

BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT THEORIES: APPLICATION TO MANAGEMENT OF NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Prof. (Mrs.) Uko-Aviomoh E.E.

Department of Vocational and Technical Education
University of Benin, Benin City.
08056650906

And

Olamigoke, E.A

Department of Vocational and Technical Education
University of Benin, Benin City
write2us2005@yahoo.com
08034562947

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the application of Behavioural Management Theories to the management of educational institutions in Nigeria. It shed light on the meaning and concept of Behavioural Management Theories, its historical development and viewed the work of one of its outstanding advocates. Moreover, it considered some of the strengths and weaknesses associated with the Behavioural Management School of thought. Finally, it examined its application to management of educational organizations in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The Behavioural Management School of thought was the second management approach to emerge in the 20th century. Its emergence was basically to fill the gaps and mend the flaws associated with the scientific or classical school of management. The emphasis of the Behavioural management theorists is on the “human element” in the work place, that is, on the potential importance of the individual and the workers problems. They were not only concerned about the increase in output that will invariably influence their profit but also on the interactions and motivations of the individual within the organizations (Ekpenyong, 2009; Nwachukwu, 1992).

This view contradicts the scientific management school, who ignored, neglected the human element, their motivation and behaviour in the workplace but placed emphasis on how the job should be designed to maximize the output of the employee. Management principles developed by the classical management movement were simply not useful in dealing with many management situations (CliffsNotes, 2010). They believed each worker was motivated by financial need and that his tendency for not restricting output was fear of replacement. Thus, they advocated complete education of employees to the fact that their need for more money and job security could only be by increased output at a low cost. They saw man as a “beast of burden” or “machine”. In Fredrick Taylor’s words “man was an economic animal and would respond to financial incentives” (Nwachukwu, 1992). As a result, the Behavioural management school was a natural outgrowth of this revolutionary management experience (CliffsNotes, 2010).

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF THE BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT THEORY

The Behavioural Management theory is often referred to as the “Human Relations Movement” because it addresses the human dimension at work. Behavioural theorists Cliffsnotes further believed that a better understanding of human behaviour at work, such as motivation, expectation, recognition, encouragement, conflict and association improved productivity. They believed in group dynamics – the study of how groups of people behave and how persons within the groups influence group decisions and actions (Wallace, Patrick and Flying, 1985).

The implication of this theoretical assertion is that the behavioural management theorists gave maximum attention to employee’s welfare. They saw the need why workers should not be isolated and

neglected, but, one that management should interact and relate with - a rapport between the superordinate and the subordinate. In their opinion, workers should be cared for, looked after and appreciated. In Robert Owen's words, "employees should be seen as vital machines"(Nwachukwu,1992).

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT THEORIES

The emergence of the different concepts, principles and theories on management is traceable to the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. It was a period of intellectual awakening through the scientific and technological discovering of Galileo, Watt, Gilbert and Harvey. which resulted in accelerated rate of resources acquisition and growth of large scale enterprises (Nwachukwu, 1992). This development culminated in bringing under one canopy hundreds of employees working together. The prevailing situation created managerial problems for these entrepreneurs. Since the owner-manager could no longer oversee all his operations alone, it became mandatory for division of labour, specialization and delegation of responsibilities to be put in place.

However, competition became the order of the day, and this compelled employers to engage in crude performance of managerial functions and regarded their workers as part and parcel of their tools and used them like machines. The labourers resented these unfavourable industrial conditions and poor wages, while entrepreneurs fought back with threats and dismissals. Thus, it became imperative for employers to seek for various ways and methods on how best to manage their business effectively. This lead to the emergence of different opinion groups on how management of business should be (Nwachukwu, 1992). Several individuals and experiments contributed to this theory and the most outstanding include:

Robert Owen (1771 – 1858)

George Elton Mayo (1880 – 1949)

Douglas McGregor (1906 - 1964)

Abraham Harold Maslow (1908 – 1970)

Abraham Maslow was a Professor of Psychology at Brandeis University. He developed one of the most widely recognized need theories, a theory of motivation based upon a consideration of human needs. His theory of human needs had three assumptions:

- Human needs are never completely satisfied.
- Human behaviour is purposeful and is motivated by the need for satisfaction.
- Needs can be classified according to hierarchical structure of importance from the lowest to highest (CliffsNotes,2010, Wikipedia, 2010).

Maslow broke down the needs hierarchy into five specific areas as shown below:

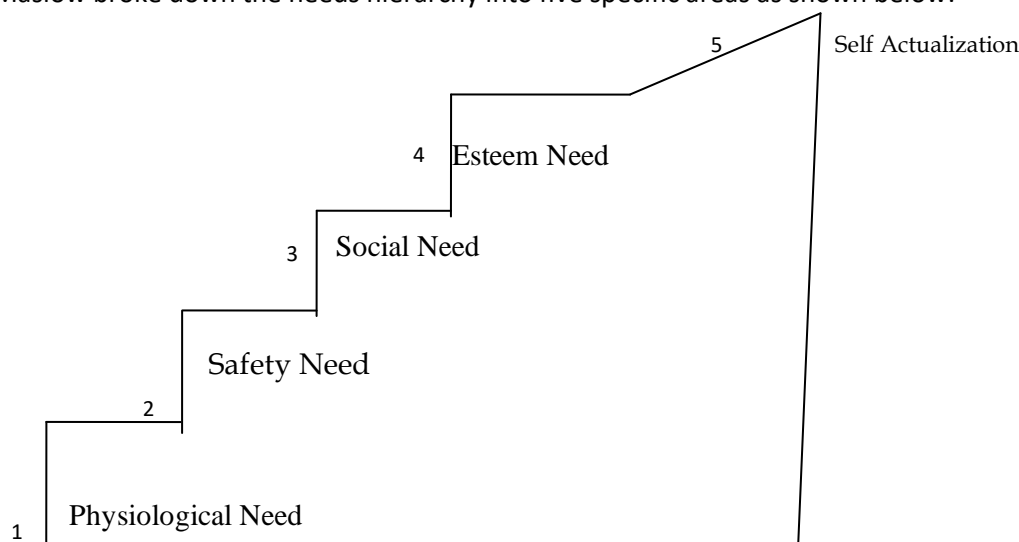


Fig. 1: Maslow Need Hierarchy

ARGUMENT FOR AND AGAINST THE BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT THEORY

The foremost shortcoming linked with the scientific management theory which the behavioural management theorists were able to identify and proffer solution to was the issue of “human element” (employee) within the organization. Hitherto, the individual was not reckoned with by the classical theorists. The employee was irrelevant, they valued and appreciated the physical machines more than the human factor. All that the scientific theorists were after was how to increase productivity and maximize profit. The Behavioural approach on the other hand, ensured value and recognition was accorded employees (Nwachukwu, 1992).

Another positive contribution that has earned the behavioural management theorists commendation in management circle borders on the issue of “human relations” and the social needs of workers in the workplace. The general conclusion from the Hawthorne Studies of Elton Mayo from 1924 to 1932 was that human motivation, social needs and psychological factors are crucial aspects of business management. Today, the behavioural science theorists continue to work towards a better understanding of human behaviour in organizational settings (Ekpenyong, 2009, Cliffs Notes, 2010). A third landmark made by the behavioural management theorists towards the development of management was through the work of Abraham Maslow. Maslow propounded one of the most widely acclaimed needs theories, a theory of motivation based upon a consideration of human needs. He classified human needs into five hierarchical orders. Physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs and self actualization. By this he was trying to show that employees have their own different needs and motives which they bring into the workplace. Thus, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory helped managers visualize employee motivation (CliffsNotes, 2010). Nonetheless, despite the numerous positive influences the behavioural theories have made on organizational management, yet, it is obvious that the behavioural principles and views are incomplete.

The number one flaw posed by the behavioural approach that has attracted much criticism is the linkage of management too closely with the field of Psychology and Sociology. Such critics are of the opinion that group dynamics and inter personal relationships are not limited to management (CliffsNotes, 2010). Another flaw critics assume to be associated with the behavioural theories is “incompleteness”. Their argument is that in management context, the human element is just one factor amidst other factors, such as, material, fiscal, physical resources, process and so on, thus, it should not be treated in isolation.

APPLICATION OF BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES TO MANAGEMENT OF NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

According to Hostrop (1975) “... without theory there is no praxis”. Management theories can transform information into communicative action (Toby, 2000). Several theories have been propounded by the behavioural management school, which educational managers have applied to varying degrees, depending on the characteristics of their organizations and types of decision to be made. However, for the purpose of this write-up, consideration will be given to careful examination of Abraham Maslow’s theory of human needs hierarchy and find out what implications it has towards managing our Educational institutions in Nigeria. According to Maslow, man always has needs to satisfy. These needs can be classified in a hierarchical order starting from the basic needs to the higher order of needs. Once a particular need is satisfied, it ceases to be a motivator of behaviour and another need emerges.

The first implication of this theory is that educational institution managers should be conscious of the fact that students are the epicentre of all learning processes and institutions. Their needs, based on their age, are paramount and should be given utmost attention in the scale of preference when drawing up curriculum and other relevant instructional materials. Other relevant variables to consider when drawing up a curriculum plan are the needs of the immediate community and the larger society where the learning institutions are based. In other words, curriculum developers must design curriculum that is responsive to the world of work prevailing in the society in question (Edigin, 2009).

Teachers are encouraged to adopt “student centred approach” and “discovering method”, where students are motivated to discover things for themselves, be independent, choose their own behaviour, inquire, active engagement in learning process, problem solving and collaboration with others. The student centred approach and discovering method are methods that de-emphasized the traditional teaching method which depended heavily on abstract verbalism, that is, a shift in emphasis in the educational

setting from verbal exercises to educational reform movement which emphasizes learning by concrete experience, direct observation and by education of the senses. (Aduwa- Ogiegbaen, and Imogie, 2005).

This assertion is further justified by the works of reknown education reformers and psychologists, Their researches brought about awakening to new teaching and learning methods in the educational circle - the theories of cognitivism and constructivism. Cognitivism borders on how people think, solve problems and make decisions, while, constructivism maintains that individuals create or construct their own understanding or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events and activities with which they come in contact. Here, learning activities are characterized by active participation, inquiry, problem solving and interaction with others (Cannella and Reiff, 1944; Richardson,1997). The teacher in both cases, rather than be a dispenser of knowledge, serves as a guide, facilitator and co-explore who encourages learners to questions, challenges and formulate their own ideas, opinions and conclusions (Abdal-Haqq,1998). In addition, Mclnerney and Mclnerney, (1998) and Woolfolk (1990) are of the opinion that a student centred approach is a democratic approach, where the teacher shares control and decision making with the class and encourages group initiatives. This method is a whole lot of contrast to the traditional method of teaching and learning where the teacher does the activities and the student is only a listener.

Another implication of this theory for academic institution managers is that it makes them conscious of the needs of their employees. In other words, it aids management thinking and helps them see the interrelatedness in human needs and act accordingly. Going by the second assumption of Maslow's theory need, which states that human behaviour is purposeful and is motivated by the need for satisfaction. The government and all stakeholders in the education industry should prioritize the welfare of the teachers. They should be well remunerated and invest in their training and retraining.

Moreover, based on the fourth level of Maslow's need hierarchy, tagged 'esteem need'. Maslow affirms here, that this need entails an individual's desire to develop self-confidence, achieve status, reputation, fame, recognition and glory. This would imply that the government, school administrators and teachers should give recognition, awards and scholarships to students who have distinguished themselves outstandingly. In the same vein, this kind gesture should be extended by the government to the teachers and school administrators, as it will serve to boost their morale, ignite and inspire their zeal for better performance.

Educational institutions irrespective of their levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), play very important roles in the entire educational pyramid. Proper and adequate attention by way of provision of well-equipped laboratories, workshops, studios, class rooms and instructional materials should be provided and the manpower (teachers) responsible for these students well cared for. Today, we bemoan the poor graduates turn-out on our universities. This woeful performance is traceable to the poor, decay and inadequate infrastructures, facilities, and equipment that trail our educational institutions - garbage in, garbage out. Against this backdrop, Mike Odiegwu in his write-up "Developing Education Sector Goes Beyond Teachers" Pay", to commemorate 2010 Teachers' Day celebration lamented: fifty years after Nigeria's Independence and self-rule, complaints of poor funding, decay in infrastructure, lack of instructional materials, poor teacher remuneration and motivation, unequal access to and commercialization of education still trail the nation's academic sector. Evidence of this rot is pronounced in mass failures of candidates in public examination and spiraling cases of examination malpractices.

From Maslow's theory of need, management is made to understand that the needs are the drives that create the tension that are filled by goal oriented behaviours. However, if the need remain unfulfilled at any level or failure to meet these needs, give rise to series of defensive behaviour by the workers. Some of these defensive attitudes include aggression, withdrawal, strike action, depression and projection, which will definitely affect the input of the employee and invariably the final productivity and achievement of organizational goals. In the case of students, you have students' unrest, riot, peaceful demonstration, etc

CONCLUSION

The subject of management is vast and calls for different approaches. Each theoretical approaches may be looked upon as valid but partial explanation of management behaviour. Eventually, one may prove to be more in accord with the facts and eclipse of others. (Petit, 2010).

Based on this assertion and the many findings put forward so far, it is evident that the Behavioural approach to management emerged in order to fill the vacuum and mend the shortcomings of the classical school. The most important of these elements, is the human dimension - interpersonal relationship between management and workers and motivation. Although, the principles advocated by the Behavioural management school have greatly influenced organizational management positively over the years, yet, the human relation approach is incomplete, due to the fact that it considers the issue of employee factor in isolation, not realizing that in managerial context, the human element is just one factor amidst other factors, such as material, fiscal, physical, process, etc. Also, it was this incompleteness that informed the emergence of the administrative management school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From all said so far, the writers hereby recommends the following:

1. Secondary education plays a vital role in national development – our students are the leaders of tomorrow, therefore, adequate and proper attention should be accorded their issue. The government and all stakeholders in the education industry should bear them in mind when designing and developing curriculum and other relevant instructional materials, that will facilitate, enhance and impact meaningful learning and teaching and equip them to meet the challenges of their immediate society and the new world which information and communication technology has brought us in.
2. The role and position of teachers in the development of secondary education cannot be over emphasized. So, it becomes imperative for the government and all stakeholders in the sector, not to hesitate to invest adequately in their welfare (good remunerations, trainings, other incentives), as these would pay-off by effective and efficient performance and productivity.
3. Conducive environment facilitate learning and teaching. The Government, Parent Teachers Association(PTA), Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs) should endeavour to take interest in and provide basic, essential and adequate facilities, equipments and infrastructures that will enhance teaching and learning
4. Training and re-training programmes (seminars, workshops, study leaves), should be organized for teachers, principals and proprietors (tresses), in order to equip them with useful knowledge, information, etc. that will help them manage classrooms and general school affairs properly.
5. Regular inspection of schools (public and private) should be carried out by the Ministry of Education (both at federal and state levels), to enable them ascertain the true state of affairs with secondary institutions and then take appropriate measures to rectify them.

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