Chapter 1
Crowdsourcing as an Example of Public Management Fashion

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ABSTRACT

Crowdsourcing is a relatively new concept, which was defined for the first time only in 2006. The growing interest in crowdsourcing has been observed since 2010. As of that moment, the number of publications on crowdsourcing has been systematically increasing. The researchers' attention is frequently focused on the benefits possible to be obtained by the organization owing to crowdsourcing. Not without importance is the issue of cooperation with the crowd. Despite the growth tendency, it may still be ascertained that the multitude and diversity of approaches to crowdsourcing does not increase the chances for clarification and transparency. In their majority these papers are of a theoretical nature and rather dispersed and fragmentary. As a whole they do not make reference to the achievements of the predecessors. The subject of this chapter is searching for an answer to the question whether crowdsourcing displays the features of a public management fashion.

INTRODUCTION

It is stated more and more often in the literature on management sciences that the ideas of management are subject to fashion swings in the same way as the aesthetic aspects of life such as clothing styles, hair length, music tastes, furniture designs, or paint colours. They are characterised by a growth of popularity, and next by their decline. Such an approach is mainly justified by a neoinstitutional perspective, a lack of strong roots and institutionalisation of management, uncertainty about the

state and value of academic knowledge, but also admiration and quick abandoning of various techniques by the organisations. The term "fashion" refers to a generally accepted custom, which is subject to frequent changes. Fashion is characterised by a lack of stability, changeability, a transitory nature, opposition to existing tradition, unreflectiveness, dependency, superficiality, shallowness, an imitative character, originality, and a promise of rationality and progress (Abrahamson, 1996). The appearing novelties quickly gain on importance, but they also lose their popularity. It is their superficiality which causes that the changes introduced along with a fashion do not have their own identity, coherence, they are dependent and they refer to akin terms. This does not, however, boil down to creating new, import ant ideas or values. It stems from the fact that old customs, solutions become less attractive for their recipients and they receive new names, packaging, intended use, and rhetoric. Linking of elements of different models takes place in order to create new or add new elements to the existing fashion and thanks to that they are perceived as new concepts (Sturdy, 1997).

Fashion does not bypass management as well. Management fashion may be determined as "a relatively transitory collective belief, disseminated by management fashion setters that a management technique leads to rational management progress" (Abrahamson, Fairchild, 1999). Management fashions result from demand and supply on the market of knowledge, innovations, willingness to test and implement new ideas, but also refreshing forgotten ideas. This gives managers a chance to implement in the organisation innovations (Carson et al., 2000), which are offered by advisors and have received a high level of acceptance in other leading organisations across the globe.

The subject of this chapter is an attempt to answer the following question: does crowdsourcing show features of a management fashion? The starting point for the assumed considerations is the ascertainment that crowdsourcing is an interdisciplinary and relatively new concept. It has been taken up in the literature by representatives of various scientific disciplines, starting with medical sciences, through technical sciences, and ending with economic sciences. Despite such dispersion, it is the object of researchers' interest in the context of open innovations, problem solving, performing tasks, optimising costs of the organisation's activity, or as a tool of marketing and cooperation with the customer.

The chapter is composed of four parts. In the first one the definitions of management fashion and fad have been presented. The second part contains examples of applying crowdsourcing in the public sector. The third part includes considerations on crowdsourcing as a public management fashion. In the last, fourth part focus has been made on the future of crowdsourcing. To realise the goal of this chapter, a bibliometric analysis of publications from 2006 to 2017 published in the ProQuest scientific base was used.

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