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EDITORIAL

In the Age of AI and Management Science: A Rebirth of the Social Sciences

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Introduction: Management education at a crossroads

Management education today finds itself at an intersection between the hegemony of management science and a functional-structuralist view of management that prioritizes operational efficiency, data analytics, and performance indicators. In this scenario, rapid changes in artificial intelligence and the geopolitics of technology seem to have pushed the social sciences to the periphery of the curriculum, resulting in a generation of students who prioritize the use of technological tools over critical thinking, analytical reading, and hermeneutic thinking. However, this apparent decline does not constitute the end of the human element in organizations, but rather the beginning of a useful and necessary transformation, a historical congruence for the social sciences to regain their rightful place in understanding a worldview that is changing radically.

The local-global context and the crisis in the classroom

Under this premise, the traditional view of management has responded to a functional-structuralist knowledge that pursues the generation of profits, sustainability in highly competitive markets, productivity and performance indicators (now KPIs), and an obsession with data, which, supported by big data, facilitates the process of control and strategic decision-making in the organization. This has strengthened Management Science in business school programs.

The emergence of powers such as China and the "chip war" make productivity and engineering mandatory in business leadership (Miller and Miller, 2021). However, this technical approach constitutes a short-sighted vision of organizational management and the training of those who do it, especially if we ignore the fact that human training constitutes the "true competitive advantage" for Latin American countries.

In the classroom, this logic translates into curricula that favor more technical subjects based on generative AI and data analytics, producing students who are more concerned with the use of technology than with reading, reflecting, or thinking (hermeneutics) (Schwab, 2017). The indiscriminate use of chatbots generates endless cycles of training for AI, but does not create knowledge for the student. In this way, "critical reading" gives way to the "world of spectacle" and gamification, where the teacher risks transitioning from a facilitator of knowledge to a mere manager of entertainment (edutainment). This behavior is a symptom

of the lack of critical literacy in a generation that abandons the written word for the image, preferring to live in the moment in a world of "non-things" (Byung-Chul Han, 2021) rather than face the difficulty of "thinking critically."

Changes in work and forms of power

Although this outlook seems bleak and apocalyptic, it actually opens up multiple scenarios for action by the social sciences in understanding phenomena that are transforming the worldview (Bauman, 2005). They are confronted with a postmodern society where pleasure and immediacy transgress traditional concepts of time and work, which have undergone multiple transformations over the last four decades (from the late 1980s to the present):

- We have moved from dependence on contracts to commercial autonomy. The "traditional worker" is moving towards the "freelancer," in other words, the manager of their own "sole proprietorship (SAS type)," thus redefining the idea of the social contract once defined by Bourdieu (2011). In this transition, labor legislation that protects workers' rights is becoming obsolete, giving way to a new form of commercial negotiation, where breach clauses are privileged between equals.
- Human Resource Management as we know it is disappearing from organizations. Highly efficient automated processes using AI and robotics eliminate human error, subjectivity based on emotions, health, and family. Human behavior is no longer a priority in the management of production processes. This gives rise to a great paradox: is it necessary to manage the human aspect in organizations that prioritize the technical in search of greater productivity and competitiveness?
- Changes in power relations and generational "permacrisis." Hierarchical power relations, analyzed by Weber (2014) or Foucault (1975), are transformed or disappear. The new generation rejects all hierarchical treatment, orders, strict adherence to schedules, and one-on-one supervision. They want spaces that allow flexibility, that generate dopamine and adrenaline, that give them a sense of absolute freedom. This phenomenon is occurring against a backdrop of global "permacrisis"—climatic, economic, and geopolitical—which seeks to shift the focus of management from profit maximization to resilience and organizational change as constants (Bauman, 2005; Mintzberg, 2005).

The labor market prioritizes the skills of future professionals

Manpower Group's 2024 Talent Shortage Study reveals that Colombia faces its highest gap rate (66%), especially in complex decision-making roles. Contrary to a technical trend, the essential skills for 2025 are human: negotiation, decision-making under uncertainty, emotional intelligence, and empathy. The modern manager must be a "socio-technical systems architect," capable of leading in VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) and BANI (Fragile, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible) environments. This paradigm shift is summarized in the following table:

Table 1

Paradigms in Education and Management Praxis

Dimension	Traditional Management (Functional-Structuralist)	Management of the Future (Integrator and Critic)
Central Objective	Profit generation, competitive technical sustainability, and KPI compliance.	Organizational resilience, social legitimacy, and ethical sustainability.
Key Tools	Big data, generative AI, software such as Python/R, data analytics.	Integration of AI with emotional intelligence, empathy, and critical thinking.
Labor Relations	Dependency, traditional employment contracts, and vertical human management.	Freelancers/SAS: Peer-to-peer business relationships and time autonomy.
Role of Management	Risk-based decision-making based on projections and control.	Architect of social and technical systems; manager of the "why" of change.
Educational Focus	Technical skills (hard skills) and accelerated operational training.	Power Skills: analytical thinking, social leadership, and hermeneutics.
Epistemological Basis	Management Science (quantitative and predictive).	Synthesis between Management Science and Social Sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, History, among others).

Note: this Editorial

Discussion

Education is strengthened when teachers use AI appropriately to reinforce their students' knowledge and return to playfulness as a fundamental element of learning through gamification, integrating students into games with clear long-term learning objectives.

Administration is strengthened when it integrates management science trends with social sciences, when it integrates critical approaches (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012), and even when it involves complexity theory from both its philosophical and mathematical meanings. In this way, management does not focus solely on the optimization of (scarce) resources, but also integrates power dynamics, culture, and change as fundamental elements of individual, social, and organizational behavior that affect and alter the organization and its functioning (Mintzberg, 2005).

The aim is to integrate fundamental elements from epistemology, together with axiology, methodology, and ontology (Burrel and Morgan, 1979) into management education. It is a commitment to developing in future managers the ability to question traditional management practices and reinterpret and redesign them by integrating sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, history, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and linguistics. An approach from the life sciences (Dufour and Chanlat, 1990) that encompasses development, but with the sustainability of the planet and its many inhabitants; that understands, in the words of Aktouf (2010), that it is possible to "make money

intelligently," not at the expense of integrity, ethics, or life itself.

Conclusion

We need to train leaders who can integrate artificial intelligence with human intelligence into augmented intelligence, in order to enhance the management of complex systems. Leaders who go beyond the idea of maximizing profits and, in the face of a global "permacrisis" and human resistance to change, seek organizational resilience and ethical business sustainability (Cortina, 2005).

We are responsible for training professionals who see themselves as "architects of socio-technical systems," and to do so, they require the necessary complementarity between technical rigor and the perspective of the social sciences.

Today more than ever, we must train leaders capable of "governing" people with empathy and "managing" resources efficiently, as Saint-Simon (1760-1825) would say. In this way, we will be able to guarantee the survival of organizations over time and their integrity in the face of a society that needs to recover its humanity in the face of technology.

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