Module Title: HOTELS OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study reflects on the management and leadership skills that are important to be obtained by the hotel managers to conduct the hospitality operations accurately. This report examines the strategic management and leadership approaches needed for Village Hotels in Scotland to navigate economic challenges and enhance service quality. Using Henri Fayol's management principles and Trait Theory, the study highlights how structured leadership can improve operational efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and customer satisfaction. This study also represents the relevant theoretical concept based on quality service by using the SERVQUAL model. In addition, this study demonstrates the role of technology as a current transformation across the hospitality industry significantly.

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1. Introduction

The hotel industry in Scotland is undergoing significant changes, influenced by rising operational costs, technological advancements, and evolving consumer expectations. Village Hotels needs good management and leadership to compete. This chapter examines how Henri Fayol's management concepts and the Trait Theory of leadership might guide service improvement, staff engagement, and visitor satisfaction. Planning, organisation, and control are essential for economic success and operational efficiency, according to Fayol. Trait Theory emphasises leadership qualities. Therefore, Village Hotels recruits and develops ambitious, honest, and smart leaders. The SERVQUAL methodology is also evaluated to improve service and customer experience. This study focuses on providing Village Hotels a strategic leadership and management frameworks to maintain its market position and operational performance in Scotland's hotel industry, which is growing in investments and demand.

2. Review of the Current Situation and Developments in the Hotel Sector

In 2025, Scotland's hotel industry is negotiating a challenging environment characterised by growing operating expenses, improved air connections, and important global alliances. The sharp rise in labour expenses is one of the biggest problems hotels face. Payroll expenses as a proportion of total sales increased from 31.2% in December 2024 to 46.4% in January 2025, far exceeding revenue growth, according to the RSM Hotels Tracker UK (Data Insights Market, 2025). Future increases in national insurance payments and the national minimum wage, which are scheduled to go into effect in April 2025, are partially to blame for this rise (Reid, 2025).

Despite these financial pressures, Scotland's tourism industry remains buoyant, bolstered by an increase in direct flights to Edinburgh. This enhanced international connectivity is attracting more visitors, particularly to key destinations like Edinburgh and Glasgow, where demand for hotel accommodations is strong (Data Insights Market, 2025; Reid, 2025). There was a 38% rise in hotel transaction volumes in Scotland in 2024, reaching £431 million, with a large chunk of these agreements occurring in Edinburgh (Savills, 2025; DRAM Scotland, 2025). Consistent 'revenue per available room (RevPAR)' and a strong global appeal have been the main drivers of this expansion, which demonstrates the high level of investor confidence (DRAM Scotland, 2025). Important roles were played in these deals by foreign investors, most notably from the United States, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates.

The occupancy rate at Scottish hotels was slightly higher in January compared to the previous year, going from 58% to 58.7%, while the average daily rate (ADR) went up from £89.54 to £91.57 (Hotel Scotland, 2025b). Hotel Scotland (2025b) reported that 'gross operating profits (GOP)' were reasonably stable, rising from 2.5% to 3% throughout the same time. The sector's adaptability to economic crises and sustained robust demand for travel and tourism are further indications of its durability. As per Hotel Scotland (2025a), in 2025, sustainability will play a major role, as will experience-driven travel and the use of technology to improve guests' stays. Several high-profile hotel acquisitions have taken place in Edinburgh in recent years, including the £49 million sale of the DoubleTree Hilton by Pandox and the Yotel by Millemont (DRAM Scotland, 2025). The city's continued popularity as a tourist destination was seen in September 2024, when its 'average daily rate (ADR)' increased to £183.38 (Scottish Licensed Trade News, 2025). Furthermore, according to Scottish Licensed Trade News (2025), the sustainable tourism industry is anticipated to receive £50 million per year from the implementation of a 5% tourist tax in Edinburgh, resulting in better infrastructural development of the sector. Although increasing prices and economic instability will be obstacles, international investment, new flights, and smart alliances will keep Scotland's hotel business growing in 2025.

3. Objectives

3.1 Role of Theories in Providing Guidance for Village Hotel to develop the services it provides

Henri Fayol's Management Principles

Henri Fayol's five functions of management, which are Planning, Organising, Directing (Leading), Coordinating, and Controlling, offer a structured framework for improving Village Hotels' service offerings in Scotland *[Refer to Appendix 1]*. Given the rising operating costs, increased tourism demand, and growing technological advancements in the hotel sector, adopting these principles can enhance operational efficiency and customer satisfaction (Hotel Scotland, 2025a).

Planning

Effective planning allows Village Hotels to anticipate market trends, manage financial constraints, and align business strategies with consumer expectations. With the rise in payroll costs (from 31.2% to 46.4% of revenue in early 2025) and the impending increase in the national minimum wage, financial planning is critical (Data Insights Market, 2025). According to Reffin

(2022), Village Hotels must budget strategically, implement cost-saving initiatives, and integrate technology-driven efficiencies such as AI-powered forecasting for demand-based pricing.

Organising

The rapid evolution of guest preferences and digital transformation requires Village Hotels to optimise workforce allocation and service structure. With Scotland's hotel transaction volumes increasing by 38% in 2024, competition is intensifying (Savills, 2025; DRAM Scotland, 2025). Village Hotels can improve operations by automating administrative processes, ensuring smooth guest check-ins via mobile apps, and investing in AI-driven customer service tools. As per Stories from Hilton (2024), Hilton Hotels and 'Be My Eyes' are providing AI-powered assistance and specialised Hilton Reservations and Customer Care support to blind and low-vision customers in the U.S. and Canada.

Directing (Leading)

Leadership is vital in shaping employee motivation and guest experiences. Village Hotels can benefit from undertaking transformational leadership significantly. Transformational leadership encourages managers to foster innovation, provide career growth opportunities, and build a culture of continuous service improvement (Şeremet, Haigh and Cihangir, 2021). As per Bryant (2025), leaders should also emphasise emotional intelligence to handle high-pressure situations such as handling guest complaints.

Coordinating

Effective coordination ensures seamless interaction between departments, from housekeeping to front-desk services, which can be beneficial for Village Hotels. According to Reffin (2022), implementing cloud-based management systems can help the hotel align its operational, marketing, and guest experience initiatives, ensuring a streamlined approach to customer service.

Controlling

The final function, controlling, focuses on monitoring service quality and operational efficiency. With the introduction of digital guest feedback systems, Village Hotels can track guest satisfaction scores, identify service gaps, and continuously refine its hospitality approach (Cuofano, 2024). Utilising different models like the SERVQUAL model, the hotel can measure service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles to maintain a competitive edge in Scotland's hospitality market.

By applying Fayol's management principles, Village Hotels can navigate economic uncertainties, optimise service delivery, and reinforce its position as a leader in Scotland's evolving hotel sector.

Trait Theory (Great Man)

The Great Man Theory, or Trait Theory of Leadership, holds that great leaders have unique attributes (Bans-Akutey, 2021). Village Hotels needs managers with the necessary attributes to maintain service quality, employee motivation, and guest pleasure.

Ambition and Energy

Given Scotland's expanding tourism sector and the rising demand for quality accommodations, Village Hotels must have leaders who are proactive, driven, and adaptive (Hotel Scotland, 2025a). In compliance with Karagiannis (2024b), ambitious leaders can innovate service delivery, integrate technology enhancements, and introduce guest-centric strategies, such as smart room technology and personalised services. As per O'Neill (2025), Marriott's CEO, Anthony Capuano, outlined a strategy for expanding beyond luxury safaris, vacation rentals, and yacht cruises to improve agility and empower regional leaders.

Desire to Lead

Hospitality leaders at Village Hotels must demonstrate a strong commitment to managing and inspiring teams. This includes mentoring employees, maintaining service quality, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Şeremet, Haigh, and Cihangir, 2021). A strong leader ensures that frontline staffs feel supported, which directly impacts guest satisfaction and retention.

Honesty and Integrity

In an industry where trust and reputation are critical, leadership integrity is non-negotiable. Guests value transparency in pricing, service commitments, and sustainability efforts (Scottish Licensed Trade News, 2025). Leaders at Village Hotels must promote ethical business practices, ensuring guests receive what is promised—from service quality to eco-friendly hospitality solutions.

Self-Confidence

Confidence enables hotel leaders to make critical business decisions, handle crisis situations, and implement strategic changes. According to DRAM Scotland (2025), with payroll costs rising and increased competition from international investors in Scotland's hotel sector, Village Hotels'

leadership must confidently adapt to these challenges, develop innovative service models, and drive business resilience.

Intelligence

Effective hospitality leaders must analyse industry trends, understand customer preferences, and implement data-driven strategies. The use of AI-driven analytics for demand forecasting and dynamic pricing helps Village Hotels enhance revenue management (Reffin, 2022). Additionally, leaders must navigate complex economic, legal, and technological factors, ensuring compliance with evolving industry regulations.

Job-Relevant Knowledge

Leaders must understand hotel operations, guest expectations, and digital change to improve service. Automation of cleaning schedules and AI-powered guest enquiries may improve operations (Schwarz, 2025). Village Hotel leaders must keep up with hospitality technologies, environmental trends, and guest preferences to compete.

Village Hotels can utilise the Trait Theory to find and develop leaders who will succeed in Scotland's changing hospitality industry. Leadership, emotional intelligence, and technology training can help ensure long-term company success and visitor happiness.

Contingency Theory: Path-Goal Theory

The Path-Goal Theory, a contingency leadership model, suggests that leaders can enhance employee performance by adapting their leadership style to meet organisational goals (Bans-Akutey, 2021).

Directive

As per Data Insights Market (2025), given the rising payroll costs, Village Hotels must provide clear guidance and structured processes to optimise operations, such as automating check-ins and staff scheduling. For example, Marriott International provides automated check-ins and seamless booking through their Mobile App

Supportive

Hospitality leaders must foster employee well-being, ensuring a positive work culture that improves staff retention and guest satisfaction (Bryant, 2025).

Achievement orientated

Encouraging staff to meet high-performance standards, such as personalised guest experiences and efficient service delivery, aligns with Scotland's growing tourism industry (Hotel Scotland, 2025b).

Participative

Involving employees in decision-making on service improvements and digital transformation ensures greater engagement and innovation (Reffin, 2022).

By applying the Path-Goal Theory, Village Hotels can enhance service quality, employee motivation, and operational efficiency in Scotland's competitive hospitality market.

3.2 Management and Leadership Skills Required by the Hotel Manager

Management Skills

Management refers to the broad term which is applied to a wide range of people in various places, different contexts and types of organisations (Needle, 2004). The management skills that are required by the hotel manager of Village Hotels in Scotland are analysed in the following.

Mastering Operational Excellence in a Competitive Landscape

Operational efficiency for hotel managers is paramount within the hospitality businesses or hotels in the global hospitality market of the present world. The hotel managers need to prioritise streamlining business operations like improved maintenance and reservation along with leveraging innovative technologies like contactless check-ins to ensure the guest experience is memorable and seamless (EHL Insights, 2024). In addition, the enhanced level of guest experience is required by the hotel managers to be balanced with managing the tight profit margins between 5% and 10% on the basis of the region significantly (EHL Insights, 2024). Hence, it leads to improving revenue management of the hotels including Village Hotels.

Developing and Maintaining Stakeholder Trust

Stakeholder management includes managing, engaging, analysing and identifying the requirements and expectations of the groups or individuals interested in or affected by the project in an appropriate manner (Benipayo, 2024). In addition, stakeholder management indicates effective nurturing and organisation of relationships for the hotel managers with partners, suppliers, employees, clients, operators and owners (EHL Insights, 2024). Proper relationships with the respective stakeholders play an important role in ensuring smooth hospitality operations, enhancing guest experiences and aligning expectations that lead to organisational success for Village Hotels.

Adapting to Industry Trends and Innovations

The implementation of cloud-based systems over the pandemic indicates that hotel managers manage operations remotely along with performing work to meet the evolvement of the guest expectations for adapting to the hospitality trends (Reffin, 2022). For instance, the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software helps hotel managers determine the demand and supply at source (Reffin, 2022). Hence, it enables the hoteliers to ensure possessing dynamic pricing strategies which consider fluctuating demand in order to maximise the "revenue per available room".

Leadership Skills

Leadership is defined as lifting the vision of the people to a greater sight, raising their performance to a greater standard, along developing their personality beyond their natural limitations respectively (Drucker, 2001). The relevant leadership skills that are important to be possessed by the hospitality leaders within Village Hotels are articulated in the following.

Improved Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

The capability to implement informed decision-making along with solving problems rapidly and efficiently is critical for hospitality leaders (Şeremet, Haigh and Cihangir, 2021). Leaders need to be capable enough to analyse complex situations like cybersecurity threats and rising competition, weigh options, along with making decisions which align with the values and goals of the organisations (Şeremet, Haigh and Cihangir, 2021). As a result, effective decision-making and problem-solving skills contribute towards the smooth business operation and assist in minimising disruptions for enhanced guest experience.

Emotional Intelligence

The attainment of emotional intelligence skills by hospitality leaders primarily allows them to navigate the complex emotional globe of hospitality with empathy and skill (Bryant, 2025). Furthermore, high-touch interactions critically often occur during the moments when the guests are highly vulnerable or possess huge expectations, like resolving service issues, celebrating a special occasion or looking for comfort after experiencing a tough trip (Bryant, 2025). Therefore, emotionally intelligent leaders within the hotel businesses, including Village Hotels, significantly determine the subtle emotional cues, developing an atmosphere of genuine connection and care along with adjusting their approach to meet the unique requirements of guests.

Effective Communication

Attaining an effective level of communication for the hospitality leaders is essential to operate the necessary activities within the hospitality industry. This skill obtained by the respective leaders leads to an enhanced level of improvement in relationships between employees and consumers and among the in-house workers effectively (Petty, 2023). It also leads to promoting inclusivity as both the consumers and staff are considered like individuals, listened to, and communicated as per their requirements extensively (Petty, 2023). Therefore, effective communication skills by the leaders lead to mitigating the problem of a toxic work environment through understanding the perspectives of each worker or employee in a precise manner.

3.3 Theoretical Concept of Quality and its Application

<u>**Role of Quality in Hotels**</u>

The investment within the hotel industry has been developed with an increment in the construction of new as well as improved hotels that result in higher quality service for the guests (Ali *et al.,* 2021). Many hotel managers recognise a greater level of competition among the hotels that allows them to concentrate on enhancing the service quality to remain competitive in the marketplace (Ali *et al.,* 2021). However, poor service quality within the hotels leads to dissatisfied guests, which ultimately leads to a lower level of demand, which also decreases the hotel's performance extensively. In addition, quality is often explored with the help of the SERVQUAL framework to evaluate operational excellence, consumer satisfaction and continuous improvement in an accurate way.

<u>**SERVQUAL Model**</u>

The SERVQUAL model is considered a framework to measure the quality of the service as well as consumer satisfaction with the help of five essential dimensions (Cuofano, 2024). These dimensions primarily involve *reliability*, *responsiveness*, *empathy*, *tangibles* and *assurance* (Cuofano, 2024). Hence, this model is broadly utilised within hospitality quality management. SERVQUAL model plays a vital role in measuring the quality of the hotel service on the basis of the relevant five dimensions as represented in *Figure 1*. *Tangibles* are treated as one of the five dimensions of this model that significantly evaluates the equipment, physical facilities, along the appearance of personnel (Cuofano, 2024).
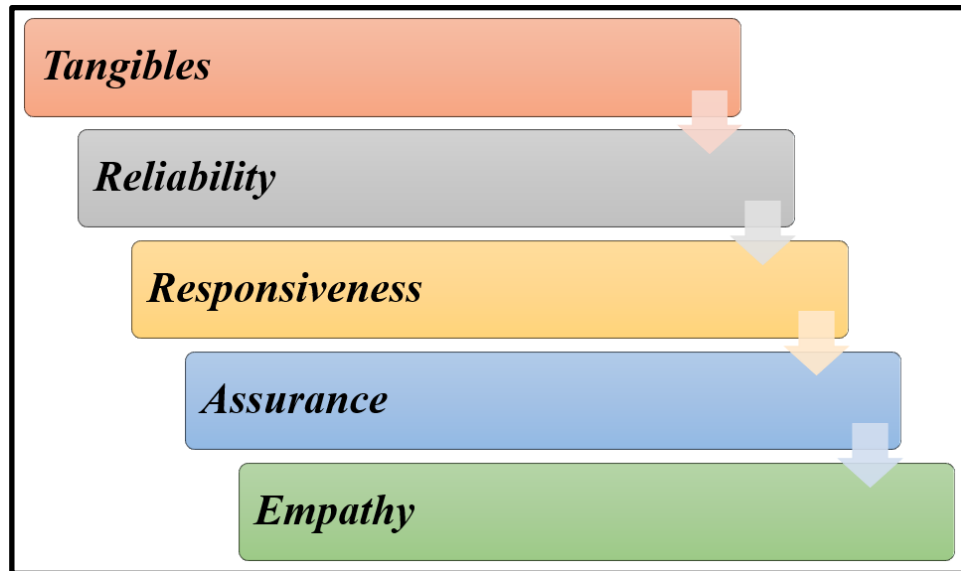
Figure 1: Dimensions of SERVQUAL Model

(Source: Author)

Furthermore, *reliability*, another dimension of the respective framework, demonstrates the ability to offer promised service accuracy and dependability. In addition, *responsiveness* articulates the willingness to assist the guests along with offering prompt service in an appropriate manner (Cuofano, 2024). Moreover, *assurance* contemplates the ability, courtesy and knowledge to inspire the level of trust significantly. Furthermore, *empathy* helps to personalise the level of attention provided to guests in an appropriate way. The perception of the quality in post-COVID hospitality has shifted with digital convenience, improved hygiene and safety, which have become essential determinants for guest satisfaction (Zhang *et al.,* 2023). However, the hotels which fail to fulfil the evolving expectations have a risk of losing their businesses to competitors which prioritise higher standards of technological innovation and cleanliness.

<u>Application of SERVQUAL Model to Village Hotels</u>

The struggles faced by the hotels, like staff shortages and the cost-of-living crisis due to COVID-19, as observed from the case study, and allow the hotels to focus on quality management in terms of a strategic path towards recovery. The relevant ways for applying the SERVQUAL model to Village Hotels are demonstrated in the following.

Tangibles

Numerous guests prefer contactless services in the modern days in order to generate enhanced convenience to manage their stay via hotel guest apps on their mobile devices (Czajka, 2024). As

a result, Village Hotels needs to ensure that the public spaces, dining areas and rooms are aesthetically appealing, modern and clean and to invest in mobile room keys or self-check-in kiosks to improve quality perceptions.

Reliability

Clear service standards are important to be established by the hotel businesses in order to ensure an improved level of consistency. For instance, Village Hotels possesses standardised cleaning protocols in order to assure the guests of enhanced hygiene (Village Hotels, 2025). Hence, it leads to improved guest experiences and consumer satisfaction effectively.

Responsiveness

The staffs need to be trained effectively to address consumer inquires in a rapid and effective manner. The proper use of technology like AI chatbots for solving consumer queries can be helpful for Village Hotels to manage guest expectations and mitigate the problem of labour shortages appropriately.

Assurance

Effective staff training plays a vital role in enhancing the level of guest satisfaction along with decreasing guest complaints (Karagiannis, 2024a). Hence, proper staff training programs like hospitality management training and compliance training can lead to improve conflict resolution and safety measures for improving trust among the guests in the services provided by hotels, including Village Hotels.

Empathy

Providing personalised services like giving tailored offers and recognising returning guests can lead to an enhancement in the level of consumer experience within hospitality organisations, including Village Hotels. It can also lead to a higher level of loyalty across the competitive market.

3.4 Role of Current Transformation of Technology Related to the Hotel

Technology is treated as an essential driver of transformation that assists hotels, including Village Hotels, to make improvements in the level of operational efficiency, maintain competitiveness and enhance consumer experiences. The potential role of current transformation related to technology in alignment with the hotel involving Village Hotels is demonstrated in the following.

Digitisation for enhanced consumer experience

The rapid adoptions of digital booking platforms, contactless payments and mobile check-ins have been increasingly implemented within hotels across Scotland in order to streamline the guest experiences effectively (Hollander, 2025). The concerned shift has accelerated during the pandemic of COVID-19 as keyless entry systems and self-service kiosks have reduced physical interaction appropriately (Hollander, 2025). For instance, mobile room keys and app-based check-in have been introduced by Village Hotels in order to enable guests to bypass reception queues (Dingle, 2025). Therefore, the concerned approach primarily aligns with the broader trend within the respective industry that significantly allows guests to access rooms through smartphones (Dingle, 2025). Furthermore, it leads to an improvement in the level of convenience along with a reduced level of staff workload extensively.

Smart rooms and personalisation

The rise of smart rooms within the hotel has reshaped the expectations among the guests extensively. The smart rooms significantly represent the intersection of cutting-edge technology, comfort and convenience (Karagiannis, 2024b). For instance, simple apps or voice-activated controls significantly allow guests to manage everything at their fingertips (Karagiannis, 2024b). Numerous hotels have efficiently introduced voice-controlled smart rooms which allow the guests to adjust temperature, lighting and entertainment with the help of using Google Home or Amazon Alexa following the industry trends (Troy, 2022). As a result, the concerned aspect primarily aligns with the consumer demand for personalised experiences within the hotels, including Village Hotels, that allow the guests to develop their ideal environment.

Automation for addressing staff shortages

Automation is treated as a vital element in maintaining service quality within the hospitality industry, which faces extreme shortages of staffing. AI-driven inventory management, robotic cleaners and automated housekeeping schedules have become essential solutions for the respective industry (Schwarz, 2025). As a result, the adoption of AI-powered maintenance tracking and automated housekeeping alerts could streamline hospitality operations, improving efficiency and reducing staff workload within Village Hotels.

Digital marketing and direct booking strategies

Numerous hotels, including Holiday Inn, have invested in SEO-driven website content as well as social media engagement to drive traffic to their booking platforms. An increase in third-party booking fees enables hotels across the globe to focus on direct booking strategies through digital

marketing (Haider, 2023). For instance, VWorks membership of Village Hotels offers co-working spaces that have been marketed efficiently with the help of targeted social media campaigns (Village Hotel Club, 2025). Hence, it leads to an enhanced level of attraction among business travellers significantly.

4. Conclusion

The above study has analysed the hotel operations management of Village Hotels in a detailed manner. The relevant theories based on supply chain, value networks and cultural issues have been properly examined in the above study to provide essential guidance for the hotel to develop the services provided by them significantly. The current situation, as well as development in the hospitality industry across Scotland, has also been illustrated in this study accurately. This study also reflected the relevant leadership and management skills required by the hotel manager, along with highlighting an overview related to the theoretical concept based on quality through using the SERVQUAL model significantly. Furthermore, technology as the major area of current transformation within the hotel industry is also analysed in this study in a precise way.

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Appendix
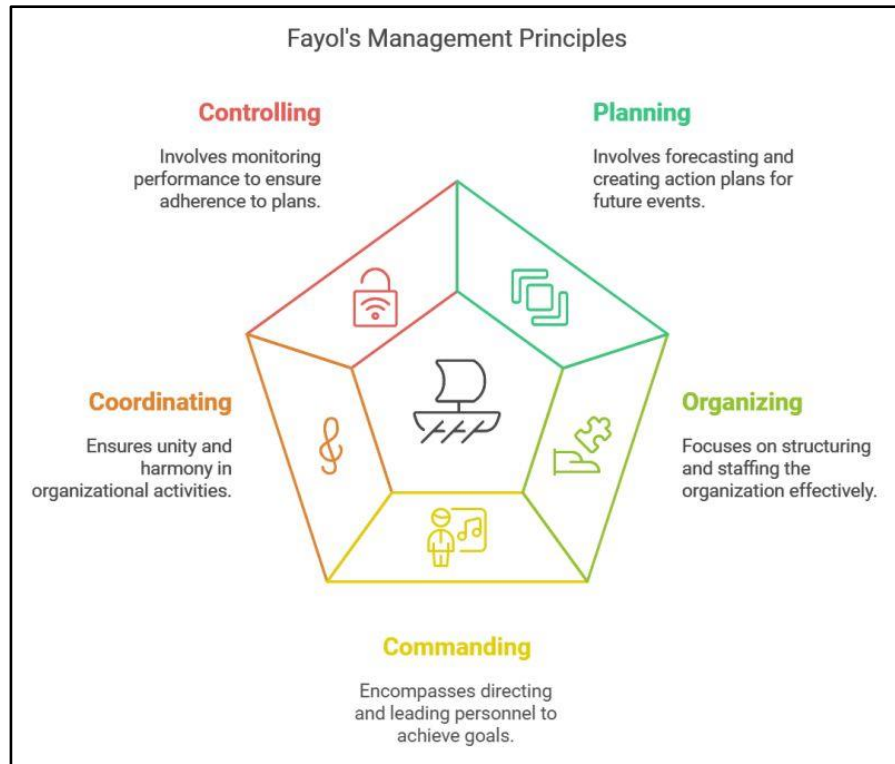
Appendix 1: Henri Fayol's Management Principles

Figure 2: Henri Fayol's Management Principles

(Source: Özay, 2024)