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EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT IN A DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

Angela BLOGUȚ

"Vasile Goldiș" Western University of Arad, Arad, Romania, Individual Office of Psychology
Angela Bloguț, Timisoara, Romania

Abstract: *The opportunity of educational management modernisation is required in the perspective of the society's development trends and of social integration, which implies the need to participate in the globalisation, internationalisation processes specific to the contemporary world. They claim a new management - the transitional management of human resources - which highlights the learning and valuing of the new competences related to cooperation in open and complex heterogeneous cultural areas, which demand for a permanent evolution and self-organisation. The edification of a modern, prospective, flexible and open education, appropriate for a democratic society and for the requirements of the market economy, for the individual self-achievement options is possible by implementing the proposed management paradigm, appreciated as a strategy of change, employed on systemic, structural, methodological, technical level, which converges towards the edification of a new "innovating school" as a "moment of change in the evolution of education", reacts in psychological plan to the requirements specific to the innovating creativity, based on an observance of the principles of efficiency on social scale, the participation of education actors in the spirit of democracy values, rational organisation and planning, motivation for permanent innovation.*

Keywords: *education, paradigm, democratic, principles*

Subject actuality. Society development, particularly in an era of changes, has a direct dependency on the evolution of education, which is one of the main tools whereby the society stimulates, directs and controls the development processes. The option for a democratic and open society claims the focus of efforts on "the educative dimension of the social development, which, according to the economic, political and cultural dimensions, should build a healthy society, improving life quality by a higher education. Given this context, "educability and adaptability" constitute two essential conditions for the current and future changes, and the "education-development" assembly represents the strategy of the social progress.

The new educational policy prefigured in the finalities of education implies an education management sought to ensure organisational development by promoting an education strategy of boosting the human resource performance, focused on the formation and development of human personality, capable of taking independent decisions in order to achieve its own destiny and choose for the democratic society. The valuing of the resources management has, its creative application, represent challenges of the contemporary time, they are able to ensure the development of the educational system, particularly of the school, in a society based on knowledge and computerisation.

The new orientations and realities involve a new vision over the man itself as a supreme

value and, therefore, the need to perceive education as a social phenomenon not only from the general-human perspective - training the man for life, perspective that currently predominates in the psycho-pedagogical research, but also from the *modern management perspective - of valuing the individual and his self-management, externalisation and behavioural manifestation capacities, as a defining value of his efficiency and efficacy, field that both theoretically and practically remains unexplored scientifically and socially.* Within this context, educational management as science and art to prepare human resources to form personalities according to some finalities requested and accepted by the individual, have the mission to modify personality in an autonomous and reformative sense for a correct, efficient achievement of his activity, to socialise people to fulfil roles and specific functions in other types of organisations and society given that this becomes *a society based on knowledge and computerisation.* In this train of ideas, the social and cultural pattern, when the individual considers himself passive in relation with his organisation, is overcome, although his magistrocentrism or socialcentrism is still persistent, paradigm that maintains the formation of the doer.

The change of paradigm *on particular level – passing from the formation of the doer to the formation of the decider – constitutes a new research direction and it involves, on overall level, a participative human-centred democratic management,* which should be promoted by specific principles.

THE DOER

- passive, depending on the others;
- is lacking the power of will in taking decisions, in overcoming inveterate habits

THE DECIDER

- proactive, self-knowledge;
- the identification/feeling of its own value;
- self-esteem, personal strength;
- high self-reflection,

and cultivating other, better and more effective habits;

- uncertain, a product of what is happening or has happened;
- victim of the situation, of the circumstances;
- it is the reflection of other people's opinions and indications;
- is lacking own reflection;
- is lacking an authentic understanding of the real joy and happiness;
- is lacking vision, unclear orientation in life.

self-awareness, self-determination, self-expression, self-confirmation, self-achievement, self-adjustment;

- orientation in life and the capacity to make decisions;
- wisdom, certainty;
- (self)discipline;
- life is considered a functional product of own decisions;
- it determines the course of things;
- builds his life on principles;
- orientation to individual and public self-achievement.

The humanisation of leadership implies consideration on the individual particulars of each participant to the educational process, creation of some conditions to promote individual development and capacities. All of these can be achieved only by removing the "administrative leadership" and implementing the "managerial leadership", having the following features: *respect and confidence in people, accepting personality, cooperation, individualisation, individual change, professional development, optimism, self-trust and trust in the others.*

The dynamics of the contemporary life, determined by impressive changes in all the areas of activity, requires a continuous adapting of the educational system to the new orientations and realities. The path chosen by the society towards democracy and opening may only ensure success if education will form personalities capable of valuing new ideas, values, beliefs, will promote new individual behaviors, specific to a democratic



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society. Being oriented from man to man, education is also a universal act of communication, and the positive orientation of education employs it axiological, meaning that the education makes its way by values and for values, the human being itself representing the supreme value of education.

Given that the contemporary societies have largely become societies of knowledge and computerisation, the production of material as also of non-material goods is ensured by a larger and larger number of individuals, who produce and value knowledge. Hence, knowledge and learning becomes the primary weapon of efficiency, performance and competitiveness. School is a specific type of social system being, on one hand, a generator of knowledge, producer of human knowledge, and on the other, being a disseminator of knowledge results meant for training successive generation for a rich personal life and self-achievement, as also to value human resources, as propulsive resources of the economic and social, scientific, technological and cultural development.

School has the social meaning to form the future, but first it is called to educate the generation, who should live and build under conditions of social equity and competition. Nevertheless, it should become democratic and flexible to changes. From this perspective, education should form intellectual, moral and physical in the individual, to aid him to live in the society. Thus, the need is felt for an authentic education, which respects and advantages human freedom by encouraging the good, the free discipline, the self-leadership of the group of students, by creating an environment that boost spontaneity. The meaning of education and the fundamental criterion of human life assessment is the achievement of personality by free creation. Updated, this orientation becomes materialised by school training

programmes for social competences, which should allow the graduates to cope with the requirements of the active life in a society based on market connections: initiative, cooperation, team work, mutual training, communication, logical thinking, problem solving, decision making, obtaining and using information, planning own actions, evaluation. In the same time, it is required for the man to honour his own personality, to try and rise over the society, to determine his own path. On the other hand, today, as never, the assertion of Paul Lengrad becomes of notoriety: "Education cannot simply be added to human life as something imposed from the outside. There is not more important thing than culture. In philosophical terms, we can say that education does not belong to the category defined by the word *to have*, but to the one characterised by the word *to be*. Human existence in a status of "becoming" in each stage and in various situations is the real existence of education". As such, the formation and development of personality, which is representing the human subject, considered as a bio-psycho-social unity, to which the epistemic, pragmatic and axiological functions are specific, in its evolution "to be" and "to become", requires a shift from individualisation to the psychology of constructive individualisation (C. G. Yung). By individualisation, the man builds his individuality and his Self, which expresses the unity of the personality.

In a time of change, a need is felt for moral authentic renewal. In this train of idea, the assertion of A. Einstein holds a particular notoriety: "The greatest human effort is the fight for morality in our actions. Our internal balance and even our own existence depend on that. But morality from our actions may give beauty and dignity to life. To transform this in a living force and to be fully aware of it is, perhaps, the most important task of

education". Education for the moral-spiritual values assumes "a value construction of the personality of each individual, build on the generally human values (truth, good, beauty, sacred) and traditional (solidarity, harmony, sincerity etc.) and open, in the same time, for the European ethos" (the values of the individual freedoms of expression, creation, initiative).

The man should be educated as a social and cultural being, which nevertheless accomplishes and updates itself as an individual being. Only as such education may transform the person in personality, if we consider that personality is a fully-accomplished person. Under the current conditions, it is important to learn permanently, to form indispensable intellectual capacities, to replace the formula "long life learning" with "learning throughout the life", which requires the formation of certain capacities of management for self. In this train of ideas, considering that Romania accedes more and more to a market economy and to a society based on knowledge, the educational system should be adapted to the fluid context where people are living according to the requirements of integration in the European community. This requires a productive conscious learning, for each man to become an active citizen of society, prepared to occupy a job, which guarantees own independence, self-respect, life quality, which claims responsibility on his side to contour his own life. As such, the educational system in the multi-cultural mosaic from the European community should be edified with high efficacy, starting with the fundamental thesis of natural integration of the individual in the universal culture, promoted by the famous German linguist and philosopher V. von Humboldt in the formula: Individual - Nation - Humanity, consolidating and achieving this strategic challenge by the national school, conceived as a "social institute of the national culture, by which disciplines the people perpetuate themselves and their material and spiritual existence.

In the conditions of the contemporary life, a particular importance for us is the education for democracy. Education for democracy has a

double unitary meaning: to educate the individual to be capable of living in, and to be capable of building the democratic society.

Democracy represents a concept of politological nature, which delimitates a "philosophy, a way of living, a religion and a governing form". In this train of ideas, considering the need for democratisation and modernisation of the education, valuing the education in the meaning of the social and human progress, we should imperatively *humanise the educational process, adapt it to the individual needs, interests and particularities of the person*, create a learning community based on trust, collaboration, support, which would ensure the success, development of the student. In this purpose, a particular importance stands in the use of all the methods of formal and non-formal education.

From the definition of education as an activity in itself, a system of actions of formation-development of the human personality, of conscious orientation oriented towards certain finalities, it results the existence of an explicit approach of the conception, organisation, coordination, evaluation, continuous optimisation of the elements of the educational system - which is even the study field of educational management. The need for management is shown by the existences of efficacy, by the increase in efficiency in achieving the finalities of education, and not only by the assurance of resources and by direction. Within the meaning of the aforementioned, the American scientist J.K. Galbraith underlines that "education should fulfil two vital functions. The first, to allow people to self-lead themselves intelligently, and the second, to make possible for them to try and obtain full satisfaction from the lived life". In an era of changes, the need for personal "self-leading" is obvious and advisable, which implies and efficient valuing of education and educational management, which majority aims at "valuing the individual and its capacities". Therefore, both education and the educational management direct the efforts towards the formation and development of the personality, capable of building its own destiny, giving to life a



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meaning. As such, the couple "education-development" targets the final purpose of individual and collective life quality enrichment. Subject to the educational management is therefore required the formation of competences, necessary for the young to connect the personal existence to the dynamism of the current and future social life, in its own interest and of the society. These competences are functional knowledge, capacities and application skills, positive and constructive behavioural attitudes made by systematic exercises in the teaching activities. The intellectualisation of the student's personality, the featuring of a new system of values, which ensures the social a human progress, should aid him to rapidly adapt to new, changing situations. Given this context, the long-term objective of the school should be to train the students for an effective social integration in the conditions of a "turbulent" environment, which involves the graduation of a preponderant, pragmatic education, oriented towards creativity and formation of an independent, critical thinking, towards the development of the spirit of initiative, entrepreneurship, team work.

The environmental change itself where the educational unit operates, the large transformations from the school - the new educational objectives, the new programmes and manuals, teaching technologies, the wider implication of the community - determines a new position of the school principal in the system. This requires another content and another character of the educational management in order to form a creating, captivating, attractive and efficient school system, to put the accent on the formation of the man who is willing and is able to take life in his own hands, to become an active citizen to cope with the challenges of the changing environment. Currently, a school manager should be able more than ever to create a

strong organisational culture and a favourable climate for the collective and individual activity, to establish the human balance, to assert the freedom in education by harmonising the organisation tasks and the human relations. As a guarantor of the individual and organisational success, the school leader should involve in a continuous search to identify and develop possibilities of improvement of the educational unit by means of his competences, by his way of thinking and acting, oriented towards man, towards the valuing and development of the individual capacities, by involving/ attracting the educational actors in the life of the school organisation and in the social life. The new educational finalities and objectives, as also the new orientations and realities from society imply passing from an empirical, traditional leadership to a scientific, efficient leadership and all its features.

An edification of the leadership system appropriate for the exigencies of the democratic society and for the new educational objectives should be achieved taking into account the education and management as a science, the trends of modern management, the main schools, theories, principles and methods of leadership, the achievement tools and the advanced leadership practices, which contribute to the increase of social efficiency of school and education overall.

In its historical evolution, the last stage of development of the general management - implicitly educational - is characterised by the attention granted primarily to human relations and therefore the largest investments are made not just in material resources, as one of the streamlining sources, but especially in human resources, primarily in the systems, projects and programmes of *original training* (school training of the students, persons trained in re-qualification, reconversion etc.) and

continuous training (post-school, post-university, for specialists, in our case for the educational personnel with teaching, leading, guiding and control functions).

The restructuration of the educational system, which should cope with the humanisation and socialisation requirements, provided in the curricular objectives of the new millennium's start, requires a higher accent in waiving the informative-reproductive education in favour of a formative-applicative-productive education; in this vision: (a) on institutional level - the achievement of the challenge of the current school on training for active post-school life (professional, civil and family); (b) on the level of the sub-system of initial training - streamlining the curriculum management by achieving the curricular objectives of general training by means of the application tools for such curriculum.

The initiation, promotion and leadership in the activity of managerial training on all education levels, formal and informal, of a new orientation of stringent actuality, materialised in actions specific to the age and training level regarding the *education* of the liability/responsibility spirit (pre-school education, primary education, gymnasium), the formation of the capacity to decide for oneself (gymnasium and high school), from where it results the training on all ages of the independence of thinking and acting, which stimulates initiative, in the end it will give shape to a complex, realistic and general programme of *formation of the decider in a society of knowledge, computerisation, freedom and democracy* specific to the rule of law, globalisation of the living, cooperation, solidarity, collective and individual security standards.

The given thematic represents a novelty in the current school managerial theory and practice, in the meaning that until now it did not present a particular concern and teaching research was not sufficiently approached, although, based on all appearances, it was intuited, assumed, therefore implicit, but "undiscovered", and a certain obvious concern was at the personal appreciation, as an isolated initiative and individual possibility.

Reorientation in the formation of such personalities is recommended to be achieved starting with the **child's education in the family**, where, as asserted by Stephen R. Covey, "the spouses play three roles: producer, manager, leader". In the role of a "producer", they should be capable, patient, should involve children to "have the motivation to perform their tasks according to the expectations". In the role of managers, the parents tend "to focus on ability and not on efficiency, on making things right, instead of making the right things", which requires "a high level of independence and self-trust", while "in the role of a leader you can produce changes... helping the others to feel free to express their concerns and involve in the creation of new, acceptable solutions". In this activity of education of children in the family for them to become "champions", as also the employed and led people, Covey claims ten principles that are to be observed: reinforcement of the self-esteem of the children; encouraging personal greatness; encouraging the occupations they love; creating a pleasant culture; timely preparation of important family events; presenting examples of excellence; knowing their own potential; accepting their friends; to have beliefs, to trust the others; to grant support, resources and sincere reactions from the parents.

The creation of specific conditions to democratise the parents-children relations (stimulating the children's' initiatives, stimulating self-education, knowing and complying with human and children rights, promoting a healthy life style targeted on the moral-spiritual values etc.) assumes the promotion of some principles of humanisation and democratisation of the family relations: axiological unity and continuity between moral and civic education; knowing and promoting consequently the human and children rights; promoting the gender equality; active and responsible participation the life of family and society.

Managerial education, as a system with influence on the formation of the becoming personality, capable of taking independent decisions, to choose a democratic state



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construction, is provided in the school curriculum, materialised in general educational objectives, in trans-disciplinary general objectives, in objectives on training steps and levels, in objectives on curricular areas, curricular objectives on disciplines, in reference objectives.

Among the factors that limit freedom in education, the teachers mention a slow democratisation of the education leadership, conservatism, old mentality, authoritarianism, insertion, fear of responsibility, the economic and financial situation, fear of freedom, teachers' fixations. These and other factors correlate in large lines with the results obtained within the study on the difficulties of the school management materialised in objective and psychological causes (individuals and psycho-social).

A general retrospective in the targeted issue allows making certain determinations regarding the formation of qualities specific to the decider personality, oriented on its constitution in two aspects, in the instructive-educative process, in all the school disciplines, particularly in the social and human ones: (a) *educating the liability spirit*; (b) *forming the capacity to decide for oneself, finalised in social plan under the form of constructive behaviors*.

The education of the liability spirit and the formation of the capacity to decide represent a main objective of the entire educational process: teaching - learning, evaluation, a process masterfully organised on four taxonomic levels of difficulty/ complexity: 1 - reproduction (to know to reproduce that you have learned); 2 - correlation, transfer, application (to know to make relations in what you have learned); 3 - solution (mainly life problems: to know, the exercise/ skill to solve); 4 - design, confection, building, production (the skill to fully value the human

and professional potential in a creative manner).

The condition to educate *the liability spirit and the capacity to decide for oneself* is ensured by the quality of the lesson, conceived and achieved as a formative applicative action/activity, therefore designed as an operational teaching task by means of some appropriate *verbs of action*, as *common indicators of teaching-learning-evaluating* on the 4 levels of *skill formation* (school acquirements as *functional knowledge*, but not as a purpose in itself, but as a mean to form *capacities and behaviors*, in this case *to decide for oneself* by systematic exercises of application in class of the knowledge assimilated in all the disciplines). The formation of the attitude of responsibility and of the behaviour to decide independently, i.e. the competence to decide for oneself, should be based on the general decision-making algorithm: in the respective problem/ theme, it is mandatory to have the necessary knowledge/ information, and the solution should be the result of choosing an alternative from several possible alternatives on *success criteria* (on each alternative it is evaluated the number of chances and mischances, choosing the *alternative with the highest chance of success* and/ or a combination on the idea, „*out of two, I choose the third*”). In fact, the formation of the capacity to decide for oneself targets the personal and public success, meaning the formation of the competence to succeed.

The synthesis of the experiments started indicate formative, school, extra-school actions, as also their effects, depending on the training level, in the pre-school and primary education: arranging sensorial contact with objects and phenomena of the real world surrounding us by training the five senses: boosting curiosity, interest, emotions, conduct, affection, civilised behaviour by independent work, rules of conduct, order, cohabitation;

independent expression of own opinions, of the states of mind.

Developing the competence to decide forms by an active participation in solving practical problems, as a training exercise for active life, and the results, even partial, will be perceived as a fruit of positive decisions, as an undertaking of the responsibility for risk/failure/ success (on professional, social line), considered as a manifestation of patriotism with chances of success, by forming a positive and active attitude for the learned discipline and its application in life, the skill to learn to teach as a condition of our own self-development. The capacity to decide is therefore formed in an education based on curricular activities, on forming the capacity to decide for oneself, particularly on self-knowledge and valuing own potential, both human (qualities of personality, positive attitudes and constructive behaviors) and professional (professional and social skills and competences), e.g. the formation of competences that ensure meeting the requirements of the market economy: initiative, cooperation, team work, mutual training, assessment, communication, logical thinking, problem solving, decision making, obtaining and using information, planning own actions, to know to learn so you can know to do, to be and to become, cohabitation. In this context, a full valuing of the school curriculum, reconsidering the school disciplines, increasing the share of some optional objects and courses in valuing the individual and his self-leading capacities, such as: moral-spiritual education, civic education, we and the law, the bases of state and law, man and society, education for family life, communication culture, life skills that reinforce the curriculum potential, the development of the individual and its capacities, skills of externalizing and behavioural manifestation of the personality. In the same train of ideas, it is important to make the curriculum in the educational class, which contains recommendations for designing and developing educative activities in the educational class and in gymnasium and high school classes, having as purpose "the formation and development on students of the

integrating capacities of the contemporary personality, defined within the context of the problems and individual values of the national and worldwide community". The achievement of this purpose is "guided by an educational self-management centred on skills, such as:

- self-control, skills, capacities, interests etc. – features and values that define personality, allow the student to specify his desires and purposes;
- concrete, real possibilities to reach the established objectives;
- the capacities (knowledge, competences, skills) required to design and monitor the activity oriented towards the purpose".

The curriculum provides the following framework objectives:

- Forming the concept of self-knowledge.
- Forming the needs/ necessities for permanent and continuous self-achievement/ self-update.
- Forming the self-management skills for our own physical, intellectual and spiritual formation.
- Developing the behavioural culture.

The recommended contents focus on educative activities of training the personality for an active life (to master oneself life, ways to self-adjust life, own style - expression of individuality, the project of individual development, the individual project for professional orientation, for career etc.), the form masters having methodological suggestions and evaluation suggestions, proposed by the curriculum authors, converging with the school curriculum objectives, and of a real use for form masters, of whom contribution is undisputable in the process of personality (self)forming with democratic options.

Hence, the achievement of the school curriculum provisions converges with the paradigm of the seven skills of the most efficient people, formulated by St. Covey, of which observance comes to ensure success in the active life: social, family, management.

The personal and public success in the active life is based on certain criteria and it depends



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on the level of individual; evolution, from a dependent status to independent and, in the end, to be inter-dependent.

Dependency is a limit-condition, less evolved, of the personality, where responsibility for the personal success/ failure falls on somebody else.

Independence is a more evolved condition of personality, which ensures *personal success*, where the individual is responsible for his own success, gets actively involved, trusts his own forces and achieves his available potential.

Interdependence is the most evolved condition of personality, which ensures *public success*, where cooperation, joint work (group/team) stimulates talents and competences to jointly create great things. This assumes: understanding, courtesy, honesty, compliance with the engagements, trust, personal integrity. The evolution from the dependence to independence and interdependence is based on the paradigm of the seven skills of the most efficient people or on the unique human talent, associated with each skill: proactivity is the feature of self-knowledge; to start having in mind the final purpose, is the feature of imagination and conscience; to grant priority to priorities is the feature of the power of will; to think win/ win is the feature of a mentality of abundance; to seek first to understand the others and then to be understood is the feature of courage in balance with respect; to act synergistically is the feature of creativity; saw sharpening is the sole feature of the continuous improvement or renewal of self in order to overcome entropy.

The transition from *the paradigm targeted on the formation of the doer/ dependent, to the curricular paradigm, which stimulates the formation-development of the decider, capable of valuing its (self)management capacities, to self-achieve*, targets features, such as:

The changes from education, *the basic curriculum*, offers a wide perspective for the

capacity valuing process and for the individual's capacity to form the competent man, independent and interdependent, with democratic options - major objective, achievable in a social-historical, economic and cultural context, and which requires a relevant and coherent methodology to promote a managerial reform.

On level of school unit, the managerial change also provides for the following stages:

Stage I – defining the concept of change and establishing the features of the changing situation, identifying the change support and creating a vision that would support the changing effort, communication and sharing the vision of the educational players, empowering them in the changing context.

Stage II – the architectural design of change, designing/ planning change, elaborating the managerial project of development of the school unit, determining the purpose, the objectives of the school organisation, changing beliefs, the culture and the organisational structure and climate, the managerial paradigms and model of the educational unit, individual and professional training in the spirit of this change, featuring a new working modality and the control system based on implicative engagement, as also on an appropriate monitoring and assessment system.

Stage III – implementing the change, ensuring the conditions for the change, motivation, communication, involvement, participation of the educational players, reconsidering the managerial activity based on the new conceptual model of leadership, waiving the assumptions of the traditional management, appreciating the effects of the change, investigating and assessing the post-change condition.

The implementation of the new educational management paradigm requires an optimisation of the interdependence between

the functions of the management from the educational system and the appropriate institutional structures. The successful implementation of the conceptual model of modern and endemic management implies anticipative analysis of the pro and against change forces. Hence, using the conception of Kurt Lewin on the balance of forces in the process of change and the methodology adapted and developed by C. Rusu, we could determine the ratio of pro and con forces in the grounds of the results of the diagnosis made by us on system and school unit level regarding leadership, evaluating the importance of the factors that determine the forces identified on a scale from 1 - low to 5 - strong.

Thus, the increasingly accepted trends regarding the edification of a democratic and open society exert a pressure/influence on the need to implement an appropriate management, fact sustained particularly by the teachers, who only under such conditions may transpose into practice the new educational objectives and finalities and to fully self-achieve. In the context, there are also other pro change forces for the management system, to increase the level of competitiveness, the need to connect to European and international educational standards, as also the organisational culture, which is built on a system of values, beliefs, thinking patterns (including professional), symbols etc., appropriate for the development level of the human, democratic society. There are also significant the forces oriented against change, among which a higher share falls on the one referring to the maintenance of the central organisational structure, to the authority hierarchy, as also to the lack of the necessary skills and experience of the teachers with management positions for such activity in a new context. Or, exactly this work condition reinforces conservatism, routine, the fear of new responsibilities, maintaining a traditionalist-empirical management.

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