THEORETICAL RESEARCH INTO THE EVOLUTION OF MANAGEMENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

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Abstract. *Since its early days, the field of management has undergone a series of significant evolution phases. Along with it, management theories and practices have evolved side by side and made their presence known in domains such as: business management, technological advances, or social developments. For this reason, this paper aims to explore the evolution of the management schools of thoughts by looking into key theories and practices that stood the test of time.*

Keywords: *management, organisational development, organisational learning, organisational theory, school of thought, workplace*

Introduction

According to researchers in the field of organisational theory, the Industrial revolution that took place in the 1900s also contributed greatly to the shape of today's organisational design and saw changes in the way in which businesses were conducted, which lead to an increase in the command and control of organisations [1]. Some of the main philosophies which were developed as a result were:

Early schools of thought

1) The **classical school of thought** in organisational theory has its roots early in the days of the Industrial Revolution and emphasises the use of machinery, while limiting the attention to the human resources. One of the most preeminent representatives of this school of though was Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856 – 1915). Considered to be the father of the scientific management philosophy, Taylor published in a 1886 paper his method which emphasised the following:

- the development of an exact science for each component of a worker's activity, so as to replace the existing rule-of-thumb;
- the scientifical selection, training, teaching, and thus development of the worker, as opposed to the existing guild practices;
- emphasising the cooperation between workers, so that all work was carried out in alignment with the scientific principles;
- and advocating for a lesser discrepancy in the division of work between managerial personas and workers [2, p. 7].

Another representative of the classical school of thought is considered Henry Fayol (1841 – 1925), a French engineer and industrialist who developed a comprehensive framework for management activities, spit into principles of planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. While not as strict as Taylor's scientific method, Fayol also included elements which looked at the worker's role in the organisation, while retaining the focus on the managerial personas [2, p.8].

2) In the 1950s and 1960s, a new organisational theory emerged known as the **behavioural school of thought**, in response to the limitations imposed by the classical organisational theory. Some of the key figures of this movement were considered Douglas McGregor and Chris Argyris. Douglas Murray McGregor (1906 – 1964) is best known as the developer of the "Theory X and Theory Y" which considers the worker's motivation and its management. According to McGregor, two types of theories which should be applied to workers in the workplace:

- Theory X, in which it is assumed that people are lazy by nature and look into avoiding work or responsibility to a great extent.
- Theory Y considers that workers are inherently happy to work, and they consider work as a joyful activity, not as burden; these workers are highly motivated to pursue the objectives through work [3].

Chris Argyris (1923 – 2013)'s theory looked into the benefits of organisational learning on the worker's activities. According to Argyris, organisations should focus on creating a learning organisation where the worker can feel safe to share their ideas for improvement [4].

Development schools of thought

3) The next current in organisational theory is that of the **humanistic school of thought**, which emerged in the 1960-1970s in response to the gaps of the classical and behavioural schools. According to this philosophy, organisations were required to consider the human aspects and include the workers' needs, motivations, as well as consider the well-being of the workers and came to be popularised by Abraham Maslow and Frederick Herzberg. Abraham Maslow's theory came to be known as the "Hierarchy of Needs" and highlighted that an individual's needs should be seen as a hierarchy, split into physiological needs, followed by safety needs, then belongingness, and love needs, esteem needs, and finally self-actualization needs. Maslow's theory emphasised that an individual could look into achieving higher level needs if the lower-level needs are fulfilled and associated it with the importance of a positive work environment, which valued the human aspect of the organisation [2, p. 117]. Another representative of this thinking model was Frederick Herzberg (1923 – 2000), who developed the two-factor theory, according to which job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by two different sets of factors: hygiene factors (e.g., salary, organisational policies, working conditions) which must be met in order to prevent job dissatisfaction, and motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition, growth opportunities in the organisation) which should be fulfilled so that the worker can achieve job satisfaction [2, p. 120].

4) The timeframe covering the 1960s and 1970s saw the development of another theory in parallel to that of the humanistic view: **the systems theory**, under which the focus was on understanding the organisational system complexity. Key representatives of this era were Kenneth Boulding (1910 – 1993) who is considered the co-founder of systems theory and W. Ross Ashby (1903 – 1972), who brought contributions in the field, as well as in cybersecurity. Under systems theory, a high importance was granted to the relationship and interdependence of a system's components, as well as the environment of the organisation. This went to show that each system is unique, as it is influenced by multiple factors such as context, input / output, and its relation to other systems [5].

Modern school of thought

5) The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of the **contingency theory** which focused on the understanding the best way to manage situations in the organisations was dependent on the situation and coping with uncertainty (Ivancevich et al., 2013, p. 346). Representatives of this school of thinking are Michel Crozier (1922 – 2013) and Henry Mintzberg (1939-present).

A visual representation on the evolution of management schools of thought can be found below:
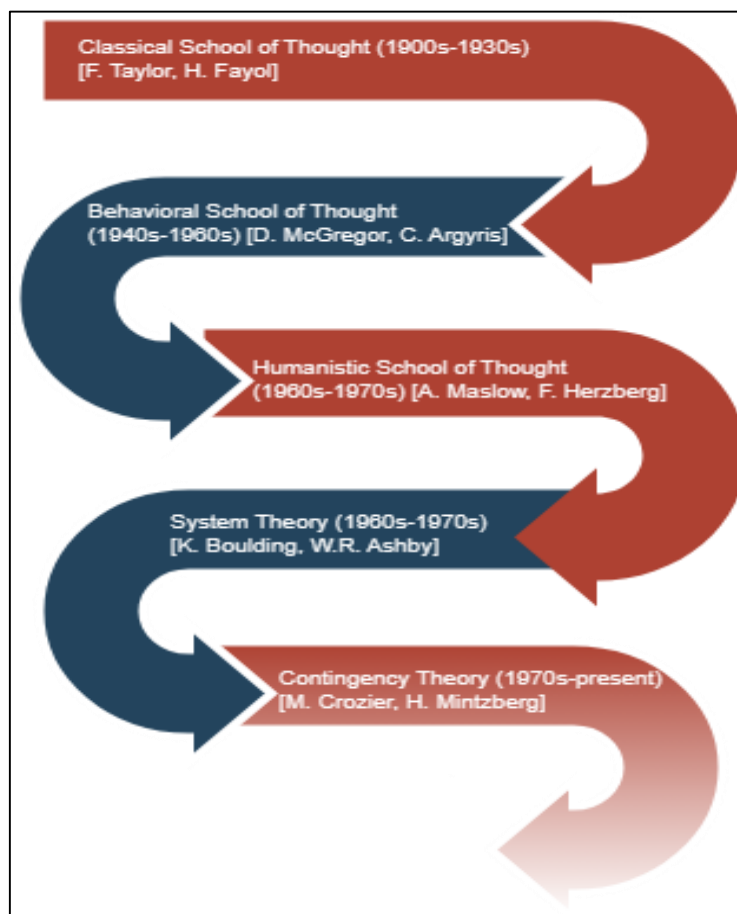
Figure 1. Evolution of organisational theory schools of thought (own view)

Conclusions

If we look at the tendency of the organisational theories, we can notice that, except for the classical phase, there has been a continued tendency to analyse organisational theories through the human resource spectre, as opposed to pure methods and techniques. Also, in the context of wider Agile-oriented management in organisations, we can expect for this tendency to continue in the following years as well.

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