

CHALLENGES OF MODERN MANAGEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

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Abstract. *The concepts and trends, concretely the concept of management has multiple meanings and it is used a lot in theory and practice in the People's Republic of China, just like in the United States of America, Japan or in the states of the European Union. The essential part in the analysis and approach of this concept is to determine the content, elements and directions that establish its features. According to the Chinese pragmatic spirit, management is conceived and treated as a state of spirit, a way of dealing with and tackling problems, a concrete mode of guidance in a dynamic vision, targeted to a well outlined purpose, namely maximum economic and social efficiency.*

Keywords: Chinese management, economic growth, managerial strategy, managerial success, sustainable development

JEL code: M11, O53, P41

1. Introduction)

I went to China twice: in June - July 1989 within the Romanian Academy for exchange of experience on local management and in September 2009 at the International Conference held at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences with the topic "Sustainable development in China and Romania". In other words, at the beginning of reform and after 20 years of continued reform efforts in conception and performance, as only the Chinese are capable. In similar periods I visited Japan and the United States of America, which offered me the possibility to carry out comparative studies, accompanied by conclusions related to the level of sustainable development and China's perspectives to exceed the two competitive states. I take into account the fact that "...since 2000, China's contribution to global economic growth was twice larger than that of the three emerging economies – India, Brazil and Russia, together. In addition, unlike the Asian tigers of the 1960s and 1980s of the 20th century, Chinese economic expansion does not seem to slow down..." [9].

In front of such solid evidence, I focused on the generating factors, among which I placed general and functional management on the first place at macro-, mezzo- and micro-level, with leaders of high reputation, among whom I should mention

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the legendary Deng Xiaoping. For its use and support, the management was oriented toward the economic component and the political one was placed secondly. Also at managerial level, the traits specific to the Chinese were stimulated and driven, namely respect and love for work and ambition to sustainable achievements. To these I should add the three growth and success factors: passage to market relations, efficiency positioning in the center of state actions and correct economic policy, with emphasis on maintaining the low level of inflation and supporting the branches to export [22].

Under the imperatives of these fundamental guidelines, epochal decisions were adopted in China, accompanied by related achievements. I saw them and they impressed me so much that I made the decision to study the Chinese general management experience, to visit enterprises, institutions, organizations, to discuss with general and functional managers, with personnel from different levels. I studied many papers related to governmental and local strategies, economic policies, managerial experience from different organizational levels in leading the reforms described in the literature as “Chinese wonder”, based on judicious management, taking into account the national specificity. Also, I studied PhD theses on the general management of reforms and import – export activities, as well as papers related to the influence of Chinese culture on management, with emphasis on the enormous influence of linguistic traditions on forming the national mentality and, in this context, on organizational culture and managerial culture. I focused my study on the life values with Chinese specificity – health and long life, family success and social situation. At the same time, I was also interested in the essential moments of Chinese history in forming managerial traditions. A special place in the study carried out was occupied by the religious and philosophical beliefs of the Chinese, placed at the basis of Chinese management. I focused my study also on other problems, such as: preoccupations and actions at the level of management theory and practice in the universities from China.

From such a theoretical and pragmatic inheritance, I started to elaborate this article, which I consider an awaited knowledge chapter in the international comparative management and a basis of studies and practice in developing business relations between Romanian and Chinese companies.

2. Premises of Chinese management

As the experience, science and technique grew and in accordance with the development of social sciences, the thinking on Chinese management also enriched, being outlined on the scientific understanding of economic and production processes. The development of technical, economic progress and effort for social progress transformed gradually the managerial activity in China into a

science, in a knowledge and organization tool of economic phenomena. A lot of efforts were made in the last decades to find solutions, always closer to the essence of phenomena, for concrete economic problems.

In order to understand the content and essence of managerial processes, the Chinese specialist in the field, practitioner or scientist, considers necessary to know this troubled and laborious past and this because knowledge is incomplete without historical basis and the assessment of current phenomena is precarious and without maturity.

It is essential that the management premises are known by Chinese because it helps them understand the main causes that generated and favored the industrial large-scale boom of last decades.

The historical analysis provided by the approach of Chinese management premises gives the manager the possibility to understand the complexity of economy, which allows him/her to generate the constituent elements of the modern company, with the entire series of managerial processes and problems.

The premises of Chinese management can be systematized as follows: approaching the economic growth as economic freedom of China [1] and selecting the model of economic growth [21]; predominance of extensive nature of economic growth; positioning of excellence model in the Chinese management by Deng Xiaping; orienting technology to value [19]; use of state and family enterprises at the model of Chinese management; transfer of Occidental management to China; adoption of national sustainable development strategy of China and positioning of management as main engine of this development.

3. Management and economic, social and ecological growth of China

The dominant feature of Chinese economic thinking is given by the continuous manifestation to the competition phenomenon. It is requested that the Chinese companies behave in good faith on the market and act according to fair manners.

Chinese managers acquired the experience to permanently act with their economic thinking. They understand and treat objective and concrete situations from their companies. Activating in a continuously changing environment, they try and manage to provide stability, by permanent economic, social and ecological adaptations. They frequently use managerial logic and principles of Chinese management. One of the particularities of Chinese management economic thinking is given by the fact that it is strongly related to the interests of the personnel, judiciously combined with those of the company and national ones. The components of company economic life, relational elements generating and accompanying them influence the economic thinking of the Chinese manager [8].

The good habits of economic thinking of the Chinese manager are cultivated permanently, continuously and consistently. For this purpose, they position thinking in the managerial process, entering into the fundamental structure of the company management system, with emphasis on influence management.

The inflation problem is found in many papers of Chinese classics. Numerous models and their efficiency were presented, the characteristics and virtues which the manager must have in order to generate and complete managerial changes were outlined.

Chinese managers have a major preoccupation for exercising their power of influence, each adopting a personal approach or inspired from the Chinese or Occidental culture. Regardless of origin, the Chinese manager manifests three pertinent virtues in practicing influence: constraint, modesty, tenacity in the process of change involved by the phenomenon of influences of economic, social and ecological growth process. Chinese managers use quite frequently the prudence, balance and authority in practicing influence. It is often considered necessary to exercise self-constraint and patience and involvement of resonance and balance state.

The use of these models aims to develop communication for supporting influence and the processing of influencing Chinese economic growth.

In order to increase the quality and efficiency components of the influencing process, comparative analyses between the two influence models are carried out and the competences and experience of managers subject to analysis are especially targeted. Attention and precaution are recommended, the analyses of this type being very sensitive and multiple oriented. The prudence virtue is put on the first place. Precaution and attention of managers are stimulated. The necessity that managers earn the confidence of persons is outlined. The feelings of persons are required to be perceived, to find complementary solutions for knowing the human factor and its problems [26].

In concrete cases, situations of change acceleration may occur, in which the influencing process itself becomes necessary. In such cases, it is recommended that the Chinese managers find a balance, use the consolidation of influence factors and avoid the causes that can generate unbalances in the subsequent series of action. External requests and expectations of own personnel will be taken into account. Completions or modifications can be brought to initial approaches. The information necessary to avoid inefficient solutions will be collected.

Influence management in Chinese vision is based on interactions and behaviors favorable to the influence process itself. The essence of this type of management is found in the capacity to encourage influences in the decisional process and actions implied by it.

Chinese managers are preoccupied with preventing negative reactions that especially occur during interactions. In such situations, five pairs of qualities are used: “influence and resonance”, “articulation and creativity”, “prudence and confidence”, “patience and commitment” and “balance and persistence”.

From the perspective of Chinese management, the manager’s influence can lead to positive results, such as the resonance and transformation reaction of unfavorable results. And everything relies on the manager’s capacity to inspire and motivate others in his/her influencing actions. The manager must use his/her words wisely, weigh the facts, use emotional states and use them rationally in motivating his/her personnel. He/she will take care to express his/her thinking accordingly, to be creative and innovative in solving personnel influencing problems [2].

The spectacular evolution of Chinese economy is provided by the Chinese management which takes into account the complexity of the process itself, but also the necessity to meet the exigencies generated by the need to comply with the requirements for facing harsh competition nowadays. Chinese managers focus mainly on the problems of resources and their wise distribution for managerial, economic and financial success. They overcome the stress states generated by deep involvement in business, especially global ones. They assume an active role in influencing the endogenous and exogenous environments and try to face challenges and ensure competitive advantage at global level.

Chinese managers tackle economic growth with competence and taking into account economic and social requirements on the market. They organize constant visit flows at clients from many parts of the world and consolidate the development capacity of thinking and managerial skills by exchanges of experiences, training and continuous improvement.

The best managerial practices are generalized at the level of Chinese corporations. The insistence is placed on visibility and transparency, on actions with long perspective. The managerial processes are oriented to quality and efficiency, the post-sale effect is monitored, the relations with the government, central and local administrations are substantiated and extended. Global and regional centers are created for encouraging business.

Young managers are trained and encouraged. Concrete actions are conceived for developing their talents, managerial thinking and skills. Briefly, we are witnessing the face change of management and Chinese managers deeply oriented to act in supporting China’s economic growth.

The rapidity with which it is acted for economic growth and to obtain success, which penetrates and it is developed in this important field, insists on using scientific, modern, high capacity, flexible managerial systems, adaptable to the requirements of the growth process and of its environment.

Recognizing success as a constant of the economic and social environment, with essential contribution in economic growth and improvement of life quality, Chinese managers promote, amplify and accelerate success using the rules and modes generated by science and art in all areas of company activities and insisting on development, innovation, change and creativity[12].

For this purpose, Chinese managers organize and practice many actions for ensuring success, among which I considered significant:

- identification of company missions, recognized by combining resources so that they create a coherent strategic system, able to put into practice the action plan and programs in order to reach one or more successful objectives;
 - verification of operational coherence of mission differences, based on the analysis carried out in two times:
 - determination of operational qualities of types able to reach the successful objective;
 - focus on personal value of people, methods and machines.
 - operational formalization of the mix of company development factors, process which takes the following into account for its achievement:
 - it starts from launching a new product, which raises many problems for companies, with the following components:
 - in order to launch a new product, the company must have the necessary competence;
 - in order to activate the operation for launching a new product, the company must have resources and means.
 - company strategy and policy are oriented to the organization success by development;
 - successful objectives are established according to the development policy.
 - The instrument of mission formalization (fig. 3.1) is used, with which it is conceived the mix of economic growth.
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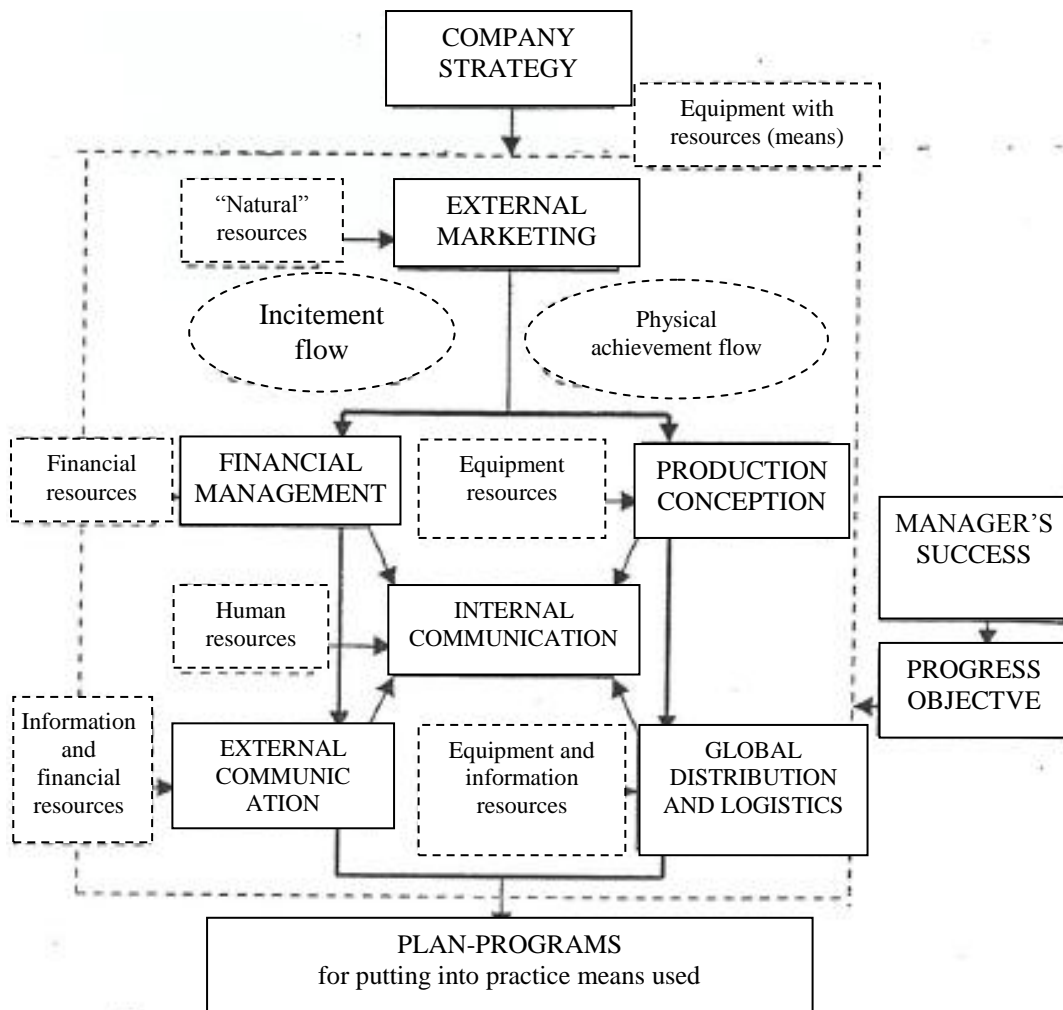


Fig. 3.1. Main components of formalization model of Chinese company mission used as instrument for conceiving the mix of economic growth

The above allow us to note the importance given to the strategy for searching successes but also its dependence on the productive system. The importance of strategy for searching success is manifested by the fact that it is the valuable source of the Chinese company. Interactions created an important effect which allows the better, faster operation with more success and better use of potential resources [3].

4. Concept of Chinese management

As established earlier, Chinese management is based on old practices and thinking models concerning values, on evaluation of performances, personnel selection and, last but not least, quality assurance and control.

In the Chinese conception, the management integrates the management positions of all company staff, starting from the director up to the team leader.

In outlining the definitional components of Chinese management, specialists use the definitional content and make references to Occidental authors [7].

A part of the definitions of Occidental specialists allowed the Chinese specialists to conclude that the management concept is often used in vague actions. Thus, they notice that a part of the specialists understand that management means managerial personnel and underline the necessity that it would be desirable that this use is connected to the description of managerial process because only in such interpretation we can talk about a good or bad quality management. In other words, references are made to the management quality only in the case in which the managerial process and accompanying results are taken into account and in no case when references to persons involved in this process [4].

At the same time, the Chinese specialists' outline that a great part of definitions make references to managers, described as persons who lead people and act so that objectives are achieved. This is connected with the fact that management means implementation and coordination of functions and persons who fulfill them so that a certain purpose is achieved. At the same time, Chinese specialists claim that the idea that enterprise actions are consequences of stimuli from the environment, to which the economic units react, based on the active process, which is nothing else than the decision process. In relation to this problem, T. Paterson [20] and other Chinese specialists show that the reaction of enterprise to stimuli leads to the fulfillment of four functions: (1) decision-making or exercising the decision process; (2) coordination of actions; (3) coordination of different enterprise in the decision and action processes; (4) performance of communications necessary for previous functions. Starting from these four functions, certain Chinese specialists claim that the management study of an enterprise can be carried out because the order and coordination of all these functions represents the management in their opinion.

The essential aspects of enterprise must be taken into account when defining management. These aspects were studied and summarized by the Chinese specialists [29], as follows: (1) anticipation of desired results, interpretation of request and market study, anticipation of important tendencies and identification of major problems; (2) setting the objectives of policies, programs, balances and

definition of adequate control means; (3) mentioning of expected results from collaborators, conception and maintenance of adequate organization; (4) identification of means of perfection, evaluation of results, decision-making, adoption of corrective measures; (5) helping subordinates make progress, understanding needs and personnel aspirations, inspiration of confidence, stimulation of participative work, maintenance of respect, discipline and ethics.

The Chinese specialized papers [11] claim that management has also certain theoretical bases by definition. Their essence is given by reference to the following imperatives: (1) to obtain results by others, however assuming the responsibility for these results; (2) to be oriented to environment; (3) to make decisions directly related to the enterprise finality; (4) to give confidence to the employee in the labor process by entrusting; (5) to decentralize the organizational system and judge employees according to the results obtained in work; (6) to ensure the mobility of structures and people. The Chinese authors relate these theoretical bases to the action methodology and draw the conclusion that modern management aims from this point of view: knowing the facts and anticipating their evolution, conceiving a competitive strategy and judiciously selecting objectives, organizing means and conceiving evolutionary structures, efficient corrective control.

In many Chinese papers about management, it is defined as the assembly of activities, disciplines, methods, techniques that integrate the tasks of leadership, management, administration and organization and aims to involve the entire group of employees by adopting optimum decisions in designing and regulating micro-economic processes in order to undertake and work as profitable as possible, to organize changes able to ensure the sustainable and efficient future of the unit at economic and social level [5].

The specialists in Chinese management claim that such definition of management is preferable because it unifies the main definitional elements expressed separately and in a substantive manner in the previous expositions. Also, they consider that the definition presents in an action context the management functions and operations arising from them, with their orientation to achieving the purpose set by the general manager. By the above definition, management is treated as the instrument that can lead the company to profitable expansion to the extent to which it normally has a good position in the hierarchy of targeted purposes and ensured objectives. The company orientation to future, the management process is based on the general exigencies of applied sciences, on the continuity in the development of knowledge, rigorous observation of organization and performance of managerial process and, finally, on the systemic research of successes and failures.

Other authors [30] consider that management is an ample, complex and conscious process of leadership and coordination of individual and group actions and activities, as well as focus and allocation of material, financial, human, information and time resources of the company in order to achieve its objectives according to the its mission, finalities and economic and social responsibilities.

Another definition [6] is also encountered in the Chinese literature, which mentions that management is the unitary assembly of general concepts, principles, methods and work techniques, the use of which ensures the optimum use of human, material and financial potential of the company. Another definition of management conceived by the author [23] as science, which studies the management processes and relations within companies and environment in which they act for outlining the regularities and principles, methods, techniques and modes that ensure the increase of economic and social growth is given.

Chinese management belongs to the national particularities of China. Based on the philosophy of Chinese management, the national management is practiced. Unlike the Occidental management which analyzes the problem at the beginning, organizes work places and then selects adequate personnel, Chinese management is based on the principle according to which “the activities depend on human relations”. Concretely, the Chinese, instead of dealing with activities, namely distribution of work force, work places, work and prove their own particularities and capacities organize things depending on human relations, create the initial structure of the organization [17].

In its years of experience, Chinese management and its specialists in theory and practice considered and consider that management and managers belong to the assembly of problems with special significance for the Chinese civilization and that economists, philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, theoreticians and practitioners in management must be involved in their scientific opinion. They must take into account that the Chinese management must be based on the system of values, beliefs and traditions formed during the historical, social and economic development of China. In the conception of Chinese management definitional components, the specialists take into consideration the Chinese market and marketing context. In China, the market economy is supported by economic, social, political and philosophical premises, by the universe of private priority spreading and equality of rights and obligations of Chinese citizens and legal entities. Efforts are made for the normal establishment of structural elements of market economy system, namely on the connections of market system, independence, personal property and personal interest. The business environment of Chinese companies is judiciously regulated both legally and morally and ethically, the criteria on business relations being coherent [15].

In its turn, marketing, principles and requirements that accompany it are correctly oriented, organized and used for satisfying the consumption demands. The connection between production and consumption was managed to be remade and the study of demand and offer on the market is careful and complex. In this vision, the future products are designed, the market is prepared for product acceptance and networks of optimum distribution are developed [13].

The Chinese manager understands the human psychology of clients because the clients are the basis of any company. The company would not exist without clients. The clients create the social and economic function assumed by any company by manifesting its needs and aspirations on the market. In order to satisfy the needs and wishes of consumers, the Chinese manager focuses mainly on two elements which are part of the output, namely of the commercial sphere of the company: a) on the clients, experimenting the data outlined by the new science of clients – marketing; b) on innovation, in the phase of products made available to its clients by that company. Chinese managers are aware that only marketing and innovation lead to positive results, ensure viability, productivity and profit. All the other factors within the company enter into the chapter of costs. Thus, the Chinese manager lays stress on the clients, marketing and innovation. He is aware that any stress laid on other elements from the company sphere disqualifies him from the position of bureaucrat.

The new commercial discipline of marketing is the essential completion of the managerial function for the Chinese manager, which emphasizes the manager's role of businessman. The actual marketing science emphasizes more thoroughly one of the manager's main tasks, that of creating a consumer for the products or services of that company. For this task, the Chinese manager investigates the market requirements and satisfies them as much as possible. Secondly, he makes efforts to innovate, influencing in this way the requirements of consumers and even creating consumers.

These fast changes awoke the Chinese managers from their comfortable dreams of planned economy and confronted them with the new managerial realities imposed by the business environment, by decisional autonomy and imperatives of competition state.

5. Chinese management - science, art and pragmatic activity

Chinese management, responsible and productive by definition, is an activity, an intellectual and physical work. It requires special competence, a series of specific work instruments and the use of certain characteristic techniques. But, first of all, Chinese management is an organic, dynamic and vital vocation for the Chinese society [10].

Chinese management is outlined as a scientific discipline centered on the assembly of continuous systematized knowledge depending on the - positive and especially negative -experience of Chinese managers.

Chinese managers focused on three major problems: a) obtaining viability for the company led by them; b) adequate organization of work and workers; c) making production decisions.

What is preponderant in the Chinese managerial activity is the fact that the intelligence of managers has to do with people more than with material forces or circumstantial acts. Thus, the manager's personality is essential, its capacity to behave with people, employees and clients of that company.

The efficiency of the Chinese manager is correlated with its possibility to ensure the necessary productivity of the company [16].

The Chinese manager is a person who assumes the responsibility to guide the company objectives and resources in order to obtain the best results as possible. For this purpose, he/she organizes the work of his/her employees for a productivity as adequate as possible, taking into account the needs and desires of employees, as well as the social function of the company it manages and which justifies his/her existence only within the limits of this social function.

Any company, especially the managerial type, requires consciousness at the management level. Only in this way the Chinese managers succeed to ensure the synergetic management of related human resources and optimize the productivity of employees in the company by allocating each person in the position in which his/her specific qualities can become as productive as possible for the highest profit of the company and for their personal one. The intelligent and adequate use of employees is the last word of the Chinese managerial art [18].

This formula has a constant value. The fundamental issues of the management target suffer non-essential modifications in time. The work profile can be modified depending on the evolution of techniques and institutions, but human coordinates are constant. As a result, the Chinese managers focus mainly on three large elements of managerial activity: a) establishing the objectives to be fulfilled as fair as possible and understanding them, given the fact that you are exposed to double labor for the same result if you lose sight of the objective to be achieved; b) capacity of simultaneous focus on more objectives or issues, with clear conscience of their exact as possible hierarchy. Commitment to a disproportionate number of levels leads to failure; c) Chinese manager's efficiency to organically impose his/her authority, proving all employees whom he/she has the task to coordinate that he/she has enough discernment and enough intuition to capitalize the specific capacity of each employee of the company at the production place to the highest degree [18].

Also, Chinese managers do not lose sight of the exact company profile, the objectives in their elastic hierarchy, development direction and human substance of company activity.

In the Chinese literature [14], management is considered an institution and a vector of progress in different areas and it is invested with social function, having the task of general guidance to company efficiency and prosperity, within which it acts and fulfils the social and economic vocation.

Being the most important social vector of progress, Chinese management justifies this function and social role in many ways, by creating and extending the constant number of clients for selling the company products or services.

With respect to the ratio between science and art in Chinese management, many scientists presented their point of view [24]. A part of them hold back concerning the use of the word art. Another group of specialists claim that management has both a scientific dimension and one related to the art area. The third group claims that management covers a wide range of facts by generalization, scientifically justified and consequently, science occupies the place of art, combating persuasively and argumentatively those who claim that management is an old art.

Referring to the most important reasons for developing the complete integrated theory of Chinese management, the specialist in the matter [27] mentions six, namely: a) in the management area, theory is the conceptual reference framework and is very important for the practical activity which uses aspects from many and different sciences, as well as numerous instruments and techniques; b) theory is necessary for guiding managerial research, by emphasizing the lacks existing in this area, as well as by providing hypotheses for guiding efforts and their judicious phasing; c) absence of such discipline would make impossible to teach or learn management and Chinese managers could not use it as guide of managerial activity; d) only with the adequate management theory one can understand the modern company and its activity; e) with managerial theory, one can ensure the efficient integration of specialist's activity in the joint efforts of the company; f) with management theory, Chinese managers able to lead other institutions are formed, the progress in freedom and human dignity is provided and the push to excessive centralism is prevented, inevitable when the management and execution decisions are focused in the hands of high level "planners".

The special significance of managerial theory and ordered assertions in its theoretical system consists in the provided possibility to suggest the means, to obtain the results wanted in the practical managerial activity.

In Chinese literature, management is not only tackled as science and art but also pragmatic activity [28]. The justificatory explanation is given by the fact that the

extension of management scope determines a series of essential mutations in managerial practice, in motivating and results of managerial actions and activities.

In China, managerial practice is treated as the activity of transforming the managerial reality in order to obtain economic, technical, social and ecological results within the company. Practice has a central place within Chinese management because it expresses the functional relations between managers and managerial team and between these and company employees. Practice is not treated as the activity to adapt to the managerial process but as the conscious activity in which Chinese managers pursue objectives set before. Also, practice is conceived as the social activity of managers, a social and managerial undertaking.

Managerial practice in China is based on information elements, in which loyalty and obligation have a major position. The most spread managerial practices in China consist in: (1) double participation which implies permanent participation of workers to the managerial process at all levels, which is a way of improving the management system; (2) three-in-one combination, according to which the specialists, technicians and workers are stimulated to work together in the innovative and managerial processes; (3) encouragement of participative management, especially in the process of adopting group decisions; (4) participation of Chinese managers to the training program in the management area, especially in the behavioral management area [25].

In conclusion, we can decide that practice has a major role in performing the entire managerial process in Chinese management. Management is brought to life by practice requirements, it starts from practice and it checks the truth of its conclusion through it.

Conclusions

The expositions presented previously allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1. China, especially due to its management, is nowadays an economic power to which many countries look up because it has the economy with the fastest and most important economic growth in the world in the last twenty years.
 2. Premises of Chinese management are numerous and managers are preoccupied to know them and act according to the directions arising from them.
 3. The influence ratio of management on economic, social and ecological growth of China is obvious.
 4. Chinese specialists define Chinese management as unifying factor of definitional elements, which act as functions and are oriented to achieving the purpose established.
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5. Chinese management is conceived and applied as science, art and pragmatic activity.
6. Chinese management underlies China's new role as financier of global economy.

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