Assignment Help Guide Series

Philosophical Paradigms

Outline the different philosophical paradigms about management and how they apply to an 'organization', 'department' or 'work-team'. Explain how can these paradigms help management improve its results.

If you have been given a topic that resembles the one presented in this guide then you can notice that it has 2 parts:

1. *Outline the philosophical paradigms about management and how they apply to an organization, department or work team.*

2. *Explain how these paradigms can help management improve its results.*

1. ***Outline the philosophical paradigms about management and how they apply to an organization, department or work team.***

The first part of the assignment is asking you to consider the 'philosophical paradigms' about management.

**Philosophical paradigms about management include some of the following**

In offering a response to **this** part of the question you need to outline the **main ideas** situated within the philosophical paradigms about management and **why** they are important. However, you also need to remember that 'philosophical paradigms' represents a vague term! The above term is used to describe different 'approaches' and 'views' between researchers. They can come from different disciplines. However, you should not be confused. Just remember that any reference to philosophical thought is often associated with 'theories'.

- Frederick Taylor - Scientific Management	- Von Bertalanffy - Systems Theory
- Max Weber - Sociology of Organizations	- Chris Argyris - The learning organization

Our Advice

In making a start with your work, we suggest that you begin with developing the **first part** of your assignment. We suggest that you acknowledge the fact that there are **differences** and **similarities** in the way management thinking is discussed between theorists. Such discussion will enable you to acknowledge some key terms used like, 'control', 'knowledge', 'decision making', etc. In turn such discussion will also help you create more specific 'bridges' for addressing the second part of the question. As you can see from the following diagram there are **three main** dimensions that you should have in mind when writing about management and organizations. Notice the interrelationship between the three different entities and try to discuss them in your own way.

Structures

Organization

Processes

People
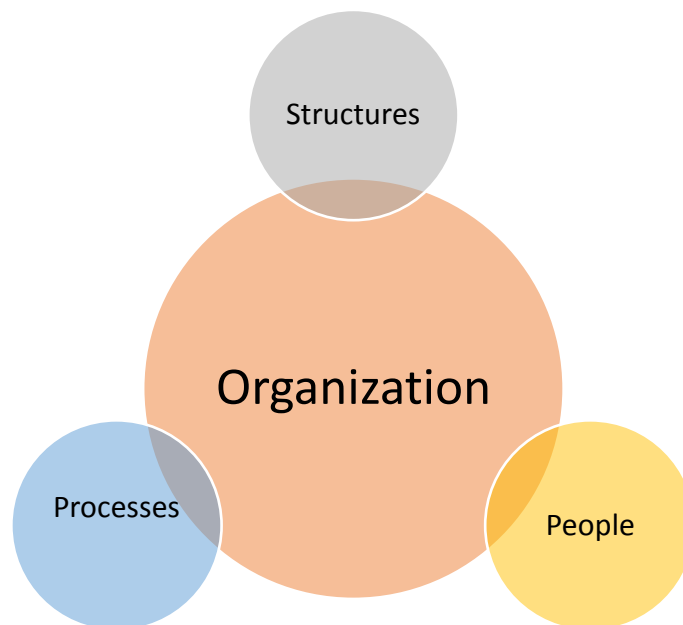
Your discussion about management though (as situated in 'paradigms') perspectives should make reference to all of the above elements.

We suggest that you start-off the main body of your work with a paragraph that makes clear to the reader the meaning of **management** and acknowledges the above 3 elements.

We present you the following paragraph as an **example** so that you can see how you could develop the topic.

The study of management is the discipline that wants to understand how processes, structures and people are organized between them. Management is about the methods with which relationships between these three dimensions can be improved and in order to enhance the overall efficiency and productivity of the organization.

Management has an important role to play with understanding how work tasks, found between these three dimensions, need to be organized. The study of philosophical paradigms about management are important because management thinking has changed over the years.

Philosophical paradigms are systems of thought that explain how and why certain 'inputs' and 'outputs' happen in an orderly fashion. It is assumed that through the study of theories there can be understanding on how to improve decision making in organizations. Different philosophical paradigms help us understand the type of assumptions that practitioners and theorists make about the nature of management as an activity. It is in the study of those assumptions that we can understand how and why management becomes important for how to manage people, tasks and processes.

As you move onto the next section you need to identify two additional elements:

(a) What specific 'theories' you are going to use in order to examine similarities and differences.

(b) The specific issues from *within* theories you are going to concentrate and how you will apply them by offering further illustrations.

ESSAY FORMAT

You need to think on **how** you are going to present your discussion in an essay format. For example, within a *scientific approach* you can make particular reference to the management of **control**.

Control remains centralised in the possession of 'power'. According to the scientific approach to management managers need to have control over how tasks are performed. Such control enables to introduce corrections and changes in order to improve the overall efficiency.

If you would like to make greater reference to the 'systems theory' and contrast it from the scientific perspective to management this would be useful. A discussion on system-theory would enable you to discuss a different basis of assumptions about management. System theory identifies the significance of connections between the external and the internal environment and how points of alignment are identified in order to improve efficiency. This paradigm, and in contrast to the scientific perspective please LESS emphasis on control.

In the following diagram we use a simple model to illustrate systems theory. Notice the different layers and how each entity needs to be viewed separated and within its own context.

The environment

The organization

The individuals
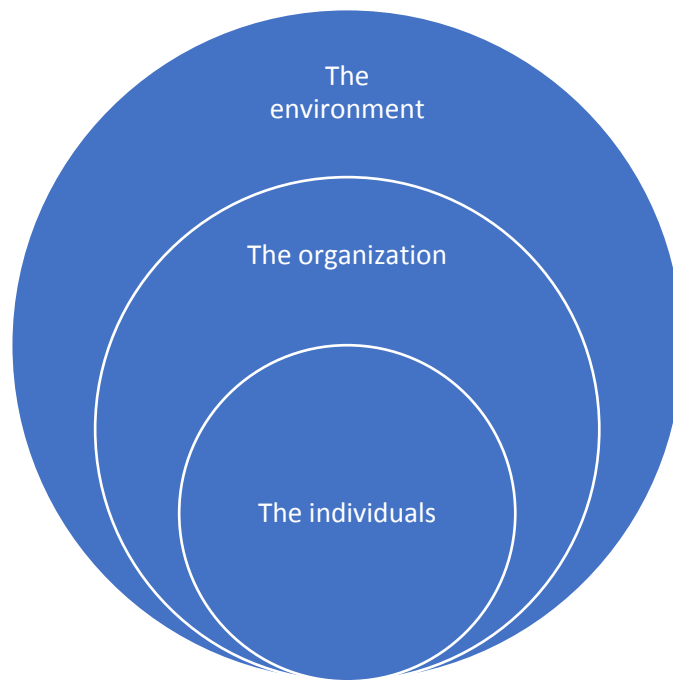
Logical Structure

You need to have a **logical structure** in the way you develop your ideas.

You are asked to make associations between (a) the study of the philosophical paradigms with (b) a 'department' or 'work-team'.

What would this department be like in this discussion?

Try to think of different organizations that you are familiar with. Think of examples but in doing so identify the case of ↓

(a) processes (b) structures and (c) people.

You can suggest that the *scientific management* approach might be more effective in those organizations that want to have a strong sense of control and because they are more vulnerable to risks.

You can also contrast the scientific perspective with the 'learning organization' by **Chris Argyris**.

His theory suggests that management should be more engaged with peoples' experiences, information and how people communicate and transmit information to each other.

Argyris is well known for the concept of the 'learning organization and how it travels between the different organizational layers over time.
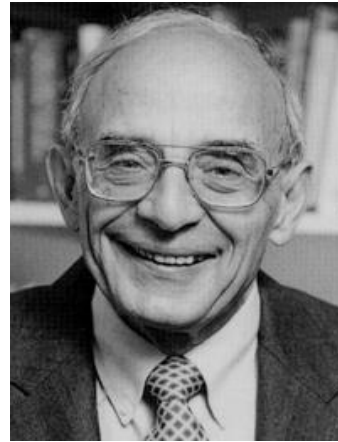
Think about the similarities and differences between a 'department' and a 'work-team.

Some of the key features that you could consider about the 'department' are the following:

- **Control**
- **Accountability**
- **Reporting**
- **Communication**
- **Interaction**

A department can have work-teams but the work-teams are *not* departments.	Communication occurs in a more formal way within departments in contrast to teams.
Seniority and control concentrates on specific individuals that have decision making power.	The communication is formal and often structured

In contrast to a 'department' we can observe the following qualities about work-teams:

- A work-team is dependent on the interaction between its members
- Effective work-teams rely on communication and information exchange.
- Trust between members is very important!
- Accountability is not assigned onto a single individual but on the collective effort between all members.
- Reporting is **not** necessarily structured or formal

The Second Part

In order to address the second part of your assignment you now need to think in more *practical terms*. Here, your focus should be placed more on the 'application' of concepts rather than their discussion.

In the **first** part you should have established the prominence of the concepts and as these are situated within their respective literatures. In **this** part you should spend time discussing the application of concepts with offering various examples to support your position. However, let us review once again the **wording** of the second part of the question.

Explain how can these paradigms help management improve its results.

You can successfully address this part of the question by trying to link 'some' of the concepts discussed before with offering practical examples.

- What were the prominent concepts discussed within the different philosophical paradigms?

- How could they be applied in work situations where managers are involved?

In the following section we offer you with examples as illustrations. You can think about similar topics within your own assignment.

We only focus on 2 key topics:

- Communication
- Motivation

Assuming that you have already contrasted various ideas, you presented in the first part of your assignment, you should **now** have identified a number of important ideas to discuss that can include:

- **Advantages**
- **Disadvantages**

For example, you might identified that the *scientific approach* likes the use of 'control'. It really believes that it is important for managers to have control **because** they know best. Hence, managers are best fitted for achieving outcomes. In contrast, to the *scientific approach*, the *learning approach* believes that understanding how information is communicated and transmitted between people and how individuals learn collectively is **more important** than achieving setting targets. *In fact, this approach suggests that such experience actually contributes to a better quality of end-outcomes!*

The learning-organization theory as presented by Chris Argyris identifies that the experience of people remains pivotal for both the 'management' and 'employees'. It suggests that….

- Information does not only have one source.
- Managers do not need to be the ones that have most control.

In order to address this part of the topic think more carefully about the above indicative topics, namely, (a) communication, (b) motivation and what examples could be given. Let us illustrate how this can be done.

Communication

Under a *scientific perspective* management communicating information to other member is done with the intention of communicating designated tasks that need to be performed.

- It offers **little space** for negotiation about how the communications methods could be used differently or how the information could be understood in many ways

- It believes that communication should support goals and objectives *already* communicated by the management or leaders of an organization

Under an learning approach (using the works by Chris Argyris) management outcomes need to rely on information that 'comes' from the management and <u>also</u> employees.

- Creating the opportunity for feedback between employees and management improves the possibility of 'collective learning'.

- If managers use a learning approach, then they will be able to identify with the experiences of the employees to a greater extent.

- Management will try identify 'how' employees think about tasks that need to be performed. They will also identify with employees on 'why' they need to be performed.

A simple case could illustrate the relevance of the above analysis. Let's assume of an organization that is *customer driven*. Service providers are organizations where customer feedback is important. The use of a scientific approach would mean that the management have greater decision making control over other employees. The advantage of this is that the decisions could be taken swiftly. The disadvantage of this might be that the decisions might not be the right ones for the customers!

Motivation

Under a scientific perspective to management methods for motivation are closely linked with the satisfaction of external needs. For example, employees only work for financial rewards (i.e. money). However, the limitations with this perspective is that it undermines internal needs which includes (a) the need for recognition and (b) opportunities for self-development.

Unless management have access to information on how employees think and feel then they will not engage with employees to a much deeper level apart from the immediate tasks that need to be completed. Even though a scientific perspective might be effective when there is a scarcity of jobs, it will not be effective when people are able to choose between different jobs that offer similar benefits. If the management are able to identify with information about human emotions and how communication involves employees as individuals and not just as workers, **then** they will be able to introduce more effective changes in the organization.

We can think of any **service-environment** for illustrating the importance of motivation. But...within a *scientific approach* motivation is mainly based on 'outcomes'.

As most service providers rely on **customer interaction** for satisfying customers, it is evident that the outcome of a service will be dependent on the quality of the employees and their efforts. If employees do not feel valued and appreciated, this can affect how much they are willing to engage with customers or whether they want to go the extra mile.

➔ The disadvantages in using a scientific approach would be to remove any sense of real autonomy from employees.

➔ Under a learning-organization perspective the use of autonomy could lead to employees to make decisions without having confirmation from management. Employees might make the wrong decisions but can feel more trusted and can take greater initiative to introduce corrections. Such effort would contribute to the development of learning and would

have better long-term implications for how these employees are managed.

In this guide we only touched upon a few ideas that you should develop in the main body of the work.

Our examples are illustrative only and aim at offering you with guidance and illustrations for how you can best develop your work.

If you require further input on strengthening your assignment then email us at support@mbawinner.com