

From Management as a Vocation to Management as a Scientific Activity: An Institutional Account of a Paradigm Shift

Original Publication by Elizabeth Goodrick

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In the same way that it is necessary to understand evolutions in the ways management has been practiced in the past in order to understand contemporary management strategies, it is also necessary to understand the evolution of the teaching of management. In her study, Elizabeth Goodrick examines the shift in the language of full-length empirical articles from the *Academy of Management Journal* in order to describe the development of management from a focus on specific vocational techniques to one reliant on scientific research.

Goodrick's paper begins by outlining the state of management study from the early 20th century onward, noting especially that external events, such as World Wars I and II, greatly influenced the way management was treated at the university level. She notes that before World War I, management was taught primarily "as part of vocational education in which specific trade practices and skills were taught." This is due in part to the need for job-specific training present in the employment market in the early half of the 1900s.

After WWII, the large number of GIs enrolling in higher education, the growth in business as part of school curricula, and the older students in the school system all pushed education to raise the value of a degree in business. Organizations such as the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business took on the roll of accrediting business programs, which subsequently led to the creation of what is now the *Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)*. The publication of this journal pinpoints the legitimacy of management as a subject worthy of scholarly publication, indicating a further progression in the shift of management education by insisting that business education be, to a certain degree, scientifically based.

Furthermore, Goodrick points out the role of the Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation in establishing the normative values for education and research in the areas of business and management—"both foundations also embodied the scientific and educational values held by society-at-large." Because the foundations supported scientific research, the vocational model that had once been so dominant began to lose its place. A great benefit to this was its linking of the study of management to the world of academia, overturning assumptions that management was not a legitimate academic endeavor.

Goodrick's study takes the historical facts discussed in the early pages of her article and puts them to the test under a study of language by offering four hypotheses:

- 1) University departments with high prestige are more likely to adopt the new scientific management model than their less-prestigious counterparts
- 2) This adoption of the scientific paradigm is not, in later years, influenced by the prestige of the department
- 3) Those who are trained in disciplines aside from management will be early adopters of the scientific paradigm than Ph.D.s trained in management
- 4) This adoption of the scientific paradigm is not, in later years, hindered or helped by the disciplinary training of the Ph.D.

Goodrick's study takes articles from the *AMJ* and uses shifts in language to rate the articles' management paradigm. Language is classified on a continuum from low variety (linear statistics, analytical mathematics) to high variety (using broader ranges of meaning—i.e. art). Science corresponds to low variety language, as it uses exact comparisons, strict language, and more concise scientific language. A table of the language continuum is included in the study, and articles are examined over the years 1958-1978.

Classifications are made of the authors of articles based on the prestige of the university departments (high, middle, and low) with which they are associated and their area of disciplinary training at the Ph.D. level (management/organization or other).

The results of the study show that the time period examined can be broken down into three phases, each phase indicating a growing acceptance and use of the scientific paradigm via the language of the articles examined. Furthermore, schools ranked as more prestigious were more likely to adopt the new paradigm early on. However, there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that research language is influenced by non-management disciplinary training.

Certain aspects of the study that pose possible limitations are the categorizing of disciplines by Ph.D.s, and the measurement of departmental prestige. Goodrick also notes that further study may include the impact of the paradigm in current institutions within the management field.