

Critique of Taylor's Testimony on Scientific Management as Presented before Congressmen

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Abstract: *This study took a critical look into a critique of Taylor's testimony on scientific management as presented before congressmen. The rule of thumb was applied in the field of management which warranted Taylor to come up with scientific management in an attempt to address the problem that was associated with the rule of thumb. The scientific management in alignment with Taylor's testimony, was mostly concern about mental revolution and comprehensive behavioural modification of the workforce in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in operations. Taylor's effort to create fresh ways of reasoning and acting was actually his most noteworthy input to the increasing science of management. It was concluded that a holistic mental revolution of the management on how things should be carried out as advocated by Taylor before the congressmen, remain a key factor towards proper management of contemporary organization.*

Keywords: Scientific Management, Congressmen, Mental Revolution, Comprehensive Behavioural Modification.

Introduction

The field of management has been over flooded with many jargons in an attempt to proffering best possible ways of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. Organisations are goal oriented entity. In an attempt to achieve these goals, various resources are coordinated in the best possible manner in order to yield optimal result. Carlisle (1963) opined that the optimal utilization of available resources is paramount for the effective and efficient achievement of the firms' objectives. With the increasing interest on ways to make the workplace more enjoyable, different ideas, philosophy and theories has been propounded by various scholars. The optimal aim of most organisations is to ensure that their goals are maximally achieved. However, Paramboor, Musah and Al-Hadawi (2016) maintained that the optimal success of firm do not only refer to large financial benefit of the organisation, but it also encompasses the development of all aspect of the business to its maximum quality. Furthermore, in an attempt to enhancing the workplace effectiveness, the planning of the work and the training of the workplace is essential for the success of the firm.

Prior to the era of scientific management, the way work was done paved way that encourages effectiveness and efficiency to be slain in the platform of inefficiency by mediocrities. In the course of addressing this great challenge in the organisation, were effectiveness was undermined and efficiency became unattainable, different principles has been developed and different theories has been propounded by various scholar over the decade. These various theories has been categorised based on their dominant ideas and focus. Apart from the grouping of these theories into dominant ideas and school of thought, it has also been grouped into schools of thought on the basis of their history and evolution, thus resulting in six school of management though which are pre-scientific, scientific, administrative, integrative, contemporary and contingency/emerging schools of thought (Baridam, 1993). This school of thought which was pioneered by Taylor, came into light with the expansion of factories in the wake of the 20th century. It focused on not just getting a particular work done, but paid more attention to the internal workings of the firm. The scientific management thought, which proceed the prescientific management, was propounded in an attempt of not just any increasing productivity and morale, but also to create a psychological revolution of the workingmen, individuals on the managing cadre, owner of the corporate and those that are connected to the functioning of the organisation.

Since the birth of this school of thought, many scholars have overtime identified its main contribution to the field of management. However, very few studies have actually looked at this school of thought as a critical and radical mental revolution. It is as a result of this dearth of literature on how this school of though is actually a mental revolution and its indisputable impact on the field of management that has informed this study

Literature Review

The scientific management school of though is pre-occupied with ways to attain optimal efficiency and productivity by way of reducing unit cost and increase in output per worker as well as improvement of work condition. Scientific management is basically concerned about studying and analysing workplace processes with the aim of boosting efficiency. Taylor (1911) observed that work in the industry was done by workmen based on their own intuition without proper plan and scientific way. Taylor advocated that the idea of scientific management could be used by workers as well as managers when confronted with any problem. The issue of

scientific management was further necessary in a way to avoiding what Taylor referred to as “Soldering” which implied the act of making a show of work and not necessarily doing one’s best. Taylor believed that with the help of scientific management, the problem of slow rate of works, inefficiency and low productivity will be eliminated. He believed that the workman efficiency will not only increase the opportunity for more work, but also the real wealth of the world.

Turan (2015) maintained that the scientific management is based on induction and adopts a pragmatic method as the best way of doing a job. Taylor observed lack of compliance between the employers and employee during his apprenticeship for four years. Taylor emphasised high wage and low cost per unit. He further pointed out the essence of manager- workman collaboration in the selection and training of employee in alignment with scientific management. According to Taylor cited in Turan (2015) scientific management is a critical mental revolution and not just a means of increasing efficiency or productivity. Prior to the scientific management theory, the act of managing and getting things done was not properly coordinated and at such, the organisation was characterised with inefficiency. Thus, the scientific management served as a mental revolution which help to enhance the work condition and foster a new scientific way of thinking among the managers and workman.

Mental Revolution of Scientific Management

Scientific management promote comprehensive modification in the attitude of management and workforces to one another by having a broad understanding of the magnitude and quality of work to be accomplished in an anticipated time and attempt to attain that target. This can be achieved by Managers planning, organizing, leading and controlling organizational tasks and staffs need to efficiently implement them as to attain supreme efficiency. Joint effort is needed to increase production and profit and close cooperation. Without this holistic mental transformation on both ends scientific management does not exist.”

According to Taylor (1947) without a broad mental insurrection of the workingman and administration's side, there would be nothing called scientific management. Nelson (1992) argued that in the United States and Europe, scientific management continuous to be an impetus to discerning the tasks of organizations, offer a sequence of techniques for refining short-run cost-effective performance. It provides an opportunity to understand the American curiosity in economic and practical reasoning and likewise the development of production administration and the fluctuating character of engineering work in the middle periods of the era. In addition to its spread in America, Taylor mental revolution started to spread globally. Today every function is provided with a definite target or aim.

Taylor's effort to create fresh ways of reasoning and acting was actually his most noteworthy input to the increasing science of management. "The greatest inspiring part of Taylor's statement before the house committee," Person claimed, "is the aspect were he advance the thought that real scientific management involves an intellectual revolution on the side of administration and of staffs. This intelligent alteration would convey the view of executive to the employees, and as such, employees would start to recognise a congruence of their interest with that of management. "Consequently, factual scientific management demands for a unifying opinion and a unanimity of interests and of hard work rarely present in a specific establishment.

This mind revolution extends totally into various realms of life. In addition to its spread in America, scientific management emphasizes specialization. The specialization in the organisations as of today started with the scientific management. Every member of the organization think functionally, details of workers progress and efficiency are kept, this records assist in determining the average labour of staff and their efficiency at the end of the month. Today operators’ efficiency records and other devices of recording help in assessing the performance of staff.

Inspection of performance and performance record is recommended in the scientific management, continuous checking against estimated time of each increment of work as it is completed makes possible a continuous appraisal of efficiency. Individual record of efficiency is used in computing the general efficiency records. Person, Harlow & Taylor Society states that all devices for inspection of performance are identical in Principle, but only differ mainly in graphical symbolization. They are used to check progress of using control flow of work and for instruction and inducing voluntary improvement of conditions and methods on the parts of foreman and workers. Pearson sees scope of scientific management extended to office in each organization division by each department taking care of the activities of the organization. Scientific management considers records of tardiness and absence, Parson state that records and limits for absence are still used today by human resources department. Individual efficiency records and operators efficiency records are used for staff appraisal ratings for salary increase as of today, although it may be with different criteria. Parson also compared today's idea in values of organization clearly, the trial period for a new employee, methods of discipline, methods of transfer between divisions, rules and regulations, methods of payment and bonuses, promotion and the role of office manager, he concluded that there is little difference to what is commonly in use today and the time of applying scientific management.

Extrinsic motivation methods and healthy competition within an organization are used in all organization today. Lefftingwell (1996) also applied Taylor system of time motion study to eliminate superfluous steps and standardization task, he belief that no task is too

insignificant for scrutiny, and definite standards give the manager a positive method of identifying his best worker. The same ideology that standardization also reduces cost is prevalent today. Many organisations today have standard practice book or office manuals, they set a standard of work to be accomplished every day.

The popularity of scientific management in industries also led to its inclusion in University education, further spreading the mental revolution, instructions for many task are documented, the recipient are expected to follow them and are inspected to ensure that they have done so. Barth helped Taylor to develop speed and feed calculating slide rules, similar aids are still in used in machine shops today.

Wharton wrote extensively on economic matter, including protective tariffs and business cycle. He conceived a school that teach how to run a business, the school focus on finance, business and management. Through these works scientific management entered into education , spreading mental revolution. Popularity in scientific approach was further propelled by Henry Ford and his ford motor company. Ford has a global vision with consumerism as the key to peace. He adopt mass codification methods that could be copied by other business. This method of codification and copying of best practices regardless of their source, with the aim of achieving similar result is also prevalent today. Furthermore, the presentation of Taylor (1911) before the congressmen on the testimony on scientific management was very accurate and on point. This is due to the fact that it leads to better management approach, training and development, fairness, collaboration and change of mind-set towards enhancing the effectiveness of the organization.

Scientific management as said by Taylor is a revolution that give impetus to a new approach to management of resources within and outside the organisation. For instance, he stated that scientific management “involves the correspondingly broad mental revolution of all in the organization. The implication of this statement is that scientific management had come to make management adopt a different meaningful approach in dealing with the subordinates. Mary Follett Parker emphasised that management is “getting things done through people” as such those that will get things done for the management must be properly managed.

Again, subordinates are resource that needs to be harnessed efficiently and effectively. If not properly harnessed like other resources, the resultant effect might be very disastrous but scientific management by Taylor came to indoctrinate managers with a new better approach to management of resources especially the human resources to achieve not only result but a far better result. For instance, one of the aims of scientific management is “to assure healthful as well as individually and socially agreeable conditions of work”. Conditions of work to employees is very paramount and one of the major determinants of labour turnover. But with scientific management, employees’ conditions of work can be properly be looked into for effective result from human resource.

With scientific management, the workforce can genuinely be trained and even re-trained as the situation demand. From the scientific management revolution aimed at assuring the highest opportunity for individual capacity, training will be essential through scientific methods of work analysis. Also, processing technique enhancement will force training as well as development of workers on the management. This is because having a firm grip of the processing technique require adequate training.

Development entails acquiring new knowledge through a formalised way like attending college/polytechnic and/or university. It is only by doing things in a scientific manner that can reveal gap in the workmen knowledge that require updating in the formal institution of learning. For instance, before now, it is possible that many members of board of directors do not know what is expected of them. But with the mental revolution of scientific management, those that do not know may be forced to acquire such knowledge either formally or informally.

Conclusion

In totality, it is a mental revolution of those in the workplace. Taylor argued that the ideology of scientific management might thrive only if there is a broad mental revolution of employees as regarding their duties to their work, a holistic revolution mentally of the employees towards their colleagues and employers, Mental revolution of management as to their obligations to their colleague in the management, towards their employee and toward all of their regular difficulties. In conclusion, a holistic mental revolution of the management on how things should be carried out as advocated by Taylor before the congressmen, remain a key factor towards proper management of modern day organization. Based on the forgoing discussion, this study opined that for this mental revolution to be achieved in alignment with Taylor’s argument the follow should be strictly adhere to;

- a. The employees and executives should have a holistic revolution of mind-set towards their mutual dealings and work effort.
- b. Management should create an appropriate working environment and scientific method of resolving problems should be set in place.
- c. Employee should pay utmost attention and carefulness to their work, and should ensure due process of enhancing efficiency is adhered to.

- d. Attractive remuneration ought to be provided to employee to increase their moral.
- e. A sense of belongingness should be created among worker.
- f. Managers should ensure discipline, devotion and honesty in fulfilling the task assigned to the workers.

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