
REFLECTIONS ON THE RELEVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF MCDONALD'S CORPORATION

Dr. Nimisha. M.N^{*1}

^{*1}Assistant Professor, Department Of Management Studies, St. Aloysius College,
Elthuruth, Thrissur, India.

DOI : <https://www.doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS45499>

ABSTRACT

The "Taylorism" method of scientific management was developed by Frederic Taylor during the Second World War. With the commercial change came a rapidly expanding pool of people searching for opportunities that required a new management strategy. The first management theory to be used internationally was scientific management. It supports the efficient use of resources for maximum productivity, motivating employees to earn more money. According to Taylor, the main obstacle to improving the productivity of human labour is managers' ineptitude. Taylor decided to get into agreements with other businesses for the reorganisation of the manufacturing processes to make the jobs that each employee had to do simpler. The employees at the Taylorized factories perform the same straightforward duty and don't do a lot of other things. Although there are still several indications that the majority of companies are using scientific management for their commercial operations, the concepts of scientific management have a significant impact on society as a whole. This article examines how McDonald's has utilised the scientific management principles to establish its dominance.

Keywords: Scientific Management, Taylorism, Motivation, Mcdonaldization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Frederick W. Taylor researched and created the management theory known as "scientific management," which analyses and coordinates workflow. His principal objective was to raise economic returns, particularly in terms of worker productivity. Taylor's set of concepts comprises following a 'one best way' approach of completing tasks, scientifically hiring, training and developing each individual, applying a work-for-reward oriented mindset and sharing the workload between management and workers evenly and equitably. Ray Kroc, the creator of McDonald's, saw the promise of scientific management in the fast food sector. He recognised that McDonald's could stand out from rivals and experience quick growth by simplifying processes and delivering a uniform customer experience and used principles of scientific management, including a system that rewards employees for achieving the organization's goals; a commitment to scientific education among all employees; and the use of a standardised approach to every task¹.

Fast meal preparation using the assembly line idea, which was originally used in manufacturing to satisfy changing customer needs while supplying reliable service and quality. This method combines high volume, high speed, and cheap cost². To achieve this, duties have to be divided into smaller, more specialised units, such as burger assembling, fry frying, and beverage distribution. Each employee received thorough training on how to carry out particular responsibilities quickly and accurately. The firm was able to streamline operations, save waste, and shorten wait times for customers by carefully monitoring each stage of the food preparation process. The fast food sector was changed by McDonald's success and adoption of scientific management concepts. Similar ideas were adopted by other significant industry companies including Burger King, Wendy's, and KFC to enhance their operations and efficiently compete. These concepts have shaped everything from menu design to service practises, becoming a fundamental part of the industry's DNA.

The guiding principle employed by McDonald's is the staff's specialised training. Standardised practises, such as the "Speedy Service System," were put into place, which further increased efficiency and enhanced the entire client experience³.

II. SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN MCDONALDS

One of McDonald's success factors is the thoughtful design of the rapid service system. The management of the company carefully plans and coordinates the entire process of creating the menu items as well as how they are prepared and served to the clients to ensure that the same high standards are met every time. One can count on receiving the same level of food and service quality anywhere in the world. Careful staff selection and training is how the service is consistently held to a high quality. The best in the hospitality sector, McDonald's training programme is created to ensure that the staff members are knowledgeable about food production and service⁴.

Following are the scientific management principles used by McDonald's.

Division of work: The key component of scientific management is scientifically assigning tasks to individuals. Worker roles at McDonald's include front counter, back area, and drive-through. For instance, the employees in the rear area could prepare hamburgers and deliver them to the shelf before the employees in the front area remove them and serve the clients. In McDonald's work is divided equally between the workers and managers, workers to make the products and managers to perform management tasks⁵ There are divisions for food preparation, as well as a straightforward split for worker-performed cooking. While the consumers can self-serve, all of the burgers are sold with the same production line-provided condiments. The meal preparation was planned by timers, pre-allocated amounts, and registered labels of food genres, resulting in 15 minutes of training for new employees to achieve the greatest efficiency for the job.

For instance, when a customer orders a "Big Mac" combo, the person who makes the buns will toast the bun and hand it to the person who makes the burgers, who will then wrap it up in preparation for the customer. People who prepare the fries will place them in the box, and then those at the front desk will put everything together for the customer. Everyone at McDonald's simply completes their task and hands it off to the next person. Everybody consistently performs their duties for that shift. Therefore, the primary goal of scientific management is to create highly repeatable jobs, which is why working at McDonald's doesn't require a lot of talent⁶.

According to Taylor, there is only one way to find or develop this best approach and its best application is through scientific research and analysis. This entails gradually replacing the "rule of thumb" with science throughout the mechanical arts. McDonald's maintains several thorough and stringent operating standards to guarantee the high quality of every item produced by any chain location. Every type of employment, whether performed by a cook, a counter employee, or a hall sweeper, has normative operational requirements and written regulations. Machines use precise numerical values to calculate and regulate the cooking time and material amounts. They also set up a computer system that sends orders to the kitchen, where the holding bins would control the temperature to maintain the food's freshness and heat. Additionally, the personnel at McDonald's are trained in several production techniques. The clerk at the counter takes the order and usually employs a suggestive sell-up to include a missing item, like dessert.

One of the principles of scientific management is to treat people like machines, allowing them to perform the same task again to increase organisational profit⁷. Each worker receives complete written instructions, outlining in detail the task they have to complete as well as the tools to be used in accomplishing the work, and the work of every worker is entirely planned out by management at least one day in advance⁸. Additionally, McDonald's employs specialists in the restaurant in positions including order takers, fry cooks, and grill operators. The order is then verified, assembled, and checked using the register display. By selecting food from the right machines and bins, the order is put together. Additionally, some employees work in the burger production while others work in the French fry production. McDonald's has established a consistent procedure for carrying out each task, enabling the staff to work effectively.

The aforementioned task suggests the theory of not only what must be done, but also how it must be done, as well as how long it must take to complete. There is also a rule in this management whereby the person who is committed to their job will work harder to maintain these rates over the long run so that they can work happily and avoid becoming overworked. The scientific management essentially entails extensive task preparation and execution. This means that task specialisation can speed up production while also requiring less space, which can make production control easier⁹.

Scientific Training: One of the key doctrines of scientific management is thought to be scientific training. Employees can become specialists in their field by being assigned to roles that match their qualifications and training, which improves speed and proficiency. Taylor thought that for employees to execute their jobs effectively, they needed to receive the proper training and development. McDonald's invests in training and development programmes to give staff members the skills and information they need to do jobs effectively, adhering to Taylor's principles.

New hires go through extensive training that covers everything from customer service procedures to food safety measures. A new employee will consent to training as soon as they begins working at McDonald's on their first day. In the first month, they has three tests to pass. As a result, strict standards result in high-quality food. The highest level of productivity is simple for new employees to achieve. Additionally, McDonald's training emphasises the development of leadership, time management, and communication skills.

The phrase McJob, which is derived from the name of the fast-food restaurant McDonald's, is used to denote any position where little training is necessary and supervisors closely monitor employees' activity. McJob used to be a part-time worker with no future career prospects. McJobs are sometimes referred to as contract work or temporary employment. McDonaldization of fast food results in an increase in McJobs. There is a misconception that a McJob lacks creativity or intellectual engagement. McJob is no longer a low-status, low-paying position. For newcomers to the workforce, a McJob was frequently their first employment. McJobs is becoming a long-term destination for an increasing number of workers due to economic developments. Even Jeff Bezos, the creator of Amazon, had a McJob. Jeff Bezos worked at McDonald's during the breakfast shift as a short-order line cook while still in high school.

Differential piece rate system: According to Taylor, giving employees no incentives despite their increased effort will lead to discouraged employees who create low output Taylor understood the value of encouraging employees to enhance their production. He suggested reward schemes for workers who achieve or surpass performance goals. These incentives, which were frequently monetary awards or job promotions, were designed to encourage employees to put out their best efforts, boosting productivity and job happiness. McDonald's implements a system of competitive pay and advancement that values and rewards effort.

The McDonald's chain of restaurants has implemented a series of challenging and thorough working standards to guarantee that every product will be of the highest quality. To attain predictability, calculability, and efficiency, McDonald's applies the principles of scientific management in the design of its work processes, placing carefully considered and imposed restrictions on employee innovation. To motivate the workforce to perform effectively and reach the objectives, bonus schemes are used¹⁰.

Aside from the base pay, McDonald's has established competitive wage and promotion programmes. At McDonald's, effort, commitment, drive, and success are recognised and rewarded. There are many ways to show appreciation, from simple words of encouragement for a job well done to restaurant-wide recognition through initiatives like "Employee of the Month." Additionally, McDonald's provides fantastic incentive programmes with access to gift cards, goods, free meals, etc. When performance reaches and surpasses objectives Long Term Incentives are given to eligible employees to reward and retain key employees who have shown sustained Performance

Standardization: The uniformity of its menu items and service practises has been the foundation of McDonald's success. McDonald's has created a series of meticulous and exact operating methods to guarantee that the food it delivers to its consumers is of the same high calibre throughout every chain or franchise. For instance, every outlet has fairly comparable equipment and machinery layouts that are measured and calculated to maximise efficiency. Similar operations techniques are being used in the production process by a huge number of organisations as well as smaller ones . "Copying" is a fundamental idea in scientific management; employees' primary task is to replicate work. This limits the creativity and innovation of both management and employees. Because every item at McDonald's has its production line, it is difficult for the company to develop new products, and doing so would be extremely expensive. such as a particular bun-making machine, oven size restrictions, uniformly sized patties, and so forth¹¹.

McDonald's has created a scoop to fill the bags with french fries that both expedites the operation and ensures a uniform number of fries is placed inside the bag. This is achieved by a staff member picking up the specially

made scoop, putting the handle into a bag, and then continuously scooping up the fries until they are just the size that the creators wanted. Fries are scooped into the bag as it is raised upwards, and as it fills with fries, the weight of the bag's contents causes it to automatically disengage from the handle.

Time and motion studies: McDonald's also used time and motion studies to identify the most effective ways to complete jobs. To minimise extra time for unnecessary movement, the ingredients that go into a burger are put strategically for the workers. The practice is used in both the manufacturing of goods and the provision of services. When talking to a customer or providing a service to them, McDonald's employees are required to adhere to a strict script. Control is one of McDonaldization's most crucial features. Time is particularly essential to many people because of the fast pace of life; as a result, they favour food products that can be prepared quickly. The consumers may save a lot of time by having the food prepared. Additionally, it is crucial for fast food establishments.

McDonalds find ways to streamline operations and eliminate extra steps by watching how personnel move and breaking down activities into smaller components. This will ultimately increase overall efficiency. For instance, McDonald's might examine the time it takes a crew member to put together a burger from beginning to end. They could spot possibilities to reorganise ingredients, modify workstation arrangements, or add new tools to shorten the assembly process by valuable seconds. In McDonalds, people don't have to take many steps. The "made for you" technique at McDonald's ensures that food is freshly prepared when you place an order¹².

When the meal is cooked, such as in the fryers at McDonald's, the machine will beep. It is a highly effective approach to inform the staff when the dish has finished cooking. Additionally, it makes it easy for the workers and helps inexperienced workers understand how long anything would take to prepare. Additionally, it will keep the meal from being overdone, preventing food waste and maintaining the same degree of quality.

Frozen raw hamburger patties are properly pre-measured, pre-packaged, and sent to the stores. They must be the same size and calibre. Until a buzzer and flashing light signalled that it was time to flip the hamburger and fry the other side, hamburgers were traditionally cooked on one side only. This approach ensured that the hamburgers were never overcooked on one side and undercooked on the other but always cooked to perfection. Several years ago, McDonald's decided that this did not guarantee 100% accuracy and developed its cooking system so that the hamburgers are now being cooked to order. so it developed its frying technology so that hamburgers are now cooked on both sides simultaneously. Not only did this improve cooking consistency, but it also cut the time needed to prepare a hamburger in half. The minimum cooking time for a normal patty, according to McDonald's training programme, is 37 seconds. McDonald's has a cooking time limit for each product. The quantity of the ingredients and the cooking time, which are indicated by a numerical value, are controlled by a computer system in its operations that can communicate orders from the kitchen to holding bins while simultaneously controlling temperature to keep food hot and fresh¹³.

III. CONCLUSION

Taylor sought to optimise production and efficiency inside businesses by using systematic procedures, standardisation, specialisation, and incentive systems. Many of his concepts are still applicable today, albeit they have been modified to take into account the changing demands of the workforce and maintain a healthy balance between productivity and employee well-being.

Companies that adhere to the Taylorism concept place more emphasis on control than communication, which can cause staff isolation and a lack of communication. Frederick Taylor's concepts are still relevant to modern management theory. Modern management techniques have been significantly impacted by scientific management. The essence of Scientific Management is still largely in use today, but tweaked and updated.

The word "McDonaldization," originally coined by George Ritzer, refers to identify the, most efficient way to do any work by first breaking it down into its smallest components and then rationalising it. Therefore, the first dimension of McDonaldization is efficiency or the optimum technique to execute the work. McDonaldization has now permeated fields including travel, finance, and even news. Education, commerce, health, and religion, where "drive-in" churches are common, are other McDonaldized industries. Businesses that implement McDonaldization may see increased revenues and cheaper expenses.

Ritzer's idea of McDonaldization is a modernization of Max Weber's classic argument of how scientific rationality gave rise to bureaucracy, which became the main organising principle of contemporary society for a large portion of the 20th century. Weber said that hierarchical duties, compartmentalised information, a system of hiring and progression based on perceived merit, and the legal-rationality authority of the rule of law were the characteristics of the modern bureaucracy. The four main components of McDonaldization are effectiveness, calculability, predictability, standardisation, and control. The demand for qualified labour has been minimised by concentrating on the four essential factors that lead to McDonaldization. Workers in these settings do routine, highly focussed, compartmentalised, repetitive duties that can be rapidly and inexpensively taught, making them simple to replace. Work of this nature devalues labour. Work like this reduces the value of labour and weakens the negotiating position of employees. Sociologists note that this type of job has resulted in decreased worker rights and pay around the world¹⁴.

In conclusion, scientific management ideas have had a significant impact on McDonald's and the fast food sector as a whole. The success and expansion of fast food chains have been facilitated by the implementation of these concepts, such as standardisation, specialisation, and efficiency.

IV. REFERENCES

- [1] Lockwood, F. (1995). A Cost Benefit Analysis Model to describe the perception and use of Activities in self-instructional texts. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03172912>
- [2] Smart, B. (1999). Resisting McDonaldization: Theory, Process and critique. In SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks (pp. 1–21). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446217627.n1>
- [3] Garland, C. (2008). The McDonaldization of Higher Education?: Notes on the UK experience. *Fast Capitalism*, 4(1), 107–110. <https://doi.org/10.32855/fcapital.200801.011>
- [4] Goffee, R., & Scase, R. (2015). *Corporate realities (Routledge Revivals): The Dynamics of Large and Small Organisations*. Routledge.
- [5] Taylor, F. W. (2018). *The principles of scientific management: Large Print*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform.
- [6] Bedeian, A. G., & Wren, D. A. (2001). Most influential management books of the 20th Century. *Organizational Dynamics*, 29(3), 221–225. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0090-2616\(01\)00022-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0090-2616(01)00022-5)
- [7] Brennan, L. (2011). The scientific management of information overload. *Journal of Business Management*, 17(1), 121–134. [https://doi.org/10.6347/jbm.201101_17\(1\).0009](https://doi.org/10.6347/jbm.201101_17(1).0009)
- [8] Heames, J. T., & Breland, J. W. (2010). Management pioneer contributors: 30-year review. *Journal of Management History*, 16(4), 427–436. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17511341011073915>
- [9] Zuffo, R. G. (2011). Taylor is Dead, Hurray Taylor! The " Human Factor " in Scientific Management: Between Ethics, Scientific Psychology and Common Sense. *Journal of Business Management*, 17(1), 23–41. [https://doi.org/10.6347/jbm.201101_17\(1\).0003](https://doi.org/10.6347/jbm.201101_17(1).0003)
- [10] Hambrick, D. C., & Fredrickson, J. W. (2005). Are you sure you have a strategy? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 19(4), 51–62. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2005.19417907>
- [11] Johnson, M., Christensen, C. M., & Kagermann, H. (2008). Reinventing your business model. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(12).
<http://safarisoftsolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2010/10/Harvard-Business-Review-Reinventing-Your-Business-Model.pdf>
- [12] Khan, M., Serafeim, G., & Yoon, A. (2016). Corporate Sustainability: First evidence on materiality. *The Accounting Review*, 91(6), 1697–1724. <https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-51383>
- [13] Schramade, W. (2016). Integrating ESG into Valuation Models and Investment Decisions: The Value Driver Adjustment Approach. Social Science Research Network.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2749626>
- [14] Ritzer, G. (2012). The McDonaldization of society. In SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks (pp. 198–217).
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446220160.n11>