THE PROBLEM OF AN APPLICANT'S EFFECTIVNESS PROGNOSIS (FORECAST OF AN APPLICANT EFFICIENCY): REFLECTIVE PERSONNEL SELECTION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to investigate peculiarities of personnel selection process in Ukraine and to elaborate the tools which provide highly exact prognosis of an applicant's effectiveness. The reflective technology (conception of group reflection by M. Naidenov is the theoretical base) for resolving both tasks was used. The study shows that the peculiarities of personnel selection situation in Ukraine are:) there are implicit corporate standards and rules that determined real criteria of personnel selection and requirements to an applicant; b) an employer's personal features determine formulation of personnel selection criteria to a great extent; c) there is an implicit approach to personnel selection as a tool of resolving the task of compensation of management failure by applicant's characteristics; d) as a result an inquiry to personnel selection specialist has high level of vagueness; that's why it is impossible to elaborate exact and clear criteria of applicant's evaluation at once. Besides that there are such applicants' stereotypes as implicit expectations which are determined by subjective ideas about just hire and their conventional non-competence to achieve his/her interests to observe the conditions of the contract by both sides. Under that conditions the solution of a task to make effective prognosis about an applicant's effectiveness become the task which propose to reveal the stereotypes of both sides for them own, to lead both sides to realisation of their needs, acceptance these needs of each other and to necessity to take mutual obligations to satisfy these needs.The reflective technology we used ensures an agreement of an employer's and employee's positions about personnel selection criteria, responsibility of both sides to follow these criteria in their relations. It is the procedural realisation of idea to turn the personnel selection process into the process of modelling of actual stereotypes and their overcoming through applicants and employers development by filling of environment with reflection **[3].**

Keywords: reflection, group reflection, group-reflective approach, personnel selection process, stereotypes, implicit expectations, conventional incompetence, personnel selection criteria, prognosis about an applicant's effectiveness, assessment-centre, reflective technology.

Subject of the report is the reflective technology of personnel selection as the tool, allowing to make an exact enough forecast of efficiency of applicants for a vacant post in conditions of specificity of a situation of personnel selection in Ukraine. Because of long isolation of a psychological science in Eastern Europe and as the consequence, non correlation of the conceptual device of researches, that, in turn, complicates understanding of researches of scientists of the East Europe by their western colleagues, the description of reflective technology of personnel selection is given through the comparison to technologies of an estimation of the personnel acting as a close analogue

and having in the West-European tradition the name of the assessment-centres. Comparison of assessment centre technology and the domestic group-reflective approach to an estimation of applicants is carried out on the basis of the conceptual analysis of principles and procedures realizing them. There are used two types of sources: a) the meta-analysis of the English-speaking literature on a theme - reviews of works, subject articles in magazines "European journal of psychological assessment", "International Journal of Selection and Assessment", materials of 10-th European congress of work and organizational psychology (Prague, 2001), parts of monographies etc.; b) the analysis of experience of development and application of the author's group-reflective approach, focused on the correspondence to cultural features of the Ukrainian society and to conditions of a transition period in economy.

Let us characterize specificity of a situation of the personnel selection in Ukraine, determining requirements to diagnostic toolkit in a situation of personnel selection. The features stated below are characteristic for dynamically developing domestic enterprises of small and average business which act as consumers of services of the specialized recruiting organizations.

On the part of the employer specificity of a situation is characterized with presence of a phenomenon of non formulated criteria of selection of the personnel, shown that during traditional interview with the applicants, usually having for an object an estimation of correspondence of the applicant to criteria, the head actually "identifies" the need for the given concrete person.

On the other hand, it is possible to speak about the presence of implicitly existing corporate norms and the rules determining the valid criteria of search of the expert which are not always identical to declared one, limited, as a rule, by the requirements to qualification of the applicant, (and that is frequently in the general kind). Thus requirements to qualification may not have lack of coincidence with requirements to the person of the applicant (following from characteristics of the enterprise organizational culture) but also to enter with them in contradiction (for example, inquiry about presence of leader potential in the applicant and simultaneously the minimization of his/her rights limiting the applicant as a leader and entering in contradiction with the level of his/her prospective responsibility).

The customer of recruiting structures and "inspector" of done work is, as a rule, the director. The given fact is the indirect certificate of backwardness of management of the personnel as organized system. Significant thus there is a role which is played in a formulation of criteria of selection with the personal features of the director. The situation of selection of the personnel connected to the given feature calls to life such particular qualities as the equalizer character of functions of the personnel, they should level the lacks of management.

So it is clear that the formulated inquiry to the expert in selection is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty that does not allow him unequivocally and precisely to define criteria of an estimation of applicants.

 Specificity of a situation of selection on the part of the applicant is characterized by:
a) Presence of the implicit expectations determined by subjective representations about fair hiring;
b) Conventional incompetence in the field of achievement of the interests on observance of treaty provisions of hiring.

Under these conditions the decision of a task of efficiency of the forecast of correspondence of the expert to offered work passes through maintenance of process duly (at a stage of selection) exposure **of stereotypes of both parties**, presentation them to

their parties with a task of comprehension of the needs, acceptance of these needs in each other and acceptance of mutual obligations concerning their satisfaction. Thus, process of selection of the personnel appears as process of comprehension, crystallization and a formulation of the substance of "the psychological contract".

The Reflective technology of selection (the head of development - M.Najdenov), represents procedural realization of a plan of transformation of a situation of selection in a situation of modeling of actual stereotypes and their overcomings through the development of the sides provided with saturation of environment by a reflection.

The reflective technology of selection of the personnel is the tool which provides: a) the coordination of positions of the sides (the employer and the candidate) concerning criteria of selection; b) acceptance by the sides of the responsibility for following to these criteria in business relations; c) and as consequence, it allows to increase a degree of accuracy of the forecast of efficiency of the expert in the described conditions of hiring.

For definition of a place of reflective technology of selection of the personnel in a number of psychological tools of selection we shall compary it to most close analogue - a method of an estimation of the personnel, known as a method of assessment centre.

Assessment-centres are technology of an estimation and development of the personnel, widely distributed in last decades in the countries of the Western Europe, Northern America and Australia. Many organizations use the Assessment-centres for selection of applicants for key posts or for selection of teams, as it is the most reliable for today a method of the forecast of an overall performance of the given concrete person in the given concrete operating conditions in the given organization. Such concrete forecast is the weakest side of the testing giving, basically, probabilistic forecasts.

Some words about the used term - assessment centre. The literal translation from English designates something close to " a concentration of an estimation ", however the given word collocation is used as the settled name of the special technology having the standards, a history and prospects of development. Therefore, we offer to use for convenience Russian-speaking variant of the term, namely - the assessment - centre. Realization of the analysis of semantic connections of a new entered term became today the indispensable requirement in scientific community, therefore we shall result. Concept "assessment" (in useful for us sense) is used in two contexts. Eric E.J. De Bruyn, discussing the approach to norm-ordering diagnostics, allocates 9 types of the estimation appropriate to various inquiries: Registration - registration (as I can describe myself), an assessment-assessment (to whom / to what I am similar), the forecast - prediction (what I become in the future), the prevention (warning) - prevention (what I should do to avoid difficulties), clarification - clarification (how I can express, what is happening to me), inspection - exploration (what wrong with me), an explanation - explanation (why it happened with me), indication - indication (is it possible to help me), the evaluation - evaluation (whether the help is adequate to me) [0, p. 167]. In this case the concept of assessment acts as a diagnostic part of a cycle of psychological work.

The second context is in practice of management by human resources. So Larraine Gooch and Nelarine Cornelius, authors of the issue " Recruitment, selection and introduction in the other competitive environment ", define an assessment through the scheme of regular selection of the personnel: " definition of criteria of selection " and " search of the bases from applicant " cause " an assessment of criteria vs. the bases ", result of that is " the choice of suitable person " [8, p. 46].

In this case the assessment is defined two more additional semantic parameters of

concept: a) a criterial estimation (the bases of an evaluation are precisely designated); b) a comparative estimation (the place of the individual is established in a number of the others). Thus, using concept "assessment", we narrow volume of concept "estimation", supplementing on a qualitative level essential characteristics. In a result of realization of the international project on generalization of experience of the organization of the assessment-centres and creation of a special manual (1989) the following definition has appeared. The assessment-centre is the standardized estimation of behaviour based on plural input of the information. For this purpose are used some prepared observers and technicians. Judgements about behaviour are made in most cases proceeding from specially organized estimated imitations. These judgements are united in the general picture during special assembly of appraisers or on the basis of application of statistical means [29, c. 460].

Initially the Assessment-centre was considered as an alternative to criterial-oriented psychotechnical measuring tools and interview with a view of the forecast. Really, these traditional methods are focused on the current or previous efficiency of the applicant though at a new work or a new position in the company absolutely other skills and competence may be necessary. An essential component of the assessment-centre is modeling of the future requirements as imitating exercises that allows to predict efficiency of the applicant on a new workplace.

In our opinion, the aspect of introduction of several appraisers is important also, because it raises accuracy and perceived validity of an estimation. It is important both from the point of view of the boss using the given method, and from the point of view of the candidate for a vacant post. More often the assessment-centre will be carried out in the form of direct ("face to face") dialogue of appraisers and applicants (though in the USA the form of an evaluation with use of videorecording is widely used).

The form of the assessment-centres is characterized also with potential of expansion of subject - subject relations in a situation of selection. It is important, considering the existing tendency of transition in a professional situation from subject-object dialogue to subject-subject form. The precondition of expansion of subject-subjective type of dialogue is that in the assessment-centre some appraisers, drawn conclusions, give reason for them not only to the colleagues, but also those whom they estimated, unwrapping their position in the communications.

As against the assessment-centre group-reflective technology realizes full scale the subject- subjective approach, that finds the expression in the stipulated by technology procedures of the coordination by all participants of estimated event, of a valuable context of interaction within the framework of a task of selection and an immediate prospects (duration one year) of work at the enterprise of the employer in case of a victory in competition. The given procedures provide acceptance by each side of obligations on the purposes, principles and rules of interaction, and also the responsibility for infringement of arrangements. The coordination has the form of signing by the sides(the executor of procedures of selection - the applicant) of so-called " the Preliminary agreement " (the psychological contract), being author's development of the Institute of reflective researches and specializations (duration of practical use - five years since). [27; 15; 4]

Special question is the influence of use of the assessment-centres for accuracy of an estimation. In this connection Filip Lievens and Richard J. Klimoski, generalizing data file, allocate 5 components of the assessment-centres [2, with. 77]: a) roles (characteristics of roles estimated, the appraiser, the player); b) a context of an evaluation (the purpose of an evaluation, organizational culture); c) means of an evaluation (evaluating parameters, used tools of an evaluation and supervision, imitating

exercises, procedures of integration of an estimation); d) process of an evaluation (described by several models); e) results of an evaluation (the estimated information, process of its acceptance by the estimated persons, and the further actions based on an estimation).

In view of a task of the description of reflective technology of selection of the personnel the most important is more detailed statement of a processual component of the assessment-centres. There are three models describing process of work of appraisers: 1) rational model (the majority of texts is executed from this point of view), 2) model of the limited abilities of the appraiser and 3) expert model.

Substantive provision of rational model (Abelson, 1981; Bobrow, Norman, 1975; Borman, 1978; Rumelhart, Ortony, 1977) consists in the following: people are capable to pay attention of detailed elaboration of behaviour to classify separate pieces of a behavioural stream in a category of parameters, in result achieving more or less objective and exact estimations. Proceeding from the given model preparation of the appraiser contains the requirement of care at transition from one phase of an estimation to the following. Selected phases of an estimation remind the instruction on realization of an introspection (a method widely used at the beginning of development of psychology): supervision over verbal and nonverbal behaviour of the candidate; recording on a course of supervision of clear behavioural actions (instead of vague interpretations); classification of the behavioural facts by groups of parameters on the basis of the made marks (for this purpose the appraiser well should master these parameters); the last one is - ranking of candidates on set of parameters. Transition to the following phase is possible only after the end of previous one.

The second model - the limited abilities (Reilly, Henry, Smither, 1990) - has arisen as consequence of that the appraiser is not always capable to satisfy to cognitive requirements of the assessment-centre i.e. to process all incoming information. In this direction ways of elimination of an overload of the appraiser are developed, first of all due to reduction of amount of parameters on which candidates (are used also various forms of fixing of the data) are estimated. Key positions in parameters should not be more than seven. So, for example, it is allocated seven key competencies of the manager of the known enterprise Pizza Hut, used in the assessment-centre: adaptability, quality of service of the consumer, the interpersonal communications, leadership in command, business-administration, tenacity / compulsion, planning and organization. Taking into account, that each of parameters has some attributes on which it can be fixed, becomes obvious, that seven parameters which need to be kept in the internal plan as the tool of an estimation together with their attributes, is much. Really, comparison of results of work of appraisers-managers and appraisers-students of psychology (on the basis of the factorial analysis of estimations) has shown, that in spite of the fact that managers of the given enterprise know better an organizational context, they simplify the structure of parameters up to 2-3 of independent group-parameters. Proceeding from the model of the limited abilities, it is recommended to use in the assessment-centres 3 groups of parameters (feeling, thinking, authority).

The other approach to the decision of a problem of accuracy of an estimation and, accordingly, the forecast, is offered in the expert model (Cantor, Mischel, 1977; Fiske, Taylor, 1991; Srull, Wyer, 1980; Zedeck, 1986). Specially prepared experts - professional appraisers - use during an estimation a well organized own cognitive structure. This organizing a pre-knowledge scheme developed from the previous experience and training, supervises over attention, categorising, recollection and integration.

The expert model is initial model in development of the domestic group-

reflective approach to an estimation of the personnel. Experts who will carry out procedures of selection, especially at its final stage - the public (at the presence of the employer on behalf of one or several directors and divisions, and sometimes and employees of the enterprise or the certain department) group action including the forms of group discussion, modelling (imitating) tasks - have theoretical and scientific-practical training preparation on development of the concept of a group reflection within the framework of performance of research theoretical and applied projects.

Accuracy of the forecast at use of group-reflective technology is provided also with the specificity of used conceptual means - conceptual model of discursive thinking which essential feature is the presence in its structure of the elements, allowing "to seize" not only a retrospective show and current (concerning to a direct situation) displays of characteristics of the applicant but also to fix the acts of his self-definitions made in reply to stipulated technology and created situation by it of a necessity to determine himself concerning the future.

Self-determination act as the basis for the forecast of efficiency of the applicant in two aspects: directly - concerning conventionality and abilities to be the carrier of corporate norms; indirectly - concerning professional characteristics of the applicant in the aspect of a self-estimation of the candidate. In the first case stability of self-definitions is important, which is checked thanking to multi-stage procedures (interview of the executor of works with the applicant, interview of the applicant with the employer at participation of the executor, group action - competition (a reflective training - practical work) - with the candidates selected at the previous stages) and by means of creation in it many situations demanding self-determination. The executor of works fixes stability / fluctuation of behaviour of the applicant from a stage to a stage, from a situation to a situation. In the second case the forecast is based on confidence of the applicant in his professional qualities, and quantitative expression of the responsibility accepted by him for non-confirmation of self-estimations by an estimation of the employer and experts (executors of works on recruiting) according to the authorized criteria of selection during a trial period.

Stages of comprehension of stereotypes by the employer, realized by him at the decision of a task of selection of the personnel, and acceptance by him of self-definitions are the stages of the coordination of criteria: the initial coordination - at signing the contract and the specification describing the requirements to the applicant; specifications of criteria - at interview with group of applicants, past a stage of interviewing with the executor of works on selection; the final statement - during last stage of selection (competition) and decision making about transfer of the candidate for a trial period.

Thus, in terms of the concept of a group reflection process of selection of the personnel is the process of consecutive realization of the employer and the applicant through a number of " trivial decisions ", stereotypes, and then through a number of the realized self-definitions, allowing to create a precise and transparent basis of business interaction. The group-reflective approach, uniting the two ways directed process of calibrating criteria and updating of the assessment-centre, allows to solve a task of selection in uncertain and dynamical conditions.

Among above listed 5 components of the assessment-centres the most investigated is the component of means of an evaluation in which for the assessment-centres imitating exercises are key ones. They have found wide application also in group-reflective technology. (the Description of types of used exercises (presentation, the group decision of a problem, exercise " in a basket " and " on a tray "), features of their construction in different types of organizational contexts and parameters of an evaluation it is possible to receive at the seminars, spent by the IRIS, (the information

can be received: [22]

The most important tendency of the last decade is, in our opinion, expansion of function of the assessment-centres, namely - their transformation into the centres of development of the personnel. This aspect makes close the given technology to the group-reflective approach developed as a complex, meaningful method. Saturation of environment by a the reflection, distinguishing the group-reflective technology, is realization of a principle of diagnostics in development. In estimated reflective event, due to procedures of the organization of group work, the diad- and individual work put in different contexts, due to change of roles which are "tried on" on themselves by the applicants, and to keeping of valuable unity of an event context, there is a stage-by-stage stipulated by technology saturation of the applicants by the feedback promoting constructive final self-determination. From the point of view of an accuracy of the forecast reaction of the applicant to numerous and substantially various feedback characterizes such aspects of the person of the applicant as flexibility, ability to learn, ability to control emotions and in aggregate it gives a sufficient material for the forecast of efficiency at work in the organization of the employer.

Thus, participation in the group-reflective assessment-centre gives an impulse to personal and professional development of applicants (both the winner of competition, and those who were refused), to the head and the commission of experts by way of specification of their requirement for the personnel and criteria of selection, and it mobilizes the organization (especially if the personnel takes part in competition).

In a result we shall emphasize three essential distinctions of technology of the assessment- centre and technology of creation of the reflective environment in the group-reflective assessment- centre for an estimation of applicants for a vacant post. In group-reflective technology:

1. The role of appraisers and a role estimated may be crossed in one person, being supported by special procedures. It is achieved by that the applicants also will carry out an estimation of themselves and partners-contenders. (In the traditional assessment-centre the given channel of information is not described).

2. The estimation of applicants by the experts represents bidirectional process: not only the person by preliminary allocated criteria is estimated, but also due to an innovational potentiality of competition (a reflective training-practical work) criteria will be improved and the image of business extends both on the part of the employer, and on the part of the applicant that creates stronger basis of fruitful cooperation;

3 The feedback is provided repeatedly and during the evaluation, providing plural developing effect and allowing to estimate potential of development of the applicant.

Thus, the concept of a group reflection and its realization in a special complex of standardized procedures not only resolves many of the assessment-centres' technology questions, but also takes into account such realities of the Ukrainian society which have not found the description and the research decision in the West-European and American culture (though in latest time works on of so-called model of dynamic criteria [28] have appeared).

In practice of the IRIS (Institute of reflective researches and specialization) the group-reflective technology of selection of the personnel is used both for the decision of an independent task of search of experts, and in the structure of complex projects on development of business of the enterprises by means of external group of development.

As a whole we see two ways of use of new technologies for improvement of administrative activity - informing of the bosses on opportunities of technologies both at a stage of preparation, and in system of consulting; and improvement of quality of preparation of professional appraisers, including the courses developing cognitive tools

of the person, in preparation of managers of the personnel.

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