

Commercial organizations projects as an economic mechanism of their «survival» in challenging market conditions

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Abstract. Nowadays, domestic researchers use the concepts of «project», «project management», and «project activity» without the strong scientific rationale. The commercial organizations activity provides the importance of studying the scientific essence and content of projects and project management in modern market conditions. Indeed, there are requirements of their competitiveness necessary level. At the same time, the concept of a project requires to consider its scientific essence. The various papers and Internet contain a lot of controversial definitions of the project, project management, and project activity concepts. As a result, there is an issue of scientific rationale of the project, project activities and project management in terms of the activities of commercial organizations. Based on the analysis of the investigated problem to identify the essence of the concepts of projects in the activities of commercial organizations and project management, the following conclusions are made: currently, researchers actively use the concept of the project in relation to the activities of commercial organizations in market conditions, while a clear scientific understanding of the essence of the project they are not given; an important characteristic of the project as a product will be a certain uniqueness for the consumer; work on the implementation of the project in a commercial organization becomes a kind of professional activity and can be designated as a project activity, that is, work on the project; limited time to implement the project - this is not a characteristic of the project, but a prerequisite for the implementation of the project in a commercial organization, as a «delay» in improving its products or creating new products can cause the loss of the market and, consequently, the existing level of competitiveness of the commercial organization; limited resources to implement the project - this is also not a characteristic of the project, but the second prerequisite for the implementation of the project in a commercial organization, as to improve its products or create new products can cause a loss of market and, consequently, the existing level of competitiveness of the commercial organization; the product of the project activities can not be managed, as from the position of the theory of management of organizations the object of management are the employees of the organization, as a consequence of this you can not manage the product of the project activities, not the activity itself, but you can manage the employees involved in the project activities.

Keywords: commercial organization, competitiveness, project, project activity, result of project activity, project boundaries, new product, project uniqueness, limited time, limited resources, project management.

JEL codes: D 21, L 02, M21

For citation: Alexander A. Kiselev. (2023). Commercial organizations projects as an economic mechanism of their «survival» in challenging market conditions. *Journal of regional and international competitiveness*, 4(1), 73.

Introduction

Currently, the concept of project and project activity has become constantly used by domestic researchers in terms of any activity of commercial organizations. For example, the new project of Rosseti Group is a stylized power line support a bear with an axe (symbol of the city) in Yaroslavl, Russia. Indeed, the lighting of this power line support initially prevented residents of nearby houses from resting at night. As a result, Rosseti subsequently announced this support illumination taking into account the complaints of the population. At the same time, it was emphasized that the company managed the project.

Various papers on project management and project activities give contradictory interpretations of «project» and «project management» essence. It creates problems of their scientific rationale. For instance, researchers A.I. Balashov, E.M. Rogova, M.V. Tikhonova, E.A. Tkachenko note that «although the concepts of «project» and «project management» have entered our lives long ago, there is no generally accepted interpretation of this term. A project in Russian management is understood as a complex and set of tasks and actions that have the following distinctive features: clear final goals, the relationship of tasks and resources, certain deadlines for the start and end of the project, a certain degree of novelty of goals and conditions

of implementation, the inevitability of various conflict situations concerning the project» (Balashov, 2017). Consequently, it can be assumed that researchers do not have a scientific explanation for these terms but use them as they are comfortable in each specific case when it comes to any innovations of commercial organizations activity. But it can characterize any activity of the organization.

In Soviet times, a project was usually understood as a set of documents being developed to create a new product. For example, an architect was developing a project for a new building or an entire block, or the designers were developing a project for a new space station, etc. Accordingly, these projects were a set of documents allowing the builders to construct a complex of buildings such as they were conceived by an architect or employees of an organization received an order for the construction. This idea of the project still persists.

Additionally, the project is an order that has not yet been approved by the head of the organization and could be changed. For instance, the H&R Manager prepared a draft order on encouraging employees of the organization in connection with its anniversary or on events following the results of employee certification and submitted it to the CEO. Otherwise, there could be a draft law or bill has been submitted to the State Duma of the Russian Federation, etc. Until the relevant decision is made by the deputies, the law or bill will remain drafts.

Also, a project is understood as some kind of practical result in the form of a new product of the organization's activities, perceived as unique. Therefore, a project can be called some new building that was built as an unique architectural monument. For example, in 2020 in the Odintsovo City District, the Moscow Region, Russia there was implemented a project adedicated to the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. On the territory of the Patriot Park there was built the Main Temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was built. It is the third largest in the country after the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and St. Isaac's Cathedral. The entire architecture of the building is permeated with symbols of the Victory of our country in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. For example, the diameter of the base of the central dome is 19.45 meters, which symbolizes the year of the end of the war. The height of the belfry of the temple is 75 meters in honor of the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, when the temple was built. The area of the stained glass windows on the vaults of the upper temple is 1418 m², which means 1418 days and nights of the war, etc¹.

Indeed, this kind of the project interpretation is not of interest for domestic researchers studying the problems of organizations' activities in market conditions, since such project cannot be further managed. Accordingly, it is impossible to develop a «modern theory of project management». It is impossible to manage a set of documents for the construction of a building, the order of the head, or a built temple, etc.

Main Part

Nowadays, domestic researchers consider the project concept in terms of the activities of commercial organizations.

The number of the most common modern definitions of the term «project», each of which probably has the right to exist depending on the specific task facing researchers of the problem of projects and their management, but does not give a scientific understanding of the essence of the concept of a project, since it is not based on scientific theories of organizations and activities. Most often, domestic researchers use project definitions taken from foreign sources as the basis for their research.

For example, the Miriam Webster Dictionary defines the project as «anything that is being conceived or planned, for example, a large enterprise»².

The Guide to the Basics of Project Management of the American Institute of Project Management contains the following definition of a project: «A project is a time-limited enterprise (event) aimed at creating a unique product or a unique service».

The World Bank management defines the concept of a project as follows: «A project is a set of interrelated activities designed to achieve set tasks with clearly defined goals within a given period of time and with a

¹ The main temple of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. <https://ghvs.ru/> (accessed 10.02.2023)

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/project> (accessed 10.02.2023)

fixed budget».

The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI, USA) considers it as «a temporary enterprise aimed at creating a unique product, service or result»³.

The Association of Project Managers (APM, UK) considers it «as a unique, temporary enterprise to achieve planned goals» (Kiselyov, 2023).

At the same time, there are many other concepts of the project in various scientific and educational papers of domestic researchers.

For example, P. Dikiy, in his book «Project Management» defines a project as a tool for organizing operations (actions) that cannot be carried out within the normal activities of the organization (Dikiy, 2019).

In addition, the project could be defined as follows:

A project is a task with certain initial data and required results (goals) that determine the way to solve it.

A project is a system of goals formulated within its framework. However, the physical objects created or modernized for their implementation, technological techniques, technical and organizational documentation, material, labor and other resources, as well as management decisions and measures for their implementation.

The project is a product appropriate to the conditions and needs of the customer.

A project is a purposeful, time-oriented sequence of, as a rule, one-time, complex and irregularly repeated actions (activities or works) to create a unique product with the following specific features:

- momentaneity and integration of the project structure;
- complexity of the project structure;
- specificity of content and financial results.

A project is a one-time set of actions and tasks that has the following distinctive features:

- clear goals to be achieved, while meeting a number of technical, economic and other requirements;
- internal and external relationships of tasks, works, operations, and resources that require clear coordination in the process of project implementation;
- certain deadlines for the start and end of the project;
- limited resources;
- a certain degree of uniqueness of the project goal, conditions of implementation;
- the inevitability of various conflicts.

The project includes the idea (problem), the means of its implementation (solutions to the problem), and the results obtained in the process of its implementation.

A project is something changing our world: the construction of a building, research and development programs, the reconstruction of an enterprise, the creation of a new organization, the development of new technology and equipment, the construction of a ship, the creation of a movie, the development of a region, etc.

These various definitions do not allow us to clearly distinguish the scientific essential basis of the project. Since thinking about the meaning of the presented formulations of the project concept and comparing them with each other, make clear their scientific «incorrectness», «blurriness», contradictory nature, and a very «broad» interpretation of the terms.

Assume a number of «project» definitions can be found in scientific and educational literature.

Firstly, it is rather difficult to understand a project as «what is conceived or planned». It is more appropriate to the notion of an idea, which, for example, could be expressed in the project documentation. At the same time, a draft sketch with a proposed version of a monument could be submitted for a competition. Or, for example, an engineer has an idea for a rationalization of complex work, which he has presented to the head of the organization. The head of the organisation agreed to include the engineer's suggestions in next year's workplan. In this case the issue is not a project, but the engineer's idea and the possibility to implement it in a certain perspective.

Secondly, by defining a project as 'a set of interrelated activities', one might think of it as a workplan. For example, financial planning should be comprehensive to provide financial resources to different areas

³ <https://www.pmi.spglobal.com/public?language=ru> (accessed 10.02.2023)

of the organization: innovation, i.e. development and implementation of new technologies affecting the competitiveness of products, creation of new products, production; supply-sale activities; production activities; organizational activities, etc. All activities in the workplan of financial-economic service of the organization in these directions should be interconnected. Because without the implementation of necessary activities of supply activity it is difficult and even impossible to perform the necessary activities of production activity. But all of this has been identified in the theory of management of organisations as the principles of their effective activity.

Thirdly, considering a project as an activity involving the creation of a unique product, service or result, the researchers do not indicate the uniqueness of the product. For example, Toyota is constantly improving its cars by making various changes in their design so they always better compared to competitors' cars and are of interest to consumers. Therefore, all innovations introduced to improve a car should be considered as projects, and all cars produced by Toyota should also be considered as projects, too, etc.

Fourthly, presenting the project as «a large enterprise (event) limited in time», the researchers do not explain the meaning of time limitation. It is impossible to perform any work in less time compared to the norms and standards, as it will result in production technology failure and, consequently, quality reduction in the work to create a given product. For example, increasing the speed of an assembly line in a car factory in excess of the calculated standard in order to reduce the time it takes to produce cars may result in workers simply not being physically able to perform all the work operations properly. Unfortunately, one of the researchers gives the following example of a project: while you go to the country house to dig potatoes, it is just a work (activity), and if you go to the country house to dig potatoes and put them away in the cellar before 6pm, it is a project. Then, according to such logic, it follows that all the work of such a person at the dacha, who has scheduled it in time, should be called a project. And the scientific essence of the project is absent. As A.N. Leontiev notes, «it is not written on the «forehead» of the activity, the subject of which science it is» (Leontiev, 1996). Generally, it is defined as an individual form of existence of social relations and characterises the way of inclusion of a person into the existing structure of the social division of labour.

Fifthly, the researchers did not say anything new that a project should be seen as «a set of interrelated activities designed to achieve, within a given period of time and with a given budget, the objectives set with clearly defined goals», as this applies to any work in organisations. They did not show the features of such work so that it could be seen exactly as a project. For example, a consumer has ordered furniture from a factory and set a budget for its production. No doubt the furniture factory workers will make the product in terms of the amount of money the consumer is willing to pay. Otherwise he will refuse the more expensive product and the organisation will lose money. In this case, the purpose of all actors involved in this activity is clear: the consumer wants to get the furniture he wants for the amount of money he is offered, and furniture manufacturers – to fulfil the order within the allocated budget and make a profit from the work done. Indeed, any activity (work) of a team will always be a «set of interrelated activities» in accordance with the principle of labour division, where each member of the professional team performs his work in the interest of a common mission. Thus, for example, when making furniture, some workers bring the necessary materials and components from one shop to another for work, other workers make blanks to assemble furniture as they receive the necessary materials, etc. Every worker has to perform his work operations in a manner calculated to enable the other workers to perform their own work operations in time to complete the order at the set time. Then it turns out that any order to manufacture any product (goods), i.e. the productive activity to implement the order for the organisation should be regarded as a project. But then the concept of uniqueness disappears, as the professional activity of workers in the manufacture of furniture for them is just a regular work. Consequently, this concept of project also has no scientific rationale operations in such a way that other workers can perform their work operations in a timely manner in order to fulfill the order at the set time. But then it turns out that any order for the manufacture of any product (product), that is, the production activity for the implementation of the order for the organization should be considered as a project. But then the concept of uniqueness disappears, since the very professional activity of workers in the manufacture of furniture for them is a normal job. Consequently, this concept of the project also has no scientific justification.

Sixth, the researchers' assertion the project is «a purposeful, time-oriented sequence of usually single, complex and irregularly repeated actions (activities or works)» has no meaning or significance. It is difficult to give an example of 'single' but also 'irregularly recurring' but nevertheless 'integrated' activities or works. Any work in an organisation must always be performed by professionals. So, for example, a turner makes a part designed by an engineer according to a drawing. He only has to make one part. Can this be regarded as a one-time, non-repetitive activity or not? Indeed, the turner is doing his job as a professional and can turn any part from a drawing given to him. Or, for example, a tailor has made a bespoke suit for a customer in accordance with the customer's preferences. But her work can hardly be considered as a project, as it is her professional activity. Certainly if, in the case of an emergency, you put a non-professional, i.e. someone who has never done this kind of work, it will be a one-off, complex and irregularly repetitive task. For example, an employee of an organisation who was sick on an assembly line has to be replaced for a short time by another employee whose main activity is not related to work on the assembly line. But whether his work would be of good quality is still a question. And such work cannot be called a project, although for the employee in this case it would be unique because he or she has never done such work before.

In this context, it is problematic to understand «any activity that changes our world» as a project, since any human activity, including professional activity, is already transformative by definition. In this case, it turns out a project would have to be called any activity of an organisation, which, incidentally, is often done by researchers today.

Seventh, the researchers' interpretation of the project essence as «a temporary enterprise aimed at creating a unique product, service or result» creates the idea that it would be some kind of work for the organisation unrelated to its professional activities. For example, one might get workers in a garment factory to tidy up the workshops, i.e. to do temporary, unrelated to their professional duties in order to improve the workplace. In Soviet times, this was called «subbotnik». But where is the uniqueness of the product, service, or result?

Eighth, it is incorrect to refer to a project as «a method developed in advance to achieve an objective». But method, as a scientific term, refers to a certain sequence and order of work. For example, the method of flow production in organizations is an advanced method of organizing production based on the rhythmical repetition of basic and auxiliary operations coordinated in time and performed at specialized workplaces located in the sequence of operations of the technological process. Consequently, in terms of scientific approach, the method cannot be considered a project.

Ninth, considering a project as a tool of organising activities or operations not possible as part of the ordinary organisation activities. It is difficult to understand what kinds of organisations' activities are involved and for which some specific means of organising operations have to be created. At the same time, considering the project as a tool for organising operations and activities which cannot be performed as part of the organisation's regular activities, it is difficult to provide an example of such a project understanding.

Therefore, domestic researchers try to find a compromise in substantiating their position with regard to the essence of projects in commercial organizations' activities. For example, I. Farhutdinov, despite the 'blurring' of various definitions of the project concept given by researchers, notes that «all these definitions (project – author) contain something common, i.e., necessary signs, characteristics of a project, allowing it to stand out from the diversity of phenomena as a certain type of such phenomena»⁴.

By the researcher's opinion, the main features of the project include the time-limitation (projects have a clearly marked beginning and end), and the project product uniqueness (uniqueness of the project goal).

Unfortunately, an examination of the «clearly defined beginning and end of a project» issue can not be indicated as a project characteristic, as they can only be intrinsic to individual projects. Undoubtedly, a project such as the television show «Polye Chudes» or «Tanci na l'du» had limited time parameters: the beginning and the end of the project. At the same time, the project «Polye Chudes» has a time limit of 1 hour, i.e. it is the duration by time of the very first prepared programme presented to consumers, i.e. the audience.

⁴ Farkhutdinov, I. *Project management at the enterprise*. <https://upr.ru/article/proektnoe-upravlenie-na-predpriyatii> / (accessed 10.03.2023)

Project «Tanci na l'du» possess the few months (season) time limit. Indeed, if these TV programs are accepted or not accepted for rotation, they lose their project status. However, these TV shows have been prepared for a long time in order to be accepted by viewers. But the work of the television staff and the people involved in the implementation of the project to prepare these TV programmes for being shown to the viewers cannot be considered a project and takes considerably more time than the showing of the TV programmes itself.

But a project in the form of a unique building or monument will not have time limits, a clear start and end time. For example, residents of Novovoronezh were shocked by the monument «Alyonka», which was erected on the 250th anniversary of Novaya Alyonovka village and opened on December 18, 2020⁵. Local residents asked the authorities to remove this monument, calling it «devilry». Meanwhile, on July 1, 2022, was erected another monument to Alyonka. It was accepted by the residents of the village and turned from a project into a cultural object. At the same time, both of these monuments can be considered projects, since they were unique. But they were projects from the moment of their construction to acceptance or rejection by the residents of the village. Then they turned into a cultural objects of the village. But the work on their creating, which has a temporary beginning and end should be considered as a project activity.

The uniqueness of the project goal can be perceived by some people as unique, while for others it will be common one. For example, the new Kamaz sports car designed for truck rally, is a unique product for the automobile plant. It differs from the usual Kamaz cars production and is customizing product. But for athletes such a car is not unique, since it was created in accordance with the norms and standards imposed on sports trucks and is similar in characteristics to sports trucks of other automobile manufacturers.

Additionally, there is an issue of the uniqueness of the project goal.

Therefore, the characteristics of the project defined by researchers (clear and specific goals, limited resources, and limited project time) need to be clarified.

Firstly, should be noted, that from Latin the word «project» is translated literally is «thrown forward». We can conclude, it as a result (product) of project activity.

At the same time, there is a need to define what should be understood as the goal of the project, and what goal should be perceived as clear and specific in terms of science.

According to the dictionary of S.I. Ozhegov, «the goal is something what the people strive for, what they want to achieve, to realize» (Ozhegov, 2012).

Therefore, in terms of science, the goal is not what we do, but what we do it for, what we strive for; the goal is some kind of guideline determining the forward movement. In order to determine this movement, we need to see its desired direction. So, for example, a ship in a storm needs to approach to the invisible shore. And so the lighthouse, as a landmark, gives the ship opportunity to determine the right direction of movement to the shore, where it will be possible to hide from the weather. But define this goal as incorrect one is wrong, since the goal encourages people, organizations to take certain actions. If there is no goal, then there are no actions. By V.G. Belinsky, «without a goal there is no activity, without interests there is no goal, and without activity there is no life.»

But in case of commercial organizations projects, a number of researchers note «a well-formulated project goal should be specific (perceived by all participants); measurable (it is necessary to formulate the identified problem in terms of the specific indicators), achievable under given time and resource constraints». As an example of «good» project goal for the commercial organization engaged in advertising: it is necessary to increase site traffic to 1,000 visitors per day for 2 months with the help of daily publication of new materials and advertising of the resource in social networks. In this case the goal is an increase in site traffic to 1000 visitors per day for 2 months with the help of daily publication of new materials and advertising of the resource in social networks. The task will be the profit of the organization: the more visitors, the more profit. The size of the specifically designated profit is determined by the need of the organization to maintain the level of competitiveness and obtain the desired result of its professional activity.

Indeed, in Ozhegov's dictionary, a task is understood as something that is assigned for execution, an

⁵ Residents of Novovoronezh were shocked by the monument to Alyonka. <https://news.mail.ru/society/44638938/> / (accessed 16.02.2023)

assignment. In Ushakov's dictionary, a task is a specific assignment. As a result, the task, unlike the goal, must always be specific and measurable. For example, a commercial organization in order to make all payments to employees, utility payments, purchases of raw materials and equipment, tax payments and upgrade (modernize) production facilities at the end of the year, in order to keep up with competitors, it is necessary to receive 100 million rubles of profit. As a result, all the tasks planned must be formulated in accordance with the required profit of the commercial organization. Otherwise, the organization may lose the market share, it also may not achieve the necessary level of competitiveness, or even may bankrupt. Consequently, the purpose of the commercial activity is the basis for determining the tasks of the organization (Kiselyov, 2020). It can be achieved by planning the activities of the organization, taking into account the actions of competitors.

In this case, the project is designed to respond to the committed or planned actions of competitors related to the violation of market equilibrium in accordance with the target orientation of the organization's activities.

In accordance with the situational approach, the project goals related to particular problems can be decomposed. For example, when implementing a project technique to create a project of the Russian airliner MS-21, it became necessary to create a new wing of the aircraft from domestic composite materials (Popov, 2021). In terms of the situational approach of the theory of organizational management, the private goal appears – to create a new wing to ensure the overall implementation of the project of a new aircraft. And researchers often define such goals as «clear goals». But the concept of a goal as a «clear goal» does not seem correct from the standpoint of science. The goal is whether it exists or not. If there is no goal, there are no actions, and, accordingly, there will be no project as a result of actions. Thus, in this example, the ultimate goal of the MS-21 aircraft project is to create a new domestic passenger airliner that allows domestic airlines save their marketshare and the level of competitiveness.

In addition, researchers often consider limited resources and limited time as the important characteristics of the project. However, it is incorrect. It is more accurate and correct to define them the conditions for the project implementation or project activities. Indeed, for example, when implementing a project related to the creation of a unique product for a given period of time (a product that differs in relation to the regular manufactured products of the organization) it is always necessary to take into account the target orientation of the project – timely preservation of the desired level of organization competitiveness through the implementation of the project. But it demands rapid decision making, especially if competitors have already started to issue their new products to the market. It indicates the project limited time. But it does not mean that it is necessary to reduce the time of work, determined by the actions of competitors.

For example, when implementing an architectural object as a project, a builder has a norm of laying 50 bricks per hour. Consequently, one builder can lay 400 bricks in an 8-hour working day. The team of 10 builders can lay 4000 bricks. The foreman needs to halve the time for the construction of the object walls. Meanwhile, he cannot force builders to lay twice as many bricks for each hour of work to complete a new task. Because, firstly, builders will not physically withstand such a speed of laying bricks. Secondly, it may lead to a violation of the technology of laying bricks. Therefore, there will be a quality reduction. The foreman should double the number of builders in order to complete this work. At the same time, he will need to make a decision on how to double the volume of concrete, since its consumption will double, etc. At the same time, the project budget should also have to be increased, as the number of employees involved in the implementation of the project by the right time will increase, etc. As a result, limited time cannot characterize the project.

The limited resources are not characterizing the project, too. Indeed, for creating the product, we need a certain resources. If there are not enough resources, the product (result) of the project activity will not be created. Also the quality of the product will decrease due to implementation of cheaper raw materials, equipment, etc. For instance, the consumer allocated a certain sum of money to repair an architectural monument to the project developer. This sum of money will be spent on the repair itself. But, this repair will be incomplete and substandard, since cheaper materials for repair can be purchased. As a result, limited

resources are not characterised the project, too. There are certain standards, State Standards, technical conditions, etc. According to these standards, the necessary amount of materials and resources should be used for the successful project implementation. Otherwise, there will be a constant need for additional resources to the originally allocated ones.

At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish the cost of the project, the cost of a product created by a commercial organization for consumers, and the cost of carrying out project activities. For example, according to the estimates of the MA-21 aircraft project participants, in the mid-2000s, about RUB 14.825 bn were required for the design, development, and certification of the MA-21. The government provided RUB 6.67 bn within the framework of the civil aviation development target programme. But RUB 8,155 bn the project participants had to find themselves. As it was planned, the federal budget would finance 40% of the work, borrowed funds would amount to 25%, and the programme participants had to cover about 35% of the costs. At the same time, the cost of the MA-21 aircraft is planned to be RUB 3,144 bn⁶.

Indeed, the need to implement projects, for example, launching a new product on the market by a commercial organization, will depend on the actions of competitors and may even arise unexpectedly. As a result, the development of the commercial organization project will need to allocate the necessary resources. But it should not disrupt the regular operation of the organization (Kiselyov, 2021). Therefore, a commercial organization should have to find the resources necessary for the project implementation. Meanwhile, it could lead to the detriment of some already planned activities implementation.

As a result, limited resources cannot be considered a characteristic of the project. It is more correct to define the availability of resources as the conditions for the successful project implementation. Or define them as the project activity. However, we should take into account the capabilities of the project customer or its participants.

Nevertheless, the project features, which are highlighted by many researchers, are not related to the project itself. They mostly relate to the process of project implementation (obtaining some result). For instance, domestic researchers use a concept of «project triangle» as a characteristic of the project. By this concept, the three sides of this triangle denote the time, the content of the project and the cost. In their opinion, the project time is always limited. The content of the project denotes the project work to be done itself. And the cost includes the cost of all project resources, including human resources, etc. The essence of the project triangle, according to the researchers, is the interconnection between all three elements (sides of the triangle). The adjustment of one of the elements (sides) of the triangle automatically affects the other two elements (sides). But it mainly refers to the conditions of professional activity on the implementation of the project, or to the project activity.

Thus, the commercial organization project should be considered as the result of project activity, presented as the result of its activities in the form of a unique product. Indeed, it makes the products of a commercial organization attractive to consumers and different from similar products of competitors. Therefore, the project can be defined as a mechanism for achieving the organization's goal and provision of the necessary competitiveness.

The project management concept is also challenging issue. For example, according to the textbook «Project Management» by P. Dikiy, «project management includes control of all its aspects, makes it possible ... to coordinate various parts of the project, optimize the order of work», etc. (Dikiy, 2019). Thus, his concept of project management should be understood as the management of employees involved in the implementation (creation) of the project.

The president of the British Project Management Association, M. Barnes, believes that «project management is the science of determining the purpose of an activity and organizing the work of groups so that these goals are achieved at the end of the activity». Consequently, under the concept of projects, they begin to interpret the managing of the work involved into the project activities employees.

In general, domestic researchers give rather complex and voluminous definitions of project management, which are often not related to the basic concept of domestic management theory – the concept of «management».

⁶ How much does it cost to create an MS-21. <https://aviation21.ru/skolko-stoit-sozdanie-ms-21/> (accessed 16.02.2023)

therefore, today we have a lot of different concepts of project management. Makarov A.M. gives the following definition: «Project management is a methodology of organization, planning, management, coordination of human and material resources throughout the project life cycle, aimed at achieving its goals by applying a system of modern methods, techniques, and management technologies to achieve the results defined in the project in terms of the composition and scope of work, cost, time, and quality»⁷. This definition seems to be correct but in terms of management science, it is only a set of incompatible phrases and terms. According to the concept above, project management is interpreted as a methodology. However, in terms of science, methodology is a set of research techniques used in any science, or the method of cognition. Also, the methodology is a system of methods, etc. (Genisaretsky, 1975). Consequently, it is difficult to understand the content and practical significance of this definition for the project management itself.

In this case, it is necessary to base on the concept of management in the theory of management organization. For example, according to B.G. Litvak (2004), management is «the process of formation and implementation of managerial influence». But it is possible only in relation to the employees of organizations. Speaking about management (managerial activity), a specialist in the field of management A.V. Karpov (2007) notes that management is «the activity of co-organizing the activities of other people». Consequently, the object of management (managerial activity) in organizations or management are employees. Indeed, it is the key to understanding the management concept essence. Therefore, considering the project as a result of project activity, it is not correct to define the project management in terms of the management theory. It is impossible to manage the projects as projects cannot be objects of management. And project management, in this case, for domestic researchers implies the «co-organization» of the organization's employees' activities involved into the implementation (creation) of the project or in project activities.

Consequently, researchers replace the concept of management with the concept of «project management». For example, I. Farkhutdinov, Financial Director of the Radius Group in his article «Project management at the enterprise» (2019) wrote: «project management begins with understanding the term «project». Various schools define a project as a set of actions having a temporary nature and a common goal to create a unique product, service or any other unique results. In practice, any activity can be called a project as the company's management decides to control separately from operational tasks. And this is the essence of understanding project management of an enterprise. If it is advisable to manage any initiative separately from regular operational tasks, then this initiative should be formalized as a project»⁸. The researcher intuitively denies understanding the project as a set of actions having a temporary nature and a common goal to create a unique product, service or any other unique results. Nevertheless, he adheres to the misconception that the project needs to be considered a project activity. As a result, he named a project any professional activity that the management of the organization decides to control, and any initiative «designed as a project».

But it is not correct to define the management of activities in terms of science. Since activity is the work of people, employees and collectives of organizations. And it is possible and necessary to manage the people performing this work.

But generally, the concepts of project management given by researchers have no scientific justification.

For example, Internet contains this one: «Project management is an integral element of the modern management system in Russia. Many domestic and foreign companies use project management to improve the quality of their products and services, reduce costs, and increase profits» [20]. This particular definition is more a slogan than a scientific definition of this concept essence.

The other source gives the following one: «project management implies a methodology for managing important and large-scale tasks for achieving a specific goal, set deadlines, and limited resource provision. This approach makes it possible to combine constant (linear) processes taking place in the company and targeted (one-time) initiatives into a single whole»⁹. But in terms of science, the methodology applied to the

⁷ Makarov A.M. *Project management*. <http://elibrary.udsu.ru/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/10232/2012832.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed 10.03.2023)

⁸ Farkhutdinov, I. *Project management at the enterprise*. <https://upr.ru/article/proektnoe-upravlenie-na-predpriyatii/> (accessed 10.03.2023)

⁹ *What is project management?* <https://finswin.com/projects/metody/proektnoe-upravlenie.html> (accessed 16.02.2023)

activity is considered as a set of methods and techniques for carrying out any work.

However, the researchers distinguish the project management from managing of the projects by the number of different «controls».

According to F. Afanasyev, project management includes the management of the following nine items:

- managing the content and scope of the project;
- project timeline management;
- project budget management;
- project personnel (team) management;
- managing the stakeholders (stakeholders, participants) expectations;
- project communications management;
- project risk management;
- project quality management;
- project procurement management (Afanasyev, 2017).

By P. Dikiy, the project management includes «managing constraints», which are «the task of a project manager» (Dikiy, 2019).

Thus, the interpretation of project management by different researchers allows us to suggest that, having no other way to determine the scientific essence of project management, they, as a rule, include a complex of «different controls» in it. Unfortunately, there is a substitution of concepts by researchers. Indeed, in terms the theory of management, not the processes.

Probably, domestic researchers tried to indicate the scientific understanding of the project management essence. But this approach does not correlate with the scientific concepts of project management and project activity management. This is not required to the basic provisions of the theory of management.

However, the managerial activity, as a kind of professional activity, represents a share of any professional activity. Otherwise no activity without «co-organization» of the included employees' activities will be effective one. Since co-organization will require both managerial decision-making and work planning, employee motivation, and the implementation (fulfillment) of tasks time monitoring assigned to employees (Kiselyov, 2021). It also applies to project activities. Since, without its organization, the work of employees of commercial organizations involved in project activities will not be effective one.

Considering the concepts of projects and their management in terms of the theory of organization management, we can note the projects become «constant companions» of organizations' activities with the development of technology, acceleration of scientific and technological progress, and reduction of the life cycle of products. All these affect behavior and action of commercial organizations and lead to their changing. In other words, competition does not exist by itself. It is the result of the activities of commercial organizations, when the effectiveness of one organization turns into the defeat of a competing one. At the same time, the competition between commercial organizations leads to the product improvement. It allows them to maintain the interest of consumers. For example, by E.P. Vorotnikova and V.V. Kulikova, «currently, the market economy and the competition generated by it make it necessary for manufacturers to pay considerable interest to the quality of the manufactured goods. It is very important. The consumer pays attention to the product when making his choice. Today, a product with unique properties, with a certain quality and brand, is in the greater consumer demand» (Vorotnikova & Kulikova, 2016). As a result, the new product of the organization itself, new technologies and modernization of production associated with improving the consumer characteristics of the products produced by the organization will act as projects. Since they require the involvement of specialists and the modern innovations for their timely implementation. It allows the organizations to produce the unique product for consumers compared to a similar product of competitors.

Thus, the implementation of projects will form the basis for ensuring the necessary level of competitiveness of commercial organizations. Therefore, projects should be considered as a mechanism allowing the commercial organizations to ensure the required level of competitiveness.

But to ensure the success of these projects, it is necessary to provide the professional management of the

project team, project activities, taking into account the basic principles of management and the peculiarities of market competition.

According to Yu.V. Taranukha (2017), «the concept of «competition» is used in scientific literature and in practice so often that it has become a kind of universal category and seems to be something taken for granted. Despite the large number of foreign and domestic studies on competition, they rarely consider its content. It is difficult to find works devoted to the mechanism of competition development itself».

The scientific analysis of the essence of projects in the commercial organizations activities allows us to consider the projects as mechanisms for timely provision of the necessary level of commercial organizations competitiveness.

By Yu.B. Rubin and O.N. Potapova (2016), acting in a competitive environment, commercial organizations «should ensure the safety and sustainable development of their business, create space for the successful realization of their legitimate interests. ... They are forced not only to help themselves, but also create problems for their competitors in the realization of similar interests in the development of their own business». Consequently, in researcher's opinion, commercial organizations should perform certain «competitive actions» could not allow competitors to achieve success, since «competitors' achievements become their own defeats» (Rubin & Potapova, 2016). Otherwise, commercial organizations need to strive to always be «one step ahead of them», performing and implementing the necessary projects ahead of competitors.

It makes the researchers started defining the project management this way. According to their studies, it is possible to achieve the production goals, release the products superiating in their consumer characteristics to competitors' products in a quite short time. In other words, to implement projects characterizing a certain degree of novelty and uniqueness for the consumer. To achieve these goals, commercial organizations will have to form project teams, in which they have to include only the high qualified and skilled specialists (Pavlyuk, 2019). Otherwise, the successful implementation of their projects will turn into defeating in the competition for a commercial organization.

As a result, in terms of the theory of organization management, it would be more correct to define the project management or project management in the activities of commercial organizations. Nevertheless, the project team management should ensure the effectiveness of project activities, have a clear target focus on timely provision of the organization with the necessary level of competitiveness through the implementation of the necessary projects, considered as a set of «competitive actions».

Conclusions

Thus, based on the analysis of the problem under study, the following conclusions are as follows:

1. Currently, researchers are actively using the concept of a project in relation to the activities of commercial organizations in market conditions. At the same time, they do not give a clear scientific understanding of the project essence. At the same time, in terms of the theory of management and the theory of project activity, a project can be understood as something that allows commercial organizations to achieve their main goal – to provide the necessary level of competitiveness in the challenging market conditions.

The analysis showed the projects in the activities of commercial organizations cannot be considered as some kind of temporary measures or some kind of special activity. Projects can be considered as something that can help organizations to react to changing market competition conditions and ensure the preservation of the necessary level of competitiveness. It also can be named as an «economic mechanism» for the «survival» of commercial organizations in market conditions. As a result, the products or services of a commercial organization should always be attractive to the consumer, having the unique properties and characteristics. Otherwise, the project should be considered the product prepared for the consumer, which will be interesting to him. These projects can be classified as external projects. At the same time, the project also may be a new technology or modernization of the equipment of a commercial organization. It will allow the organization to improve its product. this kind of projects may be considered as internal projects of the organization. Thus, an important characteristic of the project as a product is its certain uniqueness for the consumer.

2. Therefore, commercial organizations have a need to improve technology, modernize equipment, and

improve the products. In order to implement a project, they should create an interesting or unique project for the consumer, attract the qualified specialists, etc. Nowadays, with the accelerating rate of life cycle products reduction, the project implementation requirement is becoming constant, since organizations are constantly forced to improve their products, implementing more and more new projects. As a result, the project implementation becomes a kind of professional activity and can be designated as a project activity of the commercial organization.

3. At the same time, the implementation of projects in commercial organizations often response to the actions of competitors. Therefore, competitiveness requires the implementation of the project in a limited time so that consumers do not have time to lose interest in the products of a commercial organization. However, the limited time for the implementation of the project is not a characteristic of the project, but a prerequisite for the implementation of the project in a commercial organization. Indeed, any delay in improving its products or creating new products can cause the loss of the market share and, accordingly, the existing level of competitiveness of a commercial organization.

4. There is no doubt that the implementation of a project in the activities of a commercial organization will always require certain funds, often significant for a particular organization, which need to be found without simultaneously reducing the efficiency of the main production activity, which is often considered by researchers as limited resources and is considered as another characteristic of projects.

However, limited resources for the project implementation are also not a project characteristic but the prerequisite for the implementation of the project in a commercial organization. Since the attempts to improve its products or create new ones can cause the loss of the marketshare and, accordingly, the existing level of competitiveness of a commercial organization.

5. The limited time for the implementation of projects, determined by the actions of competitors, and the need to find resources for the project implementation, made researchers to study the project management itself. But the product of project activity cannot be managed, since in terms of the theory of management the object of management is the employees of the organization. As a result, it is possible to manage not the product of the project activity but the employees involved in the project activity. Thus, it is necessary to consider the issue of managing the project team in order to ensure the effectiveness of the project activity for the implementation of the project in the required time with a specific amount of resources allocated for this.

FUNDING

The work was done on a personal initiative.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Received 12.02.2023

Revised 15.03.2023

Accepted 22.03.2023