Paper’s Information

Topic: Compare and Contrast: Theories of Management

Paper Type: Essay

Word Count: 2000 words

Pages: 8 pages

Referencing Style: APA Style

Education Level: Graduate
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Introduction

Management, in general understanding, is “the art and science of getting things to be done, generally by others” (American Society of Mechanical Engineers). It is the way of organising the things and to direct the duties of people in the context of their jobs (Mullins, 2011). For instance, an army is just a group of people until it is organised. In organisations, people are managed in the context of their jobs because all the people have different abilities (Thompson, and McHugh, 2009). Precisely, there is no consensus regarding a single definition of management at all levels because different scholars from different disciplines have defined management with their own perspectives.

Discussion

These definitions entail the concept that management is an essential component. It is an activity, process, and function in an organisation. In order to practice a successful management, there is a need of theoretical support. Theories of management describe that how people can be more productive and organised to perform certain work (Edward, 1979). Precisely, management theories help people to organise to attain common goals. Established management theories deal with different dynamics of management in an organisation and provide valuable insights for current business practices (Handel, 2003). For instance, classical management theorists provided scientific view point to explain the best way of doing things and to practice management theories. Theoretical support to the subject of management provides insight to managerial activities like organisation, evaluation, planning, and control (Watson, 2012). In short,
management practices need the support of theories to determine several functions and organisational needs.

In following piece of paper, a compare and contrast study of the theories of management has been described. Theories of management include classical theory of management, human relations theory, systems theory, contingency theory, and labour process theory. Compare and contrast has been done between the different features of these theories with the support of established literature.

Classical theory of management was originally developed by Henry Fayol (1841-1925) who is also known as “father” of modern management. This theory primarily describes the best way of function by workers. In the beginning of twentieth century, its use within organisation was widespread. It salient approaches include Hierarchical structure, division of labour, monetary incentive, and autocratic leadership.

- **Hierarchical Structure**: Explaining the hierarchical structure, Fayol noted that organisations’ hierarchy should be divided into three management levels with distinct roles and responsibilities. At the top level, there should be board of directors, middle level is the body of supervisors considering individual departmental goals, and lower level management over-see daily activities including with the employment issues (Mullins, 2011).

- **Division of Labour**: This feature of classical management theory is considered as most advantageous. According to this approach of Fayol, projects should be divided into smaller tasks and these tasks are assigned to employees with clear description. Tasks should be assigned considering the ability and expertise of employees (Edward, 1979). It
enhances the productivity and growth of employees and increases the chances of project success.

- **Monetary Incentive**: According to this approach, employees should be motivated by monetary rewards. It enhances the dedication and production of employees.

- **Autocratic Leadership**: Approach of autocratic leadership sits at the heart of classical management theory which is criticized by many researchers in current century (Handel, 2003). In that approach, it is stated that single leader should hold all the decision-making power and decisions should be delivered top to bottom.

Classical management theory is still applicable in many organisations and evidenced practice. Particularly small businesses follow autocratic approach and division of labour to carry out their work. For instance, organisational structure of Wichita State University Libraries is the example body implementing classical theory (Blackburn, 2007).

On the other hand, Human Relations theory appears to be entirely in contrast to classical theory of management. It draws its basic arguments upon employee-cantered approach. Emerged originally in 1930s, human relations approach is considered as response of capitalist brutality where workers are of mere importance to organisations (Buchanan, and Huczynski, 2010). Human relations approach primarily concentrates its arguments upon three basic principles:

- **Decentralization**: This principle opposes feature of Hierarchy of classical theory of management and emphasize upon coordination between workers and executives through formal and informal channels of communication (Handel, 2003). Human relation approach criticizes presence of any kind of hierarchy within organisation (Thompson, and McHugh, 2009).
- **Participatory Decision-making**: Human relations theory assumes that employees are capable enough to take their decisions therefore, management should involve them in the matters of decision-making relating to their own as well other matters of organisation (Watson, 2012).

- **Development of Self-motivated Employees**: Inspired with autonomy of decision-making, according to the approach of human relations theory, employees have the ability to set their own tasks and to decide their level of achievement. Therefore, managers only need to reward their self-motivation including with the development of increased effective communication between managers and employees (Ritzer, 1993).

Effectiveness and practice of human relation theory is highly questionable in current business environment. However, some HR practices have embraced the aspects of human relations theory with the combination of other effective theories. For example, Tavistock Institute and the Research Centre for Group Dynamics at MIT practice human relations theory (Edward, 1979).

At the next part, Systems theory provides a holistic view of the parts of an organisation. The focus of systems theory is upon the “arrangement of and relations between the parts” that connect the other parts into a whole (Thompson, 1989). The idea that underlies the approach of systems theory stated that the behaviour of the whole part is distinct to the behaviour of its individual parts (Ritzer, 1993). Therefore, in order to be successful for an organisation, individual parts must work together in harmony (Thompson, and McHugh, 2009). Furthermore, in organisational context, systems theory is a way of thinking and analyzing about organisation. Systems theory emphasized that success of an organisation depends upon the synergy, coordination, and interdependence between different subsystems. Systems school of thought became influential in 1960s as a way of thinking which will help managers to relate different
specialists and parts of company to each other and with environmental factors (Pugh, 2007). Systems school of thought pays equal emphasis upon organisation as whole, and its interaction with environment in order to attain equilibrium (Edward, 1979). Practicing organisation of systems theory includes family structures and administrative structures at organisation level. Researchers suggest that despite of criticism to systems theory, it provided basis for contingency school of management.

Contingency theory is an integral part of systems theory, thus, it holds a comparison between both theories. It puts forth the idea that internal subsystems of an organisation form an ideal structure of a successful organisation. In return, organisational structure plays a crucial role in companies' relationships with its employees (Pugh, 2007). Contingency theory is particularly considered as relevant to employee effectiveness with elation to the role of leader. There is no significant relationship between the inherent structures of different organisations except that the structures of different organisations depend on their owners, employees and managers (Pugh, 1990). Contingency theory suggested that a flatter organisational structure in which there is less supervision is likely to increase a company's relationship with its employees and help to develop highly creative roles.

Contingency theory believed that there is no single better way to increase the efficiency of an organisation. External and internal factors actually determine the right course of action at a given situation (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler, originator of contingency management theory, stated that a correlation exists between the traits of a leader and his/her effectiveness (65). Fiedler emphasized that leaders should change their respective traits according to the change situation (62). In short, contingency theory, originally developed by Fiedler (1967), believed that there is no single way to organise the people and to tackle organisational matter, but the attitudes and behaviours are
contingent to changed situations. The practicing organisations, in current century, are various. In fact, each organisation thinking strategically tries to evolve and accommodate in current challenging situations.

Labour Process Theory, originally crafted by Harry Braverman (1974), focused upon “skill” as the key component. Original arguments presented by Braverman are distinguished as Marxist views. According to Harry Braverman (1974), two identified skills of labour: complexity and autonomy reduced or even exploited by capitalist firms. Braverman argued that within capitalist organisations, workers or labour are forced to servitude. These capitalist interests eventually lead to reutilisation and deskilling of labour (Buchanan, and Huczynski, 2010). Through the inclination of managers and executives towards higher productivity and lower production cost, managers gradually deskill the existing labour.

Deskilled labour force is available easily and easy to treat because they lack the capability of direct engagement with production process. Adler (2007) suggest that Labour Process Theory follows the line of Marxism but focuses only one side of Marx theory that is why most of the arguments of Labour Process theory are contestable (45). Therefore, expounding on the explanation of Labour Process Theory (LPT), Adler (2007) stated that key understanding of the basic assumption of LPT lies in the observation of broader society within which the organisation is embedded. Though, it is hard to name any specific organisation practicing labour process theory because of shortage of established studies availability. But researchers agree on the point that in the present age, all organisations to larger or lesser extent, practice labour process where skills of labour are repressed (Handel, 2003).
Theories of management based their assumptions regarding organisational behaviour, employees, and leaders. Most of the theories of management developed during nineteenth century due to formal beginning of the discipline of organisational management. Study of management itself has progressed through different stages and scholars of each era focused on the aspects which were important to management studies in their viewpoints. Therefore, theories developed in management studies discuss various aspects of management practice.

Major schools of thought in management studies are distinguished to be as: classical school or theory of management, behavioural school within which researchers discuss human relations theory, systems school, contingency school, and labour process school. There are similarities between different features of the schools of thought and also contrasts. For instance, classical theory is completely in contrast with human relations theory. Primary focus of classical theory of management is upon how organisation works and what system they should follow. On the other hand, human relations focused employees as strategic asset of organisation that should be given priority (Pugh, 1990). Moreover, systems theory emphasized upon presence of hierarchy and division of labour while human relations rejected this idea and hold the preference that employees have the ability to take decisions about certain tasks and management should only focus reward self-motivation of the employees.

Systems theory of management takes a broader view and emphasized upon coordination between all parts of organisation. Systems theory discusses different aspects than classical theory and behavioural theory of management. Contingency theory, on the other hand, focused upon the changing roles and behaviours of management with the change in circumstances (Buchanan, and Huczynski, 2010). For instance, leader cannot sustain with its consistent trait in any kind of conditions therefore, theorists belonging to this school of thought emphasized upon behaviour
contingent with circumstances. The last discussed theory of this paper, labour process theory, is found to be similar with behavioural theory because it also emphasized upon labour rights.

Conclusion

Management is the art of organising the things. It involves planning, controlling, evaluation, and organisation of the tasks and responsibilities within an organisation. Management theories provides the foundation to management practices and help to understand different issues related to management practices. In the above paper, we discussed five important schools of thoughts: classical theory, human relations theory, systems theory, contingency theory, and labour process theory. Brief discussion bout the essential features of each theory suggested that these theories are to some extent similar and different from each other. Current organisations practice these theories with the combinations. For instance, HR department of organisations deal with employee issues practicing the theory of human relations with changes needed in certain circumstances. Furthermore, contingency theory discusses the role and aspects of leadership and management within management studies. Role of a manager or leader is crucial to the success of organisations. Lastly, systems theory and labour process theories, developed in nineteenth century, also discuss aspect of management studies.
References


