve their ends. The interaction of people together with the interface of material resources comes with peculiar challenges that need to be resolved. Management performs functions that acquire and allocates resources, control activities that lead to satisfaction of human needs. The interdependence of people, management and organisation was described by Wren and Bedeian (2009) in what they called cultural environment. The cultural environment describes the early stage of civilisation where people articulated their needs into political, economic and social needs. This categorisation helped them formed groups that enabled them met their needs accordingly. This gave rise to creation of different organisations. Factors within the environment influenced how organisations engaged in discharging their roles. Thus, the need for management was created. Management coordinated organisational activities and ensured that the organisation resources are coordinated and yielded performance. Below is the cultural environment as described by Wren and Bedeian (2009).

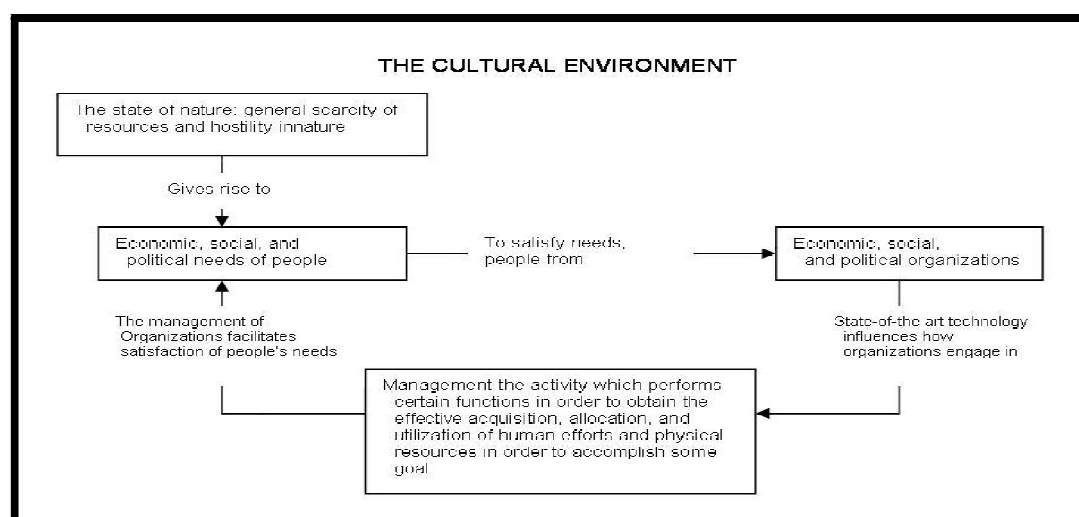


Figure 2: People, Management and Organisation

Source: Wren, D. A. & Bedeian, A. G. (2009). *The Evolution of Management Thought (6th ed.)*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

7. Influence of People, Management and Organisation on Management Thoughts

The study of management is an unfolding story of changing ideas about people and organisations, how management has struggled to attain the current status for organisation and man. From classical to contemporary theories, it seems the theorists have been influenced by thoughts about people, management and organisations. For instance, early writers in the pre-scientific era were concerned about group effectiveness. This was demonstrated in 1531 in Machiavelli's *The Discourses*, Sun Tzu's *Arts of War* and many cultural formations (Ernest, 2012). They offered brilliant insights to how groups were organised for effectiveness. Scientific managers toed this perspective. Their postulations were on creating effective and dependable organisations as parts of production process (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2011). Celik and Dogan (2011) were of the opinion that Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, Max Webber and their contemporaries considered under the ambit of scientific management were predominantly interested in efficient organisation. Their thoughts and efforts were primarily channelled towards building effective organisation, and this influenced their contributions to management thoughts. Wren (2011) was convinced that Taylor's principles created structural framework for organisation of efforts thereby setting the pace for management. Therefore, it can be concluded that scientific managers were pro-organisation. They were motivated by considerations for better organisation. Thus, their theories were concerned with increasing efficiency of management through efficient organisation (Ernest, 2012). Zuffo (2011) supported this notion that Taylor's principles of scientific management were purely concern for effective organisation more than process or people.

Feldheim (2004) portrayed classical theorist, Mary Parker Follet and her contributions to management thoughts as driven by consideration for people and organisation. Coming from political background she was interested in stability of society and organisation by managing conflict at a level where it does not generate to social disorder (Kuznetsova, 2013). She was the first to link management to people and organisation in opining that management is 'getting things done through people; and that management is more than what happens inside an organisation (Witzel, 2012). This postulation portrays the organisation as an open system where management style changes with changing cultural environment.

According to Wren (2005), Chester I. Bernard recognised people as the drive behind the formation of organisations, the reason for the declaration that the essence of organisation is to achieve goals for individuals, and that organisation is at its best when it is able to balance individual's and group's goal. Short (2011) opined that Henri Fayol recognised man as central for management and organisational study but efficient organisation was his central theme. Max Weber was so concerned about organisational success that he dedicated his entire work to its design (Ziarab, Muhammad & Zahid, 2012). According to Tieren and Bratucu (2009), Weber believed that standardisation, formalisation and rationalisation clarify roles behaviours and eliminate conflicts thereby set the organisation on the path to achieve set goals. The model is an enduring aspect of governance today (Goodsell, 2005). For Weber, organisation's process should aim at people and their relationship at work.

The neoclassical writers critiqued classical theorists for being too pro-organisation (Celik & Dogan, 2011). They proposed a shift of management to concern for workers. They felt that the scientific notion of workers' reward was not humane enough to offer them the dignity they deserved. Thus, the struggle for better worker's welfare through improved work situations. For instance, while classicalists emphasised increased production, neo-classicalist like Elton Mayo demanded for sympathetic and understanding supervisor, and that people be treated as people (Celik & Dogan, 2011). Therefore, neoclassical theorists were influenced by human factors. Their focus was inter-personal analysis. This led them to recognition of people as the power behind the organisation as such people can make or mar it. The implication is that human behaviours that can make organisations need to be identified and promoted while those that can mar should be controlled.

The behavioural scientists recognised that individual and groups have different goals and that individuals differ significantly in perceptions, attitudes and values (Ziarab, Muhammad & Zahid, 2012). They brought new dimension to the study of organisations and management by advancing the view that man is a social being endowed with lots of potentials and driven by different factors (Ozcan & Barca, 2010). By advancing this theory, they admitted the complexity of the human factor and called for multidisciplinary approach to analysing people.

Modern theories seek to link concerns for people and organisation by extending previous theories with slight modifications. In the process the theorists can be regarded as pro-management. Modern approaches to management portray management responsible for the behaviours of people and organisation (Celik & Dogan, 2011). Contemporary and emerging theories seem to deal with core aspect of management such as promoting workers' productivity, efficient structure, quality of products and services and efficient process.

8. Methodology

The study is purely conceptual. It explored theoretically the concept of management thoughts using qualitative research design. The emphasis was to examine the influences of people, organisation and management on management thoughts. The study relied on secondary data published in the field of management thoughts.

9. Findings

- Management thought is a compendium of ideas about people, organisation and management, and each is interdependence.
- Any thinking or discourse about management thoughts must be connected to concern for people, management or organisation.
- Management is pivotal to people and organisation.
- The people element is dynamic and demands greater attention.

10. Discussion of Findings

Organisations and management are means to efficiently satisfy peoples' needs. The whole idea about organisation and management is to provide some succour for people. This corroborates the view of Witzel (2012) that organisations are created for man not man for organisations. This implies that organisational rules and managerial principles should be human friendly. The use of people as extension of machines has no place in management thought.

People, organisation and management are the basic units for analysing management thoughts. Therefore, the model provides a framework for discussion about how management thoughts should be anchored and analysed. This is in line with the view of Wren and Bedeian (2009) that people, management and organisations are the basic units of analysing management thoughts. Any management thinking in the future should centre on people, management or organisation.

The interdependence of management, organisation and people mean each unit is stronger with the other. This makes each element an indispensable component to reckon with in management thoughts. Management thought is a replete of concerns for people, organisation and management apparently in efforts to improve on them. The analysis showed that classical theorists were predominantly influenced by the need to create efficient organisations; the behaviourists are concern for people and contemporary scholars concentrate in promoting management by bridging the gap between classical and neoclassical theorists. This was also the view of Celik and Dogan (2012).

11. Recommendations

- People, organisation and management should be the focus of all management thoughts and analysis because management motive can be delineated into concerns for people, management and organisation.
- Organisation and management should be sensitive to workers and treat them as people with needs to satisfy.

12. Implications of the Study

- Management theorists can be seen as pro-people, pro-organisation and pro- management.
- Management is one leg of a tripod it cannot succeed without the cooperation of people and organisation.
- Organisational policies and design should be humanistic.

13. Limitation of the Study

The absent of empirical evidence has limitation on the study. Also, it cannot be said that specific scholar is pro-people, pro-organisation or pro-management since evidence of concerns for people, organisation and management exist in nearly all management theories.

14. Conclusion

Organisations and management are creations of people for people. These basic elements of management thoughts form core areas of management discourses. They are related and function together in a dynamic state. The essence of which is to satisfy humans' needs.

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