

“14-POINT DEMING PHILOSOPHY AND MANAGERS:” AN APPRAISAL

ASWATHY S NAIR, VIJAY LAKSHMY KV

Department of Commerce and Management, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kochi, Kerala, India.
Email: vijimenon83@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study thus tries to identify the opinion of present generation managers about the applicability of 14-point philosophy laid down by the father of quality management, Deming.

Methods: This is basically a research paper done after conducting an opinion survey among managers using 5-point Likert scaling technique, in general without looking into their area of operation.

Result: Majority showed a positive inclination toward the applicability of Deming philosophy in their area of operation.

Conclusion: Managers in the present competitive world have to face tough competition to survive and sustain themselves in their area of operation. There are various institutions offering MBA degree courses, but the worth of these degree holders is a matter of suspicion. When they have to deal with practical situations, at times they might be troubled because what they actually did learn in their classes and from papers may not provide them with the right wisdom of timely usage of learned matter. Furthermore, there are philosophies put forth by various quality gurus which these managers have seen in black and white when they were students but how many have made a practical concern and consideration over those is again a doubtful affair. This study shows that present generation managers are interested in knowing more about experts like Deming.

Keywords: 14-point Deming philosophy, System of profound knowledge, Managers, Quality management.

INTRODUCTION

Management is the art of applying a scientifically learned subject. Management as science is how a manager does it. Whether to excel in the art of managing affairs in today’s tough competitive world necessitates high-quality mastery over the principles of management. Earlier, it was merely a matter of experience to manage a concern or a situation. However, now a day, proficiency matters a lot in judging the managerial traits of a person. The number of B-schools is rising on a daily basis, we can see, matching is the case of number of management graduates. However, about the quality of these graduates is a matter of suspicion. Bhat and Kumar [1] define management as “It is the art of making people more effective than they would have been without a manager.” These management graduates of today must better have knowledge over the various philosophies and principles developed by experts in their area of operation so that those philosophies can be effectively put into practice while executing their managerial functions.

Relevance of the study

By learning management as a professional subject in “Academically - Excellent B-schools,” one acquires practical oriented theoretical knowledge. In almost all top B-schools, there are avenues where the students can apply what they have learned in theory and gain maximum insights into it. However, whether all the students make a timely use of these opportunities is doubtful. It is being said that through education one absorbs the necessary knowledge and also learn various skills. It is from one’s own experience that he/she learns and inculcates various managerial traits. At times, there arise certain situations in every manager’s life where one can very well apply the theories of eminent management experts which they have covered while studying. Only then, these people would realize that what they have learned in classrooms and via books would help them to face real life situations audaciously. The increasing number of B-schools in our country also poses a question on whether these schools are able to build up academically eminent and practically viable stuff, or else this boost in number go around worthless. In this dynamic business environment,

managers have to think wide and come out of the cocoon to plan novel strategies to withstand competition. Senguptha and Chandran [2] rightly remarks that “The world today is very different from the world of yesterday. The dynamic changes that have taken place during the last 5 decades in all spheres of life have made the business environment much more complex and challenging to deal with. Most companies are now facing an increasingly turbulent, complex, and threatening environment. Business policies and strategies highlight the importance of devising strategies that can be employed to deal effectively with such environmental conditions and changes as necessary.” Deming [3] was an eminent American Engineer, Statistician, Professor, Author, Lecturer, and Management consultant. Many in Japan acknowledge Deming as the inspirer who helped Japan to rise from ashes of Second World War to miracles. The 14-point philosophy put forth by Deming (who is respected as the father of quality management) are considered as key points in transforming business effectiveness. These philosophies, if noticed, and duly put into operation by present generation managers, they can excel in their profession and also will assume for themselves a competitive advantage. It is not compulsory that managers have to follow these philosophical principles, those who follow gain the benefits too. Thus, this study becomes relevant as it helps the managers to develop themselves qualitatively to withstand competition among their increasing “manager community.”

Review of Literature

Bhat and Kumar [1] remarks that wise managers make a combination of profound theories what their predecessors have set and what they themselves have experienced while dealing with their own colleagues, teammates, followers, and other departmental members and make new philosophies to settle matters and tackle day to day issues. Only if they do this, can they have a competitive advantage in the present strategic environment? “Managing, like medicine, is an applied art and its successful practice depends upon applying to specific cases the knowledge derived from a whole series of underlying disciplines ranging from Operations research to Psychology to Cultural anthropology,” these authors say.

Singh [4] comments that “training and exercise are meant to improve a person’s skills which cannot be obtained by theoretical knowledge. They can provide one with oodles of expertise and proficiency but it can never deliver those kinds of results and improved skills that one can get from practical education.”

Aishwarya [5] comments that students choose B-schools for their management degrees depending on the placement arrangements made by them and not on the basis of their curriculum neither their faculties. The person further adds that these students concentrate on their placements alone rather than concentrating on studies, as a result of which they can never be good at concepts, and this would leave them nowhere.

Pierce *et al.* [6] remark that “managing activities internal to the firm is only part of the modern executive’s responsibilities. The modern executive must also respond to the challenges posed by the firm’s immediate and remote external environments. The executive is compelled to subordinate the demands of the firm’s internal activities and external environment to the multiple and often inconsistent requirements of its stakeholders.” The Economic Times, Education [7] reports that “India produces about three lakh management graduates every year, but hardly 35,000 of them are employable, said experts who gathered here for a conference of B-school heads.” According to All India Council for Technical Education, 3,54,421 students enrolled for MBA in 3364 institutions across the country last year. Speaking to TOI at the southern regional round table conclave of business school directors and deans, Philip, former director of IIM-Bengaluru, said, “Today, the requirement of managerial candidates in the Indian market is between 35,000 and 40,000 every year. There are two reasons for unemployment: Lack of global skills and excess supply.” The literature reviewed also reveals the relevance of this topic as this topic gains an idea over present manager’s views on the applicability of a dynamic and relevant principles/philosophies put forth by the father of quality management.

Objectives of the study

The study main aims at the appraisal of opinions of the present generation managers on the 14-point Deming philosophy - its application in the real world.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study being an appraisal of opinions of the present generation managers on the 14-point Deming philosophy - its application in the real world was conducted as an opinion survey. The data mainly applied were primary data and secondary data in the form of literature reviews were also gathered to analyze the collected data more clearly. The primary data needed for this study were collected from 100 respondents who were managers in different departments of different organizations taken at random. Questionnaires were distributed for

data collection. The study is conducted as a pilot study to find scope for further in-depth researches. The secondary data were collected from various reference text books and various research sites. Articles related to the topic were read online. The analysis was done with the help of percentages, which are presented in Table 1 in this report.

Study period

The study was done during January-May 2016.

Limitations of the study

This study is a survey-based study where sampling technique is applied. If the survey was conducted on a census basis, then the results would have been more accurate. This study collects the opinion of the manager respondents which differs from each have their own mindsets and attitudinal preferences over any topic. This chance for opinion difference must be viewed as a constraint while evaluating the results. This survey is rather a feasibility survey, wherein so many factors need further consideration while planning the same survey on an in-depth basis. “Ceteris paribus (Latin phrase meaning ‘with other things the same’ or ‘other things being equal or held constant’ or ‘all other things being equal,’ or ‘all else being equal’)” [8] assumption is followed here. There are various factors to be considered while analyzing the opinion of a person about the application of Deming philosophy. Here, just the opinions are analyzed on a 5-point Likert (5 points considered here are [Strongly agree/Agree/Not sure/Disagree/Strongly disagree]) scaling technique leaving scope for further researches. Managers were approached in general. The organization and the department to which they belong also might have affected their opinion.

Analysis and findings

The following were the points that were considered for this study which is referred to as the 14-point Deming philosophy.

For this study, these 14 points were elaborated in the questionnaires that were distributed to respondents for collecting their opinion about the applicability of them. The necessary explanations for these points were given thinking from the managerial angle of view. The managers were asked to give their opinion on the basis of their personal judgment alone. From the analysis (Table 2), it is clear that majority of the managers strongly agree and agree to the 14-point philosophy of Deming. They have shown a positive attitude toward the applicability of Deming’s 14-point philosophy. Only a few managers are not sure about the philosophy. Only a meager percentage of managers do not agree to the Deming philosophy. These analysis results show the positive inclination of managers toward the application of the 14-point philosophy of Deming, father of quality management. This is an optimistic sign that managers prefer to follow these principles, and they know that these principles are practically relevant for their existence and long-term sustainability. This matter becomes relevant when the opportunity cost of MBA graduates are increasing day by day and by

Table 1: 14 points in Deming philosophy

Point number	Philosophy
1	Create constancy of purpose toward improvement of product/service
2	Adopt any new philosophy but after careful analysis
3	Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality
4	End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tags
5	Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service to improve quality and productivity
6	Institute training on the job
7	Institute leadership
8	Drive out fear
9	Break down barriers between staff areas/departments
10	Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and targets for the work force asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity
11	Eliminate management by objectives/work standards (quotas) for factory workers
12	Remove barriers that rob the hourly worker of his/her right to pride of workmanship
13	Institute vigorous programs of education and self-improvement
14	Encourage the feeling that transformation is everyone’s job

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._Edwards_Deming#Deming_philosophy_synopsis

Table 2: Percentage analysis of opinion of respondents about applicability of the 14-point Deming philosophy

*Factor/point analyzed	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Not sure (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
1	13	70	11	5	1
2	31	66	3	0	0
3	19	73	8	0	0
4	16	75	7	1	1
5	32	62	5	1	0
6	22	68	9	1	0
7	23	69	8	0	0
8	21	69	7	3	0
9	19	76	4	1	0
10	18	76	5	1	0
11	12	80	5	3	0
12	18	78	4	0	0
13	16	74	7	3	0
14	11	80	8	1	0

Source: Questionnaire. *Factor/Point of philosophy is mentioned in Table 1, Sample size: 100

the practical usage of philosophies of eminent personalities, these MBA graduates can build a safe position for them in the career.

Scope for further research

Further studies in the following areas related to this topic are feasible:

- In-depth study on the same topic with more number of respondents after their due classification
- A study on the system of profound knowledge and Deming philosophy together
- A study on the awareness of Deming philosophy among managers
- An evaluation of the theories propounded by various quality gurus.

CONCLUSION

Deming and his philosophies are laid down forever. Managers from their experience make necessary amendments to it. If these philosophies are followed by managers in their career as well as while executing their functions among subordinates, then they can manage without coercion. They can train themselves and their employees to evaluate their performance all by themselves. Managers must work as colleagues as well as collaborators. Deming believes that there must be “We - Us” attitude combined with “Ours” rather than “I - You” in combination with “Mine - Yours” between Managers and Employees. The respondents of this survey also promoted the usage of the term “collaborators” rather than “bosses.” By learning and applying more philosophies put forth by Deming, the managers opine that they can slowly develop the quality culture in their organization, which would in turn help in instilling the total quality management aspect in the organization thereby ensuring their long-term sustainability and success in career life.

“Learning is not compulsory, neither is survival”

W. Edward Deming

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