

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Eduard Maltsev**CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION OF SYSTEMATIC APPROACH
TO THE ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT**

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Abstract

Purpose: The systematic representation of the individual and the organization at the conceptual level is a powerful tool to understand and design an organization as a whole. The systematic approach called to deal to the complexity of modern organizations while the use of abstraction let properly represent the relationships in the system. There are not too many attempts to combine the conceptual representation of organization and a person in the organization. **Methods:** We formulate a cross-cutting logic of creating links between personal and organizational concepts in the systematic approach to strategic management. It is shown that such representation is possible in the same conceptual frame: description, values, goals, mechanisms. The logic let ensure the clearness in providing integrity of the organization at the conceptual level and therefore influence people's behaviour at work in a direction desired for the whole system. **Results:** It is shown that the use of a conceptual frame allows to describe an organization through the substrate (Self-concepts of employees), concept (creating value for stakeholders) and relationships (embeddedness of the concept into the substrate –Self-concepts of employees). Suggested cross-cutting logic let establish the links between personal and organizational concepts. The core in the logic is correct representation of the organization and a person at conceptual level. **Discussion:** The definition of the Self-concept of each employee in the same conceptual frame is not trivial task due to the difficulty of adequate "measuring of oneself", abstraction and self-description in a given frame. Very common, for example, is the discrepancy between perceptions of itself and perception about the person of others. The development of methods of forming linked and holistic conceptual representations of personality and organization is an important topic for future research.

Keywords: concept; organization; personality; system; systematic approach; strategic management.

1. Introduction

Modern organizations are characterized by a high level of complexity both of the structural and dynamic types [1]. In this case it is naturally to apply a systematic approach, designed to work with complexity and treatment towards organizations as complex social systems.

Uptoday systematic movement is not a new concept, but it is a new range of development, as a certain percentage of "systematic thinking" was always presented in people's thinking and activities, otherwise the existence and development of people's communities would have been impossible. Opening the books of 19th century in technology, economics and other fields of knowledge, we find a striking resemblance to those considerations, which are typical for the systematic approach.

The value of systematic understanding is determined by the idea that "the systematic object representation regardless of its level of formalization can serve not only as a preparatory phase to create a mathematical model, but also to replace this model" [2]. This is particularly important in understanding of the complex systems such as modern economy or large commercial organizations where the application of mathematical description of such systems is impossible or is applicable only for their parts or at certain times.

Modern systematic understanding also implies the fact that any business (organization) is "embedded" in the larger systems (ecosystems). Considering the organization strategy makes sense only while taking into consideration its condition and the role the organization in the ecosystem,

which is determined by external ties of the organization.

The systematic approach is called to provide tools of dealing to the complexity by understanding the importance of relationships and how any system as a whole is being formed, worked and developed. At the same time, the value of the systematic approach depends on the clear understanding of relationships in the system. Usually the source of improper representation of relationships is different in levels of conceptualization (abstraction). Thus, the desired outcome of management in organizations often is a certain (specific) behavior of employees, and "management tools" are complex of (abstract) ideas.

The problem is that the existing models and tools of strategic management are often in conflict, since they use different levels of abstraction. Providing the understanding of various aspects of organizational performance, they do not always help to deal with the complexity of the modern organizations in a systematic and correct way.

Due to the problem it is important to formulate a cross-cutting logic of creating links between personal and organizational concepts in the systematic approach to strategic management that will ensure the clearness in providing integrity of the organization at the conceptual level and therefore influence people's behavior at work in a direction desired for the whole system.

2. Analysis of the latest research and publications

On the ground of a comprehensive analysis of the concept (notion) "system" A. I. Uyomov in his work [2] formulated the following definition: "The system is any object that has some properties that are predetermined in some relationship" and described certain aspects of systematic understanding – substrate, structure and concept. Substrate in this sense is the object itself serving as a carrier of some properties. The structure represents some characteristics of the substrate - the relationships inherent to the substrate (attributive structure). The concept is a complex of systems-creating relationships between the properties of the substrate. As the author notes, this definition can detect general systemic consistent patterns and express them through attributive and relational system parameters [2].

Systematic approach to strategic management has demonstrated its effectiveness in complex practical situations [3]. In the application of the systematic approach to the strategic management of the organization two key areas of research can be distinguished. The first area develops fostering a culture focused on employee training [4]. The second area is considering strategic management as implementation of complex strategic ideas of organizations [5].

Peter Senge [4] continues the tradition of systematic dynamics initiated by Jay Forester [6]. Senge develops the concept of "mental model" (or - intelligent model) – people's view of the world that governs their behavior. Senge notes that intelligent model rather rigidly defines our behavior because "it determines what we see. Two people with different intelligent models look at the same thing, but describe it differently because they see different parts" [4]. The author cites the opinion of a top manager "In the traditional authoritarian organization a dogma manages everything, organizes and controls everything... In a learning organization, the role of the new "dogma" will fulfill goals, values and intellectual models" [4]. So, the author is talking about a set of ideas (concepts) perceived by the employee. These ideas can manage his (her) behavior.

Norton and Kaplan, authors of Balanced Scorecard (Balanced Scorecards, BSC) investigated a relationship between BSC and governing complex of strategic ideas of a company (vision, mission, values) [5]. The authors interpret the mission as "a concise, internally focused statement of the reason for the organization's existence, the basic purpose toward which its activities are directed, and the values that guide employees' activities... also describe how the organization expects to complete and pass the value to customers" and a vision as being "paints a picture of the future that clarifies the organization's direction and helps individuals understand why and how they should support the organization" [5]. Norton and Kaplan explain the strategy development as the "quantifying the vision" process [7] providing quantitative (specific) measurement of quality (abstract) vision and mission wording.

In both areas of research, authors discuss the cooperative intellectual (mental) models of

organization, which are created by employees or are given to them for implementation. Other researchers pay attention to the relationship between organizational and personal concepts, including Akerlof and Kranton (relationship of personal and organizational identity) [8], Locke and Latham (link between personal and organizational goals) [9], Lips-Wiersma and Morris (exploring the meaning of the work) [10] Edwards and Cable (linking personal and organizational values) ideas [11].

Akerlof and Kranton in their work [8] demonstrate that behavior, or rather the scope of efforts made by the employee of organization, depends on how much he identifies himself with an organization, or considers himself as insider. Another important factors that influence the performance of the employee are norms and ideals, accepted by the organization. Organizations can "make investments that cause workers to identify themselves with the organization, with their job within it or with their workgroups" [8]. In this study authors use at least three levels of abstraction: behavioral, normative (regulating behavior) and conceptual set of ideas that stand behind norms and symptoms of the behavior.

Locke and Latham [9], [12] proposed a well-developed theory of motivation based on goal-setting. The theory emphasizes the important link between objectives and performance. Studies confirm that most effective work is done when goals are specific and complex, used to assess the performance and related to feedback provided by the supervisor. Goal understanding at work is an important source of motivation to achieve certain goal, which in turn improves productivity. There is a connection between how complicated and clear the goals are and productivity of the task performance. Specific and complex objectives better lead to improvement of task performance than vague or easy ones.

Productive performing does not only need to link organizational and personal goals, but also relates organizational goals, self- efficacy, confidence in employees' ability to cope with existing problems.

As for the feeling of workers' meaningfulness, studies [10] show that "meaningfulness does not need to be provided, as the distinct characteristic of a human being boils down to the fact that he or she has an inner "will to meaning". According to the

study [10], it is important not just to have "understanding the subjective experience of meaningful work... reality of oneself and the organizational context in which meaning gets expressed ", but also "contribute to our understanding of how to engage individuals into the conversation about meaningful work that is not prescriptive or exclusive, but that also shows where meanings are commonly held. "So the matter of meaning is difficult for its realization by everyone. It is even more difficult to "link" the sense of the organization existence with the meaningfulness of work for each individual in organization.

The author emphasizes that "meaning-making is inherent to the human beings. In other words, subjective work meaning such as vision, values and principles can and should not be provided by those people who are in positions of power, but rather should emerge from the collective existence of everyone in the organization regardless of formal power positions." [10]

The research of relationship between personal and organizational values was conducted by Edwards and Cable [11], Lamm, Gordon and Purser [13]. Edwards and Cable understand values "as general beliefs about the importance of normatively desirable behaviors or end states. Individuals apply to their values in order to guide their decisions and actions, and organizational value systems provide norms that specify how organizational members should behave and how organizational resources should be allocated. Value congruence refers to the similarity between values applied by individuals and by organizations." [11].

The authors distinguish subjective and objective value resemblance of the organization and the individual. If the subjective resemblance "involves the match between an employee's own values and his or her perceptions of the organization's values", so the "... objective resemblance...compares an employee's values with organizational values from the point of view of other people such as managers or coworkers. The authors focus on subjective resemblance, since they try to explain -"why value congruence relates to employee's attitudes, which are expressed by job satisfaction, organizational identification and intent to stay." [11]

The research [11] and further studies [12] confirm the link between value congruence and

employees' behavior at work - both in normal operating situations, as well as in the conditions of organizational modification.

In any organization, employees are members of the production system, which "aims to develop the product and which is connected to the continuous improvement principle" [14], performing some role in the processes that ensure value creation. This role-load performance requires both employee's own work and interaction with other employees in production roles. Effective implementation roles require a certain knowledge, skills, experience and capacity to perform such actions and interactions. As it is stated by the authors, citing the definition of Asian Productivity Organization, "In fact, any productivity is really an "attitude of mind". It's about those people who add value to the work process by their skills, team spirit, efficiency, pride in work and customer orientation... "[14]. So employees' beliefs, their understanding of their job responsibilities and availability of "tools" are also a very important factor, along with the goals, values and meanings.

Results of the presented research confirm the link between the working results, demonstrated by employees, their personal goals, values and meanings, and on the other hand, organizational goals, values and meanings. Highly abstract (conceptual) representation of an organization through a conceptual representation of individual basically can have impact on the outcome of the organization as a whole. The unanswered question remains - how to ensure systematic and working relationship between personal and organizational concepts.

3. Research tasks

The task of this paper is to formulate a systematic representation of individual and organization in the same conceptual frame and to offer crosscutting logic of creating links between personal and organizational concepts.

4. Research results

In his definition of a system Uyomov uses three concepts: the substrate of a system as a carrier of specific properties; (attributive) structure of the system - the relationships inherent to substrate (attribute parameters); concept as the system-forming relationships (relational parameters) between the properties of the substrate.

According to Uyomov "Concept of a system determines the whole type of relationships that

satisfy the properties expressed by this concept. Each relationship of this type will be system-forming in the sense that being abstracted from any object, it forms a system using these objects"[2]. In the modern understanding organizations exist to create value for customers - "the focus on purpose, rather than profits, builds the business confidence and drives investment" [15]. So value creating as meaning of existence (not money) can be considered as a concept that forms modern organizations as systems. In turn, attributive structure is relationships between elements of the substrate of a system. A distinctive feature of systems-forming relationships in the organization is their focus on creating value (implementation of meaning of the organization's existence). As for the substrate, the "carriers" of the organization, in fact, are employees, to be more precise, - their intellectual or mental models.

Such representation of an organization as a system is valuable because it allows to present system while remaining in an abstract-conceptual dimension, in other words - being at the same level of abstraction. Staying at one level (floor) of abstraction allows managers to clearly separate conceptual (theoretical) constructs that are abstract by nature, and behaviors that are highly specific, in other words they can be observed, measured or experienced and they are very individual. It is desirable to distinguish concepts as key ideas, concepts as notions and concept as related explanation. The concept as a key thought or idea is a short and capacious definition in a written or verbal communication and the sense of the word is commonly used in everyday communication.

The concept as a notion is used, for example, by Uyomov who defines the concept of "systems": "The meaning of the system concept can perfectly be understood by the usage of an analogy with the system of reference. Reference system should be known before conducting the study "[2]. Representing organization as a system above, we used the concept of "value for the customer" in contrast to the "profit" concept which is often used for businesses.

Categorization of concepts like abstractions of the highest level was offered by Eduardo de Bono [16], arguing that all conceptual notions can be boiled down to one of four categories: the concept of description, the concept of values, the concept of

goals and the concept of implementation mechanism. The concepts of description answer the questions: what? Where? When? What are we dealing with? How does something what we are dealing with, locate relatively other phenomena in space and time? The concepts of values answer the question "Why?" Why is it important for us? What value has it got for us? What is this value? Why should we do it? The concepts of goals answer the question "What?" What do we want to achieve? What is the purpose of our actions and operations? The concepts of mechanism answer the question "How?" How does it work? How is this goal achieved? What is power-unit? What is going on?

Concepts as interrelated explanations are synonymous with the word "theory." The concept as a theory is a "set of beliefs, impressions, ideas, dedicated to explain certain phenomena, processes and relations between them" [17].

Coming back to definition of substrate structure and concept of a system proposed by Uyomov, applying this definition to the organization and trying to stay on the same "conceptual floor" one can reach the following conclusion. The substrates of organization as a system are not people, but "the concepts of people" linked with each other via conceptual structure - conceptual relationships that are determined by the concept as a managing idea.

This understanding simplifies strategic management because: a) it provides certain logic: the creation of a common conceptual model / fields in the minds of all employees; b) it clearly separates an abstract "Self-concept" of employees from their individual (concrete) behavior. Let us focus on two key conceptual moments of conceptual - theoretical representation of an organization: the concept of the organization and the Self-concept. To do this, we should use the same conceptual frame (description, values, goals, mechanisms) which will link the Self-concept and the concept of the organization into a single systematic representation.

Let's consider conceptual representation of organization based on concepts of description, values, goals and mechanisms. It has been already discussed that the organization is a system that creates a "value for the customer." In real life, except the customer there are various other entities interested in the results of organization activity. They are often called stakeholders. External stakeholders (customers,

shareowners (shareholders), partners, local communities, the central government) and internal stakeholders (management, employees) of organizations are differentiated. An organization creates value for each stakeholder. For customer the value is the product that an organization creates; for owners it is profitability; for employees, for example it can be working terms and conditions at the organization. So when it comes to generalization of the description, it is more precisely to use the "value for" or the "value for stakeholders." Describing an organization that creates "value for" it is necessary to answer the question "why?", binding the description with values and meanings.

Organizational values are guidelines that determine the behavior and meaning of the entire organization. The values define what is desirable and what is not. Some of these values can be defined as universal, important for any organization and other values are individual or even unique. In any organization as a community of people working together, trust, respect, discipline, client orientation are important ... On the other hand, values (like understanding of acceptable and important) of organization of a Stock Trader, tightly focused on profit (including client's profit) and values of the research laboratory, which creates new knowledge are likely to be much different. Values tied into a system form ideology. Values play an important role in goal setting. That is when the goals are defined by the values of a subject, one can say about the subjective goals.

Purposefulness represented by organizational goals is an important characteristic of the organization as a system. The presence of goals allows making precise abstract ideas, adds measurement and thus moves from ideas to actions. The goal as a concept (purpose or idea of purpose) – is an abstraction at that the goals should be clear (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound). To formulate the goals it is necessary to understand among others how the goals will be achieved. In this respect the goals and mechanisms of achieving them are closely linked. For example, the achievement of goals can be performed with the usage of available resources or attracted resources; there can be various ways of achieving the same goal; the goal may be to provide "value for" one customer or to thousands of customers.

The concept of mechanism is called to determine how the "value for" is created and the goals are achieved –with a help of principles of cooperation, processes, projects, and resources. Recently, more and more mechanisms of implementation for commercial organizations are formulated as a "business model" - a holistic interrelated representation of client, "value for", processes, resources, ways to obtain profit and competitive position protection. It is clear that the mechanisms should also be in the "field of values". It means that not everything possible may be acceptable for a particular organization.

Let's consider conceptual representation of a personality using the self-concept in the same conceptual frame of description, values, goals and mechanisms. The "Self-concept" - a concept that is widely used in psychology and pedagogy. "Describing the kind of person we usually use adjectives: "reliable ", "friendly ", "strong", "conscientious" and so on. All of this adjectives are abstract characteristics that are not related to a specific event or situation. As the elements of a generalized image of the individual they represent, on the one hand, steady trends in his behavior, and the on the other hand - the selectivity of our perception." [18]. Lets turn to the person representing within the conceptual frame of description-values-goals-mechanisms.

In principle, any theory of personality, describing certain patterns of behavior, perception, mental (emotional or intellectual) activities, refers to the conceptual human representation. Psychological science suggests concepts that have their own content and that are related: perception, memory, imagination, thinking, consciousness and sub consciousness. Human sciences widely use a concept of roles: adult-child-father; social roles; gender roles and so on. Brain researcher Ramachandran [19] grounds representation of "I" on such aspects as integrity, consistency, stay in the body, personhood, social hood, free will, self-consciousness. In the literature understanding of motivation, comprehension (reflection) itself and socialization of a person are deeply worked out. All these ways of presentation are called to provide a holistic view of human being in his various aspects. For the purpose of this paper it is important that this type of description is possible at the conceptual

level, and it can be linked, for example, with working roles (employees as internal stakeholders of the organization), or with understanding of personal identity.

Personal values are a common concept used to determine the ideas about "proper, the best, the most important thing worth working, sacrificing time, efforts and something else" [20]. Researchers note the complexity associated with the formulation of values: "such values as freedom and equality, truth and justice are not available for direct observation; they are, as empiricists say, "latent constructs" which generally are available to measure only indirectly, through certain indicators. But it is just as we do in everyday life. We observe a certain behavior of our neighbors or we register certain expressions and then make some conclusions about their values "[21]. However, defined values help to predict (forecast) certain aspects of behavior, formulate subjective goals and get criteria in selecting suitable mechanisms for the subject for achieving the goals.

Qualitative goals give a person a pivot in the future, an opportunity to "open" the future personally and to check the speed and direction of progress in this future. For the purposes of determining the quality of goals A.I. Prigogin suggests using "subjectivity of goal as the main criteria of its quality, or selection of its subjective (author, creative, willing) component" [20]. Subjectivity of goals for a person means also relevance of the goals for the subject, connectedness of human notions about themselves, including their own personhood, values, and so on.

Personal mechanisms are conceptual representation of how the goals are achieved and they can be categorized on cognitive, intra-personal (reflexive) and inter-personal (social). Examples of cognitive mechanisms are strategizing, planning, problem solving. Reflexive mechanisms provide competence in working with him(her)-self - a capability for self-awareness, self-control, management of own emotions (emotional intelligence). Inter-personal mechanisms include the ability of empathy, teamwork and more - the capability for social interaction (social intelligence). Another representation of mechanism is possible through the capability to perform certain roles, including - roles at work.

Let's come back to the system definition of A.I. Uyomov through the substrate, relationships and concept in the conceptual dimension. The substrates of an organization as a system in this dimension are the Self-concepts (description, values, goals, mechanisms) of employees. The concept is the concept of the organization (description, values, goals, mechanisms) that creates value for its customers. The organization can be a system, if the concept of organization is a part of the Self-concept of a critical mass, preferably - of all the employees. In other words, the relational structure is the degree of perception of the employees at the conceptual level the concept of organization and "embedding" the organizational concept into the Self-concept. A good analogy of the conceptual representation is a fractal, when the concept of organization is reproduced in every Self-concept in the organization, creating organizational integrity.

We can explain this representation using the example of the "identity" concept. If the organization offers its employees a certain identity and the employees accept this identity, the identity becomes a factor that unites employees and makes the organization integral. The Armed Forces and the Church are those institutions that have learned through rituals and communication to build strong communities, integrated via common identity both at conceptual and at behavioral levels.

At the same time, the formation of organizations as systems at the conceptual level, remains a subject for the further research. Problematic is the matter of definition of the Self-concept of each employee in the same conceptual frame due to the difficulty of adequate "measuring of oneself", abstraction and self-description in a given frame. Researchers, for example, note the discrepancies between perceptions of itself and perception about the person of other employees [11]. Communication at the conceptual levels is not easy. The prerequisite for the success of the communication is the creation of common conceptual field in the organization. But perhaps the most difficult problem is the correct representation of the organization as a system at the conceptual level. The formation of linked, holistic conceptual representation that has the power theory, allows creating and transforming organizations, using concepts to achieve organizational integrity and

predict the behavior of the organization as a whole. It remains an important topic for future research.

5. Conclusion

The paper considers the systematic representation of the individual and the organization as a whole at the conceptual level. It is shown that such representation is possible in the same conceptual frame: description, values, goals, mechanisms. This frame can be used to create a systematic representation of an organization for the purpose of strategic management. It is shown that the use of a conceptual frame allows describing an organization through the substrate (Self-concepts of employees), concept (creating value for stakeholders) and relationships (embeddedness of the concept into the substrate – Self-concepts of employees). The paper suggests the cross-cutting logic of establishing the links between personal and organizational concepts.

It is suggested to conduct further research in two directions: development of a method of forming an interrelated conceptual representation of an organization as a system and method for creating in it a joint conceptual field. Research results in both directions will have practical value as they help to ensure organizational integrity and the effectiveness as a whole.

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Мета: системне представлення особистості й організації на концептуальному рівні є потужним інструментом для розуміння й дизайну організації як цілого. Системний підхід покликаний впоратися зі складністю сучасних організацій в той час як використання абстракції дозволяє коректно представити зв'язки в системі. Відомо не дуже багато спроб поєднати концептуальне представлення організації та особистості в організації. **Методи:** Сформульовано наскрізну логіку створення зв'язків між особистими та організаційними концепціями в системному підході до стратегічного управління. Показано, що таке представлення можливе в єдиному концептуальному фреймі: опис, цінності, цілі, механізми. Логіка дозволяє гарантувати ясність при забезпеченні цілісності організації на концептуальному рівні і, отже, впливати на поведінку людей на роботі в напрямі, бажаному для всієї системи. **Результати:** Показано, що використання концептуального фрейму дозволяє описувати організацію через субстрат (Я-концепції співробітників), концепції (створення цінності для зацікавлених сторін) і відносини (включеність концепції в субстрат – Я-концепції співробітників). Запропонована наскрізна логіка дозволяє встановити зв'язки між особистісними та організаційними концепціями. Головним в цій логіці є коректне представлення організації і особистості на концептуальному рівні. **Обговорення:** Визначення Я-концепції кожного працівника в тому самому концептуальному фреймі є нетривіальним завданням через труднощі адекватного «вимірювання самого себе», абстрагування і самоопису в даному фреймі. Розповсюдженою, наприклад, є невідповідність між сприйняттям особистості себе і уявленням цієї особистості іншими. Розвиток методів формування пов'язаних між собою і цілісних концептуальних представлень особистості і організації є важливою темою для майбутніх досліджень.

Ключові слова: концепція; організація; особистість; система; системний підхід; стратегічне управління.

Е.А. Мальцев. Концептуальное измерение системного подхода к управлению организацией

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Цель: систематическое представление личности и организации на концептуальном уровне является мощным инструментом для понимания и дизайна организации в целом. Системный подход призван справиться со сложностью современных организаций в то время как использование абстракции позволяет корректно представить отношения в системе. Известно не очень много попыток совместить концептуальное представление организации и личности в организации. **Методы:** Сформулирована сквозная логика создания связей между личностными и организационными концепциями в системном подходе к стратегическому управлению. Показано, что такое представление возможно в едином концептуальном фрейме: описание, ценности, цели, механизмы. Логика позволяет гарантировать ясность в обеспечении целостности организации на концептуальном уровне и, следовательно, влиять на поведение людей на работе в направлении, желаемом для всей системы. **Результаты:** Показано, что использование концептуального фрейма позволяет описывать организацию через субстрат (Я-концепции сотрудников), концепции (создание ценности для заинтересованных сторон) и отношения (включенность концепции в субстрат Я-концепций сотрудников). Предложенная сквозная логика позволяет установить связи между личностными и организационными концепциями. Главным в логике является корректное представление организации и личности на концептуальном уровне. **Обсуждение:** Определение Я-концепции каждого сотрудника в одном и том же концептуальном фрейме является нетривиальной задачей из-за трудности адекватного «измерения самого себя», абстрагирования и самоописания в данном фрейме. Распространенным, например, является несоответствие между восприятием личностью себя и представлением о личности других. Развитие методов формирования связанных между собой и целостных концептуальных представлений личности и организации является важной темой для будущих исследований.

Ключевые слова: концепция; личность; организация; система; системный подход; стратегическое управление.

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