

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FORM OF AN ENTREPRENEUR: SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the moral and ethical image of the entrepreneur from a socio-philosophical perspective. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that in a market economy entrepreneurial activity cannot be reduced to profit-seeking alone, but is deeply connected with social trust, responsibility, justice, integrity, and moral legitimacy. The purpose of the article is to conceptualize the entrepreneur's moral-ethical profile not as a simple set of personal virtues, but as an integrative socio-philosophical construct formed at the intersection of economic action, legal norms, stakeholder relations, social responsibility, and cultural values. The study applies hermeneutic, axiological, comparative-analytical, institutional, and stakeholder approaches. As a result, the article proposes a five-component model of the entrepreneur's moral-ethical image: axiological integrity, legally responsible conduct, justice toward stakeholders, social usefulness, and reflective self-limitation. The article concludes that the entrepreneur's moral-ethical image is not an ornamental addition to business, but an ontological and functional condition of its legitimacy, sustainability, and public credibility.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, moral-ethical image, socio-philosophical analysis, business ethics, social responsibility, trust capital, stakeholders, integrity, conscience, legitimacy.

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada tadbirkorning ma'naviy-axloqiy qiyofasi ijtimoiy-falsafiy nuqtayi nazardan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotning dolzarbligi bozor iqtisodiyoti sharoitida tadbirkor faoliyatining faqat foyda olish mexanizmi emas, balki ijtimoiy ishonch, mas'uliyat, adolat, halollik va ma'naviy legitimlik bilan chambarchas bog'liq hodisa ekanligi bilan belgilanadi. Maqolaning maqsadi tadbirkorning ma'naviy-axloqiy qiyofasini shaxsiy fazilatlar yig'indisi sifatida emas, balki iqtisodiy faoliyat, huquqiy me'yor, ijtimoiy mas'uliyat, manfaatdor tomonlar bilan munosabat va madaniy qadriyatlar kesishmasida shakllanuvchi integrativ ijtimoiy-falsafiy konstruktsiya sifatida asoslashdan iborat. Tadqiqotda germeneytik, aksiologik, qiyosiy-tahliliy, institutsional va manfaatdor tomonlar yondashuvlaridan foydalanildi. Natijada tadbirkorning ma'naviy-axloqiy qiyofasining besh tarkibli modeli taklif etildi: aksiologik yaxlitlik, huquqiy-mas'uliyatli xulq, manfaatdor tomonlarga nisbatan adolat, ijtimoiy foydalilik va refleksiv o'zini cheklash qobiliyati. Xulosa sifatida, tadbirkorning ma'naviy-axloqiy qiyofasi biznesning "qo'shimcha bezagi" emas, balki uning legitimligi, barqarorligi va jamiyatdagi ishonchlilik darajasini belgilovchi ontologik hamda funksional omil ekani asoslandi.

Kalit soʻzlar: tadbirkor, maʼnaviy-axloqiy qiyofa, ijtimoiy-falsafiy tahlil, biznes etikasi, ijtimoiy masʼuliyat, ishonch kapitali, manfaatdor tomonlar, halollik, vijdon, legitimlik.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматривается нравственно-этический облик предпринимателя в социально-философском измерении. Актуальность исследования определяется тем, что в условиях рыночной экономики предпринимательская деятельность не сводится исключительно к получению прибыли, а тесно связана с общественным доверием, ответственностью, справедливостью, добросовестностью и моральной легитимностью. Цель статьи состоит в том, чтобы обосновать нравственно-этический облик предпринимателя не как простую совокупность личных качеств, а как интегративную социально-философскую конструкцию, формирующуюся на пересечении экономической активности, правовых норм, отношений со стейкхолдерами, социальной ответственности и культурных ценностей. В исследовании использованы герменевтический, аксиологический, сравнительно-аналитический, институциональный и stakeholder-подходы. В результате предложена пятикомпонентная модель нравственно-этического облика предпринимателя: аксиологическая целостность, правомерно-ответственное поведение, справедливость по отношению к заинтересованным сторонам, социальная полезность и рефлексивная способность к самоограничению. Сделан вывод о том, что нравственно-этический облик предпринимателя является не внешним дополнением к бизнесу, а онтологическим и функциональным условием его легитимности, устойчивости и общественной надежности.

Ключевые слова: предприниматель, нравственно-этический облик, социально-философский анализ, бизнес-этика, социальная ответственность, капитал доверия, заинтересованные стороны, честность, совесть, легитимность.

INTRODUCTION

The deepening of the market economy and the increasing role of private initiative in social life make it necessary to approach the entrepreneur not only in terms of economic efficiency, but also in terms of moral and ethical criteria. In today's conditions, an entrepreneur is not just a capital owner or an agent who can see an opportunity in the market; he is an active social subject who creates employment, shapes the culture of economic relations, influences the atmosphere of trust, and ensures a balance between many stakeholders. Therefore, when it comes to the moral and ethical image of an entrepreneur, the issue is not limited to his personal ethics; it is about a holistic moral quality that affects economic decisions, legal loyalty, attitude to stakeholders, responsibility to the public, and society's trust in the entrepreneur. In recent years, research on this topic has rapidly increased, and scientific reviews have highlighted the increasing interpretation of the entrepreneur as a subject that produces social and ethical consequences. The problem is that in practical life, entrepreneurship is often defined only by profit, competition, and risk, as a result of which the moral factor is considered secondary. However, from a socio-philosophical point of view, profit and morality are not contradictory: if entrepreneurship erodes social trust, gains unfair

advantage, violates the interests of the weak, or considers legality only as a formal obstacle, it loses long-term legitimacy, even if it brings short-term economic results. The relevance of the topic is also evident in the fact that in today's economic space, entrepreneurial actions are increasingly open to public assessment. In the digital information environment, a company's or individual entrepreneur's dealings with consumers, attitude to employees, tax discipline, environmental footprint, honesty in advertising, and commitment to social responsibility are quickly exposed, and public opinion is immediately formed. Therefore, the moral and ethical image is no longer just a matter of internal conscience, but also a criterion of reputational capital, market trust, and social status. The purpose of this article is to interpret the spiritual and moral image of an entrepreneur as a socio-philosophical construct, identify its structural elements, and demonstrate its functional significance in modern market relations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature on business ethics shows that several stable theoretical lines have been formed in this area. Harris, Sapienza and Bowie argue that entrepreneurship itself cannot be ethically neutral, but always operates based on certain values. Freeman explains the success of the enterprise not only in terms of shareholder profits, but also through a system of fair relations with employees, customers, creditors, the community and the state. Carroll shows that the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic layers of corporate social responsibility are inextricably linked. Greenwood and Van Buren interpret trust between business and stakeholders as a fundamental ethical category. Kaptein interprets the entrepreneur as a “moral entrepreneur” who proactively promotes new ethical standards. Chell and co-authors show that being “social” does not automatically mean being “ethical”. Ahmed and Aassouli argue that trust is enhanced when religious and moral norms are practiced, otherwise agency problems persist. Therefore, the literature analysis shows that the spiritual and moral image of an entrepreneur is not a list of separate behavioral qualities, but a complex system between values, norms, trust, legitimacy, and social utility.¹

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was of a theoretical-analytical nature, and used a socio-philosophical conceptual synthesis method, rather than an empirical questionnaire or experiment. The methodological basis consisted of five directions. The first was an axiological approach, which allowed us to analyze the moral image of the entrepreneur through a system of values such as honesty, justice, conscience, responsibility, transparency and utility. The second was a stakeholder approach, which served to study the moral state of the entrepreneur based on his attitude towards various stakeholders. The third method was an institutional analysis, in which entrepreneurial ethics was seen not only as a product of individual intentions, but also in relation to the institutional conditions and the formal regulatory environment supporting business. Classical approaches to social capital emphasize that trust, norms and networks are fundamental factors for development. The fourth method is a hermeneutic interpretation, which allowed us to interpret the use and meaning of concepts such as “spiritual image”,

¹Kaptein M. The Moral Entrepreneur: A New Component of Ethical Leadership // Journal of Business Ethics, 2019, Vol. 156, No. 4. – P. 1135–1150. – DOI: 10.1007/s10551-017-3641-0.

“trust”, “responsibility”, “legitimacy”, “moral entrepreneur” in various sources. The fifth method is a comparative-analytical approach, which helped to compare foreign theories of ethical entrepreneurship with Uzbek normative-legal approaches to private entrepreneurship, conflict of interest and corporate governance.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As a result of the analysis, a five-component socio-philosophical model was developed that expresses the spiritual and moral image of an entrepreneur. The first component is axiological integrity. It means the correspondence between the internal values of the entrepreneur and his external economic behavior. The second component is legal-responsible behavior, which requires seeing legitimacy not as obedience arising from fear, but as moral internalization. Private entrepreneurship laws establish a transparent and responsible framework for doing business. Conflict of interest regulations reinforce the need for openness and accountability to business entities. Corporate governance codes establish institutional criteria for responsible governance. The third element is fairness to stakeholders. Freeman’s stakeholder theory suggests that entrepreneurial success is measured by the quality of relationships with stakeholders.[FN3] The fourth element is social utility and trust capital. Research on social capital highlights trust, networks, and norm loyalty as important factors in economic development.[FN10] The fifth element is the ability to reflexively limit oneself and create norms. As Kaptein notes, a truly ethical leader not only obeys existing norms, but also creates new ethical standards.[FN6] The discussion of the results shows that the moral and ethical image of the entrepreneur is not an idealistic requirement that is opposed to profit-making, but rather a factor that ensures a long-term and socially acceptable form of economic efficiency. In unethical entrepreneurship, trust is eroded, and in an untrustworthy economic environment, transactions become more expensive, control costs increase, and cooperation weakens.[FN10] In modern entrepreneurship, social legitimacy is becoming a condition for market success; customers, employees, and investors are increasingly paying attention to how the enterprise operates.[FN5] Fourth, social entrepreneurship or reliance on religious values does not automatically confer moral and ethical maturity: Chell et al. show that social intent does not always lead to moral outcomes,[FN7] while Ahmed and Aassouli argue that agency problems return when religious and ethical norms are not practiced.[FN8]].^{2,3,4}

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The socio-philosophical analysis conducted has shown that the issue of the spiritual and moral image of an entrepreneur is not a marginal topic of a market economy, but, on the contrary, is a central factor determining the legitimacy, reliability and social acceptability of entrepreneurship. The five-component model proposed in the article — axiological integrity, legally responsible behavior, justice towards stakeholders, social utility and reflexive self-restraint — allows for a systematic explanation of the spiritual image of an entrepreneur. Based on this model, a number of practical suggestions were formulated: first, it is advisable

2Korporativ boshqaruv kodeksi. – Aksiyadorlik jamiyatlari faoliyati samaradorligini oshirish va korporativ boshqaruv tizimini takomillashtirish komissiyasining 2015 yil 31 dekabrda qarori (2016 yil 11 fevraldagi 02-02/01-187-son bayonoma bilan tasdiqlangan).
3O‘zbekiston Respublikasining Qonuni. Manfaatlarga to‘qnashuvi to‘g‘risida. – 05.06.2024, № O‘RQ-931.
4O‘zbekiston Respublikasining Qonuni. Xususiy korxonaga to‘g‘risida. – 11.12.2003, № 558-II.

to include mandatory modules on business ethics and conflict of interest in entrepreneurship development programs; second, it is necessary to teach the spiritual and moral dimensions of entrepreneurial activity in higher education and professional development systems based on case studies and reflexive analysis; third, it is necessary to strengthen the code of ethics, internal openness, whistleblowing, declaration of conflict of interest and reputational incentive mechanisms in corporate governance practice; Fourth, in assessing the success of a business, employee honor, consumer trust, impact on the local community, environmental responsibility, and social trust capital should be taken into account in addition to pure financial results.

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