

ARE WE GOING BACK TO TAYLORISM WITH COVID-19?

Mustafa SAMANCI

Samsun Üniversitesi, İktisadi, İdari ve Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, Sağlık Yönetimi Bölümü, Samsun
Türkiye, mustafa.samanci@samsun.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-7557-7416.

ABSTRACT

The importance of Classical Management Approach in management science is an undeniable fact. Within this management approach, the "Scientific Management Principles" presented by Frederick Taylor to the management world have an important place. In the Classical Management Approach, people are seen as machines and it is focused on how efficiently employees can perform in addition to machines. Today, a new epidemic has broken out, which is called Covid-19, which affects the whole world. Covid-19, which has turned into a global pandemic, has reached very serious mortality rates. Countries take very serious measures within the scope of combating the pandemic and try to protect their citizens from the epidemic. The effects of the pandemic also affected working life and many professional groups had to reorganize their workflows and job designs. This article aims to explain how digitalization and Covid-19 affect the management world and working life and talk about the interrelationships of Covid-19, digitization, and Taylorism.

Keywords: Covid-19, digitalization, Frederick Taylor, pandemic, Taylorism

ÖZET

Yönetim bilimi içerisinde, Klasik Yönetim Yaklaşımı'nın önemi yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Bu yönetim yaklaşımının içerisinde ise Frederick Taylor ve yönetim dünyasına sunmuş olduğu "Bilimsel Yönetim İlkeleri" oldukça önemli bir yer kaplamaktadır. Klasik Yönetim Yaklaşımı'nda, insanlar makine olarak görülmüş ve çalışanların makinelere ek ne kadar verimli performans gösterebilecekleri üzerine odaklanılmıştır. Günümüzde tüm dünyayı etkisi altına alan ve Covid-19 olarak adlandırılan yeni bir salgın hastalık patlak vermiştir. Küresel bir pandemi haline dönüşen Covid-19 oldukça ciddi ölüm oranlarına ulaşmıştır. Ülkeler, pandemi ile mücadele kapsamında oldukça ciddi önlemler almakta ve vatandaşlarını salgından korumaya çalışmaktadır. Pandeminin etkileri iş ve çalışma hayatını da etkilemiş ve birçok meslek grubu iş akışlarını ve iş dizaynlarını yeniden düzenlemek durumunda kalmıştır. Bu makale, hem dijitalleşmenin hem de Covid-19'un yönetim dünyasını ve çalışma hayatını nasıl etkilediğini açıklamayı ve Covid-19, dijitalleşme ve Taylorizm'in birbirleri ile olan ilişkilerinden bahsetmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, dijitalleşme, Frederick Taylor, salgın, Taylorizm

1. INTRODUCTION

Businesses have to constantly evaluate their products and market advantages in order to survive in today's developing conditions (Adebayo, 2020). The human factor is of great importance for businesses. One of the main skills in health institutions is to ensure the commitment of qualified professional employees to the institution. According to Schaper (2004), it is very important to manage the work in institutions effectively. In order to achieve competitive advantage in the global market, it is necessary to motivate employees (Pindur, Rogers and Kim 1995).

Management requires the coordination of many efforts to achieve the corporate goal that the individual cannot achieve alone. As societies are formed and global and technological developments increase,

management theories have become inevitable in the way managers manage organizations (Akintayo, Yaya and Uzohue, 2016).

Theory is a structure consisting of basic concepts and ideas around which knowledge in a field is organized (Akintayo, Yaya and Uzohue, 2016). On the other hand, Augustine and Agu (2013) define theory as a suggestion, idea or assumption put forward by an individual or group on how to solve a particular management problem. The verified theory can become the principle. This means that it has become very important to examine management theories. Because theories shape our views on organizations in order to reach the best solution, guide management decisions, and provide different perspectives against every situation encountered (Augustine and Agu, 2013).

As a result, management is to regulate and coordinate the activities that are or will take place within the organization in order to achieve the goals that the organizations have set. The concept of theory, on the other hand, is a set of assumptions based on presenting logical explanations of the cause and effect relationships of some investigated situations. Management theory is a collection of ideas that reveal the general rules about the management style of a business or organization (Adebayo, 2020).

The aim of the study is, with the increase in the use of technological devices experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic process, are we going back to the thoughts of Frederick Taylor, the pioneer of the Scientific Management Process approach, which is the first of the management theories, the classical management approach? It is a compilation study aimed at answering the question.

1.1. Classical Management Approach

The industrial revolution has been a period when the way products are produced and sold began to change significantly. The invention of machines to produce products in the 19th century greatly increased productivity due to low cost, resulting in greater demand for products and therefore more factories and more employees. During this trend, managers continued to seek ways to increase productivity and efficiency, and reduce costs. Therefore, in this process, managers tended to find some solutions and as a result of these trends, the classical management theory was developed (Akintayo, Yaya, and Uzohue, 2016).

The proponents of classical management theories saw organization as a machine and sought to establish universal principles that could guide the activities of the machine. For example, in classical management theory, the manager is the boss, orders and has the power to choose who to train, who will be recommended for promotion, who will be punished, who will be hired or fired (Akintayo, Yaya, and Uzohue, 2016).

The theories included in the classical management theory have a strict management understanding with a hierarchical system. The most important feature of all of these theories is that they emphasize the economic rationality of the organization. The concept of economic rationality mentioned here is that individuals are motivated financially and the choices of individuals are based on the best financially. In the modern world, it has been heavily criticized for considering the classical theory to be obsolete. Likewise, the concept of "rational economic person" introduced by classical management is frequently criticized (Ehiobuche and Tu, 2012).

The important features of classical management are as follows (Nadrifar, Bandani and Shahryari, 2015):

Chain of Command: Management groups are divided into three in the chain of command. The first of these, the senior management, includes the general manager, chairmen, and directors in the enterprises. Regulation and orientation are the main responsibilities of this management group. The responsibilities of the middle management, the second management group, are to develop plans and to formalize these developed plans. The implementation of policies and plans falls under the responsibility of the first-level management group, which is the last group.

Division of Labor: In this feature, which is described as the division of labor, jobs with a complex structure are divided into very simple jobs that can be performed more easily by the personnel.

One-Sided Top-Down Impact: This feature, which is one of the most important features of classical management theories, is related to communication. In classical management theories, there is only one communication method in which decisions are made in the top management and communicated to the personnel in sub-units.

Authoritarian Leadership Styles: In this leadership style, managers make decisions and manage the entire management system. In the classical management period, it is believed that employees should be treated as machines to increase productivity and employees are strictly controlled.

1.2. Frederick Taylor and Scientific Management Approach

With the leadership of Frederick Taylor, the emergence of modern methods of managing people dates back to the last fifty years of the 19th century (Darmody, 2007). In the classical management period, Frederick Taylor tried to save on the time allocated by the workers for each job by working on the way things are carried out, and as a result of these studies, he defined Scientific Management (Ehiobuche and Tu, 2012). As a mechanical engineer, Frederick Taylor is also an efficiency specialist. In 1911, he published his book "Scientific Management Principles" in which he explained the work he carried out in order to increase the productivity levels of organizations and their employees. Scientific

management principles (job analysis, job design, employee-job harmony, etc.) developed by Taylor have a very important place especially in the 20th century. These principles have contributed to many management practices (Giannantonio and Hanson, 2011). It is stated by Wren (2011) that Taylor continues to be at the top of the list of contributors to the history of management thought and that his work titled *Scientific Management Principles* is accepted as the most effective management book of the 20th century. The study of Heames and Breland (2010) is a study examining the 30 years following the study conducted by Wren and Hay in 1976, and shows that Taylor was at the top of the lists even after thirty years. Bedeian and Wren (2001) state that the book titled “*Principles of Scientific Management*” published by Frederick Taylor is the best book with a high level of impact among the books published in the field of management.

With his studies, Taylor discovered that the old methods are not always valid for getting a job done. This period is the period when rapid economic development and industrial expansion started in the United States of America (USA) with the developments in science. Although Taylor's work is considered controversial and even radical, it laid the foundations of business planning and execution methods, and the impact of the studies has come to this day (Darmody, 2007). However, some historians state that the views expressed by Taylor are mostly composed of capitalist thoughts rather than theories about the field of administration (Ehiobuche and Tu, 2012).

Taylor's interest in the economic use of resources led to his first book, *Shop Management*, which he published in 1903. This book includes many ideas, such as time study, employee selection and training, to eliminate wasted movements and set an appropriate performance standard, which will be addressed in articles, books and presentations (Wren, 2011).

Taylor's model is a model in which the product, process, machine and vehicle techniques are in a systematic balance with the employees, together with the working methods and control systems. Within Taylor's views, the concept of human is in harmony with the factors here. Taylor outlined a multidisciplinary management model (Zuffo, 2011).

Taylor's aim is to replace the basic rule methods with scientific methods. Hence, the selection of employees has been central to Taylor's comprehensive system. The first step in scientific management is to check the performance of techniques that are always associated with humans, such as machines, shape and selection of instruments, measurement and control equipment. The system requires rigorous analysis of all empirical work processes that can be controlled and recognized in real business situations (Taylor, 1911).

In the study conducted by Adebayo (2020), some sectors and companies in these sectors were examined and it was observed that the companies examined were applying Taylor's Scientific Management principles. In the study, it is stated that scientific management principles are applied in the recruitment of store managers who have the right skills for the job in Domino's stores and that the managers are helped by systems such as a computerized monitoring program in tracking their employees.

Taylor's four great principles are as follows (Taylor, 1911):

1. There is a need to develop a science of work that can replace outdated methods in the field of management. This means finding the most appropriate method required to perform a job. Payments and other incentives to employees should be related to achieving maximum targets. Failure to achieve these goals will result in loss of earnings by the organization.
2. Employees who will work in the institution should be scientifically selected or trained at a level that can perform a job in the best way. Different employees should be selected for each job in order to increase the level of expertise in the works performed in terms of their position within the organization.
3. The science of work should be combined with selected and educated people to achieve the best results.
4. Task and responsibility should be divided equally between employee and management.

The importance of Classical Management Theory is not only in the past but also at the same level today. Especially today, it continues to exist as a very important method in the creation of organizational structures (Ehiobuche and Tu, 2012).

The study method is a literature review. In the study, an answer was sought to the question of whether we are returning to Taylorism with digitalization and Covid-19.

2. DIGITALIZATION AND COVID-19 TAKE US BACK TO TAYLORISM?

Digitalization not only has an impact on production but also products, distribution patterns, and marketing. Therefore, digitalization significantly changes the way we live and work. It is stated that this emerging digital revolution is a cultural revolution. Managers, customers and employees have started to communicate in different ways with digitalization. Digitization has brought about changes in the way top management in organizations work and has made the tasks of middle-level managers even more difficult. Geschwill and Nieswandt (2020) estimate in the book "Lateral Management" that almost 60% of all jobs will change in the coming years. Innovative and competitive environments that

have developed with digitalization have led organizations to reorganize all their activities. Therefore, most companies are now in search of new organizational methods (Geschwill and Nieswandt, 2020).

Since the end of the 19th century, the understanding of management has shifted to different paradigms. The paradigm defines the view of a scientific community on a global scale. (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017).

In addition to the innovations and requirements of digitalization, the world is struggling with Covid-19, which emerged in Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei Province in December 2019 and was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020 (Samancı, 2020).

In order to prevent the pace of spreading of the pandemic, countries have had to take very strict precautions and almost completely stop economic and social life. Covid-19 has affected education, social activities and the health sector almost all over the world, as well as having very significant effects on working life (Balıcı and Çetin, 2020).

The Covid-19 Pandemic period has caused many adversities, especially on healthcare professionals, and the most important of these negativities is the change in the way healthcare workers work. The most obvious indication of the change in the form of health professionals working in Turkey has been the cancellation of the annual leave of employees compulsorily health. The additional payment arrangement in order to feel better about this process in terms of health care workers to be more productive in their psychological and Turkey have been put into effect (<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/saglik/saglik-tesislerinde-calisan-personele-ek-odeme-duzenlemesi-resmi-gazetede/1964307>). In Turkey, the Ministry of Health to protect both healthcare workers and all citizens of the Covidien-19 in order to process the pandemic has made outstanding efforts.

E-commerce has become widespread during the Covid-19 outbreak. Nowadays, e-commerce seems to exist in every field. During this period, people had to move away from each other and socialization decreased. With the development of digital technology, some professional groups other than healthcare professionals had to work from their homes.

Today's globalization is a period in which technology is used a lot with technological developments and digitalization. Today's world is intertwined with technology. During this period, university students and primary school students had to continue their schools with the distance education model. With the development of technology, even if the pandemic process ends in the following years, education will become a part of technology.

With the introduction of technology into the business world, most of the employee performance is measured by technology.

The intensive use of technology with the Covid-19 pandemic process has created important opportunities for some sectors. In Turkey, especially in this period it occurred on an increase in entrepreneurship and innovation. For example, making domestic breathing apparatus and starting mass production in a very short time is one of the best examples to be given in this regard. During the pandemic period, especially the increase in the use of masks directly affected the production of masks, and with the increase in mask production, employment in this field started to occur.

With the Covid-19 pandemic process, employees in the health sector have had to act much more selflessly. Especially in this process, with the increase in digitalization, it is thought that trends towards mobile health will increase.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The understanding of classical management and the Scientific Management Approach developed by Frederick Taylor continues to significantly affect today's management world and businesses. With digitalization, the working life and social order of societies have changed as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. While some occupational groups had to make updates in their working methods, some occupational groups had to work under more difficult conditions with the pandemic. In this period, countries have made very strict and important decisions to protect their citizens from the epidemic. In particular, healthcare professionals were assumed of great responsibilities during this period, and healthcare professionals tried to fulfill these responsibilities with great devotion and effort. As a result, digitalization and pandemic have created significant effects and changes on working life. It has become very important to investigate how these changes and developments will affect working life. Finally, we thank all healthcare professionals for their dedication during the Covid-19 pandemic process.

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