

MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALIZATION IN MOLDOVA: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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Abstract: *The issue raised in this paper is one of major importance for the Republic of Moldova. The reasons are obvious. We are at the beginning of the second decade of the XXI century in terms of global financial and economic crisis. Although the Republic of Moldova has been less affected, its effects have been felt here as well. Unlike natural catastrophes, financial and economic crisis is due to human factors. The leaders of different levels have the role of getting out of this situation. The paper argues the necessity in lifelong training of managers. The paper attempts to highlight native qualities that managers must possess and which can be educated. The experience of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova in training managers is presented.*

Keywords: *professionalization, deprofessionalization, manager, professional management, educational ability of managers, managerial skills.*

JEL Classification: M₁₂, I₂₃.

Issues of professionalization (the appearance and approve of new professions) have gained relevance in recent international research not only in relation to the emergence of new professions, but also, to a large extent, related to the challenges the labor market submits towards professions and professionalism and change in requirements towards employees. Commoditization of services in the social and intellectual field, as well as growing variability in customer needs and the way they are performed lead to the emergence of new professions and deprofessionalization of others from the existing ones. It is not a coincidence that the term “deprofessionalization” has reached a growing proportion in West, particularly among representatives of professional associations of traditional professions (doctors, lawyers, architects, teachers, journalists, etc.).

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In this connection, researchers talk about the crisis of traditional institutions to maintain professionalism (professional associations, universities), or a weakening of separate elements of professions (such as professional autonomy, commitment to work problems instead of personal benefit).

The profession of a manager has aroused fierce discussions both in terms of professionalism – starting from the new market requirements and demands and the deprofessionalization – starting from the awareness of reduced effectiveness of business education, the essential differences that arise between it and classical higher education, and some scandals, largely mediated with respect to some known companies (Khurana, R., 2007), which touched a very sensitive side – the society's trust in business.

The researches with reference to education and professionalization of managers in the Republic of Moldova and other countries from the former soviet countries, the discussions on this subject are quite modest. But the topicality and the necessity of the issue of training managers, as well as the increasing demand for qualified management staff is discussed by some authors. Unlike other countries, in the Republic of Moldova, the issues of managers' professionalization are more raised in connection with the transition from a centralized system of management to that of market economy. Also new knowledge was necessary in the field of management in market conditions and competition.

Moreover, cooperation with foreign partners on international or domestic markets revealed discrepancies in knowledge of the local managers and those from West. To work together, Moldovan managers needed knowledge in specific areas of management: marketing, human resources management, strategic management, etc. In this context, there arisen some problems that needed solving:

- Creation of a management course structure compatible with the one in the West;
- Creation of an education system in the field of professional management, which would correspond to international standards;
- Study of local management features, taking into account the specific institutional and economic conditions, past experience, in order to adapt the Western management methods and techniques to the national situation;

Another group of problems is similar to the ones in West and deals with the changes which take place within organizations, the processes of globalization, and the implementation of modern communication technologies. All this requires a different vision of management as profession and the education of managers.

So the shift from amateurism, based solely on intuition, talent towards a professional, competent management is one of the most current and complex changes that appeared in the world during the last two decades in the field of management, based on the following causes:

- increasing complexity of economic activities;
- unprecedented dynamics of evolutions in economy and society;
- recent developments in the field of scientific management;
- economic and management interdependencies manifested globally.

However, there is a contradiction in the activity of management as profession: the call for professionalism among managers and their dissatisfaction with the quality of business education and management courses, between general education based on knowledge and experience, between different understanding of the fact who the “beneficiary” of the manager services is: the owner, the consumer, society, or some body else.

An old controversy among experts in management refers to the educational ability of managerial skills. The question whether managers are born or can be formed through education arises? Of course, natural inclinations and talent are important.

We agree with the opinion that it is not possible for someone to become a manager out of a management course. The process is long and requires a personal transformation process. Broadening the world and life perspective and conception, increase of awareness level, systematic self training, finding the right motivations and principles create prerequisites to become a person able to lead others, a person who deserves to be followed by others, a leader who would take care of others and not subordinate them. Optimistic people who communicate and relate easily with others, who are organized, who are endowed with intuition and empathy, who demonstrate strength of character, have a strong sense of social community and develop necessary technical skills are clearly advantaged in employment and successful completion of managerial functions/positions.

In Moldova, discussions were also held on the fact: can managers be trained during the graduate cycle and can it be the basic training or

management skills can be acquired already having an initial training in a certain area?

A common ground in these discussions was not reached, each side having arguments in favor of the supported opinion. But the endpoint was made in 2005, when the Republic of Moldova joined the Bologna process and approved the new classification of the education fields and specialties for training specialists in higher education institutions, first cycle, where the specialty "Management" is missing. The possibility of obtaining the necessary skills students have at Master, Doctorate or continuing education programs.

At AESM, for Master's degree, the educational offer in Management includes several Master programs "Human Resources Management", "Quality Management", "Business Communication Management", "Business Administration", etc.

These programs, along with others that contain subjects referring to specific parts of management, aim to develop certain skills, i.e. to develop the ability to perform a certain activity, in relation to certain standards:

Persuasive Oral Communication. A manager must be able to select appropriate ways and means of communication for efficient management approach, to communicate his ideas clearly and concisely to increase their acceptance by the audience.

Problem analysis skills. The aim is to ensure the development of a systematic approach in analyzing problems, so that they can be solved before their effects become severe. Managers must be able to define problems, to identify potential causes, to select probable causes, to verify probable causes, to verify the main causes.

Creativity skills. These will allow managers to develop abilities to find original solutions and identify radical alternatives to traditional methods.

Judgment skills and decision-making speed. Contribute to developing a systematic approach of decision-making process.

Leadership skills. These will allow managers to adjust their personal style to the situation needs of the people who work so that the result could be achieved by the team.

Teamwork skills. It is a very important quality that every manager must possess to succeed in business. It is important to cultivate a teamwork-oriented attitude to develop strong partnerships within the team that will lead to efficient implementation of the objectives.

Planning and organization skills. Are taken into consideration planning and organization skills both personally and in terms of complex projects.

Entrepreneurship. It involves developing the ability to understand key business issues that affect profitability and growth of the company and actions that will maximize success.

Strategic planning skills to ensure the entrepreneurial dimension of management.

Leading and coordination skills. It is important for a manager to be able to delegate powers so as to make most efficient team work.

Administration skills and resource management. In a situation where all resources are limited the development of this skill is very important.

Another way to develop managerial skills is by attending continuous education courses. In this respect, the AESM has authorized only one program “Business Management” for people with higher education other than economic in which students learn how to assess the current situation, how to identify business opportunities, how to design products and services within the organization having customers in domestic and foreign markets. Having graduated the courses students will have a better understanding of economic concepts that have practical relevance and will gain the necessary skills to become a manager.

A particular problem is the Doctorate degree, which currently provides scientific research in the Republic of Moldova. It is particularly important to combine research with practice. In this context, managers doing business and wishing to enrich their experience through research, have a double chance: getting research skills on the one hand, and looking and finding more efficient ways of doing business on the other hand. But according to the Bologna process, the Doctorate degree is considered cycle III, after the Master’s degree. The imposed changes in this respect do not seem to be sufficiently favorable to encourage research and ensure its highest quality.

But going through one or more levels of education is not enough to become a good lifelong manager. Obviously, to become a professional manager, lifelong learning is needed through various forms. There are sufficient opportunities through short courses, courses that cover specific thematic, round tables, seminars, etc. In order to carry out his specific and practical duties, a professional manager uses, predominantly in his work, methods, techniques, principles, models provided by management science

thus, aiming to obtain outstanding performance of the organization he leads, under the conditions of growing competitiveness and domestic, and especially international, competition.

Conclusion

Management professionalization – as a complex trend – involves essentially a change of vision and management approach that can synthesize the transition from traditional management (current, conservative, informative, fragmentary, self-sufficient) into **modern management** (anticipatory, predictive, innovative, computerized, systemic, international).

Skills training and development in the field of management is a process carried out throughout the career and requires specialized training, conducted both within organizations and professional and social environment. Competence concerns the process leading to performance, the result. Competence means doing; it must have a context and bring results. A competent person must know what to do to get the proposed outcome, must have certain skills. Therefore clearly defined and accessible standards are necessary, accredited to measure the skills of what a competent person can do.

Management professionalization at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova is aimed at promoting a process of education and research activities that meet the “knowledge society”, throughout initial training, continuing education and integration into the international values.

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