

Evaluation Of The Application Of Traditional Western Management Theories In Africa From A Survey Of Nigerian Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents analysis and evaluation of the extent to which traditional theories are adopted and applied in contemporary management practice by Nigerian organizations/managers. To this end, 1200 managers of different categories, from different companies were randomly selected for interview in Lagos and Ogun state, Nigeria, through the instrument of questionnaire using the same set of questions. The analysis of the responses reveals that some of the prescriptions of the various theories are being applied unconsciously by some organizations, but many largely depart from the formal framework of existing theories. Most managers did not quite know what theories are, and what theories exist in their areas of management, let alone applying them to making decisions. Evidently most of the managers do not have formal education in management, and most on the job management trainings often fail to expose managers to lessons in management theories and their relevance to management practice. The paper recommends that there is need for management training schools and consultants to emphasize in their programmes, the aspects of theories, to manager trainees, as the basis for good management practice.

Keywords: Management theories; Nigerian organizations; Adoption and application; evaluation; Reflections

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there has been a lot of disagreement between practitioners and scholars about the potential utility and usefulness of the application of management theories in management practice. This has arisen from the suspicion by management practitioners about the efficacy of theories, particularly considering that many of the previously held theories have been found unworkable or may not have yielded the desired result upon application (Idris & Gabriel, 2014). However, from the perspective of management scholars, this view of practitioners is unfounded and worrisome, as they believe that management theories and principles when applied adequately and under the right condition, would always yield the required results. Theories fail because of the inappropriate application by managers (Christensen and Raynor, 2003). They consider that management practice without fundamental theories and principles as guide for actions is tantamount to walking in the dark of the night, and often results going on the wrong direction, and arriving the wrong destination. It is their argument that knowledge of the underlying theory and basic principles and techniques of management can have tremendous positive impact upon its practice.

It is generally held within the circle of management scholars that in many societies and situations, management inability and failure to achieve set goals and objectives is a result of

managers' failure to make decisions based on theories and basic principles underlying decision situations (Akpór-Robaro 2018). Impliedly, there is not enough effort by management practitioners to utilize management theories and principles. Although, in many industrial societies, pockets of organizations have been observed to consciously and unconsciously apply elements of various existing management theories in their management process, it is nevertheless considered that the situation is still far from desired expectation. The situation is even worse in less science oriented societies of developing world (Adegboye, 2013), where the traditional rule of thumb and experiential approach is still entrenched and overrides objectivity and rational analysis in decision making.

Invariably, the extent to which management principles and theories are utilized varies from one society or industrial environment to another, according to the degree of cultural maturity and inclination towards rationality in actions. In Nigeria, Managerial effectiveness is a challenge in most organizations, such that many organizations have failed consistently to achieve their set goals, while others have only minimally achieved their goals, having wasted a lot of scarce resources, both in material, financial and human capital. Many have also folded up their business activities and closed shops because of mismatch between resource utilization/consumption and availability. These situations and incidences of failure in the Nigerian industry have in many quarters been attributed to irrational and unguided decision making, devoid of concrete and realistic framework by many managers. To what extent is the situation dependent on the scientific cultural maturity of Nigerians and application of existing management theories, is undetermined. But it has been largely suggested that Nigerian managers, rather than base management decisions about problem situations on fundamental theories and principles underlying such situations, resort to rule of thumb and intuition, which often lead to decision failure. This assertion so far, has no empirical evidence.

This paper therefore, examines and evaluates the extent to which organizations/management practitioners in Nigeria adopt and apply existing theories and principles of management to management practice and process. The primary objective is to provide an informed perspective on the extent of the adoption of existing theories in management by Nigerian managers. The concern of the paper is not the applicability of traditional management theories, (all of which have their roots in the west) to Nigeria management situations. It is the extent to which the theories have been used in Nigerian organizations irrespective of the disagreement by many scholars about their fit to African environment. This departure from existing part in research in west oriented management theories which had been focused on applicability to environment outside the west, underlines the relevance of this current research. The paper is also a predictive model of the extent to which indigenous theories are likely to be embraced by Nigerian organizations. The concept of 'traditional management theories' used in the paper connotes pre-1980 management theories which had origin in the west.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

First, what is a theory? Parsons (1964) defined theory as "a body of logically inter-dependent generalized concepts of empirical reference". This definition shows that theories are general framework for reference, i.e. reference to facts that have been deduced and established from past experimentation about given situations as basis for arguments and actions. In the view of Gill and Johnson (2002) "theory is a formulation regarding the cause and effect relationships between two or more variables which may or may not have been tested". Nalzaró (2012) defined a theory as an explanation of a phenomenon or an abstract generalization that systematically explains the relationship among given phenomena, for purposes of explaining, predicting and controlling such phenomena. It permits the prediction of the occurrence of the

phenomena of interest and enables one to postulate and discover unknown and unobserved phenomena as it explains why specific patterns are expected to be observed in a given situation.

Concept of Management Theory

The concept of theory in management is not far removed from the general concept. In management a theory is simply a statement predicting which actions will lead to what results and why. Management theory is a systematic grouping of interrelated principles which attempts to present in a concerted manner, loose facts about human behavior in organizations (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2001). Essentially management theory provides logical reasoning in the form of a set of broad principles that provide a general frame of reference by which management practice can be evaluated and guide the development of new practices and procedures through an explanation of existing practices to gain a better understanding of them. The general goal of management theory is to provide a frame of reference for the evaluation and development of sound management practices. Theories exist in different aspects of management or the field of management. Therefore, the term “management theory” is generic to all aspects of the field of management (Akpor-Robaro and Omoyele, 2018).

Value of Management Theory in the Management of Organizations

Management theory is useful to the manager by helping him to explain the dynamics of organization and shedding light on the problems often faced by him in practice, such as those related to motivation, productivity, satisfaction etc.

Indeed, management theory performs a great role in the management of organizations in two broad ways:

- a. It explains observed organizational behavior and the occurrence of certain events and makes the manager aware of aspects of the system he would otherwise not have considered important.
- b. It helps in prediction of future organizational behaviour and therefore helps to guide the future actions of the manager. The knowledge about inter-relationship among given events helps managers to influence future organizational behavior by taking the necessary actions as events occur.

Christensen and Raynor, (2003) summarized the value of theories in management thus: “theories help to sort the signals that portend important changes in the future from the noise that has no strategic meaning”. In other words, they help in interpreting the present, to understand what is happening and why; and in making predictions about the future. It is without gain to say that management theory is an important tool in management process. It is a means to increase the managers’ effectiveness in management process. Managers who are up to date in management theories are more likely to do better in management practice. Specifically, management theory is valuable in the management of organizations because:

- i. It increases efficiency. The manager becomes more effective and efficient by using established guidelines to help solve problems. He does not have to go through unnecessary intuition and risky practices of trial and error.
- ii. It improves training and development by providing a framework of knowledge, upon which relevant training and development (T&D) programmes can be built. Without theories and principles, T & D in organizations will be without direction. One critical aspect of the management function in which management theory is valuable is human capital management. It helps to predict employee behaviour and to provide a guide for action now and the future in order to ensure maximum effort and contribution from

workforce. The relevance of management theory to workforce management is evident in the concentration of existing theories, particularly the traditional/early theories, in workforce behaviour and productivity.

Traditional Western Management Theories in Perspective

The various theories of management are essentially approaches which are considered by different individuals as the path way to effective management of resources and personnel. Critically, all of the theories have a common goal/objective, and that is, to improve organizational effectiveness and achieve high level productivity. However the most popular of the several theories which have been thrown up in the quest for the best approach to effective management, include: Scientific Management, Administrative Management Principles, Bureaucratic Organization theory, Human Relations theory, Behavioral Science theory (theory X and theory Y) Systems theory, Contingency theory and Management Science theory. All of these theories have been canvassed very strongly by their proponents, as the best way to achieve organizational effectiveness and high level productivity both at the level of individual employee and organizational level.

The principles recommended or prescribed by these theories have been adopted and applied in managerial practice, explicitly or implicitly, in many organizations in varying degrees, in many industrial societies/developed countries. However, the general applicability of these theories is still being debated by scholars in their research. For those who believe that the theories are not generally applicable (e.g. Hofstede, 1980,1991,1994, 2001; Jaeger,1990 Seddon,1987; Pindur, Rogers & Kim, 1995, Godwell and Ekpo, 2011), their argument is based on differences in culture as constraints confronting the effectiveness and usefulness of theories across environments. While for scholars in favour of universal applicability (e.g. Mintzberg, 1973,1975; Kiggundu, Jorgensen and Hafsi, 1983; Simon, 1997) their argument is based on the increasing convergence of social systems, values and culture i.e. internationalization of culture across the globe which is occasioned by globalization that allow all societies access to technologies and processes in industry that are designed and being used in Europe and the United States of America, where these theories have their roots. The focus of this applicability debates have been on developing countries. However, the nature and prescriptions of the theories on focus are presented as follow:

Scientific Management Theory by F.W Taylor (1856 -1915)

This theory was informed by the need to increase labour productivity. It was thought that low productivity was caused by poor work methods which stifled workers' efficiency, than behaviour of workers themselves. According to the theory, labour productivity can be improved through increase in workers efficiency and this can only be achieved by improving on work methods. It postulates that organizations should move from the pattern of work based on rule of thumb and guessing to a method based on full knowledge of exact task requirement, determined by scientific study of each work. According to the theory, every task has "one best way" to perform it, known as the "science of work" and once the "one best way" (i.e. the underlying science) of each task is known, efficiency can be enhanced to increase productivity. In other words, managers must seek the "one best way" for each task through scientific study of each work, and base work action on its underlying science.

The major theme of the theory is that management should be based on observation and proven fact and not guess work. The specific principles of espoused by the advocates of theory include:

1. Replacement of rules of thumb with organized knowledge (science)
2. Reliance on scientific methods to determine what is to be done and how to do it.

3. Determination of the best way for every task
4. Scientific selection of individuals for jobs - i.e. employment and placement on the basis of competence
5. Constant and continuous development and training of staff in the procedures to carry out their jobs
6. Close supervision of workers by supervisors
7. Adequate reward for achievement
8. Reward system based on employee productivity and not position
9. Distribution of reward on the basis of fairness and equity defined by productivity levels of employees
10. Division of work or roles between workers; and between managers and workers.

Administrative Theory (or Principles) of Management by Henri-Fayol (1841-1925)

Essentially, the theory emerged out of the need to find guidelines or principles necessary to achieve effective management in a complex organization. Its focus is the internal managerial processes and interrelationship of members in the organization. Although the theory has faith in scientific methods, it nevertheless views that the concepts and methods of scientific management are not generally applicable to the broader question of organizational design. It queries that scientific management has narrow application as it is concerned primarily only with increasing productivity of the workshop (production unit) and the individual technician (worker). The theory is therefore a fulfillment of the need to develop a management framework that can apply to the entire organization i.e. all the functional aspects of the organization; and which has universal applicability (i.e. to all organizations).

The theory specifies 14 principles of management known as the general principles of management. These include:

Division of work ; Authority and responsibility; Discipline; Unity of Command; Unity of Direction; Subordination of individual interest to organizational interest; Remuneration of personnel; Centralization; Order; Scalar chain; Equity; Stability of staff tenure; Initiative; Esprit de-corps. According to Henri Fayol these principles are the blue print for effective management, and are applicable to all functional areas of the organization.

Bureaucratic Management Theory by Max Weber (1864-1920)

The theory calls for a strictly defined hierarchy governed by clearly defined regulations and lines of authority (bureaucracy). It posits that the cure to the management problems of any goal oriented organization consisting of thousands of individuals is to carefully control and regulate its activities. Bureaucratic management or bureaucracy in the reasoning of Weber, does not imply red tapism and inefficiency as it connotes in modern usage, rather it represents certain structural characteristics or principles which must be entrenched in every complex organization, for effective management.

Essentially, the approach seeks to accomplish large scale administrative tasks by coordinating the work of a large number of persons in a systematic manner through strict adherence to rules and procedures. The view is that managerial inconsistencies are the results of flexible systems. Such inconsistencies in management contribute to ineffectiveness, and can be eliminated through very rigid form of organization based on very strict principles and rules specified as:

1. Division of work based on functional specialization and expert training.
2. Clearly stated responsibility and well defined hierarchy of authority.

3. A system of clear cut rules and regulations covering the duties and rights of position incumbents or employees to guide and regulate the actions of managers and employees such that both are protected against the excesses of each other.
4. A system of procedures for dealing with work situation i.e. routinization of activities including the use of formal written documents and filing systems.
5. Selection of employment and promotion based on technical competence and excellence.
6. Establishment of rational and impersonal climate. Impersonal relations between people where rewards are based on competence, performance and efficiency rather than nepotism, tribal sentiment or family connections.

According to Weber (1922, 1968) organization which runs on these principles and attributes is technically superior to any other form of organization because it permits the organization to make faster decisions due to its reliance on codified rules, predictable relationships and specified job descriptions. Essentially, it is expected that the bureaucratic model would help to avoid such work problems as personal subjugation, nepotism, cruelty, emotional vicissitudes and subjective judgments which affect management practice in many large organizations. The bureaucratic theory is the model on which many of today's large organizations are run particularly in developed societies.

Human Relations Theory by Elton Mayo (1880 - 1949)

In the field of management, human relations is used to describe the ways in which managers interact with their employees to bring out the best in them as individuals and as a group. In other words, human relations is taking actions to motivate people in organizations and to develop work behaviour which effectively fulfills their needs as a team, and achieves organizational goals. Human relations focus is on management of people and not work (McGregor,1960). It is a process of 'people management.' That is, making employees to be happy to do their work willingly. When employees morale and efficiency deteriorate, through the actions of the organization, its human relations is said to be ineffective or poor. The human relations theory posits that the most salient aspect of management is the relationship between employees and managers. It emphasizes that the effect of leadership style on employee motivation is the key to productivity.

The theory specifies a number of principles which are summarized into five in this paper:

1. Development and expression of positive attitude towards workers.
2. Development and use of interpersonal skills such as motivating, counseling, leading and communication to improve morale, satisfactory interrelationship, and appreciation.
3. Encouragement of informal workgroup as a necessary part of organization.
4. Creation of job security and job satisfaction.
5. Involvement of employees in decision making

Essentially, the thrust of human relations theory is the need to understand and manage an informal work structure within the formal structure of the organization and for managers or leaders to show concern for employees, to motivate them towards increased productivity. It emphasizes that business operations (or management) requires a gearing of both the technical and social aspects to develop a complete socio- technical system.

Systems Theory of Management by Chester I. Barnard(1886 - 1961)

The theory is borne out of the need to integrate and harmonize the various segments of the organization into one whole with one unified purpose and objective, without conflict of interest and goals. It views an organization as a purposeful system with several subsystems (parts) which are highly interconnected such that an action that is taken to solve the problem

in one sub-system will have repercussions on the other subsystems, because of their close interconnectedness (Stoner, et. al, 2001). Therefore decision making in one section must take cognizance of the effect on all other sections.

Essentially, the point of the systems theory is that managers cannot function exclusively within the confines of their departments and units. They must mesh their department with the whole enterprise and the enterprise with the external environment (society at large). This requires that they have to communicate not only with other employees and managers in the other departments, but also frequently with representatives of other organizations and the general public, which constitute the organization's competitors, suppliers and consumers.

Although the required principles for effective management are not distinctly specified by the systems theorists, but their arguments and proposition implied that organizations must ensure the following:

1. Recognition of the interdependence among units of the organization
2. Integration of the units of the organization into one unified whole
3. The creation of a cooperative social system within the organization
4. Continuous interaction between the various units of the organization
5. Decision making process with a systems view, and which ensures that the outcomes are mutually beneficial to all the organizational units and external stakeholders, without conflict of interest and goals.
6. Creation of interface between the organization and the external environment (general public) for continuous interaction

Contingency Theory

The contingency theory proposed a case view of management rather than universal view. The major strength of the contingency theory is that it portrays each set of organizational relationship in its unique circumstances. The theory recognizes that "the environment and internal sub-systems of each organization are somewhat unique and provide a basis for designing and managing specific organizations". Thus, it is the manager's task to identify which method will, in a particular situation, and circumstances, and at a particular time, best contribute to the attainment of management goals. In specific terms the theory asserts that there is no best management technique or best way to manage and that no technique or principle is effective at all times.

Simply, the recommendation is that managers' decisions and actions must be based upon the given set of circumstances at the time since environments are never the same and behave differently both spatially and temporally, resulting in different contingencies. The major principle of the contingency approach to management is discriminatory application of methods and strategies based on identified unique circumstances. Actions and methods are determined by the situations and circumstances under which decisions are to be made, i.e. varying actions and methods according to existing situations and environmental conditions; and organizational characteristics. The managers must search for important contingencies and fit solutions to such characteristics.

Theory X by Douglas McGregor

The theory was propounded to reflect the assumptions of managers about workers. It represents the view of managers about human nature and workers in particular. The theory explains that managers hold the view that people are lazy and generally dislike work and responsibility, and lack initiative. And that most people preferred to be directed. Besides, they

are motivated not by the desire to do a good job, but simply by financial incentives. It is therefore believed by managers that subordinates (workers) must be closely supervised, controlled and constantly coerced to put forth effort in their jobs, in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Apparently, theory X encourages the idea of “boss” and “subordinate” relationship. It argues that organizations will win on their ideas only by “whips and chains” and rigid rules. It therefore emphasizes impersonal relationship between managers and their subordinates. Evidently, the principles implied in theory X are:

1. Close supervision and control
2. Enforcement of rigid rules and high handedness by managers
3. Constant coercion of subordinates.

Management Science Theory

The emergence and development of management science theory was necessitated by the desire to use a scientific approach in the management of organizations. It views that management is about problem solving in organization, and the failure of management to achieve set goals is due to inability of managers to capture correctly the interactional relationship between the variables of the problem situation. The theory explains that management is geared towards solving organizational problems and each problem is caused by the interplay of factors which may be known or unknown, and to solve the problem effectively, it requires analyzing the problem to identify the underlying factors, their interrelationship and interdependence and the extent to which they impact on each other and the entire system, and to quantify such impact. Mathematical modeling is the means of such analysis aimed at simplifying complex management phenomenon. It posits that once the problem is represented accurately and well understood, the solution will be handy. The theory views that management process involves orderly, logical thinking and analysis and hence it can be expressed in mathematical symbols and relationship. The specific principles of the theory include:

1. Analyses of problems to identify their underlying factors
2. Quantification of variables/factors in problem situations
3. Accurate representation of the interrelationship and interdependence of the relevant variables through mathematical modeling and analysis
4. Objective interpretation of the solution of the mathematical models
5. Reliance on the result of the analysis for decision making.

The management science approach forces upon managers the definition of the problems confronting them or the problem areas of the organization. There is good reason to believe that the approach of management science theory offers a whole new way to knowing the future. With the sophisticated mathematical models and computers to crunch the numerical data, forecasting the future is made easier. The question of “what if” which other management theories could not handle is now simplified.

In spite of the continued disagreement, there is no doubt that, in the developing countries, elements of many of the traditional western theories can be found being applied in many organizations both in the private and the public sector. The question is, to what extent are they being applied in the organizations in Africa? This paper uses Nigerian organizations as reference case in the evaluation of the utilization of the theories in African societies. In furtherance of this study will rely on response evidence from the survey to make conclusion about Nigerian industry.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey method of data collection. The main instruments used was questionnaire with closed-end questions with emphasis on some fixed categories of answers;

and open-end questions by which the respondents were given nearly full freedom to react and express their opinions concerning the adoption and application of theories in management. The questions were drawn to accommodate the specifications and requirements of all the major traditional theories in management. The questions were coined with respect to each theory, to elicit responses regarding the application of the prescriptions of the theory. The questionnaire was divided into eight sections to reflect the eight theories of interest in the study, and in each section the questions about management process were related to the requirements and prescriptions of the theory specified in the section.

The sample consisted of 1200 managers of top and middle categories in 100 large and medium size companies across various industries randomly selected from Lagos and Ogun states of Nigeria. The responses of the respondents were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Scientific Management

The findings from the field survey of various organizations indicate that in Nigeria although traces of the scientific management approach exist in many organizations, particularly in the private sector, in general, the adoption of the scientific approach in Nigeria organizations is still at very low level. For instance, as the findings indicated, work performance is still not based on analysis of task requirement and systematic procedure but past experience and haunches mainly. The responses also suggest that managers engage in armchair supervision of their subordinates. In most circumstances managers ditch out instructions to subordinate without seeing to it that such instructions are being followed in the manner expected. That is, the personal contact required for work supervision is very much lacking. Furthermore, remuneration is still based on position rather than achievement as specified by Taylor.

Although the approach of scientific management has not been entirely embraced by the Nigerian manager, the field responses also indicated that the approach has been adopted in a number of areas in management. According to 72% of the total responses, the prescriptions of the theory have been adopted in such areas as selection and placement of employees which in most large organizations now follow set standards and procedures; training and development programmes, both in-house and outside the organization with objective of enhancing the abilities of workers and improve their performance. Such training and development programmes have come in forms of seminars, workshops, conferences etc. This meets with the objective of developing each person to his fullest extent for his own and his company's highest prosperity as recommended by Taylor. Other areas of management in Nigeria which the field survey presents evidence of scientific management approach (with 87% positive responses) include job specification and description; departmentalization and assignment of authority which reflects the principles of division of labour espoused by Frederick Taylor; and performance appraisal based on set standard of maximum output by individuals as the basis for promotion. Although these elements may not be pervasive but they can be found to great extent, particularly in large firms with well established structures.

Administrative Principles

The responses of managers in most organizations at field survey indicated that in general Nigerian organizations have bought into the administrative principles approach to management. Findings from the responses indicated that most large organizations in Nigeria divide their operations into technical or production, commercial or marketing, finance, security, accounting and management or administration which are called by different names

such as divisions, departments, sections or units. The responses of many managers on some of the items relating to the administrative principles showed that even though evidence of practical application of some of the principles contained in the theory such as clearly stated rules and regulations governing internal relationship of members, are not very visible, they are implicitly emphasized in their conditions of service documents, which indicates that at-least, these principles are appreciated and welcome in organizations.

The responses from many of the organizations also showed that many other principles of the theory are applied. For instance, it is shown from the responses of the managers in the sampled organizations (78% of total responses) that individuals are grouped into departments and sections according to their fields or job orientations such that each department and section consists of members who are trained in the functions of that department, and even within each department and section, individuals are assigned separate tasks according to training and expertise. The creation of departments and grouping of individuals by the sampled organizations reflect the principle of division of work among employees according to specialization as emphasized by the theory.

The responses from the organizations also indicated the application of the principle of match between authority and responsibility in most organizations in Nigeria. About 66% of the total respondents indicated that the higher the level of a manager, the higher his responsibility and accordingly the higher his authority. For instance, the responses indicate that, the organizations attach authority to positions increasingly from the level of the individual task doer to the position of the director. Responsibility here means the activities, areas of decision and subordinates under the schedule of the individual, while authority is the power and freedom to take decision or exercise control and enforce orders.

The violation of the principle of discipline (i.e. respect for rules, regulations and agreements governing the organization) is suggested from the responses by managers in most organizations in the way their organizations are managed, with only 24% of total responses agreeing that there is discipline in their organizations. 66% of the respondents agree that rules and regulations are flouted in many cases by selfish and unscrupulous individuals who attempt to undermine the formal structure, but such cases when discovered usually attract sanctions in the form of queries, suspension, promotion delay, demotion, termination or dismissal. However, the provision for measures of sanction for indiscipline is a testimony, on the other hand, to the fact that the principle of discipline is formally entrenched in the Nigerian organizations. Discipline includes following due process in terms of utilization of resources by an employee, his interaction with other members, and the resignation of appointment or disengagement; and by organization in its relationship with employees in the areas of sanctions, promotions and disengagement of employees as well as appointments. However this does not suggest that due process and discipline are followed in all cases of official conduct. The respondents largely agree that there have been cases where exigencies have caused management to bend the rules particularly in dealing with engagement and disengagement of employees, and contract awards.

With regards to unity of direction, ample evidence exists that the principle is well entrenched in management approach in Nigeria. Unity of direction principle requires that every group of activities should be under only one director or manager. Response evidences from various managers showed that no more than one person is at the helm of affairs for a group of activities at each level of management. Nevertheless, in few organizations, there were cases where an individual doubled as the director/head of more than one group of activities as a strategy of optimizing scarce resources. However, this did not imply that the principle was

violated.

The unity of command principle requires that each subordinate should receive orders or directives from only one boss or superior i.e. his immediate boss. In other words, if another superior officer other than his immediate boss is to give instruction to the subordinate, such instruction must pass through the immediate boss. However, as the responses of various managers suggest, in most Nigerian organizations, the principle is not strictly adhered to by managers. In almost all cases, subordinates take instructions or orders from many more superiors than they directly work under i.e. their immediate boss. Often superiors bypass the formal structure to give orders to lower level officers down the line. The explanation is that it facilitates action. But they also forget that it impairs supervision especially when such directives conflict with the views of the immediate boss of the subordinate. This author advises that in cases where instructions by-pass the immediate boss to reach them and they are doubtful of such instructions subordinates should refer them to their immediate boss for affirmation and further instructions.

Another principle of administrative management theory is that of subordination of individuals interest to organizational interest. By this principle it is meant that the interest of the individual should be subservient to that of the organization so that when there is a conflict between the personal interest of the worker and that of the organization, that of the organization takes pre-eminence. In practical terms, the principle implies that an individual cannot use the resources of the organization for his personal benefit to the detriment of the organization but that he must at all times work in the interest and highest prosperity of the organization. Be it as it may, the adoption of this principle in Nigeria organization leaves much in doubt. Although there was no clear indication from direct responses from managers on questions on such conflict of interest and insubordination, but managers responses to questions on their organizations experience of financial misappropriation and staff dedication all suggested that indeed, in practice, Nigerian organizations/managers score very low under this principle.

Responses of managers from over 90% of the respondents in organizations surveyed showed that this principle is undermined by many managers and subordinates in areas of misappropriation and embezzlement of fund by managers, lackadaisical attitude to work, use of official work hours for personal activities, award of contract to self at over bloated cost, and under performance. The responses showed that Nigerian organizations are constantly faced with this experience, and this principle has been so violated in organizations that it is just enough to say that its adoption is only to the extent that it is generally frowned at, and there is provision for disciplinary measures against offenders who may have no way to shield themselves from discipline or sanctions. However, in most cases offenders go scot free even when discovered and found guilty. To make this principle become effective in organization, their managers must not only stop paying lip service to the enforcement of sanctions and disciplines against offenders, but also must evolve measures that make members of the organization feel that they are part owners and stakeholders in the organization and that their personal objectives are interwoven with those of the organization, and more so, that there is no better place or way to achieve their personal objectives than in the organization and by helping the organization to achieve its highest prosperity. Response evidence from about 60% of the surveyed organizations also indicates that the principle of equity and fairness is greatly undermined in many organizations in Nigeria in their relations with members. This principle must be entrenched and applied. In this way, members would feel belonging to the

organization and believe that the organization is working in his interest and therefore shun every action that would be against the interest of the organization.

For other principles of the theory such as centralization, scalar chain of authority and communication, stability of staff tenure and esprit de-corps, responses by members of organizations in Nigeria to relevant questions in the questionnaire suggested considerable commitment. For instance, as evidence of the centralization principle, most organizations in the responses from various respondents stated that strategic decisions and policies are made only at the top level and allowing only decisions for routine activities to be made by lower level managers. That is, authority for strategic decisions is concentrated in the hands of few people.

It also suggested that Nigerian organizations have also emphasized cooperative effort among members of organization in the drive of the organization towards achieving its goals. All members of the organization collaborate to work as a team with each member (individual or unit) playing a role that is directed to enhance the achievement of the overall objective. Each member act or serve as input supplier to another member. This may be information input or material input, which help the other recipient member to perform his task effectively. This interdependence and cooperative behaviour among members is a reflection of the adoption of the principle of esprit-de-corps. However, in few of the responses it was stated that team spirit is low among workers in Nigerian organizations, at the individual. The reason may well be that often members of units of organization are competition for promotion into positions and therefore attempt to act selfishly in a way that negatively affects the output or productivity of colleagues. This attitude negates the principle of team spirit.

Although there are few instances of lapses among organizations, where application and strict enforcement of the principles are distorted by environmental influences, the attempts are appreciable. The administrative management theory and its principles can be said to have found good bearing in Nigerian organizations and management.

Bureaucratic Management

In Nigeria, in most large organizations both in the private sector and public sector management processes are framed on the principles of bureaucratic management which have been identified above, but whether organizations practically run on these principles has been a question of debate. Many have taken a midpoint argument that in many of the organizations the rules and regulations are followed when it is in the interest of the management to do so. However, the evidence report from the empirical survey on the adoption of the specific principles advocated in the theory of bureaucratic management indicated that in many organizations a number of the principles were flouted, except for the principles of division of work based on functional specialization and expert training; and clearly stated responsibility and well defined hierarchy of authority, which to a large extent in many organizations were shown to be practiced. Response evidence on the adherence to the other principles specified in the theory was scanty among the respondents in all the organizations even where such rules were said to have been expressly stated in their books of reference. For instance, 816 (68%) of the total responses from the surveyed organizations indicated that their organizations hardly adhered to the principle of "clear cut rules and regulations covering the duties and rights of position incumbents or employees to guide and regulate the actions of managers and employees such that both are protected against the excesses of each other". While for the principle of "a system of procedures for dealing with work situation i.e. routinization of activities," 672 (56%) of the total respondents from all the sampled organizations indicated a minimal adherence to the principle. The response evidence with 1008 (84%) and 1104 (92%) of the total respondents, also indicated very low adherence rate for the principles of selection

of employment and promotion based on technical competence and excellence; and rational and impersonal relations between people where rewards are based on competence, performance and efficiency rather than nepotism, tribal sentiment or family connections, respectively.

Humans Relations Theory

The empirical evidence from Nigerian organizations on the adoption level of the recommendations of the human relations theory was largely below average. The result showed that for each of the three principles specified in the theory, only an average of about 28% of the total responses suggested that their organizations are managed on the platform of the principles. A total of 852 respondents (71%) claimed that management in their organizations is hostile to staff members, while 62% of the responses claimed there is poor leadership in their organizations. 75% responses indicated that management emphasizes more on productivity and output than staff welfare and careless about staff morale. The response evidence from the survey reflects largely existing observations and general opinion about human relations in most Nigerian organizations.

Systems Theory

The result of the opinion survey on the adoption of the systems theory in Nigeria, showed 90% positive response level on adoption of the theory within the internal system and 78% negative response level on external relationship indicating that most organizations have scored below the standard expected of them by the systems theory in terms of their interaction with their host communities. This is evident by the spate of agitations against multinational corporations particularly in the oil industry, by their host communities.

Contingency Theory

The survey responses showed good evidence of the presence of the contingency approach in organizational management in Nigeria. 972 (81%) of the total responses suggested that most decisions and actions taken in their organizations are based on 'on-the-spot' assessment of the situation; and Procedures for solving problems vary according to specific individual situations. Majority (78%) of the responses from all the organizations also indicate that business relationship and dealings with their clients and customers vary according to the merit of individuals. This suggests that there are no rigid general rules for business dealings with individuals i.e. it depends on the assessment of the individual circumstance and the prevailing conditions. The response evidence also indicates largely, with 66%, that in many cases internal relationship and decisions are not based on laid down rules but as a function of the merit of individual case. In general, there is a preponderance evidence that Nigerian organizations in their management processes only react to what the forces of the moment have shown and proffer ad-hoc solution to such problems without relying on any proper existing structure as basis for reference in decision making and management. The problem of lack of structure strongly suggested in the survey responses as indicative of contingency approach is evident in the constant change in policies by management or authority in both public sector and private sector organizations in Nigeria.

Theory X

The responses from the 100 sampled organizations indicate heavy presence of managerial behaviour based on the assumptions in theory X. Reported evidence include: a plethora of rigid rules about work behavior (62%); stringent conditions of employment and service in most organizations (79%); emphasis on formal queries and disciplinary measures against erring workers (53%). There is also the existence of authoritative corporate and management culture of a "para-military character" (94%), wherein people do not ask why or question the reasons

for orders. These response evidences validate the arm-chair general claim that, in Nigerian organizations people are subjected to work under a command structure and in a master-servant like relationship with a corporate culture of “the boss is always right”.

In addition to the above characteristics which stand as evidence of the theory X assumptions among Nigerian managers, there is also the implicit suggestion that Nigerian managers rather than collaborate with workers, they engage in adversarial labour relations with workers as a means to make them conform with management interest and policies. From observation however, this attitude of management has been resisted greatly overtime by labour. This is evident in the frequent industrial actions by workers’ unions particularly in the public sector.

Management Science Theory

The adoption of management science theory in management has not been quite visible in Nigeria. The response evidence in general indicates that many actions and decisions taken by managers in Nigeria are not based on mathematical science analysis of the decision situation to ascertain the nature of the interacting variables underlying the situation and the level of their influence for effective decisions. There is a general agreement with 97% of total responses that most managers are incapable of applying mathematical techniques of the management science and those that are capable find it too laborious and time consuming. About 75% of the total respondents claimed that many areas of decision making are behavioural and are not subject to mathematical modeling of the management science approach, and about 80% claimed that their areas of decision making do not require the use of mathematical techniques of the Operations Research nature to arrive at effective decisions.

It was also revealed that in almost all organizations in Nigeria, managers are not appointed based on their knowledge or background in the field of management, let alone management science. This is evident by the 79% of the total respondents who stated that their background was outside the field of management. This may have accounted for the general low capacity in the use of management science techniques by management in Nigerian organizations.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reflect largely the general view about management practice among Nigerian organizations. However, from the evaluation of the level of adoption of each of the theories focused upon in this study, it is obvious that the least adopted theories include the Bureaucratic management theory, Administrative principles theory, and Management Science theory.

The interpretation of Bureaucratic management by Nigerian managers seem to deviate from its true meaning and has therefore been misapplied in most organizations in a negative way. The cry for due process which has engulfed the public sector in recent time in Nigeria is a testimony to the findings of this study about the extent of application and workability of the Bureaucratic management. Bureaucratic management works where managers are ethically and morally rational and not selfish. Where management is aimed at self service as often the case with managers of organizations in Nigeria, bureaucratic management is bound to fail. This is the experience in Nigeria and similar societies. Even in the private sector there are evidences that rules and procedures are not adhered to, particularly rules that cover the rights and duties of employees. This has led to many cases of unwarranted sanctions and dismissal of helpless employees in many organizations, particularly in the private sector. The principle of impersonality of interpersonal relationship is also greatly violated with the evidence of employment, appraisal, promotion and contract award based on tribal, family connections and friendship in most organizations both in private and public sector industry.

Evidently, in spite of its robustness, the bureaucratic management approach has found it difficult to succeed in many organizations due to sentimental influence. No organization or management practice is totally devoid of or can be divorced from sentimental influence. It is in recognition of this fact that Weber himself declared that the "ideal bureaucracy" did not exist in reality but rather only represents a selective reconstruction of the real world.

The level of human relations in organizations has also been criticized greatly by industry observers. The criticisms are somewhat in tandem with the revelations of the responses from the survey of opinion in this study. The general observation has been that in most organizations management and individual managers show little or no concern for the social needs of the workers even within the formal structure. Workers are treated more as second class members of the organization, and in policy decisions they are never carried along, their views are never sought even when such policies and decisions infringe on their social well being. The posture is that of master-servant relationship, where the employee is looked upon with disdain and having no say even in decisions that affect him. He is constantly under surveillance and spy to know if he does anything that enhances his personal development outside the organization, where he is at each point in time even during his private hours, who he relates with whether they are persons or entities who are supposedly enemies or competitors of the organization or the boss. His relationships and interactions are guarded under strict rules and regulations. He therefore feels a sense of imprisonment within the organizational structure considering the rigidities under which he works that are binding his interaction with others.

It is also widely suggested that most managers in Nigeria suffer the problem of ego and class superiority complex. Thus, they tend to maintain high power distance from their subordinates. They see themselves as boss and not colleagues to the workers. This attitude of Nigerian managers may be linked to their background as a people with a culture of respect for superiority based on their ruler-ship approach characterized by hierarchical order of kingship and chieftaincy. The Nigerian culture of which Nigerian managers are part and parcel, emphasizes class order. This inevitably affects the way, as managers, they see themselves as people with authority and the way they relate with people working under them. For instance, it is said by many that the typical Nigerian manager would consider it un-dignifying to be seen standing with lower officers and ordinary members of the organization in the open to discuss and share views. The chief executive is more often heard in writing than seen interacting with the-rank and files. When he is outside, the workers tried to avoid him noticing them for fear of being queried for being out of their official duty post, no matter the reason. Evidence of the class distinction between managers and the rank and file employees and the discriminatory attitude of managers is exhibited by the creation of separate structures with better comfort for senior staff, distinct from those for junior staff such as senior staff canteen/club, senior staff bus, senior staff quarters and all other classifications distinguishing senior staff from junior. All of these are against employee management approach which human relations theory emphasizes.

However, in recent time some form of the human relations approach is beginning to show in many organizations. One development is the policy to address every staff member including the chief executive by his/her first name. This policy is with a view to creating a climate of friendship and personal relationship among all members of the organization irrespective of rank.

Another recent development in organizations which may be seen as having the face of human relations is the periodic interactive session or forum held by many organizations. These are meetings held between management and all members of the organization or department as the case may be. The objective is usually to brief and intimate workers about management policies, achievement, new plans, and to re-establish the mission and vision of the organization and reassure workers of management commitment to this vision and the wellbeing of the workers. Furthermore, it is also to allay the fears of workers and solicit their views on the policies of management, as well as their suggestions on how to improve the current situation. Such interactive forum ought to be good bridges between management and labour. But unfortunately as it has been observed in many organizations such meetings have turned out to have pseudo intention. In many cases management is not only selective on the information it releases to labour but also uses workers observations, information and suggestions as a means to know which worker is loyal or not, and often such observations are not taken kindly by management and consequently they turn out to be the sources of penalty for the concerned workers, rather than being used to improve on management and organization performance. All of these again are out of the requirement of the human relations theory of management.

In conclusion, one cannot but say that the human relations theory has not found its bearing in the management of organization in Nigeria. Every evidence points to the fact that management in Nigeria is work oriented and not people oriented. The manager is not concerned about the welfare of the workers even within the organization let alone outside the organization.

The adoption of management science theory has also been shown to be very low. The reasons for this low level of interest are evident from the survey responses. The important points to note consequent upon the low level of adoption of the management science approach are that decisions are made based on intuitive thought usually devoid of objectivity and the possibility for optimality. In many cases, because decisions are not based on management science approach, they result in conflicting goals which cannot be resolved, where in many cases less important goals are achieved at the expense of more important goals. The cases of over production or under production and over supply or under supply which many organizations experience are due to lack of the use of management science techniques. All such problems as poor budgetary decisions (formulation and implementation), investment decisions and distribution problems are attributable to absence of management science approach in industry. One visible evidence of the lack of management science approach in Nigeria is the long queues that are found in banks and other firms where queuing is required. Such queues can be removed by applying queue models. There are many more evidences showing that management science principles have not yet been embraced in Nigeria.

As the evidence from the survey responses indicated the adoption of the management science approach have received low interest from managers in Nigeria mainly because of its rigorous nature. It is believed that it is all about mathematics. Many managers are not mathematics oriented and therefore have the fear of not being able to cope with the mathematics input required in this management approach particularly in modeling, and again, there is the problem of lack of expert in the area of management science even outside the industry, who could be relied on for consultation. However, it must be pointed out that management science (OR) is not merely about mathematical modeling but more to this, it entails critical and analytical thinking about existing situation. It is using sophisticated reasoning to arrive at decisions. It is concerned with rationality, objectivity and decision making based on facts (which may or may not be in figures) rather than sentiments and spur of the moment. Mathematics is only an aid to this effort.

In general, bulk of the evidence from the survey indicates that adoption of existing theories in management by Nigerian managers/organizations is quite below average. Therefore full benefits of the use of these theories in terms of increase productivity, effective and efficient utilization of resources; and attainment of corporate goals, are denied organizations. One of the major findings of this study is the fact that most managers did not quite know what theories are, and what theories exist in their areas of management, let alone applying them to making decisions. Evidently most managers did not have formal education in management, relying only on management training while on the job. Unfortunately, most on-the-job management training often fails to expose managers to lessons in management theories and their relevance to management practice. In view of this shortcoming on the part of Nigerian managers, it is recommended that management training schools begin to include and emphasize in their training programmes various theories in management, to manager trainees, and the application of the theories in relevant circumstances as the basis for effective management practice.

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