TAYLORISM: MANAGEMENT THROUGH SIMPLIFICATION AND OPTIMIZATION

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School management is never an easy task. A school manager is expected to be both efficient and effective in planning, organizing, staffing, directing, funding, and controlling an organization. Thus, school management is very germane to the realization and success of an organization’s objectives.

Given the fact that managing a school or organization is tiresome, consideration of the different theories and principles could be of great help. However, regardless of the growth of other management approaches, I still find Taylor’s Scientific Management Theory as the most useful. I practically owe him much of my understanding of the various managerial practices that I personally apply as an administrator. In this sense, allow me to share his ideas with the hope that those can also be serviceable to other school managers.

As cited by Dininni (2011), Frederick Winslow Taylor’s Theory of Scientific Management developed techniques for improving the efficiency of the work process. The theory of Taylor was based on a methodological consideration of people, their tasks, as well as their organizational behavior. Through this, Taylor tried to identify the most effective means for completing a specific job.

Moreover, Taylor concluded that certain people could work more efficiently than the others. These people are those whom employers usually seek. In relation to this, he developed four principles of scientific management.
First, managers should follow the scientific approach rather than just the rule of thumb or simple habit and common sense. This can help managers to study work better and to determine the most suitable ways in performing varied tasks. To explain further, Artman (2014) also underlined that this so-called scientific approach called for ‘optimizing’ the way tasks were performed and for ‘simplifying’ workers’ jobs so they could be trained to perform their specialized sequence of motions in the one “best” way.

In relation to education, scientific management through simplification and optimization could be applied through the principle of job specialization. Focusing one’s concentration to his or her area of expertise could elicit optimum performance. For instance, teachers should be given loads and assignments depending on their specialization or major subject taken during their baccalaureate degree. However, this is not always the case. In few cases, some teachers are given loads or special assignment in which they have limited knowledge or experience. This basically is the contradiction of Taylor’s scientific management. Tapping the right persons for the right tasks is one of the most important functions of an effective school manager. Through Taylorism, one can manage out-of-field teaching, which unfortunately is one of the saddest realities faced by some schools.

Still in relation to specialization, another principle raised in Taylorism is that rather than simply assigning workers to their jobs, managers should match workers to their jobs based on the capability and motivation, and train them to work at maximum efficiency (Mind Tools Editorial Team, 2017).

Pertinent to this idea, a school manager should consider teachers’ and staff’s skills and talents in giving special duties and posts. A teacher who is inclined and has a strong interest in music could be assigned to be in-charge of the school choir or a teacher who is fascinated and is good in acting could be given special assignment in drama and theater club. Through this, there will be no waste of time and effort because the person exactly knows what he or she is doing. In leadership, right delegation is the key.
The third principle of Taylorism is monitoring of workers’ performance as well as the providing of instructions and supervision to employees. It is imperative of a school manager to conduct constant checking of a school’s performance. It is through this that the objectives can be translated into excellent actions. This also allows for tracking of operational work so that early detection of problems can be done. With this, preventive measures can take place.

Lastly, Taylorism also stressed that the school managers should allocate the work between them and their workers. Managers ought to spend time planning and training, allowing workers to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively. This principle again boils down to proper delegation of work. However, a great leader always puts in mind that only responsibilities can be delegated and never accountability.

In general, these four principles of Taylor’s Scientific Management gratifyingly help school managers like me to improve my administrative and managerial skills. The cooperation and collaboration which is developed through his approach also enhances the teamwork we enjoy today. Indeed, simplification and optimization of work are keys to impressive and productive school management.

References:
