

Innovations in Education and Russian Syndromes

¹R.M. Abdulgalimov, ²K.S. Aybatyrov, ³N.A. Kulibekov,
³A.N. Magomedova, ⁴I.E. Panova and ⁴L.N. Kharchenko
¹Dagestan State Medical Academy, Lenin Square 1, Makhachkala, Dagestan, Russia
²Dagestan State Agrarian University, Magomed Gadzhiev Street 180,
³Dagestan State Pedagogical University, Yaragskiy Street 57,
Makhachkala, Dagestan, Russia
⁴North-Caucasus Federal University, Pushkin Street 1, Stavropol, Russia

Abstract: Drawing on the opinion of the scientists and experts from different countries the role of innovations and innovation processes for the modern social and economic system of the state is supported in this study. The differences in the approaches to understanding the innovations in Russia and other countries are detected. Much attention is paid to the syndromes (a syndrome of the integral myopia, a hippo in a china shop, a dinosaur, a new tower of Babel, heavy armour and fetters, tissue incompatibility, Sharikov, etc.) which are the symptoms of the ailing Russian economy and social sector and which to a large extent hamper the positive development of the innovation processes, including those in education and science. The researcher's interpretations of defining the concepts: innovation, innovation process, Russian syndromes have been presented.

Key words: Innovation, innovation process, social sector, interpretations, Russian syndromes

INTRODUCTION

The role of innovations in the today's social and economic development has been well reflected in a rule on which Christiansen writes as follows: "A giant wave of innovations which had swept from such sectors as electronics, software development, telecommunications, chemistry and biology, affected all sectors all over the planet. Previously, there was a rule: "Do not innovate until you shall not have to do it". The today's rule is "The innovations or death!" (Christiansen, 2000). The similar ideas are expressed by Chesbrough (2003) and Schein (1992).

The analysis has shown that in the developed countries 70-85% of the gross domestic product growth account for the new knowledge, embodied in the innovative production and management techniques. Now a days, investors pay more attention to innovations than to mergers and acquisitions, changes in a leadership style, finding new opportunities for reducing the costs. Thus, the leading business analysts' survey conducted by the company of Arthur D. Little has shown that 90% of the experts surveyed believe that the importance of innovations has significantly increased. In this case, 70% of business analysts define innovations as a key determinant of the company assessment by a market (Jonash *et al.*, 2000).

At the same time, Christiansen (2000) says that in many companies the innovation processes are executed too hard as the management systems of many companies do not only contribute to but slow the innovation processes or even block it and sometimes fully destroy the innovations. The confirmation of this could be found in the results of a survey conducted by the company of Arthur D. Little, thus, 85% of the 700 companies included in the survey were dissatisfied with its approach to managing the innovations (Christiansen, 2000). Very few respondents believe that they could proactively manage the innovations.

The researchers of the innovation processes taking place in Russia (Kuzyk and Yakovets, 2005) and the Russian education (Kharchenko and Pashtaev, 2011) as well as some legal documents being in effect in the Russian legal framework (The strategy of the Russian social and economic development till 2020, the strategy of developing the science and innovations in the Russian Federation for the period until 2015, the concept of long-term forecasting the scientific and technological development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025, etc.) directly point out at a set of current problems in the field of the innovation process management.

From the point of view, the problems have the Russian shade and are systematic in nature. The objective

of this study is to disclose the underlying causes of the existing and recurring problems in the innovation process management. We have called it “syndromes” as it is unobservable.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The scope of the issues discussed within this study has been obtained from various sources and processed using the content analysis by the researchers. The content analysis was carried out in the following sequence.

Studying various sources (the research and journalistic literature, the media, laws and regulations, the leaders' speeches, the experts' opinion, the subjective and academic experience of the authors), containing the information on the state of the higher education system in Russia which are invariant in its structure and content nature but which are formally unstructured and randomly organized textual material; the qualitative and quantitative analysis of texts and text arrays, the interview materials for the purpose of the, further contextual interpretation of the identified patterns; ascension from a variety of the textual material to an abstract model of the text content (a definition of the conceptual and categorical framework in the form of the Russian syndromes).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Body: Referring to the issue of the critical analysis of “the Russian syndromes” (in Greek “syndrome” is a coincidence; a natural combination of the symptoms typical for a certain disease or its stage) which determine the development of the innovation processes in education is an attempt to answer the following questions: why during the last two and a half decades of the past 20th century and the beginning of this century Russia and the Russian education system which rose to the highest pitch of its history in the 50-70s of the XX century, lost its advantages? What the strategic mistakes were made? Why the wrong tack had been taken and the country did not move forward to the post-industrial society and the knowledge society but backward to the era of the primitive accumulation of capital and the spontaneous game of the market forces and the education system was flooded by countless, incomplete and inefficient transformations?

The discussed syndromes which have been firstly proposed by the researchers in the recent papers (Kharchenko and Pashtaev, 2011) as they say does not catch an eye at the first sight and only a in-depth analysis allows us to see them and to define its role in the activity

of the state and the education system. While being studied all the examined syndromes have been given the aphoristic names what makes it more precise, clear and recognizable even for an everyman.

Prior to start the direct consideration of the syndromes, it is necessary to pay attention to the etymology of the concepts of the innovation and the innovation process.

The studies have shown that some publications, including the fundamental monographs are devoted to the innovation issue. However on a closer examination, it has turned out that the meanings put into this concept in Russia and in the West do not coincide. Proceedings from the analysis of the works by the Western researches Drucker (1986), Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) and Twiss (1992) the innovation is primarily the economic, social and even personal category and not only the instrumental one. By the innovation process in a form of the technical, organizational and social task they mean a holistic and systemic problem.

In the Russian practice, the innovation is predominantly represented not as a social and economic category but probably as the trend in the scientific and technical progress (primarily, its high-tech component) associated with the implementation of the research and development results. In other words, any scientific and technical activity and all what it provides is declared to be innovative for the only reason that obtaining the results which are to be put into the production, products, processes has been proclaimed as its (the activity) objective.

We share the view of Cantwell (2006) who defines the innovation as a result of the activity embodied in new or improved marketable products, new or improved technological processes applied in the actual practice, new services and approaches to meeting the social needs.

We also endorse the views of Anin (2009) that the innovation as an economic category expresses the relations for ensuring the intensive development of the science and timely implementation of its achievements. Its value is determined by a number of the high-tech products made per a unit of the socially necessary work (Anin, 2009).

In our interpretation, the concept of “the innovation process” is a complex of works from building up a concept or a new technology to its extensive use, obtaining a new product and its commoditization. The whole cycle of the innovation process involves the following works which are sequentially performed (stages): generating an idea-conducting a study-developing an innovation proposal-developing an innovation project-implementing an innovation project. The efficiency of the

innovation process depends on the extent to which its stages have been integrated and sufficiently funded (Kharchenko and Pashtaev, 2011).

Now, we shall directly proceed to considering the Russian syndromes, the most important of which is the syndrome of “the integral myopia” it is the neglect, underestimation or perhaps, misunderstanding in the management sector the mechanisms of interaction between the science, education, manufacturing, business and its total integrated effect on the current social and economic processes in the country. Therefore, the changes (modernization, restructuring, reforms), carried out in the economy, the social and legal fields, science, education do not have the unity of purposes and often negate the good intentions. This could be illustrated by a system of the educational standards, existing in a country which does not have any financial and economic grounds does not meet the requirements (as it does not conform to it) of the educational service receivers (the trainees themselves, employers, occupational groups) and the targets of developing the economy and the country as a whole.

The next syndrome is “the syndrome of a hippo in a china shop” which describes the Russian economy, being developed as large or very large enterprises (sometimes singularly) in the Soviet times and its shift towards the market relations has been difficult as the large enterprises are modernized much slower and require considerable material costs. Shutdown of such giants results in stopping the entire processor chains, destructing the established economic relations, i.e., one could imagine, how many houseware items would be broken by a hippo in a china shop if it began to turn around. Unfortunately, allegorically speaking, now a days this syndrome “mutates”, changes into “the elephant syndrome” which could describe the process of the rapid growth of multinational monopolies.

In education, this syndrome is manifested through the reorganization processes (consolidation, combining the educational institutions of different educational levels) for example, the occurrence of federal universities, university districts which make the management mechanism heavy and do not improve the quality of the staff training.

“The dinosaur’s syndrome” describes the non-optimal dimensions and disproportionate development of the economic entities at the even low level of the transport and information support, i.e., hyperdevelopment of a centre and backwardness of suburban areas. According to some scientists, this fact has resulted in the collapse of a huge state of the USSR. The aphoristic syndrome's name is associated with one of

the hypotheses of dying large dinosaurs which lived in the warm waters rich in food and had a sedentary lifestyle. For a long period of time (several tens of million years) such way of living had led to the hyperdevelopment of the sacral part of the spinal cord, digestive and reproductive systems but had not contributed to the development of the brain cord and sensory organs. In fact, a large body of dinosaurs with the developed digestive and reproductive systems had been left without “the control centre” and relationship with the environment.

“The dinosaur’s syndrome” in education is manifested in the fact that the managerial decisions relating to the crucial issues of developing the education system are made by the federal centre in the context of the apparently insufficient and biased information on the state of the education system, especially on the periphery of the country. This fact results in making the deliberately biased managerial decisions.

On the one hand, “the syndrome of a new tower of Babel” reflects the ambiguity of the property (the federal, regional, local, public, private, cooperative and other one) and the leapfrog scheme of monetary units and currency in Russia. On the other hand, the Russian State (as well as the Russian education) requires restoring the prior authority and trust in our currency (as well as the quality of the education) on the international scene. Epigrammatically speaking, it is necessary to build a new tower of Babel in order to be heard and seen by the world and to successfully compete in the global market of the educational and research services.

“The syndrome of tissue incompatibility” has been borrowed from the medical biology where it is associated with the processes of tissue rejection upon its transplantation from a donor to a recipient. In our interpretation, the syndrome indicates such features of our reality as the rejection of a manufacturer (a worker) from the work results which are often buried in the sand of low work efficiency and performance or on the contrary, attaching the intellectual property to its owner (a scientist, an university professor) without giving the possibility to “implement” it. In both cases, the syndrome manifests itself as a consequence of the another syndrome, “the employee crisis” which main reason is the absence of interest (primarily, the financial one) in the results of his work. It is particularly evident in the post-Soviet territory in the public institutions and organizations.

The career growth, income, social status of the education sector employees (professors, research fellows, teachers, etc.) are not related (incompatible) to the quality of their work. The incentive system existing in the educational institutions is extremely bureaucratic and also biased.

The next syndrome is called “the syndrome of heavy armour and fetters”. It is related to overloading the militarized country with bureaucratic and compulsory military framework which is actually useless. The overmanned bureaucratic staff (in which the personal contribution, duties and responsibility are blurred) and a large number of men in uniform who in fact do not produce any material and spiritual values, hang on the economy like the heavy military gloves (fetters) and iron armour giving no way for drawing itself up. The steps on continuing the administrative reform and creating the professional army will probable decrease some burden on the state budget.

The system of education authorities in Russia, the administrative and management staff in universities is bureaucratized, huge, nepotism has been developed in it, it requires the enormous funds for its maintenance, at the same time many organizational, monitoring, methodological functions (including the development of the educational programs, study guides) have been shifted onto non-management teachers.

Finally, the other syndrome is the low managerial culture in all tiers of authority, including the tier of educational organization and the tier of managing the school subject, called “the syndrome of Bulgakov’s Sharikov”. Sharikov from “The Heart of a Dog” by Bulgakov will never understand the meaning of the innovation processes, no matter how much he might talk about it. The competence is required in all tiers of authority, including the education system, the thought plianthood and its profundity. The official bureaucrat is worried about self-preservation, so the changes in the system managed by him could be supported only if they do not affect his own interests.

CONCLUSION

Along with the general inhibitory influence on the innovation processes in education, the chronic underfunding of the education sector, basic researches, the works on promoting the scientific and technical progress; low salaries of professors and scientists; the ongoing process of “brain drain” which unlike a similar process in the 90s of the last century, now affects the promising young scientists; the decline in a number and the deterioration of the basic qualitative characteristics of the personnel potential in science; low efficiency in the field of the domestic science and multiple preponderance of exporting the Russian scientific ideas and technologies on importing the foreign ideas and technologies (in about 17.1 times), low quality of education are the consequence of the above mentioned all-Russian Syndromes.

The country could be “recovered” from these social and economic syndromes if the innovation breakthrough strategy which will require concentrating the efforts of the people, government, business community, scientists on absorbing the conceptually new, competitive technologies and products; the innovation renewal of the crucially obsolete management and production framework; increasing the role and responsibility of the state for the implementation of the strategy, promoting the increase in the innovation activity of the entrepreneurs, scientists, designers, young generation is accepted.

If Russia chooses the inertial market model of the development which is based on the strong arm of the market with a low-key role of the state which has refused carrying out its strategic and innovation function, than the economy will be, further, opening to the multinational corporations which use the country as the source of energy source materials and the market for its products, at the increasing threat of loosing the independence of the country. In this case, the education system will serve the energy source economy and will be increasingly commoditized.

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