

THE IMPACT OF THE METAMODERN CONCEPT ON THE ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR BUSINESS STRATEGIES IN CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract

This article examines how the concept of metamodernism influences the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations and how their business strategies transform in uncertain conditions. Characterized by an oscillation between modernist optimism and postmodernist skepticism, metamodernism provides a unique basis for understanding how organizations adapt to changing environments by selecting and transforming their economic behavior and business strategies. This study aims to analyze the interaction between metamodernism and organizational behavior, paying particular attention to the challenges and opportunities this creates for infrastructure organizations. It identifies key metamodernist features, such as an emphasis on flexibility, emotional depth and pragmatic idealism, and examines how these features influence decision-making and strategic planning processes. Based on a review of recent scientific publications, the study highlights issues with existing approaches to economic behavior in uncertain conditions and proposes a new classification of organizational strategies influenced by metamodernism. The results obtained show that, while metamodernism encourages innovative and adaptive business strategies, it also creates challenges in managing organizational stability. The study concludes with practical recommendations for managing infrastructure organizations in uncertain times, emphasising the need for a balanced approach that integrates metamodern principles with traditional strategic frameworks.

Keywords: metamodernism, economic behavior, infrastructure organizations, business strategies, uncertainty, organizational transformation

I. Introduction

The modern economic reality is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty caused by global crises, technological changes and shifts in cultural paradigms. In such conditions, infrastructure organizations are faced with the need to review and transform their business

strategies and economic behavior. One of the key factors influencing these processes is the concept of metamodernism, which combines elements of postmodern irony and modernist sincerity. In general, metamodern means fluctuations between two opposite concepts and the simultaneity of their use.

The economic behavior of organizations under uncertainty has long been the focus of academic and practical research. Traditional approaches such as risk management systems (Kaplan & Mikes, 2012) [9] that emphasize the importance of categorizing risks and implementing individual mitigation strategies, adaptive strategies or dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997) [10], that allow organizations to reconfigure resources in response to changing conditions, and resilience theory by Folke et al. (2010) [8] that emphasizes the role of resilience in maintaining organizational stability during disruptions have traditionally dominated the discourse. However, the emergence of metamodern as a cultural and philosophical concept has brought new dimensions to this debate. Metamodernism, defined by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker (2010) [11] as an oscillation between modernist progressivism and postmodernist relativism, offers a fresh perspective on the analysis of organizational behavior in uncertain environments.

In Russia, the theoretical foundations of the behavior of economic agents were developed by B. H. Erznkyan, O. S. Ponomareva [2], G.B. Kleiner [3], S.L. Sazanova [5]. Modern domestic researchers present scientific works on various issues related to metamodernism. Thus, E. V. Khlyshcheva considered metamodern as a new worldview [7]. D. P. Frolov investigated post-institutionalism in the 21st century [6]; G. N. Ryazanova studied the features of consumer behavior management in a metamodern organization [4].

The analysis of scientific works on metamodernism and uncertainty showed insufficient application of these trends in the study of the features of economic behavior and business strategies of infrastructure organizations.

The concept of metamodernism is a philosophical and cultural paradigm that seeks to overcome the limitations of postmodernism. It suggests a cyclical movement between enthusiasm and irony, hope and melancholy, striving for sincerity and meaningfulness in an era of uncertainty. The main features of metamodernism are oscillation (fluctuations) between opposites, informed naivety, empathy, and the desire for transcendence. Metamodernism rejects the relativism and nihilism of postmodernism, while recognizing its contribution to critical thinking.

In conditions of uncertainty caused by global economic and political factors, infrastructure organizations that are guided by metamodern principles demonstrate greater resilience and adaptability. They more effectively exploit the opportunities that arise from change and minimize the risks associated with it. Thus, metamodernism has a significant impact on the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations, stimulating them to transform business strategies and increase resilience under uncertainty.

The need to study the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations and the transformation of their business strategies in conditions of uncertainty is due to the growing complexity of the external environment. In Russia, these processes have their own characteristics associated with the historical and cultural context, as well as with current economic and political conditions.

The study is motivated by the need to integrate metamodern principles into the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations. In modern Russia, where uncertainty is exacerbated by geopolitical and economic challenges, such integration is especially relevant. Using the features of metamodernism and their impact on organizational behavior, the study aims to provide practical information for the effective management of infrastructure organizations under uncertainty.

II. Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the concepts and regulations of economic science, including the concepts of modernism, postmodernism and metamodernism, set out in the scientific works of foreign and domestic scientists. The following general scientific methods, ways of studying and processing data were used: logical, comparative, systemic, strategic, index analyses, methods of generalization and expert assessments, synthesis, classification and typology.

III. Results

In conditions of uncertainty, the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations is studied using several scientific approaches.

First, the neoclassical approach assumes that organizations seek to maximize profits by making decisions based on rational cost-benefit analysis. However, this approach is often criticized for ignoring behavioral factors and bounded rationality.

Second, the behavioral approach considers cognitive distortions, emotions, and social norms that influence decision making under uncertainty. This approach includes prospect theory, bounded rationality theory, and social network theory.

Third, the institutional approach focuses on the role of formal and informal institutions that define the rules and norms of organizational behavior. Institutions can reduce uncertainty by providing stability and predictability to the environment in which organizations operate.

Fourth, the evolutionary approach considers organizations as adaptive systems that learn and change in response to changing conditions. This approach emphasizes the importance of innovation, experimentation, and the selection of the most successful strategies.

The concept of metamodernism is a cultural and philosophical phenomenon that arose as a reaction to the crisis of postmodernism. The content of metamodernism is reflected in a number of the following features.

1. An oscillation between irony and sincerity, according to which organizations and individuals are simultaneously skeptical of grand narratives and eager to express their values sincerely. It may also be represented by a switch in the approaches between optimism and skepticism.

2. Plurality of identities –means the subject's rejection of rigid categories and the acceptance of hybrid forms. At the same time, it can also be perceived as a balancing of idealistic goals or ideas with practical limitations.

3. The rejection of binary oppositions – metamodernism clearly rejects dichotomies such as "tradition or innovation", "global or local", etc.

The directions of modern metamodernism are quite diverse and cover culture, economics, technology, sustainable development, and the social sphere.

Metamodernism influences cultural narratives by shaping how organizations perceive and respond to uncertainty.

The economic behavior of infrastructure organizations in modern Russia is characterized by a high degree of dependence on government regulation and rate policy. In conditions of uncertainty caused by geopolitical factors and changes in the economic situation, ensuring the stability of operation and maintaining the reliability of infrastructure systems becomes a priority.

The transformation of business strategies of infrastructure organizations is aimed at optimizing costs, increasing operational efficiency and diversifying funding sources. Digital technologies and innovative solutions are being actively implemented to improve the quality of services provided and reduce costs.

Particular attention is paid to the development of public-private partnerships as a mechanism for attracting investment in the modernization and expansion of infrastructure facilities. An important aspect is adaptation to changing consumer needs and sustainable development requirements.

Under uncertainty, infrastructure organizations are seeking to increase the flexibility and adaptability of their business models, as well as to strengthen their interactions with government authorities and other stakeholders. This helps minimize risks and ensure sustainable development in the long term.

Metamodernism, with its emphasis on oscillations between enthusiasm and skepticism, sincerity and irony, has a significant impact on the formation of cultural narratives. Organizations functioning in metamodernism are faced with the need to adapt their strategies and communication approaches to the perception of uncertainty that is becoming a dominant feature of contemporary culture. The impact of metamodernism on culture is manifested in the rejection of universal truths and the recognition of multiple perspectives. This forces organizations to develop more flexible and context-sensitive narratives that can accommodate a diversity of perspectives and values.

Cultural narratives in the metamodern era are characterized by increased reflexivity and self-criticism. Organizations strive for greater transparency and openness, recognizing their own limitations and shortcomings. This allows them to build more trusting relationships with audiences and enhance their reputation. Moreover, metamodernism stimulates the search for new forms of expression and communication. Organizations experiment with different media formats and platforms, seeking to establish a deeper and more meaningful connection with the target audience.

The economic aspect of metamodernism is manifested in the introduction of integrative (hybrid) business models that synthesize market and socio-centric tasks. Such models combine elements of entrepreneurship aimed at eliminating current social imbalances with commercialization mechanisms that ensure financial stability. In contrast to classic non-profit organizations, which focus on maximizing social effect, and commercial structures, which are focused on making a profit, hybrid formats assume a synergy of both vectors. The companies, producing biodegradable package, can serve as an example, since their activities not only minimize environmental damage, but also create jobs for vulnerable groups (for example, migrants or disabled persons). Similarly, technology startups that develop low-cost medical gadgets for the poor (including the elderly), combine a social mission with investor attraction and profitability. The effectiveness of such models is due to the ability to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the dual result – social impact and economic return. This requires the creation of specialized metrics that integrate indicators of the ecological footprint, the level of employment of target groups, ROI (return on investments) and EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). The monitoring system should reflect both short-term financial results and long-term changes in society.

Thus, the metamodern economic paradigm proposes to overcome the conflict between profit and social values, proving their mutual complementarity. This is confirmed by cases where the improvement of the quality of life of the population correlates with the growth of customer loyalty and brand sustainability.

Digital transformation is a key element of metamodernism, implementing its principles of adaptability and nonlinearity. The introduction of cloud platforms, AI and IoT allows organizations to quickly restructure processes, test innovations and respond to market fluctuations. Decentralization of management, replacing rigid hierarchies with agile approaches, accelerates communication between departments and stimulates creativity. For example, the transition to blockchain document management systems reduces bureaucratic costs, and the use of big data optimizes logistics.

A culture of continuous learning is becoming a must: employees master digital tools (e.g. low-code platforms), which increases their competitiveness in a VUCA world. However, risks include dependence on IT infrastructure and cyber-attacks, which require investments in cybersecurity.

Sustainable development in metamodernism is interpreted as a triune system that balances economic, environmental and social KPIs. Investments in “green” technologies (solar power plants, waste recycling) and ethical supply chains (fair trade) are transformed from optional practices into mandatory standards. For example, ESG reporting by companies now influences stock quotations, and the carbon footprint of a product influences consumer choice.

The critical difference between metamodernism and postmodernism is the recognition of the conventionality of “grand narratives” while maintaining attempts to use them constructively. Unlike the modernist belief in linear progress, metamodernism allows for cyclical development, where innovations are combined with a rethinking of traditions (for example, the use of AI in ethnographic research).

Analysis of the economic behavior of organizations in conditions of instability reveals a correlation between the level of environmental uncertainty and the choice of strategies. The introduction of metamodern principles (flexibility, multidisciplinary) can generate both positive effects (reduction of transaction costs, growth of innovative potential) and risks (overload of resources, imbalance of short- and long-term goals). The proposed classification of strategies (Table 1) demonstrates that the synthesis of adaptability and sustainability increases the resilience of organizations in crisis scenarios.

Table 1: *Classifications of economic behavior and business strategies of infrastructure organizations under uncertainty*

Type of economic behavior and business strategy	Characteristic
1. Adaptive behavior (business strategy)	Use of flexibility and adaptability
2. Sustainable behavior (business strategy)	Ensuring stability during disruptions
3. Innovative behavior (innovative business model)	Implementation of new technologies and business models
4. Socially oriented behavior (business strategy)	Taking the interests of stakeholders and society into account

The choice of the type of economic behavior and business strategy by each infrastructure organization is largely determined by the indicators of uncertainty of the environment of its operation. The orientation of economic behavior and business strategies of infrastructure organizations on the use of the principles of metamodernism can lead to positive and negative effects.

The positive effects of the application of the concept of metamodernism consists in the fact, that as a cultural and intellectual paradigm, it has a significant influence on various spheres of human activity, stimulating progress and development. For example, in relation to infrastructure organizations, one of the positive aspects of its use is the orientation of economic behavior and business strategies towards stimulating and encouraging innovation. The oscillations between opposite poles, that characterize metamodernism, create fertile ground for the emergence of new ideas and approaches, as they stimulate critical thinking and the search for compromises between traditional and modern concepts. In addition, emotional involvement, which is an integral part of metamodernism, helps to form deeper connections between employees of infrastructure organizations and the world around. Awareness of the complexity and multifaceted reality of the external environment causes empathy and sympathy in employees, which, in turn, motivates them to actively participate in solving economic, social and environmental problems on an innovative basis. Pragmatic idealism, which combines the pursuit of high ideals and a realistic assessment of possibilities, allows us to find new effective solutions to achieve our goals.

Metamodernism encourages constructive dialogue and collaboration between different stakeholders, which contributes to the development and implementation of innovative projects aimed at improving the quality of life and sustainable development.

Metamodern as a whole contributes to infrastructure organizations becoming more open to change, adopting various hybrid business strategies, and increasing staff attention to corporate social responsibility.

The study also revealed negative effects from the application of the concept of metamodernism in infrastructure organizations. For example, it introduces complexity and instability in management decision-making processes. This can largely be explained by the fact that metamodernism, characterized by oscillations between enthusiasm and skepticism, creates additional levels of uncertainty. In the context of constant paradigm shifts and the absence of clear guidelines, decision-making by management systems becomes more labor-intensive and error-prone. Such complexity is exacerbated by the fragmentation of information and the pluralism of development prospects. The lack of a single, widely accepted narrative means that decision makers are forced to consider a multitude of conflicting points of view, making it difficult to formulate a coherent line of economic behavior or business strategy.

It is necessary to specifically highlight the problems that arise when using the concept of metamodernism in infrastructure management systems, which include the complexity of managing hybrid types of economic behavior and business strategies, the risk of identity loss, and uncertainty in long-term planning.

The complexity of managing hybrid types of economic behavior and business strategies is associated with the need to simultaneously combine and alternate opposite approaches, such as sustainable development and innovation, centralization and decentralization. Effective management requires decision makers to have a deep understanding of the context, the ability to assess risks and flexibly adapt strategies to changing circumstances. Insufficient development of coordination and control mechanisms can lead to contradictory actions and a decrease in the overall efficiency of the system. In addition, the problem of assessing the effectiveness of metamodernist strategies arises. Traditional assessment methods, focused on achieving specific, measurable goals, turn out to be ineffective under conditions of constant variability and uncertainty characteristic of metamodernism. There is a need to develop new approaches to assessment that consider both quantitative and qualitative indicators and are capable of reflecting the dynamics of change and the long-term consequences of decisions made.

The next problem is the risk of identity loss, which means that when trying to balance between the opposite poles characteristic of metamodernism (e.g. between utopia and pragmatism, knowledge and faith), the infrastructure management system may lose a clear idea of its main goals and values. This may lead to a lack of coordination in decision-making and strategic planning. The uncertainty in long-term planning and the complexity, inherent in metamodernism, can make it difficult to predict future states of infrastructure systems. In the context of rapidly changing technological, economic, and social factors, attempts to adapt to metamodern trends can lead to short-term decisions that ignore long-term consequences for the sustainability and reliability of infrastructure.

Taking into account the positive and negative effects of the concept of metamodernism in infrastructure organizations, it is proposed to focus on the following management principles:

- operational flexibility, which implies the ability of infrastructure management systems to quickly adapt to changes;
- ensuring sustainable development, which means the transition to sustainable and stable styles of economic behavior and business strategy (for a certain period) during changes;
- interaction means the organization's readiness for cooperation, exchange of knowledge, technologies and experience, transparency in communications and decision-making;
- balance – the feasibility of integrating meta-modern principles with traditional frameworks.

IV. Discussion of the results

The obtained results indicate that the concept of metamodern has a significant impact on the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations.

In conditions of uncertainty, companies are forced to change their economic behavior and business strategies, leading to the emergence of hybrid strategies. The findings also highlight the role of cultural narratives and digital transformation in shaping the organizational behavior of infrastructure companies. The study extends these ideas by offering a new classification of strategies influenced by metamodernism. The emphasis on emotional depth and pragmatic idealism represents a significant deviation from traditional approaches, offering new possibilities for research and practice.

V. Conclusions

1. Metamodernism provides a unique framework for understanding the economic behavior of infrastructure organizations under uncertainty.

2. The concept encourages innovative and adaptive strategies, but also introduces complexity into the decision-making process.

3. Organizations must balance between metamodern principles and traditional structures to achieve stability and growth.

4. Key challenges include the complexity of managing hybrid strategies and the risk of identity loss.

5. Future research should examine the long-term implications of metamodernism for organizational behavior and strategic planning.

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