
Management Concepts in the Thinking of Prof. Marcin Staniewski: Systemic, Anthropological, and Epistemological Analysis

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Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to reconstruct and interpret the management concepts developed by Prof. Marcin Staniewski through an integrated epistemological, anthropological, and ethical lens. The study aims to demonstrate how knowledge management, entrepreneurship, and sustainability form a coherent hermeneutic framework in which management is understood as a moral and meaning-oriented practice rather than a purely technical activity.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study employs a qualitative, interpretative research approach based on hermeneutic analysis of Prof. Staniewski's selected monographs and peer-reviewed articles published between 2007 and 2025. The analysis is grounded in philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur), humanistic management theory, and contemporary epistemology of organisational knowledge. Comparative conceptual analysis is used to situate Staniewski's thought within international management and ethics literature.

Findings: The findings reveal a coherent intellectual trajectory in Staniewski's work: from knowledge management understood as a hermeneutic and participatory process, through an anthropological conception of entrepreneurship rooted in hope, responsibility, and relationality, to a mature vision of sustainable management based on ethical organisational intelligence. His approach integrates cognition, values, and action, redefining management as a form of practical wisdom (phronesis) oriented toward the common good.

Practical Implications: The paper provides managers and scholars with a conceptual framework for integrating ethics, knowledge, and sustainability into organisational practice. It highlights the importance of ethical intelligence, dialogical leadership, and value-based decision-making in environments characterised by uncertainty and ecological responsibility.

Originality/Value: This study offers the first comprehensive and systematic synthesis of Prof. Staniewski's management thought as an integral hermeneutic project. It contributes to the literature by bridging management theory, ethics, and theological anthropology, proposing a model of management as a hermeneutics of the common good.

Keywords: Humanistic management, hermeneutics of management, knowledge management, entrepreneurship, ethical intelligence, sustainable development, organisational wisdom.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary management science is undergoing a profound transformation, marked by a gradual shift from predominantly economic and technical paradigms toward cognitive, anthropological, and axiological perspectives. While early management theories focused primarily on efficiency, structure, and control, even classical authors such as Barnard (1938), Simon (1947), and Drucker (1954) recognised that organisations are fundamentally social and moral realities. In their view, organisational effectiveness depends not only on formal systems and procedures, but also on motivation, values, and the meanings that individuals attribute to their work.

In the second half of the twentieth century, management theory increasingly moved beyond mechanistic models of the organisation. The rise of knowledge-based perspectives reframed organisations as communities of learning and interpretation rather than as merely rational systems. Seminal contributions by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and Spender (1996) laid the foundations for organisational epistemology, emphasising the social and tacit dimensions of knowledge.

In the Polish context, this line of reflection was further developed by Koźmiński (1999) and Jemielniak (2008), who linked knowledge management with uncertainty, organisational culture, and the symbolic dimensions of managerial practice.

Within this evolving discourse, the work of Prof. Marcin Staniewski occupies a distinctive and intellectually coherent position. His scholarship consistently seeks to integrate epistemological reflection on knowledge, anthropological insight into human agency, and axiological concern for ethics and the common good.

In his monograph *Human Resource Management and Knowledge Management in an Enterprise* (Staniewski, 2008), he formulates a fundamental thesis that organisational knowledge is not merely an informational resource, but an existential and relational category rooted in interpersonal relations and ethical cooperation. Knowledge management is thus interpreted as a hermeneutic process — an ongoing interpretation of human experience within the organisational context.

This line of thought is further developed in Staniewski's later works, in which innovation and entrepreneurship are no longer understood primarily as technological or economic phenomena. Instead, innovation is seen as emerging from the dynamics of meaning, values, and interpersonal trust within organisational communities (Staniewski, 2011).

Empirical studies conducted jointly with Katarzyna Awruk deepen this perspective by demonstrating that entrepreneurial motivation and success are closely linked to psychological maturity, family communication patterns, and moral responsibility rather than to purely instrumental rationality (Staniewski and Awruk, 2015; 2019; 2021).

Staniewski's approach places him firmly within the tradition of humanistic management, represented internationally by scholars such as Melé (2012), Sison and Fontrodona (2012), and Bouckaert and Zsolnai (2019). These authors argue that management cannot be reduced to value-neutral techniques, but must be understood as a moral practice oriented toward the *bonum commune*.

In this spirit, Staniewski (2016) conceptualises management as a process of personal and communal self-development guided by values. Entrepreneurship, in his interpretation, becomes an existential expression of hope — a dynamic of meaning through which individuals participate in shaping economic and social reality.

In recent years, Staniewski's research agenda has expanded to include issues of sustainable development, energy transition, and environmental responsibility (Staniewski *et al.*, 2024; Bekun *et al.*, 2025). These works interpret sustainability not merely as a regulatory or technological challenge, but as a moral and cognitive transformation of organisations — a form of institutional *metanoia* directed toward integral development and responsibility for creation.

This perspective resonates with contemporary concepts of wisdom-based management (Nonaka *et al.*, 2022) and the emerging field of management theology (Sison and Fontrodona, 2023), both of which emphasise the unity of cognition, action, and morality.

Despite the growing body of Staniewski's publications, there is a noticeable lack of systematic studies that reconstruct his thought as a coherent theoretical project. Existing analyses tend to focus on selected empirical results or individual concepts, without addressing the underlying epistemological and anthropological foundations that unify his work.

The aim of this paper is therefore to provide a comprehensive reconstruction and interpretation of Prof. Marcin Staniewski's management concepts as an integral hermeneutic framework. The study seeks to demonstrate how his theories of knowledge management, entrepreneurship, and sustainability together constitute a coherent model of management understood as a space of meaning, ethics, and responsible action.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

2.1 Knowledge Management as an Epistemological Problem in Management Science

In classical management theory, knowledge was predominantly treated as an instrumental resource, enabling more efficient planning, coordination, and control of organisational processes. Early approaches focused on information processing and

decision-making rationality, as exemplified by Simon (1947), where knowledge functioned primarily as input for optimising managerial choices.

Over time, however, this reductionist view proved insufficient for explaining innovation, learning, and adaptability in complex organisational environments.

A significant shift occurred with the emergence of organisational knowledge theory in the late twentieth century. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) introduced a dynamic epistemology in which knowledge is created through the interaction between tacit and explicit dimensions.

Their SECI model emphasised the social character of knowing, situating knowledge creation within shared practices and collective reflection. Similarly, Spender (1996) argued that organisational knowledge is inherently social and embedded in cultural and institutional contexts rather than being fully codifiable or transferable.

Philosophical hermeneutics provides a deeper conceptual foundation for these insights. Gadamer (1960) understood knowledge not as objective representation, but as an event of understanding occurring within historical and dialogical horizons. Ricoeur (1969; 1990) further developed this perspective by linking understanding with self-interpretation and ethical responsibility. From this standpoint, cognition is inseparable from values, narratives, and communal practices.

Within management studies, these hermeneutic insights have been reflected in humanistic and interpretative approaches that view organisations as communities of meaning rather than purely instrumental systems (Melé, 2012; Bouckaert & Zsolnai, 2019). Knowledge management, in this perspective, becomes a process of sense-making and ethical orientation rather than merely a technique for information control.

2.2 Humanistic Management and the Anthropology of Organisational Action

Humanistic management theory challenges the assumption that organisations are value-neutral mechanisms aimed solely at efficiency and profit maximisation. Instead, it emphasises the centrality of the human person, dignity, and moral responsibility in organisational life (Melé, 2012). From this perspective, management is a practical activity oriented toward the development of persons and communities.

Anthropological approaches to management highlight that economic action is always embedded in social relations, cultural meanings, and ethical frameworks. Schumpeter's (1942) concept of entrepreneurship already suggested that innovation arises from creative human agency rather than from mechanical market forces. Later research expanded this view by demonstrating that motivation, trust, and values play a decisive role in organisational performance and innovation (McClelland, 1961; Sison and Fontrodona, 2012).

In this context, entrepreneurship is increasingly interpreted as a form of self-realisation and participation in the common good rather than merely as risk-taking behaviour. Ricoeur's (1990) notion of ethics as "aiming at the good life, with and for others, in just institutions" provides a philosophical foundation for understanding entrepreneurial activity as both personal and communal. Humanistic management thus integrates economic rationality with ethical and anthropological reflection.

2.3 Ethics, Sustainability, and Organisational Wisdom

In recent decades, the growing awareness of environmental degradation and social inequality has led to the integration of ethics and sustainability into management theory. The concept of sustainable development extends managerial responsibility beyond short-term financial performance to include long-term social and ecological consequences. ESG frameworks have become widely adopted, yet critics argue that without ethical grounding they risk degenerating into formal compliance mechanisms.

Contemporary authors increasingly emphasise the need for wisdom-based and value-oriented management. Nonaka *et al.* (2022) propose *wisdom-based management* as an integration of knowledge, values, and action, rooted in practical judgment (*phronesis*). Similarly, Bouckaert and Zsolnai (2019) interpret business activity as a moral practice embedded in spiritual and cultural traditions.

Theological and philosophical approaches further deepen this perspective. Sison and Fontrodona (2023) argue that management can be understood as a form of participation in the moral order, where organisational decisions contribute to the common good. From this standpoint, sustainability is not merely a strategic objective, but a moral and cognitive transformation of organisations — a process of reorienting goals, practices, and identities.

2.4 Positioning Staniewski's Contribution

Against this theoretical background, the work of Prof. Marcin Staniewski can be understood as an original synthesis of organisational epistemology, anthropological reflection, and ethical responsibility.

His approach goes beyond instrumental knowledge management by interpreting knowledge as a hermeneutic and value-laden process. At the same time, he develops an anthropology of entrepreneurship rooted in hope, relationality, and moral agency, and extends these insights toward a concept of sustainable and ethically intelligent organisations.

This literature review provides the conceptual framework for the subsequent analysis, which reconstructs Staniewski's thought as an integral model of management combining epistemology, anthropology, and ethics into a coherent hermeneutic project.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative research design grounded in philosophical hermeneutics and humanistic management theory. The objective is not to test hypotheses in a positivist sense, but to reconstruct and interpret the internal coherence, conceptual evolution, and normative foundations of Prof. Marcin Staniewski's management thought. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for analysing theoretical and normative contributions that integrate epistemological, anthropological, and ethical dimensions.

The methodological framework is based on hermeneutic analysis, understood as a systematic process of interpretation aimed at uncovering layers of meaning embedded in texts. Drawing on the hermeneutics of Gadamer (1960) and Ricoeur (1990), the analysis assumes that understanding is dialogical and historically situated. The researcher engages in an interpretative dialogue with the texts, seeking to identify both explicit arguments and implicit philosophical assumptions.

3.2 Research Material

The empirical material of the study consists of selected monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles authored or co-authored by Prof. Marcin Staniewski between 2007 and 2025. The corpus includes works on knowledge management, entrepreneurship, human capital, ethics, sustainability, and energy transition, published in internationally recognised journals such as *Journal of Business Research*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *Journal of Environmental Management*, and *Energy*.

The selection of texts was guided by three criteria:

1. Thematic relevance to knowledge management, entrepreneurship, ethics, or sustainability.
2. Conceptual maturity, understood as the presence of explicit theoretical reflection rather than purely technical or descriptive analysis.
3. Continuity of argumentation, allowing reconstruction of the evolution of the author's thought over time.

This purposive selection enabled a longitudinal and integrative interpretation of Staniewski's intellectual trajectory.

3.3 Analytical Procedure

The analytical process was conducted in three stages. First, a thematic coding of the selected texts was performed, identifying recurring concepts such as knowledge, values, hope, entrepreneurship, responsibility,

sustainability, and the common good. Second, these themes were analysed within their epistemological, anthropological, and axiological contexts, with particular attention to how cognitive processes are linked to ethical and communal dimensions. Third, the findings were synthesised into a coherent interpretative model, describing Staniewski's thought as an integral hermeneutics of management.

Throughout the analysis, concepts developed by Staniewski were systematically compared with established theories in management and philosophy, including organisational epistemology (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), humanistic management (Melé, 2012), and ethics of the common good (Sison & Fontrodona, 2012; 2023). This comparative perspective allowed the identification of both convergences and original contributions.

3.4 Validity and Limitations

The validity of the study is ensured through theoretical triangulation, combining insights from management theory, philosophy, and ethics. By situating Staniewski's work within a broad international discourse, the analysis avoids purely internal or apologetic interpretation.

Nevertheless, the study has certain limitations. As a qualitative and interpretative analysis, it does not aim at statistical generalisation. The conclusions are analytical rather than empirical, and their applicability depends on the reader's acceptance of hermeneutic and humanistic assumptions. Future research could complement this approach with empirical studies examining how Staniewski's concepts are implemented in organisational practice.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Hermeneutics of Knowledge Management in Staniewski's Thought

One of the central results of the interpretative analysis is the identification of knowledge management as a hermeneutic and participatory process in the work of Prof. Marcin Staniewski. In contrast to instrumental and technocratic approaches that dominated early knowledge management theories, Staniewski consistently understands knowledge as a structure of meaning rooted in human experience and interpersonal relations (Staniewski, 2008; 2011).

In his framework, knowledge is not equivalent to information or data. Rather, it emerges through interpretation and dialogue within the organisational community. This perspective resonates strongly with Gadamer's (1960) conception of understanding as an event in which horizons of meaning intersect. Knowledge is thus dynamic, situational, and relational, created through interaction rather than transmitted as an object. The organisation, in Staniewski's view, becomes a community of interpretation rather than a mechanism for information processing.

This hermeneutic understanding of knowledge aligns with, yet extends, the epistemology proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). While the SECI model highlights the conversion between tacit and explicit knowledge, Staniewski adds a crucial axiological dimension. Knowledge creation is not only a cognitive process, but also a moral one, shaped by trust, responsibility, and shared values. Knowing, in this sense, implies participation in a normative order that guides organisational action.

A key concept emerging from Staniewski's work is that of participatory knowledge. In his analyses of human capital and innovation (Staniewski, 2007; 2011), knowledge exists only insofar as individuals are engaged in meaningful organisational practices. Employees do not merely perform tasks; they interpret their actions and attribute meaning to organisational goals. This interpretative activity transforms work into a space of self-understanding, echoing Ricoeur's (1969) notion that understanding the world is inseparable from understanding oneself.

Furthermore, Staniewski explicitly rejects the reduction of knowledge management to measurable flows of information or technological systems. Although he recognises the importance of IT and organisational structures, he emphasises that without ethical orientation and relational depth, such systems remain empty. Knowledge management, therefore, becomes a form of care for meaning, ensuring that organisational practices remain intelligible, coherent, and ethically grounded.

An important implication of this approach is the central role of values as mediators of cognition. In later works, Staniewski (2016) introduces the idea of the organisation's ethical intelligence, understood as the capacity to make decisions that integrate efficiency with moral responsibility. Knowledge, in this perspective, is inseparable from values, and managing knowledge ultimately means managing the ethical horizon within which organisational actors interpret reality.

In summary, the hermeneutics of knowledge management identified in Staniewski's work represents a significant shift from instrumental rationality toward integral rationality, in which cognition, ethics, and community are mutually constitutive. Knowledge is not a possession of the organisation, but the very mode of its existence as a meaningful and responsible social practice.

4.2 Anthropology of Entrepreneurship and the Ethics of Success

The second major result of the analysis concerns Prof. Marcin Staniewski's anthropological interpretation of entrepreneurship, which departs fundamentally from economic and reductionist models of entrepreneurial behaviour. In contrast to neoclassical approaches that conceptualise the entrepreneur primarily as a rational profit-maximiser, Staniewski understands entrepreneurship as a meaning-creating and ethically embedded human activity (Staniewski and Awruk, 2015; 2019; 2021).

At the core of this anthropology lies the assumption that human beings are relational and interpretative subjects. Economic action is therefore not value-neutral, but always situated within a horizon of meanings, norms, and responsibilities. Entrepreneurship, in Staniewski's framework, is not merely a strategic response to market opportunities, but a form of existential self-realisation in which individuals interpret their vocation in relation to others and to the common good.

Empirical studies conducted jointly with Katarzyna Awruk provide substantial support for this perspective. In their research on motivational factors in the initiation of entrepreneurial activity, the authors demonstrate that the decision to start a business is shaped less by purely economic incentives than by a sense of agency, hope, and the desire for meaningful work (Staniewski and Awruk, 2015). These findings challenge the dominant assumption that entrepreneurial motivation is primarily driven by expected financial returns.

Subsequent studies extend this analysis by examining the psychological and moral determinants of entrepreneurial success. The concept of achievement motivation, self-esteem, and parental attitudes emerges as a key explanatory framework (Staniewski and Awruk, 2019; 2021). Family communication patterns and value transmission are shown to play a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial dispositions. Success, in this view, is not an external outcome measured solely by market performance, but the result of personal maturity and ethical consistency.

Staniewski further develops this anthropology by introducing the category of hope for success, which transcends purely psychological optimism. Hope functions here as a moral and existential orientation, enabling individuals to act responsibly in conditions of uncertainty. In this respect, entrepreneurship becomes an expression of *phronesis* — practical wisdom that integrates rational calculation with ethical judgment (Staniewski, 2016).

This interpretation places Staniewski's thought firmly within the tradition of humanistic management and virtue ethics. Authors such as Melé (2012) and Sison and Fontrodona (2012) similarly argue that authentic entrepreneurship contributes to the common good by fostering trust, cooperation, and social value creation. Staniewski's contribution lies in empirically grounding this normative perspective and integrating it with a coherent anthropological framework.

From this standpoint, entrepreneurial success is inseparable from responsibility for others. The entrepreneur is not a solitary actor competing against the world, but a participant in a network of relationships whose actions have moral consequences. Ethics and efficiency thus appear not as opposing forces, but as complementary dimensions of a single, meaningful practice.

In conclusion, Staniewski's anthropology of entrepreneurship redefines economic activity as a dialogical and value-oriented process, in which success signifies not only

economic effectiveness but also ethical integrity and contribution to the common good.

4.3 Sustainable Management and Ethical Organisational Intelligence

The final area identified in the research results concerns the mature stage of Prof. Marcin Staniewski's thought, in which issues of entrepreneurship, knowledge, ethics, and ecology are integrated into a coherent concept of sustainable management. In this perspective, sustainability is not treated as an auxiliary strategic tool or a response to regulatory pressure, but as a fundamental reorientation of organisational rationality toward long-term responsibility for society and the natural environment (Staniewski *et al.*, 2024).

Staniewski's approach is grounded in the assumption that organisations function as open systems, embedded in complex networks of social, cultural, and ecological relations. Consequently, managerial decision-making cannot be reduced to short-term efficiency or financial optimisation. Instead, it must account for moral consequences and environmental externalities. This leads the author to formulate the concept of ethical organisational intelligence, understood as the capacity of organisations to integrate cognitive competence with moral discernment.

Ethical organisational intelligence represents an extension of Staniewski's earlier work on knowledge management. While knowledge was initially interpreted as a hermeneutic process of meaning-making, it is now explicitly linked to responsibility and care for the common good. In this sense, knowledge becomes ethically oriented, guiding organisational action toward sustainable outcomes. This idea corresponds with the notion of wisdom-based management proposed by Nonaka *et al.* (2022), where wisdom (*phronesis*) integrates truth, goodness, and practical judgment.

Staniewski's empirical and theoretical contributions in the field of sustainability focus particularly on energy transition and environmental responsibility. In studies addressing environmental taxation, renewable energy, and transition pathways in developing and OECD countries (Staniewski *et al.*, 2024; Bekun *et al.*, 2025), economic processes are interpreted through an ethical lens. The energy transition is framed not merely as a technological adjustment, but as a form of organisational and societal *metanoia* — a transformation of consciousness toward ecological responsibility.

This interpretation is deeply rooted in the concept of the common good (*bonum commune*). Drawing on Sison and Fontrodona (2012; 2023), Staniewski understands organisations as communities whose ultimate purpose lies in contributing to shared goods that transcend individual interests. Sustainable management, therefore, becomes a moral practice in which economic rationality is harmonised with social justice and ecological integrity.

From a methodological standpoint, Staniewski's concept resonates with theological and philosophical hermeneutics. Sustainability is interpreted as a process of meaning-making, in which organisations reinterpret their identity, goals, and practices in light of ethical values. ESG frameworks, in this view, are not bureaucratic checklists, but languages through which organisations articulate their responsibility toward stakeholders and the environment.

In summary, the concept of ethical organisational intelligence synthesises epistemology, anthropology, and ethics into a unified model of sustainable management. It redefines managerial competence as the ability to understand, judge, and act responsibly within complex moral and ecological contexts. This perspective positions Staniewski's work at the forefront of contemporary humanistic and wisdom-based approaches to management.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This study set out to reconstruct and interpret the management concepts developed by Prof. Marcin Staniewski as a coherent theoretical project integrating epistemological, anthropological, and ethical dimensions. The analysis demonstrates that his work constitutes an original and mature contribution to contemporary humanistic management theory, offering an alternative to instrumental and technocratic paradigms of organisation and leadership.

The first key conclusion concerns the hermeneutic understanding of knowledge management. Staniewski consistently conceptualises knowledge not as an objective resource, but as a relational and value-laden process of meaning-making within organisational communities. Knowledge management, in this view, is inseparable from dialogue, trust, and ethical orientation.

This perspective extends classical organisational epistemology by integrating cognition with moral responsibility, thereby redefining managerial rationality as integral rather than purely instrumental.

The second conclusion relates to the anthropology of entrepreneurship developed in Staniewski's empirical and theoretical work. Entrepreneurship is interpreted as an existential and relational practice in which economic action becomes a form of self-realisation and participation in the common good.

Entrepreneurial success is not reduced to financial performance, but understood as the outcome of personal maturity, ethical consistency, and responsibility for others. Hope, in this framework, emerges as a central virtue enabling responsible action under conditions of uncertainty.

The third conclusion highlights the significance of sustainable management and ethical organisational intelligence as the most advanced stage of Staniewski's thought.

Sustainability is interpreted as a moral and cognitive transformation of organisations — a process of institutional *metanoia* oriented toward ecological responsibility and long-term social value. Ethical organisational intelligence integrates knowledge, values, and action, positioning practical wisdom (*phronesis*) as the core competence of contemporary management.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by offering a systematic synthesis of Staniewski's work as an integral hermeneutics of management. This approach bridges management theory, ethics, and theological anthropology, renewing the classical idea of wisdom as the foundation of leadership and organisational life. Management emerges not as a neutral technique, but as a moral and interpretative practice embedded in the pursuit of the common good.

The practical implications of this analysis are significant. For managers, Staniewski's framework underscores the importance of ethical intelligence, dialogical leadership, and value-based decision-making in complex and uncertain environments. For scholars, it opens avenues for further research into the empirical application of hermeneutic and wisdom-based management models, particularly in the areas of sustainability, organisational culture, and leadership development.

In conclusion, Prof. Marcin Staniewski's thought represents a comprehensive and coherent vision of management as a space where knowledge, ethics, and action converge. His work restores the original dimension of management as *phronesis* — practical wisdom — in which effectiveness is inseparable from goodness, and organisational success is measured by its contribution to human and ecological flourishing.

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