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Cognitive management: theory and practice in the organization

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Abstract

In the context of modern management cognitive management is considered as one of the innovative trends. Management activities in cognitive management are carried out through tools affecting human cognitive capabilities. The subject field of cognitive management is the process of managing organizational knowledge, which is possible in the information society and is most effective in a social environment.

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1. Introduction

Methodology of cognitive management appeared relatively recently, at the beginning of the XXI century, at that time the practice of social processes was changing due to the coming understanding that they need to be skillfully managed and used in business development. Cognitive management would not have arisen without the information society, with its knowledge economy. For understanding the cognitive management as a new trend in the context of the management science, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by "knowledge". In this case it is not knowledge, which comes from books, encyclopedias, reference books and dictionaries, but knowledge relevant to activities of an organization.

2. Review of related research

In the present conditions of the organization, when the markets are globalizing, technologies change and grow, competitors multiply and products become obsolete, before they reach the consumer, success comes to those companies that purposefully create new knowledge, spread it and put it into new technologies and manufactured products. Business of such organizations is a continuous process of innovation.

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However, in spite of the many definitions of “intellect” (brain-power) and “intellectual capital», few modern leaders are aware of the true nature of the companies – creators of knowledge. They do not understand what the company should do for application of knowledge technology and how such organizations should be managed.

Knowledge in management theory is a well-thought information about the subject and object of management, practice-proven result of understanding reality, its valid reflection in human consciousness. It may be noted that one and only definition of “knowledge” cannot exist. However, knowledge properties are observed by many scientists. In the cognitive management these properties include:

- Knowledge is in constant development, which motion vector starts from ignorance to the level of understanding and explanation of the various facts in the system of notions of management science, up to their inclusion into theory.
- Knowledge understands the reality of the situation (problem) of the organization in its past, present and future, in the reliable synthesis of facts.
- Knowledge finds necessary and regular behind the random, general – behind the unique and based on that forecasts development of the organization.
- Knowledge, of course, is the product of individual minds, but it can be used by many, while many may not perceive it. Hence the need for a particular knowledge in the practice of management of the organization often has to be proven.
- Knowledge can be stored in a systematic manner in a variety of storage media (books, documents, databases, files, etc.) which facilitate its use.
- Knowledge can be explicit and implicit, explained by the ease or difficulty, with which it can be described in terms that are understandable to a broad audience. In this connection, for example, Japanese managers explain the success of Japanese firms in the business by their ability to extract explicit knowledge from implicit in the process of working together, and then reproduce it in different situations, thus turning it into additional corporate resource (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2011).

Since cognitive management is associated with organizational knowledge, from the philosophical point of view two approaches to knowledge are recognized. The first approach is a paradigmatic or functionalistic knowledge, which relates to the theory of organization, originating from positivism and corresponding to the methodology of natural science research. Managers working in this way are mainly interested in general and universal laws of cause and effect relationships of the organization, regardless of context. Such approach is not very appropriate in analysis of individual case study research, however it can be applied in unexplainability of etymology of certain problems which need to be understood for further solution.

The second approach is called thematic or narrative, it is focused on the understanding of a fact, and therefore the context here is of prime importance. This approach considers the human actions and intentions. This helps to reveal the values of the organization at the level of the various staff members, organize them, and pass the organizational culture on to new employees.

In this regard, it is clear that the descriptive approach, in contrast to the paradigmatic, is more productive, for example in terms of culturally defined aspects of organizational behavior and interaction. Another example of the use of organizational knowledge in the context of competition in business is technology and techniques of work used by managers, managerial abilities, accumulation of practical experience, formation of a database of competitors, customers and suppliers, receiving patents and other similar application of knowledge in the modern management of the organization.

Any methodological divergence in modern management is formed primarily on certain scientific principles. Cognitive management is not an exception. Its methodology and principles are based on the experience of British Petroleum, and were laid down in 1998 (Devenport & Prusak, 2006):

- Knowledge emerges and remains in people's minds;
- Shared use of knowledge requires trust;
- Technology enables new forms of cognitive behavior;

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