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## MAIEUTICS AS A METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE OF PEDAGOGICAL MANAGMENT: PHILOSOPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The article examines *the topical issue* of maieutics as a methodological principle of pedagogical management through the lens of philosophical reconstruction and analysis of educational implications. It is substantiated that the dominance of the technocratic paradigm in contemporary educational management reduces subject-to-subject interaction to linear administrative procedures, depriving pedagogical management of its essential connection with the nature of subjectivity. It is demonstrated that the maieutic principle ensures the transition from the logic of external influence to the logic of knowledge generation from within.

**The purpose** of the study is the philosophical reconstruction of the maieutic principle and the substantiation of its methodological potential for contemporary pedagogical management.

**The methodological foundation** comprises hermeneutic analysis of the Platonic corpus of dialogues and an interdisciplinary synthesis of ancient philosophical heritage and contemporary pedagogical reflection. The conceptual apparatus of H.-G. Gadamer, P. Freire, D. Schön, and G. Biesta is employed to substantiate the managerial ontology of maieutics. It is established that maieutic management is enacted through the deconstruction of pseudo-certainty, the structuring of the field of possibility, and the transformation of the vertical axis of power into a horizontal plane of dialogic collaboration.

**The scientific novelty** consists in identifying the functional correspondence between the Socratic method and contemporary managerial practice, as well as in constructing an integral managerial ontology that synthesises the concepts of subjectification, reflection-in-action, and communicative rationality.

**The conclusions** confirm that the effectiveness of maieutic management is measured not by conformity to standards, but by the degree of subjectivity attained by participants in the educational process. Management is thereby transformed from a system of «planning – control» into a system of «provocation – reflection», complementing rather than negating the necessary technical rationality.

**Keywords:** pedagogical management, ancient philosophy, maieutics, higher education, subjectification, dialogue.

**Problem statement in general terms and its relation to important scientific and practical tasks.** Contemporary pedagogical management finds itself in a state of methodological tension, occasioned by the dominance of the technocratic paradigm. The historically established model of educational systems management, grounded in the principles of classical management theory, increasingly reduces the complex subject-to-subject interaction to linear procedures of administrative control, standardisation, and measurable efficiency. Such «technical rationalization» of managerial practice [12] negates the ontological depth of the cognitive process, transforming it into the mere transmission of informational units.

The fundamental problem lies in the fact that the managerial logic of modernity displaces «thinking» as a process from the space of management. Managerial acts are predominantly directed at

regulating the external conditions of learning, whilst the internal conditions for the unfolding of knowledge remain beyond consideration – regarded as unmanageable by virtue of their unpredictability. The result is a paradoxical situation: pedagogical management becomes an effective instrument of administration, yet ceases to be pedagogical, insofar as it loses its connection with the nature of the subjectivity it is meant to cultivate.

This methodological lacuna demands not merely an updating of instruments, but a reconsideration of the ontological foundations of what we call «educational management». If it is acknowledged that pedagogy is a process of the subject's formation, then the management of this process cannot be purely directive in character. Maieutics, as a methodological principle, offers a way out of this situation through the transition from a logic of «external influence» to a logic of «generation from within». The problem thus acquires a multi-layered character: ranging from the theoretical incongruence between technocratic management and the philosophy of education – to the practical incapacity of contemporary management systems to stimulate the critical thinking of participants in the educational process.

The relevance of this study is determined by the necessity of overcoming the dichotomy between administrative pressure and the humanistic aims of education. In conditions of the massification of higher education, intensified by digital transformation and the pressure of market-oriented models of university governance, traditional directive models are exhausting their heuristic potential. At the same time, global educational reforms – particularly within the framework of the Bologna Process and UNESCO recommendations on Education for Sustainable Development – increasingly orient university systems towards the formation of critically thinking, autonomous subjects capable of responsible participation in society.

Maieutics, reconstructed as a methodological principle, enables the transposition of managerial discourse from the plane of technocratic rationality to the plane of dialogic interaction. This is critically important for cultivating academic autonomy, supporting academic integrity, and developing critical thinking within Ukrainian higher education institutions undergoing systemic reform.

**Analysis of key research and publications on the issue.** The theoretical foundation of this study rests upon the interdisciplinary synthesis of ancient philosophical heritage and contemporary pedagogical reflection. An understanding of maieutics as a methodological principle is impossible without recourse to the Platonic corpus – in particular the dialogues *Meno*, *Theaetetus*, and *Republic* [11] – wherein, through the figure of Socrates, the concept of knowledge as an inner act of «giving birth» to truth (anamnesis) is constructed, in opposition to the passive internalisation of external dogmas.

The hermeneutic renewal of the Socratic approach is undertaken by H.-G. Gadamer in *Truth and Method* [7]. Gadamer extends dialogue beyond the bounds of didactic instrumentalism, interpreting it as an ontological event: the «art of questioning» is accorded priority over the art of answering, since it is the question that structures the horizon of understanding and keeps the space of cognition open. This hermeneutic disposition is critically important for the reconceptualisation of managerial logic.

Contemporary pedagogical theory provides the institutional and ethical framing of this idea. N. C. Burbules, in his monograph *Dialogue in Teaching* [4], systematises pedagogical dialogue as a unique form of relationship in which the Socratic tradition is transformed into a modern methodological category, emphasising that dialogue is not a method of presenting material but a form of communicative co-existence. In order to substantiate the managerial dimension of maieutics, the conceptual framework of D. A. Schön [12] is invoked – in particular the notion of «reflection-in-action,» which correlates with Aristotelian *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and is indispensable for the manager operating under conditions of uncertainty.

P. Freire, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [6], grounds dialogue as the antithesis of the «banking» model of education, which dehumanises the participants of the process. The concept of «subjectification» advanced by G. J. J. Biesta [1] allows the managerial act to be interpreted as a summons to the subject's autonomous existence – as the ultimate aim of maieutic management.

It should be noted that the question of the applicability of maieutics within the university context remains a subject of ongoing debate. A number of scholars point to the structural limitations of dialogic approaches within standardised educational systems and large academic cohorts [9]. It is precisely this tension between the ideal and institutional constraints that renders the question of maieutic management particularly acute: the matter at hand is not the blind imitation of the ancient method, but its methodological transformation.

Particular attention is warranted by the discourse of J. Habermas's communicative rationality – specifically his theory of communicative action, which proposes a distinction between «strategic» and «communicative» interaction [8]. This distinction is of fundamental importance for the conceptualisation of maieutic management: management grounded in maieutics cannot, in principle, be strategic

in the Habermasian sense – it must be oriented towards mutual understanding rather than towards the attainment of a predetermined outcome.

**Purpose of the article.** The aim of this study is the philosophical reconstruction of the maieutic principle and the substantiation of its methodological potential for contemporary pedagogical management. The authors set the following objectives: to ground the transformation of managerial interaction from a subject-to-object model to a subject-to-subject model through the maieutic principle; and to delineate the educational implications of this model for the practice of higher education.

**Description of the theoretical-methodological and/or experimental research procedure, specifying the research methods.** The methodology of the study integrates two complementary levels. The first – philosophical reconstruction – involves hermeneutic analysis of the Platonic corpus (the dialogues *Meno*, *Theaetetus*, and *Republic*) [11], with the aim of identifying the essential characteristics of maieutics as a method of liberating knowledge. The hermeneutic approach is implemented in accordance with the principles of Gadamer's «fusion of horizons»: the texts of antiquity are read through the prism of contemporary managerial challenges, thereby enabling a productive dialogue between tradition and actuality. It is also necessary to delineate the limits of applicability of the proposed approach. Maieutic management does not constitute a universal replacement for all managerial procedures: questions of budgetary administration, legal compliance, and the technical organisation of the educational process require their own technical rationality. Maieutics lays claim to the status of a methodological principle in those dimensions of management where the formation of the subject occupies the centre: in the interaction between administrator and faculty, in the design of the educational environment, and in the strategic planning of the institution's mission.

**Presentation of the main research material.** The Ontology of the Maieutic Question: From Platonic «Midwifery» to Management Strategies. Within the Socratic tradition, maieutics (Gr. *maieutikē* – the art of midwifery) emerges not as a set of didactic techniques but as an ontological category that reveals the concealed depths of the human mind. In the Platonic dialogues *Theaetetus* and *Meno*, Socrates radically transforms the status of the teacher and the manager: he relinquishes the position of transmitter of truth in favour of the position of «midwife» [11]. For pedagogical management, this signifies a fundamental reorientation of vector: the management of the cognitive process consists not in the administrative distribution of knowledge, but in creating ontological conditions under which knowledge is capable of being «born» from within the subject itself.

At the foundation of this ontology lies the theory of recollection (anamnesis), presented in the *Meno*. From a managerial perspective, this means that the manager does not «invest» new competencies into development as external assets, but rather actualises the intellectual potential already present within the individual yet remaining latent. The pedagogical manager in this paradigm functions as an architect of intellectual space: he does not determine «what» must emerge at the output, but formulates questions that provoke subjects into their own self-determination.

As H.-G. Gadamer observes [7], the art of questioning consists in the capacity to keep the space of understanding open. The managerial logic of traditional management frequently seeks to «close» this space by guiding the interlocutor towards an expected answer conforming to the curriculum. Maieutic management, by contrast, is realised through three interrelated mechanisms:

- deconstruction of pseudo-certainty: Socratic questions («*aporia*») are aimed not at causing confusion, but at leading the subject beyond the boundaries of habitual cognitive schemas, stimulating critical analysis of one's own presuppositions;
- structuring the field of the possible: the maieutic question in management delineates the contours of the problem without dictating the path to its resolution, thereby granting subjects freedom of choice and responsibility for the outcome;
- transformation of the vertical of power: maieutics transforms managerial interaction into «intellectual friendship» in the ancient sense, wherein the manager is not a controller but a participant in the dialogic event.

Thus, effective is not the manager who has achieved a predictable result through the minimisation of deviations, but the one who has initiated a process in which participants were able to «give birth» to their own meanings [3]. This transforms the higher educational institution from a «production site» into a «space for the generation of knowledge».

Dialogue as the Antithesis of the «Banking» Model: From Manipulation to Horizontal Managerial Ontology. In the critical pedagogy of P. Freire [6], the «banking concept» of education functions as a metaphor for alienated management, in which knowledge is regarded as a «deposit» transmitted from the active manager-«depositor» to the passive student-«savings box.» In the context of pedagogical management in higher education, this model is transformed into technocratic managerialism, wherein the administrator becomes the bearer of «objective truth» (directives, instructions, standards), and the participants in the educational process become objects subject to

optimisation. This model is by its very nature anti-dialogic, insofar as it negates the right of the «object» to subjecthood and critical reflection upon reality.

For Freire, dialogue is not a communicative technique but an «epistemological trust» in the capacity of the other to be the creator of their own world. In the managerial dimension, dialogue signifies a transition from power over people (the vertical of control) to power with people (the horizontal of collaboration) [10]. The manager in the Freirean paradigm becomes a facilitator of collective meaning-making. This demands two fundamental shifts of position on the part of the leader:

- acknowledgement of incompleteness: the dialogic manager accepts that the educational process is an «unfinished project», wherein no directive can be exhaustive;
- overcoming manipulation: any dialogue devoid of respect for subjecthood becomes manipulation. Genuine management through maieutics liberates the space for the student or faculty member to articulate their own «truth», even when it contradicts the administrative vision.

The key indicator of the effectiveness of maieutic management is the development of critical consciousness (*conscientização*). The effective higher educational institution in this paradigm is not the one that reports on the fulfilment of formal indicators, but the one in which leadership, faculty, and students are engaged in a state of constant critical dialogue regarding the meanings of their activity.

At the same time, a caveat must be entered: Freire's concept was formed under conditions of struggle against authoritarian regimes in Latin America, and its uncritical transposition to the context of the contemporary university calls for caution [13]. Nevertheless, it is precisely under the conditions of the transformational challenges confronting Ukrainian higher education that the critical potential of his ideas acquires particular relevance.

**Subjectification as a Managerial Task: From Technical Functioning to Ontological Challenge.** The transformation of pedagogical management requires the abandonment of the reductionist model of «technical rationality», which reduces professional activity to the resolution of standard tasks by means of algorithmised instruments [12]. The transition to a subject-to-subject model instead demands the revitalisation of reflective practice – rootedness in the actual educational process.

For the pedagogical manager, Schön's concept of «reflection-in-action» implies a transformation of the managerial stance: the leader ceases to stand above the process as an external instance of control and becomes an active participant in «shared intellectual tension». The manager-maieutician transforms institutional uncertainty into a space for professional growth, in which every faculty member and student perceives themselves not as an object of regulation, but as a subject of their own cognitive journey.

This reflective approach finds its logical culmination in the concept of «subjectification» advanced by G. J. J. Biesta [1]. Biesta rightly observes that contemporary education is excessively focused on qualification (the acquisition of skills) and socialisation (adaptation to norms), almost entirely neglecting the «summoning of the subject into existence». The managerial task of the pedagogical manager is to ensure conditions under which the individual does not merely «fulfil requirements,» but «enters the world» as an autonomous, responsible agent.

Biesta's ideas have been further developed in his later works, wherein he distinguishes between «weak» and «strong» subjectification and discusses the risks of excessive personalisation of education [2]. Due consideration of this discussion would enrich the analysis of subjectification in the context of managerial practice.

Subjectification thus becomes a direct managerial vector, encompassing two interrelated dimensions:

- the rejection of the monopoly of measurable outcomes as the sole measure of quality: management oriented towards subjectification acknowledges that the most valuable educational effects – critical thinking, civic responsibility, authenticity – do not lend themselves to simple quantitative assessment;

- management as intellectual provocation: managerial decisions must be evaluated not only in terms of their conformity to standards, but also in terms of whether they leave space for the «voice» of the other, and whether they create an intellectual space for an encounter with one's «own» knowledge.

Reflection in the sense of Schön [12] and subjectification in the sense of Biesta [1, 2] together constitute a new managerial ontology: the leader figures not as a guarantor of «systemic stability,» but as an ethically responsible facilitator who cultivates subjecthood at every point of interaction – from the design of a seminar session to the strategic development of the educational institution.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** The findings of the conducted analysis permit the formulation of the following conclusions. First, maieutics as a methodological principle of pedagogical management is rooted in the Platonic ontology of knowledge (anamnesis) and constitutes not merely a didactic technique but the normative logic of managerial interaction. Its transposition to the contemporary context is achieved not through formal analogy, but through functional corres-

pondence: the maieutic question performs the same ontological function within the structure of managerial dialogue as it does within the Socratic pursuit of truth.

Second, the hermeneutic reconstruction of maieutics [7] enables the reconceptualisation of the managerial question as the primary instrument of pedagogical management: it is not the directive, but the open question – one that keeps the space of understanding unclosed – that becomes the cardinal act of managerial influence.

Third, the integration of the conceptual frameworks of Freire, Schön, and Biesta produces a coherent managerial ontology in which the effectiveness of management is measured not by conformity to standards, but by the degree of subjecthood attained by the participants in the educational process. Management is transformed from a system of «planning – control» into a system of «provocation- reflection».

Fourth, maieutic management does not constitute an abandonment of institutional procedures, but their reconceptualisation: it is applied above all in those dimensions of managerial practice where the formation of the subject occupies the centre, and it complements – rather than supplants – the necessary technical rationality.

Further research should be directed towards: the empirical verification of the maieutic model within the conditions of domestic higher education; the study of the correlation between maieutic practices and the level of academic integrity; the development of concrete operational instruments of maieutic management (formats for meetings, assessment models, structures for strategic planning); as well as the continued conceptualisation of phronesis as an integral factor of managerial excellence.

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#### МАЄВТИКА ЯК МЕТОДОЛОГІЧНИЙ ПРИНЦИП ПЕДАГОГІЧНОГО МЕНЕДЖМЕНТУ: ФІЛОСОФСЬКА РЕКОНСТРУКЦІЯ ТА ОСВІТНІ ІМПЛІКАЦІЇ

У статті досліджено **актуальну** тему маєвтики як методологічного принципу педагогічного менеджменту крізь призму філософської реконструкції та аналізу освітніх імплікацій. Обґрунтовано, що домінування технократичної парадигми в сучасному управлінні освітніми системами редукує суб'єкт-суб'єктну взаємодію до лінійних адміністративних процедур, позбавляючи педагогічний менеджмент його сутнісного зв'язку із природою суб'єктності. Доведено, що маєвтичний принцип забезпечує перехід від логіки зовнішнього впливу до логіки породження знання зсередини.

**Метою дослідження** є філософська реконструкція маєвтичного принципу та обґрунтування його методологічного потенціалу для сучасного педагогічного менеджменту.

**Методологічну основу** становлять герменевтичний аналіз платонівського корпусу діалогів та міждисциплінарний синтез античної філософської спадщини і сучасної педагогічної рефлексії. Залучено концептуальний апарат Г.-Г. Гадамера, П. Фреїре, Д. Шона та Г. Бієсти для обґрунтування управлінської онтології маєвтики. Встановлено, що маєвтичне управління реалізується через деконструкцію псевдовпевненості, структурування поля можливого та трансформацію владної вертикалі у горизонталь діалогічної співпраці.

**Наукова новизна** полягає у виявленні функціональної відповідності між сократичним методом і сучасною управлінською практикою, а також у формуванні цілісної управлінської онтології, що інтегрує концепції суб'єктивізації, рефлексії-в-дії та комунікативної раціональності.

**Висновки** підтверджують, що ефективність маєвтичного менеджменту вимірюється не відповідністю стандартам, а ступенем суб'єктивності учасників освітнього процесу. Управління трансформується із системи «планування – контроль» у систему «провокування – рефлексія», доповнюючи, а не заперечуючи необхідну технічну раціональність.

**Ключові слова:** педагогічний менеджмент, антична філософія, маєвтика, вища школа, суб'єктивізація, діалог.

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