A summary of a doctoral thesis written under a scientific guidance of
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Title: PARADOX IDENTIFICATION IN ORGANIZATION

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The choice of identifying management paradoxes in organization as a subject of the dissertation was dictated by a desire to both address the current need for management practice, as well as enrich the state of scientific knowledge in this area. The problem of paradoxes has been present in the literature on management sciences at least since the 1960s (see, for example, Thompson 1967). From the theoretical point of view, it is necessary to analyze simultaneously existing contradictions (Bratnicki 2006). Empirical approach explores the significance and ways of using paradoxes for effective organization management (Kets de Vries 1980, Cameron 1986, Lips-Wiersma 2004, Cameron 2010; Smith, Binns, Tushman 2010), for identified and skillfully used management paradoxes have been proved to heavily influence efficiency and gain competitive advantage (Heijde, Van Der Heijden 2006), innovativeness (Andriopoulos, Lewis 2009, 2010, Lakhani, Lifshitz-Assaf, Tushman 2012) and long-term organization success (De Wit, Meyer 2007, Smith et al 2010).

It is of great significance that despite the steady growth of interest in this subject, the paradox in the management sciences is a somewhat unclear and therefore somewhat controversial concept. This notion is used to describe different, rarely identical, phenomena: tensions (Senge 1990), dilemmas (Hampden-Turner 1990), competitive values (Quinn, Cameron 1988), or dialectics (Mitroff, Linstone 1995). Facing the multiplicity of notions referring to the opposition, opposites, contradictions, dualities, and contrasts, functioning in the management literature under the name of paradox, identification of the features that distinguish these concepts has become obvious. Not only would it allow to define the concept of paradox in the area of management sciences, but also enable skillful recognition and use of paradoxes in organizational practice.

In this context, the following aims of the dissertation have been formulated:

A. Theoretical ones:

1. Defining the notion of paradox in management science.
2. Determination of constitutive features of paradoxes in management science.
3. Typologizing paradoxes in management science.

B. Cognitive one, which constitutes the main goal of the dissertation:
   – Development of the concept of identification of paradoxes in management science.

C. Methodological one:
   – Designing and using the tool to identify selected paradoxes in organizations.

D. Utilitarian one:
   – Outlining the ways of using management paradoxes by contemporary managers.

The structure of the dissertation is consistent with the logic of the process of achieving of the research goals set. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters and the ending.

The first chapter emphasizes the essence of the paradox: the respective literature was reviewed, definitions quoted, and all the synonyms characterized. The next step brought examples of the most famous philosophical paradoxes, their typologies, roots, and functions.

The theoretical and research activities — divided into two stages — were displayed in the following chapters: 2, 3 and 4.

Chapter 2 was devoted to the interpretation of the concept of paradox in the management literature, for clarifying the definitional disorder in given area seemed like an indispensable step prior to the identification of paradoxes in the organization. This is why, against the backdrop of various paradox definitions and their history and evolution, properties supporting redefining the notion of paradox were elicited, and clarity brought to confusing multiplicity of paradox perspectives and categories. Because of the new definition of management paradox it was possible to pursue the exploration of the existing typologies of paradoxes. Moreover, having introduced precise characteristics of particular management paradoxes proceeded their empirical verification in organizations.

The systematic review of the literature also allowed to create a new typology of management paradoxes and to make an attempt at meta-analytical review of the functions of paradoxes, resulting in creating a conceptual framework for management paradox research.
The third chapter presents how to identify paradoxes, starting from a full review of paradox research in the management literature, and finishing with denoting the constitutive features of paradoxes. To indicate the conditions of the "occurrence" of paradoxes the John Stuart Mill canons of elimination induction were applied, thus forming the solid research model foundation. The next step was the operationalization of the paradoxes included in the research tool and the presentation of data analysis methods.

The second stage of research (displayed in chapter four) is the exposition of the methodology and the results of empirical research in which the management paradoxes in selected organizations of the Silesian Voivodship were identified using the created research tool (questionnaire). References to the research hypotheses, the empirically tested research tool along with the reflection on the implications of theoretical and practical nature were also included. It was proved that the created research tool not only allows to draw theoretical conclusions, but also sets stage for application activities, which has been postulated by many researchers (e.g. Valette, Fatien Diochon, Burellier 2010, Cameron 2017). Because the research tool questions directly referred to the parameters forming the paradoxes of team affiliation, the occurrence or absence of these phenomena in organizational practice can be expressed in all accuracy and reliability. Empirical research met the requirements of representativeness, thus it became possible to generalize the conclusions. What is more, as a result of the systematic review and the elimination induction, the categories of paradoxes allowed to create the theoretical research model (then empirically verified), allowing to further develop this empirically grounded management theory. It also turned out that the paradox itself can be used as a tool to build or verify existing theories – as a method of revealing contradictions (Sułkowski 2011: 64), constituting the foundation of the so-called metatheory of management paradoxes. The chapter ends with a dispute over the limitations of the manner of identifying management paradoxes and empirical research, as well as the possibilities of further research in the field of identifying paradoxes.

The summary is an assessment of the implementation of research objectives formulated in the introduction and a critical review of the conclusions drawn from empirical research.

The theoretical and research efforts undertaken at work led to:

1. Defining the notion of paradox in management sciences.
2. Creating the typology of management paradoxes.
3. Applying the elimination induction to create the characteristics of selected management paradoxes.

4. Developing the tool identifying management paradoxes in any organization.

5. Using meta-analysis to identify the functions of management paradoxes.

6. Testing the research tool (i.e. identifying management paradoxes).

7. Proposing a new way to identify management paradoxes in any organization.

8. Verifying hypotheses regarding existence of particular management paradoxes.

9. Underlining the importance of the paradox as a tool for theorizing: metathesis of management paradoxes.

To sum up, the results of the theoretical considerations contributed primarily to the further development of the paradox concept, i.e. the new definition of the management paradox and the typology of paradoxes. Contribution to theory is not without significance for practice. The knowledge obtained as a result of the research allowed for the formulation of recommendations useful for managers.

There is an annex attached to the dissertation concerning: characterization and solving logical (philosophical) paradoxes; alternates, equivalents and synonyms to a management paradox; solving management paradoxes and criteria excluding articles from meta-analysis and / or elimination induction.

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Literature


