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SOME TOPICAL ISSUES OF TEACHING AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Nekatere aktualne teme poučevanja in praktične uporabe managementa v srednji šoli

Yuriy Ossik

*Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebsoyuz, Scientific Research Institute of
New Economic and System Planning, Karaganda, Kazakhstan
ossik2006_@mail.ru*

Ainur Shakhshina

*Economic University of Kazpotrebsoyuz,
Marketing and Tourism Department of Karaganda,
Karaganda, Kazakhstan*

Abstract

This paper reviewed actual questions that, for some reason, are often not reflected upon in the modern course of management—namely, the discussion of the direction of society's socio-economic activity, the ratio of management and ethics, and the ratio of quantity and quality of work of managers and workers in the context of the development of new branches of economic science (i.e., happiness economics).

Key words: criteria of social economic activity, rationality and irrationality of behavior, welfare economics, happiness economics, management ethics, education management, vertical component of human existence.

Appreciating more of something that can be more accurately measured, we may be wrong there, where we could be close to the truth.

John Banham, British industrialist

Povzetek

Prispevek obravnava vprašanja, ki se nekako ne odražajo v sodobnem managementu: razprava o smeri družbenoekonomske aktivnosti družbe, razmerje med managementom in etiko, razmerje med kvantiteto in kakovostjo dela managerja in delavca v kontekstu razvoja novih vej ekonomske znanosti – ekonomike sreče.

Ključne besede: kriteriji družbenoekonomske aktivnosti, racionalnost in iracionalnost, ekonomika blaginje, ekonomika sreče, etika managementa, management izobraževanja, vertikalna komponenta človeške eksistence

Ko bolj cenimo nekaj, kar se lahko meri bolj natančno, se lahko motimo tam, kjer bi lahko bili bližje resnici.

John Banham, britanski industrialec

Our thinking affects the world in which we live.

Our understanding of the essence of management (in the broad sense of this term) has an impact on the development of management and the management of social systems at all levels, from micro- to macro- and mega-levels. This means that, to a certain extent, the direction of our society's movement and the speed of this movement depend on how we see modern management in general and what vision we offer to our students—namely, what kind of management model we will build in the higher education.



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The financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009, as economists admitted, was not primarily caused by economic reasons. Even Nobel laureates in economics acknowledge that the crisis was caused by greed, dishonesty, and immorality. Management was involved in this as well, which was not the last time. Therefore, it needs to be radically transformed.

If we analyze reforms in higher education in the last decade, the instrumental character of training changes is clearly visible: computerization, standardization, certification, students' mobility, etc. Meanwhile, cognitive and methodological aspects of training are receiving less attention. Yet the program has not changed significantly despite the fact that society in the last decade has changed. The elements of organizations' network structure and outsourcing strongly entered into the practice of economic activity. The distant form of management became increasingly common, shifting the method of work to focus on the reason for development among relatively inaccessible territories as organizations become transnational and competitors started to cooperate more. The resulting monopolization of the market of a number of new high-tech goods, as well as individual and public services, led to a reduction of competition to the symbolic level. It even disappeared in some instances. In these conditions, concepts of corporate spirit fail and organizational culture is deformed. Such developments highlight a number of sensitive questions for management, which are discussed in this article.

A number of researchers have defined the direction of our society's movement as eschatological, which leads to the question of how to call the modern post-rational movement of society: development or anti-development, progress, regress, or something else? If the form of society movement has a cyclical or spiral character, how do we determine the present stage? A problem emerges related to the coordinates and criteria for the measurement of direction and performance of the socio-economic movement. Already for classic and neoclassic period representatives, with their "economic man," it was not easy to search for effectiveness. Acquiring efficiency as a whole required giving up some of the benefits, resulting in quite a narrow understanding of it, even with respect to the effectiveness of exchange, which depends on the effectiveness of actions prior to the exchange. The models of information exchange and opportunism of agents clearly demonstrate the dependence of the efficiency of exchange and institutions, defining these models (Sukharev, 2009, p. 11).

In the economic rationality of the economic activity of modern humanity, a strange irrationality has arisen. Why is it considered that the efficiency of the economic structure of some Polynesian or African tribes is necessarily below the American way of life? The African tribe does not destroy everything around it, does not steal from its neighbors, does not deprive the future of their own and alien descendants.

The prosperous American economy based on the historical structure and built system of structural dependence

(Sukharev, 2009, p. 13) is the center of the world's economic expansion. Therefore, the most economically developed countries force poor countries, as their satellites (Shaptalov, 2008), to behave so that our modern industrial and post-industrial society is more logically called "savages" than nations in the "early" stages of civilization. If the rational component of the economic behavior adds to the irrational, then the search for criteria of socio-economic activity becomes even more difficult.

This context undoubtedly includes the functions of health and skill level as the two basic functions of management. Maybe it is rational to consider the level of job satisfaction and life in general or how a person feels happy. When the American recruitment agency Career Bliss, based on a survey of 200,000 compatriots, announced the 10 professions that feel most happy, some (in descending order of happiness) were workers in the sphere of biotechnologies (rapid development of industry), managers working with clients and school teachers (convinced that their work is very important and needed in society), office workers in technical and administrative support, accountants and employees in procurement (it is nice to spend someone else's money), financiers (it is nice to work with a lot of money), employees of non-profit social services (they are not required to do a daily report on the work completed), health workers (get moral satisfaction from the fact that they help people), and—in tenth place—the wealthiest lawyers.¹

A well-known American specialist in the field of advertising and the creative director of the world-renowned advertising agency Worldwide Toyota Board, Michael Newman (2008) in his book *The 22 immutable laws of advertising* devoted an entire chapter to the higher emotional feeling: love.

In order to understand what consumers want, you will need creativity, insight, accuracy and depth. Remember: love is not a game to one of the gates. You can't analyze their love, if you do not love. If you stay an outside observer, then as an outside observer you will get nothing. I would have chosen the study, which considers beating of the heart, and not the number of fingers. (Newman, 2008, p. 96)

It is appropriate to dwell on the fact that the economy of happiness is purposefully being studied in higher education related to economics (in Moscow). This branch of economics argues the scientific basis of the thesis—namely, that happiness is not only and not as much in the consumption of material goods, but in the unity of the consumption of material goods and spiritual values, when a person moves from consumption to perception. Professor A. B. Dolgin, a specialist in the sphere of economics of happiness, believes that a person feels happy when he refuses to have a certain set of goods, instead giving them to others.²

¹ <http://rian.ru/world/20110401/359887133.html>

² Television program "Meantime". Russian channel *Culture*, January, 23, 2012.

The previously mentioned scientific argument differentiates the welfare economy and the economics of happiness. The welfare economy tries to fix the quality of life based on criteria that can be objectively measured: customer solvency, income per person, etc. All of these are, of course, important, but the well-being of people depends on something else that remains beyond the measurement limits of this branch of economics. The economics of happiness, on the contrary, operates on exclusively subjective estimates of people. They are interviewed about their satisfaction with their lives (Dolgin, 2012). Although life satisfaction and happiness are not identical concepts, for now Dolgin only justifies the reasons for which the growth of material well-being cannot be converted to happiness.

- A. For a man is not only the absolute level of his well-being that is important, but also its growth: The process of improving warms the soul no less than the result. The better the current state, the harder it is to achieve new important changes.
- B. If the connection of "satisfaction—objective improvements" is depicted graphically, the curve would represent a loop of a hysteresis: A person climbs up with deceleration and moves down with acceleration.
- C. As there are lots of criteria for life quality, and not all of them simultaneously go up, then, if a failure occurs, it might outweigh everything gained in the mind.
- D. Happiness is not an autonomous value; its feeling comes in comparison with others. Conditionally speaking, the parallels with prosperous Danes or poor Papuans have a small impact on the self-feeling of Russians.
- E. Stronger emotional reactions are caused by rarely occurring events. For relatively affluent societies, those are troubles, so they are particularly painful. Catching-up countries are in a more advantageous position.

Despite the fact that approaches developed by the combination of these two branches of economics are not entirely correct, the real economic policy is aimed at them. Such indicators (e.g., GDP, GNP, national income per capita, HDI) have been made absolute while attention is drawn away from the fact that intensive economic growth leads to emotional exhaustion (Dolgin, 2012).

The fundamental question is what place ethics should occupy in management. Is it enough just to have a theme of "social responsibility and management ethics" read in a course of ethics of management (and entrepreneurship) or restart management for the social-ethical orientation? It seems strange that a number of universities, including public ones, do not teach students specializing in economics general management theory, especially cybernetic models of management. This course is studied only by students of technical specialties. If we proceed from these cybernetic models, then defining the interaction between the subject and object of management is possible with two types of direct and reverse bonds—one responsible for changes and

development in the social-economic system and the other responsible for the stability and integrity of the system (Abdeyev, 1994). The first type of bond corresponds to the science of management while the second one corresponds to the ethics of management. Therefore, we need to study the two branches of management in unison as a scientific course and ethics management.

Of course, some principles and rules of ethics should be adapted to the conditions of activity of a modern society. First, it is necessary to overcome anthropocentrism in the understanding and interpretation of ethics in order to make adjustments and supplements connected with the peculiarities of anthropogenic activities. When a human is organically blended with nature and fully feels himself as the small part of nature that he actually is, there is no sense in distinguishing between nature-centered or human-centered interpretation of ethics. In our time of eschatological of anthropogenic activity of society, some researchers interpret ethics in general—and biblical ethics in particular—as anthropocentric. But public experience reminds us that we are no better than plants and no more ethical than animals. We are not more developed than the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, remaining in the Stone Age even during our modern era. They chose a different culture that did not destroy their connection with their home—the jungle—while the so-called "modern civilization" of educated barbarians lost its contact with the planet, causing our spirituality to be fatally exaggerated (Weaver, 2010).

The issue of reflection in management and modern work activity in general is no less important. A modern manager is overloaded with information; this problem has a mainly instrumental character because it is connected with the increasing proportion of information garbage in the whole flow of information and with the reduction of its values over time. In addition, the conditions of democracy and transparency formation increase the need for time to communicate with staff. Therefore, the modern manager has no time for reflection. Such a manager falls from the vertical dimension, existing and working only in the horizontal dimension, unlike the primitive tribes, which for some reason we call "wild."

It used to be an axiom that the primitive tribes could not come to market relations. One of the reasons was very low labor productivity, with which they were able to create only that minimum amount of goods—enough for their own consumption, but no more. Therefore, the life of ancient people was very difficult because they lacked food and endured hunger, chronic diseases, and hard work aimed at the satisfaction of minimal needs. The tribes that did not come from a primitive state until to the present time live in the jungles and deserts of Latin America and New Guinea and on some of the islands of Polynesia.

Returning to the modern world, it is appropriate to recall thoughts of the well-known professor T. Kotabrin-skiy (1975) about collective labor: When two people work,

they either help each other or interfere with each other. It is sufficient to imagine how many unproductive forces and resources are spent for the neutralization of competitors, and it becomes clear that the market economy is not always the most effective approach, even in the production of private goods. The heads of the largest corporations are aware of this shift from competition to cooperation.

The modern "sweating system" in management is widespread. If we add a variety of management systems—management quality system, system of continuous improvement, system of standardization, certification and metrology, system of documentation, etc.—to the previously mentioned information overload, then it becomes clear why the modern manager will not even dream about the vertical dimension: There simply is no time. To fill up the work time of a manager, some theorists use this motto of the manager: "Create a problem and solve it, and then there will be new problems in greater quantity. You solve them, and there come other new challenge" (Adizes, 2009).

Speaking specifically about the sphere of education, it is a vivid proof of the thesis that an individual who works too much works poorly. How much time do teachers and lecturers spend writing lesson plans, programs, guidelines, reports, and certificates—all in addition to the 125-175% of classroom hours from the standard working day? What is the quality of work and what level of satisfaction from such work can be a result of this "horizontal" overstrain?

It is no less important to question the criteria for the selection of a decent manager, using *decent* in the broad sense of the word: not only a good specialist, but also a collective image of the soviet leader (modest, sociable, a good family man, morally stable, politically literate, devoted to the business). Did these criteria lose their value? If so, what other new criteria emerged to replace them? Should all people have access to the study of management? The fact that this question is not idle can be seen from the following example. The Modern Humanitarian Academy (Moscow, Russia) realized its services of distance learning to incarcerated criminals. The criminals were taught (and maybe are still taught) not how to lay bricks and build a house or plaster walls, not to produce furniture, but the organizational and managerial wisdom at the level of higher education. In other words, if they would like to commit further evils, they will be able to do so at the highest professional level, competently, and in a managerial position.

Summing up the intermediate results, we can note that the identified problems are more realistic and a matter of heated debate; therefore, it is necessary to discuss them with students. The transition to the problem related to the presentation of educational material is also relevant in the context of the reduction of the period of information collapse in the economic sphere.

It is no secret that the idea of united national testing as "two in one," instead of the final examinations in secondary school and entrance examinations in universities, is

growing in popularity in schools so that the last year and a half of studying is dedicated to learning correct answers to test questions. Those successful in this receive excellent and good marks and the highest total score, which sends them to the university.

In the higher education sector of CIS countries in the context of the Bologna process, the epic of testing continues. Controlling the problem material by mastering testing is not useful. Moreover, "dumb" testing on computers for future leaders is not suitable at all. So why do the testing? To neutralize unfair, unjust teachers and bribe takers and to achieve objectivity in the control of students' knowledge. Maybe it is more logical to say "goodbye" to such teachers? By increasing of the number of hours, administration tried to compensate for part of their income; that was a bribe. In addition, good and qualified teachers look for ethical ways to increase their income on the side as well. As the saying goes, you get what you pay for. If you want quality work you must pay more. When the workload requires 900 to 1100 hours per year as well as supervision, preparation of methodical complex, participation in faculty meetings, methodical seminars, meetings, conferences, career-oriented and public work, and the preparation of test questions and answers (200 to 300 questions for each course), the quality and effectiveness of teacher's work cannot remain as a good level. Under these conditions, teachers using tests care less. They do not need to spend much time on consultations or answer tough questions that are not clear to students. If a teacher wants to achieve "high results" in the form of high grades with minimum effort, he needs to pass test questions and their keys to students. Then it is up to them: learn the answers or create "cheat sheets." If a teacher has no desire to provide the answer keys, students can get the correct answers to the questions from a specialist, which could be an IT specialist who installs and supervises test programs. In either case, the teacher feels more useless during the exam. With their functions, modern-day tutors can handle a methodologist, a laboratory assistant, etc.

In connection with such low efficiency in educational management, it seems appropriate to recall statement from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as announced by one of the soviet leaders: One step forward, two steps back. It is not too late. Along with the Bologna system, higher education systems can restore their classical system. It is possible to do so until the old system is completely destroyed. Higher education can only benefit from the diversity (as in other countries of the CIS—namely, Russia and Ukraine) and the-long term period of the whole economy.

Appearances can be deceiving, as evidenced by students with high grades but no understanding. During the best soviet times, we sought to catch up with and surpass America in terms of the number of university graduates with bachelor's degrees. However, it is much harder to determine what knowledge and skills they have assimilated and whether graduates are satisfied with what they learned.

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Yuriy Ossik – resercher of the Scientific Research Institute of New Economic and System Analysis (Karaganda Economic University), professor of the Management Department of Karaganda State Technical University. In 1973 graduated from the Odessa Technological Institute. Conducts classes on the following disciplines: Marketing (in English), Management, Strategic Management, Management of Knowledgs. Research interests are Ethic of Management, Institutional Economy, Globalization and Localization of World Economy.

Yuriy Ossik je raziskovalec na Scientific Research Institute of New Economic and System Analysis (Karaganda Economic University). Je tudi profesor na Oddelku za management Karaganda State Technical University. Leta 1973 je diplomiral na Odessa Technological Institute. Predava naslednje predmete: Marketing (v angleščini), Management, Strateški management, Magamenent znanja. Njegovi raziskovalni interesi so na področju etike managementa, institucionalna ekonomija, globalizacija in lokalizacija svetovnega gospodarstva.



Ainur Shakhshina – tutor of the Marketing and Logistics Department of Karaganda economic university of Kazpotrebooyuz, 2nd year master student in Management. In 2005 graduated from the university mentioned above with honours majoring in «Accounting and audit». Conducts classes on the following disciplines: Marketing (in English), Public relations and the theory of branding, Marketing research, Foundations of merchandising, Prices and pricing, Marketing services.

Ainur Shakhshina je asistentka na Oddelku za marketing in logistiko na Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebooyuz. Prav tako je študentka drugega letnika magistrskega programa Management. Leta 2005 je z odliko diplomirala na isti univerzi na smeri 'Računovodstvo in revizija'. Izvaja pedagoški proces pri naslednjih predmetih: Marketing (v angleščini), Odnosi z javnostmi in teorija znamčenja, Raziskave marketinga, Osnove trgovanja, Cene in določanje cen, Trženjske storitve.