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Personnel Management Theories and their Implications for Libraries

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Introduction

Experienced researchers and management expert have noted that every aspects of human endeavor require proper management. Management is the broad key that keeps every human endeavor flowing. Every organization, whatever its variegated nature, requires good management to function effectively. The life and success of any organization is sustained through a well planned, tested and generally accepted management principles. Management is a process that permeates all organizations because of its indispensables nature. Wherever people work together for the attainment of defined goals, there is need for management that is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the aims and objectives of the organization are realized.

Literature Review

Ifidon (1995) wrote on library management. He highlighted the importance of staff that is needed to acquire and process books and render satisfactory service to the clientele. He however noted that once staff fined their way into the library system and their appointments confirmed, they become a

problem to the organization. He suggested extra caution so that limited financial resources are not wasted on "third rate staff" In another publication, Ifidon (1995) deal copiously on pattern of organization and styles of management.Adaramola (1998) discussed in detail the need for strategic management with a view to maximizing user satisfaction but was silent on library personnel. Igbokwe (1998) was much concerned with staff development which she claimed to be a motivational tool in University library management Arua (1998) put up a brilliant and illuminating discussing on human resource management in University libraries. He suggested two approaches for effective use and management of library staff. The first approach, he advocated employment and proper development deployment and then retraining. The second approach is line with Igbokwe's (1998) suggestion. One interesting aspect is his use of Maslow's hierarchy of need. Soyinka(1995) conducted a research on leadership style in eleven libraries and revealed that the Chief Librarians in the eleven libraries studied, exhibited some aspects of "person- oriented and system-Oriented" type of leadership, otherwise termed. "Transactional". A suggestion was made that the choice of any leadership should be based upon an accurate diagnosis of reality of the situation in which the leader is operating with emphasis on the need flexibility.

Need for Effective Management

Effective management is not the duty of every body. Conversely, wherever people will work together, there is generally the need for the co-ordination of efforts in order to attain the desired goals. It must be borne in mind that anyone who overseas the duties of other people in sub-ordinate positions is regarded as a manager. Managers are primarily responsible for the achievement of organizational goals. The failure of any organization to achieve its set goal is often blamed on the management. The manager is the dynamic force that provides direction to be organization. He is like a football coach who does not play but instructs and directs other players. Management is getting things done through others, the coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in other to attain organizational objectives. The extent to which the staff is committed to the good of the organization, prepared to undertake responsibilities, to spend extra hours, to change the course of the organization, etc., depend more on manger/ administrator behavior toward the staff than other factors such as salary etc. Correspondingly, the extent to which the manger/ administrator are able to motivate and involve the staff depend on manger's /administrator's perception of the staff. Douglas McGregor quoted in Adair (1996) in his treatise upheld this view that managers handle workers according to their perception or impression of the worker. He embodied this taught in the theories he called X and Y

Management Skill for the Library

The process of management of a library requires skills at various levels. It is generally accepted that there are at least three levels or areas of skills needed in library administration/ management. These skills, though relatively independent of one another, blend together to bring about organizational productivity, efficiency and harmony. These skills are:

a. Technical Skill: This is acquired from education, training and experience. It indicates the ability to use knowledge, method and techniques in the performance of library tasks. The important technical skills needed in the library include: reading and study materials selection skills, cataloguing and classification skills, information and communication technology skills, abstracting and indexing skill among others. They form the bedrock upon which the library success resets. They form the bases on which other skills are developed. These are the keys to library leadership because of staff tendency to obey a leader who knows the technicalities of the job and 'Authority flows from the one knows' Adair (1997)

b.   Human Skills: It includes the understanding of motivation and the application of effective leadership. A good library administrator meets the needs of the users and his sub-ordinates, just as a good shepherd looks after his flock. Within the compass of human needs   working in groups three distinct but overlapping or interacting area of need can be distinguished: to achieve common task, to be maintained as a team, and the needs of which individuals bring with them by virtue of being human, Adair (1997).Closely allied to human skills is effective public relations , which is the deliberate , planned, and sustained effort to promote in public minds a favorable feeling towards the library. It is also a deliberate planned and sustains efforts to establish and maintain mutual understanding. Within the context of the university library, it reflects the sum of the library's external relations with the students, faculty members, administrative and technical staff, and the community at large.

C. Conceptual Skill: This incorporates the ability to understand the complexity of the overall organization and where one own's operation fit into the organization. The knowledge permits one to act according to the objectives of the total organization rather than only on the basis of goods and need of one's immediate group. The appropriate needs of their skills vary as individuals' progress in the library profession from Assistant Librarian to University Librarian in the case of University Libraries. For efficiency and effectiveness, less technical skill tend to be needed as one advance from the lower to higher level, but the need for more conceptual skills become more manifest. In contrast, the Assistant librarians need considerable technical skill because they are often required to handle the library clientele directly, handle the technical aspects of the library processes and to train the Para- professionals and other support staff in their various sections. At the other extreme, the University Librarian does not need to handle technical details but need to know how

to perform them and should be able to see how all these technicalities and conceptual skills needed at different levels vary, the common. Denominator that appears crucial at all levels is human skills. The importance of human skill cannot be over-emphasized.

McGregor's X and Y Theories

A group of assumptions about man was developed by McGregor. In his theories of X and Y, he classified mangers according to two basic theories:

Theory X-Authoritarian and Theory Y- Egalitarian According to him, the theory X type of Management, which originated in a Roman Catholic church and Military institution with its centralized decision making and external control work, is based on the assumption about human being. This theory assumes that:-

1. The average human being has inherent dislike for work and avoids it if possible.

2. Because of this human characteristic of work most people must be forced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment to get them work. This assumption follows the concept of strict supervision. The implication is that more force than the promise of reward must be used to get work accomplished. Accompanying this philosophy is the belief that staffs are motivated by money, fringe benefits and the threat of punishment.

On further reflection, this same McGregor, realizing the inaccurate assumptions of his theory X, developed an alternative theory called theory Y. This theory is based on the assumption that people by nature are not lazy, that if properly motivated can be productive, self-directed and evocated. But the dilemma of the library administrator is that if he applies theory X he will fail to motivate the staff and may not succeed. It is a question able method for motivating the staff. If he applied theory Y, again he may fail and sub-ordinates will take undue advantage to frustrate the system.

What Can Library Management Do?

1. It is the essential job of the library management to discover the potential in each staff, what motivates him/her and apply the appropriate strategy. The management cannot blanket all staff by a general formal. Motivation is an individual matter and one needs to know and understand the individual who is to be motivated No staff is 'third rate' as Ifidon11 puts it and properly motivated staff will never become 'a bone in the throat of the parent institution' It is just not enough to employ and confirm

a staff, proper motivation must follow.

2. One will not be able to motivate others if such motivation is used for personal or selfish reasons. It is common knowledge to day that most leaders use issues of motivation for own selfish ends not for the organizations but use organization's material resources. This has given rise to sycophancy of the highest order.

3. A most important condition that must not be over-looked is that individuals have their own goals, objectives and aspiration which must be considered the staff has personality i.e. all that a man has been, is and hopes to be. The way he thinks feels, his abilities, and interest values hopes and desires make up the personality. It is in the place of work where his hopes and ambitions must be fulfilled.

Above all, it is important that the library management never forgets, that it is the individual staff who is being asked to make the library system succeed and it is the staff that is in control. It is the staff who must make final decision to make the system succeed. He determines how much or how little he will do.

In employing a staff, one cannot employ only the hand; the owner of that hand must always come with it. What this means is that you can only employ a whole man rather any part. This whole man includes a personality, attitudes, motives, and level of aspiration, goals ambition, needs egos, roles, abilities, interests' value and many more. Effective library management must motivate the workers and in order to motivate them properly, they must have some understanding of the above factors because one understanding people, the better one can get along with them.

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