Bureaucracy Management Theory

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

• Describe Bureaucratic theory of management
• Explain the Characteristics of bureaucracy
• Explain autocratic or authoritarian, democratic or participative, laissez fair and bureaucratic styles of leadership
Introduction

• Familiarity with the development of management thought and theories can be useful to nursing managers.

• Drawing from the best and most applicable theories in each situation, nurse managers can create individual management styles to meet organizational needs.
Introduction

• Ideas of management can be found in ancient Samaria and Egypt as early as 3000 B.C.
• Most current understanding of management comes from the later 1800s.
• Bureaucratic Management: 1900–1920
1) Bureaucratic theory

- Founded by Max Weber 1864-1920
- An organization is viewed as a type of social relationship that has regulations enforced
- Has a few people at the top, making decisions and a chain of middle managers and lower-level people below them carrying out specific functions
Bureaucratic theory cont,

• Orders come from top down in a manner mimicking the military creating consistency and precision.
• Rules rather than people form the basis of an organization
• It is dependent on rules, means –end calculation and matter of factness
Types of authority

• He identified 3 types of authority:
  1. Charismatic Authority
     – Based upon personal characteristics
     – Led by individual or small group
  2. Traditional Authority
     – Monarchy or Tradition Ruled
  3. Legal-Rational Authority
     – Basis of Bureaucracy

• Standardization of work processes
Characteristics of the bureaucratic model

Fixed division of labor and specialization

• All responsibilities in an organization are specialized, with each area having a specific set of official duties and rights

• Employees in the area have the expertise to carry out the task
Characteristics cont,

• In hospital, specific parts of patient care (the job) are assigned to different individuals or groups

• Eg nurses, dieticians, laboratory workers, and doctors all provide a part of care which the patient needs
Characteristics cont,

Hierarchy of offices

• Employees are organized and ranked according to their degree of authority within the organization.

• Top positions administer and control the lower positions.

• However, lower offices should maintain a right to appeal decisions made higher in the hierarchy.
Characteristics cont,

- Each hierarchy has its own sphere of competence, allowing for a clear chain of command, control and order organization.
- Eg the hospital director/superintendant and the chief matron/nurse manager are the top most hospital hierarchies, while patient attendants and cleaners are at the bottom.
Characteristics cont,

Rational-legal authority

- Authority is given to officials based on their skills and formal positions given to them and not on individual aspects of authority like wealth, position, ownership, heritage etc.
- Management is separated from the ownership of the organization-career official work for a salary and do not own what they administer
Characteristics cont,

Creation of rules to govern performance

• Rules and procedures guide all daily organizational activities

• They should be easily understood and leaders should not change them anyhow.

• Administrative acts and decisions are recorded in writing.
Characteristics cont,

- Eg procedure and policy manuals prescribe types of behaviour for performing a procedure to policies to be followed.
- These will also act as guidelines when taking disciplinary actions against an employee.
Characteristics cont,

Separation of personal from official property and rights

• Officials do not own the resources necessary for the performance of their assigned functions but are accountable for their use
• Official and private business and income are strictly separated
• Offices or resources cannot be inherited, sold, etc
Characteristics cont,

Selection based on qualifications

• Officials are recruited based on professional qualifications, not on their relation with the leader or social rank, and are appointed, not elected, to the office.

• People are compensated with fixed salaries which should match with their qualifications and not with benefits such as rights to land, power.
Characteristics cont,

Clear career paths

• Employment in the organizations should be seen as a career for officials.
• Their work is rewarded by prospects of career advancement and promotion is granted according to seniority and/or achievement
• After an introduction period, the employee is given tenure, which protects the employee from unwarranted dismissal.
Advantages of bureaucratic approach

• Protects employees from unfair rulings from leaders which gives a greater sense of security to the employees.
• Creates an opportunity for employees to become specialists within one specific area, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency in each area of the organization.
• Creativity and stability are promoted within their respective duties and sub-tasks
Disadvantages of bureaucratic approach

• It is difficult to determine who is responsible for having made the decision, creating a feeling of powerlessness amongst employees.

• There is diffusion of responsibility and subsequent refusal to make a decision. Eg To get something done you need 6 different approvals on 6 different forms and each refusing to give approval until the other 5 have given theirs.
Disadvantages cont

- Organizational structure is too inflexible to effect necessary changes efficiently
- It is too difficult to determine specific individual contribution to successful patient care outcome
- The top bottom hierarchy does not utilize specialized lower level to make decisions in their field of specialty
Disadvantages cont

• Overspecialization, makes individuals not aware of larger consequences of their actions
• Not allowing people to use common sense, as everything must be as is written by the law.
• There is rigidity making decision-making slow or even impossible when facing some unusual case, and similarly delaying change and evolution
Bureaucratic theory cont,

- Nurses take care of their patients and don't consider larger organizational issues.
- Nurse managers oversee their nurses, but don't concern themselves with issues involving the medical staff.
Leadership styles

• Additionally, nurse managers need to identify appropriate leadership styles to lead the groups to attain high productivity and morale amongst employees.

• The situation, personal characteristics and leader’s behaviour would make one form of leadership more effective than the other.

• These include autocratic or authoritarian, democratic or participative, laissez fair’ bureaucratic.
Leadership styles cont,

- **Autocratic or authoritarian**
- Characterized by giving orders, top down communication
- Leader makes decision alone and frequently exercises power with coercion
- The group usually lacks enthusiasm
**autocratic or authoritarian cont,**

- Necessary in crisis situations when the entire focus is on getting the job done or when it is difficult to share decision making resulting in well defined actions and high productivity.
- Referred to as directive or controlling style of leadership, emphasis is on differences in status ("I" and "you").
Disadvantages

• Low creativity
• Dependent, aggressive and submissive employees
• Lack of innovation among employees
• Afraid to risk new ventures
• Unproductive in the absence of leader
• Lack of motivation-absence from work for slightest reasons
Democratic or participative leadership style

• Concerned with human relations and team work with up and down communication

• Necessary for groups of people who will work together for extended periods of time when interpersonal relationships can affect productivity of the group

• Decisions are made by the group and leader

• Responsibility for effective work performance is shared by everybody
Democratic style cont,

- Members have high morale, entirely independent of their leader, are not afraid to take risks and to think creatively
- Work output is not dependent on leader’s presence or absence
- Leaders do not issue orders—they offer information, ask stimulating questions and make suggestions in order to guide work of the group
Democratic style cont

• Are facilitators other than controllers, emphasis is on “we” and not I or you.
• Offer constructive criticisms
• They trust that group members are committed to accomplish set goals
• Is appropriate when great deal of coordination and cooperation between group members is needed or when the nature of work makes close supervision difficult
Disadvantages

• General work efficiency is somehow less than that of autocratic
• It take more time to get participation of each member when making decisions and this can be frustrating for people who are impatient and who want a job to be done as fast as possible
Laissez fair style of leadership

• Is free-reign leader who is generally inactive and nondirective
• Set almost no limits, is permisiive and has no established goals or policies and offer very little to group
• Few commands, suggestions and criticisms are given
Laissez fair style

• Is practiced by a person who has a great need for approval and is afraid to offend subordinates.
• She wants to please everyone and is preoccupied by her own work
• Members act independent of each other and often work against each other because there is little cooperation and coordination resulting to apathy and disinterest among employees, chaotic activity with high frustration
Laissez fair style

• When members are self directed, highly motivated and able to coordinate activities among themselves, the leader gives freedom needed for creativity and productivity

• In most cases the leader is unproductive, inefficient and unsatisfactory

• However it is appropriate when problems are poorly defined and brainstorming is needed to generate alternative solutions
Bureaucratic Leadership style

• Is a style for insecure leaders by always following policies
• Leader makes decisions based on standards or norms as guidance
• For details refer to bureaucratic theory above
Assignment

• Define your predominant leadership style- explain it
• Ask those who have worked with you to tell you the style that is exercised by you- let them explain it
• What style do you work best under
• What style describes a manager you have worked with –explain it but do not mention names
References

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