

A Conceptual and Diagnostic View of Leadership Training for Administrative/ Managerial Leadership Development in the University of Khartoum.*

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Preface

Whether practical (on the job) or formal (in classroom) type, training is universally considered indispensable as well as instrumental in promoting the capacity of individuals and groups in organizations of all type and size. Moreover, training (including self training by individuals in any capacity) is essentially an on-going fact of life; which poses some challenging questions of both concept and practice. That is especially so when the exact needs and approach are encountered in the process of selecting and applying the content and methods of training in particular organizational settings.

What is Administration t / Management?

As asserted by Peter Drucker (the late management guru), indeed the manager is the dynamic, life-giving element in every business. Without his/her leadership the resources of production remain just resources and never become production. Drucker further defines the manager as some-one who directs the work of others, and does his work by getting other people to do theirs. On the other hand, he also describes management as an organ that can be defined only through its functions.¹ In the present context, as it is often maintained by most students of this field administration and, management are interchangeably used, despite some insignificant other usages that place one of the two higher than the other.

The search for defining management has already continued for a long time, and ideas pertaining to management have permeated the entire human intellectual endeavor since eternity. However, perhaps it was the last century that witnessed

*The present article is prepared to serve as background material to address the key issues and perspectives that may help in designing and delivering management training courses for top level managerial personnel in the University of Khartoum, as requested by the university authorities.

¹ Peter Drucker, The Practice of Management, 2nd.ed. . Plan Books, London 1982,pp 13-14.

the greatest leaps forward in that search. Arguably one of the most enduring definitions of administration / management was the one advanced by the French industrialist Henri Fayol at the beginning of the 20th century. Fayol defined management by identifying the functions of the manager in his famous acronym “POSDCORB”, which expresses the functions of Planning, Organization, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting². However, all subsequent definitions of administration or management to date haven’t been much different from that of Fayol. Yet management theory and experience have made huge advances ever since Fayol and his contemporaries (i.e. Max Weber and Frederick Taylor, to mention only the most prominent of them).

Progress in Administration/ Management Knowledge

Today, the available on administration and management literature spans much more, and diverse, dimensions. This was made possible both as a result of systematic research by scholars in behavioral sciences and managerial technologies, as well as by the actual experiences encountered and lessons drawn by management practitioners through challenging events such as the two World Wars and the Great Depression during the first half of the 20th century. Over the 2nd half of the last century, however, the continuing organizational growth and diversity in all walks of life enabled an unprecedented growth in management knowledge (encompassing both concepts and technology), which in turn led to the emergence of numerous fields of management application in both public and private business domains. Therefore, today’s managers in all fields of specialization and types of organization are expected to acquire sufficient appreciation of that accumulated management knowledge and skills so as to remain abreast of the said developments. However, it is also through the 20th century and up to the present that the knowledge and practice of management have made such huge strides, mainly due to the vast expansion of commercial and public enterprise worldwide, as well as due to the frequent experiences with critical national and international operations such as wars and disaster situations. Additionally, the development and steady progress of international organizations

² Henri Fayol, The Functions of the Executive 1911, cited in Edwin B. Flippo and Gary M. Man singer, Management.4th.ed Allyn, Bacon and Boston.19 78 p-19.

and multinational business enterprises have also helped expand the knowledge and experience in organization and management by enabling multi cultural comparison and perspectives. Hence management has also formed an essential component in the present trend of globalization.

Organizational Characteristics

Organization, a term which is occasionally used to also mean administration/management, is central to managerial development. Good organization means good management, and total organizational development is the necessary context for training and human capacity building. Furthermore, organizations have been classified into various types and characteristics. These are considered to reflect six principal elements of organization structure, including work specialization, chain of command, span of control, authority and responsibility, centralization versus decentralization, and departmentalization. But otherwise there are additional factors that determine types of organization which are also closely related to the latter six elements. These include mechanistic organization (which is bureaucratic, formal and rather rigid and stable) and organic organization which is highly adaptive, flexible, and tend to be professionally oriented (in the sense that its employees are technically proficient and are trained to handle diverse problems.³

Other factors affecting organization include size, as there are small and large organizations (some sources define a large organization as typically employing 2000 employees or more). A large organization tends to have more division of labour greater, horizontal and vertical differentiation, and more rules and regulations than do small organizations. But it is also maintained in some views that larger and relatively more complex organizations do experience shifting toward more mechanistic structure, beyond a certain stage of growth.⁴

³ Stephen P-Robbins and David A. Decnzo, Fundamentals of Management, 3rd.ed., Prentice Hall, New Jersy ,2001,P,P-155-168

⁴ Ibid. p.166.

For the specific purposes of this presentation, the question of organizational size is of special importance, as the intention of this text the presentation is mainly intended to set the scene for designing training programs and strategy for Leadership/management training for the University of Khartoum. Thus the intended training programmes have to take into consideration the fact the University of Khartoum is presently quite a large and complex organizational entity. The latter characteristic necessarily presents the top management personnel of the university with an intricate web of both daily and long-term problems which they have to constantly attend to. However, it is often the case that top manager in such organizations are overwhelmed with daily management problems, usually at the expense of long-term issues (which are also referred to in management parlance as strategic/ policy issues). Since efficiency and effectiveness in all organizational operations (including daily and short term actions and decisions) are mainly contingent on the existence and efficacy of policy and strategy, top management personnel do need to seriously and actively engage in exploring and formulating the organization's longer –term policy options/strategy (guided by clearly defined objectives) . In fact, without such an approach the managers would essentially stay with the business of fire fighting (which means piece-meal treatment of daily arising problems). Instead, the Knowledge and commitment of managers about long term objectives does help them relate those daily and short term decisions and actions to the ultimate goals involved in organizational policy/strategy.

What are policy planning and strategy?

Policy is defined as a general guide that establishes parameters for making decision, while strategy indicates the widest possible perspective and longest visible future time span. The term "strategy itself originally is a military expression refers to "what the military leader does". But today the term "strategy "is used in almost all modern languages, and is increasingly appearing in such fields as politics and administration/management. Strategic management is presently carried out in most organizations, (reportedly) with significant benefits. It is

defined as a continuous interactive process aimed at keeping an organization as a whole appropriately matched to its environment.⁵

Strategic management is considered to be continuous identify originations, most promising business and to focus its resources on longer term development in accordance with the organizations existing strengths such as superior technology, low costs, or strong market position.⁶ The current concept method of SWOT/SLOT analysis is also associated with the organization environment analysis necessary for strategy development.

Implications for Administration /Management Training

The forgoing ideas are of course all pertinent to managerial leadership training, and training programmes of the same purpose are expected to mirror. Those ideas with respect to the required contents and methods of training activities. Training must be based on specific training needs assessment which in turn has to be directly related to the possible weaknesses detected by such assessment. As the training of employees at different organizational levels usually entails different training activity must be tailor made for each specific training group. For instance, higher level training usually draws on the actual experience of trainees and thus tends to be more experiential (including the here – and- now experience in the training sessions), while the training of lower level employees adopts greater instruction and conceptual matters, coupled with relevant exercises for explanation of the concepts and practices important to enhance their understanding and skills. Training in all organizations has to be extended to all (rank and file) employees. More specifically, the various types of training (which are essentially job-related as well as incumbent- related) do encompass initial / induction training for newly recruited employees, and is usually followed by mid-career training to prepare employees to new and higher organizational position, in addition to managerial leadership training. The structure of the training system should therefore be closely related to the career path of employees, subject to a clearly conceived career plan.

⁵ Samuel C. Certo and Paul Peter, Strategic management, 2nd. Ed., McGraw- Hill, 1991, p.5

⁶ Ibid p.5

Conclusion

The Results Required from Training .The ultimate goal of training is organizational success, achieved through people. The training function is thus concerned with the twin objectives of efficiency and effectiveness, both of which are primarily influenced by human capabilities, human relationships, job satisfaction and the concept of fairness in employment. To fulfill the organizational objectives, those objectives have to be established, and the astrictive and functionally of the organization need to meet them. The training function should therefore be committed to influencing and developing employees' behavior by appropriate means in any or all of the key areas of knowledge skills and attitudes, either by instruction or experientially. The training methods chosen must be appropriate to the particular task, and measuring the results of training is vital in order to ensure that what is being done is effective and is meeting the organizational needs⁷.

Finally, the intended training for top administrative / managerial personnel in the university of Khartoum, as in any other organization, should (among other objectives) help to clarify the training needs and contents regarding the training of employees at the lower echelons of the organization, since the problems encountered by the top management personnel will indicate the performance problems which related to subordinates needs in terms of training.

⁷ Kenneth R. Robinson ,A Handbook of Training Management, London, Kegan Page , 1981,p 205

