

THE RISK MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITIES

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Abstract: The place and role of risk in managerial activity must be analysed by taking into account the relation where the two concepts about risk are, namely: The concept suggested by the decision theory and concept suggested by managers. It is necessary to take into account managers' behaviour towards the risk defined by the theory of choice, which leads to the following conclusion: managers actually assume risks and express preferences in terms of risk, using techniques and procedures – other than the traditional ones – such as media, variation of probabilistic distributions of possible outcomes, etc. Understanding the concept of "risk" by managers leads to a certain attitude they have towards risk characterised by three essential features and namely: managers' low sensitivity to probabilistic assessments of the possible results; managers' wilful mobilisation on some key objectives and decisive influence of this mobilisation on managerial decisions; clear distinction between managers assuming the risk and game of hazard. These features combined with the individual and organisational decisions highlight the impossibility of the classical conception of "risk" to enable a thorough and meaningful of the behavioural phenomenon of assuming the risk.

Key words: risk, uncertainty, risk assessment, failure, unpredictability.

Elements of risk theory

Definition of risk

In the classical theory of decision, risk reflects the variations of distributing the possible results, their subjective probability and values. It is measured either by the non-linearity of the money relevant utility, or by the variation of distributing the probabilities of possible winnings and losses for every particular choice. According to the latest formulation, a risky option is that which variation is large for and the risk is one of the assessment elements in order to achieve the expected value of the various possible options (Dima and Man 1999). Of course, the notion of risk is included into the vaster notion of choice according to the output expected from a certain option. Virtually, all theories of choice start from the premises that those who decide prefer an increased output rather than a weaker one provided that all other factors (for example the risk) are considered to be constant. They also imply emphasising a smaller risk, when all other factors are constant (the expected value, for example). Thus, the expected value is considered to be a positive element in assessing an option, and the risk as negative element. Therefore, it has not been easy to formulate a satisfactory definition of risk within the limits of a rudimentary framework (media, variation of probabilistic distributions of the possible results, etc.). For these reasons, efforts were needed to develop a new concept about risk,

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especially for the study of financial markets. Defining the risk according to variation was criticised for the confusion it maintains between the negative risk and positive opportunity. This criticism is at the origins of elaborating the patterns based on semi-variation. But these have also been criticised, because they fulfil Von Neumann's axioms, just in certain very limited circumstances (Dima and Man 2012). This unsuccessful attempt has incited researchers to try a pattern to assess risk and preferences in terms of risk, based on the prices observed. Most of the contemporary publications dedicated to the risk of financial markets reflect this concept (the pattern of setting the asset price that proved a high closeness to financial analysis, for example). This pattern defines the systematic risk as being the co-variation degree between a given price and market price, and regression is defined as unsystematic or specific risk. Although these mouldings have contributed to a better understanding of financial markets, the risk – output relation suggested by this pattern has not been confirmed through facts.

Using the concept of “risk” outcome from the theory of decision as means to describe the actual behaviour mechanisms in terms of choice raises many additional complications in practice. Thus, there is the possibility that who decides to show a tendency of not taking into account the very unlikely or very far events, whichever their possible consequences would be. There are also situations where just a small part of the possible results is taken into account, the decision being made only according to the extent of the variation of these results in a few hypotheses. Thus, those who decide seem to prefer verbal feedback rather than numerical ones concerning the risk, even if the transformation of the first ones in numerical terms show their high degree of variation and dependence in relation to the context of the problem, and the probabilities of results and their values are independently taken into account, rather than their mathematical product (Dima et al., 2012).

All these situations tend to prove that those who decide have a concept of the risk that is very different from the definitions suggested in specialised literature and that various decision makers shall have a different concept for the same situation.

The Risk – Component of the Decision Making Process

The importance of risk in making a decision is given by the location it occupies in the theory of decision, by the rank in the managerial ideology and by the – ascending – interest to assess the management risks. Different from such an approach, most of the empirical studies about decision making did not lead to highlighting a clear concept about manager's attitude towards risk or about accepting the risk in the managerial action. Researching the role of risk in decision making rarely also had the managerial behaviour as object, which has led to the existence of clear difference regarding the concept of “*risk*” suggested by the theory of decision and that suggested by the manager.

Attitudes Towards Risk

Most opinions start from the principle that those who decide have an aversion to risk. Between an option that certainly goes towards a given result and another option offering the same expected value, but without a safe certitude, they shall choose the first one.

This would imply that those who decide would obtain a compensation for the variability of possible results. Thus, the more the resulted income after the investment is increased for an option, the more important should such a variant be. Thus, by studying the investment through placement funds, it has been established that investors detest the variation of outputs, but it is doubtful that managers determine a positive correlation between risk and output (Modrak and Pandian, 2010). This is why the studies carried out about mergers rather prove the opposite, and the assembly of data collected about this subject leads to some ambiguous results.

The attitude in relation to risk is often described as a stable characteristic of each individual, perhaps related to its personality development and culture. The taste of risk could be associated with certain aspects of personality, such as the desire to succeed. But it is always difficult to discern precisely what differentiates risk amateurs from the other members of the same culture or of the same profession (Dima, 2012).

If it possible for the taste of risk to be a stable element of personality, certain variables such as humour, sentiments or how problems are presented can change the perception of risk and attitude towards risk. Particularly, subjects disdain the acceptance of risks before a risky alternative whose possible results are good as a whole (positive results) compared to the temptation to accept a risky alternative whose possible results are risky. This dependence in relation to the context is familiar to those who study the acceptance of risk by managers.

Unsolved problems however remain. We may even admit the idea that adversity favors risk taking, but history does not show that the great changes and major innovations can be the result of an unfavorable context.

Risk in Decision Theory

For the conventional theory of decision, choice involves a compromise between risk and hoped output. Those who make the decision and who are a little adventurous prefer to minimise risks being prepared to scarify part of the hoped output in order to reduce the range of the possible results. On the contrary, those who have the taste of risk shall consent to a reduction of hoped output in order to increase this range. In theory, decision makers begin by assessing the risks before making a choice between the various possible risk-output combinations (Dima et al., 2011).

Obviously, it is not always how this is done in practice. It happens that decision makers deny the existence of a risk or consider it to be negligible. This negation often associates an acceptance of the risk actuarial reality to a refusal to integrate

this reality. Without being psychological or pathological, this refusal may mean a philosophical rejection of probabilistic judgement applied to a unique case, or the trust in the casualty of events.

Various experiments have enabled emphasizing in certain people the tendency to see a casualty in the random events and therefore a possibility to master them, as well as a tendency to establish connections from the cause to effect between events which were established to be purely accidental.

Risk management - risk specific form

Managers' Definition of Risks

Managers' view of risk is different than the one existing in the theory of decision, particularly being less accurate. Managers rarely measure the risk of an option according to the variation of distributing the probabilities of possible results.

There appear at least three characteristic features (Dima and Bajdor, 2011):

- Most managers do not consider the uncertainty of a positive output to be an important aspect of risk. The possibilities to win have an essential importance in assessing the attraction of an option, and the idea of "risk" is related to a negative result. For managers, risk is not a probabilistic concept. Most managers consider the uncertainty to be a risk factor, and the amplitude of possibly bad results an outstanding element.

There is the possibility to define the risk in terms which would define what could be lost and not the moments of distributing the results ("*I assume high risks to probabilities but not to total amounts*", "*I do not look at the probability of a success or of a failure, but the amplitude of risk*").

This tendency to ignore or minimize the probability of a loss after its moment reveals more repugnancy to loss than to risk. It is obvious that managers assess the risk they assume more depending on a few key values and not depending on the support provided by the computer or probability theory;

- Most managers do not want to reduce the risk to a single figure element, although they seek a certain accuracy in assessing the risk based on numerical calculations ("*Nobody needs a ciphered assessment*", "*Do not cipher the risk, you must be capable to discern it*"). Aware of the multiple aspects of risk, managers say that risk cannot be expressed by a single figure or by a statistical series, and quantifying the risk by a single figure is almost impossible, because risk is a multidimensional phenomenon.

Managers' Attitude Towards Risk

Managers' tendency to assume risks varies depending on individuals and contexts. Individual behaviour variations originate from experience and existing context. Thus, certain individuals like risk less than others, and certain motivation elements related to risk are integral part of a certain personality. These differences from one

individual to another are however less important compared to those resulting from the incentive measures and from the managerial behaviour standards.

According to certain studies, the average staff has the tendency to say “*the more they climb hierarchically, the less people are willing to assume risks*”, and senior staff believes that new managers able to assume risks must be trained.

Managers admit that risk assumption is also a need and a pleasure in leading positions, observing it is rather a personal motivation than an incentive measure.

There are three essential motivations in assuming calculated risks, namely (Dima, 2012):

- Risk assumption is essential to the success of the decisions made;
- Risk assumption is for managers rather a matter of professional obligation than a personal incline;
- Manager’s risk assumption has an emotional content due to anxiety, fear, excitement and joy, due to the danger of providing delicate chills.

Variations attributable to the context differences can be added to these three essential motivations. Thus, managers’ attitude in relation to risk is that of the staff in general, it can vary according to the conditions, meaning that risk assumption depends on the relation between the position at a given moment and certain critical reference points, such as: profit level, size of liquidities and sales at a reference level, current position of the organisation and its possible disappearance, etc.

Managers' Behaviour Towards Risk

The early studies on managers' behaviour concluded they avoided the risk rather than accept it. They do this by also reacting to short-term information, rather than shortly forecasting future events (Baranger, 1993). They avoid the risk which an insecure environment poses, by negotiating contracts that attenuate insecurity.

Recently, MacCrimmon and Wehrung have done the same remarks and noticed that managers avoid assuming risks, be delaying their decisions and delegating others. Other studies indicate that managers avoid to face the risk, deeming it as something that can be controlled. They do not accept the idea that the risks they face are inherent in their situation. On the contrary, they are convinced they can limit them by having the dangers under control thanks to their capacity. Keyes has shown how people who have the spirit of enterprising and taste of risk seek to have control over the uncertainties of destiny, instead of assuming risks. Adler sets a distinction between managers who avoid risks, between those who assume them and those who dominate risks. The latter are not content to assume risks but they try to control and change them.

Should a given option promise a fairly good output, but it represents an unacceptable hazard, managers try to find methods to reduce the danger, while maintaining the gain (Dima, 2010). They sometimes begin by refusing the assessments. But they especially try to turn the situation around. Managers deem they assume risks, but only do it if they have sufficiently amended the conditions to ensure the success. Before any decision, they set up a risk control strategy.

Most of managers believe they can do better than it is forecast, even after reviewing the assessments. This tactic, also called "adjustment", is deemed as a managers' classical reaction before risk, based on their trust on the opportunity to reduce the risk, taking into account how their experience is interpreted. Beyond their previous decisions, most of the staff believe they knew how to develop their chances of success. Their acceptance of the risk partly depends on the fact they greatly hope they should not bear its consequences.

Managers' Attitude Towards Risk

Low Credibility in Probabilistic Assessments

The study of the casuistry of managers' attitude highlights three managerial attitudes which differ from the traditional risk conceptions that thus enable to better understand the process of making the managerial decision.

The studies developed in recent years highlight managers' distrust in the accurate assessments in terms of probability, which they just do not understand or simply do not use. A rough determination of probability serves as an excuse to exclude certain possibilities beyond the preliminary calculations of decisions (Dima and Man, 2003). The possible results the probability of which is very low are ignored, without taking into account their possible evolution. Or, when an initial low probability is combined with important consequences, as in the case of major unforeseen catastrophes or large unexpected discoveries, not taking into account the events with a very low probability can change everything. In a world where the very unlikely events, but full of consequences are however a rule, it is not known how a system could reasonably take them all into account. As it is probably the case, if some of these events shall be generated for sure, the system that is in trouble in this type of events of low probability is prepared for an inexistent environment. This attitude leads to many systems being taken by surprise permanently by events the probability of which was a priori very low and which they were not prepared for at all.

But the tightness of assessments exceeds the frame of very low probabilities and it seems it would be more equal to the volume of the result that defines the risk for managers and not to the weight of this volume by its probability. This is obvious in using phrases like "*maximum risk*", "*an occasion you that you feel*", "*in the best or worst of the cases*". Such a behaviour is not without consequences. It favours the trend in assuming greater risks, if the distribution of probabilities of possible outcomes gets an almost rectangular shape. Compared to the situation in digits, this shape is oval.

Such a behaviour can appear that is less intelligent than an actual consideration of the probability variations (Dima and Man, 1999). However, we have to admit that managers' confusions in terms of risk are to reflect the ambiguities maintained in all literature that deals with the engineering of choices. According to the decision theory, the term "risk" refers to the probabilistic incertitude of the outcomes of

a choice. In recent papers dealing with the assessment and management of risks, this term is no longer applied to the unpredictability of results, but to their cost. According to this last terminology, the interest centre has shifted from variability towards establishing a compromise between a special “*risk*” and other costs. The most frequent attitude consists of taking into account the expected value of distributing the probabilities of unfavourable outcomes compared to other peak moments. Thus, the “*risk*” becomes “*hazard*”; it does not cover the variability of a possible result, but its expected value. Therefore, the substantial contribution of the theory of taking the decision and need to taken into account the distribution of possible outcomes as a whole.

Managers’ tightness to the assessments of probabilities also reflect the terminological imprecision of risk theoreticians and decision making (Dima, 2010). It can also be explained by a certain number of practices of decision making that are often omitted by the theoreticians of rational choices. It is always difficult to estimate the probabilities of a result, as well as the desired output, and the subjective value that could be assigned to the output achieved is far from being obvious. The information is disturbed by conflicts of interests arising between the information source and recipient.

As these difficulties are particularly sensitive in the field of estimating the probabilities, it is absolutely normal for a manager to grant less credibility to the probability assessments than to the assessments of the value of a result. Relative attention that is given to them depends on the relative credibility.

The Importance of Managerial Preferences in Risk Assumption

Empirical studies regarding the risk assumption show that preferences in terms of risk vary depending on the context. For example, the decision maker’s choice of risky operation depends on the one hand on the relation between the dangers and opportunities the option represents and, on the other hand, on certain critical objectives which he/she has set, on the other hand. From a behavioural point of view, this modality of assuming the risk according to the context would be generated less by a coherent risk preference than by a change of priorities inside an assembly of contradictory and ambiguous preferences. Following a change of situation or objectives, the decision maker’s attention is not directed on the dangers of an option but rather on the advantages which it represents.

All those who studied the human activity in problem solving have observed this managers’ trend to assess the keys of the problem. Thus, the behaviour of choice is not just dictated as it is usually deemed by their preferences and changes, but it can also be interpreted in terms of attention (Dima, 2012). In order to understand a behaviour in the situation of a complete information, it is probably preferred that it would refer to the notion of attention rather than to that of decision. There are certain theories which emphasise the sequential consideration of a small number of options, other s show how the leeway (“slack”) extends or contracts according to

the comparison between the results and aspirations, and some theories highlight the importance of the presentation order and composition of the agenda.

Many of these theories consider that the decision maker focuses his/her attention on one critical value, for example, the threshold that separates the subject success from the subjective failure. Recent remarks seem to confirm the importance of two critical values. The values quoted most frequently are a result target-threshold (for example the blind spot) and a survival level. These two reference points consist of three possible states: success, failure, disappearance (Dima and Man, 2012). Adding a critical value related to the disappearance changes a little the forecast concerning the attention (or preferences in terms of risk).

Generally, for that which is above the result threshold, the main objective is to avoid any action that would risk to go below the threshold. The attention focused on the danger, the earning opportunities switch to the secondary plan. A relative aversion for risk for managers who succeed arises from here and particularly for those who remain right above the threshold. The more symmetrical the distribution of results is, the more covariant dangers and opportunities are and once the focus is on dangers, the opportunities have less importance in choosing. The results should be significantly higher than the objective for managers to inquire the opportunities and assume the risks.

For the decision makers who did not (or foresee they shall not) achieve their goal, the desire to reach the goal generally leads them to assuming the risks. Their attention is then focused on opportunities rather than on dangers, besides when it is very close to the survival threshold. If the results are higher than this threshold, the choice shall be directed towards relatively increased variance options and therefore towards assuming risks. If they are close to the survival threshold, choosing this type of options shall be tempered by a more acute awareness of the dangers they represent.

Risk Assumption

Managers react to risk assumption. They care about their reputation in this field and only want to speak about their peers' deficiencies or about the fact that their organisation is not able to encourage them to make risky decisions wisely. On the other hand, they provide value to risk assumption, which they consider essential for innovation and success. But at the same time, they make the difference between "*assuming risks*" and "*wining a bet*". For the, the good manager is that who "*assumes risks*", not that who "*plays*" (Dima, 2012). But for those who study the theory of statistical decision, this distinction may seem misleading, because the theory presents decision making under risk conditions, and not under bet conditions, either against nature, or against other strategic actors. From this point of view, choosing a special strategy in the professional field depends on the same general considerations as a poker game strategy. The pertinence of this parallel was admitted by the decision theoreticians whom tried, without much success, to promote a criterion for evaluating managers that privileges "*good decisions*" rather

that “*good results*” According to them, elaborating a choice related to the happy denouement (due to hazard) of a risky situation (Sitek, 2013).

In our opinion, if managers establish a distinction between assuming the risk and the game of hazard, it is first because the company that assesses them does the same and then because their experience makes them believe they can control destiny. The company values risk assumption, but not the game and by “game”, it understands an assumption of the risk that took a bad turn. In this company which values good management, managers must obtain and keep the reputation of taking “*good*” risks (meaning those that result in a success) and avoid “*bad*” risks (resulted in failures), under (perhaps inevitable) conditions of incertitude.

It happens that managers exaggerate more or less consciously, the risky features of certain successful actions (Dima et al., 2011). This attempt to get themselves an image of adventurers is not of great importance. With the help of history, it is not difficult to distinguish those who were brilliant adventurers of those who behaved as imprudent players, even though the difference was not perceptible at the time of their decision. The posterior reconstruction enables telling the history, by minimising the role of “*hazard*”, in the sense of the complete probabilistic phenomenon or with inexplicable variation. The risky choices that took an ugly turn are therefore considered to be errors. The warning signals that have been neglected are more obvious than they were at the time of the decision.

History is not content to separate decision makers into winners and losers, but it assigns this actual state to the judgement and capacity differences. Neither the company and especially the manager that succeeds has a reason to doubt the following statement: good managers are able to choose the good risks and remove the bad ones, therefore they can solve the apparent inconsistency of social norms that also require risk assumption and ensured success. Taking into account managers’ experience, they believe they can influence the hazard and control a process that apparently seems to be subject to the laws of probabilities, which incites them to accept even better the risks which they would have not thought of.

Assuming risks is also part of the manager’s role. He/she is that causing the changes and assuming the (good) risks. Hence, managers’ behaviour directed towards change, because everybody expected the same type of behaviour from them. Not without some vanity, managers believe it is possible to make the difference at the time of the decision, between the risks the resolution of which shall be favourable and the unfavourable ones. They are also proud they can control risks and can increase their chances to succeed. These illusions are perfectly consistent with the certainty that their decisions shall certainly have a positive result.

Under current conditions, we can deem that the decision maker does not follow the canons of traditional theory of decision and classical concepts of risk, which emphasise the character differences between individuals, which does not represent a basis suitable for studying managers’ behaviour. In their majority, they consider the assessments of probabilities to be slightly reliable and likely to be controlled

after making the decision. The elements which they take into account in their decisions and actions that result from here closely depend on their current preoccupation. Instead of assessing and accepting the risks, managers are looking for the options which they can control in order to achieve their objectives. Although not all have the tendency to assume risks, the differences fade through their confidence to master destiny, through the sentiments of risk encouragement and from the context where their choice runs. These factors are the origin of the thesis that affirms that assuming a risk is essential for those who want to be a manager.

This managerial approach of risk is important not only to understand well the decision-making process, but also for assuming the risk and risk management (Dima 2010). Therefore, if we want to encourage or hinder managers' risk assumption, we should first adapt to the interventions of their thinking manner. For example, it could be more efficient to change their reflective patterns and illusions about themselves than to determine them to change their opinion about the probability of events.

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ZARZĄDZANIE RYZYKIEM W JEDNOSTKACH ORGANIZACYJNYCH

Streszczenie: Miejsce i rola ryzyka w działalności menedżerskiej, muszą być analizowane z uwzględnieniem relacji, jaka zachodzi pomiędzy dwiema koncepcjami dotyczącymi ryzyka: koncepcją zaproponowaną przez teorię decyzji i koncepcją zaproponowaną przez menedżerów. Konieczne jest wzięcie pod uwagę zachowanie menedżerów, odnośnie ryzyka, zdefiniowanego przez teorię wyboru, z której wynikają następujące konkluzje: menedżerowie faktycznie przyjmują ryzyko i wyrażają pewne preferencje odnośnie ryzyka, przy wykorzystaniu technik i procedur – innych niż te tradycyjne – takie jak mediana, zmiany probalistycznych rozkładów możliwych wyników, itp. Rozumienie pojęcia "ryzyka" przez menedżerów prowadzi do określonej postawy wobec ryzyka, charakteryzującej się trzema zasadniczymi cechami, mianowicie: niską wrażliwością menedżerów na możliwe oceny probabilistyczne otrzymanych wyników; mobilizacją menedżerów odnośnie określonych, kluczowych celów i wpływem tej mobilizacji na podejmowane decyzje zarządcze; jasnym rozróżnieniem pomiędzy menedżerami podejmującymi ryzykowną grę. Te cechy, w połączeniu z indywidualnymi i organizacyjnymi decyzjami, podkreślają niemożliwość klasycznej koncepcji "ryzyka" umożliwiającej dokładne i znaczące pojmowanie ryzyko jako behawioralnego zjawiska.

Słowa kluczowe: ryzyko, niepewność, ocean ryzyka, błąd, nieprzewidywalność.

風險管理組織實體

摘要：由決策理論和概念被管理者提出建議的概念：這個地方與管理活動的風險的作用，必須考慮到的關係，其中對風險的兩個概念，即進行分析。有必要考慮到管理者向由選擇的理論所限定的風險，這會導致如下結論行為：管理者實際上假定風險和明確的偏好而言危險性，使用的技術和方法 - 其他較傳統的 - 如媒體，可能結果的概率分佈的變化，等了解“風險”的概念，管理人員會導致某種態度，他們有對風險的特點是三個基本功能和即：管理者的低靈敏度的可能概率評估結果;經理人故意動員一些關鍵目標，這對調動管理決策的決定性影響;管理者假設里克和遊戲的危險之間的明顯區別。這些功能結合個人和組織的決定突出“風險”的概念經典是不可能使一個徹底的和有意義的承擔風險的行為現象

關鍵詞：風險，不確定性，風險評估，失效，不可預測性