PART 1

Read the text below and answer questions 1–13.

THE EVOLUTION OF MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

A

The rise of large-scale industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created an organisational problem that small workshops had rarely faced: how to coordinate hundreds or thousands of workers, machines and materials with predictable results. Railways, mines and factories required timetables, standard operating routines and clear reporting lines, because informal supervision could not keep pace with the speed and scale of production. Management therefore emerged as a distinct activity—separate from ownership or craft expertise—concerned with imposing order on complex work. Early theorists tended to assume that efficiency could be designed into the system through planning, measurement and control, even if the human experience of work was treated as secondary.

B

The most influential early approach was classical management, which tried to convert work into an optimisable sequence of tasks. Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management proposed that productivity could be raised by studying each job in detail, timing movements, eliminating "waste," and then prescribing the one best method. In this view, managers were responsible for analysis and method design, while workers were trained to execute the standardised procedure. At the organisational level, Max Weber's account of bureaucracy provided a complementary logic: a hierarchical structure with formal roles, written rules and impersonal authority was seen as the most reliable way to scale decision-making and ensure accountability. Together, Taylor and Weber helped normalise standardisation, specialisation and top-down coordination, but they also attracted criticism for treating workers as interchangeable units and for ignoring motivational and social realities.

C

By the 1930s, purely mechanical assumptions were increasingly questioned. The human relations movement argued that productivity could not be explained by pay and procedure alone, because work occurred within a social environment shaped by interpersonal dynamics, informal leadership and group expectations. The Hawthorne Studies, associated with Elton Mayo and colleagues, became emblematic of this shift. Although later scholars debated the interpretation of the findings, the broader message entered management thinking: feelings of recognition, participation and belonging can affect effort,

cooperation and resistance. From this perspective, a workplace is not merely a technical system but also a social system, and managers who ignore morale and communication may unintentionally create conflict or reduce performance. Critics, however, noted that “caring” management could become paternalistic if it was used primarily as a technique for compliance rather than genuine well-being.

D

Later in the twentieth century, a more holistic vocabulary emerged from systems theory and contingency thinking. Instead of searching for universal rules, systems theorists described organisations as open systems that exchange information, resources and constraints with their environment—markets, regulations, technologies and cultural expectations. Outcomes depend not only on internal design but also on external shocks and feedback loops. Contingency theorists extended this idea by arguing that what works in one setting may fail in another: a rigid hierarchy may suit stable, routine production, while a more flexible structure may be better for uncertain tasks or fast-changing industries. Management, in this framework, becomes an adaptive activity—diagnosing context, monitoring signals and adjusting structures rather than applying a single formula.

E

From the 1970s onward, strategic management became a dominant theme as competition intensified and firms looked beyond internal efficiency to long-term positioning. Managers were urged to analyse industry structure, anticipate rivals, differentiate offerings and allocate resources to build sustainable advantage. At the same time, quality management and continuous improvement reframed performance as a learning problem. Approaches influenced by Japanese manufacturing emphasised reducing defects, understanding process variation and empowering front-line workers to identify problems. Although strategy and quality developed in different intellectual traditions, both encouraged managers to think in longer time horizons: success was increasingly defined by capability building, not merely by short-term output.

F

In many contemporary sectors, the growth of knowledge work and digital tools has further reshaped managerial assumptions. Where value depends on creativity, collaboration and rapid problem-solving, strict standardisation can become counterproductive. This helps explain the appeal of flatter structures, cross-functional teams and iterative “agile” methods that break complex projects into shorter cycles with frequent feedback. Yet critics argue that agility can become a slogan rather than a genuine redesign: organisations may keep traditional control systems—fixed targets, rigid approvals and punitive reporting—while using the language of flexibility. When this occurs, employees experience

“pseudo-empowerment,” in which responsibility is decentralised but authority remains centralised, producing frustration rather than speed.

G
In the most recent debates, management thought increasingly includes ethical and sustainability considerations that extend beyond productivity and profit. Decisions about supply chains, automation, data collection, surveillance and environmental impact can impose costs on communities and future generations, not only on employees or shareholders. This has encouraged “stakeholder” approaches that evaluate organisational success more broadly—through resilience, fairness, well-being and long-term ecological constraints. Taken together, the history of management ideas suggests a recurring tension between efficiency and humanity, and a recurring lesson: no single model fits every organisation or era. Effective management is therefore best understood as the careful matching of methods to the nature of work, the surrounding environment and the needs of people.

Questions 1–5

Which paragraph contains the following information?

1 A criticism that “agile” language may mask the continuation of older control mechanisms.

2 The claim that analysing tasks scientifically can identify an optimal procedure for higher output.

3 The view that workplaces are shaped by informal relationships and shared expectations, not only formal rules.

4 The argument that organisational methods must be adjusted because firms interact with external forces and feedback.

5 The idea that modern evaluation of organisations increasingly considers wider moral and environmental consequences.

Questions 6–9

Complete the summary below. Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Changing ideas about effective management

Early theorists linked management to industrial expansion and the pursuit of measurable efficiency. Taylor’s approach sought higher **6** ..... through standardisation, while Weber’s model justified impersonal **7** ..... through rules and formal roles. Later, the

human relations tradition stressed that interpersonal **8** ..... and morale could shape performance. Systems theorists argued that organisations exchange information, resources and **9 .....** with their environment.

Questions 10–13

Select the correct answer.

10 According to the passage, what is one criticism of Taylorist scientific management?

A It treated workers as the main designers of methods and targets.
B It could ignore motivation and reduce workers to interchangeable units.
C It argued that rules and procedures should be avoided in large organisations.
D It claimed that social belonging mattered more than efficiency in factory work.

11 What criticism was made of some human-relations approaches?

A They gave workers too much control over formal decision-making.
B They treated social interaction as irrelevant to productivity.
C They relied entirely on financial rewards to secure cooperation.
D Concern for employees could become paternalistic when used mainly to obtain compliance.

12 How does systems theory characterise organisations?

A As open systems affected by exchanges with their external environment.
B As structures whose outcomes are determined solely by internal rules.
C As stable entities that function best when external feedback is excluded.
D As organisations that should apply identical structures regardless of market conditions.

13 What does Paragraph **D** suggest about “best practice” in management?

A A single method fits all organisations if applied consistently.
B Hierarchies always outperform flexible structures in competitive industries.
C Suitable structures depend on context and the organisation’s environment.
D Open systems can be managed without monitoring feedback or external shocks.

Answer Key

1. F
2. B
3. C
4. D

5. G
6. productivity
7. authority
8. dynamics
9. constraints
10. B
11. D
12. A
13. C