

A tribute to professor Rudi Rozman

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Abstract

In this article it is argued that the professional background of organizational and management researchers to a large extent explain what problems they address and the value of their works. The purpose of management, corporate governance and organizational research is to solve problems that owners, board of directors, managers and subordinates have. The classical writers on organizations where academics with managerial experiences which do explain the impact the classical contributions still have when managers address organizational problems. The classical writers addressed real problems and changes that managers need to solve. A large number of contemporary scholars, however, address problems that neither owners, managers nor subordinates have. Research published by professor Rozman does, however, address real working life problems.

Keywords: management, corporate governance, effectiveness, organizational functions

1. Introduction – Managerial experience vs. theoretical foundations

It is evident that the background of scholars largely explain what problems they try to solve and what kind of academic work they produce. The classical writers based their works on problems and challenges they faced when in managerial positions. Today we find two kinds of background of those who publish scientific articles: (1) Scholars with work experiences from public or private organizations in addition to academic qualifications and (2) scholars with academic qualifications and no managerial experience. It is evident that the work experiences of scholars largely explain what problems they address and the relevance of their research for owners, board of directors and managers. This fact does explain the content of their academic works which they produce. The contributions of some classical works on organization are presented in order to stress that research efforts ought to address real problems.

The research problems that professor Rudi Rozman has addressed over the years are clearly a consequence of his experience – from corporations and consultancy in management positions before achieving his doctor degree. His research publications clearly address problems that owners and managers face (e.g. Rozman, 2006, 2007, 2000, 2012). The writer of this tribute has similar experiences from consultancy work and management positions in the private and public sectors prior to the

achievement of a doctor degree. The main issue here is that Rozman's research is motivated by his experience from organizations and having had managerial positions.

2. Classical contributions based on work experience

2.1 Introduction

When organization and management theories emerged some hundred years ago a few persons addressed the problem of managing large companies being those who themselves worked in these industries. When recently reading one of my own textbooks on organization theory I found that the classical writers (e.g. Fredrick Winslow Taylor, Henry Fayol, Luther Gulick and Chester I. Bernard) - to mention a few - had their own personal experiences from managerial positions as the basis for their theoretical works. These contributions have had a considerable positive effect on the industrial sectors and the working conditions of employees.

2.2 Fredrick Winslow Taylor

"The writer has great sympathy with those who are overworked, but on the whole greater sympathy with those who are underpaid." (Taylor, 1911/1967, p.18f).

Fredrick Winslow Taylor (1856-1917) was admitted to Harvard University but due to an eye deficiency was unable to study. He started his work experience when eighteen years old as an apprentice for a model carpenter and later as a mechanical worker. Some years later he was employed as a factory worker at the Midvale Steel Company and was later promoted to chief engineer. During these years Taylor developed and tested what he called the "task system" which was later called the "Taylor system" or "scientific management." Taylor conducted precise experiments in order to specify the best way to complete work tasks and the time required. He analyzed materials, tools, and work sequences and specified the division of work between managers and workers. Taylor's experiments became the foundation of scientific principles being the foundation of Scientific Management.

2.3 Luther Gulick

"... The most difficult task of the chief executive is not command, but it is leadership, that is, the development of the desire and will to work together for a purpose in the minds of those who are associated in any activity." (Gulick, 1937, p. 37).

Luther Gulick (born 1892) was professor at Columbia university (USA) and dean of the Institute of Public Administration. In the 1930-ies he was asked by the government to summarize the knowledge on administration and addressed the tasks and activities of managers. Gulick specified the tasks of managers in terms of activities being: planning, organizing, recruiting, directing, co-ordination, reporting and budgeting. Hales (1986) pointed out that there are striking similarities between contemporary research and Gulick's classical descriptions.

2.4 Chester I. Bernard

"... Their cooperation has no reason for being except as it can do what the individual cannot do. Cooperation justifies itself, then, as a means of overcoming the limitations restricting what the individual can do." (Barnard, 1938/1968, p. 23).

Chester I. Barnard (1886-1961) studied economics at Harvard University without fulfilling his education. He was employed at the Department of statistics, New Jersey Telephone Co. In 1927 Barnard became

the managing director of the company and had also a top position in a public organization. When working as a top manager he was continually occupied in understanding and describing organizational activities and social relationships between employees described as the "contribution-reward balance" which was the topic of his book from 1938.

3. Contributions based on work experience - Rudi Rozman's contributions

Rozman (1986) addressed planning systems based on the fact that a complex system of planning had been developed within Slovenian Steelworks with the aim of being rational, simple and above all having a positive influence on enterprises. The article starts with basic ideas which can be expressed as co-ordination of business functions, and of business units developed in the corporate planning and a two-phase process of planning. These basic ideas and the organization of planning together with an outline of problems form the first part of the article. The system of planning - above all the approach to long-range planning - is presented more in detail in the article.

In his article from year 2000 professor Rozman studied the relationship between the organizational functions of governance and management. He argued that this relationship is one of the most crucial ones for the effectiveness of corporations. Different countries have developed different ways of organizing the governing function in order to protect the interests of the owners, while leaving managers enough freedom to take managerial decisions and actions. Many symptoms in corporations show a decrease in the role of governance and ownership. Rozman (2000) discussed reasons for that decline and suggested solutions to bring back the power to the owners.

Rozman (2006) is an article on corporate governance in Slovenian corporations in which he analyzed the present model of corporate governance in enterprises. This is a two-tier model, which follows the characteristics of the German model. The author discussed the two issues within this model of corporate governance: the role of the supervisory board and the role of workers' representatives within the supervisory board. Professor Rozman also discussed some broader issues relevant for understanding corporate governance.

Rozman (2012) is a theoretical contribution in which organizations are regarded as a set of dynamic relationships between members of a social unit which assure the existence and development of a formed social unit and reasonable achievement of the social unit's goals. The author tested its validity by showing that the whole theory is explained by organizational elements, all based on a rationality-assuring relationship; emphasizing that all organizational phenomena are logically explained. An organization is determined as a set of dynamic relationships. By comparing the theory with other theories of organization and comparing organization science with other sciences, the author presented the concept of dynamic relationships being a solution to problems discussed in organization theory. Whether this is a new theory or a version of established organization theory remains to be seen.

4. Additional contributions based on academic achievements

4.1 Servant leadership and transformational leadership

Initially it is important to stress that Greenleaf (1970) never intended servant leadership to be a theory on management and formal leadership in organizations. He never defined the concept of servant leadership; but Greenleaf (1970, p. 7) asked: "... do those who served grow as persons, do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

Burns (1978) identified two types of political leadership being "transactional" and "transformational" based on a historical and study of *political* leaders without any references to private or public organizations. Bass (1985), however, applied and redefined Burns' concepts and argued that Burns' theory were applicable for formal private and public organizations.

Based on the four categories of construct clarity, two competing alternatives are identifiable in the scholarship of both servant and transformational leadership. There are thus 16 versions of each theory. The concepts of transformational and transactional leadership are now defined in so many different ways and consequently measured differently that general conclusions about the validity of empirical studies and the usefulness of these theories cannot be drawn. Some versions of transformational theory strive to be universal while others assume contingency. The transformational theory is no longer a specific theory of leadership but many theories.

Consequently, the field will be better off when it abandons the charismatic-transformational leadership concept when studying management of formal organizations. The theories on servant and transformational leadership have collapsed under the weight of unwieldy and bewildering expansion. It ended in bidding servant leadership and transformational leadership farewell (Andersen, 2009 & 2018).

4.2 Intuition in managers

A large number of psychologist have influenced management theory especially related to the personality of managers. Karl Gustav Jung is regarded by many as the father of this academic discipline. Jung (1971) pointed out that in real life the personality types are not found in the pure forms. The typology rests on two elements (attitudes and functions) and is often presented by using three dimensions in the human psyche: (1) attitudes – extrovert and introvert, (2) perception functions – sensing and intuition; and (3) judgement functions – thinking and feeling. The prevalence of inconsistencies in Jung's works regarding descriptions and explanations of types has, however, created problems for contemporary management researchers.

Contemporary researcher of management has applied the typology theory of Jung and claim that it is almost complete in the sense that it touches on both functions of perception and both functions of judgement and their relationship to each other (Keegan, 1984). In management and leadership theory the contribution of Jung has been applied in order to describe the way in which managers make decisions. Jung's theory has stood the test of time in the fields of psychology and psychiatry (ibid.). In the field of management development the typology presented by Jung gives a genuine insight into the question why persons succeed or fail in their decision making, and how they do it (Keegan, 1984). A study of Andersen (1994) found - when data was collected on the four decision-making styles of 209 managers in eight Swedish corporations – that 32 % of the managers used intuition while only 19% of the managers used feeling when making decisions. The way in which managers were making decisions did not, however, explain the effectiveness of managers (Andersen, 2022).

The fact remains that Jung's work on personality and intuition still stimulate researcher

of today (e.g. Liebowitz, 2020). In management, however, the focus is not on how and why managers act and make decisions, but on the implementation and organizational consequences of the decisions taken.

4.3 Subordinates vs. followers

The amount of literature based on the notions of follower and followership has increased enormously over the years. Andersen (2019) questioned the value of this research from a managerial leadership perspective. Despite the growing attention of researchers, definitions of follower and of followership do not seem to have emerged (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). These terms remain neither theoretically nor empirically defined. Follower and followership are still just descriptive terms. These terms can be approached from either the perspective of the leader or that of the follower (Crossman & Crossman, 2011) or from the perspective of researchers (e.g. Carsten *et al.*, 2010). Scholars use "followership" in a number of ways: as the opposite of leadership in a leadership-followership continuum; as a direct or indirect influential activity; or as a role or a group noun for those influenced by a leader (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

The very existence of followers in formal private and public organizations is contested. It is timely to ask the following questions: Is the term follower just another word for subordinate? Are some followers while others are subordinates? Are there different kinds of followers? Ultimately, does followership exist?

All knowledge is conceptually mediated and thus conceptually dependent. A concept must reflect something that is found or exists. How can we know that this is the case when studying followership? Here is Pirsig's (1999, p. 206) answer: "If you can't define something you have no formal rational way of knowing that it exists. Neither can you really tell anyone else what it is. There is, in fact, no formal difference between inability to define and stupidity."

5. Conclusion

This tribute to professor Rozman stresses the importance of work experience when doing research especially when choosing research problems. Organizational and management problems can only be solved by research based knowledge of what problems and challenges owners, board of directors, managers and subordinates have. It appears that

the number of researchers do address problems that *they* have are increasing, rather the problems that *organizations* and *people* affiliated to organizations have.

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