

Employment Relations

Employment relations different philosophy and managerial styles.

Prepared by Dr. Nourhan Sayed

HRM 624

5th Lecture

Lecture (5)





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Discussion question:
Define employment relations

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS - WHAT IS IT?

- The study of employee relations is the study of interactions, behaviours and outcomes based in and around the workplace. It involves those in work, those who employ them, and those who have an impact on their workplace relationships such as legislators and politicians:
- it is concerned with studying the regulation of the determinants and outcomes of the employment relationship, and sometimes with the breakdown of such regulation.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

- Because workplaces do not exist alone, the economies in which they are based, together with the cultures, philosophies, styles and norms of those working within them, and the desires, wishes and expectations of those reliant on them, all have a bearing on what goes on in the workplace, as indeed does the type of work, the technology used and the levels of competition

Frames of Reference

John Fox in 1966. Fox proposed that attitudes and subsequent behaviour in workplace relationships can be divided into two distinct categories: either a unitary relationship, that is, a relationship that exists solely for the mutual benefit of the parties, or a pluralistic relationship, that exists for the benefit of the interests of distinct but interdependent groups.

unitarist framework

unitarist framework

- A unitarist framework is one in which the employer has a view of the workplace from a point of view that assumes that everyone in the organisation agrees with the employer's purpose – the organisation's success – and, more importantly, agrees with the ways in which management intends to achieve that success.

unitarist framework

- In a unitarist framework, management is the sole source of authority and, under the leadership of the employer, has the right to manage; as such, this management privilege is not called into question because everyone is part of a team; they are all working together in the same way, and they all share the same goals. This consistency means that there are no conflicts of interest and, therefore, there is no need for conflict resolution mechanisms.

unitarist framework

- Conflict is often seen as illogical and even pathological. The belief is that when the workforce is in harmony, united, and acts as a cohesive unit, external intervention is unnecessary. Trade unions are therefore viewed as unwanted disruptions in a 'happy family'.

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- or because the dissenter is seen as a nonconformist, possibly a rebellious, independent employee who is best handled through termination. This mindset is appealing to managers as it justifies their decision-making and suggests that any opposition is not their responsibility. In this scenario, the employment relationship is seen as consensual and cooperation is considered the standard.

Pluralism framework

Pluralism

- The pluralist perspective, on the other hand, is a framework that assumes workplaces consist of a number of individuals and groups, each with different sets of values, needs, beliefs and loyalties. Such a mixture is unlikely to be homogenous and as a result there will be differing expectations and allegiances.

Pluralism

- Consequently conflict is to be expected, and an organisation will need to find ways of accommodating different viewpoints and managing any potential disagreements by consultation, negotiation or shared decision making. Management's function is therefore to manage by resolving differences and emphasising consensus and consent.

Radical

- The radical **point of view** may be a **outline** of reference that **acknowledges** that **financial imbalances** are **communicated** in social conflict – and at work **this is often show** by **turmoil** and **strife inside** the **business** relationship. **Beneath** a radicalist **point of view** such **struggle** is **inevitable**;

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Radical

- the key point about the indeterminacy of the labour contract and strategies of labour control is that managers and workers are locked into a relationship that is contradictory and antagonistic. It is contradictory, not in the sense of logical incompatibility, but because managements have to pursue the objectives of control and releasing creativity, both of which are inherent in the relationship with workers, and which call for different approaches. (2005: 16–17)

Radical

- The relationship is antagonistic because managerial strategies are about the deployment of workers' labour power in ways which permit the generation of a surplus. Workers are the only people who produce a surplus in the production process but ... they do not determine how their labour power is deployed to meet the objective.

Management styles

Managerial Styles

- Within the context of the employment relationship, managers have the freedom to operate within their own chosen framework. However, within these frameworks, various managerial approaches are utilized, which are referred to as "managerial styles". Fox (1974) initially identified six distinct styles, which were subsequently further developed by Purcell and Sisson (1983) categorizes styles into five distinct groups.

Five management styles

- Traditionalists,
- Sophisticated paternalists,
- Standard moderns,
- Sophisticated modern consulters,
- and Sophisticated modern constitutionalists.

1.The traditionalist approach

1.The traditionalist approach

- The traditionalist approach involves managers holding unitarist views, believing strongly in management's autonomy without external interference. Trade unions are viewed negatively and with suspicion, while the workforce is often treated in an authoritarian and sometimes exploitative manner. Management is seen as the ultimate authority, with managerial prerogative considered a legitimate entitlement.

The traditionalist approach (cont'd)

- This style is commonly seen in small family businesses, but larger organizations like Amazon may also exhibit these characteristics.

Conflict is typically overlooked under this approach, as it is assumed that management always knows best. If conflict does arise, it is often attributed to miscommunication or the actions of a rogue employee.

2.The sophisticated paternalists

2.The sophisticated paternalists

- On the other hand, sophisticated paternalists share unitarist beliefs but use a more delicate managerial approach. This approach's primary tenet is the conviction that treating staff members well will boost their output. Employees are treated with enlightenment, even though the management prerogative is still seen as a right and unions are seen as unwelcome intrusion.

2.The sophisticated paternalists (Cont'd)

- This entails building trust via deep engagement, encouraging efficient communication, and providing advantageous terms and circumstances to encourage loyalty. Reducing the need for union involvement is the goal. Kerr quotes an employee of the Australian company Australian Abrasives as the epitome of this strategy: "We had all we could ask for, so we didn't need a union. We respected Mr. Miller, who was an amazing boss who kept everyone happy" (2007: 83).

2.The sophisticated paternalists (Cont'd)

- Hewlett Packard, Gillette UK, and Marks and Spencer are a few excellent examples. Internal staff associations are a result of worries about external union influence in some organisations, such as News International. Although they have representatives, these staff associations are not independent organisations. This guarantees that everything stays inside the company.

2.The sophisticated paternalists (Cont'd)

- Staff associations may decide to separate from their employers and formally register as unions. The Britannia Staff Association, which was established in 1972, became independent four years later, and became a member of the TUC in 1999, is an illustration of this. This kind of evolution in workplace representation will likewise drive changes in managerial style, albeit sometimes reluctantly.

3. standard modern style

3. standard modern style

- Organisations that adhere to the normal contemporary model are pluralist; they acknowledge the existence of interest-based groupings inside the organisation and the likelihood of conflict. As a result, unions are acknowledged but not particularly welcomed. Union delegates are addressed "as and when" they become essential, using an adversarial "fire-fighting" strategy.

3. standard modern style (Cont'd)

- Adversarial bargaining is a win-lose process that occurs on a limited range of problems, and legislation is commonly employed to compel adherence to protocols and/or impede union activities. Companies such as Carillion, Balfour Beatty, Tata Corus, British Airways, Diageo, and Transport for London are examples of those who embody this approach.

4.sophisticated modern managers

- The strategies, policies, and procedures of the two surviving categories of competent contemporary managers, the consultants and the constitutionalists, recognise that staff members will view things differently than management does and that the processes representation of employees will aid in containing such differences, preserving stability, and lowering or containing conflict.

4.sophisticated modern managers

- Although workplace participation is inevitable, constitutionalists confine it with rules and regulations. Managerial control is strongly emphasised, and although ties with unions are amicable, they are constrained by procedural requirements. This is common in highly competitive industries like manufacturing and in certain public sector organisations like NHS trusts.

4. sophisticated modern managers

- Conversely, the relationship between the consultants and workplace representatives is far less restricted; there is greater information sharing, cooperative issue solving, and a stronger emphasis on cooperation. For instance, there is a very good culture for employee relations at Npower, a gas and electricity generating and delivery firm, where management and unions collaborate through problem-solving techniques

4. sophisticated modern managers

- The union representatives were actively involved in the roll-out of training in the new method for line managers after negotiating and establishing a new capabilities procedure, which was successful in gaining high levels of buy-in from these managers (BERR, 2009: 17).

Chapter summary

- This chapter has addressed numerous issues that demonstrate how the employment relationship is not isolated but rather influenced by the social, economic, and legal environment in which an organization operates, as well as the culture of its workforce and the beliefs and values that both employers and employees bring to the workplace.

Chapter summary

- To comprehensively analyze and comprehend the processes and events at work, the study of employee relations must consider all of these factors. This critical realism approach acknowledges the interests and perspectives of all parties involved, the levels of power and how it is exerted, managerial styles, ethical behaviors, and instances of conflict or cooperation.

Any questions





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Thank You

